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## UAE says downed U.S. drone had taken off from its territory

**TEHRAN** — A U.S. spy drone, which was recently shot down by Iran, had taken off from a military base in the United Arab Emirates, according to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash.

Gargash made the remarks in a recent interview with Italian newspaper la Repubblica during his visit to Rome, Press TV reported.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards

Corps (IRGC) shot down on June 20 an intruding Global Hawk surveillance drone, which had violated Iranian airspace on a spying mission despite repeated warnings.

Iran has released the GPS coordinates of the doomed drone, showing that the drone was flying over Iranian territorial waters off the coast of the country's southern Hormozgan Province. **→3**

## Iran takes U.S. breach of its airspace to UN

**TEHRAN** — Iran has filed a complaint to the UN Security Council against the United States over violation of its airspace by a U.S. drone which was shot down by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on June 20.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Gholam-Hossein Dehqani said on Friday that the Foreign Ministry has filed the complaint based on

Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The complaint has noted that Iran reserves the right to defend its maritime borders and confront any violation in case such acts are repeated, he said.

The IRGC shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone on June 20 after it breached Iran's airspace. The IRGC brought the drone down by firing a surface-to-air missile at it. **→2**

## Heavy defeat for U.S., S. Arabia in G20 meeting

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — U.S. President's meeting with the Saudi crown prince on the sidelines of the G20 meeting illustrated their heavy defeat in pushing their hostile agenda against Iran.

During this meeting in Osaka, Japan, Mohammed bin Salman tried his best to rally East Asian countries (for instance, Indonesia and South Korea) against Iran.

The failure of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia in achieving his anti-Iranian goals comes when Bin Salman relied on the other G20 members for siding with Saudi Arabia and Washington against Tehran.

According to informed sources, issues discussed during Bin Salman's meeting with other countries' officials at the meeting. **→13**



**ARTICLE**  
**Mohammad Homaeifar**  
Tehran Times journalist

## Riyadh and Washington's abject failure at G20 summit

The meeting between the president of the United States of America and Saudi Arabia's crown prince on the sidelines of the G20 summit demonstrated Riyadh and Washington's failure to provoke hostility toward Iran.

During the summit in Osaka, Japan, Mohammad bin Salman expended a lot of effort into lobbying with East Asian countries, such as Indonesia and South Korea, against Iran. He even tried to demonstrate Iran as a real and dangerous threat but eventually failed to achieve his goals.

The Saudi crown prince's failure to achieve his anti-Iran goals comes while bin Salman counted greatly on the support of the other members of the G20 for Washington and Riyadh against Tehran.

As has been reported by informed sources, issues such as the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, which was raised in bin Salman's meetings with heads of the G20 and others, human rights criticisms levelled at the House of Saud due to the killings of Yemeni children, domestic suppression and execution of dissidents left no place for the Saudis' maneuvering in the G20 summit.

On the first day of the G20 summit, bin Salman and Trump launched a joint effort to coax other members of the G20 into taking a confrontational stance against Iran.

One of the issues which the Saudi crown prince and the U.S. president especially focused on was to lay the blame for the tensions in the Persian Gulf — especially regarding the attacks on two oil tankers in the Sea of Oman — on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

However, this claim has not been accepted by most members of the G20 and this issue eventually induced bin Salman and Trump to leave Japan's Osaka empty-handed.

During the summit, almost none of the members passed a positive signal to the Saudi crown prince and the U.S. president with regard to Riyadh's regional and anti-Iran policies. **→13**

## Sheikh Zakzaky in dire health condition: report

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Top Muslim cleric Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, who has been held for four years on trumped-up allegations by the Nigerian government, has been reported to be in poor health.

The leader of Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), who has been held in detention since December 2015 following a deadly raid by the Nigerian army troops on his residence in the country's northern Kaduna State is unwell, according to the announcement of his medical team.

"Lead and cadmium levels are high in his blood which is fatal," the doctors say, "His liver is also damaged." Some say that the elements found in his blood may be due to the poisoned food he has consumed while some believe that lead and cad-

mium are in his blood since lead shrapnells have been in his body from the time he was in prison and the Nigerian government did not allow any medical treatments for their removal.

Sheikh Zakzaky, who is in his mid-sixties, lost his left eyesight in the said raid. His wife also sustained serious wounds while more than 300 of his followers and three of his sons were killed in the violence.

The cleric has been kept in custody along his wife and a large number of his followers ever since.

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.

Zakzaky's legal team has long called for his

release, saying he is suffering from health issues that require urgent medical care abroad but the state high court in Kaduna has denied the request.

A group of medical experts and consultants, who conducted health assessments on Zakzaky and his wife earlier this month, suggested that the two need to be taken abroad without further delay for treatments. The cleric and his wife were unable to attend a court hearing back in March this year, due to dire health conditions, according to their lawyer Femi Falana SAN.

"My clients are yet to access any form of medical attention even after the court had ordered so," he said, referring to a court order on January 22 to avail the cleric and his wife access to medical care.

## Most Saudis wish Bin Salman not to take the power: survey shows

**GEOPOLITICS ALERT** — A university survey was conducted in Saudi Arabia about who people want to have as their country's next ruler. About one million people took part in the survey and the results were the following:

- 91% of people want the Al Saud family to keep ruling the kingdom and 9% want a regime change.

- Saudi citizens think that Ahmed bin Abdulaziz, Muhammad bin Nayef, Mohammad Bin Salman and Mutaib bin Abdullah are the most popular politicians based on their personality, former positions and their status in the tribe.

- Saudi Arabia's international image has been badly tarnished over the last year, especially after the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Moreover,

Mohammad Bin Salman's development plans inside the framework of the 2030 Agenda turned out as a failure. Now, 53% of Saudi citizens believe if Ahmed bin Abdulaziz comes to power, he might be able to repair Saudi's destroyed image.

- 30% of Saudi citizens think Muhammad bin Nayef is a good replacement for Mohammad Bin Salman because they believe Nayef did a good job as the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Saudi Arabia.

- Saudi citizens think that Muhammad bin Nayef is also a good candidate for becoming Saudi's next king because he can restore some of the powers of the Al ash-Sheikh and revive some of the long-lost religious and cultural traditions.

- Most Saudis think that Mohammad Bin Salman has done a poor job over the last few years and only 14% of people think he is a good candidate for becoming the next king. The wrong policies of Mohammad Bin Salman has exasperated some of the issues such as poverty, unemployment and inflation and has led to widespread corruption and immorality in society; many social, political and religious activists were executed over his term. His policies has also made Saudi Arabia fail in many of its key confrontations in Middle East, such as Yemen war.

- Finally, 3% of Saudis want Mutaib bin Abdullah to gain the power. He is the third son of king Abdullah and served as Saudi's Minister of the National Guard.



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## Mourners bid farewell to 150 soldiers martyred during Sacred Defense

Large number of people gathered at the front of the University of Tehran on Thursday morning to say goodbye to 150 soldiers who were martyred during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s when brutal Saddam Hussein was ruling Iraq.

The remains of the bodies of soldiers were exhumed recently. Resistance against the invading Saddam Army in those years is called "Sacred Defense".



**ARTICLE**  
**Martin Love**  
Political analyst from North Carolina

## Cry not for hapless Trump: He created the current mess

No one can legitimately feel sorry for Donald Trump. For 14 months he's been in way over his head in geopolitics, and that primarily about Iran, but with the various sanctions and threats cast upon every continent like confetti at a wedding everyone knows eventually is going fail and wind up in divorce court. Trump looks the clown to most all the world.

And he also looks awfully ignorant: since when does the head of state of allegedly the most "powerful" country the world has ever known sanction the former leader of the revolution that created the Islamic Republic who has been dead for 30 years? I mean, admittedly, the names Khomeini and Khamenei are rather similar, but NO Administration or POTUS in its right mind would be so careless to commit such a faux pas. This is equivalent to a bride's groom farting very loudly and redolently at the exact moment he slips a ring on the finger of his beloved at the wedding ceremony. You can't forget such mindless errors. They are just too glaring or grotesque and occasionally very funny.

Anyway, pundits are chiming in about the close call where the U.S. had already more or less launched a military attack on Iran (ostensibly because Iran shot down a quarter billion-dollar piece of U.S. drone technology flying four miles inside Iran's territorial waters!), and then for some reason or other Trump as U.S. "commander in chief" pulled back. That was a smart move, pulling back, but it seems credit must go to Iran's leaders for their decisive response to the spy drone.

Indeed, if Iran ever looked like some buffoonish military pushover, one might argue correctly that Trump and his merry coven of Neocon gangsters might already have attacked Iran. John Bolton, who last week was accurately called a "tapeworm" that (despite failures) apparently cannot be dislodged from the bowels of Washington, has been trying to wreck Iran for decades. (It was Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson who had the balls to so designate Bolton, albeit a tapeworm with a hideous mustache.) **→6**



## Europe not doing enough to save JCPOA

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, said on Friday that progress has been made in Vienna to save the 2015 nuclear deal but the demands of the Islamic Republic are yet to be met.

"It was a step forward, but it is still not enough and not meeting Iran's expectations," Abbas Araqchi told reporters after almost four hours of talks with senior diplomats from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

On Friday, the remaining signatories of the nuclear agreement met in the Austrian capital as a last-ditch effort to save the accord after the U.S. withdrew from it last year.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington in May 2018 from the multilateral nuclear accord, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was reached between Iran and six world powers in 2015.

Afterwards, Washington re-imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the deal.

European signatories to the nuclear deal are facing a two-month ultimatum to help Iran navigate U.S. sanctions or see Tehran take the second step of reducing its commitments on July 7.

In early May, Tehran suspended limits on its production of enriched uranium and heavy water, moves that did not technically violate the deal but signaled that its patience was wearing thin.

Referring to Iran's decision to go over the deal's core atomic restrictions, Araqchi said, "The decision to reduce our commitments has already been made in Iran and we continue on that process unless our expectations are met."

"I don't think the progress made today will be enough to stop our process but the decision will be made in Tehran," Press TV quoted him as saying.

### ■ 'INSTEX operational'

The lead EU negotiator, Helga Schmid, hailed the discussions as constructive and said the first transactions had been completed through the mechanism, known as Instex.

The EU was also due to supply a modest €3m (£2.7m) credit line to kickstart the mechanism as a signal of good intent.

However, Araqchi said this was still insufficient because European countries were not buying Iranian oil.

"For INSTEX to be useful for Iran, Europeans need to buy oil or consider credit lines for this mechanism otherwise INSTEX is not like they or us expect," he pointed out.

The European Union also issued a statement, saying the special trade channel was up and running

"France, Germany and the United Kingdom informed participants that INSTEX had been made operational and available to all EU member states and that the first transactions are being processed," said the statement.

The trade mechanism was established last year after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

France, Germany and Britain had been tinkering with INSTEX for months without making it operational, leaving Iran wondering whether they are serious about the idea.

In a joint statement earlier on Friday, Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden said they were working with the E3 to develop trade mechanisms.

Araqchi said all the parties in Vienna had agreed to hold a ministerial meeting "very soon."

### ■ China to continue to import Iranian oil

China has rejected the imposition of unilateral U.S. sanctions on Iran, saying it would import Iranian oil in defiance of Washington's bans on Tehran.

"We reject the unilateral imposition of sanctions," said Fu Cong, the director general of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of Arms Control, on Friday.

Cong made the remarks a day before U.S. and Chinese leaders met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Japan in an attempt to resolve trade disputes.

"For us energy security is important and the importation of oil is important to Chinese energy security and also to the livelihood of the people," said Cong.

The Trump administration said on April 22 that, in a bid to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero, buyers of Iranian oil must stop purchases by May 1 or face sanctions. The move ended six months of waivers, which allowed Iran's eight biggest buyers -- Turkey, China, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan -- to continue importing limited volumes.

"We do not accept this so-called zero policy of the United States," said Cong, who was speaking on the sidelines of a meeting on the implementation of the Iranian nuclear deal.

The United States' insistence on zeroing out Iran's oil exports has caused many problems in the global market, keeping confused both experts and buyers as they look straight into what is shaping up to be a chaotic chapter for the petroleum industry.

China and several other major purchasers of Iranian oil have already complained to the U.S. about the decision.

## U.S. deploys F-22 stealth fighters to Qatar amid tensions with Iran

The United States has deployed F-22 stealth fighters to Qatar for the first time, its military said, adding to a buildup of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf amid tensions with Iran, Al Jazeera reported on Saturday.

The Air Force F-22 Raptor stealth fighters have been deployed "to defend American forces and interests", the U.S. Air Forces Central Command said in a statement on Friday.

It did not specify how many of the hi-tech planes had been sent.

A photo handout showed five of the jets flying above the Al Udeid Airbase in Qatar.

Iran and the United States have been locked in an escalating standoff since U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a multi-party 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and reimposed sanctions on the Islamic republic.

Tensions spiked last week when Iran shot down a U.S. drone over sensitive Persian Gulf waters.

Iran downed the drone, an RQ-4A Global Hawk, after it invaded the Iranian airspace and ignored repeated warnings by the Iranian military to leave.

To prove that the drone had entered the Iranian territorial waters, Iran put on display the wreckage of the aircraft.

# Iran takes U.S. breach of its airspace to UN

**1 →** Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the U.S. military drone entered the Iranian airspace from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and it was targeted near Kouh-e Mobarak.

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 IRGC released GPS coordinates that showed the drone eight miles off Iran's coast, inside the 12 nautical miles from the shore that is Iran's territorial waters.

Brigadier General Majid Fakhri, the head of the Geographical Organization of the Armed Forces of Iran, said on Tuesday that the U.S. drone had trespassed into the Iranian territory by 7 kilometers before it was shot.



"The drone was certainly in Iranian territory by 4 miles or 7 kilometers," he told reporters.

Majid Takht-e Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the UN, wrote a letter on June 20 to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the UN Security Council stating that "Iran condemns, in the strongest possible terms, this irresponsible and provocative wrongful act by the United States, which entails its international responsibility."

"While the Islamic Republic of Iran does not seek war, it reserves its inherent right, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, to take all appropriate necessary measures against any hostile act violating its territory, and is determined to vigorously defend its land, sea and air," Takht-e Ravanchi said.

## Shinzo Abe says Japan will continue efforts to ease Middle East tension

*By staff and agency*

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Saturday that he is committed to make effort toward easing the situation in the Middle East and expressed concern over the recent tensions around Iran.

"While collaborating with the international community, I would like to make my efforts for relaxing the tension in the Middle East. That relaxation of tension would be very important for the peace and prosperity of the world. All leaders agreed on that ... It is not so easy, but we would like to play a role," UrduPoint News quoted him as saying on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka.

He said, "At this summit, regarding the Iranian situation, various countries showed strong interest. I also, having bilateral meetings with various leaders, [briefed them on]

my visit to Iran, and from various countries there were opinions raised regarding the attack on the vessels near the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the Iranian attack shooting down a [U.S.] drone. There was a raising voice of concern from various countries."

He noted that various leaders had strongly supported his recent visit to Iran.

Abe was in Iran on a two-day visit on June 12.

During a meeting with Abe on June 13, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed Trump as a person not worthy of exchanging messages. The Leader said Iran has "no trust" in the U.S. and will not at all "repeat the bitter experience" it gained from the negotiations that led to the conclusion of a 2015 nuclear deal, which Washington later ditched.

"Iran engaged in talks with the U.S. and

the Europeans for some five or six years, and achieved a result. The Americans, however, breached a done deal," said the Leader, emphasizing that "no wise man" would enter talks with a country that has reneged on all agreements.

During a joint press conference with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on June 12, Abe said he will use his country's "utmost effort" to deescalate tension in the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East region.

"Japan will use its utmost effort to reduce tension in the region," he said.

Abe said, "Increase in tensions in the region must be contained at any price, and Japan can play a quite constructive role in this regard."

"Peace and stability of the Middle East region is essential not only for the prosperity of this region, but also for the prosperity of

the entire world," Abe noted.

Iran and the U.S. have been at odds since last year when Trump withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers and reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

Tensions entered a new stage since April when the U.S. designated the IRGC (part of the Iranian military) as a terrorist organization, announced that it does not renew waivers for the eight major buyers of the Iranian oil, and started beefing up its military presence in the region, particularly in the Persian Gulf.

The IRGC shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone on June 20 after it breached Iran's airspace.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the U.S. military drone entered the Iranian airspace from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and it was targeted near Kouh-e Mobarak.

## Russia: JCPOA parties to help Iran export heavy water, enriched uranium

*By staff and agency*

Russia has announced parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), are tasked to practical measures to make it possible for Iran to export low enriched uranium and heavy water.

"In the context of the JCPOA's 'nuclear' aspects, experts from the member nations have been tasked to elaborate practical measures to make it possible for Iran to export low enriched uranium and heavy water in bypassing of the U.S. sanctions," the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Friday after the JCPOA Joint Commission meeting in Vienna, according to TASS.

Under the JCPOA, Iran was only allowed to keep 300 kilograms of enriched uranium. Also, based on the agreement, Iran was authorized to exchange heavy water for importation of yellow cake.

As a retaliation against the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and reimposition of sanctions on Iran coupled with a failure by the European Union to compensate for the U.S. exit, Iran officially announced that Iran stops



selling stockpiles of enriched uranium and heavy water for 60 days from May 8.

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.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on June 24 that Moscow and its partners will take steps to counter new sanctions that Washington has said it will impose on Iran.

## Russia says prepared to deliver S-400 to Tehran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Moscow says it is prepared to deliver advanced S-400 air defense missile systems to Iran. However, it says, Tehran has not yet placed any official request for the system.

"We are open for discussions on delivering S-400 Triumph air defense systems, including to Iran. Especially given that this equipment is not subject to restrictions outlined in UN Security Council's resolution issued on June 20, 2015," a representative of the press service of the Russian Federal Service of Military-Technical Cooperation told Sputnik on Friday.

The official, whose name was not mentioned in the report, was referring to the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015), which was adopted four years ago to endorse a nuclear deal between Iran and six other countries at the time, including Russia.

Iran has already received the earlier version of the missile defense system, the S-300, whose procurement had been withheld until the adoption of Resolution 2231 even though Russia had undertaken to deliver the systems to Iran under



an 800-million-dollar deal reached in 2007.

The resolution terminated all past Security Council sanctions on Tehran, including those that prohibited the supply of arms.

In a report published on May 30, Bloomberg claimed Russia had rejected Iran's request to buy S-400 missile defense

## Kushner behind Trump's withdrawal from nuclear deal: writer

Donald Trump's son-in-law and advisor Jared Kushner represents Jewish interests in the United States that basically caused the U.S. president to withdraw Washington from the Iran nuclear agreement, says an American writer and former professor.

E Michael Jones, the current editor of Culture Wars magazine, made the remarks in an interview with Press TV on Friday while commenting on a statement by former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson who said that Kushner conducted diplomacy without his knowledge when he was in the administration,

leading to several embarrassing incidents.

Tillerson, who was fired by Trump in March 2018, recounted the incidents during a testimony last month at the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, according to a transcript of a congressional hearing released on Thursday.

The former top U.S. diplomat and CEO of ExxonMobil described his frustration with Kushner conducting his own diplomacy from the White House, at times without informing the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon.

"This is illegal according to American political system. It violates — I believe — a Logan Act. But in this instance it is going to go unpunished because the part of the story that's not reported here is Jared Kushner is representing Jewish interests here," Jones said.

"And no one is allowed to question Jewish interests, if you bring it up you will be called an anti-Semite. There are Jewish interests. It is obvious but no one is allowed to talk about them," he added.

"So the real significance of the story will

be covered over by the mainstream media who were limited to the two areas of insignificance. This of course has direct relevance to Iran because it was Jewish interests that basically caused Donald Trump to abandon the Iran nuclear agreement," the analyst noted.

"It's Jewish interests that are once again pushing America into war in the Middle East this time with Iran," he said.

"Donald Trump I think -- recent events have shown -- that he does not want war with Iran. He is using the military power to threaten Iran," Jones noted.



# Iran waives visa for Chinese tourists

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – The Iranian government waived the visa requirement for Chinese nationals willing to visit the country.

The Chinese tourists visiting Iran will no longer need to obtain visas, tourism organization chief Vali Teymouri said, Mehr news agency reported on Friday.

The decision is made to attract more foreign tourists to the country; however, it is a unilateral measure, i.e. Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas, according to the source.

Iran has taken some similar steps to increase its revenues from tourism under U.S. sanctions.

There is also a U.S. entry restriction on people with Iranian entrance stamps on their passports.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei announced earlier this month that Iran has decided not to stamp the passports of foreign tourists to help them skip the U.S. travel ban.

“President Hassan Rouhani assigned the airport police not to stamp passports of foreign tourists. Taking into consideration the fact that America is practicing the economic terrorism plans, and people who travel to Iran may feel a bit afraid that they may be pressured by America,” Rabiei told reporters in Tehran.

He added that this can invite more tourists to Iran.

With a 2500-year-old civilization, Iran is visited by millions of foreign tourists each year.

About 7.8 million tourists traveled to Iran in the last fiscal year (ended March



20, 2019), showing a 52.5% growth compared with the preceding year, Teymouri said back in April.

“A majority of foreign travelers visiting Iran last year were from neighboring countries as well as European and American countries,” he added.

According to Ali Asghar Mounesan, the head of Iran's tourism organization, the lower cost of travel packages was the key factor that made Iran more attractive for foreigners.

In recent months, Iranian authorities have redoubled efforts to boost the tourism sector to increase foreign currency revenues

and create jobs.

A sharp decline in value of national currency has made travelling to and shopping in Iran very cheap for foreigners.

“The development of tourism infrastructure, investments in the tourism sector, the issuance of electronic visa and visa waiver for target countries could be the main reasons for the growth in the number of foreign travelers,” Mounesan said last November.

Iran has 157 four- and five-star hotels and by the end of President Hassan Rouhani's second term in 2021, the figure will increase to 210. “When the infrastructures are com-

plete, income from tourism will replace oil revenues,” Mounesan tweeted earlier this year. “When this happens, we will have created jobs and insured ourselves against sanctions.”

According to the 2019 Travel Risk Map launched by global risk experts International SOS in collaboration with Control Risks, Iran is as safe as a majority of European countries when it comes to travel security.

The map shows the risk level in each country and territory based on the current threat posed to travelers by political violence (including terrorism, insurgency, politically motivated unrest and war), social unrest (including sectarian, communal and ethnic violence) and violent and petty crime.

Factors such as the robustness of transport infrastructure, the state of industrial relations, effectiveness of security and emergency services and the country's susceptibility to natural disasters are also taken into consideration, the Independent reported late last year.

A low travel security risk means violent crime rates are low; racial, sectarian or political violence or civil unrest is uncommon; security and emergency services are effective; infrastructure is sound; and industrial action and transport disruption are infrequent.

The map lists five categories of risk: insignificant, low, medium, high and extreme.

Very few countries manage to make it into the “insignificant” bracket. In Europe, only Luxembourg, Denmark, Slovenia, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Iceland and Greenland have been placed in this category.

## Hatami: West to blame for massacre in Yemen

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Friday that Western countries must be held accountable for their arms assistance in the killing of innocent people in Yemen.

Western countries, including the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, have been selling advanced arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in their relentless bombing campaign against Yemen since March 2015.

The continuation of the killing of innocent people of region, especially the oppressed people of Yemen, using Western weapons is another evidence of the atrocities committed by those countries, General Hatami said, Mehr reported.



He made the remarks in a statement on Friday on the anniversary of the 1987 chemical bombing of the

northwestern city of Sardasht by the Iraqi army under former dictator Saddam Hussein.

“This day reminds us of one of the other aspects of the crimes committed by the former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in using chemical weapons against our soldiers and defenseless people in border cities and villages during the eight years of the Scared Defense (Iran-Iraq war),” Hatami stated.

He also pointed to the West's attempts to deny its role in arming Saddam Hussein with chemical weapons and to downplay the large extent of such crime, adding, “These countries acknowledged that more than 20,000 Iranian soldiers and civilians were martyred by Saddam's chemical weapons.”

## Ex-diplomat says Trump will use any leverage to force Iran into talks

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Abdolreza Faraji-Rad, Iran's former ambassador to Norway, says as U.S. President Donald Trump is seeking re-election, he will use any leverage at his disposal to try to force Iran into entering negotiations.

Trump does not think about the United States' national interests and is more concerned with re-election, Faraji-Rad said, ISNA reported on Saturday.

He also said the U.S. president cannot return to the nuclear agreement, also referred to as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), because it would mean a political suicide for him.

