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Zarif says Iran's uranium stockpile has passed 300 kilogram

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Iran's enriched uranium stockpile has passed the 300 kilogram limit under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"I have been informed that Iran has

passed 300 kilogram stockpile according to its plans and we had announced that earlier. Based on what had been announced, we have said very clearly what we do and consider it our rights within the framework of the JCPOA," he told ISNA on the sidelines of a ceremony. **→2**

'Export markets of minerals preserved despite sanctions'

TEHRAN — The export markets of Iran's minerals have been preserved despite the sanctions imposed by the U.S., Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Khodadad Gharibpour said on Monday.

The official made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to celebrate the National Day of Industry and Mine which was participated by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahm-

ani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and Majlis speaker Ali Larijani, IRNA reported.

Speaking to reporters, IMIDRO head said, "It could not be said that the sanctions have had no effect on attraction of investment for the implementation of mining projects, but in terms of steel sector our focus is on localizing the related technology which is our main priority; and we have already achieved some good successes in this due." **→4**

U.S. failed to zero out Iranian oil exports, parliament speaker says

TEHRAN — The Americans have failed to drive Iran's imports and oil sales to zero, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said on Monday.

They failed to achieve their goals "because the world's big countries and our neighbors help us a lot," ISNA quoted Larijani as saying.

The Majlis speaker also said U.S. President Donald Trump behaves wickedly and is disreputable on the world stage.

"This person who is ruling America has created problems in the region with his unpredictable actions," he said. "One day he scraps an agreement with a country and another day he behaves differently toward another country."

On the U.S. moves against Iran, the parliament speaker said maybe the term "economic terrorism" can be used for the U.S. president's actions against the Islamic Republic. **→3**



EDITORIAL

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The messages hidden in a meeting

The leaders of the United States and North Korea met at the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in the borders that divide North and South Korea. The meeting was about 50 minutes long. The two sides were inside North Korea's borders only for the initial greetings and handshakes and after taking some pictures they had their talks inside the territory of South Korea.

The two sides had last met in late February; after that, the negotiations did not go any further and were practically on hold.

Evidently, Donald Trump is the first U.S. president to step into North Korea; he believes that going across the borders that divide North and South Korea is a cause for pride.

After the meeting, Trump announced that he had invited North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to Washington and they had agreed to restart negotiations, but the sanctions on North Korea were still in place!

Kim Jong Un also said that Trump's coming to the North Korea was a historical and important moment. If Kim Jong Un travels to U.S. as well, he will be the first North Korean president to visit U.S.

This meeting and Trump's strategy in dealing with one of the most important issues of U.S. foreign policy, tells us many important things which we will briefly discuss here:

First, as many international analysts believe, Trump's behavior, as a politician, has a number of features that makes him different from most of other politicians.

Experts believe Trump is a politician who majorly behaves based on advertising techniques; with using these techniques, he plays both his enemies and political rivals.

As he himself has repeatedly said in his electoral campaigns, he is an actor who tries to take the lead in all his interactions and don't let others to design the rules of games he is playing. This strategy is completely evident in the way he interacted with rich Arab sheikhs and now with boasting about his seemingly bold entrance into North Korea.

Therefore, we can conclude that Trump's actions are not based on any specific set of rules; he has no clear stand in politics; rather, he mainly designs his actions based on an advertising and commercial model. This is completely evident in the way he has been dealing with North Korea. **→13**

Iran-Russia relations within the framework of the Prisoner's Dilemma

By Mohammad Ali Hozhabri

TEHRAN — The U.S. withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal (JCPOA) has put the Islamic Republic of Iran in a state of imprisonment.

Tehran's relations with Brussels and the continuation of negotiations with them, as well as consultations with Russia to reduce the economic and currency turmoil in the country, to deal with unilateral U.S. sanctions and to facilitate the delivery of energy can be analyzed within the framework of the concept of "Prisoner's Dilemma".

The JCPOA and the U.S. withdrawal from this agreement has kept Iran in captivity. The Islamic Republic of Iran should be considered a prisoner facing various charges from the United States. Charges like the 12-year statement issued by Pompeo, the Foreign Minister of the U.S., to Iran; charges such as the crisis in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, missile and regional activities and

support for terrorism.

Dr. Velayati's visit to Moscow and his concurrence with Netanyahu's trip to the country, as well as the Iran President's visit to Europe to negotiate with Austria and Sweden, and European talks of Mr. Zarif and his assistants in the foreign ministry, resembles the idea of prisoners and their attempts to escape from prison.

Each of the parties in the JCPOA pursue their maximum interests.

With the withdrawal of the U.S. from this agreement, Europe must either continue to pursue the JCPOA and cooperate with Tehran and, consequently, lose maximum interests in relations with the United States, or elect Washington and comply with its legal and political obligations under JCPOA, which have been the result of years of negotiation and bargaining. And in this case will lose a lot of its economic interests in Tehran.

Bin Salman, Bin Zayed's honey moon is over

TEHRAN (MNA) — The two young Crown Prince of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, who over the past four years have had the highest share in supporting the Takfiri terrorists and undermining the security and stability of the Southwest region of Asia, have recently faced great controversy over Yemen crisis.

Although during the past year some security sources have reported the intensification of the "Al Saud" and "Al-Nahyan" disputes over the Yemeni war and their methods of dividing responsibilities in this cruel aggression, but few ones thought that the scope of this dispute would include the privacy of Saudi and Emirati officials.

Last week Jamal Khashoggi's fiancée, Hatice Cengiz called on clarification of her fiancée's

murder after a long silence while she was aware of the direct and undeniable role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the murder and mutilation of her fiancée body.

Cengiz mentioned recently that Saudi officials have been involved in the killing of Khashoggi and his murder has been a political crime.

This issue has once again attracted the attention of the participants in G20 summit, and bin Salman was questioned and even blamed for Khashoggi's murder in many of his official and informal meetings with the heads of G20.

Saudi officials, however, believe that the UAE security service and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan were the director of this event aimed to retaliate against

Russia, as another party in the JCPOA, will lose its maximum interest in the United States if it chooses Tehran, and faces more serious crises.

If Tehran tend to negotiate with the United States or surrender to Washington, it will get rid of the prisoner's dilemma. Russia, in the end, will lose the prospect of continuing the game.

Russia's cooperation with Netanyahu and Trump on Syria, trying to pull Iran out of Syria, shutting down Iranian military bases in the country, agreeing on missiles issue and stopping the sale of strategic missiles to Tehran, as well as cooperating in Iran's sanctions, will bring more benefits to Moscow. These are tempting interests. The benefits like the permanent deployment of Russian military bases and the guarantee of U.S. exit, privileges in the Ukrainian crisis and energy issues such as Nord Stream 2 or strategic competition in Eastern Europe. **→6**

some unilateral measures taken by the Saudi regime in the region (regardless of the interests of the Emiratis).

However, the Saudis also did not keep silent about the action of the Emirati and took revenge!

According to some known sources, there has recently been a meeting between al-Saud's intelligence service members and wife of the ruler of the Emirate of Dubai Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in Dubai which was in fact Saudi Arabia's security counterattack to the United Arab Emirates.

There is, of course, no report on the content of this meeting, but the general confirmation of this issue has provoked anger on Emirati officials. **→13**



Tehran Times holds birth anniversary for its late co-founder

TEHRAN — Tehran Times on Monday marked the birth anniversary of its late co-founder Irfan Parviz Ansari Javid in the presence of his wife.

He was considered as one of the major pioneers of Iran's English journalism and passed away at his home in Tehran in May 2015.

Born in the central Indian city of Bhopal, Irfan Parviz and a number of his colleagues, including Abbas Barzandeh, teamed up to establish a newspaper in order to spread news of the eventful days after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. The Tehran Times was born when its first edition came out on May 5, 1979.



ARTICLE

Ebrahim Fallahi
Tehran Times journalist

INSTEX, OPEC meeting and oil market

In the past few days, oil traders around the world have been eyeing three major events closely in order to catch a glance at the direction in which the oil prices would be heading.

On Friday, in the Austrian capital city of Vienna, an Iranian delegation headed by Abbas Araqchi was discussing the EU promised Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) with the 4+1 group headed by the Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Helga Schmid.

The outcomes of this meeting could play a significant role in determining the oil market statistics in the near future.

In the same day, thousands of miles away, in the Japanese city of Osaka, the G20 summit was underway in which heads of the world's two biggest economies namely, China and U.S. were attending. Many were hopeful that on the sidelines of this summit the two sides would hold talks and resolve some of the issues regarding their long lasting trade war.

Three days later, one of the world's most important event pertaining to the oil market was also underway. Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) along with Russia and other allies gathered in Vienna to discuss market policies and statistics and more importantly to decide whether to extend a deal reached two years ago for cutting their production by 1.2 million barrels per day.

The gathering between OPEC and Russia along with other oil producers, a group known as OPEC+, is still ongoing today in the European city of Vienna.

■ INSTEX and 4+1 meeting

On Friday, after months of ups and downs, the EU representatives, known as 4+1, announced that the INSTEX has become operational and the first transaction has been processed through the mechanism. "INSTEX now operational, first transactions being processed and more EU Members States to join." Helga Schmid, said in a tweet on Saturday. **→5**

'Talks with Washington impossible unless Trump upholds nuclear deal'

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Any negotiations between Tehran and Washington would not be possible unless U.S. President Donald Trump goes back to the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran's ambassador to the UN has said.

"The first thing the U.S. should do is to go back to the negotiating table", Majid Takht-Ravanchi told Fareed Zakaria's GPS aired by CNN on Sunday evening.



MP WANTS TO TALK WITH IRAN BUT GETS THE COLD SHOULDER **LIVE CNN**

"They left the negotiating table while the other members of the international community were talking to Iran about the nuclear issue. All of a sudden, the U.S. decided to withdraw and the whole problem, the whole mess that we are seeing around ourselves is geared to that decision," Takht-Ravanchi observed.

"You compare the situation in early 2018 - before U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal - to what we have today: it's a totally different story. So all the things started with that decision. In order to make things going back to normal, that decision has to be reversed," he noted.

Takht-Ravanchi also ruled out the possibility of talks as long as the U.S. keeps threatening Iran. "Talks and threats are mutually exclusive. We cannot start a dialogue with somebody while he/she is trying to intimidate and frighten you, is trying to impose sanctions on you. Coercion and intimidation do not go well with dialogue."

Therefore, he added, "as long as threats are there, as long as intimidation and coercion are there, I think we do not consider any offer of a dialogue as a genuine and production one."

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on June 26 dismissed America's claim about seeking talks with Tehran as a "deception," saying such an offer is merely aimed at stripping the Iranian nation of its "elements of power."

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks after U.S. officials expressed numerous offers of negotiations amid a campaign of "maximum pressure" against the Iranian nation.

The Iranian envoy made the remarks in reaction to the U.S. administration's repeated calls for "unconditional" talks with Tehran. The offer of talks, however, has been made at the same time as the U.S. increases its pressures against Iran, threatening the country on a daily basis.

In his CNN interview, Takht-Ravanchi also pointed to the negative impact of the U.S. pressures on the Iranian people, but stressed that the country is still capable of sustaining the pressure.

"We have already faced difficult situation during the Iran-Iraq war - the eight-year war imposed by Iraq on Iran; we managed to survive and we did, and I'm sure that we can. It is true the economic sanctions are putting pressure on the Iranian people, that is a fact. But that does not mean that we can succumb to pressure," he noted.

■ Europe must hurry up

Takht-Ravanchi further referred to Europe's efforts to save the Iran nuclear deal, and said they must hurry up and fulfill their commitments before Iran's July 8 deadline; otherwise Tehran will implement the "second phase" of scaling down its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran notified parties to the JCPOA on May 8 that it will resume its uranium enrichment if they fail to come up with a practical solution to keep it functioning.

Iran has specifically been critical of a financial mechanism launched by Britain, France and Germany to circumvent US sanctions on Iran, saying the initiative, known as Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), has failed to defuse U.S. restrictions on trade with Iran.

Under INSTEX, which is exclusive to European businesses, exports to Iran should be compensated by imports from the country. A mirror company in Iran would carry out the same transactions for Iranian companies exporting to and importing from Europe.

However, the mechanism has effectively failed to revive bi-lateral trade mainly due to a lack of advance funds that could offset the initial exports to Iran.

In his Sunday comments, Takht-Ravanchi said the establishment of the mechanism per se is not sufficient and cannot solve any problem. "They should put money in it."

Iran grants 5-year residency to foreign investors

TEHRAN (Press TV) — The Iranian government has accorded residency status to foreign investors as it seeks to cope with the impacts of sanctions that have affected the country's oil-driven revenues.

In a bid to further woo foreign investment to Iran, the government approved on Sunday to allow foreigners to settle in the country for five years if they make an investment of more than a quarter of million euros or its equivalent in other foreign currencies, the semi-official ISNA agency reported.

The report said investments that trigger the residency permit are not exclusive to manufacturing activities and those with bank deposits or investments in bonds or housing sector would also be eligible.

There was no mention of other conditions and whether the residency permit can be extended at the end of the five-year period.

The report said the measure was part of new regulations approved in a Cabinet session earlier on Sunday to facilitate Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Iran.

Iran has been urging foreign businesses to come and invest in the country as it seeks to enrich its foreign currency resources to cope with the impacts of U.S. sanctions.

Iran's minister of economy and finance Farhad Dejjpassand said earlier this week that FDI in Iran had more than doubled since early 2018 to reach \$3.5 billion in May.

Dejjpassand said the country was eyeing to meet higher FDI targets at the end of the current Iranian calendar year in March with a scheme to facilitate investments above 250,000 euros.

Iran has been trying to diversify its economy since the United States imposed a series of tough sanctions on its sale of oil last year.

The government also announced earlier on Sunday that it had allowed visa-free travels for Chinese nationals as authorities expect the arrival of some two million tourists from the East Asian country could significantly boost foreign currency revenues this year.

Zarif says Tehran to make Washington talk to Iranians with respect

1 → He noted, "The U.S. pressure against the Islamic Republic of Iran does not come from the U.S. power or our weakness. It comes from the U.S. consecutive failures in its policies against Iran."

He said that Iran responds to respect with respect and responds to pressure with resistance.

"The U.S. seeks to break the Iranian people's resistance and livelihoods, the people who have resisted in the past four decades and are fundamental basis of the Islamic Republic," he said.

■ 'Dollar's role in intl. transactions has been undermined'

Zarif also said that the dollar's role in the international business transactions has been undermined.

"Recently, Russia and China decided to do their transactions without dollar. In the past year, Iran and Turkey did 35 percent of their transactions without dollar and even India and the United Arab Emirates decided not to use dollar in part of their transactions," he explained.

Zarif noted that Iran should rely on domestic production and national capabilities.

INSTEX is a European special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between Europe and Iran.

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



"The U.S. pressure against the Islamic Republic of Iran does not come from the U.S. power and our weakness. It comes from the U.S. consecutive failures in its policies against Iran."

European Union mechanism for trade with Iran is up and running.

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has said that INSTEX has become operational and is processing the first transactions.

"On Friday we also gave an important an-

nouncement 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

Judiciary chief says will be ruthless in tackling corruption

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's Judiciary has said that his branch will be ruthless in tackling corruption in the country.

Ebrahim Raisi assumed office as the head of the Judiciary in March, with promises to bring about some reforms in his respective system, especially by fighting corruption.

Speaking to Judiciary officials on Monday, Raisi said in a move to address the shortcomings of the judicial system, the pitfalls are being monitored through field investigations across organizations that operate under the Judiciary.

He added that reformation in the system will be implemented in three short, mid, and long-term stages.

He also said that the Judiciary has special plans to tackle corruption within its own structure in the first place, announcing that a special committee will be formed tasked with understanding and addressing internal corruption.

In another part of his remarks, Raisi said Iran's current economic and social circumstances required special attention to resistance against enemies, refurbishing production, and upholding the value of the national currency.

He then pointed to the European Union's lack of commitment to their undertakings under the Iran nuclear deal and said, "Europe is still responsible to remove the problems that have been unjustly created against the

Iranian nation."

"Launching a credit line like INSTEX is not without benefits, but is by no means sufficient, and no one can tie their hopes to such measures."

"Therefore, I hope that European countries preserve their independence against the excessive demands of the United States of America to uphold what they have agreed to in the JCPOA."

On Sunday, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said that INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between Eu-

ropean 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



'Iran pursuing case of diplomat arrested in Germany'

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that the case of Assadollah Asadi, an Iranian diplomat who was arrested in Germany, will be pursued.

"The case will be pursued politically and legally and we hope that his innocence will be proved soon and he will be freed," he told reporters on sidelines of a ceremony.

Asadi was arrested in Germany in June 2018 on charges of being linked to a bomb attack plot in the French capital, Paris.

In October 2018, prosecutors said Germany extradited the Iranian diplomat to Belgium.

Belgian authorities said that the Iranian diplomat had been arrested along with a 38-year-old man and a 33-year-old woman, suspected of plotting a bomb attack on a meeting of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in Paris, which was attended by U.S. president's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, and several former European and Arab ministers.

■ 'Europeans should take practical steps by July 7'

Mousavi also said that he hopes Europeans will take practical steps in implementing INSTEX by July 7 or Iran will take second step in reducing its commitments



under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the nuclear pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to

step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions' effects. The deadline ends on July 7.

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

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Iran's enriched uranium stockpile has passed the 300 kilogram limit.

Under the JCPOA, Iran was only allowed to keep 300 kilograms of enriched uranium.

"I have been informed that Iran has passed 300-kilogram stockpile according to its plans and we had announced that earlier. Based on what had been announced, we have said very clearly what we do and consider it our rights within the framework of the JCPOA," he told ISNA on the sidelines of a ceremony.

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.

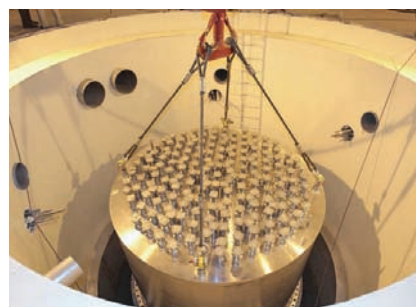
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Zarif says Iran's enriched uranium stockpile passed 300 kilograms

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Iranian

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Iran's enriched uranium stockpile has surpassed the 300 kilogram limit set under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"I have been informed that Iran has passed 300 kilogram stockpile according to its plans and we had announced that earlier. Based on what had been announced, we have said very clearly what we do and



consider it our rights within the framework of the JCPOA," he told ISNA on the sidelines of a ceremony.

Under the JCPOA, Iran was only allowed to keep 300 kilograms of enriched uranium.

As a retaliation against the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and reimposition of sanctions on Iran coupled with a failure by the European Union to compensate for the U.S. exit, Iran officially announced that it would stop implementing the limit for 60 days from May 8.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced on June 17 that Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium will exceed 300 kilograms by June 27.

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

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

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.

However, Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, on Saturday likened INSTEX to a "beautiful car without gasoline".

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

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington in May 2018 from the multi-lateral 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.

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

However, Iran has said if the remaining parties take concrete steps to shield Iran from sanctions it will reverse its decisions.

General says scope and duration of a war against Iran cannot be determined by anyone

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian armed forces are ready to impose heavy costs on the enemy in case of any aggression, says Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, the commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Central Headquarters.

“As much as we try to prevent a war with our superior intelligence, wisdom and foresight, we are ready to impose heavy costs on the aggressors more than ever and we are agile and will decide and act quickly,” Rashid said, Mehr reported on Monday.

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.

Rashid warned that in case a war breaks out



in the region, its scope and duration cannot be determined by anyone.

“America should have learned from the mistakes of invading Iraq and Afghanistan,”

he said, warning Washington against making yet another mistake with regard to the Islamic Republic.

He further reiterated that in the event of a war, the Iranian armed forces will make the enemy regret its aggression.

In a post on his Tweeter page on Thursday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the U.S. mistakenly thinks a potential war with Iran will be a short one, rejecting the speculation as an “illusion” and a “misconception.”

The beginner of such war would not be necessarily the party that ends it, Zarif added.

U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard has warned the Trump administration that “a war with Iran would make that war with Iraq look like a picnic.”

Bernie Sanders, another presidential candidate for the 2020 election, has said, “If Trump wants to go to war in Iran, that will make the war in Iraq look like a cakewalk.”

Minister: U.S. sanctions hampering Iran’s humanitarian projects

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Monday the cruel sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran prevent the country from implementing its humanitarian projects.

The sanctions disrupt Iran’s services to refugees and have a negative impact on fighting drug trafficking and human trafficking and preventing the flood of immigration to European countries, Rahmani Fazli said, according to IRNA.

He also said for forty years the Islamic Republic has welcomed millions of refugees from neighboring countries due to its humanitarian stance and moral values.

Iran has been the biggest advocate of refugees in the world and has provided the refugees with different services, including healthcare, education and decent living conditions without any discrimination, the minister insisted.

In May 2015, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei issued a decree to the Ministry of Education allowing all Afghan children of school age, regardless of documentation status, to attend primary and secondary school education. In addition, all refugees of school-age are now exempt from paying costly refugee-specific tuition fees, which encourages even vulnerable and economically challenged families to send their children to school.

Earlier this year, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said Western countries have caused many problems for the Afghan people and should fulfil their duties in helping the Afghan refugees.

“Iran has been hosting Afghan refugees for 40 years with generosity and the Western countries, which have caused many miseries for the Afghan people, should fulfil their duties in this respect,” Araqchi said.



Iran to cooperate if Europe acts honestly in implementing INSTEX: MP

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Javad Jamali, deputy chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said that Iran will cooperate if Europe acts with honesty in implementing INSTEX.

In an interview with ISNA published on Monday, he said that the Europeans cannot force Iran to fulfil its commitments and avoid paying the price.

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

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.

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.

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

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

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.

Tehran condemns terror attack in the Philippines

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has denounced a recent terrorist attack on a military camp in the Philippines that killed and injured several soldiers.

In a statement on Monday, Mousavi expressed sympathy with the government and people of the Philippines, especially the victims’ families.

Five people including three soldiers were killed in a bombing targeting an elite army unit in the Philippines’s restive south, which the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group claimed was a suicide attack.

The military said the kidnap-for-ransom group and Daesh-affiliate Abu Sayyaf was likely behind the midday blast on the island of Jolo on Friday, which also left nine other soldiers wounded.

Daesh claimed the bombing was the work of two suicide attackers, according to tweets from Rita Katz, the director of SITE Intelligence Group.

The Philippines has renewed its campaign against the militants on Jolo this year after a suspected suicide bomber struck the island’s Roman Catholic cathedral in January, killing 21 people.



