



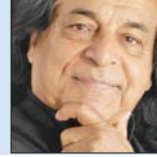
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‘Sad irony’

The U.S. which has repeatedly ignored IAEA reports on Iran’s compliance with the JCPOA is now requesting the body’s meeting on Iran



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Tehran, Islamabad take steps to bolster bilateral trade

TEHRAN — Heading a high-ranking delegation, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade Reza Rahmani paid a visit to Pakistan on Thursday to attend the eighth Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee meeting and to explore avenues of economic cooperation with Pakistani officials.

The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Friday for strengthening bilateral trade and economic

ties and vowed to remove potential barriers in the way of mutual trade, IRNA reported.

The MOU was signed by Reza Rahmani and Pakistan Prime Minister’s Adviser on Commerce, Textile, Industries, Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood on the sidelines of the Joint Trade Committee meeting in Islamabad.

The Iranian delegation also held talks with the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. **→4**

Probiotics containing indigenous bacteria produced

TEHRAN — A knowledge-based company at the Mazandaran Science and Technology Park in northern Iran has produced a probiotics supplement containing indigenous bacteria which has compatibility with the Iranian diet.

Probiotics are live microorganisms intended to provide health benefits when consumed, generally by improving or

restoring the gut flora. Probiotics are considered generally safe to consume, but may cause bacteria-host interactions and unwanted side effects in rare cases.

The indigenous bacteria is effective due to climatic and diet situation of people in the country, the managing director of the company Behzad Alaeddini explained. **→11**

Reza Pahlavi to be featured in new Iran International program: report

TEHRAN — Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran’s last dictator, will soon be featured in a TV program broadcast by the UK-based Iran International TV channel, which is linked to Saudi Arabia, according to Nour News.

In collaboration with a media consulting group, a number of Saudi intelligence agents based in one of Iran International’s offices in the UK launched initial plans for

production and broadcast of a TV program featuring Reza Pahlavi, who left the country along with his father in 1979, Nour News reported, quoting unnamed sources.

It said Pahlavi had asked for a very high salary for playing a part in the new program but eventually agreed to a salary one-fiftieth of his initial request after being pressured by a European country’s intelligence service. **→3**



ARTICLE
Chang Hua
Chinese ambassador to Iran

Efforts to counter terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang

Iran and China have a long history of friendly relations. Iranians are not unfamiliar with Xinjiang either, in 13th century, Saadi Shirazi, the celebrated Iranian poet, traveled to the city of Kashgar in Xinjiang and wrote a beautiful poem.

The interaction between Iranian and the Chinese nations is also observable in ancient Silk Road trade route. The footprints of Iran can be seen in many parts of Xinjiang, including its architecture, literature and music. I have also realized that Iranians are interested in Xinjiang, but the sources of information about this district are limited and the western media sometimes distort this information; therefore, as the ambassador of China to Iran, I am willing to introduce Xinjiang to our Iranian friends so they can develop a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of this beautiful region.

Xinjiang has been an inseparable part of China’s territory for many years.

This vast region bordered by Tian Shan mountain ranges, was known as Xiyu, meaning “Western Regions”, in ancient times. 60 years BCE, the Han Empire officially established the Xiyu Protectorate; this means that Xinjiang has been an inseparable part of China’s territory since the ancient times.

After the formation of People’s Republic of China in 1949 AD, the region went under substantial economic and social changes and entered its most developed and prosperous era.

From very old times, Xinjiang has been home to many different ethnic groups as many different tribes migrated to the region and mingled with each other and the natives, these ethnic groups include the Uyghur people, Han people, Kazakhs, Hui, Kyrgyz, Mongols, etc.

Xinjiang has also been home to many religions in different eras including Prehistoric religions, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Manichaeism, Nestorianism, Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism and Eastern Orthodox Church. **→7**

A conspiracy that will fail

By Hanif Ghaffari

TEHRAN — While based on evidences the U.S. and its allies have a direct and significant role in creating chronic security crises in Africa, Western media outlets, in a coordination with U.S. intelligence agencies, plan to bring accusations against Iran. Such a policy is being followed by the Daily Telegraph as well.

The Daily Telegraph has accused Iran of devastating activities in Africa, while Washington, Riyadh and Tel Aviv are continuing to plunder the rich African continent under the shadow of news cover-up by the Western media outlets. There should be a lot of focus on the role of Israel in this campaign.

About six decades ago, Golda Meir put a great

emphasis on the African continent in line with the interests of Israel. As a result, Mossad officers were scattered across the continent as a cancerous tumor so that the U.S. can find another partner in its efforts to loot African riches. Now, Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya are important for Tel Aviv in terms of their geographic and strategic location.

Located in the Horn of Africa, these countries overlook Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Yemen. In any case, Israel has new plans to interfere in the internal affairs of Africa.

Israel is now facing water crisis. The glow of the Nile waters is making the eyes of the Zionist regime look greedy to Egypt. Israel is struggling to expand its influence in the Horn of Africa to find a foothold in the entrance of the Red Sea.

Undoubtedly, in the near future documents will be released on U.S. and other Western countries’ support for Tel Aviv in its plundering of African. Beyond that, intervention by France, Britain and some other European countries in northern and some other parts of Africa is continuing unabatedly like the past centuries.

Injection of security crisis is the formula used by Western countries to maintain and continue their involvement in Africa. In the history of international relations, millions of people in African have been the victims of direct and indirect policies of Western countries. Under such circumstances, accusations by the media arm of Western intelligence and security agencies that Iran is interfering in Africa will have no result but a scandal for the U.S. and its allies.

“The Moon and the Sun” up at Tehran gallery

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Celebrated Iranian painter Farah Ossouli has another surprise: this time with silkscreen prints of a collection of her original miniatures in a book titled “The Moon and the Sun”.

The original drawings are on view in an exhibit of the same title at Shirin Gallery in Tehran, while the book was unveiled during the opening ceremony of the showcase on June 28.

The silkscreen prints of the paintings have been created by Masud Jazani-Hossein-Otoshi on handmade sheets of paper by Maziar Mosavvar-Rahmani for the book, which has been published in only 30 copies, Ossouli told the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview at the gallery on Friday.

Women, men, birds, flowers, grapes and cages are among the subjects repeated in the simple yet delicate original drawings here and there on

the second floor of the gallery.

Moreover, the silkscreen prints of some of the drawings created on hand-made sheets of paper have been showcased beside the original works.

The works on display on the first floor belong to a collection the artist created during the 1980s. The book also carries silkscreen prints from this collection as each page bears Ossouli’s autograph. **→16**

The Zionist presence in Islamic part Ural

By Damir Nazarov

WEST SIBERIA/ TYUMEN — These days, mainstream media mentions very little about proliferation of Zionism in the Russian Federation. And when there is any mention what is mainly referred to is the presence of Chabad movement and perhaps a strong lobby of Zionism in Kremlin. However, in reality, situation is much more severe. To begin with we should have a closer look

at how Zionist business is quite firmly settled in the Russian outback. Representatives of Israeli business are operating in major Russian cities such as Yekaterinburg, Tyumen, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Surgut and so on. However, in this piece I would like to single out the Republic of Bashkortostan and its capital Ufa. Why chose this particular region? The major significance here plays the presence of “the central

muftiat of the Russian Federation”. It would seem that Muslims must resist the cooperation with the main enemies of the Ummah and all freedom-loving people, but in our strange world, not everything is as it meant to be. In fact, special relationships between Ufa Muftiat and Zionism are not something new. Towards the end of 2008, the head of Muftiat Talfat Tajuddin openly supported Zionist terrorists who tried to destroy Gaza Strip. **→6**

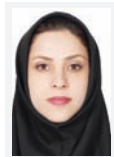


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Tehran Auction grosses over \$10 million, 65% of artworks sold at minimum prices

TEHRAN — The Tehran Auction grossed over 420 billion rials (over \$10 million, \$1=42000 rials) during its 11th sale on Friday at the Parsian Hotel in Tehran as 65 percent of the artworks were sold at the minimum prices estimated.

Parviz Tanavoli’s one-meter high sculpture “The Poet’s Head” was the most expensive work sold during the sale of Iranian modern and classical art as it fetched 32 billion rials (over \$760,000). **→16**



ARTICLE
Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the TehranTimes Economy Desk

‘Productive Financing’, CBI’s new plan for supporting production units

Like the other economic bodies of the country, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has defined supporting production as its major plan in the current Iranian calendar year, which is named the Year of Pickup in Production, and in this regard CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has several times stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country’s banking system in current year.

In early May, the official outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country’s economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

To find the best ways for supporting production, CBI is regularly holding meetings with the representatives of private sector and also with the economists.

During the recent meeting of Hemmati with the economists, removing barriers in the way of production was one of the major issues discussed, while reforming the structure of the country’s banking system, controlling liquidity, curbing inflation, improving the people’s livelihood and preventing income imbalances through monetary and fiscal policies, and the impact of U.S. sanctions and enforcement of bank operations were the other issues raised in the meeting.

And now in an Instagram post, the CBI governor has announced the bank’s new plan for supporting production.

Hemmati has mentioned this plan as “Productive Financing Plan” which is to provide finance for the production activities.

In his post, the official wrote that based on this plan, the production chain’s demand for the working capital will be met with the less inflation effect and the less expansion of credit. **→4**

3 million Afghans to flood Europe in event of Iran-U.S. war, Luxembourg FM warns

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The foreign minister of Luxembourg has warned against an influx of about three million Afghan refugees living in Iran to Europe if even a small clash takes place between Iranian and American military forces.



In case of such a clash, the situation for three million Afghan refugees living in Iran will worsen and due to the chaos in Afghanistan, many of them will not return to their homeland, said Jean Asselborn, speaking to the German N-TV television channel.

Asselborn asserted that many of the Afghan refugees living in Iran will travel to Europe through Turkey, which will once again cause a huge problem for the European Union.

He said he believed that U.S. President Donald Trump made a big mistake by pulling out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), weakening the deal.

The Luxembourg foreign minister said that the 2015 Iran nuclear deal could bring more security for Europe and the entire world.

He said that Iran has remained committed to the deal so far and wanted the Iranian officials to proceed with honoring their commitment to the JCPOA.

Police foil bomb attack in southeastern Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian police have successfully diffused a bomb planted in a pressure cooker at a residential area in the southeastern city of Zahedan, capital of Sistan-Baluchestan province.



Speaking to reporters on Saturday, the local police chief said the bomb attack was foiled on Friday, Tasnim reported.

Mohammad Qanbari said a sound bomb went off in the provincial capital on Friday morning, which only shattered windows of a number of buildings in the “Jam-e-Jam” neighborhood.

The police forces were immediately deployed to the blast site and evacuated the residents given the threat of a second explosion in such incidents, the commander said, adding that the security forces later found a bomb in the neighborhood that had been planted inside a pressure cooker with metal shrapnel.

“The bomb would have undoubtedly caused damages to people if it had gone off,” the general said.

The bomb disposal teams acted courageously and cut off the connection between the IED and its remote control, he said, adding two people have been arrested in connection with the plot.

Located in southeast of Iran, the large province of Sistan and Baluchestan borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, and has a long coastline by the Sea of Oman.

In December 2018, an explosive-laden vehicle attacked the police headquarters in Chabahar, killing two sentries and injuring a number of other people, including passersby.

‘Sad irony’ that the U.S. has requested IAEA meeting on Iran, diplomat says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Days after Tehran’s stockpile of the enriched uranium surpassed the limit allowed in the 2015 nuclear deal, the International Atomic Energy Agency said on July 5 it will hold an emergency meeting on Iran’s nuclear program next week.

The meeting of the IAEA board of governors, which follows an emergency call by the United States, would be held “on 10 July at 14:30,” an IAEA spokesman said.

Ironically, the U.S. has repeatedly ignored IAEA reports certifying that Iran was compliant with the terms of the nuclear deal in order to pull out of that deal unilaterally and reimpose sanctions.

“The international community must hold Iran’s regime accountable,” U.S. Ambassador to International Organizations Jackie Wolcott said in a statement. “The United States strongly supports the IAEA and its verification efforts in Iran,” the statement continued.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s ambassador and permanent representative to the international organizations in Vienna, has called the U.S. request for a meeting of the nuclear watchdog IAEA a “sad irony”.

“The fact that the U.S. as the prime violator of the JCPOA, has tabled this request, indicates its isolation in contradicting multilateralism and rule of law in international affairs,” Gharibabadi tweeted.

“Iran’s recent decisions, which are exercised in response to the situation caused by the U.S. including by imposing sanctions on all who want to implement their commitments under the JCPOA, tend to bring about the lost balance of the deal and are fully in line w/ its provisions,” Gharibabadi added.

Iran’s Vienna mission to the UN also said the actions are not related to the IAEA and are only linked with the agreement’s provisions.

The IAEA’s monitors Iran’s nuclear installations and activities and has repeatedly verified that so far Iran has carried out its obligations under the JCPOA.

In comments on Saturday, RT said the Trump administration has historically had a hard time dealing rationally with Iran’s nuclear program, declaring earlier this week that Tehran had violated the nuclear agreement’s terms “even before the deal’s existence.” Before exiting the deal, he routinely condemned it as the “worst deal ever,” while international opinion considered it one of the top achievements of his predecessor Barack Obama’s foreign policy.

Kharrazi says INSTEX does not go beyond a “claim”

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Kamal Kharrazi, chairman of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, believes that INSTEX, a European payment system for trade with Iran designed to circumvent U.S. sanctions imposed on Tehran, lacks teeth.

While INSTEX has positive aspects, it does not go further than a “claim” at the moment, Kharrazi told the Young Journalists Club (YJC) on Friday.

Representatives from the remaining countries signatory to the nuclear deal (JCPOA) held a joint session in Vienna on June 28 to explore ways to save the collapse of the nuclear deal as Iran is scaling back its nuclear commitments in response to reimposition of sanctions and lack of a concrete step by the EU to shield Tehran from sanctions effect.

Kharrazi, who was Iran’s chief diplomat from 1997 to 2005, said there were no definitive assessments of the meeting, but with only several millions of euros of credit that the Europeans had allocated to INSTEX, business would definitely be impossible.

Kharrazi had earlier warned that Tehran would stop its commitments under JCPOA.

In a meeting with the British Middle East Minister, Andrew Murrison on June 24, in Tehran, Kharrazi warned him, “Be sure that if the opposite side (Europe) does not



undertake an appropriate measure within the next two weeks, we will take more steps to stop implementing our commitments.”

Kharrazi’s latest comments on Friday were a response to French Finance Minister, Bruno Lemaire, who had expressed hope that the long-awaited INSTEX will be soon implemented.

Without providing further details, Lemaire had insisted, “This first transaction will be modest but it is a starting point, and we expect

INSTEX to be an effective tool. As it’s a first, we need time to do bigger things.”

On May 8, Iran’s Supreme National Council (SNSC) declared Tehran’s exit from “certain” obligations under the landmark 2015 agreement and gave a 60-day deadline to JCPOA signatories to protect Iran’s interests against U.S. sanctions, or it will restart high-level uranium enrichment.

Days later, President Hassan Rouhani, who also presides over the SNSC, threatened

Moscow condemns seizure of Iranian tanker

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Russian Foreign Ministry has slammed Britain for seizing an Iran-operated supertanker off the coast of Gibraltar.

In a Friday statement carried by Tass news agency, the ministry criticized the move as a “deliberate step” to worsen the situation around Iran and Syria.

“We condemn the seizure of a supertanker flying the Panamanian flag committed on July (4) by the Gibraltar authorities who were backed by UK Royal Marines,” it said.

“We consider the detention of the vessel and its cargo as a deliberate step geared to further aggravate the situation around Iran and Syria. Commentaries by UK and U.S. officials that came immediately after this operation only prove these assessments and indicate that this operation had been plotted beforehand and involved corresponding services and agencies of several countries,” it added.

On early Thursday morning, British Royal Marines in Gibraltar stormed the 300,000-ton Grace 1 and detained it, accusing it of carrying oil to Syria in possible violation of the European Union’s sanctions on the war-torn Arab country.

Iran has condemned the move as “maritime piracy” and summoned Britain’s ambassador in protest. It has vowed to employ all its political and legal capacities to secure the release of the vessel and uphold its rights.

A top court in the British overseas territory of Gibraltar ruled late Friday that the Iranian supertanker could be detained for up to 14 more days.



“The Supreme Court has issued today’s order on the basis that there are reasonable grounds to consider that the detention of the Grace 1 is required for the purposes of compliance with the European Union (EU) Regulation 36/2012 on sanctions on Syria,” Gibraltar’s government said in a statement.

Earlier on Friday, the Associated Press reported that the vessel’s 28 crew members were being held on the ship for questioning and had not been detained under criminal procedures, citing an unnamed spokesperson for the Gibraltar government.

Spain, which challenges the British ownership of Gibraltar, has said the seizure was prompted by a U.S. request to Britain and appeared to have taken place in Spanish waters.

Spain’s acting Foreign Minister Josep Borrell said on Friday that Madrid was planning to lodge a formal complaint against the UK and was studying the circumstances and looking at how the incident is affecting its sovereignty.

U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton — an ardent hawk behind the White House’s highly hostile Iran policy — has praised the measure.

Tehran denies seizing British-flagged oil tanker in retaliation

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran has dismissed reports about the seizure of a British oil tanker in the Persian Gulf, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) reported on Saturday.

It comes just one day after Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of the Expediency Council, suggested the seizure of a UK ship in retaliation after Royal Marines captured an Iranian supertanker.

On Saturday, maritime tracking programs showed British-flagged crude oil tanker Pacific Voyager had come to a halt, and listed its status as “not under command”, stoking fears that Iran had retaliated.

Sources, however, told The Telegraph that the situation was a “routine matter.”

“There’s nothing going on. The ship is just drifting because it’s early for its next port. It hasn’t issued any distress signals or shown any problems on board,” the sources said.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), which coordinates shipping in the Persian Gulf, said later that the ship was “safe and well”. The UKMTO, had been in direct contact with the vessel, an official said.

Iran dismissed as “fabricated” reports that the ship had been seized by Islamic Revolution Guards Corps forces. IRIB quoted unnamed senior Iranian government sources denying the boat had been seized.

Earlier this week, Royal Marines helped customs officers impound the tanker near Gibraltar, believed to be carrying two million barrels of Iranian crude to Syria in violation of EU sanctions, sparking a diplomatic spat.

that Iran would begin enriching uranium beyond the current 3.67 percent concentration allowed by the JCPOA, adding that Tehran will no longer respect the 300-kilogram limit for stockpiling enriched uranium.

The latest JCPOA joint commission, attended by the representatives of Britain, China, France, Germany, Iran, and Russia, was held on June 28.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi told reporters after the meeting that the Europeans say “INSTEX is operational, but Iran’s expectations have not been fully satisfied yet.”

“It was a step forward, but it is still not enough and not meeting Iran’s expectations,” Aragchi said.

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

Minutes after the meeting, the Secretary-General of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Helga Schmid also confirmed the reports that the European financial mechanism to work with Iran is operational.

“INSTEX is now operational, first transactions being processed and more EU members states to join. Good progress on Arak and Fordow projects,” Helga Schmid tweeted on Friday, June 28.

U.S. denies German-Iranian father visa for son’s funeral

(Press TV) — The U.S. has denied a three-day visa to a German-Iranian father, who wanted to attend his son’s funeral procession in Washington.

Dr. Seyed Shahram Iranbomy, a human rights and discrimination lawyer who runs a law firm in Frankfurt, lost his 20-year-old son, Irman, in a car accident in Washington on June 10.

Iranbomy told German broadcaster DW on Friday that the U.S. consulate in Frankfurt had rejected his visa request and accused him of taking advantage of his son’s death “to immigrate to America.”

Iranbomy was denied a non-immigrant visa because he “sought to procure a visa, other documentation, admission to the U.S., or immigration benefit by fraud or willfully misrepresenting a material fact,” read the official U.S. consulate document.

The father also said the U.S. consulate had told him that he “did not have roots in Germany.”

However, Iranbomy, who has lived in Germany for more than 40 years, said, “I am more German than Iranian,” adding that he was not interested in moving to the U.S.

He further noted that he had appealed the U.S. consulate’s decision, but was yet to receive a response.

He also announced plans to file a formal criminal complaint over inhumane treatment.

“My son still has dignity today, not only my dignity is violated, but the rights of the person who is dead,” Iranbomy said.

Frankfurt Mayor Peter Feldmann wrote a letter to U.S. Consul General Patricia Lacina to call for a review of the German-Iranian father’s visa application.

Iranbomy has organized a protest in Frankfurt’s rebuilt historic city center near the cathedral on Sunday.

“I ask you, if your son was dead and the government didn’t allow you to give him to the earth, what would



you do?” he asked U.S. President Donald Trump.

Iranbomy had received a 10-year visa for both business and leisure travel during Barack Obama’s presidency, but it was revoked in 2017 after Trump took office.

Lawmaker: Saudi insistence on holding Iranian oil tanker stokes tension

TEHRAN (FNA) — An Iranian lawmaker said on Saturday that Saudi Arabia’s persistence in continued seizure of an Iranian oil tanker is stirring tensions in the region.

“Saudi Arabia should not be after tensions in the Persian Gulf and among the neighbors through the continued holding of the Iranian oil tanker in Jeddah port. Tensions among the Persian Gulf littoral states do not benefit any country and only favor the West,” said Ali Bakhtiari, a sen-

ior member of the Iranian parliament’s Energy Commission.

He advised the Persian Gulf littoral states to choose the path of interaction instead of confrontation and avoid being fooled by the U.S., as tension in the region will trouble them themselves.

On May 2, Saudi Arabia announced its coast guard had rescued a distressed Iranian oil tanker, named Happiness I, with 26 on board off the Red Sea port of Jeddah, after it faced “engine failure and

the loss of control”.

Two months on, despite being fixed, Saudis are refusing to let the vessel leave, and at the same time charge Iran \$200,000 a day for maintaining the vessel in Jeddah.

Iranian officials say the incident occurred on April 30 while Happiness I was on its way to the Suez Canal and that water had leaked into the tanker’s engine room.

It has been reported that all 26 crew members, including 24 Iranians and two Bangladeshis, were safe and that all nec-

essary precautions were taken to avoid any environmental damage.

The reports did not specify the crew members’ current location and did not elaborate on whether oil had spilled from the tanker.

But the state-run National Iranian Tanker Co. said there had been no leak of the ship’s contents into the Red Sea.

The TankerTrackers monitoring group estimated the vessel was carrying up to 1.22 million barrels of crude oil.

Iran ready for higher uranium enrichment: top adviser

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution says the Islamic Republic is ready for higher uranium enrichment because Europe has “indirectly violated” the nuclear deal.

Ali Akbar Velayati said in a Friday interview that Iran may increase the level of its enriched uranium to at least five percent as of July 7, Mehr reported.

The move would come as part of a decision by Tehran to reduce its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

According to Velayati, Tehran will raise the 3.67% limit to any level it deems necessary for its peaceful activities.

“For instance, in order for us to use uranium at the Bushehr reactor, a five-percent purity is needed,” he said, adding, “It is a totally peaceful objective that we generate power from the reactor jointly built by Iran and Russia.”

The top advisor also said Tehran will not



walk away from the JCPOA unless the other sides withdraw from it first.

“We definitely won’t initiate any move, unless the other side makes it first ... The

Americans have violated the JCPOA directly and the Europeans have done so indirectly. Therefore, we will show reaction exactly proportional to the extent of their breach of

the deal,” he explained.

Since the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018, the Islamic Republic has insisted that European parties to the deal — Britain, France and Germany — are responsible for safeguarding Iran’s interests under the international pact.

On January 31, the three European countries announced the creation of INSTEX, a banking mechanism devised by European countries to do business with Iran, nine months after the U.S. withdrawal.

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

The trade mechanism has not become operational yet.

Iranian officials argue that even if the mechanism becomes operational, it would be restricted to foodstuff, medicine and medical equipment and would not be useful for oil exports and banking transactions.

Rouhani felicitates Venezuela on Independence Day

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Friday congratulated the Venezuelan people and government on Independence Day, saying Iran is fully ready to expand ties with the South American nation, Tasnim reported.

“Admiring the commitment of the Venezuelan nation and government to the ideals of its freedom-seeking leaders such as Simon Bolivar and Hugo Chavez, the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its deep solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and expresses its full readiness to boost bilateral relations more than ever,” Rouhani said in a message to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Rouhani also wished Maduro health and success and prayed for the prosperity of the Latin American country’s people.



Venezuela marked its Independence Day on July 5 which celebrates the enactment of the 1811 Venezuelan Declaration of Independence, making the country the first Spanish colony in South America to declare independence.

Iran and Venezuela enjoy high level of diplomatic ties and are close allies, as both countries strongly oppose U.S. imperialism.