Therefore, the former envoy continued, he should push for the path he endorsed before getting elected as president, which was withdrawing from the JCPOA.

Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, despite



strong protests from the other parties to the deal. Then his administration imposed sanctions on Tehran in a clear violation of UNSC resolution 2231, also pushing other countries to violate the same resolution by cutting economic ties with Iran.

Under the JCPOA, Iran had agreed to limit parts of its peaceful nuclear program in exchange for the removal of all nuclear-related sanctions.

## IPU chief slams worldwide unilateralism, xenophobia

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – The president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has slammed unilateralism, extreme nationalism and xenophobia in the world, saying peaceful talks, multilateralism and learning from history are the solutions for such problems.

Referring to the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Gabriela Cuevas Barron said the deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), conveys the important message of multilateralism to the world, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Despite the fact that the JCPOA was signed by only a small number of countries, it can be regarded as the international community's message, Cuevas Barron remarked.

The message indicates that multilateralism “can lead us to solutions” for issues, she added.

On the IPU's measures for resolving the crises in Syria and Yemen, Cuevas Barron



said the IPU is trying to have deeper talks with regard to those crises.

The IPU is also seeking to have a delegation in Yemen, she announced.

In reaction to the recent U.S. decision to impose sanctions on top Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, she said the IPU has clearly stated that sanctions impede political talks and diplomacy as ways to achieve peace and stability.

## ‘A colossal mistake’: GOP-controlled Senate votes down measure blocking Iran military strike

**WASHINGTON (USA Today)** – The GOP-controlled Senate defeated a measure Friday that would have blocked President Donald Trump from launching a military strike against Iran unless he got explicit congressional approval.

The 50-to-40 vote came after a rare congressional debate over war powers and amid escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran. The measure needed 60 votes to pass. Four Republicans broke ranks to support the measure: Sens. Susan Collins, Mike Lee, Jerry Moran and Rand Paul.

Supporters said the battle would now move to the House, where Democrats hold the majority and have a similar measure in the legislative hopper. And they argued that Friday's vote still marked a significant step in pushing back against Trump's foreign policy.

“A bipartisan majority of the Senate today sent an important message to President Trump: you do not have a blank check to pursue another endless war in the Middle East,” said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York.

As he left the Senate floor Friday afternoon, Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., agreed and added that it helps set up the House for success.

“We did not win on this vote but forced the vote to happen. We showed a majority of the Senate believes the president is not the king, and can't go to war on his own,” Kaine said, adding that it puts up some “guard-rail against the president doing something stupid.”



Kaine pointed to Trump being in Japan for the G-20 summit, which attracts leaders from around the world, and said that it may help cool down the possibility of war. But, he added, “the fact that we were 10 minutes away and the fact that the president said this week that he didn't need Congress, that should scare everybody. We've got to stay on our toes.”

Democrats and some Republicans have grown alarmed by the Trump administration's rhetoric and actions on Iran.

Trump threatened Iran with “obliteration” on Tuesday, warning that the U.S. would use “overwhelming

force” against the country if it attacks “anything American.” And last week, Trump initially authorized a missile strike on the country – in retaliation for Tehran's downing of a U.S. drone – but the president nixed the military action at the last minute. He said then that he was concerned about Iranian casualties.

This week, Trump has taken a harder line and boasted that any war with Iran would be devastating. “I don't need exit strategies,” he told reporters.

But some lawmakers say a war with Iran would be a prolonged and disastrous conflict – precisely the kind of “endless war” that Trump campaigned against in 2016.

“A war with Iran would be a colossal mistake,” Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., said during Thursday's debate on the measure. Kaine is a chief sponsor of the Senate proposal, along with Sens. Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Tom Udall, D-N.M.

“After 18 years of two wars in the Middle East, both of which where we still have troops deployed, we should not be fomenting, encouraging, blundering toward, rushing into a third war in the Middle East,” said Kaine, who sits on the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees.

“It is an America-first idea that we would not want to go and engage in these endless, unfocused, unconstitutional wars,” Rep. Matt Gaetz, a Florida Republican, told Fox News earlier this week. He is co-sponsoring a similar measure in the House with California Democratic Rep. Ro Khanna.

## Iran ready to pull trigger against any aggression, cleric warns

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Mohammad-Hassan Aboutorabi Fard, an interim Friday prayer preacher, has voiced Iran's readiness to respond to any foreign aggression on its soil.

Addressing worshippers in Tehran, Aboutorabi Fard hailed the IRGC's downing of a U.S. spy drone, saying the air defense system's success showed that the relationship between Iran's scientific centers and the Defense Ministry should be further strengthened.



Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone on June 20 after it breached Iran's airspace. The IRGC brought the drone down by firing a surface-to-air missile at it.

The shooting down of the American drone “showed that Iran's powerful fingers are ready to pull the trigger against any act of aggression on this territory,” Aboutorabi Fard asserted.

“The incident marks a special situation and promises a definitive victory for the Islamic Republic and the collapse of the enemy,” he added.

Aboutorabi Fard also lauded Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for his “clear, firm and wise” stances toward the U.S. president.

## Top MP calls new U.S. bans ‘ineffective’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – The newly-elected chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has described the fresh sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Iran as “useless, futile and ineffective.”

In its latest provocative move, the U.S. imposed a series of bizarre sanctions that targeted Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian military commanders. The Trump administration is also set to introduce sanctions against Zarif in the coming days.

“They imposed sanctions on Zarif, our country's foreign minister, which is not possible with regard to international relations and international laws,” Mehr on Saturday quoted MP Mojtaba Zonnour as saying. “They cannot impact our country's relations with other countries and the foreign minister's trips,” Zonnour added.

Pointing to the sanctions against Ayatollah Khamenei, the top MP said the Leader has not visited other countries since the end of his presidency.

“Also, he does not have any [foreign] bank account, and accordingly, this ban is also ineffective.”

On Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent visit to Tehran to convey the U.S. president's message to Ayatollah Khamenei, Zonnour said the Leader's response “humiliated Trump”.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei had dismissed Trump as a person not worthy of a response or a message, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem.

Zonnour said the appointment of Major General Hossein Salami as chief of the IRGC, the IRGC's downing of an American drone and Trump's humiliation after Abe's visit to Tehran provoked the United States into imposing new sanctions against the Islamic Republic.



## UAE says downed U.S. drone had taken off from its territory

**1 →** However, the United States claims the drone was flying over international waters when it was targeted.

“We'll take this new aggression to #UN & show that the US is lying about international waters,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace unit of the IRGC, said the drone had received warnings for four times before being shot down.

“Those who guided the drone received the warnings but did not care. Given that the drone breached Iran's airspace, the aerospace unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps shot it down,” Hajizadeh said.

The UAE has also recently admitted that there was no “clear, scientific and convincing” evidence to assign blame for a recent tanker attacks off its coast in the Sea of Oman, for which the United States and Saudi Arabia blamed Iran.

“Honestly we can't point the blame at any country because we don't have evidence,” UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said on Wednesday.

“If there is a country that has the evidence, then I'm convinced that the international community will listen to it. But we need to make sure the evidence is clear and precise and scientific and convincing for the international community,” he added.





STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	248577.8
IFX	3178.38

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,718 rials
GBP	53,273 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$64.74/b
WTI	\$58.47/b
OPEC Basket	\$65.61/b
Gold	\$1,410.50/oz
Silver	\$15.37/oz
Platinumium	\$838.65/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Do-Win Tech 2019 to host 350 foreign, domestic companies

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The 11th edition of Doors and Windows Technology International Exhibition of Iran (Do-Win Tech 2019) is due to be held during July 9-12 at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRIB reported.

Over 350 Iranian and foreign companies from different countries including China, Germany, Turkey and Italy are going to be participating in this year's exhibition to showcase their latest products and services.

According to the organizers, many knowledge-based companies and start-ups will be attending this year's exhibition and various specialized workshops are also slated to be held on the sidelines of the event.

As reported, this year at least six foreign trade delegations from Oman, Qatar, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan are going to visit the exhibition to hold talks and negotiate with the participating companies.

Last year some 356 Iranian exhibitors alongside 54 foreign companies from Italy, China, Bulgaria, Spain, Turkey, Germany and the UAE participated in the Do-Win TECH show, which is Iran's biggest event in the windows and doors industry.

A recession in Germany could mean economic damage for euro zone countries

The German economy has lost steam and that could shake other euro zone countries too, including Italy, France, Poland and Spain.

According to cnbc.com, data out Monday showed the manufacturing sector in Germany has weakened over the last couple of months, adding to other gloomy indicators, with economists considering whether a recession is on its way. If this were to materialize, the entire euro zone would be at risk, given the importance of the German economy to the region.

"We do expect the second quarter to be weak," Florian Hense, a euro zone economist at Berenberg bank, told CNBC via email. He forecasts zero growth for the current quarter in Germany, but a small pickup to 0.2% in the third quarter. Germany grew at a rate of 0.4% in the first quarter of the year — after narrowly missing a technical recession at the end of 2018.

Hense explained that countries in the region are struggling already, namely Italy, and those that are doing better but have close industrial ties to Germany — such as Austria and Eastern Europe — would be "particularly vulnerable to a German recession."

The "more an industry-led German recession would spread to the domestic side of the economy, France, Spain and tourism spots in the south (of Europe) would suffer too," Hense said.

The German economy relies heavily on its car manufacturers — its automotive market is the largest in Europe. A slowdown could impact jobs in Germany, but also in the rest of Europe.

French multinational Groupe PSA that has Opel as a subsidiary, runs 10 plants in six European countries: Germany, the UK, Spain, Austria, Hungary and Poland. As of December 2018, it employed 30,400 people across Europe, half of which were in Germany.

**In the rest of Europe**

Volkswagen Group, at the end of 2017, had about 289,000 employees in Germany and about 186,000 in the rest of Europe. Most of its plants are in Germany, followed by Poland, the Czech Republic, Spain, France and Sweden. Germany's Daimler has a plant in Portugal and another in France, with a total of 917 employees.

The German car industry might not be as linked to Italy as other nations, but Rome's vulnerable economic position could accentuate any knock-on effects of a German recession.

In terms of other European countries, Italy is particularly sensitive to any type of risk. Christoph Schon, executive director of risk management firm Axioma, told CNBC via email.

The Italian economy grew only 0.1% in the first quarter of the year — having experienced a short-lived technical recession at the end of 2018. However, the "Italian economy is still struggling to find firmer ground," ING said in a note on Tuesday.

Data from 2018 shows that the majority of tourists in Italy come from Germany. The southern European country is the second most attractive country in the region for German citizens to go on holiday, after Spain, according to German publication Deutsche Welle.

Different analysts argue that the ongoing trade war between China and the Unites States as well as the UK's departure from the EU could add further pressure on Berlin and the country's economy.

**German manufacturers**

The "all-important automobile industry would be disproportionately hit by either of these scenarios, not only because German manufacturers would find it more difficult to sell their cars in the other regions, but also, because the whole production process relies so much on cross-border traffic of parts and components," Schon, from Axioma, told CNBC via email.

Christopher Peel, chief investment officer at Tavistock Investments, told CNBC Thursday he's expecting a recession in Germany if the UK does leaves the EU without a formal deal.

‘Comprehensive system of domestically-made products to be launched in near future’

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister will launch a comprehensive system for registration of domestically-made products in near future, deputy minister of industry, mining and trade announced.

Farshad Moqimi said this transparent mechanism will lay the ground for introducing different industries and industrial capabilities aiming to strengthen domestic production, IRIB reported on Friday.

The current Iranian calendar year of 1398 is named as the year of "Pickup in Production" by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

The realization of this motto toward Iran's self-reliance is in fact the only way to tackle the U.S. cruel sanctions on Iran's economy.

And to this end, providing the required working capital for the production units and offering them facilities is one of the major measures being pursued by the government to support these units in the year of Pickup in Production.

**‘Helping production rise a priority of ministry’**

Also, on the occasion of the National Day of Industry (July 1), Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani mentioned helping production increase a priority of his ministry and named some of the plans they have defined in the ministry for production flourishing, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Referring to this year's title which is pickup in production, the minister said, "Our focus



in this year is to preserve the current production level, while benefitting from the most available capacities; and in this regard, a special program including 35 projects have been prepared."

"We will spare no effort for strengthening domestic production and manufacturing of those parts that are currently imported to the country, through relying on capable domestic manpower in order to tackle the current [sanction] condition", he added.

Removing the barriers in the way of production, reviving and renovating industrial

Iran elected as IMO technical committee’s vice-chair

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran d e s k Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO)'s representative at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Mandana Mansourian, has been elected as IMO technical committee's vice-chairwoman.

As reported by IRIB, Mansourian was appointed to the position during a meeting at IMO's office in London on Thursday, in which she received the highest votes by the attendees.

The Iranian official is the first female vice-chair of the organization's technical committee.

The Technical Cooperation Committee (TC) oversees IMO's capacity-building program and the implementation of technical cooperation projects for which the organization acts as the executing or cooperating agency.

The Technical Cooperation Committee of IMO has important responsibilities for presenting technical cooperation, especially to developing countries.

The International Maritime Organization, known as the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization until 1982, is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping.

Earlier this month, the chairman of the board of Iranian Coastal and Marine Structural Engineering Association (ICOMSEA) Babak Bani-Jamali was also appointed as the new vice-president of the marine engineering committee of the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (known as PIANC).

As reported by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization, the decision was made in the 2019 Annual General Assembly of PIANC which was held in Japanese city of Kobe during June 3-7.

PIANC's mission is to provide expert guidance and technical advice on technical, economic and environmental issues pertaining to waterborne transport infrastructure, including the fields of navigable bodies of water (waterways), such as canals and rivers, as well as ports and marinas.

Tehran to host intl. ceramic, tile expo

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The 26th d e s k International Tile-Ceramic and Sanitary ware (CERAFAIR 2019) will kick off today (Sunday) at Tehran International Permanent Fairgrounds, IRNA reported.

According to the Head of the Iranian Ceramic-Tile Producers Syndicate (IRCPs), Mohammad Roshanfekr, 160 domestic companies are participating in this year's event alongside foreign exhibitors from various countries including Italy, Spain and China.

Speaking to IRNA about the exhibition, the official noted that this year's exhibition mainly focuses on presentation of Iranian products and introduction of Iranian industrialists, manufacturers and entrepreneurs in the field of ceramic.

He Underlined the potentials and capabilities of Iran's ceramic and tile industry, saying that the country's ceramic and tile exports in the Iranian calendar year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019) increased by 10 percent compared to its preceding year.

Roshanfekr put the country's ceramic

removing the problems of the units which are facing serious challenges."

There are some units that enjoy high potential and capacities, but due to some problems such as inadequate working capital they cannot work with full capacity, the minister noted, adding, "Our priority in the current year is to facilitate the condition for such units."

**RAI, industry ministry co-op to support domestic production**

The head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) has announced that his organization and the ministry of industry have come to an agreement on supporting domestic production in the railway sector.

Saeed Rasouli also said that a task force has been set up to follow up the issue, IRNA reported on Friday.

This task force will encourage the other organizations to help domestic production in this sector, he added.

The official mentioned boosting efficiency of railway fleet and network through benefiting from the most available capacities, linking the major cargo centers to the railway network based on a multi-year plan, and supporting domestic production in developing passenger and cargo fleet as some priorities of RAI in the current Iranian year.

He said linking the cargo centers to the railway network has been started and implanting the scheduled plan for the current year is on the agenda, adding that he major cargo centers are planned to be linked to the railway based on a multi-year schedule.



and tile production during the Iranian calendar year of 1397 at about 400 million cubic meters.

He further noted that despite western sanctions imposed on Iran during the past few years, tile and ceramics manufacturers have made attempts in order to retain their export market.

According to Roshanfekr, Iran is the world's fifth biggest exporter of ceramics and tile after China, India, Brazil and Spain.

Iran's CERAFAIR is one of the region's top three events in the tile and ceramic industry and every year it hosts a variety of participants from all over the world.

Turkmenistan to host 1st Caspian Economic Forum

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — d e s k

Turkmenistan is going to host the first economic conference of the Caspian Sea littoral nations which is due to be held on August 11-12, IRNA reported quoting the country's ambassador to Tehran.

According to Ahmad Ghorbanov, the forum will be held concurrent with the Aktau Summit in Awaza touristic zone.

Ghorbanov made the remarks in Tehran on Friday in a meeting with Deputy Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries,

Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) for International Affairs Mohammadreza Karbasi.

"The forum is going to be attended by senior officials from Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan," the official informed.

An exhibition of business and trade capabilities of the Caspian Sea littoral states is also scheduled to be held on the sidelines of this forum in which the exhibitors will showcase their latest achievements and

products, according to Ghorbanov.

Karbasi for his part, expressed Iran's readiness for attending this forum saying "this economic forum could have great achievements for all the parties, so it is necessary to take accurate planning in this respect."

He also suggested that the private sectors of the Caspian Sea nations would be given the opportunity of B2B meetings with each other to explore avenues of cooperation and familiarity with each other markets.

G20 summit: Trump and Xi agree to restart U.S.-China trade talks

The U.S. and China have agreed to resume trade talks, easing a long row that has fuelled a global economic slowdown.

As per bbc.com, U.S. President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping reached agreement at the G20 summit in Japan.

President Trump also said he would allow U.S. companies to continue to sell to the Chinese tech giant Huawei, in a move seen as a significant concession.

Ahead of the G20 summit Trump had threatened an additional \$300b (£236b) in tariffs on Chinese imports.

However after the meeting on the sidelines of the main summit in Osaka, he confirmed that Washington would not be adding the additional tariffs, and that he would continue to negotiate with Beijing "for the time being".

And at a subsequent press conference, the US president declared that U.S. technology companies could again sell to China's Huawei - effectively reversing a ban imposed last month by the U.S. commerce department.

**U.S. tech firms**

The ban prevented U.S. tech firms from selling to Huawei, crippling the Chinese firm's ability to get critical American technology to help it make its products.

President Trump has positioned his trade talks with Xi Jinping as a win for the U.S. - but he may have also given Beijing exactly what it wants on Huawei.

It is still not clear whether what Trump has announced is a complete reversal - but if it is, it would be a significant concession by the U.S. on a company that Washington has said is a threat to national security.

The resumption of talks and pressing the pause button on more tariffs will be seen in the short term as positive for markets and American businesses.

Those have already complained about the cost of fur-



ther tariffs saying that if they had gone ahead - American consumers would have ended up paying something like \$12b more in higher prices

Chinese businesses have been suffering too - the trade war has hit investment plans, business confidence, and exports in the world's second-largest economy

But pressing pause doesn't mean the trade war is over. Tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods are still in place. And the two sides still have much to agree on.

Washington wants Beijing to fundamentally change the way China's economy has grown over the last four decades - get rid of subsidies to state owned companies, open up the domestic market and most importantly, hold China to account if it fails to deliver on any of these commitments.

But Beijing has already publicly said that it won't budge on issues of principle or bow to U.S. pressure.

How the two sides close that gap will be the real test of any trade truce. For now - it is a positive thing that they're talking again. But talking can only take you so far.

U.S. and China - the world's two largest economies - have been fighting a damaging trade war over the past year.

**Doing business in China**

Trump accused China of stealing intellectual property and forcing U.S. firms to share trade secrets in order to do business in China.

China, in turn, said the U.S.'s demands for business reform were unreasonable.

The feud escalated in the months leading up to the summit, after talks between the two countries collapsed in May.

How will the current breakthrough change the situation? The truce signals a pause in hostilities between the world's largest economies, rather than a resolution of the year-long dispute which has caused market turbulence and dragged on global growth.

Speaking after his meeting with Xi at the summit, the U.S. president said negotiations were "back on track".

"We had a very good meeting with President Xi of China, excellent, I would say excellent, as good as it was going to be," Trump told reporters. "We discussed a lot of things and we're right back on track and we'll see what happens."

In a statement, China's foreign ministry said negotiators from both sides would discuss the specific details, but did not elaborate.

China's official state news agency Xinhua also quoted Xi as saying: "China and the U.S. have highly integrated interests and extensive co-operation areas and they should not fall into so-called traps of conflict and confrontation."



# Iran's power generation capacity to exceed 85GW by March 2020

ENERGY  
desk

**TEHRAN** — With 4,827 megawatts (MW) capacity of new power plants going operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), the country's power generation capacity is going to reach 85,695 MW, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity which stood at 80,311 MW at the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2019), has currently reached 80,868 MW.

As reported, the added capacity since the beginning of the current year, was supplied from the newly operational distributed generation power plants, combined-cycle power plants, as well as renewable plants.

According to the report, a 51-MW increase in power generation capacity at distributed generation plants (DG and CHP), a 39-MW increase in the capacity of renewable power plants, and 467 MW of new capacity in the country's combined-cycle power plants in-

creased the total power generation capacity by 557 MW.

Currently, with a total generation capacity of 25,083 MW (31.2 percent) combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share in the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants generating 29.9 percent.

The share of hydroelectric power plants is 19.87 percent while hydroelectric plants generate 14.8 percent of the country's total electricity, the share of dispersed generation units is 1.5 percent and finally the renewable power plants account only for 0.79 percent of Iran's total power generation capacity.

In early May, the energy ministry announced that the government plans to inaugurate 22 new power plant units with a total capacity of 3,933 MW in the current Iranian year along with upgrading and increasing the efficiency of existing power plants to add another 461 MW of new capacity.



## Russia agrees with Saudi to extend OPEC deal by 6-9 months: Putin

Russia has agreed with Saudi Arabia to extend by six to nine months a deal with OPEC on reducing oil production, Reuters reported, quoting Russian President Vladimir Putin as saying.

Putin, speaking after talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, told a news conference the deal would be extended in its current form and with the same volumes.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other producers, an alliance known as OPEC+, meet on July 1-2 to discuss the deal that involves curbing oil output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd). The pact expires after June 30.

"We will support the extension, both Russia and Saudi Arabia. As far as the length of the extension is concerned, we have yet to decide whether it will be six or nine months.



Maybe it will be nine months," said Putin said, who met the crown prince on the sidelines of a G20 summit in Japan..

A nine-month extension would mean the deal runs out in March 2020.

Kirill Dmitriev, the chief executive of Russian Direct Investment Fund who helped design the OPEC-Russia deal, said the pact in place since 2017 has already lifted Russian budget revenues by more than 7 trillion roubles (\$110 billion).

"The strategic partnership within OPEC+ has led to the stabilization of oil markets and allows both to reduce and increase production depending on the market demand conditions, which contributes to the predictability and growth of investments in the industry," Dmitriev said.

Benchmark Brent has climbed more than 25 percent since the start of the 2019. But prices could stall as a slowing global economy squeezes demand and U.S. crude floods the market, a Reuters poll of analysts found.

## Oil could crash if Trump and Xi don't deliver, JPMorgan says

A rally that boosted crude prices more than 10 percent over the past two weeks could be in serious trouble if the U.S. and China don't take a significant step toward resolving their trade dispute this weekend, according to JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s head of oil research and strategy.

As per Bloomberg, investors are looking for "meaningful" progress from the meeting in Japan between U.S. President Donald Trump and China's Xi Jinping -- something more than merely resuming negotiations, Abhishek Deshpande said in an interview. Without it, Brent crude, now trading around \$67 a barrel, could slide to \$60 or lower, he said.

The two leaders' confab at the G-20 economic summit will set the tone for next week's meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other top crude producers. If there's

progress toward a trade deal, the OPEC+ group may just extend existing output curbs, Deshpande said. If not, they may have to announce "meaningfully deeper" cuts to reassure investors worried about a global oversupply.

"These two meetings really have to show something more positive to turn around investor sentiment," Deshpande said. "It cannot be something that's just a small change. I don't think markets are in that mood, especially on the oil side. They really want to see something."

Brent has risen 11 percent since June 12, largely due to rising tensions in the Middle East. But many investors remain pessimistic about economic growth and surging U.S. supplies, the analyst said. It will take "some kind of jolt" on both the supply and demand sides to get oil back near the \$75.60 high point it hit in April.



## Stalling renewables growth raises concerns about global decarbonization efforts

By Brian Murray

In 2018, for the first time this century, global growth of new renewable energy capacity did not show a year-to-year increase. While this leveling off counters a long and steady trend of increased new renewable capacity each year -- capacity added in 2018 is ten times higher than it was in 2001 -- it has raised concern that efforts to advance a low-carbon energy transition may be stalling at just the wrong time.

