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Piracy in Gibraltar

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Zarif says a multilateral agreement cannot be implemented unilaterally

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that Iran will be committed to the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as long as the remaining parties observe the deal, noting that a multilateral agreement cannot be implemented unilaterally.

“We will remain committed to the deal as long as the remaining participants (EU,

France, Germany, UK, Russia and China) observe the deal,” Zarif said in an email interview with The New York Times published on Thursday.

Zarif said, “Survival or collapse of the JCPOA depends on the ability and willingness of all parties to invest in this undertaking. In a nutshell, a multilateral agreement cannot be implemented unilaterally.” **→2**

Iran’s Hyrcanian Forest named UNESCO World Heritage site

UNESCO on Friday designated Iran’s vast Hyrcanian Forest as a World Heritage site, making it the second such Iranian natural site after Lut Desert, which was granted the tag in 2016.

The inclusion was unanimously approved by experts at the 43rd session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, IRNA quoted acting Secretary General of the Iranian National Commission for

UNESCO Hojjatollah Ayoubi as saying on Friday.

Ayoubi along with Mohammad-Hassan Talebian who is the deputy director of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, and several other officials are attending the session, which is running through July 10 in the Azerbaijani capital Baku. **→10**

Hamas unfazed by the threats made by Netanyahu

TEHRAN— Khalil al-Hayya, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said that the Palestinian “resistance organizations” had recently increased their strength and are preparing to expand the conflict with Israel.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of an Islamic Jihad summer camp in Gaza, al-Hayya said the organizations are unfazed by the threats made by Prime Minister

Binyamin Netanyahu and are adhering to the path of resistance that will lead to the liberation of Jerusalem.

“The attempts of the Israeli occupation to strike at the resistance organizations, threaten them, dry up their (financial) sources and persecute their activists will only add determination to the resistance organizations on the path of truth and liberation,” he said. **→13**



EDITORIAL

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Seizing Grace 1 tanker: An outright theft with no legal justification

Seizing the oil tanker Grace 1 is a new event that has heated up the tension between Iran and the United States, but it can also be related to the current disagreements between United Kingdom and the European Union.

British Royal Marines seized the Iranian oil supertanker, Grace 1, in Gibraltar on Thursday, saying that the tanker was taking oil to Syria that is in violation of EU sanctions.

UK is supposed to leave the European Union within four months and in Britain, the top conservative party members seem inclined to get closer to U.S. and drift apart from other European countries.

In addition, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt, who are likely to replace Theresa May as Britain’s next prime minister, both have taken a quite aggressive stand against Iran, a policy that seems closer to that of Donald Trump’s rather than to the leaders of other European countries.

It would have made much more sense if UK had seized the ship for carrying weapons, but it was merely carrying oil for the 17 million Syrians who are having a fuel crisis and have to stand in fuel stations for several hours before getting a little fuel. Blocking transportation of oil to Syria is an obvious violation of human rights and is against all moral values; specially because the sanctions against transferring oil to Syria are unilateral ones and are not approved by the United Nations.

On the other hand, it is quite surprising that U.S. and other western countries who send their fighter jets to Syria and Iraq as part of their so called “coalition against terrorism” can spot a fly in Syria’s sky but they never seem to notice the tons of oil that ISIS is moving around.

The Syrian nation have to suffer under a cruel siege conducted by Europeans. Posing these sanctions on Syria and preventing the fuel from getting into the country shows the depth of Europeans’ hypocrisy and unveils the true face behind all their seemingly humanitarian gestures. **→13**

Dichotomy of days: Reflections on remembrance of a tragedy

By Yuram Abdullah Weiler from U.S.

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

—White House Press Statement, July 1, 2019

July third is a very somber day of heartbreaking remembrance for the Islamic Republic of Iran, which stands accused of not living up to the terms of an agreement that was scuttled by the mercurial Washington regime. In jarring contrast, July fourth for the United States is a raucous day of celebration, which includes a gaudy military parade in Washington and ubiquitous fireworks to mark America’s independence day. For me personally, contemplating the dichotomy between the two days results in didactic tension that is almost indescribable.

Mainstream western media still scarcely acknowledge the horrible tragedy that occurred in the Persian Gulf thirty one years ago when the USS

Vincennes shot down an Iranian civilian airliner, killing all 290 passengers on board, including 66 children. The trigger-happy skipper of the Vincennes, who was awarded with a medal of honor a year later, was neither brought to justice nor expressed either remorse or regret for this sanguinary slaughter. Describing the unimaginable carnage displayed in a makeshift morgue in a cold storage warehouse in Bandar Abbas hastily set up in the aftermath of the U.S. missile assault, Robert Fisk writes, “There are fifty-eight intact corpses here, fringed by a row of human remains so terrible that they could only be described in a doctor’s report or a medical journal.”

Recently, the Pasdaran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that now is also on the Washington regime’s terrorist list, shot down a U.S. RQ-4A Global hawk, or possibly a more sophisticated and brand new MQ-4C, spy drone, which had violated Iran’s territorial air

space over Hormozgan Province near the village of Kuhmobarak. Before blowing the intruder to smithereens, the IRGC issued multiple warnings to U.S. forces, which ignored them all, the last of which was a full ten minutes before engagement in order to allow time for the Americans to correct their blunder. Furthermore, the IRGC chose not to engage a Boeing P-8 Poseidon plane that was pacing the drone, thereby compassionately sparing the 35-member crew onboard.

U.S. officials were understandably shaken by the downing of their spy drone, particularly if initial reports claiming the aircraft to be an MQ-4C are correct, since it flies at extremely high altitudes in the range of 18,000 km. In any case, even if the aircraft was the older RQ-4A, the targeting by the IRGC was quite an accomplishment, since this drone has similar capabilities. In retaliation, an attack on three Iranian targets, presumably military facilities, **→3**

Trump hits George W. Bush, McCain in new book

TEHRAN— U.S. President Trump in a new book reportedly takes aim at Republican leaders including former President George W. Bush and the late Sen. John McCain (Ariz.).

In the book, “American Carnage: On the Front Lines of the Republican Civil War and the Rise of President Trump,” by Politico Magazine chief correspondent Tim Alberta, Trump said he “brought the [Republican] Party back” after it was in “big trouble,” Axios reported early Wednesday.

Trump reportedly attributed the party’s previous failures to his predecessors, including Bush, who “caused tremendous division ... tremendous

death and tremendous monetary loss” during his presidency by focusing on foreign operations instead of boosting the domestic economy.

Trump also told Alberta that McCain, who died of brain cancer last August and repeatedly feuded with the president during his time in the White House, hurt his 2008 presidential campaign when he told laid-off Midwestern workers that some of them wouldn’t get their jobs back, Axios reports.

“I gave him money — believe it or not, because I wasn’t a huge fan, then or now, but I raised money for him,” Trump said, according to the

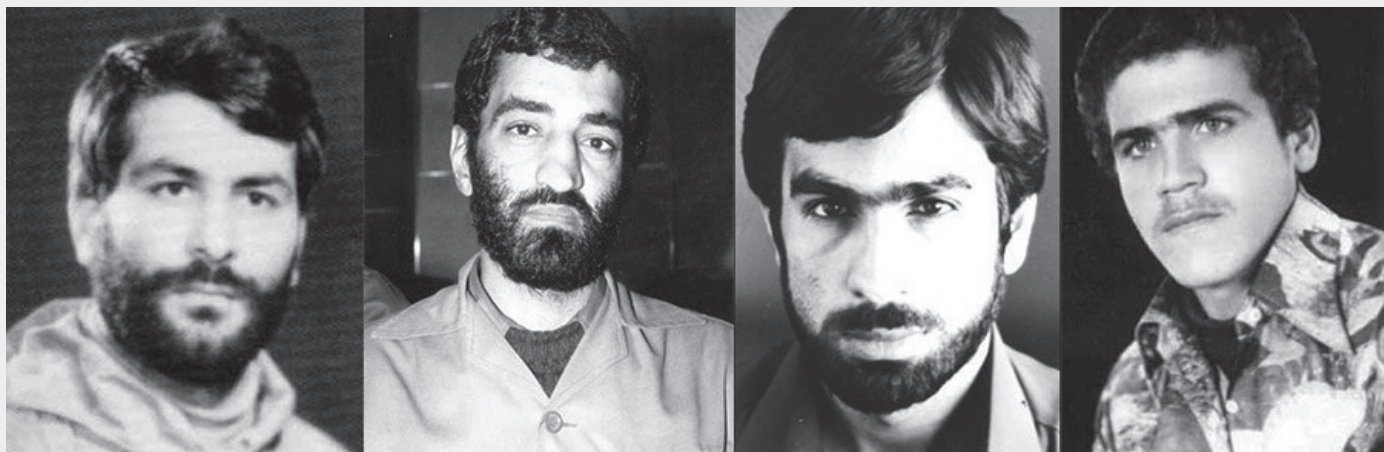
news outlet. “And then he just gave up on an entire section of the country.”

Trump has previously said he was “never a fan of John McCain, and I never will be.”

In the book, Alberta argues that Trump won the presidency in 2016 by “channeling anxious Americans’ indignation and darker impulses,” Axios reports.

“Nobody gave them hope,” Trump reportedly told Alberta during an interview in the Oval Office. “I gave them hope.”

Now, “the Republican Party is strong,” he added. “They’ve got to remain faithful. And loyal.”



Iran urges ICRC to form fact finding committee to examine issue of diplomats abducted in 1982

TEHRAN — Iran’s Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Friday urging the International Committee of the Red Cross to form a fact finding committee to investigate issue of four Iranian diplomats kidnapped in Lebanon on July 5, 1982.

Friday was the 37th anniversary of the abduction of four Iranian diplomats - Seyyed Mohsen Mousavi, Ahmad Motevasselian, Kazem Akhavan and Taqi Rastegar Moqaddam - in Barbara checkpoint in northern Lebanon in 1982. **→2**



ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from
North Carolina

Iran will have the world’s respect, and prevail

An outsider with just some knowledge about Iran can be easily whipsawed by the horrible dilemma the U.S. has dumped on the country over the past 14 months. Yes, Iran must do all it can to defend itself, if it is attacked militarily, and meanwhile must do all it can to circumvent, with assistance, the draconian U.S. economic sanctions.

The most remarkable aspect of the current impasse is the posture of Mike Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State. Pompeo maintains that Iran’s pending decision to enrich uranium to a higher level of toxicity, and yet still far from anything constituting weapons grade, is “proof” that Iran aims to or has already broken the terms of the JCPOA. But everyone in the world knows that it was the U.S. that broke or is breaking the JCPOA (and also imposed economic sanctions).

Pompeo’s is such a bald face lie that it boggles the mind, and yet the demonization of Iran continues unabated by the U.S. and Pompeo reminds one of the Nazi propagandists who well knew that if one tells a lie often enough, too many people sometimes believe it. Moreover, Pompeo tells other lies repeatedly: the whopper lie is that Iran is the world’s biggest state sponsor of terrorism, and getting one’s head around that is impossible. Let’s break it down and dispel it:

Iran objects to Israeli warmongering and apartheid. Iran may to some degree have assisted the Houthis in Yemen to try to fend off the Saudi-led attacks on that country. Iran has some troops or proxies in Iraq, a country ostensibly allied with Iran in the fight against ISIS and other terrorists. Iran, on invitation by the Syrian government, has bolstered the fight against terrorists in Syria aiming to destroy the Assad government, another Iranian ally of sorts. Iran has supported the Lebanese government, insofar as Hezbollah is a big part of that government, where the primary effort has been to force the Israelis to think twice (at least) about attacking or occupying parts of Lebanon (and Syria) as it has done on several occasions since the 1980s. **→7**

We will respond as much as Europe does: Velayati

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — After U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA (The Joint Comprehensive Plan of



Action/ Iran Nuclear Deal) Iran gave a long-standing chance to EU to take action to fulfill its obligations, senior adviser to the Supreme Leader in international affairs Ali Akbar Velayati said on Friday. “So far, the EU have step by step and U.S. directly and EU indirectly violate JCPOA, so we will react in the same vein; that is, if they reduce their obligations, we will reduce too” he added.

Iran urges ICRC to form fact finding committee to examine issue of diplomats abducted in 1982

1 → “Given the fact that Lebanon was under the U.S.-backed Israeli occupation at that time, the Islamic Republic of Iran holds the Zionist regime and its supporters legally and politically responsible for the abduction and the terrorist move,” the statement added.

The statement also praised the Lebanese government’s actions in investigating the case and called for more efforts by the UN, ICRC and other international bodies to continue efforts to reveal destiny of the kidnapped diplomats.

“To this end, the Islamic Republic once again underlines its previous proposal that a fact-finding committee is formed by the International Committee of the Red Cross to follow up the issue,” the statement said.

Zarif says a multilateral agreement cannot be implemented unilaterally

1 → Following is the full text of the interview: ■ The nuclear deal you negotiated, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is now in jeopardy. Do you regret trusting the United States and the West?

A: I believe JCPOA was and remains the best POSSIBLE agreement on the nuclear issue. None of the participants were happy with all elements of the deal, but it addressed the major concerns of all. It was negotiated by all with open eyes about what was possible and what was not. We did not neglect anything. We accepted the reality that we could not resolve all our differences in this deal and we agreed to leave them out.



It is also important to note that, contrary to public statements by its detractors on all sides, JCPOA was not built on trust. It was indeed based on explicit recognition of mutual mistrust. That is why it is so long and detailed. Paragraph 36 of JCPOA is a clear example that we negotiated this deal with the full understanding that we could not trust the commitment of the West. We are exercising that option within the deal right now, which can indeed prevent the deal from total collapse, which will be detrimental to the interest of all, including the United States.

(Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.)

■ Do you think that the nuclear deal can be salvaged? Or do you anticipate continued erosion since President Trump withdrew from the agreement?

A: We will remain committed to the deal as long as the remaining participants (EU, France, Germany, UK, Russia and China) observe the deal. Survival or collapse of the JCPOA depends on the ability and willingness of all parties to invest in this undertaking. In a nutshell, a multilateral agreement cannot be implemented unilaterally.

■ Has this turn of events jeopardized your career as Iran’s top diplomat?

A: My preferred career has always been teaching. I will resume that sooner or later, with more to share with my students.

■ Have you seen hard-liners tweeting and joking and comparing you to the 1970s movie about an Iranian who tries to live out a fantasy of American life? What do you say to this?

A: I did not see that movie, so I do not know. But I do not mind if people have a good laugh about me. That is another way of making myself useful!

■ Officials of the Trump administration have talked about designating you as a target of economic sanctions. What will it mean if Washington sanctions you?

A: Everyone who knows me knows that I, or my family, do not own any property outside Iran. I personally do not even have a bank account outside Iran. Iran is my entire life and my sole commitment. So I have no personal problem with possible sanctions.

The only impact — and possibly the sole objective — of a possible designation would be to limit my ability to communicate. And I doubt that would serve anyone. Certainly, it would limit the possibility of informed decision making in Washington.

Piracy in Gibraltar

British envoy in Tehran summoned over “illegal” tanker seizure

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — An Iranian oil tanker was seized by Gibraltar police, aided by a detachment of British Royal Marines, on Thursday.

Grace 1, a supertanker, was boarded and impounded by Gibraltar police following U.S. request in the Strait of Gibraltar, sources reported.

Following the seizure, the British Ambassador to Tehran, Robert Macaire, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in the evening of Thursday in protest over the “illegal” seizure.

The Foreign Ministry described the move as “unacceptable” and called for an immediate release of the tanker, given that it has been seized at the request of the U.S. based on the information currently available, the ministry said in a report on its website.

Pointing to the fact that the oil tanker was sailing in international waters, Iran called the UK Navy’s move “tantamount to maritime banditry”, and stressed that Britain has no right to impose its own unilateral sanctions or those of the European Union in an extra-territorial manner against other countries.

This is the very bullying policy of the U.S.,



about which the European countries have been always protesting, the ministry said.

The ambassador was provided with the document about the oil tanker and its cargo indicating the ship’s completely legal passage.

It was also emphasized that Iran will be using all its political and legal capacities to secure the release of the vessel and uphold

its rights.

The UK ambassador said he will immediately convey the protest to London, stressing that his country does not follow the unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Spain’s caretaker foreign minister, Josep Borrell, who was nominated this week to become the EU’s foreign policy chief, said

the tanker was stopped by British authorities after a request from the United States.

In Madrid, Borrell told reporters that Spain was assessing the implications of the operation because the detention took place in waters it considers its own.

Britain insists Gibraltar is part of the United Kingdom but Spain says it is not, and the tanker operation risks offending the Spanish.

“We’re looking into how this (operation) affects our sovereignty,” said Borrell.

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Theresa May said she welcomed the “firm action” by the authorities in Gibraltar.

“We have reason to believe that the Grace 1 was carrying its shipment of crude oil to the Banyas Refinery in Syria,” Gibraltar’s chief minister, Fabian Picardo, said in a statement.

John Bolton, White House national security adviser, applauded the interception of the supertanker.

“Excellent news: UK has detained the supertanker Grace 1 laden with Iranian oil bound for Syria in violation of EU sanctions,” Bolton said on Twitter, according to Al Jazeera.

EU to consult with nuclear deal partners as Iran warns of new steps

By staff and agency

The European Union has said it’s in contact with the remaining signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, to discuss Iran’s decision to reduce its commitments under the deal.

“We’ve called on Iran to reverse these steps and to refrain from further measures that would undermine the nuclear agreement,” AP quoted a spokeswoman for EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini as saying on Thursday.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday Tehran will get past a 3.67% uranium enrichment level set by the nuclear deal on July 7 as a retaliatory measure to U.S. ditching of the agreement.

“We will discard that commitment. We will go beyond 3.67% as much as we want

and as much as we need to,” he said during a cabinet meeting.

However, Rouhani said all the Iranian measures are “reversible” if the remaining parties live up to their obligations under the JCPOA.

Iran announced on June 30 that its stockpile of the enriched uranium has reached beyond the 300 kilograms allowed under the agreement. 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.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Iran’s low-grade enriched uranium stockpile has exceeded 300 kg. Zarif said Iran was exercising its right based on the mechanism included in the JCPOA in

response to the U.S. exit from the agreement and reimposition of sanctions on Iran.

“We urge Iran to reverse this step and to refrain from further measures that undermine the nuclear deal,” said the joint statement signed by EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini and the three countries’ foreign ministers — France’s Jean-Yves Le Drian, Germany’s Heiko Maas and Britain’s Jeremy Hunt.

In response, Zarif said on Tuesday that Iran will be committed to the nuclear agreement as long as the European side honors its commitments.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

“Iran is committed to the full implemen-

tation of the #JCPOA: as long as E3/EU implement THEIR economic commitments,” Zarif tweeted.

E3 refers to France, Germany and Britain.

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 falls on July 7.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered sanctions on Tehran. Trump has even introduced full ban on Iran’s oil export, a move which has been described as an economic war against Tehran.

Iranian ambassador meets Turkish party leaders

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s ambassador to Turkey has held a series of meetings with a number of Turkish political party leaders, discussing ways to boost relations between the two neighboring countries.

In a meeting with members of the Justice and Development Party, abbreviated officially “AK Parti” in the Turkish language, Mohammad Farazmand and party officials exchanged views about the latest developments in the region and the world.

Ambassador Farazmand and AK Parti politicians also discussed ways to promote political relationship, Tasnim reported on Friday, without mentioning when the meetings were held.

The Iranian diplomat also held a meeting with Felicity Party secretary general Mustafa Karamollaoglu on issues of mutual interest.

Speaking at the session, Karamollaoglu said Turkish

officials hail Iran’s resistance against U.S. threats and pressures.

The remarks come against the backdrop of increased tensions between Iran and the U.S. with Washington imposing new sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The U.S. has ratcheted up pressure on Iran since last year after withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Since then, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump is trying to reduce Iran’s oil exports to “zero,” and has sent an aircraft carrier strike group, a bomber squad, an amphibious assault ship, F-22 fighter jets, and a Patriot missile battery to the Middle East to try to stack up pressure on Tehran.

Iranian officials, however, have dismissed such moves as psychological warfare, saying the country has its own ways to circumvent bans on its crude oil export.



Trump divorced from reality on Iran: writers

“The Trump administration must face five realities in order to deescalate tension with Iran”

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** - Writing an opinion piece in the Business Insider on July 1, Aaron David Miller, a distinguished scholar at the Wilson Center and a former adviser to six secretaries of state, and Richard Sokolsky, a nonresident senior fellow in Carnegie’s Russia and Eurasia Program, wrote that “maximum pressure” against Iran “isn’t working”.

In the article, titled “Trump won’t accept these harsh realities on Iran”, the writers said the Trump administration’s “strategy of maximum pressure (on Iran) is disconnected from any realistic or coherent goals.”

Following is the text of the article: All administrations — and together we worked for seven — have their blind spots and illusions on foreign policy and national security. But the Trump administration seems particularly divorced from reality, especially with its otherworldly view of the current U.S.-Iran crisis.

Facing up to some hard realities might actually help to prevent a catastrophe and protect U.S. interests, even though we have little confidence the administration will be able to — or even wants to — squirm out of the box it has put itself in.

First, the current crisis flows from events set in motion by President Donald Trump’s reckless and unnecessary decision to walk out of an admittedly flawed but still highly functional nuclear accord without a serious plan B.

Make no mistake: The U.S. and Iran were at odds long before Trump walked out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal last year.

The original sin of unilaterally leaving an agreement that was imposing stringent restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program — and that Tehran was abiding by — has

been compounded by the administration’s misguided and dangerous conviction that its maximum-pressure campaign of sanctions will force Iran to capitulate; instead, it has isolated America from its allies and pushed the U.S. and Iran to the verge of a military confrontation that, given the level of tension and mistrust between the two countries and the absence of any regular and direct channels of communication, could easily spiral out of control.

Iran is now threatening to end its compliance with key provisions of the nuclear accord, including enriching uranium at higher levels and maintaining a larger stockpile of the material than allowed under the agreement.

In a disturbing trend that is all too familiar with this administration, in walking away from the nuclear agreement, it came up with a solution to a problem it manufactured and then made much worse in the process; instead of following the usual administration playbook of defining success downward to allow the president to declare a win, it has doubled and even tripled down on a strategy that offers no prospect for success.

Second, the administration’s strategy of maximum pressure is disconnected from any realistic or coherent goals. Trump may want to squeeze Tehran to death economically to force it back to the negotiating table to reach a better deal than his predecessor did — one that would not only establish even more dra-

conian restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program but curb its development of ballistic missiles. But the president’s policies and rhetoric have done nothing to encourage Iranian leaders to believe that they can achieve a better outcome for their interests through negotiations.

Moreover, the president’s headline advisers, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and national security adviser John Bolton, hope to use maximum pressure either to provoke Iran to take actions that would provide a pretext for U.S. military strikes, or to bring about the collapse of the regime.

But maximum pressure isn’t working.

In short, the administration’s strategy is the worst of both worlds: It has only increased tensions and cut off possible avenues for deescalation without achieving any of its goals. And it will not coerce Tehran to wave a white flag and cave to the preposterous negotiating demands the U.S. has set as the price for removing its crippling sanctions.

Third, one gets the feeling that much of the administration’s Iran policy is driven by domestic politics and presidential ego rather than the national interest. Iran is no worse than North Korea. Unlike Iran, it already possesses deliverable nuclear weapons.

Yet the administration has elevated Tehran, not Pyongyang, to the level of a global menace, as Trump praises Kim Jong Un, describes their correspondence as love letters, and warmly meets with him at high-profile

summits. Part of this is Trump’s desire to cut a deal with North Korea that would get him into the history books. He views Iran, on the other hand, as old business, a bad deal he inherited from Obama.

Bashing Tehran is also popular among evangelicals, the conservative Jewish community, and regional cheerleaders, like Israel and Saudi Arabia. Much of these constraints are self-imposed. If Trump can deal with Kim, he can certainly negotiate with Iran.

Tehran and Washington are engaged in a long-term struggle for influence and power. This isn’t the first crisis, and it won’t be the last.

Officials in Tehran believe that knuckling under to U.S. threats and pressure will only encourage Washington to escalate what it already sees as unacceptable demands; the president is all about acting tough and believes that compromise is a four-letter word. Given the fundamentally divergent interests of the two countries, the best the U.S. can do is manage the conflict.