Britain should be ‘scared’ of Iran’s retaliation: cleric

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Britain should be “scared” about the Islamic Republic’s retaliatory moves over the seizure of an Iranian oil tanker, a member of the Assembly of Experts said on Saturday.

“We declare candidly that Britain should be scared of Iran’s retaliatory moves,” Mohammad Ali Mousavi Jazayeri said, according to the Fars news agency.

“We have shown that we will never keep silent when faced with bullying,” he said. “As we gave a strong response to the intruding American drone, we will definitely give an appropriate response with this regard as well.”

On early Thursday morning, British Royal Marines in Gibraltar stormed the 300,000-ton Grace 1 and detained it, accusing it of carrying oil to Syria



in possible violation of the European Union’s sanctions on the war-torn country.

Iran has condemned the move as “maritime piracy” and summoned Britain’s ambassador in protest. It has vowed to employ all its political and legal capacities to secure the release of the vessel and uphold its rights.

Top MP says Iran has not violated nuclear deal

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Majlis Nuclear Committee Mojtaba Zonnour said on Saturday that Iran has not taken any measure against the 2015 nuclear deal, also referred to as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“We have not taken any measure against Barjam (JCPOA), but the Americans, with imposing bans on the export and trade of Iran’s uranium to abroad, have caused an excess in our country’s stockpile of enriched uranium,” Zonnour told the Mehr news agency.

He said the JCPOA was not supposed to be a one-sided agreement, adding, “We will increase our uranium enrichment to a percentage that would meet our peaceful needs.”

The top MP further said the United States has also imposed bans on Iran’s export of heavy water, which has in turn led to an excess in Iran’s stockpile of heavy water.

Iranian officials have frequently stated that Tehran would reconsider its decisions on the JCPOA as soon as the U.S. returns to the nuclear deal and the Europeans fulfil their obligations under the accord, he remarked.



“However, Barjam is not supposed to be a one-sided deal, but all parties to Barjam must fulfil their duties,” Zonnour reiterated.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, despite strong protests from the other parties to the deal. Then his administration imposed sanctions on Tehran in a clear violation of the UN Security Council resolution 2231, also

pushing other countries to violate the same resolution by cutting economic ties with Iran.

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

Exactly a year after the U.S. withdrawal, Iran announced that it would suspend some of its commitments under the deal. The country said it will no longer export its surplus uranium and heavy water to foreign countries.

It also warned that it would carry out further suspensions of its nuclear commitments if the other parties to the deal failed to take practical steps to honor their commitments within 60 days.

Days before the 60-day deadline, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced that Tehran would get past a 3.67% uranium enrichment level set by the 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,” Rouhani said on Wednesday.

Media falsely portrays Iran’s suspension of nuclear deal commitments as dash to bomb

By Ben Armbruster

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—the UN nuclear watchdog tasked with vigorously monitoring Iran’s nuclear program under the 2015 accord—confirmed this week that Iran exceeded the limit on its supply of low-enriched uranium (LEU). Unfortunately, with a few notable exceptions, reporting from many in the media on this development wasn’t great. Reporters and commentators portrayed Iran, not Donald Trump, as the primary provocateur, with many going so far as to claim, without any evidence whatsoever, that Iran is now racing to build a nuclear weapon.

One goal of the Iran nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) was to stretch the timeline to one year in terms of how long it would take Iran to enrich enough uranium for one bomb. To achieve that outcome, the United States, the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, and Iran agreed that Tehran could continue enriching uranium for civilian energy purposes but also to cap the amount of LEU it could have on hand at any one time to about 660 pounds. Before the agreement, and ostensibly under the untenable George W. Bush-era policy of “zero enrichment,” Iran had amassed around 10,000 pounds of LEU, which if further refined, could be transformed into fuel for nuclear weapons. After the JCPOA’s implementation, Iran shipped out 98 percent of its LEU stockpile and verifiably maintained, until this week,

the 660-pound cap, even after Trump last year unilaterally reimposed sanctions that were lifted as part of the deal.

And the reason Iran surpassed the cap? Back in May, as part of its unprovoked “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, the Trump administration revoked sanctions waivers allowing Iran to ship out any excess LEU it produces beyond the 660-pound cap. That left Iran with a choice: bow to Trump’s gratuitous demands even though Iran was adhering to the deal or carry on enriching uranium as allowed under the JCPOA.

Iran chose the latter course, in a move that experts say is actually “a calculated effort to get European leaders to reinforce the nuclear deal and halt the drift toward war.” Experts also say that breaching the cap, for now, “does not pose a near-term proliferation risk.” But that’s very far from how some in the U.S. mainstream media portrayed it.

Hours after the news broke, CNN Chief National Security Correspondent Jim Sciutto tweeted that Iran surpassing the 660-pound LEU stockpile limit “appears to be the first violation of the terms of the JCPOA following the US withdrawal from the deal last year.” This is completely false. Donald Trump first violated the terms of the JCPOA in November 2018 when he reimposed all economic sanctions on Iran without cause. Trump set this JCPOA-violation crisis in motion, not Iran.

In another example, editors at The New York Times headlined an opinion piece responding to the news: “Iran Is

Rushing to Build a Nuclear Weapon—and Trump Can’t Stop It.”

There is no evidence that Iran is rushing to build a nuclear weapon. In fact, U.S. intelligence has concluded that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program some time between 2002 and 2004.

The text of the Times piece argued, somewhat controversially, that given everything that Iran has endured from the United States, Iran probably should build a nuclear weapon to deter further American right-wing aggression. But the piece never presented any evidence that Iran, based on the latest news of breaching the LEU cap, is dashing toward a bomb. And its author, an American professor of political science at the University of Chicago, isn’t involved in the Iranian leadership’s decision-making processes. He is stating what he believes Iran should do, not what Iran is actually doing or plans to do.

Similarly, but perhaps less surprisingly, the Wall Street Journal editorial board referred to the news as a “nuclear breakout,” a term that is used to describe an actual move toward building nuclear weapons, which of course Iran is not doing.

Perhaps the most egregious reporting on Iran surpassing the LEU cap came in a piece from the seemingly left-leaning news outlet Vox. The original version of the story falsely claimed that Iran “vows to increase enrichment to weapons-grade level by July 7.” Although Iran has gotten close, it has actually never enriched uranium to weapons-grade levels, and

its leaders have made no such vow. Vox corrected that assertion, but the entire piece, entitled “Why Iran just violated part of the 2015 nuclear deal,” never once mentioned the actual reason Iran violated the deal, namely that Trump reimposed sanctions and thereby prevented Iran from shipping out its stockpiled LEU.

These are just a few examples of how the media has undeserved the American public on the recent Trump-induced crisis with Iran. And it’s reminiscent of how the mainstream U.S. media handled the Bush administration’s march to war in Iraq. At that time, the media often relayed false or misleading administration claims at face value with little to no scrutiny and did the White House’s bidding by framing the issue on its own aggressive terms, which in turn helped produce public opinion supportive of military action. This same dynamic appears to be at play today.

The truth is that Donald Trump, National Security Adviser John Bolton, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are responsible for the current crisis with Iran. They established a policy of confrontation, trashed the nuclear agreement (which is so far working to block Iran from building a bomb), and created the conditions that make another catastrophic war in the Middle East more likely. The U.S. media has to do better at holding them to account. The stakes are too high.

Courtesy: Lobe Log foreign affairs analysis website

Britain still pursuing ‘policy of piracy’, Kadkhodaei says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Abbasali Kadkhodaei, spokesman of the Guardian Council, has said the seizure of a tanker carrying Iranian oil by Britain shows that the country is still pursuing its policy of piracy.

“The seizure of the property of other societies is the policy of England,” Kadkhodaei said in a tweet on Friday night.

“The 1917 disaster and death of 9 million Iranians, confiscation of Iranian money despite the rulings of its domestic courts, and now the seizure of Iran’s commercial ship all show that this country is still pursuing its policy of piracy and is in practice not adhering to Barjam (2015 nuclear deal),” he added.

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, over the act.

The Foreign Ministry described the UK 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., the ministry said in a report on its website.

Secretary of the Expediency Council (EC) 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.”



MP: We welcome Russia’s plan for an Iran-Arab dialogue

TEHRAN (MNA) — “We welcome Russia’s plan for starting negotiations between Iran and Arab countries since we believe more talks would be beneficial,” a member of the Iranian Parliament said on Saturday.

Referring to the recent proposal by the Russian Foreign Ministry about starting negotiations between Iran and Arab countries, Shahrooz Barzegar said, “Establishing peace and security in the region is what the Islamic Republic of Iran wants and the country has always pursued this policy because it believes that neighboring countries can establish security in their area, therefore, the more calm and secure the region be, the more happy Iran will be, because the final result would be a stable security in the region.”

“The U.S. and the Zionist regime are seeking to create dissension among the regional countries via projecting ‘Iranophobia’ in order to advance their own objectives. We, the regional countries, have the power to diminish the presence of the U.S. in the region, while recently the U.S. president also admits that there is no reason for the presence of U.S. troops in the region,” he added.

In mid-June, the Russian Foreign Ministry warned against “deliberate efforts to whip up tensions, which are largely encouraged by the United States’ Iranophobic policy.”

“We are worried over the tensions in the Gulf of Oman. We take note of deliberate efforts to whip up tensions, which are largely encouraged by the United States’ Iranophobic policy,” the ministry said.

The ministry emphasized that there is no alternative to dialogue to prevent further degradation of the situation in the region.



Reza Pahlavi to be featured in new Iran International program: report

1 → The goal of the program is to beef up the Pahlavi dynasty, eliminate the Iranian society’s hatred toward the dynasty’s treasons and create a positive image of the Pahlavi family in the public mind, the report added.



According to Nour News, the proposal for creating the program was first formulated by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, despite strong objections by the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which threatened to make disclosures about the program.

The Guardian revealed last year that Iran International is funded through a secretive offshore entity and a company whose director is a Saudi Arabian businessman with close links to the Saudi crown prince.

Quoting an unnamed source, the Guardian said bin Salman, who many believe is responsible for the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi, is the force behind the anti-Iran TV channel.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	245445.8
IFX	3192.81

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,168 rials
GBP	52,593 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$64.23/b
WTI	\$57.51/b
OPEC Basket	\$63.43/b
Gold	\$1,399.90/oz
Silver	\$15.08/oz
Platinum	\$813.25/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

‘Productive Financing’, CBI’s new plan for supporting production units

➔ The CBI governor went on to say that high production costs over the past year has sharply increased the need for working capital which has made providing finance more difficult; therefore; taking such condition into account, CBI is to define some plans for removing this problem.



CBI’s plans take two major approaches, first is that they will lead to secure finance for production activities and provide the working capital needed for such activities; and the second one is that they will not be resulted in any deviation in the banking resources and higher inflation.

In this regard, the central bank’s committees of liquidity and credit have investigated several plans, that one of them is “Productive Finance Plan”, which will be implemented after being discussed with monetary and banking experts.

Iran’s Exchange Stars League kicks off in Tehran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Exchange Stars League kicked off in Tehran on Saturday, IRIB reported.

This round of the competition, which is the third round, is attended by 60 teams from Iranian universities and five teams from the universities of some other countries.

It is while the first edition was held through participation of 10 teams in 2017 which increased to 34 teams in 2018.

Holding the first edition of this league was among the first-ever successful experiences of Iran’s stock market in Iranian calendar year of 1396 (March 2017-March 2018).

Organized by Iran’s Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) and held at the place of the organization, the event started on July 24 and wrapped up on August 23, hosting students from the universities of Tehran, Sharif, Allameh Tabataba’i, Kharazmi, Khajeh Nasir, Al Zahra, Amir Kabir, Beheshti, Tarbiat Modarres and Azad.

Each team contained of four members, three college students and a supervisor who could be a professor leading the group and directing them to better investments in four areas.

The competition aimed at teaching the newbies the science of trade and stock exchange while developing the culture of entrepreneurship and job creation.

Drop in German industrial orders bodes ill for coming months

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.

According to hellenicshippingnews.com, contracts for ‘Made in Germany’ goods were down by 2.2% on the month after rising slightly in March and April, data from the Economy Ministry showed. The reading undershot the Reuters consensus forecast for a 0.1% decline.

The “great order book deflation continues,” ING economist Carsten Brzeski said. Devastating new orders data just undermined any hopes for an industrial rebound.”

Other recent data have painted a gloomy picture of the sector too, with engineering orders falling and activity in the manufacturing sector contracting.

In a sign that the economic slowdown is beginning to bite, a survey by the Ifo institute published on Thursday showed German manufacturers expect to make more use of ‘Kurzarbeit’ — a short-hours facility aimed at avoiding mass lay-offs.

“What misery!” VP Bank economist Thomas Gitzel said after the orders data was published. “Given the significant decline in incoming orders, industrial production will remain extremely weak in the second half of the year and that increases the risk of recession for the German economy.”

Tehran, Islamabad take steps for bolstering bilateral trade

➔ **Iran proposes special headquarters for facilitating trade**

In an interview with IRNA, Rahmani said that during the meeting with Imran Khan, he had proposed establishing a special headquarters to facilitate trade between the two countries.

According to the official, Imran Khan welcomed the expansion of Iran-Pakistan trade ties and said his country was ready to take all necessary measures in this regard.

The minister said that the proposal has also been approved by the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and the members are going to be selected in near future.

“Prime Minister Imran Khan also directed all concerned ministers to take appropriate measures under special working group to strengthen Iran-Pakistan trade ties,” Rahmani added.

The official pointed to some other issues which were discussed in the meeting including tariffs and barter trade, and noted that the two sides have agreed to take necessary steps for removing the potential bottlenecks.

Pakistan keen for boosting trade with Iran

Returning to Iran on Friday night, Rahmani held talks with the officials in Sistan-Baluchestan Province and said Pakistan is eager for expansion of economic ties with Iran.

“The visit was good and satisfactory, and the Pakistani side, expressing interest in the development of trade and economic exchanges, is set to lift the necessary barriers to trade and economic hurdles,” he said.

According to the official, activating com-



Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Reza Rahmani (R) and Pakistan Prime Minister's Adviser on Commerce, Textile, Industries, Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood signed an economic co-op MOU at the end of the 8th Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee meeting in Islamabad on Friday.

mon border markets and cross-border trade, promoting involvement of the two sides’ private sectors in mutual trade were among the main goals of the Iranian delegation’s visit to Pakistani.

Rahmani further noted that Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan has reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to strengthen relations with Iran in diverse fields, including barter trade.

“Facilitating trade, removal of hurdles in

economic ties, border issues, and transportation of goods especially foodstuff were among the major issues discussed with the Pakistani side”, he said.

Iran and Pakistan have been taking significant steps for boosting economic relations in the past few years.

In late April, Imran Khan paid a landmark visit to Iran at the top of a political and economic

delegation.

An Iran-Pakistan business forum was held in Tehran during the Pakistani prime minister’s visit, in which the two sides emphasized the necessity of using all available opportunities to expand bilateral trade relations.

The business forum, which was held by Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) in cooperating with the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran, was attended by a number of Iranian and Pakistani officials including Imran Khan, Iranian Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami, TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, and some businessmen from the both sides.

During Imran Khan’s visit, the two countries issued a joint statement highlighting the two side’s determination to enhance political and economic relations.

In late June, Rahmani also met with Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Riffat Masood to discuss his visit to Pakistan and follow up on agreements reached during Imran Khan’s visit to Iran.

In the meeting Rahmani offered establishing and activating border markets and identification and resolution of the problems that the two sides’ traders are facing, as some ways of increasing trade between the two countries.

“Considering the two sides’ willingness for achieving constructive business cooperation, it is expected that this goal is going to be achieved in the near future with the measures taken and the greater involvement of the private sector,” he added.

Iran to hold expo on domestic production opportunities

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The first exhibition of domestic

production opportunities and manufacturing boom is due to be held in late current Iranian calendar month of Tir (July 18-22), IRNA reported on Saturday, quoting the board chairman of Iran’s Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) as saying.

According to Mohammad-Baqer Ali, the exhibition is aimed at joining the country’s top manufacturers and producers in the industry sector with the academic and knowledge-based institutions in order to help them reach their great potentials.

“The exhibition is the largest and most suitable national platform for bilateral and multilateral negotiations between the knowledge suppliers and the demand parties in the country’s industry for improving production,” he said.

Ali further explained that in this exhibition industry parties active in various fields like automotive and spare parts, household appliances, mineral industries, oil, gas and petrochemical industries, telecommunications and marine industries will present

their technological or financial needs and requirements and knowledge supply partners such as universities, research centers, knowledge-based companies, investors, entrepreneurs as well as fundraising and supportive organizations will provide them with their technological, technical or even financial needs and wants.

Inviting the country’s major industrial units for attending this exhibition, IDRO’s chairman of the board said “Companies and industrial complexes can present their needs for various types of parts and machines at the exhibition, and knowledge-based and technology companies can learn more about the industrial needs of the country.”

Since the U.S. reimposed sanctions on Iran to pressure the country’s economy, Iran has been taking all necessary measures to mitigate the impact of the sanctions and counter the U.S. actions.

Improving and boosting domestic production has been one of the major strategies that Iran has been following in the past two years in order to increase its independence.

UK economy shows slowdown signs as recruiters, shoppers turn wary

British employers and shoppers are turning increasingly cautious, indicators showed on Friday, suggesting two of the drivers of the economy during the Brexit crisis are losing momentum.

According to uk.reuters.com, in a week when business surveys pointed to a contraction in overall output in the second quarter, the latest signals from Britain’s boardrooms and high streets underscored the extent of the slowdown following a strong start to 2019.

That was when many companies were rushing to prepare for the original Brexit deadline in March.

The latest figures showed that the subse-

quent slowdown in the economy was not just payback for the stockpiling surge.

The number of people hired for permanent jobs via recruitment firms in Britain fell for a fourth month in a row in June, recruitment industry group REC said on Friday.

The figures represented a stark contrast to the robust hiring activity in 2018.

“Brexit stagnation continues to seize up the jobs market as the slowdown in recruitment activity continues,” said James Stewart, vice chair at KPMG which produces the report with REC.

For temporary staff, hiring rose marginally in June, marking the weakest patch of growth

since May 2013, when Britain’s economy began to emerge from the after-effects of the global financial crisis.

Britain’s labor market

Britain’s labor market has been one of the strengths of the economy since the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Unemployment fell to its lowest rate since 1975 at 3.8% in the first quarter of 2019, according to official data.

Many economists have linked the jobs boom to uncertainty about Brexit which has made employers favor hiring workers — who can be laid off quickly — over the longer-term commitment of investing in equipment.

Sino-Italian enterprises, experts explore cooperation opportunities under BRI

Few months after Italy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with China on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), experts from both countries met here on Friday to address common future challenges in a perspective of growing cooperation chances.

As per xinhuanet.com, gathered at the Milan stock exchange for the second edition of the conference “Italy and the new Silk Roads”, entrepreneurs, officials and experts exchanged points of views and expectations.

Their debate stretched over a wide range of sectors, including infrastructure, digital economy, culture and tourism, investment, banks, and legal counselling to companies willing to expand in third countries involved in the BRI.

“From the point of view of the government, we do believe this was the right thing to do for our companies and our exports,” Italian Deputy Minister of Economic Development Michele Geraci told Xinhua.

“Although it is still early to talk about the effects (of the Memorandum), we are seeing some initial results ... a growing interest on the side of Chinese companies to engage with Italian counterparts to do business,” the official said.

Overall, the sectors in which Italian authorities sounded willing to boost economic ties with China were much varied.

“We are interested in energy sector, food and beverage, technology, tourism, airlines -- with the opening of new routes -- insurance, finance ... and of course manufacturing, where Italy and China can either compete or cooperate,” Geraci explained.

China and Italy signed the Memorandum of Understanding to jointly advance the construction of the Belt and Road in late March in Rome. Proposed by China in 2013, the BRI aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa.

Both have industrial systems

Addressing the conference, Paolo Panerai -- founder, CEO and editor-in-chief of Class Editori publishing house, noted China and Italy both had industrial systems strongly focused on small and medium-sized firms.

“This is one possible crucial driver in the future development of Sino-Italian relations (under the BRI),” Panerai told the audience.

Chinese Ambassador to Italy Li Junhua and his Italian counterpart Ettore Sequi from Beijing contributed to the debate with

video speeches, both stressing the overall magnitude of the BRI project, and recalling the ancient cultural and commercial ties connecting China and Italy through history.

On their part, businesspeople and experts tackled specific aspects of the partnership that could further arise as result of a strengthened cooperation under the BRI.

“With the new Silk Roads, a major boost will be given to logistic infrastructures that today do not even exist,” stressed Paolo Romiti, business development executive director of infrastructure group Salini Impregilo.

His warning did not come by chance, since the lack of infrastructures is considered here as one of the major weaknesses hampering Italy’s further development, and especially in some central and southern regions.

On their part, Chinese entrepreneurs also appeared eager to find new opportunities in Italy, counting on the changes that the cooperation under the BRI might provide.

“Now, from the logistic point of view, our main airports for cargo shipment (in Europe) are still Amsterdam and Frankfurt,” Fan Erning, Vice-President of Shanghai-based Eastern Air Logistics, told Xinhua.

“Yet, we are looking for opportunities to expand in Italy in the future; Milan for example could potentially be a new cargo shipment gateway ... we are looking forward to that,” he added.

A comprehensive project

Among the various stakeholders taking part in the event, Italian e-commerce and digital retail companies seemed to look at a comprehensive project such as the BRI as a chance to improve their own performance.

“One relevant issue (for Italy) is to make sure the logistic and infrastructure development attached to the BRI will result in an opportunity for us to rebalance the online trade exchange with China,” Roberto Liscia, president of Italian e-commerce consortium Netcomm, told Xinhua.

The consortium Liscia represents about 400 Italian e-commerce companies, and was among the founding entities of Ecommerce Europe, the European Electronic Commerce Association gathering over 70,000 firms in some 20 countries.

The entrepreneur stressed that China would provide today an example in terms of digital innovation, also beyond the BRI project.

Iran capable of boosting electricity exports to Iraq

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Managing director of Iran's Kordestan Province's Power Distribution Company said on Saturday that the company has the capacity to export 300 megawatts of electricity to Sulaymaniyah province in Iraqi Kurdistan, IRNA reported.

"We are currently ready to export 300 MW of electricity to Sulaimaniyah in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the number can be increased to 900 MW in the long term," Hiva Lahounian told IRNA.

The official noted that the 300MW target is easily possible with low costs, however, the transaction requires approval and coordination of officials from the two provinces of Iran and Iraq.

He further mentioned Sulaymaniyah's previous electricity dues to Iran, saying that it is no longer possible for the province to import Iranian electricity.

He called on the government and the energy ministry to take necessary measures in order to solve such problems and help realize this potential power trade opportunity.

In this regard, Head of Sulaimaniyah Province's Power Distribution Company Salar Hessamodin also said Iraq's central government is in complete accordance with the Iraqi Kurdistan region for electricity imports from Iran.

"This is a subject which should be followed on by Iran's energy ministry and Iraq's electricity ministry along with the Kurdistan region's power distribution company," he said.

Electricity exports to Iraq

Being neighbor to a country which is the home to the world's second largest gas resources is a good-enough reason for Iraq to look to Iran as one of its main suppliers of natural gas to meet its energy needs. Therefore, Iran for



long has been one of Iraq's main gas suppliers.

In February, Iran signed an agreement with Iraq to extend exports of 1,200 megawatts of electricity to the Arab country every year through three power transmission lines.

The deal was inked by Managing Director of Iran's Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company (Tavanir) and the Iraqi deputy electricity minister in Tehran.

Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Iraqi Minister of Electricity Luay al-Khatib also signed initial accords to boost cooperation in the fields of power production and exports as well as the transfer of power industry technology.

The two countries had initially signed a contract for electricity exports in 2005 with the total exports amount at 150-megawatt. The

contract has been extended every year since.

Under the latest contract between the two countries, Iran exports 1,200 megawatts of electricity to Iraq every year through three power transmission lines in Basrah, Diyala and Amarah.

Iran's power exchanges

Iran currently exchanges electricity with its neighbors namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Iraq, as well as the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic among which Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan are only importers of Iran's electricity.

According to reports, it is predicted that Iran's export of electricity would hit \$33 billion by the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 21, 2025- March 20, 2026).

In October 2018, Iranian Energy Min-

ister Reza Ardakanian announced that the country's daily electricity exports to the neighboring countries has reached 2,000 megawatts (MW).

The country's exports of electricity to its neighbors increased by 25 percent in the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) compared to its preceding year.

Impact of U.S. sanctions

Eelie this week, AFP reported that Iraq is establishing a trade mechanism to continue buying gas and electricity from Iran despite U.S. sanctions.