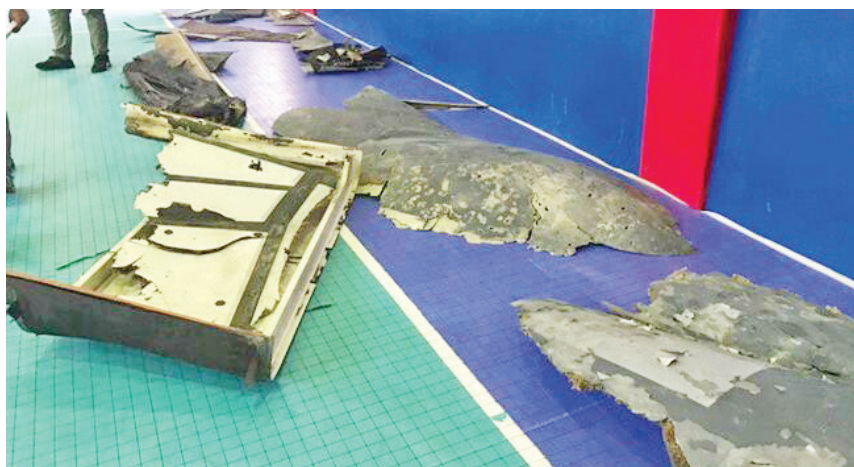
Iranian MPs to visit site of downed U.S. spy drone

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A number of Iranian lawmakers plan to visit an area south of the country where the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down an advanced U.S. spy drone, a parliamentarian said.

Speaking to the Tasnim News Agency, Ehsan Ghazizadeh Hashemi said according to a decision by the presiding board of the parliament, a number of MPs are slated to pay a visit to the Abu Musa island in southern Iran on the anniversary of the U.S. move to shoot down an Iranian civilian airliner in 1988, which killed 290 people on board, including 66 children.

In addition to visiting the site of the incident, the MPs plan to go to the area where a U.S. spy drone was recently shot down by the IRGC Aerospace Force.

The IRGC said on June 20 that a U.S. spy drone that violated the Iranian territorial airspace in the early hours of the day was shot down by the IRGC Aerospace Force’s



air defense unit near the Kooch-e-Mobarak region in the southern province of Hormozgan. 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 U.S. aircraft had a straightforward message that any foreign intrusion into Iran’s sovereign territories would draw a crushing response.

“The downing of the U.S. drone had an explicit, decisive and clear message that defenders of the Islamic Iran’s borders will show decisive and knockout reactions to aggression against this territory by any alien,” he said.

“Borders are our redline, and any enemy violating these borders will not go back,” the commander underlined.

He also made it clear that Iran is not seeking war with any country but is fully prepared for any confrontation. “Today’s incident was a clear sign of such a precise message.”

The general also reminded the enemies that the only way for them to remain safe is to respect Iran’s territorial integrity, national security and vital interests.

‘If U.S. attacks Iran, Israel won’t survive next half-hour’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Majlis Nuclear Committee Mojtaba Zonnour says should the United States attack Iran, Israel’s remaining life would be less than half an hour.



In an interview with Al-Alam TV channel, Zonnour said he does not regard U.S. President Donald Trump as a “man of war”, but in the event of an aggression, Iran’s response would be “very harsh”.

The top MP pointed to Trump’s recent claim that he had called off an attack on a number of Iranian positions, saying the U.S. president was merely bluffing.

“Trump is a businessman and is only after financial profits,” he said, adding, “Also, all those individuals who are consulted by Mr. Trump knew that the outcome of an attack would have been a defeat for America.”

“With divine power we are fully ready. We have not intended to attack any country and 40 years of the Islamic Revolution manifests this. But if they attack, we are able to cut off any foot and any hand intruding into our soil.”

Amid escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington, Iran’s IRGC shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone on June 20 after it breached Iran’s airspace. The IRGC brought the drone down by firing a surface-to-air missile at it.

Zonnour said Iran did not shoot down the American drone immediately but issued warnings first.

“We were also able to shoot down their other spy plane with 35 passengers but refrained due to humanitarian concerns,” he said. “We proved that we are powerful as well as honorable.”

Trump has lauded Tehran’s decision not to shoot down the plane. “There was a plane with 38 people yesterday, did you see that?” he told reporters on June 22.

“I think that’s a big story. They had it in their sights and they didn’t shoot it down. I think they were very wise not to do that. And we appreciate that they didn’t do that. I think that was a very wise decision.”

U.S. failed to zero out Iranian oil exports, parliament speaker says

1 → Larijani predicted that the current situation, as created by Trump, would not continue for a long time because other countries would not tolerate the status quo as well.



He also made a reference to the countries that intend to ease the Tehran-Washington tensions, saying, “We welcome any constructive proposal that safeguards [our] national interests, but we will not turn into a puppet of anyone.”

“We will determine which proposals are feasible and which ones are not,” he added.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Tehran last month with the aim of reducing tensions between Iran and the United States.

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

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

In remarks over the weekend, Abe said he is committed to make effort toward easing the situation in the Middle East and expressed concern over the recent tensions around Iran.

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

STOCK MARKET

| | |
|--------|----------|
| TEDPIX | 247122.5 |
| IFX | 3185.28 |

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

| | |
|-----|--------------|
| USD | 42,000 rials |
| EUR | 47,676 rials |
| GBP | 53,331 rials |
| AED | 11,437 rials |

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Brent | \$66.37/b |
| WTI | \$59.95/b |
| OPEC Basket | \$65.61/b |
| Gold | \$1,392.65/oz |
| Silver | \$15.33/oz |
| Platinum | \$842.20/oz |

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran calls for removing barriers in trade with Armenia

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In the opening ceremony of the 16th Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on Monday, Iranian Deputy Minister of Energy for International Affairs Farhad Yazdandoust called on the two sides to take necessary measures for removing barriers in the way of mutual trade.



“It is necessary for the two sides to explore and identify the challenges faced in the way of expanding economic relations,” the portal of Iranian Energy Ministry (known as PAVEN) quoted Yazdandoust as saying.

The official mentioned the strong cultural and political relations between the two countries and expressed hope that with the two sides’ determination the trade ties would also experience a significant boost in near future.

He further mentioned some of the areas for mutual cooperation between the two countries including accelerating the implementation of Iran’s third line of electricity transmission to Armenia, preventing contamination of the Aras river, constructing a water treatment plant or system for Armenian copper mines, and construction of a hydroelectric power plant in Armenia, as well as scientific and tourism cooperation.

In the meeting, the two sides established four specialized committees, including a committee on energy, water and the environment, the scientific, cultural, social and health committee, the committee on trade, industry, investment, banking and finance, and finally a committee on transport, communications, agriculture, security and provincial partnerships.

Representing the Armenian side, the country’s Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Infrastructure, Hakob Vardanyan expressed gratitude for Iran’s hospitality, noting that holding such meetings would bear positive outcomes for both sides.

Mentioning the two countries economic cooperation in the free zones, Vardanyan voiced his country’s readiness for expansion of mutual cooperation in this area.

Attended by the members of the two sides’ committees, the 16th Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee meeting was hosted by Iran’s energy ministry.

World Bank trims Malaysia’s 2019 growth forecast to 4.6%

The World Bank Monday trimmed its 2019 economic growth forecast for Malaysia to 4.6% from 4.7% citing external headwinds arising from the U.S.-China trade tension and weak investment growth.

As per asia.nikkei.com, the multilateral agency, which forecasts the third-largest Southeast Asian economy to expand at the same pace next year, still expects the country to achieve high-income status by 2024. In the nearer term, Malaysia’s relatively high levels of public debt will continue to constrain fiscal space, it said.

“Malaysia’s growth outlook continues to face downside risks with potential escalation of U.S.-China trade tensions and a more subdued business environment,” Country Director Mara Warwick said in administrative capital Putrajaya. “We are still optimistic that we will see recovery in global trade returning to its trend rate.”

Since sweeping to power in a shock May 2018 election, the new Alliance of Hope coalition government has scrapped several costly state-backed infrastructure projects and put others on review as Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad seeks to mend Malaysia’s finances amid mounting government debt.

■ A transition in power

A transition in power, the first since Malaysia gained independence from the Great Britain in 1957, prompted several corporates and investors to hold back investments pending policy clarity. That has weighed on economic growth at a time when U.S. and China are caught in a tariff battle.

“Moving forward, we expect more headwinds with growing uncertainty of global economic environment, particularly with geopolitics playing greater role in shaping economic policies in the region,” Minister of Economic Affairs Azmin Ali said.

Although the trade-reliant economy is vulnerable to global factors, its growth is being increasingly shaped by domestic demand fueled by private appetite, Azmin said. “Private consumption is expected to remain the mainstay of growth in near future,” he added.

The government plans to spend 45 billion ringgit (\$10.9 billion) through this year in more than 4000 development projects to support growth, he said. “With resumption of several large-scale projects, these measures will be our growth drivers for this year and the next.”

‘Export markets of Iran’s minerals preserved despite sanctions’

1 → “As compared with the other economic sectors the mining sector’s reliance on foreign sources is less, it could preserve its export markets despite all pressures from the sanctions”, Gharibpour further underlined.

In an attempt to [as the U.S. president Trump put it] “choke off the country’s largest non-petroleum related sources of export revenue”, Washington imposed new sanctions on Iran’s metals and minerals sectors in early May.

While at the first glance [considering Trump’s comments], this might seem to be a heavy hit to Iran’s economy in the near future but a close look into the country’s exports data could reveal Trump’s great miscalculations. In fact, this could even be considered a “blessing in disguise” for the country’s minerals and metal industry.

In a press conference on June 8, Iranian deputy industry, mining and trade minister said the ministry has taken necessary measures to maintain the country’s metal exports despite U.S. sanctions.

“We have established a special working group in the ministry which is closely assessing the situation and making necessary arrangements to mitigate the impact of U.S. sanctions,” Jafar Sarqini told the Tehran Times in the press conference.

The official noted that it is expected for the exports from the country’s mining sector to, at least, reach the last year’s \$8.5 billion



Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani speaking in a ceremony to celebrate National Day of Industry and Mine on Monday

by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020).

Also, during a meeting with the members of Iran Steel Association on June 23, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the country has achieved a proper self-reliance in steel industry.

Steel industry is one of the industries in which some good investment has been

made and today it has become a production advantage, the minister further underscored.

According to World Steel Association, Iran became the world’s tenth largest steel producer in 2018.

■ Iran-made movement to flourish industry

Addressing the ceremony of National Day of Industry and Mine on Monday, Industry,

Tehran hosting intl. exhibitions of kitchen, bath, ceramic, tile

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian capital, Tehran, is hosting two international exhibitions of kitchen, bath and pool, in addition to tile and ceramic industries at the place of its permanent international fairgrounds, IRIB reported.

The exhibitions including 17th International Exhibition of Kitchen, Bath, Sauna, Pool Industries and Equipment and 26th International Tile-Ceramic and Sanitary ware (CERAFAIR 2019) kicked off on Sunday and will wrap up on Wednesday.

As reported, CERAFAIR 2019 is hosting 176 Iranian and foreign exhibitors, while 160 companies are attending the international exhibition of kitchen, bath, sauna and pool.

According to the organizers, several workshops are held on the sidelines of this year’s edition of CERAFAIR and several foreign trade delegations from Central Asia and the Persian Gulf region are visiting the exhibition to purchase products or sign deals with Iranian manufacturers.

According to the Head of the Iranian Ceramic-Tile Producers Syndicate (IRCPIS), Mohammad Roshanfekr, this year’s event is hosting foreign exhibitors from various countries including Italy, Spain and China.

Speaking to IRNA before the exhibition, the official had said that this year’s exhibition mainly focuses on presentation of Iranian products and introduction of Iranian industrialists, manufacturers and entrepreneurs in the field of ceramic.

He underlined the potentials and capabilities of Iran’s ceramic and tile industry, saying that the country’s ceramic and tile exports in the Iranian calendar year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019)



increased by 10 percent compared to its preceding year.

Roshanfekr put the country’s ceramic and tile production during the Iranian calendar year of 1397 at about 400 million cubic meters.

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

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

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

And the International Exhibition of Kitchen, Bath, Sauna, Pool Industries and Equipment, which covers four main categories of kitchen, pool, sauna and bath, aims to increase the efficiency of Iranian factories and production units, expand the industry’s export markets, identify problems, barriers and weaknesses in the industry, and also to create a healthy competitive environment for domestic producers to improve their production quality.

As reported by IRNA, this year’s edition of the event is hosting 20 knowledge-based companies for the first time.

Iran, Iraq, Syria hold tripartite meeting to discuss transportation co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran, Iraq and Syria held a tripartite meeting on Monday in Tehran for discussing expansion of transportation cooperation among the three countries, IRNA reported.

According to the Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Saied Rasouli, development of rail transport, increasing transit, development of exports and imports, and implementation of the Shalamcheh-Basra railway were among the topics discussed in the meeting.

In the meeting, Rasouli expressed Iran’s readiness for starting the construction operations of Shalamcheh-Basra railway, urging the Iraqi side to determine and introduce a

representative company.

On the sidelines of the event, Rasouli told the press that a comprehensive tripartite document on rail transportation cooperation among the three countries was presented at the meeting, which was mainly focused on connecting the three sides through Shalamcheh-Basra railway.

The official further noted that establishing a railway link and creating transit corridors between the three countries are called for by high-ranking officials from all three sides.

In order to complete the Shalamcheh-Basra railroad route, the 17-kilometer Khorramshahr-Shalamcheh rail-

‘59km of railroads to connect major cargo hubs to railway network by Mar. 2020’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) said that 59 kilometers of railroads are planned to be built for connecting the major cargo hubs in the country to the national railway network by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020).

Saeed Rasouli mentioned linking the cargo hubs to the railway network as one of the main priorities of RAI in the current year, Mehr news agency reported.

The official has previously named boosting efficiency of railway fleet and network through benefitting from the most available capacities and supporting domestic production in developing passenger and cargo fleet as two other major priorities of his organization in this year.

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

Last week, Rasouli announced that his organization and the ministry of industry have come to an agreement on supporting domestic production in the railway sector.

He said that a task force has been set up to follow up the issue, IRNA reported.

The official has also announced that 20 trillion rials (about \$476.1 million) has been allocated to renovation of 1000 passenger and freight wagons and also locomotives through benefitting from domestic capabilities in the current Iranian calendar year, IRIB reported.

Rasouli said this amount has been allocated by the Planning and Budget Organization.

Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said that the Iran-made movement alone will flourish industry sector of the country.

“While preserving production was on top of the plans of Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry in the past [Iranian calendar] year, Iran-made movement, which is being followed up this year, can thrive domestic industry on its own”, the minister stressed.

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

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

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

Last week, deputy minister of industry, mining and trade announced that the ministry will launch a comprehensive system for registration of domestically-made products in near future.

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



In this year, which is named as the year of “Pickup in Production” by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, all efforts of RAI are for renovating the railway fleet of the country by relying on domestic producers, the official further stressed.

On June 12, Iran’s transport minister unveiled an Iranian-made freight locomotive on the sidelines of the 7th International Exhibition of Rail Transportation, Related Industries and Equipment, dubbed RAI-LEXPO 2019.

“This new locomotive can reduce its supply costs to one-sixth while being able to compete with foreign rivals,” IRNA quoted Mohammad Eslami as saying.

Last year, during the same exhibition, Iran unveiled the first ever Iranian-made locomotive engine.

According to the manufacturers, the mentioned engine complies with Euro4 standards for reducing fuel consumption and competes with the best European engines in terms of quality.

Currently, Iran has 13,000 kilometers of railway laid, and based on the country’s Sixth National Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2021), the railway network is due to expand to more than 16,400 kilometers.

Iran is currently among top eight countries regarding the technology of railway signaling systems, according to the head of RAI.

No ‘big’ stimulus needed in China unless trade war worsens, says PBOC adviser

China’s economy is likely to hit its growth target this year provided a bitter trade dispute with the United States does not worsen, and hence will not need “very big” stimulus measures to prop up growth, a central bank adviser said on Monday.

According to reuters.com. “if the Sino-U.S. trade relationship does not deteriorate further, the possibility of keeping gross domestic product (GDP) growth over 6% this year is rather big,” Ma Jun told Reuters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

Chinese leaders have set a growth target of 6-6.5% for 2019.

“There should be no need to take very big, new stimulus measures,” he said.

The United States and China agreed on Saturday to restart trade talks after President Donald Trump offered concessions including



no new tariffs and an easing of restrictions on tech company Huawei (HWT.UL) in order to reduce tensions with Beijing.

But China’s weak manufacturing readings in June, reflecting slowing momentum in a key sector driving growth, are likely to cast a shadow over the apparent progress

U.S. and Chinese leaders made at the G20 summit in Japan.

■ The financial system

The People’s Bank of China (PBOC) has already slashed the amount of cash banks must hold as reserve six times since early 2018 to help turn around soft credit growth. It has also injected large amounts of liquidity into the financial system and guided short-term interest rates lower.

Premier Li Keqiang raised expectations of more action last week by pledging measures to cut real interest rates on financing for small and micro firms.

The central bank has vowed not to adopt “flood-like” stimulus that analysts say could exacerbate debt and structural risks.

Larry Hu, chief China economist at Macquarie Group, still expects China’s economic stimulus to “escalate to the next level” in the four quarter as the economy is seen de-

teriorating further, even if trade tensions de-escalate.

The “reason is that the current growth slowdown in China is related to, but not caused by the trade war,” he wrote in a note on Sunday.

Asked if the PBOC will follow in the footsteps of the U.S. Federal Reserve in monetary easing, PBOC’s Ma said China’s monetary policymaking is primarily based on domestic economic conditions.

The Fed is expected to confirm a U-turn in global monetary policy and cut interest rates for the first time since the financial crisis a decade ago.

Ma said such changes in the external environment is “only for reference” in terms of its impact on the central bank’s monetary policies.

OPEC should avoid unilateralism for positive co-op with allies: Zanganeh

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Sunday that OPEC needs to keep its unity if it is pursuing cooperation between members and non-OPEC allies, Shana reported.

"Unilateralism is OPEC's current major problem," Zanganeh said upon arriving in Vienna, adding that Iran doesn't have a problem with extending the output cuts for another six to nine months.

"Without unity among members of OPEC, it is meaningless to plan cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC countries," he said.

The official noted that OPEC is a 14-member organization and every decision should be made based on consensus and not unilaterally.

"We are not here to execute the decisions that are made for us. I believe, for OPEC to survive, we must make our decisions within OPEC rather than receiving instructions from outside," he said.

Zanganeh expressed support for the decision on extending the output cuts, saying "Iran supports cooperation with

non-OPEC states, but as long as some members of OPEC are hostile against other members, like Iran, OPEC's understandings with non-OPEC states are meaningless and there is no room for cooperation."

Iran has repeatedly criticized Saudi Arabia's approach toward the Islamic Republic, saying Riyadh was too close to the United States.

"An organization, where two members strive to challenge the interests of other members, is doomed to dissolution and talks of OPEC-non-OPEC agreements would be meaningless," Zanganeh said.

OPEC members and their allies outside the organization are meeting in Vienna to decide whether to extend the current output restrictions of 1.2 million barrels per day for another six to nine months.

OPEC and its allies are expected to extend oil supply cuts at least until the end of 2019 as Iran also joined top producers Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Russia in endorsing a policy aimed at propping up the price of crude amid a weakening global economy.



In May 2018, the United States exited a 2015 deal between Iran and world powers. After withdrawing, Washington re-imposed sanctions and further tightened

them from the start of May, ordering all countries and companies to halt all imports of Iranian oil or be banished from the global financial system.

INSTEX, OPEC meeting and oil market

1 → With the EU trade mechanism going operational, Iran expects Europe to buy its oil through this mechanism and so with the Iranian oil being re-injected into the European markets, most definitely the global oil markets will be affected.

After the breakout of the news about the INSTEX going operational, Iranian media and press reported that Iran expects Europe to buy its oil through INSTEX along with basic goods and medicine trade.

Mostafa Kavakebian, an Iranian lawmaker and a member of the Iranian delegation attending the Vienna meeting, urged Europe on Saturday to include oil in the INSTEX as well as financial transactions.

The news was welcomed by Europe. Seven European countries—Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden—in a joint statement expressed their support for the efforts for implementation of INSTEX while Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov also expressed Moscow's willingness for joining the countries that will regulate trade exchanges with Iran through the mechanism.

The impact of INSTEX on the oil market is not yet very tangible, however if the EU agrees to buy oil from Iran, it could change a lot in the oil market statistics and the impact on the prices would be significant indeed.

■ U.S., China and G20 gathering

In the past two years, a trade spat between the world's two biggest economies has caused lots of worrisome among the oil traders, since the rising tensions between the U.S. and China has been weighing on the oil prices and the skepticism over the global demand has been



overshadowing the oil markets.

The two sides have held several rounds of talks, however so far no truce is expected to be reached between them as they have been imposing increasingly severe tariffs on each other's imports.

One the sidelines of the G20 meeting on Saturday, however, sign of significant progress in relations were appeared as Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to a ceasefire and restarting talks.

The exchange of olive branches between the United States and China during the G20 meeting, has offered some hope that the long-lasting dispute between the world's two largest economies can be resolved and a dimming outlook for the global oil demand is not something to be afraid about.

According to Reuters, the European Union and South

American bloc Mercosur have also agreed a free trade treaty on Friday, which could also be a driving force for the global economy.

Now, after the G20 meeting, oil traders are more optimistic about the future of the oil markets, and with more good news coming from OPEC gathering venue in Vienna, oil prices are once again heading toward new highs.

■ OPEC+ gathering underway

OPEC, Russia and some other allies are gathering in Vienna in two consecutive days, to mainly decide on the extension of an output cut deal which started in 2017 and has been prolonged up to date.

On Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he agreed with Saudi Arabia to extend existing output cuts of 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) by six to nine months.

Later that day, Iraq also joined the alliance, expressing its approval of a decision on extending the deal for another six to nine months.

Oil markets which had gathered enough momentum on the previous positive signs from Vienna and Japan, reacted strongly to the news on Monday.

Reuters reported on Monday that "oil prices rose more than \$1 a barrel after Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq backed an extension of supply cuts for another six to nine months ahead of an OPEC meeting."

Although OPEC, Russia and other producers are due to gather today to make the final decision, however the market seems to be given enough green light which the prices are seen to be following their upward trend toward the end of this week.

Brent oil jumps over \$2 as OPEC+ poised to extend supply cut

Oil prices rose over \$2 a barrel on Monday as OPEC and its allies looked on track to extend supply cuts until at least the end of 2019 at their meeting in Vienna this week.

According to reuters.com, front-month Brent crude futures touched an intraday high of \$66.75 a barrel and were up \$1.80 at \$66.54 a barrel by 0834 GMT.

U.S. crude futures for August climbed \$1.57 to \$60.04 a barrel, after earlier hitting their highest in over five weeks at \$60.28.

Iran - under U.S. sanctions alongside OPEC ally Venezuela - on Monday joined top producers Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Russia in supporting a policy aimed at propping up the price of crude amid a weakening global economy.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Russia



and other producers, an alliance known as OPEC+, meet on Monday and Tuesday to discuss supply cuts. The group has been reducing oil output since 2017 to prevent prices from sliding amid a weakening global economy and soaring U.S. production.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said

on Sunday he had agreed with Saudi Arabia to extend existing output cuts of 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) by six to nine months.

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said the deal would most likely be extended by nine months and no deeper reductions were needed.

"If Russia, Saudi Arabia and the other key OPEC members keep production at the levels they produced in H1-19 they will ensure that the global oil market is not flowing over. They will only have to pay a small restraint while reaping a nice oil price of \$60-70 a barrel," said SEB's Bjarne Schieldrop.