Even if a serious negotiation is resumed — and that’s a heavy lift — the most likely outcome would be an amended nuclear accord, which will occur only if both sides are willing to give as good as they get. As of now, that possibility seems more remote than ever.

Iran is in desperate need of economic relief, but the administration is unwilling and the Europeans unable to provide it. Trump says he does not want a war with Iran, and Iran clearly doesn’t want to court one.

Maybe a major confrontation can be avoided. At the moment, however, there’s a real risk that the U.S. and Iran are playing a game of highway chicken, and neither side is quite in control of the steering wheel. Fasten your seat belts: The road ahead could get a whole lot bumpier.

“Much of the administration’s Iran policy is driven by domestic politics and presidential ego rather than the national interest.” Aaron David Miller Richard Sokolsky write in the Business Insider.

‘Enemy won’t dare attack Iran as long as we resist’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The enemy won’t dare to attack Iran as long as “we are ready to counter the threats and resist against the enemy,” says Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Central Headquarters.

“The strength and readiness of the Armed Forces are at a very high level,” General Rashid said during a visit to the Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf on Thursday, Mehr reported.

Just like the way Iranian warriors fought the enemy during the 8-year Sacred Defense (Iran’s resistance against Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Iran in the 1980s) and did not allow even an inch of their land to remain in occupation Hussein’s army, today they are defending these islands as well, he stated.

Pointing to U.S. plots against Iran, the general said the victory of the Islamic Revolution was first in a series of heavy



defeats inflicted on the U.S. by the noble Iranian nation.

He cited resistance as the reason for Iran’s successes against the United States in

recent years, quoting Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who has said: “The cost of submission is far greater than the cost of resistance.”

Tension between Tehran and Washington has been running high since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced crushing sanctions against Iran.

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

The tension escalated as on June 20 the Iranian military shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone after it breached Iran’s airspace. The U.S. drone entered the Iranian airspace from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Iran’s Expediency Council secretary calls for seizing British tanker in retaliation

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Secretary of the Expediency Council (EC) has said Iran should seize a British oil tanker if London doesn’t release the Iranian tanker which was illegally seized by its forces.

“The Islamic Revolution has never been an initiator of tension during its 40-year-old history, however, it has not hesitated to respond to bullies and thugs,” Mohsen Rezaee tweeted on Friday.

The former IRGC chief added, “If Britain doesn’t return the Iranian tanker, the duty of responsible [Iranian] bodies is to seize a British oil tanker in a retaliatory measure.”

The British Royal Marines seized an Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar on Thursday for trying to take oil to Syria allegedly in violation of EU sanctions, a dramatic step that could escalate tensions between Iran and the West.

Hours later, the Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned Britain’s ambassador to Tehran, Rob Macaire, for the act.

“Following the illegal seizure of an Ira-



nian oil tanker in Gibraltar by British Royal Marines, the British envoy to Tehran has been summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday.

Acting Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell has said Gibraltar detained the supertanker Grace 1 after a request by the United States to Britain.

He added that Spain was looking into the seizure of the ship and how it may affect Spanish sovereignty as it appears to have happened in Spanish waters.

Turkey, Russia, Iran to hold summit on Syria in August

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Ankara will host a trilateral summit with the participation of Russia and Iran in August, Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said on Thursday.

“The meeting will mainly be on Idlib and other parts of Syria, on the general security situation, transition processes, constitutional commission and resettlement,” he said after a cabinet meeting in the capital Ankara, Daily Sabah reported on Thursday.

Kalin also said that there would be another meeting with Russian, German and French leaders in two months.

“During the G20 summit it was agreed upon that a four-party summit just like the one from last year will be held in Istanbul hosted by our president. A quadruple summit is planned before going to the UN General Assembly,” he said.

Kalin said Syria and regional issues will be discussed in these meetings.



Turkey, Russia and Iran are cooperating as part of the Astana process to bring peace and stability to war-torn Syria. Officials from the three countries most recently met in the newly renamed Kazakh capital Nur-Sultan in April.

The first meeting of the Astana process was in Turkey in January 2017 to bring all warring parties in the Syrian conflict to the table to facilitate UN-sponsored peace talks in Geneva.

The Astana talks support the establishment of a UN-backed constitutional committee in Syria to find a political solution.

Iran in possession of ‘secret weapons’: general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard, commander of Iran’s Air Defense Force, on Wednesday pledged to hand the enemies the harshest response in case of any hostile moves against Iran, adding that Iran is in possession of “secret weapons” to be used in the event of war.

“The U.S. and its regional allies should know that they do not have the power to encounter the Islamic Republic because we are in possession of secret weapons unique to the Iranian nation,” Sabahifard warned, IRNA reported.

“Our deterrence power has stopped the enemy 200 miles away from the Strait of Hormuz,” the general said.

“The enemy knows very well that it should not go for



testing Iran’s combat capability as its first mistake will be its last,” he added.

In similar condemnatory remarks on Wednesday, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said Iran has managed to destroy the United States’ fictitious and artificial grandeur in the world.

“Once, military action was the main focus of the enemy... but today, economic war is the main field in which the enemy encounters us,” Major General Hossein Salami said.

Salami also described the tensions between Tehran and Washington as a “war of wills”, saying that in the current situation it’s the enemy that is concerned about the outbreak of a war.

Erdogan says open to mediate talks between Tehran and Washington

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday said that he’s willing to accept an offer to mediate talks between Iran and the U.S. to ease rising tension in the Middle East, the TRT World reported on Thursday.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s attempts failed to find a common ground in de-escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

Speaking to reporters on his way back to Turkey from China, President Erdogan

stressed that none of the leaders were enthusiastic on discussing how to solve the Iran-U.S. crisis.

“Abe asked me whether we can act together on this issue. I said ‘Why not. I can talk to both of them, [Supreme Leader Ali] Khamenei and [President Hassan] Rouhani,” said Erdogan.

Before visiting Beijing, Erdogan had participated in the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan.

“After this, we agreed to discuss the steps that we are going to take.”

Under Donald Trump’s leadership, Washington announced to increase pressure on Iran. Countries, entities and companies that do business with Tehran will also be slapped by U.S. sanctions.

Trump withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program that aimed to curb Tehran’s uranium en-

richment program in return for lifting all of its nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions.

Erdogan stressed that Japan is also not in support of U.S. sanctions on Iran and that problems need to be solved with “new perspectives and brave leadership”.

Chinese officials are also against U.S. embargoes, he said while saying that sanctions are counter-productive to peace and stability in the region.

Dichotomy of days: Reflections on remembrance of a tragedy

1 → was planned and in progress, but was aborted by the White House at the last minute following an unexpected burst of cynical compassion over the anticipated deaths of 150 people as a result of the raids.

In calling off the strikes, Trump stressed that no Americans had been killed in the downing of the drone. However, he stated “We didn’t have a man or woman in the drone.” Had even a single American been killed Trump intimidated, “It would have made a big, big difference.” So one dead American apparently justifies attacks on three Iranian anti-aircraft defense facilities. If this is the case, and given “All men are created equal,” as proclaimed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, then the killing of 290 people on Iran Air Flight 655 should, by this calculus, justify retaliatory attacks by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 870 U.S. military assets, I would conjecture. All men are created equal, right? I see no exceptions here for Iranians; what is justifiable for America should be justifiable for Iran.

Meanwhile, the U.S. president, along with his senior adviser daughter, has engaged in numerous photo-ops at the G20 summit with other world leaders, who, despite their off-

the-record criticism of the current occupant of the White House, nonetheless seem to flock to him like self-effacing courtiers used to cluster around “His Imperial Majesty”, the former dictator of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. All of this swarming and fawning was typical and expected, given the context of an importunate, bullying egomaniac among spineless sycophants and those afflicted with hyper-inflated egos. No doubt, the former reality TV star turned leader of “the free world” used the numerous opportunities presented to hawk his illustrious brand name, which I prefer not to mention repeatedly out of empathy for the reader.

But when I learned of the draft-dodger-in-chief’s trip to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea for another photo-op, this time with Kim Jong-un, the leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, something inside of me smoldered with outrage. I myself had been stationed right there in Korea, three miles south of the DMZ at Camp Jessup in Munsan, in 1969 and 1970. I drove my commander, the late Col. Samuel B. Spicely (d. 2016), up to the DMZ in a jeep and we both had to don flak jackets and steel helmets to do so. I had no choice at the time, other than

to go AWOL (absent without leave) and leave the country; I knew one E8 master sergeant who actually did just that. In those days, the U.S. had a conscript army, and draftees had the choices of leaving the country, going to jail or reporting for duty.

At the same time, the present U.S. commander-in-chief managed to get himself a 4F medical deferment for “bone spurs,” but I passed the army physical and was inducted: poor eyesight, flat feet and all. It was not about patriotism, believe me. By then, I had realized the American war in Vietnam was, at a minimum, unwinnable, if not immoral and illegal. Like the pusillanimous U.S. president and national security adviser John “chicken hawk” Bolton. I had no desire to have my brains blown out in a rice paddy in Vietnam, either. Nevertheless, I felt that I had a responsibility to serve the country of my birth. Besides, if I had chosen to hightail it to Canada I would have had to leave my family and friends behind. That would have been especially hard on my mother who had cancer and died a year later.

As for Mike Pompeo, who was touted as a 1991 Gulf war veteran by no less than 51 members of congress during his congressional

confirmation hearings for his appointment as secretary of state and previously as CIA director, it seems that he did not see combat service there at all, at least according to the CIA. So how ironic is it that this timorous troika, Trump, Bolton and Pompeo, is pushing hard for war with Iran, when two of them are draft-dodgers and none of them has had to face real combat?

This pathetic state of affairs would almost be laughable, were it not for the fact that the valiant people of Iran are suffering due to the injustices being imposed upon them by the chauvinistic chimeras of these bellicose blowhards. Unfortunately these importunate ideologues happen to be the overseers of the largest, best armed and most lethal military force that the world has ever seen. I hope and pray that Trump will be satisfied from playing army with his soldiers and tanks on the fourth of July, and not be tempted to unleash them on someone else’s country.

These are some of my thoughts on these dichotomous days of July 3 and 4. May Allah protect the Islamic Republic of Iran, and save us all from these psychotic human shaytans in Washington and their diabolical enablers in the Zionist entity, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

Iran will enrich uranium as much as it needs, cleric says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Tehran Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani says Iran will enrich uranium to any level and in any quantity it needs starting from July 7.

“Iran will continue its enrichment. However, our enrichment is not for atomic bomb because we neither regard it ethical nor do we need it,” Movahedi Kermani told worshippers in Tehran.

President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the Arak heavy water nuclear reactor – which was agreed to be redesigned under the JCPOA – will resume its previous activities after July 7 if the other signatories to the deal fail to uphold their end of the bargain.

Rouhani added Tehran will abandon this commitment and will increase the enrichment level to the level required.



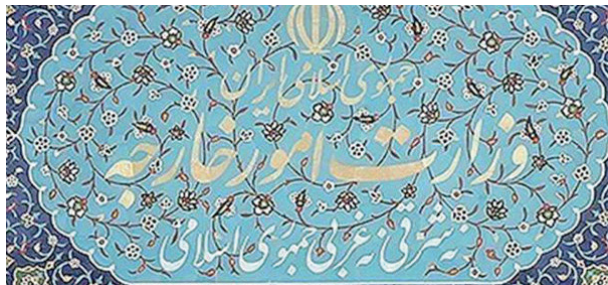
Iran expresses regret over Russia submarine fire

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi has expressed regret over a lethal fire that broke out on a Russian nuclear-powered submarine, killing several crew members.

Mousavi offered condolences and sympathy to Russia, particularly the bereaved families, over the tragic incident.

At least 14 sailors died in the blaze aboard the research vessel while carrying out a survey of the seafloor, Russian news agencies quoted the Defense Ministry as saying.

The incident took place on Monday in Russian territorial waters and the fire has now been extinguished.



Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said the cause of the incident was a “fire in the battery compartment that spread,” according to a transcription of a meeting with President Vladimir Putin on the Kremlin website.

According to Euronews, Shoigu added, “The nuclear power unit has been sealed off and all personnel have been removed.”

Iran’s enrichment limitation voluntary step: Russia’s IAEA envoy

(Press TV) The Russian envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says Iran accepted to limit the amount of its low-enriched uranium only as a voluntary step, adding that the UN nuclear agency does not enforce any limitations on the volume of the product that the Islamic Republic can keep.

“There are no limits on Iran’s low-enriched uranium (LEU) monitored by the international regulator,” Russia’s Interfax news agency reported, citing a Thursday tweet by Mikhail Ulyanov.

“For objective assessment, one should not forget that in principle there are no limits on the amount of LEU (low-enriched uranium) for NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) State Parties, provided that LEU remains under international control,” he added.

“Iran voluntarily accepted the limit on LEU as part of the Iran deal, which is fundamentally undermined by US sanctions,” the official noted.

Iran’s nuclear deal was initially reached between the P5+1 group of states – the United States, the UK, France, Russia, and China plus Germany – and Iran in Vienna in July 2015. It is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The fate of the deal has, however, been in doubt since last May, when the U.S. pulled out of the agreement and reinstated the anti-Iran sanctions that it had lifted under the document.

This May, Iran initiated a set of countermeasures in reaction to the U.S. withdrawal. The measures were also meant to prompt the deal’s European parties to restore their trade with Iran, which they stopped after the American bans were reinforced.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced on Monday that Iran had surpassed the LEU stockpile limit as part of the retaliatory measures.

Ulyanov said Iran took the move “in response to illegal oil embargo.” Washington has avowed an intention to reduce Iran’s crude exports to “zero” by returning its oil bans against the Islamic Republic.

■ ‘Iran’s measure, response to sanctions’

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, meanwhile, said on Thursday that Iran’s measure to reduce its JCPOA commitments came in reaction to the U.S. sanctions that had “made it impossible for the Iranian party to implement its obligations under the JCPOA.”

Repeating assertions made by other Russian officials, she called Iran’s move “a logical outcome” of the U.S. actions, including the sanctions.

Zakharova called Iran placed the 300-kilogram LEU limit as a volitional step, “which it had deemed acceptable [back] in 2015.”

On Tuesday, Zarif said the Islamic Republic will comply with the terms of the JCPOA as long as European signatories to the deal honor their commitments.

Zarif, in a post published on his official Twitter page, wrote that Tehran is committed to the full implementation of the landmark nuclear agreement as long as its European parties meet their economic obligations.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	248944.0
IFX	3213.53

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,400 rials
GBP	52,842 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.54/b
WTI	\$56.84/b
OPEC Basket	\$62.69/b
Gold	\$1,415.75/oz
Silver	\$15.26/oz
Platinum	\$834.50/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Traders downplaying SA credit risk should heed Turkey

The erosion of Turkey's creditworthiness is a warning signal for South Africa, and investors are ignoring it, according to Informa Financial Markets.

According to fin24.com, the cost of insuring the country's debt against non-payment dropped to the lowest in 13 months this week, even as a funding crisis at Eskom strains government finances while the economy struggles to recover from the worst quarterly contraction since the 2008 financial crisis.



Moody's Investors Service, the only major rating company still to assess South Africa at investment level, is reviewing its stance in November. Last month, Moody's cut Turkey's rating deeper into junk citing, among other factors, erosion of institutional strength and the government's inability to implement measures to revive the economy. Similar problems also plague South Africa, said Christopher Shiells, a London-based emerging-market analyst at Informa. "Turkey's credit-rating troubles throw an uneasy light on South Africa," Shiells said. "Moody's rationale for downgrading Turkey should be of concern for South Africa watchers as these are problems that beset South Africa."

■ South Africa's economy

South Africa's economy hasn't expanded by more than 2% a year since 2013, and endured recessions in 2009 and 2018. There's a chance it may be headed for another after the first-quarter contraction. Turkey's economy emerged from a recession in the first quarter.

Yet the cost of five-year credit-default swaps - insurance against a default - fell to 163 basis points on Wednesday, more than 200 below Turkey's. That suggests traders aren't hedging for the possibility of a downgrade.

"There could be a widening out in South African spreads in the build-up to the November rating decision if economic fundamentals continue to deteriorate," said Shiells. The CDS spread could "blow out" as much as 200 basis points in the event of a downgrade, he said.

The blowout could extend to bonds. Benchmark government bond yields are around the lowest since April 2018, leaving plenty of scope for a reversal in the event of a Moody's downgrade, which would spark a sell-off by funds that track investment-grade indexes.

■ The foreign-currency debt

And while the country's foreign-currency debt is already considered junk - with ratings below investment level at S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings - that hasn't deterred investors. The bonds have returned 12.3% this year, beating the average return of 11% for the 629 member Bloomberg Barclays EM Hard Currency Aggregate Sovereign Total Return Index.

The country's 2048 securities are the top performers in BB category, with a return of 20%. The yield on the debt is at the lowest since the notes began trading in May 2018.

A downgrade for the local-currency bonds to junk would have a "spillover" impact on the hard-currency notes, said Trieu Pham, a London-based emerging markets strategist at ING Bank NV.

"With the external backdrop dominating, market pricing indeed doesn't factor in the risk of a Moody's downgrade," Pham said. A "negative surprise would see an initial knee-jerk reaction on the on the bonds."

How S. Korea and Taiwan progressed and expanded their economies

South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Indonesia all suffered from Japanese occupation during the Second World War. But in the decades of peace that followed, South Korea and Taiwan revived, grew their economies and became rich. Their GDP per capita - what everyone in the country earns per year if income is equally distributed - are now on par with developed Western countries.

As per industryherald244.com, Malaysia, however, plateaued once it reached upper-middle income, a term the World Bank uses to define countries with a per capita GDP higher than \$1,045 but lower than \$12,736. In the meantime, Indonesia is still struggling in the lower-middle income level with GDP per capita below \$4,125.

Around two decades after the second world war, in 1967, Malaysia led the four economies in GDP per capita at \$317. Taiwan's was \$281, South Korea's \$161 and Indonesia's \$54.

Iranian delegation visits Baku to discuss bilateral trade ties

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — A high-ranking Iranian delegation comprising a number of MPs as well as representatives of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), visited the Azerbaijani capital of Baku to discuss ways to expand bilateral trade ties.

According to the portal of ICCIMA, the Iranian delegation met with Azerbaijan's Minister of Economy Shahin Mustafayev

and held talks on joint projects and discussed future cooperation in economic areas.

Establishing the North-South corridor, launching an automobile plant, co-manufacturing heavy trucks, establishing a joint pharmaceutical plant, as well as ways of increasing the volume of trade between the two countries, and facilitating activities of the Iranian private sector in Azerbaijan, were among the major subjects discussed in the



meeting.

In March, Iran and Azerbaijan held their 13th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Baku which was followed by a business and investment forum.

Talks between representatives of the two

countries were held within the framework of eight committees, including trade and industry, investment, finance and banking, customs and borders, transportation and transit, energy and environment, agriculture and health, and finally tourism.

Over \$6.4b allocated to unfinished projects

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian government has allocated 270 trillion rials (over \$6.4 billion at the official exchange rate) for the completion of unfinished development projects, Tasnim reported on Friday, quoting head of the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) as saying.

Despite a limitation in financial resources, a total budget of 430 trillion rials (\$10.23 billion) was earmarked for the completion of unfinished development projects, of which

270 trillion has so far been allocated, according to Mohammad Baqer Nobakht.

"We have decided to spend the money on projects that can be completed this year (ending March 20, 2020)," the official said, adding, "There are over 80,000 semi-finished development projects across the country."

He referred to the completion of semi-finished development projects as a top priority for the government, saying that at least four quadrillion rials (over \$95 billion) is

needed to complete all such projects.

In February, the industry minister Reza Rahmani announced that completing 12,000 semi-finished industrial projects with over 60 percent progress across the country was a priority.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has underlined the need for implementing semi-finished projects, saying it is a top priority for the current fiscal year.



Iran sets target of \$4b in food, pharmaceutical exports

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has it on agenda to boost the exports of foodstuff, pharmaceuticals and sanitary products to \$4 billion in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

According to the ministry's portal, promoting foreign trade and in collaboration with domestic and foreign enterprises is on the ministry's agenda for the current year.

In June, the ministry announced it has planned to boost the annual export of commodities and services to 15 neighboring countries to \$32 billion in the current Iranian calendar year.

In April, the industry minister said the country plans to double exports to the neighboring countries by the [Iranian calendar] year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

The value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$8.4 billion in the first two months of the current year (March 21-May

21), up 8.9 percent year on year.

Meanwhile, the country's non-oil imports stood at \$6.7 billion, an 8 percent decrease compared to the year before.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$4.87 billion during the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 20), down 17 percent compared to the same period last year.

Economic survey 2019: Asia, Africa and Latin America to drive IT exports

Demand from South America, Asia and Africa is expected to drive growth for exports in IT/ITeS sector in the coming years, according to the Economic Survey 2019.

As stated by moneycontrol.com, for the IT and ITeS sector, the U.S., UK and Europe accounts for about 90 percent of total exports. However in the recent times these geographies have posed challenges including visa issues in the U.S., Brexit in UK and European Union and other macro-economic volatility.

At the same time, demand from Asia pacific countries, Latin America and Middle East Asia is growing and new opportunities are emerging for expanding in continental Europe, Japan, China and Africa.

To tap the growing opportunity, the Survey said, efforts are being made to further strengthen existing markets, and simultaneously diversify and increase presence in the new and emerging markets in Europe (besides UK which is a mature market), Africa, South America, Israel, Australia, China and Japan through market development and industry re-positioning initiative.

India's exports accounted for about \$136 billion for FY2019, up 8 percent



from \$126 billion in FY18. India's IT-BPM revenue for 2018-19 is \$181 billion, up 8.3 percent from \$167 billion in 2017-18.

IT services account for about 52 percent of the total revenue, followed by BPM with share of around 20 percent. Software products and engineering services together accounted for around 19 percent share whereas hardware accounts for 10 percent, according to the report.

E-commerce market is estimated at \$43 billion for FY 2018-19, at the growth rate of 12 percent.

The survey said that the government's Digital India Initiative along with new and emerging technologies are new opportunities for revenue and job creation in IT and electronics and also new sectors of the economy such as transport, health, power, agriculture, and tourism.

Japan upgrades economic assessment for May on robust output data

Japan raised its assessment of the economy for May on Friday, saying downside movements are coming to a halt due to upbeat industrial production, though an uncertain outlook for the global economy remains due to the U.S.-China trade dispute.

As per mainichi.jp, the Cabinet Office said its coincident index of business conditions for May rose 1.1 points from the previous month to 103.2 against the 2015 base of 100, marking growth for the second straight month.

The reading, coupled with unexpectedly positive gross domestic product data for the January-March quarter, may help to dispel concern that the world's third-largest economy is heading into a recession.

The office maintains the view that Japan's current economic growth phase from December 2012 has likely surpassed the previous longest postwar expansion of 73 months from 2002 to 2008, but the outlook became murky after the office downgraded its assessment of the business conditions index in January from "weakening" to "signaling a possible turning point."

For March, the office used the phrase "worsening" -- the most pessimistic of its

five expressions -- for the first time in more than six years amid slowing demand for automobile and manufacturing equipment exports. The same wording was used for April.

■ The downside movements

For May, however, the office said downside movements are "halting to fall," raising the assessment of the index for the first time since October 2016.

The strong industrial output data contributed to the positive reading, according to the office, but some economists were not necessarily upbeat about the prospects for the economy as the rise in production was seen as largely due to last-minute demand ahead of a planned consumption tax hike in October.

They also believe production and exports are unlikely to grow sustainably on the back of the ongoing trade friction between the world's two largest economies.

"Uncertainty over the economic outlook remains," said Yoshiaki Shinke, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

The leading index of business conditions, which predicts the trend in the coming months, was down 0.7 point from the previous month at 95.2 in May.

Singapore plans huge 50MW floating solar project

By Joshua S Hill

Singapore's national water agency will work with Norwegian technical consultancy DNV GL to develop what will be one of the largest single floating solar systems in the world - a 50MW project planned for the Tengeh Reservoir in the island's north-west.

