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PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Head of the Tehran Times
Politics Desk

The deception game of Elysee Palace

News released secretly from the recent G20 summit in Japan shows that US President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron have made deals on the Iran. Of course, this is not so much new! American and French officials have long been interacting with each other. In particular, the U.S. and French foreign ministers have had a lot of contacts in this regard.

In their joint efforts with the US, the French are now demanding restrictions to Iran's missile capabilities. In their latest attempt to demonize Iran, the French have accused the Islamic Republic of violating United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 and have criticized its use of ballistic missiles.

They believe that by imposing pressure or even implementing new missile sanctions on Iran, it is possible to force Iran to negotiate, and then a direct link can be created between Iran's missile power and its nuclear capabilities. The difference between the French and US approach is the tactics employed by the two parties.

The fact is that the only reason for the crisis has been the departure of the United States from an international agreement. On the other hand, Donald Trump's government has imposed sanctions against Iran, which has shown little commitment to international treaties. In such a situation, the White House must return to the nuclear deal in the direction of the exit from the swamp, and the United States must also lift its sanctions against Iran and offset the damage that has occurred in the last year. The Trump government should also apologize to the international community on leaving the JCPOA.

No doubt, the French president in this equation is considered an accused and guilty. The Iranian nation has repeatedly analyzed the irrational and anti-Iranian game of the French government on the ground of the American government. At this point, it seems that Iran has made a wise decision. Over the last year, the European troika has not only done anything to revive the nuclear deal or bring any kind of benefit to the Iranian nation, but they have actually backed up US by developing new plans to undermine Iran's "missile work", and diminish its "power in the region" as well as its "nuclear technology".

U.S. can enter Guinness book as world's biggest liar: Hezbollah

TEHRAN— Hezbollah Deputy Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem said that Washington is behind all crises in the region and that it can enter Guinness book as the world's biggest liar and cheater.

If one wants to enlist the world's biggest liar, cheater and criminal in the Guinness World Records, the United States will surely be the one to enter the book, said the Hezbollah official on Saturday, Alahed reported.

Washington doesn't have honesty and is completely biased towards the Israeli regime and this is the source of all regional crises, he noted, adding that the Resistance Front is awake and ready to foil U.S. plots as it has done before.



According to MNA, he went on to say that the U.S.-led conference in Bahrain has failed due to

the absence of all the Palestinian forces, adding that it exposed the Persian Gulf Arab regimes who appeared clearly as being away from supporting the Palestinian cause.

Sheikh Qassem added that all the Palestinians have become more convinced that the military resistance is the only way to liberate Palestine, away from all the dishonest promises, Almanar reported.

His eminence also stressed that Lebanon rejects the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees despite the use of the economic scarecrow, noting that the crisis in the country would be solved within the limits of the sovereignty.

Iraqi Foreign Ministry protests Turkey's violation to its sovereignty

TEHRAN — The Iraqi Foreign Ministry has voiced its protest against the Turkish airstrikes on areas in its territories, calling on Turkey to respect Iraq's sovereignty.

"While we are keen to establish long-term strategic relations and to prevent acts emanating from Iraqi territory against the security of neighboring Turkey, we believe that unilateral acts of war violate Iraqi sovereignty. Good neighborliness that regulates the relations between two neighbouring peoples, and constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law," Iraqi Foreign Ministry said in a statement,

7dnews reported.

On Thursday June 27th, Turkey launched airstrikes hit the Qandil Mountains, killing three people and wounded four. According to local sources, the latest Turkish airstrike killed and injured seven civilians, who were all from the same family.

The Turkish Ministry of Defense announced 'Operation Claw' to hunt down members of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), inside Iraqi Kurdistan. Turkish military and intelligence bases were set up in Iraqi Kurdistan since the 1990's. And the Turkish army established another

camp in Baishika, Nineveh, allegedly to fight Isis.

"No matter what are the circumstances and justifications, we emphasize the importance that the Turkish side stops the bombing of Iraqi areas, the need to respect our sovereignty, and mutual cooperation to ensure the security of the borders of the two countries, because the violation of Iraqi sovereignty is a violation of international humanitarian law," the statement reads.

Operation Claw was launched on May 28th, 2019, when Turkish troops backed by tanks, entered the territories of the Iraqi Kurdistan region, penetrating as far as 30 km.

Fighting rages across Afghanistan as peace talks continue

TEHRAN— Taliban suicide bombers killed at least 19 people in an attack on a government office on Saturday night, officials said, in the latest episode of violence in Afghanistan as peace talks continue to end the war.

Election workers were registering voters ahead of presidential elections in September at an office in the Maroof district of the southern Kandahar province when fighters of the hardline group launched an attack using four Humvee vehicles, officials said.

Eight election workers were killed, they said. Eleven Afghan security force members were also killed alongside the four suicide bombers, said Tadeen Khan, the police chief of Kandahar.

The Taliban, which rejects the election process, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said the group's fighters also killed 57 members of the Afghan security forces in the attack and captured 11 others, but Afghan officials disputed the account.

The interior ministry in a statement said 25 Taliban insurgents were killed in the clash.

The Taliban, which controls or contests half the country, more than at any time since being overthrown by the U.S. invasion in 2001, has rejected calls for a ceasefire.

Fighting between the Taliban and Afghan forces has intensified even as leaders of the Taliban and

U.S. officials hold peace talks in Qatar to end 18 years of war in Afghanistan.

In a separate attack, Taliban fighters killed eight Afghan soldiers and injured eight others at a military checkpoint in Balabulak district in the western province of Farah, a local official said.

Mahmood Naemi, the deputy chief of the Farah council, said the clashes ended after Afghan forces launched air strikes.

"Many Taliban fighters were killed in the air strike," said Naemi.

In the northern province of Takhar, over 600 villagers fled as Taliban fighters seized large areas of the province during heavy fighting in recent days, government officials said.

ARTICLE

By Abdullahi Junaidu
Journalist from Nigeria

No tolerance for inhuman act against Sheikh Zakzaky

The merciless attacks by the Nigerian military on Nigeria's Islamic Movement in December 2015 has left an unhealed wound on the Nigerian society.

The barbaric and inhuman attacks, which were instigated and are still being sponsored by the Saudi regime, are intended to eliminate the only voice that speaks the truth.

The plan is to assassinate Sheikh Zakzaky and his entire family. However, they don't know that Sheikh Zakzaky and his followers are the "students of Karbala". They also follow Imam Khomeini who slapped the West on the face and was the only person who taught the world how to disobey the arrogant powers.

And now the West is realizing that Sheikh Zakzaky is the second Khomeini of his era, so they want to eliminate his ideology.

The Zaria genocide in December 2015 was their ultimate plan but they woefully failed. After that, they have kept both the ailing Sheikh and his wounded wife in their Gulag without trial.

The Islamic Movement sued the Nigerian government, demanding the freedom of the sheikh and his wife. Finally, a federal court in Abuja issued a verdict that the Sheikh and his wife must be released unconditionally and be paid N25 million each.

But till this date Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife are held in custody illegally.

Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife's health conditions have continued to deteriorate since the 2015 attack.

Months ago, health experts from foreign countries were invited to investigate the sheikh's health condition. At the end, they made a final report.

Part of the report says the sheikh suffers from severe visual impairment in the right eye that can inevitably lead to permanent blindness.

It also said the Sheikh's left eye is completely absent.

Furthermore, the report said, symptoms of heavy metal poisoning were also observed. The heavy metal investigations conducted revealed extremely high concentrations of lead & cadmium in his blood, the reported added. **→13**

TENDER INVITATION NO.98-1003

IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) Would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 6000 MT Aluminium Fluoride (AlF3) on tender basis.

Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till

15 July, 2019 based on our required instruction to following address:

NO.49, Mollasadra Ave., Vanak Square, Postal code: 1991614581 Tehran, Iran.

Attention: Ms. Emadi, Ms. Yahyazadeh

Tel: +98 21 88049046-7 Fax: +98 21 88049045

For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check our website: www.iralco.ir

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminium Company



Jahromi and Chinese ambassador hold talks on IT

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi met with Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Chang Hua on Sunday before departing for Dalian to attend the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of the New Champions (AMNC).



More than 1,800 leaders from government, business, civil society, academia and the arts will converge in the Chinese coastal city of Dalian on July 1-3.

Jahromi said that Iran and China are on one front in the information technology (IT) sector to combat U.S. oppression and unilateralism, according to the Mehr news agency.

Jahromi underscored the good history of Iran-China cooperation and bright future of their IT relations.

Naming China a significant partner of Iran in the digital economy, the minister noted that the U.S. is pursuing unilateralism in the IT sector as the world's prominent companies active in infrastructure, network, and services are American.

Jahromi added that the U.S. sanctions have created some problems for Iran, but Tehran has learned how to confront them.

On June 25, Jahromi said that protecting the privacy and security of people in cyberspace should be the highest priority for all of countries, adding that Iranian startups are among the best in the world today and that Iran invites all countries to invest in the IT field.

Referring to Iran's standing against the U.S., Azari Jahromi called on the international community to confront U.S. unilateralism.

Tulsi Gabbard: Neocons, Netanyahu, and Saudi Arabia have made it difficult for Trump to avoid war with Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Democratic candidate and Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard has weighed in on foreign policy and her performance in the first primary debate on Thursday's edition of FNC's "Tucker Carlson Tonight."

Gabbard said a war with Iran would make the Iraq War look like a "picnic," according to a report of the interview posted on ealclearpolitics.com.

"The neocons in the Trump administration and Saudi Arabia and Netanyahu have created a situation where it's going to be very difficult for President Trump to avoid a war with Iran," Gabbard said.



"This is why the neocons hate you more than anybody," Carlson told Gabbard.

Gabbard responded by saying, "We hear a lot of politicians say the same argument that we've got to stay engaged in the world otherwise we'll be isolationists as though the only way the United States can engage with other countries is by blowing them up or strangling them with economic sanctions by smashing them and trying to overthrow their governments."

"This is exactly what's wrong with this whole premise and the whole view in which too many politicians, too many leaders in this country are viewing the United States role in the world. How about the United States be a leader in the world, work out differences and build relationships with negotiations and diplomacy and finding common interests and seeing how we can work together so that we can stop sending our men and women in uniform into harm's way serving in missions that do not serve the interests of the American people that make our country look less safe and end up causing more harm and more damage to the people in the countries where we wage these wasteful regime-change wars."

The presidential hopeful added, "A war with Iran would make that war with Iraq look like a picnic. Escalating these crippling sanctions, withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, designating Iran's military as a terrorist organization, something unprecedented, and continuing to deploy more and more U.S. troops. The neocons in the Trump administration and Saudi Arabia and Netanyahu have created a situation where it's going to be very difficult for President Trump to avoid a war with Iran."

"They have built all the building blocks, placed the dynamite and lit the fuse. And it's going to be up to Donald Trump and his leadership whether or not he is going to cut that fuse and say, hey, we need to get back on track and put the interests of the American people in our country first and avoid a war with Iran. Get back in that Iran nuclear agreement."

Trump has imposed a series of tough economic sanctions on Iran since he pulled out of the landmark international agreement on the country's nuclear program in May 2018.

Waiting a year for other parties to the 2015 deal to move to save it, Iran responded in May by restricting some of its commitments under the agreement.

Iran has indicated that it will step up nuclear enrichment if it is not protected from American sanctions.

Tensions between Iran and the United States escalated earlier this month after Iran shot down an intruding American drone above its territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

Facing growing criticism over his policy on Iran, Trump said hours after the drone incident that he had abruptly cancelled a counter attack merely out of concerns for civilian lives.

Iran says responds to diplomacy with diplomacy and pressure with resistance

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Saturday that Iran responds to diplomacy with diplomacy and responds to pressure with resistance.

His remarks came as a response to comments by Garrett Marquis, the spokesman for the U.S. National Security Council, in which he claimed that Iran has failed to give an appropriate response to what he described as U.S. President Donald Trump's pursuit of diplomacy on Tehran's nuclear issue, according to Press TV.

Mousavi said, "Iran responds to diplomacy with diplomacy and responds to pressure with resistance. However, it seems that diplomacy means sanctions and economic terrorism in the U.S. statesmen's lexicology!"

"We have seen nothing but illegal sanctions and war from the U.S.," he added.

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.

The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

Also, on April 22 the U.S. announced that Washington has decided not to extend waivers allowing major importers to continue buying oil from Iran. The waivers ended on May 2.

Trump also announced new sanctions against top Iranian officials, including the office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution



Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on June 24.

Mousavi said on June 24 that the imposition of new sanctions on top Iranian officials by the U.S. is synonymous with "permanent closure of the path to diplomacy".

The Iranian Foreign Ministry says: "It seems that diplomacy means sanctions and economic terrorism in the U.S. statesmen's lexicology!"

"The (imposition of) futile U.S. sanctions against Iran's Leader and the commander of Iran's diplomacy (Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif) means the permanent closure of the path to diplomacy with the desperate U.S. administration," Mousavi tweeted.

"The Trump administration is violating

all established international mechanisms for maintaining global peace and security," he added.

Zarif has labeled the U.S. sanctions as "economic terrorism".

Zarif told ABC News in an interview published on June 2 that Iran will not be intimidated by President Trump's "art of the deal pressure" by using economic sanctions to push Iran to negotiate a new nuclear deal.

He said that "there will be consequences" if the U.S. keeps up its economic pressure campaign against Iran's people.

"If the objective of President Trump is to impose pressure on normal Iranians, on ordinary Iranians, he is certainly achieving that," Zarif said. "But he will not achieve his policy objectives through pressure on the Iranians."

Back in April, President Hassan Rouhani likened Trump to a knifeman with whom Iran will not negotiate.

"Undoubtedly, accepting the demands of a knifeman who through bullying and lying is seeking negotiation will get nowhere," Rouhani told a cabinet meeting.

Rouhani said Iran has always been seeking negotiation and diplomacy but negotiation is possible only when there is no pressure.

"We have always been the man of dialogue and diplomacy, as we have been the man of war and defense, but negotiation is possible only when all pressures are lifted and they apologize for their illegal measures and there is mutual respect," Rouhani stated.

INSTEX is like a beautiful car without gasoline, envoy says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, on Saturday likened INSTEX to a "beautiful car without gasoline".

INSTEX — the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges — is a European special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between Europe and Iran.

"The current situation of INSTEX does not suffice. This mechanism without money is like a beautiful car without gasoline," Takht Ravanchi told reporters.

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 last year.

They announced in a statement that the European Union mechanism for trade with Iran is 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," reads an excerpt of the statement published on the official website of the EU.

Takht Ravanchi said, "We cannot wait more. We do not threaten anyone and we do not set deadline. We have told them that we will reduce our commitments if they do not take any action. We will take new actions if they refuse to fulfil their commitments."

On May 8, Iran announced a partial with-

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

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

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.

■ **'Iran has never sought atomic bomb'**

Takht Ravanchi also said that Iran has never been seeking to build atomic bomb.

Noting that nuclear weapons does not bring security, the diplomat said, "The Zionist regime of Israel has had atomic bomb for many years. Atomic bomb does not bring security."

He insisted on Tehran's long-held position that Iran will not move towards building a nuclear bomb, but will not stop scientific studies.

Mogherini says INSTEX is processing first transactions

By staff and agency

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has said that INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran, has become operational and is processing the first transactions.

"On Friday we also gave an important announcement on the defense of the nuclear deal with Iran: the instrument to support legitimate trade exchanges with Iran (called INSTEX) has become operational and is processing the first transactions. Together with the three countries that set it up — France, Germany and the UK — another seven European countries will join the mechanism. On Friday we also gathered the Joint Commission that works to guarantee the deal's implementation," she said in an announcement published on her website on Sunday.

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 last year.

They announced in a statement that the European Union mechanism for trade with Iran is up and running.

After the talks, Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, said progress has been made to save the 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 in Vienna after almost four hours of talks with senior diplomats from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

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.

Araqchi said, "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."

'INSTEX cannot work miracles for Iran'

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Chairman of the Iran-Iraq Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-Es'haq highlighted the ineffectiveness of the Europeans' long-awaited financial mechanism, known as INSTEX, in the face of U.S. sanctions and said it cannot perform miracles for Tehran.

In comments released on Sunday, Al-Es'haq referred to the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), the payment channel that the three EU signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have set up to maintain trade with Tehran, as "a private company with limited capital".

"At first, it was supposed that INSTEX would compensate for the sanctions on (Iran's) oil transactions, with the support of the European governments. But today, they say that INSTEX will work within the framework of items that are not sanctioned, such as medicine and food, which will not solve any of our problems," he said.

"This private company has limited capital and no one can be optimistic about this," the official went on to say.

"The volume of (Iran's) exports to all European countries is one-tenth of the volume of exports to Iraq," he said.

This year, the Islamic Republic exported \$13 billion worth of technical services and commodity to Iraq, Al-Es'haq said, adding that INSTEX cannot work miracles

for Iran.

INSTEX is a payment channel that France, Germany and Britain - the three European signatories to the nuclear deal, known the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - have devised to continue trade with Tehran and bypass the U.S. embargoes.

The European payment channel, however, has not brought about any change in Iran's foreign trade.

On Friday, negotiators from Iran and the Group 4+1 (Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany) convened in the Austrian capital to discuss ways to save the JCPOA.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the JCPOA, a 159-page nuclear agreement between Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany) came into force in January 2016.

Following the U.S. withdrawal, Iran and the remaining parties launched talks to save the accord.

However, the EU's failure to ensure Iran's economic interests forced Tehran to stop honoring certain commitments under JCPOA on May 8, 2019.

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

Macron: Europe plans no immediate sanctions if Iran scales back nuclear commitments

Europe has no immediate plans to follow the U.S. and impose sanctions on Iran, even if Tehran makes good on its threat to scale back its commitment to a nuclear accord, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Saturday in Osaka, Japan, the venue of the G20 summit.

U.S. officials in recent days have urged Europeans to toughen their stance on Iran after the U.S. administration imposed fresh sanctions on Monday in response to the downing of a U.S. military drone.

The drone was shot down on June 20 after it violated Iran's airspace and ignored repeated warning by the Iranian military to leave. To prove that the drone, an RQ-4 Black Hawk, had breached Iran's airspace, Iran put its wreckage on display.

Talking in a press conference, Macron said his main goal is to de-escalate tensions

between Iran and the U.S.

Europe won't trigger sanctions if Iran goes over the uranium stockpile limit, because that is not how the nuclear deal works, he said.

"This is a big risk," he said. "What we will do in such a case isn't to move directly to sanctions, but to act precisely following the treaty we signed in 2015," he said, according

to the Wall Street Journal.

In case of noncompliance, France, Germany and the UK will first hold talks with the Iranian minister for official explanations, he said.

Under the deal, there is a multistep complaint and evaluation process, which takes at least 50 days to work through. Only at

The French president signaled understanding for the Iranian position. "Until very recently the Iranians, following all the records, behaved properly, they followed the rulebook. Now because of the increase in sanctions and tensions, indeed they are threatening to slightly move differently," Mr. Macron said.

the end of that would Europe potentially impose sanctions if Iran was still out of step with the deal. But some European officials say France, Germany and the UK may hold off on triggering that mechanism and wait for a bigger transgression by Iran.

The French president signaled understanding for the Iranian position. "Until very recently the Iranians, following all the records, behaved properly, they followed the rulebook. Now because of the increase in sanctions and tensions, indeed they are threatening to slightly move differently," Mr. Macron said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel also met Mr. Trump and talked at length about how to get Iran to the negotiating table.

"This is something I am very much in favor of," she said. "But the situation remains quite tense."

New bans expose U.S. insincerity in calls for talks: top official

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Any U.S. sanctions targeting the Iranian foreign minister would block the road of diplomacy and would further expose the insincerity of Washington's calls for negotiations with the Islamic Republic, says President Rouhani's deputy for parliamentary affairs.

In an interview with ICANA published on Sunday, Hossein Ali Amiri censured the new U.S. bans against top Iranian authorities, saying Foreign Minister Zarif is in charge of Iran's diplomatic contacts and foreign policy and banning him equals banning diplomacy.

He said the new sanctions were a sign of Washington's "confusion, frustration, inability and lack of understanding of the Iranian society."

Amiri also said that the U.S. has opposed the Islamic world's public opinion by blacklisting the office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, because the Iranian leadership is not only a political and administrative post, but also a religious and spiritual authority whose followers are not restricted to the Iranian borders.

"We will definitely work in such a



Hossein Ali Amiri, the vice president for parliamentary affairs, says the new U.S. sanctions on Iran were a sign of Washington's "confusion, frustration, inability and lack of understanding of the Iranian society."

way that the impact of sanctions would be foiled or minimized," he concluded.

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.

Responding to the move, President Hassan Rouhani said the sanctions originate from the U.S. administration's "confusion".

Rouhani added, "They have become mentally impotent. The White House has become mentally crippled and does not know what to do."