"OPEC as a whole is losing market share. But this burden is not evenly distributed as it is Venezuela and Iran who are taking almost all the pain."

Oil prices have come under renewed pressure in recent months from rising U.S. supplies and a slowing global economy.

U.S. crude oil output in April rose to a fresh monthly record of 12.16 million bpd, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, even though shale production growth likely peaked last year.

Meanwhile, financial markets were buoyed by a thawing of U.S.-China relations after leaders of the world's two largest economies agreed on Saturday to restart trade talks.

However, Citi analysts viewed the announcements as a temporary truce to de-escalate the trade and tariff war, and were skeptical that both sides can reach a deal soon.

OPEC set to extend output cuts into 2020 as demand falters

The OPEC+ alliance is poised to extend production cuts into 2020 as the world's leading oil exporters fret about a weakening outlook for global demand growth and the relentless rise in output from America's shale fields.

As per finance.yahoo.com, at the start of two days of meetings in Vienna, the ministerial committee that advises Saudi Arabia, Russia and other countries in the OPEC+ coalition recommended extending curbs for a further nine months. That's likely to be ratified by a full OPEC meeting this afternoon. The idea of a longer-than-expected extension was first mooted by President Vladimir Putin after he met Saudi Arabia's crown prince at the G-20 in Japan on Saturday.

The "market is going to like the nine months extension," said Mohammad Darwazah, oil analyst at consultant Medley Global Advisers, who's in Vienna monitoring the oil talks. "Everyone now is realizing that in 2020 supply growth will exceed demand growth. And the Saudis and the Russians are trying to get ahead of that situation."

Originally envisioned as a short-term fix in 2017 to drain excess global stockpiles, the decision to keep rolling the cuts forwards shows the challenge of controlling the oil market in the age of shale. While the strategy has succeeded in raising prices, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' share of the global oil market has fallen to the lowest since 1991.

By pushing to extend the cuts until March 2020, Saudi Arabia is trying to avoid cliffhanger meetings, when the group gathers only days -- or even hours -- before

a round of curbs expire, according to an OPEC delegate briefed on the strategy. OPEC will meet before the end of the year, perhaps in December, giving the cartel a cushion of several months between its next meeting and the end of the agreement.

■ To raise production over the winter

For Moscow, there's an extra incentive to extend the curbs by nine months as Russian oil companies struggle to raise production over the winter. By extending the deal into 2020, Russia could be in a better position to pump more during the spring of next year.

The International Energy Agency and other market watchers have pegged back forecasts for demand growth in recent months as China and India, the twin engines of global energy consumption, didn't grow as fast as originally expected. At the same time, American shale production has set fresh records, putting the U.S. on the brink of becoming a net oil exporter.

The "oil market is getting excited about the cut extension, but OPEC appears more and more worried about demand," said Andrew Dodson, founder of commodity hedge fund Philipp Oil.

Nigeria, Venezuela, Iraq and Oman also expressed their conditional support for an extension of as long as nine months, which isn't the OPEC policy playbook as the oil-club has traditionally aimed for half-year deals.

■ The dominance of Saudi Arabia

Despite the broad consensus for a six-to-nine month extension, the meeting could prove contentious as Iran

appears determined to make an issue of the growing dominance of Saudi Arabia and non-member Russia in the policy decision making of the cartel. Zanganeh said he may reject several side agreements meant to solidify the long-term collaboration between OPEC and Russia and other oil producers. Though he did say we wouldn't insist on anti-sanctions language in the final communique, a sticking point last time.

Until the weekend, OPEC officials had been discussing prolonging cuts through 2019. Yet Putin opened the door to 2020 by mooted longer curbs after meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

Hours after Putin's meeting in Osaka with Prince Mohammed, Saudi Oil Minister Khalid Al-Falih said that Saudi Arabia supported a nine-month extension but that "we have to talk to other ministers." He warned that oil-demand growth had "softened a little bit," but said there wasn't a need to deepen the cuts.

The group is likely to schedule its next meeting for December, according to Secretary-General Mohammad Barkindo, who also said he expects his term as secretary-general to be renewed beyond its expiry in August.

The current version of the OPEC+ deal calls for production curbs of 1.2 million barrels a day, though the alliance has cut more than it pledged as U.S. sanctions on Iran and Venezuela slashed output from both countries.

(Source: finance.yahoo.com)

Australia trims LNG export volumes forecast as it jostles with Qatar for no. 1

Australia's Department of Industry, Innovation and Science has marginally lowered its forecast for the country's LNG export volumes for the next two years as the country jostles with Qatar to be the world's largest exporter of the fuel, it said Monday in its Resources and Energy Quarterly report.

According to spglobal.com, for the 2018-2019 (July-June) fiscal year, it is now expecting exports of 74.8 million mt, down by 1% from the 75.6 million mt figure given in the March quarter edition of the report. The report also estimates LNG exports for the next two fiscal years to drop by 1% and 2% to 81.3 million mt from 82 million mt, and to 81.2 million mt from 82.6 million mt, respectively.

The fiscal 2018-2019 forecast should be enough to see Australia edge past Qatar on an annual basis to be the world's largest exporter, but the margin will be very narrow, it said, adding that it's not a certainty.

The "tussle for the title of world's largest LNG exporter is further complicated by a lack of clarity around the price level of Qatar's LNG exports," the Canberra-based unit said.

"During the mid-2020s, Australia is expected to be surpassed as the world's largest LNG exporter by both Qatar and the U.S., as new projects in both countries come online," it said.

The report noted that ConocoPhillips is expecting to shut down the Darwin LNG plant for one-to-two years, starting between 2021 and 2023, when gas from the Bayu-Undan backfill field is exhausted. While falling output had been factored into the outlook for the March quarter edition of the report, production is now expected to decline at a faster rate, it said.

The Department now expects world LNG trade to rise to 348.9 million mt in 2019, up from 318 million mt in 2018, and will increase further to 367.2 million mt in 2020 and then to 380.8 million mt in 2021.

"In 2019 and 2020, the continued expansion in global LNG supply capacity is expected to outpace growth in LNG demand, before capacity growth slows dramatically in 2021. From 2021, the LNG market is expected to begin rebalancing, as demand growth absorbs the available capacity," it said.

Global gas consumption is estimated to be just ahead of the production in the coming years. In 2019, consumption is expected at 3,929.9 billion cubic meters and production at 3,920.3 billion cu m. By 2021, consumption and production are estimated at 4,061.6 billion cu m and 3,032 billion cu m, respectively.

Wind energy in Mexico: Nordex manufactures wind turbines in Matamoros, Tamaulipas

Nordex Acciona, a plant of German origin dedicated to the production of blades for wind turbines, was inaugurated in Matamoros, Tamaulipas. The blades that will be manufactured from this border city will be the largest in the world.

As stated by ewind.es, the arrival of Nordex to Matamoros represents the generation of 800 direct jobs and an investment of 1,200 million dollars.

It is the second wind turbine production plant that has been installed in this Tamaulipas municipality in the last eight months; its construction was carried out in a record time of six months and will have four production lines that will convert this plant into the first in the world in which wind power blades will be manufactured for the 4-4.5 MW and 3-3.4 MW segments.

Since its founding in 1985, Grupo Nordex has installed more than 25 GW of wind farm capacity in 40 markets.

In Mexico, it currently has a wind farm capacity of 1,250 MW that it has installed for its customers and another 274 MW under construction.

■ The wind turbines

The wind turbines manufactured by the Nordex Acciona Windpower Group are distributed throughout the country, in parks in Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Jalisco and Oaxaca, where they started 15 years ago as well as in Quintana Roo.

Nordex has presence with plants in Germany, Spain, Brazil, the United States, India, Argentina and now in Mexico.

José Luis Blanco Diéguez, executive director of Grupo Nordex, highlighted the potential of the State for the development of the industry and recognized the support granted by the Government of Tamaulipas in the consolidation of companies such as Nordex in Mexico.

About the product to be manufactured in Matamoros, Blanco Diéguez said that the blades of this wind turbine will be the largest in the world with 149 meters of rotor and 74 meters in length; each blade has almost the same extension as the Airbus A380 aircraft.

It has more than 15 tons of weight, and to have an idea of what is inside each blade; Blanco mentioned an example that with the resin that is used to make each of the blades a family pool could be filled; and that translates into high amounts of material to be processed, such as carbon fiber, fiberglass and infusion; technologically advanced processes with advanced materials.

■ More jobs will be generated

Blanco Diéguez said at the end of his message that Nordex Group is not the only one that has reason to celebrate, since in this new factory in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, more jobs will be generated, so that the current staff of 300 employees will incorporate 500 employees more as the lines start to work.

In the last two years, Tamaulipas has had the highest growth in wind energy, thanks to the installation of new parks. An important fact to note is that the State will increase up to 29 times the generation of wind energy by passing the contribution to the national electricity system, from 54 to 1,556 megawatts.

Nordex Acciona manufactures powerful, high-performance wind turbines for almost every geographical region in the world. He has 30 years of experience in the use of wind energy, and with his arrival in

Albert Sunyer Folch, country manager Nordex Mexico, mentioned that there were many advantages that this German company saw in Tamaulipas and mainly in Matamoros to install its operations plant.

Speaking of the advantages that this company found to settle in this State, it was mainly due to the proximity to its natural market that is Mexico and the United States, being on the border and with the ports to be able to export to other markets, in addition to this, the existence of the maquiladora industry that is already well established, as well as the skilled workforce and the organized structure.

"Another factor that made us choose Matamoros was the support of the Government that opened the doors to the State; This has been an important decision because we were seeing different places in Mexico," said Albert Sunyer Folch.

Iran-Russia relations within the framework of the Prisoner's Dilemma

1 → With these in mind, will Russia sacrifice Iran for maximum profits? No

The subtle point is that if the game (Prisoner's Dilemma) is implemented once, cooperation with the opponent will not make sense, because there is no incentive to cooperate. But playing repeatedly and prolonging it will increase the chances of cooperation between competitors, because actors can profit from the flow of results, and even communicate with each other by using complex strategies (in the form of a lights off).

In this regard, the long-standing disputes between Iran and the United States and the continued prisoner-like situation of Iran under its ninth and tenth government (orientalism policy) reinforce the incentive for cooperation in Russia.

As it is said, although the profits from Russia's cooperation with Iran are small compared to the profits it received from its deal breaking, but by establishing lasting cooperation, the benefit obtained during the repeated implementation of the game will be more than the benefits of one deal breaking is obtained.

In fact, the duration of the game and the long years of Iran's sanctions by the United States and the lack of an appropriate relationship with other actors, such as Europe, leads Moscow to cooperate and non-widespread deal breaking with Iran.

The benefit Moscow takes from Tehran's bitter relation between the United States and Iran would be more than the prospect of a treaty violation.

In my view, Moscow's behavior has always been, and will be, a combination of cooperation and non-cooperation.

That is, while they vote against Iran and refuse to veto the resolution in strategic terms, like the sanctions and resolutions of the Security Council, are willing to cooperate with Tehran in tactical terms, because the Resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter, and in the next step, "American withdrawal from JCPOA", provided the conditions for the Kremlin to play a role. Hence, when Trump spoke of his decision to withdraw from the JCPOA, Moscow, Washington agreed to stay active, no way. Moscow did not make an effort to keep Washington in the Deal.

On the days when Dr. Abbas Araghchi was in talks with European authorities to provide a package of JCPOA support and encouragement of European companies to stay in Iran, on the other side of the filed, Putin, along with Saudi Arabia, accompanied Trump and increased its oil production to offset Iran's oil production.

To compensate for Iranian oil by Saudi Arabia and other OPEC members, in addition to offsetting the shortage of energy in the world, will prevent a steady increase in the price of oil and gasoline, something that should be considered as a green light to the White House, Republicans and against the interests of Tehran.

Hence, Dr. Velayati brought himself to Kremlin into a rush to understand Moscow's behavior. But the outcome of this trip was nothing more than a Prisoner's Dilemma.

"The statistics, which Putin said at the meeting, indicated he insisted that Iran-Russia oil relations continue to reach \$ 50 billion," Dr. Velayati told reporters after meeting with Putin. "This figure is high and can replace Western companies that have left Iran."

Russian Minister of Energy Alexander Novak, in response to the position of Velayati, announced the start of an oil agreement between the two countries as oil for goods.

This means that while in the association with Trump and Saudi Arabia increased its oil production, also did not sanction Iran. But they have refused to trade goods and oil with other currencies like euros or their own currency.

• In this regard, if Europe guarantees a daily purchasing of one million barrels of oil in Euros, it will take a much stronger and better move than Russia. So with this criterion, Europe looks more honest and closer to Russia.

Given that oil production in the United States has increased in recent months, and Canada and the United States are also entering the Asian market over the next two months, the increase in oil production by Moscow should be considered as a logical move to maintain its share in the global market.

What is irrational is the continuation of a prisoner's dilemma that wastes the human, natural, material, and spiritual resources of this country.

Russia's "To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds" policy like its policy to relative accompanying with Tehran in purchasing energy and investing in the energy sector, at the same time as increasing oil production for accompaniment with Trump and starting to barter trade have been implemented differently several times.

Relative cooperation with Iran in the Syrian case (supporting Bashar al-Assad and the war with ISIS) and lack of cooperation with Iran in defense against the Zionist missile attack on Iran's military bases in Syria and perhaps co-operation with or silence on Zionist encroachment against the IRGC military zone in the south of the country, prolonging the S 300 sale process to Iran, and the next sale of these missiles to regional rivals such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Even Pakistan, for example, are examples for balancing the region and preventing Tehran from gaining strategic superiority.

Therefore, the Russian zigzag and contradictory behavior and the use of Iran's card can be interpreted within the context of the "Prisoner's Dilemma".

The result is that the Russians intend to use the fear emanating from Iran military presence in Syria, take advantages from the United States and Israel in expense of limiting the power of Iran and the axis of resistance in Syria, and on the other hand, convince the leaders of these countries to leave the U.S. from Syria, on condition of minimal Russian support from the Syrian Kurds, who are the United States allies.

So John Bolton, the U.S. national security adviser, announced "the likelihood of a major deal between the United States and Russia, according to which Iranian troops withdraw from Syria and return to Iran."

Lastly, in the repeated play of the game, there is the possibility of using the "Tit for tat" strategy to convey the message to the opponent and "counteract". "Tit for tat" strategy does not penalize the other party for violation of the deal.

But it seems that, given Washington's thorough pressure and the practicality of Brussels and even Asian actors such as India, South Korea and Japan in boycotting Iran, and the hatred of Iranian leaders from Washington and the reluctance to get rid of the prisoner's dilemma, the ground is ready for adopting a "tit for tat" strategy to punish Moscow's deal breaking.

In fact, in another sense, "tit for tat" means "ignore."

So, not only Putin's paradoxical behavior towards Iran has, and is, justified, but also we should be grateful and thankful for the unilateral support of the Kremlin to the Islamic Republic of Iran!

By Saeed Sobhani

The struggle between Donald Trump and Jimmy Carter in recent days has attracted many political analysts in the United States. This conflict has occurred in the worst possible time for the Trump. The president of the United States does not have a good status in public polls and states. An overview of what has recently happened between the former president and the current president of the United States can be considered:

Jimmy Carter suggests Trump is an illegitimate president

As Cnn reported, Former President Jimmy Carter suggested Friday that a full investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election would show that Donald Trump didn't win the presidency. "There's no doubt that the Russians did interfere in the election. And I think the interference, although not yet quantified, if fully investigated would show that Trump didn't actually win the election in 2016. He lost the election and he was put into office because the Russians interfered on his behalf," Carter said at the Carter Center's retreat in Leesburg, Virginia. Asked if he believes Trump is an illegitimate president, Carter paused for a moment. "Based on what I just said, which I can't retract," Carter said to audience laughter.

Special counsel Robert Mueller's report found that Russia waged a "sweeping and systematic" influence campaign during the 2016 election with the goal of electing Trump, but did not establish a conspiracy between Trump's campaign and Moscow. Trump was asked to react to Carter during a Saturday news conference in Osaka, Japan. He said Carter is a Democrat and repeating a "typical talking point." Trump called Carter a "nice man, terrible president." Trump defended his 2016 win, saying he "worked harder and worked smarter" than Hillary Clinton. Until now, the former one-term Democratic president had shared a warmer relationship with the current President more than Trump has had with any other living president. Though he has been critical of Trump's foreign policy and accused him of deepening racial divisions, Carter has also shown a willingness to help Trump. He took a phone call from Trump in April -- the first time the two had spoken -- to discuss US-China trade negotiations. Carter also offered to travel to North Korea in order to meet with Kim Jong Un on Trump's behalf, according to a Democratic US lawmaker. In 2017, Carter told The New York Times that the media was "harder on Trump than any other president certainly that I've known about."

■ That was fast: Donald Trump-Jimmy Carter détente crumbles

Also Washingtonexaminer reported that Donald Trump and Jimmy Carter have both had at times toxic relationships with fellow living presidents, for different sorts of reasons. So, the trans-Pacific sniping between the pair during President Trump's Asia visit isn't terribly surprising. But it is notable, considering only weeks ago the president reached out to Carter, who held office during Trump's Studio 54 club days in the late 1970s, when he was an up-and-coming Manhattan real estate developer. In mid-April, Trump called his predecessor to discuss China, according to Carter, which the Trump White House then confirmed. Carter, 94, told a Georgia Sunday school audience the discussion was prompted by a letter Carter wrote to Trump about relations between the United States and China.

"President Jimmy Carter wrote President Trump a beautiful letter about the current negotiations with China and on Saturday they had a very good telephone conversation about President Trump's stance on trade with China and numerous other topics," the White House said in an April 15 statement. "The President has always liked President Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, and extended his best wishes to them on behalf of the American people."

The call marked the first time the sitting



commander in chief is known to have reached out to a predecessor on a policy issue. But the warm relations didn't last. On Friday, Carter said he doesn't believe Trump, 73, won the 2016 election legitimately. Speaking at a Carter Center conference on human rights, the former president said a full investigation into Russian interference "would show that Trump didn't actually win the election in 2016."

"He lost the election and he was put into office because the Russians interfered on his behalf," Carter said. Trump soon fired back. "He's a nice man. He was a terrible president. He's a Democrat, and it's a typical talking point. He's loyal to the Democrats, and I guess you should be," Trump said from the G-20 Summit in Osaka, Japan. "As everybody now understands, I won not because of Russia, not because of anybody, but myself."

Trump responds to Carter:

"He's a nice man. He was a terrible president. He's a Democrat and it's a typical talking point. He's loyal to the Democrats and I guess you should be ... As everybody now understands I won not because of Russia, not because of anybody but myself." So, add Carter to Trump's enemies in the ex-president's club.

Trump and Obama are not on speaking terms. At former President George H.W. Bush's funeral, they exchanged a fleeting handshake while sitting next to each other but didn't speak. And former first lady Michelle Obama wrote in her 2018 memoir Becoming that she could never forgive Trump for jeopardizing her family's safety by promoting the birther conspiracy theory, which claimed Barack Obama was born in Kenya, not Hawaii, thus making him ineligible to be president.

Trump also regularly chides former first lady Hillary Clinton, former secretary of state and his defeated 2016 Democratic rival, and sometimes her husband, Bill Clinton. Former President George W. Bush has been a Trump target, too, from time to time, through criticism of the Iraq war he led as commander-in-chief. The Bush clan has largely kept its distance from Trump. Carter, an ex-president now for more than 38 years, has also annoyed his Oval Office successors, both Democrats and Republicans. In fall 1990, he drew President George H.W. Bush's anger over efforts to undermine the international coalition the U.S. and allies were building at the United Nations to eject Iraq from Kuwait, which it occupied that August.

Nearly four years later, Carter infuriated then-President Bill Clinton by inserting himself into diplomatic efforts to make Hai-

ti's military leaders step down and avert an imminent American-led invasion. And Carter went on to be a fierce critic of President George W. Bush's foreign policy approach, particularly the Iraq War.

Carter's 2002 Nobel Peace Prize was largely seen as a rebuke to Bush. Gunnar Berge, the Nobel committee chairman at the time, was blunt about his committee's intentions. The award "should be interpreted as a criticism of the line that the current administration has taken," he said.

The worst possible hit on the Trump

Trump is extremely concerned about the impact of Carter's critique of his situation. As U.S. media reported, President Trump attends the G-20 summit in Japan this week, a score of Democrats who want his job are debating in Miami -- vying for a nomination that looks increasingly worth having. Major polls taken in the late spring showed President Trump trailing his top Democratic challengers both nationwide and in key states where the 2020 election will be decided. One recent Fox News poll, for example, showed Trump trailing prospective challengers Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders by 10 and 9 percentage points, respectively. Weak polling numbers are not a new thing in the Trump presidency. In 2016, polls showed candidate Trump losing right up until the day he was elected. (Cliffhanger wins in several swing states produced his Electoral College majority, even as he lost the national popular vote by nearly 2 percentage points.)

The president has long since made a habit of dismissing polls, or at least those he doesn't like, as one more example of "fake news." Only Fake Polls show us behind the Motley Crew. We are looking really good, but it is far too early to be focused on that. Yet it was widely reported this month that the president's own polling team had found similar results in its field work in March. When word of this leaked, and was confirmed by the president's campaign, the president reportedly fired three veteran members of his polling team.

The president's campaign manager has said Trump's numbers have recovered since March and that his "numbers have never been better," although he has yet to release any numbers to back up that assertion.

Poor poll numbers are not unusual for presidents midway through a first term. Three of the past four presidents who won a second term were trailing prospective opponents 18 months before they were re-elected. As NPR's Mara Liasson has noted

on Twitter, incumbents who have come back from significant deficits include Ronald Reagan, who won in 49 states against Walter Mondale in 1984. Moreover, the last incumbent president who lost his reelection bid (George H.W. Bush) did so after having been far ahead of the field with 18 months to go. Polls pertain to a point in time, and their shelf life is short. They have only limited power to predict the future because the events and dynamics of the actual election year always alter the landscape in unforeseeable ways.

So what is the value of a poll taken this far from Election Day? One answer might be found in the examples Liasson cited. All three of these presidents -- Reagan, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama -- had suffered substantial setbacks in the midterm elections during their first term. Each was battling emboldened opponents in Congress.

In June of the year preceding their reelection bids, three of the four were "losing" to either a specific opponent from the other party or a generic nominee of the other party. But all found ways to tack toward the center, accentuate the positive side of their first term and renew their personal bond with the voters who put them in office. All three wound up winning -- Reagan in a historic landslide. Clinton and Obama were reelected more narrowly but still had comfortable leads in the Electoral College.

So what happened to the one candidate Liasson cited who had been ahead at a comparable point in time? The first President Bush, flush with success after the quick collapse of the Iraqi army in the Persian Gulf War, seemed almost guaranteed a second term when polls were conducted in June 1991.

