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File photo

OPEC meeting wraps up, Iran exempted from new cuts

TEHRAN — The 176th meeting of the Conference of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) which was held in Vienna, Austria, came to conclusion on Monday, IRNA reported.

At the end of the meeting, OPEC members agreed to extend the supply cuts deal for another 9 months up until March 2020 and like the previous agreements, Iran

was once again exempted from the cuts.

■ 'OPEC+ charter doesn't mean a new OPEC'

Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting on Monday, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the gathering, saying that "We achieved what we were seeking from this meeting. Iran was once again exempted from the cuts." **→5**

Iran equalizes women's blood money with men's

TEHRAN — The Iranian Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled in favor of equalizing blood money and injury compensation of women with men's.

Formerly, women received only half as men in blood money and injury compensation.

Back in March, Grand Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani, a Qom seminary teacher, had

chastised the Majlis (parliament) for debating a law to match women's blood money with men.

"The Majlis has no right to debate the question of equating male and female diyeh," the 85-year-old ayatollah he had said.

The parliament initiated the reform following calls from women's rights activists.

Russian says U.S. responsible for Iran's excess uranium stockpile

TEHRAN — Russia's top diplomat has blamed the U.S. for Iran's uranium stockpile surpassing the 300 kilogram limit set by a 2015 nuclear deal.

"Iran's decision to surpass the uranium stockpile limit was caused by U.S. sanctions," Fars news agency quoted Sergey Lavrov as saying on Tuesday.

He noted that the sanctions have prevented Iran from selling the excess

uranium it produces, contributing to its stockpiling.

Lavrov in the meantime urged Iran to fulfill its obligations under the nuclear deal with world powers while calling on Europe to offer relief from U.S. sanctions.

He called on Tehran to "show restraint, not yield to emotions" and observe provisions of the deal. **→2**

Ayatollah Khamenei names new military commanders

TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appointed the new deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces as well as the new commander of the Basij Organization, Mehr reported.

In a decree on Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei appointed Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani as the new deputy chief of the Armed Forces, replacing Major-General Ataollah Salehi, IRNA reported.

The Leader said that the appointment has been made upon a proposal by the Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri.

The new deputy chief of the Armed Forces



is expected to make every effort to enhance the defensive and security capabilities of the Iranian Armed Forces, the Leader said in his decree.

In another decree, Ayatollah Khamenei named

Brigadier General Gholamreza Soleimani as the new commander of the Basij, replacing Brigadier General Gholam-Hossein Gheibparvar.

Soleimani was appointed to the job upon a proposal by IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami, the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also thanked Salehi and Gheibparvar for their loyal services to the Islamic Republic and called on the new appointees to ramp up efforts to ensure Iran's security and tap into potentials of the younger generations.

Under Iran's law, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei is the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. The top commanders of the Armed Forces are directly appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei.

Iran requests ICC to launch probe into war crimes in Yemen

TEHRAN — The Iranian Center for International Criminal Law has asked the International Criminal Court prosecutor to open a preliminary examination into possible war crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen since 2015.

Following is the text of the request released by the Iranian Center for International Criminal Law: Today, July 1st, 2019, Iranian Center for International Criminal Law (ICICL) filed a communication under Article 15 of the Rome Statute to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requesting the Prosecutor to open a preliminary examination on war crimes allegedly committed by the so-called Saudi-led Coalition from 2015 and during the ongoing non-international armed conflict in Yemen.

The communication is submitted with the

aim of supporting Yemini victims by bringing those individuals responsible for the commission of most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole to justice, and fighting against impunity which Yemen has been suffering from for a long time by offering the Prosecutor a path to justice that should be followed.

In its communication, ICICL has provided legal arguments based on publicly available information, disseminated by UN bodies, independent NGOs and the media, in order to convince the Prosecutor to initiate preliminary investigations on the alleged war crimes committed on the territory of Yemen, namely intentionally directing attacks against civilians; intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units

or vehicles involved in humanitarian assistance missions; attacks against buildings dedicated to hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected; intentionally directing attacks against protected objects, including buildings dedicated to education.

Since 2011, Yemen has been the theatre of a number of simultaneous and overlapping armed conflicts, but the current armed conflict in Yemen is taking place between the forces loyal to the self-appointed President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis. In 2015, a coalition of certain states, mostly from the Arab world led by Saudi Arabia, intervened in the conflict in support of Mansour Hadi and conducted several armed attacks against the Yemeni people. **→2**



PERSPECTIVE

M.A.Saki

Deputy editor-in-chief

Trump chained by his egoism

Trump has left no doubt that he is a bully and an odd person. While he has ditched a legally binding nuclear deal with Iran and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on the country, he wants Tehran not to do anything in protest.

For example, on Saturday he warned of unspecified retaliation if Iran enriches more uranium than allowed under the 2015 nuclear deal.

"I can only say, 'you'll see'," he told reporters at the end of a G-20 summit in Osaka, Japan.

Only a bully and abnormal person can talk in this way.

A major question is that who is going to punish the Trump administration for violating the nuclear deal, which is endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

He is so arrogant that has been threatening to punish any country or company that does not honor the illegal sanctions imposed on Iran.

Another question that must be asked is what has been left that the Trump administration has not done against Iran. The only major thing left for him is to order a military strike against Iran and even that may be on the agenda as the United States is reinforcing its military buildup in the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East region.

He sees no limit for his illegal moves to punish Iran. Even when Iraq was sanctioned for its invasion of Kuwait during Saddam Hussein's regime, the United Nations allowed Iraq to sell oil to import basic commodities. However, Trump is working hard to zero out Iran's oil export, the country's major source of income.

His administration even prevented Iranians living abroad and foreigners to send humanitarian aid in the form of money to those Iranians whose life had been washed away by devastating floods in March and April.

To prove that he is cruel, bully and his words and actions are abnormal in every sense of the word, it is enough to look at his administration's approach toward Iran. **→2**



PERSPECTIVE

Roohullah Ghasemian

Journalist

Why the Deal of the Century fails?

These days, apart from the tensions between Iran and United States, another event in south west Asia has attracted the attention of the countries' officials, nations, and the media from all over the world.

This new issue is "the Deal of the Century"; a new project that Donald Trump and his son-in-law are supposed to run. Deal of the century was officially put forward in Manama meeting and is following the same goal as "the New Middle East" project. The deal of the century is nothing but trading lands, it seeks to achieve the Zionists' aim which is to turn Palestine into a country reserved for Jews.

The details of the deal of the century are not yet clear, but based on what different media have announced, the deal says that 3 million of Palestinians should live in the West Bank, 2 million in Gaza Strip, around 2 million in Arab lands occupied in 1948 and the Palestinians who live in other countries can settle down in another separate area.

This scheme seems pretty unrealistic and there is little chance that it will get off the ground.

In Manama meeting, Saudi Arabia accepted to invest \$40 billion and United Arab Emirates (UAE) offered to invest \$20 billion. In fact, the planners of the deal of the century knew that the Palestinians are having financial problems, so they tried to start their project with first deceiving the Palestinians with offering some money.

However, this plan had two problems; first, Saudi Arabia is under unrelenting financial pressure because it has spent a lot of money by meddling in many issues in Middle East, such as the Yemen war.

Second, even though Palestinian resistant groups have a lot of differences, they are all on the same page in disagreeing with the deal of the century.

Many countries in the region, international organizations, Palestinian groups and the resistant group have declared their opposition to the deal of the century. We can say that based on four reasons, this project is doomed to fail: **→13**



IRNA/ Amin Jahali

Museum of meteorites opens in Tehran

TEHRAN — People look at outer space rocks in a museum of meteorites, which officially opened to the public at Tehran's Azadi Tower (Borj-e Azadi) on July 2, 2019.

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

The museum is dedicated to meteorites that have hit the sprawling Lut Desert and other parts of the country over time.

Zarif says Iran has not violated JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said late on Monday that Iran has not violated the 2015 nuclear deal as the country's stockpile of enriched uranium passed 300kg limit, saying Iran was just exercising its right to respond to the U.S. withdrawal and reimposition of sanctions.

"We have NOT violated the JCPOA," Zarif tweeted, using the acronym for the name of the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Zarif said as soon as the E3 – Britain, Germany and France – honor their obligation under the deal Iran will reverse its decision.

Zarif posted an image which shows paragraph 6 of the statement from the Joint Commission of the JCPOA issued on July 6, 2018 which says, "The participants recognized that, in return for the implementation by Iran of its nuclear related commitments, the lifting of sanctions, including the economic dividends arising from it, constitutes an essential part of the JCPOA."

His tweeted message was also along with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA according to which provides a mechanism to resolve disputes when parties believe other signatories are not fulfilling their obligations.

"We have NOT violated the #JCPOA. Para 36 of the accord illustrates why: We triggered & exhausted para 36 after US withdrawal. We gave E3+2 a few weeks while reserving our right. We finally took action after 60 weeks. As soon as E3 abide by their obligations, we'll reverse."

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

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

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

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

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which monitors Iran's nuclear program under the deal, confirmed in Vienna that the stockpile had surpassed the limit.

■ Trump says Iran 'playing with fire'
After the news broke out that Iran's stockpile of uranium has reached above 300 kilograms, President Donald Trump said that Tehran was "playing with fire".

Asked if he had a message for Iran, Trump said: "No message to Iran. They know what they're doing. They know what they're playing with, and I think they're playing with fire. So, no message to Iran whatsoever."

The White House said earlier it would continue to apply "maximum pressure" on Iran. It also said Iran should be held to a standard barring all uranium enrichment.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said there is no international standard prohibiting Iran from enriching uranium. "That is not the case. That is an American position," Kimball told Reuters.

Zarif said Iran's next move would be to enrich uranium beyond the maximum 3.67 percent fissile purity allowed under the deal, a threshold Tehran has previously said it would cross on July 7.

"This is not an irreversible step the Iranians have taken. Iran, with the remaining partners, can decide how they're going to proceed. There is a process in the JCPOA to try to cure breaches," said Wendy Sherman, former President Barack Obama's lead negotiator on the deal and now director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School.

■ 'Seriously?'
In another tweet, Zarif responded with surprise to a claim by the White House that Iran violated the JCPOA even before the deal existed with just one word: "Seriously?"

In a statement published by press secretary of the White House on Monday, it is said, "There is little doubt that even before the deal's existence, Iran was violating its terms."

The White House did not elaborate on how Iran could break the terms of the deal that had yet to be implemented.

The statement added that the U.S. will continue "maximum pressure" on Iran.

Iran requests ICC to launch probe into war crimes in Yemen

1 → Based on publicly available documents and surveys conducted by international NGOs or organs of the UN, these attacks, in many occasions, were in violation of the rules and principles of international law, and in particular, international humanitarian law.

Yemen is not a state party to the court, and, therefore, the ICC lacks territorial jurisdiction to engage in the situation of Yemen. The communique, nevertheless, has relied on personal jurisdiction of the World's Criminal Court with regard to Jordanian, and to some extent British, nationals, since Jordan and the United Kingdom are both state parties to the Rome Statute, and have been involved in the current armed conflict in Yemen. Jordan is one of the members of the Saudi-led coalition, and UK has been supplying the coalition with weaponry and intelligence information, and as the communication, argues, officials of these states are responsible, whether as the principal or accessory, for the crimes committed by the coalition in Yemen.

ICC is an international criminal court established in 2002 by the Rome Statute to fight against impunity around the world by prosecuting individuals responsible for the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. To date, there are 122 States parties to the Rome Statute.

Trump chained by his egoism

1 → On the one hand he, and recently his close aides, are calling for dialogue with Iran, and on the other they use harshly insulting language, such as "terrorist nation", "Marxist theocratic regime" and "murderous regime", against Iran and simultaneously add to their list of sanctions.

The approach that Trump has adopted toward Iran is an example of a man who is beating another person to force him to talk to him. It seems that his strong egoism cannot allow him to understand that these two cannot go together, especially in the case of the proud Iranian nation.

“Air Defense Force has foiled evil plots against Iran”

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard, commander of Iran's Air Defense Force, said on Tuesday that the armed forces will give an appropriate response to any action by enemies.

"Today, our enemies have become aware that any action by them will face an appropriate response by the armed forces and they have tested this issue for several times," Sabahifard said.

He said that vigilance of the Air Defense Force have foiled enemies' evil plots.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps 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.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the U.S. military drone, an RQ-4 Black Hawk, entered the Iranian airspace from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and it was targeted near Kouh-e Mobarak. The Emiratis later acknowledged that the drone had taken off from their country.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the



aerospace unit of the IRGC, said the drone had received warnings four times before being shot down.

The IRGC released GPS coordinates that

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

Brigadier General Majid Fakhri, the

Rouhani: We'll never forget Kurdish martyrs

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** - President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday sent a message to National Kurdish Speakers Congress held at Kordestan University in Sanandaj, saying that Iran will never forget Kurdish martyrs.

In his message, posted on the president.ir, Rouhani described the congress as an opportunity for praising all Iranian ethnic groups.

Rouhani's full message is as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Dear intellectuals, distinguished figures and guests, I thank God for having the opportunity of conveying my hello and respect to you and all Kurd people of the country because of this cultural and scientific meeting.

History testifies that despite its "ethnic and religious" diversity and particular "geopolitical" variety, Iran has always succeeded in overcoming various ups and downs



with the least harm; a triumphant overcome that comes from cultural solidarity of Iranian tribes and religions more than anything else, who, along with a vast geographical and

Macron says France will try to make sure Iran receives 'economic advantages' of nuclear deal

By staff and agency

French President Emmanuel Macron has said that his country will try to make sure Iran receives the "economic advantages" of the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

In a statement on Tuesday, he called on Iran to reduce its stockpiles of low-enriched uranium.

Macron said that he "took note with concern" of Iran's announcement that it has surpassed the limit of 300 kilograms (661 pounds) of low-enriched uranium laid out in the accord, according to AP.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Iran's low-grade enriched uranium stockpile has exceeded 300 kg.

Macron asked Iran also abstain from any other steps that would threaten the deal, which promised to lift trade sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear activities.

France strongly opposed President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the deal and reimpose sanctions on Iran.

Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered sanctions against Tehran.

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

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

On Friday, the remaining signatories of the nuclear agreement met in the Austrian capital as a last-ditch effort to save the accord.

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

After the talks, Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, said progress has

been made to save the nuclear deal but the demands of the Islamic Republic are yet to be met.

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

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 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.

Zarif said on Monday that INSTEX fails to meet Iran's demands.

Iran has demanded Europe to buy Iranian oil as part of their commitments under the nuclear agreement.

‘Djibouti parliament built with Iranian fund, debts unpaid’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Many foreign governments and purchasers are in debt to the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI), including Djibouti that its parliament has been financed and constructed by Iranians, the EGFI chairwoman has said.

In an interview with Tasnim published on Tuesday, Afroz Bahrami said foreign customers and governments make up for

around 70 percent of the debtors that owe money to the fund.

Considering the political consequences, the export fund is resorting to diplomacy and negotiations with the foreign debtors to force them to settle their debts, she added.

The fund has received a considerable amount of outstanding debts from Sri Lanka, Sudan, Cuba and Zimbabwe in recent years, Bahrami added, however, she said, certain

states like Djibouti, whose parliament has been constructed by an Iranian contractor with Iranian finances, have not still paid off their debts.

The money that foreign governments, state banks and companies, as well as Iranian exporters owe to the fund amounts to 10 trillion rials, she explained.

Founded in 1973, EGFI is known as the first export credit agency (ECA) in the Mid-

dle East and North Africa, according to its official website.

EGFI is a state-owned company affiliated with the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade.

The fund aims to support, develop and promote Iran's non-oil exports by supplying exporters with the necessary credits to cover the major political and commercial risks they may face.

Russian says U.S. responsible for Iran's excess uranium stockpile

1 → Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on Monday spoke in the same vein. "It should be understood as the natural consequence of the events, which have gone before," he said of Iran's stockpile surpassing the limit.

Earlier in the day, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the country had increased the production level as had been already announced. He, however, said the move is in line with Iran's rights under paragraphs 26 and 36 of the nuclear deal with its partners.

The agreement was reached between the 5+1 nations — the United States, the UK, France, Russia, and China plus Germany — and Iran in July 2015. Washington, however, left the deal in May 2018 and reinstated the anti-Iran sanctions that had been lifted under the document.

Bowing to Washington's pressure, Europe has also been throwing only verbal support behind the agreement ever since, refusing to guarantee the Islamic Republic's business interests in the face of American bans despite being contractually obliged to do so.

On May 8, Iran notified its remaining partners in the deal that it would suspend the implementation of some of its commitments as a means of prompting the European side to honor its end of the bargain.

The warning shot saw the country stopping exports of its excess uranium and heavy water for a two-month-



long period.

The measure was likewise taken in line with the Islamic Republic's legal rights under paragraphs 26 and 36 of the nuclear deal, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The country also cautioned that it would resume refining uranium to a higher fissile degree if a decision is not taken within 60 days to protect it from sanctions effect.

The deadline falls on July 7.

Last month, Iran's top security official said the country was to begin suspending more of its commitments under the deal in early July.

Ryabkov denounced "unprecedented pressure" from the United States on the Islamic Republic. The White

House had said earlier that it would continue to apply "maximum pressure" on Iran – the Trump administration's trademark policy on the country -- "until its leaders alter their course of action."

The Russian official rated exceeding the limit on uranium production as "a cause for regret," and called on Tehran to behave "responsibly," but warned "one mustn't dramatize the situation."

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said Britain wanted to preserve the pact "because we don't want Iran to have nuclear weapons."

Iran has strongly rejected any ambition to build nuclear weapons. A decree by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei has prohibited pursuit of nuclear arms as per religious teachings.

"If Iran breaks that deal then we are out of it as well," Hunt also added.

A spokesman for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said, "Such action by the Islamic Republic of Iran would not help preserve the plan (JCPOA), nor secure the tangible economic benefits for the Iranian people."

Tehran has said it would retract its measures as soon as the remaining JCPOA parties start meeting their nuclear commitments. "As soon as E3 abide by their obligations, we'll reverse," Zarif said, referring to Britain, Germany, and France.

Trump should realize Iranians unite when bullied: Larijani

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump should realize that the civilized people of Iran become more united when bullied, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Tuesday.

“If they understand these words, many of their problems would be resolved,” he added, Mehr reported.

Larijani made the remarks in a speech ahead of the 31st anniversary of the U.S. downing of an Iranian passenger plane, Iran Air Flight 655.

Iran Air Flight 655 was a scheduled passenger flight from Tehran to Dubai via Bandar Abbas, which was shot down on 3 July 1988 by an SM-2MR surface-to-air missile fired from USS Vincennes, a guided missile cruiser of the United States Navy. The aircraft, an Airbus A300, was destroyed and all 290 people on board, including 66 children, were killed.

“The Americans claimed that the captain of Vincennes had mistakenly identified the airliner as an attacking military fighter,” Larijani said.

“If he made a mistake, why did you give



him a medal?” he asked.

The parliament speaker added that such contradictions are evident in Washington’s

actions, especially with regard to the incumbent U.S. president.

The problem with the U.S. is that they

do not know the Middle East, especially the Iranian nation, and they think they can occupy a country by brining four carriers to the region, Larijani remarked.

“Throughout history, Iranians have shown that they have a strong will and national unity,” he insisted.

He also referred to the White House’s maximum pressure policy against Iran after withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear agreement, saying the Americans wrongly assumed that the Iranian nation would surrender if they impose such threats and sanctions.

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

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

Commander says Iran to firmly respond to any ‘stupid act of aggression’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Brigadier General Kioumars Heydari, commander of the Army Ground Force, warned on Tuesday that any possible “stupid act of aggression” against the Iranian territory will be dealt with a firm response.

The Army is ready to respond to any stupid act at any scale either in the land, sea, or air, Heydari said, according to IRNA.

If a confrontation occurs with the enemies, the Army will use fully indigenous equipment, tactics and techniques, he added.

The general reiterated that Iran has the capacity to crush any aggressive enemy.

In relevant remarks on Monday, Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, the commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Central Headquarters, said the Iranian armed forces are ready to impose heavy costs on the enemy in case of any aggression.



“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.

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.

Iran’s decision on uranium stockpile in accordance with JCPOA: envoy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Tehran’s ambassador to Vienna-based international organizations says Iran was entitled under the 2015 nuclear deal to let the stockpile of its enriched uranium pass 300 kilograms.

Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran’s Supreme National Security Council has already made it clear that Tehran has referred to the Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA to defend its rights, Tasnim reported.

Gharibabadi’s remarks came hours after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced that Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile has passed the 300 kg limit set by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

“It is now Europe’s turn to take serious practical measures to save the JCPOA, if they really care about its fate,” Gharibabadi said, adding that Iran could reverse its decision, provided that the E3 parties fulfill their commitments and guarantee Iran’s oil sale and trade interactions.

Iran has acted transparently in scaling down its JCPOA commitments, he added.

The envoy also expressed the hope that the international community would stand against the U.S. bullying policies and support the JCPOA.

Iran entered the nuclear talks with “goodwill” and carried out its JCPOA commitments completely, he remarked, pointing to fifteen consecutive reports of



the UN nuclear watchdog about Iran’s compliance with the nuclear deal ever since it came into force.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced on Monday that the country has increased the level of its low-enriched uranium production to over 300 kilograms.

The move came as part of a decision by the Islamic Republic to reduce some of its commitments under the JCPOA in reaction to the U.S. violation of its commitments and the Europeans’ failure to live up to their obligations.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) first announced on June 17 that stockpiles would exceed the 300kg limit within 10 days. It also said Iran would speed up enriching uranium at the level of 3.67%.

U.S. repeats anti-Iran threats, says maximum pressure will continue

(Press TV) — The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has issued new threats against Tehran, warning that its pressure campaign against Iranians “will continue.”

“Maximum pressure on the Iranian regime will continue until its leaders alter their course of action,” White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said in a statement. “The regime must end its nuclear ambitions and its malign behavior.”

Tensions have been running high between Tehran and Washington since last year, when Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and unleashed illegal sanctions against Iran.

Grisham went even further, claiming that Tehran has never been actually committed to the nuclear deal, without mentioning International Atomic Energy Agency’s myriad confirmations of Iran’s compliance.

“There is little doubt that even before the deal’s existence, Iran was violating its terms,” Grisham claimed.

The press secretary’s statement came after Iran increased the level of its low-enriched uranium production to over 300 kilograms.

The move was portrayed by Western media as “breaching the terms of the deal,” disregarding the fact that it was in line



with paragraphs 26 and 36 of the 2015 nuclear deal, and had been announced in advance. Therefore, Tehran notes that the move is “part of our rights as per the JCPOA,” according to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Trump himself called Tehran’s measure as “playing with fire” later in the day.

“They know what they’re doing. They know what they’re playing with and I think they’re playing with fire,” he told reporters.

Iran has asserted that it would “reverse” the measure once Europeans start fulfilling their obligations under the deal.

The move marks the second stage of reducing Iran’s commitments in the deal, with the first stage underway with regard to uranium and heavy water stocks.

