



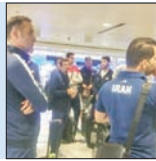
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Enrichment reaches 4.5 %

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British envoy at Foreign Ministry for third time over tanker seizure

TEHRAN — British Ambassador to Tehran Robert Macaire was in Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday for the third time since last week over the seizure of an Iranian oil tanker.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said Macaire was not summoned but he was at the Foreign Ministry for pursuing the issue of the oil tanker.

Ambassador Macaire had already been summoned to the ministry twice

in four days. He was first summoned to the ministry on Thursday, the day the tanker was seized.

On early Thursday morning, British Royal Marines in Gibraltar stormed the Iran-operated supertanker Grace 1 off the coast of Gibraltar, seizing the 300,000-tonne vessel based on the accusation that it was carrying oil to Syria in possible violation of the European Union's sanctions on the war-torn Arab country. **→2**

Zanganeh to Falih: Iran no threat to global energy security

TEHRAN — Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Sunday that Iran is not only no threat to the world's energy security but also the biggest guarantor of stability and energy security in the region, Shana reported.

The minister made the remarks in reaction to an earlier claim by Saudi Oil

Minister Khalid Al-Falih, who claimed Iran is posing "threats to global energy security."

Speaking in a televised interview, Zanganeh said "Falih is a technocrat and a respectable person and does not often speak politically; he must have probably been asked to make such political remarks." **→5**

Raisi demands immediate release of Iranian oil tanker

TEHRAN — Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has demanded an immediate release of an Iranian oil tanker seized by the British government, Fars reported.

"It seems that the British and Europeans are well aware of the Islamic Republic's reach and potential, and accordingly, it is to their own benefit that they immediately release this oil tanker, otherwise they

should await the ramifications of their action," Raisi said on Monday.

He also censured the West for turning a blind eye to Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group's capturing and smuggling of the Syrian and Iraqi oil using the same waterways.

"But today, Britain seizes the Islamic Republic's oil tanker as it travels in Gibraltar while adhering to all international laws," he added. **→3**



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari

Head of the Tehran Times Politics Desk

Unraveling the secret deal between Britain and Bolton

Informed sources have recently announced that John Bolton, the American national security advisor has promised the top leaders in London to help them in Brexit by putting Brussels under pressure. Apparently, Bolton has made the offer in exchange for London's recent activities such as seizing the Iranian oil tanker Grace 1.

Recently, Bolton has taken an extremely hostile approach toward the Islamic Republic of Iran. Bolton praised Britain's "illegal" seizure of the Iranian supertanker in the Strait of Gibraltar and called for putting more pressures on Iran. Furthermore, he openly interfered with the International Atomic Energy Agency and said the agency should reduce Iran's nuclear exemptions.

But, what is the secret behind the hyperactivity of U.S. National Security Advisor? Obviously, Bolton who is tackling internal pressures that want him to resign from power, has decided to have a more active presence in U.S. local media so that his possible forced resignation comes about with a greater cost. Another important thing here is why London is supporting Bolton?

Over the last couple of weeks, the British top officials have been aware that Trump and the traditional republicans are lobbying about removing Bolton or even Mike Pompeo, U.S. secretary of state, from the office, but with seizing the Iranian oil tanker, that was planned at least two weeks ago, Britain seems to be giving artificial respiration to Bolton and other hardliners in Donald Trump's cabinet.

Obviously, London's new move against Iran was preplanned and organized in cooperation with the New Conservatives in order to revive Bolton's lost power in the White House. Yet, the question is what Britain receives in return for supporting Bolton. **→13**

Nigerian envoy to Tehran summoned over Sheikh Zakzaky's conditions

TEHRAN — The Foreign Ministry has summoned Nigeria's envoy to Tehran to voice the Islamic Republic's concerns over the conditions of top Shiite cleric and leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaky.

"Recently, the Nigerian charge d'affaires was summoned to the Foreign Ministry and was informed about Iran's concerns over Sheikh Zakzaky's conditions in the African country," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said at his bi-weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday.

"The Nigerian charge d'affaires offered some explanations and he is supposed to convey our concerns to the Nigerian government," he added.

The spokesman expressed the hope that the Foreign Ministry's efforts would yield results and that the prominent cleric would recover soon.

Iran has spared no efforts through diplomatic and political ways to resolve the issue, he stressed.

According to the Tasnim news agency, Sheikh Zakzaky has been held in detention since December 2015 and was charged just in April 2018 with murder, culpable homicide, unlawful assembly, disruption of public peace and other accusations. He has pleaded not guilty.

In 2016, Nigeria's federal high court ordered his unconditional release from jail following a trial, but the government has so far refused to set him free.

The top cleric, who is in his mid-sixties, lost his left eyesight in a raid which was carried out by the Nigerian army on his residence in the northern town of Zaria in December 2015.

During the raid, Zakzaky's wife sus-

tained serious wounds too and more than 300 of his followers and three of his sons were killed. Zakzaky, his wife, and a large number of the cleric's followers have since been in custody.

On Friday, the UK-based Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) announced that it had received reports about Zakzaky's health condition that it had further worsened.

The IHRC — which had sent a medical team to Nigeria in April to examine the health condition of Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife — has already said the specialist treatment they require can only be fully accessed outside the African country.

Separately, members of the IMN had also said last week that the cleric had been poisoned in prison and required urgent medical care abroad.

Sister of Saudi crown prince faces Paris trial over attack on workman

TEHRAN— Princess Hassa bint Salman, 43, sister of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, is due to stand trial in absentia in the French capital on July 9 on charges of theft of a mobile phone and complicity to violence with a weapon and complicity to sequestration.

According to French reports, Ashraf Eid, a French plumber of Egyptian origin, told police he was forced to "kiss the princess' feet" after she told her "bodyguard" to "kill" him because he had filmed the royal in her father's flat at 80 avenue Foch, one of Paris' plush streets in the 16ème arrondissement.

"You must kill him, this dog. He doesn't deserve to live," he reportedly told police during

the alleged September 2016 incident, insisting he only took pictures to be able to replace objects where he removed them.

The decorator reportedly said her assistant then punched him on the side of the head, bound his hands together, told him to "kiss the feet" of the princess and place a gun at the back of his head when he refused during a four-hour ordeal, The Telegraph reported.

His lawyer has declined to speak to the press. However, speaking about the case for the first time, the princess's French lawyer, Emmanuel Moyne, said she "vigorously contests the accusations against her and never made such comments" and said she was

"devastated" at being "thrown to the dogs by the press".

Police detained the princess after the legal complaint was filed but she was released without being questioned two and a half hours later.

She departed France that day and has not left Saudi Arabia since an international warrant for her arrest was issued against her three years ago - effectively placing her under "house arrest", said her aides.

Her entourage depicted her as the victim of a judge and police out to boost their reputation by bringing the London-educated royal to court at all costs.



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'Iran determined to continue offering oil at IRENEX'

TEHRAN — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s representative in Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) said NIOC will continue offering oil at IRENEX, Mehr news agency reported.

"Offering oil and gas condensate in the international ring of IRENEX has become a legal obligation, and it will definitely be a lasting move," Amir-Hossein Tebyanian said in a press conference hosted by Mehr news agency at the place of the agency on Monday. **→4**



ARTICLE

Mahnaz Abdi

Head of the TehranTimes Economy Desk

Sanctions, an opportunity to benefit from tax potential

Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. unilaterally from the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the world's major powers (known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) in last May and re-imposed sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

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

The U.S. administration has threatened to sanction any country that do business with Iran and Trump has also vowed to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero.

To minimize the effects of sanctions on the country's economy, Iran is adopting some new economic approaches and the main important one is to reduce reliance on the oil revenues.

To materialize this objective, the country has put strengthening domestic production, boosting non-oil exports specially to the neighboring countries, and collecting taxes more systematically on top of its economic policies.

Earlier this month, Iranian Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Farhad Dejpasand said that reducing the current year's budget dependency on oil exports is the most important economic objective in the country; and his ministry is seriously following up defined tax policies to this end.

The proposed 17.03 quadrillion rials (\$405 billion) budget bill for this Iranian year (started on March 21) has envisaged 1.53 quadrillion rials (about \$36.5 billion) of tax income.

Dejpasand has also stressed that an efficient tax system should be a priority in the government's policy making.

A non-oil budget requires other stable income sources.

In a message on the occasion of the National Day of Tax (July 7), finance minister stressed the necessity of planning for using stable non-oil income.

He wrote the sanctions should be considered an opportunity to reform the budget structure and to take the advantage of tax potential. **→4**

There is limit to patience, Jahangiri tells Europeans

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran has remained in the 2015 nuclear deal even one year after the U.S. withdrawal, however, there is a “limit to patience”, Iranian First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri said on Monday.

The remarks by the vice president came one day after Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, as the Europeans missed a 60-day deadline by Tehran to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.



On May 8, exactly one year after the United States left the nuclear deal and reimposed sanction on Iran, Tehran announced that its “strategic patience” is over and announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the nuclear pact. The announcement, which was declared by the Supreme National Security Council, stated that the country would no longer adhere

to some of the limits on its nuclear activities as long as sanctions are in place. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions’ effects.

“In recent weeks, they asked the president [Hassan Rouhani] to wait more before reducing commitments. One year has passed. We have waited and fulfilled our commitments and discussed it with Europeans, Chinese and Russians. There is limit to patience,” Jahangiri said during a meeting at Alzahra University.

He said that the remaining parties to the deal have not done the least to save the nuclear deal after the U.S. withdrawal.

“So, it was natural that Iran respond,” he said.

On Sunday, Iran gave the Europeans another 60 day to honor their commitment under the deal otherwise Iran will take the next steps.

Jahangiri advised the Europeans to use the 60-day time to protect Iran from sanctions so that Iran will not be forced to take retaliatory measures.

Under the JCPOA, Iran had agreed to put limits on parts of its nuclear activities in exchange for the termination of all economic and financial sanctions.

The special mechanism introduced by Europeans, known as INSTEX, only allows sale of food and medicine to Iran, items which are not subject to sanctions.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran’s steps in reducing its nuclear commitments are “reversible” only if the three European countries of Britain, France, and Germany (E3) honor their commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

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

U.S. holds Iranian scientist over transporting medical materials

(Press TV) - An Iranian scientist will go on trial in the United States after he was charged with violating trade sanctions by trying to transport to Iran medical material he uses in his research.