Rouhani said Washington is angry with Iran's ability to detect the U.S. spy drone immediately after it violated the Iranian airspace, and more exasperated with the shooting down of its aircraft by an Iranian air defense system, not by S-300 or other systems.

The aerospace force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) shot down the drone, a Global Hawk spy aircraft, on June 20 after it violated Iranian airspace.

Commander says no one but Iran dares to confront the U.S.

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The deputy chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the conflict between Iran and the United States is a conflict between good and evil which has lasted for forty years.

Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi said the Tehran-Washington conflict has continued to grow over the years, ISNA reported.

No one in the world would dare to act against the United States, Fadavi said, reiterating that the Islamic Republic has openly and successfully confronted the United States for forty years.

Tensions between Iran and the United States reached a record high after a U.S. spy drone violated Iran's airspace and ignored Iran's warnings before being targeted by the IRGC's air defense system.

The IRGC said the drone was brought down over Iran's southern coastal province of Hormozgan.

The Guards, however, spared a second spy plane carrying 35 people, for which U.S. President Donald Trump thanked Iran.



In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and imposed severe sanctions against Tehran.

The Trump administration insists that they are ready for talks with Iran but Tehran says it will resist in face of all pressures and that there will be no talks with a party which has already violated many international agreements.

Adviser urges Trump to change behavior toward Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A senior adviser to the Iranian parliament speaker for international affairs has highlighted U.S. President Donald Trump's frustration in dealing with the Islamic Republic and said he can save himself only by changing his behavior toward Iran.

In a recent post on his Instagram account, Hossein Amir Abdollahian said the only way for Trump to save himself from the current situation is a change of behavior toward "the robust logic" of the Iranian leadership and nation.

Trump is not in a position even to talk about sanctions against Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the top adviser further said.

"He is trying to grab only Imam Khamenei's attention but he has already received the response," he added.

Earlier this month, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held a meeting with Ayatollah Khamenei in Tehran.

At the beginning of the meeting, the



Japanese premier said he intended to relay a message to Iran from Trump.

In response, Ayatollah Khamenei told Abe, "We have no doubts about your goodwill and seriousness, but with regard to what you relayed from the U.S. president, I see no merit in Trump as a person to deserve the exchange of any messages, and I do not have any answer for him and will not give him any either."

'INSTEX is useless at resolving economic problems'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – INSTEX is a useless mechanism that cannot resolve Iran's economic problems created by U.S. sanctions, an Iranian lawmaker said on Sunday.

Europe should return to its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) because INSTEX bears no positive effect on Iran's economy, said Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi, a member of the Majlis Economic Committee.

Pour-Ebrahimi said the recent developments, including the downing of an intruding U.S. spy drone by the IRGC and Iran's announcement on reducing commitments to the deal, made Europeans feel that they should pay the price for Iran's remaining in the JCPOA.

"So they announced that INSTEX had been made oper-



ational but this mechanism is not related to JCPOA commitments, rather, it can be a beginning for implementation

of the deal," he added, according to Mehr.

The remarks came two days after the European Union announced that INSTEX 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 an EU statement on Friday.

Pour-Ebrahimi described INSTEX as a banking mechanism for merely trading food, medicine and medical equipment, saying, "This is an insult to the Iranian nation."

"The way Europeans act on INSTEX is not acceptable ... Europe should honor its JCPOA commitments in trading and banking sectors with Iran. The export of Iranian oil and products are an important part of the JCPOA."

Ex-Foreign Ministry official says it's 'impossible' to continue co-op with Europe

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – A former Foreign Ministry spokesman has criticized European countries' inaction to salvage the 2015 nuclear deal, saying continuing the current situation with Europe is "impossible" and "unreasonable".

Mohammad Ali Hosseini said Europe only seeks to protect its own interests with regard to the nuclear accord, also known as the JCPOA, Mehr reported on Sunday.

"Europeans want to gain the most and pay the least price," Hosseini said.

He also cited U.S. unilateralism and bullying as another reason behind Europe's failure to safeguard Iran's interests under the JCPOA.

Hosseini stressed that by fulfilling its commitments under the JCPOA, Europeans can deepen their ties with Iran more than ever.

Europeans regard the JCPOA as one of their diplomatic achievements, yet in practice, they do not take any positive step about it, he added.

He also pointed to INSTEX, a banking mechanism devised by European countries to do business with Iran, saying even if the mechanism becomes operational, it would be restricted to foodstuff, medicine and medical equipment and would



not be useful for oil exports and banking transactions.

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

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

The U.S. exited the deal on May 8, 2018.

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

Iran's JCPOA co-op with EU should include oil sales: MP

TEHRAN (FNA) – A senior Iranian legislator underlined the necessity for the European states to help Iran stand against the U.S. sanctions by buying its crude and facilitate banking transactions, as part of their obligations under the nuclear deal.

"Continued cooperation with Europe on the nuclear deal should not be summarized within the framework of the INSTEX (the EU-proposed Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) that covers unsanctioned goods and just within the limits of trade with Europe," reformist MP Mostafa Kavakebian wrote in a memo on Saturday.

He underlined the need for such cooperation to include Iran's oil sale and different types of banking transactions.

His remarks came after a meeting of the Joint Commission on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) ended in Vienna following three and a half hours of talks by the remaining signatories to the deal (the EU3 and Russia and China) on Friday.

It was the 12th meeting of the Joint Commission on the JCPOA which began at 12:00 local time in Vienna.

In the meantime, seven European countries--Austria, Belgium, Finland,



the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden--in a joint statement expressed their support for the efforts to implement the INSTEX.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi described the joint commission with the Europeans as "a step forward", but at the same time asserted that it did not meet Iran's expectations.

"It was a step forward, but it is still not enough and not meeting Iran's expectations," said Araqchi, who headed the Iranian delegation at the meeting.

"I will report back to Tehran and the final decision will be by Tehran to take," he added.

Iran forms economic security police to counter economic crimes

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The deputy chief of the police announced on Sunday that a new department has been established within police to counter economic disruption.

Brigadier General Ayyoub Soleimani said several branches of the new department, named "economic security police", have been set up in several provinces with big shares of the country's economy, Tasnim reported.



Soleimani said the department was formed in response to a series of hostile plots to disrupt the national economy.

The economic security police focuses on plans to tackle problems hampering production, the general stated, expressing the hope for a reduction in economic crimes including fuel smuggling, livestock smuggling, and problems in the supply of consumer goods to the public.

Back in December 2018, police chief Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari announced that his forces have taken the tough line with wrongdoers over economic crimes.

Police and Judiciary have ramped up efforts in recent months to tackle economic corruption.

Since August 2018, the Judiciary has begun to hold public trials of individuals involved in major economic corruption cases.

The names of defendants were made public after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei permitted the Judiciary to take special measures in order to confront economic corruption and called for "swift and just" legal action against financial crimes.

Iranian team in Moscow to attend parliamentary forum

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – A high-ranking Iranian parliamentary delegation is in Russia to attend the second edition of the International Forum on Development of Parliamentarism.

The delegation is led by Deputy Parliament Speaker Masoud Pezeshkian and consists of members of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee as well as the Iran-Russia parliamentary friendship group, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

The lawmakers traveled to Moscow at the invitation of Chairman of Russia's State Duma Viacheslav Volodin.

They will also hold meetings with top Russian lawmakers and officials as well as members of other delegations attending the forum.

The forum will be held from July 1 to 3 in Moscow.

Volodin has announced that Russia is expecting around 800 foreign representatives from 131 countries. According to the chairman of Duma, 85 countries would be represented at the level of official parliamentary delegations, including 37 African teams.

More than 500 international participants, parliamentarians and experts from 96 countries attended the 2018 edition of the forum, which highlighted the importance of inclusive and equitable cooperation among the nations and their alliances to ensure international and regional security and stability.



No one dares to attack Iran: cleric

TEHRAN (MNA) – Representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the Army, Hossein Sanatpour, said on Sunday that no country dares to attack Iran.

"Iran's defense power has reached a point that no one dares to attack the country," he said at a funeral ceremony of two unidentified martyrs in Tehran.

"Today, the Islamic establishment is facing the most severe sanctions for safeguarding human values, protecting the oppressed, and following justice," the chief of the Iranian Army's ideo-political organization added.

Resistance is the sole route to confront the hegemony, he said, adding, "martyrs showed us the path; they did not feel weak and frightened against the enemy, and stood against enemies' excessive demands and emerged victorious."

The remarks came against the backdrop of increased tensions between Iran and the U.S. after the Islamic Republic shot down an advanced U.S. spy drone over its territorial waters.

The intruding drone was reportedly shot by Iran's homegrown air defense missile system "Khordad-3rd".

In comments made a few hours after the incident, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami said the shooting down of the US aircraft had a straightforward message that any foreign intrusion into Iran's sovereign territories would draw a crushing response.



STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	248532.9
IFX	3194.05
Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir	

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,754 rials
GBP	53,338 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
Platinum	\$838.65/oz
Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com	

Tehran hosting 16th Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee meeting

➔ Grigoryan who is also the co-chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, for his part mentioned the preferential tariff agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, noting that the agreement has provided a good opportunity for both countries to develop bilateral and multilateral economic relations.

The official emphasized the importance of pursuing regional energy interactions while underlining the need for acceleration of the implementation of Iran's third line of electricity transmission to Armenia.

The 15th Joint Economic Committee meeting between Iran and Armenia was held in the Armenian capital city of Yerevan in February 2018.

In that meeting, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, Armenian Minister of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources Ashot Manukyan, Prime Minister of Armenia Karen Karapetyan, Armenian Nature Protection Minister Artsvik Minasyan, and a delegation from Iran's power industry, participated and discussed issues like the third electricity transmission line between Iran and Armenia, participation of Iranian companies in power projects in Armenia, environmental issues affiliated with Aras river, as well as other commercial, transit, and customs cooperation between the two countries.



Tehran City's real estate deals down 44.8% in spring

➔ TEHRAN — The number of real estate deals in Tehran City fell 44.8 percent in spring, which corresponds to the first quarter of Iranian calendar year, compared to the same quarter in the past year, Tasnim news agency reported citing the data released by the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

As reported, the number of deals during the first quarter of this year has been 21,537, and the housing price has risen 106 percent year on year in Tehran City.

Singapore's CapitaLand completes acquisition of Ascendas-Singbridge

Singapore-based realty major CapitaLand Ltd Sunday said it has completed acquisition of Ascendas-Singbridge, resulting in the creation of one of Asia's largest diversified real estate groups with assets worth 123 billion Singapore dollars under management. In India, CapitaLand has a portfolio of 26 business and IT parks, industrial, lodging and logistics properties, and an urban development project.

According to financexpres.com, in a statement, CapitaLand said it has "completed its transaction with Temasek and acquired all the issued shares of each of Ascendas Pte Ltd and Singbridge Pte Ltd." In January this year, CapitaLand announced this deal which was valued at SGD 11 billion. With the completion of the transaction, the enlarged CapitaLand Group will operate as a unified entity from July.

The "completion marks the coming together of two leading real estate players as one unified entity. As an enlarged Group, we possess fully integrated capabilities in four core markets – Singapore, China, India and Vietnam, while building greater scale in developed markets," said Lee Chee Koon, Group CEO of CapitaLand Group.

With more asset classes in these markets, he said the group would strive to achieve transformational growth. "Diversifying our portfolio to new economy sectors such as business parks, logistics and industrial properties, will give us added competitive edge via a bigger global network of touchpoints," the CEO said.

Ascendas Pte Ltd (APL) and Singbridge Pte. Ltd (SPL) were the holding companies of the business of Ascendas-Singbridge. APL and SPL have now become wholly owned subsidiaries of CapitaLand. APL holds business space, industrial development and fund management platforms, while SPL holds the joint ventures for large scale urban development projects.

CapitaLand is one of Asia's largest diversified real estate groups. Its portfolio spans across diversified real estate classes which include commercial, retail, business parks, industrial and logistics, integrated development, urban development as well as residential.

CapitaLand manages eight listed real estate investment trusts (REITs) and business trusts as well as over 20 private funds.

GSI to explore 110,000 km2 of land to identify new mines

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) is planning to explore 110,000 square kilometers (km2) of land across the country in the current fiscal year (ending on March 20, 2020), in order to identify new mining potentials, IRNA reported.

According to GSI office of public relations, last year (March 2018-March 2019) over 111,720 km2 of land were explored under the framework of a program dubbed "identification and exploration of new mines", while the goal was 110,000 km2.

Iran has heavily invested in its mining sector in order to offset the revenue losses from the oil industry due to the U.S. sanctions.

In Late June, Iranian industry, mining and trade minister announced that increasing exports from the mining sector to the neighboring countries has been put on the ministry's agenda for the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, head of Iranian Mines and



Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said the organization is planning to establish a consortium in order to accelerate exploration projects

Commodities worth \$500m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During weekdays ending up to June 27, approximately, 433,911 million tons (MT) of commodities worth over \$500 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

According to the report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 90,783 MT of various products worth close to \$150.8 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 83,506 MT of steel, 3,565 MT of copper, 3,500 MT of aluminum, 200 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 12 MT of precious metal concentrates as well as 26 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 330,354 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$358 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 165,400 MT of VB feed stock, 70,775 MT of bitumen, 49,246 MT of polymer products, 27,405 MT of chemical products, 450 MT of insulation, 17,000 MT of lube cut oil, 1,012 MT of base oil as well as 860 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 12,774 MT of commodities were traded on the side market of IME.

Last week, during the meeting of IME shareholders, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad said that this exchange has prepared ten macro plans to improve its performance during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

He mentioned development of underlying assets through existing instruments, development of financial instruments for commodity-backed securities, expansion of market size and depth, increasing cooperation with other organizations, and strengthening IME brand as some of the mentioned macro plans.

Soltani-Nejad has previously announced that IME accounted for 39 percent of the value of the total trades in the Iranian capital market during the past Iranian calendar year.

He put the value of IME trades at 1.78 quadrillion rials (about \$42.3 billion) in the past year, IRNA reported.

The value of trades at IME rose 52 percent in the past calendar year from its previous year.

Over 24.84 million tons of commodities valued at 884.3 trillion rials (about \$21.05 billion) were traded at the physical market of IME, showing seven percent fall in the amount and 77 percent rise in the worth of trades year on year.

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital



market was one of the achievements of the country's' exchange markets during the past year.

In this due, IME launched "option" in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.

Option is a contract which gives the buyer (the owner or holder of the option) the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specified strike price prior to or on a specified date, depending on the form of the option.

Monthly copper anode production 33% more than planned amount

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of copper anode by National Iranian Copper Company during the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad (May 22-June 21) was 33 percent more than the planned amount, according to the managing director of the company.

Ardeshtir Sa'd-Mohammadi said the company produced 31,259 tons of copper anode in Khordad, while the planned figure for this month was 23,632 tons, IRIB reported.

Managing director of National Copper Company also said that production of copper cathode by this company during the third month has been 22,328 tons which was 20 percent more than the planned figure of



18,611 tons. According to a report previously released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries

Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), production of copper cathode and anode in Iran exceeded the planned amount in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019), IRNA reported.

IMIDRO data indicate that National Copper Company produced 247,300 tons of copper cathode and 313,700 tons of copper anode in the previous year, showing 15 percent and 21 percent rise, respectively, from the projected figures.

Meanwhile, IMIDRO has announced that production of copper concentrate in Iran during the past Iranian year was five percent more than the planned figure.

IMIDRO data put the country's copper

concentrate output at 1.18 million tons in the past year, which is 1.123 million tons more than the planned amount.

And as Sa'd-Mohammadi announced on June 18, projects have been already started for increasing the country's annual production of copper concentrate by 450,000 tons.

Also as reported, National Copper Company earned over 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) from the copper sales in the previous year, which was seven percent higher than the planned figure.

As announced by the directors of the company, achieving 150 trillion rials (about \$3.57 billion) from sales has been targeted for the current year.

Greece sees its future as the Florida of Europe

Tourists in hats, cameras slung around their necks, crane them for a view. In the heart of old Athens, it is a reminder that the holiday season has begun. Last week as parties from cruise ships were guided through the narrow streets and squares of Plaka beneath the ancient Acropolis, industry officials were rejoicing at another seemingly immutable fact: that Greece is now among the most popular destinations in the world, poised to attract about 33 million tourists this year despite global economic uncertainty.

As per theguardian.com, around a sixth will visit Athens, a capital that not that long ago was synonymous with anti-austerity protests and bypassed by holidaymakers heading straight for the isles. "There has been a massive increase with each year being a record year for the last six years," Yiannis Retсос, the country's tourism chief, told the Observer. "Greece has become trendy for sure."

After nearly a decade of crisis for the debt-stricken nation, the industry grew nearly 7% last year – more than three and a half times faster than its wider economy.

With tourism generating around 25% of GDP, it is vital to public finances. This year tourism-related jobs are for the first time projected to exceed one million, or 25% of the country's labor market, according to data from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Last year visitors spent €18.5b (£16.5b).

Gloria Guevara, the council's president and chief executive, has described Greece as an "exemplary case study of how valuable an asset travel and tourism can be when the government prioritizes the sector".

But while arrivals have almost doubled



since 2009, Retсос is the first to caution that challenges lie ahead. After years of runaway success on the back of security fears in Turkey, Morocco and Egypt, other Mediterranean countries have rebounded.

Prices dramatically cut

Bookings in Turkey are up by 40% this summer. On popular resorts such as Rhodes, hoteliers have been forced to cut prices dramatically after an unusually slow start to the season.

The specter of over-tourism has also prompted fears of whether a country of 11 million people can cope with an influx three times its population. "This is no longer a game of numbers," says Retсос, who heads the Confederation of Greek Tourism (Sete), the voice of more than 50,000 private enterprises in the sector.

"What we have to do now is go through a maturity process, manage our destinations so that tourists and locals, alike, are happy, extend the season and invest in public infrastructure. If by magic Greece were to attract another 10 million visitors it wouldn't be able to handle such numbers."

More than ever, he said, it was vital that roads, ports, airports, waste disposal and electricity grids were upgraded after years of cutbacks during the country's long-running battle to remain in the eurozone.

Better times ahead for South Africa Inc., says analyst

The last five years have been laden by market volatility, with investors exposed to local equities suffering the most as returns continued on a general downward trend. South Africa's economy has undoubtedly faced its fair share of headwinds, however, we are seeing signs of improvement, says Adriaan Pask, chief information officer at PSG Wealth.

As per businesstech.co.za, we believe that South Africans won't be seeing any further rate hikes in the near future, which means the cost of capital will cease to rise and interest rates could remain low.

Long-term government bonds are currently yielding above 9%. Yields at these levels should be able to support investment portfolios, particularly during volatile market conditions. This means that even if domestic equities have a poor run, bond yields should support portfolio returns.

With a decline of over 38% from its best levels in the past few years, our stock market appears to be super cheap. In fact, SA has some of the lowest priced stocks compared to other emerging markets. This offers great opportunities for savvy investors, if history is anything to go by.

The people who bought into markets during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) can tell you how rewarding it is to invest when everyone else is fearful.

The credit rating

Moody's kept our credit rating one level above sub-investment grade, with a stable outlook. This presents a great opportunity for SA to improve on its fiscal policy and align itself with an economic strategy that builds confidence and facilitates growth ahead of the next scheduled rating decision



in November.

The relationship between South Africa's economy and its state-owned entities (SOEs) is inseparable. As part of President Cyril Ramaphosa's clean-up mission, these entities are currently undergoing structural changes, financial audits and, with the ousting of corrupt management, SOEs could be restored and become sustainable organizations.

The aftermath of the GFC can be used as a case study to understand the nuances of market cycles. Cheap risk assets were in abundance after the GFC, steadily regaining value in the years that followed.

From 2009 to 2013, markets boomed with investors generating up to 20% returns from risk assets. High returns were a result of cheap assets available in the aftermath of the GFC.

Investors often make the mistake of pulling out their investments after a period of underperformance, essentially selling at a low. Investors continue withdrawing until the fund starts to outperform. Just before performance plunges again, investors realize that the fund has had a good run and they start to invest into it, essentially buying at a high.

The graph below illustrates how money has flowed into and out of a popular South African balanced fund.

IRENEX to hold offering of 2m barrels of light crude oil on Tuesday

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will offer two million barrels of light crude oil at the base price of \$59.28 at the international ring of Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

This will be the 12th round of light crude offering in IRENEX and the fifth round of offerings in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2019).

Since the U.S.'s withdrew from Iran's nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter the U.S. actions and to keep its oil exports levels as high as possible.

One of the main strategies that Iran chose to execute to help its oil exports afloat has been trying new ways to diversify the mechanism of oil sales, one of which is offering oil at the country's stock market.

Following the Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh's directive, NIOC has been offering crude oil at IRENEX



every week.

The minister said that it may take

some time for selling crude oil at IRENEX

to be common and regular, but the oil

ministry will offer the product at this market every week.