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

Since Trump withdrew from Iran's nuclear deal in last November, the U.S. government and its allies have been putting all their efforts together to isolate Iran and make the Islamic country bend under economic pressure and doing so, cutting Iran's energy exports has been Trump's top agenda.

Defying U.S. pressures for cutting energy ties with Iran, in early May, Iraqi electricity minister said there is no alternative for Iran's electricity in terms of volume, price or speed of delivery.

"This is something [the electricity coming from Iran] that in terms of price and volume and delivery there is no alternative for. We have explored other options in neighboring countries. There is no alternative that competes on volume or price or speed of delivery to make up for that," Luay al-Khatteeb told Foreign Policy.

Considering Iraq's geopolitical improvements in the past few years, the Iraqi government has been seeking to improve the country's infrastructure and one of the main areas of focus has been Iraq's electricity network and power infrastructures.

IRENEX to hold 4th round of heavy crude oil offering on Tuesday

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will offer two million barrels of heavy crude oil at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on Tuesday, Shana reported.

The base price for this round of offering, which is the fourth round, is \$57.66 per barrel.

Buyers can receive their cargo up to three months after the transaction, and the delivery of the cargo in other regions is subject to NIOC approval.

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

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



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

wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel cargos of oil on the day.

NIOC has so far offered light oil through 12 offerings at the IRENEX.

Offering gas condensate at IRENEX came after the successful offering of crude oil at this market. The product has been already offered at the IRENEX in seven rounds. The first offering was done on February 13, which failed to attract customers.

And then the turn came to heavy crude. Offering heavy crude at IRENEX came after NIOC offered light crude at this stock market in eight round.

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

Heavy crude offering has been held three times at IRENEX so far.

Aussie solar panel boom sparks worry over waste

Australia has the world's highest uptake of home solar energy, with the large shiny panels a familiar sight on rooftops across the country.

According to straitstimes.com, more than two million households have installed rooftop solar systems - over a fifth of all homes.

The solar panels, often subsidized by state governments, have helped cut carbon emissions and reduced the need for coal-fired power while allowing homeowners to lower their energy costs.

Households can sell excess solar energy back to the electricity grid or store it in batteries. The average power saving per house is believed to be about \$540 (\$514) a year.

The rollout has continued at a frenetic rate, with an average of six panels installed per minute around the country. But the boom has led to growing concerns about how to dispose of all these panels and batteries when their life ends.

Experts say Canberra needs to quickly address the problem, especially since China last year stopped accepting recycling waste from Australia and some other countries.

"Even if China were to suddenly start accepting Australia's waste again - an unlikely proposition - we cannot simply export our problem," they wrote on The Conversation website on June 17. "If not addressed, ageing solar panels and batteries will create a mountain of hazardous waste for



Australia over the coming decades."

Australia's hot and dry climate is particularly suited to solar energy production. Most home panels last 20 to 30 years, and some are already reaching the end of their shelf life. By 2047, Australia is expected to have about 800,000 tons of solar panel waste.

Much of the solar waste

Much of the solar waste is said to be destined for the

landfill. South Australia-based firm Reclaim PV, believed to be the first dedicated recycler of panels, said in March it was recycling about 40,000 a year.

Some states have begun to take action. Victoria this week began a ban on sending solar panel materials to the landfill. This is part of a larger scheme for electronic-waste products. It bars households from throwing away products such as phones, TVs, kitchen appliances and laptops in standard bins. Instead, these items must be left at dedicated drop-off points.

The aim is to ensure such waste is reused. "E-waste contains valuable materials that we can recover and reuse, but if left in the wrong place, they can also harm the environment and human health," said Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio last month.

State and federal governments are also looking to develop a national plan to encourage producers, retailers and consumers to recycle, reuse or safely dispose of solar panel components. The plan is expected to be in place by next year.

Most solar panels should last decades, but there are concerns that Australia's installation rush has led to some low-quality products or poor fitting.

The concerns have not slowed the rate of installations, with official data showing that the uptake of panels continues to grow.

PG region can follow UK in tapping into 'big potential' of renewable energy: British expert

By Sarah Glubb

Countries in the Persian Gulf (PG) region have been urged to learn from the UK and tap into the "big potential" of renewable energy.

Britain has had considerable interest from the Arab market about the adoption of clean energy sources, but a lack of acceptance from society was often holding back further commitment, said Frank Gordon, head of policy at the UK's Renewable Energy Association.

Speaking on the sidelines of a London summit to promote Arab-British investment opportunities post Brexit, Gordon told Arab News that there were many lessons that could be learned from the UK experience in helping countries in the region transition

to renewables.

Although Saudi Arabia and other neighboring countries were pursuing nuclear energy, Gordon said governments and societies needed to realize that renewable energy was not just cleaner and environmentally friendly, but also cheaper economically and had better health aspects.

PG states to preserve oil reserves

The "Persian Gulf states are keen to preserve their oil reserves for exporting opportunities to maximize a very valuable resource," said Gordon, adding that they were looking toward promoting renewables to provide alternative energy means for their countries.

Britain was once a global oil producer, but its supplies have dwindled to such an extent that it now imports oil and has

transitioned to consuming renewables.

One-third of all electricity produced in the UK comes from renewable sources.

"In the UK, you can build renewable energy for about half the price of nuclear power and about two-thirds of the price of newly built gas power," Gordon said.

Solar, wind and tidal were the cheapest forms of any power generation, he added, but most of the focus and major plans would likely be on solar energy in the PG, "which has big potential."

He said: The "region would not be able to access the around 14 types of renewable sources currently available in the world, due to education, geographic circumstances and lack of acceptance and education."

A lot of governments had ambitious programs and could benefit from the vast



training programs that the UK offered, he added.

Citing Britain's experience, Gordon said the transition to relying on renewable energy would need public acceptance and education, while local communities would have to be involved in projects from the start.

(Source: arabnews.com)

OPEC output hits new low on Trump's sanctions, supply pact: survey

OPEC oil output sank to a new five-year low in June as a rise in Saudi supply did not offset losses in Iran and Venezuela due to U.S. sanctions and other outages elsewhere in the group, a Reuters survey found.

OPEC pumped 29.60 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, the survey showed, down 170,000 bpd from May's revised figure and the lowest OPEC total since 2014, the survey showed.

The Reuters survey suggests that even though Saudi Arabia is raising output following pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to bring down prices, the Kingdom is still voluntarily pumping less than an OPEC-led supply deal allows it to. OPEC renewed the supply pact at meetings this week.

Despite lower supplies, crude oil has fallen from a six-month high above \$75 a barrel in April to below \$63 on Friday, pressured by concern about slowing economic growth.

"The decision of OPEC+ at the beginning of the week to extend its production cuts has done nothing to change this," Carsten Fritsch, analyst at Commerzbank, said of this week's drop in prices. "A series of disappointing economic data from the United States, China and Europe has sparked new concerns about demand."

OPEC, Russia and other non-members, known as OPEC+, agreed in December to reduce supply by 1.2 million bpd from Jan. 1 this year. OPEC's share of the cut is 800,000 bpd, to be delivered by 11 members — all except Iran, Libya and Venezuela. The producers at meetings this week in Vienna extended the deal until March 2020.

In June, OPEC members bound by the agreement achieved 156 percent of pledged cuts, the survey found, more than in May, due to lower production in Iraq, Kuwait and Angola. All three of the exempt producers also pumped less oil.

The U.S. reimposed sanctions on Iran in November after pulling out of a 2015 nuclear accord between Tehran and six world powers. Aiming to cut Iran's sales to zero, Washington this month ended sanctions waivers for importers of Iranian oil.

In Venezuela, supply fell slightly in June due to the impact of U.S. sanctions on state oil company PDVSA and a long-term decline in production, according to the survey.

Among countries pumping more, Saudi Arabia boosted supply by 100,000 bpd to 9.8 million bpd from May's revised figure, the survey found. This is still below its OPEC quota of 10.311 bpd.

Output also rose in Nigeria, which last month overproduced its target by the largest margin.

June output was the lowest by OPEC since April 2014, excluding membership changes that have taken place since then, Reuters surveys show.

The Reuters survey aims to track supply to the market and is based on shipping data provided by external sources, Refinitiv Eikon flows data and information provided by sources at oil companies, OPEC and consulting firms.

Quiet in Norwegian Arctic port as reloading of Russian LNG comes to end

By Atle Staalesen

"It has become quieter," harbor inspector Øyvind Larssen admits. "We especially feel that the tugboats are gone, they had become a part of the town," he says to the Barents Observer.

Larssen is harbor inspector at the North Cape seaport, the site that over the last half year has handled several million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Russia's Yamal LNG plant.

Since late last year, the north Norwegian town has hosted the major reloading operations of liquefied natural gas for Russian natural gas company Novatek.

The last LNG tanker left Honningsvåg on the 29th June, Larssen says. And they will not come back, he makes clear.

The first Russian LNG carrier came to Honningsvåg and the North Cape port on the 21st November 2018. Since then, more than 300 tankers have sailed into the local Sarnes Fjord and reloaded several million tons of LNG.

At most, six LNG carriers were simultaneously involved in reloading in the Sarges Fjord, the bay outside Honningsvåg. At the same time, a number of additional tankers were waiting in nearby waters for their turn to reload.

It is Norwegian company Tschudi Shipping that has handled the reloading operations. The company late summer 2018 entered into agreement with Novatek. The deal enabled the Russian energy company reduce costs for the export of gas produced in the remote Arctic field.

Ice class tankers have shuttled from LNG terminal Sabetta to Honningsvåg where the LNG has been reloaded to conventional tankers that subsequently have transported the gas to the markets.

Jon Edvard Sundnes, Chief Executive Officer of the Tschudi Group, confirms to the Barents Observer that the agreement with Novatek has come to an end.

The deal between the two companies came as Novatek was in dire need of increased export capacity. The second train of the Yamal LNG was launched in November 2018, several months ahead of schedule, and there were still not a sufficient number of ice breaking tankers to bring the gas to the markets.

Operations to Russian waters

The agreement reportedly had a time frame of up to 2-3 years, but Novatek early 2019 clearly signaled that it would move the ship-to-ship reloading operations to Russian waters in the course of 2019.

Before the end of the year, the operations will start up near the Kildin Island, by the Kola Bay, Novatek said.

Since reloading in Honningsvåg ended on 29th June, the ice-class tankers have sailed all the way from LNG terminal Sabetta to the marked without reloading.

The ship-to-ship operations will in any case be temporary. Ultimately, Novatek intends to build a permanent terminal in the Kola Peninsula. That terminal is likely to be located in Ural Guba, the militarized bay located about 50 km west of Murmansk city and will have a capacity to handle 20 million tons per year. Novatek in August discussed the Ural Guba project with the Ministry of Defense and top government officials.

It will reportedly by French company Total that will take the lead in the development of the Ura Guba terminal.

(Source: thebarentsobserver.com)

U.S. creates trouble with lies about PLA missile launch

GLOBALTIMES — The Pentagon claimed this week that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched a Chinese missile from the “man-made structures in the South China Sea” near the Nan-sha Islands. “Man-made structures” refer to the island reefs that China built on the Nansha Islands. The Pentagon said China’s acts were meant to “intimidate other South China Sea claimants.”

After the US spread the information, the Philippines stated that the country will conduct its own inquiry. “We have no first-hand knowledge about this missile launch except this news report,” Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said. Vietnam stated that it is “keeping a close watch on this incident.” Australia followed the US most closely. Australia’s Department of Defense not only expressed concern, but also said the actions “could raise tensions in the South China Sea” and that Australia has “a substantial interest in the stability of this crucial international waterway.”



The Global Times learned that the PLA had already announced that it would conduct military exercises in the South China Sea from June 29 to July 3. It is completely normal if missiles are launched during this time. A reliable source told the Global Times that the Pentagon’s claim of “Chinese missile launch from the man-made structures in the South China Sea” is malicious and misleading. Some details come from thin air, and are intended to sow discord among regional countries.

Countries’ military exercises and joint military exercises are frequent in the South China Sea region. The largest military hardware that has ever appeared in the South China Sea is the US’ nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The US has multiple military bases in countries surrounding the South China Sea. Washington’s South China Sea diplomacy is based on its navy. If there will be militarization tendency in the region, it is the US who will lead it.

If China safely launches normal missile tests in non-disputed areas in the South China Sea, do they intimidate other countries? China did not even announce its missile tests, how could China intimidate other countries? It was the Pentagon that released the information, but distorted the facts. Shouldn’t it be Washington who is trying to intimidate countries in the region?

The South China Sea has been relatively calm and tranquil for a while. China and ASEAN members are speeding up the process to work out the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. Countries concerned have remained restrained on territorial disputes in recent years. They have strengthened management of disputes, and all parties hope that the regional situation will not be dominated by maritime disagreements. They are more willing to make peace and cooperation the mainstream of national relations in the region.

The US is an ill-intentioned troublemaker in the South China Sea region. Washington has been launching public opinion offensives, accusing China of sabotaging regional security by fabricating and distorting the facts. Washington is intimidating regional countries, and creating excuses for itself to promote military activities in the South China Sea. The US pretends that its hegemony is justified to protect small countries in the region.

Washington produced and spread most of the military-related information about the South China Sea. As regional countries gradually become more vigilant to Washington’s behavior and are unwilling to follow suit, Washington has turned to its allies outside the region. This explains the news that its European allies are coming to the South China Sea to declare “freedom of navigation.” It is amusing when these words come out of countries that have almost nothing to do with the South China Sea.

Australia is nearer to the South China Sea than the UK. Thus it responds most actively to the US policy in the region. Canberra is only pledging loyalty to Washington. Instead of protecting peace in the South China Sea, Australia is only adjusting its statements based on the US’ reactions. Canberra is interfering as an outsider.

Since the US comes to the South China Sea, it should bring some real peace and stability. The South China Sea does not welcome a troublemaker that arrives by warship.

The Zionist presence in Islamic part Ural

1 → In 2015, Talgat proposed to Putin “annexation” by Israel would be the best step towards ending Palestinian-Israeli conflict. No comments necessary. Let’s dive in even further. Zionism is present in Ufa in several ways, for the most part reflecting the traditional foreign policy of cosmopolitan radicals.

1 - Pro-Israeli organizations that are diaspora-related and consist of the local Jews. Main purpose of such organizations is lobbying foreign policy of Israeli state. For instance at some point in the past Ufa had a branch of the Zionist organization called Shahr, the main task of which was anti-Hamas propaganda, however, as soon as the need to conduct such propaganda disappeared, the organization instantly disappeared from public view.

2 - Cultural program which largely relies on religious subtext. It is important to mention that the main Rabbi of Bashkiria Dan Krichевsky, who is a native of the Zionist colony. This fact begs a logical question. Dan is known to lobby the Zionist politics, why the Jewish community in Ufa and other cities of Bashkortostan did not appoint one of their locals to the post of chief Rabbi? Strange isn’t it?

3 - Economic cooperation. In this direction Zionism has launched tentacles in many areas, from the power grid complex to the rural farms. It is not enough that all of Moscow and St. Petersburg are at the complete disposal of the rootless cosmopolitans, they are now active throughout northern Eurasia and especially its central part. As for the Muslim community of Ufa and Bashkortostan in general, there is a very depressing and hopeless picture. It would be fair to say that there is no Islamic thinking in the republic, and association such as mutfiat are frankly just a bunch of businessmen who have never had regard of religion. We also see that there is no real patriotism among the rather large Russian-speaking population, we see no protests and let alone the fight against the dominance of the Zionist business in the Republic.

Julian Assange and the real war on the free press

By TED GALEN CARPENTER

THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVE — Trump administration officials were enthusiastic when Ecuador decided to expel Julian Assange from its embassy in London, where he had received sanctuary for nearly seven years. British authorities promptly jailed him for jumping bail on sexual assault charges in Sweden, and U.S. officials began plans to have Assange extradited to face espionage charges in this country. He just turned 48 in prison on July 3.

Last month, the Department of Justice added 17 counts to the one-count indictment that it had filed years earlier. His current imprisonment in Britain and the probability of a lengthy extradition battle have delayed the prospect of a high-profile trial in the United States, but that outcome remains Washington’s goal. The United States reportedly submitted a formal extradition request on June 6.

The issues at stake go far beyond whether Assange is an admirable (or even a reasonably likeable) person. He symbolizes a crucial fight over freedom of the press and the ability of journalists to expose government misconduct without fear of criminal prosecution. Unfortunately, a disturbing number of “establishment” journalists in the United States seem willing—indeed, eager—to throw him to the government wolves.

Official Washington’s hatred of Assange borders on rabid. The website WikiLeaks, which he and his colleagues founded in 2006, has published voluminous quantities of leaked documents—in some cases highly classified documents. Those revelations have embarrassed, even discredited, powerful government officials and political factions in the United States and other countries. Among WikiLeaks’s revelations were specifics about the torture of terrorist suspects at CIA “black sites” in the United States and allied countries, and evidence of U.S. war crimes, notably brazen killings of civilians, including two Reuters reporters, in Iraq. Some of the most spectacular news accounts emerged because of leaked documents that a young Army private, Bradley (later Chelsea) Manning had given to WikiLeaks.

U.S. officials were furious about such information becoming public. They not only prosecuted Manning for espionage—eventually imposing a draconian 35-year prison sentence—but they filed an espionage charge against Assange. The ongoing attacks on him are a bid for censorship powers not seen since the Nixon administration sought to prevent The New York Times and The Washington Post from publishing the Pentagon Papers. In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the government’s bid for prior restraint. The ruling did not explicitly address the question of whether authorities could prosecute journalists once a story using classified documents was published. However, a succession of administrations have refrained from pursuing that option, and the prevailing assumption was that post-publication attempts at prosecution might run afoul of the courts as well. Individuals who leak items to the press remained as vulnerable as ever to prosecution for espionage, but members of the press have enjoyed de facto immunity. With the Assange case, that situation threatens to change.

U.S. foreign policy mandarins have sought to overturn or at least dilute the Pentagon Papers precedent from the outset. Their preferred alternative is Britain’s Official Secrets Act. Passed in 1911, that statute prohibits news outlets from publishing any information that the government deems confidential. Following the Supreme Court decision, Dean Acheson, one of the key architects of Washington’s post-World War II foreign policy, called for “a severe Official Secrets Act to prevent irresponsible or corrupt transfer of secret papers from the government to publishers.” During the 1980s and 1990s,



hawkish types expressed similar attitudes. Michael A. Ledeen, a special adviser to the secretary of state, enthusiastically endorsed the British model. Ledeen was especially upset by the publication of Bob Woodward’s 1987 book *Veil*, an exposé of CIA dirty tricks. Ledeen stated that “such a book ought not to have been published,” adding that with an American Official Secrets Act, it would not have been.

Since the 9/11 attacks, such attitudes have grown. An especially outspoken proponent is Republican Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas. As an Army lieutenant in Iraq in 2006, Cotton became incensed at a New York Times story disclosing the Bush administration’s secret program to disrupt the financing of alleged terrorist organizations. In an open letter, he accused the Times of having “gravely endangered the lives of my soldiers and all other soldiers and innocent Iraqis here.” Cotton asserted that as a Harvard Law School graduate and practicing attorney, he was “well-versed in the espionage laws relevant to this story and others—laws you have plainly violated.” He closed with a chilling wish. “I hope that my colleagues at the Department of Justice match the courage of my soldiers here and prosecute you and your newspaper to the fullest extent of the law. By the time we return home, maybe you will be in your rightful place: not at the Pulitzer announcements, but behind bars.”

Yes, You Should Fear the Arrest of Julian Assange

You Don’t Have to Love Assange to Fear His Prosecution

There is no indication that Cotton has changed his views since entering Congress. Nor was he alone at the time in wanting to prosecute journalists for disclosing information that might undercut U.S. policy. Republican Representative Peter King of New York blasted the Times for being “treasonous,” as did Republican Senator Jim Bunning of Kentucky.

The United States and other Western leaders became increasingly alarmed about the surge of WikiLeaks disclosures. They worried that whistleblowers were becoming emboldened and might leak information to more respectable media outlets. Their fears were realized in 2013 when Edward Snowden, a contract employee for the National Security Agency, transferred a trove of classified documents to Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras at The Guardian. Those documents confirmed that, among other abuses, the NSA undermined private computer encryption programs and collected bulk data on Americans’ emails and other correspondence without obtaining a warrant. Equally appalling, NSA Director James Clapper had lied to Congress and the American people about the program.

The Department of Justice moved quickly to indict Snowden for espionage, but attempting to do the same with Greenwald and Poitras was more difficult. Greenwald especially was a prominent, if controversial, journalist,

and going after him risked creating a media firestorm. It seemed more than coincidental, though, that authorities in countries closely allied with the United States (especially Britain) harassed the journalists—and in one case, Greenwald’s romantic partner—with lengthy, menacing interrogations when they traveled internationally.

U.S. leaders have focused their efforts on apprehending and prosecuting Assange, considered a more “fringe” player. But the Obama administration did increase attempts to harass or intimidate journalists who utilized leaked material. Officials conducted electronic surveillance of both journalist James Risen and Fox News correspondent James Rosen in an effort to identify their sources. The government named Rosen as a “co-conspirator” in an espionage case against his source. Similarly, the administration asserted that it had the right to prosecute Risen, even though it chose not to take that step. Those were ominous warning signals.

The government’s strategy in the Assange case is especially insidious. Federal officials argue that whatever the relevance of the Pentagon Papers precedent, it doesn’t apply in this case because Assange is not a real journalist engaged in legitimate journalism. Instead, he is allegedly a co-conspirator with Manning and other individuals who have illicitly leaked classified information. Ergo, he has committed espionage, and any legal protections that legitimate journalists might enjoy should not extend to his behavior. John Demers, the Justice Department’s assistant attorney general for national security, stated that thesis explicitly. “Julian Assange is no journalist,” Demers said. Assange engaged in “explicit solicitation of classified information.”

During the early years of his campaign, Assange had a considerable number of defenders among American progressives. Most WikiLeaks disclosures had discomfited the Bush administration, which left-wing figures loathed. But newer revelations targeted possible Obama administration misdeeds, and Assange began to lose favor with progressives.

Then in 2016, he committed an apparently unpardonable sin in the eyes of many liberals, when WikiLeaks published hacked or leaked information from the Democratic National Committee that exposed political dirty tricks by Hillary Clinton’s presidential primary campaign against Bernie Sanders. Assange and WikiLeaks were now anathema to most liberal journalists, and as allegations of Russian meddling in the U.S. election on behalf of Donald Trump intensified, the increasingly popular, and dubious, trope was that Assange was a tool of the Kremlin. When he was arrested in April 2019, liberal American journalists were among the biggest cheerleaders.

Theirs is a dangerously misguided stance. Successfully prosecuting Assange and WikiLeaks for espionage would be a mortal threat to a free and independent press in the United States. Some of the government’s arguments to support the theory that Assange is not a

legitimate journalist are paper thin. One is that Assange urged Manning to provide more documents after the initial delivery of files. Yet investigative reporters from indisputably reputable news outlets routinely use methods similar to those Assange employed, including asking their sources to provide more information when investigating possible government misconduct. Another argument is that WikiLeaks does not edit leaked material, but merely releases it to the public. Other outlets have engaged in similar conduct, though, without being considered illegitimate members of the journalistic profession. BuzzFeed News, for example, published the salacious dossier on Trump that former British intelligence agent Christopher Steele compiled.

Yet the government has not sought to prosecute BuzzFeed News, and most mainstream media outlets defended the publication’s right to publish the material—although some criticized the actual decision. Unfortunately, many of them have taken a very different stance regarding WikiLeaks. The New York Times, The Washington Post, and other prominent mainstream publications rejected the argument that Assange was engaging in journalism. “The case of Mr. Assange,” the Times editorial board stated, “could help draw a sharp line between legitimate journalism and dangerous cybercrime.”

Such attitudes partly reflect resentment at an upstart player that has broken several prominent stories. Legacy publications are less than thrilled about blogs and other online publications that have sprouted during the 21st century. The Times, Post, and other mainstream publications likely also exhibit special resentment toward Assange because he expressed open animosity toward U.S. foreign policy, while those publications usually backed Washington’s often blundering overseas commitments and initiatives.

Whatever their motives, such journalists are being glib tools in the government’s attempt to plug leaks and stifle criticism, especially in the national security arena. Suppressing embarrassing revelations is clearly the intent of national security officials. Not only have the number of prosecutions against whistleblowers increased over the past decade, but federal officials have resorted to highly questionable tactics against pesky journalists from even established outlets, as the Rosen and Risen episodes confirm. The initiative against Assange is only the boldest and most recent.