Shamkhani denounces terror attack in Afghan capital

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani has denounced a terrorist attack that killed and injured dozens of people in the Afghan capital of Kabul on Monday.

In a message to Hamdullah Mohib, the national security advisor to Afghanistan’s president, Shamkhani offered sympathy with the Afghan government, people, and families of the victims of the terrorist attack.



Shamkhani also highlighted the need for the expansion of mutual cooperation in the war on terrorism.

“Undoubtedly, the termination of such distressing activities by the extremist groups and those affiliated with Takfiri thoughts will be possible only with serious resolve and determination, cooperation among the neighboring states, and genuine fight against terrorism,” Shamkhani said, Tasnim reported on Tuesday.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran voices its full readiness to assist in the restoration of stability and security, and also to provide help for the victims,” the top official added.

The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the car bomb attack on an area of Kabul housing military and government buildings, which has killed at least 16 people.

The bomb went off during the morning rush hour when the streets were filled with people, injuring 105 people, including 51 children and five women, government authorities said on Monday.

Mohammad Karim, a police official present at the site of the attack, said the bomb-laden truck exploded outside a defence ministry building.

123kg of illicit drugs seized in Zanjan province

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The police forces of Zanjan Province have seized 123kg of illicit drugs, provincial police chief Rahim Jahanbakhsh said on Tuesday.

The seizure took place in collaboration with the police forces of Ardebil Province, he said.

Jahanbakhsh said the police traced the haul of opium consignment in Zanjan province after comprehensive intelligence activities, Mehr reported.

Four smugglers were also arrested during the operation, he said.

The Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past three decades, despite its high economic and human costs.

The war on drug trade originating from Afghanistan has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police officers over the past four decades.

The country has spent more than hundreds of millions of dollars on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.



Iran not to retreat from decision on JCPOA deadline: MP

TEHRAN (MNA) — An Iranian lawmaker says the EU’s long-awaited trade mechanism (INSTEX) does not seem to meet Iran’s demands, stressing that the country will not retreat from its decision to scale down nuclear commitments after the 60-day deadline.

“Implementation of the INSTEX [Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchanges] will not meet our demands, and we will take the second step to reduce commitments under the JCPOA more firmly,” Valiollah Nanvakenari, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told Mehr on Tuesday.

“We expected the Europeans to fulfill their obligations to the JCPOA after the U.S.’ withdrawal from the pact,” he reiterated.

Noting that the deadline is so close, Nanvakenari said, “We will wait till the end of the 60-day ultimatum, but, if the remaining signatories do not honor their commitments, we will take our next step more firmly.”

On May 8, 2018, the U.S. unilaterally pulled out from the JCPOA and reimposed its sanctions on Iran’s key economic sectors.

European signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal said they will keep the accord alive by launching the long-awaited INSTEX to help Iran reap some benefits from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

However, they have shown clear inaction in saving the deal, while the U.S. violation of the JCPOA has barred Tehran from benefiting from the economic dividends of the JCPOA.

Running out of patience with the EU’s sluggishness, Iran reduced its commitments under the deal on May 8, and warned the EU that it would consider leaving the accord after 60 days if its demands were not met.



Russian diplomat says Iran not after nuclear weapons

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russia’s Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov has said that Iran’s act in exceeding stockpiles of enriched uranium does not mean it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

“Iran’s stockpiles of low enriched uranium exceeded 300 kg. This is a deviation from voluntary commitment under #JCPOA, but has nothing to do with a violation of NPT or development of nuclear weapons. Ironically this is a result of U.S. decision to sanction removal of LEU from Iran,” Ulyanov tweeted on Monday.

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 reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony.

Hours later, Zarif said the action does not violate the JCPOA.

“We have NOT violated the #JCPOA,” Zarif tweeted.



The foreign minister said Iran was exercising its right in response to the U.S. revocation of the nuclear agreement. Zarif noted that Iran’s measure will be reversed as soon as the Europeans start to fulfill their obligations under the JCPOA.

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 as long as sanctions are in place. 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.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and also decided to re-impose unilateral sanctions against Tehran.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of sanctions.

The deal requires Tehran to sell off any enriched uranium above the limit on international markets in return for natural 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 stops selling stockpiles of enriched uranium and heavy water for 60 days from May 8.

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

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

“After surpassing 300 kilograms, we will increase the speed of producing enriched uranium above 3.67 percent,” Kamalvandi stated.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	248276.0
IFX	3197.96

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,381 rials
GBP	53,091 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$64.87/b
WTI	\$58.91/b
OPEC Basket	\$65.60/b
Gold	\$1,393.10/oz
Silver	\$15.19/oz
Platinum	\$838.20/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Intl. Feed Expo
kicks off in Tehran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The fifth edition of Iran’s International Exhibition of Poultry, Livestock, Aquaculture, Feedstuff and Related Industries (Iran Feed Expo 2019) kicked off in Tehran on Tuesday.

As reported by IRNA, 61 renowned Iranian and foreign companies from different countries are showcasing their latest products and services in this year’s exhibition.

According to the Secretary of the Exhibition Touraj Saremi, the three-day exhibition aims to get Iranian companies, active in feed industry, acquainted with their foreign counterparts and develop mutual cooperation between the two sides.

Concurrent with the exhibition an international conference with the same theme is also being held in Tehran.

On the sidelines of the exhibition opening ceremony, Saremi noted that in the Iranian calendar year of 1392 (started on March 20, 2013) nearly 5.75 million tons of feedstuff was produced while in the year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019) the figure reached 10.566 million tons.

Iran Feed Expo is one of the major events in the feedstuff industry in the region.



Hosseinzadeh
appointed new
head of SCI

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, in a decree on Monday, appointed Javad Hosseinzadeh Neyestani as the new head of Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), Tasnim news agency reported.

Omid-Ali Parsa, who occupied the position before Hosseinzadeh, is currently appointed as the new head of Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA).

Japanese trade restrictions
place clamps on South
Korean economy

Headlines in South Korea proclaimed it as the “gunfire spelling the start of economic war with Japan.” This was on Tuesday, one day after the Japanese government announced it would be tightening restrictions on exports of high-tech materials to their country.

As per www3.nhk.or.jp, Japan’s trade minister announced the tougher constraints will apply to three materials used in high-tech products. Starting on Thursday, Japanese exporters will be required to apply for permission for each shipment of the materials to South Korea. Japanese firms have large market shares of each of these materials.

Shortly after Japan’s announcement, the South Korean government issued a sharp reaction, calling it “economic retaliation” for the country’s court rulings on wartime labor compensation. The Japanese ambassador was summoned to the foreign ministry and was issued a formal protest.

Many Koreans who say they were forced to work for Japanese companies during World War Two have filed lawsuits seeking compensation. Late last year, the South Korean Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs.

The Japanese government says any right to claims was settled completely and finally in 1965, when the countries signed a bilateral agreement.

Tokyo has called on Seoul to agree to set up an arbitration panel with third countries to settle disputes over the rulings. Seoul has not responded to this request.

Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga, indirectly suggested on Tuesday that the wartime labor issue was behind the export restrictions.

“South Korea has repeatedly rejected long-standing friendly ties between the countries,” he said. “Separately, it failed to produce a satisfactory response to the wartime labor issue before the G20 summit, which severely damaged trust in the relationship.”

Many industries in Japan and South Korea are entwined through the trade of high-tech materials. One of the materials included in Japan’s latest restrictions is high-purity hydrogen fluoride, a material essential for the production of semiconductors. Fluorinated polyimide, used in smartphones and TV displays, is also on the list.

‘U.S. sanctions not impeding Iranian
aviation industry’s development’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Iran’s National Airline (Iran Air) said the U.S. sanctions have not stopped Iran’s aviation industry’s continuous development, IRNA reported.

Speaking in a memorial ceremony on Tuesday, Touraj Dehqani Zanganeh noted that since the U.S. has re-imposed sanctions on the country all the technical checking and maintenance operations are being carried out by Iranian experts and the country is self-sufficient in this regard.

He further pointed to transporting 30 million passengers in year, as one of the achievements of Iran’s national airline, saying that currently the country’s fleet is comprised of 300 airplanes.

Training specialist forces inside the country and establishing numerous knowledge-based companies active in the aviation industry were among other achievements which the official mentioned in his speech.



“Despite the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deals and re-imposition of the sanc-

tions which ended Iran Air’s cooperation with foreign partners, the Airline will go

on providing its services and reaches new achievements,” Dehqani said.

On January 28, 2016, Iran Air signed a deal with the French giant plane maker Airbus for the purchase of 118 Airbus jets worth \$27 billion and it also inked a deal with Boeing on December 11, 2016 to buy 80 aircrafts valued at \$16.6 billion. It was Iran’s biggest deal with an American company since the 1979 revolution.

And in April 2017, Iran Air signed a contract to buy 20 planes from Franco-Italian turboprop maker ATR.

However, just a few number of the ordered planes (three Airbuses and 13 ATRs) were delivered before Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the nuclear deal and imposed new sanctions on Iran.

Now under the new U.S. sanctions, international plane manufacturers that use at least 10 percent U.S. made parts in their products have decided to avoid the Iranian market.

‘Regulations required to remove
production barriers’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In a live TV program on Monday night, Iranian Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister for Industrial Affairs, Farshad Moqimi, stressed that the regulations should be in a way that remove the barriers in the way of production, IRIB reported.

“When a regulation is set, it may remove a problem but creates another one. Taking this issue into account and also considering the special current condition of the country, some special approach should be taken when setting the regulations”, the official commented.

Last week, Moqimi had announced that Industry, Mining and Trade Minister will launch a comprehensive system for registration of domestically-made products in near future.

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

Also, addressing the ceremony of National Day of Industry and Mine on Monday, Industry, 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.

Sanctions lead to self-reliance
in industry

Elsewhere in his remarks during the TV programs on Monday, Moqimi referred to the sanctions imposed on Iran by the U.S. and said that they have created some condition for the country that has resulted in self-reliance and some achievements in the industry sector.

“Therefore, we will take the advantage of the condition and will become surely successful”, the official underlined.

Last week, during a meeting with the members of Iran Steel Association, industry, mining and trade minister said the country has achieved a proper self-reliance in steel industry, ILNA reported.

Rahmani said, “This industry can be still developed and regarding the huge investment made in this sector during the past years, we will soon observe a good balance also in production chain of this product in the country.”

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.

Meanwhile, in a press conference on June 8, deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister for Mining Affairs Jafar Sargini said the ministry has taken necessary measures to maintain the country’s metal exports despite the 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,” Sargini 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 by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

“We won’t also have any problems regarding the supply for the domestic consumption in the current year,” he added.

Iran exports \$2.5b of commodities to
Turkey during January-May

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — According to the data released by Turkish Statistical Institute, the country imported \$2.57 billion of goods from Iran during January-May of this year, which shows 25 percent drop from \$3.435 billion in the same period of time in 2018.

The released data also show that Turkey’s exports to Iran during the five-month period of this year has fallen 10 percent to \$1.022 billion from \$1.139 billion in the first five months of 2018, Tasnim news agency reported.

Iran-Turkey worth of trade stood at \$3.592 billion during January-May 2019, dropping 25 percent from \$4.574 billion in the same period of time in the past year.

On May 19, Turkish ambassador to Iran said his country wants the barriers in the way of trade with Iran to be removed, IRNA reported.

The envoy said if some of the obstacles are removed, Turkish businessmen and investors would be keen to come to Iran.

“The obstacles facing Turkish investors, which are often related to Iran’s regulations, should be resolved”, Derya Ors said at a meeting with Tehran’s governor.

Turkish merchants are now well represented in Iran and have invested in units such as Razi and Pars Hayat petrochemicals, he said.

Ors went on to say that the existing barriers to Turkish investment in Iran are more in keeping with the rules that prevent investors from investing in some fields.

The Turkish ambassador in Iran said: “These issues are regularly reviewed by the two governments on the negotiation table, and all the doors are open for negotiations.”

He also announced that the meeting of Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee will be held in summer or fall of this year, and members will discuss all the existing problems and solutions for removing obstacles.

On June 14, Head of Iran-Turkey Joint



Chamber of Commerce said Turkey’s trade center in Tehran is completely active and the trade is going smoothly between the two countries.

“Although there are small problems with money transactions but still we manage and the trade is going on smoothly,” Reza Kami told ILNA.

Kami noted that Turkish companies are willing to contribute to the reconstruction projects in the flood-stricken regions, saying “Turkish companies have a good history in manufacturing prefabricated houses, and in recent years we have seen that a few Turkish companies were active in Mehr Housing Projects.”

He further mentioned establishment of an Iran-Turkey special economic zone, noting that the two sides are determined in this regard but there are still some issues that should be discussed and resolved.

Mentioning the impact of sanctions on trade between the two countries, Kami said: “The Turkish authorities have repeatedly stated that they are not going to comply with the U.S. sanctions, but obviously the sanctions have created some problems regarding banking relations, and it should be also borne in mind that the entire region’s economy is in recession.”

In early June, Iran’s Ambassador to Turkey Mohammad Farzmand announced that Iran and Turkey are working on a financial mechanism channel to bypass the U.S. unilateral sanctions.

The ambassador said that such mechanism is aimed at preventing bilateral trade from falling victim to trans-regional players.

Govt., private sector discuss amending CBI directive on re-injection of export income

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 86th Dialogue Council of the Government and the Private sector was held in Tehran on Tuesday to discuss issues pertain to foreign trade and currency market, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

In the meeting, which was chaired by Iran’s Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand, the government policies for re-injection of export income into the country’s economy were discussed and it was decided that a committees comprised of the private sector, the central bank, and the ministry of industry, mining and trade and the ministry of finance, would be established to follow and finalize the directive issued in this regard.

In late May, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) unveiled a directive package which provided the country’s exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country’s economy.

However soon after its issuance, the new directive aroused some debates in the country’s private sector



and the traders and businessmen claimed that it needed to be amended.

According to economic experts and businessmen, the directive didn’t take into account serious obstacles in the way of transferring foreign currency into the country considering U.S. sanctions and lack of banking relations with other countries.

Private sector ready to prepare an industrial development outline: ICCIMA head

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafe’i said the private sector is ready to prepare an industrial development outline for the country, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to celebrate the National Day of Industry and Mine which was held on Monday participated by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani, Foreign

Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Majlis speaker Ali Larijani, and Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Khodadad Gharibpour.

Shafe’i said: “If the government and Majlis assign the private sector to prepare an industrial development outline, we will do it at our own expense, provided that it will be used.”

The U.S.’s withdrawal from Iran’s nuclear deal and imposing fresh sanctions

on the country has put Iran in a new economic condition and under the new condition the role that private sector can play to tackle the sanctions has come under the spotlight.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says the country’s counting on the private sector in the new round of sanctions, saying, “If we are together, we will turn any threat into opportunity. Private sector can neutralize sanctions and make opportunities out of them.”



176th OPEC meeting wraps up, Iran exempted from new cuts

➔ He mentioned the charter for cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC which was approved in the meeting, saying that this charter has no impact on OPEC's operational mechanisms and decisions.

Zanganeh further noted that Iran demanded some amendments in the charter which were all applied.

"The thing is that the decisions of this set [OPEC+] are not binding, and there are no obligations for OPEC members to comply, moreover, the members are allowed to bring the matters to their governments and authorities if necessary," he added.

■ 'No negotiations with U.S.'

Answering a question by CNBC about holding talks with the U.S., the Iranian oil minister said Iran is not going to negotiate with the U.S. unless all the sanctions are removed.

"If sanctions are lifted, then the United States can see a change in the atmosphere, and we can do a lot in return," Zanganeh said.

Asked about the attacks on the oil tank-



ers in the Gulf of Oman, the official said, "I do not know who has been behind these attacks, but Iran has always supported the maintenance of market security, and we repeatedly stated that the oil market should not involve in politics."

■ 'An independent, professional and technical OPEC'

Also on the sidelines of the 176th OPEC gathering, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's permanent envoy to Vienna-based international organizations, said that Iran supports an

independent and professional OPEC not an organization which executes the orders of world powers.

"Iran is in favor of an independent, professional and technical OPEC, not an OPEC that is influenced by a country like the United States, or an organization in which some members are organizing its decisions from outside," Gharibabadi said.

The envoy further noted that with the support of some OPEC members, the U.S. has always tried to influence the organization's key decisions.

"They [the U.S.] have implemented unilateral sanctions against some OPEC members, like Iran and Venezuela, and are always following their agenda through some of the OPEC members," he added.

The 176th meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries was held on Monday under the chairmanship of its president, Manuel Salvador Quevedo Fernandez, Minister of Petroleum of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The OPEC also held a meeting with non-OPEC allies on Tuesday.

Oil prices climb as OPEC extends cuts, but demand worries persist

Oil gained on Tuesday as producer club OPEC agreed to extend supply cuts until next March, although prices were pressured by worries demand could ease amid hints of a slowdown in the global economy.

According to reuters.com, Brent crude futures for September delivery were trading up 17 cents, or 0.3%, at \$65.23 a barrel by 0706 GMT, after earlier falling to \$64.66.

U.S. crude futures for August were up 9 cents at \$59.18 a barrel, after touching their highest in over five weeks on Monday.

"(OPEC) sticking to their production curbs ... will continue to support oil prices as it remains the primary mechanism for the delicate task of keeping the market equilibrium intact," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at Vanguard Markets in Bangkok.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed on Monday to extend oil supply cuts until March 2020 as the group's members overcame their differences to try to prop up the price of crude.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday he had agreed with Saudi Arabia to extend global output cuts until

December 2019 or March 2020.

Russia reduced oil production in June by more than the amount agreed in a global deal to cut output, the energy minister and industry sources said on Monday, as the sector felt the impact of a contaminated crude crisis that crippled exports.

Meanwhile, U.S. crude oil stockpiles were seen falling for a third consecutive week, a preliminary Reuters poll showed on Monday, also supporting prices.

"With back-to-back weekly inventory draws, I think we are starting to see some strategic buying thinking we will get another draw," Innes added.

While U.S. producers hit a monthly record of 12.16 million barrels per day (bpd) in April, according to data, new U.S. shale oil production is expected to slip this year from last year, according to a survey of major forecasters.

Still, concerns of a weaker global economy denting oil demand capped price gains.

While the U.S. and China agreed at a recent Group of 20 leaders summit to restart trade talks, indications that factory activity shrank across much of Europe and Asia in June while



growth in manufacturing cooled in the United States weighed on oil prices.

"Oil traders will now turn their attention to the economic data, as the weakening global activity and waning demand could again weigh on the sentiment and call for a downside correction in oil prices following the June rebound," Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior market analyst at London Capital Group, said in a note.

China just created a huge opportunity for the oil and gas industry

China will remove the joint venture requirement for foreign companies wanting to enter its oil and gas industry as it moves to open up a range of industries as per a pledge it made during its continuing trade dispute with the United States.

According to oilprice.com, the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission had announced it would remove the joint venture requirement for oil and gas projects along with a rule stating that only local firms can control gas networks in cities with populations of over half a million people.

This opens up a lot of opportunities for foreign companies who are eager to stake a claim in China's fast-growing gas market as the country switches from oil and coal to gas for electricity to reduce pollution.

Interest in oil and gas exploration might be a little more



-muted given the challenges inherent in new exploration, but it will probably still be there.

The NPRC announcement, Bloomberg noted, came on the heels of news that presidents Xi and Trump had agreed to what effectively amounts to a truce in their trade war with

pledges to renew the negotiations that broke down last month.

China agreed to ease restrictions for foreign ownership in car manufacturing companies, insurers, and banks while President Trump said he would delay the imposition of restrictions on Huawei.

According to the NPRC announcement, the new rules will enter into effect at the end of July along with any other restrictions that are absent in the so-called negative list of rules restricting foreign companies' access to certain industries such as oil and gas and mining.

To drive the goodwill point home, the NPRC said "China is sticking to the opening-up policy and continuing to ease market access, despite the fact that globalization is currently hampered by unilateralism and protectionism, and cross-border investment is affected by trade frictions."

'Clean' natural gas is actually the new coal, report says

By Don Pittis

There's no question that when you burn it, methane, the main component of natural gas, is much cleaner than coal.

With that in mind, you might think a newly released report titled The New Gas Boom should be cause for celebration.

Instead, the fresh analysis from Global Energy Monitor, a group well known in energy circles for keeping track of coal plant construction in Asia, sounds a warning, not just for the climate but for investors in what it calculates as a risky \$1.3 trillion U.S. worth of global gas infrastructure.

Effectively, the report warns that rather than being an environment-friendly product that can help solve our climate problems, gas is the new coal.

The explosion in spending on planned new liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities — the vast majority in the U.S. and Canada — combined with new calculations for leakage from the LNG supply chain called fugitive gas — means the world may soon turn against gas in the same way it turned against its solid fuel relative.

"New studies have shown there is significantly more fugitive gas than studies showed five years ago, and the gas is also a bigger contributor to climate change than was understood," said James Browning, one of the report's authors.

A 34,000-ton heavy lift vessel carries barges for LNG Canada completing pre-construction work at Kitimat, B.C., last fall to prepare the port for larger vessels once the new \$40-billion natural gas export facility is constructed.

According to U.S. government sources, by weight, methane is 25 times better at trapping heat than carbon dioxide, and while the gas eventually breaks down, that superheating

effect magnifies the cascading impact of processes like ice- and permafrost-melt that in turn contribute further to global warming.

Credible sources have calculated that natural gas is an environmental wonder fuel compared to coal, oil and even bio-energy.

At the point of combustion, burning gas produces less than half the CO₂ of coal. It produces much less nitrogen oxide and almost no sulfur dioxide, two harmful components of smog. It produces a microscopic fraction of the airborne particulates generated by burning bio-fuels. Particulates are a well-known hazard of coal and diesel combustion.

■ Natural gas an attractive option

For those reasons, natural gas is seen as an attractive option for smog-bound cities, especially in Asia, currently using coal to heat and to make electricity.

Until quite recently, for all practical purposes, gas was seen as a continental resource. In other words, whereas coal and oil were commonly moved by freighters and tankers all over the world, gas was limited to places where you could build a pipeline.

As it was produced in places like Alberta, for example, pipelines moved it across the country to be burned in cities of Eastern Canada.

But the falling costs of LNG technology changed all that. Suddenly it became feasible to compress the gas into a chilly liquid for shipping by specialized tankers anywhere in the world.

And according to data assembled in the GEM report that has led to a boom in planned LNG construction worth something approaching \$2 trillion. Since plants to compress the gas are much more expensive to build, gas-exporting countries are by far the biggest investors.

"At least 202 LNG terminal projects are in development worldwide, including 116



export terminals and 86 import terminals," says a release summarizing the new report. "Export terminal development is concentrated in the U.S. and Canada."

LNG development in Canada has had wide support from business and government as an opportunity to sell what had been a cheap and plentiful national resource to countries without our advantages. Canadian taxpayers have contributed to speed the projects along.

"At current consumption levels, Canada's resources can provide natural gas to consumers for the next 300 years," says a website produced by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, celebrating the fact that Canada is the world's fifth-largest producer.