DNV GL announced on Thursday that it had been contracted by Singapore's Public Utilities Board (PUB) as technical advisor for the 50MW floating solar PV project.

PUB will conduct a tender for development of the project, billed as Southeast Asia's largest public tender for floating PV and, according to DNV GL, use a "pioneering business model consisting of both conventional and renewable energy components."

DNV GL will work with PUB throughout the tender preparation, bidding, design, construction, and operational phases of the project.

The "scale of the Tengeh Reservoir project makes it an important milestone in the development of this rapidly emerging technology," said Nicolas Renon, Executive Vice President Asia Pacific, at DNV GL - Energy.

"We are looking forward to bringing our expertise across various forms of energy generation to this project and support the Singaporean government in meeting its



ambitious solar generation targets."

The Tengeh Reservoir floating solar PV project is billed as being completed and operational by 2021 and will be used to power the reservoir's water treatment facilities, eliminating 28,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually in the process.

An island city-state off the southern coast of Malaysia, Singapore is one of the world's global financial centers, but has limited renewable options and resources. According to Singapore's Energy Market Authority (EMA), the country has "no hydro resources, our wind speeds and mean tidal range are low, and geothermal energy is not economically viable."

Unsurprisingly, then, solar energy "re-

mains the most viable renewable energy option for Singapore" as the country is located helpfully in the tropical sun belt and enjoys an average annual solar irradiance of 1,580 kWh/m²/year.

Nevertheless, Singapore is making significant strides towards achieving its Paris Agreement pledges, which include a pledge to reducing emissions by 16% by 2020 and reducing its Emissions Intensity by 36% from 2005 levels by 2030, and to stabilize their emissions with the aim of peaking around the 2030 mark. Singapore also hosts the Singapore International Energy Week, which will mark its 12th edition later this year and help meet the country's commitment to becoming a global leader

among energy companies.

■ A Launched public tender

Singapore's PUB launched a public tender to seek proposals to design, build, own, and run the 50 MW floating solar PV project at Tengeh Reservoir on June 6. At the same time, PUB also confirmed it is in the process of implementing two smaller 1.5 MW floating solar PV systems on the Bedok and Lower Seletar reservoirs.

The tender for these two smaller projects has already closed and will be awarded in the third quarter for operations to begin in early 2020. PUB is also deploying rooftop solar PV installations across their water infrastructure and reservoirs in order to reduce their carbon footprint.

When the three floating solar projects are completed, PUB will boast solar capacity of around 57MW, and will add a further 5MW in 2025 when rooftop solar is installed atop the Tuas Water Reclamation Plant.

The first utility-scale public tender for floating PV in Southeast Asia, the Tengeh Reservoir project has already completed preliminary design, independent energy assessment, technology benchmarking, and business model studies, and will provide tender support and proposal evaluation during the bidding phase.

(Source: reneweconomy.com.au)

U.S. considering waiver for China to import oil from Iran: report

ENERGY TEHRAN — The U.S. Department of State is mulling over allowing China to import oil from Iran as payment for a Chinese company's investment in an Iranian oilfield, Politico reported on Wednesday, quoting three U.S. officials and sources.

According to the officials, the State Department is discussing an arrangement that would allow China to import Iranian oil as payment for the Chinese oil company Sinopec works on an Iranian oilfield.

"Administration officials have offered to issue a waiver for the payback oil in official correspondence between the State Department and Sinopec," a source familiar with the situation said.

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

In late June, China's Jinxi Refining and



Chemical Complex received a one-million-barrel cargo of Iranian oil in the first month after the Trump administration ended

waivers permitting imports of Iranian oil. Jinxi is owned and operated by PetroChina, which is affiliated to China

National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), a long-time buyer of Iranian oil and the parent company of Bank of Kunlun, the financial institution that has been at the heart of China-Iran trade for the last decade.

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

Meanwhile, Reuters reported that Iran delivered 130,000t of fuel oil to China despite the U.S. sanctions.

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

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

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

Iraq to set up mechanism to buy Iranian gas, electricity

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iraq is going to establish a trade mechanism to continue buying gas and electricity from Iran despite U.S. sanctions, AFP reported, citing senior Iraqi officials.

"The special purpose vehicle (SPV) would allow Iraq to pay for imported Iranian energy in Iraqi dinars, which Iran could use to exclusively buy basic goods," Iraqi officials said.

As reported, the SPV was the result of months of talks between Iraqi, Iranian and U.S. officials.

"The Iraqi government will continue to pay Iran for gas by depositing money into a special bank account inside Iraq, in Iraqi dinars," one of the officials told AFP.

A U.S. official also told AFP that Washington was aware of the mechanism's creation.

In mid-June, AFP reported that the United States

granted Iraq another 90-day waiver to continue with vital energy imports from neighboring Iran despite re-imposed sanctions.

Iranian energy imports are vital to Iraq, one of the world's hottest countries, which faces chronic blackouts that often leave homes without power for up to 20 hours a day.

Iraq pipes in up to 28 million cubic meters of Iranian gas a day for power generation and also directly imports up to 1,300 megawatts of Iranian electricity.

That dependence is uncomfortable for Washington, which sees Tehran as its top regional foe.

Trump reimposed unilateral sanctions on Iran's energy and finance sectors in November following a decision to abandon a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Tehran.

He gave Iraq an initial 45-day waiver to continue buying



electricity and natural gas from Tehran, and in December Washington granted Baghdad a 90-day extension.

Oil set for weekly loss on weak economic data

Crude oil prices fell on Friday on weak economic indicators from the United States and Germany, shrugging off tensions around Iran and this week's decision by OPEC and its allies to extend a supply cut deal until next year.

According to reuters.com, U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures CL1 were down \$0.79 at \$56.55 per barrel by 0754 GMT. There was no settlement price on Thursday because of the Independence Day holiday in the United States.

Front-month Brent crude futures LCO1 were down \$0.23 at \$63.07 per barrel. Both benchmarks were set for their biggest weekly falls in five weeks.

"Oil prices eased lower on Friday morning as concerns over global economic growth offset escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East," RBC analysts said in a note.

Weak industrial demand gave a bearish signal for oil demand.

■ Europe's largest economy

German industrial orders fell far more than expected in May, and the Economy Ministry warned on Friday that this sector of Europe's largest economy was likely to remain weak in the coming months.

In the United States, new orders for factory goods fell for a second straight month in May, government data showed on Wednesday, stoking economic con-



cerns.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration on Wednesday reported a weekly decline of 1.1 million barrels in crude stocks, much smaller than the 5 million barrel draw reported by the American Petroleum Institute earlier in the week and analyst expectations.

Giving a floor to prices was this week's commitment to cut production from the world's largest exporters - including members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other producers such as Russia, a grouping known as OPEC+.

"Global growth remains the main factor holding back crude prices," said Alfonso Esparza, senior analyst at OANDA. "The OPEC+ deal will keep prices from falling too hard, but there must be an end to trade protectionism to assure the demand for energy products recovers."

Ongoing tension in the Middle East offered some support.

India plans \$330b renewables push by 2030 without hurting coal

India said on Thursday it needs \$330 billion in investments over the next decade to power its renewable energy dream, but coal would remain central to its electricity generation.

According to reuters.com, the energy guzzling country wants to raise its renewable energy capacity to 500 Gigawatts (GW), or 40% of total capacity, by 2030.

Renewables currently account for 22% of India's total installed capacity of about 357 GW.

"Additional investments in renewable plants up to year 2022 would be about \$80 billion at today's prices and an investment of around \$250 billion would be required for the period 2023-2030," according to the government's economic survey presented to parliament on Thursday.

India wants to have 175 GW of renewable-based installed power capacity by 2022.

The investment estimate reflects the magnitude of financial challenges facing one of the world's most important growth markets for renewable energy, with government data indicating a growth slowdown in private and capital investments in the year ended March 2019.

India, which receives twice as much sunshine as European countries, wants to make solar a cornerstone of its renewable expansion, but also wants to make use of its cheap and abundant coal

reserves, the fifth-largest in the world.

■ Coal-based utilities

The annual economic survey warned India against abruptly halting coal-based utilities, citing risks to its banking sector and the stability of the electricity grid.

"It may not be advisable to effect a sudden abandonment of coal based power plants without complete utilization of their useful lifetimes as it would lead to stranding of assets that can have further adverse impact on the banking sector," the survey said.

Thermal power plants account for 80% of all industrial emissions of particulate matter, sulfur and nitrous oxides in India.

India, one of the world's largest coal producers and greenhouse gas emitters, estimates coal to be its energy mainstay for at least the next three decades. The country's coal use rose 9.1% to nearly a billion tons in 2018-19.

The survey said it would be difficult for a growing economy like India to migrate to renewable power supply unless "sufficient technological breakthrough in energy storage happens in the near future".

Environmentalists worry that India's rising use of coal at a time when many Western nations are rejecting the dirty fossil fuel will hamper the global fight against climate change, despite the country's commitment to renewable energy.

Iberdrola continues to strengthen in Brazil with more wind energy projects

Iberdrola obtained two new wind power projects for a combined capacity of 74.2 MW in Brazil, in the state of Piaui, through its subsidiary Força Eolica do Brasil.

The country of Rio de Janeiro made a new energy auction at the end of June, it has been in its thirties, where it is securing electricity supply contracts through solar power, wind turbines, hydroelectric and biomass energy.

As per ewind.es, so far, the Spanish firm has already been awarded contracts for up to 178 MWh of power, all of them through wind farms.

In one of the last closed auctions, on June 28 (the 29th auction that was held), the Spanish firm was the main winner in the wind field by adding wind farm contracts for 74.2 MW, ahead of Voltalia which added 21 MW for a wind farm in Rio Grande, in the north of the country.

In addition, Iberdrola benefited from the fact that the average price was 62% lower than the maximum and that value (about 20.7 dollars per MWh) was the second lowest recorded in Brazil.

The Spanish company, also other companies such as Voltalia or Enerlife, is following a strategy with which they commit to supply through the regulated business under half the installed capacity, close to 30%, while the rest is left to fight for clients in the free market.

This strategy allows you to benefit after higher prices and offer greater profitability.



In fact, last year the average spot price in Brazil was 280.9 Brazilian reais, close to 4.2 times the average price of the auction that Iberdrola has paid. In addition, these operations "help facilitate access to finance by reducing the risk of the project," explain Bloomberg analysts.

The firm chaired by Ignacio Sánchez Galán has benefited from the high competition in the sector that pushed prices down, given that the 20.7 dollars per MWh represents the second lowest price registered in Brazil

since April 2018.

■ The wind energy

"Urgency on the part of the local manufacturers of wind energy to ensure supply orders also helped lower prices", point out from Bloomberg as another key in the auction. Even so, Brazil is expected to add at least 2.6 GW in contracts for wind power for 2019 and 2022, a quarter of what was offered in the last four years.

Although it has moderated its exponential growth in the last sessions, Neoenergia continues to shoot up compared to its stock market startup.

The firm has revalued 9.6% in the few days it has been trading, by trading above the 17.5 Brazilian reais from the 16 with which debuted, which is an important gain for the three large owners of the same: Iberdrola which controls 52.45%, Caixa de Previdência with 38.21% and finally Banco de Investimento with 9.34%.

The Brazilian subsidiary of Iberdrola has accumulated significant growth in recent years that has allowed it to shoot its value. Thus, while five years ago its turnover was just over 3,900 million, for this 2019 is expected to stay close to 6,300 million euros.

Regarding the growth of its operating profit has not been so broad, revenues come through purchases, but it is also important to go from 722 million euros in 2015 to around 1,100 million in 2018.

OPEC'S pass for U.S. shale to be short-lived, says JP Morgan

A gradual drop in crude oil prices in coming years could prompt OPEC to reclaim some of its market share from the U.S., the leader of Emea (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) Oil and Gas Research at J.P. Morgan, said Thursday, Kallanish Energy reports.

As stated by kallanishenergy.com, Saudi Arabia and OPEC are "there to support oil while they are effectively pregnant with all this economic growth and capital they have got to deliver. But, having said that, what we are saying to the bulls is: Don't get used to it," J.P. Morgan's Christyan Malek told CNBC's "Squawk Box Europe" Thursday.

Earlier this week, OPEC+, the group which includes most OPEC members along with a number of non-OPEC producers led by Russia, agreed to keep 1.2 million barrels a day (Mmbpd) off the market for another nine months.

OPEC+ has been reducing output since 2017, to help steady crude prices. The group has succeeded in keeping crude futures near \$60 a barrel, but a long period of production cuts has seen its share of the global oil market sink to the lowest level in almost 30 years.

At the same time, the U.S. oil and gas industry, through continued growth in shale plays, has grown so quickly it threatens to overwhelm OPEC+'s efforts, swamping the global oil market with supply.

When asked whether he believed Saudi Arabia could eventually outlast the U.S. shale players, Malek said: "I think, at the moment, with OPEC and Saudi focusing on fiscal (and) economic policy, they are absolutely two feet in the value camp."

"This value proposition, the fact they are giving shale a free pass so to speak is short-lived ... I mean three of four years ago, who would have thought that they would be happy with \$60 to \$70 (per barrel)?"

Malek said on CNBC he expects \$50 a barrel in a few years "to be an okay oil price, at which point Saudi and OPEC could reclaim that market share and then it becomes more competitive."

Tight storage prompts Guangdong Energy to receive LNG cargo through double discharge

By Shi Yun Fan

China's Guangdong Energy received an LNG cargo via separate discharges at the Dapeng and Diefu LNG terminals in Shenzhen Tuesday, as soft LNG demand left limited storage capacity on the terminals, a source with close knowledge of the matter said.

After unloading at Dapeng, the ship discharged the remaining super-chilled fuel at the nearby Diefu terminal and left the port empty Tuesday, the source added.

The Dapeng terminal was currently reported to be experiencing limited tank space amid excessive inventories, while other southern terminals are also generally close to hitting tank tops, an end-user said.



Persistent rainy season and tepid downstream demand were cited as causes pressuring the terminal storage, market sources said.

The full size LNG cargo was procured from Malaysia's Petronas earlier in March via an expression of interest seeking two cargoes for delivery into the Dapeng LNG terminal over H2 May and H1 July, respectively, S&P Global Platts reported earlier.

The cargo was initially slated for early-July delivery at a price of around \$5.25/MMBtu. The shipment was later pushed forward for June 29 delivery, with a price adjustment to \$5.05/MMBtu, Platts reported earlier.

■ The LNG prices

Meanwhile, the LNG prices have come under pressure with average domestic trucked LNG prices recorded at Yuan 3,413/mt Thursday, the lowest level seen since early-May 2018, according to Shanghai Petroleum and Natural Gas Exchange, or SHPGX. The SHPGX monitors trucked LNG transactions from 50 LNG terminals and factories.

In the meantime, Typhoon Mun was reported to have hit South China's Hainan Province Wednesday, resulting in heavy rains and landfall along the coastal regions, according to the China Meteorological Administration.

A soft Chinese downstream market coupled with mild summer weather are expected to further dampen sentiment in the LNG spot market. The Platts JKM for August cargoes was assessed at \$4.31/MMBtu Thursday, plunging 44 cents/MMBtu on-week as a global supply overhang continued to weigh.

In China, coal-to-gas switching policy directives as a mean to curb air pollution had led to robust LNG import growth since 2017. However, market participants noted a significant decline in growth rates since start of the year.

Total Chinese LNG imports for first half of 2019 stood at 27.6 million mt, up 18.6% year-on-year, against a near 50% spike on-year for the same period in 2018 at 23.2 million mt, according to S&P Global Platts Analytics data.

The country registered a 7.2% increase in June LNG imports year-on-year, the slowest growth rate in monthly imports across first half of the year, Platts Analytics data showed.

Guangdong Energy signed a terminal usage agreement with CNOOC at Dapeng at the end of 2018, and has been active in the spot market for procurement of several spot cargoes since March.

Both the Dapeng LNG terminal and Diefu LNG terminal are operated by CNOOC.

(Source: spglobal.com)

Kushner plan aims to assert colonial privilege over Quds: Australian Prof.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A senior professor and political analyst based in Australia said the economic plan raised by US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, in a recent conference in Bahrain, was part of attempts to assert colonial privilege over al-Quds and the Syrian Golan.

Kushner Plan Aims to Assert Colonial Privilege over Quds: Australian Prof.

"Washington and Tel Aviv are trying to consolidate the apartheid colony in Palestine, in face of tremendous rejection worldwide," Professor Tim Anderson said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

"The Kushner Plan follows closely attempts to assert colonial privilege over al Quds/Jerusalem and over the Syrian Golan," he added.

Professor Tim Anderson is a distinguished author and Director of the Sydney-based Centre for Counter-Hegemonic Studies. He has worked at Australian universities for more than 30 years, teaching, researching and publishing on development, human rights and self-determination in the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East. In 2014, he was awarded Cuba's medal of friendship. He is Australia and Pacific representative for the Latin America based Network in Defence of Humanity. His most recent books are: Land and Livelihoods in Papua New Guinea (2015), The Dirty War on Syria (2016), now published in ten languages; and Countering War Propaganda of the Dirty War on Syria (2017). His next book Axis of Resistance is due out in 2019.

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 on June 25 and 26 in Manama, 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: Washington and Tel Aviv are trying to consolidate the apartheid colony in Palestine, in face of tremendous rejection worldwide. The Kushner Plan follows closely attempts to assert colonial privilege over al Quds/Jerusalem and over the Syrian Golan. None of this changes international law. Nevertheless, the best ally in this has been Riyadh, which uses the Bahrain regime as a 'front man' and promises some finance after the dirty deed is done.

Which dirty deed? The Zionists have made no secret about it: give up the entire project of Palestinian nationhood. Their ambassador in New York, Dany Danon asks rhetorically 'What's wrong with Palestinian surrender?' (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/24/opinion/palestinian-peace-bahrain-conference.html>).

Most of the world these days would respond, 'what is wrong with equal rights for all in Palestine?' Few propositions are as straight forward, now that the Netanyahu regime has effectively destroyed any remaining illusions over a possible 'two-state solution'. Indeed, as Richard Falk and Virginia Tilley pointed out two years back (<https://counter-hegemonic-studies.net/israeli-apartheid/>), dismantling the apartheid system, where more than half the population lacks equal citizenship, is mandated by international law.

The Kushner plan involves a promise of investment money, after Palestine surrenders. According to Reuters, there would be a "global investment fund to lift the Palestinian and neighboring Arab state economies, and fund a \$5 billion transportation corridor to connect the West Bank and Gaza". However this would only take place after the peace/surrender deal, the money would be spread across ten years and half of it would go to Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-plan-exclusive/exclusive-white-houses-kushner-unveils-economic-portion-of-middle-east-peace-plan-idUSKCN1TNOES>).

There is a threat behind this blackmail. If Palestine does not surrender, the resistance will be hunted down and killed. Whatever the rhetoric, this 'deal of the century' was meant to be a 'win-win' for Israel, and a 'lose-lose' for Palestine.

Fortunately, even much of the US corporate media has branded the 'deal' as 'dead on arrival' (DOA). They recognize that the Kushner Plan has no support from Palestinians, who were not even represented at the conference.

■ Some analysts say that the Trump administration's focus on an economic plan, led by his son-in-law and senior adviser 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: There can be no practical impact of a plan in which no-one believes. Kushner's proposal has pre-conditions which will not be met, so the hedged money promises will never materialize. The Israeli media observed that the Palestinian Authority regarded the Bahrain stunt as a 'stunning failure' for Trump administration (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-calls-bahrain-conference-a-stunning-failure-for-trump-administration/>). The resistance news site al Manar notes the Israeli media's disappointment that the conference "Failed to Oblige Palestinians to Concede" and that "the absence of all the Palestinian forces has mainly contributed to the failure of Al-Manama conference" (<https://english.almanar.com.lb/771047>).

It is quite obvious that the US undermined, rather than built, Palestinian confidence, by encouraging Netanyahu's relentless land theft and ethnic cleansing, and by backing the illegal claims over al Quds/Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan. There has been little to appeal to even the most demoralized Palestinian leader.

However the latest impasse, in some respects, may serve to further discredit the US and Saudi roles, and to enhance the anti-apartheid, 'One Democratic State' campaign.

■ Israeli occupation forces have killed 84 Palestinians during the first half of 2019, including eight women and 19 children, according to local media reports. On 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. 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: At a political level we see little immediate change, as there are entrenched positions over Palestine and even the exposure of Zionist atrocities can seem to have little impact at the political level. However there is a groundswell of change, and the colonists are worried. ➔13

The game is changing among Democrats

Harris takes Biden's place?

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Polls recently published in the United States indicate that former US Vice President Joe Biden can no longer guarantee his easy victory in the Democratic primaries! In other words, Biden's definitive move to the final stage of the US presidential election in 2020 is no longer possible. An overview of the latest news and polls in the United States illustrates this very well:

■ **Biden's Iowa support crumbles in new poll**

As politico reported, As Joe Biden lands in Iowa for two days of events, he's confronting signs of crumbling support in the first-in-the-nation caucus state: A new survey shows he's plummeted 20 percentage points since September.

A Focus on Rural America poll released Wednesday suggests the ground has shifted significantly over the past several months, with Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris and Biden currently clustered together at the top: Warren had 20 percent, Harris at 18 percent and Biden 17 percent.

Bernie Sanders came in fourth at 12 percent. In September, in the same poll, Biden was walloping the field; with 37 percent support, he led Sanders, his next closest competitor, by 25 points.

In the months since then, however, the former vice president has lagged behind other top-tier rivals in assembling an on-the-ground organization. Leading Iowa Democrats have complained Biden has failed to offer Iowans the kind of doting retail politics to which they're accustomed.

Focus on Rural America Chair Patty Judge, also a former lieutenant governor in Iowa, said the results are the latest sign that Biden has to "step up his game" if he wants to compete in Iowa.

"He has not been campaigning in Iowa. He has not had a presence here," Judge said. "Couple that with the debate — in which Kamala Harris certainly took a piece of his hide. I think it has caught up to him."

The new survey showed Warren making the most marked gains, with a 12-percentage-point jump since March. It's a sign the Massachusetts senator's heavy investment in staffing and organization in the state might be paying off. "[Warren] is definitely seeing some of the fruits of all of the hard work done by her campaign in Iowa. She's doing well because she's been here," Judge said. "She is growing here in name ID and popularity, she's camped out here a good deal of the time. She has an incredible field operation going."

Harris, too, saw a sizable bump, gaining 9 percentage points since March. Biden, meanwhile, dropped 8 percentage points since the March survey, when he led with 25 percent. The latest poll was in the field the weekend after the first presidential debates, when Harris seized headlines after a lengthy takedown of Biden over race-related questions. The survey was conducted by David Binder Research, who also serves as Harris' main pollster.

But Harris stood at just 7 percent in December and 9 percent in March in the same poll.

The new poll is the latest sign of trouble for the 76-year-old Biden, who



is attempting to regain his footing after his roundly panned first debate performance raised questions about the durability of his candidacy.

The former vice president has been buffeted in the days after the debate with questions about his record on civil rights and his recent comments about his relationship with segregationist senators.

Biden has had one high-profile donor abandon him and has seen his standing decline in several national polls taken after the debate.

His campaign, however, has committed to plowing more resources into early state infrastructure, including in Iowa, where 50 new staffers are rushing to catch up to already established organizations of Warren and others who began laying the groundwork as early as January.

Biden, who in June promised Iowans he would be paying closer attention to the state, will appear with his wife, Jill, at a community event in Waterloo on Wednesday. He will march in the Fourth of July parade in Independence on Thursday and has two other events scheduled.

■ **Kamala Harris rises, Joe Biden slips in polls after first 2020 Democratic debate**

Also CNBC reported that The first Democratic presidential debate appears to have shaken up the 2020 race — at least for now.

A series of polls released after 20 candidates faced off last week found a bump for Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., and a slide for the early front-runner, former Vice President Joe Biden. The surveys largely show a tightening race among Biden, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., Harris and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. — the four leading candidates according to a RealClearPolitics average of recent national Democratic primary polls.

