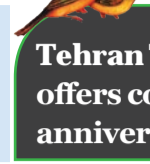
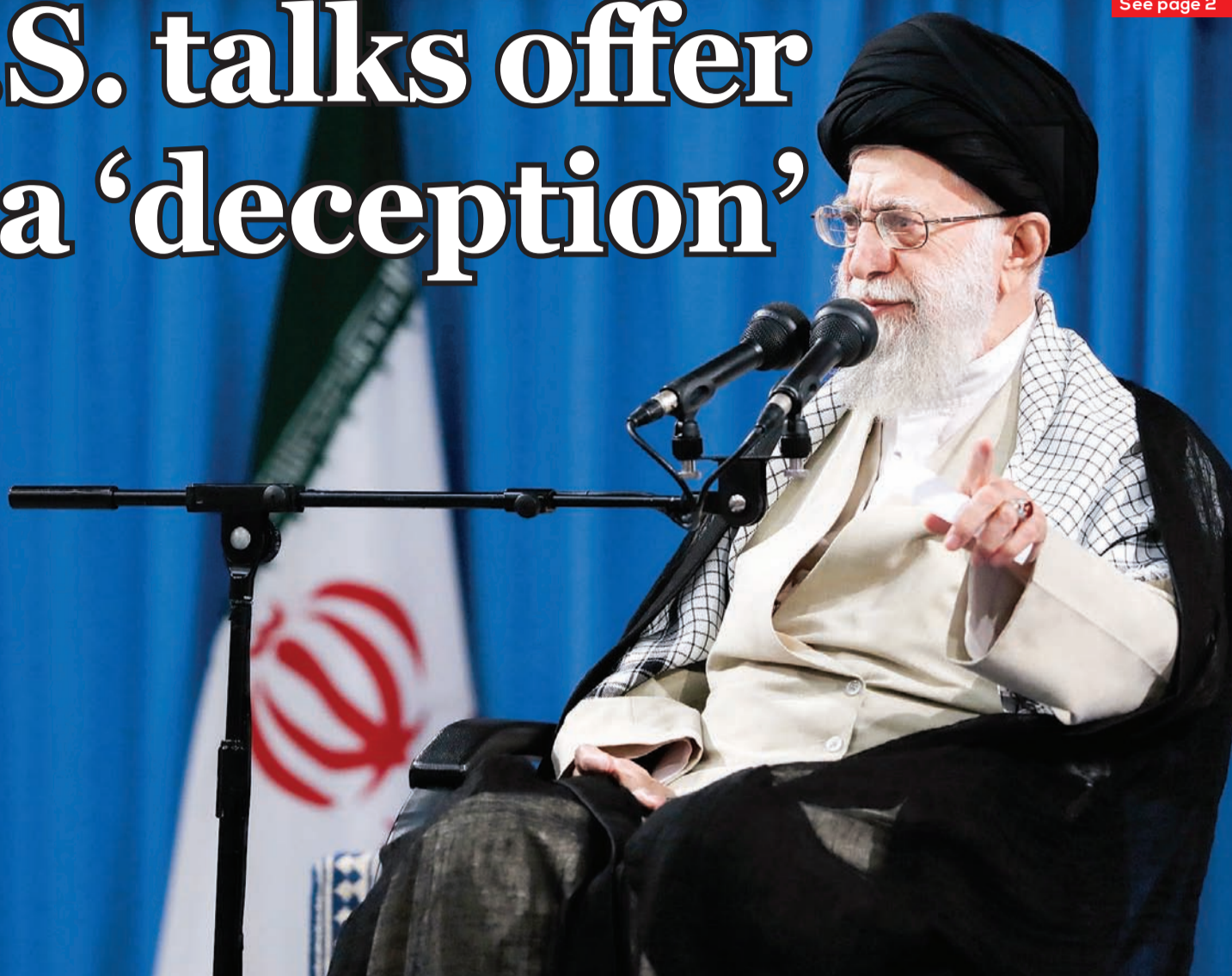


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U.S. talks offer is a 'deception'

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Iran's oil exports rising despite U.S. pressures: CBI governor

TEHRAN — The governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said the country's oil exports are following an upward trend despite the U.S. pressures for cutting them to zero, IRNA reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Abdolnaser Hemmati noted that the calmness in the country's foreign currency market is an indication

that the U.S. pressures are no longer affecting the market and people are well aware of Washington's psychological warfare.

Mentioning the Europe's claims of trying for realization of the INSTEX, Hemmati said, "They [Europeans] have been making such claims for so long, but we haven't seen any actual work done." **→4**

Iraqi president: Sanctions will not change Iran's policy

TEHRAN — Iraqi President Barham Salih says his country under no circumstances will allow the United States to use its bases in Iraq to launch an attack on neighboring Iran.

"We do not want our territory to be a staging post for any hostile action against any of our neighbors, including Iran," Salih said in an interview with CNN's Christiane

Amanpour in London on Tuesday.

"This is definitely not part of the agreement between the Iraqi government and the United States."

Salih questioned the efficacy of sanctions to change a country's behavior, saying there was a "fundamental question" about whether sanctions could induce a country to change policy. **→3**

Yemeni drones hit Jizan, Abha airports in Saudi Arabia: military

TEHRAN — Yemeni troops carried out aerial assaults against designated targets at Jizan Airport and Abha International Airport in Saudi Arabia's southwestern province of Asir, a military official said.

June, 26, 2019 - 08:53 World Comments

Yemeni Drones Hit Jizan, Abha Airports in Saudi Arabia: Military

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said on Tuesday that the airports were hit by a squadron of domestically-manufactured Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones.

Saree added that the attacks led to the suspension of flights at the airports. **→13**

Trump's willingness to talk with Iran 'not a serious proposal': Robert Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Robert E. Hunter, the former U.S. ambassador to NATO, says Trump's willingness to talk with Iranian authorities is "Not a serious proposal."

"It is designed to try showing the allies that he is not just 'pressure' without efforts to talk," Hunter tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the full text of the exclusive interview with Hunter:

■ Do you think that the maximum pressure campaign on Iran will have an outcome for the Trump government?

A: If it goes to war, negative with most US public opinion; if not, most Americans are not paying attention; but allies will continue to fret.

■ It looks as though we are approaching the date of the American presidential election, Trump's

willingness is increasing to talk with Iranian authorities. Some believe that this tendency is more for electoral advertising than as his foreign policy achievement. What is your opinion?

A: Not a serious proposal; it is designed to try showing the allies that he is not just "pressure" without efforts to talk.

■ If the maximum pressure against Iran does not reach the result, would you imagine a change in Trump's warring team, including the expulsion of John Bolton and Mike Pompeo?

A: No. They are doing what he wants in terms of rhetoric against Iran. The issue is whether they will help start a war by accident or miscalculation. The same is the risk with actions by Iran. The situation is very dangerous. (Iran would be the biggest loser in a war, no matter how it is fought.

■ Given that China's trade war with China

will have unfavorable effects on the US economy in the coming months and the economy is also the card winner for the trump, how do you assess the results of the US elections in 2020 in the shadow of the continuation of the trade war with China?

A: To the extent that Trump has control over the trade war, it will be settled, one way or another, long before the election.

■ The poll was recently held by Fox News, Media sponsor Trump, that it show Trump has less votes than five Democrats, including Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden. Given the fact that the poll was held by Fox News, How do you evaluate it? (Of course, there were some differences between Trump and Fox News recently)

A: At this point in the election cycle, polls are meaningless. That has been proved over and over.

Impossible to predict where Trump will go with Iran policy: Falk

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Richard Anderson Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, says "We have learned that it is impossible to predict where Trump will go with Iran policy."

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights says "The American people seem opposed at this time to any kind of military undertaking that risks war with Iran."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Do you think that the maximum pressure campaign on Iran will have an outcome for the Trump government?

A: We have learned that it is impossible to predict where Trump will go with Iran policy. Judging from relations with other leaders, he is likely to be more forthcoming if the foreign government and its leaders are receptive to his diplomatic initiatives and face to face meetings.

Whether this pattern would be followed in relation to Iran is unlikely for several reasons. First of all, Trump has himself taken a number of unilateral provocative steps for which there was no justification, starting with the withdrawal from the Nuclear Program Agreement followed by the imposition of a harsh sanctions regime that

seeks to coerce other countries from not trading with Iran, which itself is an instance of economic aggression in violation of international law. Secondly, Trump's chief advisors seem determined to push the US Government to escalate tensions and threaten military action. Thirdly, U.S. military capabilities have been increased with the obvious goal of posing a threat to and exerting pressure on Iran, or some in the US claim for deterrent purposes. Fourthly, the anti-Iran policy has been pushed by Israel and Saudi Arabia, which exert excessive influence on American foreign policy in the Middle East. **→7**



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Tehran hosts meeting on peaceful coexistence based on Islamic teachings

TEHRAN — The University of Tehran hosted an international conference on peaceful coexistence based on Islamic teachings on Wednesday.

The conference, titled "Strategic Capacities of Islamic Teachings in Realizing Peaceful Coexistence", brought together religious scholars from Islamic world. Presidential advisor for ethnic and religious minorities Ali Yunesi also participated in the forum.

PERSPECTIVE



Hanif Ghaffari

Head of the Tehran Times
Politics Desk

Why Pompeo is travelling to Middle East?

American Secretary of States Mike Pompeo announced on Sunday that he will travel to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) to discuss the issues of western Asia.

It seems that the intention behind this trip, like the previous trips of U.S. officials to Middle East, is to shake down Arab tycoons. In fact, Trump had recently said that Saudi Arabia must financially support U.S. actions and now Pompeo is making this trip to reap the benefits.

In fact, with muddying the waters, U.S. is only trying to downplay his recent failures against Iran, especially after Iran downed U.S. super modern Global Hawk drone that had intruded into Iran's airspace.

Following the incident, Trump made a strange announcement saying that he wanted to retaliate, but he called off the attack against Iran just 10 minutes before it was to be launched.

After this, the western media tried to start up a psychological warfare against Iran. First saying that Trump is ready to negotiate, and then repeated the false claims that they might return to nuclear deal. Amid all this tension, Trump once again sent a message to North Korea's Supreme Leader, and now Pompeo's trip to the Middle East is just another piece of this puzzle.

Out of a general viewpoint, we can say that the followings are the main intentions of Pompeo with making this trip to Middle East:

- Announcing U.S. support for Saudi and UAE regimes to continue killing the innocent people of Yemen until they reach a big victory.

- Gaining more victories in Yemen has specially become important for Saudi-led coalition after Yemeni drones targeted Abha and Jizan airports in the south of Saudi Arabia.

- On the other hand, a rift has opened up between the two main pillars of Saudi-led coalition, Saudi Arabia and UAE because Saudi disagrees with UAE's plans for dividing the northern and southern Yemen.

- Putting pressure on Arab countries to attend the Manama event where U.S. is planning to put forward the "deal of the century." **→7**

R E P O R T



Ramin Hossein Abadian

Mehr News Agency
journalist

Saudi critical military positions targeted by Yemen

On Wednesday morning, it was reported that Yemen's military and national groups launched an extensive attack on Abha Airport, in southwest of Saudi Arabia.

The attack targeted military positions and aircraft hangars.

According to Arab media, the attack was launched by Yemeni drones. The drones targeted both Abha and Jizan airports. Saudi-led coalition uses the airports for fuelling the fighter planes that are continuously launching deadly attacks on Yemen.

In this regard, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, announced that "the drone and missile attacks launched by [Yemen's] army and national groups is not meant to increase tension, but it is a natural response to five years of aggression by the Saudi-led coalition. This is the Saudi enemy who tries to heighten tensions by using all kinds of weapons, even the ones that are internationally illegal. We are only defending ourselves against five years of aggression, and we will make all the effort to [gain] this purpose."

"We previously signed a truce for stopping all drone and missile attacks, but the enemy continued its attacks and our brothers in military forces came to the conclusion that the truce is not going to work and we have to go back on adopting defensive strategies," said Mohammed Ali al-Houthi.

Just a few days before this new attack, Yemeni forces had launched another strike on Abha airport.

After the first attack on Abha airport, the spokesperson of Yemen's Armed Forces announced that the launched missile hit the exact position that it was meant for in Abha airport and even the most accurate missile defense systems of United States had not been able to track the missile down.

The extensive missile attacks on Saudi airports by Yemenis and the increase in the country's drone power reveals the fact that Saudi Arabia is now faced with a strong defense from Yemenis; obviously, Riyadh is doing its best to diminish this power, but so far, it has not made any progress. **→7**

UAE says no evidence to blame any country for tanker explosions

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – “Honestly we can’t point the blame at any country because we don’t have evidence,” and need to ensure evidence is “precise and convincing,” UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan has said in his most recent statements about recent attacks on tankers off the shores of his country.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, right, and Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan shake hands after their joint news conference following their talks in Moscow.

Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed, who was speaking in Moscow at a press conference with his Russian counterpart that was broadcast on Al Arabiya TV, also called for de-escalation of tensions in the region.

The UAE’s recent stance on the issue goes in stark contrast to its buddy Saudi Arabia, whose crown prince was quick to accuse Iran for the June 13 incident in which two tankers were struck by explosions in the Gulf of Oman.

‘Power drawn from spiritual influence can’t be subject to sanctions’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The secretary of Supreme National Security Council says Iran’s power, which “is drawn from spiritual influence” cannot be subject to sanctions.



In a statement released on Wednesday, Ali Shamkhani said the West’s lack of knowledge about Islam, Shiism, and the capacity of the Marja has misled them to defeat upon many occasions over the past four decades.

In reference to U.S. military threats against Iran and its new sanctions against top Iranian authorities including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the top security official said threatening Iran with military attack and sanctioning the Leader belies the West’s misapprehension of the mechanisms of the spiritual influence in “creating and expanding power.”

Shamkhani added, “Threatening the interests of the Islamic Republic, at any rate and in any form, will surely entail retaliatory action by Iran and the network of lovers of the Islamic Republic in the region and around the world.”

IRGC general: Enemy lacks will power to attack Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force on Wednesday rejected the idea that there is a specter of war against Iran, saying the enemy does not have the will power to attack the Islamic Republic.



“There is no specter of war against Iran, [because] the enemy lacks the will power, and this fact has become clear to everyone,” Amir Ali Hajizadeh said, Tasnim reported.

General Hajizadeh lauded his forces for downing an intruding American spy drone with a homegrown air defense system, saying, “Neither the U.S. nor any other country dares to attack Iran’s soil today.”

The remarks came almost a week after the IRGC Aerospace Force shot down the U.S. drone after issuing several warnings. The United States denied that the drone intruded into Iran’s airspace at the time.

U.S. President Donald Trump later claimed he decided to call off an attack on several Iranian targets after he learned 150 Iranians would die as a result of the strike.

Hajizadeh said it was “impossible” for the U.S. to carry out the threat of retaliation, adding, “The Americans must mind their manners, because the era of looking down on the Iranian nation is over.”

The commander also rejected the U.S. claim that the doomed drone had not entered the Iranian airspace, saying, “Other countries have refuted the U.S. claim of not violating the Iranian border.”

Iran’s military will respond firmly if U.S. continues aggression, Rouhani says in phone call with Macron

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran’s armed forces will respond firmly if U.S. continues to violate Iran’s territory, President Hassan Rouhani said late on Tuesday in a phone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron.

However, Rouhani added, Iran is not interested in escalating tension in the region and has never sought war with any country.

“We have always been committed to development of stability and security in the region and will make efforts in this respect,” Rouhani asserted.

Rouhani said the U.S. administration is responsible for escalation of tension in the region.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on Thursday shot down a U.S. drone which violated Iran’s airspace. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace unit of the IRGC, said on Friday that the drone had received warnings for four times before being shot down.

“The U.S. drone was shot down after violating Iranian airspace and refusing to pay attention to several warnings by Iran’s defense systems. The Iranian armed forces will respond firmly if the U.S. seeks to violate Iran’s airspace and waters again,” Rouhani said in his conversation with the French leader.

■ ‘U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA was against intl. interests’

Rouhani also said that the U.S. action in withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in May 2018 was against international interests.

There would be positive developments in the world if the JCPOA was implemented



properly, Rouhani remarked.

Pointing to Europe’s lack of practical actions to preserve the JCPOA, the president said, “Iran will continue reducing its commitments phase by phase based on the JCPOA’s 26 and 36 articles if Iran does not gain benefits of the deal.”

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the nuclear pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions’ effects. The deadline ends on July 7.

In line with Tehran’s decision to scale back its commitments under the nuclear deal in protest to reimposition of sanctions by the United States, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced on June 17 that Iran’s stockpile of enriched uranium will exceed 300 kilograms by June 27.

■ ‘Iran will never renegotiate the JCPOA’

Rouhani also told his French counterpart that Iran will not renegotiate the terms of the deal under any circumstances.

“By acting against international law and imposing sanctions against the Iranian people, the U.S. has proven that it does

not seek settle issues,” he said.

Elsewhere, he said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran will never do return to the past.” Rouhani added, “Whenever banking relations and oil sale issues are resolved by 4+1, situation will return to where they were, and nothing will change until the U.S. removes all sanctions against Iran.”

5+1 is now referred to as 4+1 - France, Britain, Russia and China as four permanent members of the UN Security Council - plus Germany.

The JCPOA was first referred to as a legally binding agreement between Iran and the 5+1 group. However, the U.S. unilaterally exited the pact in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

Under the JCPOA, Iran is tasked to limit its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of sanctions. Since the deal went into effect in January 2016, the International Atomic Energy Agency has issued 15 reports each time confirming that Iran is abiding by the terms of the agreement. However, after waiting for a year that the remaining signatories to the JCPOA to do something to offset sanctions, Iran is saying that its “strategic patience” is coming to an end and it is removing caps on its nuclear activities step by step.

■ Macron says France makes efforts to save the JCPOA

For his part, Macron expressed regret over the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and noted that France will make efforts to save the deal.

He also said that cooperation and interaction to develop stability and security in the region should be expanded.

Leader: U.S. talks offer is a ‘deception’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday that U.S. officials’ claims seeking negotiations with Tehran is an act of “deception,” saying such an offer is merely aimed at disarming the Iranian nation of its “elements of power.”

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in response to numerous offers of negotiations recently put forward by U.S. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo amid a campaign of “maximum pressure” against Tehran.

“Having failed to achieve its goal through pressure, the enemy is coming forward with an offer of talks, while assuming the Iranian nation is simple-minded,” the Leader said, according to a Press TV report of his statements.

“The Iranian nation will definitely make progress, but without you and on the condition that you don’t approach it,” he said to U.S. officials.

Speaking during a meeting with top Judiciary officials, the Leader said the American officials, fearing Iran’s might, are now attempting to bring Iran to the negotiating table so



they could wreak havoc on it.

Ayatollah Khamenei said in case Tehran accepts the offer and submits to Washington’s demands, Washington will then move to harm the Iranian nation, and if Iran rejects the offer, the U.S. will keep up its pressure as well as its political

and propaganda campaign against the Islamic Republic.

The Leader reaffirmed that the Iranian nation will not retreat in the face of America’s “cruel sanctions” and “insults” and will continue on the path to progress and prosperity.

“The world’s most hated and vicious government, which is itself behind wars, sedition and exploitation of other countries, levels accusations against and levels insults at the honorable nation of Iran on a daily basis,” the Leader said.

“However, the Iranian nation will not be taken aback by such ugly measures and will not retreat,” Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

The Leader’s remarks came two days after the U.S. imposed new sanctions targeting Ayatollah Khamenei’s office and senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Washington is also set to slap bans on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is seen as the architect of a 2015 multilateral nuclear deal, which Washington abruptly abandoned last year and reinstated its unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Zarif says B-Team drags U.S. out of negotiating table and plotting for war

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the “B-Team” dragged the U.S. out of the negotiating table and plotting for war.

“Iran never left the negotiation table. #B_Team dragged the U.S. out, while plotting for war,” he tweeted on Tuesday.

He also posted a link of an article wrote by U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton and said, “Wanna know why those with proven record of detesting diplomacy are suddenly interested in talks?”

Just read @AmbJohnBolton’s 2017 recipe for destroying the #JCPOA.”

The B-Team includes Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, and UAE

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed.

Zarif had previously warned that the B-Team could goad Trump into a war with Tehran.

In an article titled “How to get out of the Iran nuclear deal” published by National Review on August 28, 2017, Bolton presented a campaign plan to abrogate the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

“Early, quiet consultations with key players such as the U.K., France, Germany, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, to tell them we are going to abrogate the deal based on outright violations and other unacceptable Iranian behavior, and seek their input,” Bolton introduced as the first step.

As the second step, he said, “Prepare the

documented strategic case for withdrawal through a detailed white paper (including declassified intelligence as appropriate) explaining why the deal is harmful to U.S. national interests, how Iran has violated it, and why Iran’s behavior more broadly has only worsened since the deal was agreed.”

“A greatly expanded diplomatic campaign should immediately follow the announcement, especially in Europe and the Middle East, and we should ensure continued emphasis on the Iran threat as a top diplomatic and strategic priority,” he added as the third step.

And as the last step of his plan, Bolton said, “Develop and execute Congressional and public diplomacy efforts to build domestic and foreign support.”

Elsewhere in his article he wrote, “Iran is



not likely to seek further negotiations once the JCPOA is abrogated, but the Administration may wish to consider rhetorically leaving that possibility open in order to demonstrate Iran’s actual underlying intention to develop deliverable nuclear weapons, an intention that has never flagged.”

Araqchi says Iran left with no choice but to cease one-way commitment to JCPOA

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi said on Tuesday that a failure by Europe to ensure Tehran’s interests under the 2015 nuclear deal has left Iran with no choice but to cease a one-way commitment to the multilateral agreement.

Araqchi made the remarks in a meeting with Lukas Parizek, state secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

Pointing to Iran’s strategic patience during the past year in the face of the U.S. illegal and unilateral move to withdraw from the JCPOA and imposing harsh sanctions on Iran, Araqchi highlighted the European countries’ procrastinations and failure to honor their commitments to the nuclear pact.

“Sadly, the balance between the Islamic Republic of Iran’s obligations and rights under the JCPOA has been now upset, and considering the European side’s unfulfilled pledges, there remains no reason for the implementation of Iran’s one-way commitments. However, Iran has kept the window of diplomacy open by gradually reducing its commitments,” Araqchi said, according to the Tasnim news agency.



For his part, the Slovak diplomat said his country backs the JCPOA, expressing hope that INSTEX, a payment channel that the three EU signatories to the JCPOA have set up to maintain trade with Iran, would become operational and Europe would maintain and strengthen its economic and trade ties with Tehran.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the JCPOA, a 159-page nuclear agreement between Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany) came into force

in January 2016.

Following the U.S. withdrawal, Iran and the remaining parties launched talks to save the accord. However, the EU’s failure to ensure Iran’s economic interests forced Tehran to stop honoring certain commitments under the JCPOA on May 8, 2019.

Since that date Iran has set a 60-day deadline for the remaining JCPOA parties to fulfill their undertakings.

■ Political consultations

Parizek also emphasized the Bratislava government is serious for continued political

consultations and strengthening economic, commercial and cultural cooperation with Iran.

“We are determined to strengthen reciprocal ties, particularly the bilateral economic and trade cooperation, and are ready to hold the joint commission’s meeting in the near future to that end,” stated Parizek who had visited Tehran for political consultations between the two countries.

During the talks, the two sides conferred on bilateral relations, as well as regional and international developments.

Araqchi expressed satisfaction with the continuation of political contacts and consultations between the two countries and highlighted the great capacities for economic and commercial relations between two nations.

“By taking advantage of the current situation, the two countries have fortunately taken major steps to strengthen and boost the mercantile and trade ties,” Araqchi said, according to the Foreign Ministry’s official website.

“It is hoped that holding the Iran-Slovakia Joint Commission’s meeting in the future would upgrade and solidify this trend,” he added.

Rouhani urges Europe to honor JCPOA, advises U.S. to return to the deal

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday advised European countries to meet their obligations under the 2015 nuclear pact and the Americans to return to the deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying it would be to the benefit of everyone if they followed his advice.