Professor Masoud Soleimani was arrested upon his arrival to the state of Chicago in October last year on charges that he had violated trade sanctions against Iran. He has been held in detention south of Atlanta since then.



The scientist was planning to complete the final stage of his research on treating stroke patients as a visiting scholar at the prestigious Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

Soleimani and two of his students, who are free on bond, are accused of conspiring and trying to export biological materials from the U.S. to Iran without a license from the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Soleimani’s attorneys say he seized on the plans of a former student to travel from the U.S.

to Iran in September 2016 as a chance to get recombinant proteins used in his research at a lower price than what he’d pay at home.

Lawyers for the scientists say the trio did nothing wrong, stressing that no specific license was required as the proteins are medical materials and that transporting them to Iran for noncommercial purposes doesn’t amount to exporting goods.

The indictment said that Soleimani had communicated with Mahboobe Ghaedi, a permanent U.S. resident from Iran who has worked in stem cell research and regenerative medicine at several universities in the U.S., about getting some recombinant proteins.

According to court filings, Ghaedi bought the proteins from U.S. firms and gave them to Maryam Jazayeri, an Iranian-born U.S. citizen who agreed to bring them to Soleimani when she traveled to Iran.

Jazayeri was stopped at the Atlanta airport in September 2016, and the vials of recombinant proteins were seized by the custom officials back then.

Soleimani’s lawyer Leonard Franco said in a court filing that the recombinant proteins are used to help speed up stem cell research.

The prosecutors allege the violations of sanctions that bar trading with Iran, saying an exception for medicine and medical devices depends on the way those items are defined under federal law, prosecutors say.

“Notably, items for medical research, including the proteins at issue, are not listed in the definition,” they wrote.

Defense attorneys noted that the sanctions are vague, adding that the shifting relationship between the countries causes confusion.

Even though the material was seized from Jazayeri at the tail end of the Obama administration, which saw a thaw between the two states, the secret indictment against Soleimani was issued a month after President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. in May 2018 from a multilateral nuclear accord with Iran and reimposed unilateral sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Iran says will not breach JCPOA unless ‘bizarre actions’ are taken

Mousavi says if the remaining parties to the nuclear deal, especially Europeans, fail to fulfil their obligations, Iran will take a “stronger third step” after 60 days

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran will not take any measure against the 2015 nuclear agreement unless the other parties to the deal take peculiar, unexpected actions, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday.

“Iran’s next step is also under the legal framework and under the paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, unless certain countries in the meantime take peculiar, unexpected measures, after which the third step would not be taken and we’ll take a fundamental step instead,” Mousavi said during a press conference in Tehran.

Iran officially announced on Sunday, July 7, that it is starting to enrich uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, as the Europeans missed a two-month deadline to devise a concrete economic and financial mechanism to protect Iran from the harsh U.S. sanctions.

On Monday, Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), told ISNA that Iran’s degree of enrichment has reached 4.5 percent which is enough to power nuclear plants.

The step taken by Iran on Sunday was the second of its kind. In the first step on May 8, Iran announced that it will not sell its stockpile of uranium enriched to 3.67 percent.



Mousavi said if the other remaining parties to the nuclear deal, especially Europeans, fail to fulfil their obligations, Iran will take a “stronger third step” after 60 days.

Kamalvandi also said on Sunday that Iran’s third step includes installing more centrifuge machines, reinstalling IR-2 and IR-3m centrifuges and enriching uranium to 20 percent.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said Iran’s

second step was consistent with paragraph 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

“Iran is entitled to react to Europe’s inaction and such reaction has been rational, legal and under the paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA,” he reiterated.

If now they are concerned, the spokesman continued, they should have been more so when

Iran won’t tolerate British piracy: Hatami

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Monday that Britain’ act in seizing Iranian oil tanker was an act of piracy which will not be tolerated.

“On these days, we have witnessed a provocative act by the British government against the Islamic Republic of Iran’s oil tanker in Gibraltar. This action is against international regulation and the Europeans commitments under the JCPOA and is also a kind of piracy,” Hatami said.

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 ambassa-

dor for three times in protest. Tehran has vowed to employ all its political and legal capacities to secure the release of the vessel and uphold its rights.

On Sunday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi denied reports that the supertanker was carrying oil to Syria.

“Contrary to Britain’s announcement, the tanker was not bound for Syria, and the port mentioned is not capable of receiving such a tanker,” Araqchi told reporters at a news conference in Tehran.

The seized tanker is a 2 million barrel capacity very large crude carrier (VLCC), Araqchi said, adding it could not pass through the Suez Canal and that was why it had to go the extra mile through Gibraltar.

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 Bor-



rell 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.

Zarif: ‘There is a way out’ of Iran-U.S. dispute but not with B-Team

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a post on his Twitter page late on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said “there is a way out” for the nuclear dispute between Iran and the United States by it is not possible with the “B-Team in charge”.

“There’s a way out, but not with B-Team in charge,” Zarif tweeted.

The B-Team includes White House national security advisor John Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, and UAE Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed.

Zarif said the B-Team pressured Donald Trump to kill the nuclear deal under the illusion that they can secure a better deal through “economic terrorism” against Iran.

“B-Team sold Donald Trump on the folly that killing JCPOA through Economic Terrorism can get him a better deal,” Zarif remarked.

But now that after the passage of a year the B-Team have realized that they cannot get a better deal and Iran is scaling back its nuclear commitments in response to the revocation of the deal and reimposition of sanctions, “they are bizarrely urging Iran’s full compliance” with the JCPOA.

Defense Ministry delivers indigenous vessel to police

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Defense Ministry has started delivering domestically-made Haidar-class patrol boats to police forces operating in the Persian Gulf waters.

The frigates, mainly tasked with search and rescue missions, joined the marine police fleet during a ceremony in southern port city of Bandar Abbas on Monday, after successfully passing sea and shore-based trials, according to Press TV.

The Haidar-class vessels are made of marine grade aluminum alloy hulls, which gives them high hydro-dynamic capabilities and lets them withstand powerful sea storms. They are also built around the latest Search and Rescue (SAR) concepts. The self-righting features of the vessels mean they can stay afloat even at high rolling angles of up to 180 degrees.

Beside search and rescue missions, the frigates will patrol Iran’s territorial waters to ensure their safety.

Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami, Managing Director of Defense Min-



istry’s Marine Industries Organization Rear Admiral Amir Rastegari and Police Chief Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari were present at the ceremony.

Addressing the event, the defense chief said Haidar-class vessels were highly maneuverable in all weather conditions and could be used as the basis for other projects such as marine ambulances and fireboats.

They can also be used for military purposes as well as coast guard and anti-smuggling missions.

Over the past years, Iran has made major

breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing military equipment and hardware despite facing sanctions and Western economic pressure.

The Islamic Republic says its military power is solely for defensive purposes and does not pose any threat to other countries.

The delivering of the boats came a day after Iran announced it was considering tolls on vessels that pass the strategic Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, where the country’s forces watch over their safety.

MP Amir Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi on Sunday highlighted that the parliament bill to charge foreign ships passing through the narrow waterway which accommodates around a third of global seaborne oil traffic is meant to reciprocate hostile actions by the United States and its allies in the region.

“If Iran is the real guarantor (of security) in the region and in international waters, then the Majlis believes that commercial hubs and all ships in the region should pay the cost in the form of tolls based on the international norms and (due to conducts of) the United

States,” he said in an interview with the Sobhe No newspaper.

The lawmaker said the bill has yet to be approved for an official debate in the parliament, saying it had raised objections from political forces who seek “normalization for Iran” and believe Tehran should maintain the status quo in the Parisian Gulf.

Ghazizadeh said that Iran could introduce its own preferential charging mechanism for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

“Since the bill is based on our country’s internal laws, (the toll) could be levied on unfriendly countries, meaning those who have no trade relations with us and have recognized America’s sanctions (against Iran),” he said.

Iran controls much of the northern part of the Strait of Hormuz as it is situated within the country’s territorial waters.

The waterway and the wider Persian Gulf region has been the scene of some unprecedented tensions between Iran and the U.S. over the past months. The tensions escalated on June 21 when Iran shot down an intruding U.S. spy drone.

Zarif calls British seizure of oil tanker piracy done on behalf of B-Team

Chief diplomat says seizure of Iranian oil tanker “must end now”

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that British seizure of an Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar constitutes a concrete example of “piracy” which has been done on behalf of the B-Team.

“UK’s unlawful seizure of a tanker with Iranian oil on behalf of #B_Team is piracy, pure and simple,” Zarif tweeted.

The B-Team includes White House national security advisor John Bolton, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, and UAE Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed.

Zarif said such act “sets a dangerous precedent and must end now.”

Britain has claimed it seized the supertanker because it was carrying oil for Syria in violation of the European Union sanctions.

In response Zarif said, “Iran is neither a member of the EU nor subject to any European oil embargo. Last I checked, EU was against extraterritoriality.”

British envoy at Foreign Ministry for third time over tanker seizure

1 → Iran said the act amounts to piracy. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi on Sunday denied reports that the supertanker was carrying oil to Syria.

“Contrary to Britain’s announcement, the tanker was not bound for Syria, and the port mentioned is not capable of receiving such a tanker,” Araqchi told reporters at a news

conference in Tehran.

Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami warned on Thursday that Iran cannot tolerate piracy by Britain.

Earlier Mohsen Rezaei, a former IRGC chief and current secretary of the Expediency Council, has suggested a retaliatory measure by Iran.

Iran not after war with any country: Army chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chief of desk the Iranian Army says Tehran is not seeking war against any country but it has learned how to defend itself.

“As repeatedly announced before, the Islamic Republic of Iran doesn’t seek war against any country,” Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said on Monday, Mehr reported.

In recent years Iran has faced with complicated threats by the enemy, he said, emphasizing that in countering the enemy’s plots, military power is not enough.

“In the current situation, what is strategically important is countering the enemy’s psychological war, which has cultural and intellectual aspects,” the top general remarked.