Harris' average support jumped to 14.7% on Wednesday, up from 7% on June 25, the day before the two-day debate started. An average of 27.2% of respondents supported Biden as of Wednesday, a drop from 32.1% on June 25. "Clearly, the debate had an impression

on Democrats and Democratic leaners we surveyed. The big question is can Sen. Harris continue to build on this momentum," said Mary Snow, polling analyst at the Quinnipiac University Poll. A Quinnipiac survey released Tuesday showed Biden with 22% of support — down from 30% the previous month — and Harris with 20% — up from 7% previously.

The polls show how debates can shift the foundations of a presidential race — particularly a crowded one where candidates only get a few chances to speak to a national audience. Harris has at least temporarily nudged her way to the front of the pack, in part by hitting Biden with a personal attack over his race record during Thursday night's debate.

Meanwhile, the former vice president's early grip on the race has loosened as voters become more familiar with their alternatives. Of course, much can change between now and the Iowa caucuses, the first nominating contest that will take place in February. Any number of the two dozen candidates could experience a surge or slump after the five debates scheduled scheduled for later this year. The first of those will take place at the end of the month. "This was post-debate and we have a long way to go," Snow said. "It's six months before any presidential nominating contests. So we always want to keep that perspective."

Polls suggest Harris' debate performance helped her standing in the race. Nearly half, or 47%, of Democratic or Democratic-leaning voters who said they watched most of the debate or paid attention to news stories about them said Harris did the best job, according to the Quinnipiac poll. Among respondents who said they watched the debate, 29% backed Harris, while 18% supported both Biden and Warren.

In a separate ABC News/Washington Post poll, 41% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said Harris stood out in the debate. The survey found debate viewers felt better about supporting Harris. Only 5% of those who did not watch backed her for the nomination, while 20% who watched the

senator in the debate supported her. Biden still leads the field in just about every poll. He has one other factor going for him: voters view him as the best option to beat Trump.

In the Quinnipiac poll, 42% of respondents said he had the best chance of winning the 2020 election. The ABC News/Washington Post poll found 45% of respondents believe Biden is best equipped to beat Trump.

■ **Joe Biden's soft polling underbelly just got exposed**

Also CNN reported that There's only one takeaway from the new CNN-SSRS poll of the 2020 Democratic field: Joe Biden may not be the race's front-runner for much longer.

In the first poll conducted after the first two nights of debates between the top 20 (!) candidates in the Democratic race, Biden stands at 22% -- followed closely by California Sen. Kamala Harris at 17%, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren at 15% and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders at 14%.

The real story isn't those numbers as much as it is the change between this latest poll and CNN's late May survey of the 2020 field. Biden is now down 10 POINTS from that May poll, while Harris is up 9 and Warren is up 8. (Sanders dropped by 4 points.)

It's hard not to see the impact of the debates -- my winners and losers from night one and night two, FYI -- in those numbers. Harris, and to a lesser extent Warren, shined on the stage. Biden, and to a lesser extent Sanders, sagged. (Worth nothing: These numbers come hard on the heels of those debates -- so they may be capturing a bit of a recency effect among voters. Still ...)

What the rapid -- and steep -- drop in Biden's numbers seems to suggest is that lots of Democratic voters were sort of parking their support with the former vice president because, well, they knew him and liked him. (Biden's favorability among Democrats in the new CNN poll is 74%, while 22% have an unfavorable view.) The issue for Biden is that when presented with other serious, credible options via the debate(s), those voters who were parked on him headed to other candidates like Harris and Warren.

Obviously, drawing too many conclusions from a single set of a data taken from a poll in late June is a dangerous proposition. But we aren't doing this in a vacuum. We know there have been questions (concerns?) about whether Biden -- a longtime senator and card-carrying member of the Democratic establishment -- is the right fit for a) these times and b) this party.

The Democratic Party of 2019 is younger, less white, more female, more liberal and far more skeptical of establishment politicians than it was even five years ago. Biden has been installed as the front-runner, yes, but the seeming mismatch with not only his profile but also the sort of campaign he is running so far (Trump is an anomaly, politics -- and Republicans -- will return to normal once he is gone, etc.) has always been a problem.

The Point: It's not yet clear if there is temporary or permanent slippage for Biden. But the numbers have to be deeply worrisome for his side either way.

Polls recently published in the United States indicate that former US Vice President Joe Biden can no longer guarantee his easy victory in the Democratic primaries!

UK's Hunt makes toothless threat against China

GLOBALTIMES — During an interview Thursday, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt still refused to directly criticize the violent protesters who stormed and vandalized the Hong Kong Legislative Council. Instead, he superficially stated that the UK condemns "all violence" and warned China again. He did not elaborate on the "serious consequences" that he previously warned China that it may face, but said the UK is "keeping options open" over China.

Almost all analyses believe Hunt is putting on an air. Nobody believes the UK will send its only aircraft carrier to China's coast. Nor would anyone believe the UK will punish Beijing at the cost of hurting trade with China. The UK has been dwarfed by China in military and trade. Hunt's inappropriate statements make many British people nervous: Will Beijing cancel an order from the UK to warn British politicians?

If China-UK relations deteriorate, will expelling Chinese diplomats become a card for London? This was the way that the Theresa May government used to deal with Moscow when a former Russian spy was poisoned in the UK. BBC reporters asked Hunt about the possibility for expelling diplomats. But it seems more like these BBC reporters, who bully politicians for pleasure, were using the unreliable option to make things difficult for Hunt.

Launching a diplomatic war against China leads to nowhere. European countries will not stand by London on the Hong Kong issue. By worsening diplomatic relations with China, the UK will only isolate itself.

What's important is that Beijing has done nothing



wrong on the Hong Kong issue. It is obvious to all that China persists in the "one country, two systems" policy, and Hong Kong's system is different from the mainland's. The Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, proposed by Hong Kong regional government, was a small cause of the unrest. It was politicized and magnified by opposition factions. The situation escalated according to the logic under Hong Kong's system, not that of the mainland. But such storming and vandalizing is not acceptable under Hong Kong's system or any system worldwide.

Instead of blaming violent protesters, Hunt directed

his ire against Beijing, which is based on his selfish interests to win the election. Hunt wants to defeat Boris Johnson. In charge of diplomacy, Hunt believes the Hong Kong issue is a chance that dropped into his and the UK's lap. But this is not the 19th century when the Opium War broke out. The UK has gone past its prime.

Hunt knew that Beijing would sniff at his threat of "serious consequences." But he still said it because he needed to play in front of voters. This is political fraud. Hunt obviously believes that the British people can be manipulated like a flock of sheep.

But Hunt's stunt has no good effect. Many British people are more worried whether Hunt's words would lead to "serious consequences" from China. Purpose and ability should match in diplomatic strategy, but Hunt is obviously outwardly strong and inwardly weak. Even the British people think his performance is amusing.

In a few short years, one minute the UK calls its relations with China the "Golden Era," and the next minute it warns China of "serious consequences." Although these statements are from different administrations and politicians, the UK still shows inconsistency in policy. The country also swung from side to side on Brexit. The UK's politics have become politicians' coffers and plots. They are undermining the UK's image.

Under such circumstances, we should not be too serious when dealing with the UK. Regardless of whether it shows a friendly or an opportunistic gesture, we should remind ourselves this will not be its first or last attitude toward China, and by saying that we mean it will be in a relatively short time, to be specific.

Iran will have the world's respect, and prevail

1 → Iran verbally has supported Hamas in Gaza which does maintain some token resistance to Israeli cruelty against the Palestinians there and elsewhere, such as the West Bank. Iran, even while attempting to suggest ways to cool mutual hostility between the Saudis (and the UAE) and Iran, has still criticized the Saudis (and the UAE) for their paranoia about Iran and their manifold political and human rights abuses, which included last year the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a writer for the Washington Post.

Meanwhile, Iran has spurned suggestions of bilateral talks with the Trump gang, and rightly so, given the facts of the sanctions and other threats, including so far at least a couple apparent false flag attacks on some shipping in the Persian Gulf. Who in their right mind would sit down with the Americans to negotiate or renegotiate ANYTHING with a veritable axe poised above their head. And particularly so when Mike Pompeo has been claiming that Iran must give up entirely its efforts to have any kind of nuclear technology or program when the U.S. may be sharing nuclear technology and know-how with the Saudis, not to mention the fact that the Israelis have scores of nuclear weapons and has long refused completely to abide by any of the conventions related to the ownership of nuclear weapons.

One must think that NO country has ever been so pressured and unfairly treated as Iran has in decades. This is precisely what it looks like, anyway, to someone who, however



imperfect their information as this writer's is, is apprised generally of what's been going on in the Middle East of late.

But still, the big lies perpetrated by the Trump gang keep coming, and it seems obvious the U.S. and its Mideast "allies" want to bring Iran to its knees one way or another. Just as it has brought other countries to grave suffering, hurting above all the general populations of those countries. The assumption in Iran's case is that the pain will become so great that internal discord will bring down the Islamic Republic. But this latter has already proven to be a chimera

and Iran, one would have to say, has quite heroically not buckled — and must not, under any circumstances, however increasingly vile the circumstances could still become short of actual military conflict.

Someday, when the U.S. and the Zionists and the Saudis have been chastened and disempowered by their arrogance, Iran's heroism will be remembered by most of the world, and Iran will once again prosper. It will happen and the sole thing in dispute is the timing, because the U.S. and its allies have literally forgotten how to make friends. Even if China and Russia, for

examples, can't quite do enough for Iran as this juncture (but are trying) to alleviate the suffering, and even if Europe, including the European signatories to the JCPOA, have proven to be too cowardly so far to stand up to the destructive actions of the U.S. and its allies, Iran is going to manage to maintain its sovereignty and "win" (if not every battle) the world's respect.

China, for one, does not appear to be giving in to U.S. demands. And other countries may well, in time, follow China's lead and try harder to circumvent trade restrictions.

Trump, interestingly, sent John Bolton off to Mongolia and brought along newsman Tucker Carlson to Korea's DMZ. Carlson has clearly been against war on Iran. This is a positive, and maybe Bolton will be fired eventually. As said before, Trump well knows he won't be reelected if he starts a war with Iran.

A bold and fascinating prognostication also recently emerged with excellent journalist Sharmin Narwani, who was trained at Columbia University in New York and is now based in Beirut. Narwani believes that after the first response of Iran to any military attack, the Arabs will suddenly turn and become Iran's allies. Can one imagine the overthrow of the Saudis in Arabia and worldwide revulsion against the Zionists, and in the U.S., too? Stranger things have happened historically and Narwani may well have made a reasonable prediction, but let's hope no war occurs.

Albert Garcia Watson: Nakba Day marking Palestinians sacrificed by international community

TEHRAN (FNA) — Alberto Garcia Watson, political analyst and activist, says the international community in order to satiate the sick desires of a supremacist project which had the backing of the large financial elites in the murky web of Jewish pressure lobbies, made it possible to European population resident in Palestine to declare unilaterally the establishment of the state of Israel on the soil which still belongs to Palestinians.



Speaking with FNA in an exclusive interview, Mr. Watson described Israeli occupation's treatment of Palestinians as "brutal massacres and ethnic cleansing" perpetrated by Jewish fundamentalists on the part of the Zionist authorities, which resulted in destruction of more than 500 Palestinian villages and refuge of more than 700,000 Palestinians in the very first years of the occupation.

Alberto Garcia Watson is an activist for human rights. He has participated as a human shield in different humanitarian missions in the Gaza strip as well as participating in the second Freedom Flotilla. He was also a journalist, as well as a contributor to various TV channels and written press as a political expert and analyst. Below is the full text of the interview:

■ Why is the day of May 15th 1948 called the Day of Catastrophe (Nakba Day)?

A: The Nakba represents the catastrophe, the disaster for the Palestinian people, who were sacrificed by the international community in order to satiate the sick desires of a supremacist project which had the backing of the large financial elites in the murky web of Jewish pressure lobbies. The complicity of the British Empire made it possible to, on the 15th May 1948 and in a unilateral way, European population resident in Palestine to declare unilaterally the establishment of the state of Israel on Palestinian soil. From this time on, they proceeded to dismantle the Arab presence in Palestinian territory, a brutal ethnic cleansing on the part of the Zionist authorities, the destruction of more than 500 Palestinian villages, their sacking and the brutal massacres perpetrated by Jewish fundamentalists. This situation caused at least half of the Palestinian population to flee from their homes and land, in terror, converting into refugees more than 700,000 men, women, children and elderly, by establishing a climate of terror which exists to this day in occupied Palestine.

■ Palestinian youth hurl stones at Israeli armored vehicles which enter their land, but receive teargas and bullets in return inside their own land. Which side commits war crime? Who is to be internationally condemned?

A: The Gaza strip, a territory well known to me from my several visits there, is on the point of collapse. The brutal and illegal siege and blockade to which it has been subjected for more than ten years, has plunged its population into a dire situation. It is an open air prison frequently attacked by Israeli forces, causing thousands of deaths among the civilian population. The Israeli regime, as occupation force of the Palestinian territory, is obliged by virtue of the Geneva Convention to protect the civilian population suffering that occupation. On the contrary, that same civilian population in the Gaza strip is habitually the target of indiscriminate criminal attacks by the occupying Israeli forces. In the face of this, the act of a child throwing stones at an armored car, can only be described as an act of heroism and never terrorism as is underlined within the framework of International Rights which determines that all people suffering a military occupation have the right to resist the occupying forces with any means at their disposal. But Israel does not respect International legislation, and resolutions condemning their continued violations of human rights are vetoed in the Security Council of the UN.

■ The US embassy move to al-Quds in 2018, and the so-called Deal of the Century in 2019; how do you assess the role of the Trump Administration in this complication?

A: Ariel Sharon, the butcher of Sabra and Shatila and ex-prime minister of the Zionist entity, affirmed during his lifetime that "Israel controlled the US and that they, the US, were undeniably aware of that." In the US, no president, congressman or senator who reaches the top can do so without counting on the goodwill of the Jewish, pro-Israel lobbies. They finance campaigns and dispose of political representatives according to their sympathies or disagreements with Israel, towards whom their politics are designed to favor, even in detriment of the political interests of the US. Donald Trump is, without doubt the most important exponent of this political submission, and has shown it by moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem/Al Quds, eternal capital of the Palestinian people and third most sacred place of Islam. Together with the fact that they have denied the funds to the Palestine National Authority, these decisions show the clumsiness of the US Administration with regard to their managing their sympathies in the ME. →13

The Nakba represents the catastrophe, the disaster for the Palestinian people, who were sacrificed by the international community in order to satiate the sick desires of a supremacist project which had the backing of the large financial elites in the murky web of Jewish pressure lobbies.

Blame America too for ruptured relations with the Chinese

By Doug Bandow

THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVE — Hanging out in China for a couple weeks is an experience. Beijing feels a lot like a Western city: tall buildings, horrid traffic, distinct neighborhoods, lots of money. You come across the full range of people—funny, friendly, officious, nervous, helpful, distant, welcoming, interesting.

Yet the political and cultural differences are also real: forced respect for political leaders (maybe everyone really loves President Xi Jinping, but, really, EVERYONE?); rigid hierarchy (for a conference opening ceremony and dinner, we "distinguished" visitors lined up like the Soviet politburo and went to our assigned seats); deference to age (I hate to admit it, but this one is an advantage now!).

There have been a lot of unofficial discussions outside of the major conference I'm currently participating in. And many topics have been of interest, including North Korea, trade, U.S. politics, and, of course, Beijing-Washington relations. While some of my Chinese colleagues are hopeful after the Trump-Xi meeting at the G-20, few have any illusions about the continuing challenge our two countries face.

Perhaps the most important question I was asked was this: why the recent worsening of relations? Or more bluntly: why do Americans hate us now? The query is worth a serious think.

Richard Nixon's 1972 decision to break the Cold War isolation of the People's Republic of China was long overdue. Ignoring unpleasant regimes doesn't make them go away. The lack of communication channels with potential adversaries can have catastrophic consequences, including, among them, China's previous entry into the Korean War.

Such a state of affairs intensified hostility between the two nations, which remained until the 1970s. After Mao Zedong's death, when China embraced reform, Americans found an avid new trading partner. Despite Beijing's embrace of brutal authoritarianism in Tiananmen Square, many U.S. policymakers and analysts imagined that the PRC's submersion in the international economic system would encourage social, cultural, and ultimately political liberalization. Frankly, I was among those who hoped to see such a transformation. Some Americans even imagined that capitalism would turn China into an Americanized version of itself—friendly and free.

For a time, liberalization appeared to be a reality. The PRC was no democracy, to be sure, but American culture suffused Chinese life, especially that of the young. Social strictures of the Maoist era disappeared: people were free to marry without official approval. Religious liberty advanced, irregularly and inconsistently, yes, but spaces still opened for people of faith. A genuine private sector arose, with Chinese free to seek employment where and how they wished. Even increasing indirect political debate appeared possible, as restrictions over academic cooperation, NGO activities, and foreign contacts eased. There remained red lines, to be sure, but China's authoritarianism seemed a bit looser, more tired and less determined.

U.S.-China relations still hit significant bumps over the intervening years. The PRC was not smoothly becoming a Sinicized version of America (whatever that might even look like) because the Chinese Communist Party sat uncomfortably atop an ancient civilization. Chinese worldwide are loyal to that heritage, if not necessarily to the particular government in power. Nevertheless, with economics serving as the relationship's foundation, the com-

mon expectation was that ties between China and the United States were destined to improve, however irregularly.

China Isn't an Enemy and Hawks Shouldn't Turn It Into One America's Relationship With China Can't Become Too Big to Fail The rise of President Xi Jinping changed everything.

Of course, Xi is not alone. He represents viewpoints that have long been present within the CCP. But his government has formalized several important trends and is creating a very different China than the one once expected by Americans. The impact on American opinion has been dramatic: an increasing number of analysts express regret at having engaged the PRC economically and speak darkly of the possibility of a new cold war, this time with China rather than Russia.

In almost every area, Americans perceive a mix of double-cross and disappointment. For instance, human rights have moved in reverse: the Xi government is attempting to Sinicize religion, limit academic exchanges, tighten internet controls, and restrict NGOs. Even more shocking has been the detention of a million Uighurs in re-education camps.

The CCP appears to be turning to technology to create a totalitarian state, with pervasive cameras and a highly intrusive "social credit" system. Official attacks on the rule of law and support for enhanced party control have shattered any illusion of a move toward Western standards. Beijing's foreign policy has grown more aggressive, especially involving territorial disputes in East Asian waters and with Taiwan. China's military build-up has put hard power behind more political objectives. The ongoing crackdown in Hong Kong, though seen as a domestic question in Beijing, is viewed as a repudiation of the international agreement reached with the United Kingdom over the territory's return to the PRC.

Finally, promises of further economic reforms have gone a-glimmering. Even corporate America, long the strongest supporter of the Sino-American relationship, has grown frustrated, viewing the Chinese market as almost irredeemably biased against foreign firms. Concern, even anger, has grown over IP theft and technology transfer, as well as potential security threats arising from Chinese economic activities. The result has been to dissolve what once was the firmest foundation for ties between the two countries.

Obviously, Chinese officials defend their conduct, and in some ways the PRC is only mimicking the behavior of the rising American republic of the 19th century—one can hardly be more aggressive internationally than to launch a war against a neighbor and seize half of its territory, as America did to Mexico. Nevertheless, in other areas, such as human rights, Beijing's behavior transgresses deeply held American values.

What has driven the bilateral relationship to its current depths? The answer is a confluence of factors that in virtually every area are moving ties backwards. Moreover, there looks to be little hope for improvement. Xi appears determined to rule for life. He is committed to expanding pervasive party control over Chinese society and his international posture looks to be permanently aggressive.

The case against China appears to be a lengthy one. But U.S. policymakers need to take a more hard-headed approach that realistically assesses both the practical impact of Chinese behavior and the likelihood of changing the PRC's policies.

First, international relations will always be messy, pragmatic, and unsatisfying. Washington must deal with many unpleasant, even murderous governments. Further, global social engineering is but a dangerous fantasy: the world's greatest power has proven incapable even of replacing the hostile government of a small island almost within sight of its coast. These challenges



and limitations are even greater when applied to a putative great power, such as China.

Second, Beijing poses no existential threat to America. The geopolitical struggle is over Washington's continued domination of East Asia along China's border. That will grow ever more difficult and will not be worth the cost and risk. The PRC is already a great power and, though it faces a multitude of economic and political challenges, is likely to become a superpower. The United States will have no choice but to accommodate this more powerful China, leaving friendly Asian states to take over responsibility for constraining, if not containing, Chinese behavior.

Third, Americans should not hesitate to promote our principles and values, especially involving basic human rights. But policymakers must be realistic about their ability to influence China's development. No combination of lectures, sanctions, and threats is likely to force a nationalistic regime to abandon policies that it views as essential for its political control. Closing off contacts—canceling the visas of Chinese academics, for instance—is self-defeating. Western friends of China should look for ways to encourage increased information flows to the Chinese people while remaining engaged with the PRC.

Fourth, trade benefits both parties and is best kept free rather than excessively managed. Washington must decide what issues are broadly essential to our commercial relationship, especially given legitimate security concerns. No time should be wasted on trade balances and deficits, which are but aggregations of a multitude of private transactions. U.S. officials cannot expect to prevent Beijing from asserting government control over their economy: after all, Washington is neither advocate nor practitioner of laissez-faire. In short, what are the necessary few red lines for both states?

Fifth, Americans must give up unrealistic expectations. China will always be China—sometimes more friendly towards America and sometimes less. Moreover, U.S. policy should reflect the fact that circumstances and responses will change in the coming years. If one thing is unlikely to be static, it is China's development.

Of course, Beijing will also have to accommodate American views and policies, so neither side is likely to be happy in making such compromises. But this is how it works now: the unipolar world is gone and won't be seen again for a very long time, if ever.

It is easy to blame the Xi government for the ongoing deterioration of U.S.-China relations. However, American expectations and objectives have also played an important role. Both countries have a powerful, indeed even overriding incentive to avoid a rupture. Washington and Beijing should thus work cooperatively in the coming decades.

China, EU should further strengthen cooperation

By Xu Hailin

GLOBALTIMES — German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen has been named a candidate for European Commission president. The nomination became the focus of media as her attitude toward China at previous interviews would allegedly lead to uncertainties in China-EU ties.

Von der Leyen would bring her stance toward China to the EU after she succeeds incumbent Jean-Claude

Juncker. This includes differences between China and Germany. Her attitude reflects only the views of some German political parties.

After assuming office, von der Leyen will need to consider China-EU relations and policies toward China from the EU's standpoint. The bloc still uses the 2016 EU Strategy on China to define its policies on China. But the EU remains committed to the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation that the two sides jointly formulated in 2013. Amid the complicated

world situation, Europe is confronted with huge international order challenges which have shaken Europe's model of economic development, diplomatic policy coordination and values. EU should not ignore China when it is seeking cooperation and strategic autonomy.

As an important power in this multipolar world, the EU doesn't necessarily benefit from following the US footprints, particularly on China policy. Although the US and the EU are allies, their differences in policies

are becoming increasingly apparent due to US unilateralism.

The EU is China's largest trading partner, while China is the EU's second-largest after the US. The EU is seeking to form a more balanced and reciprocal economic relationship with China. This is consistent with the mutually beneficial state cooperation relationship that China always advocates. The key to multilateralism upheld by the EU lies in the bloc's cooperation with China rather than in following the US.

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قابل توجه شهروندان محترم تهرانی

چنانچه تمایل به اشتراک روزنامه تهران تایمز دارید، لطفاً 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 **۶۹۷۳۰۸۶۳۲۸-۰۱۲-۹۲ IR** 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 نمائید.

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Quakes on Mars may share a common mechanism with human-caused earthquakes

Quakes on Mars might sometimes result from aquifers being squeezed by ice, much like how quakes on Earth have been triggered by wastewater or fracking fluid injected into the ground by the oil and gas industry.

Oil and gas companies often dispose of large volumes of wastewater by pumping it into buried rock, and previous research suggests such water can trigger earthquakes by causing faults to slip. Earthquakes can also be triggered by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which involves injecting water, sand and other materials under high pressures to fracture rock and help oil and natural gas flow out more easily.

Now researchers suggest that winter cold on Mars might generate «marsquakes» in much the same way. To understand how, scientists first noted that previous research suggested that liquid water might lurk right under the red planet's surface.