Just about any ambitious climate plan in circulation -- for example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's "1.5 degree" report, the Green New Deal resolution in the U.S. Congress -- calls for massive mobilization of renewable energy investment. Though the last decade's growth in renewables is impressive, many policymakers are looking for it to accelerate rather than flatten in order to help meet long-term decarbonization targets to mitigate climate risk. Let's unpack how this development might affect such efforts.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) reports that new renewable energy capacity additions in 2018 were about 180 gigawatts (GW), the same as in 2017. That is roughly equivalent to 180 nuclear power plants and accounts for two-thirds of annual global capacity additions last year. The International Renewable Energy Association reports that one-third of all power generating capacity is now from renewables.

That sounds like a lot, but the actual generation that comes from a given amount of renewable capacity is lower than nuclear and fossil fuel plants because of the intermittency of renewables. Currently, renewables, including hydropower, account for just under one-quarter of global power production. The gap between renewable capacity and generation shares will narrow if energy storage and grid infrastructure investments geared toward renewable integration grow to match the scale of renewable capacity additions.

### ■ Growth in renewables

Last year, renewable generation grew 7 percent, but this only supplied 40 percent of the growth in total global electricity demand. Consequently, global CO2 emissions from the energy sector rose by 1.7 percent, even with the impressive growth in renewables. For renewables to play a major role in curbing global emissions commensurate with the Paris Agreement, the IEA estimates that renewable capacity additions will need to grow by over 300 GW each year between now and 2030 -- or roughly two-thirds higher than last year's total.

Hydropower accounts for more than half of global renewable capacity today, but in the last decade capacity growth has been driven first by wind and now solar PV.

The big story here is last year's slowdown in solar PV's growth. As the IEA explains, global solar PV's exponential growth had been compensating for slower increases in wind and hydropower since 2015. Solar PV's growth flattened in 2018, however, as China suddenly changed its solar PV incentives to address cost and grid integration challenges.



Meanwhile, the European Union and India also saw lower wind additions, further stalling overall global renewable growth.

China announced drastic cuts to support for solar developments in May 2018. Of the 97 GW of new solar capacity added last year globally, 44 GW came from China -- but that actually marks a sharp decline from the 53 GW China installed in 2017.

Other factors behind last year's slowdown in renewable capacity are a drop off in wind investment in the EU and India. From 2017 to 2018, new onshore wind installations dropped almost a third in the EU. Twelve EU countries failed to install a single wind turbine last year, but the largest drop-offs came from Germany, which was down by more than half compared to 2017, and the UK. Wind industry analysts point to permitting issues, especially in Germany and France. This slowdown in the EU has recently raised concern that the bloc's goal of 20 percent renewables by 2020 may be at risk.

Zooming in to the United States reveals that the last two decades have seen tremendous growth in renewable capacity, but that growth has been uneven. The United States is adding much more renewable capacity, but not always increasing year-over-year. The U.S. added 18 GW in 2018 -- up from the 17 GW in 2017, but not quite the 24 GW from 2016.

The U.S.'s growth in renewable capacity should continue through the short-term. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) expects non-hydro renewables to be the fastest growing source of US electricity generation for at least the next two years. In fact, just this week, EIA announced that in April, for the first time ever, generation from all renewables in the U.S. exceeded coal generation.

Last year's stalled growth in renewable capacity is worthy of attention, but it does not by itself indicate that we have hit "peak renewables." Policies still matter -- a lot -- and in some places, policies have barely scratched the surface. While many countries declared renewables targets as part of their Paris Agreement pledges in 2015, some countries are still crafting those policies. In one country, the United States, national commitments have devolved to subnational actions, and yet the needle is moving toward more renewables. Harmonized national policies -- whether focused directly on

renewables or decarbonization more broadly -- would be more efficient than the current piecemeal approach in the U.S. and could expand renewables and modify the mix considerably if adopted. Future elections will set the tone here.

### ■ The world's largest energy user

China, the world's largest energy user, is so big that whatever the Xi government and any successors choose to do with renewables will have an outsized effect at home and abroad, not just in terms of global adoption numbers but on global markets.

One thing that early adopters like Germany, the rest of the EU, and US states that adopted an RPS decades ago have done is provided the scale effect necessary to bring down the unit costs of wind and solar generation dramatically, so that they can compete on par with fossil generation in many cases. It is tempting to conclude that in due time renewables will outcompete fossil generation everywhere without reliance on policies whatsoever, which would certainly help scale up adoption. But that is not guaranteed.

First, energy storage technologies and grid improvements must catch up to integrate the higher levels of renewables. Second, although the average cost of renewables has been declining through technical improvements and scale economies, the marginal cost of generation rises as you move from the choicest spots with the least expensive land and the most productive resources to those that are more expensive and less productive. That's exactly what happened with dam construction in the United States. As the Atlantic explains, "by 1980 nearly all the nation's good sites -- and many dubious sites -- had been dammed."

Geographic variation in policy has ensured that we are not necessarily starting with the most productive spots and moving on from there. This means that there may be more low-hanging fruit as policies migrate to new areas, but eventually highly ambitious global targets will run into this constraint.

As I point out in my recent post in Forbes, declining costs of renewables can also coincide with higher retail electricity prices if it leads to higher system costs, including large transmission investments, to meet the intermittency challenges of renewables. The emergence of high renewables penetration may lead to a substantial revision of the standard electric utility business model, a view shared by Faraday Grid, a company that works on bidirectional smart grid systems, which they conveyed to me in response to my earlier article.

Policies will continue to play an important role for renewables for the foreseeable future. Policymakers should consider whether 100% renewable targets should be the sine qua non of climate policy or if high renewables adoption mixed with other emissions-free sources and carbon capture should be part of the portfolio. Whether mandating high levels of renewables is the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is the subject of much current debate.

(Source: forbes.com)

## U.S. oil output tops 12 million barrels a day for first time

U.S. crude output soared to new heights in April, highlighting OPEC's dilemma just days before the producer group meets amid growing geopolitical threats.

According to Bloomberg, a government report on Friday showed U.S. production grew 2.1 percent in April to 12.16 million barrels a day. Booming shale production from places like the Permian basin of West Texas have enabled U.S. oil output to overtake Saudi Arabia and Russia.

At the same time, trade disputes and escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf have clouded the outlook for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which is expected to extend current output cuts next week.

"It really means that OPEC has to make a decision to balance the market or shale will do it for them," said Jim Lucier, managing director of Washington, D.C.-based Capital Alpha Partners LLC. "Despite all the talk about Wall Street forcing capital discipline, we're not seeing any diminishing production yet."

Crude output from the Permian is expected to jump 50 percent by 2025, according to BloombergNEF. ESAI Energy forecasts crude and condensate from the Bakken, another prolific play, will surpass record output into next year.

## Russia holds the keys, but Rosneft trying to turn Putin

By Kostis Geropoulos

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other major oil producers led by Russia plan to meet on 1-2 July in Vienna to decide if the group known as OPEC+ extends its current production cuts into the second half of the year.

Russia is still holding consultations with local oil producers regarding the position on further implementation of the OPEC+ deal, TASS quoted Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak as saying on June 27, adding that decisions made on the sidelines of the G20 summit on 27-30 June would be critical for Moscow's position.

Chris Weafer, a partner at Macro-Advisory, a Moscow-based consultancy, said Russia has benefited from the deal with OPEC both politically and economically. The higher average oil price has boosted oil tax revenue, and helped the budget end a six-year run of deficit to record a surplus of \$44 billion in 2018, he told New Europe. Moreover, Russia's relationship with Saudi Arabia, and with the other Persian Gulf states, Weafer said, has noticeably improved since the 2016 production deal.

"This has helped improve Moscow's position in the region and helped secure investment deals from Saudi and the Emirates," Weafer said.

### ■ Russian oil companies

Russian oil companies, however, and in particular state oil giant Rosneft are pressuring Russian President Vladimir Putin to lift the cuts. The "CEO, Igor Sechin, has expressed unhappiness with the deal because it mostly benefits the American producers and is allowing them to gain global market share and to boost oil exports, Weafer said.

U.S. producers have benefitted from the decline in production from countries such as Iran, Libya and Venezuela and filled the gap, according to Weafer. The U.S. share of global oil production has risen from 8.7% in 2008 to an estimated 17% this year. Russia has been able to maintain its market share at 11.6% with production growth from 10 million barrels per day average per day to 11.6 million barrels this year.

"So far, the surge in U.S. oil exports has not hurt the oil price or Russia's market share but there is a real concern that if there is a drop in global demand, for example, if there were to be a slowdown in China or Asian economic growth as a result of escalating trade wars, then this rapid rise in U.S. production could crash the oil price again," said Weafer.

The big question mark for OPEC+ confab is whether the oil production cuts will be extended and for how long.



Alexei Kokin, a senior oil and gas analyst at UralSib Financial Corp in Moscow, argued that Russia is losing its market share mostly to American producers. "There is certainly a way of thinking that says, 'We should stop this and we should ask for an increase and, at the very least, increase our quota.' This is particularly convincing if production from some of the OPEC members -- like the usual suspects, Iran, Venezuela, potentially Libya -- declines. Then Russia could step in," he said. He opined that Moscow might agree to extend the OPEC+ deal but only for three months. "Russia is not willing to commit for a long enough time," he said.

### ■ Foregoing increased production

Kokin noted that Russia has gained quite a lot in terms of total revenue coming into the country by actually committing to a relatively small cut and foregoing an increased production that was forthcoming.

Weafer said the Russian economy does not need higher oil prices. The "Fiscal Rule and the weak ruble policy means that the budget breakeven price has been cut from \$115 per barrel in 2013 to just over \$50 this year and with a target breakeven of \$44 per barrel in 2022. With a price average of \$60 per barrel, which is the price President Putin said he is satisfied with, and also assuming a ruble -- dollar exchange rate of 65, then the surplus would remain over \$20 billion per annum assuming current spending plans," Weafer said.

He argued that the Kremlin is very wary of any events that create oil price volatility and also they are fearful of a price spike, i.e. because the higher price would accelerate supply growth and create conditions for the next oil price crash. The "actions that Russia was forced to take since 2014, because of sanctions and the oil price collapse, has positioned the Russian Budget and the oil producers much better than their OPEC counterparts," he said.

Regarding Iran, Weafer argued, "It is ironic that the U.S. Congress is debating possible new sanctions against Russia that, amongst other factors, would prohibit U.S. investors and others because of the secondary sanctions threat from purchasing any new Russian sovereign debt and, at the same time, the U.S. actions against Iran and Venezuela means that the Finance Ministry does not have to worry about raising any new external debt ... and for a very long time in the future."

(Source: neweurope.eu)



## Where is Trump the Realist?

For better or worse, Donald Trump listens to his advisers on foreign policy.

By Peter Harris

**NATIONALINTEREST**—President Donald Trump’s iconoclasm provides endless fodder for critics of his foreign policy, who variously rail against his curt treatment of U.S. allies, rejection of free trade, and contempt for international institutions. Scarcely a month will pass without the President giving his detractors the gift of some gaffe or another. The layups have been especially plentiful for those with an interest in exposing Trump’s destruction of America’s global leadership role. This cacophony of opprobrium was entirely predictable. But two-and-a-half years ago, it might also have been expected that an army of contrarians would leap forth to counterbalance those who defend the status quo ante. After all, there is no shortage of scholars, analysts, and pundits who call for the United States to adopt a slimmed-down global role. Shouldn’t these would-be retrenchers (or, “restrainers”) support Trump’s axe-wielding?

The truth is that voices in favor of Trump’s foreign policy moves have been few and far between—even within the (still somewhat incipient) restrainer community. Instead, Trump has endured flak from both sides. To internationalists, Trump is a know-nothing president who takes a perverse delight in wrecking America’s hard-won reputation as a benevolent global leader.

Do You Know What Happened On This Day?

But to restrainers, Trump is a fair-weather friend at best. Even if his graceless hacking at the fabric of the “liberal” international order might sometimes lead to an accidental positive outcome, the President’s steadfast commitment to overseas militarism is doing nothing to solve the problems of America’s entangling alliances and its never-ending wars. Indeed, Trump is making matters worse. Polish president Andrzej Duda’s recent trip to Washington, DC is an illustrative case in point. Under Trump, the United States and Poland have improved their bilateral relationship in some noticeable ways, especially when it comes to arms sales. Last year, Poland purchased \$4.75 billion worth of air defense systems from U.S. firms, including Patriot missile batteries. Now, the Trump administration is keen to equip Poland with F-35 fighter jets. All of this is meant to put Russia on notice that Warsaw cannot be pushed around.

Arms sales such as these are music to the ears of restrainers, who have long argued that the United States should enable other countries to provide for their own defense—a sort of Nixon Doctrine redux—to facilitate America’s own military retrenchment. If Poland and other Eastern European states are nervous about an expansionist Russia, the argument goes, then why not sell them the military hardware necessary to deter Moscow themselves? But as President Duda’s visit showed all too well, the Trump administration is not intent on matching arms sales with corresponding cuts to U.S. overseas deployments. On the contrary, Trump boastfully confirmed in the Oval Office that up to two thousand additional U.S. troops might be sent to Poland in the near term. These forces will enlarge an already substantial American presence in Poland, which usually totals around 4,500 troops at any given time.

Moreover, extra boots on the ground will be in addition to the \$232 million that the Pentagon has earmarked for infrastructure spending in Poland, especially for the U.S. Air Force, and the revival of the U.S. Navy’s 2nd Fleet, which this month took part in naval exercises in the Baltic Sea. And so while plans for a new and grandiose military base in Poland (“Port Trump”) might have been shelved, it is clear that the Trump administration has no intention of shrinking America’s physical presence along NATO’s eastern flank.

Those who advocate for a more circumscribed foreign policy have every reason to feel cheated. During the 2016 election campaign, Trump often talked as though he would govern in the spirit of retrenchment. He repeatedly emphasized the domestic costs of America’s post-9/11 wars in the Middle East, suggested that countries like Japan and South Korea ought to assume more of the burden for their own defense, and urged rapprochement with Russia as a way to lessen American commitments in Europe.

Yet not only has Trump expanded America’s military ties to North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies like Poland, but his administration has also supported new allies being brought into the fold. Tiny Montenegro joined NATO in 2017, North Macedonia’s accession process was formally kickstarted in February of this year, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has even declared that Georgia should be afforded NATO membership—despite that country being involved in an ongoing conflict with Russia over the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The dashed hopes of retrenchers don’t end there. From surging troops in Afghanistan to threatening war with North Korea, to supporting the Saudi-led war in Yemen, to backtracking from promises to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, to threatening war with Iran—Trump has made a habit of dangling the prospect of retrenchment, only to yank it away later.

By now, it should be obvious: Trump won’t retrench. But why not? Part of the explanation is that Trump, for better or worse, does listen to his advisers on some foreign-policy issues. As he said of his decision to increase troop deployments to Afghanistan, for example: “My original instinct was to pull out, and historically I like following my instincts, but all of my life I heard that decisions are much different when you sit behind the desk in the Oval Office.”

Another reason is that Trump has genuine (and longstanding) affection for the military. He’s thus more likely to indulge the Pentagon’s requests far more than he is to insist upon cuts to overseas deployments or overall spending. Additionally, it is especially tempting for Trump to acquiesce in unabated militarism given that a penchant for the armed forces is one of the primary things that unites the (sometimes fractious) Republican Party in Congress and the country at large.

The truth is that America has options for dealing with its problem of “turbulent frontiers” in Europe, the Middle East, the Asia-Pacific region, and elsewhere. Permanent alliances and forever wars are only some of the tools available—and not very desirable ones at that. Other options include simply abandoning those frontiers (retrenchment) or shifting the burden of providing security onto regional allies (offshore balancing). Of course, using diplomacy to lessen tensions with America’s adversaries is perhaps the ideal solution.

Trump once sounded as though his presidency would tilt the balance of power in U.S. foreign policy in favor of those who yearn for America to come home. At times, he still does. But now that he has an actual track record to examine, the clear portrait is of a president whose commitment to militarism cuts in exactly the opposite direction of retrenchment and restraint. America First does not mean America alone. It means America everywhere—still.

He might be selling F-35s to Poland, but the bigger picture is that President Trump does not expect the Poles or any other U.S. ally to stand on their own two feet. America’s long-suffering cohort of retrenchers will have to wait another day.

By Danny Sjrusen

Democrats, liberals, progressives—call them what you will—don’t really do foreign policy. Sure, if cornered, they’ll spout a few choice talking points, and probably find a way to make them all about bashing President Donald Trump—ignoring the uncomfortable fact that their very own Barack Obama led and expanded America’s countless wars for eight long years. This was ever so apparent in the first two nights of Democratic primary debates this week. Foreign policy hardly registered for these candidates with one noteworthy exception: Hawaii Representative Tulsi Gabbard—herself an (anti-war) combat veteran and army officer.

Now primary debates are more show than substance; this has long been the case. Still, to watch the first night’s Democratic primary debates, it was possible to forget that the United States remains mired in several air and ground wars from West Africa to Central Asia. In a two-hour long debate, with 10 would-be nominees plus the moderators, the word Afghanistan was uttered just nine times—you know, once for every two years American troops have been killing and dying there. Iraq was uttered just twice—both times by Gabbard. Syria, where Americans have died and still fight, was mentioned not once. Yemen, the world’s worst humanitarian disaster, courtesy of a U.S.-supported Saudi terror campaign didn’t get mentioned a single time, either.

Night two was mostly worse! Afghanistan was uttered just three times, and there was no question specifically related to the war. Biden did say, in passing, that he doesn’t think there should be “combat troops” in Afghanistan—but notice the qualifier “combat.” That’s a cop-out that allows him to keep advisers and “support” troops in the country indefinitely. These are the games most Democrats play. And by the way, all those supposedly non-combat troops, well, they can and do get killed too.

The only bright spot in the second debate was Senator Bernie Sanders’s single mention of the word Yemen—specifically ending U.S. support for that war and shifting war powers back where they belong—with Congress. Still, most of the candidates had just about nothing to say on this or other war-related topics. Their silence was instructive.

Ironically, then, two more American soldiers were killed in another meaningless firefight in the long meaningless war in Afghanistan on the day of the first Democratic presidential primary debate. Indeed, were it not for this horrendous event—the deaths of the 3,550th and 3,551st coalition troops in an 18-year-old war—Afghanistan might not have ever made it onto Rachel Maddow’s debate questions list. I mourn each and every



service-member’s death in that unwinnable war; to say nothing of the far more numerous Afghan civilian fatalities. Still, in a macabre sort of way, I was glad the topic came up, even under such dismal circumstances. After all, Maddow’s question on the first night was one of precious few posed on the subject of foreign policy at all. Moreover, it spurred the most interesting, engaging, and enlightening exchange of either evening—between Gabbard and Ohio Representative Tim Ryan.

Reminding the audience of the recent troop deaths in the country, Maddow asked Ryan, “Why isn’t [the Afghanistan war] over? Why can’t presidents of very different parties and very different temperaments get us out of there? And how could you?” Ryan had a ready, if wholly conventional and obtuse, answer: “The lesson” of these many years of wars is clear, he opined; the United States must stay “engaged,” “completely engaged,” in fact, even if “no one likes” it and it’s “tedious.” I heard this, vomited a bit into my mouth, and thought “spare me!”

Ryan’s platitudes didn’t answer the question, for starters, and hardly engaged with American goals, interests, exit strategies, or a basic cost-benefit analysis in the war. In the space of a single sentence, Ryan proved himself just another neoliberal militarist, you know, the “reluctant” Democratic imperialist type. He made it clear he’s Hilary Clinton, Joe Biden, and Chuck Schumer rolled into one, except instead of cynically voting for the 2003 Iraq war, he was defending an off-the-rails Afghanistan war in its 18th year. Gabbard pounced, and delivered the finest foreign policy screed of the night. And more power to her. Interrupting Ryan, she poignantly asked:

Is that what you will tell the parents of those two soldiers who were just killed in Afghanistan? Well, we just have to be engaged? As a soldier, I will tell you that answer



is unacceptable. We have to bring our troops home from Afghanistan...We have spent so much money. Money that’s coming out of every one of our pockets...We are no better off in Afghanistan today than we were when this war began. This is why it is so important to have a president — commander in chief who knows the cost of war and is ready to do the job on day one. In a few tight sentences, Gabbard distilled decades’ worth of antiwar critique and summarized what I’ve been writing for years—only I’ve killed many trees composing more than 20,000 words on the topic. The brevity of her terse comment, coupled with her unique platform as a veteran, only added to its power. Bravo, Tulsi, bravo!

Ryan was visibly shaken and felt compelled to retort with a standard series of worn out tropes. And Gabbard was ready for each one, almost as though she’d heard them all before (and probably has). The U.S. military has to stay, Ryan pleaded, because: “if the United States isn’t engaged the Taliban will grow and they will have bigger, bolder terrorist acts.” Gabbard cut him right off. “The Taliban was there long before we came in. They’ll be there long [after] we leave,” she thundered.

But because we didn’t “squash them,” before 9/11 Ryan complained, “they started flying planes into our buildings.” This, of course, is the recycled and easily refuted safe haven myth—the notion that the Taliban would again host transnational terrorists the moment our paltry 14,500 troops head back to Milwaukee. It’s ridiculous. There’s no evidence to support this desperate claim and it fails to explain why the United States doesn’t station several thousand troops in the dozens of global locales with a more serious al-Qaeda or ISIS presence than Afghanistan does. Gabbard would have none of it. “The Taliban didn’t attack us

on 9/11,” she reminded Ryan, “al-Qaeda did.” It’s an important distinction, lost on mainstream interventionist Democrats and Republicans alike.

Ryan couldn’t possibly open his mind to such complexity, nuance, and, ultimately, realism. He clearly worships at the temple of war inertia; his worldview hostage to the absurd notion that the U.S. military has little choice but to fight everywhere, anywhere, because, well, that’s what it’s always done. Which leads us to what should be an obvious conclusion: Ryan, and all who think like him, should be immediately disqualified by true progressives and libertarians alike. His time has past. Ryan and his ilk have left a scorched region and a shaken American republic for the rest of us.

Still, there was one more interesting query for the first night’s candidates. What is the greatest geopolitical threat to the United States today, asked Maddow. All 10 Democratic hopefuls took a crack at it, though almost none followed directions and kept their answers to a single word or phrase. For the most part, the answers were ridiculous, outdated, or elementary, spanning Russia, China, even Trump. But none of the debaters listed terrorism as the biggest threat—a huge sea change from answers that candidates undoubtedly would have given just four or eight years ago. Which begs the question: why, if terrorism isn’t the priority, do far too many of these presidential aspirants seem willing to continue America’s fruitless, forever fight for the Greater Middle East? It’s a mystery, partly explained by the overwhelming power of the America’s military-industrial-congressional-media complex. Good old President Dwight D. Eisenhower is rolling in his grave, I assure you.

Gabbard, shamefully, is the only one among an absurdly large field of candidates who has put foreign policy, specifically ending the forever wars, at the top of her presidential campaign agenda. Well, unlike just about all of her opponents, she did fight in those very conflicts. The pity is that with an electorate so utterly apathetic about war, her priorities, while noble, might just doom her campaign before it even really starts. That’s instructive, if pitiful. I, too, served in a series of unwinnable, unnecessary, unethical wars. Like her, I’ve chosen to publicly dissent in not just strategic, but in moral, language. I join her in her rejection of U.S. militarism, imperialism, and the flimsy justifications for the Afghanistan war—America’s longest war in its history.

As for the other candidates, when one of them (likely) wins, let’s hope they are prepared the question Tulsi so powerfully posed to Ryan: what will they tell the parents of the next soldier that dies in America’s hopeless Afghanistan war?

## Cry not for hapless Trump: He created the current mess

➡ Does anyone ever question why Trump and his mob have not attacked North Korea? For the same reason probably Iran has not been bombed yet – it has shown smarts and strength and some capability, and everyone knows bullies like the U.S. or the Zionists don’t usually pick on anyone who can fight back. Look at it this way:

If Iran does not have any nuclear weapons, and it does not and has not been attempting to make even one, it has something invaluable to ward off military aggression, just as the Norks have their extant nukes. Iran lies immediately on the Straits of Hormuz, which is just as effective as having nukes. Iran can and will close down Hormuz to sea traffic and oil dispersal IF it is attacked...and send the world economy plummeting into the sea just as fast as that U.S. drone. Maybe this is why Trump wised up suddenly: he damn well knows his reelection chances are nil if he starts a new war in the Middle East.