We cannot allow the government to usurp the right to decide who is or is not a “legitimate” journalist. Yet that is exactly Washington’s ploy in the Assange case. If federal prosecutors prevail with that argument and eventually convict him of espionage, the implicit protections that the Pentagon Papers ruling has afforded the press will be severely diluted. Only legacy publications friendly to the national security bureaucracy could then count on government restraint—and even that expectation could become quite fragile. Obstreperous online outlets and their writers would routinely find themselves under threat of criminal prosecution if they published a story based on classified information. At a minimum, the new system would create a chilling effect on (already insufficient) foreign policy dissent in the media; at worst, the government would achieve the de facto, functional equivalent of the Official Secrets Act that officials have long sought.

It is fashionable in the journalistic community to accuse Trump of “waging war on a free press.” Yet most of his actions have consisted of little more than rude comments, combined with occasional harassment, such as suspending the White House credentials of adversaries in the press. But that type of petty conduct does not constitute a real threat to press freedoms. Prosecuting Julian Assange for publishing leaked classified information is such a real threat, and defenders of the First Amendment must unite to repel it.

Rule of law is Hong Kong’s core value

GLOBALTIMES — The storming and vandalizing of the Hong Kong Legislative Council building by some extremists has sent a shock wave. It has sounded the alarm for Hong Kong society that such a deplorable scene, in which rule of law was trampled upon, happened in the international financial center.

The violence has embarrassed some Westerners who have long shown partiality to Hong Kong demonstrators. But some others attributed the violence to a lack of response from the Hong Kong government to opposition demands. US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, despite widespread criticism of the violence, claimed that the Hong Kong protesters “have inspired the world” and their courage should not be ignored.

There is growing vigilance and resentment worldwide against violent demonstrations. Since the end of the Cold War, countries which witnessed political upheavals caused by violent demonstrations have fallen into long-term chaos, stagnation and even retrogression. The Color Revolutions didn’t bring any country what the protesters initially expected.

Western countries are tough in cracking down on violent demonstrations happened in their own countries. Britain

unrelentingly reprimanded the demonstrators in the London riots in 2011, a typical example of how the West deals with domestic violent demonstrations.

But outside the Western realm, the West backs almost all riots and even color revolutions that go against their governments. The West has been lending strong spiritual support to violent protests around the world. On many occasions, non-governmental organizations, diplomats and intelligence agencies of the West have acted behind the curtain to escalate riots.

In recent decades, the West has been interested in promoting “revolutions” in many countries and praising the protesters. But when those countries hit by color revolution run into turmoil and need economic assistance, Western countries run away. In most societies, economic problems are caused by economic reasons, which can hardly be resolved politically.

Hong Kong needs to inject new impetus in the deep layer of its economy and people’s livelihood. This is a universal problem. US populism emerged from white middle-class people’s dissatisfaction with their conditions. The Trump administration attributes all problems of the US to other

countries taking advantage of the US on trade and misleads public opinion with trade wars. Many Americans are actually aware that their problems can only be solved by patient reforms.

Supported by Western forces, certain extremists in Hong Kong have spared no effort to instill in Hong Kong society such an idea: To tackle all problems, Hong Kong must be more “democratic,” more street demonstrators are needed, and violence should be resorted to, if necessary. Nonetheless, Hong Kong is a developed society. With its tradition of valuing the rule of law, its high quality citizens, and the backing of the motherland, copying the “color revolution” commonly seen in backward areas will definitely be resisted in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the will of the central government and mainland society to oppose Hong Kong’s turmoil is an insurmountable hurdle for those forces.

Safeguarding the rule of law is the Hong Kong society’s common value. External forces must respect this core interest of Hong Kong society and stop supporting violent protests. Otherwise, they are against all Chinese people

The role of the former U.S. president in the presidential election of 2020

will Obama break the Trump game?

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Former U.S. President Barack Obama is trying to take an active role in the upcoming presidential election. Undoubtedly Obama will use all his power to defeat US President Donald Trump in the upcoming election. In this regard, Obama will provide full support for the Democratic nominee for the presidential election of 2020. The same thing worries Trump and his entourage. On the other hand, news and statistics on the performance of Obama and Trump and a comparison of these two have raised the White House's concerns.

Trump is falling almost 1 million Jobs Short Vs. Obama

As Forbes reported, The U.S. Bureau of Labor announced that the economy added 224,000 jobs in June vs. expectations of 160,000 and May's revised result of 72,000. The 224,000 is still strong, but there were revisions to April and May that subtracted 11,000 people hired in those months and government employment added 33,000. Overall private payrolls added 191,000 employees. The stock markets are reacting negatively due to the jobs number being stronger than expected since investors are lowering their expectations that the Fed will cut interest rates by 50 basis points later this month. A 25 basis point downward move is still being priced into the market, but that may wind up being optimistic due to the strong report.

Over 29 months Obama added almost 1 million more jobs than Trump

Trump entered office on January 20, 2017, and starting with February 2017 he has been President for 29 months. Total job growth during that time has been 5.613 million or 194,000 per month with those results being helped by the tax cut. Working back from January 2017, Obama's last month in office, there had been 6.423 million jobs added or 221,000 per month. The difference for the 29 months is 810,000 more jobs or 27,000 more per month than Trump. Note that back in January this year the total difference was only 194,000, which means over the past five months it has increased by 616,000. And looking at the next six months with Obama's job numbers of 188,000 to 327,000 per month, the gap should only increase and cross 1 million.

Job growth is slowing down

To help smooth out any one months result it is worthwhile to look at 3, 6 and 12-month trailing numbers. You can see the slowdown in the number of jobs being added when you look at these averages.

12 month per month average of 192,000 equals 2.3 million per year (and the second month in a row it has been under 200,000 per month)

6 month per month average of 172,000 equals 2.07 million per year

3 month per month average of 171,000 equals 2.05 million per year

Not the best economy ever

The underlying economy is weaker than perceived when you look at March quarter's GDP numbers and railroad traffic taking a significant downward move over the past month. If the economy continues on this path it could enter a recession when few are forecasting one with one reliable indicator foreshadowing a downturn in the next 6 to 18 months. It could become a self-fulfilling prophecy as almost 70% of CFO's are predicting a recession by the end of 2020.

Waiting for Obama

Barack Obama is literally more popular



than Jesus among Democrats. Unfortunately, neither the former president nor any of the party's 23 candidates currently seeking the 2020 nomination know quite what to do with that information.

Of course, before any serious endorsement conversation can commence, Obama has to finish his book (between rounds of golf and raising millions for his foundation). The writing has been going more slowly than he'd expected, and according to several people who have spoken with him, the 44th president is feeling competitive with his wife, whose own book, *Becoming*, was the biggest release of 2018 and is on track to be the best-selling memoir in history. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, like others in this story, these sources note he'll occasionally say in conversation that he's writing this book himself, while Michelle used a ghostwriter. He's also trying to balance the historical and political needs of a project that will be up to his standards as a writer, and not 1,000 pages long. Obama's research process has been intense and convoluted, and it's still very much ongoing, from the legal pads he had shipped to Marlon Brando's old island in French Polynesia, where he spent a month in March 2017, to the interviews that aides have been conducting with former members of his administration to jog and build out memories.

The untitled memoir, which will reportedly begin with his 2004 Democratic National Convention speech and cover his two terms in the White House, won't be released in 2019, as his publisher, Penguin Random House, had predicted just a few months ago. Dropping the book this year would have helped Obama largely avoid the current political calendar, and a 2020 release threatens to affect the primaries and the party's campaign against Donald Trump by re-litigating decisions made a decade ago. Another option is to hold it until 2021, when Obama could be either the voice of a party in despair after another defeat, or poised to grab the spotlight from a freshly elected Democratic president. Publishers tend to save their marquee releases to coincide with the holiday-shopping season—Michelle Obama's book came out a week before Thanksgiving—but doing so in 2020 would mean the book would hit shelves right after Election Day. Katie Hill, an Obama spokesperson, told me that no decisions have been made on the new timing for publication. Hill gave me a statement carefully written to keep the former president's distance, saying he "welcomes the debate" playing out in the primaries. "The policy debate has shifted since 2007 and 2008, and that's good—it's

evidence of the progress made since then by activists and elected officials at all levels. Big, bold ideas are a sign of the Democratic Party's strength, and President Obama urges everyone running to be transparent with voters about how these ideas will work in the nitty-gritty, how they're paid for, and how they'll affect the lives of all Americans."

As with *Becoming*, this book will have more than a standard release. Aides expect Obama to go on tour, with a rush of interviews in which he'll be expected to talk not just about what he's written, but about Trump and whatever political news is unfolding that day. When that conversation has come up internally, according to people involved in the discussions, he often says simply, "I can handle it."

Voters shouldn't expect him to do almost anything political, or even public, until next year, potentially not until the next Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee. But with former Vice President Joe Biden talking up Obama every chance he gets, the rest of the field is weighing how much they want to present themselves as a restoration of the previous administration, a continuation, or a new approach to politics entirely. Obama hasn't committed to fundraising or other political activity beyond an email that went out last week, signed with his name, announcing the creation of a new general-election fund at the Democratic National Committee. The aide who handled Obama's political activity through the midterms left earlier this year, and has yet to be replaced. But a source close to the former president told me he is still receiving calls from 2020 hopefuls. The candidates are reportedly looking for more of the wise-elder conversations he hosted through last year's midterms and beyond, scrounging for advice, and cherishing the fun of getting to talk with a former commander in chief. Some are already on their second or third chat. Obama remains firm that he won't endorse soon, while aides are stressing that he might get involved later in the process—presumably, the thinking goes, to stop a candidate he sees as too divisive or likely to lose from becoming the nominee. (This hasn't been specified, but most assume it would be to stop Bernie Sanders.)

Obama and his aides have carefully guarded when and how to deploy him; some have even theorized he could be called on to broker who the 2020 nominee is, if the primaries finish without a clear winner and Democrats face a contested convention. They feel gratified by what happened in the 2018 midterms,

when after a year of being dogged by complaints that he'd disappeared, he burst into the final weeks of the campaign season with an intense assault on Trump. As the 2020 race kicked off, Obama stepped out of the way to avoid looming over the conversation, but he is acutely aware that if Biden secures the nomination next summer, that will change. Democrats with ties to Obama expect he will then have to get even more involved next year, both out of a personal friendship and a feeling that the election would become a referendum on his presidency.

The way Biden is campaigning, though, Obama is a regular presence on the trail. On his first day in the race, Biden told reporters that he'd asked Obama not to endorse him (despite firm statements from Obama's orbit making it clear that he'd decided himself not to endorse his former veep). During his Philadelphia rally this past weekend, Biden said, "Let me stop here and say something we don't say often enough as a party or as a nation: Barack Obama is a man of extraordinary character, courage, and decency. He was a president our children could look up to and did. He was a great president. I was proud to serve every day as his vice president, but never more proud than on the day we passed health care."

"For Biden, it's a very important piece of his CV; it's a very important part of his story," Randi Weingarten, the head of the national teachers' union, told me in an interview. "For everyone else, they're talking about how their own biography leads them to certain things."

Biden wasn't the first 2020 candidate to invoke the former president's name on the stump. Asked at his own kickoff press conference in February about past conversations with 44, Senator Cory Booker repurposed a favorite line: "Well, first of all, I just want everybody to know, I miss Obama, and I miss her husband, too." Beto O'Rourke, who's attracted a number of top Obama alumni, has been comparing his race to the 2008 campaign. On Tuesday night, during a CNN town hall, O'Rourke called Obama "the greatest president of my lifetime, as far as I'm concerned."

But to paraphrase a Biden joke from 2007, Biden's 2020 campaign so far is almost a noun, a verb, and Barack Obama. Biden talks about his old boss in nearly every speech, using him as a validator, a shield from criticism, and a way of summoning nostalgia. During his first week in the race, Biden's campaign released a video that draws extensively from remarks the former president made in 2017, when presenting Biden with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in their closing days in the White House. It was purposefully made to sound like an endorsement, and produced with the approval of Obama's office.

Biden advisers declined to comment on the record about how much he's talking about Obama, wary of seeming like he's doing it out of crass political calculation. To the Biden team, other presidential candidates not talking about Obama as much as they could is an example of misreading political chatter on Twitter as representing voters overall, and failing to realize how popular Obama actually is among Democrats. And it's not just Dems: The Democratic super PAC Priorities USA released a new poll this week finding that among registered voters in the key 2020 swing states of Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, Obama's approval rating is at 54 percent, way above

Efforts to counter terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang

1 → Originally, Islam was not the religion of Uyghur people and many other ethnic groups who lived in Xinjiang; also today, it is not the only religion practiced in the region.

In modern era, when China was having a period of weakness, the imperialist regimes took advantage of the situation and invaded Xinjiang; they started promoting the separation of Xinjiang from China and by doing so they lay the foundation of destruction of stability and prosperity in Xinjiang.

After the Cold War, the region was affected by separatist movements, religious extremism and terrorism and it was hit by some terrorist attacks that had devastating effects on the life and wealth of the residents, and severely damaged the human rights situation in the district.

The separatist groups substantially distorted the history of Xinjiang and tried to stir up hatred between different ethnic groups. They then tried to establish a new country named "East Turkestan" by doing Jihad.

These religious extremists are holding up the flag of Islam but their behavior is in total violation of Islamic rules. They incite people into fighting the governmental administration, they advocate a lifestyle without television, radio or newspapers and preach fake religious rules such as "women are not allowed to work". These terrorists majorly violate the human rights of Xinjiang residents and does violent, destructive activities that only harm the ordinary people.

The statistics show that from 1990 to 2016, the separatist groups, terrorists and extremists have done thousands of terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, killing many innocent civilians and hundreds of police officers and caused substantial economic loss.

On January 5, 2009, East Turkestan movement, both from inside and outside of China, started an extremely violent riot in Ürümqi that shook up the whole world. The terrorists staged major attacks in big stores and public places. The attack killed 197, injured more than 1700 and destroyed 331 stores and burnt down 1325 vehicles, many other public places were also damaged over the attacks.

These terrorists attack the religious leaders as well. In 1996, Aronghan Aji, vice president of the China Islamic Association and president of Xinjiang Islamic Association, and the preacher of Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar was stabbed 21 times by four terrorists on his way to a mosque and seriously wounded.

On July 30, 2014, the 74-year-old Senior Mullah Juma Tayier, vice president of Xinjiang Islamic Association and imam of the Id Kah Mosque, was brutally killed by three terrorists on his way home after morning Fajr prayer.

Considering the real threats of terrorism and extremism in the region, proper actions have been taken to fight these groups based on the ongoing situation in Xinjiang. The fight against terrorism in Xinjiang has always followed the law and has tried to secure the rights of civilians, to bring about justice and to serve the logical needs of the religious people.

Xinjiang administration is focused to counter terrorism by developing the economic wellbeing of residents, advertisement, giving legal education to people, and setting up centers that offer professional and vocational training.

In fact, establishment of education and training centers is a precautionary action to fight terrorism. The centers teach people who are guilty of minor crimes or law-breaking. The teaching program consist of standard spoken and written Chinese language, law, vocational skills, and courses on the eradication of extremism.

After receiving the education, the trainees develop their skills in standard Chinese language, increase their sense of state, citizenship, and rule of law, acquire professional skills and can free themselves from the ideology of terrorism and extremism and go back to their normal life.

Over the educational program, the trainees' rights are fully observed so that they can have a normal study and life routine. Trainees can have home visits on a regular basis and can ask for leave to attend to private affairs. The centers fully respect and protect the customs and habits of trainees of different ethnic groups. Moreover, the centers are equipped with indoor and outdoor sports and cultural facilities.

Recently, I visited some of these educational centers and saw how trainees have very good opportunities to develop their studies, working skills and knowledge of law.

The people of Xinjiang, from all different ethnic groups have shown great support for these activities that are aimed at countering terrorism and bringing stability to the society. The program had had many positive effects on the society and has substantially changed the social conditions.

For more than two year, Xinjiang has not saw any violent terrorist activity; moreover, the security and welfare of people has increased substantially. In general, Xinjiang is now a stable community. All aspects of life in Xinjiang are improving, the economy is blooming and people's quality of life, from all ethnic groups, has had major developments.

In 2018, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Xinjiang improved 6%; over the year, around 150 million people from inside and outside of China travelled to Xinjiang, a year-on-year increase of 40 percent; foreign tourists totaled 2.4032 million, a year-on-year increase of 10.78 percent.

Muslims in Xinjiang have complete religious freedom. Currently, there are more than 26 thousand mosques and 29 thousands clergymen in Xinjiang. In fact the ratio of mosques to population is very high in Xinjiang compared to world standards.

For several years, some western media and politicians have advertised Islamophobia. In the same time, some of these western countries have caused tension in Middle East, but they condemn China's activities to counter terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang and say that the government is oppressing the Muslim Uyghur people.

On the contrary, Muslim countries have appreciated China's activities. In a resolution passed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation country members in March 2019, the activities of Chinese government for protecting the Muslim Chinese were described as positive and Muslim countries underlined that they are willing to develop their cooperation with China. China, on the other hand, appreciated their positive feedbacks.

Iran and China also have a long-standing friendship and the two countries have majorly cooperated in increasing security and countering terrorism.

I hope, with above explanations, my Iranian friends can develop a broader understanding of China's efforts in countering terrorism and the achievements it had by carrying out these plans in Xinjiang.

I personally believe that the cooperation between China and Iran in countering terrorism and extremism will grow larger and the two countries can play an important role in safeguarding the security and stability of the region.

Ex-White House official: Trump administration under pressure to reduce tensions with Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) — Professor Frank N. von Hippel, former assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology says sanctioning the Iranian leader foreign minister would certainly be counterproductive in undermining any possibility⁷ for diplomatic talks between Iran and the US.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, the Princeton University professor said, "It is difficult to understand how Trump believed that it would be possible for the US to end its commitments and press the other parties to the deal to do the same without creating the possibility that Iran would end its commitments."

"The Trump Administration is under pressure to reduce the tensions with Iran," he added. Frank von Hippel is a theoretical physicist, and a Professor of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. Prior to working at Princeton, he worked for ten years in the field of theoretical elementary-particle physics.

In the 1980s, as chairman of the Federation of American Scientists, Von Hippel partnered with Evgeniy Velikhov in advising Mikhail Gorbachev on the technical basis for steps to end the nuclear arms race. From 1993 to 1995, he was the Assistant Director for National Security in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

He now serves on the National Advisory Board of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, the research arm of Council for a Livable World. He is a member of the International Panel on Fissile Materials.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The United States recently imposed new sanctions against senior Iranian officials, including the Supreme Leader and some senior Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) commanders. It was announced that Iranian Foreign Secretary Javad Zarif would be hit with the US sanctions later, too. What could be the objective of this move?

A: My guess is that this is an indication that there are few remaining Iranian economic activities that the Trump Administration has not already sanctioned. Sanctioning the Supreme Leader and Foreign Minister would certainly be counterproductive in undermining any possibility for diplomatic talks. This therefore would suggest that the Trump Administration currently has little interest in such diplomatic talks. This is very unfortunate, especially given the currently increasing chances of an unintended war.

■ The sanctions on Iranian officials seem to be a move to buy Trump some reputation and alleviate his pains or grief after Iran shot down an American surveillance drone. How do you evaluate the move?

A: This is possible. I am not sure that "grief" is the right word to use since no loss of human life was involved. He claims that his first impulse was a military response, which could have resulted in war. From that perspective, the announcement of the sanctions was a less dangerous act in the short term, although the signal it sends about a lack of interest in diplomacy increases the danger of war in the long term.

■ The American Secretary of State recently talked about negotiation with Iran without any preconditions, while he

had earlier set a dozen prerequisites for talks with Tehran. Why do you think he has softened tone towards Iran?

A: The Trump Administration is under pressure to reduce the tensions with Iran. It would be a positive development if Secretary Pompeo was seriously willing to talk without preconditions. I hope that Iran will respond that it is willing to talk on that basis. Winston Churchill was claimed to have said that "Jaw, jaw is better than war." Even if he didn't say it, that is right.

■ The United States pretends to be offering talks to Iran while intensifying sanctions on the country. How could one justify such an approach?

A: I don't think that negotiations can accomplish anything if there are not potential benefits for Iran as well as for the US and its allies.

■ How could one explain the western states' complaints about modification of the nuclear deal undertakings by Iran that came in a reciprocal move against Washington's full disrespect and violation of the agreement, given the fact that Tehran's new strategy came a year after President Trump withdrew the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)?

A: It is difficult to understand how Trump believed that it would be possible for the US to end its commitments and press the other parties to the deal to do the same without creating the possibility that Iran would end its commitments. That being said, I think that what Iran is doing is very dangerous in that it could provide a pretext for the Trump Administration to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, claiming that it was necessary to stop Iran from getting the bomb.

SpaceX shares vibrant footage from its first-ever nose cone recovery

SpaceX just shared some footage from a successful attempt to recapture part of a rocket's nose cone after it plunged into the ocean. The results are stunning.

The maneuver last month marked the first time after a launch that a piece of the rocket's cone, which is also called a fairing, was recovered. The fairing guided itself into a giant net hoisted up by a crew boat. SpaceX has been trying to do this for more than a year.

The company shared some footage this week from a camera on board the fairing during its descent. The video shows a stream of neon-blue light flowing around the object as it falls back to Earth after reaching a speed more than nine times the speed of sound.

"Friction heats up particles in the atmosphere, which appear bright blue in the video," SpaceX said in a tweet that included the video.

Also visible in the footage is a parachute — shaped like a giant stick of gum — that the fairing deployed.

A second video captured by a camera aboard the net-wielding crew boat, named Ms. Tree, shows one of the fairing halves



land gently on its target.

The fairing rests on the top of the rocket, and it acts as a shield for satellites that SpaceX launches for its customers. Once the rocket

is in space, it splits into two and falls away. After most rocket launches, the fairing halves are left to plummet back to Earth, where the ocean becomes their graveyard.

SpaceX's rocket fairings costs about \$6 million, CEO Elon Musk has said.

And as he once put it: If "you had \$6 million in cash on a pallet flying through the air, and it's going to smash into the ocean, would you try to recover it? Yes. Yes, you would."

The company has always said it wants to reuse as much of its hardware as possible in order to drive down launch costs. But recovering and reusing a fairing had never been done before. SpaceX tried numerous different iterations of its fairing recovery plan before last month's success.

Recovering and reusing parts of its rockets is at the core of SpaceX's plans to make its launch vehicles cheaper. The company has already mastered its technique for landing first-stage rocket boosters, which provide the initial boost at liftoff before detaching from the second stage. Rather than letting the booster fall into the ocean, which is how most rocket parts are discarded after launch, SpaceX devised a way to steer and land its first-stage boosters on ground pads or autonomous seaborne platforms, called drone ships.

(Source: CNN)

World's largest seaweed bloom spotted from space

Researchers in Florida have identified the world's largest seaweed bloom, a massive expanse of Sargassum visible from space.

Though expanses of the brown algae have increasingly blanketed beaches in Florida and the Caribbean, scientists know relatively little about what fuels their growth and how they impact marine ecosystems.

In moderate amounts, algae and seaweed are beneficial, vital even, to marine food chains. But extreme quantities can harm ecosystems, sucking the oxygen from swaths of the ocean, synthesizing dangerous toxins and simply get in the way of marine life.

To better understand the growth patterns of Sargassum, a genus of brown macroalgae, or seaweed, scientists at Florida Atlantic University, the University of South Florida and the Georgia Institute of Technology surveyed nearly two decades of satellite images of the so-called Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt, which stretches from West Africa to the Gulf of Mexico. Their survey -- published Friday in the journal *Science* -- revealed the largest Sargassum bloom in history.

The massive bloom peaked last year. At its maximum, the belt of seaweed stretched 5,500 miles and featured 20 million metric tons of seaweed.

Scientists used field study observations and environmental data to provide context for their satellite survey, determining that the belt of seaweed blooms seasonally and responds to two main nutrient inputs. In the winter, upwelling of deep ocean water off the coast of West Africa provides the

seaweed with nutrients, fueling growth. In the spring and summer, the belt's expansion is accelerated by nutrients carried into the ocean by the Amazon.

Researchers found preliminary evidence that the belt has swelled in recent years in response to nutrient overloads fueled by deforestation and increased fertilizer use in the Amazon.

"Severe floods have recurred in the Amazon basin since 2009, which would result in extensive freshwater runoff and nutrient enrichment in the western Atlantic Ocean," Brian Lapointe, a research professor at FAU, said in a news release. "It is reasonable to suggest that the 2011 massive bloom is therefore the result of nutrient accumulations since 2009, resulting from stronger upwelling in the eastern Atlantic and excessive Amazon River discharges in the western Atlantic."

When conditions are right, the belt swells in the central Atlantic before drifting westward, covering beaches in the Caribbean several months later. "The significant biomass accumulations along the pathway of the Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt underscore the need for multidisciplinary research to better understand their ecological and biogeochemical impacts, as well as their impacts on coastal environments, tourism, economies and human health, especially when the role of Sargassum changes from an essential habitat to a significant and perpetual nuisance," Lapointe said.