"We advise the Americans that the path you have chosen is flawed," Rouhani said during a cabinet session. "We advise the Europeans that your inaction toward Barjam (JCPOA) has been flawed and we tell them both to return to their commitments."

"This will be to the benefit of us, you, the region, law, international bodies and the non-proliferation regime," the president argued.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew his country from the JCPOA. Ever since its withdrawal, the U.S. has occasionally imposed new sanctions against the Islamic Republic in line with its "maximum



pressure" on Tehran.

The latest rounds of U.S. sanctions were announced on Monday, targeting top Iranian officials, including the office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

In his speech, Rouhani decried the new U.S. sanctions, saying the White House has been thrown into confusion as its officials are making "inappropriate and ridiculous" comments and adopting the policy of disgrace.

The president also highlighted Iran's success in shooting down an intruding U.S. spy drone, saying the aircraft was brought down by a homegrown air defense system after it violated Iranian airspace and ignored warnings.

"This indicates our power and defensiveness," he asserted.

"We do not want war and conflict in the region, but at the same time, we won't let our country be invaded," Rouhani added.

Mogherini says INSTEX ready to be operational

By staff and agency

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said on Tuesday that INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran, is now ready to be operational.

"You will probably hear more from us in the coming days but, as you know, we have been working a lot with our member states to put in place these mechanisms that allow legitimate trade with Iran to continue. I believe that this is now ready to be operational and I hope that this is something that can help to keep Iran compliant with the agreement, as it has been so far and as we all want to see this continue to be the case," Mogherini said during a joint press conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Brussels.

According to the official website of the European Union, she added, "As I already had the opportunity to say before, the deal has, in itself, mechanisms and steps that can be taken in case of non-compliance with the agreement. But the focus we keep today and we will still keep even more so in these days that are probably the most difficult ones for the agreement, is to keep the agreement in place and to keep full compliance with the agreement."

On January 31, France, Germany and Britain, the three European parties to the JCPOA, announced the creation of INSTEX.



INSTEX was announced nearly nine months after the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

The U.S. exited the deal on May 8, 2018. Even since its introduction on January 31, it has not become operational yet.

On March 20, Iran's central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced that a mechanism similar to INSTEX has been registered in Iran, officially called the Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI).

During a joint press conference with For-

eign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Tehran on June 10, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said, "We make efforts to make it possible to have economic cooperation with Iran. A financial mechanism called INSTEX has been devised in this respect."

Kamal Kharrazi, chief of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said on Sunday that the Europeans should dedicate more resources to INSTEX and facilitate Iran-Europe interaction.

"We should see if Europe just gives promises or takes practical actions in the

remaining time," Kharrazi told reporters after a meeting with British Minister of State for the Middle East Andrew Murrison.

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the nuclear pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions' effects. The deadline ends on July 7.

Kharrazi also said Iran is serious about decisions related to the 2015 nuclear deal and will take new steps after the 60-day deadline.

In line with Tehran's decision to scale back its commitments under the nuclear deal in protest to reimposition of sanctions, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced on June 17 that Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium will exceed 300 kilograms by June 27.

After June 27, Kamalvandi said, Iran will speed up its uranium enrichment activities beyond 3.67 percent if the other sides don't take a practical step.

"After surpassing 300 kilogram, we will increase the speed of producing enriched uranium above 3.67 percent," Kamalvandi stated.

Iran has insisted it will reverse its decision if it is shielded from sanctions.

The 60-day deadline will end on July 7.

Iraqi president: Sanctions will not change Iran's policy

Salih says Iraq will never let U.S. use its soil to attack Iran

1 → "We in Iraq have suffered from sanctions in the 1990s, and the devastation that has afflicted Iraqi society has been really enduring, even to date," he said.

Tensions between the U.S. and Iran are running high. After the downing of an American spy drone last week, U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday warned that an attack on "anything American will be met with great

and overwhelming force."

President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday

the U.S. ruling authorities are baffled and wondering why none of the measures they

adopt against Iran bears fruit.

The fact is that after each such U.S. move, the Iranian nation becomes livelier, stronger, and gains further morale to push on in various arenas, Rouhani said after Washington announced a new round of sanctions on the Islamic Republic's top officials.

Rouhani also said the White House in is a state of mental retardation.

There is a "fundamental question" about whether sanctions could induce a country to change policy, the Iraqi president says of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

What shooting down a \$110m U.S. drone tells us about Iran

By Nick Paton Walsh

(CNN) — Once the dust cleared, it turned out that one of the enduring lessons from the past week occurred at about 22,000 feet.

The Iranian downing of an RQ-4A Global Hawk on Thursday is thought to have been the first time one of the Pentagon's surveillance workhorses has been shot out of the sky. Aside from the fact the incident nearly risked taking the United States and Iran to war for a few hours, it was also stark evidence of an escalation in Tehran's military capabilities.

"They work," said Jeremy Binnie, Middle East and North Africa editor at Jane's Defence Weekly, of Iran's air defenses. The incident "highlights that when the Iranians really make investment, it can really count," he told CNN.

"We knew that with ballistic missiles, but it appears the case with air defenses too."

The RQ-4A isn't a clay pigeon. At \$110 million each, the Global Hawk needs three people to remotely pilot it and its sensors. Wider in wingspan than a Boeing 737, it has a Rolls Royce engine moving it along at around 500 miles per hour as it hovers up signals and images normally at 65,000 feet to keep out of the way of surface-to-air missiles. Even if they get too close, it has a radar-warning receiver, a jamming system and releases a decoy, towed behind it.

But its destruction is a sign of Iran's quiet focus. Binnie pointed out the size of the aircraft makes it "not a tough target in that respect", he said. "A few years ago this would have been a surprise, but now their new air defense gear looks a lot more impressive."

While America's military is by no means threatened in the long term by Iran, instances like the downing of the drone show that Tehran can sometimes have an outsized effect with narrowly-focused efforts, and is an adversary certainly capable of keeping its opponents off balance. The



U.S. would win any conventional conflict in the short term, but should be wary that Iranian ingenuity will stop any conflict from being a "cakewalk."

Despite the dispute over precisely where it happened, there's no doubt the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps managed to destroy one at 4:05 a.m. on June 19. The U.S. military has released video to support its claim that it happened 34 kilometers from the nearest Iranian land mass, and showed a flight path that suggests the spy drone never entered Iranian territory. Conversely, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tweeted coordinates for the attack that put it well inside Iranian territory -- near the city of Kouh-e Mobarak.

The IRGC said it used a "3rd of Khordad" surface-to-air missile system, images of which have been circulating now on social media as a symbol of Iranian prowess against the staggering unmanned technology the Americans unleash in the stratosphere every day.

The Khordad 3 was first unveiled in 2014, has a range of up to 75 kilometers, and can hit as far up as 30 kilometers, Iranian state-backed media has said. Janes concluded

the strike was likely from a mobile vehicle, given the U.S. contention the missile was launched from 70 kilometers away, and there is no Iranian facility matching that location. In short: Tehran took out a U.S. spy drone from the back of a fancy truck.

While the U.S. has massively improved its drone fleet since the Global Hawk first came to the Navy 13 years ago, with the MQ-4C Triton about to join service, Iran also has more advanced missiles than the one that took down the drone last week.

Ten days before the incident, Iran unveiled an upgrade which has nearly double the range and is also homegrown -- the product of a series of reverse-engineering feats and technology purloined over the years by the sanctions-strapped country.

Binnie said the Iranians had either bought or developed radar technology that had helped them improve targeting at a distance. "We do not really understand how these guidance systems are working," he said.

Binnie added that the angle of attack of the missile seemed to suggest it had approached the drone from the west, rather than chasing it from behind, suggesting it may have been relatively efficiently guided towards the drone by its launcher.

This isn't the first time Iran has hit U.S. technology. It took down a RQ-170 stealth drone in 2011 and reportedly reverse-engineered it to create its own variants from the wreckage.

There didn't appear to be much left of the RQ-4A to pore over, but the interception at 22,000 feet belies a nation, in the words of President Trump, "going through hell."

It was just one very expensive pilotless drone, but its downing nearly took the U.S. to war in the region yet again, exposing just how important these flashes of the unexpected are.

New U.S. sanctions are only a show, Jannati says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, head of the Assembly of Experts and the Guardian Council, said on Wednesday the new U.S. sanctions targeting top Iranian authorities are merely a spectacle.

"The sanctions are merely a spectacle and will not have an impact on the determination of the [Iranian] people and authorities in their path toward Iran's progress and dignity," Jannati said, according to ISNA.

"The Islamic Republic has stood up to U.S. bullying for 40 years and will continue this path fervently," he stated, adding, "That's why the ignorant U.S. president imposes new sanctions every day."

The veteran official also voiced his surprise at certain European countries that keep silent against the "ignorant measures of Trump, while they should stand up to him and follow an independent policy."

On Monday, U.S. President Donald Trump announced new sanctions against top Iranian officials, including the office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

The U.S. had already blacklisted the entire IRGC. Trump said that the sanctions were in part a response to the shooting down of a U.S. drone on Thursday, but would have happened anyway.



MP Saffari Natanzi dies of pancreatic disease

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Morteza Saffari Natanzi, a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, passed away on Wednesday morning after a period of severe illness, Mehr reported.



According to his brother, Mojtaba Saffari Natanzi, died of a pancreatic disease in Nikan hospital in Tehran. Saffari Natanzi represented the people of Natanz and Badroud in the parliament. He had a PhD in economy.

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani offered condolences over Saffari Natanzi's demise to the people of Natanz as well as his family and friends.

In his letter, Larijani described Saffari Natanzi as a diligent and capable lawmaker.

Drone downing had a message for regional states: MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, says the shooting down of a U.S. spy drone by the Islamic Republic carried a "very good message" to regional countries.

Boroujerdi said on Wednesday that regional countries should note the significance of relying on their own capabilities and power, the Mehr news agency reported.

"Six years ago, our armed forces managed to bring down a U.S. RQ7 drone safely to the ground and reverse engineer it. Today, they once again showed off their power to the U.S. by downing their super-advanced drone," he maintained.

"The U.S. needs to know that Iran is not like any other country in the region, and it will never be able to overcome Iran's power, because we have made great advances in attaining new technologies and the U.S. cannot violate our territories even with its super modern drones," the senior MP added.

In a statement issued last Thursday, the IRGC said the U.S.-made Global Hawk surveillance drone was brought down by its Air Force near the Kouh-e Mobarak region — which sits in the central district of Jask County — after the aircraft violated Iranian airspace.

According to the statement, the Global Hawk had flown from one of the American bases in the southern parts of the Persian Gulf region at 00:14 a.m. local time, with its identification transponders off in breach of all international aviation rules.

It also went on to say that the drone had stealthily continued on the route from the Strait of Hormuz towards Iran's port city of Chabahar.

While returning towards west of the Strait of Hormuz, the drone violated Iran's territorial airspace and began gathering intelligence and spying, the statement said.

The RQ-4A drone had been targeted and shot down by the IRGC at 04: 05 a.m. local time, it added.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	248577.8
IFX	3178.38

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,695 rials
GBP	53,286 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$65.03/b
WTI	\$58.89/b
OPEC Basket	\$65.05/b
Gold	\$1,405.65/oz
Silver	\$15.31/oz
Platinum	\$809.35/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran’s oil exports rising despite U.S. pressures: CBI governor

➔ “Of course, some meetings have been held with the European side to discuss the matter, but we insist that for the mechanism to work there should be actual financial transactions,” he said.



Hemmati further noted that we are not exporting any oil to Europe at the moment and so obviously without INSTEX, there would be no imports as well.

“One solution is for them to buy oil from us, but they say there are facing problems in this regard,” he added.

The governor further mentioned a second solution, saying “The second option is for them to open credit lines for us so that we can purchase goods from them.”

“In any case, if they were willing, launching the INSTEX won’t take even a week,” Hemmati said.

How cryptocurrency can play the role of gold in future

By Seyed Amir Miri

It is better to begin with this point that human society has great potential for evolution, development, invention, and discovery. But the important issue is the synchronization of human society and the adaptation of viewpoints with these changes.

In this era, real-life concepts and themes are becoming a series of contracts between humans. This means that many of the subjects and issues that were real in the past have now changed to unrealistic subjects. For example, in the past, we called two people friends who met each other, shook hands and talked directly. But today, friendship is not limited to eye-to-eye contact. Now you can be friend with someone else through the net, without the need to see each other.

In the case of economy, this is true as well. Many economic experts are expecting, with the growth of the world economy and the growth and frequency of goods and products, the money will lose its value and concept in the near future.

Let’s think that if everyone has a 3Dprinter at his home that makes anything that will happen to all companies. Or with another device, with the ability to convert air into iron by changing molecules and atoms at the same time, then what will happen to concepts of money and purchasing? Do you think money would exist at that time?

Maybe YES. Travel to space and live on other planets could increase our need to have money but in another form and concept. Human society was made based on exchanges. If we look at human history, we realize that peoples always used their precious things for exchange.

The early men and women exchanged their sheep and cows. Over the centuries, people used jewels as money for trade until a smart person introduced gold as a valuable material with unique properties as a currency and the rest of the people accepted gold as money. Gold has special properties and a lot of uses. It does not stain and it is scarce. For thousands of years, gold was used as money in all exchanges. By 1971, the United States had completed the gold reign. From that day, we are in a dark time that would not use anything valuable in our exchanges. We only follow the illusions of governments of countries with a large economy to value our money. But maybe cryptocurrencies could change this equation.

Let’s think that we go to space in the near future. What can be important to us in space? In fact, energy is the most important thing. Humans need energy to survive. And if we want to live in space we need the energy to move to the unknown place or convert the ice on Mars and other planets to water. So, the most expensive thing in space is the energy that we bring from the Earth.

Although we will have endless gold silver or copper in other planets, we need the energy to extract them and convert them to our own needs. If cryptocurrency and a digital number have the ability to save and carry energy we could use them as money. The value of these cryptocurrencies depends on the energy used to produce them. If we can turn these cryptocurrencies back to energy whenever we want, they can play the role of gold for about 1000 years.

Tehran, Islamabad stress expansion of trade ties

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani met with Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Riffat Masood on Wednesday in Tehran to discuss expansion of trade ties.

In the meeting, Rahmani mentioned Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit to Iran in late April, saying “During the prime minister’s visit the two sides called for exploiting business and economic opportunities.”

Rahmani furthered offered establishing and activating border markets and identification and resolution of the problems that the two sides’ traders are facing, as some ways of increasing trade between the two countries.

“Soon I’ll have a visit to Pakistan to follow up on the agreements reached during Imran Khan’s visit to Tehran,” Rahmani said.

“Considering the two sides’ willingness for achieving constructive business cooperation, it is expected that this goal is going to be achieved



Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani (R) and Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Riffat Masood met in Tehran

Free zones’ export, import problems discussed in a meeting

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Barriers and problems related to the process of exports from Iran’s free trade zones and imports from them were investigated in a meeting attended by Morteza Bank, the secretary of Free Zones High Council, and Reza Rahmani, the minister of industry, mining and trade, on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Bank put the value of exports from free zones at \$18.5 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), IRNA reported.

The official also put the value of foreign investment at these zones at \$650 million in the past year, falling 30 percent from \$1 billion in its preceding year, due to the sanction condition.

Bank further mentioned imports of the raw materials and machinery as one of the major issues to be discussed in terms of the free zones.

He named the problems that the enterprises are facing regarding supply of foreign currency and order registration as the other important issue to be discussed and solved.

In an interview recently conducted by IRIB, Akbar Eftekhari, the deputy secretary of Free Zones High Council for production, exports and technology affairs, put the value of commodities produced in the free zones at \$28 billion in the past year.

The official said that about 500,000 people are working in 1,700 production units in the country’s free zones.



Morteza Bank (R), the secretary of Free Zones High Council, and Reza Rahmani (speaking), the minister of industry, mining and trade

There are seven free trade zones and 25 special economic zones in Iran, according to Eftekhari.

And as previously announced by Morteza Bank, 2600 industrial, service and tourism units are operational in Iran’s free trade zones.

The official said 1.3 quadrillion rials (over \$30.95 billion) of investment have been made in these zones over the past five years.

Free zones play some significant role in development of the country, Bank noted.

Establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back

ICCIMA holds meeting with Iranian commercial attachés

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted a seminar in collaboration with the foreign ministry to acquaint the country’s commercial attachés with ICCIMA plans and policies, the portal of ICCIMA reported.

As reported, some 40 attachés based in different countries and regions including Asia-Pacific region, Europe, North and South America, as well as Arab and African

countries, attended the seminar which was held at ICCIMA building in Tehran.

In the meeting, ICCIMA deputy head for international affairs Mohammad-Reza Karbasi introduced some of ICCIMA’s approaches and policies, emphasizing that increasing interactions with the foreign ministry and representative offices of the Islamic Republic of Iran outside the country are among ICCIMA’s most important international strategies.

The official further stressed the need for direct communication between the private sector and embassies, saying “The private sector expects embassies to identify and resolve the needs and problems of the country’s private sector representatives and help them find specific solutions in current circumstances [the U.S. sanctions].”

Finding solutions for transferring money; presence of private sector representatives in joint economic committee meetings, especially

with exports target countries; communicating information regarding the destination markets; updating the country’s foreign trade information; helping traders finding trusted business partners as well as introducing the latest changes in the international economic laws, including tax laws, customs, and transportation in the target countries, were some of the issues that ICCIMA representatives offered to be done in collaboration with the foreign ministry.

Sobering reality renews for China’s economy in the second quarter

By Rahul Vaidyanath

The first-quarter high for the Chinese economy — fuelled by borrowing — has worn thin into the second quarter. China Beige Book (CBB) says the Chinese economy improved in the second quarter “albeit modestly and unsustainably.”

The CBB research service conducted over 4,000 interviews with firms and bankers on the ground in China to prepare its second-quarter preview. Over the last three quarters, CBB data has bested Beijing’s official data in revealing the true picture of the Chinese economy as it struggles in the trade war with the United States. Official purchasing managers’ index (PMI) readings initially clashed with CBB’s numbers but then fell into line with them.

The narrative remains that there’s a pernicious side to every positive economic development in China. While manufacturing and retail carried the economy in the second quarter, inventories rose at a record pace, shadow banking (non-traditional lending) skyrocketed, and the gigantic service sector

languished.

■ Funneling credits to banks

Shehzad Qazi, managing director of CBB International, expects another round of central bank stimulus if the economy weakens prior to the 70th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China.

“Current trends suggest Beijing will continue relying on various state-backed shadow lenders to help funnel credit to firms,” Qazi said.

Debt continues to mount, but the problem is not just its volume. It’s the growth of shadow lending, the diminishing utility of borrowing, and some of its purposes.

“Firms reported the highest share of shadow borrowing (45 percent) as a share of overall borrowing in survey history,” according to CBB. State-owned non-banks are a major source of this shadow funding — coming at rates 6 percent higher than traditional bank loans on average.

Compared with 2016, borrowing is not spearheading a massive property and commodities rally. Now in 2019, with sky-high shadow lending, CBB’s leading indicators of

capex and starts suggest a property slowdown may be coming, says Qazi.

He also added that in certain cases the borrowing is not necessarily funneling productive activities.

Copper and aluminum companies, with their ballooning inventories due to a deceleration in construction, are having to borrow to pay vendors since they are not getting paid by clients.

The borrowing of manufacturing firms appears to be to cushion further hits from the trade war. Manufacturing capex barely budged.

■ The faltering service sector

Among the many worries Chinese policymakers face is the faltering service sector. As economies mature, the service sector tends to grow. With a growing middle-class population, households’ discretionary spending on services increases.

For the service sector, the PMI showed the slowest expansion in May since February. Borrowing hit a 6-year high, but the sector still reported slower growth. Revenue, profits, capex, and volumes all fell

from a year ago.

Qazi says CBB isn’t seeing problems with consumer spending or confidence right now, as retailers reported higher sales volumes despite rising prices. But the accumulation of inventories (oversupply challenges) could become problematic if sales price inflation — the “main event of Q2” — begins denting consumer demand in the near future.

For the time being, firms are gaining at the expense of consumers but are set up for a fall due to excess supply.

With the easing of trade tensions at the start of 2019, the yuan strengthened into the 6.70 neighborhood. But with China disappointing the Trump administration at the negotiating table and with the renewal of tariffs, it weakened to above 6.90. The currency’s weakness was accompanied by a 13 percent plunge in the Shanghai Composite from April 19 to May 9.

All eyes are on the G-20 meeting in Japan for the next chapter in the U.S.-China trade relationship and the fate of the Chinese economy. (Source: theepochtimes.com)

German GfK consumer morale edges down heading into July

German consumer morale fell heading into July as the slowdown weighing on Europe’s largest economy darkened income expectations among shoppers, a survey showed on Wednesday.

According to euronews.com, the GfK consumer sentiment indicator, based on a survey of about 2,000 Germans, fell for the second time in a row to 9.8 from 10.1 a month earlier. Economists polled by Reuters had expected a reading of 10.0.

Household spending has become a key source of growth in Europe’s biggest economy as record-high employment, above-inflation pay hikes and low borrowing costs boost domestic demand.

The economy has been facing headwinds from trade conflicts, Brexit uncertainties and a cooling world economy, which are hurting Germany’s export-oriented manufacturers.

There are fears the slowdown in manufacturing could spill



into the services sector and dent the robust labor market.

The GfK survey showed that consumer confidence has

been shaken, mainly as a result of concerns that German carmakers, which are grappling with trade frictions and a shift toward electric vehicles, could cut thousands of jobs.

“So far, the income indicator has been able to benefit from the excellent development of the job market in Germany. But now the voices heralding the end of the employment boom are growing,” said Rolf Buerkl, a researcher for GfK.

A sub-index measuring income expectations fell to its lowest level since March 2017.

Still, consumers’ propensity to spend rose as shoppers seemed unperturbed by growing doubts about job security.

“Whether this will remain the case depends heavily on how income prospects develop in the coming months,” GfK said. “If the significant loss suffered by this indicator in June turns into a persistent downward trend, it will also be tough for propensity to buy to maintain its currently excellent level.”

Iranian consortium inks MOU with NIOC to develop oilfield

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has signed a memorandum of understanding with a domestic consortium for developing Band-e-Karkheh oilfield in southwestern Khuzestan Province.

According to Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), Alireza Zamani, the head of the field's development project, the required technical documentation is presented by the four Iranian companies which comprise the consortium and members of the joint technical committee are also introduced.

"Consortium representatives also visited the site," Zamani said.

In late April, NIOC announced that the company is planning to award five oil exploration and development projects to domestic companies.

Earlier in February, for the first time, NIOC signed a memorandum of understanding with an Iranian company called TENCO for geological and geophysical studies at Toudej, located in southern Fars Province.

In a press conference in December, Saleh Hendi, the exploration director of NIOC, said: "Plans are underway to award exploration projects to domestic companies now that the



U.S. is putting pressure on foreign companies to operate in Iran".

Also, speaking in the 3rd Iran International Exploration and Production Congress and Exhibition (Iran E&P 2019) held in Tehran on February 23, Hendi noted that like the mining sector in which mines are being de-

veloped by the private sector, NIOC should also award oil and gas fields development projects to capable private companies.

"Iran has huge resources of shale oil, shale gas and gas hydrates which have not yet been developed; exploration and development of these resources should be awarded to the

private sector," the official said.

"The private sector can well handle a significant part of the government's responsibilities in the oil industry," he said, adding that this could be initiated with small projects and small fields, and then move to bigger projects.

The budget bill for the current Iranian calendar year 1398, which began on March 21, 2019, indicates that the budget allocated to the development projects is not expected to see a noticeable rise in this year, and it is while there are over 80,000 semi-finished development projects in the country; so the government has invited the private sector to contribute to finishing them.

In this due, oil and gas sector as the main source of income for the country welcomes private sector's presence in its projects, both in exploration and in development.