Partly as a result, Bush and his team underestimated the challenges and challengers ahead. They were dismissive of intra-party rival Pat Buchanan and independent H. Ross Perot, and untroubled by such upstarts as Clinton, who was then the youthful governor of Arkansas. Worse yet, the Bush team would be slow to react to the recession that overtook the economy that fall. Battered by Buchanan and Perot and the economy in the early months of 1992, Bush found himself beleaguered and forced to cover his conservative flank. That led to moves such as his veto of the popular Family and Medical Leave Act (which was almost enacted over his veto). All this helped Clinton, who would win the three-way November election against Bush and Perot with just 43% of the popular vote.

So, early polls cannot "call the race." But they can point a candidacy in a particular direction, right or wrong. They can lead to complacency, or they can offer insight into the state of political opinion and the mix of national sentiments.

Taken seriously, and taken in concert with other sources of intelligence, early polls can act as a corrective for a presidency at risk. We can read today's polls, then, and ask why Trump is not doing better in the midst of relative peace, low unemployment and interest rates, and a soaring stock market. We can also observe that he loses these hypothetical matchups despite overwhelming approval ratings among Republicans. Is there something he is doing that keeps his base firm but prevents its expansion? Are there ways the president can alter his approach and keep his friends close, while alienating fewer potential swing voters?

So far, his reelection strategy seems centered on his base and the most provocative issues and behaviors that bind him to it. These include his hard line on immigration, tough talk on trade and bellicose attitude toward foreign adversaries -- as well as his confrontational personal style. Defenders say "it's worked for him so far," and that is true. But if the current polls mean anything, they mean that what has worked for him has limits. The signals are there to be seen.

Vietnam-EU pacts show trade war reshaping industry

By John Kiriakou

GLOBALTIMES —The EU and Vietnam reportedly agreed to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) and an investment protection agreement (IPA) on Sunday in Hanoi, a development that can be seen as a response to US trade protectionism. US President Donald Trump on Wednesday described Vietnam as "the single worst abuser of everybody" and worse even than China, according to The Guardian. Some observers believe the words hinted Trump might impose tariffs on the emerging economy. The US is an important export market for most Asia-Pacific countries including Vietnam, but the ongoing trade war had made those economies realize their excessive dependence on the US consumer market is an unsustainable way to develop their export-oriented economies.

Some economies in the region have sped up the

process of diversifying their trade partners. The agreements between Vietnam and the EU are the latest examples. Vietnam is the EU's second-largest trading partner in Southeast Asia after Singapore, which signed trade and investment agreements with the EU in October, 2018. Asia has been feeling the impact of the trade war since last year, and it thus became more open to trade cooperation and trade agreements with the EU. China, as the core of the Asian supply chain, led that trend. China and the EU are moving fast to complete a bilateral investment treaty (BIT), with the 21st round of negotiations finishing earlier this month. Meanwhile, China-US BIT negotiations have stagnated since the trade war began. The US has played an important role in the Asian supply chain, but the trade war is weakening US influence. Supply chains are being rapidly reconfigured. Once this process is complete, US influence on Asian economies will be shattered.

The trade war doesn't seem to be going as Trump expected. Many companies have moved work to Vietnam instead of the US after Trump slapped tariffs on Chinese imports in an effort to bring manufacturing jobs back to the US. Even if Trump imposes levies on Vietnamese goods, the FTA and IPA with the EU will dilute the negative effect of US tariffs, helping made-in-Vietnam products enter EU markets with low or no tariffs.

Vietnam is a close neighbor of China. Vietnam's economic growth will be conducive in pushing up exports of Chinese goods to the Southeast Asian country, giving new momentum to bilateral economic cooperation. The EU's increasingly close ties to Vietnam are an important part of the reorganization of global supply chain. In this process, the US' role is being weakened by its trade protectionism, while China is seeking to further integrate into the global economy.

U.S. sanctions have toughened iranians resolve: EX-U.S. senate candidate

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A former U.S. Senate candidate said US sanctions against Iran have failed to have any impact on the Islamic Republic's progress and they, in fact, have "toughened the Iranian resolve".

"Sanctions are an act of war. It is important for the American public and the world to understand this. President Trump has absolutely no legitimate reason to be doing this, except that his 'America First' campaign promises of 2016 which involved keeping the United States out of worthless Middle East conflicts, have been belied by the complete hijacking of his Administration by Zionist Neo-Conservative Agents more interested in serving Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel than in obeying the Constitution of the United States, International Law, or the needs and interests of the average American who voted for him," Mark Dankof, who is also a broadcaster and pastor in San Antonio, Texas, told Tasnim. He added, "To me, the sanctions have only toughened Iranian resolve."

Mark Dankof is a broadcaster for The Ugly Truth Podcast. Born in Wiesbaden, Germany, the son of a United States Air Force Colonel, he graduated from Valparaiso University in 1977 and from Chicago's Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1983. In recent years, he has pursued post-graduate work in systematic theology and theological German at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Formerly the 36th District Chairman of the Republican Party in King County/Seattle and later an elected delegate to Texas State Republican Conventions in 1994 and 1996, he entered the United States Senate race in Delaware in 2000 as the nominated candidate of the Constitution Party against Democratic candidate Thomas Carper and Republican incumbent William Roth.

Following is the full text of the interview:
■ US President Donald Trump on Monday announced new sanctions on Iran as part of its 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: Sanctions are an act of war. It is important for the American public and the world to understand this. President Trump has absolutely no legitimate reason to be doing this, except that his "America First" campaign promises of 2016 which involved keeping the United States out of worthless Middle East conflicts, have been belied by the complete hijacking of his Administration by Zionist Neo-Conservative Agents more interested in serving Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel than in obeying the Constitution of the United States, International Law, or the needs and interests of the average American who voted for him. I was one of them, who saw him as the only possible alternative to a Hillary Clinton Presidency, or the candidacies of open Neo-Conservatives and Israel Worshipers in the GOP who opposed Mr. Trump in the 2016 primaries. Both the Clinton wing of the Democratic Party and virtually all of the GOP is explicitly pledged to continue these inter-



ventions militarily and with Iran specifically. As the Trump Presidency continues, it only sadly underscores that he is also their tool of control, even as the only American Presidential contender of my lifetime sincerely committed to putting this Fifth Column out of business in the United States was clearly Pat Buchanan in the GOP Presidential Primaries in 1992 and 1996. One could not find a worse foreign policy and national security advisors to an American President than John Bolton and Mike Pompeo, just to name two. Their agenda for a Greater Israel and the aggrandizement of the worst elements in the American National Security establishment is transparently obvious. When Trump named them to their respective posts, it became undeniable that the Fix Was In.

■ President Trump and 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: Trump is speaking absolutely incoherent nonsense on this. I would use a better word to describe his rhetoric than nonsense, only it would not be appropriate for Tasnim readers. David Stockman is completely correct on this subject. Mr. Trump has 1) unilaterally scuttled a JCPOA/P5+1 deal with Iran that secured a verifiable deal on Iran's nuclear program that served the interest of every nation who signed the multilateral agreement. (Stockman is correct when he says that we must fairly say that this was the one quantifiable achievement of the Obama Presidency in foreign policy, in bringing the United States into this treaty.) 2) Iran's absolute compliance with the terms of the treaty has been verified by the International Atomic Energy Commission and the American intelligence community itself. 3) Mr. Trump's unilateral abrogation of the deal with Iran, the subsequent imposition of draconian economic sanctions, and the deployment of more American military assets to the region, simply accentuates that

the President of the United States is being dragged around by the nose by Netanyahu and the most extreme Zionist forces extant, even as the word of the United States and its President can no longer be trusted by the leadership of Iran or the other nations who are signatories to the deal. That the President would now be calling on Iran to "talk without preconditions" is preposterous given this history. Clearly, the Administration has closed the path to a diplomatic solution with Iran, as it is the former and not the latter, which has destroyed an agreement reached through diplomacy and subsequently engaged in a series of actions with sanctions, deployments, and escalating militaristic rhetoric and threats. It is entirely reminiscent of the actions of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the run-up to war with Japan in World War II, as I indicated in a 2013 presentation to the National Conference of the American Free Press in Austin, Texas entitled, FDR and Pearl Harbor: The Primer for the Zionist Assault on the American Republic and the Nation of Iran.

■ 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: To me, the sanctions have only toughened Iranian resolve. This explains the series of False Flag tanker incidents in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman falsely attributed to Iran, but clearly the work of the Trump Neo-Conservatives desperately working in tandem with Israel, the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK/MKO), and the Saudi regime. What is terrifying is to ponder what their next act of criminal lunacy might prove to be. Nothing they have done yet has worked.

■ The new sanctions came after Iran last week shot down a US spy drone that had ventured into Iran's airspace. President 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: Again, Mr. Trump spouts total nonsense. Obviously, the latest round of sanctions has been imposed because Trump and his Zionist friends are miffed that the Iranians chose to engage in self-defense in downing the RQ-170. Trump is trying to conceal that fact that his bluff has been called in this by suggesting Iran "may have made a mistake" in the downing of the spy craft. It also cost the American taxpayer a "mere" \$110 million dollars, simply a pocket change in terms of what an Israeli-Saudi led American foreign policy has already cost the American people, not to mention what it will cost if this nonsense continues, both in money squandered--and more importantly, human lives. That \$110 million dollars would have done wonders for farmers in Southwest Iowa and much of Nebraska flooded out by the failed levee on the Missouri River the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers has failed to repair since 2011. Most of these folks voted for Mr. Trump. What do they think of his priorities now? Or have they connected-the-dots yet?

The minimal response taken by the Iranians in shooting down the drone which was violating its own airspace under international law was a totally justifiable action. Even more notably, the Iranian military leadership has noted it could have downed an American P8 Orion spy craft with the loss of 35 American lives but chose not to. Mr. Trump needs to think about this, and the lack of wisdom in pushing the envelope with the Iranian government, or with Vladimir Putin who has clearly outfoxed the Zionist Neo-Conservatives in Syria. If Trump thinks his vaunted military geniuses have miscalculated in terms of Iranian resolve and Iranian missile capability, he and his geniuses need to contemplate facing Russian hypersonic missiles in the Middle East, or in Eastern Europe if the United States and NATO continue militarizing Mr. Putin's western border.

■ Iranian officials are of the opinion that resistance is the best option for the country as they have announced no talks will take place until all Iran's demands including the complete removal of oil and banking sanctions. Do you believe the continuation of the resistance policy would be a viable option for Tehran?

A: Sadly, I agree with the continuation of the resistance policy. What other alternative does Iran have? It has been the victim of its own honest diplomacy on nuclear programs and power, at the hands of a Zionist Beast which now holds a gun to the head of the Iranian government and the Iranian people, even as The Beast indicates its desire to "negotiate without preconditions." Ask the Palestinians where "negotiations" have gotten them since 1948, and in the first years of the Trump Presidency.

And Americans against the New World Order and Zionism, who want their beloved Old American Republic back and the end of The American Empire, need to ask what voting for Donald Trump in 2016 has gotten them since. We are together in the most dangerous and volatile situation, with evil forces aligned against us both

With increased confidence, China and Japan can lead on world stage

By Zhang Yun

GLOBALTIMES — Chinese President Xi Jinping will travel to the Japanese city of Osaka for the G20 summit from Thursday to Saturday. China's relations with Japan have seen an uptick since 2017, bringing into stark relief the heated competition with the US in trade, technology and geopolitics. Many believe that the root cause of better ties with Japan lies in the uncertainty besetting the policy adopted by the administration of Donald Trump. The White House's ambivalence surely provides the strongest external push, but if it were the only reason, the sustainability of China-Japan relations would have been put into question. The fundamental reason for the thaw in ties between the once-estranged neighbors is the change in the way they started looking at themselves and perceiving each other in the past few years. If both sides seize the opportunity, sustainable development of China-Japan relations is not far. With rising confidence, China has been more proactive in seeking better relations with Japan.

China in 2010 replaced Japan as the world's second-largest economy, and left the US behind in manufacturing. This boosted China's confidence and prompted China to think its domestic path and strategic international issues. China has been trying to deepen its reform and opening-up, become proactive in global economic governance and supply of public goods, and improve its discourse power in world affairs. China-Japan ties suffered after 2010 due to territorial, historical, and security issues.

However, with well-defined goals and enhanced confidence, China has gained the ability to shape the strategic environment on its own. Thus, fostering a new type of international relations has become a choice. Japan is both a big power and China's neighbor, so developing relations with Japan in the new era has naturally been included in China's policy agenda.

On the other hand, Japan's increased confidence in itself has also added impetus to its China policies. Although opinions vary on "Abenomics," Japan's stock market has been rising, employment among youth is higher, and society has been less pessimistic about the economic outlook. According to a Japanese Cabinet Office survey released in August 2018, 74.7 percent of Japanese were either satisfied or moderately satisfied with their daily life. Losing the position as the world's second-largest economy, Japan has started to re-examine its people's living standards and satisfaction rate, and to reassess itself as a great economic and social power. Unlike other developed countries, Japan has been devoid of populist sentiments, and has been economically and socially stable. On the international front, Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook, since its 2016 edition, states that "while making the utmost efforts for promotion of national interests," Japan will "lead the international community for peace and prosperity of the world."

For example, after the US withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a new Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership that Japan agreed with 11 other countries demonstrates Tokyo's leadership in international economic governance. Meanwhile, Japan has recognized the historical trend of China's further development. China remains a future world power and Japan's neighbor, thus developing strategic relations with Beijing has become inevitable for Tokyo. An unpredictable US has prompted introspection and mutual perception between China and Japan to a certain extent. Facing a world with supply deficit of public goods and a lack of leadership, China and Japan have realized that both have the responsibility to be active in global governance reforms. China has long acknowledged itself as a big country enduring poverty and other weaknesses. Beijing has regarded development as its long-term strategic goal. However, to develop further, China as the world's second-largest economy should take the initiative to play the role of global leader. This is also the call of the international community. ➡13

Fresh U.S. sanctions on Iran 'purely symbolic': U.S. scholar

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A senior American political analyst in Madison described the US' new sanctions against Tehran as "purely symbolic", urging Iran to continue with its "resistance strategy until Trump changes course or backs off".

"The new sanctions are purely symbolic. The Supreme Leader's office is not using Western banks. They will not have any actual effect. But they send an ugly, insulting message. They are also an attempt to divide the Iranian people. But it will not work. By disrespecting the Leader and the IRGC Trump and his stupid advisers will just convince more Iranian people to rally to Iran's defense," Kevin Barrett told Tasnim.

He added, "Iran should continue with its resistance strategy until Trump changes course or backs off. It really has no other choice."

The following is the full text of the interview.
■ US President Donald Trump on Monday announced new sanctions on Iran as part of its 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: The new sanctions are purely symbolic. The Supreme Leader's office is not using Western banks. They will not have any actual effect. But they send an ugly, insulting message. They are also an attempt to divide the Iranian people. But it will not work. By disrespecting the Leader and the IRGC Trump and his stupid advisers will just convince more Iranian people to rally to Iran's defense.

■ 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: Trump and his advisers are pursuing an incoherent and chaotic policy. Trump wants to negotiate a "better" nuclear deal. But his advisers (Mike) Pompeo and (John) Bolton want to overthrow the Islamic Republic and install a US-Zionist puppet government. So they make ridiculous threats and demands and apply draconian sanctions (Pompeo and Bolton's policy) while at the same time talking as though they want to negotiate (Trump's policy).

The problem is that Trump doesn't realize that there will never be a "better" nuclear deal. Iran already agreed to forgo nuclear weapons and to allow inspections. But Iran is not going to give up its rockets and it is not going to stop having good relations with Hezbollah and the Palestinian resistance. So there is really no opening for negotiations to lead anywhere. At this point, the only path to a diplomatic solution would be for Trump to fire Pompeo and Bolton, end the sanctions, go to Tehran, and convince Iran to commit to talks on all outstanding issues between the two countries. Trump could claim he succeeded in getting Iran to agree to talk to the US about all issues including rockets, Hezbollah, and so on. Iran could use those talks to explain where its red lines are and why. The talks could continue indefinitely and go nowhere, like the US talks with North Korea, and Trump's short attention

span might move on to other issues.

■ 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: This question answers itself. The US has already applied maximum sanctions. The world doesn't agree with the sanctions and is now seriously thinking about ending US dollar hegemony. So the US is actually harming its own position. It has no more leverage against Iran except covert operations (which Iran can covertly answer) or a war that would be a total disaster for the US.

■ 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: The sanctions probably are a response to the shootdown. The Americans felt they needed to take some kind of action to save face.

■ Iranian officials are of the opinion that resistance is the best option for the country as they have announced no talks will take place until all of Iran's demands, including the complete removal of oil and banking sanctions, are met. Do you believe the continuation of the resistance policy would be a viable option for Tehran?

A: Yes. Iran should continue with its resistance strategy until Trump changes course or backs off. It really has no other choice.

If Trump fired Pompeo and Bolton and offered major sanctions relief in return for talks, that might be the time to consider negotiating. Iran could offer sweeteners to Trump including celebrating the defeat of DAESH and giving Trump some credit for it and possibly dangling business opportunities as a future possibility.

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New model explains appearance of supermassive black holes in early universe

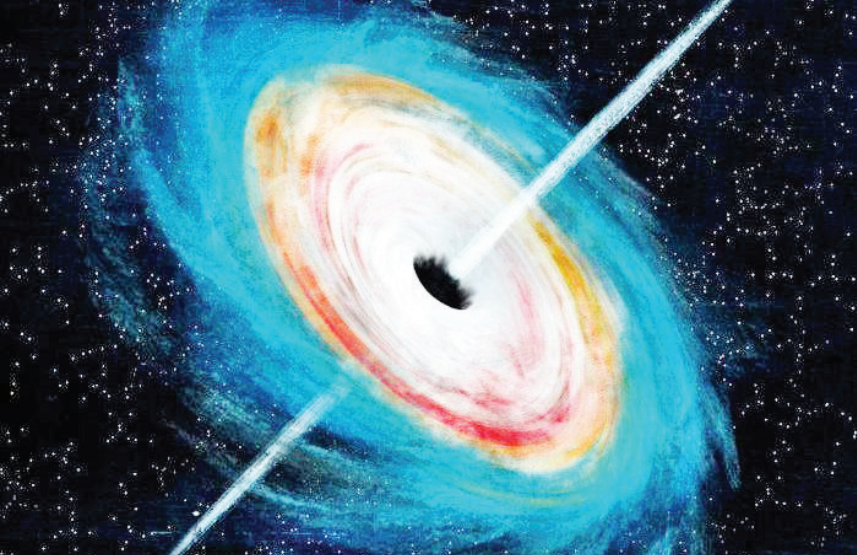
Scientists have developed a new model for the formation and growth of supermassive black holes that could explain their appearance in the early universe.

According to the new study, published this week in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*, supermassive black holes grow extremely fast over a very short amount of time, and then very suddenly, stop growing.

Scientists came up with the new model to better explain the distribution of supermassive black hole masses and luminosities throughout the distant universe.

“This is indirect observational evidence that black holes originate from direct-collapse and not from stellar remnants,” Shantanu Basu, an astronomy professor at the University of Western Ontario, said in a news release.

Basu and his colleague Arpan Das analyzed the mass growth function of supermassive black holes that gain an exponentially large amount of mass in a relatively short amount



of time. They determined the rapid growth is capped by the Eddington limit, the balancing of outward radiation and and inward gravitation forces. For brief periods of time, rapidly expanding supermassive black holes can even slightly exceed the Eddington limit.

“Supermassive black holes only had a short time period where they were able to grow fast and then at some point, because of all the radiation in the universe created by other black holes and stars, their production came to a halt,” said Basu. “That’s the direct-collapse scenario.”

Over the last 10 years, astronomers have discovered several supermassive black holes in the early universe that were formed and already growing just 800 million years after the Big Bang. The standard stellar remnant model for black hole formation can’t explain how these black holes got so big, so quickly, so early in the evolution of the universe. The new model can.

(Source: UPI)

Bees kept for honey are killing wild species by spreading disease, study suggests

Beekeepers could be fuelling the worrying decline of wild bees, new research suggests.

Wild bumblebees can contract diseases from domestic honeybees if they share the same flowers, according to new US research which suggests domestic beehives should be kept out of areas home to particularly vulnerable pollinators.

Land degradation and the proliferation of pesticides on crops is already known have a catastrophic effect on global bee populations, but the spread of disease from commercial beehives could be the third key driver of decline.

“Many wild pollinators are in trouble and this finding could help us protect bumblebees,” said lead researcher Samantha Alger, a scientist at the University of Vermont.

Researchers explored 19 sites in Vermont and found that two well-known viruses – deformed wing virus and black queen cell virus – were higher in bumblebees collected less than 300 meters from commercial beehives. Both of these viruses can cause colonies to collapse.

Nineteen per cent of flowers sampled near domestic beehives had viruses on them. No bee viruses were found on flowers more than one kilometer from commercial sites.

Scientists also found infections of the deformed wing virus were higher near these commercial beehives, but no deformed wing virus was found in the bumblebees they collected where beehives were absent.

Researchers believe this finding has global significance,



according to the paper published in Plos One.

Dr Alger said: “I thought this was going to be like looking for a needle in a haystack. What are the chances that you’re going to pick a flower and find a bee virus on it? Finding this many was surprising.”

The results suggest “viruses in managed honeybees are spilling over to wild bumblebee populations and that flowers are an important route,” according to Alison Brody, a professor in the University of Vermont’s department of Biology.

“Careful monitoring and treating of diseased honeybee colonies could protect wild bees from these viruses as well as other pathogens or parasites,” she said.

The rusty patched bumblebee, for example, has declined by nearly 90 per cent and is now listed under the Endangered Species Act. In the UK, wild pollinating insects have vanished from a quarter of their former habitats across Britain.

The US researchers are particularly concerned about the effects of big operators putting beehives on trucks and moving them around the country to pollinate crops. For example, commercial hives could be taken to California to pollinate almonds and then onto Texas for another crop, taking diseases with them.

Between bouts on commercial farms, these bees are also often taken to pristine natural habitats to rest and recover, where there is diverse and better forage.

Dr Alger said: “This research suggests that we might want to keep apiaries outside of areas where there are vulnerable pollinator species, like the rusty patched bumblebees, especially because we have so much more to learn about what these viruses are actually doing to bumblebees.”

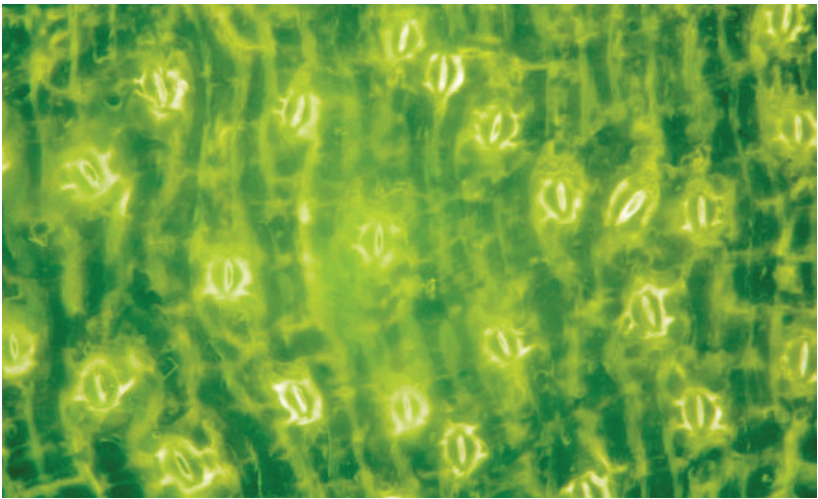
Honeybees are an important part of modern agriculture, but they’re nonnative in many areas where they are used.