Boosting the people’s resistance and tolerance in the face of pressures carries strategic importance and should be addressed by cultural authorities, he added.

Today, the enemy is focusing on a hybrid strategy which includes sanctions, threats and psychological operations, especially



Today, the enemy is focusing on a hybrid strategy which includes sanctions, threats and psychological operations, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi notes.

on people and officials’ determination and calculations, said the commander, adding that the enemy wants to disrupt the calculations made by Iran’s decision makers.

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

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

Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force Amir Ali Hajizadeh rejected the U.S. claim that the doomed drone had not entered the Iranian airspace, saying, “Other countries have refuted the U.S. claim of not violating the Iranian border.”

Russia says will pursue diplomatic efforts to save nuclear deal

By staff and agency

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that Russia will pursue diplomatic efforts to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

“Russia aims to continue dialogue and efforts on the diplomatic front. We are still supporters of the JCPOA,” AFP quoted Peskov as saying.

Pointing to Iran’s action in reducing its nuclear commitments, he said the announcement by Iran is one of the “consequences” of the United States abandoning the landmark deal.

“Russia and President (Vladimir) Putin warned of the consequences that would be imminent after one of the countries decided to end its obligations and exit the deal,” Peskov said.

Iran officially announced on Sunday it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the current 3.67%, as the Europeans missed a 60-day deadline by Tehran to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

In a post on his Twitter page on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, “Today, Iran is taking its second round of remedial steps under Para 36 of the JCPOA. We reserve the right to continue to exercise legal remedies within JCPOA to protect our interests in the face



of US #EconomicTerrorism. All such steps are reversible only through E3 compliance.”

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

E3 includes the three European countries of Britain, France and Germany which are party to the JCPOA.

On May 8, Iran’s Supreme National Council (SNSC) declared Tehran’s exit from “certain” obligations under the landmark

agreement and gave a 60-day deadline to the remaining JCPOA signatories to protect Iran’s interests against U.S. sanctions, or it will restart high-level uranium enrichment.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, said on Sunday that Moscow understands the reason behind Iran’s steps in reducing commitments under the JCPOA.

“We understand the steps taken [by Iran], the reasons that pushed the Iranians to take them. We call on Iran to refrain from further actions that could complicate the situation with the nuclear deal even more,” he told Sputnik.

It will be possible to determine by how much Iran had increased its uranium enrichment limit in a few days, he added, stressing that a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iran’s uranium enrichment levels may be presented at a special session of the agency’s governing board on July 10.

“In any case, there is space to continue diplomatic efforts, they will be continued,” Ulyanov noted.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, a top official at Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, announced on Monday that level of uranium enrichment has reached 4.5 percent. He said this degree of enrichment is enough to power nuclear plants producing electricity.

Ex-diplomat says Trump needs to make swift strategic turnaround to get rid of self-imposed crisis with Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A former Iranian diplomat says if U.S. President Donald Trump wants to resolve the unnecessary crisis that he himself has created with Iran it is necessary that he make a “swift strategic turnaround”.

“If Trump genuinely wants to resolve this unnecessary, self-imposed crisis, he needs to make a swift strategic turnaround, one that would allow both countries to save face,” Hossein Mousavian wrote in a commentary in the Guardian on Sunday.

Mousavian, who served as a member of Iran’s nuclear negotiating team from 2003-2005, such an approach that would allow both the U.S. and Iran to “save face” and it that case “credible diplomacy” would “become possible once more”.

Following is the text of the article:

In May 2018, the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was designed to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and had been agreed on after 12 years of exhaustive negotiations.

The U.S. began to impose new economic and political sanctions, targeting not just various sectors of the Iranian economy, but the state’s most influential entities and actors. The imposition of these sanctions has virtually killed off the possibility of diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis and will have political consequences for not just Iran and the U.S., but the whole region. The current situation is extremely fraught, with Iran responding to aggressive actions by increasing its level of uranium enrichment.

The reemergence of hostility between Iran and the U.S. — after a period of detente under Barack Obama — is one of the most urgent challenges to peace and security in the Middle East. And yet Trump’s belligerent policies have all but blocked conventional channels of diplomacy.

For one thing, cooperation requires dialogue between the countries’ respective military establishments in the region. U.S. Central Command (Centcom) and Iran’s revolutionary guard corps’ Quds force are both responsible for their countries’ extraterritorial operations. The IRGC’s designation as a terrorist organization — and Iran’s reciprocation against Centcom — has ended the possibility of negotiation between these two extremely influential state entities.

Next, in an unprecedentedly aggressive action, the Trump administration has imposed sanctions on Iran’s ultimate

source of authority according to its constitution, namely the supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Just as in the U.S. the president has the authority to determine the general trajectory of foreign policy, the supreme leader in Iran is the one who sets the foreign policy of that country. Let’s not forget it was the supreme leader who allowed direct negotiation with the U.S. over the nuclear issue in the first place. By sanctioning Ali Khamenei, Trump has effectively killed off any chance of diplomatic rapprochement so long as he is in office. And it is not only the political leadership of Ali Khamenei that is relevant here; he is also a religious scholar with millions of Shia Muslim followers — not just in Iran, but Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Bahrain and elsewhere.

In addition, last week, the Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the Trump administration was looking to levy penalties against Iran’s Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif, who trained in the U.S. and is one of the most distinguished career diplomats in Iran’s recent history. Zarif has been compared to the popular Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, who nationalized Iran’s oil industry and was deposed in 1953 in a coup organized by Britain and the U.S. Sanctioning Zarif is a mistake if the U.S. ever wants to reengage with Iran, because he is in charge of the diplomatic channels that would be necessary to resolve this crisis. As Wendy Sherman, who led the U.S. negotiating team in the talks that led to the 2015 accord, put it: “I can’t think of anything that makes less sense than sanctioning a key person who might actually be helpful if there is ever a dialogue with the U.S.”

The Iran nuclear deal is the most comprehensive agreement in the history of non-proliferation. As part of it, Iran accepted the most intrusive transparency measures and stringent limits on a nuclear program ever demanded of a non-proliferation treaty member. What is more, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently judged that Iran was in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the JCPOA.

But where Iran has kept its end of the bargain, it has been rewarded with sanctions and additional pressure, and the benefits Iran was supposed to receive have been suddenly snatched away. The Trump administration made a decision to undermine the diplomatic legacy of Obama, but it may not have fully understood that in doing so it would also be obliterating any possibility of brokering its own diplomatic solution.

Trump has consistently offered to talk to Iranian officials, but his actions have been by far the most belligerent since the 1979 revolution. Deploying these phony, rhetorical offers of talks at the same time as imposing devastating sanctions is not a strategy that will make Iran yield.

Iran warned world powers in advance that if the other parties failed to meet their commitments, it would begin to reduce its obligations under the JCPOA. As a first step, over the past few days, it exceeded the 300kg limit on its uranium stockpiles. It has now also announced it will enrich uranium



“Deploying phony, rhetorical offers of talks at the same time as imposing devastating sanctions will not make Iran yield.”

above the 3.67% limit specified by the deal. In addition, the Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, has told his cabinet that the Arak reactor will be restored to its original design which, it was claimed, would be able to produce plutonium. It is crucial to note that this is the first time Iran has contravened the JCPOA. Ever since the Trump administration withdrew last year, Iran has been patiently waiting for the other parties involved in the nuclear agreement to honor their commitments, but the only outcome was the intensifying of pressures and sanctions. Iran cannot be expected to fully comply with the deal when others are failing to meet their obligations.

Trump single-handedly undid 12 years of intensive negotiations between Iran and world powers by withdrawing from the nuclear deal. He chose the dangerous path of hostile policies and actions and has increased the likelihood of yet another disastrous conflict in the Middle East. He does appear to recognize that a military confrontation with Iran would be catastrophic in every possible way. But he should also realize the fact that Iran will never give in to bullying.

If Trump genuinely wants to resolve this unnecessary, self-imposed crisis, he needs to make a swift strategic turnaround, one that would allow both countries to save face. Only then would credible diplomacy become possible once more.

Enrichment level reaches 4.5 percent

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — On Monday, Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), told ISNA that Iran’s degree of uranium enrichment has reached 4.5 percent which he said is enough to power nuclear plants.

Increasing the level of enrichment to above 3.67 percent was taken on Sunday after Europe missed a 60-day deadline by Tehran to devise a concrete mechanism to guard Iran against U.S. sanctions.

On Sunday, Iran also gave Europeans another 60-day time to protect the country from sanctions otherwise it will take the next step.

Kamalvandi said Iran’s next step includes installing more centrifuge machines, reinstalling IR-2 and IR-3m centrifuges and enriching uranium to 20 percent.

“Twenty percent is not needed now, but if we want we will produce it,” Kamalvandi stated.

Iran needs uranium enriched to purity of 20 percent to power its research nuclear reactor which produces isotope for cancer patients.

Kamalvandi added, “When we’ve put aside 3.67% enrichment we have no obstacle or problem with this action (20 percent enrichment).”

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran’s steps in reducing its nuclear commitments are “reversible” only if the three European countries of Britain, France, and Germany (E3) honor their commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Britain, France, and Germany are party to the JCPOA.

Iranian Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri on Monday called on Europe to seize the 60-day time to normalize economic ties with Iran.

Jahangiri said reduction of JCPOA undertakings by Iran are reversible if countries party to the JCPOA use the “60-day opportunity” to honor their commitments.

Iran’s chief demand is that the country be permitted to export crude oil at the same levels before the U.S. reimposed sanctions.

Britain must pay compensations for oil tanker seizure: ex-Rouhani aide

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The British government must pay compensations to Iran and others for seizing an Iranian oil tanker, says a former advisor to President Hassan Rouhani on citizenship rights.

Britain must pay compensations to Iran and relevant countries, including pick-up and destination countries, for the damage inflicted on them by delaying the oil tanker for several days, El-ham Aminzadeh said in an interview with the Mehr news agency published on Monday.

“Nearly 2 million oil barrels or 300,000 tons of Iranian oil has been seized in Gibraltar,” she said.

“Iran can file a complaint through international bodies, including the United Nations, against the act,” Aminzadeh suggested.

She also argued that under international law, the British government must officially apologize to Iran.