But as well as documenting the expansion of LNG investment in Canada and around the world, the GEM report contains a warning to those who are investing that extends to banks lending the money for facilities based on the idea of an industry imagining a 300-year run.

For one thing, the latest expansion flies in the face of international agreements to reduce natural gas use, said Browning, and while the current U.S. government has repudiated those commitments, so far, Canada has not. And governments change.

"You add all these new projects together and you're talking about a tripling," said Browning.

And Browning says countries suffering

from the effects of climate change will be looking for less costly alternatives, especially as it becomes better understood that fugitive methane from drilling and shipping can make gas as damaging as coal.

■ Fossil fuel alternatives

Already, sun-drenched India, one of the countries likely to be worst hit by rising temperatures, is finding that in many cases solar energy is cheaper than fossil fuel alternatives.

That's why the report warns that early-stage lenders and investors in LNG may be disappointed as markets for gas exports dry up long before the investment in the massive expansion pays off.

The report's conclusion is hardly far-fetched. Market analysts now say the struggling U.S. Company General Electric lost hundreds of billions by betting on natural gas and coal instead of renewable energy sources.

Karen Tam Wu, regional director for the Pembina Institute in British Columbia, where Canada's giant LNG project has already got the go-ahead, is sympathetic to countries trying to move away from the polluting effects of coal. But she said the so-called rush to gas may turn out to be a wasteful intermediate step on the essential path to low-carbon energy.

She's afraid that in pushing LNG, B.C. is wasting money it could have spent competing with the rest of the world in developing better renewable technology.

Forty to 60 years, the lifespan of an LNG plant, is plenty of time for places like China, currently in the market for Canadian gas, to discover alternative energy technology.

"China may turn around and say, 'You know, we don't need to be importing fossil fuels from other countries because we've become self-sufficient,'" said Tam Wu.

(Source: cbc.ca)

Barkindo reinstated as OPEC Secretary General for 3 more years

ENERGY TEHRAN — OPEC reappointed Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo for another three-year-period, Shana reported on Tuesday.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries announced the decision during its 176th gathering on Monday in Vienna.

OPEC also extended its supply curbs deal with non-OPEC producers, for an additional 9 months and into 2020 on the back of weakening outlook for global demand growth and the relentless rise in output from America's shale fields.

The organization has set December 5 as the date for its next delegate meeting.



DIY solutions for solar power diversion through home automation

By Richard Chirgwin

A couple of weeks ago, I took a look at a customer's need to integrate his solar PV controller with his smart home system, and concluded that this industry needs to settle on standard protocols so systems can get smarter.

That post drew some really interesting comments and suggestions for solutions — and while I haven't changed my opinion that the industry falls far short of a plug-and-play solution for the "if there's enough solar power, switch on the heater / pool pump", it's worth looking over what our readers suggested (the original comments are beneath the original post).

Thanks to Mark A for pointing out Fronius gets pretty close to a plug-and-play solution: its inverters' Energy Management feature has load diversion, and Mark told us that with a recent software update, the inverter can manage four digital outputs with selectable priority. However, the ability to integrate that with the smart home depends on support from the smart home vendors — or the user's willingness to get into Fronius' Application Programming Interface (API).

Before picking up other comments, I'd like to return to the IT systems administrator I spoke to while prepping the previous article, because his setup turns out to be pretty typical of most of the advice that turned up in the comments on the story: you need to get data out of the inverter (via Bluetooth in his case); data travels over the Internet to PVOutput; and Home Assistant fetches the data from PVOutput and controls a TP-Link Smart Switch (while TP-Link doesn't publish its API, there are GitHub projects like this one to help) to turn the pool pump on or off.

■ Opening TP-Link software

Geoff's comment gave us similar advice — he alerted us to the open source TP-Link software — as did Paul, who uses Home Assistant, Efergy current clamps, and WiFi switches.

You've probably noticed by now that there's a minimum level of DIY, whatever the solution, at least to program what happens in what conditions.



Another entry in the "most popular solution" list is If This Then That, a service that allows users to choose triggers (for example, "high PV output") that they link to actions ("switch power to EV charger").

Commenter Matthew likes IFTTT, with a caveat relevant to the solar power diversion question:

"If solar inverter manufacturers and smart pool pump makers each implement an interface into IFTTT, then users can easily setup whatever rules they want".

Vendors' willingness to cooperate is the difficult question. Malcolm also likes IFTTT, but probably accurately considers it too complex for the average user.

Parklea Solar told us they run the Reposit monitoring system, and IFTTT uses Reposit data as triggers to actions in a Homeseer automation system, managing Insteon switches.

OpenEnergyMonitor has software for Energy Use, Solar PV, EV Charging and Heat Pump Monitoring. The EV Charging solution handles realtime solar diversion and would suit the Tesla-owning YouTuber CWNE881, but at this point, OpenEnergyMonitor seems to lack hardware specific to the Australian market.

■ Solar energy diversion

Its approach to solar energy diversion looks daunting if you're not comfortable building the hardware. It's not for the faint-hearted.

If you've got slightly deeper pockets, a Mac Mini is what Mclass runs to host the Indigo home automation system, which runs the "whole house including remote access" on a Mac Mini. Indigo can work with Enphase's Envoy through a plug-in and directly with Fronius via its API.

Most of the solutions described here use cloud services for data collection or programming, and that's a pretty big point of failure.

As the last household on a very long strand of Telstra copper, I couldn't ever be certain that the upstream service is visible from my place; and cloud smart home services can be taken out of service by faults in the wider Internet (this isn't the place for a tutorial on the Domain Name Service or the Border Gateway Protocol, but they're both great ways to break big cloud providers like Amazon, Microsoft Azure, and Google).

(Source: solarquotes.com.au)

Palestinians seen 'Stateless' in Kushner's economic Plan: Analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A senior author and analyst based in Sweden said Palestinians are regarded "as a people without a country" in the economic plan raised by US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, in a recent conference in Bahrain. "I have examined carefully the Jared Kushner/White House document Peace to Prosperity - The Economic Plan: A New Vision for the Palestinian People," Hussein Askary said in an interview with Tasnim.

"The document refers to the 'Palestinian people', but there is no mention even once to the term 'state', nor 'Palestinian Authority'. There is no mention of 'Palestine' (although this is easy to understand given who wrote it). So, the 'Palestinian people' here are regarded as a people without a country," he stated.

Askary is an Iraqi-born Swedish citizen. He is the Southwest Asia Coordinator of the International Schiller Institute. Askary has worked as an economic and strategic analyst on Southwest Asia and North and East Africa for the Washington-based weekly magazine Executive Intelligence Review since 1996. He is the co-author of several books on the New Silk Road strategy and its impact on the world economy. His latest book-length special report "Extending the New Silk Road to West Asia and Africa" was published in November 2017. He has spoken on these matters in international conferences and seminars in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, Egypt, Sudan, Iran, Japan, and China. In 2018, he wrote an 80-page study on the reconstruction of Yemen and China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The following is the full text of the interview:



■ Bahrain hosted the so-called "Peace to Prosperity" conference to discuss what the US has described as the economic part of President Donald Trump's "deal of the century", a plan which aims to consign the Palestinian cause to oblivion. The Palestinian leadership boycotted the meeting in Manama on June 25 and 26, leading critics to question the credibility of the event. In your opinion, what goals are the US and Israel pursuing by holding the conference? Would they reach their goals?

A: I have examined carefully the Jared Kushner/White House document "Peace to Prosperity - The Economic Plan: A New Vision for the Palestinian People." If the reader of this proposal is an alien who has just landed from Mars and has no idea what has happened on this planet in the past 75 years, he or she might find some of the ideas useful; infrastructure, education, healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, etc. But that is not the reality. The document refers to the "Palestinian people", but there is no mention even once to the term "state", nor "Palestinian Authority". There is no mention of "Palestine" (although this is easy to understand given who wrote it). So, the "Palestinian people" here are regarded as a people without a country. They just happen to inhabit an area called the West Bank and Gaza. The "Palestinian people", whose pictures in this document are glowing with happiness and optimism, will be enjoying their lives under the benevolent shadow of the Israeli army's guns. The term "occupation" is mentioned only to mean vocational practice, not military occupation. So, the whole thing is an unserious attempt to dilute and eliminate the Palestinian issue. The danger is that President Donald Trump and many Americans and Europeans might think this is a great offer.

If you look at the "financing" part of this proposal, it shows clearly that the authors never have in mind a Palestinian government or state. "Capital raised through this international effort will be placed into a new fund administered by an established multilateral development bank," the document says. It is a "fund" which will be created through donations by mainly the US and the (Persian) Gulf countries, like all other failed donation operations in Bosnia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, etc. And, it will be administered not by the representatives of the "Palestinian people" but by a foreign agency (most probably the World Bank). This means no sovereignty and no independence for the "Palestinian people".

■ Some analysts say that the Trump administration's focus on an economic plan, led by his son-in-law Jared Kushner, is a strategic mistake that could stymie the peace negotiations even before they begin. What is your assessment of the US approach to the conflict and the future of the plan? Is it practical at all?

A: I am a strong believer in the concept promoted by the late American political prisoner and economist Lyndon LaRouche that there could be no peace without economic development. But what is being presented here is intended to fail not to succeed. Remember that these are the same ideas proposed during the Oslo Peace process two decades ago. Kushner is presenting this plan in Bahrain in a conference downgraded to workshop because it was already boycotted by the Palestinian Authority and denounced by all Palestinian political groups. Kushner himself says that he is presenting this economic part of the "Deal of the Century" because the political part is so disputed. The Palestinians, and I agree with them, say this economic plan is blackmail to force them to accept the political part. But Kushner already knows what the Palestinian answer will be. If they refuse, then they will look like bigots who are biting the hand which is trying to feed their people. And if everything collapses and more violence is practiced against the Palestinian people by Benjamin Netanyahu's extremist government, then the US could say that the Palestinians should blame no one but themselves. The British (the instigators of this whole problem from start) and the right-wing Israelis will stretch this conflict as far as it goes to keep the region unstable and prone to conflicts. Besides, the Likud extremists' philosophy is that "Jordan is Palestine", which means all Palestinians will probably wake up one morning to find themselves in Jordan. So, there is no intention, at least from the Israeli right wing, to reach peace.

According to my sources in the US, Trump personally might not harbor similar ideology like the Likud or Zionist lobby, but he has accepted the Likud regime uncritically and listens to people like billionaire Sheldon Adelson on how to deal with the Middle East. For the moment, he is focused on Iran where he is surrounded by war hawks like John Bolton and Mike Pompeo who preach the whole Netanyahu's line that 'Iran is the source of terrorism in the region'. →13

The weakness of the former vice president of the United States in the debate Alarm for Biden!

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Former Vice President Joe Biden still has a great chance to attend the upcoming presidential election. Biden's popularity, however, has fallen far more than before. The reality is that if Biden fails to compete with other Democrat candidates in states like Iowa and New Hampshire, he can hardly continue to run for electoral competition. Eventually, Biden will have a lot of concerns about the 2020 presidential election.

Poll: Biden support sinks, Harris moves up to third place after Democratic debate
As The Hill reported, Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) surged into third place among 2020 Democratic presidential candidates following what many considered a standout debate performance on Thursday, according to a new Morning Consult poll. The survey, which was released Saturday, found that 12 percent of potential Democratic primary voters chose Harris, who made headlines for confronting former Vice President Joe Biden (D) about his past views on busing, as their first choice for president. The figure represents a 6 percentage point surge from an identical poll released last week.

Harris still trails Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Biden by solid margins. But Morning Consult noted that Harris's surge came at the expense of Biden, who saw his support drop by 5 percentage points from last week. Thirty-three percent of respondents picked Biden as their top choice. Meanwhile, 19 percent of respondents said Sanders was their preferred candidate. Twelve percent of possible Democratic primary voters said they'd choose Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) as the party's presidential nominee. It was a decrease of 1 percentage point and good enough to place her in a tie for third with Harris.

South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg (D) appeared ahead of Harris in the previous Morning Consult poll, with 7 percent of respondents saying they'd vote for him. He received 6 percent of the support to sit in fourth place in the most recent survey. Harris's rise comes on the heels of a commanding performance on the second night of the first 2020 presidential debates. At one point, the California senator engaged in a contentious back-and-forth with Biden after she criticized his opposition to busing to desegregate schools. "There was a little girl in California who was part of the second class to integrate her public schools, and she was bused to school every day," Harris said to Biden. "That little girl was me."

Biden called Harris's criticism a "mischaracterization" of his views and said his issue was with the Department of Education administering busing policies. The Morning Consult post-debate poll was conducted between June 27 and June 28 among 2,407 registered voters who said they were considering voting in a Democratic primary or caucus in their state. It has a margin of error of 2 percentage points.

Biden's Support Slipped 10 Points After



Debates, Poll Shows

Also Time reported that The first Democratic primary debates appear to have cost Vice President Joe Biden some of his supporters — at least for now, one poll suggests. Polling by Morning Consult and FiveThirtyEight before and after the two debates on Wednesday and Thursday suggests that support for Biden dropped by about 10 points among likely Democratic voters, when asked who they would choose if the election were held tomorrow.

Biden had previously enjoyed a healthy lead over the other Democrats. The polling prior to debates, which was conducted between June 19 and 26, suggested that Biden was supported by about 41.5% of voters. At that point, the polling showed Sen. Elizabeth Warren had the support of 12.6% of voters and Bernie Sanders had 14.4% of support. Biden appears to have slipped in the polls after each debate, his support falling to 35.4% after the first debate and to 31.5% after the second round.

Post-debate analyses suggest that Sen. Kamala Harris' strong debate performance — coupled with her willingness directly attack Biden, including his civil rights record — posed a challenge for the former Vice President. In one of the most heated moments of the debate, Harris drew attention to Biden's previous opposition to busing as a tool to promote school integration. The poll also showed Harris gaining a significant number of supporters. While she had the support of just 7.9% of likely voters before the debate, she had 16.6% of the support afterwards.

Other candidates appeared to experience smaller gains and losses, according to the poll. Sen. Bernie Sanders' support rose from 14.4% to 17.3% after the second debate; Sen. Elizabeth Warren's support grew from 12.6% to 14.4%.

Deep dive into SC's 2020 presidential poll shows why Biden leads, Trump dominates

But Postandcourier reported that The past week has been busy for the 2020 Democratic presidential candidates. They crammed onto a hot stage outside a Columbia children's museum for U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn's Fish Fry. They piled one-by-one into the Columbia's convention center to speak to state party faithful. Then they traveled to Miami for the race's first nationally televised debates. No wonder, in a poll taken shortly before this eventful week, four out of five S.C. Democratic voters say they are following the race closely.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, who has long ties to South Carolina, has led the field for the Feb. 29 primary since the first Post and Courier/Change Research poll was conducted in February. Those behind him have changed from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and California Sen. Kamala Harris to Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg in the latest survey.

Polling shows the other top S.C. contenders in the 24-candidate field are New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke, whose numbers haven't fallen off. Here are some other insights from the latest Post and Courier/Change Research poll about the crowded 2020 S.C. Democratic primary and the general election in a state that has gone Republican since 1976. Getting to know you Name recognition is helping Biden and Sanders.

Almost every S.C. Democratic voter is seeing or reading some news and information about Biden, the highest mark in the field and just a ahead of Sanders. Warren and Harris come next with eight in 10 voters getting some information about the senators. Booker, O'Rourke and Buttigieg come at the end of the current crop of front-runners.

The coverage of Buttigieg as the 2020 race's breakout candidate has helped in South Carolina where he sits third in poll-

ing. While the mayor is not known by 19 percent of S.C. voters, that's not far off O'Rourke, considered the best potential breakout star after losing a highly contested race for the U.S. Senate in Texas last year.

Biden has the highest favorability marks among the 2020 Democrats in South Carolina, according to the poll taken before the former vice president's comments about getting along with senators who backed segregation. He sits at 81 percent, aided by thumbs up from nine in 10 black voters. Warren, Sanders and Harris are next, hovering around 65 percent approval. The next grouping includes Buttigieg and Booker around 55 percent. The survey was taken before Buttigieg was criticized for his handling of a white South Bend police officer killing a black man. The rest, including O'Rourke, have favorability ratings under 50 percent with many voters just feeling neutral about candidates.

GOP support for President Donald Trump remains strong in South Carolina. Nine in 10 S.C. Republicans give the president favorable ratings and good marks on his job performance. A bulk of GOP voters, 70 percent, said Trump reflects the Republican Party's views.

Eight in 10 S.C. GOP voters say they plan on definitely casting a ballot for Trump next year. Just 2 percent said they would definitely vote for another candidate. Still Trump is not faring well among women in the state, especially those who are college-educated and identify as independent. The president's core is white men and non-college educated voters.

No surprise in a Republican-leaning state that Trump would defeat top current Democratic challengers in a projected general election. Biden does the best, losing 54 percent to 38 percent. The former vice president comes close to beating Trump among independents, 42 percent to 40 percent. Harris, Sanders and Booker nab 32 percent to 34 percent of the vote versus the president while earning a smaller share of support from independents.

In looking at the chances of winning the White House, Democrats are pretty evenly split between predicting a Democrat will probably beat Trump and the race will be a toss-up. Republicans are much more confident about their chances in November 2020 with nine in 10 predicting victory for Trump. And more than half of S.C. independents think the president will win another four years.

Health care is the top issue for S.C. Democratic primary voters followed by education, minority rights, abortion and jobs/economy. Nearly 90 percent of Democratic primary voters support Medicare-for-all. The climate, a huge topic at the recent presidential debates, ranked sixth. Immigration was by far the biggest priority for S.C. Republican primary voters. Nearly a third of GOP voters cited the issue atop President Donald Trump's agenda as their main concern followed by abortion, transportation/roads and taxes. Jobs and crime fell outside the top five biggest issues.

Jamal Daoud: Extremists desperate to demonstrate existence, attacking soft target Sri Lanka

TEHRAN (FNA) — Jamal Daoud, journalist and human rights activist, says the terrorists who were heavily defeated in Iraq and Syria, try to conduct attacks in the countries that have not put their security on high alert to catch the attention of the world.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Dr. Daoud discussed the roots of extremist groups committing terrorist attacks, saying "[Saudi Arabia and its allies] are active in spreading extremism in Western countries... What made the current wave the most intense and most serious is the support the extremists received from Western countries' authorities in the form of political support, where they turned a blind eye to recruitment and brainwashing and the media adopting the extremists' story."

Jamal Daoud, is a Sydney-based journalist and human rights campaigner who participated in many social justice movements, such as the refugee rights and anti-racism campaigns.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ After the US, UK, France and Belgium, we witness terrorist attacks in countries that have not been at the center stage, like Sri Lanka. Why do you think such a trend has started?

A: Many of the countries who experienced major terrorist attacks took strong security measures and harshly cracked down on extremists/sleeping cells and their supporting/logistical networks. This had weakened their ability to conduct major attacks that could have any impact. As a result, this played a major role in terrorists shifting their deadly activities to countries that are considered safe and that had not put their security on high alert.

We should take into account also the desperation of terrorist organizations and their offshoots to prove that they are still active and were not totally defeated. This is why they are desperate to continue with their terrorist attacks, even in different regions and new countries that were not on their radar. This partially explains the high



number of casualties of the latest deadly attacks in Sri Lanka, as the terrorists were desperate to prove that their major defeats in Syria and Iraq did not paralyze their abilities to conduct terrorist attacks.

■ How has the Western version of extremism come into existence?

A: Daesh and other terrorist organizations have capitalised on issues of marginalisation and crack downs on minorities, using them as excuses and as tools to brainwash and recruit support by trying to convince Muslims in Western countries that they are not welcome, are oppressed and hence need to rise up against this oppression. The extreme ideology and its groups in the Western countries were imported from different sources in the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states. These countries were active in spreading extremism in Western countries for the last few decades in the form of funding to build Islamic

(Wahhabi) schools, mosques and religious centres. The current wave of intense extremism/terrorism flourished with the Arab "spring", especially the beginning of the Syrian crisis. What made the current wave the most intense and most serious is the support the extremists received from Western countries' authorities in the form of political support, where they turned a blind eye to recruitment and brainwashing and the media adopting the extremists' story of what is happening in Syria. In Australia, it is estimated that Saudi Arabia alone spent more than \$2 billion since the 1980's to promote extremism. This is why Australia has had the largest number of Western Muslims joining the terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq per capita.

■ Which social classes do you think are most vulnerable to extremists' recruitment propaganda? The poor? The immigrants?

A: Most Australian extremists who joined terrorist organisations in Syria, Iraq and Libya are settled Australians who migrated easily decades ago. Some of them are very wealthy, had well-established businesses and lived lavish lives. To date, there was no single newly arrived Muslim who joined a terrorist organisation in Syria, Iraq, Libya or in Australia. This does not mean that we do not have racism in Australia. On the contrary, we are facing a lot of racism and Islamophobia. The immigration system also became more discriminatory and many migration ministers vowed to stop Muslim migration. All this was capitalised on and used as excuses by extremists in order to establish and promote their hate campaigns and to recruit extremists. Of course fighting against racism and Islamophobia will undoubtedly reduce the feelings of marginalisation among Muslims. This in turn will help our fight against extremism by neutralising the many arguments of extremists about Muslims being systematically targeted and the need to retaliate with extreme violence.

Canadian analyst calls U.S. approach to Israel-Palestine conflict 'Absurd'

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A Canadian political expert described the Trump administration's economic plan on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as 'absurd' and said the US approach to the issue is "indicative of a deep underlying colonial mindset".

"The approach being taken is really quite absurd and most certainly indicative of a deep underlying colonial mindset on the part of all involved in its conception," Barry Grossman, who is based on the Indonesian island of Bali, told Tasnim in an interview.

Barry Grossman is a political analyst specializing in Public International Law, who has resided in Indonesia for more than 20 years, frequently commenting on current affairs and geopolitics. He graduated from the University of Calgary with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1984 and from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto in 1987, after which he worked as a commercial litigator with a large Toronto law firm before moving to Australia to take up an academic position with the University of Melbourne Law School and, after that a lectureship at Monash University Law school. In addition, he worked for a number of years as a senior litigation consultant to a large, national law firm in Australia and is widely published by refereed Academic journals and as a writer of reference works for the legal profession.

Following is the full text of the interview: ■ Bahrain hosted the so-called "Peace to Prosperity" conference to discuss what the US has described as the economic part of President Donald Trump's "deal of the century", a plan which aims to consign the Palestinian cause to oblivion. The Palestinian leadership boycotted the meeting in Manama on June 25 and 26, leading critics to question the credibility of the event. In your opinion, what goals are the US and Israel pursuing by holding the conference? Would they reach their goals?

A: The conference (was) quite clearly aimed at generating both public and regional support for Trump's so-called 'Deal of the Century' which is obviously not a deal at all, so much as a foreign intervention to impose a rebranded and expedited version of the long running Atlantic World program to complete the Zionist Project for Palestine which they started long before Israel gave birth to itself



at the expense of Palestinians in 1948.

Clearly, whatever else may transpire, any agreement reached cannot be called a deal since not only is there no Palestinian participation in this process, but the occupation has also long worked to ensure that no cohesive political organization which legitimately represents all Palestinians can emerge.