“A huge misconception in the public is that honeybees serve as the iconic image for pollinator conservation. That’s ridiculous. It’s like making chickens the iconic image of bird conservation,” said Dr Ager.

In the UK beekeeping is soaring in popularity with membership of the British Beekeepers Association rising from about 8,500 people in 2008 to more than 24,000 now.

(Source: The Independent)

Scientists discover how plants breathe and how humans shaped their ‘lungs’



Scientists have discovered how plants create networks of air channels -- the lungs of the leaf -- to transport carbon dioxide (CO2) to their cells.

Botanists have known since the 19th century that leaves have pores -- called stomata -- and contain an intricate internal network of air channels. But until now it wasn’t understood how those channels form in the right places in order to provide a steady flow of CO2 to every plant cell.

The new study, led by scientists at the University of Sheffield’s Institute for Sustainable Food and published in *Nature Communications*, used genetic manipulation techniques to reveal that the more stomata a leaf has, the more airspace it forms. The channels act like bronchioles -- the tiny passages that carry air to the exchange surfaces of human and animal lungs.

In collaboration with colleagues at the University of Nottingham and Lancaster University, they showed that the movement of CO2 through the pores most likely determines the shape and scale of the air channel network.

The discovery marks a major step forward in our understanding of the internal structure of a leaf, and how the function of tissues can influence how they develop -- which could

have ramifications beyond plant biology, in fields such as evolutionary biology.

The study also shows that wheat plants have been bred by generations of people to have fewer pores on their leaves and fewer air channels, which makes their leaves more dense and allows them to be grown with less water.

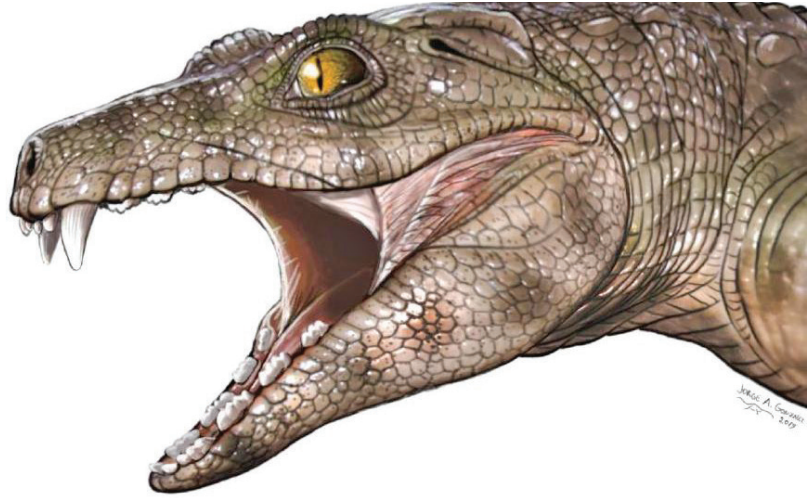
This new insight highlights the potential for scientists to make staple crops like wheat even more water-efficient by altering the internal structure of their leaves. This approach is being pioneered by other scientists at the Institute for Sustainable Food, who have developed climate-ready rice and wheat which can survive extreme drought conditions.

Professor Andrew Fleming from the Institute for Sustainable Food at the University of Sheffield said: “Until now, the way plants form their intricate patterns of air channels has remained surprisingly mysterious to plant scientists.

“This major discovery shows that the movement of air through leaves shapes their internal workings -- which has implications for the way we think about evolution in plants.

(Source: Science Daily)

Crocodiles living 200 million years ago were vegetarians, study finds



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

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

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

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

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

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

All crocodiles alive today have a similar body shape with relatively simple, conical teeth ideal for ripping apart meat.

However, the tooth fossils were clearly non-carnivorous and appeared to have specialized forms not seen in modern-day animals.

To work out what they ate, researchers compared the size and shape of teeth in extinct crocodiles with those around today.

“Our work demonstrates that extinct crocodyliforms had an incredibly varied diet,” said Mr Melstrom.

“Some were similar to living crocodylians and were primarily carnivorous, others were omnivores and still others lived specialized in plants. The herbivores lived on different continents at different times, some alongside mammals and mammal relatives, and others did not.

“This suggests that an herbivorous crocodyliform was successful in a variety of environments.”

Scientists are now looking to reconstruct the diets of these extinct crocodiles, including in fossilized species that are missing teeth.

Mr Melstrom wants to find out why crocodiles diversified so radically after the end-Triassic mass extinction but not after the end-Cretaceous mass extinction, when the vegetarian crocodiles were wiped out.

(Source: The Independent)

“Giant wombat” fossil discovered by council workers in Australia

A “giant wombat” fossil has been discovered by local council workers in the Monaro region of southern New South Wales.

Two Snowy Monaro regional council employees found the fossilized jaw of a baby diprotodon last Friday at an undisclosed location that is known for such paleontological findings.

The council workers informed the Australian Museum of their discovery and its curator, Matthew McCurry, extracted the fossil at the weekend.

“A couple of locals called me up and asked me if I’d like

to come and collect it safely for the museum,” McCurry told *Guardian Australia*. “If people were to try and collect these without any experience, it’s quite likely that they’d be broken and we’d lose information.”

Diprotodons were a type of megafauna that were widespread across Australia and co-existed with the Indigenous population for thousands of years. The exact time of extinction is contested and estimates vary between 7,000 and 40,000 years ago.

They likely fed on shrubs and herbaceous, non-grasslike

plants known as forbs and may have eaten as much as 100 to 150kg of vegetation daily, using its chisel-like incisors to do so. It is the largest known marsupial to ever have lived.

Their bones have been found throughout Australia but they preferred semi-arid plains, savannahs and open woodlands, according to the museum. One skeleton found at Lake Callabonna, in the far north region of South Australia, had the remains of saltbush in its abdominal region.

(Source: The Guardian)

Space station mold survives 200 times the radiation dose that would kill a human

As anyone who’s ever had a mold infestation knows, the fungi can be very hard to kill. It turns out mold may also be highly resistant to the harsh conditions of outer space. Its spores can survive doses of radiation 200 times higher than those that would kill a human, researchers reported at the *Astrobiology Science Conference*. Such hardness could make it difficult to eliminate mold’s health risks to astronauts. Mold might also one day threaten other parts of the solar system—with hitchhiking mold spores from Earth.

Astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS) already constantly battle with mold, which grows on the station’s walls and equipment. That mold, of course, is in a protected structure in low-Earth orbit, where radiation doses are low. Outside of the station, doses are higher—and they would be higher still on the hull of a spacecraft going to Mars or beyond.

To find out what might happen to mold there, Marta Cortesão, a microbiologist at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) in Cologne and colleagues beamed x-rays and heavy ions at a common black mold called *Aspergillus Niger*, which is plentiful in the ISS. The researchers fired “stupid amounts” of radiation, Cortesão says—much more than encountered on a Mars-bound spaceship (0.6 gray per year) or on the surface of Mars (0.2 gray per year). The gray is a measure of the amount of absorbed radiation energy.

The researchers discovered that the spores could survive radiation doses of 500 to 1000 gray, depending on which type of radiation they were exposed to. Humans, by contrast, get radiation sickness at doses of 0.5 gray and are killed by 5 gray. Cortesão also found that the spores survived large amounts of high-energy ultraviolet radiation, which is commonly used as a hospital disinfectant and has been proposed for sterilizing the surfaces of spacecraft.

Cortesão cautions that her research focused only on radiation and did not include all aspects of the harsh outer space environment. But, she says, at least one older study suggests that mold spores resist radiation even better in a vacuum. Meanwhile, one thing is certain, she says: “We will have spores with us for sure in our space travels. Fungi have been forgotten for the past 20 or 30 years, but it’s time to go back to them.”

Andrew Schuerger, a microbiologist and Mars astrobiologist at the University of Florida in North Merritt Island, agrees. Most of the focus on keeping Earth’s microorganisms from contaminating other worlds so far has been on bacteria, he says, because the vast bulk of microorganisms on the surfaces of spacecraft has been bacterial. “I really like a presentation like this [that says] ‘Let’s not forget about this other group of microorganisms called fungi,’” he says.

The finding is also important for researchers studying the origin of life, says Paul Mason, an astrobiologist at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.

That’s because one of the puzzles in origin-of-life research is that Earth seems to have gone from prebiotic all the way to fairly complex microorganisms early in its history—a process that some scientists think required more time than had passed since the planet first became habitable. One idea, Mason says, is that life originated elsewhere, either in our solar system or farther afield. “Now that we know that Earth life can survive in space, it is certainly reasonable to think that it could have arrived on Earth from somewhere else,” he says.

(Source: sciencemag.org)

Enormous prehistoric bird that weighed the same as polar bear is discovered in Crimean cave

A giant prehistoric bird that weighed the same as a polar bear has been discovered in a Crimean cave on the coast of the Black Sea.

The 450kg flightless creature lived around 1.5 to 2 million years ago and may have been a source of meat, bones, feathers and eggshells for early human hunters.

At 3.5 meters tall, it was around three times the size of today’s ostriches and therefore would have been fiendishly fast.

Speed may have been essential to its survival as it would have lived alongside massive Ice Age carnivores such as giant cheetah, giant hyenas, sabre-toothed cats.

Pachystruthio dmanisensis, was already known but scientists had not realized quite how large it was, according to a paper published in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*. It was previously thought that such gigantic birds only ever existed in Madagascar, New Zealand and Australia.

“When I first felt the weight of the bird whose thigh bone I was holding in my hand, I thought it must be a Malagasy elephant bird fossil because no birds of this size have ever been reported from Europe. However, the structure of the bone unexpectedly told a different story,” said lead author Dr Nikita Zelenkov from the Russian Academy of Sciences.

“We don’t have enough data yet to say whether it was most closely related to ostriches or to other birds. This formidable weight is nearly double the largest moa, three times the largest living bird, the common ostrich, and nearly as much as an adult polar bear.”

Elephant birds were hampered by their great size when it came to speed, but the femur of this current bird is long and slim, suggesting it was a fast runner.

The oldest hominin site outside Africa is in the town of Dmanisi in Georgia which is near the Taurida cave where the giant bird was found. Scientists say the bird may have been typical of the animals found at the time when the first hominins arrived in Europe. The bird would have probably reached the Black Sea region via the Southern Caucasus and Turkey.

“The Taurida cave network was only discovered last summer when a new motorway was being built. Last year, mammoth remains were unearthed and there may be much more to that the site will teach us about Europe’s distant past,” said Dr Zelenkov.

The bird might have grown so large because the environment was becoming increasing arid as the Pleistocene epoch approached. Animals with larger bodies have lower metabolic demands which means they can make use of less nutritious food growing in open steppe.

(Source: The Independent)

Iranian nomads attend festival in Kazakhstan

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A number of Iranian nomads, who are natives of Golestan province, promoted traditions, skills and arts at Koshpendiler Alemi, a festival of ethno-culture of nomads, held in Kazakhstan.



Ethno-musicians from 10 countries performed at the event, which was held in Nur-Sultan from June 28 to 30, IRIB reported. Ancient manners of wrestling, and making felt, potteries and jewelry were among highlights of the festival, according to organizers. The one-millennium-old, UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus is one of the most significant tourist destinations in Golestan province, neighboring the Caspian Sea.

Hybrid airliners could come to dominate the skies

Steady improvements in battery technology, driven along by the electrification of road transport, are helping air taxis and other small electric aircraft get airborne. But even the best lithium-ion cells are still far from being able to power the workhorses of civil aviation: short-haul airliners carrying 150 or so passengers.



An electric version would not be able to rise from the ground, because of the weight of the batteries required to drive its engines. Nevertheless, many aerospace experts continue to think that electric flight is the future, at least in hybrid form. This could be achieved by starting with smaller hybrid airliners, such as those carrying 50 or so passengers on regional routes, and then scaling the technology up. Details of one such effort, called Project 804, illustrate how the airborne equivalent of a hybrid Toyota Prius might work.

(Source: The Economist)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Great Zimbabwe National Monument

The Great Zimbabwe National Monument is approximately 30 km from Masvingo. The ruined property — the capital of the Queen of Sheba, according to an age-old legend — is a unique testimony to the Bantu civilization of the Shona between the 11th and 15th centuries.

Great Zimbabwe National Monument extends over almost 800 ha and is divided into three groups: the Hill Ruins, the Great Enclosure and the Valley Ruins.



There are numerous layers of traces of human settlements in the Hill Ruins. Rough granite rubble-stone blocks form distinct enclosures, accessed by narrow, partly covered, passageways. The Great Enclosure, which has the form of an ellipsis, is located to the south of the hills and dates to the 14th century. It was built of cut granite blocks, laid in regular courses, and contains a series of daga-hut living quarters, a community area, and a narrow passage leading to a high conical tower. The Valley Ruins are a series of living ensembles scattered throughout the valley which date to the 19th century. Each ensemble has similar characteristics: many constructions are in brick (huts, indoor flooring and benches, holders for recipients, basins, etc.) and dry stone masonry walls provide insulation for each ensemble. Scientific research has proved that Great Zimbabwe was founded in the 11th century on a site which had been sparsely inhabited in the prehistoric period, by a Bantu population of the Iron Age, the Shona. In the 14th century, it was the principal city of a major state extending over the gold-rich plateaux; its population exceeded 10,000 inhabitants.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran sets sights on drawing 2 million Chinese tourists per annum

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran's tourism organization has set sights on attracting two million Chinese nationals per annum after the country approved to waive the visa requirement for Chinese travelers.

"In 2018, some 150 million Chinese nationals visited various countries across the globe, and in regards to Iran embracing vast tourism attractions and capacities, we are setting a goal to welcome two million Chinese tourists per annum," tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Sunday, IRNA reported. The decision is made to attract more foreign tourists to the country; however, it is a unilateral measure, i.e. Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas.

Fortunately, the Iranian government has approved to waive the visa requirement for Chinese nationals, which could be an effective step to increase Chinese arrivals in Iran, he said.

Mounesan, who doubles as vice president, said that some 52,000 Chinese people visited the Islamic Republic over the past Iranian calendar year (ended in March 2019).

The number of Chinese tourists visiting Iran fell short of expectations. Some experts deem that insignificant numbers of Chinese



restaurants, Chinese-language guides or even inappropriate lodging facilities as the main reasons behind the low arrivals.

Some say that part of this failure comes from inside Iran, because Chinese restaurants are scanty across the country while the



A foreign traveler visits the historical Agha Bozorg Mosque in Kashan, central Iran.

Iran, Tajikistan stress expansion of tourism ties

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran and Tajikistan have recently explored avenues to enhance tourism ties after the two nations experienced decline in the number of arrivals.

A drop in the number of travelers from both countries led them to enter into negotiations, Iran's deputy chief of tourism Vali Teymouri said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

A total of 4993 Tajik nationals visited Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1396 (ended in March 2018), however, the number fell 9 percent in 1397, reaching 4085 people, the official announced.

The number of Iranians traveling to Tajikistan reached 6261 in 1396, which decreased by 14 percent in 1397, Teymouri added. Referring to Tajikistan's interest in boosting tourism,

Teymouri said, "Talks have been held with Tajikistan's deputy minister of tourism in order to develop cooperation with regard to the cultural commonalities between the two countries. And Tajikistan is keenly interested in exchanging travelers bilaterally."

The number of international tourists visiting Iran surged 52.5 percent in 1397 from a year earlier, Teymouri said earlier in April.

Outbound passengers added up to 7 million during the past year, which is less than a year earlier, when some ten million Iranians traveled overseas, Teymouri said, citing financial strains among reasons behind.

Of Iran's attractions are hundreds of museums, ancient bazaars, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, mansions as well as 22 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Mashhad-Muscat weekly flights increase

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran's Qeshm Air has commenced operating a weekly service connecting Mashhad to Muscat.

The round-trip service made its debut on Thursday, IRIB reported.

The flight from Muscat to Mashhad's Shahid Hasheminejad International Airport was scheduled at 1 p.m. local time and the return flight conducted at 2:45 p.m. The flights are to be operated



every Thursday.

It adds to capacity of the same flights that are routinely being operated by Oman Air, the flagship carrier of the Sultanate, four times a week.

The number of foreign arrivals in Mashhad has been rising over the past couple of years, Gholamabbas Arbab-Khales, the head of Foreign Ministry's Mission in East and North Iran, said earlier in June.

"The arrival of foreign tourists to Mashhad is increasing by 15-20% annually, according to [the number of] visas on arrival that are issued by this mission."

Every day, Mashhad plays host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries and even across the globe to visit the beautiful, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

Hundreds of mummies found buried around the world's oldest pyramid

An amazing cache of mummies has been found in Egypt near one of the world's oldest pyramids. Polish archaeologists discovered several hundred of them at the site. The unearthing of the mummified bodies is expected to help researchers better understand a very important site and also the religious beliefs of ordinary ancient Egyptians.

The mummies were discovered by a team of Polish archaeologists from the Department of Egyptology at the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Oriental Studies that were led by Dr. Kamil Kuraszkiewicz. They had been working in the area near Djoser Pyramid, close to the ancient capital of Memphis in Lower Egypt.

The University's experts have been investigating the location for almost 20 years and they have made numerous important discoveries. In recent years, they found the graves of noblemen from the era of the 6th dynasty, dating to the 24th-21st century BC.

■ Finding the Djoser pyramid mummies

The Polish team found the mummified corpses in the Saqqara necropolis, adjacent to the world's oldest pyramid.

This was a burial area that was believed to have been the necropolis for the inhabitants of Memphis.

The best-known monument in this cemetery is the Djoser pyramid, which is a step-temple, reportedly designed by the legendary vizier Imhotep. It dates to the 27th century BC and is commonly regarded as the first pyramid ever built.

The mummified cadavers were found last September in a location between the ancient step-pyramid and 'the so-called "dry moat", a deep ditch surrounding the pyramid's sacred area' according to the First News website. In ancient Egyptian beliefs, the dry moat (trench) was a type of symbolic path or structure that the pharaoh had to traverse on his route to immortal life. Some of the burials were found in this symbolic ditch or 'moat'.

■ Hundreds of mummies

The archaeologists discovered several dozen, or possibly hundreds, of mummies 'that are in a poor state - their wooden coffins and other organic material has largely decayed. According to First News, 'the majority of the mummies they discovered were laid to rest with only modest arrangements'.

This is in contrast to the elaborate burials of members of the elite and it would indicate that those buried at the site came from lower down in the social hierarchy.

The fragments remaining of the caskets indicate that they were not very well made. And the mummies had only been embalmed in a very basic way and wrapped in bandages before being deposited in graves dug into the sand. First News reports that a symbol of the 'Blue Anubis, believed to be a protector of graves, was found on the base of the coffins'.

There is none of the ornamentation and decorations that are associated with the burials of nobles, bureaucrats, and Pharaohs.

Interestingly, the archaeologists found a very poorly written hieroglyph on one of the caskets. Poland. In reports that the inscription was probably 'created by someone who couldn't write since it makes no sense and some of the signs aren't found in any other place'. Dr. Kuraszkiewicz is quoted by First News as stating that the craft person who 'painted it apparently could not read and perhaps tried to reproduce something that he had seen before'.

(Source: Ancient Origins)

The struggle to turn your face into secure travel ID

The global travel industry is looking to replace your paper tickets and security documents with your biometric data in an effort to ease gridlock.

The International Civil Aviation Organization, the UN's aviation body, met last week in Montreal to discuss ways to bridge the gulf between physical and digital travel documents.

At least 53 biometric systems are used by the industry for everything from airline boarding to hotel check-in, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council. Each is typically unique to a particular venue. British Airways' boarding gates in New York, Los Angeles, London and Orlando, for instance, use facial recognition, while Clear, a New York-based private security screening company, uses iris and fingerprint scans to move passengers through security checks. The current lack of global standards frustrates achievement of a seamless journey from airport curb to destination city.

"Right now it's very fragmented," said Gloria Guevara, the council's president and chief executive officer. "We need to make sure that there is some interoperability among

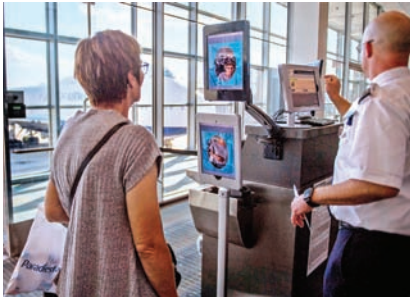
these different models."

Reducing travel friction and increasing security is critical for the industry, which is expecting passenger growth from 4.6 billion this year to 8.2 billion in 2037—a surge that current methods will be unable to handle, Guevara said.

Beyond biometric security measures, airlines are working on new data standards for traveler records, called One ID, to "liberate the industry from a century of accumulated legacies," Alexandre de Juniac, chief executive officer of the airlines' global trade group, the International Air Transport Association, said last week.

"With One ID, passengers will no longer be subject to repetitive document checks from check-in to the departure gate," said de Juniac while addressing a crowd in Athens at a symposium on aviation data. "Air travelers have told us that they are willing to share personal information if it removes some of the hassle from air travel, as long as that information is kept secure and not misused."

Passengers have, in the past, expressed concerns about their privacy when asked to share biometric data. On Wednesday, the



Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, an independent agency in the U.S. government's executive branch, said it would review benefits and privacy concerns arising from biometric tech use in aviation.

Through a spokesperson, the agency declined to comment on the issue but noted it's at an early stage of its research.

For biometric traveling to gain acceptance, it will need to allow people to opt for a "single-journey token" for personal data that would be saved and used for a single trip, Guevara said. "When you hear [passenger privacy] concerns, that's because they don't see the benefit," she said.

Last week, Delta Air Lines Inc. said it would expand facial-recognition boarding for international flights at 49 gates at its Atlanta, Minneapolis and Salt Lake City hubs. The carrier has been using the tech since last fall in Atlanta's Terminal F and claims 72% of surveyed passengers prefer facial recognition to standard boarding.

Delta and JetBlue Airways Corp. began experimenting with biometric data two years ago; American Airlines Group Inc. started tests with such boarding in Los Angeles in December. British Airways says more than 250,000 customers "have experienced a glimpse of the journey of the future" by using their face to board at three U.S. airports and its London Heathrow base over the past 18 months.

Later this year, some airports and carriers will begin tests on the next step of this digital evolution: a complete travel experience from curb to destination, involving all travel documents and security screenings. Routes planned include London-Dallas, Amsterdam-Aruba and Dubai-Sydney, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Knowledge-based companies, startups team up to manufacture subway trains

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian knowledge-based companies and startups plan to jointly manufacture trains for Tehran's subway system, the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari announced, Mehr reported on Sunday.

According to an agreement signed between Tehran Municipality and the vice presidency two years ago, it was planned to build trains by knowledge-based companies and a team of startups, he said.

"According to the plan, we have predicted to build 400 trains after two years," he noted.

"Up to now 70 percent of trains have been imported from other countries and by signing this agreement, we are committed to build 85 percent of a train by the domestic industry," he said.