In development sector, as there are many exploration blocks waiting for implementation of projects, NIOC is seriously following up the plans to lay the ground for the private sector's contribution.

As Hendi has announced, some 250 oil fields have been recently discovered throughout the country, while 120 fields have been developed, and there are 130 discovered gas fields, of them 100 fields have been developed.

China receives first Iranian oil cargo post waivers

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – China's Jinxi Refining and Chemical Complex has received a one-million-barrel cargo of Iranian oil in the first month after the Trump administration ended waivers permitting imports of Iranian oil, Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

A medium-sized Suezmax vessel owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) departed from Iran's Kharg Island terminal on May 24.

The vessel called SALINA loaded approximately one million barrels of Iranian oil.

SALINA arrived at the Jinxi Refinery, located near the Port of Jinzhou, near Beijing, on June 20.

Notably, Jinxi is owned and operated by PetroChina, which is affiliated to China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), a long-time buyer of Iranian oil and the parent company of Bank of Kunlun, the financial institution that has been at the heart of China-Iran trade for the last decade.

SALINA's journey serves to confirm earlier reports that China had resumed purchasing Iranian petroleum products,



including crude oil and liquid petroleum gas, despite the fact that such purchases would run afoul of U.S. sanctions. Several other tankers are expected to arrive in China in the coming weeks.

Since April when the United States announced that buyers

of Iranian oil should stop purchases by May 1 or face sanctions, China has been constantly opposing Washington's policies toward Iran and Chinese officials have repeatedly announced that they will continue purchasing oil from Iran.

In early May, Chinese Commerce Ministry announced the country's opposition to unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran, saying that cutting Iranian oil supplies will only worsen volatility in global energy markets.

In late May, Reuters reported that Iran delivered 130,000 of fuel oil to China despite the U.S. sanctions.

Later this month Bloomberg informed that China is still importing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Iran after the U.S. imposed sanctions on the country's oil industry.

According to ship tracking data, the Paris-based energy researcher Kpler SAS estimated that at least five supertankers loaded Iranian LPG in May and June heading for China.

China is Iran's largest oil customer with imports of 475,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the first quarter of this year, according to Chinese customs data.

EU delegation visiting Iran to explore co-op in water management

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – The European Union has started cooperating with Iran for managing the country's water resources, a senior adviser to Iran's Energy Ministry announced.

According to Farhad Yazdandoust, in this regard a delegation of experts from EU has arrived in Iran and several meetings have been held for exploring the issue, the portal of Iranian Energy Ministry reported on Wednesday.

"Representatives of the European Union active in water sectors, diplomats from the German, Finland, and Austrian embassies, as well as water officials from the Ministry of Energy and the Iranian Department of Environment along with authorities from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in these meetings,"

Yazdandoust said.

"In the course of this meetings, the priorities and challenges facing the country's water resources management were discussed with the European side", he added.

The official noted that the EU delegation has started its two-week visit to Iran two days ago aiming to explore ways of mutual cooperation and to discuss various approaches for allocating EU contributions to Iran's water projects.

"The European Union expert body is going to attend several more specialized meetings in the coming days. And they are scheduled to visit Shiraz accompanied by officials and experts from the energy ministry's water department," he said.

As reported, in the end of the visit, a closing meeting will



be held with all officials in the water sector in attendance, to discuss future agreements with the European Union.

Oil prices jump as U.S. crude stocks fall, Middle East worries add support

Oil prices rose more than 1% on Wednesday to their highest in nearly a month as industry data showed U.S. crude stockpiles fell more than expected, underpinning a market already buoyed by worries over a potential U.S.-Iran conflict.

As per cnbc.com, front-month Brent crude

futures, international benchmark for oil, were up 1.3% at \$65.91 by 0341 GMT. They earlier touched their highest since May 31 at \$66 a barrel.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$58.98 per barrel, up 1.8% from their last settlement. WTI earlier hit

its strongest level since May 30 at \$59.03 a barrel.

Analysts said the gains were mainly driven by American Petroleum Institute (API) data showing a fall in U.S. crude inventories.

U.S. crude stockpiles fell by 7.5 million barrels in the week ended June 21 to 474.5

million, compared with analyst expectations for a decline of 2.5 million barrels, the data showed. Crude stocks at U.S. delivery hub Cushing, Oklahoma, fell by 1.3 million barrels.

"Oil prices went ballistic after the API report," said Stephen Innes, a managing partner at Vanguard Markets.

China's risky move to boost domestic oil production

By Vanand Meliksetian

China's unprecedented economic development since Deng Xiaoping's "Open Door Policy", has transformed the Asian country into the second-largest economy of the world. The booming economy has had the undesired side-effect of increasing Beijing's dependence on foreign oil imports.

Twenty-five years ago, China produced approximately 4 million barrels per day (mb/d), which was enough to satisfy the Asian country's domestic demand for petroleum products. In April, on average, 10.64 mb/d were imported, which is a new record. In 2018, the ratio of foreign oil dependency reached 70 percent and this number is expected to grow.

It is a reason for concern, as oil is a crucial product for maintaining stability and security. Beijing is aware of its relative weakness because most of the imported oil reaches mainland China through shipping lanes, which are controlled by the U.S. Navy.

The relative weakness of the Chinese navy increases the risks and exemplifies the security threat in case of a blockade. Therefore, Beijing has been pushing domestic energy companies to increase production from local oil fields.

In the next five years China's 'big three', PetroChina, Cnooc, and Sinopec, aim to increase spending by 517 billion yuan or \$77 billion, which is a growth of 18 percent compared to last year. In contrast to Western firms, the Chinese state-owned energy giants are investing in oil fields that are mature and require high-costs to raise production. These assets need an increase in investment between 13 and 27 percent to reach their goals.

■ The oil fields

Pouring money into oil fields with low productivity has



become a concern for private investors who are skeptical about the future ability of Chinese energy companies to pay a dividend. Although the firms are state-owned, they are also listed on both Chinese and U.S. stock exchanges.

As the potential rates of return of the concerning oil fields are relatively low for international standards, the value of the shares has dropped significantly.

The reliance on foreign oil producers has become especially worrying for Beijing due to the escalating trade war with the U.S. and President Xi has now directly called on Chinese energy companies to increase domestic production. According to a researcher at the China National Petroleum Corp., the parent company of PetroChina, the additional spending will only increase production to 200 million tons by 2022, which is not a significant gain.

According to analyst Neil Beveridge from Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. "there is no question that those companies are under much pressure to grow production quickly. There will be a concern that in our low commodity price environment, this could erode returns and shareholders will want to see discipline."

The Chinese energy firms are taking a significant risk

by increasing production at oil fields with low productivity compared to top-tier assets. However, it also underlines Beijing's attention to decrease dependence on foreign producers. In this context, oil is not only a vital source of energy but also a strategic asset.

■ Chinese energy giants

Chinese energy giants have also been trying to replicate the American shale boom. However, they are facing significant challenges as the shale formations in China differ from the ones in the U.S. because the oil and gas deposits are located much deeper in the Earth's crust and are less concentrated which makes extraction more difficult and expensive. Add to this that Western companies are reluctant to share their technological know-how due to intellectual property rights issues.

Besides oil, China is also growing increasingly dependent on foreign natural gas. Beijing's push to combat air pollution through the so-called coal-to-gas policy has significantly increased the consumption of gas.

In 2017 natural gas made up around 7 percent of China's total energy mix. The government intends to increase that number to around 15 percent in 2030. It could make China the world's largest importer of LNG with approximately a quarter of the entire global production of 500 million tons.

Beijing doesn't look keen to become overdependent on foreign producers for crucial resources to power the economy and security apparatus. Especially the current standoff with the U.S. and heightened tensions are a reason for concern.

Therefore, the government is pushing its energy giants to increase domestic production despite the high costs and low productivity.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Asia's thermal coal trade faces threats, with LNG the silent assassin: Russell

By Clyde Russell

Everywhere Asia's coal industry looks it sees headwinds, from the current slump in prices induced largely by oversupply, to the lack of financing available for new projects, to the risk of restrictive regulations and the rise of cleaner energies.

But perhaps the biggest risk in most of Asia, home to the world's top four importers and two biggest exporters, is from liquefied natural gas (LNG), the super-chilled fuel that is expanding rapidly versus a largely moribund coal sector.



Perhaps the surprising thing at this year's Coaltrans Asia event, held this week on the Indonesian resort island of Bali, was that most of the delegates didn't seem too concerned about LNG, or rising pipeline supplies of natural gas from central Asia and Russia to China.

There was plentiful focus on renewables and whether coal still had a long-term role to play in growing the region's power generation, or whether wind and solar would eat their lunch.

But when it came to LNG, the general view was that the super-chilled fuel will be too expensive to be viable in countries that are planning to expand electricity generation through power plants that will run on imported commodities.

■ LNG over coal

While this may currently be the case, the trends already underway would seem to be swinging the pendulum in favor of LNG over coal, even for power generation in Asia.

Consider the following case. You are in a country like Vietnam or Thailand and you plan to build a thermal power plant with about 500 megawatts of capacity and you have to decide whether it will run on imported coal or LNG.

While coal is currently more cost-effective, this is a 40-year asset so an investor will have to take a long-term view.

Most of these power plants would look mainly at running on Indonesian coal, given the closer location and generally cheaper prices than for thermal coal from Australia, South Africa or even further afield such as the United States and Russia.

But the Indonesian government also plans to build some 20 gigawatts of coal-fired power in the coming 15 years, and is increasingly forcing domestic miners to set aside more of their output for the local market.

Not only does this lower the amount of coal Indonesia will be able to export, it's also possible that Indonesia's total production will slip in coming years, as coal miners struggle for revenue since selling domestically isn't as lucrative as exporting.

It's also becoming harder to develop new mines in Indonesia given ongoing regulatory uncertainty over mining licenses and increased environmental and land acquisition costs.

One senior executive at a major Indonesian miner attending the Coaltrans event said that financing is becoming "very difficult," with banks reluctant to lend to the industry.

Australia, the world's second-biggest coal exporter behind Indonesia, is also becoming a harder place for coal miners to do business, notwithstanding the surprise re-election of the coal-friendly Liberal-National coalition in last month's federal election.

The struggles of India's Adani Enterprises to get its Carmichael mine in Queensland State approved and built is a case in point.

While Adani has secured all the necessary environmental approvals, it has yet to obtain any outside financial backing and will have to use its own capital if it does build the mine, capable of producing 8 to 10 million tons per year.

■ Thermal coal mines

Even if Adani does finally export coal, its torturous experience has likely put off other would-be developers of greenfield thermal coal mines in Australia, meaning that over time it's likely that exports will gradually trend lower as existing mines become exhausted.

The third major supplier of coal to Asia is South Africa, and it's unlikely that it will boost exports in coming years, mainly due to capacity constraints in its rail system, but also because it also has increasing domestic demand that the government will prioritize.

While Russia and the United States can certainly add more tons to Asia's thermal coal market, the question for power plant developers is whether they want to rely on these supplies.

In contrast, LNG supply looks to be expanding rapidly in the coming decade, as oil and gas majors across to globe rush to bring projects to final investment decisions.

Recently, new projects have been sanctioned in Mozambique, the United States, Canada and there are many more on the verge.

It's quite possible that the global LNG market could double within the next decade, while the seaborne thermal coal market thinks a fabulous outcome would be to remain static, and most players expect a gradual decline from the mid-2020s onwards.

A 40-year generation asset needs certainty above all else, and it appears that LNG may be the safer bet in Asia.

Throw in the risk of increased global action against carbon emissions as parts of efforts to mitigate climate change, and the risks start to rise further for coal.

LNG also has the advantage of being a more flexible fuel for Asia, given countries use it in different ways, with more industrialized nations such as Japan and South Korea focusing on power generation, China on industry and replacing coal-fired heating, while in other countries it has been gaining traction as household energy and in transport.

(Source: reuters.com)

Unilateralism will be supported by few

PEOPLE'S DAILY — The U.S. has received broad objection from the international community during the past year as it widely instigated trade frictions regardless of international rules.

However, the extreme pressures exerted by Washington intimidated no country. On the contrary, the largest victim of the US unilateralism and trade protectionism ended up to be the rule-based multilateral trading system.

It is especially true as the 14th Group of 20 (G20) summit in Osaka, Japan is around the corner. More than any other issue, the US attitude toward trade has placed stress on the forum, conflicting with the group's traditional commitment to an international trading order underpinned by low tariffs and the WTO, said an article published on the website of the US think tank Council on Foreign Relations.



According to the article, since 2018, the US administration has enacted or threatened higher tariffs on Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Turkey, and the EU, G20 members that together account for over half of the world's economy.

Behind the big stick of US tariffs is the rising unilateralism in the country's foreign policies. Compared with its usual acts to impede the reform of global governance within the multilateral system, the US went further retrograde. It frequently withdrew from international organizations, arbitrarily broke the rules and smashed the global governance system.

When dealing with diplomatic issues, some politicians in Washington screamed that the US is making the strongest military in the history of the world stronger still, which means everybody has to make room for America.

Every policy presents a tradeoff, said Former US Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew and Columbia University scholar Richard Nephew in an article published on Foreign Affairs. Yet US officials seem to have adopted the belief that the United States is so large and powerful that the laws of economic and political gravity no longer apply to it, they added.

The world is not a wrestling pit where muscles and power rule. Zero-sum mentality and unilateralism will be supported by few, let alone dominating. Some US politicians have blindly resorted to extreme egoism, trampled on rules and undermined global governance system, and such arbitrary acts have been widely condemned by the international community, which suggests that unilateral thinking is far lagged behind by the trend of time. Falling from the moral high ground of global governance, the US is no longer the arrogant "City upon a Hill".

The international system's demand for rules is not decreasing, but constantly growing. At present, the world is facing constant ups and downs of global hotspot issues, as well as non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, cyber security and refugee crisis. In addition, unilateralism and protectionism are also on a rise. No country is able to solve all these problems independently. Joint efforts within mechanisms are indispensable for each country to effectively cope with challenges.

Moreover, living in the same global village, one might have his beard burnt by blowing out the lamp of others. The impacts placed on the globe by US unilateral policies have no doubt reinforced such perception.

Global countries share broad consensus regarding to what kind of an international rule system should be built. In the 21st century, to uphold a vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, settle global affairs by the peoples of the world through consultation, and actively advance the democratization of global governance rules is not only a basic request of international justice, but also a necessary demand raised by the changes of the international landscape.

Upholding the multilateral banner of the UN and giving full play to the constructive role of multilateral mechanisms such as the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the G20, will offer institutional support for the operation of the international system and mechanism guarantee for coping with global challenges.

"It is true that we are slowly moving towards a multipolar world, and that is in itself a very positive evolution. But as history tells us, multipolarity alone does not guarantee peace. Europe was multipolar 100 years ago, but the multilateral framework for cooperation and problem-solving was not there, and the result was a catastrophic world war," remarked Secretary-General of the UN António Guterres at the plenary session of the St Petersburg International Economic Forum. What he said is worth pondering.

Two clear logical clues have been revealed by China's reaction to the China-US trade dispute: the country's resolution to safeguard the core national interests and the basic interests of the people, and the commitment to the protection of international rules. The two logical clues reflect dialectical unity that China has a clear demarcation for its own interests and the future of the world. The country deeply knows that a rule-based international system conforms to the trend of time and is also where the fundamental interests of reach country lay.

That is why China has won wide support for its stand. UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond recently described China as a "crucial bilateral partner" with a "vital role" in championing the rules-based multilateral order, saying that the UK will work with China to safeguard the multilateral trade system.

Hammond's remarks are both a resolute denial to some country's request to exert pressure on China, and recognition to China's just position.

"As the world is confronted with grave challenges and when human being is at a crossroad with a choice to make, all the countries need to check out the sense of responsibility and take concrete actions rather than standing on the sideline, and work together to take the fate of human being in our own hands," said

Chinese President Xi Jinping at a global governance forum co-hosted by China and France in March.

Given today's international landscape, if global countries want to take the fate of human being in their own hands, they must stand in a consistent position to oppose unilateralism and protectionism, and further concrete their support and protection for multilateralism.

Trump himself is serious about talking to Iran: Shireen Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that "Trump himself is serious about talking to Iran and his position is not merely a campaign ploy."

"The problem is unless the position of the two countries become closer and they are willing to make compromises talking by itself would not be able to change anything," Hunter says.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Do you think that the maximum pressure campaign on Iran will have an outcome for the Trump government?

A: Of course any policy has an outcome. The question is whether the policy of maximum pressure on Iran will have a positive or negative outcome. So far it seems that this policy has only strengthened Iran's resolve to resist American pressures until Washington changes its behavior. But since it is unlikely that America will change its position faced with Iran's refusal to talk, the outcome of the current standoff might well be a military conflict.

■ It looks as though we are approaching the date of the American presidential election, Trump's willingness is increasing to talk with Iranian authorities. Some believe that this tendency is more for electoral advertising than as his foreign policy



achievement. What is your opinion?

A: Trump himself is serious about talking to Iran and his position is not merely a campaign ploy. The problem is unless the position of the two countries become closer and they are willing to make compromises talking by itself would not be able to change anything.

■ If the maximum pressure against

Iran does not reach the result, would you imagine a change in Trump's warring team, including the expulsion of John Bolton and Mike Pompeo?

A: Trump has been prone to making sudden changes in his advisers. Therefore, he might appoint someone else as Secretary of State or National Security Adviser. However, personnel changes are never enough

to produce fundamental policy change. If Trump decides to change his policy, even Pompeo and Bolton would be forced to implement it.

■ Given that China's trade war with China will have unfavorable effects on the US economy in the coming months and the economy is also the card winner for the trump, how do you assess the results of the US elections in 2020 in the shadow of the continuation of the trade war with China?

A: Trade wars with China but perhaps more importantly with Mexico could have negative repercussions on US economy. The question is the extent to which US economy might deteriorate because of these tensions. If slowdown in economy leads to more unemployment, which currently is very low, then it might affect Trump's electoral chances. But this will not become clear much later in the next year.

■ The poll was recently held by Fox News, Media sponsor Trump, that it show Trump has less votes than five Democrats, including Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden. Given the fact that the poll was held by Fox News, How do you evaluate it? (Of course, there were some differences between Trump and Fox News recently)

A: As a general rule incumbent presidents poll low during the early stages of campaign. What are important are the figures juts before the election around September next year.

Palestinians want to see democracy through Legislative Council elections: Kamel Hawwash

By Damir Nazarov

TEHRAN — Palestine Liberation is a goal that will never be forgotten. Although US and Zionist officials continue to persecute their oppression against the Palestinian people, the Palestinian people will eventually win. In this regard, we have conducted an interview with Kamel Hawwash the Chair of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign:

■ In your opinion, in what ways did the rule of Hamas in Gaza exhausted itself and what are the most necessary changes that need to take place?

A: What is important for Palestinians is unity in the face of American and Israeli attempts to deny them their rights on a permanent basis. Following many attempts at reconciliation and the deteriorating situation, both politically and on the ground, the time has come for Fatah and Hamas to put their significant differences aside and unite in the face of these threats.

■ In your opinion, what is stopping opposition forces inside Fatah from weakening the longstanding dictatorship of Abbas?

A: Palestinians want to see democracy enacted through presidential and Legislative Council elections. They also want to see the Palestinian democratic institutions reformed. This applies

particularly to the Palestine National Council and the PLO, which are badly in need of reform. Both the division and the occupation have made it difficult for free and fair elections to take place.

■ In the future, should we expect new attempts by Israel to attack Hezbollah? And could such a scenario potentially lead to a wider conflict?

A: Israel continues threatens its neighbours and Lebanon is no exception. This also applies to Syria. The US standoff with Iran adds to the tensions, and it is therefore possible for a wider conflict to start if the US attacks Iran.

■ We are witnessing a parade of talks on "normalization of relations" between Israel and the Gulf countries. What makes the leaders of Arabian Peninsula so keen to openly "make friends" with Israel?

A: What Israel and the American Administration have attempted and to a certain extent succeeded in doing is to divert the Gulf States attention from the Arab Israeli conflict to what they sell them as the Iranian threat. They somehow believe that they are in the same ditch as Israel in looking for ways to combat that threat. It appears that this could be at the expense of the Palestinians as they try to push them to accept Trump's 'peace plan' which will negate their rights.



■ You are perhaps aware of such cases when, under pressure from the pro-Israel lobby, UN postponed the publication of reports on companies conducting illegal activities with Israel in the West Bank, spying on BDS activists by the Mossad and the like. Could this indicate that Israel feels its strength and acts more boldly? Or is there some kind of conspiracy against international Palestinian support?

A: There is no doubt that Israel has been emboldened by the Trump Administration to continue with

its illegal policies and practices. It tries to present itself as the victim when it is the aggressor, oppressor and illegal occupier. It has focussed on the BDS movement because it is increasingly effective and it worries about its escalation. It is a legitimate and peaceful means of pressuring a state which operates above the law. It has fought hard to stop the publication of the database but for the sake of justice and to help end the illegal settlement enterprise, the database should be published.

CIA seeking more impunity

By John Kiriakou

The agency is trying to get a pass on crimes even before they're committed and it represents a threat to press freedom.

The CIA has quietly asked the Senate Intelligence Committee to include a provision in its next authorization bill that would vastly expand the definition of a "covert agent" whose identity would be protected from unauthorized disclosure.

The current law, called the Intelligence Identities Protection Act of 1981, defines a covert agent as any intelligence officer who is serving abroad or who has served abroad in a covert capacity in the past five years. The new bill would expand that protection to include all unacknowledged intelligence personnel even if they have never left the United States.

Let me be clear: This measure is not at all about protecting the identities of CIA officers doing their jobs. It is about protecting those CIA employees who have committed crimes against humanity. It's a cover-up. Take it from me. I have first-hand experience with this law.

The Intelligence Identities Protection Act (IIPA) has been used only twice since its passage. It was used to convict Sharon Scranage, a CIA secretary who had had an affair with an intelligence officer in Ghana and had given him the names of all CIA employees in the country and the identities of Ghanaians who were working for the CIA. She was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in a minimum-security prison. My prosecution was the second and it came in retaliation for my blowing the whistle on the CIA's torture program. I never made public the name of any covert operative and I ended up with 23 months.

These two minor prosecutions aside, very few revelations of CIA identities have ever led to court cases. Former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage famously leaked Valerie Plame's name to two syndi-



cated columnists. He was never charged with a crime. Former CIA Director David Petraeus leaked the names of 10 covert CIA operatives to his adulterous girlfriend, apparently in an attempt to impress her, and was never charged. Former CIA Director Leon Panetta revealed the name of the covert SEAL Team member who killed Osama bin Laden. He apologized and was not prosecuted.

Petraeus with his biographer/mistress Paula Broadwell. (Wikimedia Commons)

Implementation of a Joke
The implementation of this law is a joke. The CIA doesn't care when an operative's identity is revealed — unless they don't like the politics of the person making the revelation. If they cared, half of the CIA leadership would be in prison. What they do care about, though, is protecting those employees who commit crimes at the behest of the White House or the CIA leadership.