Gibraltar police and customs agencies, aided by a detachment of British Royal Marines, boarded and impounded Iranian supertanker Grace 1 in the Strait of Gibraltar on Thursday, upon a request from the United States.

Later that day, Iran’s Foreign Ministry summoned Britain’s ambassador to the country, Rob Macaire, to express its strong protest at the move. He was told that the British Royal Marines’ move was tantamount to “maritime piracy.”

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.

However, the British-claimed overseas territory rejected the claim on Friday, saying that Gibraltar had acted independently.

Gibraltar’s position comes as a British Foreign Office spokesman had welcomed the move on Thursday, describing it as a “firm action by the Gibraltar authorities, acting to enforce the EU Syria Sanctions regime.”

The seizure of the Iranian tanker comes as the U.S. has pledged to reduce Iran’s oil exports to “zero” as part of the sanctions that it has reinstated after leaving a multilateral 2015 nuclear deal with Iran last year.

Tensions have further escalated between the two countries when the U.S. began to send military reinforcements and troops to the Middle East in early May, citing alleged “threats” from Iran.

Several oil tankers have also been targeted near the Persian Gulf region, with Washington and its ally Saudi Arabia quickly blaming Iran for the attacks.

Tehran has rejected any involvement, saying the incidents appear to be false flags meant to frame the Islamic Republic.

Raisi demands immediate release of Iranian oil tanker

1 ➔ Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also slammed the seizure as an “act of piracy”, saying Tehran strongly rejects such actions which lead to increasing tensions in the region.

“We demand that the British government immediately end this illegal seizure,” Mousavi said at a press conference in Tehran on Monday.

“We reject this act of piracy that escalates tensions and we have given them the necessary warnings,” he added.

He also pointed out that the oil tanker did not enter territorial waters of any state.

Mousavi stressed that Iran was continuing to take actions aimed at the release of the ship and was in constant contact with European diplomats.

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. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi on Sunday dismissed reports that the supertanker was carrying oil to Syria. Araqchi said the port mentioned is not capable of receiving such a tanker.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has summoned Britain’s ambassador to Tehran for the seizure three times since Thursday.

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

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

“Ramping up uranium enrichment was an inevitable response to U.S. moves. A resolution is possible if the president changes course.”

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	249252.9
IFX	3218.95

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,163 rials
GBP	52,601 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$64.37/b
WTI	\$57.53/b
OPEC Basket	\$63.43/b
Gold	\$1,404.70/oz
Silver	\$15.09/oz
Platinum	\$816.75/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Sanctions, an opportunity to benefit from tax potential

1 → Also, in a separate message on the same occasion, Omid-Ali Parsa, the head of Iran's National Tax Administration (INTA), wrote; "Establishment of an efficient tax system and reducing the budget reliance on oil income requires renewing the country's tax system in all aspects."



The official further underlined that lunching smart tax collection projects based on the comprehensive tax plan is a promising measure that INTA is taking to fulfill the pivot role of tax in the national economy during this year.

All such measures, while promoting the role of tax as an instrument for stability, transparency and economic justice, will lead to reduce the effects and pressures of sanctions on the country, the official underlined.

Nearly \$133m of non-oil products exported from Yazd Province in Q1

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — More than 695,533 tons of non-oil commodities worth \$132.7 million were exported from Yazd province, central Iran, during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), a senior official at the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

"The figures show an 11 percent and 17 percent growth in terms of value and volume, respectively, in comparison with the corresponding period of last year," Mohammad Hossein Salmani, the director general of Yazd Province's Customs Department, stated, Mehr news agency reported on Monday.

The main products exported over the period were construction materials, such as tiles and ceramics, steel and glass products, iron bars and pistachio.

Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Thailand, Turkey and Syria were Yazd's top customers in the first quarter, he added.

Salmani noted that some 13,555 tons of goods worth \$38.178 million were imported through the province's customs during the same span, up 40 percent in terms of tonnage and 27 percent in terms of value year-on-year.

Yazd's top exporters in the past three months were Turkey, China, Italy, UAE, Spain and Germany.

Iran exported \$11.5 billion of non-oil commodities during spring, which corresponds to the first quarter of the Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), head of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced on Sunday.

Mohammadreza Modoudi said that the non-oil exports during spring of this year has not changed compared to the spring of previous year, IRIB reported.

The official put the value of non-oil imports at \$10.2 billion during the first quarter of this year, falling 8.7 percent from that of the same period of time in the previous year.

As previously announced by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, the value of Iran's non-oil exports stood at \$44.3 billion in the previous year while \$42.6 billion worth of commodities were shipped into the country.

Iran shares border with fifteen countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

Based on the data published by TPO, the value of trade with the neighboring countries stood at over \$36.5 billion in the past Iranian calendar year, that is about 41 percent of the country's total non-oil trade in the mentioned time span.

Iran plans to launch 15 mega export projects to identify more target markets, according to TPO head.

Mohammadreza Modoudi said with the implementation of these projects, which mainly focus on the markets of neighboring countries, identifying professional trade and promoting export of non-oil commodities will be put on agenda, Mehr news agency reported.

The official further referred to the \$1.7 billion positive trade balance in the country's non-oil trade in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), and said this positive balance was achieved through cooperation with the private sector.

Ground prepared for co-op between Italian, Iranian companies: envoy

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Italian Ambassador to Iran Giuseppe Perrone said the ground is prepared for cooperation between Italian and Iranian companies, the news portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) published on Monday.

Making the remarks during a meeting of Iran-Italy Joint Chamber of Commerce, the ambassador said that the activities of the joint chamber in fact show that there is high interest for cooperation between the two countries and based on the available data, Italy is one of the major trade partners of Iran.

Expressing his satisfaction over the eagerness of Iranian and Italian private sectors for cooperation, the envoy said Italian embassy is ready for offering any



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (R), Iran-Italy Joint Chamber of Commerce Chairman Ahmad Pour-Fallah (C), Italian Ambassador to Iran Giuseppe Perrone (L)

Daily gasoline output to surpass 110m liters soon

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The daily production of gasoline in Iran will exceed 110 million liters in the upcoming week to mark a new record in the country's gasoline production history, Tasnim reported, quoting Iranian oil minister as saying on Sunday night.

The raise in the country's gasoline productions comes at time that the U.S. is putting all its efforts in crippling Iran's oil industry.

The daily gasoline production has witnessed a 5 million barrels increase in the past six months.

In January, Nasser Ashouri, the secretary general of Iran's Oil Refining Industry Contractors Association (ORICA), had announced that the country's daily gasoline production stood at 105 million liters in January.



The increased in the gasoline output has been mostly due to the inauguration of the third phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery. President Rouhani inaugurated the third phase of the refinery in a ceremony on February 18 participated by Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh.

The refinery in Bandar Abbas, the capital city of southern province of Hormozgan, is the first of its kind designed based on gas condensate feedstock.

'Iran determined to continue offering oil at IRENEX'

1 → Briefing the press about the procedures and processes of NIOC's oil and gas condensate offerings at IRENEX, the official noted that physical sales of oil at IRENEX is just the first step and the main goal is to activate other financial instruments, and offer Iranian crude in the regional stock markets.

"We will continue offering oil at the IRENEX in order to institutionalize the necessary procedures which are a prerequisite for improving IRENEX to the level of world class stock exchanges," he said.

According to the official, IRENEX was initially founded in an attempt to permit the Iranian private sector export crude oil since Washington aims to cut Iran's oil sales.

However now, foreign buyers have also expressed willingness to engage in IRENEX oil offerings and welcoming the idea, NIOC is preparing necessary bases for them to be able to do so.

NIOC offered crude oil at IRENEX first on October 28, 2018 just few days before new U.S. sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector took effect (November 4). In the first round, NIOC could sell some

280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel.

"After two unsuccessful offerings of light crude oil in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), NIOC codified new guidelines for the oil offering which were mainly pertain to pricing and lowering risks for buyers and facilitating purchases," Tebyanian explained.

Facilitated oil trades in IRENEX

According to the NIOC representative, based on the new guidelines, buyers are offered several incentives and facilitative features including lower prices, the right to stay anonymous, flexible shipping destinations and terminals, no need for authentication and etc.

Tebyanian emphasized that all the information regarding the domestic and foreign buyers will be completely confidential in IRENEX, adding "the buyer's information will be taken out of stock information systems and will be saved in the physical form."

The official further mentioned the attractive base prices in oil offerings, saying "Mediterranean oil prices which are most of the time the lowest prices

compared to the Asian ones are set as the base price in IRENEX oil deals."

Delivery and transportation of oil cargoes

Regarding the delivery and transportation of the purchased cargoes Tebyanian explained that "three methods are provisioned for delivery and transportation of crude oil shipments: loading from Kharg export terminal, ship to ship transportation and land transportation through the refinery of Tabriz."

"Of course, land transportation will be for small cargoes," he added.

"The purchased cargos can be transported and exported freely to all countries across the globe expect the occupied Palestinian territories by the Zionist regime of Israel," he noted.

Payment procedures

Regarding the payment procedure, Tebyanian stated applicants have to initially pay six percent of the total value of the contract.

"This prepayment can be in cash or in the form of credit, and in case of credit payments, bidders must provide banking guarantees approved by the National Iranian Oil Company," he explained.

kind of cooperation in this due.

"We are in a special condition created as the result of sanctions pressure on both sides and under the current condition Iranian and Italian governments and private sectors have a double responsibility to remove the barriers", he stressed.

Addressing the same meeting, Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the head of ICCIMA, evaluated Iran-Italy political and economic relations as good and said that expanded economic ties between the two sides will strengthen political relations between them.

Ahmad Pour-Fallah, the chairman of Iran-Italy Joint Chamber of Commerce, for his part, expounded upon the activities of the chamber over the past year and said that the number of chamber members has increased in the past year.

Iran's foreign debt drops 17% in a year: CBI

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's foreign debt fell to \$9.339 billion at the end of the last Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019), registering a nearly 17 percent drop compared to the figure for the preceding year, IRNA reported on Monday, citing central bank data.

The latest data published by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) shows that of the country's total external debt, \$7.187 billion was long and medium-term debt while short-term debt accounted for \$2.151 billion.