«There is a good evidence for past oceans on Mars,” said study lead author Michael Manga, a planetary scientist at the University



of California, Berkeley. “That water may now be in aquifers.»

The researchers conjectured that winter's cold temperatures could force the top layers of this groundwater to freeze and compress any still-liquid groundwater underneath, loosening faults. Marsquakes could then be triggered either by the gravitational pulls of Mars' two moons, or changes in atmospheric pressure from the warming or cooling of Mars' thin air by the sun.

NASA's InSight lander on Mars has detected the kind of shallow marsquakes one might expect of ice-squeezed aquifers. If Manga and his colleagues are correct, InSight may detect a pattern to marsquakes that matches the behavior of the Martian moons and atmosphere, providing evidence of deep, pressurized groundwater. If these aquifers really exist, future Mars explorers could drill into them and the water would then come shooting out of the ground under its own pressure like an artesian spring, Manga said.

(Source: Inside Science)

Einstein's Cross is helping measure the spin of distant supermassive black holes

The rotation of giant discs of dust and gas swirling into supermassive black holes billions of light-years away may sound like a difficult thing to measure, but astronomers have found a way to do it.

Using a new technique, researchers have determined the spin of five accretion discs - finding that one, in a quasar called the Einstein Cross, is zipping around at over 70 percent of the speed of light.

It all comes down to observations in X-ray wavelengths, combined with a cosmic effect called gravitational lensing.

See, there's some stuff in the Universe that has so much mass that it generates a powerful gravitational field around it. Massive galaxies and clusters of galaxies, for instance.

When the light behind that field passes through it, the gravitational force is so strong that it bends the path of the light. This is what gravitational lensing is: where bent light creates multiple images of an object, allowing us to see details that would otherwise have been too distant to make out.

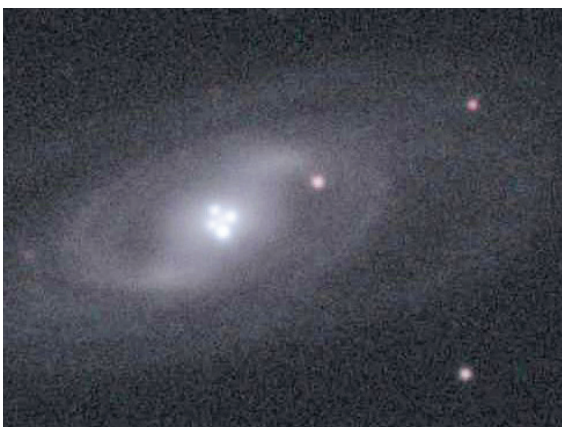
This effect is really handy for astronomers, and there are quite a few lensed objects out there that have given us insight into the Universe's evolution, including lensed quasars.

These are among the brightest objects in the Universe: extremely luminous galactic cores powered by actively feeding supermassive black holes. As the accretion disc of material swirls around the black hole, its friction generates such intense radiation that we can see it even from billions of light-years away.

When viewed through a gravitational lens, we can see even greater detail.

In this study, to calculate the rotation rate of five of these lensed quasars (ranging between 8.8 billion to 10.9 billion light years away), the research team added a final crucial ingredient to help gauge their rotation: microlensing.

This is just like galaxy-scale lensing, but smaller, using



the lensing effect created by individual stars in the lensing galaxy, rather than galaxies or clusters of galaxies. The technique creates additional magnification - which, in turn, means that a smaller region must be producing the X-ray emission observed.

We know that a spinning black hole drags space-time around with its rotation: a phenomenon called frame-dragging. This means that the inner edge of the accretion disc can orbit closer to the black hole than for a black hole that isn't spinning. The faster the black hole's spin, the closer the orbit.

X-rays are generated when the rapidly spinning accretion disc creates a high-temperature corona above the disc, close to the black hole. These X-rays reflect off the inner edge of the accretion disc, and are distorted by the black hole's gravitational forces.

A smaller region of X-ray emission implies a very tight orbit, which, in turn, means the black hole must be spinning pretty

fast. Based on observations taking using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory, this is what the team used to calculate the spin rate of the black holes.

The Einstein Cross black hole was spinning the fastest, as close as we've seen to the maximum rate possible. Emanating from a region just 2.5 times the size of the black hole's event horizon, the X-ray emission indicated a spin rate of 70 percent of the speed of light.

This implies that the event horizon is spinning at the speed of light.

The other four black holes were not quite so dramatic; the detected X-ray emission came from regions four to five times the size of their event horizons, indicating they were spinning at around half the rate of the Einstein Cross black hole.

In addition, all five showed high levels of distortion, which also implies close proximity to the black hole - and high spin rates.

These black holes are pretty huge, with masses between 160 and 500 million times that of the Sun. The Milky Way galaxy's supermassive black hole is only about 4 million solar masses, and relatively quiet.

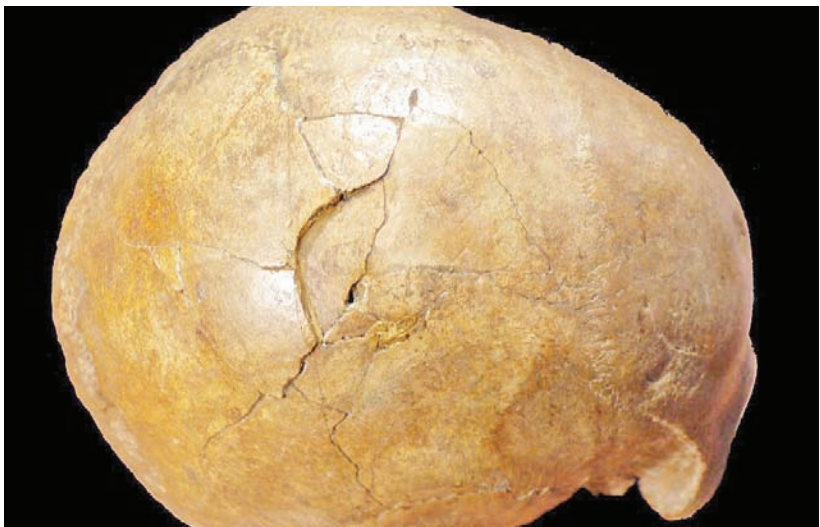
The researchers think that the quasar black hole rotations became so fast because they were continuously accreting matter for a long period of time - billions of years - along the same spin orientation. Because there was nothing to slow them down, they just kept getting faster.

“Unfortunately,” the researchers write in their paper, “the spin measurement technique presented in this paper can only be used to analyze the small sample of targets whose X-ray spectra can be measured with sufficient signal-to-noise ratios using the current generation of X-ray telescopes.”

We hope the next generation can tell us more, because this is wild.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Ultimate cold case? 33,000-year-old murder mystery discovered in cave in Transylvania



A Paleolithic man was brutally bludgeoned to death with a club in a Transylvanian cave, new analysis of a 33,000-year-old skull has suggested.

The man received two vicious blows to the head in quick succession and was facing his killer before he fell to the ground, researchers believe.

The person who killed him was probably left-handed and used a “club-like object”, according to a paper published in the journal Plos One.

The fossilized skull of the Paleolithic adult man, known as the Cioclovina calvaria, was found by miners digging for phosphate in the Pester Cioclovina cave in Romania in 1941. They also found some stone tools and fossils of cave bears, but the body of the man was never found.

The fossil - one of the earliest modern humans known from Europe - has been extensively studied. The source of the trauma on the skull has long been disputed, but now, an international team of researchers, led by the University of Tübingen in Germany, believe they have settled the debate.

“The results of our study strongly suggest that the Cioclovina fractures represent indisputable hard evidence of fatal interpersonal violence among early Upper Paleolithic modern humans of Europe,” the researchers wrote.

In order to find out what happened, scientists carried out simulations on synthetic bone spheres to work out how being hit with a bat, or a rock or falling from various heights damaged the skull. They also visually inspected the skull using computed tomography (CT) scans.

The simulations showed the man was probably hit over the head twice with a bat-like object. The researchers also believe the injuries were made intentionally, and not as a result of accidental injury.

“The depressed and inwardly displaced cranial fragment has a semicircular shape with a radius of approximately 35.2mm. This shape could only be produced by a rounded object, such as a club,” they wrote. Because no body has been found it is possible injuries may also have been sustained elsewhere. Scientists say it shows homicide was being practiced by early humans at this time.

“The Upper Paleolithic was a time of increasing cultural complexity and technological sophistication. Our work shows that violent interpersonal behavior and murder was also part of the behavioral repertoire of these early modern Europeans,” the authors wrote.

The skull is housed at the University of Bucharest's laboratory of paleontology. (Source: The Independent)

Volcanologists: Magma is wetter than we thought



Researchers have determined magma is wetter than previously thought.

Volcano experts knew volatiles in magma play an important role in influencing the size and power of an eruption. But measuring volatile levels is difficult. In the wake of a violent eruption, all the volatiles have evaporated and escaped into the atmosphere.

The best technique scientists have for measuring volatile levels is locating and analyzing tiny bits of magma trapped in crystals ejected during the eruption. By measuring the amount of hydrogen in the magma inclusions, researchers can estimate the amount of water that was dissolved in the magma prior to the eruption.

Scientists have accepted the technique as a reasonable way to determine the lower limit of volatile levels in a volcanic magma. But researchers at Washington University in St. Louis wanted to establish an upper limit.

“What people have never looked at before and what we're trying to measure now is, how big is this bucket?” Michael J. Krawczynski, assistant professor of earth and planetary sciences, said in a news release. “You can imagine if it rained a lot, and your rain gauge was full, then you don't really know how much it rained. It could have rained more! We just can't say.”

Similarly, if a melt inclusion is too small to hold all the water dissolved in the magma,

then scientists aren't measuring the upper limit of volatile levels.

Researchers took to the lab to test how much water a melt inclusion can hold. To create a synthetic melt inclusion, scientists replicated the conditions of a magma chamber, complete with high temperatures and extreme pressure. They melted and rapidly cooled a magma sample, confirming that glass formed. Scientists repeated the process, adding more water each time until the rapid cooling failed to form glass.

“We found out that if you have a lot of water, then eventually you don't have a glass,” said Maxim Gavrilenko, a former postdoctoral fellow in Krawczynski's lab, now a researcher at the University of Nevada.

Non-glassy melt inclusions are relatively common, but they are rarely studied by scientists. The authors of the latest study -- published this week in the journal American Mineralogists -- suggest this bias has prevented scientists from accurately modeling volatile levels inside volcanoes.

“If the deep magmas in these zones have more than 9 weight-percent of water, then they won't be correctly measured by the current gold-standard method,” Gavrilenko said. “There is a need to find a new method for how to measure. We need a new, bigger bucket.”

(Source: UPI)

Hundreds of newly discovered exoplanets are losing their numbers-based titles for proper names

One benefit of discovery is that you get to name the things you discovered. Astronomy is blessed in this regard. There are more stars in the observable universe than grains of sand on Earth, trillions upon trillions - enough to name a galaxy for every human who ever did or will live and every god or goblin proposed by human imagination.

In the past two decades a new wonderland of naming opportunities has emerged with the discovery of planets around other stars, potential cradles of life and far-future adventure. But so far exoplanets, like everything else in the sky, mostly don't have names, just numbers, like HD 156411 b or HAT-P-5b. Are they secret agents?

Celestial nomenclature is typically a rigid and exclusive business, closely managed by the International Astronomical Union, the world organization of astronomers. But in celebration of its hundredth anniversary, the IAU is sharing the fun, allowing every country in the world to name its own exoplanet and the star it calls home.

On 7 June, the organization released a list of stars and their planets for the 79 countries that have signed up so far for IAU100 NameExoWorlds, as the project is officially called. Each star on the list is visible and bright enough to be seen with a small telescope from the country that now has dibs on it.

For the United States, that would be a yellow star named HD 17156, a bit bigger and hotter than our sun that lies about 255 light-years away in the constellation Cassiopeia. Its planet is about three times the mass of Jupiter and orbits the host star in 21 days, and so is surely an unlivable furnace.

Eduardo Penteado, an astronomer at the Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins in Rio de Janeiro, who is managing the project for the IAU, says that the process was just beginning but that it had already garnered interest. “Some national campaigns are already receiving many name entries,” he says. “The one in Greece already received 1,500 entries during the weekend.”

Stephen Pompea of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory, who heads the US naming campaign, says names started coming in as soon as the program was announced. Among the early contenders, he says, were a pair of names from JRR Tolkien: Wilwarin, the elvish name for Cassiopeia, and Sauron.

Some 4,000 possible exoplanets have been discovered in the Milky Way since 1995, by spacecraft like NASA's Kepler and TESS and by telescopes on the ground; by extrapolation, there could be billions of possibly habitable worlds in our galaxy alone. A few hundred have been confirmed as such by further observations.

By astronomical tradition, whoever discovers a new planet or moon is entitled to suggest names for it to the IAU. The union, which has 11,000 members in 93 countries, was founded in 1919 to promote international scientific cooperation; its hegemony over the heavens is absolute. No political string-pulling or money paid to a commercial star registry can get your name on a star or anything else out there.

But the union is not unbending, nor is it unmindful of the need for more compelling names for places that might eventually be arenas for scientific fame. Its new project follows on a campaign in 2015 that invited everyday Earthlings to vote on names for 14 stars and the 31 planets orbiting them. Half a million votes came in from 182 countries and territories.

So we now have, among other things, a four-planet system named for Cervantes characters - Quixote, Dulcinea, Rocinante and Sancho - in Ara, a southern constellation. And a couple of planets in Ursa Major, Taphao Thong and Taphao Kaew, after characters in a Thai legend of an evil crocodile lord named Chalawan.

This time around, astronomers in each country are responsible for organizing their own campaigns to invite suggestions and voting from the public. Indigenous names or phrases, reflective of the cultural and historical traditions of the individual country, are encouraged.

The national coordinators will submit a few final candidates to a steering committee of the IAU, which will vet the names to make sure the rules have been followed. Among those rules: The names must be pronounceable, they cannot have religious, military or political references, and they cannot refer to living persons.

“The NameExoWorlds initiative reminds us that we are all together under one sky,” Debra Elmegreen, an astronomer at Vassar College and president-elect of the IAU, says. “What's cool for the proposers is that the names become official names.”

All the exoplanets on the new list were discovered before 2012. (It took time and additional observations to confirm their existence.) They all were discovered by telescopes looking either for stars that wobbled as orbiting planets tugged on them or that blinked as planets passed in front and briefly occluded them. Most are Jupiter-size, because monster exoplanets are the easiest, and thus the first, to be detected.

Elmegreen says that the steering committee began by inviting member countries of the United Nations to participate. So far, 79 have confirmed their participation, but people in any country can join by setting up their own national committee within their country.

“That will take some effort, but should be lots of fun,” she says. (Source: The Independent)

Apollo space program spawned technologies, products still in use

It's true that NASA has been erroneously credited with inventing a handful of technologies and products -- Tang, Velcro and computer chips, to name a few -- but America's space agency really is responsible for a variety of innovations that are still in use.

When scientists with NASA's Apollo Space Mission needed a drill to collect core samples from the lunar surface, they got in touch with engineers at Black and Decker. Researchers at the tool company developed a computer program to perfect the drill technology. The model helped engineers boost motor power while minimizing power use.

According to Interesting Engineering, the same computer program was later used by Black and Decker to develop a handheld, cordless vacuum cleaner, which became known as the Dustbuster. The creation of the lunar drill paved the way for the development of a variety of lightweight, cordless electric tools.

As NASA prepared to send astronauts to the moon, they needed to make everything as lightweight as possible, including the astronauts' spacesuits. In the 1970s, engineers with the Apollo mission began using a process called «blow rubber molding.» (Photo: UPI)

One third of U.S. workers haven't taken a vacation in more than 2 years

Thirty-six percent of Americans took their last vacation over two years ago, and 51 percent have not vacationed in more than a year, according to the 11th annual Vacation Confidence Index by Allianz Global Assistance.

Many previous studies, from a variety of sources, have shown that Americans, especially younger generations, have a hard time getting out of the office and spending some quality time off. Even though we know vacation is good for our mental and physical health, and some of us even get paid vacation time from our employers, the latest numbers on how many U.S. workers are not taking time off is still, well, depressing.



However, Allianz Global Assistance defines a "vacation" as any trip that is at least a week in a destination that is 100 miles or more from home, so there's no accounting for trips like "micro-cations," which are increasingly growing in popularity amongst Millennials and Gen X workers. That said, a previous study identified the ideal vacation length as eight days, and for many people that's not happening.

It doesn't look like 2019 will be a good year for vacation either. According to Allianz Global Assistance, only 42 percent of respondents said they felt confident they would be able to take a vacation this year — the lowest since 2013.

You can probably blame all the usual suspects for this vacation deficit as well. Forty-four percent said money was the main reason why they couldn't take time off, and 19 percent said they wouldn't want to spend on vacation anyway. Another 12 percent of workers said they didn't want to take the time off of work. Other reasons include other personal obligations that get in the way of taking time off and the stress of planning a vacation.

But it's not just employees who are overworking themselves, it's also the employers. The survey also revealed that 52 percent of U.S. workers say they take about the same amount of vacation time as their bosses do. So, bosses, if you want your employees to use their PTO, you're going to have to leave the office, too, sometimes. The survey showed Americans are only using 41 percent of their paid time off, while their bosses are using 51 percent.

The survey concludes that American vacations are changing — so much so that week-long vacations could go out of style. Allianz Global Assistance noted that short trips may become even more popular in the future, especially when it comes to making getting away — even for a day or two — more accessible for younger workers.

(Source: [travelandleisure.com](#))



ROUND THE GLOBE

Hortobagy National Park

A World Heritage, Hortobagy National Park (also named the Puszta), located in Hungary, is an outstanding example of a cultural landscape which preserves intact and visible evidence of its traditional pastoral use over more than two millennia and represents the harmonious interaction between people and nature.



The Puszta consists of vast plains where specific land-use practices such as animal husbandry, including grazing of hardy livestock breeds adapted to the natural conditions of alkaline pastures, steppes, meadows and wetlands.

Significant scientific discoveries made since the inscription of the property attest that treeless alkaline grasslands dominated the landscape from the end of the Pleistocene period.

The open character of the Hortobagy, suitable for their grazing practices, presented adequate conditions for the settlement and population of the region.

Numerous peoples migrated from the east into the Carpathian Basin in prehistory. The nomadic groups that arrived around 2000 BC were the first to leave their imprint on the natural landscape in the form of many burial mounds (kurgans), mostly found on dry land, but located near a source of water. They were often used for secondary burials by later peoples, and in some cases Christian churches were built on them. Also found in the park are the low mounds (tells) that mark the sites of ancient settlements back from the Neolithic.

(Source: [UNESCO](#))

Iran's Hyrcanian Forest named UNESCO World Heritage site

1 → The country has also 22 cultural properties being registered on the prestigious list, including Cultural Landscape of Maymand, Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region, and Historic City of Yazd.

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.

The Hyrcanian Forest cover the northern slope of the Alborz Mountain in Iran at the southern edge of the Caspian Sea and it contains very rich ecosystems due to the particular orographic and climatic situation (precipitation rich, warm-temperate, high moisture from the Caspian Sea and damming effect of the Alborz Mountain range).

According to UNESCO, the forest contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. It also contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

It is outstanding examples in the record of significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms and significant geomorphic or physiographic features. It is also outstanding example representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in



the evolution and development of terrestrial, ecosystems and communities of plants.

■ Statements of authenticity and/or integrity

Hyrcanian Forest has a high degree of authenticity and integrity. This ancient forest contains its full original complement of wild plants and animals, much of which has been lost from other adjoining areas. This natural area with its geological diversity and altitudinal range, different weathers, plant communities with high numbers of endemic species, in its most area is substantially unmodified by people and their effects.

Having a total area of 1847886 ha is large

enough to survive as a natural area, and to maintain genetic diversity even though there are outside influences. Management of the forest, particularly after 2003, demonstrates that the natural environmental quality of the area has been maintained and improved.

■ Comparison with other similar properties

Along with climate, geology, and topography, which are primary factors that determine plant distribution, similarities between the floras of Hyrcanian Forests, Middle European deciduous broadleaved forests and western North America deciduous broadleaved forests are increased by historical biogeography.

Mahan Air expands long-haul services to Rome, Shenzhen

TOURISM DESK TEHRAN — Iran's Mahan Air has launched direct flights connecting Tehran to Rome and Shenzhen, a major city in Guangdong province of China.

On June 2, Mahan Air, which is the first and largest private airline of the country, started operating a weekly direct flight to the Italian capital, IRIB reported.

The flight was scheduled to take off from Imam Khomeini International Airport at 7:15 a.m. and land at Rome-Fiumicino International Airport "Leonardo da Vinci" at 9:49 a.m., Tehran time.

The services to Shenzhen was launched last week, adding the number of the airline's flights to Chinese cities including Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, to 17 per week.

Iran's tourism organization has set sights on attracting two million Chinese nationals per annum after the country approved to waive the visa requirement for Chinese travelers earlier this month.

A total of 7.8 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) that shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year.

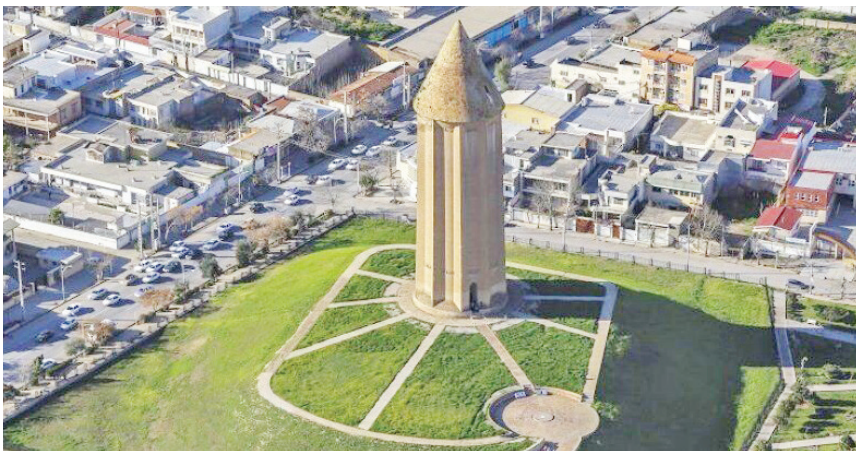
Gonbad-e Qabus World Heritage registration anniversary celebrated

HERITAGE DESK TEHRAN — People in Iran's Golestan province on Thursday celebrated the 7th registration anniversary of Gonbad-e Qabus on UNESCO World Heritage list.

The one-millennium-old brick tower is of high architectural importance as an exemplar and innovative design of the early-Islamic-era architecture.

July 1 is considered a significant cultural event for Iranians to hold the anniversary of Gonbad-e Qabus UNESCO registration, and the annual celebration is organized by Gonbad Kavus municipality, Mehr reported.

The UNESCO comments that tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.



The long-lasting structure capped by an eye-catching conical roof boasts intricate geometric principles and patterns which embellishes parts of its load-bearing brickwork.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond.

Two encircling inscriptions in Kufic calligraphy date the tower to 1006-7 CE while commemorate Qabus Ibn Voshmgir, Ziyarid ruler and literati (reigned 978-1012).

The UNESCO also credits Gonbad-e Qabus as "an outstanding and technologically innovative example of Islamic architecture that influenced sacred building in Iran, Anatolia and Central Asia."

Domaine de Chantilly: The Paris alternative to Versailles

You could call it a smaller, quieter version of the Palace of Versailles.

There's an on-site mansion, sprawling André Le Nôtre-designed gardens, Michelin-starred gastronomy and a five-star hotel.

But, crucially, no sea of tourists.

In recent years, city-weary Parisians in the know -- and in the money -- have been escaping to the Domaine de Chantilly, a retreat just 40 minutes away by train or car from the daily grind, chaos and noise of urban living in the French capital.

Surrounded by dense, green forests, it's home to one of France's lesser known chateaux, long eclipsed by its more ostentatious cousins in the Loire Valley and Versailles.