In 2011, when I was the senior investigator on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a journalist called me to say that he had information that the CIA was placing officers under cover who had been prominent participants in the agency's torture program. I wrote

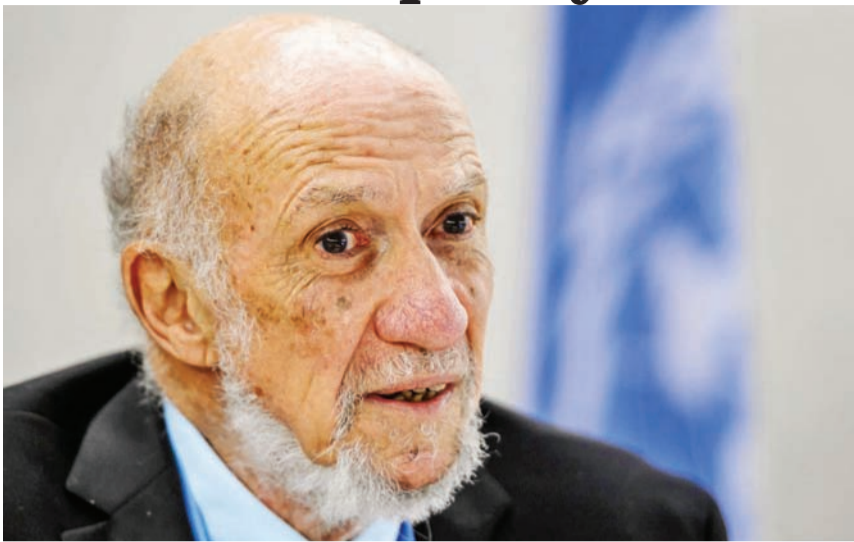
the CIA a letter under John Kerry's signature asking for clarification and saying that placing people under cover solely for the purpose of protecting them from prosecution was a regulatory violation. Six weeks passed before a colleague came into my office and said, "The Agency finally responded to your letter." I told him that I had just checked my mail less than an hour earlier and that I hadn't seen anything. He said that the letter had been classified at the Top Secret level and, at the time, I had only a Secret clearance. I asked what the letter said. His response was quick. "It says to go fuck yourself."

Former Vice President and current Democratic front-runner Joe Biden was one of the senators in 1981 who voted against the IIPA, which he believed was unconstitutional in the first place. Biden said in an op-ed in The Christian Science Monitor in 1982 that, "The language (the IIPA) employs is so broadly drawn that it would subject to prosecution not only the malicious publicizing of agents' names, but also the efforts of legitimate journalists to expose any corruption, malfeasance, or ineptitude occurring in American intelligence agencies." It's nothing more than an attack on a free press.

The CIA doesn't care about a free press, though. The proposed provision in the authorization bill would save the CIA the trouble of having to explain itself to the likes of the media, to members of the congressional oversight committees, or even to the courts. And it raises far more questions than it answers. Why is such a provision necessary in the first place? What exactly is it supposed to protect? What was the precipitating event?

There are, of course, no legitimate answers to those questions. No CIA officers have been exposed. None have been threatened. None have had their lives put in danger by unauthorized disclosures. That's a red herring. This new provision is a power grab. It is an attempt to get a pass on crimes even before they're committed. It's prior restraint. It's un-American and we have to fight it.

Impossible to predict where Trump will go with Iran policy: Falk



➔ At the same time Trump's unpredictability may suggest that a more hopeful future. Trump has indicated a willingness to talk, and has seemed reluctant to initiate wars as distinct from making threats. He was critical of Democrats for the regime-changing wars in the Middle East, especially Iraq, and may believe that a military confrontation with Iran would hurt his reelection prospects in 2020. The American people seem opposed at this time to any kind of military undertaking that risks war with Iran.

■ It looks as though we are approaching the date of the American presidential election, Trump's willingness is increasing to talk with Iranian authorities. Some believe that this tendency is more for electoral advertising than as his foreign policy achievement. What is your opinion?

A: As my prior response suggests, it is always difficult to grasp Trump's political motivations accurately, and he is quite capable of thinking that peace talks with Iran will help his reelection plans one day and think the opposite way the next day. His positions are adopted and abandoned that reflects his calculations of advantage at a particular moment in time.

Trump knows very little about the substantive issues relating to Iran. All he seems to know is that his friends in Tel Aviv and Riyadh dislike Iran and that his nemesis, Obama, reached a normalizing relationship with Iran that he has repudiated.

It is quite likely that if Trump thinks he could achieve a new agreement on Iran's nuclear program that he could promote as his personal diplomatic victory, and claim as a reward for his hard line approach allowing him to proclaim a great political victory. He might believe that such an outcome would bring him victory and a second term in the White House, and he could be right about this.

■ If the maximum pressure against Iran does not reach the result, would you imagine a change in Trump's warring team, including the expulsion of John Bolton and Mike Pompeo?

A: As with the earlier questions, we cannot

confidently predict how Trump will handle high officials in his own government whom he thinks disagree or obstruct his policies. It seems that most often such officials resign or are fired, but not always. Yet if he claims victory with respect to his Iran policies he may not break with Bolton & Pompeo.

We cannot know at this point whether the hard line advocated by Bolton and Pompeo is seeking results by exerting maximum pressure via threat diplomacy or is a prelude to war if Iran does not give in or retaliates in some way. These tanker attacks in the Gulf of Oman can be understood either as a possible effort by the intelligence agencies and Bolton/Pompeo to induce Trump to authorize a 'decisive response' or maybe just an effort to mobilize public opinion in the US and Europe to become more supportive of the current Washington approach based on hostility and provocation. We do know that the evidence increasingly points to false flag operations in these tanker attacks, and thus clearly intended to raise tensions and set the stage for a further escalation of the conflict.

■ Given that China's trade war with China will have unfavorable effects on the

US economy in the coming months and the economy is also the card winner for the Trump. Reelection campaign, how do you assess the results of the US elections in 2020 in the shadow of the continuation of the trade war with China?

A: As far as we now know, the Trump trade policies are producing a trade war with China that will not end soon, but whether its negative effects will alter the 2020 national elections is highly uncertain at this time. As long as the American stock market remains high and the unemployment levels remain low it is not likely to be a major factor as compared to health, immigration, security, and most of all, a test of Trump's degree of popularity with the American voting public.

■ A poll was recently held by Fox News, Media sponsor of Trump, that shows that Trump has less voter support than five Democrats, including Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden. Given the fact that the poll was held by Fox News. How do you evaluate it? (Of course, there were some differences between Trump and Fox News recently)

A: Fox News continues to be mainly supportive of Trump, and this presidential

popularity poll may have been released to energize Trump support groups to work harder, warning of a strong challenge from a candidate of the Democratic Party.

There is a broad American consensus that China had been acting unfairly in international trade, which justified some efforts to resurface the playing field in relation to trade and intellectual property rights, but among economists there seems wide agreement that raising tariffs on Chinese imports are not an effective tool for reaching this goal, but are counterproductive to the extent that they drag down the world economy, and end up hurting the United States. As your question suggests over time a trade war will produce a downturn in the American economy that then drags down the world economy.

These early polls are not reliable. I do not expect that either Sanders or Biden to end up as the choice of the Democratic Party to oppose Trump in 2020. I believe Biden will be seen as too weak a candidate that would self-destruct if facing Trump, while Sanders is seen as too divisive, old, and narrow in his focus. What is true is that Trump remains a historically unpopular president, and is definitely vulnerable to defeat if the Democratic Party puts forward a candidate that unifies its moderate and progressive factions while offering positive programs on the main domestic issues and proposing a more constructive foreign policy. Such Democratic candidate would certainly act to restore the nuclear agreement with Iran and reinstitute a suspension of sanctions in accord with the agreement, which would also achieve a restored consensus with Europe, Russia, China. If such an eventuality occurs, Iran would be expected to renew its commitment as to an agreed level and quantity of enriched uranium and an acceptance of limits on the annual production of heavy water. Such a positive expectation would be reason enough for me to vote in favor of whomever the Democratic Party ends of nominating. I hope it will be Elizabeth Warren, but several others would be acceptable to me.

U.S.-China poised to clash over the Philippines

ASIATIMES — When a Chinese vessel rammed and sank a Filipino fishing boat this month at the contested Reed Bank in the South China Sea, many in Manila wondered if the United States would finally intervene against Beijing's maritime aggression.

The collision sparked new anti-China protests in the Philippine capital and reignited a debate over the 1951 US-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), which requires the long-time strategic partners to come to each other's defense in the case of an attack on their sovereign territories, assets or personnel.

Prominent Filipinos are now calling on President Rodrigo Duterte to activate the treaty to counter China's rising threats to sovereign Philippine territory in the South China Sea, exemplified by Beijing's recent militia swarming of Thitu island to block strategic upgrades of its facilities.

The calls come as US President Donald Trump's administration has stepped up strategic assurances to its oldest regional ally, with Washington stating for the first time its willingness to intervene militarily against Chinese maritime militia forces in defense of Philippine positions in the South China Sea. "China's island-building and military activities in the South China Sea threaten your sovereignty, security and therefore economic livelihood, as well as that of the US," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said during a late February visit to Manila.

"As the South China Sea is part of the Pacific, any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft or public vessels will trigger mutual defense obligations," Pompeo said, removing previous ambiguity on the geographic scope of its commitment to the Philippines under the MDT.

Manila and Washington are expected to begin next month a formal review of the MDT, a process that could either bolster or diminish the strategic alliance pending on the outcome of the deliberations.

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana called for a treaty review last December in sight of rising Chinese aggression and America's past failure to respond under the MDT, including most notably during China's 2012 seizure of the Scarborough Shoal, a feature that falls in Manila's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Lorenzana recently told this correspondent that a revision of the treaty's actual text is not on the table. Instead, the Philippine defense chief says he seeks a revision of the "guidelines" that govern the bilateral alliance's posture and operations.

One potential area for change, Lorenzana says, is a firmer US commitment to assist the Philippines against Chinese

militia forces that have increasingly menaced Filipino vessels in maritime areas where it stakes sovereign claim.

It's not clear yet if the Reed Bank incident was planned at a high level in Beijing and whether it came in response to reinvigorated Philippine-US defense ties, witnessed in recent bilateral sea exercises that simulated retaking an occupied island and the recent sale of US surveillance drones to improve Manila's monitoring of the sea. The Philippine Navy also announced this month that Duterte has approved its plans to purchase two new corvettes and eight missile-armed fast attack vessels that will allow for strikes on targets as far as 25 kilometers away.

The announcement came as the Navy inaugurated two new anti-submarine warfare helicopters, which are clearly aimed at countering China's growing submarine presence in nearby waters.

Philippine sources suspect that the Chinese vessel involved in the June 9 ramming incident was part of its burgeoning and increasingly aggressive maritime militia forces, which have been unleashed on fishing vessels from rival claimant states across the contested sea.

China's fishermen-cum-militia forces are known to receive fuel subsidy, basic para-military training as well as electronic communications equipment from Chinese authorities.

They also enjoy support from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and its coast guard forces, which often intervene against regional law enforcement agencies seeking to apprehend Chinese fishermen and militia forces that enter their claimed waters.

The strategic ambiguity of China's militia forces has recently come under tougher scrutiny in Washington. Last November, the Pentagon announced that it will begin to treat and deal with Chinese militia forces as an explicit extension of the PLAN.

That means the US Navy will use the same rules of engagement, including possible armed response, against China's fishermen-cum-militia forces if they are perceived as threatening US interests and assets in the South China Sea. Whether that posture will now be extended to Philippine interests and assets under the MDT is not altogether clear, though signs are pointing in that direction.

Following the Reed Bank ship-sinking incident, US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim stated that the MDT could apply even to Chinese militia forces. "Any armed attack, I would think that would include government-sanctioned militias," the American representative said on June 14, just days after the collision between a suspected Chinese militia vessel and a Filipino fishing boat.

in a 2015 peace declaration that the central government abandon the relocation of the base within Japan's southernmost prefecture of Okinawa.

Onaga, who passed away in August 2018, became governor in 2014 by winning the support of the many Okinawa residents and political forces who were opposed to the relocation.

Abe has been attending the ceremony for seven consecutive years since 2013, but once again he mentioned nothing about the US base relocation from Futenma to Henoko. A prefectural assembly member who at-



"We are totally committed to the obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty and we will live up to those obligations. I have confidence that our defense leaders in Washington and Manila understand what is at stake and that when we encounter situations that will require our commitment to come to reality, I think we will deliver," he said.

The Duterte administration has so far opted to de-escalate tensions by exploring joint investigations of the incident, which ironically occurred on Philippine-China Friendship Day (June 9), as well as new maritime agreements aimed at preventing similar collisions. Filipino defense officials and high-ranking military personnel initially accused the Chinese vessel of intentionally ramming the Philippine vessel, a collision which left 22 Filipino crewmen who rescued by a Vietnamese boat to drown on high seas.

Duterte has since contradicted his own defense officials by downplaying the incident as a "little maritime accident" which should not affect warm bilateral relations with China. His presidential palace has suggested invoking the MDT would be "reckless and premature."

That's not how many of Duterte's political allies and rivals see the situation, with rising calls to move away from his government's China-leaning policies.

Prominent Filipino senator and former national police chief Panfilo Lacson went so far as to accuse Duterte of "surrender" to China instead of properly assessing the country's strategic options.

"He forgot to explore all resources available before exercising his last option of surrender. The MDT is one yet untapped weapon," Lacson wrote in a tweet. "I am not suggesting World War III, but at least it can make China feel the balance of power in the [South China Sea]."

tended the ceremony stated, "Abe's speech is pretty much the same every year. Participants should keep quiet out of respect for the victims under normal circumstances. However, locals have no choice but to raise their voices considering the current situation in Okinawa."

A 20-year-old university student from the town of Nishihara commented, "Though the prime minister showed off his efforts to reduce the burden (of hosting US bases), he made no reference to the issue in Henoko, and I felt he was sidestepping the matter."

Why Pompeo is travelling to Middle East?

➔ After massive protests of both Muslim and non-Muslims on Quds Day in different countries.

After thousands of both Muslims and non-Muslims took to the streets on Quds Day (May 31) in protest of the "deal of the century", many countries stepped back from agreeing to this deal; which is according to many experts is a vague and impractical plan. These events majorly hindered the project from going further. First, John Bolton, U.S. National Security Advisor tried to stop the failure of this deal by making a trip to occupied Palestine and now Pompeo is making a trip to pressure their allies among Arab countries to attend the Manama meeting as it is among the most important events arranged to facilitate the deal of the century.

• Fuelling Iranophobia among Arab countries.

White House has failed in carrying out many of his projects against Iran over the last two years; this has seriously undermined U.S. foreign policy; so, now, U.S. is trying to make them afraid of Iran and incite them into violent reactions.

• Diverting the attentions out of the successful results of "active resistance" of Iranians in reaction to U.S. unilaterally leaving the nuclear agreement with Iran.

After United Nations Security Council passed a resolution for step by step suspension of Iran's commitment to the nuclear deal, U.S. plans for pressuring Iran into having a new round negotiations were thwarted.

Many experts believe that this would change the game in favor of Iran. So, it seems that one of Pompeo's intentions in making this trip is to divert the public attentions out of the mistakes of warmongers in White House.

In general, Pompeo's trip to Middle East is indeed not a sign of U.S. power and control over the region; on the contrary, it reveals U.S. failed plans and strategies in the region and especially in dealing with Iran.

Anyway, the course of the events is showing that this trip will bring no achievement for neither U.S. nor ignorant tycoons of Middle East because Iran will never succumb to oppression and Yemen will never end its resistance against the usurpers. The deal of century has no influence over the changes in Middle East, especially now that all the evidences show that the Manama meeting is going to be a humiliating failure.

Saudi critical military positions targeted by Yemen

➔ In fact, Yemenis, without bluffing about their military power to Riyadh, has just showed off their power by continuously targeting Saudi's most crucial military bases. Yemen's determination has been so unsettling to the west that Mike Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State recently made two short trips to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to discuss the issues.

It seems that, with making this trip, Pompeo is trying to give a message to Yemen's army, people and resistance groups. The message is that even if they ramp up their defense against the Saudi-led aggression, Washington will never stop its support for the aggressors.

Equality key for China-U.S. talks to resume

GLOBALTIMES — Chinese Vice Premier Liu He held a phone conversation with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Monday. The two sides exchanged views on trade issues following the instructions from the phone talk between the two state leaders. Both sides said they would continue to communicate without disclosing more details to the media.

We have noticed that compared to the period preceding the China-US summit on the sidelines of the G20 Buenos Aires summit in December last year, public opinion in the two countries is much less optimistic now. It looks the two sides have cooled down after the excitement generated by the phone conversation between the two state leaders last week and are assessing more cautiously the differences that are obstacles to the resumption of trade talks.

However, differences can always exist between the two countries and can be further expanded because of their different interests. But this is not the major stumbling block to the new round of trade talks. Cooperation could generate interest, for which it is necessary to make compromise. Once there is willingness to compromise, it is not difficult to bridge the differences.

China and the US have reportedly resolved about 90 percent of the disagreements, so there must be room to resolve the remaining issues of dispute.

The key is the two sides' attitude toward this remaining 10 percent. The breakdown in the previous negotiations came because the US used tariffs as a lever to make China fully accept its conditions. Washington was even trying to infringe upon China's national sovereignty, which is absolutely unacceptable. To resume the talks, it is important to have sincerity and uphold the principles of equality. China will by no means make unprincipled concessions in exchange for a trade truce. That would mean the US can willfully coerce China by exerting maximum pressure, which is much worse than any short-term pain caused by additional tariffs and cutting off supply to Chinese high-tech enterprises.

It is evident that neither China nor the US desires a protracted trade war. China understands that the US wants bilateral trade to be more balanced, and US intellectual property to be more respected. The two sides should resolve these problems practically, but the US believes that maximum pressure is the best bargaining chip, and will help the US impose its will on China. But national security concerns mean that China will maintain its vigilance against this tactic of maximum pressure.

It is not hard for China and the US to make progress on specific trade issues, unless the US turns trade into politics. We do not know whether the US is willing to promote an extreme China strategy at the cost of economic losses brought by the trade war. But we know that we will defend national sovereignty at any cost.

We hope to see positive momentum during the G20 summit in Japan. But Chinese society will not be too disappointed if no consensus is reached, because the twists and turns in the past year have reduced people's expectation of a decisive deal and made us doubt the US' sincerity in implementing the agreement.

China's principles and bottom line are clear, but the US' are not. Washington adjusts its negotiating tactics according to the US economy, and next year's presidential election will have an influence. We hope the US will be pragmatic toward the negotiations. If Washington still wants to try exerting maximum pressure, Beijing will have to wait patiently for it to return to realism.

Japanese Protest U.S. military Presence during Okinawa war memorial

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Protesters shouted their strong opposition to the continued US military presence on the Okinawa island during Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's speech at a ceremony to commemorate the war victims.

June, 24, 2019 - 17:15 World Comments Japanese Protest US Military Presence during Okinawa War Memorial

Abe's speech, in which he emphasized he would "make an all-out effort" to reduce the prefecture's burden of hosting US military bases, drew fierce protests from participants at a June 23 ceremony to mark the 74th year

since the end of the Battle of Okinawa, The Mainichi reported.

His speech sparked huge outcries such as, "That's a lie," and, "We don't need just words," showing local residents' strong opposition to the national government forcibly proceeding with reclamation work for the relocation of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan to the Henoko district of Nago.

Participants have continued to raise their voices in protest every year at the annual ceremony during Abe's speech since late Okinawa Gov. Takeshi Onaga demanded

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The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists. Persian equivalents have been given for all entries, including idioms and expressions. The glossary also includes example sentences for entries the authors thought it would be a bit difficult to learn.

For more information contact:

Tel: 021 - 430 51 450
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Hubble Space Telescope spots “soccer balls” in space

The Hubble Space Telescope has identified soccer ball-shaped molecules amid the gas and dust that fills the space beyond our solar system and between other star systems.

That space is known as the interstellar medium or ISM, and Hubble is exposing some of the mysterious electrically charged molecules within it. A recently published study in the Astrophysical Journal Letters explores the soccer ball molecules.

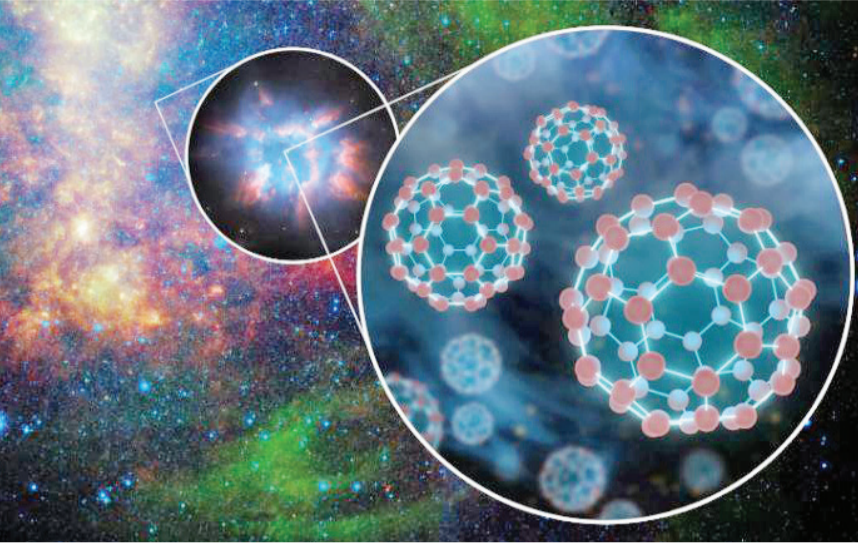
When stars and planets form, they pull together material from clouds of gas and dust. This is why the interstellar medium is so important.

“The diffuse ISM can be considered as the starting point for the chemical processes that ultimately give rise to planets and life,” said Martin Cordiner, study author and research associate in the Catholic University of America’s Department of Physics, in a statement. “So fully identifying its contents provides information on the ingredients available to create stars and planets.”

Cordiner is now at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, the agency said Tuesday.

The soccer ball shape of the molecule is due to the arrangement of 60 carbon atoms in a hollow sphere, giving them the shorthand of C60. The molecules are a form of carbon called Buckminsterfullerene or Bucky balls.

On Earth, these molecules can rarely be found in rocks and minerals or appear in soot created from high combustion.



Although the molecules have been observed in space before, this observation marks the first time that electrically charged C60 has been seen in the interstellar medium. The electrical charge occurs when an electron is shorn off by UV light from stars, which creates a positive charge.

“The diffuse ISM was historically considered too harsh and tenuous an environment for appreciable abundances of large molecules to occur,” Cordiner said. “Prior to the detection of C60, the largest

known molecules in space were only 12 atoms in size. Our confirmation of C60+ shows just how complex astrochemistry can get, even in the lowest density, most strongly ultraviolet-irradiated environments in the Galaxy.”

The interstellar medium is difficult to study because it’s so far away, so astronomers have to study the way it affects light from distant stars to understand it. Some of the compounds that make up the interstellar medium block or absorb

different wavelengths of starlight as it passes through this space. Those compounds have unique patterns that affect starlight, allowing astronomers to identify them as diffuse interstellar bands.

Testing the many bands to match them up would take quite some time, but the research team was able to match C60. Hubble observations were matched with C60 data. This detection could help astronomers understand other compounds.

Although most of this interstellar environment contains helium and hydrogen, two of the most plentiful elements in the universe, there are other unidentified compounds waiting to be discovered.

Life as we know it is carbon-based, and now carbon has been shown to form and survive in the harsh and exposed interstellar medium.

“In some ways, life can be thought of as the ultimate in chemical complexity,” Cordiner said. “The presence of C60 unequivocally demonstrates a high level of chemical complexity intrinsic to space environments, and points toward a strong likelihood for other extremely complex, carbon-bearing molecules arising spontaneously in space.”

Cordiner said that the researchers will continue searching to see where else they can locate the molecules in the universe. At the moment, their observations seem to point to a widespread presence in our galaxy, the Milky Way.

(Source: CNN)

The highest-energy photons ever seen hail from the Crab Nebula

Physicists have spotted the highest-energy light ever seen. It emanated from the roiling remains left behind when a star exploded.

This light made its way to Earth from the Crab Nebula, a remnant of a stellar explosion, or supernova, about 6,500 light-years away in the Milky Way. The Tibet AS-gamma experiment caught multiple particles of light — or photons — from the nebula with energies higher than 100 trillion electron volts, researchers report in a study accepted in Physical Review Letters. Visible light, for comparison, has just a few electron volts of energy.

“This energy regime has not been accessible before,” says astrophysicist Petra Huentemeyer of Michigan Technological University in Houghton, who was not involved with the research. For physicists who study this high-energy light, known as gamma rays, “it’s an exciting time,” she says.