NIOC offered crude oil at IRENEX first on October 28, 2018, just few days before new U.S. sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector took effect (November 4). In the first round, NIOC could sell some 280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel. With the daily supply amount of one million barrels, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel-cargos of oil on the day.

NIOC also sold 70,000 barrels of heavy crude oil at IRENEX for the first time on April 30. In the first round one million barrels of heavy crude was offered at a base price of \$60.68.

Offering heavy crude at IRENEX came after NIOC offered light crude at this stock market in eight rounds.

Successful sales of heavy crude at Iran's stock market happened while the U.S. is tightening pressure on the country's oil industry as the Trump administration has ended waivers on crude purchase granted to Iran's primary oil buyers in a bid to push Tehran oil sales to zero.

Mitsui to join LNG project in Arctic Ocean off Russia

Major trader Mitsui & Co. officially announced Saturday that it and government-linked Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp. (JOGMEC) will jointly invest in a planned Russian-led liquefied natural gas project in the Arctic Ocean along the Russian coast.

According to japantimes.com.jp, Tokyo has voiced its expectation for Mitsui's participation in the large-scale project, calling it a centerpiece of the country's economic cooperation for Russia.

Mitsui President and Chief Executive Officer Tatsuo Yasunaga signed the deal on Saturday, the same day Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in Osaka.



Japan Arctic LNG BV, a Dutch joint venture that is 75 percent owned by JOGMEC and 25 percent owned by Mitsui, will acquire a stake of 10 percent in Arctic LNG 2 LLC, the operator of the project, for which total investment is expected to reach up to \$23 billion, according to the trader.

With the Japanese participation, Arctic LNG 2 will be owned 60 percent by major Russian natural gas producer Pao Novatek, and 10 percent each by French energy giant Total SA, a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corp. and a unit of China National Offshore Oil Corp.

LNG production from the project is slated to start around 2023 with an annual capacity of 19.8 million tons.

Global warming has made it possible for ships to sail in the Arctic Ocean along the Russian coast during the summer, enabling LNG transportation to Japan and other parts of East Asia in a relatively short period of time, according to Mitsui.

The investment announcement also comes amid heightened tensions in the Middle East.

There is some concern that the Arctic Ocean LNG project will be subjected to Western sanctions against Russia that were imposed after the country's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

At a general meeting of Mitsui shareholders on June 20, Yasunaga brushed aside such concerns, saying that the company has been studying Russian projects while carefully managing risks related to the sanctions.

Iran preparing infrastructure to build oil tankers inside country: NITC

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) said renovation of the tanker fleet is a priority and the infrastructure is being prepared for constructing oil tankers inside the country based on international standards.

In an interview conducted by ISNA, Nasrollah Sardashti said that NITC currently owns 60 vessels of which 32 went through overhaul in China and UAE last year. "In the next eight months, we have plans for repairing 12 other vessels, two of which are ready to be dry docked for overhaul," the official said.

Sardashti further noted that the U.S. sanctions cannot impede the NITC operations and the company will pursue its plans despite all the pressures imposed by the U.S. embargo.

In late June, Iranian technicians managed to repair a giant oil tanker inside the country for the first time in the history of Iran's shipping industry.



According to the NITC office of public relations, the 320,000-ton supertanker (called Dore) was successfully dry-docked in Bandar Abbas at Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) on June 24.

Dore belongs to the national Iranian oil tanker fleet and is a "giant oil tanker" with a length of 333 meters.

This was the first time that repair and maintenance services of a super oil vessel is assigned to a domestic repair yard.

According to NITC Technical Advisor Ali Mansourzadeh, before this Iranian technicians had successfully completed the overhauling and maintenance operations of a variety of smaller vessels in a 6-month period, including MARIA 3 tanker with a capacity of 13,600 cubic meters, POLARIS with a capacity of 45,000 tons, and ARK and ARGO each with a capacity of 100,000 tons.

However, due to some technological limitations, the repair operations of supertankers like Dore was carried out in foreign countries.

The oil crisis Saudi Arabia can't solve, new survey says

Saudi Arabia's CEO Amin Nasr's message to the press that oil flows to the market are guaranteed, should be taken with a pinch of salt.

As per scoop.co.nz, looking at the current volatility in the Persian Gulf and the possibility of a temporary closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the Aramco CEO's message might be a bit overoptimistic. In reality, Aramco will not be able to keep the necessary crude oil and products volumes flowing to Asian and European markets in the case of a full Strait of Hormuz blockade. Even that Aramco owns and operates a crude oil pipeline with a capacity of 5 million bpd, carrying crude 1,200 kilometers between the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, much more is needed to keep the oil market stable.

Nasr reiterated that Aramco (aka the Kingdom) is able to supply sufficient crude through the Red Sea, reiterating that the necessary pipeline and terminal infrastructure is there. However, what analysts tend to forget, Nasr's statement is only linked to Saudi's oil export volumes, which will likely be not higher this summer than around the level this pipeline can support. The real issue, if it comes to a full-blown conflict, is that not only Saudi oil is being threatened.

At present, between 20-21 million bpd of crude and petroleum products are transported via the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi exports are a vast part of it, but also the UAE, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Iran, will have to look at additional routes.

A closure or military action in the region will cause a temporary disruption for all maritime traffic. Besides the options that are already on the table, such as the Saudi onshore pipeline and the UAE's Fujairah pipeline, no other real alternatives are available, as overland trucking or rail transport is minimal.



Transferring volumes via the Saudi and UAE's pipelines is not an option at all, as the total capacity of the two is less than 10 million bpd, representing not even 50% of the current maritime flows through Hormuz. Another thing that should be noted is that pipelines can't ship crude and crude products at the same time.

■ Consequence of blockade

Another consequence of a blockade would be that most available VLCCs and other tankers will either be in the Persian Gulf (and blocked) or will not be able to be rerouted. Before the market will have found a solution for this, days and probably weeks will have gone by, and a price spike for all products is to be expected. This will likely also be the case for LNG and other commodity flows.

Few analysts are talking about oilfield security and pipeline availability. Any military advisor will put these options as part of his or her 1st phase military action plan.

Looking at the majority of oil and gas production assets and infrastructure in the Arab world, especially in Saudi

Arabia, UAE or even Iraq, everything is in reach of short-distance missiles, fighter jets and even drones.

Any move against Iran will result in a full-scale attack on Saudi's Eastern Province (which produces 80% of all its oil and gas), Abu Dhabi's offshore oil infrastructure and the regional pipelines. Looking at history, denying energy access and diminishing the opponents stability is a no-brainer in military strategy.

Quelling fears in the market is the right thing to do, but reality also needs to be addressed. Nasr's message is that of an oil company CEO, taking all precautions to deal with a calamity. ADNOC's Sultan will be doing the same. Still, the oil market is at present a victim of geopolitical power projections of emotional leaders superseding rationality.

This confrontation is one of a possibly unprecedented order, not for oil (as skeptics again will state) but with oil as a weapon for defeat or survival. Asian consumers will need to prepare for severe price hikes in the most optimistic scenario, but also for a shutdown of vast parts of their economy.

rotor in the onshore market to 166m hub heights, enabling the turbines to capture new wind resources at higher and more consistent wind speeds.

Following the launch of the EnVentus platform in January, the first order comes just five months after the V162-5.6 MW was introduced, highlighting the platform's modular architecture's ability to reduce development cycles and time to market.

"We are delighted to continue our long-term co-operation with Vestas. We share the same ambition to relentlessly seek ways to develop the wind power business and hence Simo Sarvisuo demonstrates the working combination of efficient site development and cutting-edge turbine technology", says Henriikki Talvitie, Managing Director of TuuliWatti.

Vestas winning largest wind farm in Finland's first energy auction

Vestas has secured the first wind power order for an EnVentus platform wind turbine, underlining how Vestas continues to develop technology that enables tailored solutions to match customer needs. The order features the largest wind turbine, the V162-5.6 MW, which will be deployed at the 151 MW Simo Sarvisuo wind farm by long-term customer TuuliWatti.

As stated by evwind.es, leveraging the V162-5.6 MW turbine's industry-leading energy production and capacity factor, the solution significantly boosts the projects annual wind energy production and lower the cost of energy, which played a decisive role in the customer securing the project in Finland's first renewable energy auction.

To further maximize the wind park's power production, Vestas has also designed a tower solution to lift the largest



Khorasan razavi
Water and Wastewater company

Call for identification of investors for

Completion of a section of wastewater system in **sabzevar** through Buyback contract (Auction)

According to Article 37 of the sixth development plan, Article 2 of the law on establishment of water and wastewater companies approved in 1990, Note 19 of the single article of the budget law of 2018 of the whole country and And the Executive Order of Note 19 to No. 33989/55341 dated 2018, the **Khorasan razavi** Water and Wastewater company intends to concede the completion of a section of the wastewater collection and treatment system in **sabzevar** against the allocation of the determined volume of treated effluent for specific use for a limited and predetermined period through Buyback contract according to the following conditions to a qualified investor.

A- Brief description of the project:

- Subject: completion of a section of the wastewater system in **sabzevar**, including: **WWTP and sewer**
- Concessioner: The **Khorasan razavi** Water and Wastewater Company
- Construction period: **3** years
- Commercial operation period: Financial model to be submitted
- Treatment efficiency: **Surface water discharge**
- Population coverage: **356202** person
- Project site: City **sabzevar** Province **Khorasan razavi**

B- General conditions for investment:

- The investor must be a real or legal entity in possession of acceptable management experience to ensure and allocate the required investment.
- Date, deadline and address to collect the qualification documents: Qualified investors may submit their letter of intent for investment in the plan and collect the qualification documents from **2019/07/01** until the end of office hours on **2019/07/08** from: **mashhad-sadaf-vakil abad blvd- The Khorasan razavi Water and Wastewater Company- the technical support unit (TSU)**
- Address and deadline for submission of the required documents: The completed evaluation forms should be submitted at 12.00 on **tuesday** dated **2019/07/24** to: **The Khorasan razavi Water and Wastewater Company Secretariat**
- Following the review of the evaluation documents submitted by the interested parties, the qualified investors shall be invited for contract negotiations.
- The concessioner has the right to accept or reject the technical or financial proposals of the investors at any stage of the proceedings.

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Tulsi Gabbard is right: Trump’s cabinet is full of ‘chickenhawks’

By Brad Polumbo

WASHINGTONEXAMINER — In a presidential debate with nine candidates and one Beto O’Rourke on stage, it’s hard to stand out. So tonight, Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard leaned on her credentials as a military veteran and her reputation for restrained foreign policy, taking a hard stance on the Trump administration that’s sure to stand out.

She said:
The president and his chickenhawk cabinet led us to the brink of war with Iran. I served in the war in Iraq at the height of the war in 2005, a war that took over 4,000 of my brothers and sisters in uniforms’ lives. The American people need to understand this war would be far more devastating, far more costly than anything we saw in Iraq.



Now, Gabbard’s criticism of President Trump is somewhat unfair. As president, Trump has been fairly dovish, talking us down from the brink of war with North Korea, and making moves toward exiting our seemingly never-ending quagmires and conflicts in Middle Eastern countries such as Syria and Afghanistan.

Yet Gabbard is right to take aim at a few real hawks in Trump’s administration, whom she blasts as “chicken hawks.” Take national security adviser John Bolton, for example, the hawkish adviser who

was a key architect of the failed Iraq War, and has pushed aggressive, dangerously interventionist stances toward North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela, but of course, never served himself. An excerpt from the Los Angeles Times sums this up nicely:

Has anyone noticed that those national policy makers that have had the heavy burden of ordering our military men and women into harm’s way, such as Gens. James N. Mattis and McMaster, are less inclined to threaten military action against our adversaries that those who managed to avoid military service altogether, such as Trump and Bolton?

Gabbard gets this. Some of the congresswoman’s record is questionable, and much of her policy platform is highly objectionable, but at least she has the veteran experience to back up her foreign policy stances. Maybe we should demand that the Trump officials constantly calling for war have to be the first ones to enlist — as Gabbard points out, they might not be so hawkish if it was their life on the line.

Flailing against the world, U.S. may risk losing everything

By Yan Yunming

GLOBALTIMES —The U.S.-launched trade war against China is getting increasingly out of Washington’s hands. The original intention of the US might lie in containing China’s further development through decoupling from China. But the trade war will lead to an unintended consequence that US President Donald Trump may not even have thought of: While the US is decoupling from China, the rest of the world may be considering doing the same to the US.

In an interview with Fox Business Network on Wednesday, Trump claimed, “Almost all countries in this world take tremendous advantage of the United States. It’s unbelievable.” In addition to heaping blame on China, he also slammed Vietnam, Europe and Japan.



Vietnam is “the single worst abuser of everybody.” Europe “treats us worse than China.” Japan is ungrateful because “if Japan is attacked... we will fight at all costs, right? But if we’re attacked... they can watch on a Sony television, the attack.”

Although the US under Trump has pursued its “America First” policy, its arrogance and bias are now going too far, astonishing and unsettling the entire world. To seek its own profits, the country disregards every other nation, including its allies. Wantonly criticizing and cracking down on others is nothing new for the US. Washington may truly see itself as a global overlord. Even if certain countries are still on the same side with the US for interests or other reasons, no one can guarantee their future relations with the self-proclaimed world leader. Who knows whether or not the US will turn against its so-called allies and kick them away? Who can promise that the US won’t treat them in the same way it treats China right now? And most importantly, who dares to continue developing trade with such a rogue state?

The US decoupling from China will vastly intensify other countries’ concerns over Washington’s hegemonism and protectionism. They will realize that supporting and relying on the US will eventually lead to losses of their own. Letting the US dominate global trade and economic order will only throw the world into chaos.

In fact, Europe and Japan are already distancing themselves from the US. In January, the UK, Germany and France set up a payment channel, the Instrument in Support Of Trade Exchanges, with Iran to circumvent US sanctions, an obvious challenge to Washington.

Japan has numerous contradictions with the US, especially in terms of automobile tariffs and agricultural products. On June 17, two Japanese enterprises, Sony and Nintendo, together with Microsoft, issued a joint statement against the US-proposed tariffs on gaming consoles, saying the tariffs would cause “disproportionate harm” to the industry.

Before the trade war, global industrial divisions had raised the development level of newly industrialized countries, and improved living standards in developed economies by lowering prices. But the US has broken the chain for its own benefit and is trying to further disintegrate the world.

The trade war marks the beginning of the US closing its door and resting complacently on its laurels. It will also be the start of the thorough collapse of US global supremacy.

Spaniards determine the fate of the U.S. election?

By Ali Azimi

The president of the United States is very worried about recent polls in Florida. This concern has intensified in recent days. Trump is worried that ethnic minorities in the 2020 presidential election will change the game at his own expense. Here are the latest polls and news about the situation in Trump:

Poll shows Trump, Republicans have not gained Latino support

The poll found that 56 percent of Latinos who voted for Republicans in the past agree that it is hard to support Republican candidates right now.

The same day Republicans launched their “Latinos for Trump” initiative in Florida to try to chip away at Democrats’ support from Latinos, a poll from a major Latino advocacy group held a warning for the GOP.

The poll commissioned by UnidosUS, the nation’s largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, formerly known as National Council of La Raza, found that 56 percent of Latinos who voted for Republicans in the past agree that it is hard to support Republican candidates right now. Of all those polled, 37 percent said they had voted for a Republican in the past.

“The poll shows that support for the GOP is eroding,” Clarissa Mart?nez-de-Castro, UnidosUS deputy vice president for policy and advocacy, said in a press release.

“While the president claims Latino support is growing, that is not based in reality. In fact, he has brought down the overall likability of the entire party,” she said later in a conference call to discuss the poll results.

A poll of Latinos in four states conducted by Telemundo and Maxon-Dixon Strategies Inc. found similar dislike for Trump among registered Latino voters.

In California, 66 percent said they would not vote to re-elect him; in Texas, it was 69 percent, and in New York City, 73 percent. The number was even lower in Florida, at 56 percent. The poll of 400 people in each state has a plus or minus 5 percent margin of error. Florida has become the epicenter of the discussion of Latino voters this week as both parties hold major events seeking the support of the country’s nearly 60 million Hispanics. Democrats hold their first two debates here on Wednesday and Thursday.

“The reality is you see from the numbers the president seems to be holding the margin of support that he captured from Latinos from when he got elected, similar to most of the rest of the electorate,” Mart?nez-de-Castro said.

The Trump campaign rolled out its 2020 campaign pitch to Latinos Tuesday in Miami, with Vice President Mike Pence delivering a starkly different message than Trump delivered when he launched his 2016 campaign. Then, the president



said people “sent” by Mexico were rapists, criminals and drug couriers. Pence said the Latinos for Trump group was “one of the most important coalitions of the 2020 campaign.”

“I promise, from the first day of this administration, President Trump has been fighting for the values that are really synonymous with Hispanic and Latino Americans — hard work, faith, family, freedom, educational choice and the American Dream,” Pence said at the rally.

But fear of a Trump re-election is registering as a potential factor in his campaign effort. The UnidosUS poll shows that 66 percent of Latinos agree that the treatment of immigrants by the president and his allies make them worry that it will get worse in a second Trump term. Adding in people who said they sometimes have such worries put the share at 78 percent. A yet-to-be-determined Democrat nominee was favored 62 percent to 21 percent over Trump, while only half of self-identified Republicans said they would definitely vote for Trump. “Latinos are concerned about issues, but they also have this overarching concern about how Trump is treating Latinos and immigrants,” said Sylvia Manzano, a principal at the polling firm Latino Decisions, which conducted the poll.

Pence touts Latino support for Trump in Miami ahead of Democratic debates

With the unemployment rate among Latinos reaching historic lows at 4.2 percent, the poll conducted by Latino Decisions, which has done polling for Democrats

and progressive groups, shows Republicans do have an opportunity to reach out to the Latino community.

Despite low unemployment among Latinos, results from the poll show that jobs and the economy ranked first in priority among those polled, with 23 percent mentioning that issue as their top concern. However, while jobs and the economy was the top issue, health care was mentioned the most by respondents. Immigration ranked third.

The poll asked Latinos an open-ended question to explain what they meant when they named jobs, health care or other issues that mattered most to them. Manzano said that in those explanations, respondents discussed job insecurity, low wages, having to hold more than one job, cuts in work hours and having to pay more for health care as their work hours are cut. UnidosUS plans to release more in-depth analysis and polling that dives deeper into those issues as the campaign continues, Martinez-de-Castro said.

The poll was conducted before Trump announced on Twitter that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) would begin removing millions of undocumented immigrants from the country. The president later put that on hold for two weeks. While it may not rank as the top issue, immigration “packs a powerful punch” among Latino voters who know “it is used as a proxy to wage anti-Latino sentiment,” Mart?nez-de-Castro said.

The poll found that 76 percent of those polled want a candidate who values diversi-

ty and brings people together. A candidate who “fights for my priorities,” is willing to work with both parties and compromise to get things done finished a close second at 74 percent. Only 2 percent of the respondents thought that the ability to speak Spanish was the most important trait for a president.

Mart?nez-de-Castro said the findings show Latinos want to see solutions and plans, and outreach to Latinos is more than having a website in Spanish.

The poll conducted by Latino Decisions, a Democratic polling firm, surveyed 1,854 eligible Latino voters between June 1-14, and carries of margin of error of plus or minus 2.3 percentage points. Surveys were conducted in English or Spanish, according to the respondent’s choice, and were completed using a blended sample that included live telephone interviews on landlines and cellphones, and online surveys.

also The Hill reported that Joe Biden is the top choice for the Democratic presidential nomination for Hispanic voters in key states, according to four polls released by Telemundo on Monday.

In surveys of Hispanic likely Democratic voters in California, Florida, Texas and the New York City metropolitan area, the former vice president leads the field — polling between 20 and 26 percent. Second place is less clear cut, with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) leading with roughly 10 percent in California, Florida and New York, while former Texas Rep. Beto O’Rourke (D) is in second with 14 percent in his home state.

The plurality of Hispanic voters in all four areas was undecided on their preferred nominee. The poll was open, meaning respondents were not given a list of the two dozen candidates competing for the nomination. Forty-nine percent of Hispanics in California, 47 percent of Hispanics in the New York City area, 40 percent of Hispanics in Texas and 37 percent of Hispanics in Florida said they remain undecided.

Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy polled 400 registered Hispanic voters in each area from June 6-13. The margin of error for the entire sample in each area is plus or minus 5 percentage points, although that figure would be higher for the subgroup of likely Democrats.

Hispanics are expected to make up roughly 13 percent of eligible voters in the 2020 election, according to an analysis by the Pew Research Center, making them the largest ethnic or racial minority group in the electorate.

The release of the surveys come just ahead of the first slate of Democratic primary debates, which will take place in Florida later this week. Hispanics in each of the four areas said they preferred to replace President Trump rather than reelect him.

New sanctions on Iran aim to placate U.S. allies: Analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A senior Italian analyst said the new US sanctions against Iran indicate that President Donald Trump is trying to appease Washington’s allies in the region after he called off a plan to attack Iran after the IRGC shot down a US spy drone over Iran’s territorial waters.