The CBI data indicates that in the Q3 of the past Iranian calendar year (September 22-December 21, 2018), Iran's total foreign debt stood at \$10.34 billion of which \$3.174 was short-term debt and \$6.86 billion was medium- and long-term.

The country's external debt shrank \$695 million in the Q4 compared to the Q3, the data showed.

In its previous report, CBI put the country's foreign debt by the end of first nine months of the last fiscal year on December 21, 2018 at \$10.03 billion.

The Central Bank of Iran website reported that long and medium-term debt accounted for over two-third of the foreign debt at \$6.8 billion by the end of Q3. Short-term debt amounted to \$3.1 billion during the period or 31 percent of the total foreign debt.

This is while the total external debt by the end of the first month of the past fiscal year (April 20, 2018) was \$11.3 billion, meaning that Iran's debt registered over 12 percent reduction compared to the end of the Q3.

America trade war as a weapon and China's strength to endure it!

By Ghania Nisar

Globalization plays a pivotal role in shaping the global economy. Trade is one of the most effective tools to bring revolutionary changes in deteriorating financial systems. But in today's world, it is used as a weapon for the destruction of emerging economies.

Trade has a past, a great past which either makes a nation great or divide. On turning the pages of history, we will encounter with examples that prove how imperialistic nations use it as a weapon? The significance of a robust economy cannot be overlooked.

The economy of a country helps to determine its status in the global village. This is the reason, G20 came into existence. G20 summit held at Osaka where leaders discussed the pertinent issues of the global economy.

This year the salient topic which attracts the attention of the leader was the U.S. and China trade war. Japan and Germany are in dire straits due to the escalation of tariffs between the U.S. and China. Therefore, the trade war is not disrupting U.S. and China economies, but also influencing the global economy in a negative manner and gave a serious hit to globalization.

East India Company, a big giant that changes the dynamics of Asia in terms of politics and geography. It divided the subcontinent and created tensions in China in the name of trade.

British imported tea and Chinese silk

Between 1839 to 1842, British imported tea and Chinese silk to fulfill their luxurious needs. Therefore, it created a trade deficit for the British. Then, in order to save silver for themselves; they began to give opium instead of silver which resulted in massive Chinese addiction to opium. Therefore, Emperor of the Qing Dynasty decided to close the door of trade with the outside world.



This ignited Britain and they initiated a war named Opium war in the name of free trade with China. America wants to follow the same footsteps of Britain to shaken China? It is 21 Century, where China is among the most technologically advanced country, the largest army, and with good diplomacy policies. It wouldn't be easy for America to halt the progress of China.

Trump's slogan "Make America Great" brings him at a verge to impose high tariffs on China imports and Chinese retailed back with high tariff rates. In this tug of war, only two countries are not suffering, but in this globalized world, where every country is connected in a chain. This trade war is not only disrupting a whole chain but affecting the global economy. For instance, Japan is one of those countries whose economic growth slumping due to the U.S. China trade war. It is famous for its automobile parts, which are exported to China where they assembled and exported to America. But with surging export taxes, the orders from China to Japan delineated. Germany's economy shrinks significantly

due to a trade war.

The aftermath of this trade can be observed explicitly. The loss or gain in this war can be observed after a period. But, one thing is clear, the consumers are the sufferer at the end of the day because increase in tariffs will proliferate the inflation which in return affects the purchasing power of people. Secondly, it has substantially affected the economy of China.

For new production sites

Factories have started to shift from China to Bangladesh, Vietnam, Korea, etc. Vietnam and India emerged as the "two most favored destinations for new production sites" among companies in the tech supply chain across China and Taiwan.

According to General statistic office Vietnam's newly registered foreign direct investment (FDI) capital from China increased by 4.6 times this year ... India's FDI from China increase to 137 percent in 2018 from the previous year.

George Santayana said, "Those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it". The Chinese nation understands and knows it better. This is the reason they are utilizing the power of nationalism and history to survive this arduous time. But one thing should be remembered this is a technology era. Those who utilized and get expert in technology will win every war in every field. China learned from history how the British have exploited its terrorism and rule Hong Kong? It is the biggest economy with Road and Belt visionary project.

To conclude, trade may use a weapon for economic destruction, but a nation with technology and spirit of patriotism is difficult to defeat. The society which is labeled as authoritarian is better in playing and silently working to strengthen itself.

(Source: blogs.dunyanews.tv)

PEDEC to develop 3 oilfields under IPC-based deals

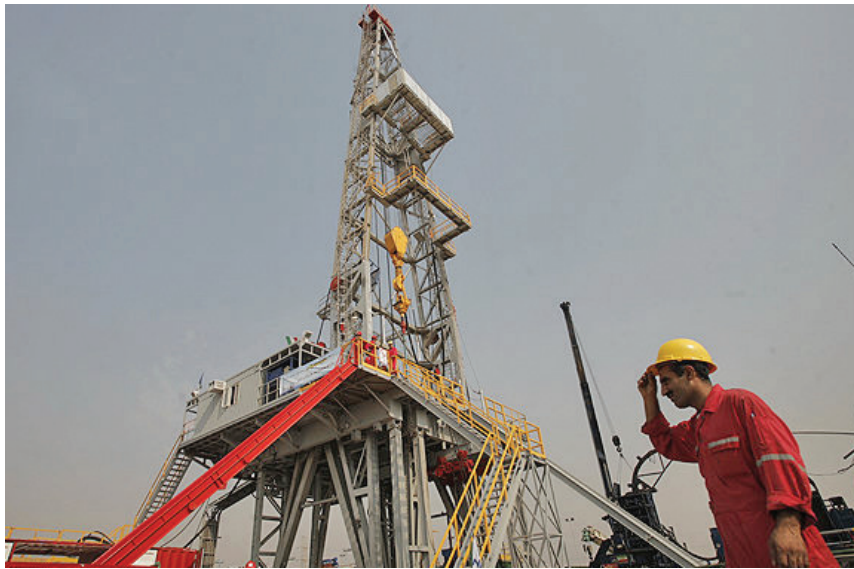
ENERGY TEHRAN — Head of d e s k Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) said the company will start developing two Iranian oil fields under the country's new model of oil contracts (known as IPC) soon and another field is also expected to be awarded to PEDEC in near future, IRNA reported on Monday.

"Currently, developing Sepehr and Jufair as well as Aban and Paydar-e Gharb oilfields under the IPC contracts are on the company's agenda. It is also expected that the implementation of the integrated development project for Yaran field will also be awarded to PEDEC in the near future," Mohammad Reza Asadi said.

According to the official, technical discussions related to the integrated development of South- and North-Yaran oilfields have been conducted with an Iranian company, and it is expected that its IPC contract will be signed soon.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed a contract with Pasargad Energy Development Company (PEDC) for the integrated development project of Sepehr and Jufair fields in March 2018, assigning PEDEC as the project supervisor.

After the implementation of JCPOA in



January 2016, Iranian government put it on the short term agenda to hastily increase its oil production to reclaim its oil market share lost to the fellow OPEC members due to the restrictions imposed by the West.

In this regard and following new pol-

icies for attracting foreign investors to develop the country's fields, in 2016 Iran introduced the Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC), which replaced the old buyback model.

In March 2016, NIOC signed a deal with a consortium comprising Russia's

Zarubezhneft Company and Iran's Dana Energy Company for developing Aban and Paydar-e Gharb oilfields in west of Iran.

However, after U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal and reimposition of sanctions on Iran's oil industry most of the foreign companies were forced to leave Iran or face harsh sanctions.

In March 2019, NIOC announced that the project for development of Yaran Oilfield was studied by the National Iranian Oil Company.

Yaran is one of the five oilfields known as West Karoun oilfields which Iran shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun. The field, which is divided into two parts namely North Yaran and South Yaran, lies 120 kilometers west of Ahwaz, the capital city of southwestern province of Khuzestan, on the border line with Iraq.

Since the reimposition of sanctions, Iran has been encouraging private sector's presence in its oil and gas projects, both in exploration and in development.

In development sector, as there are many exploration blocks waiting for implementation of projects, NIOC is seriously following up the plans to lay the ground for the private sector's contribution.

Zanganeh to Falih: Iran no threat to global energy security

➔ Zanganeh blamed the U.S. for destabilizing the energy market in the world, saying: "U.S. is the biggest de-stabilizing force in the world's energy sector."

U.S. destabilizing actions

He further mentioned some of U.S. actions in the oil market saying that the U.S. is the world's largest producer of crude oil which had added roughly 3.6 million barrels per day (bpd) to its output over the past two years. Washington is putting pressure on Iran and Venezuela to make room for its own oil in the market.

The market was shocked by the U.S. crude output which was completely unexpected, he added.



"We have always said that oil is not a weapon but where energy security is at stake, we will be affected."

The official, elsewhere, noted that Iran is not primarily concerned with the price of oil and was rather focused on its oil exports.

"Right now, the price of oil is not the number one issue for Iran, rather the number of exported oil barrels is what that matters," he said.

The Iranian oil minister further said too high prices could reduce demand for oil which would harm the producers by losing market share which was almost the case for the time being.

He stated that shale oil production breakeven is reportedly below 40 dollars per barrel.

Petronas to be assigned SP phase 11 development project

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zanganeh mentioned South Pars phase 11 development project noting that Iran lacked technical savvy to complete South Pars Phase 11 whose development was planned in a contract signed between by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and a consortium of Total, Petropars and CNPCI. Total pulled out of the deal and China has not stepped forward.

"CNPCI has so far failed to start developing Phase 11 project in Iran. Petropars, as a member of the project's consortium, is to be assigned development of the project," he said.

"China is a friend of Iran and the latter would not opt for severing ties with China for foot-dragging in projects. We are seeking alternative solutions."

He also said that Iran eyed 300,000 bpd oil recovery from West Karoun Oilfields.

10MW solar farm goes operational in southeastern Iran

ENERGY TEHRAN — A 10-megawatt solar power plant was inaugurated in Kerman province southeastern Iran last week, Mehr news agency reported.

Based in Baft County, the \$4.6-million plant was fully designed and constructed by Iranian experts.