In space, supernova remnants and other cosmic accelerators can boost subatomic particles such as electrons, photons and protons to extreme energies, much higher than those achieved in the most powerful earthly particle accelerators. Protons in the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva, for example, reach a comparatively wimpy 6.5 trillion electron volts. Somehow, the cosmic accelerators vastly outperform humankind’s most advanced machines.

“The question is: How does nature do it?” says physicist David Hanna of McGill University in



Montreal.

In the Crab Nebula, the initial explosion set up the conditions for acceleration, with magnetic fields and shock waves plowing through space, giving an energy boost to charged particles such as electrons. Low-energy photons in the vicinity get kicked to high energies when they collide with the speedy electrons, and ultimately, some of those photons make their way to Earth.

When a high-energy photon hits Earth’s atmosphere, it creates a shower of other subatomic particles that can be detected on the ground. To capture that resulting deluge, Tibet AS-gamma uses nearly 600 particle detectors spread across an area of more than 65,000 square meters in Tibet. From the information recorded by the detectors, researchers

can calculate the energy of the initial photon.

But other kinds of spacefaring particles known as cosmic rays create particle showers that are much more plentiful. To select photons, cosmic rays, which are mainly composed of protons and atomic nuclei, need to be weeded out. So the researchers used underground detectors to look for muons — heavier relatives of electrons that are created in cosmic ray showers, but not in showers created by photons.

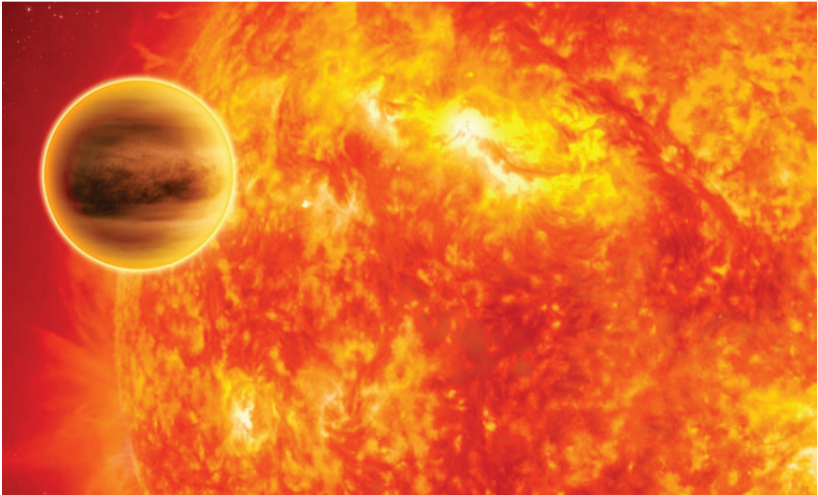
Previous experiments have glimpsed photons with nearly 100 TeV, or trillion electron volts. Now, after about three years of gathering data, the researchers found 24 seemingly photon-initiated showers above 100 TeV, and some with energies as high as 450 TeV. Because the weeding out process isn’t perfect, the researchers estimate that around six of those showers could have come from cosmic rays mimicking photons, but the rest are the real deal.

Researchers with Tibet AS-gamma declined to comment for this story, as the study has not yet been published.

Looking for photons of ever higher energies could help scientists nail down the details of how the particles are accelerated. “There has to be a limit to how high the energy of the photons can go,” Hanna says. If scientists can pinpoint that maximum energy, that could help distinguish between various theoretical tweaks to how the particles get their oomph.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

A new algorithm finds nearby stars that could host hidden worlds



A new planet-hunting algorithm suggests that at least 9 percent of nearby stars could host planets orbiting out of sight — and the stars’ chemistry could help find the worlds.

Planetary astrophysicist Natalie Hinkel of the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio and colleagues trained a machine-learning algorithm on a catalog of thousands of stars and their chemical compositions. In the dataset of stars located within about 500 light-years of the sun, 290 were known to host giant planets, while more than 4,200 didn’t — or so astronomers thought.

First, the algorithm analyzed the chemistry of the planet-hosting stars. Then, based on what it learned about those celestial objects, the program estimated the probability that each of the stars in the other group actually does host planets.

It works similarly to how online TV streaming companies like Netflix choose which TV shows to recommend to viewers, Hinkel says. “If I watch a bunch of movies,

Netflix learns that I like science fiction, martial arts movies and British period movies,” she says. The program then uses that knowledge to identify other shows she might like — that is, the stars with planets not yet detected.

The new algorithm identified 368 additional stars — or about 9 percent of the stars thought to be lacking planets — that had a more than 90 percent probability of hosting a giant exoplanet, Hinkel reported June 26 in Seattle at the Astrobiology Science Conference. “That was way more than I was expecting,” she says.

The stellar elements that best predicted a potential planet’s presence were iron, carbon, oxygen and sodium. But the ratios of those elements to each other seemed to matter more than just having a lot of each one. The way the elements interact in a planet-forming disk around a star probably shapes planet formation, similar to how baking ingredients interact to make a cake rise, Hinkel says.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

How reindeer evolved to survive freezing Arctic winters



Santa’s warm workshop is nothing like the cold, often-dark Arctic where reindeer really live. Above the Arctic Circle, temperatures can drop as low as –67°C and darkness can last nearly the entire day. Now, a new study reveals how reindeer have evolved to cope with these tough conditions.

To look for the genes that let Santa’s helpers survive scarce food and months without daylight, researchers took advantage of a massive effort to sequence the genomes of reindeer and 43 other ruminants, including cows, sheep, and camels. They compared the reindeer’s genes for various traits to the same genes in several other mammals.

One improvement: Compared with other mammals, the reindeer are much more efficient in their use of vitamin D. That isn’t a complete surprise, scientists say, because reindeer need lots of vitamin D—created during sun exposure—to build their bony antlers, which even females shed and regrow every year. To overcome the winter sunlight shortfall, mutations in two of the 68 genes used to synthesize

and process vitamin D make the process up to 20 times more efficient, researchers report today in Science.

Because the amount of sunlight varies so much so far north, reindeer seem to have lost the biological clock that makes humans and other animals active by day and sleepy by night. Compared with other mammals, reindeer have genetic changes that “short-circuit” their clocks, disrupting the ability of one key clock protein to interact with another. This finding could help researchers unravel disorders that involve disrupted biological clocks, such as insomnia, seasonal affective disorder, and perhaps even depression.

Other mutations in the reindeer genome, some of which are present in polar bears and Adélie penguins, improve fat use, fat transport, and the building of fat reserves. This discovery, the scientists say, could improve the understanding of fat accumulation and transport in people. It also goes to show that maybe those reindeer don’t need Santa’s help, after all.

(Source: sciencemag.org)

Astronauts, not robots, essential to getting answers on the moon

The scientific legacy of the Apollo program, including the first manned mission to the moon, is considerable. But 50 years later, there’s a lot lunar scientists still aren’t sure of -- questions unanswered and models in need of tweaks.

The moon promises not only to reveal secrets about itself, but also to provide answers to broader planetary science inquiries.

“The moon is the best and most accessible place in the solar system to explore fundamental processes of the solar system’s origin and evolution,” David Kring, senior staff scientist at the Lunar and Planetary Institute, told UPI. “And it is only three days away.”

Five decades after Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin returned with a cache of lunar rock samples, inspiring decades of discoveries, scientists are hoping the planned return of NASA astronauts to the moon will reinvigorate lunar research. Of course, NASA and other space agencies have continued to study the moon using both space telescopes and ground observatories. Over the last decade, China has put three landers on the lunar surface -- the most recent on the far side of the moon earlier this year.

Robotic spacecraft have collected and will continue to collect data vital to scientists’ quest to unravel the moon’s mysteries. But NASA’s promise to return astronauts to the moon would certainly prove a boon to the agency’s lunar science program.

“Well-trained astronauts exploring a complex geologic terrain can produce extraordinary results beyond the reach of any robotic asset,” Kring said. “They have the capacity to observe, process those observations, and make decisions that ensure mission objectives are met in a time-efficient manner. Apollo demonstrated the intrinsic advantages of human explorers and, simultaneously, their inspirational value.”

What do lunar and planetary scientists want to know?

Many scientists suggest samples from the moon’s basins could confirm if and when the Late Heavy Bombardment occurred. Models of the solar system’s early evolution show a reorganization of the inner planets triggered an increase in collisions between asteroids and terrestrial planets.

“We know that the last of the huge basins formed more than 3.5 billion years ago, but what we don’t know is whether the number of impacts on the moon was steadily declining from the time of its formation, about 4.5 billion years ago, or whether there was a relatively quiet period followed by a late heavy bombardment,” said Tim Swindle, director of the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory at the University of Arizona.

While the rock samples collected during the Apollo missions can offer relevant context, new samples from bigger, older lunar basins -- like the South Pole Aitken -- are needed to shed light on the timing of the late heavy bombardment.

“By returning impact melt from the South Pole Aitken basin and other large basin impacts, like Nectaris, we could be able to answer the question” of the late heavy bombardment, said Clive Neal, professor of lunar science at Notre Dame University. “However, we need to know what an impact melt actually looks like so we return the correct samples for dating in terrestrial labs. I think we can help there in terms of what we have learned from the Apollo samples.”

The Late Heavy Bombardment is one of several hypotheses that scientists could interrogate using fresh samples and data collected by new lunar missions. An outpouring of big ideas followed the return of the Apollo lunar samples, including the giant impact hypothesis, the lunar magma ocean hypothesis, the lunar cataclysm hypothesis and the magmatic epoch hypothesis. Most recently, surveys of the Apollo samples inspired new ideas about the origin and evolution of water in the Earth-moon system.

“We need to test those ideas with new samples collected at landing sites specifically selected to address them,” Kring said.

In addition to lunar basins, lunar and planetary scientists want to target the moon’s volatiles, chemicals with low boiling points -- nitrogen, water, carbon dioxide, ammonia, hydrogen, methane and sulfur dioxide. Surveys of the satellite’s volatiles, including ice deposits, could offer insights into a variety of planetary processes.

“That includes volcanism, which may have been so intense that it created a transient atmosphere around the moon more than 3 billion years ago,” Kring said. “Teasing that history from any polar ice deposits will be fascinating.”

Scientists are keen to understand whether the deposits of volatiles observed on the rims of craters and basins are superficial or evidence of large reserves.

“Are lunar volatile resources actually reserves? If they are, this has huge implications for interplanetary transport, human exploration, commercial involvement, and science,” Neal said. “If these are reserves and permanent human presence on the moon is the goal, we can truly develop the cislunar economy.”

The list of unanswered lunar science questions is long. New missions to the moon could help scientists better understand the lunar interior, its impact history, the evolution of its atmosphere and the satellite’s volatile cycles. But perhaps the biggest unsolved mystery is the moon’s formation.

Scientists mostly agree that the moon was forged by a giant impact between Earth and a planetary body the size of Mars. But the details of such a collision are murky.

“For the last 35 years, we’ve had a basic framework that most scientists have agreed on, the giant impact theory, but there are still enough questions that no specific model has satisfactorily solved them all,” Swindle said.

By comparing the chemical composition of lunar rocks and terrestrial rocks, specifically the relative isotopic composition of many elements, and of how strong it should be, researchers could hone in on a more precise model.

“I don’t think that there is a specific mission that will answer the question, but having more samples of areas like lunar highlands far away from the sites that the Apollo missions sampled would help a lot,” Swindle said.

Robotic missions to the moon can provide tremendous insights into the queries highlighted by lunar and planetary scientists, but despite its proximity to Earth, the moon remains a mysterious place -- the kind of place where human cognition would be invaluable. “Humans are extremely good at picking out the rock that is just a little bit different than the others -- there are several examples from Apollo -- so astronauts will find the interesting ones far more rapidly than a robotic mission, even with the best artificial intelligence we have,” Swindle said.

The list of lunar science questions that could be answered with the help of astronauts is long, but it is also incomplete. New missions are certain to inspire new questions and new ideas on how to solve the moon’s mysteries -- where to look, what to measure and more.

“It is important to understand that most of the moon remains unexplored,” Kring said. “Thus, while we will be testing previously developed big ideas, we are surely going to be surprised with an extraordinary set of new findings. The moon is a land of discovery just waiting to be explored.”

(Source: UPI)

Tehran-Sardasht car rally to promote peace and friendship

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Today, a group of drivers will hit the road heading from Tehran to the north-western city of Sardasht in a car rally which is aimed to promote peace and friendship.



A total of 40 vehicles are scheduled to attend the rally organized by the Touring and Automobile Club of Iran in close collaboration with the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

The rally will pass through various cities coming to an end on June 29.

Sardasht was attacked by chemical weapons in 1987 during Iran-Iraq war. The Iraqi Air Force targeted four most populated areas of the city with chemical bombs; overall some 110 civilians died from poisonous gasses and some 8000 were injured.

Iraq frequently used chemical weapons against Iranian civilians and soldiers. Reportedly, out of a population of 20,000, 25 percent are still suffering severe illnesses from the attacks.

Climate change threatens Acropolis and other ancient Greek monuments

Climate change is threatening ancient Greek monuments, among them the Acropolis, one of the most-visited archaeological sites in the world, scientists said.

Air pollution and acid rain are eroding marbles, while extreme weather phenomena such as droughts or torrential rains have led ancient walls and temples to develop structural problems.

Even though the Acropolis hill, where the Parthenon stands, is probably Greece's best preserved archaeological site, there are signs that climate change has been increasingly affecting the monuments that stand on the hill.

"The walls of the (ancient) city have more erosion than in the past," Maria Vlazaki, General Secretary of the Greek Culture Ministry, told Reuters.

The temple of the Parthenon on the rock of the Acropolis, located in the heart of Athens, dates back to the classical period of antiquity - the 5th century BC.

For decades there have been efforts to preserve and protect the Acropolis and its monuments, an operation that has been sped up since the mid 1970s.

But the country has hundreds if not thousands of exposed archaeological sites.

"Every year, we have more cases... We give more money, unexpected money to protect the walls of the (ancient) cities that had no problems before, to protect the coastal area," Ms Vlazaki said.

The wider Athens area has been hit hard by deadly floods and forest fires over the last decade.

(Source: The Telegraph)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Island of Mozambique

A calcareous coral reef, the Island of Mozambique is situated 4 km from the mainland coast in the entrance to the Mossuril Bay of the Indian Ocean in Nampula Province of the Republic of Mozambique. A bridge built in the 1960s joins the island to the mainland. The island forms an archipelago with two small uninhabited islands, the Islands of Goa and Sena to the east.



The island communities are intimately associated with the history of navigation in the Indian Ocean as the island played a unique role in intercontinental trading links from the 10th century. Its international historic importance relates to the development and establishment of Portuguese maritime routes between Western Europe and the Indian subcontinent.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the Island of Mozambique has two different types of dwellings and urban systems. The stone and lime town of Swahili, Arab and European influences in the north half, and the macuti town (city of roofed palm leaves) of traditional African architecture in the south.

The incredible architectural unity of the island derives from the uninterrupted use of the same building techniques with the same materials and the same decorative principles. The island's patrimony also includes its oldest extant fortress (St. Sebastian, 1558-1620), other defensive buildings and numerous religious buildings (including many from the 16th century).

The existing houses and structures on the island provide evidence that the building materials and techniques are original. The majority of buildings that had administrative, commercial and military functions are still in the same general form and design of their period of construction but the conservation of a living monument, inter-twined with difficult socio-economic problems and changing demands on the urban fabric, requires a particularly sensitive approach.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iranian Garden, microcosm of paradise on Earth!

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — For millennia, Iranian gardens have combined the beauty of nature with the aesthetic qualities of art and architecture to create a symbolic representation of paradise on Earth.

The idea of materializing earthly paradises became a key part of the Iranian culture and spread to other cultures during the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC).

Ancient Iranians regarded planting trees as a sacred activity, which gradually evolved into scenic amalgams of agriculture and architecture. Through their constant efforts, ancient Persians came across with more efficient ways in garden designs to survive extreme climatic conditions.

The genuine concept of the Persian Garden, which is a World Heritage, is deeply rooted in time interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

According to Press TV, there are four main elements to the intricate geometric design of Iranian gardens: High walls surrounding the garden to



A view of Shazdeh Garden near Mahan, Kerman province

create a protected space for spiritual and leisurely relaxation; a koushk (palace) on the highest point in the middle of the garden; a water pool decorated with tileworks and fountains; one or several water canals for irrigation of the entire

green space.

Iranian gardens often integrate the indoor area of the koushk with its surrounding garden through an inner courtyard, with architectural elements such as vaulted arches connecting the

two spaces. Such gardens were basically built in front of the water flow coming out of qanats, underground tunnels for transferring of water. The water then circulates in the garden through streams and the pool.

Tall trees such as cedar, pine and plane surround the pool and streams, creating an extensive shadow which prevents water evaporation and cools down the area. Flowers with strong scent are also planted in the area to produce pleasant smell in the environment. The pool is normally located in front of the Koushk, functioning as a large mirror which reflects a full image of the mansion.

Apart from the role of Persian Gardens in Iranian architecture and urban designing, they have had the most significant influence in the artistic design of Persian carpets, which mainly depict a panorama of a heavenly garden with vivid illustrations of architectural and artistic elements.

The UNESCO-tagged Persian Garden consists of nine gardens, selected from various regions of Iran, which tangibly represent the diverse forms that this type of designed garden has assumed over the centuries and in different climatic conditions.

Sarein's historic hill to turn into outdoor museum

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A northwestern Iranian hill, which embraces a ruined temple dedicated to ancient goddess of Anahita, will be turned into an outdoor museum in Sarein county, Ardebil province.

Provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi announced the makeover on Wednesday, when he was examining an archaeological survey underway at the ancient site.

"A comprehensive [archaeological] survey has commenced at the site because it is historically significant," the official said, CHTN reported.

"Initial excavations suggests that the site dates to 4500 years ago but experts say it may be home to objects that

date far back in time."

Anahita, also called Anahiti, is an ancient Iranian goddess of royalty, war, and fertility; she is particularly associated with the last, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

Possibly of Mesopotamian origin, her cult was made prominent by Artaxerxes II, and statues and temples were set up in her honor throughout the Persian Empire.

Sarein attracts more than five million tourists annually who travel to this region from different parts of Iran and the world because of its climate and hot springs. It has nine hot springs which are very different in terms of composition and properties.

Iran tourism grows 1.9% to account for 6.5% of GDP

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's tourism sector grew by 1.9% to contribute 1,158 trillion rials (\$8.83 billion) or 6.5% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and 1,334 jobs (5.4% of total employment) in 2018, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council's annual report.

The WTTC report, which digs into the economic impact and social importance of the sector, shows international visitors spent 168,954 billion rials (\$1.28 billion) in Iran in 2018.

The council expects the number of international arrivals to stand at 6.5 million in 2019, according to Iran-China Chamber of



Commerce and Industries.

According to the Central Bank of Iran, tourism industry contributed \$11.8 billion to the country's GDP in the past Iranian year 1397 (ended March 20), tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan said earlier this month.

The number of international tourists visiting Iran surged 52.5 percent in the past Iranian calendar year from a year earlier, according to data compiled by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization. The Islamic Republic hosted some 7.8 million foreign nationals in that year, which shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year.

As rains pour, Kerala sets sights on monsoon tourism

Nearly a year after floods ravaged Kerala, India as another monsoon arrives, the state famed for its tourism sector is upbeat about increased tourist arrivals during the monsoon season.

Indicating that the state had bounced back after the floods, tourist arrivals in Kerala during January-March this year grew 6.82 percent to 4.61 million, including over 422,000 foreign tourists.

The state is a strong player in the medical tourism sector, too, and the monsoon months of June and July are considered best for ayurvedic rejuvenation treatments.

"A number of corporate teams are also now preferring meetings and conferences in Kerala during the monsoon months, and this year we are expecting a significant number of Arab tourists in the post-Ramadan weeks", Shirkant Wakharkar, general manager of the Grand Hyatt in Kochi, told Gulf News.

In a new development, many youngsters are opting for Kerala and the monsoon time to hold their weddings. Wakharkar says that within the wedding tourism seg-

ment, a new segment — renew your vow — has emerged, with couples celebrating their wedding anniversaries at premium properties and destinations in Kerala.

The Confederation of Indian Industry announced last week that it would partner hospitals in Kerala to campaign for increased medical tourism prospects for the state. CII and hospitals in the state will organize the Kerala Health Tourism (KHT) conference in Kochi on July 3 and 4, which will be attended by an international delegation comprising ambassadors and consuls general from nine countries.

The medical tourism industry in India is valued at \$9 billion, of which Kerala has only a modest 6-7 percent share, and the CII is aiming to highlight the international class medical facilities available in the state. Kerala has as many as 33 hospitals with NABH accreditation, and the Kerala Medical Value Trust Society is set to launch a web portal aimed at medical tourists.

Kerala Tourism recently joined the Indian edition of TikTok's global in-app travel campaign #TikTokTravel to promote the state as a world class travel destination.



A worker builds a wall with sandbags to create a barricade against waves of the Arabian Sea during a storm, near Kochi.

Kerala Tourism director P. Bala Kiran said Kerala was one of the first Indian state tourism boards to be on the TikTok platform.

(Source: gulfnews.com)

An ancient system could stop modern-day Peru running out of water

An ancient water conservation technique once used in Peru could be making a comeback in the modern era, as the country struggles with extreme dry seasons amidst a population rise.

Researchers estimate the technique - used by indigenous peoples of the region - is at least 1,400 years old. It involves diverting water from streams to mountain slopes when the rain is plentiful, resulting in natural springs that keep water stored over a longer period of time after the rainy season has stopped.

In the pre-Inca age, this was done through the construction of canals and ponds to divert some water away from its natural flow. It would then take months to resurface downstream, right when it was needed.

"The people of Lima live with one of the world's least stable water situations," says environmental engineer

Wouter Buytaert, from Imperial College London in the UK. "There's too much water in the wet seasons, and too little in the dry ones."

"The indigenous peoples of Peru knew how to get around this, so we're looking to them for answers."

The researchers visited Huamantanga in western Peru, to study one of the few remaining examples of this ancient water system. Here the canals, or "amunas" in the Quechua language, have been recently restored.

Over the course of two years, in consultation with local people, the team found that the rerouted water takes between two weeks and eight months to work its way downstream — an average of 45 days.

Adapting this diversion process for the capital city Lima, the researchers estimate, could mean around 35 percent of wet season water (roughly 99 million

cubic metres or around 3.5 billion cubic feet) gets saved up for later months. Scaling up the system is going to be difficult, but it could work.

During the dry season, which lasts from May to October, Peru struggles to keep water available for all 12 million residents of Lima. The seasonal variation between water levels hasn't been helped by climate change and melting glaciers, or by farming methods that have left mountain slopes devoid of water-trapping soil.

By bringing back this ancient technique, the researchers think the amount of water available during the dry season could be boosted by as much as 33 percent in the early months, and by around 7.5 percent during later months.

However, the traditional methods would be used in tandem with more modern approaches, the researchers

suggest, to maximise how much water could be saved during times of plenty — and to act as insurance in an ever-changing climate.

In the face of a changing climate, providing enough water for human needs is becoming a growing challenge in some parts of the world, with scientists turning to a variety of different solutions to try and guarantee reliable water supplies in the future.

As it turns out, we might be able to learn something from the techniques practised many centuries ago.

"With the advent of modern science, you'd be forgiven for wondering how ancient methods could apply to modern day problems," says hydrologist Boris Ochoa-Tocachi. "However, it turns out that we have lots to learn from our ancestors' creative problem-solving skills." (Source: Science Alert)

Tehran amongst top 500 world innovation cities

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN – Tehran is amongst the world's top 500 innovation cities of 2018 based on the Innovation Cities Index, released by the Innovation Cities Program.

There are four regional indexes for Americas, Europe, Asia and Emerging, extracted from the main Global index.

Ranking cities for innovation, Tehran is 413rd city on the list worldwide. The city ranks 19 amongst 53 countries in emerging category of the index.