(Source: UPI)

Elites' preference for maize led to the collapse of the Maya civilization

The preference for a maize-centric diet by Mayan elites may have left the ancient civilization more vulnerable to climate change, according to new research.

To better understand the relationship between diet and the collapse of the Maya civilization, researchers analyzed the remains of 50 Maya people from burial sites surrounding an ancient Maya city in Belize. The oldest remains were dated to the Middle Preclassic period, between 735 and 400 B.C., while the youngest remains were dated to the Terminal Classic, between 800 and 850 A.D.

To decipher the dietary habits of the Maya people, scientists analyzed the carbon and nitrogen isotope values in preserved bone collagen. The findings showed the youngest remains had higher levels of carbon isotopes from a group of plants that includes the Maya staple crop maize. The concentration was highest among the remains of elite members of the Maya civilization.

Isotope rations among the remains of both elites and commoners from the Middle Preclassic period revealed a diverse diet. Over time, however, maize became more popular among elites.

As the Maya population grew and social stratification intensified, a dichotomy in eating habits developed during the Terminal Classic period. The remains of people living farther from the city center had lower levels of maize-derived carbon

in their bones. People living in the city ate more maize, researchers found.

"Our results show a pattern of highly restricted stable nitrogen and carbon isotopes for elite individuals in the Late and Terminal Classic, which corresponds to a hyper-specialized maize-based diet that persisted through the final abandonment of the site," Claire Ebert, a paleontologist and geochemist at Pennsylvania State University, said in a news release.

Ebert and her colleagues suggest the agricultural practices of the Maya civilization shifted to meet the demands of city elites. Intensified monoculture practices made the civilization less able to adapt to periods of drought and other types of climatic stress.

"Population expansion and anthropogenic environment degradation from agricultural intensification, coupled with socially conditioned food preferences, resulted in a less flexible and less resilient system," Ebert said.

Researchers published their findings this week in the journal *Current Anthropology*.

"The study speaks to the importance of diet in the resilience and decline of ancient societies and contributes to our understanding of vulnerability to climate change among modern traditional farming communities as well as industrialized nations," Ebert said.

(Source: UPI)

NASA's TESS mission finds its smallest planet yet

NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has discovered a world between the sizes of Mars and Earth orbiting a bright, cool, nearby star. The planet, called L 98-59b, marks the tiniest discovered by TESS to date.

Two other worlds orbit the same star. While all three planets' sizes are known, further study with other telescopes will be needed to determine if they have atmospheres and, if so, which gases are present. The L 98-59 worlds nearly double the number of small exoplanets -- that is, planets beyond our solar system -- that have the best potential for this kind of follow-up.

"The discovery is a great engineering and scientific accomplishment for TESS," said Veselin Kostov, an astrophysicist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, and the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California. "For atmospheric studies of small planets, you need short orbits around bright stars, but such planets are difficult to detect. This system has the potential for fascinating future studies."

A paper on the findings, led by Kostov, was published in the June 27 issue of *The Astronomical Journal*.

L 98-59b is around 80% Earth's size and about 10% smaller than the previous record holder discovered by TESS. Its host star, L 98-59, is an M dwarf about one-third the mass of the Sun and lies about 35 light-years away in the southern constellation Volans. While L 98-59b is a record for TESS, even smaller planets have been discovered in data collected by NASA's Kepler satellite, including Kepler-37b, which is only 20% larger than the Moon.

The two other worlds in the system, L 98-59c and L 98-59d,

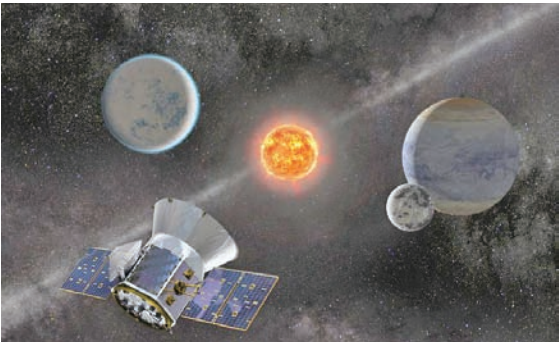
are respectively around 1.4 and 1.6 times Earth's size. All three were discovered by TESS using transits, periodic dips in the star's brightness caused when each planet passes in front of it.

TESS monitors one 24-by-96-degree region of the sky, called a sector, for 27 days at a time. When the satellite finishes its first year of observations in July, the L 98-59 system will have appeared in seven of the 13 sectors that make up the southern sky. Kostov's team hopes this will allow scientists to refine what's known about the three confirmed planets and search for additional worlds.

"If you have more than one planet orbiting in a system, they can gravitationally interact with each other," said Jonathan Brande, a co-author and astrophysicist at Goddard and the University of Maryland, College Park. "TESS will observe L 98-59 in enough sectors that it may be able to detect planets with orbits around 100 days. But if we get really lucky, we might see the gravitational effects of undiscovered planets on the ones we currently know."

M dwarfs like L 98-59 account for three-quarters of our Milky Way galaxy's stellar population. But they are no larger than about half the Sun's mass and are much cooler, with surface temperatures less than 70% of the Sun's. Other examples include TRAPPIST-1, which hosts a system of seven Earth-size planets, and Proxima Centauri, our nearest stellar neighbor, which has one confirmed planet. Because these small, cool stars are so common, scientists want to learn more about the planetary systems that form around them.

L 98-59b, the innermost world, orbits every 2.25 days, staying so close to the star it receives as much as 22 times the amount of energy Earth receives from the Sun. The



middle planet, L 98-59c, orbits every 3.7 days and experiences about 11 times as much radiation as Earth. L 98-59d, the farthest planet identified in the system so far, orbits every 7.5 days and is blasted with around four times the radiant energy as Earth.

None of the planets lie within the star's "habitable zone," the range of distances from the star where liquid water could exist on their surfaces. However, all of them occupy what scientists call the Venus zone, a range of stellar distances where a planet with an initial Earth-like atmosphere could experience a runaway greenhouse effect that transforms it into a Venus-like atmosphere. Based on its size, the third planet could be either a Venus-like rocky world or one more like Neptune, with a small, rocky core cocooned beneath a deep atmosphere.

(Source: Science Daily)

Collision course: Amateur astronomers play a part in efforts to keep space safe

Heavy traffic is commonplace on Earth but now congestion is becoming an increasing problem in space. With over 22,000 artificial satellites in orbit it is essential to keep track of their positions in order to avoid unexpected collisions. Amateur astronomers from the Basingstoke Astronomical Society have been helping the Ministry of Defense explore what is possible using high-end consumer equipment to track objects in space.

Grant Privett, of the Defense Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), talked about this surprising collaboration on Thursday 4th July at the Royal Astronomical Society's National Astronomy Meeting in Lancaster.

When the Basingstoke Astronomy Society (BAS) heard about Dstl's Space Program they were keen to find ways that they could help. Dstl's team came up with an idea that would help them to find out whether a low-cost distributed network of cameras could make a worthwhile contribution to the future UK space situational awareness effort.

The amateur astronomers used commercially available telescopes, tripod-mounted DSLR cameras and low-light cameras to record images of satellites such as the International Space Station, Cryosat, and Remove Debris. By collecting accurate time stamps for the images,

Dstl were then able to process the data and compare expected orbits to the data provided by the astronomers. Dstl were pleased to find that for low Earth orbit satellites, down to about the size of a kitchen freezer, small aperture prosumer level lenses and cooled CCDs similar to those used by amateur astronomers, are capable of monitoring their positions and maintaining a reasonably accurate orbit.

"The accuracy of the exposure timing is absolutely critical, and requires some attention to detail" explains Privett, "the BAS astronomers were very good and clearly highly talented so together we formed a good team."

"We found there are no obvious impediments to using commercially available kit to provide small component of a more capable and diverse system for monitoring space, where satellites of importance to UK communications, economy, and defense operate."

The ability of such a relatively low-cost and deployable approach to data gathering is being examined to ensure Dstl can provide the best possible guidance and advice to UK Government in its future procurements. The full technical results from the collaboration will be published later this year.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Scientists develop new method for studying early life in ancient rocks

Scientists have developed a new method for detecting traces of primordial life in ancient rock formations using potassium.

The method relies on searching for high concentrations of potassium in ancient sedimentary rocks, rather than traditional methods that look for carbon, sulfur or nitrogen—which can appear in ancient rocks through processes unrelated to ancient life.

"Our findings show that microbial biofilms trapped potassium from ancient seawater and facilitated its accumulation into clay minerals that were buried on the seafloor," explained University of Alberta microbiologist and geochemist Kurt Konhauser, who was a co-author on the study.

"This is critical because there is no abiotic mechanism that can be used to explain the potassium enrichment aside from life itself."

The study examined clay particles from the Francevillian formation located in Gabon, on the west coast of central Africa. The 2.1-billion-year-old formation hosts well-preserved microfossils in clay.

"In our quest to find evidence of early life on Earth, we have been limited to looking for a number of signatures that have all proven ambiguous because, unfortunately, the signatures can be explained by both bacterial and abiotic processes," explained Konhauser.

"Our results indicate that a different signature—potassium—is potentially a more unique tracer, as it could only have been created through the metabolism of living bacteria."

The research was led by Jérémie Aubineau and Abder El Albani from the University of Poitiers in France.

The study, "Microbially Induced Potassium Enrichment in Paleoproterozoic Shales and Implications for Reverse Weathering on Early Earth," was published in *Nature Communications*.

(Source: phys.org)

Here are some of the weird things animals do during eclipses

For most animals, the structure of their day – and indeed their year – depends on the light-dark cycle. These regular and rhythmic cycles in the length of days tell animals when they should be foraging, when they should be asleep, when it's time to migrate and when it's time to breed.

Animals can tell all this from how many hours of daylight they experience, but the Moon's cycles also strongly influence their behavior.

The lunar synodic cycle – the Moon's regular journey from full Moon to full Moon again over 28 nights – causes changes in the Earth's magnetic field, the Moon's gravitational pull on Earth, and light levels at night.

Many species can detect this and use it to synchronize their breeding. Mass spawning in corals sees tens of millions of eggs released at once on reefs to coincide with full or new Moons. But what happens to animals when the Moon or the Sun does something unusual or unexpected, such as an eclipse?

Solar eclipses

Of all the cosmic events, solar eclipses prompt perhaps the biggest change in animal behavior. Puzzled animals that are active during the day head back to their nighttime abodes while nocturnal animals think they've overslept.

A solar eclipse occurs when the Sun, Moon and Earth are aligned on the same axis so that the Moon completely blocks the Sun. Around the world, unusual incidences of behavior are usually reported while everyone else is watching the eclipse.

Some spider species begin to break down their webs during an eclipse, as they typically do at the end of the day. Once the eclipse has passed, they begin to rebuild them again, possibly lamenting the lack of rest in between.

Similarly, fish and birds that are active during the day head for their nighttime resting places, while nocturnal bats appear, seemingly tricked by the sudden darkness.

Hippos in Zimbabwe were observed leaving their rivers during an eclipse, heading towards their nocturnal feeding grounds on dry land. Midway through their departure, the eclipse passed, daylight returned and the hippos aborted their efforts.

The animals appeared agitated and stressed following the eclipse for the remainder of the day.

The Moon

A lunar eclipse happens when the Moon, Earth and Sun are very closely aligned, with the Earth positioned between the two. As the Moon passes directly behind us, Earth blocks sunlight from directly reaching the Moon, causing a reddish glow to appear.

These so-called "blood Moons" can only occur when there is a full Moon, so it's difficult to separate the impacts that lunar eclipses have on animals compared to a standard full Moon.

A study in 2010 discovered that Azara's owl monkeys – a typically nocturnal species – stopped foraging in Argentina during a lunar eclipse as their world became suddenly darker. They may have struggled to see their food, or felt too unnerved to move safely through the trees.

Around three times a year, a "superMoon" occurs, which is when a full Moon coincides with perigee – the point at which the Moon is closest to the Earth. The Moon's distance to Earth varies throughout the month, because the Moon's orbit is not a perfect circle. During a perigee event, the Moon is about 46,000 km (28,500 miles) closer to the Earth than during apogee – when the Moon is furthest from Earth.

During a superMoon, light levels at night are around 30 percent brighter than at any point in the Moon's monthly cycle, and it appears much larger in the sky.

Our recent study found that wild barnacle geese responded to these superMoon events while they over-winter in south-west Scotland.

We fitted small devices to the animals which measure their behavior and found that the geese's heart rate and body temperature increased at night during superMoons, when typically at this time of day they'd be subdued.

The birds didn't respond to "superMoon" events when the Moon was hidden by heavy cloud and the night stayed quite dark. So it appears that, a bit like with humans, the bright light of a superMoon woke the geese up, causing their heart rate and body temperature to increase, potentially in preparation for daytime.

The lunar cycle and us

For centuries, people have been fascinated about the relationship between human behavior and the lunar cycle. Many folklores and fables were connected to our interactions with the Moon, the most extreme example perhaps being that of mythical beasts such as werewolves.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Exhibit to explore ethno-culture of nomadic life in southwest Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A festival featuring nomadic life, traditions, arts, handicrafts and souvenirs is to open today in Yasuj, the capital of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, southwest Iran.

A total of 100 stalls have been set up for the exhibit in which tribespeople from various provinces will be promoting skills through July 11, CHTN reported.



Earlier in May, tourism department of the province announced a plan to establish an ecomuseum dedicated to nomadic people and their everyday life.

Having many pristine yet diverse natural setting, Iran has many to offer to nature lovers. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts and culture.

Desert diver discovers submerged treasure beneath 2,300-year-old Kushite pyramid

A team of archaeologists 'diving' in the sweltering deserts of northern Sudan, once the land of Nubia, have discovered artifacts and 'gold leaf' in a 2,300-year-old submerged tomb belonging to a pharaoh named Nastasen who ruled the Kush kingdom from 335 BC to 315 BC.

A key difference between the pyramids discovered in northern Sudan and the more famous pyramids at Cairo in Egypt is that the pharaohs were buried beneath them, rather than within them. For this reason, George Reisner, a Harvard Egyptologist, first visited Nuri over a century ago and discovered burial chambers beneath Taharqa's massive pyramid, the largest of 20 pyramids marking the burials of Kushite royal family.

Sometimes called the "black pharaohs," this dynasty conquered Egypt in the 8th Century BC and ruled for almost a century. Reisner not only reported that he had found their water filled tombs, but he also noted the presence of a narrow, ancient processional staircase cut into the bedrock running deep below Nastasen's pyramid at Nuri.

In 2018, the team located the 65-step stairway and began excavating, but when they got to around 40 stairs down they hit a water table - enters underwater archaeologist Pearce Paul Creasman - associate professor in the dendrochronology laboratory at the University of Arizona, who led the team into the subaquatic ancient tomb for the first time in at least 100 years.

In a National Geographic article Creasman said "normal scuba tanks would have been too cumbersome" and this is why he decided to pump oxygen through 150-foot-long (45.72 meters) hoses from a gasoline-fed pump on the surface. With Fakhri Hassan Abdallah, an inspector with Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums , manning the air pump, Creasman entered the ancient abyss.

Creasman told BBC Newsday , "There are three chambers, with these beautiful arched ceilings, about the size of a small bus, you go in one chamber into the next, it's pitch black, you know you're in a tomb if your flash lights aren't on. And it starts revealing the secrets that are held within." (Source: Ancient Origins)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Kronborg Castle

A UNESCO World Heritage, Kronborg Castle is located north of Elsinore on a strategically important site commanding the Sound, a narrow stretch of water between Denmark and Sweden. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Kronborg Castle played a key role in the history of Northern Europe.



The Sound is the gateway to the Baltic Sea and from 1429 to 1857, Denmark controlled this passage thanks to Kronborg Castle, positioned at the narrowest part of the Sound, which is only four kilometres wide.

Around 1.8 million ships passed through the Sound during this period and all of them had to pay a toll at Kronborg Castle. For this reason Kronborg Castle and its fortress became a symbol of Denmark's power.

The Sound toll was not just a source of income; it was also a political instrument. By favoring the shipping trade of selected nations or by allowing their navies free passage, Denmark was in a position to create important alliances.

The castle itself is a Renaissance building with four wings surrounding a spacious courtyard. The bright sandstone facades are characterized by horizontal bands and the front walls are balanced by towers and spires.

Kronborg Castle was admired for its beauty as a castle and feared for its strength as a fortress. The castle was protected by tall ramparts and strong angular bastions. The overall impression of Kronborg Castle is closely associated with its architecture and location, which stress the castle's symbolic, commercial, and strategic importance.

(Source: UNESCO)

Efforts underway to ease traveling to Iran, tourism chief says

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran tourism chief has said that the country is putting a great deal of effort to facilitate and increase foreign tourist arrivals.

"We are making efforts to provide target countries with good facilities in order to travel to Iran easily," Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Thursday.

Stating that the tourism industry would soon turn into a new stimulus for the country's economic growth, the official said that Iran has taken new measures such as issuing electronic visas to attract foreign tourists.

In a related move last month, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani ordered authorities to dismantle requirements for mandatory stamping of passports for foreigners arriving in Iran.

Mounesan, who doubles as vice president, made the remarks in an interview with China Radio International, Press TV reported.

Considering the large population of China and the fact that some 150 million Chinese nationals visit other countries each



Chinese travelers pose for a photo during their visit to Chehel Sotoun, a tourist destination in Isfahan, central Iran. The name, meaning "Forty Columns" in Persian, was inspired by the twenty slender wooden columns supporting the entrance pavilion, which, when reflected in the waters of the fountain, are said to appear to be forty.

year, Iran sets sights on attracting Chinese tourists, he said, adding that the Iranian

government has given the go ahead for annulling visa requirements for Chinese

Tehran to host loan exhibit from Spanish museum

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – The National Museum of Iran is set to host a loan exhibit from Spain's Archeological Museum of Alicante (MARQ).

Over 280 selects of relics from the Archeological Museum of Alicante will go on show at the National Museum of Iran in an exhibit which will open to the public in early [Iranian month of] Mehr (starting September 23).

A delegation from the museum has recently arrived in Iran to exchange views with the National Museum of Iran over organizing the event, Mehr news agency reported on Friday.

The exhibit will be in return of a landmark Iranian exhibit titled "Iran, Cradle of Civilization" that the Spanish museum is currently playing host to.

"Iran, the Cradle of Civilization" turns the spotlight on the earliest developments of agriculture and livestock farming from the very beginning to cuneiform clay tablets, gold beakers and ornaments, bronze weapons and

beautifully painted ceramics associated with successive Iranian kingdoms. It features nearly two hundred pieces of a large span of Iranian history, starting from pre-historical era to the Islamic period.

"Iran, Cradle of Civilization" was previously on show at Drents Museum, Assen, the Netherlands, where it was well received by museumgoers from June to November 2018.

MARQ is divided into various thematic sections which provide visitors with the opportunity to enjoy an emotive journey through the local history. On entering the exhibition area, visitors are immediately submerged into the local geography of Alicante and are shown the rich and varied nature of its natural and monumental landscapes. From here the historical journey begins through the permanent galleries dedicated to Prehistory, the Iberians, the Romans, the Medieval Age and the Modern and Contemporary Historical Periods.



Façade of the Archeological Museum of Alicante in Spain

UNESCO lists Iraq's Babylon as World Heritage site

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has added the sprawling Mesopotamian city of Babylon to its World Heritage list, boosting Iraq's hopes of reviving its battered tourism industry.

The massive 10-square-kilometre complex was given the go ahead for inclusion at the 43rd session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, which is running through July 10 in the Azerbaijani capital Baku.

Since 1983, Iraq had been anticipating

for the 4,000-year-old site to be added to the United Nations' prestigious list. Babylon was famous for its Hanging Gardens, which were among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

The site has suffered in recent years - first from the construction of a palace for Saddam Hussein, and later from being used as a base for U.S. troops, BBC reported.

Announcing its decision, UNESCO said: "Seat of successive empires, under rulers such as Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon represents the expression of the

creativity of the Neo-Babylonian Empire at its height."

"The city's association with one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World - the Hanging Gardens - has also inspired artistic, popular and religious culture on a global scale."

In the early 1980s, former Iraqi leader Saddam razed a large part of the ancient city in order to build a replica on top of some of the original ruins. After the Persian Gulf War, he also built an extravagant modern palace for himself on another part of the ruins, overlooking the main site.

Paris deputy mayor says tourist buses 'no longer welcome'

Paris's deputy mayor has revealed the city is working to stop tourist buses causing "total anarchy" in the city.

Emmanuel Gregoire said the town hall is working on regulations to limit bus traffic, and would introduce parking areas outside the city.

"Buses are no longer welcome in the very heart of the city," said Gregoire.

The deputy mayor spoke of the measure as part of a number of initiatives designed to mitigate the impact of overtourism in the French capital.

While the problem has not reached the levels of Venice or Barcelona, Gregoire believes that Parisians are wary of issues caused by overcrowding.

He emphasized that the capital is open to mass tourism, and has made great efforts to provide free public toilets, but claimed that "tourists can do what everyone else does and use public transport or switch to environmentally friendly mobility options" instead of buses.

However Gregoire acknowledged that group tours are

useful for older visitors.

And while restrictions on buses may make life more difficult for tour guides, Gregoire said that they must adapt and use cycling or walking tours.

"Everyone has to adapt their work to the needs of the city," he said.

Gregoire also raised concerns over increased housing costs, which he partly blamed on Airbnb, and claimed that crime rates in Paris were low compared to other large cities around the world.

In Venice, huge cruise ships have become a focal point for concerns about visitor numbers.

In June 2019 a cruise ship hit a tourist boat in the Giudecca canal, and locals are pushing for the ships to be banned from the area.

Overtourism is also an issue in Amsterdam, where the tourist board has decided to stop advertising in an attempt to manage the booming number of visitors.

The city has also attempted to introduce a 30-day short



Overtourism is a growing concern in destinations around the world.

term rental limit on Airbnb properties, but has found itself in dispute with the world's biggest private rental firm over its plans for more stringent rules.

(Source: CNN)

Thailand mulls compulsory travel insurance for all visitors

Visitors to Thailand could soon be forced to purchase compulsory travel insurance on arrival in the country.

The nation's Office of Insurance Commission (OIC) says travelers would have to pay a 20-baht (52p) premium at the airport, which would be put towards a fund to provide cover in the event of death of up to one million baht (£26,000).

The legislation, which is awaiting approval from the Tourism and Sports Ministry before being sent to cabinet, is designed to bolster the confidence of foreign visitors to Thailand in the wake of a string of tragedies involving tourists. Last year 47 Chinese holidaymakers died when two tourist boats sank off the coast of Phuket.

Nel Mooy, head of travel insurance at Axa, said travelers should still purchase their own cover as it does not appear the policy will include injury and illness; a typical medical care allowance with a standard insurer could cover up to £15million.

"Travelers need cover for medical care," she told the International Travel and Health Insurance Journal. "Medical expenses abroad can be very expensive – we recently paid a £164,000 claim for a British tourist involved in a road traffic accident in Thailand.

"Travelers... need to ensure their insurance includes the



Thailand has a reputation for outdoor activities - that come with risks (CREDIT: GETTY)

activities they'll engage in, like scuba diving or rafting for instance.

"We recommend that UK tourists holidaying in Thailand continue to buy a travel policy in the UK no matter what. It will cover medical expenses and other costs linked to cancellations, delays, luggage loss and other mishaps. It remains a must."

Thailand has a poor reputation for visitor safety. Earlier this year a Canadian tourist fell to his death after a zipwire cable snapped at Flight of the Gibbon in Chiang Mai.

Of safety and security in the country, the Foreign Office says visitors partaking in extreme sports should ensure the operator is fully licensed and insured. It also offers guidance for swimming, diving and jungle trekking.

Rates of road deaths in Thailand are some of the highest in the world, especially when motorcycles are involved. There are 5,500 motorcyclist deaths a year.

British holidaymakers who fall ill or suffer injury but do not have travel insurance face medical bills stretching into the thousands of pounds.

Earlier this year research by Admiral Travel Insurance found that one in four UK travelers depart the country without relevant cover. Abta, the travel association, believes one in five travels without insurance.

According to the ABI, one medical bill in 2017 for treatment following a jet-ski accident in Turkey cost £125,000. Another for care following a stroke in the U.S. led to a £760,000 bill.

The cost of the average medical claim in 2017 ran to £1,300, a 40 percent rise since 2011.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Cryptocurrency mining is virtual electricity export: ICT minister

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN — Talking about recent activities in the field of cryptocurrency mining in Iran in recent months, Information and Communication Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi told IRNA that mining cryptocurrency is a kind of virtual electricity export.

Generating (experts use the term “mining”) digital or virtual currency (dubbed cryptocurrency) with cheap electricity in Iran has become one of the major problems in big cities in recent weeks.