New Sanctions on Iran Aim to Placate US Allies: Analyst

“I think it is a very unwise move. In part, Trump had to re-establish credibility that he is tough on Iran with those, both in the US but especially in the (Persian) Gulf region, who thought his aborted attack last week was sending a dangerous sign of weakness,” Riccardo Alcaro, a senior fellow with the Transatlantic Program of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), told Tasnim.

Riccardo Alcaro was a nonresident fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe. He is an expert in transatlantic political and security relations with a focus on US-European cooperation in Europe’s neighboring regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, Iran and the Persian Gulf, the Sahel, Eastern Europe, and Russia.

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ US President Donald Trump on Monday announced new sanctions on Iran as part of his pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic. They target the office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Iran’s foreign minister and senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). What is your take on the sanctions?

A: I think it is a very unwise move. In part, Trump had to re-establish credibility that he is tough on Iran with those, both in the US but especially in the (Persian) Gulf region, who thought his aborted



attack last week was sending a dangerous sign of weakness. But if that was the only purpose, cyberattacks and other forms of responses could have worked. Sanctioning Iran’s supreme leader is a deliberately insulting move that sends the signal that a deal can only happen if Iran capitulates to US demands - whether Pompeo’s 12 points or Trump’s 1 point (a new nuclear deal), I can’t say. Very difficult for a US president to make compromises with a foreign leader who’s been targeted by US sanctions.

■ Trump and other senior US officials have repeatedly said that Washington is ready to talk to Iran about a new nuclear deal without any preconditions. It seems the Trump administration, by imposing new sanctions on Tehran, is facing political confusion. What do you think? Do you

believe that the administration is closing the path to a diplomatic solution with Iran?

A: The party of maximum pressure - National Security Advisor Bolton and Secretary of State Pompeo in particular - has apparently re-asserted its control over America’s Iran policy. By sanctioning (Ayatollah) Khamenei, Trump is basically undercutting any real possibility of genuine talks over de-escalation measures, let alone negotiation over a new nuclear deal. It seems the administration is trying hard to goad Iran into making further steps that can justify an even more confrontational approach. The problem is, Iran may think that Trump’s aversion to war will eventually force him to back down, and in order to do that Iran may take further steps that the US sees as provocations. It’s a very dangerous game that may end up in conflict.

■ As you know, most of Iran’s economy has been already targeted by earlier US penalties and, in fact, there is not much left for Washington to target. Do you believe that it is just a theatrical move and that sanctions diplomacy no longer works in face of Iran?

A: The one-million-dollar question is indeed: how long can Iran go on under this unprecedented level of pressure? If Iran finds a way to cope with the US financial siege and stabilizes economically, ‘strategic patience’ - meaning waiting for a different US administration while keeping the moral high ground and insisting that the Europeans stick to the JCPOA commitments - emerges again as the most sensible policy option. If, on the contrary, the economic situation becomes unsustainable, Iran may feel compelled to retaliate aggressively, and we’re back on the possible escalation dynamic towards military conflict I’ve just mentioned.

■ The new sanctions came after Iran last week shot down a US spy drone that had ventured into Iran’s airspace. Trump told reporters that the sanctions had nothing to do with the downing of the drone. It seems, however, that the sanctions were imposed in response to the shootdown. What are your thoughts on this?

A: Look, the US had to respond somehow to Iran shooting down a drone, which the US insists was flying in international airspace. Some form of retaliation was always supposed to come. But as I said the new sanctions - particularly the targeting of (Ayatollah) Khamenei - seem to me more a response to those (especially in the (Persian) Gulf region) who have criticized Trump’s decision to abort the attack than anything else.

Arms dealers and lobbyists get rich as Yemen burns

By Barbara Boland

AMERICAN CONSERVATIVES — Chronic human rights violator Saudi Arabia is using American-made weapons against civilians in the fifth-poorest nation in the world, Yemen. And make no mistake: U.S. defense contractors and their lobbyists and supporters in government are getting rich in the process.

“Our role is not to make policy, our role is to comply with it,” John Harris, CEO of defense contractor Raytheon International, said to CNBC in February. But his statement vastly understates the role that defense contractors and lobbyists play in Washington’s halls of power, where their influence on policy directly impacts their bottom lines.

Since 2015, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have waged war against Yemen, killing and injuring thousands of Yemeni civilians. An estimated 90,000 people have been killed, according to one international tracker. By December 2017, the number of cholera cases in Yemen had surged past one million, the largest such outbreak in modern history. An estimated 113,000 children have died since April 2018 from war-related starvation and disease. The United Nations calls the situation in Yemen the largest humanitarian crisis on earth, as over 14 million face starvation.

The majority of the 6,872 Yemeni civilians killed and 10,768 wounded have been victims of Saudi-led coalition airstrikes, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Nearly 90 coalition airstrikes have hit homes, schools, markets, hospitals, and mosques since 2015, according to Human Rights Watch. In 2018, the coalition bombed a wedding, killing 22 people, including eight children. Another strike hit a bus, killing at least 26 children.

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American-origin munitions produced by companies like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Dynamics, and Raytheon were identified at the site of over two dozen attacks throughout Yemen. Indeed, the United States is the single largest arms supplier to the Middle East and has been for decades, according to a report by the Congressional Research Service.

From 2014 to 2018, the United States supplied 68 percent of Saudi Arabia’s arms imports, 64 percent of the UAE’s imports, and 65 percent of Qatar’s imports. Some of this weaponry was subsequently stolen or sold to al-Qaeda linked groups in the Arabian Peninsula, where they could be used against the U.S. military, according to reports.

The Saudi use of U.S.-made jets, bombs, and missiles against Yemeni civilian centers constitutes a war crime. It was an American laser-guided MK-82 bomb that killed the children on the bus; Raytheon’s technology killed the 22 people attending the wedding in 2018 as well as a family traveling in their car; and another American-made MK-82 bomb ended the lives of at least 80 men, women, and children in a Yemeni marketplace in March 2016.

Yet American defense contractors con-



tinue to spend millions of dollars to lobby Washington to maintain the flow of arms to these countries.

Pentagon Chief Shanahan Steps Down, Former Raytheon Executive Steps Up

Cronyism in Action: Government’s Cozy Ties to Big Tech and Big War

“Companies like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, and other defense contractors see countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE as huge potential markets,” Stephen Miles, director of Win Without War, told TAC. “They see them as massive opportunities to make a lot of money; that’s why they’re investing billions and billions of dollars. This is a huge revenue stream to these companies.”

Boeing, Raytheon, and General Dynamics have all highlighted business with Saudi Arabia in their shareholder reports.

“Operations and maintenance have become a very profitable niche market for U.S. corporations,” said Richard Aboulafia, a vice president at Teal Group. He added that defense contractors can make as much as 150 percent more profit off of operations and maintenance than from the original arms sale. U.S. weapons supply 57 percent of the military aircraft used by the Royal Saudi Air Force, and mechanics and technicians hired by American companies repair and maintain their fighter jets and helicopters.

In 2018 alone, the United States made \$4.5 billion worth of arms deals to Saudi Arabia and \$1.2 billion to the United Arab Emirates, a report by William Hartung and Christina Arabia found.

From the report: “Lockheed Martin...was involved in deals worth \$25 billion; Boeing, \$7.1 billion in deals; Raytheon, \$5.5 billion in deals; Northrop Grumman had one deal worth \$2.5 billion; and BAE systems...had a \$1.3 billion deal.”

“Because of the nature of U.S. arms control law, most of these sales have to get government approval, and we’ve absolutely seen lobbyists weighing in heavily on this,” Miles said. “The last time I saw the numbers, the arms industry had nearly 1,000 registered lobbyists. They’re not on the Hill lobbying Congress about how many schools we should open next year. They’re lobbying for defense contractors. The past 18 years of endless wars have been incredibly lucrative for the arms

industry, and they have a vested industry in seeing these wars continue, and not curtailing the cash cow that...has been for them.”

The defense industry spent \$125 million on lobbying in 2018. Of that, Boeing spent \$15 million on lobbyists, Lockheed Martin spent \$13.2 million, General Dynamics \$11.9 million, and Raytheon \$4.4 million, according to the Lobbying Disclosure Act website.

Writes Ben Freeman:

According to a new report...firms registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act have reported receiving more than \$40 million from Saudi Arabia in 2017 and 2018. Saudi lobbyists and public relations professionals have contacted Congress, the executive branch, media outlets and think tanks more than 4,000 times. Much of this work has been focused on ensuring that sales of U.S. arms to Saudi Arabia continue unabated and blocking congressional actions that would end U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

Lobbyists, lawyers and public relations firms working for the Saudis have also reported doling out more than \$4.5 million in campaign contributions in the past two years, including at least \$6,000 to Trump. In many cases, these contributions have gone to members of Congress they’ve contacted regarding the Yemen war. In fact, some contributions have gone to members of Congress on the exact same day they were contacted by Saudi lobbyists, and some were made to key members just before, and even on the day of, important Yemen votes.

Over a dozen lobbying firms employed by defense contractors have also been working on behalf of the Saudi or Emiratis, efficiently lobbying for both the arms buyers and sellers in one fell swoop. One of these lobbying firms, the McKeon Group, led by former Republican congressman and chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Howard McKeon, represents both Saudi Arabia and the American defense contractors Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Orbital ATK, MBDA, and L3 Technologies. Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman are the biggest suppliers of arms to Saudi Arabia. In 2018, the McKeon Group took \$1,697,000 from 10 defense contractors “to, among other ob-

jectives, continue the flow of arms to Saudi Arabia,” reports National Memo.

Freeman details multiple examples where lobbyists working on behalf of the Saudis met with a senator’s staff and then made a substantial contribution to that senator’s campaign within days of a key vote to keep the United States in the Yemen war. American Defense International (ADI) represents the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia’s coalition partner in the war against Yemen, as well as several American defense contractors, including General Dynamics, Northrup Grumman, Raytheon, L3 Technologies, and General Atomics.

Not to be outdone by the McKeon Group, ADI’s lobbyists have also aggressively pursued possible swing votes in the U.S. Senate for the hefty sum of \$45,000 a month, paid for by the UAE. ADI lobbyists discussed the “situation in Yemen” and the “Paveway sale to the UAE,” the same bomb used in the deadly wedding strike, with the office of Senator Martin Heinrich, a member of the Armed Services Committee, according to FARA reports. ADI’s lobbyists also met with Congressman Steve Scalise’s legislative director to advise his office to vote against the congressional resolution on Yemen. For their lobbying, Raytheon paid ADI \$120,000 in 2018.

In addition to the overt influence exercised by lobbyists for the defense industry, many former arms industry executives are embedded in influential posts throughout the Trump administration: from former Airbus, Huntington Ingalls, and Raytheon lobbyist Charles Faulkner at the State Department, who pushed Mike Pompeo to support arms sales in the Yemen war; to former Boeing executive and erstwhile head of the Department of Defense Patrick Shanahan; to his interim replacement Mark Esper, secretary of the Army and another former lobbyist for Raytheon.

The war in Yemen has been good for American defense contractors’ bottom lines. Since the conflict began, General Dynamics’ stock price has risen from about \$135 to \$169 per share, Raytheon’s from about \$108 to more than \$180, and Boeing’s from about \$150 to \$360, according to In These Times. Their analysis found that those four companies have had at least \$30.1 billion in Saudi military contracts approved by the State Department over the last 10 years.

In April, President Donald Trump vetoed a resolution that would have ended American support for the Saudi-UAE coalition war against Yemen. Such efforts have failed to meet the 60-vote veto-proof threshold needed in the Senate.

There are a few senators who didn’t vote for the War Powers resolution “that will probably vote for the Raytheon sales,” Brittany Benowitz, a lawyer and former adviser to a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told TAC. “I think you’ll continue to see horrific bombings and as the famine rages on, people will start to ask, ‘Why are we a part of this war?’ Unfortunately, I don’t think that will start to happen anytime soon.”

On Trump’s economic terrorism against Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) — President Donald Trump signed an executive order imposing what he called “hard-hitting” new sanctions on Iran in response to the downing of an unmanned US drone in the Strait of Hormuz by the Islamic Republic.

The new sanctions deny Iran’s Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and his office access to key financial resources. As foolish as it may seem, in addition to eight military leaders, the US is also sanctioning Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The stated agenda is to ratchet up pressure on Tehran “until the regime abandons its dangerous activities including its nuclear ambitions.” Other goals include: to contain Iran’s influence in the region and curtail its ability to finance national development plans by blocking its access to international technology and market.

As is often the case, the Trump regime’s bullying is a deep part of American culture. This is especially true of the political and media establishments, who present themselves as being civil and savior, and anything but bullies. The inconvenient truth is that bullying is embedded in American culture, governing elites and most powerful institutions: the military, the corporation, and the state. They all live in a society that bullies the world through militarized capitalism. And they never bother to play by international rules and protocols.

Likewise, the war-party establishment embraces a global militarism that threatens and bullies all nations opposing US interests. Although Trump preaches many universal values with a pledge to “make Iran great again,” he is still explicit in his embrace of Iranophobia and economic terrorism.

In the prevailing environment, the international civil society and independent nations don’t have to abide by Washington’s self-serving rules and bullying tactics, including its addiction to sanctions. Sovereign nations don’t have to embrace



the bullying code of the US military either. Quite the opposite, the world community should hold the US to account for its illegal move to impose new sanctions on Tehran.

Nonetheless, the 45th president of the United States faced a key Iran-related decision when he rose to power: To give diplomacy and multilateralism a chance or go beyond the bounds of international law, view the counterproductive sanctions as a tool of power and influence, and listen to Iran hawks whose stated agenda is to provoke Iran, alienate Washington’s NATO allies, and escalate tensions without any clear idea of the end. And everything shows that he has always been after the second line of policy.

Trump’s executive order has nothing to do with “containing Iran” and everything to do with power play and keeping a military footprint in the region. The perverse essence of this gambit is based on a cynical miscalculation meant to prolong the economic war and protect Washington’s illicit interests. It is no surprise, then, that this will only get much uglier.


The World Court has even hit the US for not ensuring that their sanctions aren’t

blocking food and drugs into Iran. This too is a subject that has been a big deal in recent years, with US sanctions blocking even aid during recent the flooding in Iran. And you may not believe it but President Obama also did the same as he also never allowed supply of medicine to Iran through banking sanctions.

However, the signs are there that the US is still playing the victim card to save its hegemony. It is obvious that Trump doesn’t want to take responsibility (a classic sign of victim behavior) for the latest saga - a US drone shot down in the Strait of Hormuz. He has trouble accepting that the US Navy has played a role in this. Instead, he holds onto his grudges, points the finger at Iran, and ignores the US Navy’s undeniable role in perpetuating the problem.

Under current geopolitical environment, the Trumpsters should avoid thinking they are perfect and that they can prolong their unipolar moment, issue diktats to Iran, and dismiss the multipolar reality they live in. This arrogance and narcissism closes them off from having trustworthy and cooperative relationship even with their own NATO allies.

At any rate, Iran has long been in full compliance with the nuclear deal and diplomacy and this is the United States that is pushing the whole world into chaos and tension to appease Israel and warmongers in Washington and earn billions more through arms sales to the Saudis and some other dictatorial monarchies in the Arab world. Those who wish to deescalate the situation should pressure the US to show respect for its obligations under the nuclear agreement and act responsibly in the international environment rather than requesting Iran, the real victim, to unilaterally continue provoking the United States and its western allies with not just merits of the nuclear deal, but even more concessions and surrender to the US bullying.

First Announcement (Call for public tender (First/Second publish) One -Stages tender			
 N.I.O.C 1398.1874		Subject of Tender: Parts For Caterpillar Equipment National Iranian Drilling Company	
Tender descriptions:			
The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,205,454	Tender No. :FP/09-98/033 Indent No.:01-27-9747005	11,198,049,580
Qualitative evaluation of tenderers			
Method	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ established announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject (good's supply). 1- Applicants who have more than 4 in process contracts with NIDC are not allowed to participate in this tender. Applicants which have more than 2 in process contracts with NIDC in similar subject (exclusively same subject) are not allowed to participate in another tender		
Purchasing & Submitting			
Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.		
Distribution Place	Hall No.113, 11 th floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN – Tel : 061 34148601		
Submitting Method	• Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Avoid any payment other than the bank method (in person) and also provide a deposit. • Submitting formal Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.		
Closing date	Days after the last time of Purchasing 35		
Documents Receiving Method	Address	Hall No. 107, 11 th floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: + 98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569	
Tender Guarantee			
Value of guarantee	560,000,000 Rial/ 11,910 Euro		
Type of guarantee	✓--Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓--Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran		
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Apollo 11 tapes bought for \$218 may sell for millions after nearly being lost

When Gary George bought a truckload of videotapes for \$218 from a US government surplus auction more than 40 years ago, he planned to sell them to television stations – to record over.

Fortunately, he decided to hold on to the three tapes labelled “Apollo 11 EVA”, which have since been identified as the only surviving original recording of the first moon landing, in 1969.

Now the tapes – which include Neil Armstrong’s famous words “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for

mankind” – are to go on sale in July at Sotheby’s in New York, where they are expected to fetch as much as \$2m.

The collection also includes footage of Buzz Aldrin walking in minimal lunar gravity, planting the US flag on the moon, collecting samples. It also shows the crew’s call with Richard Nixon.

George, now 65, was astonished. “I had no idea there was anything of value on them,” the retired mechanical engineer from Las Vegas told Reuters. “I was selling them to TV stations just to record over.”



George thinks he sold eight reels to television stations for \$50 each. It was his father who spotted the three NASA labelled reels.

“He was really into the space program and he said, ‘I think I’d hang on to those. They might be valuable someday. So, for that very reason, I pulled them out and hauled them around the country for the next 43 years. That’s how come they survived.’”

In 2006, NASA admitted that they could not find the original video recordings of

the landing. It was not until two years later, when George was on holiday with a friend who worked at NASA, that he found out they were looking for them.

“Quite frankly, I was sitting at the table drinking a beer and I said, ‘Well, damn, I have those,’” said George.

He did not have the equipment to watch the tapes, but after he started speaking to NASA about handing them over he was able to see the footage for the first time in a special studio in California.

(Source: The Guardian)

“Extinct” creatures found alive in “lost city” deep within Honduras rainforest

A team of scientists have discovered an ecosystem filled with rare and endangered species, including species that were thought to be extinct, in a “lost city” deep within a rainforest in Honduras.

The conservation team spent three weeks exploring an ancient settlement, known as the “Lost City of the Monkey God” or “White City”, in the Mosquitia rainforest and found a diverse hub of wildlife, including hundreds of species of butterflies, bats and reptiles.

Scientists also rediscovered three species that were thought to be no longer living in Honduras: the pale-faced bat, the False Tree Coral Snake and a tiger beetle which had only been recorded in Nicaragua and was believed to be extinct.

Trond Larsen, the director of Conservation International’s Rapid Assessment Programme (RAP), said they were “shocked” to discover such a rich environment of rare species.

“The ‘White City’ is one of the few areas remaining in Central America where ecological and evolutionary processes remain intact,” he added.

The RAP also discovered 22 species that have never been recorded in Honduras before, such as the endangered Great Green Macaw, and a live bearing fish that researchers believe is new to science.

In total, scientists discovered 246 species of butterflies



and moths, 30 species of bats, and 57 species of amphibians and reptiles.

Mr Larsen said the diversity of the area’s wildlife made it a high priority for conservation.

“One of the main reasons we found such high species richness and abundance of threatened and wide-ranging species (e.g., peccaries) is that the forests around the White City remain pristine, unlike much of the region,” he said.

“This makes the area a high conservation priority for

maintaining the broader landscape connectivity that is essential for the long-term persistence of biodiversity through Central America.”

Explorers have searched for decades to find the White City, which is thought to have been home to an ancient civilization in the pre-Columbian era.

Due to the lack of infrastructure in the region, scientists had to be flown in by helicopter and guarded by armed soldiers to protect them from drug traffickers and predators in the area.

Mr Larsen said the biggest threat to the region was illegal deforestation for cattle ranching, despite the “lost city” being officially protected by Honduras’ president in 2015.

Dr John Polisar, a member of the RAP expedition team, called for strong protection to allow the newly-discovered wildlife to thrive.

“We have been doing field work in the indigenous territories of La Moskitia for 14 years, and this site stood out as being simply gorgeous,” he said.

“Because of its presently intact forests and fauna the area is of exceptionally high conservation value. It merits energetic and vigilant protection so its beauty and wildlife persist into the future.”

(Source: The Independent)

Scientists teleport information inside a diamond



Scientists have successfully teleported quantum information inside a diamond. The breakthrough could provide a boost to quantum computing technologies.