Tehran is categorized as NODE city on the list. According to its website, all cities are classified based on Index Scores into four classifications by score; NEXUS (City is a critical nexus for large number of economic and social innovation segments), HUB (City has dominance on key economic and social innovation segments based on current global trends), NODE (City has a strong performance across many innovation segments, with key imbalances or issues)



and UPSTART (City has potential strong future performance, with some further

improvement). Tokyo, London and San Francisco are

on the top of the list followed by New York and Los Angeles.

With the motto of 'city innovation comes from being more local, while going global', the index assessed the cities based on the three factors of Cultural Assets, Human Infrastructure and Networked Markets.

This city rankings include technology, smart, startups and other aspects of a good city to live, work and play based on economic opportunity for innovators. The Innovation Cities Indexes measure each city's potential as an innovation economy at the current time, since 2007.

Mobility, in other world public transport and personal mobility is a critical part of Human Infrastructure that is excluded in the use of the term 'Smart Cities', is included in Innovation City ranking.

The Innovation Cities Program is done based on assessing innovation pre-conditions via examining 162 indicators (that use up to 1300 data points), which are benchmarked.

ICT minister invites global community to invest in Iranian startups

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi has called on all countries to invest in Iranian startups.

"Today, Iranian startups are the best. We invite all the countries to invest in Iranian startups," he said at the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2019, which was held from 25 to 26 June at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Center in Singapore.

"Protecting civilians in cyberspace, especially their privacy and security, must be the highest priority for us," he wrote on his Twitter account.

"The international community has paid a lot for U.S. unilateralism. Let's stand together."

Azari Jahromi also met with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary General Houlin Zhao on June 25.

The Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2019 commemorated the 40th Anniversary of the APT and recognize the valuable role



of Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) in the regional cooperation on telecommunication/ICT and renewed high level commitment for continued support to further strengthen the community.

It also provided high-level policy guidelines for the region for the next five years on the development of telecommunication/ICT and its critical role in enabling creative economy and socio-economic development. It followed-up on the development of telecommunication/ICT in APT member countries towards achieving the objectives of the Brunei Darussalam Statement.

NAM center for science and technology aims to boost ties with Iran

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN – Iran's vice presidency for science and technology and the Center for Science & Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Center) aim to boost ties through launching joint programs, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The Iranian vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari and NAM S&T Center Director General Amitava Bandyopadhyay discussed enhanced cooperation during their meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Bandyopadhyay referred to the history of the center, which was established in 1989 in New Delhi.

The center has 47 member countries and aims to boost joint scientific and technology cooperation among the member states.

Iran has a great improvement in science and technology during recent years and can share the experiences with other member countries as a development model



for technology, he said.

During the meeting, Sattari stressed the important role of the vice presidency in development of knowledge economy in Iran, saying that technology and innovation ecosystem has a great impact on boosting of knowledge economy.

Iran is ready to hold educational courses and joint workshops in the field of advanced technology in developing countries, he said.

Iran was the first country that proposed the nanotechnology and science and technology diplomacy to the center.

Academics, startups key for development of intelligent transport: official

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN – The academic sector and startups are the key elements for development of intelligent transportation system in the country, the head of space technology and advanced transportation development center announced, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Manouchehr Manteqi said that Iran needs to design and manufacture technological products dealing with advanced transportation system.

"We hope that effective steps will be taken on air, rail and road transport in coming two years," he said.

According to statistics, over 40 percent of the capacity of railroads are used in Iran and the center plans to boost the capacity at low costs.

Efficiency is a very important factor for the center and universities and academic centers can help the center to develop this issue, he said.

An intelligent transportation system is an advanced application which, without embodying intelligence as such, aims to provide innovative services relating to different modes of transport and traffic management

and enable users to be better informed and make safer, more coordinated, and 'smarter' use of transport networks.

According to Financial Planning, new industry research report on Global Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Market 2019, describes an in-depth evaluation and professional study on the present state of the Intelligent Transportation System market across the globe.

Global Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) market research supported product sort including: advanced traffic management sys-



tem, advanced traveler information system, its-enabled transportation pricing system, advanced public transportation system, and commercial vehicle operation.

Which climate innovations will really limit global warming?

From a chemical-free spray that turns sand into lush green land, to a caterer who serves planet-friendly dishes, and from technology that makes stronger concrete with less cement, to insect farms that produce fish food and fertilisers, there is no shortage of ideas to reduce emissions. But which ones work best?

To help filter the most effective innovations to invest in, a global initiative has developed a new way to estimate their emissions-slashing potential. In the next year, it aims to identify 1,000 solutions with a combined potential to avoid more than 40 gigatons of CO2 emissions or equivalent around the world each year by 2030.

"They're not all going to be implemented, but (we want) to show that the solutions are out there, it is possible to reduce emissions by large quantities," said Jay Hennessy, project coordinator of the Mission Innovation 1.5°C Compatible Solution Framework.

More than 53 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions were produced globally in 2017, according to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). By 2030, annual emissions need to be cut by 55% from this number to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the UN agency says. In 2018, energy-related CO2 emissions rose to a historic high of 33.1 gigatons, according to the International Energy Agency.

Global temperatures have already risen 1° Celsius, so 'rapid and far-reaching' transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities are needed, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which also identified an acceleration in technological innovation as a key enabler of limiting global warming.

The new assessment framework, which is making its methodology available for public funders, businesses and investors to use, was developed for Mission Innovation, a global initiative of 24 countries and the European Commission working to accelerate clean energy innovation.

Scores for the 100 innovations assessed so far range from less than 1 megaton in reduced CO2 emissions per year in 2030, to more than 300 megatons.

"There isn't any time to waste and there aren't any resources to waste, and we have to ensure that the resources we are using are focused in the right places."



One of the highest scorers is vegan catering company Gigafood, which delivers its food by cargo bike and uses ecologically sustainable packaging materials. Its score of 152 megatons reflects not just the company itself but the potential for a business model for low-emissions eating to be scaled up globally.

An insect farm run by Hexafly, an Irish company, is also on the menu. Although it has not yet been assessed by the framework, the company is confident it will do well.

"We can produce 15,000 times more protein per acre (0.4 hectare) than a beef farm, 7,000 times more protein per acre than a chicken farm – with no emissions," said Alvan Hunt, CEO and co-founder of Hexafly.

"It's a zero-waste facility that can be scaled up and rolled out globally" and uses very little water, no chemicals, and the insects feed on agricultural and food waste, he adds.

For now, the insects are used to produce organic fertiliser, protein for fish and pet feed, and oil for cosmetics. Hunt hopes to expand into poultry feed, and ultimately food for people, but for that to happen EU laws need to change, he says.

Achieving a good score in the framework would highlight the benefits of insect farming and could help change legislation as a result, Hunt says.

Environmental innovations often need more capital investment than other sectors, says Patrick Sheehan, founder and partner at ETF Partners, a UK-based fund which specialises in sustainable investing.

The weight of venture capital money goes into internet and software companies which can grow rapidly without too much capital expenditure. "Making stuff that physically works is more difficult than making software that doesn't really have to work all the time," said Sheehan.

However, investors can still make just as big a profit and have a positive impact on the environment, he says. "If you fulfill a great need ... then you have a great opportunity for returns for your investments."

Only companies that grow fast and big can change the climate, says Rene Savelsberg, co-founder, CEO and managing director of SET Ventures, a European venture capital firm specialising in disruptive energy innovations.

"We need clear winners that transform the energy sector as a whole," he said.

The sector is changing and, since the 2015 Paris climate deal, "we have passed the tipping point ... the path towards the energy sector becoming a clean sector is definitely working", Savelsberg said.

But dominant oil, gas and utility companies have to change their business models for innovation to thrive, says Savelsberg.

Governments have to play an important role in this, for example by imposing an effective tax on CO2 to help shift the industry to CO2-free energy systems, he adds.

Sheehan says governments need to help fund major engineering innovations that could have a large impact on emissions reductions, as private investors cannot commit to very long-term projects. Nuclear fusion, for example, is taking decades to develop.

Savelsberg and Sheehan – who have both been in the field for more than a decade – say they already have their own ways of assessing an innovation's potential to reduce emissions.

"The uncomfortable reality is you never really know the impact and it's more important to be directionally correct," Sheehan said.

What's needed is a common language to talk about innovation that is easy for all parties to understand, he adds.

"Innovation is messy and difficult ... and governments tend not to put enough money into it because it's hard to explain, and because there's a lot of failure around (it) inevitably. So ... simplicity and clarity are profoundly important," he said.

(Source: horizon-magazine.eu)

Internet penetration rate in Iran highest among students: report

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN – According to a recent report released by the Information Technology Organization of Iran, the highest internet penetration rate is amongst students with 89.6 percent, Mehr reported on Monday.

A total of 36.5 percent of internet users are employed individuals, 26.7 percent are housekeepers, 23.8 percent are students, and 6.3 percent are unemployed individuals, according to the report.

The statistics is based on the three indices of access to cellphone, internet and computer. According to the statistics about 29.4 million of Iranians (63.4 percent) are 'usual' internet users.

Students also have the highest computer penetration rate with 94.5 percent.



According to the report, the highest cellphone penetration rate belongs to working population while 97.4 percent of cellphone users are employed. Among unemployed people the penetration rate is 91.9 percent, followed by students with 66.7 percent, and housekeepers with 83.7 percent.

The report said that 3.5 million Iranians use internet once a week, 749 thousand use internet once a month and 243 thousand use internet less than once a month.

■ Internet users worldwide

According to Hosting Fact statistics, there were 4.1 billion Internet users in the world in December 2018, compared to 3.9 billion Internet users in mid-2018 and about 3.7 billion Internet users in late 2017.

Asia has the most Internet users of all continents – accounting for 49 percent of all Internet users (down from about 50 percent in 2017 and up from about 48 percent mid 2018). Europe is a runner up with 16.8 percent of all Internet users.

According to the report, China has the most Internet users of all country. At over 802 million Internet users at the time of writing this, China currently accounts for almost 20 percent of Internet users worldwide. It is trailed by India, with over 500 million Internet users.

Interestingly enough, Iceland is the country with the highest Internet penetration in the world – with an impressive 100 percent of its citizens using the Internet and The Internet influenced retail sales to the tune of \$2.84 trillion in 2018 and is expected to influence retail sales to the tune of \$3.45 trillion in 2019.

Rapid robot rollout risks UK workers being left behind, reports say

British workers are being shut out of decisions over the rising use of robots in the UK economy, according to a report.

According to the commission on workers and technology, run by the Fabian Society and the Community trade union, almost six in 10 employees across Britain in a poll said their employers did not give them a say on the use of new technologies.

Risking a future where workers' jobs get worse and people's voices go unheard over changes in the workplace, the findings come as a separate report finds the use of robots in poorer regions triggers the loss of almost twice as many jobs as in wealthier ones.

In a study by the consultancy firm Oxford Economics, the rapidly growing use of robots is expected to have a profound impact on jobs across the world, resulting in up to 20m manufacturing job losses by 2030.

Around 1.7m manufacturing jobs have already been lost to robots since 2000, according to the study, including as many as 400,000 in Europe, 260,000 in the US and 550,000 in China.

The global analysis of 29 advanced economies found that each new industrial robot eliminated as many as 1.6 manufacturing jobs on average. In the lower-income areas of the nations in the study, this figure rises to 2.2 jobs, with 1.3 jobs lost in a richer area.

Cumbria is the place in Britain most at risk from job losses due to robotic automation, as well as parts of the West Midlands. London and the south-east are most insulated, Oxford Economics said.

A year on from the launch of the commission on workers and technology, chaired by the Labour MP Yvette Cooper, the early findings show that technological change has affected most people's jobs, but workers are not getting a say when this happens.

In a speech in Liverpool on Wednesday evening, Cooper is expected to warn that the rapid rollout of new technologies could risk leaving workers behind.

"As technology changes our workplaces, it is workers who should be in the driving seat, but our research shows that workers are too often being shut out of decisions that affect both their working conditions and their enjoyment of work. If we fail to prepare, we face a future where jobs get worse and workers' voices go unheard," she will say.

From a series of factory and workplace visits across the country to gather evidence, the two-year commission has heard that workers often feel powerless and frustrated about their lack of influence over tech decisions.

According to a poll for the study by YouGov, as many as 80% said the rollout of new technology had some impact on their current role over the last five years. However, around 58% of employees disagree with the statement "my employer gives me the opportunity to influence how new technology is used in my workplace".

Despite fears over the rising use of robots in the workforce, while sounding an alarm that bad practice can damage working standards, the commission said many staff were positive about technology change.

There are hopes that job losses can be contained or that workers can move into new and more fulfilling roles in future. The World Economic Forum forecast last year that 133m jobs globally could be created with the help of technological advances over the next decade, compared with 75m that could be displaced.

(Source: theguardian.com)

86, 550 Iranians to start hajj pilgrimage

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — This year, some 86,550 Iranians will travel to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, for performing hajj pilgrimage, deputy director of Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, has said.



Performing hajj is compulsory on every Muslim at least once in their life time. It is one of the largest annual gathering of human beings on earth, with approximately three million people gathering each year for three to five days between the eighth and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, the last month of the Muslim calendar. The pilgrimage has been occurring annually since 630 CE when the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) led his followers from Medina to Mecca.

The first group of pilgrims will leave Iran for Mecca within the next two weeks on July 8, IRNA quoted Akbar Rezaei as saying on Wednesday.

A week later after the first group of pilgrims are dispatched to Mecca, other groups will head to Medina, he further noted.

All pilgrims will travel to Mecca from August 5, and will be back to the country by September 8, he added.

He went on to conclude that the number of women pilgrims is more than men.

Scientists discover 56 lakes beneath Greenland ice sheet

More than 50 lakes have been discovered beneath the Greenland ice sheet, which scientists say could be home to examples of “extreme life”.

The 56 subglacial lakes range in length from 200 meters up to 5.9km, and bring the total known number of lakes under the ice sheet to 60.

Greenland covers an area roughly seven times the size of the UK, and its ice sheet – the melting of which plays an important role in climate change – is in places more than 3km thick.

The lakes form when meltwater generated from a number of sources, including the Earth’s geothermal heat, becomes trapped due to variations in the ice’s thickness or in depressions.

They were discovered by scientists at the Universities of Lancaster, Sheffield and Stanford, who analyzed more than 500,000km of airborne radio echo sounding data, which provided images of the ice sheet’s bed.

Scientists said the lakes’ discovery would help them understand where meltwater occurs and how it drains, which influences how the ice sheet responds to rising global temperatures.

“Researchers have a good understanding of Antarctic subglacial lakes, which can fill and drain and cause overlying ice to flow quicker. However, until now little was known about subglacial lake distribution and behavior beneath the Greenland ice sheet,” said lead author Jade Bowling of Lancaster University.

“This study has for the first time allowed us to start to build up a picture of where lakes form under the Greenland ice sheet. This is important for determining their influence on the wider subglacial hydrological system and ice-flow dynamics, and improving our understanding of the ice sheet’s basal thermal state.”

The majority of lakes were relatively stable, but risk filling up with more meltwater and draining into the sea as the climate warms.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Disarray in the Middle East

(October 19, 2000)

BBC Middle East correspondent Frank Gardner reported on how the peace summit in Sharm el Sheikh left the Arab world divided as Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak called a meeting to form a unified Arab stand to support the Palestinians against Israel.

The Arab world is once again in **disarray**. Its Foreign Ministers are all here in Cairo but they have widely differing views on what this coming **summit** is supposed to achieve. Last Tuesday’s **US-brokered ceasefire** in Sharm el Sheikh has taken much of the pressure off the Arabs to do something about the violence in the Palestinian territories. **Hard-line** governments like Libya and Yemen still want **hostile** action against Israel but more **moderate states**, like Egypt, have said military action is out of the question. The Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, has dismissed the coming summit as just a **talking shop**. To the **dismay** of the Egyptian organizers, he has already revealed the contents of the **draft communiqué** in a television interview. At the very least, ordinary Arabs want their leaders to **sever all ties** with Israel. At the moment six Arab states have diplomatic relations of some sort with the Jewish state. But Egypt’s role as a **mediator** in this troubled region would be seriously **undermined** if it broke off links with Israel.

■ **words**

disarray: If people or things are in disarray, they have become confused or disorganized

summit: a meeting between the leaders of different countries to discuss important matters

US-brokered ceasefire: an agreement which was arranged by the US to stop fighting

hard-line: uncompromising

hostile: unfriendly, aggressive

moderate states: countries that are not extreme

a talking shop: a place where only words are exchanged and no real action is taken

dismay: disappointment

draft communiqué: a message that is being prepared

sever all ties: cut all links

a mediator: a person who talks to both sides involved in an argument

undermined: to make someone or something less secure

(Source: BBC)

3,863 Iranians lost lives in road crashes within 3 months

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Road crash casualties amounted to 3,863 in the country during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), traffic police chief Seyed Kamal Hadianfar has said.

During the first three days of summer, 64 people were killed in traffic related accidents, while 1,375 others got injured, he added.

He went on to note that 2,368 drivers were responsible for the crashes occurred in the aforementioned period.

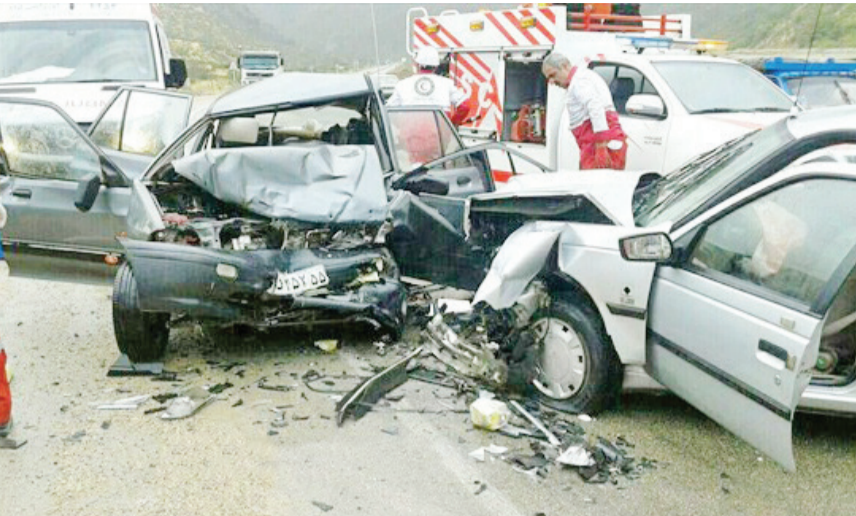
Given that 91 percent of the country’s total transportation is carried out on roads, there must be special attention to the infrastructure of the roads nationwide, he noted.

Approximately, 22,270,187 vehicles are running in the country and the number of motorcycles reach over 11 million, he said, adding that some 41 million of Iranians currently have driving license.

He further explained that during the two first months of this year, 2,584 people have lost their lives due to road accidents, which means that some 25 people got killed immediately at the crash scene each day, while the number increases to 41 people with taking into account the deaths happening on the way to hospitals.

About 9 of the road accident fatalities have been children who play no role in the accidents and are the victims, he lamented.

Although, road fatalities occurred in sub-



urban areas have dropped by 9 percent during the first two months of this year compared to the same period last year, it increased by 4.6 in urban areas, he regretted.

Analyzing the statistics of the aforementioned period, he pointed out that 54 percent of the deaths happened right in the accident scene, 6 percent while transferring to hospital and 39 percent occurred in medical centers.

Referring to rollovers having a higher fatality rate than other types of vehicle collisions, he said that overturned car ac-

cidents are responsible for road fatalities by an average of 24-25 percent, adding, it increased by 40 percent over the Eid al-Fitr vacation (June 4-5) on the southern roads of the country.

He also added that not paying attention to the front road, driving an unsafe speed, overtaking and reckless driving are among the leading causes of such incidents.

Cars are to blame for 57 percent of the accidents, while motorcycles are responsible for 27 percent, and 7.3 and 4.4 percent of

Tehran short of 12,000 classrooms

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Considering the current population of students educating in Tehran, there is a shortage of 12,000 classrooms which will increase to 18,000 over the next few years, director of the organization for renovation of Tehran schools has stated.

Currently, 8,500 classrooms are beyond repair and must be reconstructed, while 14,500 others need retrofitting, ISNA quoted Ali Shahri as saying on Wednesday.

There is also a high density of students in the capital, and despite the average capacity of classrooms accommodating 24 students, the number of students in some areas is twice the average, he lamented.

Referring to the current construction projects, he said that there are 110 projects under construction, half of which will be completed by the new school year (September 23).

Last year, we were working on some 220 projects and succeeded in completing half of them, he added.



He went on to say that “We tend to start new construction projects. For the time being, tenders have been held for about 30 projects.”

The projects consist of schools, classrooms, sport halls, pool and the other parts of schools, he further concluded.

In December 2018, Mehrollah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development and equipment of schools, said that there were some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which awee dilapidated, not meeting safety standards.

Shadegan wetland water level rises after heavy rain

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Shadegan wetland fully filled after heavy rainfall poured over the province of Khuzestan during spring, Ahmad Lahijanzadeh, head of marine environment affairs at the DOE has said.

Shadegan wetland covers 530,000 hectares, 400,000 hectares of which has been designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value).

“Also, the wetland feed on Marun and Karun rivers both crossing Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahamd province,” he added.

After the torrential rains and flooding started on March 19, the wetland has been saturated, Lahijanzadeh said, adding, water flowed Hour al-Azim wetland by 97 percent.

Based on the latest data published



by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization, since the current crop year (September 23, 2018), precipitation in the country increased to 310.2 millimeters from 159.2 millimeters in the previous water year, demonstrating a 94.9 percent rise. The amount also raised in comparison to the long-term average of 222.3 mm, amounting to 39.5 percent.

“Currently, both wetlands are in good condition so that migratory birds including flamingos are returning to the area,” he concluded.

Clearing the road ahead to reach Zero Hunger in Asia and the Pacific

FAO Conference side event explores obstacles such as urbanization, inequality, obesity and natural disasters

Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger has slowed in Asia and the Pacific, despite strong economic advances, and highlighting the need for concerted policy actions to tackle the increasingly complex nature of challenges ahead, representatives of FAO Member Countries heard during an event on the sidelines of the 41st Session of the FAO Conference.

“Asia has always been the biggest region for FAO, in terms of people and land and the number of malnourished people,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva. “There have been large reductions in poverty and hunger in China, but unfortunately this progress has not been followed by all big countries.”

He also warned that rising rates of obesity in Pacific Island states are linked to local people shifting from eating traditional healthy foods such as taro and local fruits and vegetables to instead consuming cheap imports such as chips and other artificial foods. Such malnutrition - obesity and hunger - were “two sides of the same coin,” Graziano da Silva said.

“Various factors are at work to undermine the fight against hunger in Asia and the Pacific,” said Kundhavi Kadiresan, FAO Assistant Director-General and the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific. She cited increasingly frequent natural disasters as well as unequal distribution of income - perhaps the most “stubborn problem of all” - and the cumulative impact

of stresses on the natural resource base, all of which tend to weigh on the most vulnerable and food insecure.

On the issue of obesity, and in addition to the Pacific Islands, Kadiresan noted it was occurring in all sub-regions, with a pronounced effect in urban centers. “Going forward, we will have to focus more on urban nutrition problems than we have in the past,” she said.

■ Beyond doom and gloom

The side-event, “On the road to Zero Hunger in Asia and the Pacific,” also presented an opportunity to examine some of the efforts being made in countries around the region that are resulting in both challenges and positive outcomes.

Bangladesh, India, Iran and Nepal have enshrined the right to food in their constitutions, Kadiresan noted, while Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam have deployed shock-responsive social protection measures tied to food security to build resilience against disasters.

Kadiresan offered special thanks to the Director-General for being an “inspiration to us all”, particularly for his initiative to appoint Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand as UN FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Zero Hunger. The Princess’s high level of visibility, work and advocacy has helped raise awareness in the Asia-Pacific region to work to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition.

■ Different directions along the same road to Zero Hunger

Indeed, approaches to defeating hunger and improving nutrition have varied across the region, ranging from the multi-sectoral coordination approach to food security Fiji has adopted, and the food system framework used in Indonesia to nutrition-focused production strategies and even specific National Action Plans on Zero Hunger, as Thailand and Nepal have done with the support of FAO.