According to Energy Ministry, the new solar farm will help reduce greenhouse gases by up to 10,000 tons annually and save the consumption of 4 million cubic meters of natural gas and over 3,000 cubic meters of water.

Currently, nine solar plants with a total capacity of 59 MW are operational in the central Iranian province, which has a dry climate and has sufficient solar radiation.

Meanwhile, 926 rooftop systems are also functioning in the province, with a total capacity of 8,228 kilowatts.

According to the energy ministry, currently the capacity

of Iran's renewable power plants stands at 724 megawatts (MW), and 416 MW capacity of new power plants are under construction.

As reported, of the country's total renewable capacity, 44 percent is the share of solar power plants while the share of wind farms stands at 40 percent and small-scaled hydropower plants generate 13 percent of the total renewable capacity.

Accounting for only six percent of the country's total power generation capacity, renewable power plants have created 43,450 job opportunities across the country and the volume of private investment in this sector has exceeded 124 trillion rials (over \$2.95 billion).

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic

demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

According to Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), the number of small scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is being increased noticeably as Iranian households and small industries have embraced the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

In early May, Seyed Mohammad Sadeqzadeh, the head of SATBA, announced that Iran plans to add electricity generated from renewable sources to its export basket.

According to the official, the capacity of power generation from the renewable sources will exceed 1000MW by the end of the current Iranian year (March, 19 2020).

Way of Appropriate Workbook in Producing and Delivering Auto

SAIPA Becomes Leading Car Manufacturing Co. in Nationwide

At the end of Iranian month of Khordad in the past Iranian calendar year in 1397 (June 21, 2018), SAIPA Car Making Company managed to produce more than 100,000 vehicles as of the first working day of the current Iranian calendar year (April 6, 2019).

Despite US sanctions imposed on Iran and many ups and downs, attaining high production volume is undoubtedly considered as a giant achievement in the current year named after "boosting domestic production" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. In spite of international restrictions and other economic challenges facing the country, SAIPA Auto Making Company managed to increase its production volume in the country.

With due observance to the said issue, SAIPA Auto Making Company was turned into the leading and first car manufacturing company in the current year (started March 21, 2019).

In this period, SAIPA Car Making Company managed to manufacture 60,000 various types of passenger cars in the same period for delivery to its customers. This car manufacturing company intends to accelerate supply of advanced parts for its products.

Undoubtedly, attaining this status under the auspices of supports of government and the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade has been realized in the current year named after as "boosting domestic production".

Success of industries of the country at the threshold of National Day of Industry and Mine is regarded as a giant achievement for the subsidiaries of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade in the year that the company faced serious challenges and restrictions in various production fields.

Implementation of Accurate Production Policies

Accurate and precise implementation of production policies and programs is the first factor behind recent successes of SAIPA Car Making Company. Improvement of level of cooperation and parts manufacturers and suppliers through fast payment of claims, reduction of current costs, guidance of liquidity and revolving capital to the production lines were of the salient programs followed up by this car manufacturing company. This policy caused growth of productivity in this industrial and production unit which lay the ground for the daily production capacity from 700 vehicles to more than 2,000.

Upon the successful implementation of this policy, production trend in this company experienced an ascending trend since the beginning of Feb. 2019.

Parliament Backs SAIPA Car Making Co.

Salient achievements of SAIPA Car Making Company which were gained in difficult economic period should not be ignored by the executive and supervisory organizations.

In this regard, a Parliament representative said, "with the implementation of an accurate and principled program, suitable ways were provided for this industrial and production unit to take maximum advantages of growth and productivity.

Seyed Ahsan Alavi made the remarks and asserted, "this car manufacturing company managed to promote its level in the field of manufacturing quality car."

According to the available statistics, SAIPA managed to produce more than 2,200 units, showing that this company took giant strides to increase production volume of car.

Nonstop Car Production

The second factor can greatly have contributed to materialize most objectives of the company is related to the implementation of programs entitled "nonstop production".

In this comprehensive program, car production using maximum capacity of production line consecutively, has been put atop agenda.

Despite outbreak of problems in the field of supplying some specific and advanced



parts from foreign markets, the company did not wait to supply these parts, rather, the company managed to provide these required parts from domestic leading parts manufacturing companies.

According to the reports, some restrictions caused by sanctions imposed against the country impeded provision of these products timely. According to its mission, the company did not halt its production and made its utmost efforts to supply required parts using high capabilities and capacities of domestic parts manufacturing companies.

With due observance to the said issue, most objectives of this industrial and production unit were realized.

Consecutive Supply of Car to Market

The third factor that caused SAIPA Car Manufacturing Company to be leader at the market is related to the consecutive implementation of policy in the field of supply of car to the consumer market. In sales scheme of products, SAIPA Car Making Company, moreover meeting demands to its previous commitments, managed to implement various sales schemes in a short three-month period, the issue of which provided the liquidity required by this industrial and production unit. In implementation of this policy, SAIPA never ignored supply of high-quality car to the domestic market. In the current year (started March 21, 2019), company's policies of consecutive supply and delivery of cars to its customers continued seriously and this industrial and production group managed to manufacture and supply more than 60,000 high-quality cars to the market by the end of first three months of the current Iranian calendar year in 1398 (March 21 – June 21).

The available statistics show that in the first days of the Iranian month of Tir (June 21), car production volume of this company exceeded 1,500 units. Given the successful implementation of production policy, it seems that car production volume of the company will increase in coming weeks.

Unsparring Support of the Ministry of Industry for Production Boom

Boosting domestic production and unsparring support of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade from the company have been cited as the other factor that

led to the success of this industrial and production unit in materializing macro policies of the country. Offering financial facilities to car and parts manufacturing companies on the one hand and also following up the policy of booming production lines of these industries by SAIPA Car Making Company caused national strategy of "production boom" to be taken into serious consideration in car industry particularly.

Undoubtedly, in the very difficult economic situation and existence of many obstacles in the field of production [including restrictions caused by the US sanctions imposed against the country, devaluation of national currency, skyrocketing price of exchange rate, shortage of required liquidity and many other factors, SAIPA Car Making Company managed to materialize most of its objectives using an accurate and principled policy.

Generally speaking, SAIPA Car Making Company managed to protect itself against risks caused by the mentioned difficulties.

Indigenization of Parts, SAIPA's Strategic Objective

Special emphasis of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution with regard to the necessity of optimal use of domestic capabilities and potentials in the field of booming production and also unflinching effort of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade in the field of materialization of this strategic objective caused the company to focus on making huge investment for domestic manufacturing of parts in line with reducing dependency to foreign resources.

For this reason, the company first identified leading industrialists, producers and knowledge-based companies as well as pioneer startups. In general SAIPA Car Making Company established very close relationship with leading parts manufacturing companies, knowledge-based firms and also domestic startups for designing and manufacturing advanced and sophisticated parts.

In this regard, SAIPA Car Making Company intends to identify leading parts manufacturing companies which enjoy high capabilities and capacities in line with supporting these units.

This leading car manufacturing company has taken giant strides in line with materializing most of its objectives such as organizing permanent exhibition for supply of its required parts, participating in International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2019), holding an international symposium for manufacturing body parts, etc. in cooperation with Sharif University of Technology, etc.

Given the current restrictions overshadowing the country in the course of supply of required raw materials, taking advantage of high capacities and capabilities of the country can lay the ground for the growth and excellence of domestic companies especially in the current year named after "Boosting Domestic Production" as emphasized by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Concluding Remarks

With due observance to the said issues, SAIPA Car Making Company managed to get the lion's car production share in domestic market.

The management of the company focuses on booming production through supporting domestic parts manufacturers, development and growth of portfolios with the adoption of policies for promoting current platforms, designing and manufacturing new platforms using high capacities and capabilities of domestic companies, etc.

However, SAIPA Car Making Company will implement world's latest car production technologies in line with booming production.

By: A.Saeedi



Why Britain cannot interfere in China’s internal affairs

TEHRAN (FNA) — It is said history has a habit of repeating itself. After the recent violent incidents at the Legislative Council building in Hong Kong, some politicians in the United Kingdom have cited the Sino-British Joint Declaration as the reason for their support of protesters in Hong Kong, and claim that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government must not use the violence as an excuse for a crackdown.

This blatant support for the illegal acts in the Hong Kong SAR and the gross interference in China’s internal affairs will undoubtedly harm the China-UK relations.

The Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed by China and the United Kingdom in 1984. It lays out the arrangements for the resumption of China’s sovereignty over Hong Kong and provides details about the transition period.

After Hong Kong’s return to China on July 1, 1997, the rights and obligations stipulated in the statement related to the British side were fulfilled and the statement became a historical document. To argue otherwise, if not because of ignorance of history and politics, it is an attempt to interfere in China’s internal affairs.

It has also been claimed by some people in the United Kingdom that the freedom of the people of Hong Kong was won by the British. British scholar Martin Jacques says this is an example of British hypocrisy. Under colonial rule, Hong Kong “never enjoyed even a semblance of democracy. It was ruled from 6,000 miles away in London,” he said.

During the colonial period, Hong Kong governors were appointed by Britain, the Hong Kong people never had a right to vote, and the local judiciary was not independent.

After the handover of Hong Kong, China’s government implemented the policies of “One Country, Two Systems” and “Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy” in accordance with China’s Constitution and Hong Kong’s Basic Law. Under this arrangement, the people of Hong Kong have enjoyed unprecedented democratic rights and freedoms.

According to data released by the World Bank, Hong Kong’s global rule of law ranking jumped from 60th place in 1996 to 11th in 2015. Hong Kong is arguably more free and democratic now than it ever has been.

As for the handling of the recent protests, the government in Hong Kong has addressed the incidents of violence in accordance with the law. The Basic Law does give Hong Kong residents the freedoms of speech, assembly, and demonstration. These freedoms do not, however, negate the need for protesters to respect the rights of others and to ensure that public safety and order are upheld. Nor do these freedoms give protesters the right to break the law, commit acts of violence, or trample on the rule of law.

Twenty-two years have passed since British colonialism in Hong Kong ended. China resumed the exercise of sovereignty over the region, and Hong Kong affairs became an internal matter for China.