At its heart is Auberge du Jeu de Paume, a five-star hotel built specifically with Parisians in mind.

The allure? A restorative retreat where stressed-out urbanites can live like 19th-century French nobility in the bucolic countryside -- think horseback riding, polo, long forest promenades and Swiss spa treatments -- if only for a weekend.

"When we first opened in 2012, our target market was the Parisian market," says Pascal Groell, the hotel's director, or "maitre de maison."

"Paris is close by and easy to develop. But we very quickly discovered that the city of Chantilly was not well-known in the market or outside of France, even though this is a real gem. There are a lot of things to discover here."

Chantilly is best known within the upper echelons of Paris society for hosting some of the most prestigious horse races in Europe, including the Prix de Diane Longines and the Prix du Jockey Club, also known as the French Derby.

The château's last owner, Henri d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale, is credited with establishing the first racecourse in France, in the 19th century, after discovering the sport in England.

Chantilly is also known for hosting polo events and the luxury classic car show Chantilly Arts & Elegance. In other words, elite events traditionally reserved for society's upper crust.

What's perhaps lesser known are the assets that give the area broader appeal for the general public.

The Château de Chantilly houses the second largest collection of antique paintings in France after the Louvre, while sweetened whipped cream, otherwise known as Chantilly, was popularized here.

The Aga Khan, Prince Shah Karim Al Hussaini, adopted the Domaine de Chantilly in 2005 as one of his many pet projects, pledging to preserve and develop the region's history and heritage.

A big part of this vision would be the opening of a five-star hotel to attract overnight visitors and make the area an easy, accessible escape for Parisians on the weekends and for tourists on their final night in France. The hotel is a 20-minute drive from Charles de Gaulle Airport.

A visit on the Monday following the latest edition of the Prix de Diane Longines, traditionally held every June, offers a technicolor snapshot of this ritzy world.

In the lobby, stunning floral centerpieces made to replicate fancy ladies' hats and fascinators worn at the races fill the space.

"The Mentalist" star Simon Baker and British actress Kate Winslet have just left the property after fulfilling their duties as ambassadors for a Swiss luxury watchmaker and the post-race atmosphere is relaxed and casual.

As one of the biggest events of the year, the race helped fill nearly all of the hotel's 92 rooms and suites.

The lobby is thronged with guests from Asia, who've spent the night like French aristocracy in rooms designed to evoke the elegance of 18th-century France.

Think Louis XV armchairs, voluminous drapes, burgundy and blue printed Jouy fabrics depicting pastoral scenes of the French countryside, and private terraces overlooking the chateau gardens.

The hotel furniture was made in France by artisan workshop Henryot & Cie, which has been manufacturing traditional furniture and seating for more than 150 years in the Vosges region.

Only the bathrooms feature foreign materials: Italian



The Chateau de Chantilly boasts the second largest collection of antique paintings in France.

Carrara marble, Venetian mirrors and Murano glass.

But sleeping in the shadow of a French castle where the local hobbies include horseback riding and polo comes, predictably, at a price.

During high season, rates for basic rooms vary widely, ranging from 300 to 650 euros a night (\$335 to \$730). Suites can go for as much as 5,000 euros a night (\$5,600).

One or two nights is also likely more than enough time to explore the grounds for guests planning to stay exclusively on the Domaine, particularly if horses and elite equestrian sports figure low on your list of interests.

The property is a member of the Relais & Chateaux association, widely recognized among the French as the gold standard for independent, luxury, historic properties. It's one of the closest Relais & Chateaux properties to Paris.

And the hotel's chef concierge Dimitri Ruiz boasts the distinction of being president of Les Clés d'Or France, an association of concierges for the most prestigious properties in the country.

Because in the end, Groell notes that the hotel is as much about the French "savoir vivre" -- the ability to live elegantly, with poise and good manners -- as it is about living in sumptuous rooms for a few days.

(Source: [CNN](#))

Health ministry plans to establish registry system for organ shipping

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN – The health ministry plans to establish a registry system for organ donation shipping, the head of the ministry's management center for transplantation and special diseases said, IRNA reported on Thursday.

Mehdi Shadnough said that the center is now working on a comprehensive map nationwide in order to transfer organs for donation via air ambulance in the fastest way. "We have already conducted research on transportation infrastructures between provinces and it has been successfully tested," he explained.

The golden time is an important factor in organ transplantation, he added.

The infrastructure is provided by the center as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force, Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran (abbreviated as NAJA), Iran's National Emergency Medical Service Organization, he noted.

"Through registration system, we will witness more organ transplantation in the near future," he said.

The registration system project is implemented with the support of the health ministry, the National Cartographic Center, the Iranian Space Agency, Iran Air Force, NAJA as well as medical sciences universities, he explained.

Usage of motorcycle ambulances, air ambulance, ambulance car and even airliners are assessed in a software, which can find the fastest way that is needed to ship an organ,



he concluded.

■ **Organ donation rate in Iran**
In February, the transplantation and

treatment of diseases department at the health ministry announced that organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over

Usage of motorcycle ambulances, air ambulance, ambulance car and even airliners are assessed in a software, which can find the fastest way that is needed to ship an organ

Barbari, Lavash, main sources of hidden salt in Iranian diet

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN -- Researchers announced that Lavash, a soft, thin unleavened flatbread, and Barbari, a long, oval shaped bread with doughy ends, are on top list of hidden salt in Iranian diet, the head of the National Nutrition And Food Technology Research Institute announced, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Hedayat Hosseini said that Lavash, as the most popular bread in Iran have a great role in salt intakes of Iranians beside Barbari has the most amount of salt, he added.

In a recent study, the institute announced that bread, cheese and dough (a savory yogurt-based drink that is popular in Iran), are the main sources of hidden salt in Iranian diet.

According to a research conducted by the institute, 53 percent of salt intake is from the salt added to food, 12.5 percent from bread, 5.3 percent from cheese, 4.7 percent is from dough, and the rest from other sources.

In late December 2018, the Iranian Heart Association announced that the average salt intake among Iranians is around 10-12 grams per day, which is far beyond standard levels.

According to recent studies in the country, salt intake among women is



three times the men.

World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that adults consume less than 5 grams (just under a teaspoon) of salt per day; however, based on global statistics, most people consume too much salt—on average 9–12 grams per day that is around twice the recommended maximum level of intake.

WHO has stated that salt intake of less than 5 grams per day for adults helps to reduce blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and coronary heart attack.

National surveys in Iran has revealed that around 34% of Iranians have high blood pressure, leading to the prevalence of stroke and cardiovascular diseases to the extent that they are the second cause of death among Iranians over the age of 50.

Over 28.5 million Iranians receive family medicine services: official

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN – A total of 28 million and 700 thousand Iranians receive family medicine services, the head of public service center of Salamat Health Insurance Mohammad Reza Mirzaei announced, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Mirzaei said that rural, nomadic citizens as well as dwellers at below 20,000 population cities are covered by the family medicine services, as one of the projects of the Salamat Health Insurance, Iran's Universal Public Health Insurance scheme.

Family medicine is a medical specialty devoted to comprehensive healthcare for people of all ages. The specialist is named a family physician or family doctor. It provides continuing and comprehensive health care for the individual and family across all ages, genders, diseases, and parts of the body. It emphasizes on the disease prevention and health promotion.

They received free of charge disease prevention and health promotion services including appointment with general physician as well as midwifery, medicine, , medical laboratory and medical imaging services, he explained.

The plan has 28 trillion rials (about 666 billion dollars) budget half of which,

the past 18 years.

Although, Iran ranks 26 in organ donation in the world, it can claim better ranks given some plans being implemented in this regard.

If Iran move ahead with the current trend, it will achieve 45 percent increase by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

■ Organ donation, how and why?

Organ transplantation is one of the great advances in modern medicine, but unfortunately, the need for organ donors is much greater than the number of people who actually donate.

According to the figures revealed by International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation (IRODaT) Spain leads the world in organ donation.

Figures published for 2017 reveal that 2,183 people in Spain became organ donors after they died. That's 46.9 per million people in the population (pmp) – a standard way of measuring the rate of donation in a country, The Independent reported in July 2018.

According to the data published on IRODaT by the end of 2017 Iran's per million population of actual deceased organ donors was 11.43. In 1996 Iran's per million population of actual deceased organ donors was 0.1, which compared to the current pmp shows a great increase.

Some 5,000 people die of brain death annually in Iran, out of 3,000 brain deaths reported last year being qualified to be organ donors, only 926 donated their organs.

is provided by the Salamat Health Insurance, he said.

A total of 6,760 physicians and 5,440 midwives are active in family medicine project in 3,970 rural health centers nationwide, he added.

Under the family medicine project, family practice doctors had 60 million appointments with patients while the number is 15 million for the midwives and 5 million for the dentists since the previous Iranian year 1396 (March 2018-March 2019).

Family doctor scheme was proposed in the fifth five-year development plan (2016-2021). Based on this program, a doctor will be in charge of healthcare of a group of people and will keep close tabs on them in case of a health crisis.

According to the American Academy of Family, family physicians deliver a range of acute, chronic and preventive medical care services. In addition to diagnosing and treating illness, they also provide preventive care, including routine checkups, health-risk assessments, immunization and screening tests, and personalized counseling on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Family physicians also manage chronic illness, often coordinating care provided by other subspecialists.

‘Targeted hygiene’ embraces some dirt and germs

Somewhere between the Mom who obsessively wipes down every knob and toy her child might touch, and the dad who thinks rolling in the dirt is "good" for kids, there's a healthy medium, British experts say.

"We have to find a way to protect against infectious diseases and harmful microbes, whilst at the same time sustaining exposure to the essential beneficial microbes in our world," explained Sally Bloomfield.

Bloomfield is a member of the International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene, and also the co-author of a new report that surveyed British adults on their attitude towards dirt and germs in the home.

The 2018 survey, from the Royal Society for Public Health, suggests people are confused about how much dirt is OK. A lot of that confusion is probably coming from the rise of the "hygiene hypothesis" -- the notion that today's homes are overly sanitized, and kids need contact with germs to build up healthy immune systems.

But this notion can be taken too far, as Bloomfield's group found.

In fact, nearly one in four people polled agreed with the statement that "hygiene in the home is not important because children need to be exposed to harmful germs to build their immune system."

Men were twice as likely as women to express that opinion.

On the other hand, misconceptions around the level of "danger" posed by dirt were also common.

Bloomfield's team found that "almost two-thirds of those we surveyed (61%) said touching a child's dirty hands after they have been playing outside was likely to spread harmful germs."

But that's simply not true. In fact, "there is little evidence that outdoor dirt and soil is



contaminated with harmful microbes (unless there are animals nearby)," according to the report.

■ **Different germs, different hazards**
Bloomfield, a researcher at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said the key thing to remember is that all germs are not created equal.

Exposure to diverse microbes from other people, domestic animals and the natural environment do help build a healthy immune system and microbiome -- the varied microbes normally living in the gut and respiratory tract, experts agree. However, exposure to the wrong types of germs can both weaken the microbiome and cause infections.

And if those infections require antibiotics, "good" bacteria in the gut get destroyed along with the bad, they pointed out.

So, how to find a balance between being a compulsive germaphobe who's constantly cleaning or the lax parent letting kids chow down on mud pies?

Bloomfield believes a new, more nuanced

model, called "targeted hygiene," is probably the answer.

Targeted hygiene means intervening with kids and their environment, but only when you can stop the risk of infection. This doesn't necessarily mean avid cleaning. Cleaning does get rid of visible dirt, but it won't necessarily reduce the risk of infection.

What does? Handwashing. Handwashing is a simple component of targeted hygiene, and should be timed to certain activities, Bloomfield said.

"Our own bodies, our food and our domestic animals are the most likely sources of spread of infection -- so the times that matter are [times such as] when we handle raw food, when we use the toilet, when we care for our pets, when we are infected or caring for someone who is infected," she explained.

So, be sure to wash your hands well: When you first come home; if you've been caring for or playing with a pet; after toileting; before eating or preparing food; after handling raw meat, fruits or vegeta-

bles; after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.

■ 'Common sense' clean

Most -- but not all -- of the British adults surveyed seem to understand the value of hand washing, since "73% of respondents said they 'always' washed their hands thoroughly with soap after using the toilet and after preparing raw meat," the report found.

In addition to hand washing, Bloomfield said other important measures include cleaning surfaces that come into contact with food, cleaning surfaces regularly touched by many people, and washing dishcloths immediately after using them so they don't spread germs.

Dr. Aaron Glatt is a spokesperson for the Infectious Diseases Society of America. He reviewed the new report and said he "likes the idea of targeted hygiene."

"Good common sense remains the best way to prevent infection," Glatt said. "You don't need to wash your hands 40 times a day, but appropriate hand washing needs to be stressed. If you've just come out of the bathroom or are going to be preparing foods, wash your hands."

When it comes to routine cleaning, Glatt said the kitchen and bathrooms are two major areas that need attention.

He agreed that pets can potentially be a point of transmission for infection, but if they're cared for properly, they shouldn't be a concern.

"We even allow pets into the hospital for therapy," Glatt said. "In general, kids and pets interact in a positive way."

Again, common sense should be your guide: "Kids shouldn't let a pet lick their plate and then eat from it," Glatt said.

(Source: webmd.com)

Iran producing pharmaceutical raw materials, medicine in Russia: official

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN – Iran is now manufacturing pharmaceutical raw materials as well as medicines in many countries, including Russia, the head of the public relations office at the Food and Drug Administration said, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

"Today over 97 percent of the demand of medicine in Iran is met by domestic companies and just 3 percent, equaling 30 percent in terms of foreign exchange value, is imported," Ki-anoush Jahanpour said.



The imported medicines are either those which their technological knowledge for manufacturing is not available in Iran or are of higher technology methods for production in other countries, he added.

Many nontechnology, biotechnology and chemical medicines are manufactured inside Iran, he explained.

The health ministry supports human resources and knowledge-based potentialities in order to stop importing of medicine from abroad, he said.

The Iranian-made medicine are available at one fiftieth of price in comparison with imported ones, he added.

The Food and Drug Administration has already banned importing 60 items of medicine to Iran.

The number of the banned medicines would be increased in the future due to capabilities of Iranian pharmaceutical companies, the spokesman of the Food and Drug Administration, Shahram Shoeibi, said.

The medicines include ones related to cardiovascular, hormone, eye, and skin diseases as well as some antibiotics, he explained.

He said that there would be no problem to supply these medicines to the Iranian market.

Iran's pharmaceutical capacity

On June 22, the first Iranian pharmaceutical factory in Turkey that produces recombinant protein drugs and biologic medicines was inaugurated.

CinnaGen Pharmaceutical Group launched the new production line in Turkey with the name of CinnaGen ilaç.

The factory produces 22 types of medicine that are mostly used for treating chronic, life-threatening diseases such as cancer, osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis (MS), as well as nervous system and blood diseases.

According to the acting director of Food and Drug Administration, Iranian medicines are exported to 30 countries.

In June, the Food and Drug Administration announced that a special department for "national production" might be opened to further support the domestic production of medicines.

In February, secretary of biotech development center (BioDC) at science and technology vice-presidency, Mostafa Qanei, said that there were 146 biopharmaceuticals in the global market, of which, 22 items are available in Iran which are monoclonal antibodies and recombinant proteins.

The BioDC announced that the domestically manufacturing of biotechnology products has so far saved one billion dollars for the country. In October 2018, the center announced that medicine is on top of the list of exports of biotechnology products in Iran.

Why fast walkers may live 15–20 years longer

Researchers say a quick walking pace is a good cardiovascular workout, but it may also be an indicator of a person's overall health.

In a recent study, faster walkers lived longer no matter their BMI measurement. Getty Images

Taking a brisk walk could increase your odds of living longer, and it doesn't matter how much you weigh when you slip on your walking shoes, a new study suggests.

People who have a quicker walking pace lived longer than those who walked more slowly, according to researchers who monitored the walking habits and deaths of nearly 475,000 people, most of whom were in their 50s at the start of the study.

"Brisk walking" was defined by researchers as walking at least 3 miles per hour, or 100 steps a minute.

However, walking pace was self-reported by participants, who were asked to indicate whether they walked at a "slow pace," "steady/average pace," or "brisk pace."

Participants with brisk walking paces had longer life expectancies across all categories of BMI, according to the study published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings.

"The survival is the same for fast walkers for a wide range of body mass index, from 20 to 40," Dr. Francesco Zaccardi, a clinical epidemiologist at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom and the study's lead researcher, told Healthline.

"This result indicates that physical function is a stronger determinant of longevity than body mass index, and also people with high body mass index but with a good fitness may survive longer," he said.

Conversely, participants with slower walking paces had shorter life expectancies across all categories of BMI.

Researchers reported that women who walked more quickly had a life span of about 87 years compared to 72 years for women who walked slowly.

Men who walked quickly had a life span of about 86 years compared to 65 years for men who walked more slowly.

That's a 15-year average difference for women and a 20-year average difference for men.

"What this tells me is if you're walking faster you're doing a very low-intensity form of cardio, and if done on a regular basis, it will strengthen and condition your heart. So, whether you're overweight or in shape, fast walking does have positive physical effects on your body and life expectancy," Jamie Hickey, a certified personal trainer and nutritionist at Truism Fitness, told Healthline.

(Source: healthline.com)

Arctic fox walks from Norway to Canada in record 76 days

A young Arctic fox left researchers “thunderstruck” after it walked hundreds of miles across the ice from Norway’s Svalbard islands to northern Canada in a record 76 days.

The creature covered 3,506km (2,179 miles), travelling across sea ice and glaciers at an average of 46.3km per day. On one day alone it managed 155km.



Scientists from Norway’s Polar Institute fitted the female fox with a tracking device and freed her into the wild in March last year. She was under a year old when she set off from the island of Spitsbergen in search of food.

“This is the fastest movement rate recorded for this species,” the Polar Institute’s research paper on the fox’s journey stated.

The previous known record was held by an adult male fox tracked in Alaska who travelled 113km in one day.

“We couldn’t believe our eyes at first,” Eva Fuglei of the Polar Institute told Norway’s public broadcaster NRK. “We thought perhaps it was dead, or had been carried there on a boat, but there were no boats in the area. We were quite thunderstruck.”

The fox completed her journey in two legs, reaching Greenland after travelling across 1,512km of sea ice in 21 days.

She arrived on Canada’s Ellesmere Island in July after walking a further 2,000km over 76 days.

The researchers noted that she slowed down significantly on two occasions in northern Greenland.

They think she may have curled up in the snow to wait out bad weather or found a source of food.

When she arrived on Ellesmere Island, the fox will have switched her diet from “marine food resources” to mostly lemmings, the scientists said.

The fox’s journey has raised concerns about how climate change could impact animals’ ability to migrate.

Already the shrinking of the polar ice pack means the Arctic foxes can no longer visit Iceland.

“This is another example of how important sea ice is to wildlife in the Arctic,” Norway’s climate and environment minister, Ola Elvestuen, told the Polar Institute. “The warming in the north is frighteningly fast. We must cut emissions quickly to prevent the sea ice from disappearing all summer.”

Arctic sea ice is melting at an unprecedented rate with temperatures warming in the region more than twice as fast as they are for the planet as a whole.

This has opened up the area to exploration with Russia set to tow a floating nuclear power plant to the Arctic port town of Pevek next month.

Arctic foxes are incredibly hardy animals that can survive temperatures as low as -50C.

They have furry-soled paws, short ears, and a short muzzle to help them survive in cold climates.

The ultimate fate of the fox is unknown as her transmitter stopped working in February this year.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Turkish economic problems

(December 7, 2000)

BBC reporter Chris Morris reports on how the financial markets in Turkey have responded to a promise of help from the International Monetary Fund.

The markets rose sharply because the IMF acted more quickly and more generously than expected. Financial aid worth more than ten billion dollars will be given to Turkey **over the coming year to help it overcome a severe bout of the economic jitters**. A collapse in confidence in the Turkish banking sector has caused a huge **liquidity** crisis in the last few weeks as billions of dollars was withdrawn from the country. Now things have **stabilized to some extent**, but the hard work still lies ahead. The government has **pledged** in return for IMF assistance **to redouble its efforts** to reform the economy. That means swifter privatization and more extensive banking reform.

A number of financial institutions could be **swallowed up** in a series of mergers and acquisitions, but **the real onus** will be on the government itself to deliver on its promises. The IMF has plenty of critics in Turkey, ranging from left-wing trades unions to right-wing nationalists within the governing coalition, so there will also be pressure on the government to delay some of its reforms. But if it tries to do that the IMF could easily **turn off the tap of financial aid**, which will only be **disbursed gradually** throughout the next twelve months.

Words

over the coming year: financial aid will be given out gradually over the next twelve months - not all at the same time
severe bout of: a bad case of; we can suffer from a severe bout of flu for example
economic jitters: worries about the economy
liquidity: having money/cash available
stabilized to some extent: made a little more stable
pledged: promised
to redouble its efforts: to greatly increase its efforts
swallowed up: absorbed into a larger institution
the real onus: the real responsibility
turn off the tap of financial aid: to stop giving money
disbursed gradually: given out slowly, not all at the same time



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.

‘Saving Zagros forests must become first priority’

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Given that **d e s k** Zagros forests condition is worrisome being gravely threatened by wood logging, it must become the main concern of the related bodies to prevent it from disappearance, Khalil Aqaei, head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO) has stated.

Zagros Mountains forest steppe ecoregion with an area of about 6 million hectares (3.5 percent of Iran) is located primarily in Iran, ranging northwest to southeast and roughly paralleling the country’s western border. The forests constitute 40 percent of the country’s forested area and is stretching over 12 provinces. These forests have also been called western oak forests, due to the dominance of oak species.

According to the Science Direct Western oak forests are home to many species including, the Persian squirrel which is the indicator species of this region. Persian squirrels and oak trees have symbiotic relationships, in which forests provide ecological requirements of Persian squirrels such as food and shelter and, in return, the Persian squirrel contributes in seed germination and forests’ regeneration.

A wide variety of wildlife, including wolves, leopards, and even the Persian fallow deer which was once thought extinct have made their homes in the mountains.

Saving Zagros forests is the first priority



of the FRWMO, he noted, adding, only holding meetings and discussing the issues haunting the valuable forests is not solving the problems; it is necessary to follow up the implementation of the plans every day.

He went on to say that “We are conducting researches in collaboration with the Organization’s research institute to determine the areas suitable for cultivation and harvest of wood.”

To reduce the pressure on the forests

for wood harvest, he noted that there is a need for the private sector to participate in the production of wood.

The other way to cut wood logging is to increase import, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Aqaei pointed to the role of locals and environment lovers in reducing wildfires which is a way to save the forests, adding that also, the most advanced technologies should be used to protect forests.

London records biggest rise in cycling journeys in 2018

Cycling journeys grew by 5% in London last year, with more than 4m km travelled each day by bike in the capital, figures show.

City Hall said the increase, recorded by Transport for London, was evidence investment in infrastructure, including cycle lanes and revised signalling at junctions, was paying off. The figure is almost three times higher than the average 1.8% growth in distance nationwide.

Cycling campaigners welcomed the figures but cautioned previous studies had showed growth in distance travelled was not necessarily a sign of more people cycling, and said more needed to be done to encourage wider take-up.

London’s walking and cycling commissioner, Will Norman, said: “The mayor is determined to enable more cycling all across the capital, and I’m really pleased last year saw the biggest increase in the amount of cycling in Londonsince records began.”

TfL’s monitoring began in 2015. The figures showed an 8% increase in overall distance travelled in central London in 2018, higher than in outer boroughs, possibly due in part to the completion of two central sections of superhighway.

Norman added: “It is clear that where we have invested in new high-quality routes, people feel safer and more confident cycling on London’s streets. And it is yet more evidence for boroughs across London that investing in



walking and cycling infrastructure works – getting more people healthy and active as part of their everyday routine, and making our streets cleaner, greener and safer.”

According to Cycling UK, the proportion of journeys made by bike nationwide has remained static at about 2% but London and other cities, including Leicester, Cambridge and Manchester, had higher growth after investing in active travel.

Sam Jones, of Cycling UK, said: “The important thing is getting protected space and routes where people feel safe.”