Frankly speaking, there is no way to characterize this effort by the Trump administration on behalf of the Occupation, except as an effort to bribe and, as necessary, extort Arab World nations into accepting the "final solution" being sold by the USA, namely, the coercive imposition of a complete capitulation on Palestinians, followed by granting a measure of personal autonomy to Palestinians still residing on that tiny part of their ancestral lands which, for the time being, the occupation is willing to leave to Palestinians as long as the occupation retains a high degree of control over all matters of Palestinian governance and security.

Needless to say, it is also quite apparent that, regarding the expected support from Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations which typically take direction from the Saudi royal family on matters of economy and foreign policy, the Trump administration, like those of his predecessors, quite obviously has a clear understanding that US backing for Saudi

Arabia's ongoing, belligerent war on Yemen and its wider efforts to isolate Iran, is dependent on Saudi Arabia and its regional client states embracing this "Deal of the Century."

■ Some analysts say that the Trump administration's focus on an economic plan, led by his son-in-law Jared Kushner, is a strategic mistake that could stymie the peace negotiations even before they begin. What is your assessment of the US approach to the conflict and the future of the plan? Is it practical at all?

A: The approach being taken is really quite absurd and most certainly indicative of a deep underlying "colonial" mindset on the part of all involved in its conception. Even if one were to ignore what we already know and keep an open mind towards this initiative, the reality is that there is no point in the players attending the Bahrain conference even discussing the prospects for reaching an agreement with Arab nations to coerce Palestinians into accepting colonial-style rule by foreign agents so long as the occupation itself still has no elected government empowered by its constituency to accept all related deals.

The fact that they are even there, speaks volumes about their lack of bona fides when it comes to supporting the Palestinian cause.

■ Last Friday, Israeli forces once again opened fire on Palestinians taking part in the

peaceful "Great March of Return" protests, along the separation fence between the besieged Gaza Strip and occupied territories, injuring at least 79 peaceful protesters. According to media reports, more than 270 people, including 52 children, have been killed since the demonstrations began in March 2018. Most of the dead and the thousands wounded were unarmed civilians against whom Israel was using excessive force. Why has the international community, particularly the Western mainstream media, made a muted response to the Tel Aviv regime's crimes against Palestinians so far?

A: Why indeed? The only coherent conclusion anyone with a functioning nervous system and even just a basic understanding of the related issues can reach, is that the occupation, at the highest levels of its command structure, has consciously taken a decision to deal with Palestinians in a manner which fits squarely within the long-accepted definitions of both war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The fact that the Atlantic World, under US leadership, has chosen to double down on its support for the occupation and turn a blind eye to these criminal and inhumane tactics can only be understood as their acceptance of the US/Israel position that they are, as nations, far too exceptional to be bound by any international law or previously agreed treaty obligations.

That tragic reality, in turn, stands as hard evidence that the Atlantic World is deep in crises and a downward spiral to its own unavoidable demise. After all, a nation's legal system - like its economy and currency - can only function when the people have confidence in it, and with most people in the Atlantic World having lost their confidence in government and the system, the only thing slowing the collapse which is already unfolding, is the Atlantic World's continuing ability to usurp no small part of other nations' wealth and thereby maintain what, by international standards, remains a very high, albeit rapidly declining standard of living for a majority of their people, while at once using coercive means to impose order on all others rather than rely on the increasingly non-existent civic mindedness and confidence of their citizenry.

U.S. anti-China hawks may yet scupper trade deal

By Xu Hailin

GLOBALTIMES—Right after the G20 summit in Japan, US Senator Marco Rubio made the headlines again by calling for legislation to continue the ban on Huawei, even after US President Donald Trump said he would lift some of the restrictions on US companies doing business with the Chinese tech giant.

Rubio is a salient representative of the US political extreme. Some US politicians appear to take advantage of the split in US society and are using their extreme political views to gain more voters as well as please different political groups. This actually reflects the increasingly prominent malfunction of US politics.

It is an important reason why China is concerned that the US-launched trade war against China will not end in the short term. We believe there are rational people who know China well at the US government's decision-making level. Even so, law-makers like Rubio have gone too far. They are not messing with China but rather wearing down the credibility of US politics. The US political system is becoming increasingly flawed. Many politicians deliberately act up to firmly oppose anything that would benefit China for the sake of being anti-China. That the political landscape is becoming extreme in the US is providing these politicians with the opportunity to play to their base if they show an open anti-China stance.

Rubio is one such politician. He paints himself as being hostile to China to draw attention. Despite the fact that the trade war and the Huawei ban are harming the interests of the US, Rubio insists on this excessively tough stance toward China because that could spark controversies which could end up favoring him.

This is what Rubio, an unsuccessful candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016, needs to fulfill his political ambitions. Such narrow-minded thinking has de facto escalated the US-launched trade war against China. Rubio doesn't understand China and probably barely knows China's history. But taking advantage of being anti-China, he can create hot debates and make headlines, and thus gain more assets for his political career.

Even though people who don't know much about the world's second-largest economy can be a senator in the US, it is a joke that someone like Rubio can pretend to be a China hand and comment on China's policies. This is one of the key reasons for the ratcheted-up tensions between China and the US.

The fundamental split in the US political system provides openings for hawkish politicians who have long been hostile toward China. The US is now in the throes of the 2020 presidential campaign, when candidates vie with each other to make outrageous remarks to appeal to their supporters.

This marked increase in radicals in US politics makes it much more difficult for the US government to function normally and for Republicans and Democrats to reach compromises, especially on major issues.

Even though there are signs of China-US trade frictions turning around, as the US political system will not fundamentally change in the short term, China must remain vigilant and prepare for a long-term trade war, in case the hawks gain the upper hand.

Managing Director of IWWCO:

Supply of Drinking Water to 4mn Citizens Depends on Completing Construction Operation of 2nd Water-Supply Project

Managing Director of Isfahan Water and Wastewater Company (IWWCO) Eng. Hashem Amini said that supply of drinking and potable water to four million Isfahani people strictly depends on the completion of construction operation of second phase of water-supply projects in this province.

Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company (IWWCO) is responsible for supplying water to 56 cities and 300 villages of this province which is home to over 4 million people, he said, adding, "for this reason, we are witnessing the considerable water pressure drop despite improvement of situation of water resources."

■ Reduced 6.9% Water Consumption Rate in Household and Non-Household Sector

Speaking on the occasion of a week entitled "Saving in Water Consumption", he expressed his special thanks to the sound cooperation and interaction of media with the provincial Water and Wastewater Company and added, "despite all shortfalls and bottlenecks, provincial Water and Wastewater Company has made its utmost efforts to offer the best possible service to the noble people of this province."

In this regard, unflinching cooperation and interaction of media cannot be ignored, he emphasized.

Water consumption rate in household and non-household sectors have been managed optimally in the current year, showing a considerable 6.9 percent decline as compared to the same period of last year, Eng. Amini added.

Fortunately, water condition is satisfactory and Zayandehroud River also has better condition in the current year, he added.

■ Water Pressure Drop in Isfahan Water Network Is Due to Capacity of Wastewater Treatment House

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amini said that the current water-supply system in this province does not have more capacity of water outlet, "we are witnessing the considerable water pressure drop."

As long as the second phase of water-supply system is not completed, this province will face water pressure drop, he added.

Of course, this water-supply system should have been completed by 2007 but this project has not yet been finished due to some reasons, he added.



Isfahan Regional Water Company is currently constructing wastewater treatment house and water-supply projects, he said, adding, "all efforts are underway by the provincial Water and Wastewater Company in order to terminate construction of this project in the shortest time possible."

Isfahan second water-supply system has a passive defense approach, he said, adding, "solving the problem of supplying drinking water for a 4-million people is of paramount importance in this province."

■ Storing 23-Million Cubic Meters of Water with Technical, Cultural and Legal Measures

He further noted that Isfahan Water and Wastewater Company has managed to stand at the first rank in the water and sewage industry of the country.

Total of these measures caused considerable water-consumption reduction of 6.9 percent as compared to the same period of last year, he said, adding, "last year, all provincial cities were divided in 23 divisions in order to get rid of tough water shortage problem."

■ Quality, Redline of Using Underground Waters

Elsewhere in his remarks, managing director of provincial Water and Wastewater Company pointed to one of the complaints of people in

the field of supplying potable and drinking water from well and/or digging well and added, "when citizens need potable water, we have to supply some requirements of people from water wells."

He emphasized, "the water that we use should have necessary criteria and quality, the issue of which should be approved by the provincial Health Center."

He denied any water rationing in this province and reiterated, "according to the scheduled program, water will not be rationed in this province, observing accurate management system and using water consumption pattern especially during summertime."

Turning to the issue of income-free water in urban water network systems, he said, "fortunately, giant steps were taken by the provincial Water and Wastewater Company in this regard in a way that the company has managed to minimize income-free water amount in the country optimally."

■ Returning 700 lit./second Water to Distribution Cycle over Past 10 Years

Several leakage problems have been upgraded across drinking water networks level, he said, adding, "accordingly, leakage operation has been upgraded on 85km water network. Also, we have obliged water connections and leakage operations to carry

out repair and maintenance services in this regard."

He pointed out that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked with Isfahan Province Building Engineering Council, based on which water should be recycled at homes."

Cooperation of steel industry i.e. Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company (EMSCO) with provincial Water and Wastewater Company caused nine cities of this province to benefit from quality urban sewage network system, he highlighted.

He also pointed to the cultural programs of this company and added, "we have established very close relationship with media. Every week, cultural programs are disseminated for raising public awareness for optimal use of water resources."

■ 90% of People in Isfahan Province Consume Water below Consumption Pattern

He pointed to the monitoring of highly-consumption water subscribers in the last year and added, "giant steps were taken in this regard in this period in such way that 66 percent of provincial people were consuming water between zero to 20 in 2008."

He then pointed to the projects of the company and added, "presently, supplying water to Baghbahadoran city is underway and it is

tried to operate this projects within the next one or two months."

Also, water-supply project to Golshahr and villages of this province were become operational in the presence of Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian."

Water supply project to the cities of Dehaghan and its surrounding villages is underway, he said, adding, "we hope that this water-supply project will be put into operation by the yearend."

■ Construction of Three Wastewater Treatment Plants in Isfahan Province

The managing director of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company revealed the construction operation of three wastewater treatment plants in this province and added, "presently, Khansar Wastewater Treatment Plant has become operational in this province."

Construction of Chadegan Wastewater Treatment Plant is underway with more than 60 percent physical progress, he continued.

This province has 41 rural water-supply complexes, 14 of which were put into operation within the framework of 217 villages, he added.

According to him, 130 billion tomans worth of credit has been funded through the credits of the National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI) at the official order of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei.



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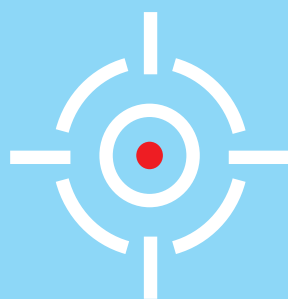
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قابل توجه شهروندان محترم تهرانی

چنانچه تمایل به اشتراک روزنامه تهران تایمز دارید، لطفا فرم اشتراک را تکمیل نموده و با واریز وجه مربوط به دوره اشتراک مورد نظر به حساب جاری **۶۹۷۳۰۸۶۳۲۸** بانک ملت شعبه هجرت (به نام موسسه تهران تایمز) قابل پرداخت در کلیه شعب بانک ملت، اصل یا کپی فیش بانکی را به همراه فرم اشتراک از طریق پست سفارشی به نشانی: خیابان استاد نجات الهی، کوچه بیمه، پلاک ۱۱ کدپستی **۱۵۹۹۸۱۴۷۱۳** ارسال و یا جهت تسریع در امور به دفتر امور مشترکین فکس نمائید. همچنین از طریق شماره شبای **۶۹۷۳۰۸۶۳۲۸** می توانید پرداختی خود را به صورت اینترنتی انجام داده و شماره پیگیری را همراه فرم مربوطه فکس نمائید. متقاضیان محترم سایر شهرستان ها به دفاتر سرپرستی و نمایندگی روزنامه تهران تایمز در مراکز استان ها و شهرستان ها مراجعه نمایند.

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Scientists perform world's smallest MRI on single atoms

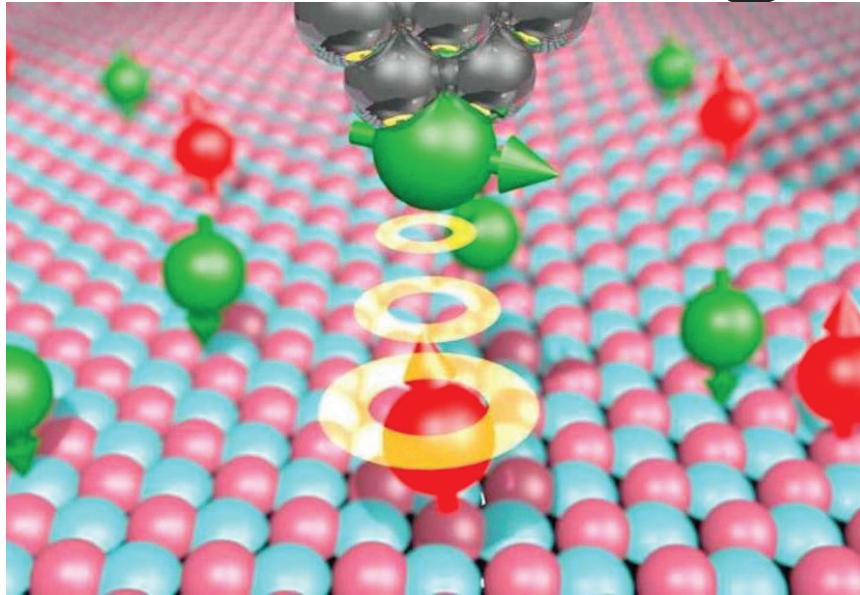
Scientists have successfully measured the spins of a single atom, executing the world's smallest MRI.

Magnetic resonance imaging measures the density of atomic spins, the electromagnetic properties of electrons and protons, inside the human body. Most MRI scans measure millions of spins. For the latest feat, detailed Monday in the journal *Nature Physics*, scientists detected the spins of individual atoms.

Researchers combined MRI technology with a scanning tunneling microscope to image a single atom. For the experiment, scientists used a tiny sample of iron and titanium.

Using the atomically sharp metal tip of the microscope, scientists successfully isolated a collection of atoms. Researchers were able to create a three-dimensional map of the atoms' magnetic fields.

Scientists attached another spin cluster to the microscope's tip and passed it over the atomic sample. Like magnets, the spins of the atoms and clusters attracted and repelled each other as the cluster passed from one side to the other. By imaging the magnetic interaction, scientists were able



to create an MRI of the individual atoms.

"It turns out that the magnetic interaction we measured depends on the properties of both spins, the one

on the tip and the one on the sample," Philip Willke, researcher at the Center for Quantum Nanoscience, QNS, at Ewha Womans University, said in a news release.

"For example, the signal that we see for iron atoms is vastly different from that for titanium atoms. This allows us to distinguish different kinds of atoms by their magnetic field signature, and makes our technique very powerful."

In followup experiments, Willke and his colleagues plan to create MRIs of more complex atomic structures, capturing the individual spins that make up molecules and unique magnetic materials.

"Many magnetic phenomena take place on the nanoscale, including the recent generation of magnetic storage devices," said QNS researcher Yujeong Bae. "We now plan to study a variety of systems using our microscopic MRI."

Discoveries made using the new microscopic MRI technology could inspire the creation of new nanomaterials and drugs.

"The ability to map spins and their magnetic fields with previously unimaginable precision allows us to gain deeper knowledge about the structure of matter and opens new fields of basic research," said Andreas Heinrich, director of QNS.

(Source: UPI)

Hubble captures ultraviolet portrait of Eta Carinae's fireworks

The Hubble Space Telescope has captured Eta Carinae's fireworks in red, white and blue, just in time for Independence Day.

Eta Carinae is a binary star system located 7,500 light-years away in the Carina constellation. One of its two stars, which orbit each other, is large, highly unstable and nearing the end of its life. The dynamic stellar duo occasionally produces violent outbursts.

The system's most famous outburst occurred in 1838. In the wake of the eruption, the stars gradually brightened. By 1844, Eta Carinae was the second brightest star in the night sky.

The duo's time on top was short-lived, but the system remains a favorite target for astronomers. The 19th century outburst is still visible in the form of the dumbbell-shaped clouds of gas and dust.

Over the last quarter-century, Hubble has used nearly its entire arsenal of instruments to image the star system and surrounding nebula.

The newest ultraviolet portrait revealed a new luminous magnesium structure hiding between the two dumbbells, filaments energized by the collisions between the waves of gas and dust ejected by the



star system over millions of years.

"We've discovered a large amount of warm gas that was ejected in the Great Eruption but hasn't yet collided with the other material surrounding Eta Carinae," Nathan Smith, an astronomer with the Steward Observatory at the University of Arizona and lead investigator of the Hubble program, said in a news release. "Most of the emission is located

where we expected to find an empty cavity. This extra material is fast, and it 'ups the ante' in terms of the total energy of an already powerful stellar blast."

By studying the movement of gas and dust in the nebula, evidence of previous eruptions, scientists hope to unravel the mystery of how the Great Eruption began. Each new ultraviolet image of the star system and surrounding nebula reveals new structural intricacies, details that might help astronomers better understand the dynamics at play inside Eta Carinae.

"We had used Hubble for decades to study Eta Carinae in visible and infrared light, and we thought we had a pretty full account of its ejected debris. But this new ultraviolet-light image looks astonishingly different, revealing gas we did not see in either visible-light or infrared images," Smith said. "We're excited by the prospect that this type of ultraviolet magnesium emission may also expose previously hidden gas in other types of objects that eject material, such as protostars or other dying stars; and only Hubble can take these kinds of pictures."

(Source: UPI)

Huge burst of mysterious cosmic radio waves traced back to exact location in galaxy billions



A huge one-off burst of mysterious cosmic radio waves has been precisely located to a galaxy 3.6 billion light years away.

The powerful shiver of waves came from a Milky Way-sized galaxy that scientists were able to pinpoint for the first time using three of the world's largest optical telescopes.

"This is the big breakthrough that the field has been waiting for since astronomers discovered fast radio bursts in 2007," said lead author Keith Bannister, from Australia's national science agency.

"If we were to stand on the Moon and look down at the Earth with this precision, we would be able to tell not only which city the burst came from, but which postcode and even which city block," he said.

The discovery was made by an Australian-led international team using a new radio telescope belonging to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), the Australian science agency.

Astronomers hope the breakthrough will move them closer to discovering the causes of fast radio bursts, which remain unknown, according to the study published in the journal *Science*.

Since 2007, just 85 cosmic radio wave bursts have been detected. Most are "one-offs" but a small amount are "repeaters" which recur in the same place.

Two years ago, astronomers found a "repeater" home galaxy but this is the first time they have exactly located a "one-off" ripple. Fast radio bursts last less than a millisecond which makes it incredibly hard

to pinpoint their origin.

The technology used in the discovery was the Australian Square Kilometer Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope.

Team member Dr Adam Deller from the Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne said: "The burst we localized and its host galaxy look nothing like the 'repeater' and its host. It comes from a massive galaxy that is forming relatively few stars.

"This suggests that fast radio bursts can be produced in a variety of environments, or that the seemingly one-off bursts detected so far by ASKAP are generated by a different mechanism to the repeater."

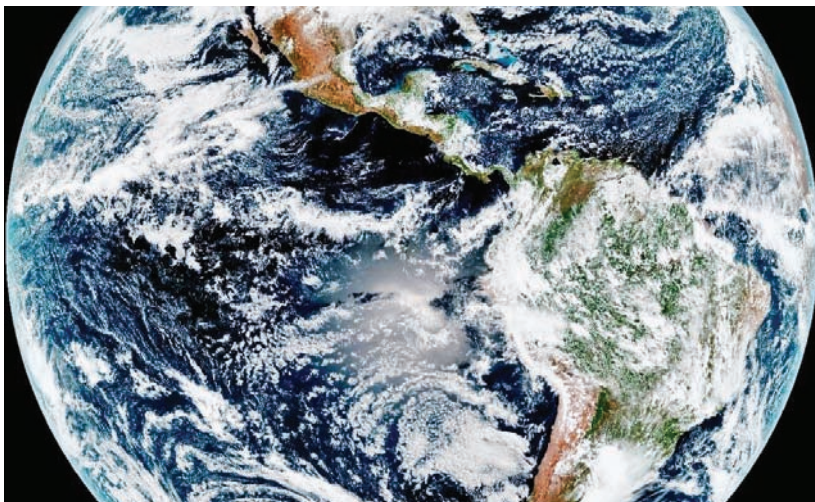
ASKAP is an array of multiple dish antennas and the burst had to travel a different distance to reach each antenna which means it arrived at slightly different times.

ASKAP was able to freeze and save the data less than a second after the burst (FRB 180924) arrived at the telescope from its home galaxy (DES J214425.257405400.81).

"From these tiny time differences – just a fraction of a billionth of a second – we identified the burst's home galaxy and even its exact starting point, 13,000 light-years out from the galaxy's center in the galactic suburbs," said Dr Deller.

To find out more about the home galaxy, the team imaged it with the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile and measured its distance with the Keck telescope in Hawaii and the Gemini South telescope in Chile. (Source: The Independent)

Continents on early Earth rose from the sea, then disappeared



According to a new model, Earth's first continents emerged much earlier than previously thought. After emerging from the planet's primordial oceans, the continents disappeared without a trace.

Researchers in Australia designed the model of rock radioactivity to better understand the history of Earth's crust. Simulations showed Earth's crust was much thicker, much earlier than previous models predicted.

"We use this model to understand the evolving processes from early Earth to the present, and suggest that the survival of the early crust was dependent on the amount of radioactivity in the rocks -- not random chance," Derrick Hasterok, geoscientist at the University of Adelaide, said in a news release. "If our model proves to be correct, it may require revision to many aspects of our understanding of the Earth's chemical and physical evolution, including the rate of growth of the continents and possibly even the onset of plate tectonics."

To build their model, scientists catalogued 75,800 geochemical signatures of igneous rocks. Each rock sample was tagged with an estimated date and level of radioactivity. Scientists designed their model to simulate the history of average radioactivity across Earth's continents over the last 4 billion years.

"All rocks contain natural radioactivity that produces heat and raises temperatures in the crust when it decays -- the more radioactive a rock the more heat it produces," said Hasterok. "Rocks typically associated with the continental crust have higher radioactivity than oceanic rocks. A

rock four billion years old would have about four times as much radioactivity when it was created compared with today."

In rocks older than two billion years, Hasterok and his colleagues were surprised to find low radioactivity levels. When they tweaked their model to account for greater heat output, which boosted radioactivity levels, they erased the disparity.

"We think there would have been more granite-like -- or continental-type -- rocks around but because of the higher radioactivity, and therefore higher heat, they either melted or were easily destroyed by tectonic movement," Hasterok said. "That's why these continental crusts don't show in the geological record."