"Manufacturing trains is one our concerns because the country needs this technology. In addition to Tehran, other metropolises can benefit from this national achievement," he added.

"In this way, the knowledge-based ecosystem turns threats into opportunities and creates jobs."



Tehran Municipality is also committed to help the vice presidency to establish an innovation factory in order to develop startups working in the field of urban services, he said.

A train includes seven or eight cars and 60 percent of the needed 300 billion rials (about \$7 million) investment is provided by the Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operation

Company and the rest by the Iran National Innovation Fund.

In late June, Tehran mayor Pirouz Hanachi said that some 70 new metro cars have been imported to the country which will soon join operational metro lines.

"In order to reach the maximum capacity of the subway, the time between arrivals of trains at the stations should be reduced to two minutes, while currently there is a gap of 2 to even 15 minutes due to the lack of metro cars," he explained.

Tehran subway system consists of five operational lines, stretching to 170 kilometers, which is delivering over 730 million rides each year; two lines of 6 and 7 are under construction.

The lines link south to north, east to west and are gradually covering more neighborhoods. By completing the two aforementioned lines 70 kilometers will be added to the current railways. Currently, the total number of operational trains serving the passengers is 106 trains and 15 trains are running on the subway line 5 linking western Tehran to Karaj, Alborz province, so the city's subway system comprises 121 trains.

ISC to hold workshops on scientometrics, knowledge studies in Oman

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) plans to hold workshops on scientometrics and knowledge studies in Oman, Mehr reported on Monday.

The dean of ISC Mohammad Javad Dehqani met with the Omani Minister of Higher Education Rawya Saud Al Busaidi in Muscat, Oman, talking about activities of ISC.

During the meeting Dehqani proposed holding educational workshops on scientometrics and knowledge studies for universities by the ISC. The ISC cooperates with Omani universities in order to boost their rankings and introduce prominent Omani researchers and thinkers in international level, he said.

Amer Ali Al-Rawas from Sultan Qaboos University, director - University of Oman Project Faten Hani, Iran's ambassador to Oman Hojjatoleslam Mohammadreza Nouri Shahroudi, Shiraz University of Technology Chancellor Mohammad Mehdi Alavian Mehr and director for international cooperation at the Shiraz University of Technology Akbar Rahideh attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Nouri Shahroudi pointed to communalities between Iran and Oman saying that they have a great

potentialities for further cooperation in the field of science and technology. The universities and academic centers of the two sides are eager to boost ties in different fields of engineering, new technologies and medicine, he said.

Alavian Mehr also present capabilities of the Shiraz University of Technology in different fields of engineering and courses the university hold to develop skills and entrepreneurship for alumni.

Rawya Saud Al Busaidi elaborated on the general plans of Oman for higher education and the demands of the universities in the field of research and industry.

ISC is a citation index established by the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology after it was approved by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It only indexes journals from the Islamic world.

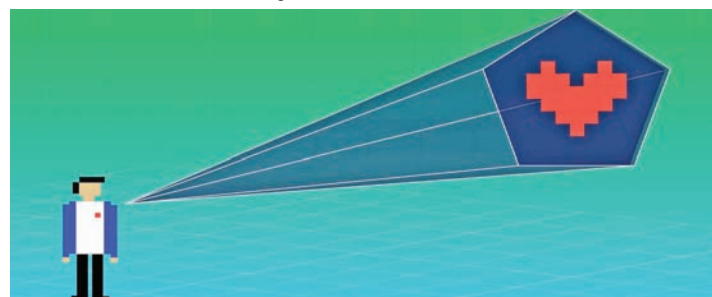
It was announced in Baku, Azerbaijan, during the Fourth Islamic Conference of the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research held in October 2008. It is managed by the Islamic World Science Citation Center, located in Shiraz.

In 2009, ISC partnered with Scopus that allows ISC's publications to be indexed in Scopus.



The dean of ISC Mohammad Javad Dehqani (second from right) and the Omani Minister of Higher Education Rawya Saud Al Busaidi (third from right) pose for a photo with Iranian and Omani officials and scholars in an undated photo in Muscat, Oman

New Pentagon laser identifies high-risk individuals by their heartbeat



The use of biometric technology to identify known enemy combatants is a major theme in military circles right now, and there are multiple tests and trials running to evaluate what works best under different conditions. Challenges include enrollment and identification at a distance, from vehicles, from covert deployments and on the move—and so all kinds of innovative thinking are being applied. Now, the MIT Technology Review has reported that this includes a laser developed for the U.S. military to "identify people from a distance by their heartbeat."

The focus for these technologies within the military is the recognition of known threats at distance. The most prevalent solution for standoff biometric detection is facial recognition, but that technology clearly requires visibility of a subject's face and can be hampered by poor lighting and enrollment imagery. Jetson, the Pentagon's new device, "uses a technique known as laser vibrometry to detect the surface movement caused by the heartbeat," and can reportedly "identify people without seeing their faces... detecting unique cardiac signatures with an infrared laser." Albeit, it currently only works out to distances of 200 meters, has an accuracy rate of around 95%, and needs a pre-enrolled database of cardiac signatures.

According to the MIT Technology Review, Jetson works by extending existing technology "used to check vibration from a distance in structures such as wind tur-

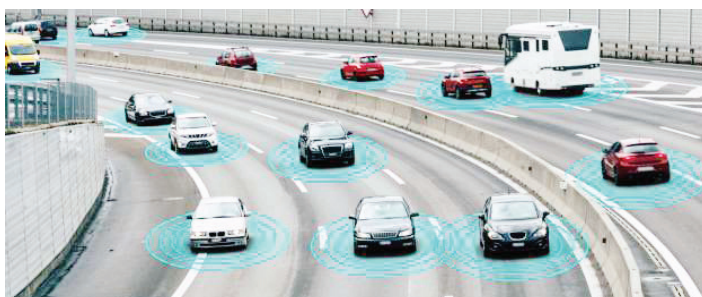
bines [and] takes about 30 seconds to get a good return." The system is currently limited to stationary targets who are not wearing heavy clothing—so, early days still. Most biometric identification technologies operate in controlled conditions. Shifting to a standoff, non-compliant, non-controlled environment increases the complexity many times over. This new technology will encounter the same problems as other technologies.

Cardiac identification joins gait recognition, voiceprint, facial recognition and fingerprinting as biometrics become ever more commonplace in identity assurance. From a military perspective, think connected IoT sensors leveraging central datasets in battlefield conditions. The U.S. Army's Advanced Research Labs (ARL) envisages integrated sensors, wearables, weaponry and vehicles "to develop the fundamental understanding of dynamically-composable, adaptive, goal-driven IoT (Internet of Battlefield Things)," including the fundamental challenge of target acquisition.

Alexander Kott, chief of ARL's Network Science Division, and colleagues call this "the emerging reality of warfare." Here scientists envisage laser missile shields and battlefields where ground and airborne vehicles, and even soldiers themselves, are autonomous robots. "Robots probably will fight robots," says Kott, "there's no question about it."

(Source: forbes.com)

Bad driving skills to inspire technology can make driverless cars 'think' on the road



Tailgating, speeding, cutting people off on roundabouts and illegal u-turns are some of the worst moves made by Britain's drivers -- and now they are being taught to driverless cars.

Oxford University scientists are using drivers' bad habits to train autonomous vehicle technology to think like a human and react to the challenges they will face on the road.

Footage from thousands of CCTV cameras and drones are being analysed by technology that uses computer vision to track road users' movements.

Machine learning technology then extracts the predictability within natural human behavior to create real life simulation scenarios and teach driverless cars how to cope with them.

Oxford University professor Shimon Whiteson said that a large amount of the footage the team uses to teach driverless vehicles is of bad drivers.

"It's raw video, so the quality of the driving is exactly what you see when you are on the road yourself," he said.

"We don't want to learn perfect behavior, we want to learn naturalistic behavior, and if people drive badly we want that to be what they [driverless cars] capture and learn."

The technology also analyses the movements of pedestrians, cyclists and motor-cycle users to predict their behavior in an infinite number of scenarios.

This technology is being used in two government-funded trials worth £7m,

(Source: msn.com)

UAE debuts the world's largest individual solar power project

The United Arab Emirates might still be associated with oil money, but it just set a record for reducing its dependence on oil. The Emirate Water and Electricity Company has started running Noor Abu Dhabi, the largest individual solar power project in the world. At 1.18 gigawatts of peak capacity, it's only eclipsed by solar parks (where multiple projects share space) -- it makes the US' biggest facility, the 569MW Solar Star, seem modest by comparison.

Not surprisingly, Abu Dhabi is keen to tout the envi-

ronmental benefits. It estimates that Noor Abu Dhabi's 3.2 million panels provide enough power for 90,000 people, and will lower CO2 emissions by 1 million metric tonnes (984,206 imperial tons). That's the equivalent of pulling 200,000 cars off the roads, according to the emirate.

It's hard to deny that the UAE is using the solar farm as a publicity tool. Although it should have a tangible effect on emissions, the reality is that the UAE is still heavily reliant on oil. It recently talked about cutting

oil production to balance the market, not to shy away from fossil fuels. It remains an important development, though, and you can expect other record-setting solar projects before long. Emirates Water and Electric has early plans for a 2GW solar project, and Saudi Arabia has a basic agreement for 2.6GW of solar power in Mecca. The region is quickly becoming kinder to the planet, even if it's not ready to ditch its most prized resource just yet.

(Source: engadget.com)

ELECOMP 2019 to provide special place for disabled-friendly startups

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The 25th edition of Iran International Exhibition of Electronics, Computer & E-commerce (ELECOMP 2019) provides a user-friendly place for startups that bring disability solutions to market, the head of the Information Technology Organization of Iran, Amir Nazemi, announced on his Twitter account, Mehr reported on Sunday.



Tech breakthroughs that empower people with disabilities can set up stands with special features, which are disability-friendly to present their services at the ELECOM Stars of the event, he said.

In "ELECOM Stars", the startup companies compete for a finance by Iran's ICT Guild Organization.

With the motto of 'better future' this year, ELECOMP 2019 will be held from July 18 to 21.

ELECOMP Jobs is a new section, which will be added to the exhibition in order to boost entrepreneurship for ICT graduates. It aims to facilitate the connection between alumni and the companies, which may be facilitated by the ELECOMP Jobs section.

ELECOMP Trends as another important section in which, hi-techs like big data and blockchain are discussed.

A total of six halls are allocated to startups, while the halls for startups are limited to four in past editions.

The ICT Ministry is negotiating with some foreign countries to take part in the ELECOMP 2019.

ELECOMP is the biggest event in the Iranian electronics and computer market. Since its first edition in 1995, the event has been providing a unique opportunity for businesses to increase their share of this huge and ever-growing market.

Twenty provinces connected to National Technomart Network

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Twenty provinces of Iran are connected to the National Technomart Network in order to create synergy between startups, Mehr reported on Sunday.

The necessity of connection between industry and scientific and technology approaches was the main issue discussed during the 12th national meeting on technomart.

Over the past year, agreements worth one thousand billion rials (about \$23.8 million) were signed between the industry sector and researchers, the National Technomart Network director Milad Sadrkhanlou said.

He pointed to the Asia-Pacific Startup Network, an online platform for promoting technology startups and programs, which was introduced by Iran during the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) meeting on June 10 in Tehran, saying that startups receive mentoring and consultation services through this network.

The network and its mechanism are currently being studied by ESCAP. In case the project is approved by the commission, all member countries will officially join the network and start activities. ESCAP is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region.

World's central banks tackle technology with innovation hub

Central banks grappling with fast-changing financial technology and companies like Facebook (FB.O) moving into finance will aim to work together more closely through an innovation hub approved on Sunday by the Bank for International Settlements.

The BIS said the intention of the hub, which will be based in Basel, Hong Kong and Singapore, is to improve the functioning of the global financial system and it will identify and develop insights into trends in technology affecting central banking. Facebook's plan to expand into payments and launch its own Libra cryptocurrency were not mentioned in the BIS statement, but the social media giant's move has helped crystallize opinion among central bankers on the urgency of coordinating regulatory responses to financial technology trends.

"The IT revolution knows no borders and therefore has repercussions in multiple locations simultaneously," BIS Chairman Jens Weidmann said in a statement following the decision to create the hub at a BIS board meeting.

The hub will focus on helping central banks to "identify relevant trends in technology, supporting these developments where this is consistent with their mandate, and keeping abreast of regulatory requirements with the objective of safeguarding financial stability," he added.

Basel-based BIS, a central bank umbrella group, has already called on politicians to closely scrutinize Big Tech's incursion into finance, a move that raises questions about data privacy, competition, markets and banking.

Details about the hub were limited, and the BIS said it was not able to provide details on investment or staffing levels.

The Swiss National Bank (SNB), the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Monetary Authority of Singapore have all signed up to support the initiative.

SNB Chairman Thomas Jordan said the central bank would step up its efforts in scrutinizing new financial technology.

"The SNB is already keeping very close track of technological innovations in the financial area, and works actively within the central banking community in identifying and assessing relevant developments at an early stage," Jordan said.

(Source: reuters.com)

\$4.2b earmarked for job generation in rural areas

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A total budget of 180 trillion rials (around \$4.2 billion) has been allocated to open up job opportunities in rural areas, vice-president for rural development and deprived areas has announced.



Despite the efforts made to increase migration from cities to rural areas, the population of villages is declining, Mehr news agency quoted Mohammad Omid as saying on Saturday.

In the past, population density was 65 percent in rural and 35 percent in urban areas, while today it has reached 26 and 74 percent, respectively, he noted.

Referring to the slight changes in the population of villages, he said that currently 21 million people are residing in rural areas.

So, it is planned to earmark a budget amounting to 180 trillion rials (around \$4.2 billion) in order to empower rural residents and encourage migrants to turn back to the rural areas, he added.

Up to now, 150,000 job opportunities have been created in these areas, so the rural unemployment rate has been reduced, he highlighted.

He went on to conclude that job creation plans require careful and continuous monitoring, which, if considered, will reduce the failure rate, adding, necessary steps should be taken by facilitators to develop successful projects.

Butterflywatch: small blue makes waves between downpours

Britain's smallest butterfly has been spotted more than 25 miles from its nearest known colony

It seems not to have stopped raining since last month's Butterfly watch but it has been quite warm and in the gaps between the deluges I've seen plenty of Britain's largest butterfly, the swallowtail, in its Norfolk heartland.

I've also admired hundreds of migratory painted ladies, blown in on southerly winds, in what is the largest invasion for a decade but still well short of the epic painted lady summer of 2009.

But it is Britain's smallest butterfly that has been making the most waves. The small blue has been discovered in Norfolk for the first time since 1910, more than 25 miles from its nearest known colony. This tiny, mostly brown-grey insect has also been spotted in other places where it has been absent for some years, including in Suffolk, Essex and Cambridge shire, where it is breeding at a site close to a housing estate.

The small blue caterpillar's food plant, kidney vetch, is relatively common and increasingly found on roadsides. Some suspicious lepidopterists believe the small blue's sudden arrival in new sites means butterfly breeders are releasing it, but this tiny insect consistently amazes in its ability to disperse across inhospitable urban terrain, locate its food plant and set up home.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Dome diamond raid

(November 9, 2000)

Police arrested nine people after an unsuccessful attempt to steal diamonds worth 500 million dollars from the Millennium Dome in London. Tom Hagler reported.

The robbers smashed their way through the Dome's gates in a **digger**. Armed with **smoke bombs**, hammers and nail guns, and wearing gas masks, they made their way to the zone where the diamonds were kept. Among the display they hoped to find the Millennium Star, which experts say is the world's largest diamond of its kind. Their aim was to break the reinforced glass case and then **make their get-away** on a speed boat which was waiting for them on the river Thames. Meanwhile, on the opposite bank one of the gang was apparently **monitoring** police calls using a **scanner**. But police - who say they had known about the planned **heist** for months - were lying in wait.

Detective Superintendent John Shatford said he was delighted by the **undercover operation**.

"If this robbery was carried out in accordance with the wishes of those taking part it would have been the biggest robbery to have occurred anywhere in the world. This was an **audacious** attempt at a robbery but it was foiled by an even more audacious **police response**." Some members of the public were on the site when the raid took place. Among them was a group of school children. When the security alert was sounded, they were ushered into a small room and sang hymns throughout the ordeal. This is how one eyewitness described the scene short after the police swooped. "There were several **bursts of automatic fire**. Helicopters - in fact there are still helicopters circling around now. There's a **considerable police presence**, and yes there was a lot of shouting and **gunfire**."

Police have, in fact, denied there was any shooting. But even if the robbers had made a successful get-away they would have been sorely disappointed. **Tipped off** about the likelihood of a raid, De Beers had swapped the diamonds the previous evening for **fakes**.

Words

digger: a big machine for making holes in the ground
smoke bombs: bombs filled not with explosives but smoke powder
make their get-away: escape
monitoring: listening to what the police were saying
scanner: an electronic device used to listen to transmissions
heist: a term from American English for a large robbery
undercover operation: a complicated activity carried out in secret
audacious: audacious behavior is behavior in which people take risks in order to achieve something
police response: what the police did to react to the raid
security alert: a warning
bursts of automatic fire: sudden short periods of shooting
considerable police presence: lots of police in the area
gunfire: repeated shooting, or shots from guns
Tipped off: if you tip someone off you tell them in secret about a crime that is going to happen
fakes: copies which look like the real thing

DOE plans on live capture of cheetahs for conservation

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Department of Environment (DOE) is preparing a plan on capturing two remaining Asiatic cheetahs alive for conservation and reproduction purposes, Majid Kharrazian-Moqaddam, director of the wildlife conservation and management at the DOE has said.

Through the plan, an Asiatic cheetah couple inhabiting in protected areas of central province of Yazd will be caught, he said, adding, related organizations must cooperate in this regard.

To implement the plan, an amount of budget is required, which must be allocated to prevent the valuable species from extinction, he further highlighted, YJC reported on Monday.

He went on to note that Iran is the only country in Asia and the world that can reproduce and revive endangered species due to the existence of few remaining Asiatic cheetahs in the country.



If the required budget is provided, we can be somewhat hopeful to revive the precious species, he concluded.

The world's fastest mammal, capable of reaching speeds of 120 kilometers per hour, once stalked habitats from the eastern reaches of India to the Atlantic coast of Senegal, once their numbers have stabilized in parts of southern Africa, but they have practically disappeared from northern Africa and Asia.

The subspecies "Acinonyx jubatus venaticus", commonly known as the Asiatic cheetah, is critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with fewer than 50 believed to remain in Iran.

Roads fragmenting cheetahs' habitats are the main threats for the species, while guard dogs and stray dogs, drought spells, decreasing population of the prey species to support the cheetahs, and habitat loss are also other factors endangering the sparse population of the cheetahs in the country.

50,000 housing units under construction for the underprivileged

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Over 50,000 residential units are being built for persons with disabilities and those under the Welfare Organization's coverage across the country, Ali Raboubi, an official with the Organization has stated.

Since the Iranian calendar year 1385 (March 2006- March 2007), the Welfare Organization has constructed 108,300 housing units for the deprived, he said, Tasnim reported on Monday.

Currently, construction of over 50,000 houses for those covered by the Organization is underway, he added.

"However, some 113,610 individuals being supported by the organization do not own a house," he lamented.

He went on to say that it is planned to grant the houses to half of them, and the rest will be provided each with loans amounting to 100 million rials (nearly \$2,380).

Referring to the families having more than two members with disabilities, he noted, "We also provided 6,000 of these families



with housing units, while it is scheduled to construct some 6,641 houses, as well."

Last year, a total of 5,241 residential units were provided and transferred, in addition to construction of 5,000 others for the people affected by flood, he concluded.

Torrential rain started on March 19 led to flood in at least 25 out of 31 provinces of Iran and caused extensive damage to the houses, schools, urban and rural infrastructure, crops and livestock. Provinces of Lorestan, Golestan, and Khuzestan are hit the hardest with the flooding.

More than a dozen seabird species in decline off south-east Australia, study finds

The findings are 'worrying', researchers say, and are likely to be partly because of warming ocean temperatures.

More than a dozen species of seabirds are in decline off Australia's south-east coast – likely because of warming ocean temperatures, new research has found.

The study revealed sightings of almost half of the 30 most abundant seabirds – including the wandering albatross and flesh-footed shearwater – had fallen in the region between 2000 and 2016.

Seabirds are critical in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems, acting as predators that feed on a range of prey.

"Our findings are worrying, not just because 13 of our more common species are declining, but because we don't know for sure what is driving these declines," lead author and University of NSW honors student, Simon Gorta, said on Monday.

Researchers at the UNSW Centre for Ecosystem Science suggest warming ocean temperatures are likely contributing to the trend.



The east Australian current has strengthened off the country's south-east, which has led to warmer and less productive waters in the region. That is potentially driving birds to hunt elsewhere, Gorta said.

"We can predict that as surface temperatures increase with climate change, we will be seeing fewer species that prefer cooler-than-average surface temperatures," he said.

The research, published in the international scientific journal Biological Conservation, was based on data collected by birdwatchers who go out to sea almost monthly.

(Source: The Guardian)

Young golden eagles disappear in mysterious circumstances

Area becoming 'black hole' for the species, expert says after almost a third of tracked birds disappear.

Two young golden eagles have disappeared "under suspicious circumstances" within hours of each other on the same Scottish grouse moor, according to wildlife presenter Chris Packham.

The birds were being monitored with satellite tags by Mr Packham and Raptor Persecution UK as part of a study of the movements of young golden eagles in Scotland.

The two eagles, named Adam and Charlie, are said

to have vanished from the Auchnafree Estate in the Strathbraan area of Perthshire on 18 April.

They had been wearing satellite tags that inexplicably stopped working and the birds have since been untraceable, Raptor Persecution UK said.

It is illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, with a few exceptions, in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Mr Packham and Raptor Persecution UK said there was no evidence to suggest the Auchnafree Estate was involved in the disappearances.

The Spring watch presenter said: "We can't prove that harm has come to Adam and Charlie, nor who might have been responsible, but we can look at the circumstances, look at the science, look at the wider evidence and draw plausible conclusions.

"The Scottish government has already acknowledged that illegal raptor persecution is an ongoing problem.

"How many more golden eagles do we have to lose before that same government takes effective action?"

(Source: The Independent)

Bird spotted feeding chick cigarette butt in 'devastating' picture

A parent bird has been spotted feeding its chick a cigarette butt, highlighting environmental concerns and prompting a wave of anger at careless smokers.

The black skimmer bird was photographed at a beach in Florida, US, picking the butt up and putting it in the baby's mouth.

Karen Mason, who took the photographs, issued a simple plea as she posted the pictures online: "If you smoke, please don't leave your butts behind."

She added: "It's time we cleaned up our beaches and stopped treating them like one giant ash tray. #nobuttsforbabies."

Commenters endorsed her plea, saying the sight was "heart-breaking and devastating".

Susan Nagi wrote: "The baby chick needs to become a poster child for change."

"People are disgusting!" wrote Josee Noel. "They don't want their butts, as if we do! Time to ban them, everywhere! What about our rights? Nature's? Toxicity off the charts!"