And this latter point about Trump becoming a one-term President if he launches an attack seems to have been born out. Last Wednesday night the Democrats had their first of many debates among candidates for the nomination next year. First, there are far too many candidates already, and the debate was, to be frank, quite boring with most everyone promising economic freebies to the American public if they are elected. In other words, the usual BS, bribery, pie in the sky, whatever you want to call it. But one candidate stood out: Hawaiian U.S. House Representative and military veteran Tulsi Gabbard, 38, who stuck to her original message: end the U.S. foreign wars.



Period. And lo and behold, she was allegedly the debate winner by a country mile Wednesday night. That tells you the U.S. public is sick and tired of U.S. imperialism and warmongering.

The public also recently heard from long silent (on Iran) and long-established columnist Thomas Friedman of the New York Times. This rotund oracle of frequent nonsense and an alleged Mideast “expert” makes several hundred thousand dollar a year in salary at the newspaper and is allegedly paid \$40,000 for a mere speech. We should all

address the chain of command, Callamard said, including the role of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who American intelligence officials have concluded ordered the killing. “A UN criminal investigation is essential in order for these central questions to be addressed,” she said.

Khashoggi’s fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, also urged the United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, to use his influence to garner support for an international investigation. “I want to know who ordered the killing of Jamal and who else knew,” she said in a brief statement to the council.

“I want to know where is his body.”

It is now an established fact that Khashoggi was deliberately killed at the hands of state actors and journalists around the world are increasingly seeing the same fate. What’s more, Callamard has determined that Saudi Arabia is “responsible” for the “extrajudicial” murder of Washington Post writer Khashoggi.

This killing was a result of an elaborate mission involving extensive coordination and significant human and financial resources. It was overseen, planned, and endorsed by high level officials and it was

premeditated. The right to life is a right at the core of international human rights protection. If the international community ignores targeted killing designed to silence peaceful expression, it puts at risk the protection on which all human rights depend. Since it occurred at a consulate in Turkey, the killing cannot be considered a “domestic matter” and violates the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations as well as the prohibition against extraterritorial use of force in times of peace, making it an international crime.



# The official start of the U.S. presidential race in the year 2020

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — The 2020 presidential elections in the United States have actually started! Democratic candidates' debates have shown that the competition is very tight. However, Donald Trump's foreign policy was one of the main issues that was considered in the Democrats debate. All Democrats declared their opposition to US President-in-Office foreign policy.

It seems that in the presidential elections of 2020, foreign policy will be one of the main issues. Here's a brief overview of some of the news and analysis on the US presidential election:

## ■ The case for a woman running against Trump

As The Vox reported, A lot of Democrats are worried that a woman can't beat President Trump. In a recent poll, just 33 percent of voters thought their neighbors would be comfortable with a female president. And as Vox's Li Zhou has written, "electability" for a lot of Americans seems to mean being white and male. So for some people, this week's first Democratic presidential debates, with multiple women onstage for the first time ever, became a referendum on whether a woman would have what it takes to debate Trump. Washington Post political correspondent Dave Weigel summed up the attitude, arguing that Sen. Kamala Harris's performance would show voters a woman could really win:

One reason that Kamala exchange with Biden matters: Dem voters need to be convinced that a woman can face Trump onstage and take him apart. That moment got her a long way.

Harris's exchange with Biden on his history with busing — "Do you agree today that you were wrong to oppose busing in America then?" she pressed Biden, putting him on defense — was one of many strong moments for her in the debate, and suggested she could handle Trump ably. But when it comes to debating our current president, her gender isn't an obstacle she'd need to overcome. It's an advantage. Trump has spent his life trying to be the alpha male, perhaps stretching all the way back to his time in military school. His tactics are often based on challenging his opponents' masculinity. Think of the 2016 Republican primary debates, when he called Marco Rubio "Little Marco" and boasted about the size of his penis. That tactic simply doesn't work on women. His approach with Hillary Clinton and other female opponents and critics has generally been to belittle their looks — hurtful and offensive, to be sure, but something most high-profile women have a lot of practice handling.

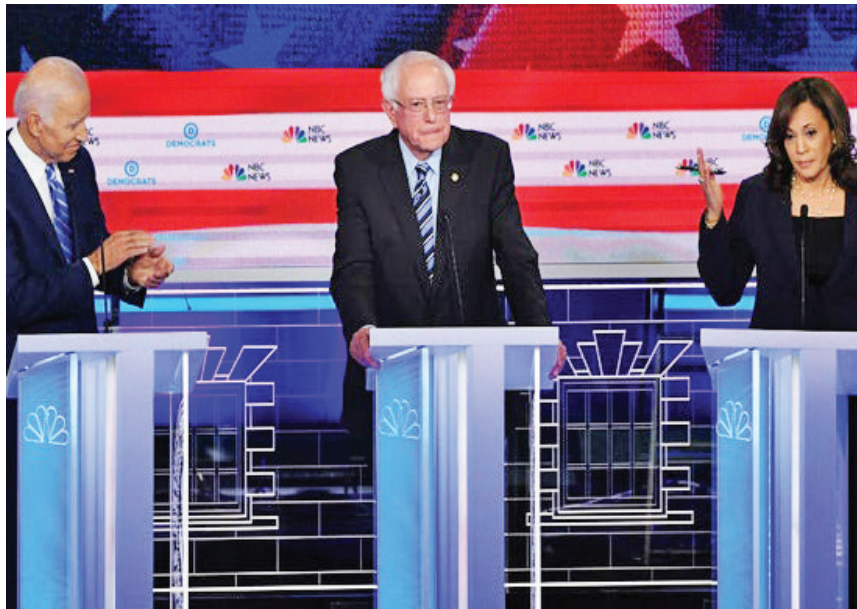
Though Clinton lost the 2016 election, many felt she won the debates (and, of course, she won the national popular vote). And this week's debates were another reminder that not only can a woman hold her own in a debate against Trump, a woman might actually be uniquely suited to beating him.

## ■ Trump's debate style actually makes a woman more likely to beat him

Worry about a woman losing to Trump in 2020 runs deep. In a June Daily Beast/Ipsos poll, 74 percent of voters said they would be comfortable with a female president, but just a third said their neighbors would. Meanwhile, as Vox's Tara Golshan wrote earlier this month, former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders, two white men in their 70s, were leading in polls going into the debates, even though polls suggest that, given a choice, Democrats might prefer a candidate who isn't an older white man. So for some Americans, the debates this week weren't just a test of who was the best candidate. They were also a test of whether a woman could really win.

By any measure, Harris and other female candidates passed. As Vox's Ezra Klein wrote, Harris "tore into Biden's comments about segregationists and his record on busing in a way that left him sputtering onstage, and that carried the meta-message that she'd be able to confront Trump with the same cool precision." She also cut through her opponents' interruption-fest on education with a lighthearted jibe — "America does not want a food fight, they want to know how we'll put food on their table" — that made her look like the adult in the room.

But other female candidates had strong showings too. Sen. Amy Klobuchar won applause when she took Gov. Jay Inslee to task for saying he was the only candidate to have achieved something on abortion rights. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand made an impact with her comments on the Hyde Amendment, which bans federal fund-



ing for most abortions. Sen. Elizabeth Warren showed the calm and clear grasp of policy that has been her trademark, and Wednesday night's debate was essentially a referendum on her plans. Any of the female candidates onstage this week could probably perform well in a debate against Trump, up to and including Marianne Williamson, who would probably out-weird him. And in all their cases, their gender wouldn't be a stumbling block they'd have to get over to beat Trump onstage. It would actually help them.

In the 2016 primary debates, when Trump wasn't zoning out, he was trying to question his opponents' masculinity and assert his own. He repeatedly called Rubio "Little Marco." He also took Rubio to task for making fun of his allegedly small hands (a longtime dig against Trump).

"Look at those hands," he said. "Are they small hands? And he referred to my hands — if they're small, something else must be small. I guarantee you there's no problem, I guarantee."

That was the only time he actually bragged about his penis size, but the implication was there throughout. It was a piece of his general strategy against his opponents throughout the primary campaign — accuse them in coded or not-so-coded ways of lacking virility, as when he accused Jeb Bush of being "low-energy."

It makes sense that Trump's debate and campaign style often devolved into a form of gendered bullying — he spent most of his career in the male-dominated real estate development business. He also spent his formative years at the all-male New York Military Academy, where, as a captain, he was in charge of whipping other boys into shape (until he was reassigned for mysterious reasons).

But treating debate as a literal dick-measuring contest doesn't work when your opponent is a woman. Instead, Trump has typically resorted to insulting women's appearance, as when he reportedly said of Republican presidential hopeful Carly Fiorina, "Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that?" He's also tried physical intimidation, looming creepily behind Hillary Clinton on the debate stage. At a rally soon after, he insulted her body, saying, "when she walked in front of me, believe me, I wasn't impressed."

But women, especially those who have been in the public eye, are unfortunately used to these tactics. Take E. Jean Carroll, who says that Trump sexually assaulted her in the 1990s. In response to her story, Trump said she was "not my type" — Carroll, who wrote in New York magazine that Trump was one of several men to attack her over the course of her life, fired back, "I'm so glad I'm not his type."

Clinton, meanwhile, has written that Trump's looming made her "incredibly uncomfortable." But she chose to ignore him and didn't let it affect her debate performance. "Maybe I have overlearned the lesson of staying calm, biting my tongue, digging my fingernails into a clenched fist, smiling all the while, determined to present a composed face to the world," she wrote in her 2017 book *What Happened*. Her response to Trump's bluster was to laugh at him, and polls afterward showed Americans thought she won the debates, even though she ultimately didn't win the election.

Many women have had to learn the same lesson Clinton did — including the women of the 2020 Democratic field. Being in the public eye as a woman can be a trial by fire, and there's evidence that

the women who make it to high office are toughened by the experience. As Golshan writes, some political science research suggests that "because women have to work harder to prove themselves in the electoral process, they actually perform better when they get into office."

The women onstage largely showed that their experience has made them into effective debaters, easily able to shut down male opponents. Harris certainly showed she knows how to handle interruptions, and Klobuchar's exchange with Inslee showed she can easily put a man in his place.

None of this shows that a woman can definitely beat Trump in an election — that's not something we can know at this stage, though research suggests that women are actually just as "electable" as men. There are also lots of factors voters can use to make their primary decisions; "who would win in a debate against Trump" is far from the only question to be asked. But this week's debates should put to rest the idea that a woman won't be able to go head to head with Trump on national TV and win. The women onstage showed their strength this week — and what's more, recent history shows that where Trump is concerned, they would actually have an advantage.

Poll: Biden leads Democratic field in Maine with Warren in second place

The Hill reported that Former Vice President Joe Biden holds the lead among voters in Maine's Democratic presidential primary, according to a new poll. In a survey from Gravis Marketing, Biden was supported by 25 percent of registered Democratic voters, while Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) edged out Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) to take second place, though the two are within the poll's margin of error at 17 percent and 15 percent, respectively. The poll also found President Trump losing the state to much of the Democratic primary field, including Biden, Sanders, and Warren as well as other Democratic contenders including Sen. Kamala Harris (Calif.) and South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg.

Sanders, Warren and Biden were the only three candidates to break double-digit support levels in the poll. Buttigieg came in fourth at 8 percent. "It is important to note that Sen. Sanders won the Maine Democratic caucus in 2016," Doug Kaplan, Gravis's president, said in a press release accompanying the poll. "However, Maine is now moving over to a primary system for their 2020 Primary Election which will most certainly alter the electorate that will participate in choosing the Democratic Nomination."

Maine Sen. Susan Collins (R) could possibly face a tough reelection fight, according to the poll, which found her leading her announced Democratic challenger by double digits but with even favorable and unfavorable ratings at 48 percent. The poll surveyed 767 registered Maine voters including 243 registered Democratic primary voters on June 24. The overall margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points, while the margin among Democratic voters is 6.3 percentage points.

## ■ Yes, democrats are paying plenty of attention to the 2020 election

Political junkies might think the whole country is devotedly following the 2020 presidential campaign (FiveThirtyEight certainly is). But remember, the election is still more than a year away. So it's definitely fair to ask just how many people are already tuning in.

And with this in mind, a new survey from the Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that just 35 percent of Democrats1 said they were paying

"a good deal" or "a lot" of attention to the campaign so far. Or in other words, only about one-third of Democrats are seriously following the goings-on of the campaign.

But one-third seemed a bit low to me, given that other pollsters have found that Democrats care a lot about picking a candidate they think can defeat President Trump this year, so I took a look at what other pollsters have found this cycle. I found that Quinnipiac University has asked a version of this question three times so far in 2019, finding each time that Democrats are paying quite a bit of attention to the race. For example, 74 percent said they were either paying "a lot" or "some" attention in the most recent survey.

## ■ Other polling bites

A new report from the Pew Research Center shows a huge partisan gap over Americans' attitudes toward capitalism and socialism. Republicans had sharply positive views of capitalism, with 78 percent holding a positive view and just 20 percent holding a negative one. But Democrats held mixed views: 55 percent had a positive impression while 44 percent had a negative one. Conversely, socialism was thoroughly disliked by Republicans, with only 15 percent holding a positive view and 84 percent holding a negative one. But Democrats were much more positive. Sixty-five percent had a positive impression and 33 percent had a negative one.4

New polling from Democratic pollster Global Strategy Group suggests that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell might make a better target for Democratic candidates in 12 battleground states than President Trump. The survey, sponsored by campaign finance reform group End Citizens United, found Democrats ahead 48 percent to 45 percent on the generic ballot in those swing states. The pollster tested three different messages using McConnell, Trump and Republicans in Congress as foils to see how they changed voting intention. The language about McConnell produced the largest Democratic gain in the margin on the generic ballot — nine percentage points — while the language about Republicans in Congress and Trump increased the Democratic edge by six and three points, respectively.

According to a survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted just before the first Democratic debates, health care was the topic Democrats5 wanted to hear about most — 87 percent said it was very important for the candidates to talk about it. Other issues that were top priorities included: issues affecting women (80 percent), climate change (73 percent), gun policy (72 percent) and income inequality (70 percent).

Speaking of the debates, a number of candidates spoke in Spanish at different points, and YouGov recently found that 42 percent of Americans thought candidates are "pandering" when doing this versus 31 percent who believed they are being "respectful." Among Democrats, 46 percent felt it was respectful compared to 32 percent who said it was pandering. Hispanic Americans also were more likely to view it as respectful (37 percent) than pandering (27 percent).

Young voters were an important part of Bernie Sanders's presidential campaign in 2016, and new polling from Chegg/College Pulse found that Democratic college students6 are more supportive of the Vermont senator than other candidates. The group's latest data showed Sanders with 26 percent, Elizabeth Warren at 20 percent, Biden at 17 percent and Pete Buttigieg at 10 percent. However, this represents continued improvement for Warren, who was in the single digits in April, while Sanders has slid from the low 30s to where he is now.

A new report from the Public Religion Research Institute found that only a relatively small share of Americans support refusing services to various minority groups for religious reasons, but that the share has increased in the past five years. Among the key findings was that 30 percent of Americans support business owners refusing service to LGBTQ individuals if it violates their religious beliefs. In 2014, only 16 percent of Americans supported this position.

Last week, President Trump decided to hold off on ordering a military strike against Iran, which had shot down a U.S. surveillance drone. A new HarrisX poll found that 26 percent of Americans support taking military action against Iran while 39 percent oppose such a move. Another 34 percent said they were not sure.

## Memo to Trump: Trade Bolton for Tulsi

By Patrick J. Buchanan

**ANTIWAR**—"For too long our leaders have failed us, taking us into one regime change war after the next, leading us into a new Cold War and arms race, costing us trillions of our hard-earned tax payer dollars and countless lives. This insanity must end."



Donald Trump, circa 2016?

Nope. That denunciation of John Bolton interventionism came from Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii during Wednesday night's Democratic debate. At 38, she was the youngest candidate on stage. Gabbard proceeded to rip both the "president and his chickenhawk cabinet (who) have led us to the brink of war with Iran."

In a fiery exchange, Congressman Tim Ryan of Ohio countered that America cannot disengage from Afghanistan: "When we weren't in there they started flying planes into our buildings."

"The Taliban didn't attack us on 9/11," Gabbard replied, "Al-Qaida attacked us on 9/11. That's why I and so many other people joined the military, to go after al-Qaida, not the Taliban."

When Ryan insisted we must stay engaged, Gabbard shot back:

"Is that what you will tell the parents of those two soldiers who were just killed in Afghanistan? 'Well, we just have to be engaged.' As a soldier, I will tell you, that answer is unacceptable. ... We are no better off in Afghanistan than we were when this war began."

By debate's end, Gabbard was the runaway winner in both the Drudge Report and Washington Examiner polls and was far in front among all the Democratic candidates whose names were being searched on Google. Though given less than seven minutes of speaking time in a two-hour debate, she could not have used that time more effectively. And her performance may shake up the Democratic race. If she can rise a few points above her 1-2% in the polls, she could be assured a spot in the second round of debates.

If she is, moderators will now go to her with questions of foreign policy issues that would not have been raised without her presence, and these questions will expose the hidden divisions in the Democratic Party. Leading Democratic candidates could be asked to declare what U.S. policy should be — not only toward Afghanistan but Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jared Kushner's "Deal of the Century," and Trump's seeming rejection of the two-state solution.

If she makes it into the second round, Gabbard could become the catalyst for the kind of globalist vs. nationalist debate that broke out between Trump and Bush Republicans in 2016, a debate that contributed to Trump's victory at the Cleveland convention and in November. The problem Gabbard presents for Democrats is that, as was shown in the joust with Ryan, she takes positions that split her party, while her rivals prefer to talk about what unites the party, like the terribleness of Trump, free college tuition and soaking the rich. Given more airtime, she will present problems for the GOP as well. For the foreign policy Tulsi Gabbard is calling for is not far off from the foreign policy Donald Trump promised in 2016 but has since failed to deliver. We still have 2,000 troops in Syria, 5,000 in Iraq, 14,000 in Afghanistan. We just moved an aircraft carrier task force, B-52s and 1,000 troops to the Persian Gulf to confront Iran. We are about to impose sanctions on the Iranian foreign minister with whom we would need to negotiate to avoid a war.

Jared Kushner is talking up a U.S.-led consortium to raise \$50 billion for the Palestinians in return for their forfeiture of sovereignty and an end to their dream of a nation-state on the West Bank and Gaza with Jerusalem as its capital. John Bolton is talking of regime change in Caracas and confronting the "troika of tyranny" in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Rather than engaging Russia as Trump promised, we have been sanctioning Russia, arming Ukraine, sending warships into the Black Sea, beefing up NATO in the Baltic and trashing arms control treaties Ronald Reagan and other presidents negotiated in the Cold War. U.S. policy has managed to push our great adversaries, Russia and China, together as they have not been since the first Stalin-Mao decade of the Cold War. This June, Vladimir Putin traveled to Beijing where he and Xi Jinping met in the Great Hall of the People to warn that in this time of "growing global instability and uncertainty," Russia and China will "deepen their consultations on strategic stability issues."

Xi presented Putin with China's new Friendship Medal. Putin responded: "Cooperation with China is one of Russia's top priorities and it has reached an unprecedented level."

At the end of the Cold War, we were the lone superpower. Who forfeited our preeminence? Who bled us of 7,000 U.S. lives and \$6 trillion in endless Middle East wars? Who got us into this Cold War II? Was all this the doing of those damnable isolationists again?



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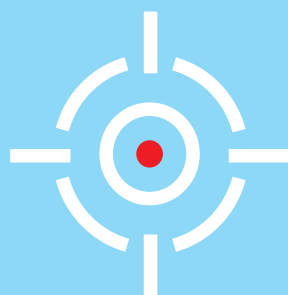
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The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

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.

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# Total eclipse will shield sun over South America next week

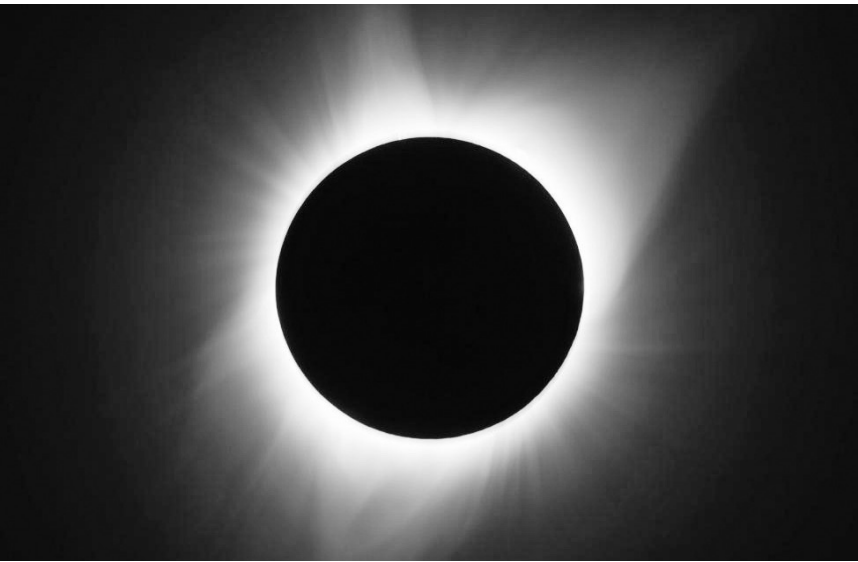
The first total solar eclipse since 2017 will occur next week, and will be visible in parts of South America.

The eclipse will be seen along a 6,000-mile swath on Tuesday. When it aligns with the sun, the moon will cast a dark shadow over parts of Chile and Argentina, experts said. During the event, those locations will be shaded from the sun

for several minutes.

Observers will be able to see next week's eclipse in a narrow zone from Chile to central Argentina. Neighboring South American countries will see a partial eclipse.

The "Great South American Eclipse" will be the only total eclipse of 2019, and the first since the "Great American



Eclipse" of August 2017. There will be an "annular" eclipse on Dec. 26 visible in many Mideast nations.

Experts at NASA say the only safe way to observe the eclipse is through special-purpose solar filters, like the "eclipse glasses" that became famous during the 2017 event -- which was seen over a large section of the United States.

Tuesday's will be the final total eclipse until December 2020, which will be a near repeat -- as Chile and Argentina will again be the primary locations under its path.

The next total solar eclipse in the United States will occur April 8, 2024, and will be visible from Texas to New England.

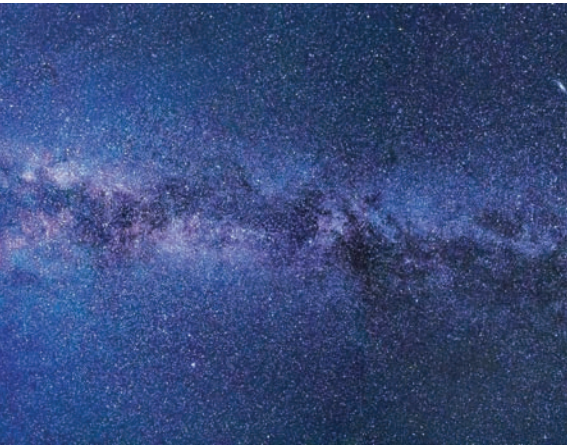
(Source: UPI)

## Researcher shows physics suggests life could exist in a 2-D universe

James Scargill, a physicist at the University of California, has written a paper reporting that the laws of physics allow for the existence of a life-supporting two-dimensional universe. MIT's Technology Review has reviewed the paper and found that the work does show that such a 2+1 universe could exist.

Because we live in three-dimensions, it is difficult for us to envision a universe in which the third dimension does not exist—or one in which there is a fourth or fifth dimension. But philosophers and physicists have spent a lot of time and work trying to figure out if life could exist in anything but the three dimensions we know. In such discussions, time is also included, which has led to the description of what we experience as a 3+1-dimensional universe.

As TR notes, most physicists have concluded that our 3+1-dimensional universe is the only one that could support life. They point out that with more than three dimensions, Newton's laws of motion would be susceptible to problems with tiny perturbations, which would prevent the formation of orbits—like planets



around a sun. So that is out. But what about a two-dimensional world? Most experts suggest it is difficult to imagine how gravity could work in such a universe,

making it difficult or impossible for life-supporting systems to form. In his paper, Scargill suggests we might need to rethink this argument. He has shown that the laws of physics do allow for gravity in a 2-D world, and also the development of systems capable of supporting life.