The models showed continents emerged from Earth's oceans as the planet's crust thickened. But even before Earth's earliest continents emerged, the new simulations showed Earth's had begun to develop substantial but unstable continental crust much earlier than previously thought.

Scientists shared the predictions of their new radioactivity model in the journal *Precambrian Research*.

"What this new model allows us to do is help predict rock radioactivity in places where we have few or no samples, like Antarctica, where we cannot access samples, which could be very important in assessing the stability of ice sheets and the threshold of temperature changes needed for global warming to impact glacial melting," said Martin Hand, a professor of earth sciences at the University of Adelaide.

(Source: UPI)

Oumuamua: scientists perplexed by mysterious space rock as they try to rule out 'alien spaceship' idea

Scientists are perplexed by the origins of the mysterious space rock known as 'Oumuamua.

Researchers have looked to understand whether the object is natural in origin -- or if, as some have suggested, it was a disguised spacecraft exploring our solar system. The world's experts say they are sure that the rock is not an alien ship, but nothing more about the mysterious rock.

But they do admit to still being mystified about how the rock could have formed or made its strange way into our solar system.

'Oumuamua was first spotted in October 2017, and was quickly identified as the first interstellar object ever seen to have entered into our solar system. Researchers rushed to learn more about it before it disappeared from view, and it left in just a few weeks.

During that time, researchers gathered enough information about its composition and its path through the universe to suggest that there was something very strange about the object.

In fact, the data was so unusual that some suggested the rock could actually be an alien spacecraft, sent past us to explore our solar system.

Now research published in the journal *Nature Astronomy* claims a natural explanation is more likely. But scientists are still perplexed about what exactly that explanation could be.

"We have never seen anything like 'Oumuamua in our solar system. It's really a mystery still," said Matthew Knight, an associate research scientist in the University of Maryland's department of astronomy, who helped lead the research. "But our preference is to stick with analogues we know, unless or until we find something unique. The alien spacecraft hypothesis is a fun idea, but our analysis suggests there is a whole host of natural phenomena that could explain it."

The rock moved through the solar system in an entirely unexpected way, mysteriously accelerating as it flew through the universe. But there was no obvious explanation for why that was.

"The motion of 'Oumuamua didn't simply follow gravity along a parabolic orbit as we would expect from an asteroid," Dr Knight said. "But visually, it hasn't ever displayed any of the comet-like characteristics we'd expect. There is no discernable coma -- the cloud of ice, dust and gas that surrounds active comets -- nor a dust tail or gas jets."

To attempt to understand that strange behavior, 14 astronomers from across the world have been working in collaboration to try to understand the rock. The collaboration allowed researchers to generate the most detailed picture of 'Oumuamua ever -- but that did not give a definitive answer to where it had come from.

"We put together a strong team of experts in various different areas of work on 'Oumuamua. This cross-pollination led to the first comprehensive analysis and the best big-picture summary to date of what we know about the object," Dr Knight explained.

"We tend to assume that the physical processes we observe here, close to home, are universal. And we haven't yet seen anything like 'Oumuamua in our solar system. This thing is weird and admittedly hard to explain, but that doesn't exclude other natural phenomena that could explain it."

Rather than believe that the red, cigar-shaped rock is a spacecraft, the team proposes a number of alternative natural processes.

They have considered the possibility that the object was thrown out of a giant gas planet that was orbiting another star. Previous theories have suggested the Oort cloud -- a huge set of small objects floating at the edge of our solar system -- was formed in exactly this way, and some of those objects might have made their own journeys through the universe.

Astronomers hope to learn more as they look up to the skies to see more visitors just like 'Oumuamua. The Large Synoptic Survey Telescope will switch on in 2022, and should allow them to see yet more of the objects -- if they are out there.

"In the next 10 years, we expect to begin seeing more objects like 'Oumuamua. The LSST will be leaps and bounds beyond any other survey we have in terms of capability to find small interstellar visitors," Dr Knight said. "We may start seeing a new object every year. That's when we'll start to know whether 'Oumuamua is weird, or common. If we find 10-20 of these things and 'Oumuamua still looks unusual, we'll have to re-examine our explanations."

(Source: The Independent)

Detecting a single unit of sound

Just as light waves have a particle version -- the photon -- sound waves do too. Called a phonon, it's a way to quantify incredibly tiny packets of sound, or vibrations, and is particularly important for understanding certain properties of solids such as electric resistivity. And just like how the study of light brought us modern-day technologies such as fiber optics, the study of phonons may one day revolutionize applications such as quantum computing.

Last year, a group of researchers from the University of Colorado Boulder built a device that can detect phonons with unprecedented precision. Their device used an acoustic cavity, which is essentially a vibrating drumhead that contains the phonons. You can picture it as a bunch of kids bouncing on a trampoline, except the trampoline is smaller than the cross section of a human hair. The phonons trapped in the cavity interact with a connected superconducting circuit that gives out a readable electrical signal.

Since even the lightest whisper can produce a huge number of phonons, the researchers had to put their contraption inside a vacuum chamber to isolate it from all the outside phonons bouncing around. They also had to cool it down to just a few thousandths of a degree Celsius above absolute zero to minimize vibrations from heat. Even so, they were only able to count with a precision of around seven phonons.

Now, the same group of researchers has improved their previous design enough to detect individual phonons. By optimizing the transducer, a device used to convert phonon-induced strain in the acoustic cavity into electric signals, they were able to improve the link between the cavity and the superconducting circuit, which increased the sensitivity. They reported their latest invention in the journal *Physical Review X*.

Phonons are slower than photons, and this, together with the possibility of measuring phonons without destroying them, makes sound particles a unique contender for quantum computing applications. One caveat, however, is that the current device can hold on to the phonons only for a short time before they escape, which is less than ideal for certain applications, such as data storage. The researchers look to overcome this problem by adding acoustic reflectors to the cavity, which other scientists have previously built to successfully increase the lifetime of the phonons.

(Source: Inside Science)

Ancient shipwreck carrying secrets of Roman trade discovered off Cyprus

An ancient wooden ship complete with cargo has been discovered off the eastern coast of Cyprus near the resort town of Protaras. The ship belongs to the period after Rome annexed the island in 58 BC.

“This is the first undisturbed Roman shipwreck ever found in Cyprus, the study of which is expected to shed new light on the breadth and scale of seaborne trade between Cyprus the rest of the Roman provinces of the eastern Mediterranean,” the Cypriot antiquities department said.

Amphorae in and around the wreck identify the ship as a merchant vessel that transported cargo between Syria and the southern coast of modern Turkey, known in ancient times as Cicilia. Amphorae are narrow necked pottery jars used by Greeks and Romans for storage and shipment of oil and wine.

The Cypriot antiquities department announced the find by two volunteer divers working with the Maritime Archaeological Research Laboratory (MARElab) of the University of Cyprus. A MARElab team accompanied by students and volunteers is at the site to document the ship and protect it from looters while the department prepares to conduct a preliminary investigation.

The effort is the first underwater project to be fully financed by the Cyprus government, which praised the role of volunteers in the discovery and protection of the site. Their actions, said the authorities, send “an optimistic message regarding the protection of cultural heritage by Cyprus society”.

A mid-4th century Greek ship discovered in 2007 off Cyprus’s southern coast near the town of Mazotos is considered to be one of the region’s best-preserved wrecks. It has yielded information on ship construction and artefacts that provide insights into life during the height of classical Greek civilisation.

The 500 amphorae from this ship are believed to have come from the Greek island of Chios.

(Source: The Irish Times)

Croatia’s tourism industry grows steadily in first half of 2019

ZAGREB (Xinhua) — Croatia’s tourism sector recorded 6.5 million visits and 26 million overnight stays in the first half of the year, Tourism Minister Gari Cappelli said on Monday.

“We accomplished everything that we have projected. Apart from a small disbalance in May due to the bad weather, everything went by the plan,” Cappelli told reporters in Funtana near the city of Porec on the Istrian peninsula.

The latest tourist numbers show a slight improvement compared to the same time last year. According to the Croatian National Tourist Board, in the first half of 2018, there were 6.4 million visits and 25.4 million overnight stays.

The minister said the government expects two to three percent growth of physical tourism indicators in 2019.

The southeastern European country is one of the most popular tourist destinations on the Mediterranean. Its economy depends heavily on tourism industry, which has a nearly 20 percent share in the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). In 2018, a record 19.7 million tourists visited Croatia, 6.5 percent more than in 2017.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Medina of Tunis

A World Heritage, the Medina of Tunis is one of the first Arabo-Muslim towns of the Maghreb (698 CE). The property is located in a fertile plain region of north-eastern Tunisia, and a few kilometers from the sea.

Capital of several universally influential dynasties, it represents a human settlement that bears witness to the interaction between architecture, urbanism and the effects of socio-cultural and economic changes of earlier cultures.



Under the Almohads and the Hafsids, from the 12th to the 16th century, Tunis was considered one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the Arab world. Numerous testimonies from this and earlier periods exist today. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, new powers endowed the city with numerous palaces and residences, great mosques, zaouias and madrasas.

The inscribed property covers an area of approximately 280 ha and comprises all the features of an Arabo-Muslim city. It is composed of the central medina (8th century) and suburbs to the North and South (13th century).

There are some 700 historic monuments, distributed in 7 areas, among which the most remarkable are the Zitouna Mosque, the Kasbah Mosque, the Youssef Dey Mosque, Bab Jedid Gate, Bab Bhar Gate, the Souq el-Attarine, the Dar el-Bey, Souqs ech-Chaouachia, the Tourbet (family cemetery) el Bey, noble houses such as Dar Hussein, Dar Ben Abdallah, Dar Lasram, the Medrasa Es- Slimanya and El-Mouradia, the El Attarine military barracks and the Zaouia of Sidi Mehrez.

With its souqs, its urban fabric, its residential quarters, monuments and gates, this ensemble constitutes a prototype among the best conserved in the Islamic world.

(Source: UNESCO)

UNESCO is to assess Iran’s Hyrcanian Forest for World Heritage

HERITAGE DESK **TEHRAN** — On June 30, the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee kicked off in Baku, Azerbaijan, to assess 36 nominees, including Iran’s Hyrcanian Forest, for possible inscription on the World Heritage list.

Representatives of about 180 countries are attending the event, which will be running through July 10. And of the nominees 28 belong to the cultural sites, six are natural and two are mixed [nature and cultural] properties, Mehr reported.

The attendees range from high-level officials from UNESCO member states, including prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, culture, environment, and tourism ministers, to heads of international organizations, UNESCO advisory bodies, and permanent representatives to about 70 UNESCO countries and specialists in architecture, heritage and environment.

Hyrcanian Forest (also known as Caspian Forest), extends from the south of Azerbaijan to about 900 km to the east to the Iranian northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan. This forest forms the outermost boundary of the west-



Eurasian nemoral deciduous forests to alpine thorn cushion corridors and forest-

free dry vegetation of the Iranian highlands and Central Asia.

Tirgan, a feast in honor of rain

Iranian Zoroastrians. The celebration is widely attested by historians such as Abu Saeid Gardezi, Biruni and Al-Masudi, as well as European travelers to Iran during the Safavid era, Iran Review reported.

This event is celebrated on the 13th day of the month of Tir, (the 4th month of the Persian calendar) which corresponds to the 2nd or 3rd July in the Gregorian calendar.

The Tirgan festivity refers to the archangel, ‘Tir’ (meaning arrow) or ‘Tishtar’ (lightening), referring to thunder storms that bring much needed rain that boost harvest and avert drought.

Ancient legend of the Tir (arrow) refers to ‘Arash of the swift arrow’ or ‘Arash the archer’ (Arash-e Kamangir).

According to the Zoroastrian calendar, each thirty days of the month carries a name. The thirteenth day of the month of Tir on the Persian calendar (June 22 - July 22) is named after the respective month, Tir.

Legend has it that Arash was the best archer in the Persian army. He was selected to settle a land dispute between Persia and Turan (present day Central Asia).

When the kings of the two lands - Manouchehr and

Afrasiyab - decided to settle their dispute and to set a permanent boundary between Persia and Turan, they arrived at a mutual understanding that Arash should climb to the tall Mount Damavand’s peak, and from there shoot an arrow toward the east. Wherever his arrow landed, they agreed, would determine the boundary between the two kingdoms.

Arash shot his arrow (Tir) on the 13th day of the Persian month of Tir, which fell on the banks of the Jeyhun (the Oxus) River. Thus, the borders of the two countries were marked.

Legend has it that as soon as the border dispute was settled, rain began pouring down on both lands, which had been suffering from an eight-year drought.

Thus this day, the 13th of Tir (July 4th) is celebrated as the Festival of Rain.

It is customary for Zoroastrians to tie rainbow-colored ribbons around their wrists for ten consecutive days and toss the ribbons into a stream on the day of the festival.

The Festival of Rain is celebrated by people dancing, singing, reciting poetry and serving delicacies such as spinach soup and ‘sholeh zard’ (saffron flavored rice pudding).

Ancient fort in southern Tehran to turn into outdoor museum

TOURISM DESK **TEHRAN** — The ruined Gabri fort, which is said to date from Sassanid era, will be turned into an outdoor museum, an official with the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization said on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

Gabri fortress is one of the various castles and fortresses that can be found near gates of old city of Rey, now in southeast Tehran. Gabri stands in Varamin plain of Rey and others are located in Kasni, Deh Khiz, Tappeh Begam, Moqim Abad.

“The fortress, measuring about 3,000 square meters in area, was built in Sassanid era (224–651) and, at the present time, the towers of this castle have been



destroyed for centuries by erosion, and only lengthy and tall clay ramparts have been left,” the report said.

The history of settlement in Rey dates from the 3rd millennium BC. It is featured in the Avesta (the original document of

Zoroastrianism, an Iranian religion) as a sacred place, and it is also mentioned in the book of Tobit, of the biblical Apocrypha, and by classical authors.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire (3rd century BC–3rd century CE). It was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivaled in western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad. Islamic writers described it as a city of extraordinary beauty, built largely of fired brick and brilliantly ornamented with blue faience (glazed earthenware). It continued to be

an important city and was briefly a capital under the rule of the Seljuqs, but in the 12th century it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects. In 1220 the city was almost entirely destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

Rey, however, retains enough history to give it a different sensibility, its key sight is the elaborately decorated Shah Abdol Azim Shrine. Beside the shrine complex is a lively bazaar, while further afield are a couple of minor historical attractions.

Archaeologists restart excavations at ancient Christian pilgrimage site in northern Turkey

Excavation works at the ancient city of Hadrianopolis have been restarted to unearth rare mosaics and Christian pilgrimage site in Turkey’s northern Karabuk province, with the aim to protect and preserve the artifacts and open the site for tourism.

Known as the “Zeugma of the Black Sea” for unique mosaics unearthed at the site, Hadrianopolis in Karabuk’s Eskipazar district was an important site of pilgrimage for early Christians until the city lost its importance in 8th century CE.

It was the birthplace of Saint Alypius the Stylite, one of the most important personalities of the ancient ages.

Believed to have lived between 6th and 7th centuries CE, Saint Alypius the Stylite is one of the pillar-saints of Christian faith, who climbed on top of pillars and spend the rest of their lives with preaching, fasting and praying.



Led by Professor Ersin Celikbas from Karabuk University’s Archaeology Department, the excavation works are carried out with a team of 30 students, Anadolu Agency reported.

Karabuk Governor Fuat Gurel told reporters that they

aim to protect the artifacts found during the excavations.

Gurel noted that this year’s excavations focus on an area referred to as “Church C,” and the works are carried out in portions as the site is spread over a large area.

A total of 14 public and other types of structures were discovered dispersed throughout the historical site during excavations.

These include two public baths, two church doors, rock graves, a theater, and other monumental structures of different types.

The floors of the churches are garnished with mosaics. These mosaics show figures of horses, elephants, deer and gryphons, because of this the ancient city is compared to Zeugma in southeastern Turkey, which is famous for its mosaics.

First excavations at the site were launched in 2003

(Source: Daily Sabah)

These are the most on-time airlines in the United States

When you book a flight, you probably consider things like which airline offers the best fares, the largest amount of legroom, and the biggest seats in economy. But above all else, whether or not an airline can get you to your destination on time probably matters the most to you.

OAG, a leading provider of air travel data, recently released its latest biannual list of On-Time Performance Star Ratings, and of the 13 airlines to receive five stars, only one U.S. carrier—Hawaiian Airlines—earned this top rating. Trailing behind Hawaiian, Delta, Alaska, and Spirit all earned four-star ratings; all other U.S. airlines ranked three stars or fewer.

The national airline of Indonesia, Garuda Indonesia, took the top spot overall with its flights arriving on time 91.6 percent of

the time, while Fuji Dream Airlines and Panama’s Copa Airlines came in second and third, respectively. Even though Qatar Airways was recently named the world’s best airline of 2019 by Skytrax, it only earned four stars in the rankings.

Using data from June 2018 through May 2019, OAG ranked 125 airlines with a minimum of 600 operations per month based on their on-time arrivals. According to its parameters, on-time arrivals were defined as ones that take place less than 15 minutes after the scheduled arrival time. The airlines performing in the top 10 percent received five stars. The performers in the bottom 10 percent received one star. The OAG gives airlines star ratings twice a year based on the previous 12 months of performance data.



Here’s how each of the 13 U.S.-based carriers scored in the most recent report:

Hawaiian Airlines: (87.8%) 5 Stars
Delta Airlines: (83.4%) 4 Stars
Alaska Airlines: (80.7%) 4 Stars
Spirit Airlines: (80.4%) 4 Stars
Cape Air: (79.9%) 3 Stars

Southwest Airlines: (78.3%) 3 Stars
Allegiant Air: (78.0%) 3 Stars
United Airlines: (76.9%) 3 Stars
American Airlines: (76.9%) 3 Stars
JetBlue Airways: (73.5%) 3 Stars
Frontier Airlines: (69.4%) 2 Stars
Silver Airways: (68.5%) 2 Stars
Sun Country Airlines: (68.1%) 2 Stars
Cape Air—the Massachusetts-based airline that flies between Boston and Cape Cod, as well as regional flights in the Midwest, Caribbean, and Montana—had the greatest improvement in on-time performance by any U.S. carrier, jumping from the 11th spot in 2018 to fifth this year. JetBlue, which came in last for the U.S. airlines last year, jumped three spots in the rankings and earned itself a three-star rating.

(Source: MSN)

Iran facing prevalence of premature death, official warns

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Iran is facing the prevalence of premature death, deputy health minister Reza Malekzadeh has said.

Some 0.5 percent of premature deaths happen before the age of 70 and 2 percent before the age of 50, he lamented.

He made the remarks during a meeting held under the title of Prospective Epidemiological Research Studies in Iran (known by its abbreviation PERSIAN) Birth Cohort at the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences on Monday.

About 3800 premature deaths reported during the last year in Iran, which is caused by the noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), Mehr quoted Malekzadeh as saying.

"A total of 85,000 premature deaths for people under 50 years were registered in Iran over the past year, which is a catastrophe."

"Although noncommunicable diseases is the main reason for death of people, about 70 percent of these diseases can be prevented," he added.

He also pointed to infant mortality in Iran saying that it can be decreased by safe childbirth.

PERSIAN is a nationwide cohort study launched in the year 2014 in an attempt to



A total of 85,000 premature deaths for people under 50 years were registered in Iran over the past year

encourage research in the fields of medicine, epidemiology, health, and nutrition.

PERSIAN has empowered medical schools around the country with the necessary resources to take part in the study, in order to identify the risk factors related to the most prevalent chronic diseases in Iran, with the ultimate goal to reform the health system and enhance the health of Iranians, while contributing to the world's medical knowledge.

■ Premature death worldwide

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the evidence shows that 15 million of all deaths attributed to NCDs occur between the ages of 30 and 69 years. Of these "premature" deaths, over 85% are estimated to occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Children, adults and the elderly are all vulnerable to the risk factors contributing to NCDs, whether from unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and exposure to tobacco smoke or the harmful use of alcohol.

These diseases are driven by forces that include rapid unplanned urbanization, globalization of unhealthy lifestyles and population ageing. NCDs threaten progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a target of reducing premature deaths from NCDs by one-third by 2030.

Iranian medicines fill the need to foreign products

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — The homegrown medicine can meet the shortage of foreign products, said the acting director of the Iranian Food and Drug Administration (IFDA).

Now, the Iranian version of many foreign medicines are produced in the country, Mehr news agency quoted Mohammadreza Shanesaz as saying on Monday.

"Now we are only short of 20 medicines while last year it was a three-digit number," said Shanesaz.

"Normally, when it is announced that a medicine is unavailable in the market, it takes patients three to four months to believe that the shortage has been filled and they can now easily find their required medicines in the market," he added.

"In using our foreign currency reserves, our priority is on medicines that have no similar Iran-made version."

"The main problem, however, is that the foreign currency allocated to importing medicine is the same as what is allocated to other consumer products, but there should be a difference," said Shanesaz.

"If a medicine has both foreign and Iranian versions, we advise doctors to prescribe the Iranian ones, so that the patients have no worries about purchas-



ing the prescribed medicines."

"We assure Iranian consumers that the homegrown medicines are produced under close supervision and with the highest standards. In addition, the distribution of medicines is also carefully monitored," he added.

In June, Shanesaz had announced that Iranian medicines were exported to 30 countries.

"Currently, 120 factories in the country produce medicine and 70 factories produce raw pharmaceutical materials. There are also 56 distributing companies and 12,000 pharmacies all around the country," he said.

In February, the then IFDA director Mehdi Pirsalehi said that 120 homegrown medicines came onto Iran's market over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2018- March 2019), despite U.S. sanctions against the country.

Researches design virtual reality system for cognitive neuroscience

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Iranian researchers designed a virtual reality system to help the studies in Cognitive neuroscience, announced the Cognitive Sciences and Technologies Council at Vice Presidency for Science and Technology on Sunday.

The research was carried out in Tehran University, supervised by Mohammad-Reza Abolghasemi-Dehaqani, assistant professor in the faculty of computer and electrical engineering.

Cognitive neuroscience is the scientific field that is concerned with the study of the biological processes and aspects that underlie cognition, with a specific focus on the neural connections in the brain which are involved in mental processes. It addresses the questions of how cognitive activities are affected or controlled by neural circuits in the brain.

According to Abolghasemi-Dehaqani, the system can help researchers to record neurocognitive responses with great precision because it can thoroughly record and control all the small details of cognitive neuroscience tests; it also offers more methods for cellular recording.

"All standard mazes used in cognitive researches are simulated in this system, so the system can produce desired maps with



showing a variety of signs, it can also generate auditory stimuli and stimulate different organs both mechanically and electrically in a controlled time span," said Abolghasemi-Dehaqani.

"One of the challenges in cognitive neuroscience is how to simultaneously record the activities of nervous cells and run cognitive tests. One way to overcome this challenge is to simulate the real environment of tested animals by using virtual reality. By using this method, we can apply the most up to date methods of cellular recording and concurrently use cognitive stimuli," he added.

According to Abolghasemi-Dehaqani, using virtual reality environment is a new growing trend in neurocognitive research, so this new system offers a cheap and high-quality environment for Iranian researches to do their studies.