Ms Mason, known online as Karen Catbird, was inundated with requests from the world's media to reproduce her photos. "Whatever helps to get people to think before they toss," she said.

She explained that the birds feed by skimming along the water with their beaks open. "They don't see what they are getting. This parent must have latched on to a butt in the shallow water," she wrote.

"People won't go anywhere without a way to carry their cell phone but they apparently don't want to be bothered with carrying something small enough for their butts."

Liette Ricard pointed out discarding butts does not just hurt animals and environments; it can start forest fires too.

Cigarette butts were the most common item of all types of rubbish collected from beaches globally, according to a report by Ocean Conservancy last year.


"Tobacco butts are so ubiquitous that most of us have become blind to them," said Rachel Kippen, of the Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education Coalition. "There are 4.5 trillion of them littering our streets, parks and beaches around the globe.

"Most people don't realize that butts are made from cellulose acetate, a plastic that never entirely degrades.

"These filters provide no health benefit to smokers but create a lasting environmental threat, especially for the ocean, when they are inappropriately discarded – which most are."

Black skimmers – also known as scissor-bills or shearwaters – live mostly in estuaries and along wide rivers in warm regions.

(Source: The Independent)



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Second Announcement

(Call for public tender (First/Second publish

One Stages tender

Subject of Tender: P/F DLL TOOL (HALLIBURTON LOGGING SERVICE

National Iranian Drilling Company

Tender descriptions:

| The Tender holder | Registration No. through national electronic tendering system | Tender No. /Indent No. | Estimated value (Rial/Euro) |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| National Iranian Drilling Company | 3/206/033 | Tender No.: FP/98-20/ 035 Indent No.:08-22-9745026 | 3, 717, 870, 307 |

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 which have more than 4 in process contacts with NIDC are not allowed to participate in this tender . 2- Applicants which have more than 2 in process contacts with NIDC in similar subject (exclusively same subject) are not allowed to participate in another tender |
|--------|---|
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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 (closing date) |
|---|--|--|
| Distribution Place | Hall No.:113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148253 | |
| Submitting Method | Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR. 520100004001114004020491) in .name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank .Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents | |
| Documents Receiving Method | Closing date | Days after the last time of Purchasing. (closing date 98/05/26) 35 (27/05/98) The envelopes will be opened At 10:15 .a.m On |
| | Address | Hall No. 107, 1 st 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 | 186,000,000 Rial / 3/915 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 (Shaba No. IR. 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran. |
| Duration of credit & quotation | Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration. |

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr
تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۸/۴/۱۰نوبت دوم ۹۸/۴/۱۰

Erdogan: ‘Some people paying serious money’ to bury Khashoggi issue

‘Out of question’ to support U.S. Palestine plan

TEHRAN — Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says “some people” are paying “serious money” to bury the issue of the murder of Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Khashoggi, a former advocate of the Saudi royal court who later became a critic of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was killed and his body dismembered by a Saudi hit squad after being lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018.

Turkish officials were the first to report the killing of Khashoggi. They have pressed the kingdom for information on his dismembered body’s whereabouts.

Speaking to reporters after the G20 summit in Japan, Erdogan said bin Salman must uncover the killers of Khashoggi, noting that some aspects of the murder were still being hidden.

The Washington Post, for which Khashoggi was a columnist, said last November the CIA had concluded that bin Salman personally ordered his killing.

According to Press TV, Riyadh has spurned all the allegations linking the killing to the crown prince and instead claimed that the murder had been carried out by a “rogue” group.



■ U.S. plan for Middle East

Erdogan also said it was “never possible” for Turkey to positively consider the \$50 billion U.S. “peace” plan for the Middle East.

Last week, the U.S. outlined the “economic” part of its plan for the Middle East. Critics say Washington is offering financial rewards for Palestinians to ac-

cept the Israeli occupation.

Erdogan also said the presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey would hold a summit this month to discuss developments in Syria.

■ Turkey to get S-400 systems within 10 days

Turkish media on Sunday quoted Erdogan as saying that the Russian S-400 missile

defense systems would be delivered within 10 days, a day after he said the U.S. did not plan to impose sanctions on Ankara over the deal.

Turkey and the United States have been at loggerheads for months over Ankara’s purchase order for the S-400s, which the U.S. claims are incompatible with NATO systems and the Lockheed Martin Corp’s F-35 stealth fighters.

Washington has given Ankara until the end of July to cancel its purchase of the Russian missile defense systems or see another deal — for the purchase of F-35s from the U.S. — canceled.

It has also formally begun the process of expelling Turkey from the F-35 program, halting the training of Turkish pilots in the U.S.

But, Erdogan said on Saturday the U.S. president had personally told him that there would be no U.S. sanctions on Turkey over the S-400 purchase.

“Within 10 days, maybe within one week, the first shipment will have arrived. I told Trump this openly,” the Hurriyet newspaper cited Erdogan as saying after a meeting with his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump.

N. Korea upbeat on Trump-Kim surprise meeting as a chance to push nuclear talks

TEHRAN — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump agreed at their meeting on Sunday to push forward dialogue for making a new breakthrough in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, North Korean state media said on Monday.

Trump became the first sitting U.S. president to set foot in North Korea on Sunday when he met Kim in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas and agreed to resume stalled nuclear talks.

“The top leaders of the two countries agreed to keep in close touch in the future, too, and resume and push forward productive dialogues for making a new breakthrough in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and in the bilateral relations,” KCNA news agency said.

According to Reuters, the meeting, initiated by a tweet by Trump that Kim said took him by surprise, displayed the rapport between the two, but analysts said they were no closer to narrowing the gap between their positions since they walked away from their summit in February in Vietnam.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters shortly before departing South Korea that a new round

of talks would likely happen “sometime in July” and the North’s negotiators would be foreign ministry diplomats.

In a photo released by KCNA on Monday, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho and Pompeo are shown sitting next to Kim and Trump respectively in Freedom House, the building in which the two leaders had their one-on-one talks.

KCNA said that during the chat between Trump and Kim, the two leaders explained “issues of easing tensions on the Korean peninsula,” “issues of mutual concern and interest which become a stumbling block in solving those issues,” and “voiced full understanding and sympathy.”

Kim said it was the good personal relationship he had with Trump that made such a dramatic meeting possible at just one day’s notice and that the relationship with Trump would continue to produce good results, according to KCNA.

The two leaders’ “bold, brave decision” that led to the historic meeting “created unprecedented trust between the two countries” that had been tangled in deeply rooted animosity, KCNA said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the meeting between Trump and Kim and “fully supports the



continued efforts of the parties to establish new relations toward sustainable peace, security and complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula”, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in a statement.

Taliban attack in Kabul kills at least 16

TEHRAN — The Taliban detonated a powerful car bomb in an area of Kabul housing military and government buildings, killing at least 16 the interior ministry told Al Jazeera.

The bomb went off during the morning rush hour in the capital when the streets were filled with people, injuring 105 people, including 26 children and five women, according to the ministry of health.

Mohammad Karim, a police official in the area of the attack, said the vehicle

bomb exploded outside a defense ministry building.

At least three fighters then ran into a nearby high-rise located near the ministry’s engineering and logistics department, a government security official said.

“Gunmen have entered a building and they are clashing with the Afghan forces after the powerful blast,” said interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement that the group’s

fighters attacked “the logistics and engineering centers” of the ministry of defense.

The statement said the large explosion outside the defense ministry building caused “heavy casualties to a number of civilian people”, but said the target of the attack was not civilian, but military.

The United Nations, NGOs and the Afghan government have criticized the Taliban for causing civilian casualties.

“I was sleeping when I heard a huge blast,

immediately after that the roof of my room fell on me, leaving me injured,” Ikram, a witness, told Al Jazeera.

“Just a 100 meters away, I saw from my window that fighters were conducting more blasts and shooting. I went out to check on my grandmother and mother, who were both stuck under the rubble after the roof fell on them as well.”

Afghans decried the attack on social media, many sharing photos of children who were injured on their way to school.

EU leaders suspend talks without deal on top jobs, Macron fumes

TEHRAN — EU leaders suspended a summit on Monday after 20 hours of talks failed to produce a deal on who should get the bloc’s top jobs, prompting anger from French President Emmanuel Macron who said Europe’s indecision was hurting its image abroad.

Their inability to find consensus candidates during marathon negotiations that ran through the night reflected the fragmented state of the bloc’s parliament, and underlined the problems in reaching a common position on issues from migration to climate change that have grown as the bloc has expanded.

Macron, who left the venue shortly after the talks were abruptly called off until Tuesday morning, labeled the breakdown a “failure” though he said an agreement could still be found.

Eastern European countries had strongly objected to a deal hatched by him and the leaders of Germany and Spain

to hand the European Commission presidency to Dutch socialist Frans Timmermans.

Timmermans’ nomination was also deeply unpopular with the center-right European People’s Party (PEP) group in the European Parliament, which argued it should hold the Commission presidency as it has the most lawmakers in parliament.

Macron said there could be no further enlargement of the 28-member bloc without reforms that permitted it to function.

The post of Commission president was just one of five that need allocating, also including president of the European Central Bank.

It is highly unusual for summit talks to run into a third day, and the current negotiations mark what is already the third attempt to fill the posts for at least the next five years.

Asked what the main sticking point in negotiations was,

an EU official said: “The whole package.”

“It’s just unbelievably complicated. You have so many political factions,” said Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, adding that some factions remained divided among themselves.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose Christian Democrat party belongs to the PEP, was more conciliatory toward the eastern nations, saying the EU’s larger members could not ignore the views of its smaller nations.

To be appointed, the next Commission president needs the support of at least 72% of the 28 member states, who must represent at least 65% of the bloc’s population.

Diplomats said getting names agreed was crucial for the EU’s standing, as more delays would only provide fodder for anti-establishment nationalists who say the bloc is out of touch with its citizens, divided and dysfunctional, Reuters reported.

Israeli missile attack kills kid, several others in Syria

TEHRAN — An Israeli missile aggression against Syria’s Homs and the suburbs of Damascus has killed a number of civilians, including a kid, the official news agency SANA reported.

State media put the number of victims at four. Many others have also been injured in the Israeli aggression, the report by SANA said.

The Syrian air defense earlier said its

forces had shot down three missiles launched by Israeli warplanes on Sunday night from Lebanese airspace towards some Syrian sites.

SANA quoted a military source as saying that the aggression targeted military sites in Homs and the suburbs of Damascus.

The London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also claimed that the strikes had targeted a research center and a military airport west of the city of Homs.

Following the explosions near Damascus, Israeli jet fighters reportedly fled at low altitudes in the Lebanese airspace.

The Israeli regime launches airstrikes on the Syrian territory from time to time. Such aggressive moves are usually viewed as attempts to prop up terrorist groups suffering defeats at the hands of Syrian government forces.

According to Press TV, Israel used to be

very careful with its operations over Syria after Russia equipped Damascus with the advanced S-300 surface-to-air missiles in October 2018.

However, U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent decision to recognize the “Israeli sovereignty” over the Syrian territories of Golan Heights has seemingly emboldened Tel Aviv to launch new aggression on the Arab country.

which is loyal to anti-Damascus Druze leader Walid Jumblatt.

The attack comes on the heels of tensions that were ignited by a visit by Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil to the area earlier in the day. His visit caused led protesters to block roads (shown in the following video), prompting Bassil to call off the visit.

Lebanese Defense Minister Elias Bou Saab called for calm, telling the LBC network that the army had placed a large number of forces in the area .

The messages hidden in a meeting

➔1 Trump wants to pretend that he has a specific doctrine in his international policy; he has even tried to come up with “Trumpism” as a new doctrine like “Jacksonism” or “Jeffersonism”, but it is already clear to everybody, including the republicans, that Trump’s international policy is not based on any specific strategy or theory; rather it is merely a show that is rooted in his specific character.

The second point to discuss here is the important role of “foreign policy” in U.S. next presidential elections in 2020.

Based on the latest polls taken by Quinnipiac University, foreign policy is among the most crucial parameters that have severely decreased Trump’s popularity, especially in grey, key states such as Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, Ohio and Florida.

It is expected of democrats to mainly focus on Trump’s foreign policy as one of his weaknesses during the next presidential elections; therefore, Trump is now thinking about “changing the current trend” of his foreign policy; in other words, he mainly wants to create the feeling in American citizens that he is making changes in his foreign policy.

In conclusion, we cannot simply figure out Trump’s strategies and judge the limits and parameters of his behavior; because his behaviors are not consistent, they are based on “fleeting tactics” and “momentary emotions”, and we have all witnessed numerous examples of this behaviors since he took the office in 2017.

The last point to discuss is the general idea behind the meeting between U.S. and North Korea’s leaders. Obviously, in dealing with Pyongyang, Trump is simultaneously using both “threats” and “negotiations”, this is the same strategy that he is trying to adopt toward Iran as well.

This paradox is not based on some careful foreign policy plans that U.S. administration has devised; rather, it is the result of Trump’s uncertainty about the right way to use U.S. diplomatic and strategic powers. This is a very serious problem and cannot be resolved anytime soon, even with removing people like John Bolton and Mike Pompeo from the cabinet.

Even when Rex W. Tillerson was the Secretary of State and H. R. McMaster was the National Security Advisor, Trump suffered from this chronic uncertainty; therefore Trump will continue to have this paradoxical, dubious and dual behavior until the last day he is in office, whether it would be 2020 or 2022A.

With increased confidence, China and Japan can lead on world stage

➔7 Since the defeat in WWII, Japan has long played second fiddle to the US. But in the face of prominent changes in the international order and China’s rise, Japan has realized that it can also exercise international leadership. And this requires a healthy relationship with China. Of course, many sensitive issues between the two have not been resolved. The possibility of downtick in ties remains. But as long as the two can factor in global and regional governance, strengthen strategic communication, manage differences, and build political and social consensus, stability and development of relations is a given.

Bin Salman, Bin Zayed’s honey moon is over

➔1 Reportedly, Haya bint Hussein, wife of the ruler of the Emirate of Dubai has fled to Germany some weeks ago and applied for asylum.



Accordingly, Emirati officials are now worried about Saudi abusive use of Haya bint Hussein’s secret information, especially since she sought political asylum upon her arrival in Germany, and demanded divorce from bin Rashid absently.

In this regard, bin Zayed has personally asked the German authorities to return Haya bint Hussein to the Emirates, but this demand has been rejected by German officials.

In such circumstances, the issuance of permission for Saudi security officials to meet with Dubai’s spouse has led to the simultaneous embarrassment form the rulers of Berlin and Riyadh.

It should be noted that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan who over the past four years have had the highest share in supporting the Takfiri terrorists and undermining the security and stability of the Southwest region of Asia, have recently faced great controversy over Yemen crisis.

Those who have joint projects such as full support for ISIL, Yemen crisis, terrorist operations in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the removal of Qatar from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council’s political equations, support of Khalifa Haftar in Libya, and other decommissioning in North Africa, complete harmony with the Zionist regime to normalize relations with the Arabs and ‘Deal of the Century’ and a strategic alliance with Donald Trump against the interests of the Muslim world and the axis of resistance, now are trying to shift the responsibility of the failure in Yemen to each other.

Lampard excused Derby pre-season training amid Chelsea talks

Derby County excused Frank Lampard from pre-season training on Monday and Tuesday to allow the manager more time to negotiate a move to Europa League champions Chelsea.

The Championship (second tier) club said in a statement the decision was to allow Lampard's discussions "to be concluded as soon as possible".

"On the assumption that Frank will reach an agreement with Chelsea to become their new manager, the club shall step up its efforts to find a replacement manager," Derby added.

Lampard won three Premier League titles and the Champions League as a player at Chelsea and is favourite to replace Maurizio Sarri after the Italian joined Serie A champions Juventus.

The former England international led Derby to the Championship playoff final last season, losing to Aston Villa, in his first year in management.

The 41-year-old is adored by the Chelsea faithful for his record-breaking goalscoring exploits during a trophy-laden 13 years in West London.

Chelsea last month appointed their former goalkeeper, and Lampard's ex-team mate, Petr Cech as technical and performance advisor.

The club last month appealed a transfer ban imposed by world soccer body FIFA for breaching rules regarding the international transfer and registration of players under 18.

The ban prevents Chelsea from signing players in the close season and January transfer window in 2020.

The Premier League club announced on Monday that 31-year-old Argentine striker Gonzalo Higuain, who was on loan from Juventus, was one of five players to have left at the end of their contracts.

Captain Gary Cahill, retiring goalkeeper Rob Green, Eduardo and Kyle Scott were the others.

Goalkeeper Eduardo spent last season on loan at Vitesse Arnhem. *(Source: Reuters)*

Godin signs for Inter, Juve snap up Pellegrini

Veteran Uruguayan central defender Diego Godin, who announced his departure from Atletico Madrid in May, signed a three-year deal with Inter Milan on Monday.

In a busy day of Serie A transfer activity, Luca Pellegrini became reigning champions Juventus' first summer signing after moving from Roma on a 22-million-euro (\$25 million) four-year deal.

The promising Pellegrini, 20, came through the ranks at Roma before spending last season on loan at Cagliari. Fellow defender Leonardo Spinazzola moved the other way as part of the deal.

Juventus are expected to tie up the transfer of French midfielder Adrien Rabiot from Paris Saint-Germain later Monday.

Roma paid out 29.5 million euros for 26-year-old Spinazzola, the seven-time Italy international who also signed a four-year contract with the capital club.

Also joining Roma will be Guinea midfielder Amadou Diawara on a 21-million-euro three-year contract.

That follows the departure from Roma on Sunday of Greek international centre-back Kostas Manolas who joined Napoli for a reported fee of be 36 million euros.

Godin, 33, signed for Inter after coming to the end of his contract with Atletico, where he spent nine seasons and was captain.

"There's a new sheriff in town," Inter tweeted of the uncompromising Godin, who has won 131 caps for his country but could not prevent his country being knocked out in the quarter-finals of the ongoing Copa America.

(Source: AFP)

Kevin Durant to depart Warriors for Nets as NBA free agent

Two-time NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Kevin Durant announced Sunday that he will depart the Golden State Warriors, his team since 2016, for the Brooklyn Nets.

The 30-year-old star forward made his announcement on social media moments after the start of the NBA's free agency period, saying he will sign a maximum-level deal with the Nets.

Durant commands top dollar despite the fact that he suffered a ruptured Achilles tendon in game five of this year's finals and is expected to miss all of the 2019-20 season.

"Kevin Durant has confirmed he will sing a max deal with the Brooklyn Nets," said a post on the Instagram and Twitter accounts of The Boardroom, his company-owned sports-business network.

A max deal for Durant would be worth some \$164 million over four years. The Warriors could have offered him \$221 million over five years to stay.

Under NBA free agency rules, teams cannot sign contracts with players until Saturday, so no deals will be confirmed until then.

Multiple US media outlets reported that Boston Celtics playmaker Kyrie Irving would be joining Durant in Brooklyn on a four-year deal worth \$141 million.

It could give the Nets a formidable duo once Durant returns from an upcoming year of rehabilitation, provided Durant can regain the form that helped power the Warriors to the 2017 and 2018 NBA crowns.

It was in 2016 at the start of the free agency period when the Warriors, who had just been beaten by Cleveland in the NBA Finals, went to Durant and asked him to join them after the star forward opted to leave Oklahoma City.

Durant had the Warriors looking like champions again this year before a right calf injury sidelined him. Durant missed nine games before returning in game five of the NBA Finals against Toronto. He scored 11 points in 12 minutes before suffering the ruptured tendon that required surgery two days later.

(Source: ESPN)

'Spygate' row erupts at Women's World Cup



necessary tournament planning by USWNT coach Jill Ellis, who said her colleagues were scouting out a hotel to potentially stay in ahead of the final.

"I assume everybody's doing that, you have to plan ahead," said Ellis, who is hoping to

become the first coach to win two Women's World Cup titles.

"The only two people that think planning ahead on my team is my administrator -- she has to book all the flights and everything -- and her boss.

Australia PM backs Queensland 2032 Olympic bid



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has thrown his support behind a potential bid by Queensland state to host the 2032 Olympics, saying the government "will be there every step of the way".

The state capital Brisbane has been mulling whether it can justify the expense of hosting such a major event, and has carried out feasibility studies which impressed IOC chief Thomas Bach when he visited the city in May.

Morrison said he supported a bid after meeting Bach and Australian Olympic Committee president John Coates following the G20 summit in Osaka.

"A Brisbane Olympics has the potential to be a game-changer for southeast Queensland and my government will be there every step of the way," he told reporters in Japan late Sunday.

"Just like in Sydney (which hosted the 2000 Olympics), a Queensland Olympics, led by Brisbane, would be an economic and job boom and would show off the entire state to the world," he added.

With the next two Olympics in Europe and North America, the 2032 showpiece is expected to take place in the

Asia-Pacific region.

So far Jakarta, which hosted the last Asian Games, has applied and Mumbai has expressed interest, while the IOC has also suggested a joint bid by the two Koreas.

During his recent visit to Australia, Bach said it was encouraging to see the interest given that 2024-host Paris and Los Angeles in 2028 were selected unopposed.

A healthy slate of candidates for 2032 is seen as necessary to restore faith in the process.

Coates said in a statement Monday that Bach was open to the Games being hosted in several cities or regions, as opposed to just Brisbane.

"We have significant existing sports infrastructure across multiple locations in southeast Queensland," he said.

The next steps would be the formation of a "Leadership Group", completion of an economic feasibility study by the Queensland government and finalisation of a competition venue master-plan, he added.

The IOC is not due to select the host until 2025.

(Source: Eurosport)

Foul lane: NBA's Harden apologises for China traffic violation



Houston Rockets star James Harden is used to flying past defenders in the NBA, but he was swiftly blocked by a traffic officer in China as he rode a scooter in Shanghai.

Harden, 29, apologized after causing a social media storm following his weekend ride on one of China's ubiquitous electric scooters.

Images circulating online showed Harden stopped by police on Saturday, and state media said it was for allegedly riding against traffic and in an area where scooters are forbidden.

A friend of his is seen on another scooter with a passenger on the back, which is illegal in Shanghai for certain types of non-motor vehicles.

"I would like to apologize for violating traffic rules during my scooter ride today," Harden wrote in English and Chinese on the Twitter-like Weibo platform on Saturday night, adding that he asked his staff to accept the penalty, which he did not specify.

"Not a good example obviously but I was just trying to enjoy the city as much as possible. Thank you for your understanding and I'll make sure to abide by

"And everybody else, yeah well they don't worry about that. That's probably who the two people were. It's important to do your job."

The USA defeated France 2-1 last week to continue its run of reaching at least the semifinals at every World Cup.

Ellis' side is strong favorite to defeat the Lionesses on Tuesday, although the two teams drew 2-2 when they last met at the SheBelieves Cup in March -- a tournament England went on to win.

Accusations have also been made about the Americans' complacency during the World Cup after defender Ali Krieger said the US has "the best team in the world and the second best team in the world," to which Ellis responded by saying that "it's really a comment about ourselves."

She added: "Everyone on our team has confidence, I wouldn't say that this is in any way an arrogant team. I think this team knows that they've got to earn everything and that we've got tough opponents, as we played the other night, still ahead of us."