In his paper, Scargill uses physics formulas to show that scalar gravitational fields could exist in two dimensions—and goes on to show that the necessary complexity needed for life could also exist in a 2-D universe—and he does it using neural networks as a basis for comparison. He starts by exploring whether there are any 2-D networks that have all the same characteristics as a neural network. He then shows that 2-D networks can be built in modular fashion to overcome the problem of crossing edges. Then he shows that such networks can demonstrate criticality. And by doing so, he demonstrates that there could exist a life-supporting 2-D+1 universe—at least according to physics.

(Source: phys.org)

## Blue color tones in fossilized prehistoric feathers



Examining fossilized pigments, scientists from the University of Bristol have uncovered new insights into blue color tones in prehistoric birds.

For some time, paleontologists have known that melanin pigment can preserve in fossils and have been able to reconstruct fossil color patterns.

Melanin pigment gives black, reddish brown and grey colors to birds and is involved in creating bright iridescent sheens in bird feathers.

This can be observed by studying the melanin packages called melanosomes, which are shaped like little cylindrical objects less than one-thousandth of a millimeter and vary in shape from sausage shapes to little meatballs.

However, besides iridescent colors, which is structural, birds also make non-iridescent structural colors.

Those are, for example, blue color tones in parrots and kingfishers. Until now, it was not known if such colors could be discovered in fossils.

This blue structural color is created by the dense arrangement of cavities inside feathers, which scatters the blue light. Underneath is a layer of melanin that absorbs unscattered light.

Paleontologists have shown that the feather itself, which is made of keratin, does not fossilize while the melanin does. Therefore, if a blue feather fossilized, the dark pigment may be the only surviving feature and the feather may be interpreted as black or brown.

Now researchers from the University of Bristol, led by Frane Barbarovic who is currently at the University of Sheffield, have shown that blue feather melanosomes are highly distinct from melanosomes that are from feathers expressing black, reddish-brown, brown

and iridescent, but overlap significantly with some grey feather melanosomes.

By looking at plumage colorations of modern representatives of fossil specimen and reconstructing which color was the most likely present in the fossil specimen, they were able to discriminate between melanosomes significant for grey and blue color, leading to the reconstruction of prehistoric Eocoracias brachyptera as a predominantly blue bird.

Frane Barbarovic said: "We have discovered that melanosomes in blue feathers have a distinct range in size from most of color categories and we can, therefore, constrain which fossils may have been blue originally.

"The overlap with grey color may suggest some common mechanism in how melanosomes are involved in making grey coloration and how these structural blue colors are formed.

"Based on these results in our publication we have also hypothesized potential evolutionary transition between blue and grey color."

The research team now need to understand which birds are more likely to be blue based on their ecologies and modes of life. The blue color is common in nature, but the ecology of this color and its function in the life of birds is still elusive.

Frane Barbarovic added: "We also need to understand how grey color is made. This is made in a very different way in birds than it is in mammals. We believe it is related to how the melanosome shape can result in a kind of self-assembling process in the feather and the surface tension of the melanosomes pull them into certain configurations inside a feather as it forms."

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

## Study links lightning with gamma rays inside clouds



Weak gamma-ray glows appear to precede lightning strikes and accompanying gamma-ray flashes under certain conditions.

Over the last several years, researchers at the University of Tokyo worked with schools and businesses in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, in central Japan, to install a network of radiation monitors for studying lightning.

"Forever, people have seen lightning and heard thunder. These were the ways we could experience this power of nature," University of Tokyo graduate student Yuuki Wada said in a news release. "With the discovery of electromagnetism, scientists learned to see lightning with radio receivers. But now we can observe lightning in gamma rays -- ionizing radiation. It's like having four eyes to study the phenomena."

Scientists used observations by the network of radiation monitors to study the connections between lightning and two different kinds of gamma-ray phenomena. Gamma ray glows comprise weak emissions and last roughly a minute. The more intense terrestrial gamma-ray flashes, TGFs, last only a split second and accompany lightning strikes.

Both phenomena are fueled by differences in charges within cloud layers. Stark charge disparities cause electrons to accelerate to nearly the speed of light. The electrons, traveling at relativistic speeds, briefly slow down as they pass by the nuclei of nitrogen atoms. When they do so, they emit a gamma ray. Scientists refer to these gamma rays as bremsstrahlung radiation.

"During a winter thunderstorm in Kanazawa, our monitors detected a

simultaneous TGF and lightning strike. This is fairly common, but interestingly we also saw a gamma-ray glow in the same area at the same time," said Wada. "Furthermore, the glow abruptly disappeared when the lightning struck. We can say conclusively the events are intimately connected and this is the first time this connection has been observed."

Scientists are still trying to decipher the dynamics of thunder clouds and figure out what exactly causes lightning to strike. Gamma ray phenomena could offer insights.

Researchers involved in the latest study, published in the Journal Communications Physics, expect to expand their network of radiation monitors and collect more gamma ray observations in the near future -- observations they hope help explains the role of gamma rays in triggering lightning.

The ongoing study of the relationship between thunderstorms and gamma rays could even have implications for the work of paleontologists.

"Paleontologists who study life from the last 50,000 years or so use a technique called carbon-14 dating to determine the age of a sample. The technique relies on knowledge of the levels of two kinds of carbon, carbon-12 and carbon-14," said Wada. "It's commonly thought carbon-14 is created by cosmic rays at a roughly constant rate, hence the predictive power of the technique. But there's a suggestion thunderstorms may alter the ratio of carbon-12 to carbon-14, which may slightly change the accuracy of or calibration required for carbon-14 dating to work."

(Source: UPI)

## NASA to send Dragonfly drone to explore Titan, Saturn's largest moon

NASA is sending a nuclear-powered drone to Saturn's largest moon to explore multiple locations in search of habitability and life.

The space agency said Thursday that a dual quad copter called Dragonfly would fly from location to location over Titan, a moon with conditions that mimic those on earth 4bn years ago.

If Dragonfly is successful, it could help to reveal how life arose and took hold of our planet. Those secrets could offer valuable insights into the search for life elsewhere in the universe.

The Dragonfly mission is part of NASA's competitive New Frontiers Program and is aimed at understanding how chemistry gave way to biology.

Scientists have long considered Titan an attractive place to study whether it would be capable of supporting microbial life.

Titan's landscape is dominated by "sand dunes" and "waterways" composed of hydrocarbons -- liquid methane and ethane. Its surface is composed of water ice, frozen as hard as rock. Beneath the crust hides a liquid-water reservoir that astrophysicists believe to be the same temperature as the shallows of the Pacific Ocean.

Titan's organic chemistry is composed of complex molecules that may well be, at minimum, precursors for alien biology. It has long been an object of fascination of astrophysicists.

Describing Titan, the late astrophysicist Carl Sagan once wrote: "The molecules that have been raining down like manna from heaven for the last 4bn years might still be there, largely unaltered, deep-frozen, awaiting the chemists from Earth."

Announcing the expedition on Thursday, Dragonfly's principal investigator, Elizabeth Turtle, a planetary scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), said there was little certainty about what kind of biological soup might await.

"We know Titan has all of the ingredients necessary for life. How far does chemistry get in an environment that has all of the ingredients sitting there?" Turtle said in comments to Scientific American.

"Titan has been doing chemistry experiments for hundreds of millions, if not billions, of years. And what we want to do is go pick up the results of those experiments."

The kind of experiments that have been going on for millions of years would simply take too long to replicate in a laboratory, Turtle said. As far-fetched as it might seem, she said, it was "simply" more feasible to send a nuclear-powered drone on a billion kilometer journey to see for ourselves.

"Our habitable world has so many different environments that can support life," Turtle told the magazine. "So it's important to be able to look at this broadly."

The interplanetary technology NASA is deploying to reach Titan, perhaps as soon as 2034, is an offshoot of modern drone technology.

The spacecraft will be at once a drone and a lander, designed to take advantage of Titan's Earth-like gravitational field and aerodynamics to maximize its ability to explore.

The instruments onboard Dragonfly are not dissimilar from those on NASA's Curiosity Mars rover. Like Curiosity, Dragonfly will be nuclear-powered, carrying a radioisotope thermoelectric generator, rather than sun-powered. On Saturn, the sun's rays are too faint to reliably power a solar flying drone and the atmosphere on Titan is too soupy to allow permit enough light to penetrate.

The craft will be fitted out with a range of scientific instruments designed to detect complex organics and biosignatures. And it will be able to measure seismic activity, perhaps offering insight into the ocean beneath which is believed to be under immense pressure.

Biogeochemists at the University of Illinois at Chicago, who are also working on Dragonfly craft, have reportedly developed unique experiments designed to replicate the conditions of Titan's ocean within a series of Ping-Pong-ball-sized incubation chambers.

"These types of adaptations can be very useful to understand, so we can better target the types of molecules we would find on Titan," the university's Fabien Kenig told the magazine. "Even if it's very, very slow -- when it's an ice-covered environment that remains stable for millions, billions of years, slowness is irrelevant."

Dragonfly was one of two finalists being considered for the New Frontiers award. Another contender, Caesar, led by Steve Squyres at Cornell University, aimed to grab a piece of a comet's surface and bring it back to Earth.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Dried Earth microbes could grow on Mars with just a little humidity

Salt-loving microbes can dry out and come back to life with just a little humidity, researchers have demonstrated for the first time.

Scientists have suspected that microbes in arid places may get their moisture from humidity alone, but no one has shown that dried-out microbes can revive with water sucked from the air. Dessicated Halomonas bacteria from Washington's Hot Lake perked up and began growing again after absorbing humidity in a jar, astrobiologist Mark Schneegurt, of Wichita State University in Kansas, said June 21 at the ASM Microbe 2019 meeting. That discovery has implications for the search for life on other planets, and for preventing life from Earth from contaminating other worlds.

Schneegurt and colleagues grew Halomonas bacteria in magnesium sulfate brines. Magnesium sulfate (also called Epsom salts) and perchlorates are the main types of salts found on Mars. Those salts don't play keep-away with water molecules the way sodium salts do, so microbes have a better chance of snagging some moisture.

Magnesium salt--tolerant microbes have been detected in clean rooms where NASA builds its spacecraft, Schneegurt said. "There's definitely life on Mars. It just came from Earth," he said. The question is "how worried do we have to be that an organism from Earth can survive and grow there?"

Halomonas growing in magnesium brines at room temperature double their numbers in three to four days, the researchers found. Even at -4° Celsius -- a more Mars-like temperature -- the microbes grow, but it takes months. The microbes also held up well to repeated cycles of drying and wetting. "We lose a few, but not an enormous amount," he said.

Mars currently is probably too cold and dry for Earth microbes to thrive there, Schneegurt said. But "at least some of them can grow in the chemical conditions there."

(Source: sciencenews.org)



## Tunisia moves to reassure tourists after suicide attacks

Tunisian officials have sought to reassure tourists after twin suicide bombings targeting security forces struck the country's capital on Thursday, killing a patrol officer and injuring at least eight people.



Tourists visit the Bardo Museum in Tunis on October 3, 2018 (Fethi Belaid/AFP)

Prime Minister Youssef Chahed described the bombings as "a cowardly terrorist operation [to] destabilize Tunisians, the economy and democratic transition," noting that they happened as the tourist season was in full swing.

In an interview with The Associated Press, his tourism minister, René Trabelsi, said he did not think the first attack was tied to the French Embassy nearby but had targeted Tunisian police.

"This attack against national security agents (...) has nothing to do with tourists," said Trabelsi.

A critical sector for Tunisia's economy, tourism accounted for some 14% of the country's GDP and employed almost half a million people from a population of 11 million back in 2014.

But those figures plummeted following successive terrorist attacks in 2015, which threatened the country's relative political stability in the region.

The terror threat led to travel agencies pulling out and foreign governments issuing warnings for citizens planning to go to Tunisia.

Since then, tourism has partially bounced back as government increased security around popular destinations.

The tourism minister said he had a "message to tourists: have a good holiday and come to Tunisia. Tunisia is a country that fights these terrorists."

Thursday's bombings came as the country's 92-year-old president Beji Caid Essebsi, who had been released from a brief hospitalization less than a week ago, was rushed again to the hospital after being struck with a "serious illness".

Prime Minister Chahed said he had paid a visit to the ailing president in a message posted on Facebook.

"I would like to reassure Tunisians that the president is receiving the necessary care," he said, warning against the dissemination of "false and confusing information".

The Daesh group has claimed responsibility for Thursday's attacks through its Amaq propaganda agency. It was unclear whether it was an opportunistic claim. It was behind Tunisia's deadliest extremist attacks, which struck at the heart of Tunisia's tourism sector in 2015.

One at the Bardo Museum in Tunis killed 22 people, and another three months later killed 38 people in the coastal city of Sousse.

(Source: France 24)



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Sangiran Early Man Site

Archaeological excavations from 1936 to 1941 led to the discovery of the first hominid fossil at the Sangiran Early Man Site, a World Heritage in Indonesia.

The site is situated about 15 kilometers in the north of Solo town in Central Java, covering an area of 5,600 hectares. It became famous after the discovery of Homo erectus remains and associated stone artifacts (well-known as Sangiran flake industry) in the 1930s.



There is a very significant geological sequence from the upper Pliocene until the end of Middle Pleistocene by depicting the human, faunal, and cultural evolutions within the last 2.4 million years. The property also yields important archaeological occupation floors dating back to the Lower Pleistocene around 1.2 million years ago.

The macrofossils that appear abundantly from the layers provide a detailed and clear record of many faunal elements, while the property reveals more than 100 individuals of Homo erectus, dating back to at least 1.5 million years ago.

These fossils show human evolution process during the Pleistocene period, particularly from 1.5 to 0.4 million years ago. Inhabited for the past one and a half million years, Sangiran is one of the key sites for the understanding of human evolution.

More discoveries of stone tools have been made since. These human, fauna, and stone tool materials were deposited within its unbroken stratigraphical layers.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Kandovan village and breathtaking rocky landscape

### TOURISM

**TEHRAN** — Kandovan d e s k is a historical village in Iran's East Azarbaijan province, near the city of Tabriz. It is one of the three rocky villages in the world and the beauties of this village have made it one of the strangest villages of the country, according to Mehr news agency.

#### Location

Kandovan Village is located 60 kilometers southwest of Tabriz in Sahand Rural District, in the Central District of Osku County, East Azarbaijan Province, Iran. It is popular for its magnificent rocky architecture which is the result of volcanic activities and hand-carved structures. The village was registered on Iran's National Heritage list, and it has a worldwide reputation and is the only rocky village in the world which is still inhabited. There are two other cliff villages which are not inhabited with similar structures in the world; Cappadocia in Turkey and Dakota in America.

#### Etymology

It's known as Kandovan because the rocky houses in this village look like hives. It has been said in the history of Kandovan that the first group to settle in the region were residents of a village called Hilevar, 2 km away from Kandovan. They migrated to this area escaping from Mongols and started to carve the Karans to build themselves a safe refuge.



#### Architecture

The history of this wonderful village dates back to 6000 years ago. Some researches of archeology have estimated its age up to 7000 years old.

The village architecture is one of its wonders; thickness of its walls reaches two meters in some places. The rock acts as an energy efficient material, keeping the house cool during summer and warm during winter. The heights of these rocks are about 40 meters.

There are sharp pyramidal cliffs with the holes on their irregular surfaces in this village which have been created due to volcano eruption in the region of the Sahand Mountain Range. The cliffs have shaped hive cells which are also known as Karan. Generally, most of these Karans are two-story in some cases, three and even four floors that they are not related to each other from the inside.

The inhabitants carved every room of the cliff houses like kitchens, halls, and

even pens out of stone to make windows for the rooms and later, to decorate them with colorful glasses.

#### Village

Since the Kandovan is located on the slopes of the Sahand Mountains, it has a great climate and there are plenty of greenery and landscapes around it. The fruitful plains of the region provide nomads with a possibility to breed honey bees and grow medicinal herbs, both are sources of income for the locals. The people of this village are mostly farmers and ranchers.

It is the only rocky village in the world which is still inhabited and currently, 117 families live in the village. The village has a mosque, public bath, school, a mill, souvenir shops, buffet and restaurant.

#### Souvenir

The most famous souvenir of Kandovan is honey. Apricots and sour cherries, dried fruit, rugs and jajim are other souvenirs of Kandovan.

Mineral water springs of Kandovan are also well-known and basically used for treatment of kidney disease.

#### Best season to visit

The best season to visit Kandovan is spring and summer. It is not a favorite destination in autumn and winter since it gets so cold. The minimum temperature of Kandovan is 13° C and the maximum 25° C in summer. Visiting this village will take 2 hours up to one day.

## The latest trends in travel and tourism



### Artificial intelligence

It would seem that AI has taken over the world. From social media algorithms to spam filters, artificial intelligence surrounds us almost every day. When it comes to travel and tourism, AI is leading the way for a more comfortable and user-friendly experience.

Consider the prevalence of chatbots in the travel industry. While making arrangements and booking their next vacation, people who encounter problems don't have to worry if no one on staff is there to help. Cheapflights employs a chatbot that can help users make decisions about where to go or even give them recommendations. In the eyes of a traveler, this gives a personal touch to the otherwise impersonal process of researching destinations and booking online.

### Virtual reality

It's been a long time since Google Maps launched its street view feature, but it's had a considerable effect on the travel industry. Travelers are no longer in the dark about what a destination looks like in person or how to find their hotel. The reality is that it's never been easier to hop online and visit some place virtually.

The use of virtual reality in travel is only going to grow as time goes on. That's because the cost of virtual reality is quite low. All it takes is a smartphone or tablet and Wi-Fi to be able to virtually visit somewhere and prepare for your upcoming trip. When it comes to travel agents, virtual reality also allows them to improve their knowledge. That means that they can provide a better experience for their customers in the future.

### The takeaway

Gone are the days of buying foldable maps in travel agencies and heading out into the unknown. With the major advances in technology, the landscape of travel and tourism has changed completely. Travelers of today also expect more unique and personal experiences. Not to mention, they prefer the immediacy that booking online allows them.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a growing trend of traveling for shorter periods or exploring on a micro trip. Tourists of today want to maximize their time as much as possible. After all, there is a bounty of beautiful places out there in the world. The travel and tourist industry will only continue to thrive as modern travelers quench their thirst for adventure.

(Source: The Jakarta Post)

## Ancient Peruvian engineering could help solve modern water shortages

Rain seldom falls on the desert lowlands of coastal Peru, so people in the area have always depended on the water that flows down from the Andes during the rainy season. But streams in this part of the world come and go quickly, so indigenous people built a system of canals and ponds to channel excess rainwater and create groundwater. Now a group of researchers says that a scaled-up version could help improve Peru's water management.

### Ancient engineers (not aliens)

1,400 years ago, Chavin and Wari indigenous communities on the slopes of the Andes Mountains dug systems of stone-lined and earthen canals to channel excess rainwater from streams to areas where the ground could soak up more of the water. From there, the water gradually trickled through sediment and cracks in the rock until it reached springs downslope. "Water is stored in the soils and travels much slower beneath the surface than it would as overland flow," Boris Ochoa-Tocachi, a civil engineer at Imperial College London, told Ars Technica. Water that would otherwise have been lost to flooding feeds springs that remain active even into the dry season.

Today, most of these once-widespread canals—called amunas in the Quechua language—lie abandoned or clogged. But in a few rural communities, like Huamantanga in the central Andes, people have used and

maintained parts of the ancient amunas for centuries. Eleven of the original canals still operate, feeding 65 active springs and 14 small ponds.

Recently, with help from local non-governmental organizations, people at Huamantanga started enhancing these pre-Incan systems. In most cases, they used concrete to make the upstream section of the canal more watertight so that more water reaches the permeable ground downslope. And when Ochoa-Tocachi and his colleagues injected tracer dyes into the canals and checked to see how much—and how quickly—the dye emerged at springs downstream, it turned out that the amunas system still works remarkably well.

In some places, it took just two weeks for the dye to make its way through the system and bubble up in a spring; elsewhere, it stayed underground for up to five months before emerging. On average, water took about 45 days to flow through the canals and underground channels to reach springs. The springs were still flowing about a month after the end of the dry season, and the team calculated that the amunas caught about half of the water discharged by streams above Huamantanga.

It's not terribly surprising that the system works; after all, other people around the world have devised similar ways of managing water supplies. Medieval Arab rulers in Spain built

systems called careo from the 9th to 15th centuries, and structures called paar collect rainwater after it percolates through sandy soil in Rajasthan, India. Across North Africa and the Middle East, sloping tunnels called qanats carry groundwater from within hills to wells dug on the lower slopes.

### "The challenge is scalability"

Canal systems like the one at Huamantanga were built to support a relatively small community; today, about 1,000 people live in the town, where they rely on the water to support livestock and farming. But Ochoa-Tocachi and his colleagues suggest that a larger-scale version of the ancient design could be useful for the teeming city of Lima, which relies on a complex infrastructure and still struggles to provide enough water to its 12 million residents during the dry season. (Even with about 330 million cubic meters of storage capacity in the form of reservoirs and dams, Lima still needs about 43 million cubic meters more water to meet its demand during the dry season.)

"The challenge is scalability to estimate regional impacts for a much larger population in the lowlands and urban centers," Ochoa-Tocachi told Ars. His team ran a computer simulation that took the data from Huamantanga and applied it to the Rimac River basin, which waters the Lima. The team found that the systems could boost water flow through the Rimac River by an

average of 7.5 percent during the city's dry season. The impact would be most noticeable in the first couple dry months—around a 33 percent increase—and then taper off to less than one percent by the end of the season.

"We observed that the water volumes will follow a curve that peaks after two months and is sustained even eight months later," explained Ochoa-Tocachi. "The mean residence time of water inside the soils is 45 days, which means that if a unit of water is infiltrated in day 0, half of this unit would come out within the first 45 days, and the other half will come out after 45 days, but for as long as 10 months after the initial infiltration. This means that water will emerge unevenly (more water during the early months and less water during the later months)."

That's definitely not a magic bullet (or magic water gun), but Ochoa-Tocachi and his colleagues claim it's enough to be a useful part of Lima's overall water supply system, perhaps by relieving some of the demand on reservoirs, dams, and other infrastructure. If everything works as well as the simulation predicts, a large enough amunas system could reroute about 99 million cubic meters of water a year down the river to Lima. "This could allow serving a higher water demand with the same infrastructure," they wrote, adding that it could also help buffer against short droughts during the wet season.

(Source: arstechnica.com)



# Iranian startups tap into vacation rental market

By Setareh Behroozi

**TEHRAN** – Summer is here! A season in which everyone wish to hit the roads and spend long days of summer in other locations and cities. In recent years, many Iranian startups and applications launch their online vacation rentals, which provides passengers with eco lodges as well as rentals that they can reserve with internet for their sojourn in different cities of Iran.

According to a recent report published by TechRasa, an Iranian startup and tech media on June 24, vacation rental has a 41,280 billion rials (about \$980 million) market in Iran, which is the reason that Iranian startups are trying to tap into this market and bring it online.

A vacation rental is the renting out of a house, apartment, villa or any accommodation to a tourist as an alternative to hotels. In the past three years, a few players have entered this market.

According to the report on vacation rental market in Iran, only two percent of bookings are done online in Iran yet, which shows the potential of this market for online platforms. Note that the average commission rate for connecting the host to the guest is about 16.6%.

The report also reveals the percentage of different accommodation types. This percentage is based on per person per Night number in total. This means that tourists have used vacation rentals (with an overnight stay) more than any other type of accommodation. The biggest share of the market goes to vacation rental with 31 percent. The runner up is private accommodation with 23 percent. It follows by public accommodation including hotels with 13 percent, which is neck to neck with staying in tents with 12 percent. The remaining nine percent goes to other types of accommodation.

The business model for vacation rentals is an example of a shared economy in which, individuals give services to each other and unlike the traditional model (hotels), people participate and earn money themselves.

In this model, the online platform connects tourists to hosts. Benefiting from the vacant capacity of any rentable accommodation including people's houses, apartments, and villas as well as helping the owners to earn money by renting their property for a short period of time.

The online rental vacations noticeably decreases the cost of accommodation services for tourists, which in turn can help to stimulate the country's economy. In addition to that, empowering this market can help local businesses and stores such as restaurants, recreational and commercial centers to grow too.

**■ Average basket value of 7.110 million rials**

In 2018, local tourists rented the ac-



commodations in groups of 3.8 people for about 2.4 days on average. The cost of a vacation rental for 2.4 days, with the average daily rate of 2.930 million rials (about 70 dollars), is about 7.110 million rials (about 170 dollars).