“Besides, a big part of the electricity network is free in nonpeak hours. It means that without any investment and running electricity network, we can export electricity virtually using cryptocurrency,” he explained.

Mining cryptocurrencies is, in nature, a very energy-consuming process and in many of the advanced countries, the governments impose huge tax fees and certain electricity tariffs for people or companies which are active in this area. In Iran, however, the situation is quite different.

On one hand, the gap between the value of the rial and the U.S. dollar is increasing day by day and the global demand for trading with cryptocurrencies, especially Bitcoin is increasing drastically and this has made the area even more attractive for companies and people to join in. On the other hand, no regulation or law has been defined for such electricity subscribers.

The government is compiling laws and Iran will probably allocate some places near power stations for this issue, Azari Jahromi said.

Generating power and its transmission to the miners increase the expenses hence the government allocate some places near power stations and the electricity rate is set according to their income, he explained.

Mining cryptocurrency is very popular worldwide, however, the energy price in Iran is very low in comparison to other parts of the world.

Power generation cost, including production and transmission expenses, is



very low in Iran due to abundant natural resources, which makes it economical for the country, he added.

“This reasonable price of energy is very attractive in Iran for cryptocurrency miners,” he said, adding, “however, it is not favorable that others mine cryptocurrency using domestically-generated electricity.”

“The Ministry of Energy estimates that about 700 megawatts of electricity are consumed for cryptocurrency mining. This violates other people's right.”

The government should set regulations for their activities and use electricity in nonpeak hours, he said.

Though the import of cryptocurrency mining hardware and special computers is banned in Iran, there are many people active in this field, he lamented.

Many of these computers have already used in state-run and private organizations, he added.

The government should issue licenses for cryptocurrency mining in order to have legal activities in this field, he said.

According to wikipedia.com, in order to get started mining, cryptocurrency miners will need dedicated computer hardware with a specialized graphical processing unit (GPU) chip or application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC), sufficient cooling means for the hardware, an always-on internet connection, a legitimate cryptocurrency mining software package, and membership in both an online cryptocurrency exchange as well as an online mining pool.

■ **China not intended for mining cryptocurrency in Iran**

The China government does not have any plan for mining cryptocurrency in Iran, however, the Chinese private sector may be active in this field, Azari Jahromi said.

He traveled to Dalian, China, to attend the World Economic Forum's Annual

Meeting of the New Champions (AMNC) on July 1-3.

“Before Iran, China was attractive for cryptocurrency miners, however, it has been shifted to Iran this year.”

According to a recent report by the Bitcoin Mining Network released in June 2019, China still dominates both the mining hardware manufacturing sector and mining itself, despite being in a grey area.

Furthermore, it is estimated that China conducts 60% of global mining, with the Sichuan province alone producing 50% of global hashrate, or computing power of the Bitcoin network.

Chinese miners are major players in the Bitcoin mining industry. Two largest mining pools - BTC.com and AntPool (both owned by Chinese mining hardware giant Bitmain) - hold almost 32% of the Bitcoin network hashrate, which essentially measures how much computing power is needed to maintain the network.

“We do not have any evidence of Chinese activities in Iran, though I have heard about the issue,” Azari Jahromi said.

Trade between Iran and China in the field of ICT amounts to \$1.5 billion annually, which makes China one of the main trading partners of Iran, he said.

Azari Jahromi called digital economy as one of the most important issues which are observed by Iran for international cooperation.

“The neighboring countries and some other countries like China are of high priority for expanding cooperation [with Iran]. This issue was discussed during the meeting with the Chinese minister of industry and information technology Miao Wei.”

Cooperation for establishing an East-West transit route passing from China, Pakistan, and Iran to Europe was also discussed during the meeting, he added.

“We also invited China to attend the 25th edition of Iran International Exhibition of Electronics, Computer & E-commerce (ELECOMP 2019), to be held from July 18 to 21, and the Chinese side welcomed our invitation,” he concluded.

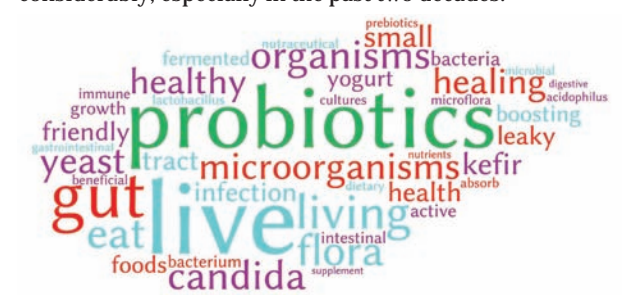
Probiotics containing indigenous bacteria produced

➔ “Each gram of the probiotics product contains 10 million bacteria. Using an exclusive method, the company can produce 2,000 units of probiotics each month, which can meet the needs of factories for their raw material.”

In comparison with foreign rivals, the domestically-produced product has a more reasonable price and a higher quality, he said.

■ **Probiotics in the world**

According to Wiley Online Library, probiotics have become a popular approach for managing digestive and immune health and are being recommended more frequently as effective therapeutic interventions by medical professionals. Introduced early in the 20th century, the science of probiotics has advanced considerably, especially in the past two decades.



In the global marketplace, probiotics are found primarily in three main categories – foods, dietary supplements and pharmaceuticals. The regulatory category of some newer products containing probiotics is unclear.

The quality of probiotic products, including reliability and accuracy of product labelling, can vary considerably amongst the product category and geographical regions. Currently, there is no global harmonization of regulatory frameworks dictating manufacturing and claim substantiation requirements for probiotics. Consumers and manufacturers would greatly benefit from efforts to verify product quality through a third party.

Things we won't be able to live without in 2035

By Rob Enderle

I'm giving myself extra wiggle room because we know things rarely happen as fast as we think or progress as slowly as we hope. We all thought we'd have flying cars by the end of last century, for instance, but we are due to be up to our armpits in them by the end of next decade if the impressive number of trials continue to go well.

I'll close with my product of the week: my favorite laptop.

■ **Drone drop spots**

I touched on the drone drop issue a little last week, and I have been thinking about it ever since. With the advent of drone deliveries, we need a safe place to drop packages. For homes, the roof would be best because it generally has clear airspace above, it is sturdy in case the package drops prematurely, and it is a ton more secure than a driveway, lawn or porch.

It's also far safer than trying to get a drone to land on a balcony or navigate through an open window (and safer for pets as well, because none of us want to come home to a pet injured by a drone or as a result of trying to catch one).

Multitenant buildings could have tenant-only accessible areas with cameras on the top floor where packages could be picked up.

■ **Autonomous ride-sharing car harbor**

Autonomous cars are in the works to take the place of services like Uber and Lyft -- but where will these cars go to standby and charge? (Most likely will be electric.) If they haven't already, I have no doubt that the firms thinking of building out this solution will realize that parking structures may become a competitive advantage and will start buying up and retrofitting them for this use.

The firm with the most local cars likely is going to get the most riders in a region, and firms that don't have their own parking may find themselves banned from cities trying to control traffic and limit bad behavior, like double parking, at scale.

Cars will go in, charge, and then deploy as needed, staying off the street when they don't have riders except on the way to pick them up or return from dropping them off. These standby, charging and wait points will be critical to the success of the autonomous ride-sharing car effort.

■ **Autonomous plane sky harbor**

A bigger problem is the coming group of autonomous flying vehicles. They can't use existing structures, except maybe on roofs, and those won't handle the kind of volume traffic that Uber likely anticipates with its coming service.

For these you'll likely need purpose-built structures that safely can receive and then deploy these autonomous flying vehicles, which some mistakenly call “flying cars.” (If it just flies, it isn't a “car” -- it is something else.)

Given the limited range of these things and the necessary safety envelope for that range, bringing them in from remote areas would both reduce the benefit of timeliness and increase the chances of a catastrophic failure in transit massively, as well as lower the time in service for the vehicles.

Flying vehicles likely will need a storage/charging area kind of like aviaries. One source of inspiration for builders could be Japanese science fiction anime. Its artists have been particularly creative with this problem.

■ **Autonomous traffic control**

There are going to be some interesting problems with autonomous vehicles at scale that peer-to-peer navigation can't address. What happens, for instance, if a passenger has a medical emergency, or if a vehicle gets hacked or goes rogue due to some technical problem?

A centralized deep learning artificial intelligence could take control of the vehicle, fire up and look through its interior and exterior sensors, and mitigate the risk, but initially it is likely that a human will be called on first to do the job and then oversee it to make sure the AI makes the right decisions.

However, I truly doubt that human dispatchers, given the historic problems and delays surrounding this limited resource, will be able to act both fast enough and comprehensively enough.

Realize that autonomous vehicles would be excellent explosive delivery platforms, too, and the related threat would need to be identified and mitigated in seconds, particularly if it should involve an autonomous flying vehicle (a poor man's cruise missile).

Some central service is going to need to coordinate responses across a variety of services and resources at computer speeds, once a problem is identified.

(Source: technewsworld.com)

Iran plans to export \$100m of nanoproducts in calendar year

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council plans to export \$100 million of nanoproducts in the current Iranian calendar year (ending on March 20, 2020), the secretary of the council Saied Sarkar announced, Mehr reported on Friday.

Last year, \$62 million of nanoproducts were exported, he added.

He said that the council plans to increase exports of Iranian nanoproducts to one billion dollars by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Due to its expanded target markets, nanoproducts can be exported to different countries, he explained.

Nanoproducts are being used in 15 different industries in Iran and are being exported to South Korea, Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Russia, Turkey, Malaysia as well as European, Latin American, and African countries, he added.

There are currently about 580 nanoproducts in the market, he said, adding that 250 new nanoproducts will be introduced during the current year.

In February, the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council announced that knowledge-based companies manufacture 12 to 15 new nanoproducts per month.



■ **Nanotechnology and global market share**

According to a research conducted by the Research and Markets, the global nanotechnology market is expected to exceed \$125 billion mark by 2024.

Nanotechnology continues to have a broad and fundamental impact on nearly all sectors of the global economy, namely electronics, energy, biomedical, cosmetics, defense, automotive and agriculture among others.

The factors such as advancement in technology, increasing government support and private sector funding for R&D, growing demand for miniaturization of devices, and strategic alliances between countries are expected to drive the global nanotechnology market growth. However, the issues such as environmental, health, and safety risks, and concerns relating to nanotechnology commercialization are expected to hamper market growth.

Space-based business market development high on agenda: ISA

TECHNOLOGY
d e s k

TEHRAN — The development of space-based business market is the priority of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) for the current Iranian calendar year (ending on March 20, 2020), the ISA director wrote on his Instagram account.

“We are doing our best to expand the market for space-based businesses using capacities of all provinces,” he said.

Each province can create business and job opportunities according to its capacities and strongpoints in order to increase efficiency and to preserve resources, he explained.

Referring to an exhibition of space products, which is to be held from July 7 to 9 in Tehran, he called the event as a great opportunity for space-based businesses to be connected to a network and meet the demands of different organization with innovative services.

Organized by the Iran National Innovation Fund and the Iranian Space Research Center, a series of meetings on IT and innovation will be also held on the sidelines of the event.

In March, the head of the Iranian Space Research Center, Hossein Samimi, announced that the center was



working on five key projects which were considered as the main achievements of Iran's space technology.

According to an agreement signed in February between the Iranian Space Research Center and the Ministry of Agriculture, remote sensing satellites are planned to be used in different sections of the agricultural industry.

The center has already provided a map of the cultivated area, which provides more than 95 percent of the national rice market in five provinces.

According to Morgan Stanley, it is estimated that the global space industry could generate revenue of \$1.1 trillion or more in 2040, up from \$350 billion, currently. Yet, the most significant short- and medium-term opportunities may come from satellite broadband Internet access.

Bitcoin's energy consumption 'equals that of Switzerland'

Bitcoin uses as much energy as the whole of Switzerland, a new online tool from the University of Cambridge shows.

The tool makes it easier to see how the crypto-currency network's energy usage compares with other entities.

However, one expert argued that it was the crypto-currency's carbon footprint that really mattered.

Currently, the tool estimates that Bitcoin is using around seven gigawatts of electricity, equal to 0.21% of the world's supply.

That is as much power as would be generated by seven Dungeness nuclear power plants at once.

Over the course of a year, this equates to roughly the same power consumption as Switzerland.

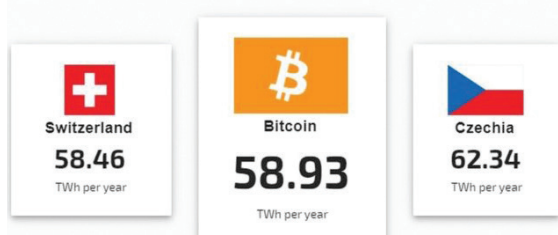
“We want to use comparisons that set the narrative,” said the tool's co-creator Michel Rauchs, from the university. “Visitors to the website can make up their own mind as to whether it seems large or small.”

In order to “mine” Bitcoin, computers known as mining machines are connected to the crypto-currency network.

They are tasked with verifying transactions made by people who send or receive Bitcoin. This process involves solving puzzles.

The puzzles aren't integral to verifying movements of Bitcoin, they simply provide a hurdle to ensure no-one fraudulently edits the global record of all transactions. As a reward for pitching in to this system, miners occasionally

Country Ranking



receive small amounts of Bitcoin.

To make as much money from this process as possible, people often connect large numbers of miners to the network - even entire warehouses full of them.

That uses lots of electricity because the miners are more or less constantly working.

The University of Cambridge tool models the economic lifetime of the world's Bitcoin miners. It uses an average electricity price per kilowatt hour (\$0.05, £0.04) and the energy demands of the Bitcoin network. Finally, the model assumes that all the Bitcoin mining machines worldwide are working with various efficiencies.

It is then possible to estimate how much electricity is

being consumed at any one time.

Enough to power one of the world's oldest universities for a few more centuries

Bitcoin energy expert Alex de Vries, from accountants PwC, built a similar tool to estimate Bitcoin's energy use last year.

He told BBC News that the most important thing was the carbon footprint of Bitcoin's energy consumption.

That is, the emissions associated with the electricity resources used to power the crypto-currency. This varies from place to place, depending on energy supplies.

De Vries said that, despite its many proponents, the Bitcoin network has an energy consumption problem. It uses lots of energy despite processing fewer than 100 million financial transactions per year.

He added that the number was “completely insignificant” in global terms. The traditional financial industry processes 500 billion transactions per year, he added.

De Vries said that Bitcoin still appears to use far more energy per transaction than all the world's banks put together, when considering the amount of energy used by data centers.

The electricity used for Bitcoin produces about 22 megatons of CO2 annually, a study in the scientific journal Joule estimated. That is as much as Kansas City in the U.S. (Source: bbc.com)

Welfare Organization generates 3,200 jobs for the deprived

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The Welfare Organization opened up some 3,200 job opportunities for those under its coverage residing in Tehran during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), head of the Organization has stated.

Some 530 of the jobs have led to the employment of those who recovered from drug use, Mehr quoted Darioush Bayatnejad as saying on Wednesday.

Given that empowerment and job creation are among the Organization's goals, more than 3,200 job opportunities created for these individuals last year, he added.

“We first consider their abilities and skills to offer them jobs,” he added.

As scheduled, three rehabilitation centers will be inaugurated in the capital in the next 3 months to help addicted recover, he noted.

Planting billions of trees is ‘most effective climate change solution’, researchers say

Planting billions of acres of trees in an area the size of the US could be the “most effective climate change solution to date”, researchers say.

A study found there is the potential for an extra 900 million hectares (2.2 billion acres) of tree cover in areas that would naturally support woodland and forests.

As they grow and mature, the trees could absorb and store 205 billion tons of carbon, the analysis published in the journal Science suggests.

If that mostly came from the atmosphere, it could tackle around two thirds of the 300 billion extra tons of carbon which is in the atmosphere because of human activity since the industrial revolution.

In their study, the Swiss scientists from the Crowther Lab say it “highlights global tree restoration as our most effective climate change solution to date”.

However, other experts claimed the study over-estimated how much carbon such forest restoration could take out of the atmosphere, and that the focus should instead be on eliminating emissions from fossil fuels.

Professor Tom Crowther, senior author of the study, said: “We all knew restoring forests could play a part in tackling climate change, but we had no scientific understanding of what impact this could make.

“Our study shows clearly that forest restoration is the best climate change solution available today and it provides hard evidence to justify investment.

“However, it will take decades for new forests to mature and achieve this potential.

“It is vitally important that we protect the forests that exist today, pursue other climate solutions, and continue to phase out fossil fuels from our economies in order to avoid dangerous climate change.”

In the UK, an estimated 4.6 million hectares of tree cover could be created, much of it on grazing land which could continue to support livestock while providing carbon storage, the researchers say.

The analysis used almost 80,000 high resolution satellite images of protected areas to assess natural levels of tree cover in areas ranging from Arctic tundra to savanna, open woods and dense forests.

The Crowther Lab found that forests could be regrown on 1.7 to 1.8 billion hectares of land in areas with low human activity that are not currently used as urban or agricultural land, adding 900 million hectares of tree cover.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

President Clinton in Ireland

(December 14, 2000)

President Clinton, during his final visit to Ireland as president, urged everyone involved in the peace process not to give up.

As extraordinary as Ireland's efforts are in **exporting peace and peacekeepers** to **troubled areas** all around the world, I can tell you nothing, nothing will compare to the gift Ireland gives the world if you make peace here **permanent** . You can give people all over the world desperately needed hope and **proof that peace can prevail** . That the past is **history, not destiny** . That is what I came to ask you to **redouble your efforts** to do.

I think we are losing one of the most **consummate politicians** we've seen in a long time. I think that's recognized by both his supporters in **domestic** American opinion ... and certainly his role in the Irish **peace process** has been **unique** . He took on a pretty **high risk policy** but one that has proven, I think, to have **broken the log jam** in many respects. He has also indicated that he is available in whatever capacity to be helpful and I think that is full **testimony** to the genuineness of his interest and concern about this issue generally.

■ **Words**
exporting peace and peacekeepers: many people from Ireland serve in humanitarian agencies or peace keeping forces
troubled areas: countries where there are civil wars or other unrest

permanent: lasting for ever
proof that peace can prevail: overcome violence permanently
history, not destiny: the past is over and finished: it cannot determine what will happen in the future
redouble your efforts: try twice as hard
consummate: extremely skillful
domestic: within the United States
peace process: a process is a series of actions which have a particular result - here, to lead to peace
unique: if something is unique it is the only one of its kind
high risk policy: a policy is a set of plans used when deciding something high risk means that it could succeed well or fail badly
broken the log jam: changed a situation where previously people were unable to agree
testimony: evidence or proof

Precious Hyrcanian Forest loses 25,000 ha annually

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Some 25,000 hectares of Hyrcanian Forest in northern Iran undergo fragmentation mostly due to land use changes for agricultural and residential purposes, wood smuggling and overgrazing, an official with the national network for environmental and natural resources organizations has said.

Unfortunately, lack of supervision and protective measures is exacerbating the condition for Hyrcanian Forest, ISNA quoted Masoud Molana as saying on Saturday.

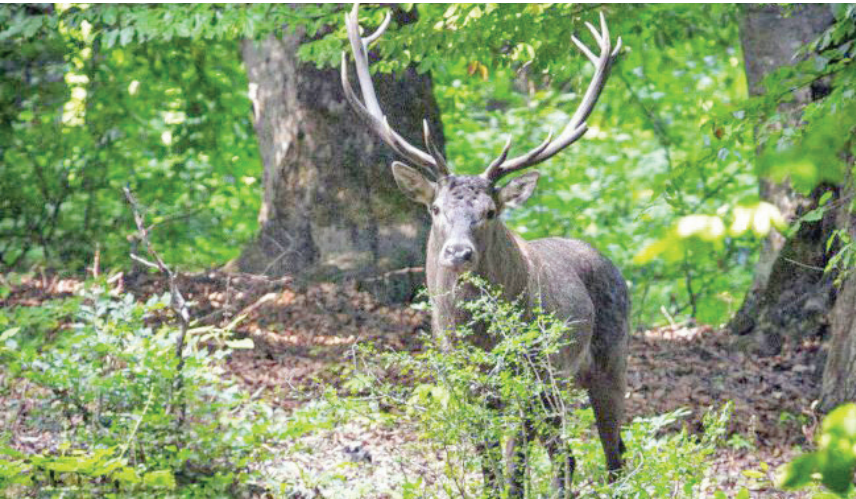
Recently designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO, the Hyrcanian Forest cover the northern slope of the Alborz Mountain in Iran at the southern edge of the Caspian Sea and it contains very rich ecosystems due to the particular orographic and climatic situation (precipitation rich, warm-temperate,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

According to UNSESO, 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.

■ **Law banning exploitation of endangered forests not efficient**

Referring to a law banning exploitation of endangered forests in northern part of the country, he noted that the law was in fact replacing an incomplete plan with defective structures, which was not fully enforced due to lack of fund and supervision.

In January 2017 in line with the laws regulating all aspects of policy making and project managements with regard to environmental factors Majlis [Iranian parliament] prohibited any exploitation of endangered forests by the fourth year of implementing the sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021).



According to the law, exploitation of forests for commercial and industrial purposes will be brought to a halt by 2020. By that time all exploitation contracts will be expired and none will be renewed.

All exploitation projects will be banned with the exception of broken branches, fallen or damaged trees which can be only authorized by the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization.

“In the previous plans, despite some defects, there was little monitoring, but banning exploitation of endangered forests without a field of performance led to the complete loss of supervision,” Molana explained.

He went on to say that due to lack of proper structure for the implementation, lack of funding and participation of locals in addition to lack of support from the related organizations, the project was failed.

■ **Land use changes the most to blame for**

“Over 50 percent of the Hyrcanian Forest has been depleted since past 40 years, Molana said, adding that some 1.8 million hectares of the forests has remained. The figure was

3.6 million hectares in 1330s (1950s), he regretted.

If deforestation continues, undoubtedly, the valuable Hyrcanian Forest will disappear in the near future, he added.

Land use changes, wood logging and overgrazing are the main reasons behind the forest depletion, among which land use change is even more damaging, with wood smuggling, only trees are cut and the woodland remains untouched, so after 10 years the area can be reforested but in land use changes there is no chance of rehabilitation.

■ **Forests reduce climate change speed**

As forests play a significant role in the carbon cycle, when are cut down, not only does carbon absorption cease, but also the carbon stored in the trees is released into the atmosphere as CO2 if the wood is burned or even if it is left to rot after the deforestation process, he explained.

According to climateandweather.net, forests store up to 100 times more carbon than agricultural fields of the same area, it is estimated that more than 1.5 billion tons of

Biodiesel curbs 160,000 kg of carbon emissions

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – The first phase of the scheme on using biodiesel in Tehran bus transport fleet which was piloted some three years ago, has resulted in reduction of carbon emissions by 160,000 kilograms, Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

The second phase of the scheme will soon go into effect, which is a part of a broader plan aimed to meet emission standards in the metropolis of Tehran.

In recent years, the Biotechnology Development Council affiliated to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has been seeking to use biodiesel in public transport. The plan was launched as a pilot scheme in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016- March 2017).

About 300 diesel buses were operating in Tehran transport fleet, 20 of which were running on biodiesel through the first phase of the scheme.

Some 2 to 15 percent of the biodiesel produced from used



edible oils was injected into Tehran's public transport fleet. Up to now, over 60,000 liters of biodiesel have been produced and consumed, which has reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

Biodiesel refers to a vegetable oil- or animal fat-based diesel fuel consisting of long-chain alkyl (methyl, ethyl, or propyl) esters. It has proven a reliable and effective fuel for transport fleet and buildings and has helped reduce air pollution in megacities while lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Choking air pollution hitting metropolises of Iran especially during cold seasons is making living in cities harder than ever. The predicament is blamed on numerous factors namely clunkers, sand mines, sand and dust storms originating from dried up wetlands, pollutant industries, carburetor motorcycles, etc.

Nonetheless, regulations such as increasing public transportation, addressing sand storms, setting high standards for fuel quality, imposing green tax and spending them on mitigating air pollution, and being explicit about the rules are believed to help curbing the problem of air pollution.

74,000 ha in Tehran prone to raise SDSs

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – Some 74,000 hectares of southern and southwestern part of the capital are prone to give raise to sand and dust storms (SDSs), the provincial Department of Environment chief has stated.

“It is planned to assign specific tasks and instructions to related bodies, so that each can take steps to overcome this phenomenon,” Mehr quoted Kioumars Kalantari as saying on Saturday.

Tehran might face SDSs in the next few months. The hotspots are mainly in southern and southwestern parts of the capital,

stretching to over 74,000 hectares, he added.

■ **Ozone haunting Tehran summers**

Rising temperatures which have increased ozone pollution in Tehran needs to be tackled soon, he noted.