The winner of Tuesday's game will go on to face either Sweden or the Netherlands in Saturday's final in Lyon.

(Source: CNN)

Ruiz, Olmo fire Spain past Germany to fifth European U21 title



"We'll look to the future and prepare for the next challenges."

■ 'Great team spirit'

Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos, already a veteran of the 2017 finals, helped power the Spaniards ahead early on in front of a 23,000 crowd.

The Germans, watched from the stands by senior head coach Joachim Loew and former international Oliver Bierhoff, struggled for the first half hour.

Ruiz, who plays for Italian club Napoli, latched onto a

Spain dominated holders Germany 2-1 to win the European under-21 championship title for a record-equalling fifth time in Udine on Sunday as Fabian Ruiz and Dani Olmo scored in either half.

Ruiz rifled in the first after just seven minutes at the Stadio Friuli in northeastern Italy, with Olmo adding the second on 69 minutes to avenge their 1-0 defeat to Germany in the final two years ago.

Nadiem Amiri pulled a goal back two minutes from time, but it failed to ignite a revival for the defending champions. Spain reclaim the title they last won in 2013 and join Italy as the only nation to have won the tournament five times.

"Obviously we're not happy we didn't win but Spain were better," said Germany coach Stefan Kuntz.

"We didn't start the match very well, Spain played very, very tough, and obviously in a final players are always a bit nervous. After the first goal we tried to pick up our game."

"When we conceded the second goal it was psychologically hard, but we showed them after that we could be dangerous."

The Spanish controlled the match with top tournament scorer Luca Waldschmidt of Bundesliga club Freiburg pegged back and unable to add to his tally of seven goals to achieve a new record.

"We played a good tournament until the final. To lose the final hurts a lot," said Waldschmidt.

Porto returned to work this morning to begin the pre-season and did so with goalkeeper Iker Casillas, although the first day back was dedicated to medical revisions with the whole squad undergoing routine checks.

While Casillas reported for duty as normal, his future with Porto remains up in the air.

The goalkeeper is on long-term sick leave after suffering a heart attack at the start of May and his future at Porto and in football is not guaranteed.

As for the club's other keepers, Fabiano's contract expired yesterday although he is expected to renew terms while Diogo Costa will go out on loan to Paços de

Ferreira, according to O Jogo. As things stand, Porto don't have a replacement for Casillas.

The 38-year-old has spent the past two months recovering and insists that he will be the one to call time on his playing career when he feels the moment is right. For now, Casillas is taking it easy and is not contemplating what

might happen in the immediate future. However, Porto president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa stated a few weeks ago that the club would be looking to bring in a keeper this summer and Gianluigi Buffon had been linked before he decided to return to Juventus.

(Source: AS)

Iran eyes success at Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games: official

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's chef de mission for the 2020 Paralympic Games Hadi Rezaei says they will participate in the Games with the aim of winning more medals than the previous edition.

Iran enjoyed a success Paralympic Games in 2016, with the nation placing 15th in the medals table.

The Iranian Para athletes claimed eight gold, nine silver and seven bronze medals in Rio.

"Around 4,350 athletes from 165 countries will compete in Tokyo and Para athletes will compete in 540 medal events across 22 sports. We will partake at the Games with 45 male and 12 female para athletes and our preliminary observations show that we could win 11 gold, 13 silver and eight bronze medals in the event," Rezaei said in the news conference held in Iran's NPC headquarters on Monday.

"Iran have a chance of winning medals in the men's sitting volleyball, Para archery, Para shooting, powerlifting, football-5-a-side, Para taekwondo, athletic and judo. We don't expect to win medal at the men's wheelchair basketball, Paracanoe, women's sitting volleyball, swimming, and the men's goalball in Tokyo but it will be a good opportunity for our athletes in preparation for the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Para Games," he added.

"It was our policy in the 2018 Asian Para Games and we finished in the third place in medal table in Jakarta. Our athletes will not go to Tokyo as tourists. We want to be among the top 10 countries in Tokyo," the sitting volleyball legend stated.

Asked him whether Para archer Zahra Nematı can participate at the 2020 Olympic Games, Rezaei said, "It depends on her. She can participate in the Olympic Games and join us one month later. But I believe that Nematı should focus on one event."



Calderon eyes fourth successive IPL title with Persepolis

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Argentine coach Gabriel Calderon says he is going to win Iran Professional League (IPL) for the fourth time in a row.

The 59-year-old coach arrived in Tehran, capital of Iran Sunday night to finalize his contract with the Iranian football giants.

Persepolis are without a coach after parting ways with Branko Ivankovic and Calderon is going to fill the vacant coaching job.

Ivankovic led Persepolis to the Iranian domestic treble last season. Under guidance of the Croat, the Reds experienced their first ever AFC Champions league final as well.

Ivankovic, who built the most decorated resume of any

coach in Persepolis history, is now leading Saudi Arabian football club Al Ahli.

Now, Calderon says that he has come to Persepolis to continue the team's winning way in the last three seasons.

"Persepolis are one of the Asian greatest teams with the best supporters in Iran and Asia. We want to win IPL title for the fourth successive time, that's why I am here," Calderon said after his arrival.

"We want to improve our quality and I believe that we can do it. I am highly motivated to work at the team because Persepolis are a big club. I can promise the fans that I will do my best and we will display glittering performance in Iran and Asia," Calderon went on to say.

Lima 2019: Parapan Torch unveiled



The Lima 2019 Organising Committee has unveiled the Parapan American Torch that will carry the flame and spread the spirit of the Games and the Parapan American values across the Peruvian capital city ahead of the Opening Ceremony on 23 August.

Lima 2019 General Director Alberto Valenzuela, Para badminton world champion Giuliana Poveda and NPC Peru President Lucha Villar presented the torch at a ceremony held in Lima on 28 June.

Carlos Neuhaus, Lima 2019 President, said: "These have been two years of hard work. We have worked as a team and we are excited about what is coming next."

Valenzuela added: "We want the athletes to become new heroes in history."

The Parapan American Torch will be lit on 20 August at the Inca Pachacamac Temple in Lima.

It will then travel throughout 12 historical sites called 'huacas' located across the city such as Huaca Pucllana, Puruchuco, Mateo Salado, Huallamarca, among others.

On 23 August, the Parapan American Torch will arrive at the National Stadium for the Opening Ceremony of the Games. A total of 300 torchbearers will participate.

Lima 2019 will take place between 23 August – 1 September and will feature over 1,800 athletes competing across 17 sports, overtaking Toronto 2015 as the biggest Parapan American Games in history.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Bayern Munich sign New Zealand star Singh



Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich have announced the signing of Wellington Phoenix playmaker Sarpreet Singh in a historic move for a New Zealand professional.

The 20-year-old has signed a three-year deal, starting initially with Bayern's reserve team in the third-tier 3.Liga competition.

If Singh impresses there, he could become the first Kiwi to play in the first team of one of the European superpowers.

He would also become the second New Zealander to play in the Bundesliga after Wynton Rufer, arguably the country's finest attacking player who had six seasons with Werder Bremen.

Singh's performances for New Zealand at the under-20 World Cup recently are reported to have attracted the eye of the German club's scouts.

"They see me as a potential for the first team and they basically want me to develop for the next season, then who knows what will happen from there," Singh said in a statement.

"Depending on how well you do anything is possible. My second team, we train right next to the first team at the same time and if there's injuries or things like that you can get called in quite easy. Now it's down to me to prove myself."

Singh bagged five goals and eight assists last season in a role just behind twin strikers.

Born and raised in Auckland, he joined the Phoenix Academy in 2015, a source of pride for the club's general manager David Dome.

(Source: ESPN)

Asian clubs continue pursuit for glory

The chase for club glory in the 2019 AFC Champions League and AFC Cup will resume when Asian clubs learn their opponents in the quarter-finals and knockout stages respectively on Tuesday.

The excitement continues to build in the 2019 AFC Champions League after the thrilling group stage and Round of 16 encounters where four teams from the East Zone – title holders Kashima Antlers as well as 2017 champions Urawa Red Diamonds, both from Japan and China PR's Guangzhou Evergrande FC, the 2015 winners, and Shanghai SIPG – confirmed their names in the pot.

While the West Zone resume their campaign in the Round of 16 knockout stage, the competition is shaping up to be another enthralling showpiece with Guangzhou Evergrande FC, Urawa Red Diamonds, Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SFC and Al Ittihad as well as Al Sadd SFC from Qatar in the running to claim the ultimate club prize in Asia for the record-equaling third time.

It has been a riveting lead up to the 2019 AFC Champions League quarter-finals with Shanghai SIPG and Guangzhou Evergrande narrowly making it through on penalties after defeating Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors from Korea Republic and China PR's Shandong Luneng FC respectively.



Kashima Antlers were on the brink of defeat against Sanfrecce Hiroshima before Shoma Doi struck the winner two minutes from time, while Urawa Red Diamonds overturned a first-leg defeat with an emphatic 3-0 away win against Ulsan Hyundai FC of Korea Republic to advance on a 4-2 aggregate.

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) General Secretary Dato' Windsor John said: "The AFC Champions League is our premier club competition and it continues to excite fans in Asia and beyond. The competition is now one of the best

Continental club competitions in the world.

"The standard of Asian clubs has improved significantly and it has been a gripping competition in the AFC Champions League and AFC Cup, evidently seen as all 68 teams except one club registered points in the Group Stage.

"The AFC Champions League is also a pathway to the FIFA Club World Cup and with Asians teams finishing runners-up twice in the last three seasons – it clearly shows the quality of our teams."

There is much at stake in the AFC Cup as new champions will be crowned for the first time since 2015.

Following an enthralling Group Stage campaign, 4.25 SC from DPR Korea emerged East Zone champions for the third consecutive time while Turkmenistan's Altyn Asyr FC won the Central Zone for the second time and Abahani Limited Dhaka of Bangladesh were first-time winners of the South Zone title.

The contest in the ASEAN and West Zones is promising to excite once more as the regional rivalries reach their final stages. In ASEAN it is an all-Vietnam affair with Becamex Binh Duong and FC Hanoi reaching the ASEAN Zonal final while Lebanese side Al-Ahed and Jordan's Al Jazeera have made the West Zonal final.

(Source: the-afc)

VNL Final Six: Iran drawn with Poland and Brazil

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran have been drawn with Brazil and Poland in Pool B of the 2019 Volleyball Nations League Final Six.

The Iranian team, who are looking for the VNL first medal, will start the competition with a match against powerhouse Poland on July 11.



Igor Kolakovic's men will meet Brazil on July 12.

Hosts the U.S. are pitted against Russia and France.

The VNL final round will be held in the Credit Union 1 Arena, Chicago, United States From July 10 to 14.

This will be the first edition of the World League or the Nations League to have the Final Round hosted in North America.

Gabriel Calderon officially named Persepolis coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian football club Persepolis have confirmed the appointment of Gabriel Calderon as their new head coach.

The 59-year-old Argentine coach, who arrived in Tehran, capital of Iran Sunday night, has signed a one-year contract, with the option to extend for a further year.

Branko Ivankovic left Persepolis in mid-June to lead Saudi Arabian football club Al Ahli.

The Croat led Persepolis to the Iranian domestic treble last season. Under guidance of the Croat, the Reds experienced their first ever AFC Champions league final as well.

Ivankovic, who built the most decorated resume of any coach in Persepolis history, is now leading Saudi Arabian football club Al Ahli.

Calderon, the ex-Argentina midfielder, who has represented Albicelestes in the 1982 and 1990 FIFA World Cups, is familiar with coaching in the region since he has already led Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabian national football teams and coached Saudi clubs Al Hilal and Al Ittihad and Qatari outfit Qatar SC.

We did nice job against Iran, the U.S. coach says

The U.S. national volleyball team coach Robert Neilson says they did a nice job against Iran in the 2019 FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League.

The U.S. beat Iran 3-0 (27-25, 25-21, 25-20) in Plovdiv, Bulgaria Sunday evening.

"I'm happy with the way our guys played. We did a nice job receiving the ball, put some pressure on them from the service line," Neilson said.

"Our team did a very good job competing in this pool, that's what we wanted to see from a group of young guys who are still trying to find their identity and play consistent volleyball," he added.

"I'm happy with their performance and there's a lot of bright things in the future for a lot of these guys," Neilson concluded.

(Source: fivb.org)

Iran will fight for victories in Chicago: Igor Kolakovic

Iran national volleyball team coach Igor Kolakovic says they will fight for victories in the final round of the 2019 FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League in Chicago.

Iran lost to the U.S. 3-0 (27-25, 25-21, 25-20) in Plovdiv, Bulgaria Sunday evening.



"The U.S. were much better than us especially in service. Congratulations to them, however I am happy because nobody else got injured in such a competitive and close match," Kolakovic said.

"At the moment we have four injured players who have to recover for the Finals in Chicago. We are going there to fight for victories, match by match and we will see what is going to happen," he added.

Iran player Milad Ebadipour also said that Team Melli will participate in the final round for winning a medal.

"We didn't play our best game against the U.S. but it was a good training for us. The most important thing is to achieve victories in the Finals. We had brilliant performances in the tournament so far and we proved that we are one of the best teams in the world. But it is not enough for us" Ebadipour said.

"We have to show the same during the Final Six in Chicago. We have a big chance to take the gold there or at least a medal but we are going there to fight and to play and win game by game," he added.

(Source: fivb.org)

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Advice is plentiful, but who will listen and follow it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Charles-Henri de Fouchecour made honorary member of Persian literature academy

CULTURE TEHRAN — French Orientalist and Hafez expert Charles- Henri de Fouchecour has been selected for honorary membership in the Academy of Persian Language and Literature.

He received the membership at the Iranian Cultural Center in Paris during a special ceremony attended by a number of French scholars and Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Iran to UNESCO Ahmad Jalali, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Monday.



French Orientalist and Persian literature expert Charles-Henri de Fouchecour delivers a speech in an undated photo.

De Fouchecour is famous for his translation of the Divan of Hafez and the articles of Shams-i Tabrizi, the wandering sage who later became the mentor of the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi during the 13th century CE.

“Professor De Fouchecour’s efforts in the translation of the Divan of Hafez are extremely valuable and moreover, his great courage to render the articles of Shams-i Tabrizi is like a miracle, because it is even difficult to read these articles in Persian,” Jalali said.

In her short speech, Leili Anvar, a professor of the Persian language at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in Paris, praised De Fouchecour for his contributions to Persian culture and his role in inspiring her to study Persian literature.

Eve Feuillebois, a professor of Persian literature and Islamology at the University of Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, also said, “De Fouchecour inspired love of Persian literature, culture and civilization among his students.”

For his part, De Fouchecour delivered a short speech celebrating Persian language scholars, including Gilbert Lazard, Nasrollah Purjavadi, Mohammad-Ali Movahhed, Samad Movahhed and Iraj Afshar.

The 94-year-old scholar served as the director of the Iranology Department of l’Institut Français in Tehran from 1975 to 1979. From 1972 to 1985, he also held the chair of Persian literature at the INALCO.

His work in the field of classical Persian literature is vast. He is the founder of Abstracta Iranica and also directed the bibliographical and critical review of Iranian studies. His studies on Persian literature have been published in over 50 articles.

Iran has celebrated De Fouchecour’s achievements during various occasions, latest of which was held by the Iranian Cultural Center in collaboration with the INALCO in January 2018.

In addition, Cinéma Vérité, Iran’s international documentary festival, honored him in November 2011. “Majnun”, a documentary by Iranian director Mohammad-Ali Farsi about De Fouchecour, was screened at the festival.

Springer publishes book by Iranian scholars

A R T TEHRAN — An e-book version of “Quality Confirmation Tests for Power Transformer Insulation Systems”, co-written by Iranian scholars Behruz Vahidi and Ashkan Teimuri, has been recently published by Springer Publications in New York.

The book, which is written in English, focuses on oil-paper insulation included in power transformers, especially for EHV (extra-high voltage, 66kV to 800kV) and UHV (ultra-high voltage, 800 kV and up) transformers.

Vahidi is a professor of electrical engineering at Tehran’s Amirkabir University of Technology and Teimuri is one his students.

Springer is a global academic publisher that publishes books, e-books and peer-reviewed journals in science, humanities, technical and medical since 1842.

Filmmaker delves into life of father of Iranian circus

A R T TEHRAN —

d e s k Iranian director Maryam Oslubi is making a documentary about Khalil Tariqatpeyma, a former circus performer who is considered to be the father of Iranian circus. Iran’s Documentary and Experimental Film Center announced on Monday.

Entitled “Eagle’s Nest”, the documentary follows the personal and professional life of the 85-year-old artist who performed under the pseudonym “Khalil Oqab”, which means “Khalil, the Eagle” in Persian.

He was the first person who introduced the circus to Iranians as it is today, brought trained animals to stage and sold tickets for his shows from the 1950s until the late 1970s.

Khalil Oqab has performed in over 35 countries all over the world. His wife Shahla Ashkbus, considered to be the first female Iranian circus performer, was the manager of his circus. She died in a car accident during her tour of Italy in 2009.

Khalil Oqab also starred in a number of Iranian films during the 1960s.

His son, Ebrahim, took over the management of the circus in 2010, modernizing it into a circus with renowned performers from all over the world.



Khalil Oqab is seen in a scene from Maryam Oslubi’s documentary “Eagle’s Nest”.

Golden Pen Awards unveils nominees



An image of the Golden Pen trophies.

CULTURE TEHRAN — Eight d e s k books have received nominations at the 17th Golden Pen Awards, the organizers announced on Monday.

“Where There Is No Name” that contains over 50 love songs by Yusefalai Mirshakak is one of the nominees.

Another highlight is writer Mohammadreza Ruzbeh’s book “From Being Cocoon to Becoming Butterfly”, which carries simple strategies for a better and more beautiful life.

Poet Ali Davudi’s travelogue of Lebanon “Published in Beirut” and Reza Yazdani’s poetry collection “Denial” on social, ritual and revolutionary topics are among the nominees this year.

Also included are “Ra Ra” by Pantea Safai, “Songless Years” by Mohammadreza Turki, “You Called Me” by Leila Hosseinnia and “Considerations” by Omid Mehdinejad.

Iran’s Pen Association is the organizer of the Golden Pen Awards, which are presented in five categories.

The winners are scheduled to be honored during a ceremony at the Tehran

Book Garden on Thursday.

Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the director of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, will also be honored as the Literary Figure of the Year at the ceremony.

Haddad-Adel is also the director of the Sadi Foundation, a Tehran-based organization that provides Persian language educational services abroad.

His collection of poetry entitled “Still Again” was published in 2016. The book contains all different types of poetry.

“I wanted to publish poetry about the people and the characters I like. For a long time, I had tried to compose a poem about the Prophet Muhammad (S); I also composed a poem for (the third Imam of the Shia) Imam Hussein (AS) and now they are here in the book,” Haddad-Adel said.

Last year, the 16th edition of the awards honored “Gildad”, a story that presents a panorama of the folk culture of the northern Iranian region of Gilan, as best novel.

Hassan Qolipur is the author of the novel published by Suresh-Mehr in March 2017.

Farid Qadami to attend 2019 Autumn Literature Translation Studio in Sofia



Farid Qadami in an undated photo.

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k writer and translator Farid Qadami has been invited to attend the 2019 Autumn Literature Translation Studio, which is organized by the Sofia Literature and Translation House every year, the writer has announced on his Instagram account.

Qadami and 13 writers and translators from different countries, including Russia, the U.S., Ukraine and Argentina, have been invited to attend the program running in two separate periods from September 13 to 15 and 27 to 29.

In 2016, Qadami was granted the Joyce Scholarship and Looren Residency, which is offered by the Friends of the Zurich James Joyce Foundation and Translation House Looren located in the Swiss city of Zurich.

Works of many writers, including Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, D.H. Lawrence, Ossip Mandelstam, Walt Whitman and William Butler Yeats, have been translated into Persian by Qadami.

Persian translation of a selection of Allen Ginsberg’s haikus, poems and quotes by Qadami was published in a book titled “American Pieces” in 2017.

He is also the translator of Richard Brautigan’s “Willard and His Bowling Trophies: A Perverse Mystery”.

The program of the Sofia Literature and Translation House is arranged at the Next Page Foundation that started in 2014.

Located in the beautiful former residency of the renowned painter Nenko Balkanski (1907-1977) that was entirely renovated and brought back to life, the house is the first ever space in Sofia specially dedicated to international literary communication and to stimulating a new attitude towards literature.

It acts as a physical and virtual hub for both Bulgarian and international writers and literary translators.

The Sofia Literature and Translation House provides creative residencies for translators who work from the Bulgarian language into any language of the world as well as to writers.

The house also functions as a cultural center, offering workshops on literary translation and creative writing, public discussions, book launches and events with children and youth.

“Room 1216” to be set up in memory of Iran Air Flight 655 victims

A R T TEHRAN — A troupe d e s k that will be helmed by director Ali Borji is scheduled to perform a reading of Keyvan Sabbagh’s play “Room 1216” in memory of the victims of Iran Air Flight 655, which was shot down by USS Vincennes on July 3, 1988.

The reading performance will be held at Tehran’s Sarv Theater on Wednesday, which is the 31st anniversary of the tragedy, the theater has announced.

Elham Hadian, Davud Shams, Maryam Kuchakkhani and Baharak Tavakkoli are the cast members who will perform the reading for three nights.

The U.S. Navy guided missile cruiser USS Vincennes shot down the Iranian airliner over the Persian Gulf, killing all 290 passengers and crew members, including 66 children.

The following year, President George Bush awarded William C Rogers, captain of the USS Vincennes, America’s Legion of Merit medal.



A poster for director Keyvan Sabbagh’s the reading performance of the play “Room 1216” at Tehran’s Sarv Theater.

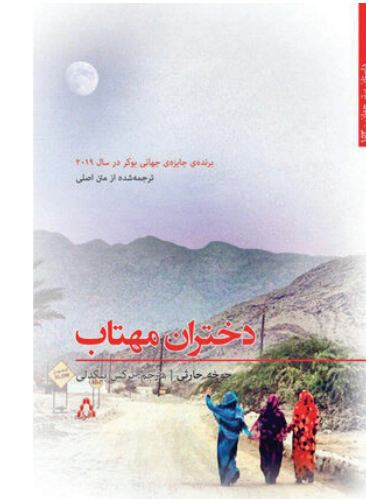
Jokha Alharthi’s “Celestial Bodies” published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — A d e s k Persian translation by Narges Bigdeli of Omani novelist Jokha Alharthi’s “Celestial Bodies”, the winner of the 2019 Man Booker International Prize, has been published in Tehran.

Published by Afraz Publications, the book has been translated from Arabic, the original language of the book.

Alharthi is the first author who writes in Arabic to win the Man Booker award. She shared the prize equally with Marilyn Booth, the American translator of her book.

“Celestial Bodies” is set in the Omani village of al-Awafi and follows the stories of three sisters: Mayya, who marries into a rich family after a heartbreaking experience; Asma, who marries for duty; and Khawla, who is waiting for a man who has emigrated to Canada.



Front cover of the Persian version of Omani novelist Jokha Alharthi’s “Celestial Bodies”.