If the relationship between China and the United Kingdom is to remain healthy, it must be fostered in an atmosphere of mutual respect and the understanding that neither side has the right to interfere in the other’s internal affairs. London should let go of its colonialist mentality in these modern times. This is no longer the 19th century.

Tanvir Chowdhury: Most Rohingya giving up hope of repatriation

TEHRAN (FNA) — Tanvir Ahmed Chowdhury, journalist, says Myanmar’s government still neglects Rohingya Muslims’ demand to be recognized as an ethnic group, leaving no room for them to return to their homelands.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Tanvir Chowdhury said Rohingya demand official recognition by Myanmar authorities, as well as compensation and justice for the crime committed against them by the Myanmar forces.

“Most Rohingya do not see much future in Bangladesh. Their life is very restricted... Many are now keen to escape the situation in camps of Bangladesh and eager to find better economic opportunity in much richer nations across South East Asia”, he added.

Tanvir Ahmed Chowdhury is a journalist based in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka. He taught journalism at the American University in Bangladesh. He was of the first journalists who attended Cox’s Bazar to report Rohingya’s conditions in 2017.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ The world’s largest refugee camp is the home to over one million Rohingya for nearly two years now. How do you see the Rohingya situation in the Cox’s Bazar camps?

A: Things are much better for them now in the Refugees camps in Cox’s Bazar. Majority of the refugees are sheltered in Kutupalong camp. They feel somewhat secured now, they get weekly food rations and other basic provisions from local and International AID agencies. Although the living conditions are very rudimentary and congested – tents are made with Bamboo poles and plastic sheets, exposed to seasonal harsh weather conditions, only basic services like sanitation and clean water are available, although not quite adequate for the sheer number of people there. However, the biggest challenge for the refugees is now access to basic education and to find a source of income. Nearly 55 percent of the refugees are children and they do not have access to any kinds of formal education. There are around 2000 learning centers, which are set up by the AID agencies providing non-formal educations. The refugee camps also have other unusual immediate concerns, like smuggling of drugs, human and sex trafficking and to an extent even gang violence.

■ For Rohingya, Bangladesh came to be seen as a refuge from a harsh home country. Do you think if Rohingya will be repatriated any time soon?

A: The UN panel says it still receives reports of human rights abuses in Rakhine and Chin states. In recent months, there have been clashes between Myanmar’s military and the insurgent Buddhist Arakan Army rebels, which mainly recruits from the Rakhine Buddhist ethnic group. Thousands of people have been displaced internally within Rakhine state due to frequent clashes between Myanmar security forces and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists rebels, who want autonomy for Rakhine state. This new situation has also made repatriation more complex. Almost all Rohingya feel that the ground is not conducive for them to return back to their home. Their key demands are: that they first are recognized as ethnic Rohingya, and get some sort of citizenship card. They also demand to be compensated for what they have lost and also get justice for the crime committed against them. Under the prevailing circumstance, repatriation appears to be out of the table for now.

■ Torture, intimidation and loss of life await many Rohingya women and girls trying to flee Bangladesh to Malaysia. Why do they still risk their lives at the hands of traffickers?

A: Most Rohingya do not see much future in Bangladesh. Their life is very restricted. They are not allowed to work, go to Bangladeshi schools and confined with a limited area of Cox’s Bazar. Most have given up the hope of repatriation, at least in the near future. Many are now keen to escape the situation in camps of Bangladesh and eager to find better economic opportunity in much richer nations across South East Asia despite the danger involved. There is a sense of hopelessness among the Rohingya as they do not see any solution for the predicament anytime soon. They have experienced enough turmoil and torture. They are not afraid to take chance to look for a better future even at the hands of traffickers.

A review of the latest American electoral challenges

Is Biden hoping?

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — US President Donald Trump monitors public and state polls accurately! Trump knows well that he does not have much opportunity to change the polls. One of the main reasons for the early start of the US presidential campaign is the same. An overview of the latest news on the US presidential election can give us a clear picture of this competition:

Poll: Biden only Democratic candidate with wide lead over Trump in hypothetical matchup

Businessinsider reported that Former Vice President Joe Biden is the only Democratic contender for the 2020 Election who holds a comfortable lead over President Donald Trump, according to a new poll. A Washington Post/ABC News poll found Biden would lead Trump by 53% to 43% among registered voters who responded as if the election was held today.

California Sen. Kamala Harris and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders held narrow leads over Trump, pulling two points and one point, respectively above the president. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren tied with Trump. The poll’s timing is worth noting, as it was taken between June 28 and July 1, while Trump was at the G20 Summit and days before Biden said he was blindsided by a confrontation from Harris on his past vote that opposed desegregation busing.

NBC News reported last month that Trump’s re-election campaign let go of internal pollsters after leaked results showed the president trailing former Biden in critical states for the election.

That was the latest discouraging development for Trump, including results reported by the New York Times earlier this month and data obtained by ABC News showing Trump trailing Biden in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Florida. The two have traded public barbs as the race heats up, with Biden calling Trump a “bully” and the president lashing out at Biden as a “reclamation project.”

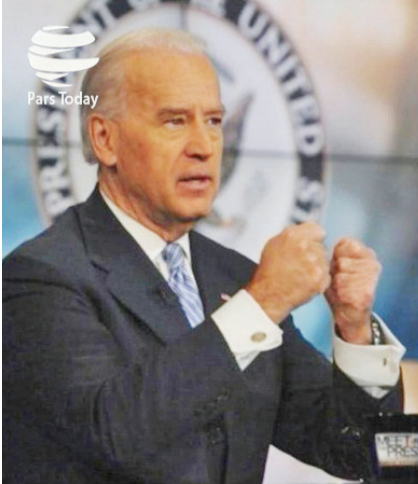
“Some things are just not salvageable,” Trump wrote in part of a tweet that knocked Biden’s bid for president.

Poll: Trump’s approval rating hits highest point of presidency

As The Hill reported, Trump’s approval rating has surged to the highest level of his presidency, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. The survey, which was released Sunday, found that 47 percent of registered voters approve of the job Trump is doing in the White House, a figure that represents a 5-point increase from April. Fifty percent of registered voters disapprove of Trump’s performance as president, however. Meanwhile, 44 percent of voting-age Americans said they approve of Trump’s job performance, while 53 percent said they disapprove of it. Just 39 percent of voting-age Americans said they approved of Trump’s job performance in April.

The survey’s release comes as the 2020 Democratic primary race begins to heat up, as candidates such as Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) gain ground on former Vice President Joe Biden in the polls.

The economy served as the only issue where a majority said they approve of Trump’s performance, according to the



poll. Fifty-one percent of respondents said they approved of the way he has handled economic issues since entering the White House. Forty-two percent said they disapprove of his handling of the economy. Meanwhile, a majority of respondents said they disapprove of how Trump has handled immigration, health care, issues of special concern to women, abortion, climate change, gun violence and foreign policy. Forty-nine percent said they disapprove of the way he’s handled taxes, while 42 percent said they approve.

In addition, 65 percent of respondents said Trump has acted in an “unpresidential” way since taking office. Twenty-eight percent said he has acted in a “fitting and proper” way. The Washington-Post ABC News poll was conducted between June 28 and July 1 among a national population of 1,008 adults. The margin of error for the full sample is 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error is 4 percentage points for the sample of 875 registered voters.

Warren and Harris Rise in Democratic Primary, Challenging Male Front-Runners As New York Times reported, When Beth Krerowicz began reviewing the platoon of Democratic presidential candidates, her first instinct was to back Joseph R. Biden Jr., whom she saw as the strongest opponent to President Trump.

But recently, Ms. Krerowicz, 58, began to have second thoughts. So this week she trekked to a community center not far from the Las Vegas Strip to watch Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts detail her plans for reshaping the economy. Ms. Krerowicz, an executive assistant who is between jobs, said that she was now leaning heavily toward Ms. Warren, and that Senator Kamala Harris of California was her second choice. “I want someone who I know will stand up, that has a backbone,” Ms. Krerowicz said, suggesting that Ms. Warren and Ms. Harris could perhaps form a ticket. “They’re both very, very strong women. I would love to see them together, but I think Elizabeth has the experience.”

In the span of just a few weeks, voters like Ms. Krerowicz have pushed the race into a new, highly uncertain phase, propelling a pair of women toward the top of the Democratic pack at the expense of the onetime front-runners, Mr. Biden and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Neither woman is yet in a position to take control of the race. Mr. Biden and Mr.



Sanders retain considerable advantages, most notably the backing they enjoy among working-class voters and their significant financial reserves. Mr. Biden, 76, is still the clear front-runner, and both he and Mr. Sanders, 77, are not likely to see their support simply melt away.

But recent polls, and interviews with voters in the early primary and caucus states over the last week, found that Ms. Harris and Ms. Warren had plainly broken through, drawing on a deep hunger within the Democratic electorate for big ideas and groundbreaking female leadership. Together, the two senators have functioned as something of a political pincer, squeezing Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders from the left and the relative center, and endangering any hope of an easy march to victory for either man.

After Ms. Harris’s searing clash with Mr. Biden over his record on race in the first primary debate, she claimed for herself a chunk of Mr. Biden’s formidable support among African-Americans and white liberals. And Ms. Warren, with her relentless focus on economic inequality and political corruption, and her full portfolio of progressive policy proposals, has cut deeply into the coalition Mr. Sanders built during his 2016 campaign.

Their performances in the first debate lifted both women, with Ms. Harris making an especially sharp ascent after confronting Mr. Biden — a showdown that convinced some voters she had the toughness necessary for the general election.

“I just think she has the moxie to bring it to the Donald,” said Claire Haws, a stay-at-home mother from Des Moines, who contributed to Ms. Harris’s campaign after watching her in the debate.

Yet both women still face a complex path forward, one complicated by the enduring strengths of Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders, and perhaps most of all by each other. While they have distinct political bases, Ms. Warren and Ms. Harris are both relying on the support of women and educated liberals to propel their candidacies. That strategy also means they are dividing up powerful constituencies that could in theory make one of them a dominant figure. Joseph R. Biden Jr. still holds a pronounced lead in some polls and is unlikely to lose all support from working class voters, a constituency with whom Ms. Warren and Ms. Harris are lagging.