“Quantum teleportation permits the transfer of quantum information into an otherwise inaccessible space,” Hideo Kosaka, a professor of engineering at Yokohama National University in Japan, said in a news release. “It also permits the transfer of information into a quantum memory without revealing or destroying the stored quantum information.”

Diamonds offer the ideal setting for quantum teleportation. A collection of individually contained but linked carbon atoms inside the diamond provide the “inaccessible space.”

The carbon atom is a study in atomic symmetry, boasting a nucleus of six protons and six neutrons. Six electrons orbit the balanced nucleus. Inside a diamond, the carbon atoms form a rigidly structured lattice.

But diamonds aren’t perfect. All diamonds have small defects. Often, a nitrogen atom holds court in one of the two vacancies on either side of one of the carbon atoms -- a defect known as a nitrogen-vacancy center. The nucleus of the nitrogen atom, which is surrounded by carbon atoms, creates what is known as a nanomagnet.

Scientists take advantage of diamond defects to produce unique electromagnetic phenomena.

When researchers supplied a wire to the surface of the diamond and ran a microwave

and a radio wave through it, they were able to create an oscillating magnetic field around the outside of the diamond, creating ideal conditions for the quantum teleportation.

Scientists used the microwave and radio wave frequencies to trigger an entanglement between an electron anchored to the nanomagnet and the spinning nucleus of the adjacent carbon atom. The magnetic field of the nanomagnet causes the electron’s spin to break down and become vulnerable to entanglement. During entanglement, the physical characteristics of the individual atomic components become blurred beyond recognition.

Researchers supplied the entanglement with a polarized photon carrying quantum information. When the electron absorbs the photon, the polarization state of the photon is transferred to the carbon atom. The entangled electron makes the teleportation of quantum information possible.

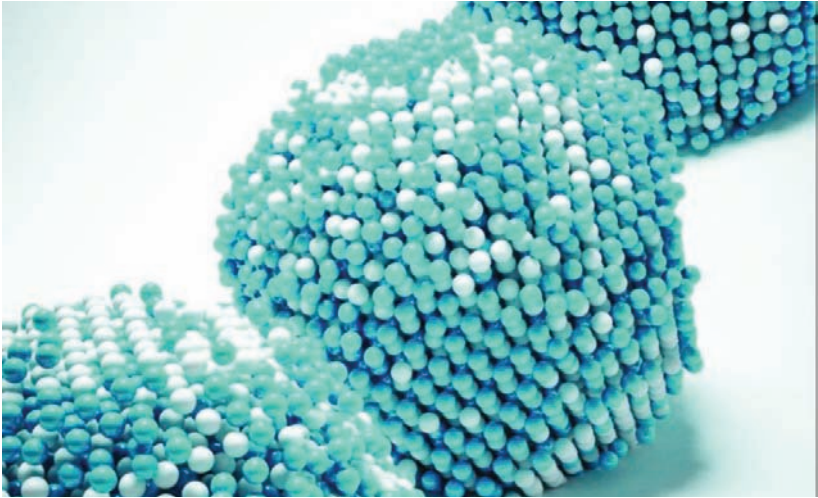
In effect, the carbon atom memorizes the photon’s polarization, enabling not only the transfer, but also the storage, of quantum information.

Kosaka and his colleagues described their breakthrough in a paper published Friday in the journal Communications Physics.

“The success of the photon storage in the other node establishes the entanglement between two adjacent nodes,” Kosaka said. “Our ultimate goal is to realize scalable quantum repeaters for long-haul quantum communications and distributed quantum computers for large-scale quantum computation and metrology.”

(Source: UPI)

Scientists capture atomic motion in four dimensions for the first time



Scientists have for the first time captured atomic nucleation in 4D, the movement of atoms across space and time.

Nucleation is the coalescence of atoms and molecules that happens as matter changes states -- during freezing, melting or evaporation. Using a new high-tech imaging technique, scientists were able observe the movement of atoms during nucleation in four dimensions.

“This is truly a groundbreaking experiment -- we not only locate and identify individual atoms with high precision, but also monitor their motion in 4D for the first time,” Jianwei “John” Miao, professor of physics and astronomy at UCLA, said in a news release.

Using a powerful electron microscope at Berkeley Lab’s Molecular Foundry, researchers deployed an imaging technique called “atomic electron tomography.” As a molecular sample spins, the microscope captures 3D images of the atoms inside the sample.

For their experiments, scientists used the novel imaging technology to observe iron-platinum alloy nanoparticles as they were heated to 968 degrees Fahrenheit, a temperature that triggers a transition between two different solid phases. Researchers snapped 3D images after 9 minutes, 16 minutes and 26 minutes.

Before heating, the alloy’s internal structure is more haphazard. Images of the atomic movements showed the

material’s atomic structure takes on a more rigid pattern, with alternating layers of iron and platinum atoms, after being heated.

Scientists were able to track the movements of the same 33 nuclei, some containing as few as 13 atoms, at 9 minutes, 16 minutes and 26 minutes.

Until now, scientists assumed nuclei were relatively round and boasted a sharp boundary, but the new imaging breakthrough showed nuclei formed irregular shapes. Images showed each nuclei was formed by a collection of atoms that had adopted the structure of the new phase. However, the atoms closer to the center of the nuclei were more disorganized than the atoms farther away.

During the phase transition, scientists observed nuclei shrinking, dividing, merging and even disappearing. Previous theories of nucleation posited that nuclei, once formed, can only get bigger and bigger.

“Nucleation is basically an unsolved problem in many fields,” said Peter Ercius, a staff scientist at the Molecular Foundry. “Once you can image something, you can start to think about how to control it.”

The new findings -- published this week in the journal Nature -- may force scientists to rethink the atomic models describing a variety of chemical and physical phenomena.

(Source: UPI)

Climate impacts of airplane contrails could triple by 2050

Under certain conditions, airplane contrails become contrail cirrus, icy clouds that trap the sun’s heat and warms the planet. New research suggests the climate impact of airplane contrails, largely ignored until now, could triple by 2050.

When contrails become clouds, they throw off the balance of Earth’s radiation budget, triggering radiative forcing, whereby more of the sun’s energy is absorbed by Earth’s atmosphere and less is radiated back into space.

Air traffic accounted for 5 percent of anthropogenic radiative forcing in 2005. Most of the 5 percent was caused by contrail cirrus clouds.

“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 when setting up emission trading systems or schemes like the Corsia agreement,” Lisa Bock, a researcher at DLR, the German Aerospace Center, said in a news release.

Researchers expect contrail cirrus clouds to proliferate as air traffic increases. Air traffic is predicted to quadruple by 2050. Air travel routes are expected to shift to higher altitudes, where conditions are more conducive to the formation of contrail cirrus.

The warming encouraged by contrail cirrus clouds will be most pronounced across Europe and North America, according to the new study, published this week in the journal Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics.

“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,” Bock said. “But it’s clear they warm the atmosphere.”

Researchers suggest the best way to reduce the climate impact of airplane contrails is for regulators to push for cleaner aircraft emissions. A reduction in the number of soot particles emitted by aircraft engines would lead to fewer seeded ice crystals and smaller contrail cirrus clouds. But scientists warn that even a 90 percent reduction in soot particles wouldn’t entirely prevent the warming effects of contrail cirrus clouds.

(Source: UPI)

Astronomers find a pair of galaxy clusters about to collide

Astronomers have discovered a pair galaxy clusters on the verge of collision.

Galaxy clusters are the largest cosmic structures organized by gravity. These three-dimensional webs of galaxies, numbering in the thousands, contain billions and billions of stars.

Just as galaxies collide to form larger galaxies, clusters can collide and merge. But the latest study marks the first time scientists have spotted a pair of clusters just prior to collision.

The study of large-scale cosmic mergers and the resulting shocks can help scientists better understand the structural evolution of the universe.

Collisions between galaxy clusters take billions of years. Previously, astronomers have previously documented mid-collision and post-collision galaxy-cluster mergers. Pre-collision formations last between 300 million and 600 million years, a short amount of cosmic time, making them harder to find.

“X-ray and radio images of these clusters show the first clear evidence for this type of merger shock,” Lijl Gu, a cosmologist at RIKEN, a large scientific research institute in Japan, said in a news release.

“The shock created a hot belt region of 100-million-degree gas between the clusters, which is expected to extend up to, or even go beyond the boundary of the giant clusters,” Gu said. “Therefore, the observed shock has a huge impact on the evolution of galaxy clusters and large-scale structures.”

Researchers described their discovery this week in the journal Nature Astronomy.

Scientists plan to continue imaging the galaxy-cluster merger and use their observations to build a comprehensive model of the evolution of cluster mergers.

“Radio observations at very low frequencies provide a unique view on these clusters, in this case pinpointing the locations of old radio jets that light up again due to the merger,” said Huib Intema, scientist at International Center for Radio Astronomy Research in Australia. “Mapping out the whole radio sky will inevitably lead to the discovery of even more of these systems. This will help us to complete our understanding of the role of merger shocks in the formation of the largest structures in the universe.”

(Source: UPI)

Soyuz capsule safely returns three space station crew members to Earth

Two astronauts and a cosmonaut are back on Earth after 204 days aboard the International Space Station. The trio touched down inside the Russian-built Soyuz capsule.

NASA astronaut Anne McClain, David Saint-Jacques of the Canadian Space Agency and Oleg Kononenko of the Russian space agency Roscosmos landed in Kazakhstan at 10:47 p.m. ET last week.

McClain, Saint-Jacques and Kononenko orbited Earth 3,264 times during their 204-day stay aboard ISS. During their seven-month tour, the Expedition 59 crew members conducted hundreds of scientific experiments in a variety of fields and executed a handful of spacewalks.

During two spacewalks, McClain helped swap out old batteries for new ones and aided the comprehensive upgrade of the space station’s power system. During one of her spacewalks, McClain was joined by Saint-Jacques, who became only the sixth Canadian to venture outside the space station.

Of the three, Kononenko was the veteran. As such, he served as commander of Expedition 59 and the return Soyuz mission.

“Kononenko, on his fourth mission, conducted two spacewalks totaling 13 hours and 46 minutes, bringing his career total to 32 hours and 13 minutes spread over five spacewalks,” NASA reported in a blog update.

As soon as the departing trio’s ride left the space station’s docking port, Expedition 60 commenced inside ISS. For now, the space station is occupied by only Nick Hague and Christina Koch of NASA, who will serve as flight engineers, and Alexey Ovchinnikov of Roscosmos, the new station commander.

The space station’s population will double in a month. The current threesome will be joined by Andrew Morgan of NASA, Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency and Alexander Skvortsov of Roscosmos on July 20.

(Source: UPI)

208 museums set up since August 2013 in Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN**— A total of 208 museums have been established in Iran since President Hassan Rouhani assumed office on August 3, 2013, CHTN reported.



As of 1979, which marks the victory of the Islamic Revolution, till (August) 2013, a total of 429 museums have been established while 208 museums have been set up from August 2013 up to the present, said Mohammadreza Kargar who presides over Museums and Historical Moveable Properties Office of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

Iran's first museum opened in [the Iranian calendar year] 1313 (1934-1935) and only 43 museums were built until 1379 (2000-2001), the official added.

Some 25 million people paid visits to Iran's heritage museums and historical sites over the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), according to data compiled by the CHHTO.

For the time being, there are 129 private museums across Iran, which are dedicated to cultural heritage, Kargar said last September, adding some three million historical objects are being kept in the CHHTO-affiliated museums.

Acropolis opens ancient neighborhood in Greece

Greece's Acropolis Museum has opened an excavation area under its modern-day building. For the first time, visitors will be able to walk through an ancient Athenian neighborhood that survived from Classical to Byzantine times.

The museum's base rests on heavy pillars. Below it is a neighborhood of excavated homes, workshops, baths and streets. Most of the remains were found when the museum was being built.

The Acropolis Museum director, Dimitris Pantermalis, recently spoke about the newly opened area with Reuters reporters. "Visitors can come down and see ancient ruins of the city of Athens, especially in the area south of the Acropolis" he said.

Visitors will see luxurious ancient houses, some of which included rooms where bathers could warm up before entering heated pools.

"It was fascinating, an amazing experience," said Carol Hoover, a recent visitor from the American state of Colorado. He said he was most interested in the special floor design and the complex drainage system of ancient Greece.

The Acropolis Museum has brought in more than 14 million visitors since it opened doors 10 years ago.

The museum sits at the edge of the Acropolis hill in Athens. Inside are many sculptures created in ancient Greece, including works from one of the most influential buildings in Western civilization, the Parthenon.

But one thing is missing.

Greece has repeatedly called on Britain to return the Parthenon marbles, or, as they are often called, the Elgin Marbles. The sculptures were taken from the Parthenon by Thomas Bruce, the Seventh Earl of Elgin, in the early 19th century. The Elgin Marbles are on display at the British Museum in London.

Greece has asked for their return for almost 200 years. (Source: VOA)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape

A World Heritage, the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape demonstrates the rise and fall of the first indigenous kingdom in Southern Africa between 900 CE and 1,300.

Mapungubwe is set hard against the northern border of South Africa, joining Zimbabwe and Botswana. It is an open, expansive savannah landscape at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers.



The core area covers nearly 30,000 ha and is supported by a suggested buffer zone of around 100,000 ha. Mapungubwe's position at the crossing of the north/south and east/west routes in southern Africa also enabled it to control trade, through the East African ports to India and China, and throughout southern Africa.

From its hinterland it harvested gold and ivory - commodities in scarce supply elsewhere - and this brought it great wealth as displayed through imports such as Chinese porcelain and Persian glass beads.

Mapungubwe's demise was brought about by climatic change. During its final two millennia, periods of warmer and wetter conditions suitable for agriculture in the Limpopo/Shashe valley were interspersed with cooler and drier pulses. When rainfall decreased after 1300 CE, the land could no longer sustain a high population using traditional farming methods, and the inhabitants were obliged to disperse. Mapungubwe's position as a power base shifted north to Great Zimbabwe and, later, Khami.

The remains of this famous kingdom, when viewed against the present day fauna and flora create an impressive cultural landscape of universal significance.

(Source: UNESCO)

Birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi^(AS) named national heritage

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Celebration of the birth anniversary of the twelfth and last Shia Imam, Imam Mahdi (AS), at Jamkaran Mosque in the central city of Qom, has been added to the national heritage list, the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization announced on Friday.

The event, widely known as Jashn-e Nimeh Sha'ban in the country, is marked by millions of Shia Muslims around the world, including Iran. Iranians bedeck the streets, hang lights around villages, towns, and cities, attend festive events at mosques and religious centers, and distribute votive refreshments.

"Jashn-e Nimeh Sha'ban which is annually being celebrated in at Jamkaran Mosque has been registered on the national heritage

list," Qom province's tourism chief Hamid Yazdani said, ISNA reported.

Many gather around the shrine of the Eighth Shia Imam, Imam Reza (AS), in the Iranian city of Mashhad, to mark the birth anniversary. The occasion is one of the most important ones among Shia Muslims, who have a strong devotion to the Imam who was born on the 15th day of the month of Sha'ban on the lunar calendar around 1,200 years ago.

He is known as the Savior among Shias, who believe he will reappear on earth as per divine decree, establishing peace and ridding the world of injustice, discrimination, and other instances of evil. Shias believe that Imam's reemergence will take place on a Friday.



Iranians celebrate the birth anniversary of the twelfth and last Shia Imam, Imam Mahdi (AS), at Jamkaran Mosque in the central city of Qom, on April 21, 2019.

Historical backgrounds suit Tabriz to become child-friendly

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tabriz enjoys historical backgrounds to be turned into a child-friendly city, Iraj Shahin Baher, the mayor of the northwestern Iranian city, said on Friday, Mehr reported.

"Tabriz enjoys necessary bedrocks in historical terms for materializing objectives of such proposal," he said, welcoming a UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) proposal.

The official made the remarks in a specialized meeting to study opportunities of joining Tabriz to the initiation of child-friendly cities in the presence of UNICEF representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying "[The notion of being a] child-friendly city is deep rooted in this land and territory."

Tabriz urban management system has already tried to construct welfare amenities that can be delightful for



A view of Elgoli Park, a popular travel destination in Tabriz

children and young adults, the mayor added.

Suitable welfare amenities should be provided for children in order to have fun without presence of their parents, he said, adding, "We believe that future and development of cities depend on their children, so that investment should be made as of the earliest stage of childhood with a focus on educating and training children."

Capital of East Azarbaijan province, Tabriz, which is well-soaked in history and culture for millennia, embraces several historical and religious sites, including Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few.

Tabriz was named the capital of Islamic tourism for 2018 by the vote of the inter-governmental Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2015.

Museum dedicated to meteorites to open in Tehran



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A major museum, specialized for meteorites, is scheduled to be opened to the public on July 2 at Tehran's Azadi Tower (Borj-e Azadi).

A gathering of geoscientists, academia and cultural officials will attend the opening ceremony, which according to organizers, would be the first and the largest meteorite museum in the country, IRNA reported.

Over 1200 pieces will be put on show at the exhibit. Many of the meteorites have been collected by Hojjat Kamali, who is a record holder spotter, collector and museum owner of such outer space rocks.

The exhibition will display meteorites that

have hit the sprawling Lut Desert and other parts of the country over time.

The scorching Lut Desert is now being considered to be one of the top areas in the world for finding meteorites, thanks to its unique parameters. In recent years, significant finds have been made, with the efforts of national and international teams of researchers.

Meteorites, whether more iron-rich or "stony," are generally silvery or black, and therefore stand out in two major environments — sandy deserts, or icy realms. According to experts, the dry conditions of a desert help to preserve the space rocks in as original as condition as possible.

Ancient palace emerges from drought-hit Iraq reservoir

A 3,400-year-old palace has emerged from a reservoir in the Kurdistan region of Iraq after water levels dropped because of drought.

The discovery of the ruins in the Mosul Dam reservoir on the banks of the Tigris River inspired a spontaneous archeological dig that will improve understanding of the Mittani Empire, one of the least-researched empires of the Ancient Near East, the Kurdish-German team of researchers said in a press release.

"The find is one of the most important archaeological discoveries in the region in recent decades," Kurdish archaeologist Hasan Ahmed Qasim said in a press release.

The palace would have originally stood just 65 feet from the river on an elevated terrace. A terrace wall of mud bricks was later added to stabilize the building, adding to the imposing architecture.

Ivana Puljiz, an archaeologist from the University of Tübingen's Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies, describes the palace, known as Kemune, as a carefully designed building with mud-brick walls up to two meters (6.6 feet) thick.

Some of the walls are more than two meters high, and various rooms have plastered walls, she added.

The team also found wall paintings in shades of red and



Clay tablets found at the site have been sent to Germany for translation.

blue, which were probably a common feature of palaces at the time but have rarely been found preserved.

"Discovering wall paintings in Kemune is an archaeological sensation," she said in a press release.

"Kemune is only the second site in the region where wall paintings of the Mittani period have been discovered," Puljiz told CNN in an email.

Ten clay tablets covered in cuneiform, an ancient system

of writing, were also discovered. High-resolution photos of the texts have been sent to Germany for translation.

"From the texts we hope to gain information on the inner structure of the Mittani empire, its economic organisation, and the relationship of the Mittani capital with the administrative centers in the neighboring regions," Puljiz told CNN.

Archeologists first became aware of the site in 2010 when water levels in the reservoir were low, but this is the first time they have been able to excavate.

However, the site was submerged shortly after the dig, Puljiz said, adding: "It is unclear when it will emerge again."

Qasim also worked on another project with the University of Tübingen, uncovering a Bronze Age city in northern Iraq in 2016.

The team unearthed the city, which lies beneath what is now the small village of Bassetki in the autonomous region of Kurdistan, close to territory that was held by ISIS.

Days after the dig was completed, Iraqi security forces began their push to take Mosul back from ISIS.

Measuring a kilometer in length and 500 meters across (about 1,000 yards by roughly 550 yards), the ancient urban area features grand houses, a palace, an extensive road network and a cemetery.

(Source: CNN)

People are spending about \$2,000 to visit an uninhabitable Scottish island for 20 minutes

How would you like to visit a super tiny, uninhabitable island in Scotland, for roughly 20 minutes, for about \$2,000?

In early May 2020, 18 tourists and around seven crew members will board a 1918 tall ship to be the first public tour group to visit Rockall, a volcanic remnant 260 miles to the west of Scotland's Outer Hebrides, The Daily Mail reported.

To organize the trip, Kraken Travel teamed up with Lupine Travel, a tour company that takes travelers to "hard-to-visit and remote places," including North Korea, Chernobyl, and Iran.

Within one week of announcing the itinerary, Lupine Travel said the £1,595 trip was completely booked, The Scotsman reported. "We expected it to be popular but not as popular as it has been," said tour director James Finnerty.

Finnerty believes "this is the first time

tourists have publicly been able to book this trip." Previously, interested adventurers could only reach the islet by private boat or helicopter. Less than 200 people have reportedly visited Rockall in total, the last time the rock saw any guests was in 2016. Nick Hancock, a Scottish adventurer who previously broke records in 2014 after spending 43 days on Rockall, will be leading the expedition.