Many countries in the Asia and Pacific region are also pursuing ways to incorporate neglected and underutilized species such as millets, sorghums and yams - so-called “future smart food” - as part of their food strategies. Kadiresan pointed out that FAO is collaborating in this area with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and is now “looking to partner with international financial institutions for higher impact investments.”

Mahendra Reddy, Fiji’s Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environments, who spoke at the event, emphasized the importance of improving school nutrition in a country where 63 percent of people over the age of 17 are obese and non-communicable diseases are the cause of four of every five deaths.

(Source: FAO)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

‘Too soon to decide cheetah kept in captivity is pregnant or not’

Female Asiatic cheetah, Delbar, kept in captivity, undergone artificial insemination at Pardisan Park in Tehran earlier this year (starting on March 21), and may be pregnant but it is still too soon to determine, Majid Kharrazian-Moqaddam, director of the wildlife conservation and management at the Department of Environment has said.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“ex-, exo-”

■ **Meaning:** outside or external

■ **For example:** For some people, **exotic** animals make great pets because of their shock value and novelty.

PHRASAL VERB

Note something down

■ **Meaning:** to write something down so that you will remember it

■ **For example:** Note down the main points you want to include in your essay.

IDIOM

Cross that bridge when we come to it

■ **Explanation:** to deal with a problem when it occurs and not worry about it before

■ **For example:** What will happen if we can’t repay the loan? We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.

تشخیص بارداری دلبر؛ ماده یوزپلنگ پارک پردیسان هنوز زود است

مجید خرازیان مقدم، مدیرکل دفتر حفاظت و مدیریت حیات وحش سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: حدود دو ماه پیش عملیات لقاح مصنوعی بر روی دلبر؛ ماده یوزپلنگ پارک پردیسان با موفقیت انجام شد اما تشخیص بارداری او هنوز زود است.

Rights groups denounce french government ‘Punitive Policy’ on refugees

TEHRAN (FNA) — Twenty prominent rights groups denounced France’s “punitive policy” toward the refugees held in the country’s detention centers, where at least two people recently committed suicide and many others are on hunger strike. In a letter to French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner on Wednesday, the rights groups, including Amnesty International and Doctors without Borders, warned the French government about the refugees’ conditions in the country’s detention camps, World News reported.

They said that two people had committed suicide in the detention centers, and cited cases of hunger strikes, riots, and arson attempts due to the difficult conditions at the sites. “Men and women self-harm or attempt suicide in the Administrative Detention Centers (CRAs) [as] the result of an unacceptable policy that leads to an extremely alarming situation,” added the letter. The government, it announced, “trivializes the deprivation of liberty for foreigners” in the meantime.

The 20 associations also called on Castaner to ban the confinement of children, to protect the sick, and to “put an end to the administration’s illegal practices”. Castaner stated on Tuesday that the detention



of children in the CRAs had to remain an “exceptional” circumstance and only happen in specialized centers capable of housing whole families. But the letter by the rights groups indicated that was not happening. The rights groups also said there were many detainees suffering from mental disorders who were being locked up in separate rooms

with no professional help.

France’s highest administrative court issued an order last week calling for the installation of water points, showers, and toilets in a gymnasium that is housing some 700 refugees in Grande-Sythe in northern France. The NGOs described the situation at the site as a violation of the rights of

the detainees. Earlier this month, another group of rights organizations said that last year saw a rise in the number of families with children being held in French refugee detention centers, with 1,221 children on the French-administered Indian Ocean island of Mayotte and 208 more in mainland France. According to The Guardian, an estimated 16,000 refugees live in 497 informal settlements in France.

Last month, the United Nations (UN)’s special rapporteur for housing also called on the French government to act on the “dire” living conditions of refugees sleeping rough in Calais, the site of the former notorious “Jungle” camp in Northern France. The human rights groups announced in their Wednesday letter that police in Calais forcibly evicted people who were sleeping outside in wooded areas or by the sides of roads and confiscated their tents and sleeping bags, leaving them without any shelter.

France adopted harsh refugee policies after destroying Calais’ notorious camp back in October 2016. Most of the refugees arriving in France, and Europe in general, are the nationals of Middle Eastern countries who have been displaced by conflict, often instigated by Western countries.

India on sanctions over S-400 sale: We’ll do what’s in Our national interest

TEHRAN (FNA) — Minister of External Affairs of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar stated, in the course of his press conference with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, that India will do what is in its national interests regarding S-400 purchases from Russia possibly attracting CATSAA sanctions.

Jaishankar stressed that part of being good partners is to “comprehend and appreciate the national interests of each other”, Sputnik reported.

The US Secretary of State said that he and his counterpart had touched upon India’s wish to buy Russia’s S-400 air defense systems. “You ask in particular about trade disputes and S-400 challenge

that we face ... On each of those two issues, we had a chance to talk today, to try and plot a path forward”, Pompeo noted.

Pompeo, who landed in India late on Monday, has a very busy schedule for his trip. The secretary of state already held talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Adviser Shri Ajit Doval earlier in the day.

Pompeo’s visit comes ahead of the G20 summit, which will be held in the Japanese city of Osaka from June 28-29. US President Donald Trump and Modi are expected to hold negotiations on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders.



Russia vows ‘Countervailing Military Measures’ if NATO fulfills its INF-linked threats

TEHRAN (FNA) — Moscow will be forced to take ‘countervailing’ military measures should NATO make good on its threats related to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters on Wednesday.

“Attempts to portray what is happening as a military and political response to Russia’s actions reek of a propaganda campaign with a large element of deliberate misinformation

being fed to global public opinion,” Ryabkov stated, according to TASS.

“When these threats begin to materialize into real action, we will have to take countervailing military measures,” he added.

Over the past years, the alliance’s member-states have adopted an ideology of a dual-track approach to their relations with Russia: to contain it along with holding dialogue on the issues, which NATO seeks to

discuss. Russia will pursue a similar line, the high-ranking diplomat stressed.

“We will contain NATO’s aggressive plans, measure them and adopt a very selective approach to dialogue with the alliance, which the member-states of this organization are promoting,” he said.

According to Ryabkov, although the alliance is interested in discussing the Ukrainian crisis at the NATO-Russia Council, “this

does not mean that Moscow will be ready to do this”.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Tuesday that the alliance’s member-states could agree on a number of measures in connection with Russia’s suspended participation in the INF Treaty. Besides, he added Russia had five more weeks to eliminate its missiles, which allegedly violate the arms control treaty.

China blocks all Canadian meat imports as trade war with U.S. heats up

TEHRAN (FNA) — China suspended all imports of meat from Canada, saying it found traces of illegal feed and demanding action. The move comes amid a trade war with the US and extradition hearings for an arrested Huawei executive.

“In order to protect the safety of Chinese consumers, China has taken urgent preventive measures and requested the Canadian government to suspend the issuance of certificates for meat exported to China,” the Chinese embassy in Ottawa said in a statement on Tuesday, adding that a probe of meat imports has revealed as many as 1888 “counterfeit” veterinary health certificates and accusing Canadian authorities of “obvious safety loopholes”, RT reported.

The investigation was launched after Chinese authorities said that traces of a feed additive banned in China were found in Canadian pork. Official data shows that China bought \$235.26 million worth of pork from Canada between January and April this year, and was Ottawa’s third-largest export destination.



Canadian reactions to the announcement have ranged from regret to outrage, sprinkled with speculation that Beijing’s move might be related to the ongoing legal drama of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei who was arrested in Vancouver on a US warrant in December.

Her extradition to the US is pending.

However, Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau confirmed that the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency (CFIA) found “inauthentic export certificates” and was working closely with both the meat industry and Chinese officials to address the problem.

“CFIA is investigating this technical issue and has informed appropriate law enforcement agencies. This incident is specific to export certificates to China. Export certificates to other countries are not affected,” Bibeau stated in the statement.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has sought help from US President Donald Trump, who is supposed to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the upcoming G20 summit in Osaka, Japan and discuss trade relations that have been damaged by the ongoing tariff war.

Meanwhile, China is dealing with a shortage of pork due to the epidemic of African swine fever, which has killed millions of animals and driven up meat prices.

Egypt threatened Morsi before his death

TEHRAN (FNA) — Egypt’s first democratically-elected president Mohammad Morsi was threatened by Egyptian officials days before he died, according to a report.

Morsi was pressured to surrender his legitimacy as the elected president of Egypt and bow down to the regime of Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, but he rejected, Middle East Eye (MEE) claimed.

Morsi was told to disband the Muslim Brotherhood or “face the consequences”, the MEE said in the report.

He refused to talk about closing down the Muslim Brotherhood, stating that he “is not the leader of the movement”.

Morsi dismissed the threat and he was dead after a couple of days.

Morsi has been in prison undergoing multiple trials ever since the military ousted him in July 2013 and launched a massive crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. The session was part of a retrial, being held inside Cairo’s Tura Prison, on charges of espionage with the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

The Muslim Brotherhood has accused Egyptian authorities of being responsible for Morsi’s “deliberate slow death”.

The Egyptian authorities “put him in solitary confinement... they withheld medication and gave him disgusting food... they did not give him the most basic human rights”, the Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party announced in a statement



published on its website.

Senior Muslim Brotherhood official Amr Darrag called for an international expert team to examine Morsi’s body.

Amnesty International also called for a

fair, transparent and comprehensive Egyptian investigation into Morsi’s death.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, calling Morsi a “martyr”, extended condolences to his family and the Egyptian people.

“Unfortunately, the incident took place in the court room. I first of all I wish God’s mercy for our martyred brother Morsi,” he said.

“The West has always been silent in the face of these executions by el-Sissi. The EU member states forbidding execution unfortunately accepted an invitation by this murderer Sissi to attend a meeting in Egypt,” he added, criticizing the EU for being “hypocrites” and calling Sissi a “tyrant” who took power in a “coup” and trampled on democracy.

Yemeni drones hit Jizan, Abha Airports in Saudi Arabia: Military

➔1 “The attacks on Abha and Jizan airports are in response to the crimes of Saudi-led aggressors and the ongoing siege on Yemen, which has now entered its fifth year,” the top Yemeni military official pointed out, according to Press TV.

Saree then called on civilians and businesses to stay away from Saudi airports and military sites, stating that they are legitimate targets as long as the Saudi-led military aggression and the blockade of Yemen continue.

It is not the first attack on Abha International Airport. It was also struck by Yemeni forces on Monday, with one person killed and 8 others injured in the incident.

The attacks were in retaliation for the Riyadh regime’s deadly military campaign against their country.

Poll: Biden and Sanders both lead Trump by 10 points nationally

TEHRAN — An Emerson Polling survey released Tuesday found both former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) leading President Trump by 10 points nationally.

The poll, conducted June 21-24 among 1,096 voters, found the two Democratic presidential hopefuls ahead of Trump in a hypothetical match-up, 55 percent to 45 percent.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) also led Trump in the survey, 53 percent to 47 percent, while Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg both led him 52 percent to 48 percent. The survey has a 2.9 point margin of error. The survey showed Trump with a steady 43 percent approval rating and his disapproval at 48 percent, down 1 point since last month.

It also found a gender gap among approval of the president, with 47 percent of male respondents approving and 47 percent disapproving, compared to 49 percent disapproval among female respondents and 39 percent approval.

Several other national polls have Trump trailing Biden, who has led most polls of the crowded Democratic primary field ahead of the first debates this Wednesday and Thursday. Other polling has also indicated Biden leads Trump in several key states, including internal polling by a firm Trump’s reelection campaign severed ties with after it was leaked to the media earlier this month.

Mass ‘Free Zakzaky’ rallies held in northwest nigeria

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Thousands of protesters took to streets in Northwestern Nigerian town of Kano as well as Suleja and Abuja in a peaceful weekly protest call for the release of Islamic Movement in Nigeria’s (IMN) leader

Mass ‘Free Zakzaky’ Rallies Held in Northwest Nigeria (+Video)

A video uploaded on YouTube by activists shows a large group of people staging massive rallies in Kano major streets to express their anger over long-time detention of the Islamic leader by the Nigerian government and asking for his release after years of detention.

Zakzaky has been imprisoned at an unknown location without charge since he was detained by security forces in 2015 after the Nigerian army carried out a raid on his residence in the northern town of Zaria during which he lost his left eyesight.

Back in 2016, Nigeria’s federal high court ordered his unconditional release from jail following a trial but the government has so far refused to set him free.

Syrian army reinforces military positions in homs’ desert region

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Syrian Army dispatched fresh troops and massive military equipment to Badiyeh (desert) region in Homs province in a bid to reinforce its military positions in areas around Palmyra and al-Sukhneh region, a Syrian military source said.

The source pointed to the possibility of ISIL’s increasing movements in Badiyeh region after the alleged operations by the US and its allied militants in Eastern Deir Ezzur, and said that the dispatch of military convoy by the ISIL has taken place to confront any possible attacks by the ISIL.

“The Syrian Army troops also engaged in fierce clashes with the ISIL terrorists in the surrounding areas of al-Koum in Badiyeh al-Sukhneh in Eastern Homs, killing a number of them,” he added.

Meantime, the Syrian Army’s artillery units and air forces also heavily pounded the ISIL’s movements in Palmyra and al-Sukhneh Badiyeh and in the surrounding areas of T3 Station and al-Moayzeleh Dam up to borders with Deir Ezzur, destroying several terrorists’ targets and killing a number of them.

In a relevant development earlier in June, the Arabic-language al-Mayadeen Television news network reported that the ISIL backed by the US troops stationed in al-Tanf had heightened its movements against the Syrian Army in Eastern Badiyeh of Homs province.

Al-Mayadeen, meantime, pointed to the massive spread of terrorists in the surrounding areas of Jabal al-Bashri in Southeastern Raqqa and al-Dafineh in Southern Deir Ezzur and between Palmyra desert and Al-Sukhneh and the surrounding areas of al-Tanf in Eastern Homs, and said that the ISIL’s movements have taken place in line with US’ objectives to exert pressure on the Syrian Army and its allies in Syria.

Meantime, it is believed that about 2,000 terrorists are stationed in Eastern Badiyeh of Deir Ezzur.

In a relevant development in late May, the Arabic-language media outlets said that “the

U.S. was supporting the terrorist groups” on the Syrian Army positions in Homs as the Syrian Army is conducting military operations to cleanse the ISIL’s remnants from the Eastern Badiyeh in the province..

The Syrian Army backed by Russian air force has reinforced its military points on the hills overlooking al-Aqirbat and al-Balas regions as well as their surrounding areas in Eastern Homs, the Arabic-language website of the Russian Sputnik News Agency quoted a Syrian Army battlefield commander in Eastern Homs as saying.

The source pointed to the Syrian Army’s military operations to clean up the remaining ISIL terrorists in the Northeastern part of al-Aqirbat in Eastern Homs, and said the Syrian Army troops are preparing for new battle against the ISIL on the road leading to Deir Ezzur.

Palestinians gather in Sydney in protest of Deal of Century

SYDNEY (MNA) — Palestinian workers union in Sydney, Australia, gathered on Mon. to denounce the US-sponsored summit in Bahrain where Washington is expected to reveal details of its long-awaited initiative, called ‘Deal of the Century.’

The Deal of the Century plan was denounced by the gathering as an effort to destroy the dream of the Palestinians to return to their homeland and form the Palestinian

state over the Israeli occupation.

The gathering was attended by Arab and Muslim communities, as well as activists and politicians.

Senator Shawekett Moselmane spoke at the gathering on Monday, voicing regret over the actualization of any deal that would harm the Palestinians’ rights.

Abdul Illah Hobiashi, a Bahriani activist, spoke against

the Bahraini rulers for allowing this shameful meeting to be taken place in Manama.

Raoul, an Argentinean activist, also spoke in the gathering. Eddy Zananari, a Palestinian activist and former adviser for late Palestinian leader Yaser Arafat was the last person to speak in details against the shameful Deal of the Century.

Silva: I am leaving Manchester City this season

Manchester City midfielder David Silva has said he will leave the Premier League champions at the end of the 2019-20 season.

Asked if he would stay beyond next season, the 33-year-old was quoted as saying by the BBC: "No, this is the last one."

"Ten years for me is enough. It's the perfect time for me."

"Initially, City were talking about two years, but I decided to sign [for] another one, so I finished at 10 years."

"It completes the cycle. It's a nice round figure. I can never see myself playing against City for another team. So 10 years -- that's it."

Silva, who joined City from Valencia in 2010, has won four Premier League titles, two FA Cups and the League Cup four times, making 396 appearances for the club to date.

Capped 125 times by Spain, Silva won the World Cup in 2010 and the European Championship in 2008 and 2012.

He told ESPN FC last year that he would like to end his career playing for Las Palmas, his hometown club on the island of Gran Canaria.

(Source: ESPN)

Arsenal set to win €25m Saliba race

Arsenal are poised to make France under-19 defender William Saliba their first signing of the summer in a €25 million deal, sources have told ESPN FC.

Arsenal and Saint-Etienne have almost reached an agreement for the promising 18-year-old, who is tall, quick, strong and excellent on the ball.

Saliba, who fits with Arsenal's new recruitment strategy of young, promising players like Lucas Torreira and Matteo Guendouzi, will stay on loan at Saint-Etienne next season in an effort to continue his development and play regular first-team football.

Beaten Europa League finalists Arsenal have beaten a number of rivals to the signing of Saliba, including Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain.

(Source: Soccernet)

Bayern consider bid for Ousmane Dembele - report

Bayern Munich will consider a move for Barcelona winger Ousmane Dembele if they fail to sign Leroy Sane from Manchester City, Bild newspaper reported on Wednesday.

With veteran wingers Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery leaving the club, Bayern had targeted Germany international Sane as they look to bolster their attack ahead of next season.

"If the Sane transfer fails, Bayern also have Ousmane Dembele on their list," wrote Bild.

France international Dembele, 22, was linked to Bayern before joining Borussia Dortmund from Rennes for 15 million euros (\$17m) in 2016.

A year later, he became the most expensive outgoing or incoming transfer in Bundesliga history when Dortmund sold him to Barcelona for 125 million euros.

With his current contract set to expire in 2022, questions remain over whether Bayern could afford to sign the French international.

Bayern broke their own transfer record with the 80-million-euro signing of French defender Lucas Hernandez earlier this year, as they look to rejuvenate their squad in what club president Uli Hoeness has called "the biggest investment programme in our history".

Yet their recruitment drive has stalled in recent weeks, with Hoeness openly admitting that first-choice target Sane may prove to be too expensive.

(Source: AFP)

Breakdancing takes step closer to Paris 2024 inclusion

Breakdancing has moved a step closer to being in the 2024 Olympics after its inclusion was approved by International Olympic Committee (IOC) members.

Along with surfing, climbing and skateboarding, 'breaking' was proposed by Paris organizers in February.

A final decision on the sports' inclusion will be made in late 2020 by the IOC executive board.

Games chiefs want to introduce events that are "more gender-balanced, younger and urban".

"As well as being spectacular and creative, they generate strong engagement among young people," said Paris 2024 president Tony Estanguet. "They also project the values that we hold dear in terms of openness and diversity."

Surfing, climbing and skateboarding will make their Olympic debuts at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

In 2018, breaking debuted at the Youth Olympic Games though there was no British representation.

(Source: BBC)

West Indies legend Lara discharged from Mumbai hospital

West Indies batting legend Brian Lara was given the all-clear and discharged from a Mumbai hospital on Wednesday, a day after he was admitted because of chest pains.

"He was discharged at 12:00 pm (0630 GMT). His condition is normal," hospital spokesman said.

Lara was rushed to hospital on Tuesday in India's financial capital where he is currently working for Star Sports, the official broadcasters of the ongoing cricket World Cup.

The 50-year-old Trinidadian underwent an angiography "as a precaution", Dhurke said. "His health is good," he added.

Lara released an audio recording on Tuesday night in which he said he was "fine".

"I may have just extended myself in the gym this morning," he said, thanking people for their concern.

He added that he was "chilling" in his hospital bed watching the England versus Australia match and joked that he hoped Australia would win.

"Not a big fan of England," he said.

Australia went on to thump England by 64 runs to book their place in the World Cup semi-finals.

(Source: AP)

Federer seeded second at Wimbledon, Nadal drops to three

LONDON (Reuters) — Eight-time champion Roger Federer was confirmed as the second seed for Wimbledon on Wednesday, bumping Rafael Nadal down to third despite being ranked below the Spaniard.

Defending champion Novak Djokovic tops the draw while new world number one Ash Barty is top seed in the women's singles.

South African Kevin Anderson, runner-up to Djokovic last season, is fourth seed despite falling to eighth in the ATP rankings as Wimbledon used its special formula once again.

Twice Wimbledon champion Nadal will be seeded three, meaning he is likely to have to beat both Federer and Djokovic to claim his first title at the All England Club since 2010.

The Spaniard was critical of the Wimbledon's seedings formula this week, saying "it's not a good thing" that the grasscourt event is the only one of the four Grand Slams that does not stick rigidly to ATP rankings



Sambo: Russia's Olympic dreams for homegrown martial art



With elements of judo, karate, boxing, Greco-Roman wrestling and more, sambo was created to train the forces of the Soviet Union and is still taught in the Russian army.

As a sport, dating back to 1930, it has caught attention this month at the European Games in Minsk.

Now its backers are targeting the Olympics.

The history of sambo -- the name of which comes from a contraction of the Russian phrase "self-defense without weapons" -- is closely tied to that of the USSR.

For decades, trainer Anatoly Kharlampiyev was held up as the father of the sport, said to be a combination of pre-existing Slavic combat forms.

It was only in 1982, three years after Kharlampiyev's death, that the role of former soldiers Victor Spiridonov and Vasily Oshchepkov was made public.

Oshchepkov was a judo specialist who had studied in Japan and later trained Red Army soldiers, and was well aware that sambo owed much to Asian martial arts.

But in Stalin's USSR, everything that came from abroad was subject to suspicion.

Oshchepkov was arrested for spying for Japan, sent to the Gulag and executed in 1938.

In Russia, star fighters in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) -- another popular discipline in the country -- all say they came to the sport via sambo.

Unlike the combat version used in the military, the sport of sambo is not violent and relies on restraining rather than striking opponents.

President of the International Sambo Federation Vasily Shestakov has reportedly said he hoped the sport would be included in the Olympics.

Last November, IOC officials granted sambo temporary IOC recognition, bringing it a step closer to becoming an Olympic sport one day.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, a martial arts enthusiast, has long championed the sport.

(Source: AFP)

Germany fear for Olympic spot as Europeans dominate World Cup



Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg admitted Wednesday that she fears for her side's place in the 2020 Olympic Games due to the overwhelming success of European teams at the Women's World Cup.

Voss-Tecklenburg, 51, watched on from the stands in Rennes on Tuesday night as the Netherlands beat Japan to become the seventh European country to reach the World Cup quarter-finals.

With only the three best European teams at the World Cup earning qualification for next year's Olympics in Tokyo, there is now even more at stake than usual in the latter stages of the tournament.

"Even the semi-final may not be enough now, if four European teams get there," said Voss-Tecklenburg on Wednesday, with an eye on Olympic qualification.

Japan's defeat means that holders USA are now the only non-European team left in the tournament.

for seedings.

Wimbledon uses form over the past 24 months on grass to tweak the positions of the top 32 players in the men's draw.

While the women's seedings are in line with the WTA rankings, Wimbledon reserves the right to change the order to create "a balanced draw".

Anderson's promotion is bad news for French Open runner-up and world number four Dominic Thiem who drops to fifth seed and could play Djokovic, Federer or Nadal in the last eight.

Former runner-up Marin Cilic moved up from a world ranking of 18 to the 13th seeded spot.

Seven-time champion Serena Williams is seeded 11th as per her WTA ranking. Last year the American was bumped up to 25th seed despite being ranked 183rd after returning to the Tour following the birth of her daughter.