**■ 5.8 million vacation rental bookings per year**

In 2018, vacation rentals had nearly 5.8 million bookings of 24,000 owners and 64,000 properties. The notable point is that it has been the direct and indirect source of income for 103,000 people.

**■ Comparing vacation rental market with other sectors in Iran**

Tourism in Iran has an estimated market size of 5 to 6 trillion rials (about 120 to 140 million dollars) annually which consists of different sectors. The vacation rental market with 41,280 billion rials (about \$980 million) market in Iran, annual market size is a part of the tourism industry in Iran.

According to the report, the local hotel

annual market is about 40 to 50 trillion rials (about \$952 - \$1,190 million) in Iran while the annual foreign hotel market is more than 15 billion rials (about \$357,000).

The annual ecotourism market reaches about 20 trillion rials (about \$476 million) which only a few of the vacation rental platforms have entered to.

The vacation rental market can also be compared to other startup sectors such as fintech and transportation.

The report shed lights on road transportation market in Iran. According to the report, the annual bus ticket market is something about 30 trillion rials (about \$714 million). The annual motorbike delivery market is about 4,000 billion and the annual ride-hailing market in Tehran and seven other big cities is about 80 trillion rials (about \$1,900 million).

The annual taxi change transaction market in Tehran and seven other big cities is nearly 60 trillion rials (about \$1,420 million).

**only two percent of bookings are done online in Iran yet, which shows the potential of this market for online platforms. Note that the average commission rate for connecting the host to the guest is about 16.6%**

**■ How vacation rental market size in Iran is calculated?**

The main sources of this market research are the reports and surveys done by the Statistical Center of Iran from 2008 to 2018 which is generally done just for the season of spring. The main focus of these reports is on giving statistics on tourism in Iran.

However, the report considers the average length of stay, daily rate of vacation rentals, number of guests per stay, annual average number of properties' rented days, number of properties owned by the host, number of owner's dependents, commission rate, and percentage of bookings done online for more precise analysis.

The required data are compiled directly from five Iranian online vacation rental platforms.

**■ Global vacation rental market size**

According to reuters.com, with the slowdown in world economic growth, the vacation rental industry has also suffered a certain impact, but still maintained a relatively optimistic growth, the past four years, vacation rental market size to maintain the average annual growth rate of 10.81% from 61 million \$ in 2014 to 83 million \$ in 2017, Research analysts believe that in the next few years, Vacation Rental market size will be further expanded, we expect that by 2022, The market size of the Vacation Rental will reach 165 million \$.

The global vacation rentals market has witnessed a rapid growth in the past few years, owing to the growing tourism industry worldwide. As compared to hotels, vacation rentals offer more flexibility with lodging. It is a cost-effective and more comfortable accommodation option for people looking to stay for a longer period of time, probably a week or more.

This market is growing off the online booking trend. The preference for instant bookings has increased among the consumers, and online booking provides an increased degree of service differentiation, by presenting many options for accommodation at varied price ranges to the customers. Farmhouses, private homes, beach houses, villas, cabins, cottages, short-term rental apartments, are only a few of the several types of housing places that are up for booking.

The increase in the number of domestic and international travels has given rise to the popularity of these short-term rental properties. They are convenient to book, with minimal to zero wait time, thus increasing customer satisfaction. These vacation rental homes are present on web-based listing sites, where customers can leave reviews for other customers to take advantage of, and suggestions for the homeowners to improve their stay. However, despite these listings, the major restraint in this market is the presence of fraudulent vacation rentals.

## Sharif University of Technology to host ICT Challenge 3

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Sharif University of Technology will hold the ICT Challenge 3, the third edition of competition on ICT challenges, on August 16 and 17, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Focusing on one of ICT challenges in each edition, the event aims to identify talented participants in order to attract them to the market.

This edition focuses on new financial technologies, banking and electronic payment and urges entrepreneurs and talented professionals to bring their solutions for ICT challenges in this field.



Participants have 8 hours to solve the challenge proposed at the first stage and after that, 10 to 15 teams will compete at the second stage of the event.

During the second stage, innovation and creativity of the teams are assessed by the jury. Each team should present an innovative idea in the banking sector in ten minutes to a jury composed of experts and investors.

## Iranian knowledge-based companies to visit Russia

**TECHNOLOGY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A high-ranking trade and technology delegation, comprising managing directors of 70 knowledge-based companies, will travel to Russia from July 9 to 14, Mehr reported on Friday.

Headed by the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari, the delegation is also composed of representatives from



ministries of foreign affairs, science, and health, as well as the Trade Promotion Organization, and the National Innovation Fund.

The managing directors will hold meetings with their counterparts in the Russian cities of Moscow and Yekaterinburg to boost cooperation.

Their stay is concurrent with the International Industrial Trade Fair (INNOPROM), which will be held from July 8 to 11 in Yekaterinburg.

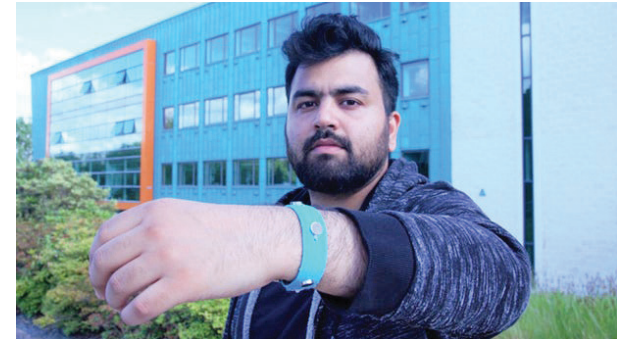
The meetings aim to develop cooperation in the field technology and science between the two countries.

## Assistive wristband channels the spirit of the mood ring

One of the challenges of dealing with depression, anxiety, or bi-polar disorder is the fact that your emotions can take control of you, without you even realizing that it's happening. An experimental new wristband could help, as it alerts wearers to changes in their emotional state.

Scientists at Britain's Lancaster University have actually developed several versions of the device, all of which utilize sensors on their underside to detect fluctuations in the electrical conductivity of the wearer's skin – this is known as galvanic skin response, and it varies in accordance to a person's level of emotional arousal.

Although the setup can't identify individual emotions, the researchers state that low arousal tends to be associated with feelings such as sadness, whereas high arousal is an indicator of anxiety.



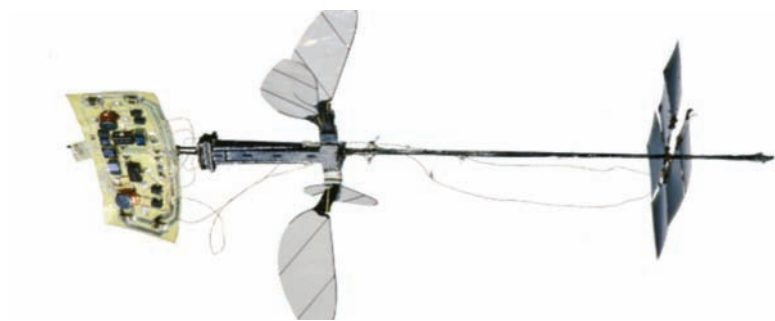
Some of the prototypes squeeze the wearer's wrist to alert them to changes in emotion, while others vibrate or heat up. In the case of the latter, the heat also causes thermochromic materials on the exterior of the wristband to change color, much like the mood rings of the 1970s.

In a test of the technology, volunteers wore the devices for multiple eight-to-16-hour periods while playing games, working, having conversations, watching movies, laughing, relaxing and becoming scared. It was found that after as little as two days of use, participants became more adept at identifying emotional responses of which they were previously unaware.

"We wanted to create low-cost, simple prototypes to support understanding and engagement with real-time changes in arousal," says PhD student Muhammad Umair, co-author of a paper on the research. "The idea is to develop self-help technologies that people can use in their everyday life and be able to see what they are going through. Wrist-worn private affective wearables can serve as a bridge between mind and body and can really help people connect to their feelings."

(Source: New Atlas)

## Incredible video reveals the tiny solar-powered 'RoboBEE'



A lightweight insect robot has been created which is capable of flying without being tethered to a power source, by using energy from light.

Incredible footage reveals the solar-powered RoboBee X-Wing which uses four wings which flap at a rate of 170 times per second to fly, instead of a propeller.

Developed by a team from Harvard University, the robot has a wingspan of 1.4 inches (3.5 centimetres) and could be used to monitor the environment.

Weighing only 259 milligrams, the insect is light enough to land on leaves and tiny enough to manoeuvre through small spaces.

Wings are far superior to propellers, but scientists have struggled to replicate the natural control that insects and birds possess.

Noah Jafferis and his colleagues suggest that if they can make wings work, the flying robots will be more agile and quieter than any other man-made machine.

RoboBee uses solar panels situated over its wings to collect its own power, removing the need for an external power source.

Its wings are controlled by two muscle-like plates that contract when voltage passes through the

The six tiny solar cells weigh only 10 milligrams each and are located above the wings so as not to interfere with flight.

However, the panels require an intense amount of light to power up, three times the

strength of sunlight, which means outdoor flight is impossible at the moment.

RoboBee normally flies for around half a second before it flies out of the light.

Insect-based robots micro-engineered to mimic winged flight are not a new idea.

There have been previous iterations of insect robots, including older versions of the RoboBee, but they have all required been connected by a lead to a power source.

"This is a result several decades in the making," said Professor Robert Wood, from Engineering and Applied Sciences at SEAS and principle investigator of the RoboBee project, in the study.

"Powering flight is something of a Catch-22 as the trade-off between mass and power becomes extremely problematic at small scales where flight is inherently inefficient.

"It doesn't help that even the smallest commercially available batteries weigh much more than the robot.

"We have developed strategies to address this challenge by increasing vehicle efficiency, creating extremely lightweight power circuits, and integrating high efficiency solar cells."

The team hopes the robot will be able to fly in regular sunlight, and have sensing mechanisms built in.

"It can then really control what it's doing when it's flying around," said Noah Jafferis, who led the study.

(Source: dailymail.co.uk)

## NASA's Dragonfly mission is sending an eight-rotor drone to Titan



NASA announced today its next big mission to explore our Solar System. The agency has greenlit a mission called Dragonfly that will send a spacecraft to the surface of Titan, Saturn's largest moon. Dragonfly, the latest of NASA's New Frontiers program, was selected because of Titan's unique makeup, which makes it one of the more promising candidates for discovering signs of microbial life.

Dragonfly is scheduled to launch in 2026, a slight delay in the originally planned launch window of 2025. It will spend nine years in flight, covering 840 million miles before finally making a two-hour decent to the surface of Titan. Once it lands, the dual-quadcopter will spend 2.7 years making short flights of up to 5 miles around the moon. Those flights will occur about once every Titan day, which is about 16 Earth days. The drone will be able to travel at about 20 miles per hour and reach altitudes as high as two miles. By the time its baseline mission is complete, the drone will have covered 108 miles, nearly double the distance traveled by all Mars rovers combined.

During its travels, Dragonfly will make stops to collect samples from compelling regions of Titan. Elizabeth Turtle of Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, said dune fields on the moon are particularly attractive areas for an explanation because "The material in the

sand particles may be widely sourced," meaning the drone could pick up materials from across the moon beyond where it will be able to explore.

Dragonfly's baseline mission will conclude when it reaches an impact crater known as Selk. According to Turtle, the crater is at a low-latitude and should be accessible to the drone. "We know this area quite well, there's a lot of data from different instruments in this region," she said. Turtle called the crater a "high-priority target" because it's a place where "organics and liquid water may have mixed in the past." It's believed that liquid water and complex organic materials including hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen -- the building blocks of life -- may have existed together for tens of thousands of years.

Dragonfly is the fourth mission launched through the New Frontiers program, which NASA uses to fund particularly ambitious space exploration missions throughout the Solar System. Prior missions include New Horizons, which flew by Pluto in 2015 and continues to explore the Kuiper Belt beyond it; Juno, which ventured to Jupiter and is currently continuing its mission to collect data from the gas giant; and OSIRIS-REx, which began orbiting the near-Earth asteroid Bennu earlier this year.

(Source: engadget.com)



## Bikes to hold 3.5% share in Tehran transportation

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Bikes will carry out 3.5 percent of the capital's total transportation, as the national document on bike transport development has proposed, deputy mayor for traffic and transport affairs at Tehran Municipality has stated.

A five-year plan to develop biking in the capital has been proposed aiming to promote biking, develop bike lanes and curb air pollution.

Currently, the document is under review by the traffic council to be approved, ISNA quoted Mohsen Pourseyyed Aqaei as saying on Saturday.

As per the document, some 120 kilometers of the roads will be accessible for the bicycle riders each year, he added.

The reason behind the failure of bicycle schemes in past recent years was that the technology was overlooked in the schemes so that the cyclists had to return to the bike renting stations and give back the bikes, while today, using the new technologies, bicycle use has been facilitated for the citizen, he explained.

Referring to the claims arguing that the bike schemes in Tehran will fail, he said, "The claims are inappropriate because we could extend biking as a modern transport system by passing through the traditional methods and using the world-class technologies."

Governmental and municipality's offices also will be provided by bicycles to encourage staff to ride while going to nearby buildings, he concluded.

### ■ Tehran Metro hosts over 2,000 cyclists

According to Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operation Company, some 2,282 bike riders used the metro in the Iranian calendar month of Khordad (May 22- June 21), as taking bikes on trains is allowed at Tehran's subway during off-peak hours on weekdays.

Bicycle riders used metro last month even more than a month earlier which was reported 422 people, IRIB reported on Wednesday.

Peak hours for subways are from 6:30 am till 9:30 am and between 4 pm and 7 pm on weekdays. There are no peak hours on weekends.

Launching the scheme, cyclists will also able to use the subway, while ordinary bikes are only allowed to enter wagons marked with labels on the train since past 8 months.

During non-peak hours, bikes are allowed in metro as long as they can be folded and stored in luggage racks, while ordinary bikes can enter the trains only on weekends and holidays.

## Crocodiles living 200 million years ago were vegetarians, study finds

'The most interesting thing we discovered was how frequently it seems extinct crocodyliforms ate plants,' says study author Keegan Malstrom.

Long-lost crocodile species living 200 million years ago were vegetarians, a new study has found.

Tooth fossils revealed between three and six members of the ancient crocodile and alligator family evolved specialized teeth for chewing on plants.

Study author Keegan Melstrom, a doctoral student at the University of Utah, analyzed 146 teeth from 16 crocodyliforms.

He said: "The most interesting thing we discovered was how frequently it seems extinct crocodyliforms ate plants. Carnivores possess simple teeth whereas herbivores have much more complex teeth."

According to the study, published in Current Biology, this evolved separately in each of the species, suggesting it was a very successful adaptation.

The plant-eating creatures appeared early in the evolutionary history of the group shortly after the end-Triassic mass extinction 200 million years ago. They would have then been killed off 66 million years ago in the end-Cretaceous mass extinction that killed off all dinosaurs except birds.

All crocodiles alive today have a similar body shape with relatively simple, conical teeth ideal for ripping apart meat. However, the tooth fossils were clearly non-carnivorous and appeared to have specialized forms not seen in modern-day animals.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Flood education in Vietnam

(October 26, 2000)

BBC Correspondent Owen Bennett-Jones reported on how the Vietnamese Red Cross launched a campaign to teach children about the dangers of floods. Nearly 300 children died in flooding of the Mekong river.

The Vietnamese Red Cross says that earlier this month twenty children a day drowned in the floods. In many cases parents had gone looking for food or work, leaving their children **unattended**. Many of those who have drowned have been under four years old. The Red Cross campaign though will **target** older children because parents often leave them **in charge** of younger brothers and sisters. Aid workers have already **distributed** thousands of life jackets or **flotation devices** and have **urged** children who are playing in the flood water to wear them.

Children are now being advised to stay away from electricity wires and flooded **river banks** which could **collapse**. Red Cross officials say that even children who can swim are **at risk** as they often move too far away from their families and then **encounter difficulties** getting back to dry land. The Red Cross campaign follows an appeal from the United Nations Children's Fund, which has warned that when the flood waters do fully **recede** later this year, children and infants will be at particular risk of **contracting diseases** such as diarrhea, cholera and malaria.

### ■ Words

**unattended:** if a child has been left unattended, he or she has been left by him or herself

**target:** if something is targeted at children then it is focused and designed especially for them

**in charge of:** with responsibility for, looking after

**distributed:** gave to many people

**flotation devices:** something you wear that helps you not to go under water is a flotation device

**urged:** encouraged strongly

**river banks:** the sides of a river are called the banks

**collapse:** fall down

**at risk:** in danger

**encounter difficulties:** find something much more difficult than expected

**recede:** get less

**contracting diseases:** becoming sick and ill

# High ozone brings serious air pollution to Tehran's summer

By Faranak Bakhtiari

**TEHRAN** – Tehran air quality reached a level which was unhealthy for sensitive groups for about 7 days due to ozone pollutant; as the statistics show concentration of this pollutant increases in the capital mostly during summer, so, ground level ozone became the main contributor to pollution in the capital's hot seasons.

Ozone in the lower atmosphere is formed by the reaction of sunlight on air containing hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides (NOX) that react to form ozone directly at the source of the pollution namely, cars, industry, gas vapors, chemical solvents, fuel combustion.

According to the statistics published by Air Quality Control Company, the concentration of other pollutants in Tehran has decreased in the last month of spring compared to the same period last year, however, during the last month, ozone reached up to a level which is unprecedented in the past 17 years.

In fact, polluted summer phenomenon has haunted the metropolis of Tehran since 3 years ago which has been compounded this year; last year Tehraners experienced 15 days of polluted air quality contaminated by ozone, thus, this was much less compared to the previous years.

Hossein Shahidzadeh, the caretaker for Air Quality Control Company told Khabaronline news agency that regarding the current situation, ozone pollution inevitably rises during summer this year.

Several reasons might be behind the emergence and intensification of such environmental issue over the past few years, he noted, adding, for one, ozone measurement devices have changed in recent years, so that is possible to notice ozone pollution due to the precision of measurements.

Heavy rainfall in spring has reduced the amount of particulate matter in the air, which also resulted in ozone emission raise, as sunlight intensifies in hot months, he added.

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.

"Of course, this is not the only reason for the increase of ozone-infected days, there is also a second reason, which shows that human involvement is not negligible," he further stated.

He also noted that ozone is a secondary pollutant, as it is produced when two primary pollutants react in sunlight and stagnant air, so, cars are not emitting ozone directly, but is produced by the reaction of certain gases produced by cars, motorcycles and diesel vehicles.

"All of these reasons together led to an unexpected increase of low level ozone in Tehran's air over the past few years, but some measures could come efficient to mitigate the pollution, which did not take place in the past few years.

Curbing ozone emission can come up with several solutions, one of which is the implementation of a scheme for vapor recovery through which a system was installed to separate organic vapors from air and off-gases in the stations, however, the scheme is developing at a low pace," he explained.

Another way to improve the situation is clunker cars scrappage, which means discarding the old cars and motorcycles, he stated, highlighting that over 60 percent of motorcycles amounting to 1.5 million are

extremely old which must be scrapped.

According to the Clean Air Act, car manufacturing companies are supposed to turn 10 percent of its production to electronic ones throughout the year, or remove clunker cars from operation, he added.

Not employing these solutions may make this situation more dangerous in the summer in near future, and summers turn into a new season for air pollution, he lamented.

### ■ How climate change affects ozone pollution?

The past three years were the hottest on record, as the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) wrote in its annual report on the global climate. 2016 was the warmest year in records dating back to the 19th century, with 2017 and 2015 tied for second place in a warming trend the WMO blames on man-made emissions of greenhouse gases.

According to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2018 is on pace to be the fourth hottest year on record due to climate change.

Climate change has led Iran's temperature to raise over the past decades, an increase of 2 times the world's average; this rise in temperature in the summer can make the ozone pollutant more easily produced.

When temperature rises, wildfires will diminish the forests or oxygen producing areas and spew smoke into the air forming

## Flying more than twice as damaging to climate than previously thought, study finds

The source of non-CO2 warming set to triple by 2050, according to researchers.

The trails left by planes in the sky have a more damaging effect on the climate than all the carbon dioxide ever emitted from their engines, a study has revealed.

The tracks – called contrails – linger in the sky as ice clouds and trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere.

This is an unaccounted source of climate warming from air travel. And researchers from the Institute of Atmospheric Physics (IAP) in Germany now say the problem is set to triple by 2050.

"It is important to recognize the significant impact of non-CO2 emissions, such as contrail cirrus, on climate and to take those effects into consideration," said lead author Lisa Bock from the German Aerospace Centre at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics.

The Corsica agreement, which is the UN's scheme to offset air traffic carbon emissions from 2020, ignores the non-CO2 climate impacts of aviation.

However, the latest findings will raise alarm over the climate impact of contrails. Researchers say the relative increase in radiation caused by contrails will be greater than that of CO2 because planes will become more fuel efficient.

Overall air traffic is set to be four times larger in 2050 compared with 2006 levels, but planes are generally

more smog, or ozone, on warmer days, which can cause million deaths if not prevented.

According to World Health Organization, 4.2 million deaths every year is the result of exposure to ambient (outdoor) air pollution and 91% of the world's population lives in places where air quality exceeds WHO guideline limits.

### ■ Can clunker cars elimination curb ozone pollution?

Shahidzadeh also noted that due to an increased concern about the influence of ozone emissions on human health and on the capital's air quality, notably clunker cars should be scrapped and diesel vehicles also have to be discarded.

This is while an Iranian automaker has undertaken a study on manufacturing diesel cars.

Diesel fuel contains slightly more carbon than petrol, however, it involves toxic emissions which threaten public health, during fuel combustion in an engine nitrogen is released and combines with oxygen atoms to create nitric oxide (NO), which is further combined with oxygen and create nitrogen dioxide (NO2), both are referred to together as NOx.

Navab Hosseini-Manesh, an official with Tehran Vehicle Inspection Company affiliated to Tehran Municipality said that currently, over 100,000 diesel vehicles are plying the capital's roads which means that smoke amounting to 87 cubic kilometers is choking in the capital per day.

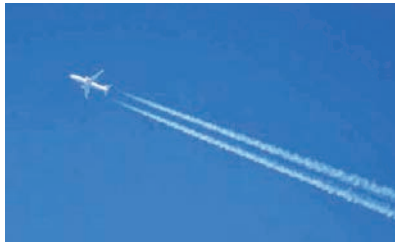
He further regretted that there are 4 million cars moving across the metropolis of Tehran contributing to numerous days of unhealthy air quality, warning that once pollutant diesel cars join the capital's fleet the pollution will soar.

### ■ When solutions become effective?

All the solutions have ever been proposed whether by the officials or the experts might be effective to mitigate air pollution haunting the capital and imposing serious threats to the lives of thousands of residents, the certain solution is only strict implementation of the solutions and obliging the responsible devices to employ the rules and regulations.

Otherwise, none of the aforesaid solutions can make a slight change in the increase of pollutants.

So, it needs public cooperation along with serious enforcement to breath clean air.



flying slightly higher, which helps the formation of contrails in the tropics.

Areas over North America and Europe will be most affected as this is where most traffic is, according to the study published in the journal Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics.

Dr Bock said: "There are still some uncertainties regarding the overall climate impact of contrail cirrus and, in particular, their impact on surface temperatures because contrail cirrus themselves and their effects on the surface are ongoing topics of research. But it's clear they warm the atmosphere."

More efficient aircraft would reduce the number of soot particles emitted by engines, which could, in turn, reduce the climate impact of contrail cirrus.

However, researchers say larger reductions than the projected 50 per cent decrease in soot emissions are needed.

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

## ‘Welfare Organization helps 15,000 breadwinning women to become financially independent annually’

On average, 15,000 female heads of households who have been under Iran Welfare Organization's assistance, become financially independent annually through employment and entrepreneurship programs, Derakhshan-Nia, director general of family and women capacity building office at the Welfare Organization has said.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “demi-”

■ **Meaning:** half

■ **For example:** He caused the horse to make a *demi*volte across the path.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Open up

■ **Meaning:** if opportunities open up, or a new situation opens them up, they become available or possible

■ **For example:** With a microscope, a whole new world of investigation opens up.

### IDIOM

#### Cross the line

■ **Explanation:** to go beyond the authorized limits and do something which is not acceptable

■ **For example:** He has an unpleasant habit of telling jokes that really cross the line.