He added: “Any growth in cycling is a good thing, but

we’re clearly a long way from when women, children and the elderly feel comfortable and safe enough to make those shorter local journeys – whether those are to the shops, school, education – all of which are needed not just to increase the diversity of people who are cycling but also the amount of people cycling.”

TfL’s analysis shows just 27% of cyclists are women, and the dominant demographic profile of people using its new infrastructure was still white, middle-aged, high-income men. Surveys of seven new stretches of lanes, both super-highways and “quietways”, found the majority of users felt safer although concerns about road surfaces remained.

Fran Graham, the campaigns coordinator of the London Cycling Campaign, said: “Time and time again, evidence shows that if you create the conditions that mean people feel safe cycling, they will. But the mayor has a way to go before London is known as a ‘byword for cycling’ – it’s why it is so important that he hits his target to triple protected cycle track by the end of his term.”

She added: “Borough councils also have a large part to play – the recent actions of Kensington and Chelsea to oppose walking and cycling improvements are holding London back, stopping it from becoming a world-class cycling city.”

(Source: The Guardian)

‘Incredible’ : Antarctica’s floating ice level plummets to record low

The amount of ice floating in the sea across Antarctica has fallen to a record low just three years after hitting an all-time high.

Floating ice levels near the continent increased steadily from 1979 to 2014, when it hit 4.9m square miles, the highest amount on record.

But by 2017 the amount of ice was at 4.1m square miles, its lowest ever mark, according to a Nasa study of satellite data.

The amount of sea ice lost in those three years would cover an area bigger than the size of Mexico.

Losing that much ice so rapidly “is

pretty incredible” and faster than anything researchers have seen before, said Claire Parkinson, a Nasa climate scientist who authored the new study.

“Things have been crazy,” said Mark Serreze, director of the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre.

He said observing the plummeting ice levels had been a “white knuckle rides”.

Antarctica has previously not been as affected by global warming as the Arctic.

Non-scientists who reject mainstream climate science have often previously pointed to the south pole’s ice to downplay the impact of global warming on



the polar ice caps.

Mr Serreze and other experts do not know if the Antarctic ice level fall is a

natural blip or a sign that long-term global warming is finally catching up with the south pole.

“The fact that a change this big can happen in such a short time should be viewed as an indication that the Earth has the potential for significant and rapid change,” said Waleed Abdalati, a scientist at the University of Colorado.

The study examines data up to 2017.

Antarctic sea ice levels increased slightly in 2018 but the amount was still at its second lowest since 1979.

Levels in May and June this year were the lowest on record, eclipsing 2017.

(Source: The Independent)

Second Announcement

N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER No. : 08-38-9640010

1398.2020

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 TO 12-1/4 INCH NO.16, 16/32 IN.ID.	40
03		32
04	NO.18, 18/32 IN.ID. NO.20, 20/32 IN.ID	8

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

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Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

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

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تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۸/۴/۱۲ نویت دوم ۹۸/۴/۱۵

Saudi airports come under fresh retaliatory raids by Yemen

TEHRAN — Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah forces have carried out fresh retaliatory strikes against military sites in Saudi Arabia's Abha and Jizan airports after bypassing the kingdom's air defenses.

During the attacks on Thursday night, drones operated by the Yemeni resistance forces once again targeted aircraft hangars and other military positions inside the airports, which have become a regular target for Yemen's retaliatory attacks.

According to a report by Yemen's al-Masirah TV network, the attacks disrupted air traffic and delayed at least four flights in Abha.

Saudi media only confirmed the attacks on Jizan airport and quoted military commanders as saying that the drones had been intercepted without elaborating.

The intensified drone attacks over the past months have proven an effective response to the years-long deadly war waged by Saudi Arabia and its regional allies, including the United Arab Emirates, against the impoverished country.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since Saudis launched the illegal campaign in March 2015 to drive Houthis out of the capital Sana'a and to restore power



to a fugitive president.

The Saudi war, which is propped up by a number of Arab allies and enjoys support from Western governments, have also left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

According to Press TV, the Thursday attacks come after the Houthis pledged a

firm response to Saudi airstrikes earlier this week that targeted two residential houses in the southern province of Ta'izz, killing eight members of a family.

For long, Yemenis relied on domestically-developed missiles to respond to the Saudi-led aggression.

That strategy worked well on many

instances, as they were able to hit targets deep inside Saudi territories, including the international airport in Riyadh, which is some 800 kilometers away from Yemen's northernmost parts.

To reach such targets, the missiles had to bypass layered air defenses that have US-made Patriot missile systems as their backbone.

Drones have opened a new chapter in the war, allowing Yemeni resistance forces to carry out even more precise attacks at much lower costs.

Using the domestic Qasef-2K design, Yemeni forces have been able to deliver devastating blows to various targets across Saudi Arabia.

The one attack that stood out, however, took place in May, when the Houthis targeted two oil pumping stations near Riyadh, forcing Saudi authorities to stop oil flow in one of the country's main pipelines.

Yemeni forces say they have put together a list of more than 300 vital targets across Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemeni and will target them with their drones should the Saudi-led aggression continue.

Pakistan PM to meet Trump for talks on improving ties

TEHRAN — Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan will meet U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington later this month, its foreign office said on Thursday, a visit that could help to ease tensions between the two countries.

Trump late last year accused Pakistan of not doing "a damn thing" for the United States despite billions of dollars in aid, angering Islamabad which has long been at odds with Washington over the war in Afghanistan.

By February, Trump said the United

States had developed a "much better" relationship and may set up some meetings with Pakistan.

Khan accepted an invitation to visit Washington and will meet Trump on July 22, the foreign office said in a statement.

"The focus will be to refresh the bilateral relationship," it said.

Pakistan and the United States are officially allies in fighting terrorism but they have a complicated relationship< Reuters reported.

India says Pakistan's crackdown on 'militant group a 'cosmetic step

TEHRAN — India said Pakistan's announcement of a crackdown on Hafiz Saeed, leader of a group blamed for militant attacks on Mumbai in 2008, lacked sincerity and meant to mislead foreign governments.

Pakistan said on Wednesday it had launched 23 cases against Saeed and 12 aides for using five trusts to collect funds and donations for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), blamed by India and the United States for the assault in Mumbai that killed 166 people.

"Let us not get fooled by these cosmetic

steps," Raveesh Kumar, spokesman for India's foreign ministry, told a regular press briefing.

"Pakistan's sincerity to take action against terrorists and terror groups will be judged on the basis of their ability to demonstrate verifiable, credible and irreversible action against terror and terrorist groups operating on their soil."

He said Pakistan's declarations regarding its crackdown were meant to "hoodwink the international community", Reuters reported.

Sudan military council, opposition reach power-sharing agreement

TEHRAN — Sudan's ruling military council and a coalition of opposition and protest groups reached an agreement to share power during a transition period leading to elections, setting off street celebrations by thousands of people.

The two sides, which have held talks in Khartoum for the past two days, agreed to "establish a sovereign council by rotation between the military and civilians for a period of three years or slightly more," African Union mediator Mohamed Hassan Lebatt said at a news conference.

They also agreed to form an independent technocratic

government and to launch a transparent, independent investigation into violent events in recent weeks.

According to Reuters, the two sides agreed to postpone the establishment of a legislative council. They had previously agreed that the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) coalition would take two-thirds of a legislative council's seats before security forces crushed a sit-in protest on June 3, killing dozens, and talks collapsed

The streets of Omdurman, Khartoum's twin city across the Nile River, erupted in celebration when the news broke, a Reuters witness said. Thousands of people of all ages took to the streets, chanting "Civilian! Civilian! Civilian!"

Young men banged drums, people honked their car horns, and women carrying Sudanese flags ululated in jubilation.

"This agreement opens the way for the formation of the institutions of the transitional authority, and we hope that this is the beginning of a new era," said Omar al-Degair, a leader of the FFC.

"We would like to reassure all political forces, armed movements and all those who participated in the change from young men and women ... that this agreement will be comprehensive and will not exclude anyone," said General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, deputy head of the Transitional Military Council.

Turkey's S-400s to be loaded on planes Sunday in Russia

TEHRAN — The first of the Russian S-400 defense systems that Ankara has purchased will be loaded on to cargo planes on Sunday and arrive in Turkey some time next week, privately-held broadcaster Haberturk reported.

Washington has said that U.S. sanctions would be triggered when the missile batteries

arrive in NATO ally Turkey.

The initial S-400 delivery will be sent on two cargo planes from a Russian military air base, Haberturk said without citing a source. It also reported that a Russian technical team that would oversee its installation is expected to arrive in Turkey by Monday.

Turkey and the United States have been at odds over Ankara's decision to buy the S-400s, which Washington says are not compatible with NATO defenses and would compromise U.S. F-35 fighter jets, which Turkey helps build and also plans to buy.

According to Reuters, Washington has

also formally started the process of expelling Turkey from the program for F-35s, made by Lockheed Martin Corp.

Sanctioning Turkey and removing it from the F-35 program would be one of the most significant ruptures in recent history in the relationship between the two nations.

Seizing Grace 1 tanker: An outright theft with no legal justification

➔1 Continuing this blockage means that either more Syrians travel to European countries to get rid of the siege, or they start to bear more grudge against the countries that have laid the siege. Therefore, saying that seizing the ship was in breach of European sanctions against Damascus is only a pretext.

On the other hand, the sanctions against Damascus is imposed by the European Union and U.S., not the UN, so other countries don't have to observe these sanctions; therefore Iran has done nothing wrong because the EU and U.S. are not allowed to force other countries into following these sanctions; the sanctions are supposed to be followed by the countries who have imposed them,

not others, so Iran has not done anything against the international law.

Following the blatant stealing of the Iranian oil tanker in international waters, the UK ambassador to Iran, Robert Macaire was summoned to Iranian Foreign Ministry on Thursday, July fourth.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned the seizure of the oil tanker, saying that UK has obviously seized the tanker under U.S. orders and asked for the immediate release of the tanker.

Iran's Foreign Ministry announced that seizing the oil tanker was the same as stealing because the sanctions imposed by UK or the European Union do not apply to

other countries and UK was not allowed to force them on Iran. This is U.S. bullying other countries, something that European countries had long protested.

Over the meeting, all the documents that showed the movement of the tanker and the goods it carried where completely legal were handed to the UK ambassador.

Iran also announced that it will use all of its legal capacities to release the tanker and ensure that the country's rights are safeguarded.

The UK ambassador to Tehran said that he will inform London immediately, underlining that UK does not abide by U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran.

China, EU should further strengthen cooperation

➔7 In addition, in 2015, von der Leyen told the German weekly Die Zeit her goal of a more integrated Europe. Although her wish that her grandchildren could live in a "United States of Europe" has proven difficult to achieve, her support for European integration is consistent with China's idea.

China firmly supports the European integration process and takes delight in seeing a united and prosperous Europe that plays an important role in international affairs.

It is important for the EU to create an ideal external environment, strengthen cooperation with strategic partners, and obtain external support to promote the European integration process. Cooperation between China and the EU is conducive to a balanced development inside EU and strongly promotes European integration.

Europe is an important pole in the multipolar world and has a comprehensive strategic partnership with China. As President Xi Jinping said in 2016 in a signed article on Polish newspaper Rzeczpospolita, "As the world's two major forces... China and Europe have every reason to enhance synergy in their development strategies, deepen shared interests, promote common growth and contribute to world peace and development."

Hamas unfazed by the threats made by Netanyahu

➔1 Al-Hayya praised the strong relations between the military wings of Islamic Jihad and Hamas, saying, "Shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart and rifle to rifle on the way to liberation."

Earlier Netanyahu has threatened a "large-scale" military offensive against the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu claimed Wednesday that Israel wants to "restore calm," but "same time we are preparing for a large-scale military operation, if such an action is required."

"Those are my instructions to the army," he added.

The hawkish premier made the remarks after a cabinet meeting to discuss the situation in the besieged coastal enclave. Netanyahu also held a meeting with local and regional council heads, some of whom left the meeting in protest.

"The prime minister had no intention of holding a special meeting on the Gaza envelope area as expected and as requested today," they said.

Russia to help beef up Venezuela's armed forces

TEHRAN — Russia plans to take steps to strengthen Venezuela's armed forces, RIA news agency cited Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying Friday.

Russia is a staunch ally of embattled socialist President Nicolas Maduro and has backed him alongside China, while most western powers have backed opposition leader Juan Guaido.

"I want to underline that I am talking specifically about work with equipment which was delivered there," Ryabkov was quoted as saying.

Putin warns that militants are flowing into Libya from Syria's Idlib

TEHRAN — Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was worried that militants were flowing into Libya from Syria's Idlib province and warned that the Libyan situation was deteriorating.

Putin, who was speaking at a news conference in Rome after holding talks with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, said Moscow wanted Libya's warring sides to agree a ceasefire, to hold talks, and to enter into a proper political process to sort out the country's problems< Reuters reported.

Protesters burn U.S. flag ahead of Trump's Fourth of July show

TEHRAN — Protesters have burnt an American national flag in front of the White House in Washington, DC during a Fourth of July Independence Day demonstration organized against the policies of U.S. President Donald Trump.



Two people were arrested on Thursday during a flag burning protest ahead of Trump's "Salute to America" Fourth of July celebration in Washington, DC.

Police also arrested political activist Gregory Lee Joey Johnson during the demonstration outside of the White House just before Trump's celebration was set to start, someone confirmed on his Twitter account. His account also said that another protester had been arrested along with him, but did not identify him.

Johnson famously burnt an American flag outside the 1984 RNC to protest against then-President Ronald Reagan's policies. He was later arrested and later charged for desecrating a venerated object.

Johnson challenged the decision before the Supreme Court in the famous case Texas v Johnson, which ruled that flag desecration is protected by the First Amendment as "symbolic speech."

According to Press TV, he is a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party which organized the protest on Thursday in front of the White House.

Hundreds of other protesters who were not affiliated with the Revolutionary Communist Party attended the Independence Day demonstration, carrying anti-Trump signs and a giant "Baby Trump" balloon.

.Kushner plan aims to assert colonial privilege over Quds: Australian Prof

➔6 We see a big Israeli campaign to block a change of government in Britain, where large sections of the British Labor Party are rejecting Zionist influence. Zionists fear to lose the support of the original sponsor of their colony, the British state, should a government led by Jeremy Corbyn come to office.

In the US, there is a shift away from Zionism by liberal Jews. They have been influenced by the staunch Palestinian resistance and exposure of Israeli crimes. This is a gradual movement of 'liberal Zionists' towards a more anti-Zionist position, using their own logic.

For example, two US academics who call themselves "lifelong Zionists" explain that they have chosen to boycott Israel out of "love for Israel and a desire to save it".

Clearly, these 'liberals' have some dream which does not sit well with the reality of a Netanyahu-led apartheid state. In any case, they go on to say "we are refusing to travel to Israel, boycotting products produced there and calling on our universities to divest and our elected representatives to withdraw aid to Israel ... until Israel seriously engages with a peace process that either establishes a sovereign Palestinian state or grants full democratic citizenship to Palestinians living in a single state" (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-zionist-case-for-boycotting-israel/2015/10/23/ac4dab80-735c-11e5-9cbb-790369643cf9_story.html).

Whatever their logic, these 'left Zionists' effectively lend support to the 'One

Democratic State' proposal, urged by Palestinian activists (https://counter-hegemonic-studies.net/amal-odsp-1/). Importantly, their call was run in the US establishment paper, the Washington Post.

Similarly, the US anti-war group 'Jewish Voices for Peace' has recently declared itself anti-Zionist. This has led to an avalanche of Zionist accusations that they are "self-haters", "anti-Jewish", representing "far-left antisemitism", and so on. Other media highlights young Jewish liberals who now claim to be anti-Zionist (https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/new-faces-jewish-american-resistance-israel). The result is that a large split is opening up between Israeli Jews (who mostly support President

Trump) and the US liberal Jews (who mostly hate Trump), whose self-image is offended by an ugly apartheid state.

All this is important in terms of undermining the foreign support on which the Zionist colony depends. Nevertheless, the bedrock of hope for the future remains the steadfast Palestinian resistance. Remaining and resisting, strengthening links with their regional allies, the Arab and Muslim population of Palestine now outnumber the Jewish Israeli population. Jewish emigration is now greater than that of Arabs. Many Israelis have dual nationality and are finding life easier in Europe and the USA. The contradictions of Zionist apartheid are starker than ever, and that is opening doors for the future.

Milan Olympic bid promoter is convicted of doctoring paperwork

The mayor who successfully championed Milan's bid to win the 2026 Winter Olympics has been convicted of fiddling paperwork in his previous role as head of the 2015 Milan Expo world fair, a court ruled on Friday.

The court gave Giuseppe Sala a six-month suspended sentence for pre-dating works contracts in the build-up to the fair, which defied naysayers and attracted huge crowds. It immediately converted the sentence into a 45,000 euro (£40,378) fine.

Sala, a centre-left politician whose career got a major boost following the success of the Expo, has always denied wrongdoing and he can appeal the verdict. His office said he would not be stepping down as mayor.

Last month, Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo were awarded the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, beating Stockholm in a vote of International Olympic Committee members.

(Source: Reuters)

Former world number one Wozniacki knocked out of Wimbledon

Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki is out of Wimbledon at the third-round stage following a 6-4 6-2 defeat by China's Zhang Shuai.

The Danish 14th seed was 4-0 up before Zhang, who had not got past the first round previously, fought back brilliantly to take the first set.

Wozniacki seemed to let some line calls affect her as the world number 50 triumphed in 80 minutes.

Zhang will now play Viktorija Golubic or Dayana Yastremska.

On court three, eighth seed Elina Svitolina saw off Greek 31st seed Maria Sakkari 6-3 6-7 (1-7) 6-2 with her seventh match point in an error-strewn match.

The Ukrainian had two chances to get over the line at 6-5 in the second set before going on to lose the tie-break.

Svitolina wasted three more opportunities at 40-0 and two at deuce in the eighth game of the deciding set before she eventually booked her spot in the fourth round courtesy of Sakkari's 48th unforced error. In the next round, Svitolina will face either American Danielle Collins or 21st seed Petra Martic of Croatia.

(Source: BBC)

Local ticket demand exceeds 2020 organisers' expectations

Tokyo 2020 organizers said on Friday they had underestimated Japanese demand for tickets after 3.22 million briefs were sold during the first domestic sales phase last month.

The unexpected demand prompted organizers to re-evaluate their Japan-based sales going forward and there will now be a second ticket lottery in August for those who missed out the first time around.

Organizers say hundreds of thousands of tickets will be available in the second lottery.

The exact format of the second phase has yet to be decided but will only be open to those who failed to obtain tickets the first time around, when results were announced on June 20.

The window will close by Aug. 22, when the application process for Paralympics tickets is scheduled to begin.

"There was a massive amount of applications received in the first wave and this absolutely exceeded our expectations," Tokyo 2020 spokesman Masa Takaya said on Friday.

"So in that respect, we are pleased to see such huge excitement being built up amongst people across Japan."

Organizers have also ditched plans to offer further unsold tickets on a first-come, first-served basis later in the autumn, as had been originally proposed.

There is now likely to be a third lottery phase instead, only open once again to Japan-based residents.

Those wishing to purchase tickets outside Japan must do so through country-specific Authorized Ticket Resellers.

Between 70-80 percent of all tickets have been reserved for domestic sale with the remainder allocated to international customers and sponsors.

"As far as we know, the reaction from the public to this second chance is being well received ... and by those who participated in the first wave," added Takaya.

"So, we are right on track but we want to continue making our best effort." Organizers say that over 7.5 million people had registered for the Tokyo fan ID needed to make a ticket application.

Although the total number of tickets available has yet to be announced as many venue designs are still being worked on, organizers said in their bid for the 2020 Games that 7.8 million tickets would be made available.

(Source: Reuters)

Popov, Bubka deny taking bribes for backing Rio's Olympic bid

Russian swimming great Alexander Popov and Ukrainian pole vault legend Sergey Bubka, both IOC members, reacted furiously Friday to claims they took bribes in exchange for supporting Rio de Janeiro as hosts for the 2016 Olympic Games.

"I didn't even vote for Rio de Janeiro," said Popov, one of three Russian members of the International Olympic Committee, in a statement released by RIA Novosti.

Bubka, who is also head of Ukraine's national Olympic committee, was also quick to deny the allegations, saying: "I completely reject all the false claims."

Brazilian media cited a former governor of Rio de Janeiro, Sergio Cabral, who is in prison on corruption charges, as saying at a court hearing that he helped to orchestrate a bribe to secure the city as host of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games.

He said the bribe, worth a combined \$2 million, was organised with the help of Lamine Diack, the disgraced former head of athletics' world governing body the IAAF.

Diack resigned as an honorary IOC member in November 2015 and faces trial in France over corruption and money-laundering. Among the people who allegedly received the funds, Cabral cited four-time Olympic gold medallist Popov as well as six-time world champion Bubka, who is the senior vice president of the IAAF.

(Source: AFP)

Transfer power: LaLiga spends €830 million in just 33 days

The 2019 summer transfer window is being hit hard by clubs from LaLiga Santander. At the time of writing, 66 new players have been purchases with an unprecedented investment of over 830 million euros. All of this has happened in just 33 days, across which there have also been 67 players sold for the value of 565 million euros. At this rate, LaLiga is on track to double the €934,270,000 spent last summer.

■ Big spending LaLiga

As it stands, the Spanish top flight has spent more on transfers than the other major leagues: Bundesliga (€518 m), Serie A (€533m), Premier League (€546m), Ligue 1 (€171m) and Liga NOS (€74m). Just the 290 million euros laid out to date by Real Madrid exceeds

both the Portuguese and French clubs combined. The 127.2 million paid by Atlético for Joao Félix stands out in this comparison.

Following Los Blancos in expenditure are their neighbours Atleti on 177.2 million euros, Barça on €113m and Sevilla on €92m. Other teams such as Valencia (48 million), Betis (30m), Real Sociedad (21m), Celta (12m), Levante (12m) and Osasuna (10m) are all in the double digits and add to the overall figure. This appears to show a shift in the market moves across the whole league, as many of these clubs would not have previously pushed close to that.

As individual players go, Joao Félix is currently the greatest value investment at €127.2m, then come Hazard



Krieger on President Trump: 'I refuse to respect a man that warrants no respect'



US national soccer team player Ali Krieger has said she would "absolutely not" go to the White House if invited and stood by her teammate Megan Rapinoe in her war of words with US President Donald Trump.

The 34-year-old defender -- a veteran of three Women's World Cups -- believes it was important for her to publicly support Rapinoe, who has attracted as much media attention for her comments off the pitch as her exploits on it.

"I refuse to respect a man that warrants no respect," Krieger told CNN New Day's Alisyn Camerota of Trump. "I feel that staying silent at times can side with the oppressor and I didn't want her to feel like she was having to process this all alone, because a lot of us do have those similar feelings."

"I wanted to make sure that as one of her close friends, she didn't feel that and I feel like we're able to focus -- as women it's funny, imagine that, we can multitask -- on two things at once."

"I refuse to just sit back and watch an abuser, a bully talk like that to my friend and I support her as a friend and I wanted to make sure that I said something that

meant something to me and was important to me and that's why I did what I did."

Krieger -- a Women's World Cup winner with the US team in 2015 -- last week responded to Trump's string of tweets about Rapinoe, writing: "I know women who you cannot control or grope anger you, but I stand by @mPinoe [Rapinoe] and will sit this one out as well."

The US defeated England 2-1 Tuesday to set up a clash with the Netherlands in Sunday's showpiece final and Krieger insists that the players' off-field battles have no impact on how they perform on the pitch.

"Honestly, after I tweeted about that incident I haven't really been on Twitter and focused on him [Trump] at all," she said. "More importantly, Barack Obama tweeted at us which I definitely liked so I saw that one and I was really excited about that," she says, grinning from ear to ear. "And we all were as well."

"I don't think it takes a lot of mind space to go ahead and tweet something out that's very important and then just refocus -- turn it off and then refocus on the job. What we're doing here is to win."

(Source: CNN)

Arjen Robben retires after stellar Bayern Munich career



After 10 years at Bayern Munich, Arjen Robben has announced that he will quit the game.