“We should think of a solution to overcome rising ozone in the capital to once again breathe the clean air during the summer,” he concluded.

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

vapors, chemical solvents, fuel combustion.

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

Since the beginning of this year (March 21), 25 days of excellent air quality was reported in Tehran, while last year in the same period only 8 days of clean air days were reported.

However, 15 days were lightly polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups this year.



Tehraners did not breathe a single day of unhealthy air last year, but for one day, air quality reached a level which was unhealthy for all the residents this year.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

40,000 flood-stricken families received appliance packages

Iran Red Crescent Society (IRCS) volunteer organization provided some 40,000 packages consisting of household appliances to the families affected by flood, head of IRCS volunteer organization Mohammad Nasiri has stated.

Each family receives a package consisting of a refrigerator, oven, TV, blankets and carpets, he added, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“bi-, bin-, bis-”

■ **Meaning:** two or twice
■ **For example:** *Biscuit* comes from the French meaning twice-cooked.

PHRASAL VERB

Opt in

■ **Explanation:** to decide to join a group or system
■ **For example:** Employees have the choice to opt in to the scheme.

IDIOM

Cross your mind

■ **Explanation:** If an idea or thought crosses your mind, you suddenly think of it
■ **For example:** It just crossed my mind that the shops are closed today.

اعطای لوازم خانگی به ۴۰ هزار خانوار سیلزده از سوی سازمان داوطلبان

رئیس سازمان داوطلبان هلال احمر از اعطای بسته های لوازم خانگی شامل ۵ قلم اصلی خانوارها به حدود ۴۰ هزار خانواده آسیب دیده در سیل اخیر خبر داد. محمد نصیری رئیس سازمان داوطلبان هلال احمر در گفتگو با خبرنگار درباره جزئیات این بستهها نیز توضیح داد: بستههای لوازم خانگی که قرار است میان خانوادههای سیل زده توزیع شود شامل ۵ قلم از جمله یک تخته فرش، گاز، تلویزیون، یخچال و پتو خواهد بود.

Erdogan urges end to Haftar's 'unlawful attacks' in Libya

TEHRAN — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called for an end to “unlawful attacks” by militiamen loyal to the renegade commander of the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), Khalifa Haftar.

“The president renewed his support for the internationally-recognized government and urged an end to unlawful attacks by Haftar’s forces,” Turkey’s presidency quoted Erdogan as saying during a meeting with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj in Istanbul on Friday.

Libya has been divided between two rival governments, the House of Representatives, based in the eastern city of Tobruk, and Serraj’s internationally-recognized unity Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli.

Haftar, who is presumably loyal to the government in the east, launched a deadly campaign on April 4 to invade and conquer Tripoli, resulting in repeated fierce clashes, particularly on the southern edges of the capital, leaving nearly 1,000 people killed so far, Press TV reported.

Last month, Haftar, whose forces hold



much of eastern and southern Libya, ordered his army to arrest all Turkish nationals and close all restaurants and shops with Turkish names after he lost a major town to forces backing the GNA.

On July 1, a day after Haftar’s forc-

es destroyed a Turkish drone parked at Tripoli’s only working airport, the LNA released six Turkish sailors after it briefly detained them. Their release came after Ankara vowed that the LNA would become a “legitimate target” un-

less the men were released immediately.

“The price of hostile attitudes or attacks will be heavy. They will be responded to with the most efficient and hard manner,” said Turkish Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar on June 30.

Turkey’s interest in Libya goes back to the Ottoman era as the North African country was part of the vast empire until 1912.

Separately on Friday, the United Nations Security Council called for a ceasefire in Libya, condemning the late Tuesday attack on the Tajoura detention camp east of the capital.

In a statement, the council “stressed the need for all parties to urgently de-escalate the situation and to commit to a ceasefire.”

Libya has been the scene of increasing violence since 2011, when former dictator Muammar Gaddafi was toppled from power after an uprising and a NATO military intervention.

His ouster created a huge power vacuum, leading to chaos and the emergence of numerous militant outfits, including the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

NATO mulls missile system boost amid INF void, risking tensions with Russia

TEHRAN — NATO is considering options to upgrade its “air defenses” against Russian missiles after Washington withdrew from a key arms control treaty that will expire next month, European officials say.

The New York Times, which reported the news, cautioned that any change to the stated mission of NATO’s current missile defense system would probably divide the alliance’s member countries and enrage Russia.

Moscow maintains that the alliance’s missile defense sites in eastern Europe are “a source of instability in Europe” and pose “a threat to its nuclear arsenal.”

Washington announced in February its decision to abandon the 31-year-old Cold War-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, alleging that Moscow had violated the pact for years.

Moscow reciprocated Washington withdrawal from the treaty by deciding to suspend the treaty.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin suspended the country’s participation in the INF over U.S. violations of it.

The INF was signed toward the end of the Cold War, in 1987, by the then US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Under the treaty – which terminates on August 2 unless Moscow and Washington agree to revive it -- both sides were banned from creating ground-launch nuclear missiles with ranges from 500 to 5,500 kilometers. The pact also banned the sides from deploying short and intermediate-range, land-based missiles in Europe.

While sources of the Times report cautioned that discussions among NATO members over new missile defense measures are at their earliest stages, the alliance’s chief spokeswoman, Oana Lungescu, denied that any studies of the feasibility of upgrading the ballistic missile defenses were underway.

She was cited as emphasizing that the alliance had repeatedly made clear that the existing ballistic missile defense system “is neither designed nor directed against Russia.”

According to the daily, “American officials have

focused on trying to deter Russian intermediate-range missiles by quickly developing their own ground-launched cruise missile, a class the INF treaty has banned.”

“Many in the alliance oppose deploying new offensive weapons. NATO planners are not expecting a directive to add offensive capabilities, only to expand defensive measures,” it added, quoting “a senior alliance official.”

This is while NATO’s Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced last week that the military alliance is considering new air and missile defenses without revealing any details.

The report further cited the allied official as adding that “given the rising threat of the Russian cruise missiles, NATO members are expected to order the alliance to study defense options, either after the October defense ministers’ meeting or the December leaders’ summit.”

However, it noted that such an order would require all 29 allies to agree to it, adding: “Some officials think that if the treaty ends, the allies will at least be willing to examine the options... If the allies ultimately could not agree on shifting the mission of the ballistic missile defense sites, they may be open to a compromise that would introduce new systems to defend against Russian cruise missiles.

The daily then pointed out that based on intelligence from multiple allied agencies, “NATO countries have forged a consensus that the new Russian nuclear-capable cruise missiles pose a threat.”

Any move by NATO to redirect its missile defenses or expand its system with new capabilities could be a tipping point, according to the report, noting: “Russians have never believed the alliance’s denials that its interceptor system would not eventually be used to shoot down Russian missiles. The system has remained a persistent irritant for Moscow, which questioned why the alliance still needed it after Iran agreed in 2015 to pause its nuclear enrichment program and threatened to direct missiles at the alliance interceptor sites.”



According to Press TV, Last week, allied defense ministers approved an examination of potential responses to the Russian deployment of so-called SSC-8 cruise missiles, the weapon NATO accuses Moscow of deploying in violation of the treaty, according to three NATO officials.

Such measures, according to The Times, “include expanding existing deterrence exercises and publicizing the alliance’s nuclear exercises, which are highly secretive.”

“The United States Missile Defense Agency has examined how existing Aegis Ashore missile defense systems could be upgraded with new radar, software and interceptors to allow them to strike intermediate ballistic missiles and potentially cruise missiles,” the report added citing “current and former officials briefed on the discussions.”

Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels on Friday after a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council that “we must prepare for a world without the INF Treaty, which will be less stable for all of us.”

He further said the chances of an outcome that preserves the treaty are “going down day by day.”

China says briefed by U.S. on latest Trump-Kim meeting

TEHRAN — China has received a briefing from the United States on the latest meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, China’s Foreign Ministry said on Saturday, in a call between two senior diplomats.

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

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui and U.S. Special Represent-

ative for North Korea Stephen Biegun discussed that meeting in a telephone call on Friday, China’s Foreign Ministry said in a short statement.

“Biegun introduced the meeting between the U.S. and North Korean leaders at Panmunjom, and said the U.S. side is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with the Chinese side on the peninsula issue,” the ministry added.

Luo told Biegun the recent “positive interactions” on the North Korean issue by all parties had important meaning for the peace talks process, the ministry said.

“China supports U.S.-North Korea exchanges and dialogue and hopes that the two sides will meet each other halfway and follow the consensus of the leaders of the two countries to resume consultations at the working level as soon as possible,” it added.

Trump’s meeting with Kim came around a week after Chinese President Xi Jinping met Kim himself during a state visit to Pyongyang.

While China has not officially announced it, Luo is likely China’s new special envoy for the North Korea issue,

after predecessor Kong Xuanyou became China’s new ambassador in Tokyo in late May.

Luo was also involved in a briefing to Chinese reporters on Xi’s visit to North Korea before Xi went, according to state media.

Luo is an urbane career diplomat who speaks good English, according to diplomats who have met him.

He previously served as China’s ambassador in Canada, Pakistan and India, and also worked in the Chinese embassy in Washington from 1996-2000, Reuters reported.

Yemeni Army attacks Saudi mercenaries in Al Bayda

TEHRAN — The Yemeni army and popular committees have targeted Saudi mercenary positions in Al Bayda, in widespread artillery attacks.

Meanwhile, 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.

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.

On Venezuelan independence day, Maduro calls for dialogue

TEHRAN — Venezuela’s bitterly divided political factions held competing commemorations of the country’s independence day on Friday, with President Nicolas Maduro calling for dialogue and opposition leader Juan Guaido decrying alleged human rights violations by Maduro’s “dictatorship.”

Speaking to a gathering of top military officials, Maduro reiterated his support for a negotiation process mediated by Norway between his socialist government and Guaido, the leader of the opposition-held National Assembly who argues Maduro’s 2018 re-election was a fraud.

“There is room for all of us within Venezuela,” Maduro said in a speech in Caracas, before calling for military exercises on July 24 to defend the South American country’s “seas, rivers and borders.”

“We must all give up something in order to reach an agreement,” he said.

Venezuela was plunged into a deep political crisis in January when Guaido invoked the constitution to assume a rival interim presidency, calling Maduro a usurper. He has been recognized as the rightful head of state by dozens of countries, including the United States and most South American neighbors.

But Maduro retains the recognition of Cuba, Russia and China, and remains in control of state functions and the armed forces. He calls Guaido a U.S.-backed puppet seeking to oust him in a coup, Reuters reported.

ISIL carried out attack at Shia mosque in central Afghanistan

TEHRAN — Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group fighters claimed responsibility Saturday for a deadly overnight attack in a mosque in central province of Ghazni in Afghanistan.

At least two people were killed and 20 others sustained injuries as a bomb planted by the hardline militants inside the Moham-madiya mosque, used by Shias, went off on Friday night, said Aref Noori, a provincial government spokesperson.

Daesh frequently targets Afghanistan’s Shia minority, which it calls “apostates.” The militant group said 40 people were injured in the explosion.

The explosive device was planted ahead of the Friday prayers, government officials said.

Ghazni has recently been the scene of heavy clashes between government forces and Taliban militants.

While Afghanistan’s wars have mostly been fought among Sunnis, there have been increasing numbers of attacks on Shia targets in recent years.

Daesh increasingly claims responsibility for attacks on civilian targets even as talks for peace between U.S. officials and the Taliban to end the Afghan war intensify.

No reliable census information exists on the size of the Shi’ite community in Afghanistan, but estimates range around 10-15 percent, including most members of the Persian-speaking Hazara ethnic group and some Tajiks< Reuters reported.

40 injured as Israeli troops attack Palestinian protesters in Gaza

TEHRAN — Israeli forces have attacked Palestinians taking part in protests near the border fence separating the besieged Gaza Strip from the occupied territories, leaving scores of people injured.

Ashraf al-Qedra, the spokesman for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 40 Palestinians were injured during the Friday protests, adding that 22 of them were hit by live ammunition.

The rallies have been held every week since March 30 last year. The Palestinians demand the right to return of those driven out of their homeland by Israeli aggression.

Israeli troops have killed at least 305 Palestinians since the beginning of the rallies and wounded more than 17,000 others, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

In March, a United Nations (UN) fact-finding mission found that Israeli forces committed rights violations during their crackdown against the Palestinian protesters in Gaza that may amount to war crimes.

Gaza has been under Israeli siege since June 2007, which has caused a decline in living standards.

TEHRAN — Almost 1,000 people have been killed since Libyan renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar launched a push three months ago to capture the capital, Tripoli, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

The figure announced on Friday included at least 60 detained migrants who died in a devastating air attack on a detention centre in the Tripoli suburb of Tajoura on Tuesday night.

Haftar’s self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), which holds eastern Libya and much of the country’s south, launched an offensive in early April to wrestle the capital from forces loyal to the United Nations-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA).

Air attacks and ground fighting have since left nearly 1,000 people dead and some 5,000 wounded, the WHO said, without specifying the breakdown between civilians and fighters.

The fighting has forced more than 100,000 people to flee their homes in a country mired by a bloody power struggle between militias since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

The GNA has accused Haftar’s forces of carrying out



the attack on the migrant detention center.

The LNA denied the accusation, saying it had targeted a nearby militia’s position but did not hit the hangar.

A Geneva-based spokesman for the International Organization for Migration said six children were among

those killed.

Joel Millman said “350 migrants, including 20 women and four children”, were still detained at the centre, one of five air hangars hit in the raid. The UN reported that guards shot at migrants as they tried to escape the bombing, a claim security personnel deny.

Desperate situation

UN agencies and humanitarian groups have repeatedly voiced concern over the plight of thousands of migrants and refugees held in detention centers near combat zones in the capital.

According to the UN, some 5,700 migrants and refugees are being held in detention centres in Libya, 3,300 of which are vulnerable to fighting in and around Tripoli.

Al Jazeera’s Mahmoud Abdelwahed, reporting from the detention center in Tajoura, said people have been sleeping outside on the ground since Tuesday’s bombing and are relying on aid organisations and donations for food.

“We’re trying to alleviate their suffering by raising their morale, especially those that are still in shock,” Khadduka Mohamed from the UN Population Fund said.

Portuguese police interview Cristiano Ronaldo over ‘Football Leaks’

Cristiano Ronaldo was interviewed by Portuguese police in early June as a witness in the investigation into the hacker behind the “Football Leaks” revelations, local media reported on Saturday. Ronaldo was heard as a “witness and victim” in “complete discretion” by the judicial police while in the country playing for Portugal in the League of Nations finals, *Diario de Noticias* reported.

Asked for details by AFP, the police did not respond. The Juventus striker was one of the main targets of Portuguese hacker Rui Pinto. The financial revelations caused Ronaldo problems with the Spanish tax authorities. Pinto’s leaks also revealed accusations of the rape, which he denies, of the American Kathryn Mayorga. Pinto was extradited from Hungary in March and arrested on his return to Portugal. His lawyers have argued that Pinto is a “very important European whistleblower” and said this week that his continued pre-trial detention amounted to organised “judicial harassment”. The Portuguese authorities suspect Pinto accessed the computer systems of the Portuguese state, the Sporting Lisbon football club and the investment fund Doyen Sports and then published confidential documents on a website. The hacker then asked Doyen for money to hush up compromising documents, but has said this was part of his attempt to show the dishonesty in football. Last week, Portuguese weekly *Sabado* reported that the prosecutor’s office wanted to broaden the scope of the investigation and extend Pinto’s detention.

(Source: AFP)

Chelsea’s Morata to make Atletico loan move permanent in 2020

Spain forward Alvaro Morata will join Atletico Madrid on a permanent deal from Premier League Chelsea following the end of his 18-month loan with the La Liga club, both clubs said on Saturday. Morata, who left Chelsea in January to join Atletico, said in May that he had no plans to return to his parent club where his form had dipped last season. The 26-year-old rediscovered his touch in Madrid, scoring six goals in 17 games since his move. “Atletico de Madrid and Chelsea have reached an agreement over the transfer of Alvaro Morata from July 1, 2020,” Atletico said in a statement. “The Spanish striker will play at our club on loan this season, as was agreed when he joined Atletico... and the move will become permanent at the beginning of the 2020-21 season.” Morata joined Chelsea from Real Madrid in 2017 and scored 24 times in 72 appearances for the London club. “We would like to thank Alvaro for his contribution and wish him the best of luck for the future,” Chelsea said.

(Source: Mirror)

California earthquake shakes NBA summer league games

The New York Knicks and New Orleans Pelicans summer league exhibition game in Las Vegas was postponed Friday night after an earthquake rattled a large section of California and western Nevada. The 7.1 magnitude earthquake, which was centred about 230 kilometres (145 miles) southwest of the city, hit the Thomas & Mack Center with just under eight minutes left in the contest, leaving the giant scoreboard and several overhead speakers swaying above the court. Officials initially decided to delay the game and the players were sent to their dressing rooms. Some fans left the arena after the quake -- which lasted 10 seconds -- and others waited around to see if it was safe to resume the game. New Orleans was leading 80-74 when play was postponed. Pelicans rookie and first overall draft pick Zion Williamson had to exit the game in the first half with a knee injury after colliding with a another player. A basketball game in the nearby Cox Pavilion continued because that gym lacks an overhead scoreboard. The earthquake was also felt at the Ultimate Fighting Championship Hall of Fame awards in Las Vegas, striking in the middle of a speech by inductee Rashad Evans. “I’m feeling it. Woo. OK. Earthquake baby!” said Evans from the podium. Other NBA athletes in Las Vegas reacted to the earthquake on Twitter. “Just experienced my first earthquake while being on the 21st floor of a hotel. Talk about scary,” said Atlanta Hawks player Evan Turner. Portland Trail Blazers player Meyers Leonard was woken up from a nap in his hotel. “I can hardly believe what I just felt. Wow. I had just woke up from a nap and the entire hotel was swaying back and forth. That was actually crazy,” Leonard said. In Los Angeles, the quake struck as the San Diego Padres’ Eric Lauer prepared to pitch to the Dodgers’ Enrique Hernandez.

(Source: Eurosport)

Official: Theo Hernandez joins Milan

Theo Hernandez is officially a Milan player after his contract was deposited with the Lega Serie A, completing a permanent transfer from Real Madrid. There are no financial details, but the Lega Serie A website confirms it is a permanent move and not a loan deal. He already had his medical on Monday and Tuesday, but the five-year contract was only registered some time on Friday evening and appeared on the list this morning. The 21-year-old left-back was expected to join from Real Madrid at a cost of €20m.

(Source: Football Italia)

Brazil already thrashed Peru Once; will Copa America final be any different?

Sunday’s Copa America final between Brazil and Peru is a contest replete with history, one that carries the weight of two veteran managers looking to turn their respective players into champions for the first time in their tenures. It’s also a rematch of the most lopsided game in this year’s competition. While Brazil’s inclusion in the title game may not be that surprising (the host nation is undefeated and has yet to concede a goal), Peru’s most definitely is. Less than two weeks ago, it suffered a 5-0 destruction at the hands of the Selecao and slipped into the knockout stage as a third-place finisher. Ricardo Gareca’s side found a way to rebound, though, and thanks to an impressive change of character, resilience against Uruguay in the quarterfinals and a resounding victory against Chile in the final four, it now finds itself in the Copa America final for the first time in 44 years. Beating Brazil is a bigger mountain to climb, though. Even without Neymar, it’s a squad filled with talent, experience and attacking pedigree, capable of breaking an opponent’s strategy in a heartbeat. Given what happened in their June 22 meeting, what reason is there to believe Sunday will be any different for Peru?

Atletico to request charges be brought against Barcelona over Griezmann pursuit



It’s a transfer saga that has been running for the best part of 18 months and simply won’t disappear, yet Atletico Madrid are to request charges be brought against Barcelona for what they deem to be an illegal pursuit of Antoine Griezmann. The details of Los Colchoneros’ complaint centres around the fact the forward had a release clause of 200 million euros which dropped to 120 million euros on July 1. In response, Atletico released a club statement on Friday evening detailing their position. ‘On May 14, Antoine Griezmann informed Miguel Angel Gil Marin, Diego Simeone and Andrea Berta of his decision to leave the club at the end of the season. In the days that followed that meeting, Atletico Madrid learned that Barcelona and the player had come to an agreement as far back as March, specifically in the days after the second leg of our Champions League tie against Juventus. They had also been negotiating the terms of such an agreement since mid-February. In reference to [Barcelona] president [Josep Maria] Bartomeu’s statement made today, we want to state that it’s true there was a meeting between Miguel Angel Gil Marin and Barcelona’s CEO, Oscar Grau, at the request of Barcelona and that in said meeting, Mr. Grau expressed his intention, once the buy-out clause in Griezmann’s contract dropped from 200 to 120 million euros, to request a postponement of the payment of the aforementioned amount of the clause effective as of July 1. Obviously, the response from Atletico Madrid is negative, understanding that both Barcelona and the player have disrespected Atletico Madrid and all its fans. As a result of all this, today, Atletico Madrid have requested to the player, via his sister, the agent of the player and his lawyer, that Antoine Griezmann, in compliance with his contractual obligations to our club, appear on Sunday at the training facility in order to start pre-season with the rest of his teammates. Through this press release, Atletico Madrid wants to express its strongest repulsion for the behaviour of both, especially Barcelona, for having induced the player to breach his contract with Atletico Madrid at one point during the season, when the club was playing, not only the Champions League against Juventus, but also for the league title against Barcelona themselves. This is something we consider violates the protected periods of negotiation with players and alters the basic rules that govern the integrity of all sporting competition, besides being a huge loss to our club and its millions of fans.’

(Source: Marca)



Roberto Firmino, Philippe Coutinho and Arthur, Tite will also be hoping some more magic from captain Dani Alves, who, at 36, rolled back the years against Argentina and delivered his best performance of the competition. Alves, who took the captain’s armband from Neymar prior to the start of Copa America, has seen it all during his career and is currently a free agent after recently leaving PSG. No male player in the history of the game has won more trophies (42 for club and country) than the right back, and he will be looking for one more on Sunday. A key absence will be Willian, as a hamstring injury rules him out. The winger mainly served as a substitute during the tournament and scored the last dagger against Peru in the commanding victory. Even without Willian, Brazil has enough weapons to cause problems, and nobody knows this better than Gareca. “I don’t know how to beat Brazil, I don’t have an answer for that right now, but I do know we have players who can find the answer.” Gareca said, speaking to the press after the 3-0 win over Chile, arguably his best win with Peru. “When you reach a final, you want to win it. That will be our mentality.”

(Source: SI)

Benin pinching themselves after dream victory over Morocco



Benin woke up on Saturday still pinching themselves after an extraordinary win at the Africa Cup of Nations as they rode their luck to eliminate highly fancied Morocco on penalties in the last 16. “We dream of victories every day and I believe we can continue this beautiful dream,” said coach Michel Dussuyer after the small west African nation won 4-1 on penalties after holding Morocco to a 1-1 draw following extra time on Friday. Benin achieved success despite conceding a last gasp penalty after the end of 90 minutes, which Morocco missed, and then playing most of the extra time period down to 10 men. “I’m very proud of my team. We had a difficult challenge. Morocco are a very strong team but we prepared well mentally and luck was on our side,” added the journeyman French coach, in charge of a motley collection of players including one from Yeovil Town in League Two. “Playing with a man less was difficult, and we will try to make amends for the absence of Khaled Adenon, who will miss next game.” “This is the greatest achievement in the history of Benin football,” added veteran striker Mikael Pote, who was in the squad when Benin last competed at the same tournament in Angola nine years ago. “We’ve come down to earth a little even if the emotion is still high. What we did was historic, it was beautiful,” added the 34-year-old, who played in Turkey’s second division last season. “We showed that we were really a group. We know that in terms of quality, we do not have the best team. But our solidarity, the human relationships, as well as our confidence, have proven to be very important things.” One of the more relieved at the victory was captain Stephane Sessegnon whose tired-looking tackle in the fourth minute of stoppage time handed Morocco a chance to secure a come-from-behind 2-1 win before extra time. The clumsy challenge was such an obvious penalty none of the Benin players disputed the decision but Hakim Ziyech missed the chance to win the game for Morocco. “I almost did not play in this Cup of Nations because I had a long club season. But I was convinced that this tournament would allow us to show what we can do.”