Rural, nomadic women get free breast cancer screening, prevention services

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Rural and nomadic women in the country can enjoy free of charge breast cancer screening tests and prevention services for one year, Mehr reported on Monday.

According to an agreement signed between the vice presidency for women's and family affairs and the health ministry, breast cancer screening tests and prevention services are covered by Iran's Universal Public Health Insurance scheme (Salamat Health Insurance).

The head of cancer department at the health ministry, Ali Motlaq, has said 40 to 50 percent of cancers in the country are preventable.

Breast, colorectal cancer and cervical cancers, which include 40 percent of cancers among women, can be prevented, he explained.

According to the health ministry's data released in October 2018, breast cancer is the most common cancer among Iranian women and about 14 thousand cases are

added to the number of patients with breast cancer in the country annually.

The survival rate of women with breast cancer, five year after the diagnosis, in developed countries is 90 percent and in Iran is 70 percent. That means out of every 10 people with breast cancer 9 people in developed countries and seven people are still alive after 5 years.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), so far the only breast cancer screening method that has proved to be effective is mammography screening. Mammography screening is very costly and is cost-effective and feasible in countries with good health infrastructure that can afford a long-term organized population-based screening programs.

Low-cost screening approaches, such as clinical breast examination, could be implemented in limited resource settings when the necessary evidence from ongoing studies becomes available.



Many low- and middle-income countries that face the double burden of cervical and breast cancer need to implement combined cost-effective and affordable interventions to tackle these highly preventable diseases.

Air pollution 'may affect number of eggs ovaries can produce'

Results suggest environmental factors could play a role in female reproductive health

Women living amid the worst air pollution are up to three times more likely to have hormone levels signifying severely low ovarian reserves. Photograph: Andy Wong/AP

Air pollution has been linked to a drop in activity of a woman's ovaries, researchers have revealed.

Experts say the findings suggest the female reproductive system is affected by environmental factors, although the study does not look specifically at the impact of air pollution on fertility.

However, they added that if such an effect were permanent, it might mean that women might have a shorter period of their life in which to reproduce and an earlier menopause.

"Environmental aspects of our lives matter so we should take care about indoor environments as well as external," said the study's lead researcher, Antonio La Marca, of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, in Italy.

The findings, presented at the annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology, are based on a study of levels of a hormone called AMH. This is released by cells in the ovaries and gives an indication of a woman's ovarian reserve — the number of viable eggs the ovaries can produce. This level differs between women and is affected by a number of factors, including



genetics, age and smoking. Its link to fertility is debatable: a low ovarian reserve does not necessarily mean natural conception will be difficult.

However, La Marca said previous studies had suggested there could be a link between higher air pollution and reduced fertility in women, and animal models have inferred air pollution could affect levels of AMH.

To explore the issue further, La Marca and colleagues looked at AMH levels in about 1,300 women, the samples being collected in Modena between early 2007 and autumn 2017. From the participants' home addresses, the team

estimated daily levels of small particulates known as PM2.5s and PM10s, as well as levels of nitrogen dioxide.

For women over the age of 25, levels of AMH in the blood fell with age. After taking age into account, though, the team found AMH levels were lower among women who lived in areas with higher levels of air pollutants.

More specifically, when the team split the air pollution levels into four bands, they found women living amid the worst pollution were two to three times more likely than those in the other bands to have AMH levels below 1ng/ml — a level the team say signifies a severely low ovarian reserve. La Marca said previous research had shown only about 10% of healthy women under the age of 30 had such low levels of AMH.

La Marca said while the link between AMH levels and the chances of becoming pregnant naturally in the short term remained unclear, the results suggested environmental factors could play a role in female reproductive health.

"Having a high AMH is in some way a reproductive advantage because women with a higher AMH are going to have a longer reproductive lifespan," he said, adding it was also significant to those undergoing IVF. "If you have a high AMH you will have a higher number of eggs after ovulatory stimulation which turn into a higher number of embryos," he said.

(Source: the guardian)

Obesity: How diet changes the brain and promotes overeating

Scientists have implicated specific neurons in the lateral hypothalamic area, a region involved in survival mechanisms such as food intake, in signaling to the brain when to stop eating. This mechanism is impaired in obese mice.

How does obesity trick the brain into sending a signal that says to keep on eating?



Obesity is a worldwide problem, with the World Health Organization (WHO) estimating that 650 million people across the globe were obese in 2016.

Many experts point the finger at overeating and a sedentary lifestyle as the root causes of the obesity epidemic.

However, any action that we take has consequences at the molecular level, and experts know little detail about how our brains behave as the readings on the scales slowly go up.

Scientists from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, along with collaborators in the United States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, sought to unravel the molecular pathways at play in the brains of mice with obesity.

Garrett Stuber, a professor of neurobiology who has now moved to the Center for the Neurobiology of Addiction, Pain, and Emotion at the University of Washington in Seattle, is the senior author of the team's results, which feature in the journal Science.

■ Identifying the 'brake on feeding'

Stuber and his collaborators study a specific area of the brain called the lateral hypothalamic area (LHA).

"The LHA has long been known to play [a] role in promoting feeding behavior, but the exact cell types that contribute to feeding within this brain structure are not well-defined," explained Stuber about his research to Medical News Today.

Analyzing gene expression in individual cells in the LHA in obese mice and comparing it to that in normal mice, the team found prominent changes in vesicular glutamate transporter type-2 (Vglut2)—expressing neurons. These cells use glutamate as their fast-acting neurotransmitter.

However, changes in gene expression do not necessarily equate to changes in function.

Stuber dug deeper and used a combination of techniques to visualize individual LHAVglut2 neurons when the team gave mice sucrose, a common sugar comprising glucose and fructose.

The researchers found that sucrose consumption resulted in the cells' activation. However, the response was nuanced. Mice that were not very hungry showed strong activation of their LHAVglut2 neurons, whereas those that had fasted for 24 hours had an attenuated response.

Stuber and his colleagues, therefore, suggest that LHAVglut2 neurons play a role in the suppression of feeding by telling our brain when to stop eating. They call this the "brake on feeding."

"We hypothesize that the excitatory LHAVglut2 signal represents the activation of a brake on feeding to suppress further food intake," they write.

Next, the team investigated how obesity affects the activity of these cells in mice that ate a high fat diet for 12 weeks to induce obesity.

"Whereas LHAVglut2 neurons from control mice maintained their responsiveness to sucrose consumption, LHAVglut2 neurons from [the high fat diet] mice became progressively less responsive to sucrose consumption and less active at rest," the team writes in the study paper.

In other words, the neurons did not send such a strong "stop eating" signal to the brain when the mice consumed sugar or when the mice were resting. Instead, the animals overate and developed obesity.

■ Obesity 'impairs break on food intake'

When MNT asked whether he was surprised to see such a stunted response by the cells, Stuber explained, "Yes, the imaging results, which show that LHA glutamate cells are downregulated by high fat diet exposure (our experimental model of obesity) was surprising to us."

"When these neurons are activated, mice halt sucrose licking and avoid locations paired with LHAVglut2 stimulation. Thus, activation of LHAVglut2 neurons may serve as a brake on feeding," comments Stephanie Borgland, a professor at the Hotchkiss Brain Institute at the University of Calgary in Canada, in an accompanying Perspective article in Science.

"Given that activation of these neurons also leads to escape and avoidance behaviors, these neurons may be involved in the switch from foraging to escaping to promote survival, which is consistent with other homeostatic functions of the hypothalamus," said Stephanie Borgland.

"While our work has focused on the LHA, it is critical to note that many other interconnected brain regions and cell types are also likely modulated by obesity," Stuber told MNT. "This includes cell types in the arcuate and periventricular hypothalamus, as well as other brain regions."

Indeed, earlier this year, MNT reported that when scientists from The Rockefeller University in New York City, NY, stimulated dopamine 2 receptor neurons (hD2R) in the hippocampus of mice, the animals ate less. The researchers suggested that this neuronal circuit prevents mice from overeating.

Meanwhile, Stuber and his colleagues are continuing their investigations into the LHA, where they plan to look at other neuronal subtypes.

As for how applicable Stuber's findings are to humans, he explained, "We think that our [...] data will reveal novel genetic and therapeutic targets that could, someday, be translatable to humans."

(Source: medical news today)

10,000 flood-hit classrooms to be retrofitted within 3 months

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some 10,000 classrooms which have been destroyed by flood will be fully renovated and prepared by the beginning of school year (September 23), director of schools' renovation, development and equipment organization has announced.



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.

Flood has devastated 1,400 schools across the country, 200 of which have been beyond repair and needed reconstruction, Mehr news agency quoted Mehroollah Rakhshanimehr as saying on Monday. "We scheduled to complete some 12,000 flood-affected classrooms, 10,000 of which will be retrofitted and provided for the student by the next three months."

The rest will be also constructed 4 months later than the first group is exploited, he added. All the schools in province of Khuzestan have been affected by flooding, while in northern Golestan province 24 schools have been fully destroyed, he lamented. "We are making efforts to rebuild 10 schools in Golestan province over the aforementioned period, adding that however, 14 others will be prepared by the next school year (September 23, 2020)." A total budget of 220 billion rials (about \$5.2 million) have been earmarked to renovate Golestan province schools by the government, while benefactors contributed some 500 billion rials (about \$12 million) in this regard, he concluded.

Over 50 bike sharing stations established in Tehran

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — So far, some 50 stations for bike-sharing scheme through a system based on Internet of Things (IoT), have been set up in the capital, Fars reported on Tuesday.

Proposed by an Iranian startup, the scheme is planned with initiatives to mitigate air pollution along with encouraging people to use green vehicles rather than emitting private cars.

The scheme was first introduced in mid-August 2018 while first launched officially after 3 months in two districts of 2 and 6 of the capital.

The residents can start cycling through downloading Bdood app on their smartphones and after paying some 1.59 million rials (about \$38) as a deposit, which can be refunded at any time they decide.

Whenever arrived at the destination, the citizens can drop off the bikes at the nearest parking lots.

Yaqoub Azadehdel, director for development of clean transport systems said that in the capital hosts 50 bike-sharing stations in different parts of it thanks to the private sector efforts.

He also said that promoting the culture of using bikes rather than private vehicles is of great importance that can bring back the clean air and butterflies to the city.

He further expressed appreciation to the mayor of Tehran Pirouz Hanachi for his joining the 'car-free Tuesdays' campaign and choosing bike for his trips to work, adding that all the officials should join hands to make it viral among citizens.

'Car-free Tuesdays' campaign aiming to decrease the number of private cars in the cities hence mitigate air pollution, kicked off in 2016 by Mohammad Bakhtiari, majored in architecture and a member of a local NGO with 1,000 members known as "the guardians of the environment of Arak city".

WORDS IN THE NEWS

HIV genetic risk

(November 16, 2000)
Scientists have found that people with a tiny genetic mutation are twice as likely to catch HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, but will take much longer to develop the full blown disease. The mutation is more common in people of West African descent than those of European origin. Toby Murcott of the BBC's science staff reported.

Over the last **decade** it has become **increasingly** apparent that a person's **genetic makeup** has a strong influence on the likelihood of them catching HIV. For example, some women in Kenya have been identified as genetically **resistant to** infection with the virus. This finding has led to the development of an experimental vaccine against HIV. This new research has identified a single mutation in one gene that **doubles a person's chances** of becoming infected with HIV, but at the same time greatly reduces the rate at which the infected person goes on to develop **full blown** AIDS. As with Kenyan HIV-resistant women, this discovery could lead to a way of **tackling** AIDS.

The researchers believe that a drug based on this gene might **slow the progress of the disease**. It might also help to explain some of the differences in the **pattern** of AIDS across the world. The researchers found that this mutation was **present** in about half the people of West African origin that they tested, whereas just one fifth of people of **European descent** tested had the mutated gene.

■ **Words**
decade: a period of ten years
increasingly: more and more
genetic makeup: the way a person's genes are structured and arranged
resistant to: not harmed by
doubles a person's chances: makes it twice as likely (for a person to get infected with HIV)
full blown: if something is full blown, it shows all the characteristics typical of that thing
tackling: if you tackle something, you deal with it
slow the progress of the disease: make the disease develop less quickly
pattern: if something happens repeatedly or regularly, you call it a pattern
was present: was there, was found. If you say something is present, you describe something that exists now
of European descent: when you talk about someone's descent, you mean their ethnic background, their family origin

‘Iran’s gasoline; high consumption, low price’



The rate of fuel consumption in the country is 10 times above some countries around the world, which shows that our policymakers need to move towards smart and efficient policies and insist on developing appropriate transportation system, he explained.

Vehicle inspection or implementation

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Yousof Hojjat, director for the transportation and traffic company affiliated to the Municipality of Tehran has warned of high consumption of gasoline in the country criticizing it for being cheap.

"Some 100 million liters of gasoline is consumed in the country per day," he stated, Fars news agency reported on Tuesday.

He went on to say that three important factors in choosing transportation vehicles for the residents are time, price, and convenience, however, cars are the easiest and cheapest transport vehicle due to the low cost of fuel in the country in addition to less physical movement.

Comparing bikes with cars, he lamented that since the price of a liter of gasoline is one-third a bottle of water, and cars are less time consuming and more convenient, most people would like to use it.

"When we make people aware of social factors such as air pollution, traffic congestion and environmental damages, sense of using bicycles for transport will increase among them," he added.

Why today’s human feels the need to travel to Mars

By Seyed Amir Miri

TEHRAN — Every day people all over the world are complaining about their daily life. Nobody seems to be unhappy. The unemployment crisis and recession are becoming ordinary issues. Worst of all, global politicians describe the political and economic situations of the world as unfavorable or fragile almost every day.

The crisis of confidence has become so pervasive that even the oldest unions are being dissolved. A final instance of which is Britain's separation from the European Union.

The current era is undoubtedly one of the rare periods of human life on the planet Earth in which we humans are faced with complicated and unsolvable problems. We need solidarity and alliances to solve them. Today's problems have polarized communities in a way that struggle and war seem to be the easiest solutions. At this time, people's mutual fear is thought of as the major factor in opportunistic politicians' political survival, a fact which has led to the increasing growth of right-wing parties and extremists.

The advent of radical Islam and increased radicalism among other religions have gone so far that the peaceful religion of Buddhism has become violent. However, the phenomenon of violence has not emerged in the recent years. The cycle of violence has been continuing for centuries. By the end of the 20th century, mankind was so fortunate to accomplish many achievements which seemed to be far-fetched in the past. With the development of technology, many boundaries have disappeared. Political, ideological and even cultural boundaries have largely vanished, and many humans have become aware of their basic rights. Almost all the ideologies, which could mobilize people for any kind of battle, murder or massacre in the recent centuries, are now gone, a fact which resulted in a relative stability and prevented another great war during the last 70 years. However, many people see this peace as so fragile. For instance, some believe that fewer people have been killed for the last 50 years due to the decreased number of wars and improvement in the healthcare system. The human lifetime has also increased, a fact which has jeopardized the natural resources. Another great danger which threatens the



world today is the disappearance of the spirituality of life among people. The reason can be the bolder role of materialism in people's daily lives and the absence of beliefs and ideologies which have guided human through life for years.

Nowadays, even capitalism, consisting of a simple and one-dimensional worldview which is the foundation of today's modern life, seems to be inefficient. It has not been able to meet the modern man's material needs, let alone the spiritual ones. Class differences, poverty, continuous unemployment crises and recession have resulted in people's distrust in this materialistic ideology. Now there are two ways for the human survival without a large-scale bloodshed and massacre. Like George Orwell's 1984, the world should be divided into three parts which should be ruled with dictators. Small wars can be provoked to control population, and rebellious people can be inhibited by involving them in war. Another solution is to define a new ideal for the people around the world and encourage global communities to achieve this common goal.

Nowadays many people believe that the terrorist groups, such as ISIS, have managed to draw attention among many bewildered European young people through non-materialistic ideologies and by setting meta-material goals and inviting to the paradise. Such groups do not rely on material issues anymore. Their secret to success is to set meta-material goals. Therefore, the era of absolute materialism should be considered over in human societies. Boundaries should be broken,

and integrity should be established in the new world based on meta-materials topics.

If benevolent leaders and politicians delay determining a new ideal for mankind, a Hitler may direct people towards a massive war by setting evil ideals and goals and drag them to shambles with grudge-driven ideologies like what terrorist groups are doing today. What can this high goal be nowadays? The only way of getting rid of countless problems may be journey into space. Determining an important goal, such as leaving the earth, can unite humans. With the development of technology, man is now able to travel to other planets; however, it takes the determination of all the people and countries of the world due to high expenditures and many problems.

If the ideals of living in other planets are set for all the peoples of the earth, and this project is prioritized by global organizations like the UN, then unimportant matters such as religion, race and individual and social attributes become irrelevant then. Therefore, it will become easy to accept democracy and admit flaws in order to achieve higher goals. The false fear of fellow human beings will gradually diminish.

Nobody will be afraid of black or white people, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus anymore. In fact, today's generation has lost its goals, and the worldly material life has resulted in tiredness and dejection among humans. Therefore, humans have resorted to radicalism to get rid of such unpleasant feelings. Perhaps, the formation of the first human colony and community on Mars can be the first step on this path. Finally, it can be stated that humans have established a series of rules as religions and civil laws to facilitate life on the Earth. These rules are no longer efficient nowadays. Bold changes are definitely required to achieve a better future for our children. With these changes in the laws and traditions established over thousands of years, our life may be completely transformed. Moreover, some values, which are essential for us today, such as money, wealth, etc. may be no longer important. Although the future is unpredictable for all of us, it can be certain that the world will soon face massive crises resulting from current trends. Therefore, the thousand-year traditions and beliefs should be changed today. The first step may be travel to Mars.

Charity grants 400 home appliance packages to flood survivors

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejraiye-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam has provided the flood-affected families in western Ilam province with 400 packages of home appliances.

Heavy rainfall, beginning on March 19 has led to flooding in 28 out of 31 provinces affecting 42,269,129 inhabitants in 253 cities and causing widespread damage to municipal facilities, houses, infrastructure, livestock and crops.

Mostafa Seyed-Hashemi, deputy director of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, announced that 1000 stationery packages were distributed in the area in addition to the appliances.

"This year, we intend to open up 2,400 job opportunities in the province to help those affected by flood," he added.

He also highlighted that 74,000 families have lost their appliances during flooding; Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has afforded to provide 30,000 appliance packages to these families.

So far, we have established 356 factories across the country in cooperation with Barekat Foundation and benefactors, 9 of which are located in Ilam province, he also noted.

To help livestock owners who have lost their livestock in the flood, 15 livestock will be provided to each of them, he stated.

Moreover, 960 jobs have been generated in the province during February to March, he concluded.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, also known as Setad-e Ejraiye Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam, was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat charity foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of the communities by encouraging entrepreneurship

prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructure such as water supply schemes, power grid, and road building, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health

for all, granting non-repayable loans and insurance especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 08-38-9640010

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES WITH API REGULAR TOOLJOINT PIN CONNECTION LEVEL OF INSPECTION :2 (L.O.1.:2) QCP/MPDS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM" ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION " 8-3/8 IN L.A.D.C 2.1.4	80
02	NOZZLES FOR DRILLING BITS ONE SET CONSING OF 3 NUMBERS CONNECTION SIZE AS SPECIFIED FOR SIZE 8-3/8	40
03	TO 12-1/4 INCH NO.16, 16/32 IN. ID.	32
04	NO.18, 18/32 IN. ID.	8
	NO.20, 20/32 IN. ID	

to participate “ letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 12,765 EURO or 608,000,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender Conditions material technical thorough specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

Kouy-e Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: 061 341 24016 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

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Iraq wants Shia militias as ‘indivisible’ part of army

TEHRAN — Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi has issued a decree that further integrates the Popular Mobilization Forces, which have proven a decisive force in Baghdad's counter-terrorism operations, into the country's armed forces.

“In the interest of the public good and as per the powers granted to us by the constitution...the following is decreed: All Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) are to operate as an indivisible part of the armed forces and be subject to the same regulations,” read the decree, which was issued on Monday, AFP reported.

The fighters, also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, joined forces with the military in 2014 after the Takfiri terror group of Daesh launched a campaign of bloodshed and destruction against the nation.

They effectively contributed to the country's anti-terror struggle, especially in liberation of Daesh-held areas lying to the south, northeast, and north of the



capital. The combined push -- reinforced by Iraq's allies, including Iran, which has been lending military advisory support to the Iraqi military -- led to Daesh's expulsion

in late 2017.

This prompted Abdul Mahdi's predecessor Haider al-Abadi to order the PMU's formal inclusion in the Arab country's security

forces last March. That order granted the PMU many of the same rights as members of the military.

However, the United States, which has been leading scores of its allies in a so-called anti-Daesh coalition in Iraq despite the group's demise, has systematically found fault with the PMU's involvement in Iraq's defensive affairs.

In May, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had told Iraqi leaders during a surprise visit to Baghdad that if they failed to exercise more control on the fighters, Washington would respond with force.

Influential Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sar celebrated Abdul Mahdi's decision, though, announcing that he would sever its ties with the fighters under his support, and urged them to integrate more closely into the military.

“What came from the prime minister on the PMU is an important thing and a correct first step towards building a strong state,” Sadr said in a statement.

Trump vows ‘very strong intelligence’ presence in Afghanistan

TEHRAN— U.S. President Donald Trump has vowed to maintain a “very strong intelligence” presence in Afghanistan, while repeating his claim that he wants to withdraw American troops from the war-torn country.

“We will be leaving very strong intelligence, far more than you would normally think,” Trump said in an interview with Fox News on Monday, adding that the problem with pulling the 9,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan was that the country “just seems to be a lab for terrorists... I call it the Harvard of terrorists.”

“I've wanted to pull them out,” he nevertheless claimed, referring to the U.S. troops.

The United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, as part of its so-called war on terror. After 18 years, however, terrorist incidents continue to occur across Afghanistan on a near-daily basis.

Washington is now engaged in “peace talks” with the Taliban, the very group that it had sought to root out with the 2001 invasion. Even during the negotiations, the Taliban continue to carry

out terrorist attacks throughout the war-ravaged country.

The interview with Trump was broadcast just after the Taliban claimed responsibility for multiple terrorist attacks in Afghanistan's capital of Kabul and other parts of the country and as Washington began a new round of negotiations with the group in the Qatari capital of Doha on Sunday.

According to Press TV, Trump said during his remarks that he hesitated to pull out the U.S. troops from Afghanistan due to advice from his military commanders that it would be preferable to fight the militants there than at home — echoing a claim advanced by former U.S. president George W. Bush, who launched the invasion of Afghanistan.

“Sir, I'd rather attack them over there than attack them in our land,” Trump cited a general as having told him, adding, “It's something you always have to think about.”

This is while ending America's wars overseas has been Trump's promise since his campaigning days.

Turkey preparing for U.S. sanctions over S-400 purchase

TEHRAN — A report says Turkey is preparing for possible sanctions by the United States against the country over its purchase of Russia's advanced S-400 missile defense system.