IOC approves exclusion of boxing body from Tokyo 2020 Games

LAUSANNE— Switzerland (Reuters) - The International Olympic Committee on Wednesday officially took over the boxing qualification and competition for next year's Tokyo 2020 Olympics and suspended international boxing federation AIBA following a vote at its session.

The IOC voted unanimously to implement a recommendation of its executive board to oust AIBA from the Tokyo 2020 Games over issues surrounding its finances and governance and suspend the body until the issues are resolved.

AIBA has been in turmoil over its finances and governance for years with the federation \$16 million in debt and an ongoing bitter battle over the presidency that has split the body internally.

Serbian IOC member Nenad Lalovic, who heads an IOC task force to look into the ties with AIBA, earlier on Wednesday delivered a damning report to the IOC session, saying the association could reach a debt of as much as \$29 million.

He also said AIBA had failed to reform at the top of the organization.

AIBA president Gafur Rahimov suspended himself from



the post in March because of his presence on an U.S. Treasury Department sanctions list "for providing material support" to a criminal organization. The Uzbek strongly denies the allegations.

Rahimov's presence on that sanctions list was extremely damaging to the IOC though he has been replaced on an interim basis by Mohamed Moustahsane.

"It exposes the IOC and its commercial partners to unacceptable reputational, legal and financial risks," he said.

Lalovic said AIBA's debt meant money would not go to sports and the athletes in the future and the organization still faced problems with refereeing.

AIBA largely depends on Olympic Games revenues to survive between Games and has started letting people go as a result of its Olympic exclusion. The sport's governing body will discuss the IOC decision at its Executive Committee meeting on Thursday.

Japanese IOC member Morinari Watanabe, president of the international gymnastics federation, heads the task force to organize qualifiers and the Tokyo Games competition.

England's Houghton and Bright injury doubts for Norway clash

England manager Phil Neville says defenders Steph Houghton and Millie Bright are "major doubts" for their women's World Cup quarter-final against Norway in Le Havre on Thursday.

Captain Houghton was on the receiving end of a tough challenge during the closing stages of the 3-0 victory over Cameroon in the last 16, while Bright is suffering from a virus.

"Both are major doubts," Neville told a news conference on Wednesday.

"Steph because of the tackle, we are hoping she takes part in some training today, that is the key for Steph."

"Millie has got a virus that is going a little bit through the camp so she is probably more of a doubt than Steph. We are

going to give them right to the last minute to be fit."

England losing their center-back pairing could be seen as a blow but Neville said he was relaxed about the potential replacements, Leah Williamson and Abbie McManus, who have previous featured at the World Cup and SheBelieves Cup.

"You guys have had an obsession with my rotation for the last 18 months... but it's for moments like this," Neville added.

"We can bring in two people who know the system and the have utter belief and confidence in each other. It's a seamless transition."

"I put my life on Leah and Abbie that, if called upon, they will be the best two players on the pitch."

The Lionesses are currently on a five-match winning streak in the World Cup, which is their best ever run in the history of tournament.

Goalkeeper Karen Bardsley feels the squad is peaking at the right time as they look to improve on their third-placed finish in 2015.

"I think we are the most prepared team, the most resilient team, and we know our strengths," she said.

"We have gathered momentum throughout the group stages and experienced different tests, and I am very excited for the game tomorrow because I do not think we have reached out potential yet."

"I think we could do that."

(Source: Reuters)



Alireza Emamifar named Iran assistant coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Persepolis midfielder Alireza Emamifar has been named as assistant coach of Marc Wilmots.

Emamifar can speak French since he has played in Belgian top-flight football club Charleroi for two years.

Former Bayern Munich striker Vahid Hashemian has been previously chosen as Wilmots's first Iranian assistant.

Hashemian also speaks German fluently, which makes it easier for them to communicate.

Wilmots will name two other Iranian assistants soon.

French coach Laurent Spinosi had been already named as Iran's goalkeeping coach.

Kevin Miny is Team Melli's fitness coach and Herman De Landsheer serves as analyst.

Manu Ferrera is also Wilmots's Spanish assistant in Iran national football team.

Wilmots replaced Carlos Queiroz, who helped Iran qualify for the 2014 and 2018 World Cup finals.

The Belgian notched up his first win in charge with a comfortable 5-0 victory over Syria at Tehran's Azadi Stadium in early June and drew 1-1 with South Korea five days later.

Iran, who are top AFC team in the FIFA rankings at No. 21, will likely play a friendly match with Japan in late August.

Iran are preparing for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that begin in the second half of this year.



Iran's Sarkhosh wins gold at Asian 6-Red Championship



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Amir Sarkhosh from Iran emerged champion of the 2019 Asian 6-Red Championship.

The Iranian representative defeated Pakistan's Babar Masih 7-4 in the final match.

Asjad Iqbal also from Pakistan bagged a bronze medal.

The 2019 Asian 6-Red Championship was held in Doha, Qatar.

The Iranian 28-year-old player had won a gold medal at the 2019 IBSF 6 Red World Cup in Doha, Qatar in January after defeating Thailand's Thanawat Tirapongpaiboon 7-6 in the final match.

Six-red snooker (sometimes spelled six-reds, 6-red, and also known as super 6s), is a variant of snooker, but with only six red balls initially on the table as opposed to the standard fifteen.

Iran senior football team to play U23 in friendly



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team will play Iran U23 team in a friendly match in late July.

The match has been scheduled for July 24.

Iran U23 football team, headed by Farhad Majidi, prepare for the 2020 AFC U23 Championship which will be held in Thailand from Jan. 8 to 26.

The top three teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2020 Summer Olympics men's football tournament in Japan as the AFC representatives.

Iran, a powerhouse of the Asian football, have not been in the Olympics since the 1976 games in Munich.

Iran national football team are also preparing for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that begin in September.

Barcelona near €60m mark with Cillessen, Gomes sales

Barcelona midfielder Andre Gomes has joined Everton in a deal worth €25 million plus add ons, the Spanish champions have confirmed.

Gomes is set to be followed out the Camp Nou door by goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen, who passed a medical with Valencia on Tuesday ahead of a €30m transfer.

Barca also finalized the departure of Marc Cardona on Tuesday. The young forward has joined promoted La Liga side Osasuna for €2.5m after spending last season on loan at Eibar.

The sales edge the club towards the €60m they need to bring in before the end of the month to balance their accounts for the 2018-19 season.

Gomes, 25, spent last season on loan at Premier League side Everton having fallen out of favour at Barcelona, who he joined from Valencia in 2016 for €35 initially.

His performances in England drew interest from elsewhere -- notably West Ham United -- but the Portugal midfielder said it was always his desire to remain at Goodison Park.

«It wasn't hard to decide, it was an easy decision and I'm very happy to have made it,» Gomes said.

«Last year was a really good experience for me.



I just wanted to feel part of something special and I found it here. It was good for me at that moment and right now, after signing for Everton, it's even better.»

Gomes made 78 appearances for Barca and won four trophies, but was never able to win a regular place in the side. Criticism from fans led him to reveal that life in his second season at the club had become «a kind of hell.»

Meanwhile, Cillessen is in Valencia to complete his move to the La Liga side. The deal will eventually see goalkeeper Neto move in the other direction. Barca will pay a fee in the region of €25m for the one-cap

Brazil international.

However, the Catalan club must wait until July before finalising that part of the agreement due to their need to bring in money before the end of June to balance their accounts before starting afresh next month.

Barca signed Cillessen from Ajax in 2016 to provide competition for Marc-Andre ter Stegen following the sale of Claudio Bravo. The Dutch goalkeeper has done well when he's played -- mainly in the Copa del Rey -- but has failed to oust the German from between the posts.

Cillessen, 30, made 32 appearances for Barcelona in total and helped them win the Copa del Rey twice. He was also a runner-up in the same competition in May when the Blaugrana lost to his new club Valencia.

Before that final, he had already made it clear that he wanted to leave Barca this summer in search of regular first-team football ahead of next year's European Championships.

There was strong interest from Portuguese side Benfica but they were never willing to match the €30m Barcelona were asking for.

(Source: ESPN)

Thailand 2019 draw to take place today

Asia's top 16 futsal clubs will learn their opponents for the AFC Futsal Club Championship 2019 on Thursday at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as the excitement builds for the annual tournament, which takes place in Bangkok, Thailand from August 7 to 18 this year.

Clubs will be divided into four groups and have been seeded according to the final ranking from last year's tournament in Yogyakarta, Indonesia - with position A1 reserved for the side representing hosts Thailand - Port Futsal Club.

The Thai club will be making their return to the Continental stage for the first time since the inaugural edition in 2010 when they finished fourth, at the expense of traditional powerhouses and two-time winners, Bluewave Chonburi.



Defending champions, Mes Sungun, who became the fourth Iranian club to win the Continental club championship

in 2018, return to the tournament in Pot 1, together with the side they defeated in the final last year, Vietnam's Thai Son Nam.

Lebanon's Bank of Beirut who finished third in the last edition -- their best-ever performance -- complete the line-up in Pot 1.

The tournament's most successful club with three titles, Nagoya Oceans from Japan, will take their place in Pot 2 along with 2016 runners-up Iraq's Naft Al Wasat as well as Kyrgyz Republic's FC Erem and Vamos FC who were the first Indonesian team to qualify for the Knockout Stage in the last tournament.

Uzbekistan's AGMK FC and Myanmar's Victoria University College FC, both of whom made their debuts last year, will return this year and are joined by this edition's debutants Star FS Seoul from Korea Republic and Kuwait's Kazma SC in the draw's final pot.

(Source: the-afc)

Khedmati named Iran's flag bearer for 2019 Universiade

TASNIM — Najmeh Khedmati has been named Iran's flag bearer for the 2019 FISU Summer Universiade.

The Iranian woman shooter, who earned a quota place for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in late April, will carry the country's flag in the competition's opening ceremony.

The 2019 Summer Universiade will be held in Naples, Italy from July 3 to 14.



The Summer Universiade, a biennial sports gala hosted by the International University Sports Federation (FISU), was initiated six decades ago in Torino. Naples is to host its 30th edition.

The name is a combination of the words "University" and "Olympiad". The Universiade is often referred to in English as the World University Games or World Student Games; however, this latter term can also refer to competitions for sub-University grades students. The Universiade is the largest multi-sport event in the world apart from the Olympic Games.

Jordan's Adham Makhadmeh to officiate Zob Ahan v Al-Ittihad

Jordan's referee Adham Makhadmeh has been appointed to officiate a match between Zob Ahan of Iran and Al-Ittihad of Saudi Arabia.

The match has been scheduled to be held on August 5 in the 2019 AFC Champions League knockout stage.

Makhadmeh has been a FIFA referee since 2013 and officiated in the first-leg of the 2017 AFC Champions League final between Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal and Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds.

He was also one of the Additional Assistant Referees for the deciding leg in last year's AFC Champions League final between Persepolis and Kashima Antlers in Tehran and the AFC U-23 Championship final between eventual winner Uzbekistan and Vietnam in China earlier in 2018.

Making his continental debut in the 2014 AFC Cup, the Jordanian is widely-regarded as one of the rising stars of Asian refereeing, having graduated from the 2007 batch of the Project Future Referees program, which has since been replaced by the AFC Referee Academy.

Makhadmeh's commendable performances have seen him manage several prominent international matches, which include China PR vs. Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria vs. Korea Republic and Iraq vs. UAE in the 2018 FIFA World Cup Asian Final Round Qualifiers.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran's Idani wins bronze at Goa International Open GM Tournament

IRNA — Pouya Idani from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the Goa Chess Association's 2nd Goa International Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament.

Armenian Grandmaster Samvel Ter-Sahakyan emerged champion of the tournament, following his impressive final round win over Grandmaster Jovua Davit.

Three GMs finished with eight points at the end of Round 10, but it was Armenian Ter-Sahakyan who finished with a better tie-break point which ultimately made him the champion.

Ter-Sahakyan's compatriot Petrosyan Manuel who led for the major part of the event had to settle for second spot as last year's champion Idani came third.

Takis Lemonis shortlisted for Persepolis job

Persian Football — Greek coach Takis Lemonis has been nominated as a replacement for Branko Ivankovic in Persepolis.

Ivankovic parted company with the Iranian club to join Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia last week.

Lemonis, 59, is a new candidate to lead Persepolis.

He has been without a job since parting ways with Olympiakos in January 2018.

Ante Cacic, Massimo Carrera, Alexander Nouri, Krunoslav "Kruno" Jurcic and Walter Zenga are the other candidates to take the helm at Persepolis.

Ivankovic led Persepolis to win the Iran Professional League title three times. Under tutelage of the Croat, Persepolis also won one Hazfi Cup and three Super Cups.

Sharifi reaches agreement with Turkish volleyball club Bursa

TASNIM — Iranian national wing spiker Morteza Sharifi has reached an agreement to join Turkish volleyball club Bursa Metropolitan Municipality.

The 20-year-old player has reportedly reached a one-year contract with the Turkish club.

Sharifi, who started his playing career in Moghavemat Urmia, won a gold medal with Iran in the 2018 Asian Games.

He is a member of Iran national volleyball team in the 2019 Volleyball Nations League.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who is not saved by patience, is destroyed by impatience.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iran to organize art exhibition on downed U.S. drone

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization in Tehran will organize an exhibition of posters and cartoons on the U.S. drone that was shot down by Iran last week.



A poster for the exhibition “Hard Slaps”.

All the artworks have been created by Iranian artists for the exhibition entitled “Hard Slaps”, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

The exhibition will take place at the Iranian Photographers Center from June 30 to July 13.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone last Thursday after it breached Iran’s airspace.

Maine festival picks Iranian docs

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian documentaries “Water Folks” and “The Wind” will go on screen at the 22nd edition of the Maine International Film Festival (MIFF), which will be held in Waterville, Maine in the U.S.



A scene from Azadeh Bizargiti’s documentary “Water Folks”.

Directed by Azadeh Bizargiti, “Water Folks” follows the everyday life of a fisherwoman from Hengam Island in the Persian Gulf.

“The Wind” by Hamid Jafari is about Zar, a spiritual ritual in southern Iran. It is believed that the Zar ceremony can free the body from evil spirits with the assistance of music and song.

The Maine International Film Festival will run from July 12 to 21.

Caravaggio painting found in French attic sold to mystery foreign buyer

TOULOUSE, France (Reuters) — A mystery foreign buyer has snapped up a painting by Italian master Caravaggio that was discovered five years ago in a French attic before it could be sold at auction, the auction house said on Tuesday.

The painting, which had been estimated at up to 150 million euros (\$170 million), dates from 1607 and depicts biblical heroine Judith beheading the Assyrian general Holofernes.

“Judith and Holofernes” had been scheduled to be sold at an auction in the French city of Toulouse on June 27. It was found in 2014 by the owners of a house in Toulouse as they investigated a leak in their attic.

“The painting was sold privately to a foreign buyer,” the Marc Labarbe auction house and art expert Turquin said in a statement. “This sale is covered by a confidentiality agreement concerning the price and identity of the buyer.”

The auctioneers said the painting will leave French soil but will soon be on display in an unnamed “great museum”, which was a stipulation of the seller — that the public should continue to be able to see it.

“It went for a very good price,” Marc Labarbe told Reuters, declining to give the amount.

King of Iran’s eulogists Salim Moazzenzadeh Ardebili’s style wins national heritage status

A R T **TEHRAN** — The performance style of Iran’s icon of Islamic eulogy, Salim Moazzenzadeh Ardebili, was made a National Intangible Cultural Heritage item on Tuesday.

The eulogist of the Prophet Muhammad’s household had his own unique style, which was then followed by his numerous disciples who dubbed him “the king of Iran’s eulogists”, although he used to perform most of his eulogies in the Azeri language.

His full life and decades of eulogy performances were celebrated during a mass funeral for Moazzenzadeh Ardebili in his hometown Ardebil in November 2016 when he passed away at the age of 80. He is buried at Ardebil’s Beheshte Zahra Cemetery.

A number of officials of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) and Ardebil Province attended a ceremony organized at Ardebil’s Beiza Library to announce the decision to register the item on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

“Master Salim Moazzenzadeh Ardebili’s style is part of the province’s cultural and historical identity,” the director of CHTHO Office for Registration and Restoration of Intangible and Natural Heritage, Mostafa Purali, said at the ceremony.

“He preserved the Islamic eulogy principles that remained from the Safavid era, and the CHTHO registered his style to observe his heavenly voice, teachings and service,” he added.

In his short speech, Nader Fallahi, the director of the Ardebil Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said, “Master Salim Moazzenzadeh is really part of Ardebil’s spiritual heritage. His expertise in the melodic modes of Persian music helped him progress in Islamic eulogy and made him internationally famous.”



Eulogist Salim Moazzenzadeh Ardebili performs in an undated photo.

IAF reviews “Death and the Judge” about renowned Iranian criminal judge Azizmohammadi

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Hassan Khademi’s documentary “Death and the Judge” about Iran’s most famous criminal judge Nurollah Azizmohammadi went on screen during a session at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Tuesday.

The program was attended by Khademi, Azizmohammadi and a number of cultural officials and cineastes.

Produced in 2017, the film follows the personal and professional life of Azizmohammadi, who served as a criminal judge for 45 years and passed about 4500 death sentences.

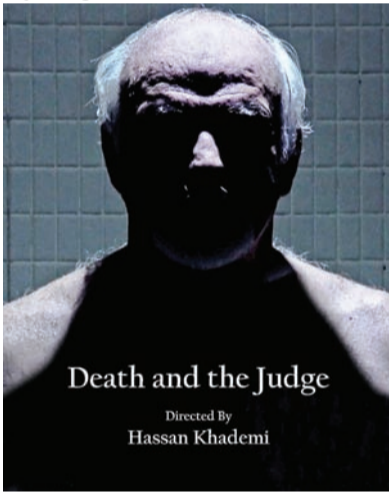
“Death and the Judge” tries to show the role of death in the judge’s life as he either takes life away from criminals or death comes to his loved ones like his father.

Azizmohammadi’s 88-year-old father was killed by a young man in his home during a burglary in 2010, but instead of claiming for retaliation, Azizmohammadi preferred to forgive the killer.

“Although I have to sentence killers to death based on the law in some of my cases, I always ask victim’s next of kin to forgive them. I did the same for my father’s case,” Azizmohammadi once said in an interview.

“Death and the Judge” received the Award of the Association of Iranian Filmmaking Institutes and Companies (AIFIC) at the 11th edition of the Cinema Verite, Iran’s major documentary film festival, in 2017.

“The film doesn’t intend to exonerate,



A poster for Hassan Khademi’s documentary “Death and the Judge”.

defend or support Azizmohammadi. I didn’t want to depict a heroic face for him,” Khademi told the Persian service of Honaronline on Monday.

“I just wanted to show that a person who orders the execution of thousands of criminals can be an ordinary person who does his job accurately and it puts a heavy burden on him,” he added.

“Despite what I expected, Azizmohammadi was really cooperative with me and he was easy to work with, as it took me over four years to make the documentary,” he concluded.

Iran’s “Little Narrators” to explore effects of weapons of mass destruction

A R T **TEHRAN** — “Little Narrators”, an exhibition of children’s paintings that will open in Sardasht on Friday, intends to attract visitors’ attention to the long-term effects of weapons of mass destruction.

The paintings have been created by children in Tehran as well as in Sardasht, the northwestern Iranian town that was bombed by Iraq with chemical weapons on June 28, 1987. Over 1,000 people were killed during the chemical attack, which also injured over 8,000 civilians, many of whom were permanently disabled.

The two-day exhibit marking the 32nd anniversary of the bombardment will open in the Bistun Historical Bathhouse in Sardasht and will next move on to Tehran’s Arasbaran Cultural Center on July 17.

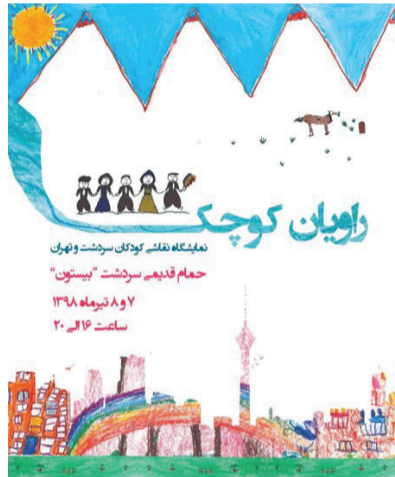
The painting exhibition is part of a three-phase cultural project set up by the Tehran Peace Museum.

“The exhibition is the second phase of the project,” Farahnaz Attarian, an expert from the children’s section of the museum, said in a press release on Wednesday.

“The first phase of the project was a storytelling workshop and a group painting exhibition named ‘My City’, which were held in both cities,” she added.

The works will next be given to those researchers interested in this issue in the last phase, she stated.

The project aims to study the effects



A poster for the children’s painting exhibit “Little Narrators” on the effects of weapons of mass destruction.

of chemical weapons on successive generations who live in cities that have been bombed by these munitions.

The paintings have been created by children aged 6 to 12, the third and fourth generations of the Sardasht bombardment’s victims.

They are coming from the Kowsar Girls’ School and Enqleab Boys’ School in Sardasht. Works by students from the Sedaqat Girls’ School and Hadis Kindergarten in Tehran have also been selected to be showcased at the exhibition.

French director Jean-Francois Dusigne to hold workshop in Tehran



French director Jean-Francois Dusigne in an undated photo.

A R T **TEHRAN** — French director and author Jean-Francois Dusigne will be holding a workshop on acting in Tehran in September.

The workshop has been organized by Dusigne’s educational center ARTA in Paris in collaboration with the Hilaj Film School in Tehran.

“How to narrate a story on an empty stage with body and tone of voice,” “How to narrate time and express experiences in some short

visits”, and “How to change the reality and how to imagine it,” are the major topics to be discussed at the workshop, Hilaj has announced.

Dusigne is the professor of performing arts at the University of Paris 8, and the co-director of the ARTA.

The ARTA and French director Ariane Mnouchkine’s Théâtre du Soleil in Paris have long been active in theater, having organized training courses in various theatrical fields.

Isfahan filmfest to host workshop by illustrator Farshid Mesqali



Farshid Mesqali in an undated photo.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian illustrator Farshid Mesqali will be holding a workshop on poster design during the 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth, which annually takes place in the central Iranian city of Isfahan.

The workshop will be running from July 6 to 8, the organizers have announced.

Interested applicants are asked to submit copies of their posters to the secretariat of

the festival and the final participants will be selected by Mesqali himself.

Mesqali received the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1974. He is the only Iranian winner of the award in the illustration category.

Illustration of the books “The Little Black Fish”, “The City of the Snakes”, “Arash, the Archer” and “I, the Hedgehog and My Doll” are among his noteworthy credits.

Spider-Man leaves New York for Europe in “Far from Home”

LONDON (Reuters) — Spider-Man leaves New York for Europe in Marvel’s latest film about the web-slinging superhero, who once again has to fight off a new enemy.

Set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, “Spider-Man: Far From Home” sees protagonist Peter Parker, played by Tom Holland, take on his superhero responsibilities again when Samuel L. Jackson’s super-spy Nick Fury, a regular “Avengers” character, asks him to step up against a new threat.

But Parker is reluctant as he heads off on a school trip to Europe, where he just wants to enjoy himself and share his feelings to love interest MJ, played by singer and actress Zendaya.

“We’ve taken Spider-Man outside of Queens and we put him on the world stage...we’ve taken him to London, Venice, Prague,” Holland told Reuters.

“In this film he’s trying to hang up the suit and not be Spider-Man for a while and take a break. And wherever he goes it seems that trouble follows so we’ve caught him in a vulnerable state

and we get to see how he deals with that situation.”

The film follows on from Marvel’s “Avengers: Endgame”, the finale to a decade-long superhero series. Jackson said Fury was “definitely trying to regain control of his life and a modicum of control of the world” in this movie, which also looks at the concept of fake news and misrepresentation.

“We are living in a time where there is a lot of complication and people don’t really know what’s going on,” Jake Gyllenhaal, who plays newcomer Quentin Beck, said.