(Source: Reuters)

Cori ‘Coco’ Gauff, 15, stages remarkable comeback at Wimbledon

Cori “Coco” Gauff keeps on winning — and stockpiling fans — at Wimbledon. Already tennis’ newest favorite, Gauff earned cries of “we love you” on her debut on the most famous court in the world as she engineered an electrifying rally to keep her historic Wimbledon run going. If you didn’t know better, you’d think Gauff played for Britain instead of the US. “The support has been outstanding,” her affable father Corey told a small group of reporters. “Every match they’re calling her name. I sit there and go, like, ‘What in the world is going on?’” It looked like his daughter’s stay at the grass-court grand slam was about to end but the 15-year-old saved two match points to defeat Polona Hercog 3-6 7-6 (9-7) 7-5 to the delight of most of 15,000 assembled on Center Court. “She’s always had that fight,” her father said. “She always had it ever since she was a little baby. She had that feistiness in her. She wouldn’t quit.” Gauff left the arena to rapturous applause and gave autographs to her adoring public while Hercog could only rue what might have been. Corey and wife Candi are near celebrities now, with fans taking selfies with the duo. But spare a thought for the Slovenian, whose lone support from her box came from coach and husband Zeljko Krajan. There was a cast of 17, meanwhile, next door in Gauff’s box.



“I’m sure I will be thinking about the match in the next days, but hopefully as little as possible,” Hercog told reporters. Before play even started, Gauff was the fourth favorite according to some British oddsmakers despite only ever winning one top-level encounter prior to Wimbledon. ■ **Life changing** After beating Venus Williams in the first round — bridging a 25-year age gap — to become the youngest player to win a match here since Jennifer Capriati in 1991, sweeping past 2017 semifinalist Magdalena Rybarikova and then coming back against Hercog, she might be pushed up even further.

Her life won’t ever be the same. And all this after being a wildcard — in qualifying. “It’s just crazy,” Gauff, the youngest ever qualifier to land in Wimbledon’s main draw, told reporters. “I remember before I played Venus, when you walk to leave the practice courts, there are people waiting. One little kid asked me for a picture. “Then after the next day, after I played Venus, everybody was screaming my name. It was pretty surreal how life changes in a matter of seconds.” Gauff had celebrities direct messaging her after her second-round tussle and said Friday that Beyonce’s mom Tina, posted her on Instagram. “I was, like, screaming,” she said. Her winning displays, combined with the massive support she is receiving and her pedigree as a junior, presumably earned Gauff a place on Center Court instead of former world No. 1s Caroline Wozniacki — who lost earlier — and Karolina Pliskova. Such is her pull already. On Thursday, host broadcaster the BBC noted that its highest peak Wimbledon audience was Gauff’s victory over Rybarikova on Court 1. She earned a clash with another former No. 1 Monday in Simona Halep, and that will likely be on one of the two biggest courts.

(Source: CNN)

Zahra Nemati to partake at Tokyo 2020 test event

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian two-time Paralympics gold medalist Zahra Nemati will participate at the Tokyo Olympic test event.

The para-archer will leave Tehran on Monday to partake at the event to be held at Yumenoshima Park Archery Field in Tokyo.

Nemati made history by securing qualification for both the 2016 Summer Olympics and the 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

She qualified for the Olympics by placing second in the women's recurve at the 2015 Asian Archery Championships in Bangkok before winning gold at the 2015 Asian Para-archery Championships to qualify for the Paralympics.

Once again, Nemati is going to secure qualification for both the 2020 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

She won two medals in the 2012 Paralympic Games in London and became the first

Iranian woman to win a gold medal at either the Olympic or Paralympic Games.

A test event is a dress rehearsal to confirm and improve the competition and Games operation capabilities in order to ensure a successful operation during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Test events have usually been held prior to past Games and will also be carried out in preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Games.

The test events will be organized by the International Federations and the National Federations as well as by the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee.

Overall, 56 test events will be held until May 2020 – some during scheduled domestic and international sporting events that happen to be taking place in Japan during the build-up to the Tokyo 2020 Games, and 22 others comprising dedicated Olympic and Paralympic test events organized by Tokyo 2020.



Iran to face Puerto Rico at FIBA World Cup 2019 opener



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran will kick off the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 with a match against Puerto Rico on Aug. 31.

The match will be held at the Guangzhou Gymnasium in Guangzhou.

Team Melli have been drawn with world's second-ranked Spain, Puerto Rico and Tunisia in Group C.

Iran will face Tunisia on Sept. 2 and meet powerhouses Spain two days later.

The competition will be held in China from 31 Aug. to 15 Sept.

The 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup will be the 18th tournament of the FIBA Basketball World Cup for men's national basketball teams.

Rescheduled from 2018 to 2019, this edition will be the first FIBA Basketball World Cup since 1967 that will not occur in the same year as the FIFA World Cup, but a year following the latter.

Also, the group stage will expand from 24 to 32 teams. The top eight teams, including Japan as the hosts of the 2020 Summer Olympics (and the top two teams from each of the Americas and Europe; and the top team from each of Africa, Asia and Oceania) in this competition will qualify for the men's basketball event in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Both the Czech Republic and Montenegro will make their first appearances in the FIBA World Cup as debutants.

Persepolis in hunt for fourth successive title: Gabriel Calderon



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Persepolis coach Gabriel Calderon says that they are going to win Iran Professional League (IPL) title for the fourth successive time.

The Argentine coach replaced Branco Ivankovic on July 1 as head coach of Persepolis football team.

Ivankovic led Persepolis to the Iranian domestic treble last season. Under guidance of the Croat, the Reds experienced their first ever AFC Champions league final as well.

"I am very happy to be here and I am satisfied with what I am doing here. I am also satisfied with the club's equipment," Calderon said in the training on Saturday.

"I've won the title whenever I've coached a big club. I know that to win a title for the fourth time in a row will be very difficult but I believe in my team. We want to keep going," the 59-year-old coach stated.

"I am a coach who likes attacking football. We will play attacking football in the new season but I also care about defensive football. I am here less than a week but I have good relationship with my all players," Calderon said.

"Ivankovic did a great job in Persepolis and I am going to continue his winning way in the team. I know it will be a very tough task to repeat the championship but I am here to do that," Calderon concluded.

Cavendish axe from Tour causes team rift

BRUSSELS (Reuters) — Sprint king Mark Cavendish's surprise omission from the Tour de France caused a split in his Dimension Data team on Saturday with owner Doug Ryder and performance director Rolf Aldag at odds over the decision.

Briton's "Manx Missile", who has amassed 30 Tour stage wins, has appeared at every race since making his debut in 2007 but was cut from the eight-rider squad this week.

Addressing media in the paddock opposite the Royal Palace in Brussels, shortly before the Grand Depart, Ryder spoke for the first time about Cavendish's exclusion.

"Mark is a legend of the race," he said. "It is sad for the race that he's not here. We took that into account and spoke to the organizers. We selected a team based on the route and how hard it is this year. It was a team decision."

Aldag had wanted Cavendish in the squad.

"It's no secret I wanted him here," he said. "I think it would suit our strategy but ultimately it's a team owner



decision," he said.

"It's within my remit to select the team which I did and Mark was included and the team owner has the right to overrule me which he did."

Cavendish, who is chasing Eddy Merckx's record of 34

Tour de France stage wins, said this week he was "heart-broken" not to be taking part in the Tour.

"As I have done for my entire career, I targeted a specific time to be at peak form. This has pretty much always resulted in me hitting my goals or coming damn close," he said. "I feel I was in the perfect place."

Cavendish's Dimension Data team mate Steve Cummings said on Friday it was a "big call" to leave out the sprinter.

Cavendish's wife Peta sprung to the defense of her husband on Saturday, saying on Twitter: "The truth always comes out in the end. Cowards can't hide forever."

This week Cavendish "cheered himself up" by going for a ride with a young fan who was sad not to be able to watch his hero on the television at this year's race.

After riding with Evan Llewellyn in Mansfield, Cavendish said on Twitter: "It was an absolute pleasure Evan! Couldn't bear to see you sad."

"I knew a bike ride would cheer us both up!"

No clear favorites in Intercontinental Cup

India may be the defending champions but there are no clear favourites in the four-nation Intercontinental Cup that kicks off in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

India will kick off the tournament against Tajikistan and the hosts will be aiming for a winning start as new head Igor Stimac continues to mold the squad ahead of the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

DPR Korea and Syria complete the cast with all four teams using the Intercontinental Cup to finalize preparations for the Asian Qualifiers, with the groups set to be unveiled on July 17.

After a third-place finish in the Thailand King's Cup in May, Stimac will be hoping to see more progress from his team in the Intercontinental Cup.

The Croatian replaced Stephen Constan-

tine as head coach and despite relying on established players in the King's Cup, Stimac also gave young players a chance and this is an approach that is expected to continue in the Intercontinental Cup.

Tajikistan, however, will be out to spoil India's party on the opening night as Usman Tashev's squad, which includes the likes of highly-experienced defender Akhtam Nazarov of Tajik League champions FC Istiklol and Malaysia Super League side PKNP FC player Siyovush Asrorov, look for a morale booster ahead of the Asian Qualifiers.

DPR Korea will also be on a mission to get into shape for the Asian Qualifiers and will be a threat to the ambitions of the other teams in the Intercontinental Cup.

The core of the squad comes from 4.25 SC, who have been enjoying yet another successful season in the AFC Cup and Yun



Jong-su's side will surely provide Syria a stern test when they square off on Monday.

At 83, Syria are the highest ranked team in the tournament but will be wary of the threat posed by their challengers.

They suffered a 5-0 defeat against Islamic Republic of Iran in a recent friendly but

with captain Firas Al Khatib leading their charge, the West Asians will be confident of their chances.

The top two teams at the end of the round robin competition will progress to the final on July 19.

(Source: the-afc)

Siamand Rahman has no intention to break record in Nur-Sultan

The world's strongest Paralympian Siamand Rahman says he wants to make sure winning a slot at the Tokyo 2020 first and then will think about winning a medal.



He will be in action on the penultimate day of the 2019 World Para Powerlifting Championships in Nur-Sultan (19 July) in Kazakhstan.

The question arises whether he will be able to break his own world record of 310kg in Nur-Sultan or wait until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

"Attending the competitions in Kazakhstan is very important to me. It is a prerequisite of Tokyo 2020, and that is my concern," he said.

"I want to make sure I secure my Tokyo 2020 slot first in Kazakhstan – and then win a medal. It's all about getting prepared for the Paralympics," he added.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Iran U16 football team to participate at CAFA tournament

IRNA — Iran U16 football team have learned their rivals at the CAFA Youth Championship.

Iran have been drawn along with Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in Group B.

Group A features Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

The tournament will be held in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan from July 26 to August 1.

The CAFA Youth Championship is an international football competition in Central Asia for the member nations of the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA).

Igor Sergeev on Iran's Persepolis's radar

Tasnim — Iranian football club Persepolis are going to sign Pakhtakor Tashkent striker Igor Sergeev.

Sergeev scored a late goal against Persepolis in the 2019 AFC Champions League group stage in May.

Persepolis have opened the negotiations with the Uzbekistan international forward.

Sergeev has played in all levels in Uzbekistan national teams.

Persepolis, headed by Argentine coach Gabriel Calderon, have also negotiated with Al-Gharafa striker Mehdi Taremi.

Ex-Persepolis forward Budimir joins NK Lokomotiva

Persian Football – Former Persepolis Croatian striker Mario Budimir has joined NK Lokomotiva.

Budimir, who parted ways with the Iranian club in late June due to financial issue, will replace Dejan Radonjic in Lokomotiva.

"Mario has agreed to join us. He will join our team in the Netherlands's training camp on Monday," the club director Božidar Šikić's said.

Budimir joined Persepolis in January and scored an important goal against Pars Jonoubi in the last match of the Iran Professional League which helped the Reds win the title for the third time in a row.

NK Lokomotiva Zagreb are a professional Croatian football club based in Zagreb. The team compete in the Prva HNL, the country's top division. Founded in 1914, the club's only period of success came in the late 1940s and early 1950s before spending most of the following five decades as lower-level minnows.

Ali Karimi reaches agreement with Aves

PLDC – Esteghlal midfielder Ali Karimi has been linked with a move to Portuguese football club Aves.

According to Islamic Student News Agency (ISNA), the two parties have reached an agreement.

The deal will be finalized soon.

Sepahan midfielder Mehrdad Mohammadi has recently joined the Portuguese football team.

Karimi has been absent in Esteghlal's training in the previous days.

The Portuguese club was founded on 12 November 1930 and plays at the Estádio do Clube Desportivo das Aves, which holds a seating capacity of 8,560.

Iranian duo join Al-Ahli Doha handball team

Tasnim — Iranian handball players Mehrdad Samsami and Afshin Sadeghi joined Qatari handball club Al-Ahli.

Samsami, 31, has penned a two-year contract with the Doha-based handball club. Al-Ahli is his first foreign club.

Sadeghi, 26, who has most recently played in Samen Mashhad, has signed a contract with Al-Ahli.

"I had several offers from the foreign countries but I opted to join Al-Ahli. I will participate in medical exam on September 1," Samsami said.

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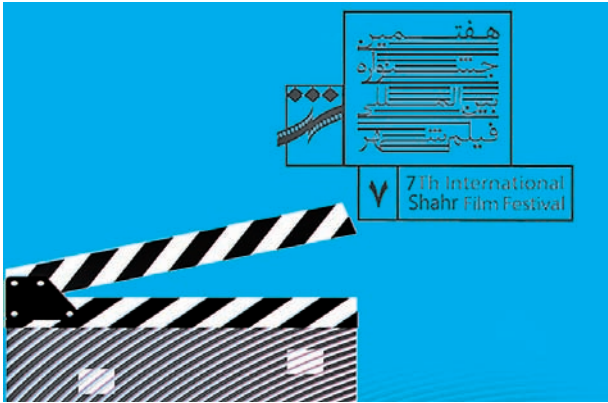
**GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

He who seeks and endeavors for something, will
secure all or some of it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Shahr film festival
announces national lineup

A R T **TEHRAN** – Eighteen Iranian films have been selected to go on screen in the national competition of the 7th edition of the Shahr (Urban) International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Friday.



A poster for the 7th Shahr International Film Festival.

“Bearer” by Bahman Kamyar, “Searing Summer” by Ebrahim Irajzad, “Axing” by Behruz Shoeibi, “One Kilo and Twenty One Grams” by Rahim Tufan, “I Love You” by Afshin Hashemi and “Wishbone” by Ali Atshani will be competing in this category. “Feast of Sorrow” by Puria Azarbaijani, “Istanbul Junction” by Mostafa Kiai, “Sheeple” by Hooman Seyyedi, “Untaken Paths” by Tahmineh Milani, “The Underwater Cypress” by Mohammad-Ali Bashe-Ahangar and “Boarding Pass” by Mehdi Rahmani are also among the films.

Also included are “Lottery” and “Blood Trap”, both directed by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian, “Reverse” by Pulad Kimiai, “The Dark Room” by Ruhollah Hejazi, “Yellow” by Mostafa Taqizadeh and “Watching This Movie Is a Crime” by Reza Zehtabchian.

An exhibition of photos and paintings by 50 artists will also be held on the sidelines of the festival, which will run from July 17 to 22 with the motto of “Responsible Citizen, Healthy City”.

The festival is organized every year under the auspices of Tasvire Shahr Institute at the Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality.

Tehran Auction grosses over
\$10 million, 65% of artworks
sold at minimum prices

1 → Only 52 out of 79 items were sold during the auction, and works by celebrated artists such as Mohammad Ehsai and Reza Mafi failed to find a buyer.

An untitled 97x70 centimeter mirror mosaic painting by Monir Farmanfarmaian fetched 30 billion rials (over \$714,000) and became the second most expensive work sold at the auction.



Parviz Tanavoli's one-meter high sculpture "The Poet's Head" is on display during the Tehran Auction at the Parsian Hotel in Tehran on July 5, 2019. It was the top seller, fetching over \$760,000.

It was followed by an untitled oil painting on canvas by Sohrab Sepehri that was sold for 22 billion rials (over \$520,000).

Works by top Iranian artists, including Mahmud Farshchian, Behjat Sadr, Jazeh Tabatabai, Aidin Aghdashlu, Masud Arabshahi, Nasser Ovissi, Sadeq Tabrizi, Hossein Zenderudi and Kurosh Shishegaran, also went under the hammer at the sale.

A total of 114 items were sold during the 10th edition of the auction in January, which grossed over 344 billion rials (about \$8.2 million).

“The Moon and the Sun” up at Tehran gallery
reflects mesmerizing prints of Ossouli paintings

1 → During her artistic career, which spans over 40 years, Ossouli has made efforts to enliven Iranian traditional miniature paintings through her modern style of miniature painting, and her new exhibit traces her immense love of this form of art.

“When publisher Mosavvar-Rahmani proposed the idea of the silkscreen prints, I believed it would not be possible, however, I did several drawings that were tested for silkscreen prints, and when I saw the results, I thought it was satisfactory,” she said.

“Next, Mr. Jazani created the silkscreen prints of my original drawings. It was even hard for me to believe that this could be possible. He made efforts to make the silkscreen prints. The original drawings are 17 in number, published on handmade sheets of paper of very high quality. I did not believe it would be possible,” she said with surprise in her voice.

“The publisher next offered to do the same with my paintings, however, I still believed it would not be possible due to the variety of colors and the details on my paintings. When the prints were made, I saw them, and was really surprised to see how delicately the works were done. They are really very close to my original paintings,” she explained.

Ossouli further explained that the paintings were made in the 1980s, and all of them have been sold. Not a single one is in Iran, so she only had some photos of her works, which were not even in good condition.

“When you want to make a silkscreen print of an artwork, considering the different surfaces, patterns, motifs and the variety of colors, it could be a very difficult task to accomplish. I know it is hard and it was a big surprise for me, of course,” she asserted.

“As far as I know each color needs its own silkscreen cliché frame, and my paintings bear different patterns and motifs. I really must tell him (Jazani) that he has done a very good job and I really appreciate it,” she mentioned.

“I myself am very sensitive about the colors I choose for my works and rarely use pure colors. Each motif I choose bears several different colors, and that is why the hardest part of my work is color. It was interesting for me to see the job has been done so beautifully and skilfully. I think he is one of the best in Iran,” she remarked.



Farah Ossouli poses with a print of one of her drawings at the opening ceremony of her exhibit “The Moon and the Sun” at Shirin Gallery in Tehran on June 28, 2019. (Honaronline/Zeinab Mahdavi)

Ossouli added that she has not made any additional changes on the silkscreen prints, “Not even a line on a face. I must say I am very happy with the results, anyway.”

She next explained that the title of the exhibit, “The Moon and the Sun”, is inspired by a lyric of Hafez.

“Angels are repeated in my works. They are in battle with the evils which have surrounded us here and there. The angels are our hopes, our faith and our dreams which protect us. They bring us the sun and the moon. They bring us the flames of love, hope and inspiration,” she said.

“When something horrible happens like war, some go to help like the borderless doctors and volunteers. They are the

good force that stands against the evil and does not let evil dominate and capture the world,” she said.

“During the [1980-1988 Iran-Iraq] war, I was expecting to be a mom and everything was horrifying. I found out how simple things in life can be of high significance, like sitting in the yard and drinking a cup of tea or taking a grape and tasting it. These moments are so enjoyable,” she spoke of her days in the past as a source of inspiration for her paintings.

“We were young in those days, and we thought these things are natural and nothing bad would happen, but the war happened and life itself was in danger and we were not sure if we would be alive the next day. I

found out that every moment that I was still alive, my children were okay and I was still living, could be a great blessing from God.

“And then, in sharp contrast to the horrifying moments, I created those paintings, which are all in praise of life and hope. This was actually an invitation to peace and tranquility,” she concluded.

The gallery also screens “Between Shadow and Light”, a documentary by renowned filmmaker Khosro Sinai who is Ossouli's husband. The film was made in 2002 to feature Ossouli's thoughts, ideas and style in a poetic expression.

“The Moon and the Sun” will be running until July 10 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

Naxos Records to release Ali Rahbari's new album

“My Mother Persia” next week

A R T **TEHRAN** – Naxos Records, a Hong Kong-based German record label specializing in classical music, is scheduled to release Iranian composer Ali (Alexander) Rahbari's new album “My Mother Persia” on July 12.

The album features melodies and improvisations in Iranian traditional styles, including a violin concerto entitled “Nohe Khan” by soloist Paula Rahbari.

“Mother's Tears” and “Children's Prayer” are the other tracks of the album.

The Prague Metropolitan Orchestra and Antalya State Symphony have cooperated with Rahbari in this album.

Rahbari, the former conductor of Tehran Symphony Orchestra, performed the composition at Aspensos Hall in Antalya in April 2018 along with the Antalya State Symphony Orchestra and Iranian prominent vocalist Mohammad Motamedi.

In a press conference held in Tehran in May 2018, Iranian tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh, who attended the concert,

said that unlike most of artists, Rahabari performed a song about his homeland in a place that was not his homeland.

He also lamented that cultural officials lacked an understanding of Rahbari's value, therefore, they made no effort to convince him to stay in Iran.

In 2004, just a year before the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the presidential election, Rahbari was invited from Austria to reorganize the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, but he resigned the following year over the low salaries paid to the musicians.

In 2013, after Rouhani won the presidential election, he asked cultural officials to reinstate the Iranian symphony orchestras, which were closed down by the government under Ahmadinejad.

As a result in March 2015, Rahbari was assigned once again to restore the orchestra. However, he resigned his position as a conductor in protest over a decision by the Rudaki Foundation to set up a center with the assigned task of managing the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra.

Alexander
RAHBARI

My Mother Persia
Symphonic Poems • 1
Nos. 1, 2 and 3

Paula Rahbari, Violin
Antalya State
Symphony Orchestra
Prague Metropolitan
Orchestra
Alexander Rahbari

Front cover of Iranian composer Ali Rahbari's new album “My Mother Persia”.

Doc on basketball player Aidin Nikkhah Bahrami premieres in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Ashkan Mehryar's documentary “Aidin”, about Aidin Nikkhah Bahrami, a key member of the Iranian national basketball team during the 2000s, premiered during a special ceremony at Iran Mall Cineplex on Friday.

A number of cultural officials, artists and athletes along with Aidin's parents and his brother Samad, who is also a professional basketball player, attended the ceremony.

“I've always dreamed of doing such a thing for Aidin, and now I am really shocked and I appreciate the director's efforts,” Farzaneh Ebrahimifakhar, Aidin's mother, said in her brief speech at the event.

“People have never forgotten my son and they have

never left us alone. I thank them all,” she added.

A commemorative postage stamp homage to Aidin was also unveiled during the ceremony and was dedicated to Aidin's family.

Produced by the Exxon International Group, the film covers the life story and death of Aidin, who won the Gold Medal at the FIBA Asia Championship in 2007 and helped the national team to qualify for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

He died in a car accident on December 27, 2007 on the Tehran–Chalus road with his fiancée.

Iranian prominent actor Parviz Parastui is the narrator of the movie, which will go on screen in the near future at Iran's Art and Experience Cinemas, which are dedicated to screening documentary and art films.



A poster for Iranian director Ashkan Mehryar's documentary “Aidin”.

Indian actress draws fire for quitting over Islamic faith

NEW DELHI (Reuters) — A Muslim actress' decision to quit Bollywood, saying acting was taking her away from her faith, has triggered a backlash in India from fellow actors and fans.

Zaira Wasim, 18, best known for her role as a wrestler in the 2016 film Dangal, announced her “disassociation” from acting on Sunday.

“This field indeed brought a lot of love, support and applause my way, but what it also did was to lead me to a path of ignorance, as I silently and unconsciously transitioned out of ‘imaan’,” she said, referring to her faith.

“While I continued to work in an environment that consistently interfered with my ‘imaan’, my relationship with my religion was threatened,” she said in simultaneous posts on her social media profiles.



Actor Zaira Wasim arrives for a promotional event at Golf Club in Mumbai, India, December 10, 2017. (Reuters/Stringer/File Photo)

On Instagram alone, her post drew more than 27,000 comments.

Wasim's manager confirmed the announcement.

“Her posts are genuine and written in the state of mind she is currently in. Let's give her time and space,” said Tuhin Mishra, managing director of Baseline Ventures.

Reuters' calls and messages to Wasim were not answered.

Wasim's last film was the 2017 drama “Secret Superstar”, in which she played a Muslim teenager who sings surreptitiously because her abusive father will not allow it.

She won several awards for the film.

Actress Raveena Tandon accused Wasim of being ungrateful to an industry that gave her opportunities.

“Just wish they'd exit gracefully and keep

their regressive views to themselves,” Tandon said on Twitter.

Twitter user Ifra Jan said Wasim's decision would make it harder for other Muslim women to pursue an acting career.

“Please don't leave spitting at an industry, audience that gave you SO much,” Jan said.

“PS, you could have left quietly. With this letter you've made it difficult for every Muslim woman to choose an unconventional career. As if our society wasn't enough!”

Public figures in Wasim's native Jammu and Kashmir, the country's only Muslim-majority state, came to her defense.

“Who are any of us to question @ZairaWasimmm's choices?,” former chief minister Omar Abdullah said in a tweet.