Reporting on Monday, Bloomberg alleged that the Turkish military was stockpiling spare parts for U.S.-made weapons as the bans loom large.

Those include parts belonging to F-16 fighter jets and other military equipment, it said, citing “two Turkish officials.”

It is unclear, though, when the stockpiling decision was first taken or when the hardware began being stored away.

The United States placed a three-year arms embargo on Turkey in 1975.

Turkey and Russia finalized an agreement on the delivery of the S-400s in December 2017, two years after the U.S. decided to withdraw its Patriot surface-to-air missile system from the Turkish border with Syria.

Ever since, Washington has been warning Ankara against going ahead with the purchase, including by threatening to remove it from a multilateral program aimed at manufacturing the U.S.'s F-35

warplanes.

Several Turkish industrial giants are partaking in the program, and Turkish pilots have trained in the U.S. to fly the aircraft, Press TV reported.

Recently, however, the U.S. stopped training the pilots over Ankara's refusal to halt the purchase. Washington has also warned it would ultimately refuse to provide Turkey with the aircraft.

Last month, however, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the missile systems would begin arriving in the country in July.

Owning the S-400 would enable Turkey to lay its hands on the ballistic missile technology. The acquisition is also reportedly to be followed by Turkey's joint production of the defensive equipment's next batch together with Russia.

Washington and its allies in the U.S.-led Western military alliance of NATO, of which Turkey is also a member, allege “security concerns” over the acquisition besides citing the S-400's alleged incompatibility with the alliance's other military equipment.

Israel to open foreign ministry office in Oman, Mossad chief says

TEHRAN— The head of Israel's spy agency Mossad says the occupying regime is renewing ties with Oman, adding that a representative office of the Israeli foreign ministry will open in the Persian Gulf, as Tel Aviv and Arab monarchies move to bring their clandestine ties to light.

Speaking at the Herzliya Conference on Monday, Yossi Cohen said “Just recently, renewal of formal relations with Oman was declared and the establishment of a representative office of the foreign ministry in that country.”

“That is only the visible tip of a much broader secret effort,” he added.

Jordan and Egypt are the only two Arab states that have diplomatic ties with Israel. However, reports have indicated that several of them, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, have had secret relations with Tel Aviv.

“We do not yet have with them (Arab states) official peace treaties but there is already a communality of interests, broad cooperation and open channels of communication,” Cohen said.

Israel and Oman agreed to open trade representative offices in the 1990s, but in 2000, the Persian Gulf sultanate

shut them down after the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada (uprising).

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Oman's Sultan Qaboos in Muscat last October. The controversial visit was kept secret until after the Israeli premier returned to the occupied territories.

On Wednesday, Oman announced plans to open an embassy in Palestine in support of the Palestinian people, in a first for a Persian Gulf state.

■ Palestine warns Oman

Hanan Ashrawi, a senior official in the Palestine Liberation Organization, welcomed Muscat's decision, saying “I hope the embassy will help in educating the Omani government on the real nature of the Israeli occupation.”

She, however, warned Oman against using its mission to establish formal ties with Tel Aviv, saying, “If this has a political price attached then certainly there will be ramifications.”

Israel and the Persian Gulf Arab regimes have dramatically increased their contacts since late June, when Bahrain hosted a U.S.-led conference where the “economic” part of President Donald Trump's “peace” plan for the



Middle East was unveiled.

The recent moves towards normalization of ties have angered Palestinians, who see them as an attempt to liquidate the Palestinian cause press TV reported.

Limited U.S. military assistance to resume to some Somali troops

TEHRAN — The United States is resuming some assistance to a unit of the Somali military that is not working directly with U.S. forces, U.S. officials said Tuesday, around 18 months after aid was suspended to such units over widespread corruption concerns.

The assistance, part of U.S. military aid to the country aimed at helping the government fend off insurgents, was suspended in December 2017 after the Somali military

was unable to account for food and fuel.

U.S. and Somali investigators visiting bases also found far fewer soldiers than had been reported. Many of the men present were missing their guns, indicating they were not ready for active duty.

The resumption of assistance of units not working directly with U.S. forces will be on a pilot basis, a press release from the U.S. embassy in Mogadishu said.

“On the basis of internal reforms made by

the Federal Government of Somalia and an inspection of the recipient unit, the United States assesses that the Federal Government of Somalia and the SNA (Somali National Army) have undertaken significant efforts to improve accountability over donor resources,” the release said.

There were no further details on the reforms or the amount of aid being offered. A spokeswoman for the embassy was not immediately able to offer further details.

The aid suspension did not affect some Somali military units, like the Special Forces group Danab that is trained directly by U.S. forces.

Somalia has been riven by civil war since 1991, when warlords overthrew a clan dictator then turned on each other. The U.S. also helps fund an African Union force that is supporting the weak, UN-backed government against insurgent group al-Shabaab, Reuters reported.

Syria writes to UN over repeated Israeli attacks, calls for ‘decisive’ action

TEHRAN— Syria's Foreign Ministry has urged the United Nations to take the necessary measures to stop Israel's repeated acts of military aggression on the Arab country after four people lost their lives in the latest such airstrikes.

Israeli warplanes fired missiles at areas in the capital, Damascus, and its countryside as well as the province of Homs at 12.35 a.m. local time on Monday from Lebanese airspace, leaving four people, including a baby, dead and injuring 21 others, most of them women and children, the ministry said.

In two identical letters to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the head of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the ministry slammed the air raids as a “flagrant violation” of UNSC Resolution 350 of 1974 on the disengagement of forces between the two sides.

It noted that the attacks were aimed at prolonging the crisis in the country.



Tel Aviv would not have been able to push ahead with such a “dangerous hostile approach” if it had not been for the U.S. administration's “unlimited support” as well as the regime's “immunity from punishment” provided by Washington and certain Security Council members.

According to Press TV, there has been a rise in Israeli aerial assaults against Syrian territory since late March, when U.S. President Donald Trump recognized the “Israeli sovereignty” over the Tel Aviv-occupied side of Syria's Golan Heights in defiance of international law.

The Damascus government further urged the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and “take immediate and decisive” steps towards preventing the Tel Aviv regime from repeating such attacks.

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 on the battlefield against Syrian army forces and their allies.

The occupying regime has also been providing medical treatment to extremist elements wounded during fighting in Syria.

Why the Deal of the Century fails?

➔1 Over the last two decades, every project that U.S. has started in South West Asia or North Africa has failed. One example is the Substitute Homeland Project suggested by Ariel Sharon with two alternatives of either building a new capital in Jordan or reviving the Bahrolmeyer Lake by building a canal over the Gulf of Aqaba. Other examples are the Neom City plan put forward by Mohammad bin Salman and the Red Sea tourism project. All these plans were managed by U.S. and were supposed to attract the Palestinians from both inside and outside their country.



Similar projects for attracting and locating Palestinians were carried out in Sinai Peninsula, but all these projects failed and the deal of the century which has the same goal and road map will fail just like them.

2. The deal of the century cannot be successful; it is not because U.S. or the United Kingdom or any other country who follows them are not trying enough, it is simply because they are now “incapable” of doing whatever they want in Middle East. U.S. and U.K. can no longer be the main powers in the region, they cannot suppress the Palestinian resistant groups and cannot determine the course of events for Palestine.

Palestinian resistant groups are now far more powerful. In the same time, Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet has become weaker than before as they have faced many failures over the last years. Therefore, it seems unlikely for them to be able to run the deal of the century.

3. The deal of the century is a project that seeks to change the geopolitics of a region, to give away some vast lands and to make a big population move so that the usurper regime of Israel can have a firmer position and they can turn Palestine into a land excluded to Jews; however, changing the geopolitics of a region or changing the religions practiced in a region are social transformations and cannot be controlled by some political plan.

The statistics show that the population of Palestinian Arabs has increased 7.4% while the population of Jews leaving in this region has increased by only 1.2%, this is a social fact that the number of Arab Palestinians is increasing; the dominant ethnic groups in this region are Arabs. Palestine is an Arab country and will remain one, and their lands will be completely returned to them.

4. The main supporter of the Zionists and the deal of the century is no one but U.S.; however, over the last few months, American officials have repeatedly announced that they do not seek military action against Iran. This shows that U.S. is changing its policies toward the Middle Eastern countries who are resisting the American oppression, and especially toward the Islamic Republic of Iran which is the symbol of resistance against western interference and oppression in Middle East. Based on these facts, we can easily predict that the deal of the century will be a total failure.

The last word

The deal of the century is the first step toward “the New Middle East” project that was first proposed when George W. Bush was the president of the United States. “The new Middle East” project seeks to change the geopolitical features of the Middle East.

Undoubtedly, projects such as “the New Middle East” and “the deal of the century” which try to divide lands and populations, can pose great dangers to the nations, but we can defeat these dangers if we stand against them with open eyes and firm resolution. From now on, Middle East and the Muslim world should pay more attention to such projects and try to nip them in the bud.

Palestinians seen ‘Stateless’ in Kushner's economic Plan: Analyst

➔6 I am optimistic, though, that if a genuine dialog between Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping takes place soon (on the sidelines of the coming G-20 Summit), it can bring some rationality to the situation, because the whole world can be affected by a large military conflict in the Persian Gulf. This will affect the Palestinian issue too.

■ Last Friday, Israeli forces once again opened fire on Palestinians taking part in the peaceful “Great March of Return” protests, along the separation fence between the besieged Gaza Strip and occupied territories, injuring at least 79 peaceful protesters. According to media reports, more than 270 people, including 52 children, have been killed since the demonstrations began in March 2018. Most of the dead and the thousands wounded were unarmed civilians against whom Israel was using excessive force. Why has the international community, particularly the Western mainstream media, made a muted response to the Tel Aviv regime's crimes against Palestinians so far?

A: There are two reasons for this indifference in the Western mainstream media to the suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli army: 1. They are busy, upon orders of the political and economic forces that own them, demonizing Russia, China and their allies, like Iran and Syria, and whoever in the West would dare to show friendliness or promote closer and friendly relations with Russia and China. The Transatlantic imperial forces are upset because their system of control over the world economy is collapsing, and that of Russia, China, and their allies and friends is thriving along the New Silk Road. 2. Many of the large media outlets are owned or controlled by powerful economic interests that are friendly to or are part of the so-called Zionist lobby, who attempt to suppress any information about the suffering of the Palestinian people or Yemen for example.

Neymar’s dad says he’s not going to Barcelona to negotiate

Neymar’s father has poured cold water on his son’s potential return to Barcelona by insisting they are not in talks to leave Paris Saint-Germain this summer.

Reports in Brazil emerged this week claiming that Barcelona officials were set to meet with Neymar’s representatives to discuss his touted move back to the club.

Esporte Interativo reported that the Paris Saint-Germain star’s father and his lawyer are already in the Catalanian capital where they will be received by compatriot Andre Cury, who brokered the deal which saw Neymar leave Barca in 2017.

However, the player’s father has insisted this is not the case and that no negotiations have started.

‘It’s not planned anytime, I’m in Brazil and I’ll stay here until my son returns to Paris,’ he told Canal Supporters.

He also reaffirmed that Neymar is a PSG player and that no plans are in place for him to leave this summer despite rumours suggesting his future lies elsewhere.

Neymar only left Barcelona to join PSG for a world-record fee of £198million two years ago.

The Brazil star is currently on the comeback trail after injury ruled him out of the Copa America.

Contrary to his father’s claims, Neymar is reportedly determined to secure a return to La Liga this summer but the league’s president, Javier Tebas, admitted he hopes the forward does not return to Barcelona this summer, insisting his behaviour is ‘not good for the competition’.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Moreno says goodbye to Liverpool as five-year spell comes to an end

Alberto Moreno has bid farewell to Liverpool after the left back’s five-year spell at the club came to an end.

The 26-year-old Spaniard made 141 appearances and scored three goals in his time at Anfield having joined from Sevilla in the summer of 2014.

“Life goes in cycles, and mine at my beloved Liverpool FC has drawn to an end,” he posted on his Twitter account.

“Thank you for making me a better footballer and, above all, a better person ... Finally, a very special thank you to the club’s superb fans, who always supported me.”

The defender is reported to be returning to Spain to play for Villarreal next season.

(Source: Goal)

Leicester reject Manchester United’s £70m bid for Harry Maguire

Manchester United have had a £70million offer for Harry Maguire rejected as Leicester hold out for a world-record fee for the England defender.

Reports had suggested Maguire’s heart was set on joining Premier League champions Manchester City, but United have pushed ahead in the race to land the former Hull star.

However, it has now emerged that United’s latest bid will not be enough for the Foxes to sanction a deal - despite the huge money on offer.

Talks between both Manchester clubs and Leicester have been ongoing for several weeks but Sky Sports claim a deal is still someway off despite United’s new offer.

It is believed owner Aiyawatt Shrivaddhanaprabha will only agree to sell Maguire if they receive a bid in excess of the £75m Liverpool paid for Virgil van Dijk.

The deal to take the Dutchman from Southampton to Anfield in January of last year made him the most expensive defender in history.

Maguire is understood to be content at Leicester and will not try to force through a move, although remains open to joining either United or City this summer.

Both clubs had indicated that they would be ready to splash out £65m on Maguire initially, but the Red Devils have increased their offer.

Leicester believe United’s £50m signing of Aaron Wan-Bissaka from Crystal Palace has set a precedent, with the right back not matching up to Maguire in terms of being proven at the highest level.

The 26-year-old - along with all of the club’s other international players - is yet to return for Leicester’s pre-season schedule.

(Source: Daily Star)

Barcelona hope to present Griezmann at Camp Nou next week

Barcelona are hoping to complete the signing of Antoine Griezmann in time to present him at the Camp Nou on Thursday, July 11.



The Frenchman’s release clause at Atletico Madrid fell to 120 million euros on Monday, but Barcelona could opt to negotiate for a lower price.

The club are already preparing for his presentation, but that’s nothing new when it comes to possible signings.

Frenkie de Jong will be presented on Friday, while Neto will take his turn to meet the fans at the Camp Nou on Monday or Tuesday.

If Griezmann’s signing is completed by the end of next week, he will return to training

with his new teammates on July 14.

Once Griezmann is through the door, Barcelona can focus all their efforts on trying to secure Neymar’s Camp Nou return.

(Source: Marca)

Gauff eclipses Venus to steal day one limelight



French Open runner-up Marketa Vondrousova, the 16th seed, also bowed out but former world number ones Karolina Pliskova, Caroline Wozniacki, Simona Halep and Victoria Azarenka all made it safely through to the second round.

■ **Djokovic untroubled**
Men’s defending champion Novak Djok-

ovic was untroubled as he began his quest for a fifth Wimbledon crown that would take him level on the all-time list with Swedish great Bjorn Borg.

The Serb, with former champion Goran Ivanisevic in his box, beat Germany’s Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3 7-5 6-3.

It was a bad day for two of the young guns

expected to lead the new generation into a brave new era, however.

Sixth seed Alexander Zverev lost 4-6 6-3 6-2 7-5 to Czech Jiri Vesely while Greek 20-year-old Stefanos Tsitsipas went down in five sets to Italian journeyman Thomas Fabbiano.

Tsitsipas, in particular, was highly-fancied to have a long run at the All England Club having reached the Australian Open semi-final this year but lost 6-4 3-6 6-4 6-7(8) 6-3.

“He was just better than me today. I think the way I played, it should have been in three, not five. I don’t know how I got to five. I guess with my fighting spirit, somehow I managed to win those two sets,” he said.

Croatia’s 40-year-old Ivo Karlovic, one of 47 men aged 30 or over in the men’s singles, became the oldest man to play a first round match in the Wimbledon singles since Ken Rosewall in 1975.

Last year’s runner-up Kevin Anderson cruised through in straight sets against Pierre-Hugues Herbert.

Eight-time champion Roger Federer and women’s defending champion Angelique Kerber, as well as 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams, start their campaigns on Tuesday.

(Source: Reuters)

Warriors thank Durant, say they will retire No. 35



The Golden State Warriors issued a statement Monday thanking Kevin Durant and announcing that no player will ever wear No. 35 for the team again.

The statement, from Warriors co-chairman and CEO Joe Lacob, said Durant “carried himself with class and dignity both on and off the court.”

After winning two NBA championships in three seasons with Golden State, Durant will begin the next chapter of his career in Brooklyn, where he plans to sign a four-year contract worth up to \$164 million. He will join free agents Kyrie Irving and DeAndre Jordan, who also plan to sign with the Nets.

Durant, who joined the Warriors after spending eight seasons with the Oklahoma City Thunder, won two NBA Finals MVPs during his tenure with Golden State.

“Today, as he starts a new chapter in his incredible career, we thank KD for all of his contributions, for being an integral part to one of the most prolific runs in NBA history and wish him well as he continues his Hall of Fame journey,” Lacob said in the statement. “As long as I am Co-Chairman of this team, no player will ever wear #35 for the Warriors again.”

The Warriors were quick to recover from the news of Durant’s departure, finalizing a sign-and-trade with the Nets

for D’Angelo Russell on Monday, league sources tell ESPN’s Adrian Wojnarowski, and agreeing to a maximum contract with Klay Thompson, his agent, Greg Lawrence, told Wojnarowski.

Kevin Durant, who will be joining the Brooklyn Nets, left the Golden State Warriors because he felt under-appreciated by its fans, according to a Sunday report.

Kendrick Perkins – Durant’s former Oklahoma City Thunder teammate – and another source close to Durant, told The Undeclared’s Marc J. Spears that Durant felt overshadowed by Warriors’ point guard Stephen Curry.

Durant’s feeling is understandable, given that Curry, who was picked in 2009, is largely the face of the franchise, writes Spears.

“There was always the sense that the 10-time All-Star felt like a distant second fiddle to Stephen Curry,” Spears said.

He added that two events further alienated Durant from the Warriors: fans chanting “M-V-P” for Curry at home games, and general manager Bob Myers joking during the Warrior’s 2018 championship parade that Durant could have whatever contract he wanted in free agency – the same thing he had apparently told Curry the year prior.

(Source: Fox Sports)

Real Madrid haven’t given up on Paul Pogba yet



Real Madrid know that it’s going to be a long summer. The club have not given up hope of signing Paul Pogba, the only transfer petition which Zidane has expressly asked Florentino Pérez for. As it stands, Manchester United are refusing to negotiate - they didn’t attend Madrid in either of the two occasions the Spanish club tried to open talks. Not that Madrid have been put off - they’ll wait with the hope that United will eventually come around to discussing the transfer. The transfer window in England closes on 8 August and Madrid will insist while there is still a chance that United can sell. In Spain, the transfer deadline is 2 September. Pogba could do the same as Ronaldo Nazário did when he signed just before the window closed on 31 August 2002. The player has given his word to Madrid and club directors hope that will go in their favour in their attempt to bring him to the Bernabéu.

United have not qualified for this season’s Champions League but that is not the reason why they don’t want to let Pogba go. They don’t want to do any deals that potentially could weaken the club and besides, being

the second richest club in the world (according to Forbes), they have no need to sell.

Pogba has been granted a few extra days to rest and so wasn’t at the Aon Training Complex when the squad began their pre-season yesterday. Madrid is his only option, seeing as the rumoured interest from his old club Juventus is not quite what it seems and could be a tactical manoeuvre by his agent, Mino Raiola. According to Spanish football programme Jugones, Florentino Pérez and José Ángel Sánchez met on Friday to discuss the matter as Zidane keeps insisting Pogba is the missing link the team needs for the new campaign.

In England, doubts persist as to whether Pogba will join United for the pre-season. AS reported a while ago that the player intends to hold a conversation with Solskjær once he is back from his holidays to persuade the coach to convince club directors to hear his request to leave. He doesn’t want to be boarding the plane with the rest of the squad on Sunday when United jet out to Perth, Australia for the pre-season.

(Source: AS)

Chile eager to make Copa history against Peru, says Vidal

Chile midfielder Arturo Vidal says the reigning Copa America champions are focused on making history ahead of their semi-final against Peru.

The 2015 and 2016 champions are aiming for a third continental title in a row, a feat only achieved once before by Argentina in successive years from 1945-47.

“We want to leave our legacy as triple champions, that’s our dream,” said the Barcelona midfielder, an integral part of Chile’s only two previous Copa successes.

“That’s why we want to play our best match of the Copa against Peru. It would be something historic for us to get to the final and that’s our aim.”

Chile faced Peru in the 2015 semi-finals on home soil when they won 2-1 before beating Argentina on penalties in the final for their first ever continental success.

“We need to play the perfect match, to win it with authority,” added Vidal.

“Peru have great teamwork, they play well, very similar to Colombia” who Chile beat on penalties in the quarter-final.

“That’s why it will be a very difficult match and fantastic to play in it.”

Vidal pointed to Peru captain and striker Paolo Guerrero as the biggest threat Chile will face on Wednesday. Guerrero and Chile’s Eduardo Vargas, with 12 goals each, are the top two still active scorers in Copa history.

“He’s a player who knows how to play against four



defenders and it always takes a lot out of us to mark him,” said Vidal.

Vargas, who scored twice in Chile’s opening 4-0 thrashing of Japan, may never have had the chance to add to his Copa ledger, but for a change of heart by Chile’s Colombian coach Reinaldo Rueda.

Vargas, known as “Turboman” for his incredible engine, fell out of favor with Rueda for disciplinary reasons following a friendly with Sweden in 2018.

He spent almost 18 months overlooked by the Colombian before being recalled for the Copa America following 17 goals in 49 matches for his Mexican club side Tigres last season.

It was a good move as Vargas has been electric in the tournament alongside a rejuvenated Alexis Sanchez -- who’s looked his old self after 18 months of misery at Manchester United -- and Jose Fuenzalida in a three-pronged attack.

■ **‘Right conditions’**

Peru are clear underdogs having been surprise qualifiers for the semi-finals.

They arrived in the knock-out stages demoralized following a 5-0 thrashing by hosts Brazil in their final group match and progressed to the semi-finals on penalties, but only after Uruguay had three goals ruled out for offside in their quarter-final, two of those by the slimmest of margins that VAR spotted but were invisible to the naked eye.

Even so, coach Ricardo Gareca says there’s no hint of an inferiority complex amongst his players.

“We’re in the right conditions to tackle this kind of match,” he said.

“Maybe it’s a bigger match than the others before but we can play better.”

While Chile can boast established European-based talents in midfield such as Barcelona’s Vidal, Charles Aranguiz of Bayer Leverkusen and Bologna’s Erick Pulgar, Rueda feels that in Christian Cueva, who plays for Brazilians Santos, he has one of the most under-rated players in the tournament.

(Source: AFP)

Iran at VNL's Final Six; all you need to know

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN — Showing a convincing performance, Iran managed to advance to the final round of 2019 men's Volleyball Nations League which is going to be held in Chicago.

Here is all you need to know about the team in the coming thrilling matches.

VNL's preliminary round kicked off on May 31 with a match between Iran and Italy in China's Jiangmen. Iran survived an early scare with a 3-1 win against one of the most decorated teams of the event. That was how the journey started for Igor Kolakovic and his men.