"It is a pretty barren place and you can't really move around too much," Hancock told The Sunday Post. The main ledge is about the size of a large single bed. There is another flat area on the summit which is about half that size.

"The main issue is not being able to walk around too much and, if there hasn't been a storm, there is usually a lot of bird guano, which makes it slippery and very smelly," he said. "Then with the sea and winds, it can be a pretty bleak and cold place."



The disclaimer on Kraken Travel's website warns that there will not be a refund should the expedition fail.

According to The Scotsman, travelers will don wetsuits, boots, and floatation devices before climbing onto Rockall. Once they've landed, they will get to spend between 15 to 20 minutes on the islet.

Those who do manage to visit the volcanic shard become members of the "exclusive" Rockall Club. It was founded in 2012 in cel-

ebration of the 40th anniversary of Rockall joining Scotland, reported The Sunday Post.

Although the UK has laid claim to the rock — and the surrounding territorial sea — since 1955 (with the Island Of Rockall Act finalizing ownership in 1972), Ireland, Iceland, and Denmark do not officially recognize this. Irish prime minister Leo Varadkar, for one, says that the 12 nautical miles around Rockall are part of the European Union and "should be shared" by all members.

The voyage will depart from Oban on May 2, 2020, with one stop at St. Kilda. Although the trip is scheduled to take seven days, the actual time could change depending on the weather.

Even though the next journey is sold out, Lupine Travel is tentatively planning a second trip for £1,745 (about \$2,211) in May and June of 2022.

(Source: travelandleisure.com)

Revision underway in law for the mentally ill

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — There are many gaps in law about dealing with people who suffer from mental disorders, but changes are underway, said Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi.

According to Harirchi, the government will soon put forward a new bill for supporting people with psychological disorders.

He made the remarks over the first national congress on “legal challenges in treating people with mental disorders”, Fars news agency reported.

The congress ran from Wednesday to Friday.

“Despite the new developments in treating mental health problems and the usage of new methods, there aren’t enough laws for helping these patients restart a normal life,” said Harirchi.

“For starters, there isn’t a common language for the experts in law and in psychology to discuss specialized issues, in fact there is actually no communication between the experts of these two fields,” he said.

“An example is the law of “involuntary hospitalization” of the mentally ill. This law is not practical; 90% of the mentally ill are involuntary hospitalized without any juridical orders. Only 10% are hospitalized based on a legal verdict and no forensic psychologist is assigned to oversee this 10% anyway,” he added.

“Many words that are used in legal context has no scientific grounds. For example the word “jonun” (literally means insanity) is



Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi speaking in the first national congress on “legal challenges in treating people with mental disorders.”

used in many legal texts while this is a very broad term; how can we know the exact clinical problem of a patients with using such a word, and how can we apply proper rules and regulations to them?”

“Another problem is the law about assigning a guardian to people with mental disorders. Currently, appointment of a guardian to a patient is completely based on the judge’s opinion. The verdict will appoint a permanent

guardian for a mentally ill person without any time limit; however, the patients’ mental situation may change over time, especially with the new developments in psychology.”

■ What revisions the new bill suggest?

According to Harirchi, the Health Ministry has put a lot of work into drafting a new bill that would resolve the existing issues. First of all, a standard definition is assigned to

every mental health problem.

The new bill also includes the exact terms and condition of involuntary hospitalization, the duties of the medical teams in regard to patients with mental disorders and the legal consequences of insulting such patients.

Moreover, some new plans are proposed to teach people about how to treat the mentally ill.

Opening forensic-psychological hospitals is another proposal made in this bill.

According to World Health Organization, there are many different mental disorders, with different presentations. They are generally characterized by a combination of abnormal thoughts, perceptions, emotions, behavior and relationships with others.

Mental disorders include: depression, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia and other psychoses, dementia, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders including autism.

There are effective strategies for preventing mental disorders such as depression.

Health systems have not yet adequately responded to the burden of mental disorders. As a consequence, the gap between the need for treatment and its provision is wide all over the world. In low- and middle-income countries, between 76% and 85% of people with mental disorders receive no treatment for their disorder. In high-income countries, between 35% and 50% of people with mental disorders are in the same situation.

Serious shortage of physicians in the country: health official

HEALTH **TEHRAN**— There is a serious shortage of doctors in the country, ISNA quoted Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi as saying on Sunday.

According to Harirchi, there are currently 1.6 physicians (including the general practitioners, medical specialists, dentists and pharmacists) in every 1000 people, but there need to be at least 2.5 physicians in every 1000 people.

“In many countries the parameters are even higher and they believe there should be 3.5 to 5 doctors in every 1000 people,” he added.

“According to an initiative adopted by the Iranian parliament (Majlis), 30% of university places must be reserved for the students of deprived areas and they would in return make a commitment to work in those deprived areas triple the time they spent studying that would be 21 years.”

“The students who have been subject to this new law will be graduated next year and hopefully the initiative will resolve the shortage of doctors in deprived areas,” said Harirchi.



■ How many doctors work in rural areas?

According to Harirchi, currently, 6800 doctors work in rural areas; but not every village has a doctor; this is because the villages need to reach a certain standard population to

be entitled to having a doctor.

“Based on our own population standards, all the villages that are in need of doctors have them; however, sometimes even the villages which have as few as 50 to 100 families request for doctors, but the doctors are not distributed like this in any part of the world,” said Harirchi.

“In fact, the distribution of doctors around the country is fair. The problem is that the Health Ministry can decide about the working area of each doctor only for the first two years of their practice and after that they decide for themselves about their working location.”

“Therefore, we see that up to 40% of specialists work in Tehran, but we hope Majlis initiative for deprived areas solve this problem,” he added.

A physician shortage is a situation in which there are not enough physicians to treat all patients in need of medical care. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates a shortage of 4.3 million physicians, nurses and other health workers worldwide, especially in many developing countries.

Why scientists are searching the ocean for new drugs

As medical researchers continue their efforts to improve human health, some are turning their attention to the ocean because they believe that the Earth’s seas might harbor novel disease-fighting chemistry.

The oceans cover more than two-thirds of Earth. As the adage goes, we know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the bottom of the ocean.

The sea’s ability to transition from dark, explosive rage to serene, crystal-clear calm has terrified and beguiled humanity since we first visited the beach.

Given the vast, untapped nature of Earth’s oceans, it makes sense to plumb their depths in the hunt for new and innovative treatments.

Marine animals, plants, and microbes have evolved a unique portfolio of chemicals to defend themselves and aid communication. Scientists are keen to know more about these novel compounds.

■ Why look to the sea?

There are a number of reasons why life in the sea has developed a distinct selection of molecules. For instance, animals that are anchored to the floor and do not have armor plating, such as sponges and corals, need to find other ways to defend themselves. In many cases, chemicals are their weapon of choice.

Additionally, marine creatures tend to have relatively primitive immune systems, and some live in overcrowded habitats, such as coral reefs, where defending themselves is a full-time job.

At the same time, organisms in the ocean need to attract some organisms and repel others. They also need to coordinate reproduction by synchronizing the release of eggs and sperm into the environment. All of these things require active biological molecules.

Animals and plants that dwell in the ocean sit and swim in a bath of bacteria, fungi, and other organisms intent on turning them into a meal or a home.

This diversity of threats has forced evolution to mount increasingly complex chemical battles. Some of the resulting compounds might be useful for our own war against disease.

“Consider [...] the universal cannibalism



of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.”

■ Ancient seas

Medical researchers’ fascination with the sea is nothing new. The first evidence of humans using medicines from the ocean comes from China in 2953 B.C.E. During the reign of the emperor Fu Hsi, there was a tax on the profits that came from fish-derived medicine.

Jumping forward a few thousand years to the 1950s, an organic chemist called Werner Bergmann isolated a number of nucleosides from a Caribbean species of sponge called *Cryptotethya crypta*.

These chemicals inspired the creation of a new generation of drugs, with scientists deriving two drugs called Ara-A and Ara-C from these nucleosides. Doctors use Ara-A to treat herpes infections and Ara-C to treat acute myeloid leukemia and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Over recent years, sourcing drugs from the ocean has experienced a resurgence of interest. Below, we provide a few recent

examples.

■ Sea snail toxins

Conus magus is a venomous sea snail whose diminutive size and decorative shell belie its deadly suite of neurotoxins.

This invertebrate’s brand of chemical weaponry is conotoxins — a highly variable family of poisons that, although the snail uses them to kill fish, are more than capable of killing a human.

There are hundreds of other species of cone snail, including the geography cone. People sometimes refer to this mollusk as the cigarette snail because, following envenomation, you only have enough time to smoke a cigarette before you die.

Ziconotide is a synthetic version of conotoxin that works as a pain reliever and is 1,000 times more potent than morphine. People may take it to treat chronic pain that results from conditions such as cancer, stage 3 HIV, and certain neurological disorders.

Importantly, as one author writes, “prolonged administration of ziconotide does not lead to the development of

addiction or tolerance.”

However, because ziconotide only works if healthcare professionals deliver it directly into the spinal fluid (intrathecally), they only use it when other therapies have failed or are not viable.

■ Cancer treatments from beneath the waves

Despite years of research, cancer is still proving a tough nut to crack. Although treatment has improved vastly, scientists are keen to get their hands on new bioactive chemicals that might help in the fight. Some cancer researchers are dipping their toes in the ocean.

Most recently, a group of researchers investigated molecules that they had extracted from lampreys — a jawless, parasitic fish with an ancient pedigree. In particular, they were interested in so-called variable lymphocyte receptors (VLRs).

VLRs target the extracellular matrix (ECM), which is a network of molecules that runs between cells. The ECM carries out varied roles in the body. For instance, it provides structural support for tissues, helps cells and tissues bond together, and assists with cell-to-cell communication.

As VLRs target the ECM, researchers believe that they could serve as drug mules that can transport chemicals through the normally impenetrable blood-brain barrier and straight to the brain.

They theorize that if VLRs can bypass the blood-brain barrier — a roadblock to most drugs — they may be able to treat certain conditions, including brain cancer and stroke, more effectively. Their preliminary work in a mouse model produced encouraging results.

■ The wonder of sponges

Sponges are of particular interest to cancer drug researchers. In fact, the authors of a review on the topic even refer to them as a “drug treasure house.” They write:

“Every year, around 5,300 different natural products and new compounds have been isolated from marine sponges. [...] Such compounds proved to have antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, antimalarial, antitumor, immunosuppressive, and cardiovascular activity.”

(Source: medical news today)

Allium Jesdianum can eliminate cancer cells, Iranian researchers find

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — A new research at the Kharazmi University has found that the extract of Allium Jesdianum (AJ) can eliminate cancer cells, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

For the first time, the researchers focused on anticancer characteristics of Allium Jesdianum, although the research was restricted to breast cancer, the conductor of the research Saied Ayrian said.

The Allium Jesdianum mostly grows in western Lorestan Province and southwestern Khuzestan Province and is known by the locals as natural painkiller.

“We have done research on extract taken from different part of this plant and come to conclusion that one of these extracts eliminate cancer cell,” he explained.

He said that in the next step, the researchers focus on the main anticancer factor existed in the extract.

“The research paves the way for producing a chemical anticancer compound with natural origin,” he concluded.

The research entitled “A review of anticancer characteristics of different extracts of Allium Jesdianum”, is supported by the vice presidency for science and technology.

Allium Jesdianum is the largest and most important plants genus of onion family that possesses many pharmacological effects. Allium Jesdianum belongs to Liliaceae family, which grows widely in west and northwest of Iran and has nutritive and medicine uses in the regions.

Why your foot calluses might be good for you

Before you take a pumice stone to your foot calluses just because they’re unsightly, you might want to consider the idea that they are actually nature’s shoes.

That’s one of the messages from a new study suggesting that in certain ways, walking on callused feet can be better for you than the modern luxury of cushioned shoes.

Researchers found that calluses offer the foot protection while you’re walking around, without compromising tactile sensitivity -- or the ability to feel the ground. That’s in contrast to cushioned shoes, which provide a thick layer of protection, but do interfere with the sense of connection to the ground.

Meanwhile, although thick-soled shoes do lessen the impact of each heel strike to the ground, they actually deliver more force into the knee joints.

No one, however, is advising people to forgo shoes -- especially if they have medical conditions that make barefoot walking risky.

Study co-author Daniel Lieberman stressed that the study is about understanding a fundamental evolutionary question: How does modern footwear -- a recent development in human history -- differ from the natural “shoes” that humans wore for thousands of years?

“I’m not anti-shoe,” said Lieberman, who heads human evolutionary biology at Harvard University. “And I’m not telling people to run around barefoot.”

But, he added, you might consider taking a kinder view of the lowly callus.

“Calluses are normal, and they may have some benefits,” Lieberman said.

That comes with some big caveats, though: People with certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, should neither go barefoot nor let calluses build up, said Dr. Jane Andersen. She’s a podiatrist and chair of the communications committee for the American Podiatric Medical Association.

People with nerve damage or poor blood circulation to the feet -- from diabetes or other medical conditions -- should see a foot doctor regularly and, if needed, have calluses trimmed, Andersen said. Calluses can lead to ulcers in those cases.

People with nerve-damaged feet also need to wear shoes, she said. That reduced sensation means they may not notice any cuts or other injuries they’d get while walking barefoot.

Beyond that, Andersen noted, barefoot humans of the past were not running around on hot asphalt and other modern surfaces.

The findings, published June 26 in the journal *Nature*, are based on just over 100 adults from Kenya and the United States. Both groups included people who said they were barefoot more often than not, and people who wore shoes every day.

As expected, the barefoot crowd had thicker, harder calluses. Despite that, they showed no lack of sensitivity in the soles of their feet. In contrast, thick-soled shoes do compromise tactile sensitivity when you’re walking, the researchers said.

It’s not clear what the implication of that might be. But, Lieberman’s team points out, when your perception of a walking surface is dulled, that can affect gait and balance. So it raises the question of whether thick-cushioned shoes can contribute to falls in people at risk.

Lieberman stressed, however, that it’s simply a question. He said controlled studies would be needed to figure out the answer -- for example, a trial that compares cushioned shoes to “minimal footwear” in older adults.

Minimal footwear refers to shoes with thinner, harder soles -- like moccasins or sandals. According to Lieberman, they more closely approximate thick calluses, compared with cushiony soles.

In other tests, the researchers found that cushioned shoes lessen the impact of the heel striking the ground with each footstep, compared with walking barefoot or in thin-soled shoes. Thick calluses did not have that effect.

Yet cushioned shoes sent more force up into the joints with each step.

“The load is basically delivered to the knees,” Lieberman said. Again, the consequences of that, if any, are unknown. But one question, Lieberman said, is whether modern footwear could be a contributing factor to knee arthritis.

According to Andersen, it’s an interesting question -- but it would be challenging to study the way footwear choices over decades could affect arthritis risk.

“People generally wear all kinds of different shoes,” she said. “There are also many other factors that would affect arthritis risk.”

Plus, Andersen added, many people simply find minimalist shoes uncomfortable. “Even if wearing them for 30 years lowered your risk of knee arthritis, that’s 30 years of being uncomfortable,” she noted.

As for calluses, Andersen said that if they are not causing problems and you’re healthy, they can probably be left alone.

(source: WebMD)



(Source: *The Independent*)

Palestinian government says Bahrain confab was ‘stunning failure’ for Trump

TEHRAN— The Palestinian government says a recent U.S.-sponsored conference in Bahrain meant to promote a “deal” on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a “stunning failure” for the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

In a statement released on Saturday, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said the failure of the meeting, which was held in Manama on June 25-26 despite a Palestinian boycott, must have sent a message to Washington.

“The stunning failure of the Manama workshop... should constitute a clear message to Mr. Trump and his administration that the policy of dictates, threats, and coercion is no longer effective with our steadfast people and its legitimate leadership headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, which rejected all suspicious deals aimed at the liquidation of our national cause,” Abu Rudeineh said.

He also accused the Trump administration of pursuing a “policy of punishment and intimidation... against everyone.”

Abu Rudeineh further complained that the U.S. team behind the proposal



on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was “totally biased toward Israel.”

“This biased team cannot offer solutions that can lead to a lasting and just peace,” he said.

The official also expressed Palestine’s resolve to achieve “a just and lasting peace” based on United Nations (UN) resolutions and the preservation of Palestinian rights, with the establishment of an independent state with East Je-

rusalem al-Quds as its capital.

The Bahrain workshop focused on the economic aspects of Trump’s proposal on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which Trump himself calls the “deal of the century” but which all Palestinian factions have rejected before it has become fully public.

While Palestinian public opinion, as well as the Arab street in general, is fiercely opposed to the plan, certain

Arab governments back the initiative, ignoring the demands of the Palestinian government and people.

■ **Name of street in West Bank city changed to remove ‘Bahrain’**

In another development on Saturday, a street called “Bahrain” in the West Bank city of Yatta, situated in al-Khalil (Hebron) Governorate, was renamed “Marzouq al-Ghanim,” after the Kuwaiti parliament speaker.

According to a statement issued by Yatta’s municipality, Mayor Ibrahim Abu Zahra decided to change the name of the street after requests by locals and in an attempt to hail Kuwait’s support for the Palestinian cause.

Kuwait did not participate in the Manama conference.

On Monday, Ghanim stressed his country’s support for Palestinians’ rights, saying, “Kuwait is a supporter of occupied Palestine and rejects normalizing ties with Israel.”

Other Arab governments, such as Bahrain itself, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, are widely believed to be moving toward the normalization of ties with the Israeli regime, Press TV reported.

Trump meets North Korea’s Kim at DMZ

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump has met North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas, in what was effectively an impromptu get-together.

During a brief outdoors meeting at the DMZ, which saw a flurry of flash photography and cameramen and bodyguards swirling around, Trump stepped over the demarcation line into North Korean territory and Kim into South Korean territory, marking historic firsts.

“This is my honor. I didn’t expect it. Stepping across that line was a great honor,” Trump said.

Kim, for his part, said, “President Trump just crossed... became first U.S. president to visit our country. This is an expression of his willingness to eliminate the aggression of the past and open a new future.”

Trump also said that “a lot of positive things are happening... we met and we liked each other from day one. And that’s very important.”

“We’re going to go and talk for a while,” the U.S. president said before the two headed back into the South for follow-up discussions.

■ Mutual invitations

According to Press TV, inside the House of Freedom on the southern side, Trump told a throng of reporters that he would invite Kim over to the White House.

Kim said it would be a great honor if Trump visited Pyongyang.

“It’s a great day for the world,” the U.S. president also said, while Kim said, “I am convinced our rela-

tionship will enable us to overcome barriers standing in the way.”

Trump and Moon then escorted Kim back to the North, with Trump saying, “This was a very historic day, a legendary day.”

Ahead of the meeting on Sunday, Trump was touring the DMZ accompanied by South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

A day earlier, he joined a press conference with Moon, saying he had sent out a last-minute invitation to Kim for the meeting over Twitter toward the end of his trip to the South.

“I’ll be meeting with Chairman Kim. I look forward to it very much. I look forward to seeing him. We’ve developed a very good relationship,” Trump told the presser.

Against a backdrop of sheer hostility, marked by fiery exchanges between the two, Trump suddenly opened up to Kim last year and began voicing hope about the quality of potential relations between their countries.

The two heads of state met for the first time in Singapore last year on Washington’s initiative, with a view to enabling the North’s denuclearization.

They met for a second summit in Vietnam’s capital, Hanoi, in February. But that summit abruptly ended over disagreements on mutual compromises.

Subsequent working-level talks also effectively snagged.

However, a recent exchange of affable messages between the leaders of the two countries again raised hopes for the revival of talks.



■ Sanctions remain on North Korea

Following his Sunday meeting with Kim, Trump said U.S. sanctions on North Korea would remain in place, but he said they could be scaled back as part of renewed negotiations.

“I don’t like sanctions being on this country... But at some point during the negotiations things can happen, and that’s when we will be talking about sanctions,” the U.S. president told reporters.

The U.S. has over the years imposed or spearheaded rounds of sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear and missile programs.

Washington now demands that North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons entirely before the sanctions are lifted; Pyongyang insists on a step-by-step approach that would include verifiable American commitment to end its massive military presence near its territorial waters.

GNA’s military operation, told reporters in Gharyan.

“The military commanders and the political leaders are now fully aware of these weapons and ammunition to make the right decisions that will be announced.”

United Nations reports have previously said that the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have been arming Haftar’s forces since 2014, Press TV reported.

Libya’s GNA forces seize U.S. missiles at captured Haftar base

TEHRAN— Military officials with Libya’s internationally-recognized government say they have seized sophisticated U.S. missiles and weaponry at a base they captured from forces allied to renegade General Khalifa Haftar in the south of the capital, Tripoli.

The Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) retook the southern strategic town of Gharyan, home to the main supply

base of eastern forces attacking the capital, from Haftar’s self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA).