## سالیانه ۱۵ هزار زن سرپرست خانوار از چرخه حمایت بهزیستی خارج می شوند

فریبا درخشان نیا، مدیر کل دفتر توانمندسازی خانواده و زنان سازمان بهزیستی کشور گفت: به طور میانگین سالیانه ۱۵ هزار نفر از زنان سرپرست خانوار تحت پوشش، از طریق اشتغال و کارآفرینی در قالب انفرادی یا گروه های همیار، بازتوان شده و از چرخه حمایت خارج می شوند.



# Yemeni forces shoot down Saudi spy drone in Jizan

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — The Yemeni army and Popular Committees successfully targeted an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) belonging to the Saudi-led military coalition while flying in the skies over Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Jizan.

An unnamed source in the Yemeni air defense forces told the media bureau of the Houthi Ansarullah movement that the army forces and their allies shot down the drone as it was on a spy mission east of the mountainous Jabal al-Nar area of the region, located 967 kilometers southwest of the capital Riyadh, on Friday afternoon.

The news came hours after the army forces downed another Saudi-led spy drone in the skies northeast of al-Durayhimi district in Yemen's western coastal province of Hudaydah.

Yemeni forces seem to have developed a sophisticated air defense network to fight off Riyadh's drone raids.

They downed an MQ-1 Predator last month, a US-made drone, using a surface-to-air missile.

The media bureau of Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement announced in April that Yemeni air defense forces and their allies had shot down a Chinese-built me-



dium-altitude and long-endurance Wing Loong drone with a surface-to-air missile.

Yemen's air defenses also downed three more Saudi spy drones of unspecified models in various parts of the country.

In late March, Yemeni soldiers and fighters from Popular Committees had intercepted and shot down an MQ-1 drone in the Hamdan district of Sana'a province.

The development comes as Yemeni fight-

ers have achieved great strides in developing domestic attack drones and using them to orchestrate devastating retaliatory attacks on oil facilities and other vital Saudi targets.

Last month, the Houthi movement said about 300 critical targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well as in Yemen were in its crosshairs.

The warning came after the Yemeni army launched retaliatory drone attacks on a ma-

JOR oil pumping station deep inside Saudi Arabia, forcing state crude giant Aramco to temporarily shut down the pipeline.

The ability to shoot down enemy drones and conduct drone offensives is the latest game-changing development in a years-long war by Saudi Arabia and its regional allies -- mainly the UAE.

They had already stirred fear in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi by developing a formidable arsenal of ballistic missiles and conducting regular missile attacks against strategic targets in aggressor countries such as the Riyadh international airport.

Saudi Arabia and its allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall the Riyadh-allied former regime and crush the Houthis -- objectives that have failed to materialize due to Yemenis' stiff resistance.

Since the war began, there have been tens of thousands of civilian casualties. Millions of Yemenis now subsist beneath the poverty line and hundreds of thousands of children are suffering and dying from malnutrition.

The Western-backed military aggression, coupled with a naval blockade, has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and led to a massive humanitarian crisis.

## Heavy defeat for U.S., S. Arabia in G20 meeting

➔1 including the murder of Jamal Khashoggi as well as the human rights violations of the Saudi regime regarding the slaughter of Yemeni children and suppression and execution of Saudi dissidents, left no room for the Saudis' maneuver in the G20.

On the first day of the G20 summit, Bin Salman and Trump, began a joint effort to rally other G20 members against Iran.

One of the topics that the Saudi crown prince and the U.S. President Donald Trump focused on was to blame the Islamic Republic of Iran for the tensions in the Persian Gulf and in particular the attack on two Japanese tankers in the Sea of Oman.

However, the claim was not widely accepted by G20

members and eventually left Bin Salman and Trump empty-handed.

During the G20 summit, almost none of the participating members sent a positive signal to the Saudi prince or the U.S. President about their regional and anti-Iranian policies.

Media sources have emphasized that the European countries have put the blame on Trump, Bolton, Pompeo and their allies for the ongoing crisis in West Asia.

Accordingly, European countries and other international players have condemned Trump's government for withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and failing to manage critical situations. This criticism includes Saudi Arabia as the main U.S. ally in West Asia.



## Kremlin on Trump-Putin talks at G20: Learn from past, move forward

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — At their G20 meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump discussed improving trade relations, including China in new arms control talks, and foreign policy disagreements.

A short readout of the talks provided by the White House announced that both presidents agreed to improve relations between the U.S. and Russia and "continue discussion" on arms control in the 21st century,

which Trump said ought to include China as well. The two leaders also discussed the "situations" in Iran, Syria, Ukraine and Venezuela, RT reported.

More details were provided by the Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov, who praised Trump's "constructive approach" and desire to fix the "dismal" state of trade and economic relations between the U.S. and Russia.

"We also note the readiness to start a conversation on serious topics of stability and

disarmament, arms control... at the highest level," Peskov told reporters in Osaka on Friday, adding, "Let's learn to draw lessons from the past and move forward."

Trump raised the issue of Ukrainian Navy sailors detained by the Russian coast guard last November, after a 10-hour confrontation in the Kerch Strait. Putin "gave the necessary clarifications", Peskov told reporters. The issue of Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany did not come up.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called the meeting "very important and constructive".

Trump said that he would instruct his staff, who were present for the meeting, to follow up on the topics that were discussed with their counterparts in Moscow, Lavrov told reporters.

"We are ready for all these conversations," the foreign minister stated, adding, "Let's see what the American colleagues will do after this."

## Haftar orders forces to attack Turkish ships, interests in Libya

**PRESS TV** — Libya's strongman Khalifa Haftar has ordered his forces to attack Turkish ships and interests in the North African state, his spokesman said Friday, accusing Ankara of supporting Haftar's rivals in the Libyan conflict.

"Orders have been given to the air force to target Turkish ships and boats in Libyan territorial waters," said General Ahmad al-Mesmari.

"Turkish strategic sites, companies and projects belonging to the Turkish state (in Libya) are considered legitimate targets by the armed forces," he added.

He also declared that any aircraft arriving from Turkey attempting to land in the capital Tripoli would be treated



as hostile. The same would apply to Turkish ships docking at Libyan ports.

The spokesman said Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) force would attack any Turkish military presence, without elaborating.

Turkey supports Libya's internationally recognized government in Tripoli which on Wednesday dealt a blow to eastern forces trying to seize the capital in a three-month campaign.

Turkey has supplied drones and trucks to forces allied to UN-backed Tripoli Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj, while the LNA has received support from the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, according to diplomats.

## Turkey helping Tahrir Al-Sham terrorists to attack Syrian army's military positions in Hama

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — The Turkish Army deployed in areas under its control in Hama and Idlib provinces backs Tahrir al-Sham al-Hay'at (the Levant Liberation Board or the Al-Nusra Front) in its attacks against the Syrian Army positions and safe zones in Northern Syria, the Arabic-language media outlets reported.

The Arabic-language website of Russian Sputnik news agency quoted a Syrian Army source as saying that the Syrian Army's military positions came under the Turkish Army's artillery attacks while the government forces were thwarting the terrorist groups' attacks on their positions in Northwestern Hama.

The source pointed to the military and logistic supports from the Ankara-controlled areas for terrorists in Northern Syria, and said that the terrorist group, specially Tahrir al-Sham and Turkistani Party, have set up new military positions near Ankara-controlled areas; while the terrorist groups in their recent attack had deployed their militants in the surrounding areas of Ankara-controlled areas in Shir al-Magar in Hama and provided support for them.

Meantime, the Syrian Army units pounded the terrorists' movements near the Ankara-controlled region in al-Hawija and Shahr Naz near the Tur-

key-controlled region in Shir al-Magar in Northern Hama.

The source noted that the terrorist groups have pounded the Turkish military spots in Hama and Idlib to provide Ankara with an excuse to attack the Syrian Army.

In a relevant development earlier on Saturday, the Syrian Army was preparing to take full control of strategic points to reopen the key Saqilbieh-Mahradeh road in Northern Hama as government forces have intensified their military operations in the region.

The Syrian Army's missile and artillery units targeted and heavily pounded the military positions and movements of Tahrir al-Sham al-Hay'at and Jeizh al-Izza terrorist groups in the towns of al-Jobin and Tal Malh in Northern Hama, destroying several of their military positions and hardware and killing a number of them.

Meantime, a military source noted that the Syrian Army troops destroyed the defense lines of the terrorists in Northern Hama, and said that the Syrian Army intends to reopen the strategic Saqilbieh-Mahradeh Road by taking full control of strategic town of Tal Malh.

He also said that the Syrian Army's

artillery units destroyed the terrorists' logistical convoys in Abu Raideh, al-Zuka, Hasraya, al-Latamineh in Northern Hama.

Meantime, the Turkish Army sent fresh military convoys comprising armored personnel carriers and a large number of its elite forces to the border towns of Reyhanli and Qirq Khan behind borders with Syria.

In a relevant development last Monday, the Syrian Army dispatched massive military convoys to Northern Hama to resume military operations in the region, the Arabic-language media outlets reported.

Sputnik news agency quoted a Syrian Army military commander as saying that the army has recently sent its special forces known as 'Tiger Force' together with massive military equipment to the battlefronts in Northwestern Hama and Southern Idlib, including the newly-liberated towns from the terrorist groups.

It pointed to the arrival of elite forces of the Syrian Army in Northern Syria and their participation in upcoming operations, and said that the Syrian Army will most probably launch its military operation in the region.

Meantime, the Arabic-language al-Watan newspaper reported the



Syrian Army air force and artillery units pounded the military positions and movements of terrorists in the surrounding areas of Jisr al-Shoghour, North of Mahradeh, al-Latamineh, Kafar Zita, al-Mouzereh in Northern Hama and Kafar Nubl, Saffoun, Jouzeif, Tal'as, al-Naqir and Sheikh Mustafa in Southern Idlib, killing and injuring a large number of militants and destroying their military equipment.

Meantime, a military source reiterated that the Syrian Army's artillery and missile units destroyed the communication lines, key centers and arms-ammunition depots of terrorists in Northern Hama and Southern Idlib while foiling terrorists' attempts to penetrate into Syrian Army's military positions.

## On 64th Friday of Great March of Return and Breaking Siege, Israeli Forces Wound 128 Palestinian Civilians

**The Palestinian Center For Human Rights (PCHR):** On Friday, 28 June 2019, in excessive use of force against peaceful protesters on the 64th Friday of the Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege, Israeli forces wounded 128 Palestinian civilians, including 38 children, 3 women, 7 paramedics, and a journalist. Four of those wounded sustained serious wounds.

According to observations by PCHR's fieldworkers, the Israeli forces who stationed in prone positions and in military jeeps along the fence with Israel continued to use excessive force against the protesters by firing bullets and tear gas canisters at them. As a result, dozens of the protesters were hit with bullets and teargas canisters without posing any imminent threat or danger to the life of soldiers.

On Friday, 28 June 2019, the incidents were as follows: At approximately 16:30, thousands of civilians, including women, children and entire families, started swarming to the five encampments established by the Supreme National Authority of Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege adjacent to the border fence with Israel in eastern Gaza Strip cities.

Hundreds of protesters, including children and women, gathered adjacent to the border fence with Israel in front of each encampment and its vicinity tens and hundreds of meters away from the fence. The protesters chanted slogans, raised flags, and in very limited incidents attempted to approach the border fence and throw stones and Molotov Cocktails at the Israeli forces, who fired live and rubber bullets at them. The Israeli shooting, which continued until 19:30, resulted in the injury of 128 Palestinian civilians, including 38 children, 3 women, 7 paramedics, and a journalist. Among those wounded, 41 were hit with live bullets and shrapnel, 36 were hit with rubber bullets and 46 were directly hit with tear gas canisters. In addition, dozens of civilians suffered tear gas inhalation and seizures due to tear gas canisters that were fired by the Israeli forces from the military jeeps and rifles in the eastern Gaza Strip.

PCHR reiterates Palestinians' right to peaceful assembly to confront Israel and its forces' denial of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, right to return and right to end the occupation of the Palestinian territory.

PCHR stresses that the Israeli forces should stop using excessive force and respond to the legitimate demands of the demonstrators, particularly lifting the closure which is the real solution to end the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

PCHR reiterates the reported published in February by the UN Commission of Inquiry which emphasizes what came by PCHR and other Palestinian and international human rights organizations. The report at the time concluded that the Israeli violations may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

PCHR emphasizes that continuously targeting civilians, who exercise their right to peaceful assembly or while carrying out their humanitarian duty, is a serious violation of the rules of international law, international humanitarian law, the ICC Rome Statute and Fourth Geneva Convention.

Thus, PCHR reiterates its call upon the ICC Prosecutor to open an official investigation in these crimes and to prosecute and hold accountable all those applying or involved in issuing orders within the Israeli Forces at the security and political echelons.

PCHR also emphasizes that the High Contracting Parties to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention should fulfill their obligation under Article 1; i.e., to respect and ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances and their obligations under Article 146 to prosecute persons alleged to commit grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

PCHR calls upon Switzerland, in its capacity as the Depository State for the Convention, to demand the High Contracting Parties to convene a meeting and ensure Israel's respect for this Convention, noting that these grave breaches constitute war crimes under Article 147 of the same Convention and Protocol (I) Additional to the Geneva Conventions regarding the guarantee of Palestinian civilians' right to protection in the occupied territories.

## World should support UN Khashoggi report

➔6 There is now the need to establish a UN criminal investigation to ensure the delivery of justice, as the inquiry undertaken by the Saudi authorities was woefully inadequate. The investigation carried out by the Saudi authorities failed to address the chain of command. It is not only a question of who ordered the killing - criminal responsibility can be derived from direct or indirect incitement or from the failure to prevent and protect. As always, Saudi Arabia continues to deny its involvement and rejected the new report, stating that it is based on "prejudice and pre-fabricated ideas." While the killing of Khashoggi was brutal, his story is just one of many cases of targeting journalists around the world. This execution is emblematic of a global pattern of targeted killings of journalists, human rights defenders, and political activists.

According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 80 journalists were killed, 348 imprisoned, and 60 held hostage in 2018, reflecting an unprecedented level of violence against journalists. Javier Valdez Cárdenas, a Mexican journalist who investigated cartels, was killed in May 2017. Just days after, Valdez's colleagues and widow began receiving messages infected with a spyware known as Pegasus, which was bought by the Mexican government from Israeli cyber warfare company NSO Group. According to the NSO Group, Pegasus is only sold to governments for the purposes of fighting terror and investigating crime. However, digital watchdog Citizen Lab found 24 questionable targets, including some of Mexico's most prominent journalists.

## Riyadh and Washington's abject failure at G20 summit

➔1 According to media sources, European countries, in their inner circles, have also complained about and blamed Trump, Bolton, Pompeo and their allies for the current crisis in West Asia.

Accordingly, the European countries and other international actors have railed against the Trump administration for pulling out of the Iran nuclear agreement and its inability to manage the current critical conditions. Such complaint and criticism is also leveled at Saudi Arabia, as the main ally and pawn of the United States in West Asia.



## Manchester United complete £50 million move for Wan-Bissaka

Manchester United completed the signing of Aaron Wan-Bissaka from Crystal Palace for a reported fee of up to £50 million (\$64 million) on Saturday.

“Manchester United is delighted to confirm the signing of Aaron Wan-Bissaka from Crystal Palace,” United staid in a statement. “Aaron has signed a five-year contract with an option to extend for a further year.”

The 21-year-old made just 42 Premier League appearances for the Eagles, but was an outstanding performer last season.

An initial fee of £45 million with an extra £5 million in add-ons has reportedly been agreed between the clubs, making Wan-Bissaka the most expensive defender in United’s history.

“It’s an unbelievable feeling and an honour to call myself a Manchester United player and something I know that only a small number of players have the privilege to say,” said Wan-Bissaka.

The Red Devils are in need of an overhaul after finishing sixth in the Premier League last season to miss out on Champions League qualification.

A long-term replacement at right-back for club captain Antonio Valencia, who left Old Trafford at the end of last season when his contract expired, was one of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer’s priorities in the transfer market.

“Aaron is one of the best upcoming defenders in the Premier League,” said Solskjaer.

“He has the right work ethic, talent and mentality to play for Manchester United and he fits exactly the type of player that we are looking to bring into the squad to help us improve and push on further.”

Wan-Bissaka will become United’s second signing of the summer following the arrival of winger Daniel James from Swansea as United turn their attention towards young, British players rather than the expensive star buys of recent seasons.

(Source: Mirror)

## Aurier fears injury may end his Cup of Nations tournament

Ivory Coast captain Serge Aurier fears his Africa Cup of Nations may be over after being forced to leave the field during Friday’s 1-0 defeat to Morocco in Cairo.

The right-back is coming off an injury-filled season at Tottenham Hotspur during which he was sidelined at various stages of the season by a thigh problem, groin injury and hamstring tear.

“I think it may be over because I felt something. It may be a tear,” he said without giving more details about the injury.

Ivory Coast were outplayed by Morocco in their second Group D clash and Aurier said their opponents looked much fresher.

“I think we came across a team that had more juice than us. They had one more day of recovery after the first round and I think we, quite simply, ran out of freshness,” he added.

“The Moroccans were better committed and created more goal opportunities. Our goal tonight was to qualify for the round of 16 but we still have one game left for that. We will do everything to win it,” he said of Monday’s game against minnows Namibia.

“We lost a battle but not the war, there is still a match to play. We are competitors and we know why we are here and that is to qualify.”

(Source: Reuters)

## Collison retires from NBA at 31 to focus on faith

Veteran guard Darren Collison has decided to retire from the NBA after 10 seasons primarily to concentrate on helping the less fortunate through his Jehovah’s Witnesses faith, he told ESPN’s The Undeclared in a letter.

“While I still love basketball, I know there is something more important, which is my family and my faith,” Collison wrote Friday. “I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses and my faith means everything to me. I receive so much joy from volunteering to help others and participate in a worldwide ministry. The joy I feel is unmatched. With that being said, I have decided to retire from the NBA.”

The 31-year-old, who has made \$43 million during his NBA career, was on target to secure a \$10-12 million annual salary in free agency this summer, according to ESPN’s Adrian Wojnarowski. But after long deliberation with agent Bill Duffy, Collison ultimately decided to retire.

Collison averaged 12.5 points and 5.0 assists in 708 games through 10 seasons. The 2010 All-NBA rookie selection played for the New Orleans Hornets, Dallas Mavericks, LA Clippers, Sacramento Kings and Indiana Pacers. He is one of 26 players in NBA history to average at least 10 points and 3.5 assists per game in each of his first 10 seasons.

(Source: ESPN)

## Mbappe will not renew PSG contract

Kylian Mbappe is making it clear to Paris Saint-Germain that he does not see his long-term future at the club.

After moving from Monaco in 2017, the forward does not feel he has been given enough responsibility in the team, partly due to the fact that Neymar is the star.

As MARCA understand, Mbappe is not keen on renewing his contract with PSG no matter how much money they’re prepared to pay him.

His current deal still has three years left to run but he has no intention of extending it beyond 2022.

As his contract ticks down, PSG are put in an increasingly difficult situation as they try to avoid eventually letting him go for nothing.

Everything points to him being sold either next summer for a huge fee or the year after for a lower fee.

PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi has stated that Mbappe is not for sale, but the player is the one with the power in this instance.

Real Madrid would love to bring Mbappe to the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu but can’t offer as much money as PSG will be able to.

But that doesn’t matter for Mbappe, who is striving more for sporting success in the form of winning trophies and individual awards.

(Source: Marca)

# Roger Federer: The power and presence of the \$120 million man

He was devastated and in disbelief. Roger Federer had just shattered his dreams in the 2009 Wimbledon final. But in the midst of his torment, sitting distraught in the locker room, Andy Roddick was struck by Federer’s act of kindness in the aftermath of victory.

Ten years later, the Swiss legend is still going strong and second favorite to clinch a record-extending ninth title at the All England Club when the tournament begins next week.

The 37-year-old Federer may well be the best men’s player of all time with a record 20 grand slam victories (and 10 runner-up spots), but his aura and popularity add up to far more than the sum of his titles.

Perhaps it has to do with his longevity and elegant playing style. But according to Roddick, that moment behind closed doors, shortly after going down 16-14 in the fifth set of an epic final, speaks volumes for the man himself.

“It’s not like separate locker rooms or anything else, so I walked in and I was pretty devastated,” Roddick told CNN Sport. “I was in disbelief and shock and a lot of emotions, and his team comes in.

“They should have been celebrating. Absolutely. I saw him out of the corner of my eye, he kind of gave them one of these ‘Be quiet’ (signs) and point to me and they walked out and went about their business in another part of the All England Club.

“I thought that was considerate. I thought it was probably unnecessary given that’s a



whole life of work. But it was kind of a microcosm of maybe the way he thinks a little bit.”

### ■ ‘Great attitude’

Despite making three finals, Roddick never did win that Wimbledon title to add to his 2003 US Open crown, but the American — whose serve was as quick as his wit — kept in touch with Federer after quitting tennis at the US Open in 2012.

Federer attended a fundraiser for Roddick’s foundation in Austin, Texas last September

-- sandwiched between the US Open and Laver Cup -- and the way the American remembers it, showed little pretention.

This from one of the world’s most recognizable names who has pocketed more than \$120 million in prize money and landed plenty more in endorsements, not to mention having nearly 13 million followers on Twitter and even more likes on Facebook.

“I mean I don’t know how he has enough hours in the day, but he did,” said Roddick.

“Landed, great attitude. He’s very insightful. On the car ride to our events that we were doing, most people would say, ‘Hey, what time am I leaving? I need to have a plane.’

### ■ ‘Most superstars are a little bit weird’

Despite his advancing years, in tennis terms, it would surprise no one if Federer added to his grand slam tally before he retires. But his legend will tell of an artist who had all the shots while simultaneously making things look simple much of the time, something the more workmanlike Roddick noted.

“I don’t think he’s naive enough to say, ‘Oh, I’m just another guy playing tennis,’” said Roddick. “He doesn’t think that and he shouldn’t, because he’s not. But I think he understands the power that he has and I think he is inherently a really, really true, honest, good person.

“But my biggest source of jealousy is watching him practice, and it’s free and it’s easy. It doesn’t seem like there’s a lot of stress the day before a slam. He’s still saying hello to everyone in between points and he’s able to kind of operate with this ease and calmness.”

Respected coach and ESPN television analyst Darren Cahill said if tickets were sold to Federer’s practice sessions “you could fund the ATP Challenger Tour for 20 years,” referring to the second-tier of tennis’ professional ladder.

(Source: CNN)

## While Argentina make progress, Messi toils at Copa



After carrying Argentina on his back so many times Lionel Messi could be forgiven for having an off day but while his team mates earned high praise for Friday’s Copa America quarter-final win over Venezuela the captain did not look like his old self.

Argentina’s all-time top scorer often loses out to Diego Maradona in debates over who is the country’s best ever player due to his failure to inspire his nation to a major trophy.

While he usually looks to be playing on a different level to his international team mates, against Venezuela it was the five-times world player of the year who looked rusty, slow and the least likely to conjure up a moment of magic.

After four games at the Copa America, Messi has only scored once — from the penalty spot — and has not provided any assists, nor has he looked anything like the player who netted more goals than anyone in Europe in the last three seasons.

Argentina could certainly do with him rediscovering his form in their next game, a semi-final with tournament hosts and arch rivals Brazil.

Messi did play a supporting role in Argentina’s opening strike against Venezuela, whipping in a cross which Sergio Aguero

sent towards goal and Lautaro Martinez flicked into the net with his heel, but it was the only memorable moment of an ineffective display.

His passing was sloppy, his shots were frequently blocked and never troubled Venezuela goalkeeper Wuilker Farinez, and he rarely managed to beat defenders as he usually does with such nonchalant ease.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni did not want to be drawn on Messi’s poor display in the post-game news conference but said his presence alone is good for the team.

“Messi’s contribution on the pitch is essential, if you could see what he gives us in the dressing room you’d think differently. I assure you it’s great to have him here,” Scaloni said.

When further pressed on Messi’s poor form, Scaloni replied curtly: “All there is to say about Leo is he’s the best in the world.”

The poor state of the playing surfaces in Brazil also seem to have taken their toll on Messi.

“The pitches here are shameful, the ball is like a rabbit, it can go anywhere,” he said.

“The conditions are very difficult and it’s very hard to dribble properly. This cannot go on.”

(Source: Reuters)

## Waldschmidt targets record as Germany meet Spain in Euro U21 final



Germany star Luca Waldschmidt will be looking to set a new goal-scoring record as the defending champions take on Spain in Sunday’s final of the European under-21 championships in Udine.

Waldschmidt has scored seven goals so far in the tournament and one more would see him overtake Swede Marcus Berg’s record achieved in 2009 for the most scored at the continental championships.