Iran kept the momentum in almost all 14 remaining games and earned 12 victories while also suffering three losses. With the 12-3 win-loss record and 36 points, Iran finished as runners-up behind Brazil with 14-1.

■ **Iran rely on both experienced and young players**

Many volleyball experts in the country believe that Igor Kolakovic had to give the opportunity to youth players in the event; both for training the next generation and also for preserving the stamina of the experienced ones for other important events of this year, such as the 2020 Olympics qualifiers. However, Kolakovic didn't share the same view. He held a different opinion. The Montenegrin coach fielded his top guns in almost all games, except for the last two ones against Bulgaria and US; showing that attaining medal in this event is of priority for him. And till now he has been successful as he managed to lead the team to the final round for the second time in Iran's history; the first one occurred in 2014 under leadership of Julio Velasco.

Although there is still much difference between Iran's main and second squad, the youth players, such as Mohammadreza Hazratpour, Ali Asghar Mojarad, Porya Yali, and Javad Karimi promise yet another golden generation for Iranian volleyball. They only need more time and more games to achieve the required harmony.

Critics say that now that the team have



taken the risk of injuries and advanced to the final stage, it is now the best time to earn a medal in the event since the main squad are at their best readiness and if they miss the chance now, it will take many years to gain another such opportunity.

Iran are mainly powered by their top guns who also rank among the best players of this year's VNL. The team's captain, Saeid Marouf, is now the best setter of the event with an average per set of 8.42. He had also attained the 2014 World League's best setter prize.

Amir Ghafour is Iran's and the event's best attacker so far with a total of 183 spikes and an average success rate of 57.73 percent. He also ranks second in the best scores' table with 208 points, behind Japan's Yuji Nishida with 220. It seems pretty likely that Ghafour would catch Nishida since Japan is not present in the Final Six.

Naming Iran's top players, one cannot ignore Seyed Mohammad Mousavi who is among the best blockers of the competition with 29 stuff blocks and 38 rebounds.

■ **Final Six**

Top five teams of the table, i.e. Brazil, Iran, Russia, France, Poland plus the host, US, will hold the Final Six round in Chicago on July 10 to 14.

Iran have been drawn along Brazil and Poland in Pool B of the final round. Iran's matches against these two powerhouses in the preliminary round both finished in five sets, one win and one loss.

■ **Iran vs Poland**

According to FIVB, Iran and Poland have held 19 matches at major world level tournaments; the results were seven wins for Iran and 12 for the European side.

This year's match between the two teams at 2019 VNL preliminary round was held in Iran's Urmia on June 15 and ended with a hard-fought 3-2 victory for the host.

The game in Chicago on July 11, 22:00 GMT, will surely be an exciting encounter; why, you ask? For the history of the two teams' head-to-head matches and all the controversies that follow. Poland captain,

Michal Kubiak has a long history of engaging in verbal and even physical conflict with the Iranian players.

Kubiak was suspended in early June for six games following offensive remarks where he called Iranians "fatal, malicious and damned people". Days later and after Iran's official complaint, FIVB Disciplinary Panel Sub-Committee noted in a statement that Kubiak has 'committed violations' of the regulations and urged the Polish player to issue a written apology.

The official apology was issued but not by Kubiak himself, rather by the Polish volleyball federation and it was read before the start of Iran-Poland game in Urmia.

Kubiak has just played for Poland in the Week 1 of 2019 VNL and it's very likely that he will be fielded in the final round.

■ **Iran vs Brazil**

According to FIVB, Brazil and Iran have met 15 times at major world-level competitions. Brazil won 12 of these games, including each of the last six. Iran won three, with the most recent victory dating back to their 2014 World League pool stage encounter. Their last encounter goes back to June 7 in the Week Two of the event which finished with a 3-2 victory for the South American team.

The two teams will lock horns on July 12 at 22:00 GMT.

France, US and Russia hold matches of the Pool A. Two best teams of each pool will advance to the semifinal.

One more thing about Iran is that the team will by no means be alone in Chicago as more than one million Iranians are living in the US and Canada and surely, some will make a trip to Credit Union 1 Arena to cheer for their team.

Who can earn the \$1 million prize of the first rank? No one can guess for sure as all six teams have proved their top-class volleyball and the fact that volleyball cannot be predicted at this world top level. I and many other Iranians are just impatiently waiting to see a high-quality performance by our team.

Iran's Omid Singh wants Indian No. 7 jersey

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's Indian-origin star **d e s k** Omid Singh says he wants No. 7 in Indian national football team.

Igor Stimac has recently invited Omid Singh to Indian national football team.

Although he was raised in Iran, Omid's father holds an Indian passport, making him eligible to represent the country.

The 28-year-old midfielder started his playing career in Gahar Zagroz in Iranian football league and has also played in top-flight teams Naft Masjed Soleyman, Esteghlal Khuzestan, Pars Jonoubi and Nassaji.

"I liked to play for Iran national football team but I was not invited to Team Melli. At the moment, Iran are one of the best teams in Asia and it's hard to be part of the team. Mr.



Stimac called me and I accepted to play for India," Singh said.

"I am not familiar with Indian football team but I know that they have progressed a lot in the recent years. David James, Robert Pires, Nicolas Anelka, Roberto Carlos and Zico have played in Indian league in the past years," he added.

"I always wear No. 7 but they want to hand me No. 17. I hope they give me No. 7 in India," he added.

"India are a rising team in Asia and can compete with the continent's giants. The team will not surely lose to South Korea with six goals. They have invested in the development of football in the recent years," Singh stated.

"Many Iranians are unhappy with my decision but I am going to make them proud. My father is an Indian, however I was born in Iran," he concluded.

Mehrdad Mohammadi officially joins Aves



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian **d e s k** winger Mehrdad Mohammadi officially joined Portuguese top-flight football team Desportivo das Aves.

The 25-year-old player, whose contract with Sepahan ran out at the end of the Iranian season, joined Aves on a free transfer.

Mohammadi has signed a three-year contract with Aves for an undisclosed fee.

His twin brother, Milad, is play-

ing in Russian football club Akhmat Grozny.

Mehrdad Mohammadi joined Iranian football club Sepahan in 2016 from Rah Ahan and scored 13 goals in 82 matches for the Isfahan based football team.

He helped Sepahan come second in Iran Professional League last season.

The Portuguese club were founded on 12 November 1930 and play at the Estádio do Clube Desportivo das Aves, which holds a seating capacity of 8,560.

Iran fly to Spain for 2019 IFCPF World Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran **d e s k** 7-a-Side National Team left Tehran on Tuesday to participate at the 2019 IFCPF World Cup.

The competition will be held in Sevilla, Spain from July 4-20.

Iran, runners-up at the 2017 World Championships, have been drawn in Group B along with the U.S., Finland and Ireland.

The Persian will start the campaign with a match against the U.S. on July 8.

The 2019 IFCPF World Cup features

16 of the world's top Para 7-a-side teams that qualified through IFCPF Regional Championships and the IFCPF rankings.

Ukraine enter the tournament as reigning world champions after winning the 2017 IFCPF World Championships.

■ **The Nations**

Group A: Japan, Germany, England, Brazil
Group B: Ireland, Iran, Finland, the U.S.
Group C: Ukraine, Spain, Australia, Argentina
Group D: Thailand, Russia, Netherlands, Canada

Quarter-final ties confirmed



SIPG will host the first leg on August 27, with the return leg on September 17.

The 2019 AFC Champions League quarter-final lineup was finalised following the official draw ceremony at the AFC House on Tuesday.

Defending champions Kashima Antlers, aiming to create history by becoming the first Japanese side to win back-to-back titles, will face two-time AFC Champions League winners Guangzhou Evergrande FC from China PR.

Guangzhou, who have not gone beyond the quarter-final stage since 2015, will welcome Kashima on August 28 before travelling to Japan on September 18.

Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds, champions in 2007 and 2017, will lock horns with China PR's Shanghai SIPG, who have never advanced past the quarter-finals in their previous appearances.

The West Zone quarter-finals promise to be exciting affairs as the winners of the Round of 16 tie between Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr and Al Wahda FSCC of the United Arab Emirates will square off against the victors of the clash between Qatar clubs Al Duhail and Al Saad.

The first leg will take place on August 26, with the return leg on September 16.

The other West Zone quarter-final will see the winners of the Al Ittihad (Saudi Arabia) and Zobahan (Islamic Republic of Iran) Round of 16 tie pitted against the victors of the tie between Saudi Arabia clubs Al Ahli and Al Hilal.

The first leg will be played on August 27 with the return leg on September 17.

(Source: the-afc)

Wonderkid Sayyadmanesh officially joins Fenerbahce

Fenerbahce officially unveiled Iranian forward Allahyar Sayyadmanesh in a signing ceremony after completing his transfer from Esteghlal on a five-year deal.

Sayyadmanesh posed for cameras wearing the Fenerbahce shirt and put pen to paper sitting opposite club sporting director Damien Comolli.

Fenerbahce released an official statement on the official club website welcoming the new player to the club.

The statement read: "We welcome Allahyar Sayyadmanesh to Fenerbahce and wish him all the best moving forward."

The Yellow Canaries have shifted transfer policy towards focusing on young players and developing talent since Ali Koc replaced Aziz Yildirim as club president last May.

Sporting director Damien Comolli brought in Beri Pardo – formerly of Crystal Palace – as Head of Performance Analysis.

Meanwhile, Serhat Pekmezci – who discovered Cengiz Under and Caglar Soyuncu – was brought in from Altinordu as Head of Academy Recruitment. Sayyadmanesh was named in the Guardian Next Generation 2018: 60 of the best young talents in world football list.

Sayyadmanesh already has an international cap for the senior national side despite being aged just 18-years-old.

(Source: Turkish-football)



Dragan Skocic appointed as Iran's Sanat Naft coach

TASNIM — Croatian football coach Dragan Skocic has been appointed as new head coach of Iranian football club Sanat Naft.

He has penned a one-year contract with Sanat Naft for an undisclosed fee.

Skocic replaced Portuguese coach Paulo Sergio, who left Sanat Naft in mid-May to take charge of Saudi Arabian football club Al-Taawoun, in Abadan-based football team.

Skocic, 50, started his coaching career in Rijeka in 2005 and has also worked at Iranian football clubs Malavan, Foolad and Khooneh be Khooneh.

Sanat Naft finished 9th in the Iran Professional League (IPL) last season.

Benitez to take charge of Chinese side Dalian Yifang

UEFA Champions League-winning manager Rafael Benitez said on Tuesday that he will join Chinese top-tier side Dalian Yifang, just days after his three-year reign at English club Newcastle United came to an end.

"After a long path... We start a new challenge! I'm happy to begin this new project with Dalian Yifang," the Spaniard wrote on his verified Twitter account.

Benitez, who guided Liverpool to the UEFA Champions League crown in 2005 and has managed at European giants like Inter, Chelsea and Real Madrid, parted ways with Newcastle last week.

The 59-year-old becomes the latest big-name foreign manager to try his luck in the Chinese Super League (CSL), which have included the likes of Brazil's World Cup-winning coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, and Italian legend Fabio Cannavaro, who remains in charge at CSL power Guangzhou Evergrande.

Dalian Yifang, who are currently in joint 10th place in the CSL, also confirmed his appointment on social media.

Benitez was a hugely popular figure at Newcastle after leading the club to promotion in his first full season and stabilizing Newcastle in the Premier League over the past two years.

(Source: AFP)

Nishino to chart Thailand's future

The former Japan national head coach will lead Thailand's bid to qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Nishino, who led Japan's Samurai Blue to the Round of 16 at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia, will also guide the Thailand U-23 team at the 2019 SEA Games in the Philippines and the 2020 AFC U23 Championship, to be held in Thailand.

The Football Association of Thailand, in a media statement, said Nishino requested to oversee both teams in order to build continuity and manage the two national teams in the same direction.

The second round of the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 kicks off in September with the draw to unveil the groups to be held in Kuala Lumpur on July 17.

(Source: AFP)

Alireza Beiranvand to stay at Persepolis: report

TASNIM — Iran international goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand will reportedly remain in Persepolis football club.

Among numerous excellent performances from Team Melli in the recent years, Beiranvand was arguably the standout player and was heavily linked with a move away from Persepolis.

The 27-year-old goalie has been linked with a move to Japanese football club Vissel Kobe, Turkey's Fenerbahce and Greek team Olympiacos but a source close to Persepolis said he will remain at the club.

Beiranvand has two-year remaining on his current contract. Newly-appointed coach Gabriel Calderon has reportedly told the club to keep Beiranvand at the team.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The world makes the body decrepit, desires fresh, death near, and hope remote, access to it vanquishes, and profiting from it brings pain and fatigue.

Imam Ali (AS)

“Big Strange Uncle” honors Persian translator of Shel Silverstein’s books Razi Hirmandi

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Razi Hirmandi, the Iranian translator of books by American children’s book writer Shel Silverstein, was honored during the first performance of the play “My Little Big Strange Uncle” in Tehran on Monday. The play inspired by stories written by Silverstein has been written by Gita Davudi, and Nasser Avijeh directs it at the Bustan Hall of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) in Tehran.



Actor and director Nasser Avijeh plays the role of Shel Silverstein in the play “My Little Big Strange Uncle” on stage at IIDCYA’s Bustan Hall on July 1, 2109. (IIDCYA/Yunes Panahi)

Avijeh, who also performs the role of Silverstein in the play, went on stage on the first night and said, “I am Shel Silverstein born in 1930 in Chicago and died of heart attack in 1999. I wrote many books for children, I wrote songs, and I did many paintings. “My books have been translated into different languages, especially in Persian, and the individual who introduced me to Iranian readers is none other than Razi Hirmandi,” he added. Hirmandi went on stage with a round of applause and receiving red roses from the children actors of the play. “If Shel Silverstein is introduced to Iranian book readers, I was not alone. The publications of Hastan, Ofog, IIDCYA, and my dear wife, as well as you, the book readers, helped introduce Silverstein in Iran, and I am thankful to all of you,” he told the audience. Avijeh has also launched a program titled “One Night, One Play, and One Writer”, which introduces one writer to theatergoers every night. Maryam Ashuri, Mahak Fattahpur, Mehrdad Baqeri Shahin-Golkar, Mohammad Allahdadi, Saba Soleimani and Raha Avijeh are other actors of the play, which will be running until August 22. “My Little Big Strange Uncle” tells the story of a library run by a lady who believes stories and books can have good and magical effects. The arrival of a sad and lonely girl named Sara at the library leads to strange stories.

Silverstein was born in Chicago, and began writing and drawing at a young age. He became a cartoonist, playwright, poet, performer, recording artist and Grammy-winning, Oscar-nominated songwriter.

Silverstein is best known as the author of iconic books of prose and poetry for young readers. His works include such modern classics as “Lafcadio: The Lion Who Shot Back”, “The Giving Tree”, “A Giraffe and a Half”, “The Missing Piece”, and “The Missing Piece Meets the Big O”. His immensely popular poetry collections are “Where the Sidewalk Ends”, a 1974 Michigan Young Readers Award winner, and “A Light in the Attic”, recipient of the School Library Journal Best Books Award in 1982.

Silverstein’s books, which he also illustrated, are characterized by a deft mixing of the sly and the serious, the macabre, and the just plain silly. His unique imagination and bold brand of humor is beloved by countless adults and children throughout the world.

Lady Gaga, Letitia Wright among hundreds invited to join film academy

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The group that hands out the Oscars said on Monday it had invited 842 new members from 59 countries including Lady Gaga, Sterling K. Brown and Letitia Wright as the organization strives to further diversify its ranks. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences said half of the new invitees were women and 29% were people of color. If all accept, it will bring total membership to more than 9,000 - 32% of them female and 16% of them people of color. Other invitees include Adele, Claire Foy, Tom Holland and Elisabeth Moss. In 2016, the academy launched a campaign to diversify its membership after criticism that its largely white, male and older roster of film industry professionals was a barrier to racial and gender equality among Oscar winners and nominees.

Iranian writer Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi nominated for IBBY-iRead award

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian writer Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi has been nominated for the IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award, the Children’s Book Council of Iran announced on Tuesday.

The council selects Iran’s nominee for the biennial award, which has been co-established by the iRead Foundation in China and the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in Switzerland to honor worldwide the reading promoters who have made an outstanding contribution to children’s reading.

The award is presented to a writer who has shown over at least three years evidence of exploration and practical experience that can be verified and demonstrated with material evidence.

Earlier in August 2018, Seyyedabadi, the writer of acclaimed books such as “Whom Did Aunt Suska Marry?”, “The Wedding of Bijan and Manijeh” and “Rainbow in My Pocket”, was nominated for the 2019 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) celebrated Seyyedabadi’s lifetime achievements in children’s literature after being nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award on February 24, 2019.

In 2011, his “Whom Did Aunt Suska Marry?” was among the titles representing the Middle East in the annual White Ravens Catalogue, which is published by the International Youth Library in Munich.

“Whom Did Aunt Suska Marry?” tells of a ladybug who wishes to marry Mr. Mouse. In the process, she also considers other ways that a lifelong bond could be sealed. The modernization of the transmitted material is made visible through the book’s fascinatingly powerful, vivacious color illustrations and its fresh typography by Alireza Golduzian.



Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi attends a ceremony held by the IIDCYA in Tehran on February 24, 2019 to celebrate the writer’s lifetime achievements in children’s literature.

Iranian official urges caution for BBC Persian children’s productions



Director of Iran’s Saba Animation Center Mohammad-Rahim Livani in an undated photo. (Mehr/Majid Haqdoost)

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Director of Iran’s Saba Animation Center Mohammad-Rahim Livani has said that the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and relevant organizations need to be cautious about BBC Persian Television’s new decision to air children’s programs.

He made the remarks in a press conference held at the center on Tuesday to introduce the summer programs of the center.

“BBC Persian Television’s decision to produce programs for children shows the highly significant status of children. However, we know the background of the

news channel and we know what objectives the channel pursues,” he noted.

“Although we have been sanctioned in the economic fields, we are so rich in culture and can fight against them on cultural issues,” he asserted.

“Our productions enjoy such high-quality levels that they are purchased by international companies. Therefore, it helps promote a type of culture which is rooted in our lifestyle outside the country,” he said.

BBC Persian Television, the BBC’s Persian language news channel, which is officially viewed as an enemy medium in Iran, has begun airing a special program for children during the summer season.

Adaptation of Jean Genet’s “Deathwatch” to go on stage in Tehran



A scene from “Deathwatch” by Iranian director Mehdi Rezaei.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A loose adaptation of French writer Jean Genet’s 1947 play “Deathwatch” will go on stage at Tehran’s Da Theater on July 7.

Director Mehdi Rezaei has renamed the play “The Castle” to perform it in Iran. The play is about four prisoners who are locked up in the same cell. Green-Eyes has killed a woman and is to be guillotined. Maurice and Lefranc are sentenced for more minor crimes.

Maurice has a deep attachment to Green-Eyes, as does Lefranc, but secretly. He also hates Maurice, while feigning to hate Green-Eyes, preferring him to

Snowball, who is also condemned to death and along with Green-Eyes, they are considered the Kings of the prison.

“Deathwatch” was adapted for the screen in 1965 by American director Victor Morrow, but it wasn’t given a general release in the U.S. and never released in the UK due to its homosexual content.

Ahmad Shah-Qasemi, Emad Zarei, Amir-Hossein Daneshju and Rayan Habibian are the main members of the cast for the play.

No one 16 and under will be admitted to the play that will remain on stage until July 24.

Tehran theater to host “Hedda Gabler”

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A reading of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen’s 1891 play “Hedda Gabler” will be performed at Tehran’s Mehregan Theater on Saturday.

Maryam Baqeri will direct the reading performance with a cast composed of Fariba Ramezanpur, Azadeh Akbari, Mir-Nader Mazlumi, Parsa Kojuri and Arezu Khodakarami.

The play is about Hedda, the daughter of General Gabler, and her new husband, George Tesman, who return from their six-month honeymoon to their new house.

Hedda married George out of desperation, only because she had reached the age at which society dictated she should wed. But she finds life with him to be dull and tedious even though she’s pregnant with his child.

When Hedda meets Eilert Lovborg, an alcoholic friend and George’s academic rival, she finds out he has quit drinking and has devoted himself to serious work due to his love for Hedda’s friend.



Iranian director Maryam Baqeri in an undated photo.

Out of jealousy, Hedda persuades Lovborg to start drinking again and later incites him to commit suicide.

Earlier in 2011, actor and director Vahid Rahbani staged “Hedda Gabler” in Tehran. The play was soon banned by the Office for Dramatic Arts after pictures containing allegedly un-Islamic scenes from the play were published by a Persian news agency.

Complaining about the decision, Rahbani withdrew his play from the 29th Fajr International Theater Festival that year.

“Hedda Gabler” has been adapted for the screen a number of times, from the silent film era onwards, in several languages.

The most successful one was “Hedda” (1975) by British director Trevor Nunn, which brought its star Glenda Jackson a nomination for an Academy Award for Best Actress.

The BBC also screened a television production of the play in 1962, with the period stars Ingrid Bergman, Michael Redgrave, Ralph Richardson and Trevor Howard.

A Picasso sold during Nazi flight can stay at New York’s Met -U.S. court

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A masterpiece painted by Pablo Picasso that a German Jewish businessman was allegedly forced to sell to fund his escape from the Nazis can stay at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York rather than be returned to the businessman’s heirs, a federal appeals court ruled on Wednesday.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan said the great-grandniece of Paul Leffmann, who once owned Picasso’s “The Actor,” waited too long by not demanding the painting’s return until 2010, which was 72 years after it was sold and 58 years after it was donated to the Met.

Writing for a three-judge panel, Chief

Judge Robert Katzmann recognized that the federal Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016 and other recent measures respected the need to provide “some measure of justice, albeit incomplete,” to victims of Nazi brutality and their heirs.

But he said it would be unfair for the Met to give up the Picasso to Leffmann’s great-grandniece, Laurel Zuckerman, given the “unreasonable” delay in demanding its return.

“This is not a case where the identity of the buyer was unknown to the seller or the lost property was difficult to locate,” Katzmann wrote. “The Met has been

prejudiced by the more than six decades that have elapsed since the end of World War II.”

Zuckerman’s lawyer had no immediate comment. A lower court judge also sided with the Met in February 2018.

According to the complaint, Leffmann sold “The Actor” to a Paris art dealer for \$12,000 to fund the escape by him and his wife to Switzerland from Italy, which was then led by Benito Mussolini, an ally of Adolf Hitler.

Zuckerman said the Met did not properly recognize Leffmann’s ownership until 2011, after decades of incorrect cataloguing. A Met spokeswoman said the museum

“considers all Nazi-era claims thoroughly and responsibly,” and has returned works that were unlawfully appropriated.

The Picasso was not such a work, she said, adding “and it is our responsibility and joy to share it with the widest possible audience.”

The 2016 federal law gives people six years to file claims after learning the whereabouts of artwork lost between 1933 and 1945 because of Nazi persecution.

Painted during Picasso’s “Rose Period” in 1904 and 1905, “The Actor” also made news in January 2010 when an art student lost her balance and fell into it. The resulting six-inch (15 cm) tear was repaired.