The GNA announced on Saturday that among the weaponry its forces had seized were four U.S.-made Javelin anti-tank missiles packed in wooden crates marked “armed forces of the United Arab Emirates”.

The GNA officials said the markings

indicated that the missiles – jointly manufactured by the arms giants Raytheon and Lockheed Martin – had originally been sold to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a major buyer of U.S. arms and one of Haftar’s main supporters.

“The seized weapons and ammunition have been sent to the specialized experts and have been documented,” Mohammed Qununu, spokesman of the

In race for No. 10, UK’s Johnson and Hunt vow to splash the cash

TEHRAN — Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt vowed to spend billions of pounds on public services, infrastructure and tax cuts on Sunday as the two men battling to become prime minister pitched themselves as the best candidate to take on the opposition Labour Party.

The rivals to succeed Theresa May as leader of the ruling Conservative Party set out plans to win broader political backing by investing in education, transport and defense, even if that means higher government borrowing. The race should be over by July 23.

Johnson, the favorite, vowed to increase spending on education, adding to earlier pledges to invest in transport, superfast broadband, more police and tax cuts.

Foreign Secretary Hunt pledged to slash corporation tax, even in the event of a disorderly no-deal Brexit, to drive economic growth and generate the funds to invest more in social care, defense and education.



“Believe me there is cash now available,” Johnson told Sky News. “(And) I’m prepared to borrow to finance certain great objectives but overall we will keep fiscal responsibility.”

With Britain now due to leave the European Union on Oct. 31, much of the debate has revolved around how the two candidates would steer the world’s fifth-largest economy out of the world’s biggest trading bloc without crippling growth.

With the winner decided by Conservative Party members, who overwhelmingly back Brexit, Hunt has toughened his language, saying he would take a decision at the beginning of October to go for a disorderly no-deal exit if there was no prospect of getting an agreement through parliament.

The self-proclaimed entrepreneur said a cut to the corporate tax rate to 12.5%, matching the level in Ireland and one of the lowest in any major economy, would become even more important in the event of a no-deal because it would support companies through the upheaval. The rate is currently 19%, Reuters reported.

Israel arrests Palestinian minister of al-Quds affairs

TEHRAN— Israeli regime forces have arrested Palestinian Minister of Jerusalem al-Quds Affairs Fadi al-Hadmi during a raid on his home in the occupied city.

Palestine’s Wafa news agency reported on Sunday that the Israeli forces searched Hadmi’s home at night and confiscated his mobile phone before taking him into custody.

Hadmi’s arrest was the first high-pro-

file detention in Tel Aviv’s ongoing crack-down on the Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem al-Quds, the report said.

Israeli police spokesperson Micky Rosenfeld confirmed that Hadami had been arrested and was being questioned for what he merely referred to as “activities in Jerusalem.”

Meanwhile, a source close to the Palestinian minister told AFP that the

arrest was most likely linked to Hadmi’s recent activities that included accompanying Chilean President Sebastian Pinera during a visit to the Old City of Jerusalem al-Quds.

On Tuesday, Pinera visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound, situated in East Jerusalem al-Quds. Israel occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds during the Six-Day War in 1967 and later annexed it in a

move not recognized by the international community.

The Palestinians, however, view al-Quds’ eastern sector as the capital of their future sovereign state. The Israeli Foreign Ministry claimed that Pinera’s visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound with senior Palestinian officials had been in violation of diplomatic procedures and previous agreements, Press TV reported.

Israel security cabinet meeting on arson balloons

➔1 Overnight Friday-Saturday, two Palestinians were nabbed with a pair of knives in the south of Gaza.

And on Friday, Gaza health officials said Israeli security forces shot and injured 50 Palestinians at the border during riots and mass demonstrations involving some 7,000 protesters, which also saw a military jeep set ablaze by an explosive device thrown by protesters.

There were no reported Israeli injuries.

The Hamas-run health ministry said 19 Palestinians were injured by live fire, and said Israeli troops also injured eight paramedic volunteers and one journalist. It was unclear how the remainder of the reported 50 individuals injured sustained their wounds.

No tolerance for inhuman act against Sheikh Zakzaky

➔1 However, instead of complying with the doctors’ suggestions, the authorities are now trying to exterminate the ailing Sheikh and his wife via poisonous apple. They are always sending their agent with poisoned apple to where the sheikh is kept in their Gulag.

We are telling the general public and the Nigerian government that we won’t tolerate this kind of inhuman and barbaric act.

Yemen vows ‘strong response’ to Saudi crime in Ta’izz

TEHRAN— Yemen’s Foreign Ministry has condemned Saudi Arabia’s bombing of the southwestern province of Ta’izz, vowing a “strong response”.

A ministry official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, told Saba news agency that the fresh Saudi killing was yet another flagrant violation of international law and human values.

It also warned that the crime would be met with a “strong response and retaliation.”

Saudi warplanes targeted two houses in the Khadir district of Ta’izz on Friday, killing at least eight members of a family.

The airstrike also left five Yemeni civilians wounded, reports said. The spokesman for Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah movement denounced the Ta’izz killing, stressing that it would only increase the Yemeni people’s resolve to confront the Saudi aggression.

“Killing and injuring a number of citizens is considered a continuation of the aggressive bloody approach in targeting civilian houses,” Mohammed Abdul-Salam said.

He further expressed regret that the bodies of innocent Yemeni women and children do not lead international parties to stop lucrative arms sales to aggressor regimes, Press TV reported.

Trump suggested stepping up mutual dialogue to Putin

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump suggested stepping up a dialogue with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin when the two met in Osaka, Japan, Interfax news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on Sunday.

Trump and Putin met for an hour and a half on Friday on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Japan for the first time since their initial formal meeting in Helsinki a year ago.

Little is known of what the two discussed in Osaka. Peskov said on Friday that Trump showed readiness to start a dialogue with Russia on strategic stability and disarmament, and the leaders also discussed the issue of Ukrainian sailors detained by Russia in late 2018.

“The American president quite distinctly showed his intention to step up the dialogue. As for Putin, he has long been talking of his desire to go along the path of normalization of relations,” Peskov said, according to Interfax.

Peskov also said that Trump appeared to be unhappy with the scale of trade turnover between the United States and Russia, and instructed Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin directly at the meeting to work with his Russian counterpart Finance Minister Anton Siluanov on overcoming trade hurdles, Reuters reported.

Bahrain FM’ call for normalization with Israel ‘reckless, unprecedented impudence’: Wefaq

TEHRAN — Bahrain’s main Shia opposition group, al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, has condemned the country’s Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifah for urging open communication with the Tel Aviv regime, dismissing his remarks as “reckless.”

“This hysteric rush towards the Zionists reflects the (Manama) regime’s tendency to throw itself into the Israeli lap,” Wefaq said in a statement, adding that Al Khalifah’s remarks were “totally rejected.”

The statement added that such comments “are unprecedented impudence” by the Bahraini regime, as they reflect the gap between the “oppressive” ruling dynasty and Bahraini people.

According to Press TV, Wefaq further highlighted that the Bahraini nation views Israel as an occupying regime, stressing that ordinary Bahrainis can’t be complicit in giving the Tel Aviv regime a chance to woo Bahrain.

“Israelis who were allowed to tour Bahrain were backed by the regime’s security forces,” the Bahraini opposition group added, noting that any protest against the Israelis’ visit to the kingdom was banned by force.

Meanwhile, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said in a statement that Al Khalifah’s remarks and his allegation that Israel was part of the Middle East region’s heritage constituted “clear treachery,” and proved that the Bahraini regime was deeply involved in supporting plans to wipe out the Palestinian cause.

“This position contradicts the position of the brotherly people of Bahrain,” the PFLP said, adding that Bahraini people were “one of the strongest advocates of the Palestinian cause and Arab rights.”

Swiss women's football team player missing after swimming accident

A player on Switzerland's national women's football team, Florijana Ismaili, has been declared missing after a swimming accident on Lake Como in northern Italy, her professional club announced Sunday.

The BSC Young Boys club said in a statement that they had "been informed that our player Florijana Ismaili has been missing since Saturday afternoon on Lake Como after a swimming accident".



"Searches by the police continue," the statement said, adding that "we are very concerned and have not given up the hope that everything will turn out well".

The club said it was "in close contact with family members".

Ismaili, who is captain of the Young Boys team, has been on Switzerland's national team since 2014.

According to the Italian daily Corriere della Sera, Ismaili had decided to spend a relaxing day at the lake with a teammate, and they had rented an inflatable boat near Musso. "She jumped in to the water, but never surfaced again," the paper said.

The alarm was reportedly sounded at 4:30 pm (1430 GMT), and divers began searching the area, with no results.

The search was suspended overnight, but reportedly resumed Sunday morning.

(Source: Independent)

Mbappe wants Neymar by his side

Kylian Mbappe hit the headlines when he stated at the Ligue 1 awards that he wanted more responsibility, either at Paris Saint-Germain or elsewhere, but it is important to think about what the 20-year-old was saying.

The forward made it clear to PSG that they needed to put him in the best possible situation for him to thrive, likely surrounded by a team of experienced, world-class players, as he looks to achieve his main goal since joining the club: winning the Champions League and starting to position himself in the fight to win the Ballon d'Or.

Although it has been difficult to manage the egos of both Mbappe and Neymar, the Frenchman is aware that PSG are a weaker side without the Brazilian. Much has been spoken about the differences between the two, but the truth is that their relationship is good. Recently, after it became known that Neymar was going to miss the Copa America through injury, Mbappe sent a very thoughtful message to his teammate.

It is true that one of Mbappe's requests is to play as a striker next season, but it'd be better to do so with Neymar on the left wing.

Managing and cohabiting Mbappe and Neymar in the same team is a difficult task, but ultimately it will come down to the work put in by Thomas Tuchel and the club, and although Neymar has been put on the market, they will not force his departure.

The message of PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi in France Football sought greater commitment from Neymar, but if he decides that he is not up for the fight, the Parisians will simply demand a fee that is at least what they paid for him in 2017: 222 million euros.

PSG would like Neymar to stay, and they have openly stated that, but there is going to be a different approach moving forward. The club has to come first.

(Source: Marca)

Rooney: Van Gaal was better than Ferguson

Wayne Rooney has claimed that his former Manchester United boss Louis van Gaal was the best coach he has ever worked with.

In club football Rooney also worked with David Moyes, Alex Ferguson, David Moyes and Jose Mourinho before moving to DC United in MLS.

Ferguson won the Champions League twice, and a haul of Premier League and other domestic trophies over his 26-year stay at Old Trafford, but fell out with Rooney on a number of occasions.

On the eve of his retirement he told the press that Rooney had asked for a transfer away from the club, something which Rooney denied at the time and was seen as an attempt to force him from the club.

Van Gaal won just the FA Cup in his time in England, but Rooney told the Dutch paper De Telegraaf of his respect for the former Barcelona manager. Van Gaal won just the FA Cup in his time in England, but Rooney told the Dutch paper De Telegraaf of his respect for the former Barcelona manager.

"Van Gaal is by far the best coach I have worked with - one hundred percent," Rooney said.

"His tactical skills, his way of preparing and his attention to the finest of details, I found amazing. I admired that in him. I had never looked at stuff like that before."

(Source: Eurosport)

NBA salary cap jumps \$7M, set at \$109.14M

NEW YORK -- The NBA set the salary cap for the 2019-20 season at \$109.14 million, an increase of just more than \$7 million from last season.

The tax level will be \$132,627,000, and the minimum salary, which is 90% of the cap, will be \$98,226,000. All of those figures are virtually identical to what the league has been projecting for some time.

All the new figures take effect Monday. Teams may begin negotiating with free agents and the league's annual moratorium begins at 12:01 a.m. ET July 1 and continues through noon ET July 6. When the moratorium ends, new deals can be signed.

The midlevel exception figures for 2019-20 are \$9,258,000 for non-taxpayer teams, \$5,718,000 for tax-paying teams and \$4,767,000 for teams with salary-cap room.

(Source: ESPN)



Argentina waiting for Messi magic to make an appearance

For the last dozen years, Argentina has been waiting for global superstar Lionel Messi to lead their football team to a major international trophy.

But when the country needed the five-time Ballon d'Or winner most, Messi failed to emulate the feats of Diego Maradona in 1986 -- when for some he almost single-handedly won the World Cup.

Four times Messi has lined up with Argentina in a major final -- the 2014 World Cup and Copa America in 2007, 2015 and 2016 -- but every time they have lost.

He has often come under criticism for failing to reproduce his Barcelona form when wearing the sky blue and white jersey of the national team.

Now, ahead of a mouth-watering Copa semi-final against hosts Brazil in Belo Horizonte, Argentines are simply waiting for Messi to turn up.

"This is the match for Messi to appear," screamed Ole newspaper's online edition after Argentina beat Venezuela 2-0 to secure the Brazil semi-final.

Ironically, at this tournament, while Argentina's performances have

been improving steadily, Messi has, if anything, become less influential.

Argentina were all at sea in their opening 2-0 defeat to Colombia and needed a Messi penalty to salvage a 1-1 draw with Paraguay.

But in the 2-0 win over Qatar that qualified Argentina for the knock-out rounds, and the quarter-final victory over Venezuela by the same score, Messi became an increasingly peripheral figure.

■ 'Not at my best'

He admitted as much after the Venezuela match, saying: "I'm not at my best level, I'm not playing how I hoped I would. I'm not having my best Copa America."

Brazil center-back Thiago Silva is not so convinced, though.

"For me, Messi is the best player in history, the best I've ever seen play. It's a privilege to play against him," said a player who hails from the country that produced Pele, Garincha, Socrates, Ronaldo and Ronaldinho.

Messi turned 32 during the tournament and while he doesn't appear close to retirement, it cannot be too many years away.

His game has changed over the years and he no longer produces the same kind of, or quantity of, darting runs at the heart of opposition defences.

He plays deeper than he used to, passes more and is more selective with his runs.

He also rests more than he used to and took an eight-month break from the national team following the World Cup in Russia, only returning in March in a 3-1 friendly defeat to Venezuela.

But he is more than just the star of the team

these days, he is the leader and captains both club and country.

During the club season, Messi took the lead in defending Philippe Coutinho, whom he will line up opposite on Tuesday, from criticism levelled at the Brazilian playmaker in the Catalan press.

Messi also defended Barcelona boss Ernesto Valverde against the brickbats.

And here, while his and Argentina's attacking performances have been nothing to enthuse about, Messi took the time to praise the team's defensive efforts.

■ 'Essential contribution'

And Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni acknowledges that Messi brings much more than just brilliance on the field.

"For me he gives an essential contribution on the pitch, and if you saw everything he brings in the dressing room..." said Scaloni.

Before the tournament began, much of the talk was about whether Messi could ever land the one thing missing from his impressive list of accolades: an international trophy.

He's won the Champions League four times, La Liga 10 times and the Copa del Rey six times with Barcelona, but nothing major with Argentina, who haven't won anything since 1993.

Tuesday's semi-final in Belo Horizonte looks tailor made for the Messi of old.

Brazil have yet to concede a goal in the competition but despite victories of 5-0 over Peru and 3-0 against Bolivia, they looked ponderous and lacking imagination in the 0-0 draws against Venezuela and Paraguay.

(Source: AFP)

Man Utd value plummets by over £1 billion following dismal season



Manchester United's value has plummeted by more than £1 billion after another tumultuous season on the pitch.

While the Old Trafford club posted record revenues of almost £600million last September, shares on the New York Stock Exchange have fallen sharply over the same period. Premier League.

Last August, United shares were trading at \$27.70 (£21.82) - valuing the club at £3.51bn. On Friday night, they closed at \$18.08 (£14.24). That values the club at around £2.25bn.

Disgruntled fans now hope the stock exchange meltdown will increase pressure on the Glazer family to sell the club they bought in a controversial £790m takeover in 2003.

Fans took to the streets outside Old Trafford on Saturday to demonstrate against the Americans' ownership.

United finished sixth last season and Jose Mourinho was sacked as manager in December after claiming the club failed to back him properly in the transfer market.

There has been a growing social media campaign in recent weeks, aimed at once again bringing the Glazers to account. United have responded by cancelling phone-in shows on their in-house TV station because of fears that supporters will call to vent their anger.

United remain almost £500m in debt,

more than 16 years after the Glazers leveraged loans against the club to finance their takeover.

In that time more than £1bn has been taken out of the club to service debts and pay the Glazers an annual dividend. Supporters feel that money should have been spent keeping the team at the top of the European game.

United have spent almost £70m already this summer to buy Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Daniel James but most fans fear it is going to be a painful rebuilding process, more than six years after Sir Alex Ferguson won the last of his 13 Premier titles.

In the season just ended, they finished 32 points behind champions and Mancunian rivals City - and the same amount ahead of relegated Cardiff.

More than £500m has been invested in the transfer market since Ferguson retired and the Old Trafford wage bill is now the highest in world football, but United fans feel they are now paying the price of the Glazers' ownership model. One outraged group of supporters broke away to set up FC United of Manchester in response.

And a green and gold campaign that used the colours of United's founding club, Newton Heath, as a means of protest sent out a powerful but ultimately futile message.

(Source: Mirror)

Djokovic prepares for Wimbledon with 'seven-hour' meeting



Preparing to try and retain a Wimbledon title is arduous enough but men's top seed Novak Djokovic says he has spent as much time in the past few days playing politics as hitting tennis balls.

As president of the ATP Player Council, Djokovic has had his hands full of late dealing with the fall-out from the resignation of ATP Board member Justin Gimelstob, who in April was sentenced to three years probation and 60 hours community service on an assault charge.

Following a Player Council meeting on Friday to vote on a replacement for Gimelstob, as well as discuss Grand Slam prize money and the distribution of prize money at lower levels, Dutch player Robin Haase quit from the Board, saying it had been an "unproductive" year and that the Council had "not moved the game forward". Andy Murray's brother Jamie followed suit.

At his pre-tournament news conference Djokovic revealed the previous night's meeting had gone on until midnight as splits within the game, widened by ATP chairman Chris Kermode being denied a contract extension in March, were thrashed out.

"For all of us taking part in this tournament, staying for seven hours and not going through the whole agenda yet, is

quite tiring," Djokovic told reporters.

"But there's a larger picture and larger issues that Robin was addressing. I think it's a system and a structure that keeps on failing us. I've been saying this before."

Djokovic said he respected Haase's decision to step down, saying the "leaking" of information from Player Council meetings over the past 10 months had been a contributory factor.

"That was a trigger because of which Robin decided to step down, and many others," the Serb, who is bidding to a fifth Wimbledon title, said.

Djokovic, who in May complained that "everyone holds me accountable for everything that happens in tennis at the moment", says his team would prefer it if he stepped away and just focussed on winning more Grand Slams.

"I mean, I've obviously considered various options. I did consider also stepping down," Djokovic, 32, said.

"I think my team wants me to step down, honestly. It's obvious. But I feel something is telling me from inside that I'm supposed to still stay there because I feel that we are part of the big transitional phase in tennis at the moment.

"Having a top player, I feel it means a lot to the group.

(Source: Reuters)

Suarez devastated as shootout miss sees Uruguay crash out of Copa

Luis Suarez broke down in tears after his shootout miss saw Uruguay dumped out of the Copa America by unfancied Peru on Saturday, the 15 times champions losing 5-4 on penalties after having three goals ruled out in a scoreless draw.

Suarez spurned the first penalty of the shootout, his effort bouncing off the chest of Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese, to complete a frustrating evening for Uruguay's all-time top scorer, who also had a goal ruled out for offside.

Every other player converted their spot kicks and Edison Flores sealed Peru's place in the last four by blasting past Fernando Muslera.

Suarez, who rushed back to full fitness after undergoing knee surgery in May in order to make it for the Copa, covered his face with his shirt and was consoled by team mates after the shootout defeat.

"Luis was very sad, he ended up missing in a decisive moment but that's football and life," Edinson Cavani told reporters.

"Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. We have won the Copa before but today we have to accept that we are out."

Peru will face neighbours Chile in the last four, with tournament hosts Brazil meeting arch rivals Argentina in the other semi-final clash.



"I am very proud. I am speechless," said striker Paolo Guerrero after scoring in the shootout.

"People said before Uruguay were the favourites but being favourites means nothing in football, especially in South America."

Uruguay dominated the play during the game but Cavani, Giorgian de Arrascaeta and then Suarez all had goals chalked off for offside which were each verified by VAR checks.

They became the third team in this tournament to lose a quarter-final tie on penalties after a goalless draw after Paraguay were beaten by Brazil and Chile beat Colombia on spot-kicks.

There is no extra time in Copa America quarter-finals in the event of a draw, although 30 minutes will be added on in the semi-finals and final if necessary.

Uruguay defender Diego Godin lamented his side's inability to convert their chances.

"We were just missing a goal, we kept looking for it but it didn't come and if we had scored it would have been a different game," he said.