“What matters more is the title,” insisted Walschmidt, who has emerged as one of the stars of the tournament which also doubled as a qualifier for the 2020 Olympics.

It is estimated that the 23-year-old’s value has tripled from the five million euros (\$5.7 million) paid last summer by Bundesliga club Freiburg, where he scored nine goals in his first season.

But the Vespa-loving player whose full name is actually the Italian ‘Gian Luca’ has come into his own in Italy.

Waldschmidt scored a hat-trick against Serbia in the group stage and a brace against Romania in the semi-finals.

Coach Stefan Kuntz insisted however there was more to his team than Waldschmidt.

“(Waldschmidt) had a great performance, but I don’t want to single out one of my players,” said Kuntz after the semi-finals in Bologna.

“It’s the group that’s important, even those who didn’t play a minute are also important for the team spirit.”

Waldschmidt conceded he was feeling more at ease ahead of Sunday’s match in the north-eastern town of Udine which will be a repeat of the title showdown two years ago.

“When you come from behind in a semi-final against such a good side it gives you confidence,” he said ahead of Germany’s bid for a third continental title.

Spain last lifted the trophy in 2013 and are bidding to match Italy’s record of five European titles.

The ‘Rojita’ have their own star in Real Madrid midfield maestro Dani Ceballos, among the stand-out players in Spain’s run to the final as he was in Poland two years ago.

Ceballos, 22, has scored two goals and provided two assists so far, with the Spanish sweeping past France 4-1 in the semi-finals.

“This team is getting better with every match,” said coach Luis De la Fuente, whose side had started the tournament with a defeat by Italy.

“I have a team that is growing, which is capable of overcoming difficult moments.

“The defeat against Italy made us stronger. I don’t think my players are yet at their maximum.”

(Source: AFP)

## Carlos Queiroz tasked with kicking Colombia’s bad habit after Copa America exit

Like Maurizio Sarri and his 60 cigarettes a day, Colombia have a bad habit. Los Cafeteros, the so-called People of Coffee, have developed a tendency to fail on the big stage; to find a way to lose even when everything is in their favour.

In the 1990s, with the great Carlos Valderrama and Faustino Asprilla in their ranks, they never got past the last 16 at a World Cup; they never reached a Copa America final, falling instead at the semis three times in succession. When Colombia finally did become champions of South America in 2001, rather than build on the success, they followed it up by failing to qualify for a World Cup for more than a decade.

Their performances at the 2014 and 2018 global showpieces have helped optimism slowly bubble back up again. Eighteen goals across the two tournaments proved their traditional attacking play was not an issue, but a surprise loss to Japan last summer, and the ease with which they conceded chances in other ties, suggested a defensive frailty that needed to be addressed.

Enter Carlos Queiroz. Recruited from Iran after January’s Asian Cup, the former Portugal, Real Madrid and UAE manager left Tehran with a record of 100 games and only 60 goals conceded.

His ability to organize a defence was seen as the missing piece of the Colombian puzzle, and the early indicators suggest he is getting his message across.

Yet on Friday night against Chile, Queiroz’s hotly tipped Colombia found a way to fail once more.

There has been criticism of this year’s Copa America



being too sanitised; too clean and corporate. For domestic league matches, the streets outside stadiums such as the Mineirao and Maracana tend to be a chaotic mixture of expletive-laden chants, chargrilled meats and chilled drinks being served out of makeshift ice buckets.

This was not one such match. Perhaps it was because Argentina had set up a semi-final with Brazil earlier in the day, but it felt as if, finally, the Copa America had awoken

from its slumber.

The approach to Arena Corinthians saw the local metro turn into a sea of yellow and red shirts, while inside the stadium, banners and flags unfurled. The Chilean anthem continued into its second verse as has become tradition in recent years.

Queiroz had called the match an “anticipated final” and such was the traffic in Sao Paulo, kick-off was delayed to allow not only more fans to arrive but also the Chile team’s bus.

Colombia were the only team to collect maximum points during the group stage and did so without conceding a single goal, yet despite keeping another clean sheet against the Chileans, they still managed to exit at the quarter-final stage for a third time in four iterations.

An exhausting, emotional 5-4 defeat on penalties left Queiroz philosophising that “shootouts are more dependent on God’s will than our will. It has been like this for ever and will remain so”.

The Portuguese coach added: “Our team played four great matches. We have not lost a single game; not conceded a goal. We only lost a shootout. It’s a very hard way to leave a competition, but somebody has to lose and somebody has to win. Unfortunately for us, Chile won.”

It was a defeat for which Queiroz must shoulder the blame. With a day’s more rest and against the oldest side at the tournament, Colombia threatened to run rampage early on. Yet for all their early verve and newfound defensive stability, they managed just one shot on target.

(Source: The National)



# Persepolis confirm negotiations with Gabriel Calderon

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian football giants Persepolis have reportedly reached an agreement with Argentine coach Gabriel Calderon. The team's officials are under pressure after they failed to reach an agreement with Branko Ivankovic. The Croat led Persepolis to the Iranian domestic treble last season. Under guidance of Ivankovic, the Reds experienced their first ever AFC Champions league final as well. Ivankovic, who built the most decorated resume of any coach in Persepolis history, is now leading Saudi Arabian football club Al Ahli. With just one month to go until the Iran new league season kicks off, Persepolis are still without a coach. Calderon will reportedly pen a contract with Persepolis worth \$1 million per year in the next few days. Calderon played in several teams including Argentine Racing Club de Avellaneda and Club Atletico Independiente, Spanish Real Betis and French Paris Saint-Germain. He was part of the Argentina Under-20 team that won the 1979 FIFA World Youth Championship, and also played in the 1982 FIFA World Cup in Spain and in the 1990 FIFA World Cup in Italy. After his retirement, he managed Caen, Lausanne Sports and several teams in the Middle East including the Saudi Arabian national team, Omani national team, Al Ittihad, Al Hilal, Baniyas and Bahraini national team. He also managed La Liga side Real Betis. In the past few days, Persepolis have opened negotiations with several coaches in Istanbul, Turkey. Greek trainer Takis Lemonis, Croatian coaches Ante Jurcic and Krunoslav «Kruno» Jurcic, Iranian-German Alexander Nouri and Italians Walter Zenga and Massimo Carrera are reportedly linked to the team.



## Iran discover fate at Volleyball Boys' U19 World



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Defending champion Iran have been drawn in Pool B of the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U19 World Championship. The Iranian team are pitted against Czech Republic, Italy, Colombia and Bulgaria. Pool A consists of Tunisia, Brazil, Taiwan, Cuba and Belarus. Japan, Egypt, Argentina, Mexico and German have been drawn in Pool C. Russia, South Korea, the U.S., Nigerian and Dominican Republic are in Pool D.

## Mes Sungun learn fate at AFC Futsal Club Championship

Port Futsal Club will be counting on home support when they take on Kyrgyz Republic's FC Erem and newcomers Shenzhen Nanling Tielang of China PR and Korea Republic's Star FS Seoul in Group A in the tenth edition of the AFC Futsal Club Championship. Asia's top 16 futsal clubs identified their group rivals at Thursday's official AFC Futsal Club Championship Thailand 2019 Draw in Kuala Lumpur. Last year's runners-up, Vietnamese champions Thai Son Nam FC will be making their sixth appearance in the annual tournament and were drawn in Group B with Iraq's Naft Al Wasat, who finished fourth in Yogyakarta, Al Rayyan of Qatar and Uzbekistan's AGMK FC.



## Mohammad Mousavi: We aim at the medals!

After a 2018 season, not the best for them in terms of results from world-level competitions, in 2019, Iran stormed back as one of the best teams in the men's FIVB Volleyball Nations League so far. With star players, such as middle blocker Mohammad Mousavi, leading the way, they are placed second in the current standings on an 11-2 win-loss record. After the team's victory over Serbia at the Kolodruma in Plovdiv, with which Iran officially booked their ticket to the Final Six, Mohammad Mousavi, the tournament's best blocker so far on an average of 0.55 stuffs per set, took time to speak to fivb.com and comment on Iran's success. The Asian squad may be considered VNL's pleasant surprise package by some, but the great results come as no surprise to the Iranians themselves. "Yes, we expected it," 31-year-old Mousavi confirmed. "We started our preparation in very good shape. We do well in every practice. And without injuries! Because of the many injuries of important players in the last two seasons we couldn't produce good results. But this year all the experienced players and all the young players, who joined the team, brought in high quality, so everything's perfect. I cannot say we knew beforehand that we would be first or second, but I was sure we would qualify among the first six teams. Experienced players, such as Saeid Marouf

and Amir Ghafour, are in good shape and play very well. Some new players also joined the team and helped a lot. That's why our result has improved since last year." Mousavi is already looking forward to the finals in Chicago from July 10 through 14 with the hope of a podium finish. "All six teams will be great, but we are looking for a medal. Every match will be important. I know it will be difficult, because we're all tired after playing all these games, but there is some time to take some rest and recover, so we can go to Chicago in a perfect shape to have a perfect performance and get a good result," said the 200-cm-tall athlete. Within the last few years, Iran have evolved from a regional power to a world-level volleyball force to be reckoned with. They are currently placed eighth in the FIVB World Ranking. Mousavi, who has been on the squad for more than 10 years now, has been an integral part of this incredible rise. "Our federation has been working a lot with the youth and hiring good coaches to train them. More and more young people come to volleyball and, step by step, the sport is growing," he analyzed. "Some of the best coaches in the world also come to Iran to teach us how to win. 10 years ago we played well, but we did not have the knowledge and the confidence in the important moments to close a match with a victory. We had po-

## Taekwondo athlete Kimia Alizadeh ready to fight



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian taekwondo athlete Kimia Alizadeh has recovered from foot injury. The Iranian woman missed the 2018 Asian Games due to a torn ACL and underwent surgery in September. Now, she is ready to fight after her recovery. Alizadeh will participate at the Iran taekwondo championship, slated for Aug. 8. She won a bronze medal at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. This made her

the first Iranian woman to win a medal at the Olympic Games. Among other important results, Alizadeh won a gold medal in the women's 63-kg class at the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games. She beat London 2012 gold medalist Jade Jones at the 2015 World Championship to win a bronze medal. Alizadeh also won a silver medal two years later at the 2017 World Taekwondo Championships. Group C will also be keenly contested as Lebanon's Bank of Beirut, who finished third last year, Indonesia's Vamos FC, debutants Soro Company of Tajikistan and Myanmar's Victoria University College FC complete the line up. Group D promises to be a sizzler with title holders Mes Sungun Varzaghan, who became the fourth Iranian club to win the tournament in 2018, were pitted against three-time champions Nagoya Oceans of Japan, United Arab Emirates' Al-Dhafra Sports & Cultural Club and first timers Kazma SC of Kuwait. The tournament - to be held on August 7-17 - with 32 matches to be played, will be held in Bangkok. (Source: the-afc)



not easy to go outside as people immediately come to talk to us, to take pictures and so on," said Mousavi and went on to discuss the social media situation. "I started this experience five years ago. At the beginning it was so strange for me to get so many followers on Instagram and I put my mind to it. Now I am OK. I am just enjoying Instagram, without concentrating too much on it." Staying humble, however, he refused to dream up an ideal team with himself as a member. He listed seven other volleyballers instead. "This is so difficult, because there are so many good players — even just in Iran, let alone the whole world," he pointed out. "I think Marouf as setter, Robertlandy Simon and Srecko Lisinac as middle blockers, Ricardo Lucarelli and Osmany Juantorena as receivers, Maxim Mikhaylov as opposite and Alexey Verbov as libero."

## Shahrdari Bam champions of Iran women's football league

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Shahrdari Bam football team won the title of the 11th edition of the Iran women's league on Thursday.



The holders defended their title after beating Zob Ahan 2-1 in Isfahan's Foadl Shahr Stadium. Safoora Jafari was on target for Zob Ahan in the first half but Zahra Ghanbari and Mona Amoudi scored for Shahrdari bam in the second half. Shahrdari Bam are the most decorated women football team in the league, winning the titles six times.

## Ex-Iran wrestler Alireza Heydari survives car crash

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Iranian wrestler Alireza Heydari survived a horrific car crash that killed his two friends. Heydari, 43, was left with two broken ribs in the accident which happened on a road between Tehran and Kashan. The car he was travelling in, collided with a truck. He won a bronze medal in the Men's Freestyle 96 kg at the 2004 Summer Olympics. Heydari also claimed a gold medal in the 1998 World Wrestling Championships in the 85 kg in Tehran and also claimed three silvers at 1999 (Ankara), 2002 (Tehran) and 2003 (New York). He also competed in Sydney 2000, where he placed 6th. He is also a seven-time Asian champion. Heydari was selected as the 1999 National Sportsman of the Year in Iran.

## IPC sends its condolences to family of Razieh Shirmohammadi

The International Paralympic Committee sends its condolences to the family of Razieh Shirmohammadi and the Iranian Paralympic Committee. The Para archer died on Tuesday at the age of 42 due to a heart attack. Shirmohammadi claimed a bronze medal in the women's team recurve open at the London 2012 Paralympic Games — competing alongside Zahra Javanmard and Zahra Nemati. The Para archer had recently won a quota spot for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games competing at the World Championships in 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands. Born in Mashhad, Iran, Shirmohammadi also represented her country at the Rio 2016 Paralympics. Among other important results, she won two medals in Asian Para Games — a gold at Guangzhou 2010 and a silver at Indonesia 2018 — and two World Championships medals — a gold at Beijing 2017 and a bronze at Torino 2011. (Source: Paralympic.org)

## Anthony Stokes leaves Tractor Sazi

**PLDC** — Irish striker Anthony Stokes left Iranian football club Tractor Sazi on Thursday. The 31-year-old forward scored 11 goals for Tractor Sazi in Iran Professional League last season. Stokes has announced his departure on his Instagram account and thanked Tractor Sazi's fans. He joined the Tabriz-based football club along with Scottish striker Lee Erwin and English forward Harry Forrester last year. Stokes began his senior career with Arsenal, but established himself with a successful loan spell with Falkirk in 2006, scoring 14 goals in 16 SPL games. He then signed for Sunderland in a £2 million deal, but he struggled to hold down a place in the Sunderland first team. Stokes has also played for Sheffield United, Crystal Palace, Hibernian, Celtic and Blackburn Rovers.

## Turkish club Menemenspor eyes Iran's Alireza Haghighi

**TASNIM** — Professional Turkish football club Menemenspor have shown interest in signing Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Haghighi. The 31-year-old goalie is in Izmir at the moment to negotiate with the Turkish club, Hurriyet reported. Haghighi, who started his goalkeeping career in Iranian club Persepolis, was a member of Iran national football team in the 2014 FIFA World Cup. He has also played in Russian club Rubin Kazan, Portuguese teams Sporting Covilha, Penafiel and Marítimo and Swedish clubs Eskilstuna and Sundsvall.



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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Keep your faith secure by charity, and guard your wealth in strong fortress through alms, and keep the waves of distress and disaster away by benediction.

Imam Ali (AS)

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Shamsollah Saedi is underway at Haft Samar Gallery. The exhibition will run until July 3 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahhari Ave.

■ Paintings by Zohreh Qazihosseini are currently on view in an exhibition at Idea Gallery. The exhibit titled "Familiar Room" will be running until July 3 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ A collection of paintings by Abolfazl Rafiei is on display in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery. The exhibit named "The Inhabitants of Moan" runs until July 10 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

■ Negah Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Reza Mazruei. Entitled "Conversions, Confluences and Interactions", the exhibit runs until July 10 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Akbar Rafiei is being shown at White Line Gallery. The exhibit titled "Old Houses" will run until July 8 at the gallery, which can be found at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jame Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.

■ Atieh Ramezanpur and Raheleh Yusefi are showcasing their latest paintings in an exhibition at Negar Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Unstable Situation" will be running until July 3 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

■ Golestan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mitra Bostani.

The exhibition will run until July 3 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

■ A collection of paintings by Saman Farhangi is on display in an exhibition at Atbin Gallery. The exhibit named "Moment before Perception" runs until July 9 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

■ Paintings by Mahmud Mahmudi are currently on view in an exhibition at Moon Gallery. The exhibition will be running until July 16 at the gallery that can be found at 26 Golestan Blvd., Africa Ave.

### Sculpture

■ An exhibition of sculptures by Iman Aqai is underway at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Confront" will continue until July 3 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

■ A group of artists, including Hanibal Alkhas, Kambiz Derambakhsh, Yazdan Sadi, Arash Lahiji, Nikzad Nojumi and Adak Jamshidzadeh, is showcasing their drawings in an exhibition at Artland Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Along the Line" runs until July 8 at the gallery located at 4 Safa Alley, Kachui St. in the Evin neighborhood.

# Top Iranian photojournalists honored

**A R T TEHRAN** — Winners of the Third Iran Press Photo Awards were honored during a special ceremony at the Iranian Artists Forum on Thursday.

In the News Photo section, Morteza Jaberian of the Mehr News Agency received the award for best photo series. The best single photo award in this category went to Mohsen Bakhshandeh-Zahmatkesh of the Shahr Photo Agency.

Abdollah Heidari from IRNA won the award for best series in the Documentary Photo section. Freelance photographer Ali Nejatbakhsh Esfahani was honored for his single photo in this section.

The award for best photo series in the Sports Photo category was presented to Javid Nikpur who is working for the National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tasnim News Agency. Mehdi Bolurian from the Fars News Agency won the best single photo award.

A collection by Majid Asgari of the Mehr News Agency won the award in the Portrait section. A single portrait by Sajjad Safari of the Iran International Photo Agency also received an award in this section.

The best photo series in the Environment category went to Salman Samdaliri of the Iran Photo Club, and the best single photo award in this section was presented to Abolfazl Nesai from the Hormozgan Photographers Society.

"Star Wars", a single photo by Saeid Zareian of the Hamshahri Photo Agency, won the audience award.

Veteran photographers Maryam Zandi, Kaveh Kazemi and Seyyed Abbas Mirhashemi were honored for their lifetime achievements.

Photojournalists in six categories are honored at the Iran Press Photo Awards, which is organized by the Iranian Photojournalists Association.

In his short speech, the director of the Iran Press Photo Awards, Amir Narimani, said, "Photojournalism in the world has certain standards but our photographers, unfortunately, ignore them."

"We noticed this issue when we asked the photographers to send us a number of their unedited photographs," he added.

The Iranian Photojournalists Association organized courses to teach photojournalists about the standards, he noted.



Winners pose with the organizers in front of the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on June 27, 2019 after being honored at the 3rd Iran Press Photo Awards.

## Sculptor Nasser Hushmand-Vaziri dies at 73

**A R T TEHRAN** — Sculptor Nasser Hushmand-Vaziri died of a heart attack on Friday, he was 73, the Association of Iranian Sculptors announced.

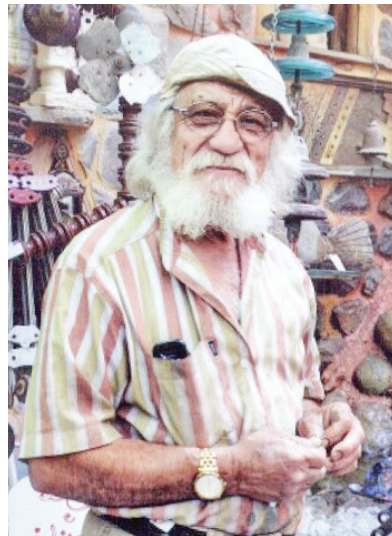
Hushmand-Vaziri was born in the west-central Iranian city of Hamedan and he was one of the first Iranian sculptors who became familiar with fiberglass and began to work with it in his creations.

He has made over 300 sculptures, 50 of which are situated in Tehran's Jamshidieh Park.

His works also adorn Saei Park in Tehran, Barajin Park in Qazvin, Falakolafak Castle in Khorramabad and Rakhshshuikhaneh Museum in Zanjan.

Hushmand-Vaziri established his museum in 2005 in Lavasan, a resort town about 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran.

A number of the sculptures on display at this museum are inspired by the characters in the Shahnameh, the epic masterpiece of the Persian poet Ferdowsi. He made the museum using recycled materials.



Sculptor Nasser Hushmand-Vaziri in an undated photo.

## Munich Iranian filmfest to open on July 12

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 6th edition of Cinema Iran, a festival of Iranian films, will be held in the German city of Munich from July 12 to 14, the

organizers have announced.

Media artist and graphic designer Amir-Ali Qasemi is the Iranian curator of the event, which is organized by Filmstadt

## "The Other Hand" published in Persian

**A R T TEHRAN** — British writer and journalist Chris Cleave's novel "The Other Hand", also known as "Little Bee", has recently been published in Persian by Morvarid Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Elaheh Shamsnejad, the 2008 book is a dual narrative story about a Nigerian asylum-seeker, Little Bee, and a British magazine editor, Sarah.

They met during the oil conflict in the Niger Delta, and now are reunited in England several years later, while Little Bee is illegally released from a British immigration detention center and Sarah has just lost her husband.

The book was nominated for the 2008 Costa Book Awards and a 2009 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. It was also on the 2009 Sunday Times bestseller list and has been ranked number one on the New York Times bestseller list.



Front cover of the Persian version of British writer Chris Cleave's novel "The Other Hand".

## Pakistani expert Sahar Gul Bhatti translating Rumi poems into Sindhi



Sahar Gul Bhatti in an undated photo.

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — Pakistani Persian literature expert Sahar Gul Bhatti is translating a selection of works by the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273) into Sindhi, an Indo-Aryan language of the historical Sindh region in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent.

She made the remarks in a meeting with Iran's cultural attaché Ahmad Abdollahpur at the Cultural Center of Iran in Hyderabad on June 25.

She talked of her love for the Persian

language and said that she has passed a primary course on the Persian language at the University of Karachi and needs to expand her knowledge of Persian.

She is due to attend the Persian Language and Literature Refresher Course held annually at the Sadi Foundation in Tehran beginning mid-July.

Sahar Gul has an MA in philosophy from Pakistan and another MA in anthropology from the UK. Her expertise includes teaching, writing and hosting political talk shows. She is fluent in several languages such as English, Urdu, Sindhi, Arabic and Punjabi.

## 80 artworks to be sold at Tehran Auction July 5



A poster for the 11th edition of the Tehran Auction.

**A R T TEHRAN** — A collection of 80 artworks will be offered for sale during the 11th edition of the Tehran Auction, which is dedicated to modern and contemporary Iranian art, on July 5.

The auction, which is among the largest auctions in the Middle East, will take place at Tehran's Parsian Azadi Hotel and a preview will be arranged on July 3 and 4, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The collection includes 75 paintings and 5 sculptures by 60 deceased and living artists, including Parviz Tanavoli, Aidin

Aghdashlu, Sohrab Sepehri, Mahmud Farshchian, Masud Arabshahi and Sadeq Tabrizi.

The Tehran Auction organizes two sales every year. The first sale is dedicated to classic artworks and the second sale focuses on modern and contemporary works.

Art expert Alireza Sami-Azar, a former director of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, is the director of the auction.

A total of 114 artworks went under the hammer at the 10th Tehran Auction, which grossed over 344 billion rials (about \$8.2 million).

## "Bohemian Rhapsody" movie makes magic for Queen as music sales soar

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — British rock band Queen sold more albums in North America than any other artist in the first half of 2019, as music featured in movies and television sent streaming and downloads soaring.

A midyear report by Nielsen Music released on Thursday said the soundtrack to the musical "Bohemian Rhapsody," which won four Oscars in February, was the best-selling rock title of the first six months of 2019, with Queen's "Greatest Hits 1" compilation coming in second.

Queen sold more than 731,000 albums - more than any

other artist - as well as the most digital songs with more than 1.3 million downloads, Nielsen said.

Queen in February became the first rock band to open the Oscars when it kicked off the annual ceremony in Hollywood with a live performance of "We Will Rock You" and "We Are the Champions."

Lady Gaga and actor-director Bradley Cooper's steamy performance on the Oscars stage of their winning duet "Shallow" from "A Star Is Born" also sent sales soaring. The romantic ballad has seen some 648,000 digital song

downloads so far this year, the report said.

The Elton John biopic "Rocketman" fueled a 138% gain in album sales for the British singer-songwriter in the first week after the movie's release on May 31.

Rapper Post Malone's collaboration with Swae Lee on the song "Sunflower" shot to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 charts in January after being featured in the animated movie "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse."

The song saw a 170% increase in radio play, and the video had been viewed more than 642 million times on YouTube.