With the Bavarian club not interested in extending his contract for another season, the Dutchman described a battle between his heart and his head when weighing up his options. In a personal statement, Robben called quitting "without a doubt the most difficult decision I have had to make in my career."

"The love for the game and the belief that you can still take on the whole world went up against the reality that not everything always turns out exactly as you would like, and that you are no longer a 16-year-old boy who didn't even know what an injury was," Robben wrote. "At the moment I am fit and healthy, and as a lover of many other sports, I would like to keep it that way for the future. So I will definitely stop, but that's a good thing."

Robben has scored more Bundesliga goals, 99, than any other player from the Netherlands. With 31 in the Champions League, he is the country's second-most prolific marksman in Europe's premier club competition. Robben also lifted the Champions League as part of Bayern Munich's treble-winning season in 2012-13,

scoring the decisive goal in the 89th minute.

Former teammates at Bayern, including Thomas Müller and Holger Badstuber, rushed to pay tribute.

Provided he was fit (not always a guarantee), Robben has been a regular fixture on the right wing for Bayern for a decade, having joined from Real Madrid. He's best known for his trademark goal: receiving the ball on the right flank, cutting inside onto his stronger left foot, often leaving a defender or three in his wake, making a small amount of space for himself and then curling the ball around his marker and out of reach of the goal-keeper into the top left corner.

Robben won domestic titles in four countries: with PSV Eindhoven in his native Netherlands, twice with Chelsea in the English Premiership, once with Real Madrid in Spain, and eight times with Bayern.

In Germany, his double act with a fellow winger, Franck Ribery from France, became the stuff of legend. The pair, nicknamed "Robbery," both spent the vast majority of their careers in Bavaria. Ribery is also retiring from the sport this summer.

(Source: Deutsche Welle)

Nadal defeats Kyrgios in bad-tempered Wimbledon duel

Rafael Nadal may not end up winning a third Wimbledon singles title but he will take joy from having beaten his 'bete noire' Nick Kyrgios in an engrossing but bad-tempered grudge match on Thursday.

The 33-year-old Spaniard came through in four sets 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/3) which saw fiery but talented Australian Kyrgios receive a warning for unsportsmanlike behaviour after a running argument with the umpire while twice serving under-arm.

Nadal's pleasure was evident when he sealed the match against a man he had accused of lacking respect for the sport as he fist-pumped and jumped in the air yelling to his camp seated on Centre Court.

"I was aware of everything," said Nadal, who was winning his 50th match at Wimbledon.

"I was just next to him so I don't want to comment on this but potentially he is a Grand Slam winner."

Earlier, his great rival, eight-time champion Roger Federer had no such problems as he eased into the third round, beating British wild card Jay Clarke 6-1, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 to equal American legend Jimmy Connors's record of 17 appearances in the last 32.

On the women's side, there will be a new name adorning the trophy as defending champion Angelique Kerber went out in three sets to lucky loser Lauren Davis 2-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Federer said his game had not been perfect but Clarke had helped his cause.



"I struggled to take care of business a bit from the baseline," said 37-year-old Federer who has now reached the third round at the Slams for the 70th time.

Federer and Nadal's half of the draw lost two of the potentially more awkward customers in big serving duo John Isner and Marin Cilic.

Ninth-seeded Isner, who played in the epic semi-final last year with Kevin Anderson which lasted over six hours, fell in five sets to unseeded Kazakh Mikhail Kukushkin 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 in just over three hours of play.

Cilic, the 13th seed and finalist in 2017, lost in straight sets to Portugal's Joao Sousa, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

FIFA's Infantino wants to expand women's World Cup to 32 teams

FIFA President Gianni Infantino wants to expand the women's World Cup to 32 teams from 24 for the next edition in 2023, he said on Friday.

Ahead of the women's World Cup final on Sunday between holders the United States and the Netherlands, Infantino said he would take his proposals to the FIFA council and member associations

for approval.

"I want to expand the tournament to 32 teams," the Swiss-Italian told a news conference. "We will have to act quickly to decide if we are to increase it for 2023, if we do we should reopen the bidding process to allow everyone to have a chance or maybe co-host. Nothing is impossible."

Infantino hailed the tournament in France as "the best women's World Cup ever" and said it was an opportunity to build on the game worldwide.

"(I would like to see) a Club World Cup for women starting as soon as possible next year or the year after," Infantino added.

"We need a Club World Cup which can be played every year to expose clubs

from all other the world to make clubs invest even more in women's football to really shine in a world stage which is a real and true Club World Cup."

Infantino said FIFA will increase its investment in women's soccer worldwide to \$1 billion (£797 million) over the next four-year cycle.

(Source: Mirror)

I will shake hand with Kubiak in Chicago: Pouria Fayazi

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran outside spiker Pouria Fayazi says he has forgotten what Michal Kubiak has said about the Iranian people and will shake hand with the Polish player in the 2019 Volleyball Nations League final round.

Team Melli have been drawn in Pool B along with Brazil and Poland. Pool A consists of the hosts the U.S., France and Russia.

The Iranian team, who are looking for the VNL first medal, will start the competition with a match against powerhouse Poland on July 11. Team Melli will meet Brazil on July 12.

The VNL final round will be held in the Credit Union 1 Arena, Chicago, United States from July 10 to 14.

Iran will face Poland, while the European team will take advantage of the service of Kubiak, who will return to the action after six-match sanction.

Kubiak had launched a stinging attack on Iranian nation in #PrawdaSiatki YouTube program in June.



"We are very emotional and sometimes such provocations are inevitable but only in the heat of battle. It has nothing to do with personal animosities. The match is over and I've already forgotten everything that Kubiak said. I respect him because he is really a great player in terms of sports level. He is among the world's top players," Fayazi said in an interview with Siatka.

"Kubiak has his own style and I am not going to talk about him, because we are all human beings and we all make mistakes. I have read several books about the history of Iran and Poland. Relations between our countries have always been good," the MKS Bedzin player added.

"I've already forgotten what Kubiak said. Outside the game, we are all friends together, but on the pitch, sometimes we are angry with together. Personally, I have very good contacts with many players from different countries. Undoubtedly, I will shake hand with Kubiak in Chicago," Fayazi concluded.

Igor Kolakovic names squad for VNL Final Six



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Igor Kolakovic has named his 14-man squad for the 2019 Volleyball Nations League Final Six.

The VNL final round will be held in the Credit Union 1 Arena, Chicago, United States from July 10 to 14.

Iran have been drawn with Brazil and Poland in Pool B of the 2019 Volleyball Nations League Final Six.

The Iranian team, who are looking for the VNL first medal, will start the competition with a match against powerhouse Poland on July 11.

Team Melli will meet Brazil on July 12. Hosts the U.S. are pitted against Russia and France.

This will be the first edition of the World League or the Nations League to have the Final Round hosted in North America.

■ Squad:

Saeid Marouf, Mohammad Mousavi, Milad Ebadipour, Farhad Ghaemi, Pouria Fayazi, Amir Ghafour, Mohammadjavad Manavinezhad, Ali Shafiei, Masoud Ghomami, Aliasghar Mojarad, Javad Karimi, Pouria Yali, Mohammadreza Moazen and Mohammadreza Hazratpour

Iran crowned 2019 Cadet Asian Greco-Roman Wrestling champion



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers won the title of the 2019 Cadet Asian Championship at Nur-Sultan in Kazakhstan on Friday.

Iran team, headed by Farshad Alizadeh, won four gold medals, two silver and one bronze.

On day one, bouts in five weight categories of Greco Roman style were held. Amir Reza Dehbozorgi seized a gold medal in the 48kg.

Saeid Esmaeili (51kg) and Saeid Karimzadeh (92kg) also won two other

gold medals.

Danial Sohrabi took a silver in the 60kg and Shahrokh Mikaeilzadeh won a bronze in the 110kg.

On the second day of the competition, Hojjat Rezaei (65kg) won Iran's fourth gold medal.

Reza Saki also seized a silver in the 71kg.

Iran freestyle wrestling team will also start the two-day competition on Saturday.

Iran claimed the title, followed by Kazakhstan and India.

Esteghlal eye Malian striker Diabaté

Persian Football— Malian forward Cheick Tidiane Diabaté has been linked with a move to Iranian football club Esteghlal.

The local media reports suggest that the Blues want to strengthen their attacking line in the coming season of the Iran Professional League.

The 31-year-old striker started his playing career in French club Bordeaux and has also played in Ajaccio, Nancy and Metz.

In January 2018, Diabaté joined Serie A side Benevento on loan for the rest of the 2017-18 season.

Diabaté has made 39 caps for Mali national football team and scored 15 goals.

Iran GM Ehsan Ghaemmaghami wins World Open

TASNIM — Iranian GM Ehsan Ghaemmaghami claimed the title of the World Open Daily Blitz.

Ghaemmaghami scored eight wins and two draws in the tournament underway in Philadelphia, USA.

Armenian grands masters Zaven Andriasian and Hovhannes Gabuzyan finished in second and third place respectively.

Blitz chess, also known as Speed Chess, is a single, time-controlled game of 1-10 minutes. Playing Blitz chess creates a flurry of moves, as both players hustle to complete their respective halves of a chess game, depending on which rule set they're playing under.

The 47th Annual World Open was held from July 2-7 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Everton interested in Iranian-born Hossein Zamani

Everton have shown interest in snapping up Ajax teenager Hossein Zamani.

The winger hit three goals and one assist in 22 games for Ajax Under-17's last season, but he's now allegedly looking for a new challenge away from the Amsterdam giant.



Everton and Leicester City are allegedly showing serious interest in Zamani, but there's competition from AC Milan, Atalanta, Marseille, Manchester City and Manchester United.

Iranian-born youngster Zamani fits the bill, and would give Everton a real talent for the future, which has been a key part of Brands' approach so far; signing youngsters with resale value.

(Source: Daily Mail)

China women's football receives funding boost

Chinese women's soccer received a major financial boost on Friday after Ant Financial's Alipay said it would provide 1 billion yuan (115.8 million pounds) in funding for a 10-year project.

The initiative was being funded primarily by charitable organisation the Alipay Foundation and would look to make the sport more accessible to girls and women across the country, Alipay said in a statement.

The funds would be allocated to improve the national team set-up, youth development, coaching education as well as the welfare of retired professionals.

"We are very grateful for Alipay's unprecedented, 10-year commitment to women's football in China," said Cai Yong, executive committee member of the Chinese Football Association (CFA).

"Women's football is not just a sport, but also a powerful social cause that encourages girls and women to pursue their dreams and ambitions."

The Chinese women's team have traditionally been more competitive on the international stage than the men's side, finishing runners-up at the 1999 women's World Cup and fourth at the 1995 tournament.

At the ongoing World Cup in France, China reached the last 16 where they lost 2-0 to Italy.

The Chinese men's team have qualified for the World Cup only once, in 2002 when they were eliminated in the group phase after losing all three games.

(Source: Reuters)

Choi Kang-hee appointed Shanghai Shenhua head coach

Choi Kang-hee appointed Shanghai Shenhua head coach Choi Kang-hee was announced as the new head coach of Shanghai Greenland Shenhua FC on Friday.

The 60-year-old former Korea Republic international is a two-time AFC Champions League winner when he coached Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors to Continental glory in 2006 and 2016, as well as six successive K League 1 titles.

Choi has a deep understanding of the Chinese Super League, having managed two other Chinese top-tier teams, Tianjin Quanjian last year, and most recently Dalian Yifang.

The 2016 AFC Coach of the Year, will be tasked to turn the Shanghai-based club around, as they are currently tied with Shenzhen FC and Hebei CF on 12 points, hovering just above the relegation zone.

(Source: the-afc)

Men's VNL - Who are your breakout teams?

With the Men's Finals of the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League set to be played in Chicago, USA from July 10-14, FIVB.com editors Anna Tomas, Constantine Dimaras and Nikolay Markov predict which teams will claim the medals next week.

■ Constantine Dimaras

Hosts USA are expected to line up their top guns to play in front of a home crowd, but they should be challenged by defending champions Russia who are also thought to be bringing on some of their star players that sat out the VNL pool play tournaments.

But one of last year's medalists will have to be eliminated of this year's medals round, as Russia, France and USA are all in the same pool in Chicago.

The other pool features Brazil, Iran and Poland. Iran, the only representative of Asia in this event, are also hungry for a world title - and they've pointed this out in previous comments - but their clash against long-time rivals Poland is one to watch out for.

The other question is, can Brazil who missed out on a medal last time around in Lille reach Rio 2016 Olympic heights again?

Once again, it will all be down to how the coaches, who will always have the upcoming Olympic qualification tournaments for Tokyo 2020 in the back of their minds, manage their human resources in this quick and intense Final Six, which includes the always very tricky three-team pools in its first phase.

■ Nikolay Markov

Unlike my approach to the women's competition, for the medalists of the men's 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League I will make some changes to my pre-season prediction. Having found out that not all of France's big stars will be able to travel to Chicago, I am taking my original favorites off the podium. In this situation, my expectation is: gold for USA, silver for Brazil and bronze for Iran.

The United States rotated their squad a lot during the preliminary round and did not reveal their full potential. Still, even though they were automatically qualified as hosts, the Americans managed to finish in the top six and deserved their place in Chicago on sporting merit as well. I would be concerned



whether or not USA's core team, which has trained a lot together, but has not played together in any official matches this season, will be cohesive enough and ready for the challenge of the Final Six, but then I guess coach John Speraw knows best what's best for the team. The home court advantage should also help push the hosts all the way to the top.

Brazil were the most consistently performing team throughout the preliminary round. They lost only one of 15 matches played and took a well-deserved first place in the standings. With even more potential to reveal, the South Americans can be considered as the main contenders for the title, but since that's already "taken" I am putting Ricardo Lucarelli and his teammates in the second spot on the podium.

Throughout the preliminary round, Iran have shown that this year they are a major force to be reckoned with. They finished second in the standings and allowed defeats (other than the five-set loss to Brazil) only when some of their main starters were given some rest. With the preliminary round's best

setter Mir Saeid Marouflakrani and best attacker Amir Ghafour in action, I expect them to use this momentum in reaching the semifinals and most likely the medals.

■ Anna Tomas

Russia, Poland and France were my top favorites to win the 2019 VNL but Brazil and Iran came up with the most surprises this year. Between Brazil and Iran, Brazil would have an advantage heading down the home stretch to the men's VNL final.

Yoandy Leal was a great addition to the roster and with the brilliant performances of Ricardo Lucarelli after coming off an injury, Brazil are back in the game. Not only that, the depth of their roster gives coach Renan Dal Zotto the luxury of experimenting with his starting six, but almost always delivering the same winning result for the South American team.

Russia, even without stars Maxim Mikhaylov and Dmitriy Muserskiy, have stayed on course for a title defence, relying on the likes of Egor Kliuka in the first two weeks of competition. The high-flying and hard-hitting Victor Poletaev succeeded Kliuka in spearheading the Russian offence, eventually paving the way for the other players to contribute and secure the Final Six spot.

France has proven many times that they can never be counted out of the picture. They hit a rough patch along the way, but they have always managed to come back stronger. Their experience playing in many final rounds gives them an edge and a great perspective of turning things around in their favour.

The 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League Finals in Chicago will take place at the Credit Union Arena 1 from July 10 to 14. Six teams are qualified including hosts USA, Brazil, Iran, Russia, France and Poland. Olympic champions Brazil and world champions Poland meet in the first match on July 10 before hosts USA take on last year's runners-up France. The pools are played over three days before the semifinals on Saturday and the medal matches on Sunday.

(Source: FIVB)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Envy is disgraceful; and fear is a sign of defect. Indigence makes an intelligent man dumb in argument, and a needy person a stranger in his hometown. Helplessness is a great calamity; fortitude is courage; abstemiousness is wealthiness, and devoutness is a chainmail which guards the body and soul against sins.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Simin Keramati is currently underway at Etemad Gallery 1.

The exhibition titled "Seppuku" runs until August 6 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.

■ Paintings by Amin Soqrati are currently on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Anonymous Concern" will be running until July 16 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ A collection of paintings by Abbas Latifi is on display in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery.

The exhibition will run until July 10 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

■ Vista Gallery is currently displaying paintings by Arghavan Heidaramajd in an exhibition entitled "Hurqliaa".

The exhibit will be running until July 12 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Photo

■ Photos by Amir Jamshidi are on display in an exhibition at Saye Gallery.

The exhibit named "Stony Portraits" will run until July 10 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

■ A collection of photos by Maryam Madadi is on display in an exhibition at Idea Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Theiam" runs until July 10 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

Drawing

■ Mehraveh Khandan, Shaqayeq Safai and Mohsen Rezaei are displaying their latest drawings in an exhibition at Rezaian Gallery. The exhibition will be underway until July 17 at the gallery located at 14 Taban St., Africa Ave.

Multimedia

■ A group of artists, including Saeid Emdadian, Azar Baqeri, Reza Barati, Parviz Moazzez, Mahsa Talebiani and Atefeh Sadr, is showcasing their paintings and sculptures in an exhibition at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibit titled "The Nature Today Green or Gray" will run until July 10 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

■ Sets of installation art and sculptures by Sorayya Kiani are on display in an exhibition at Inja Gallery. The exhibit named "Abandonment" will be running until July 19 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

■ Razi Razavi, Barana Saadat, Alireza Chamak, Ali Ansari, Hamed Noruzi and five more artists are displaying their latest paintings, drawings and statues in an exhibition at Negar Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Animism" will continue until July 10 at the gallery, which can be found at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Golden Pen Awards held without winners except for poetry, research

CULTURE DESK TEHRAN — The 17th Golden Pen Awards did not select any winners this year with the exception of those in the categories of adults' poetry and research.

"Where There Is No Name", which contains over 50 love songs by Yusefalai Mirshakak, and "From Being a Cocoon to Becoming a Butterfly", which carries simple strategies for a better and more beautiful life by Mohammadreza Ruzbeh, shared the Golden Pen in the adults' poetry category during the awards ceremony held at the Tehran Book Garden on Thursday.

"Evaluation of Historical Sources of the Shahnameh" by Farzin Ghafari and "Localization of Magic Realism in Iran" by Mohammad and Mohsen Hanif shared the Golden Pen in the review and research section.

The jury of the Golden Pen Awards, which is organized every year by the Iran Pen Association, celebrated other works in other categories with honorable mentions.

"Big Candy" by Tayyebeh Shamani received an honorable mention in the children's poetry section, and "Dream of Panther" by Hadi Hakimian won an honorable mention in the children's novel section.

In the adult's best novel category, "Rain of Raspberries" by Mostafa Falegari and "After 20 Years" by Salman Karimi were honored.

The organizers also honored Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the director of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, as the Literary Figure of the Year.

Haddad-Adel is also the director of the Sadi Foundation, a Tehran-based organization that provides Persian language educational services abroad.

"I have been a member of the association from the first day of its establishment, but I never thought in all these ceremonies there would be an honoring ceremony for me," Haddad-Adel said after accepting his award.

He paid tribute to his teachers and family members and added, "I have studied philosophy, but the Persian language has always been my love in life."

He called Persian the second language of the world of Islam and said, "If we lose our language we will lose our minds. We have had different local languages and dialects



Academy of Persian Language and Literature director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel attends the 17th Golden Pen Awards on July 4, 2019 that honored him as the Literary Figure of the Year. (f)

and nobody should feel malice towards them. All the people throughout history used to exchange knowledge and thoughts through the Persian language."

Haddad-Adel's collection of poetry entitled "Still Again" was published in 2016. The book contains all different types of poetry.

"Lion of Zaytan", biography of veteran Mojtaba Zolfaqarnasab, published



Military commanders and cultural officials unveil Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's note on the book "The Lion of Zaytan" at Tehran's Arasbaran Cultural Center on July 4, 2019. (Mehr/Behnam Tofighi)

CULTURE DESK TEHRAN — A biography of Colonel Mojtaba Zolfaqarnasab, an Iranian military advisor who was martyred in the Syrian war, has been published under the title of "The Lion of Zaytan".

The book was unveiled during a special ceremony at Tehran's Arasbaran Cultural Center on Thursday.

In addition, a note written by Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, for the book was presented during the ceremony.

"Dear Martyr Zolfaqarnasab and every devotee like him are the honor of the country and a true soldier of Islam and Quran," the Leader wrote.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran Army and all of us should be proud of people like Martyr Zolfaqarnasab," he added.

Written by Mehdi Fesahat, the biography has been published by Sureh-Sabz.

Zolfaqarnasab was killed during a battle in the village of Zaytan in southern Aleppo, Syria on May 10, 2016.

Kiarostami's last intl. award donated to Film Museum of Iran



Eurasia Film Festival's special award was posthumously dedicated to Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami during the 14th edition of the event in Astana, Kazakhstan in July 2018.

A R T DESK TEHRAN — Legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's last international award was donated by his son, Bahman, to the Film Museum of Iran on Friday, which marked the third anniversary of his death, the museum announced.

The special award was presented to Kiarostami posthumously by the organizers of the 14th edition of the Eurasia Film Festival in Astana, Kazakhstan in July 2018 to honor his remarkable vision as a

pioneer of the Iranian New Wave.

The award is on display along with Kiarostami's the most prestigious award, Palme d'Or for Best Film, which was awarded to him for "Taste of Cherry" at the 50th Cannes International Film Festival in 1997.

Kiarostami, the director of a number of acclaimed Iranian movies such as "Where Is the Friend's House?", "Life and Nothing More", "Under the Olive Trees" and "The Wind Will Carry Us", died of cancer on July 5, 2016 at the age of 76.

Gyula Shakespeare Festival next stop for "Midsummer Night's Dream"

A R T DESK TEHRAN — Iranian director Mostafa Kushki will be in Gyula, Hungary on July 14 to stage "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Gyula Shakespeare Festival, the organizers have announced.

The weeklong festival, which opens on July 8, is part of a six-week all-arts festival, featuring the performances of historical dramas, different forms of contemporary theater, opera, ballet, modern dance, jazz, blues, puppet shows, classical music, folk music and folk dance.

A cast composed of Azin Nazari, Mohammad-Sadeq Maleki, Sajjad Baqeri, Ghazal Shojaei, Amir-Mehdi Juleh, Shahruz Delafkar, Nazafarin Kazemi, Khatereh Hatami,

Alireza Keymanesh and Kushki himself will perform the play at the Erkel Ferenc Cultural House.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a comedy written by William Shakespeare in 1595 and 1596. It portrays the events surrounding the marriage of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, to Hippolyta, the former queen of the Amazons.

Earlier in July 2016, the troupe performed "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Tehran Independent Theater. They also took the play on stage at the 22nd Gdansk Shakespeare Festival in Poland in July 2018.

Baqer Soroush has rewritten the play, which the troupe has previously performed about 200 times in Tehran.

Kiarang Alai realizes "A Cat's Dream" in Finland

A R T DESK TEHRAN — "A Cat's Dream in Paris", a solo exhibition by Iranian photographer Kiarang Alai, is underway at the Ahjo Art Centre in the Finnish city of Joensuu.

Reza Maddahi is the curator of the exhibition that opened on Friday, the organizers have announced in a post published on the center's Facebook page.

Alai has said that the main theme of his photos is people who have seized the locations in famous tourist sites.

"The similarities and mimicking of people observed in famous tourist attractions have been recorded in these photos, while immigration, isolation and individualism are other secondary themes, in addition to Black immigrants," he added.

In a statement published for the exhibit, Alai also



Members of director Mostafa Kushki's troupe perform "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Tehran Independent Theater on July 17, 2016. (Tehran Picture Agency/Milad Beheshti)

wrote, "Paris consists of parts of a perplexity, as members of a big family who are divided among an unknown population, with Black people, who have captured the atmosphere, and whites, who are wasting the city. It is a population that surrounds the world's most visited iron structure."

"I have tried to showcase the sites, which have been contaminated with the presence of human beings, as a symbol of an ideal city, a city that has been a popular rendezvous for a great number of colorful people who are negligent of the great history of Paris," the statement reads.

The exhibition will be running until July 26. Alai won the Vision Bronze Medal for his photo "Loyalty" at the 2nd International Digital Exhibition Vision in Finland organized by the Photo Club Vision in 2018.



A poster for "A Cat's Dream in Paris" by Kiarang Alai.