"We played well, but unfortunately we've been knocked out. We couldn't score and they struck their penalties better than we did."

Uruguay won the Copa America for a record 15th time in 2011 but they have underachieved in their last three appearances, losing to Chile in the last eight in 2015 and exiting in the group stage in 2016.

"This is a huge disappointment because we came here wanting to win and we tried to impose ourselves on the game," added Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez.

(Source: Goal)

Ex-Iran basketball player Oshin Sahakian breaks silence after one year

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ex-Iran basketball team power forward Oshin Sahakian has broken his silence one year after he hung up his boots.

After more than a decade of service to the Iran national team, Sahakian retired from Team Melli in early July last year. Sahakian was a mainstay of Team Melli since first playing for Iran at the FIBA Asia Cup 2007.

With Sahakian as one of the team's frontliners, Iran won three FIBA Asia Cups (2007, 2009, 2013) and three FIBA Asia Challenges (2012, 2014, 2016). He was also a member of the All-Star-Five in 2013, averaging around 8 points and 7 rebounds per game.

Sahakian also saw action in two FIBA Basketball World Cups (2010, 2014) and one edition of the Olympics (2012).

Now, the 6ft 7in (2.00m) forward has revealed that he was forced to retire from the national duty for deep-rooted problems with Iran coach Mehran Shahintab.

"I was forced to leave Team Melli because Shahintab didn't respect me as a player who had worked for his country for many years. No one should be treated the way I was treated in the team. They made situation so bad in my team and compelled me to leave the team," Sahakian said.

"I was under pressure in the last two years because they wanted to bring me down. They caused controversy and interfered in my personal life. I don't know why they did that," he pointed out.

"Shahintab was always blaming me and treated me in a way that I felt completely lacking in self-confidence. Any coach had never treated me like he did. I don't know what was the reason behind his behavior," Sahakian added.

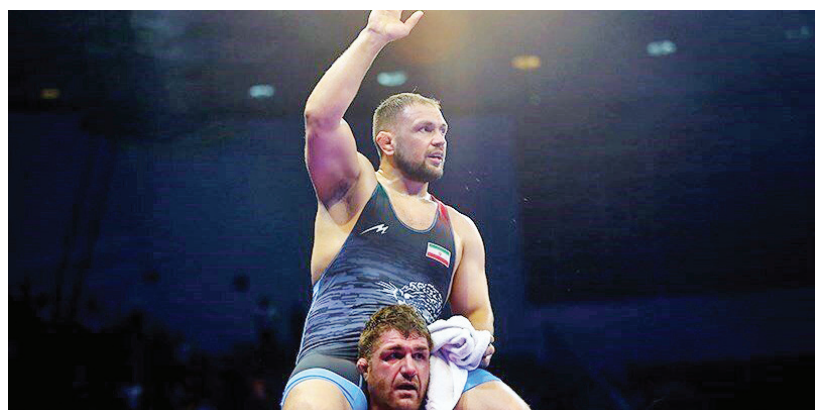
"The best player in the world will lose his abilities if he sits on the bench for a long time. I had no place in the national team and I don't know why, because I was always prepared and ready. I decided to stop playing for Team Melli. I remember in a match we were 35 points ahead



of our rivals but Shahintab didn't send me to the field and I found out that he was intentionally substituting me," Sahakian said.

"Since then, I hate watching basketball and even don't touch the ball. I worry about the future of Iran's basketball," he concluded.

Iranian wrestler Komeil Ghasemi bids farewell



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian freestyle wrestler Komeil Ghasemi has issued a farewell statement.

The 31-year-old wrestler announced his retirement on Friday after the Iran league championship.

Ghasemi won a bronze medal in the men's freestyle 120kg event at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. He also won a silver medal at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio.

Ghasemi claimed a gold at the 2014 Asian Championships in Astana and seized two silvers in Tashkent (211) and Doha (2015).

He also clinched a silver medal at the 2014 World Championships in Tashkent. Beating his American opponent Tervel Dlagnev in the semifinal of 125kg weight class in Rio will be remembered as one of the best moments in his career.

Ghasemi posted a farewell message on his Instagram account.

Iran to participate at World Sports Games 2019



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran has sent 87 athletes to Spain for the sixth edition of the World Sports Games.

The Iranian delegation consists of 68 male and 19 female athletes.

The World Sports Games 2019 will be held in Tortosa from July 2 to 7.

As usual, the games will begin with an opening ceremony that will take place in the football field José Otero

in Tortosa. The event will bring about 5,000 athletes from 42 countries together.

The WSG are a major multi-sports event held every two years, full of sports, sport for all, cultural exchange, fun and new opportunities.

These Games are not multisport games for top athletes, but for all amateurs from different countries and cultures all over the world.



VNL 2019: Iran suffer defeat against the U.S.

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran suffered third loss in the 2019 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) on Sunday.

Team Melli lost to the U.S. (25-27, 21-25, 20-25) in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Benjamin Patch had 16 points for the U.S. and Iran's Milad Ebadipour registered 14 points.

Iran had already qualified for the Final Six to be held in Chicago.

This is the first edition of the World League or the Nations League to have the Final Round hosted in North America.

The 16 teams compete in a round-robin format with every core team hosting a pool at least once. The teams are divided into four pools of four teams at each week and compete five weeks long, for 120 matches.

The top five teams after the preliminary round join the hosts of the final round to compete in the final round.

France's Mombaerts gets Melbourne City job



Experienced Frenchman Erick Mombaerts, who had stints at Paris Saint-Germain and Toulouse, has been appointed head coach of Melbourne City in Australia's A-League.

City's cross-town rivals Melbourne Victory also unveiled a new coach on Friday in German Marco Kurz, who won a Bundesliga title as a player with Borussia Dortmund.

Mombaerts, who most recently had three seasons in Japan where he guided Yokohama F. Marinos to an Emperor's Cup final in 2017, said he was motivated to win trophies.

"I am here to achieve two main objectives -- to implement a style of play that gives the team a clear identity, and in doing so to win silverware," said the 64-year-old.

"My focus now is on our pre-season

preparation, together with my coaching team, who provide a fantastic combination of local and international experience. Our hard work begins today."

Mombaerts coached Paris Saint-Germain from 1987-88 and Toulouse for five years from 2001.

He has also been in charge of the French U-18 and U-21 teams, helping nurture the likes of Antoine Griezmann and Benjamin Mendy.

He takes over from Englishman Warren Joyce, whose contract wasn't renewed at the end of last season after City finished fifth on the 10-team ladder.

Kurz is already familiar with the A-League, having previously been in charge of Adelaide United.

(Source: AFP)

Iran a safe and beautiful country: Marc Wilmots



Marc Wilmots, the new Belgian coach of Iran's national football team, better known as Team Melli, describes Iran as a safe and beautiful country a few weeks after his arrival.

In an interview with a Belgian TV channel, Wilmots underlined that during his stay in Iran over the past weeks, he has not faced any instance of insecurity.

He described Iran's conditions as good and added when the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic offered him the leadership of Iran's Team Melli, he found out that the Iranians have a long-term plan.

"My journey to Asia after years of coaching in Europe was a new experience. I made a tour of Iran's sports

facilities which gave me an extraordinary experience," he said.

The Belgian coach described Iran as a safe and beautiful country and said unlike what is rumored worldwide, there is no war or insecurity in Iran. "I've never ever experienced a slight trace of insecurity in Iran."

Based on a contract, Wilmots is set to lead the Iranian team for the next three years. The 50-year-old coach has so far led several national football teams across the world. He is going to lead the Iranian team during the Qatar 2022 World Cup.

Reports say his deal is signed for a fee of \$1.2 million a year.

(Source: IFPnews)

Indonesia to play Iran U-23 in friendly

Indonesia U-23 national team are scheduled to play IR Iran, one of the strongest footballing nations in Asia, in a friendly match to be held in November this year.

The match will be part of Garuda Muda's preparations for the men's football competition in the 2019 Southeast Asian Games which is to be held in Philippines from November 30 to December 11.



"We have lined up the friendly against the Iran U-23 as part of the team's preparation, just two weeks before they leave for the Philippines," Ratu Tisha Destria, the general secretary of the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) announced recently.

The PSSI general secretary also revealed that the association is looking to find more opponents for the U-23 national team to play against during the months of September and October.

"We are looking for teams to play against during the months of September and October. We are waiting for the final programme submission from head coach Indra Sjafri on the proposed training camp," she said.

"Iran would be the hardest opponent for the team, so we will arrange proper matches as a lead up to the big test," Tisha added.

Indonesia are the AFF U-22 Championship 2019 winners having defeated Thailand 2-1 in the final held at the Phnom Penh Olympic Stadium in Cambodia in February earlier this year.

(Source: Fox Sports Asia)

Al Hilal name Romanian Lucescu as head coach

Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SFC have announced the appointment of Romanian Razvan Lucescu as their new head coach.

The 50-year-old left Greek side PAOK Thessaloniki last month after guiding them to a historic unbeaten Greek Super League title; their first since 1985.

Prior to his successful stint in Greece, Lucescu had managed Rapid Bucharest, Brasov and Petrolul Ploiesti in his native Romania. He also had a two-year spell in Asian football, which saw him win the Qatar Stars Cup with El Jaish in 2012-13.

Lucescu fills the head coach post at King Saudi University Stadium which had been vacant since the departure of Pericles Chamusca who served as interim manager for one month, leading Al Hilal to two wins and a defeat in three league games in addition to a win and a draw in their last two 2019 AFC Champions League group stage matches.

Lucescu, the son of Mircea Lucescu; one of Romania's most prominent coaches, has just over a month to prepare for Al Hilal's 2019 AFC Champions League Round of 16 clash against domestic rivals Al Ahli, in what will be his first competitive match in charge of the Riyadh side.

The former Romania coach continues a proud tradition of Romanian coaches at Al Hilal. Anghel Iordanescu led the club to the 2000 Asian Club Championship, while the late Ilie Balaci won the 2002 Asian Super Cup.

Current Jiangsu Suning boss Cosmin Olaroiu won the Saudi Pro League title with Al Hilal in 2007-08 and most recently, Laurentiu Reghecampf led them to the 2014 AFC Champions League final.

(Source: the-afc)

Sousa reports for Bahrain duty

Helio Sousa is set to start work as the Bahrain national team head coach after touching down in Manama.

Sousa, who replaced Miroslav Soukup, will get to know his players during a local training camp.

He will then take the squad for a training camp in his native Portugal as Bahrain prepare for the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and the 2023 AFC Asian Cup China.

Sousa, 49, joins Bahrain after completing his assignment with the Portugal side that competed in the recent FIFA U-20 World Cup.

The draw for the second round of the Asian Qualifiers will be held on July 17 with 40 teams to learn their opponents.

The second round of the Asian Qualifiers will kick off on September 5.

(Source: the-afc)

Russian Olympic gold medalist rower banned for doping

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian rower and Olympic gold medalist Sergei Fedorovtsev has been banned for four years for doping.

Fedorovtsev won Olympic gold in quadruple sculls in 2004. He tested positive for the banned substance trimetazidine shortly before an Olympic qualifying regatta in 2016, and his crew was stripped of its Olympic spot when the results came back.

The Russian anti-doping agency, which collected Fedorovtsev's drug-test sample, says he has now formally been handed a four-year ban by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in a long-running case.

CAS has not yet announced any sanction, and didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Fedorovtsev's ban is backdated to May 2016. It's unclear if the 39-year-old three-time Olympian has any intention of competing again when the sanction ends next year.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Fear God and do not sin in privacy, for, He Who is the witness judges your deeds.
Imam Ali (AS)

Singer Mohammad Motamedi says U.S. sanctions hit medical treatment in Iran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian vocalist Mohammad Motamedi has said that due to the U.S. sanctions on Iran, doctors in the country are struggling with a critical shortage of specialized drugs and medical instruments to treat their patients.



This photo shows vocalist Mohammad Motamedi in bed in a Tehran hospital.

He made the remarks in a post published on his Instagram with a photo depicting him when he was lying in bed in a Tehran hospital. However, the singer is in good health condition now.

“A while ago, I wrote a post about the negative effects of the U.S. sanctions on patients and the process of their treatments, and said that the claim by the U.S that medicine is exempted from sanctions is a big lie, and that their main goal was actually to create a feeling of public dissatisfaction in the worst way possible. However, several dear compatriots blamed me and said it is not true and the medicine will not be sanctioned by the U.S.,” he wrote on his post.

“It has been two months since I have been waiting for a simple pH meter to continue my treatment for an operation on my stomach. But the necessary instrument has not been delivered to the country due to the sanctions,” he added.

A pH meter is a scientific instrument that measures the hydrogen-ion activity in water-based solutions, indicating its acidity or alkalinity expressed as pH.

“Thank God, my case is not critical and I am only waiting for a simple operation which is not a matter of life or death. But those poor patients who, despite their severe health conditions, are used by the U.S. as an instrument to pressure the government to change the political equation for the benefit of the world powers,” he added.

The U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had claimed that “the U.S. does not, and never did, sanction food and medicine. They are exempt from sanctions.”

Limits on financial transactions have caused problems in the process of buying and producing medicine.

Earlier on June 19, Motamedi gave a charity concert at the Milad Hall of the Tehran International Permanent Fairgrounds to raise funds for the flood victims in the Lorestan region. The concert was organized by the Association of Freedom and Development Watch.

Also in March, Motamedi gave concerts with low price tickets in Tehran for families from all walks of life.

The concert took place in the Tehran Theater Complex in the Khavaran neighborhood. The concert was part of “Art for All”, a project Motamedi has pursued in recent months to provide the facilities for low-income families to be able to afford tickets for concerts and theaters across the city.

“Over the past few months, I was thinking of launching the project ‘Art for All’ in the fields of theater and music. I negotiated with the officials at the Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality, and it was decided that good theaters mainly in downtown Tehran would be dedicated to the project,” Motamedi earlier said.

He also performed two open-air concerts with the Orchestra of National Instruments in Tehran’s Ab-o-Atash Park in August 2018.

The performances were part of a series of free outdoor concerts organized by several popular musicians to boost the spirits of Iranians during the current adverse economic conditions confronting the country.

Reza Mirkarimi on Golden Apricot filmfest jury

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Reza Mirkarimi who is also the director of Iran’s Fajr International Film Festival has been selected for the jury of the 16th edition of the Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival in Armenia, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Sunday.

Russian screenwriter Aleksandr Mindadze, Swiss director Nicolas Wadimoff, American executive director of the Tribeca Film Festival Amy Hobby, British producer Elizabeth Karlsen, Italian film critic Paolo Bertolin and French actress Nino Kirtadze are the other members of the jury.

A lineup of ten Iranian films will go on screen in various section of the festival.

Among the films are “Umbra” by Saeid Jafarian about a young woman who is looking for her missing partner at midnight and “The Ashes” by Aryan Golsurat about a couple, who are looking for a place to burn a corpse they are carrying in the trunk of their car.

“Slaughter” co-directed by Saman Hosseinpour and Ako Zandkarimi, about a family that is forced to slaughter their lone cow to pass the hard, cold winter days and “Return” by Shahriar Purseyeyedan about Rahim, a man who after 23 years in prison returns to his hometown to meet his brother will also be screened.

The lineup also includes “Driving Lessons” by Marzieh Riahi about a young girl who must have a man from her relatives accompany her on driving lessons and “Day for Night” by Kaveh Ebrahimpur about a young filmmaker who enters an old house in search for his feature film location.

“Song Sparrow”, a co-production of Iran and Denmark by Iranian director Farzaneh Omidvarnia, about a group of refugees who by themselves try to reach a safe country in search of a better life, and “Beloved” by Yasser Talebi about an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder’s existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people will also go on screen.

Also included are “Absence” by Fatemeh Zolfaqari about a devastating earthquake that struck the Kurdish town of Sarpol-e-Zahab, and “Axing” by Behruz Shoeibi about a woman addict who thinks that her girl is dead while she is alive and lives with her father.

The Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival will be held from July 7 to 14.



Iranian director Reza Mirkarimi in an undated photo.

“The Pillowman” coming to Tehran theater



A poster for Irish playwright Martin McDonagh’s “The Pillowman”, which will be staged by actor-director Ali Sarabi at Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater on July 6.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Irish writer Martin McDonagh’s 2003 play “The Pillowman” will go on stage at Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater on July 6.

Actor and director Ali Sarabi will helm the play, which will be performed by Navid Mohammadzadeh, Hamidreza Azarang and Bahram Afshari, a team of public relations announced on Sunday.

“The Pillowman” tells the tale of Katurian, a fiction writer living in a police state, who is interrogated about the gruesome content of his short stories and their similarities to a number of bizarre child murders occurring in his town.

Sarabi and Mohammadzadeh has previously co-starred in the play which was staged by Mohammad Yaqubi and Aida Keikhai at Tehran’s Arasbaran Cultural Center in August and September 2013.

They also performed the play at the 2nd International Festival of Martin McDonagh, which took place in Perm, Russia during October 2016.

“The Pillowman” was also regarded by Siavash Asad, another Iranian director, who merged it with McDonagh’s plays “The Beauty Queen of Leenane” and “A Skull in Connemara” for performances at Tehran’s Paytakht Theater in October 2017.

Belgian choreographic platform GRIP to perform “Being” in Iran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater announced on Sunday that the Belgian choreographic platform GRIP will be at the theater on July 7 to give a performance titled “Being” for three nights.

The group will then leave Tehran to repeat the performance in the cities of Rasht and Shiraz.

Director Bara Sigfusdottir from Iceland is collaborating with two Iranian artists, Masumeh Jalalieh and Alireza Mirmohammadi, in “Being”.

In this performance, the body serves as a poetic instrument and common ground to put in dialogue between the West and the Iranian culture and society, exploring how communications occur despite cultural similarities and differences.

Sigfusdottir is also scheduled to hold a workshop during her stay in Tehran.

The troupe performed “Being” at the 21st International Iranian Festival of University Theater (IIFUT) in Tehran in May 2018. They also performed the play in the northern



A poster for Belgian choreographic platform GRIP’s performance “Being”, which will be held at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater.

city of Sari afterwards.

Also in 2016, Sigfusdottir held a workshop in Tehran

Iranian publisher to review Sharon Creech’s “Walk Two Moons”



A poster for a meeting Cheshmeh Publications will hold on July 2 to review American writer Sharon Creech’s novel, “Walk Two Moons”.

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** — Cheshmeh Publications, the publisher of the Persian version of American children’s book writer Sharon Creech’s “Walk Two Moons”, announced on Sunday that it will host a group of children for a review session of the book on Tuesday.

The translator of the book, Keyvan Abidi Ashtiani, and Iranian writer and translator Rezvan Khorramian will attend the meeting, which is organized for readers aged between 12 and 17.

“Walk Two Moons” is about Salamanca Tree Hiddle, Sal, a thirteen-year-old girl whose only wish is to be reunited with her missing mother.

The book is written in the first person, revealing the thoughts and feelings of Sal. The novel is a story-within-a-story. During her road trip to Idaho with her eccentric grandparents, Sal tells them about her friend Phoebe Winterbottom and the disappearance of Phoebe’s mother.

In the telling of her story, the tragic events of her own mother’s disappearance and parallels between the situations and reactions of the girls are revealed.

Published in 1994, the book won the 1995 Newbery Medal. It also won the United Kingdom Reading Association Award, and the United Kingdom’s Children’s Book Award. In 1996, it received the WH Smith Mind-Boggling Book Award.

Tennessee Williams’ play “I Can’t Imagine Tomorrow” to go on stage in Tehran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Kambiz Banan will stage American writer Tennessee Williams’ play “I Can’t Imagine Tomorrow” at Tehran’s Mehregan Theater tonight.

Banan will also co-star with Parizad

Seif in the play that is about One and Two, who are depending on each other for survival.

A reading performance of the play was also staged by the director at Mehregan Theater last April.

“Producing and staging plays in the private sector without having sponsors is a really difficult job,” Banan told the Persian service of MNA on Sunday.

“At least theater lovers and experts can support us by buying tickets, and not expecting

us to provide invitations and free admissions,” he lamented.

“As you pay for any service like paying for a cup of coffee in a café, you should pay for theater as well,” he concluded.

The play will be on stage until July 23.

“I Am a Happy Actress” reviewed at Tehran institute

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Afghan filmmaker Samereh Rezaei’s documentary “I Am a Happy Actress” exploring the dreams of two Afghan teenagers of becoming actors was screened at the Baharan Educational Institute in Tehran on Sunday, Iran’s Documentary and

Experimental Film Center (DEFC) announced.

Produced at the DEFC in two separate episodes, the documentary narrates the stories of two teenagers named Hakimeh and Sakineh living in a residential suburb near capital Tehran. Despite problems in

their families, they dream of becoming actors when they grow up.

“I Am a Happy Actress” was selected as best documentary at the Fourth Afghanistan International Women’s Film Festival — Herat, which was held in Kabul in 2016.