“They’re in the same lane right now, and it’s getting pretty crowded,” Patty Judge, Iowa’s former agriculture secretary, said.

The two women also still face competition for their core supporters from other dogged candidates reaching for the mantle of change, like Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., and Senators Cory Booker of New Jersey and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. Former Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the longtime Democratic leader in that chamber, said Mr. Biden still had an “early advantage.” Though he is neutral in Nevada’s early caucus, Mr. Reid, who worked closely with Mr. Biden for 30 years, said the former vice president should not be underestimated.

“Joe Biden has a great deal of good will that’s been created over the years that he’s been in politics,” Mr. Reid said, pointing to Mr. Biden’s tragedy-inflected biography and expansive network of political friendships as foundations for his candidacy. “Here’s a man whose life story is something you can’t ignore.”

But Mr. Reid also praised the two women who are surging in the race, calling Ms. Harris a candidate “you have to be impressed with” and describing Ms. Warren’s indignant economic message as a good match for his own state, which was ravaged by the Great Recession. “Here in Nevada,” he said, “it resonates quite well.”

Ms. Harris and Ms. Warren have been eyeing each other warily for months, anticipating a tug of war for Democratic voters who are eager for a fresher-faced champion than Mr. Biden or Mr. Sanders. A new poll in Iowa showed that voters who list either woman as their top choice list the other as their most common second-choice preference. Ms. Harris already appears to have cut into Ms. Warren’s support from liberals, and she is also improving with moderates and African-Americans — a combination of constituencies that prove pivotal in Democratic primaries.

Some in Ms. Warren’s camp have long seen Ms. Harris as a serious threat, but have also questioned whether Ms. Harris can sustain the energy she has generated with set-piece moments like her takedown of Mr. Biden. Ms. Harris has repeatedly bobbled policy issues, most recently after her debate confrontation last week with the former vice president over school busing, when she was quizzed on her own views on busing and struggled to differentiate her position from that of Mr. Biden.

Ms. Harris’s advisers, in turn, are convinced that Ms. Warren will ultimately suffer for her fixation on her policy agenda and relative lack of interest in going after Mr. Trump directly. For all of the enthusiasm over Ms. Warren’s churn of ideas, many Democrats remain deeply concerned about her readiness to face Mr. Trump in the general election.

The two women’s contrasting approaches to the race were on vivid display over the last week, as Ms. Harris carried her momentum into Iowa and Ms. Warren pressed her advantage in Nevada. Ms. Harris, tapping into the excitement surrounding her debate performance, debuted a new line of attack against Mr. Trump, encouraging Democrats to see her as a prizefighter pursuing a president they loathe.

Trump’s rant against Japan treaty may be a ripple, but will prompt security rethink

By Chen Yang

GLOBALTIMES — US President Donald Trump gave vent to his dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the US and Japan at a press conference after the G20 summit on June 29 - “Look, if somebody attacks Japan, we go after them and we are in a battle - full force in effect... If somebody should attack the United States, they don’t have to do that. That’s unfair.”

But he added he was not thinking of withdrawing from the pact, which may bring solace to Japanese minds. The defense pact has been the cornerstone of the postwar Japan-US alliance. Once Washington withdraws from the treaty, it will not only affect Japan’s diplomacy and Tokyo-Washington ties, but also the geopolitics of the entire Asia-Pacific region.

The treaty was originally aimed at bringing stability to Japan more than looking after its security. In 1951, Japan’s then prime minister Shigeru Yoshida signed the treaty under which the US would still have rights to keep troops in Japan even after the Asian country regained its sovereignty. The greatest significance of this treaty was to change the status of US military from an occupying force to a legitimate one. However, no US obligations to protect Japan were stipulated, which paved the way for subsequent revision of the treaty.

In 1960, in spite of much opposition at home, the Nobusuke Kishi administration pushed forward the revised security treaty, which clearly mentioned the US responsibility to protect Japan. The old treaty laid the initial foundation for Japan-US relations, and the revised one has served as the cornerstone of ties since the postwar period and has set the tone of postwar Japanese diplomacy - US dominance of Japan. What Trump is now complaining about is precisely the revised treaty. Although Japan has benefited a lot from



the treaty since the war ended, the country never fully accepted it.

Japan emerged rapidly from defeat, rising as the world’s second-largest economy in 1968 and kept the position for 42 years. It was due to US military protection that Japan was able to concentrate on economic development, reduce conflicts with other countries, and build an image of a peaceful power. The treaty has emboldened Japan in its approach to foreign affairs. In 2012, Washington sent a clear message that the treaty should apply to the Diaoyu Islands. It was the treaty that gave Japan the courage to challenge China on the islands and the South China Sea issue in recent years.

However, the security treaty has also shackled Japan’s military development, drawing concern within the country. According to the US Congressional Research Service, about 54,000 US military personnel are stationed at 85 Japanese facilities. The deployment is aimed at providing security protection to Japan while preventing the revival of Japan’s

militarism. The treaty, to some extent, has been used to keep Japan under check.

As US power waned, Washington started asking Japan to wield more responsibility in maintaining regional and global peace. For instance, after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe started his second term in 2012, Japan decided to exercise its right to collective self-defense, relax the Arms Export Ban, and purchase a large quantity of US military weapons.

But the East Asian country is still unable to freely develop armaments due to restrictions posed by the treaty. Therefore, Trump’s tirade against the treaty may not make Abe worry, instead raising hopes that US withdrawal from the pact would unshackle Japan from the restraints of Washington’s oversight and grant it more military autonomy.

It is also noteworthy that Trump scoffed at the treaty in the wake of Abe’s attempts to amend the Japanese constitution. Amending Japan’s constitution has been Abe’s long-cherished political dream. Since his second term, he has hyped up the so-called North Korea threat theory and China threat theory in a bid to gain support for the move. Nonetheless, with easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and the warming of China-Japan relations, opinion in favor of Abe’s wish has been found lacking. After all, what is the necessity of a constitutional amendment when the surrounding environment is not volatile? Hence, Trump’s complaints about the treaty have likely provided the Abe administration a new card. That is, Japan’s security depends on the Japanese rather than the US. But it remains to be seen how the card will affect Japanese public opinion. Trump’s claim is only a ripple that can hardly shake the foundation of the Japan-US alliance. But this ripple will certainly prompt Japan to seriously consider measures it deems necessary to safeguard its security. Japan-US relations will last for a long time, but the security treaty may still be tweaked.

Europe: from integration to identity crisis

By Alexander Casella

ASIATIMES — conoclastic historian John Lukacs once commented that when Adolf Hitler's Third Reich collapsed, some 10,000 Germans, not all of whom were Nazis, committed suicide. Conversely, when the Soviet Union imploded and Communism crumbled, there is no record of even one Communist committing suicide.

The reason for this discrepancy was underlined by no one less than Josef Stalin. One week after Germany invaded the Soviet Union and as the Soviet army was retreating in total disarray, Stalin went on the radio to exhort the nation to resist the Nazis with one caveat; his call to arms did not refer to the defense of Communism or of the Soviet Union. Fighting the Nazis would come under the heading of "The Great Patriotic War."

Nationalism had trumped ideology, and for a good reason, too: Russia, like Germany, was a country. Communism was an ideology. Giving one's life to defend Mother Russia was in the order of things. Getting killed in the name of Dialectical Materialism was not.

Though the context is different, Stalin had instinctively understood what a whole generation of Western European politicians had failed to grasp, namely that it takes more than a few treaties to change a people's psyche and that when all is said and done, nationalism is the bedrock on which nations are anchored.

The Cold War created, for all practical purposes, two Europes. Eastern Europe, enduring under the fetters of a Soviet-imposed system, went into social hibernation. Issues like nationalism, anti-Semitism and multiculturalism, which had dominated the political landscape until the closing days of World War II, were swept under the rug by the countries' respective Communist parties on instructions from Moscow.

Man is a social animal who lives in tribes and, given the chance, will preferably share his territory with those like him, those with whom he shares a common language, common values and customs and, if not a common at least a dominant religion. To a large extent it is the tribe that binds individuals together and which provides them with a common denominator they can all refer to.

Tribes are in essence territorial, and while they might harbor members of other tribes, they have a keen sense of the space they occupy and in which they are the dominant group.

The tribalization of Europe reached its pinnacle with the end of World War II in 1945. All the German minorities that had drifted east over the centuries had been driven back to Germany, and overall the borders of Europe's nation-states matched the borders of the dominant tribes: Poles in Poland, Magyars in Hungary, Germans in Germany, Romanians in Romania, Italians in Italy and the like.

While Eastern Europe was frozen in time, Western Europe slowly embarked on an integration process that started with the treaty establishing a Coal and Steel Community in 1952. While the community was purely an industrial endeavor, the six member states — France, West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Luxembourg — represented a Western European core of nations that shared a common vision of human rights and democratic institutions. It was this communality that induced the same six states five years later to adopt the Treaty of Rome that saw the creation of the European Union and its Commission, based in Brussels.

Western Europe, with Germany in the lead, embarked on a process of re-evaluation of the social and ethical archetypes that had led the continent into fighting two world wars. While the re-evaluation was extensive, albeit not fully comprehensive and gaps were left unfilled, what emerged was the semblance of a common understanding: The future was not to be held hostage to the ghosts of the past, and the likes of democracy, tolerance and the respect of others should not be smothered under the dictates of nationalism and dictatorship.

Over the subsequent decades the EU proceeded to grow by including new members such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Finland and the United Kingdom. While these countries had all very much their own make-up, they were also part of a common family of shared values such as democracy, social tolerance and free speech that had largely overcome the divides that had led to World War II. This obviously did not come about overnight but gradually developed during the 45-year period that went from the end of the war to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The implosion of the Soviet Union released its Eastern European vassal states from the dictatorships imposed on them by their respective Communist parties and their Soviet overseers. This newfound "freedom," as well as the urge to distance themselves from a potential Russian zone of influence, fueled the longing of Europe's new independent Eastern states to join both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Community. This process, and especially its speed, was viewed with some concern by some of the founding states but, egged on by the United States, 11 new members had joined the EC by 2007.

What the EC's new members shared was not only a deep antipathy to Russia but also a deficit of 45 years of kinesis as regards the practice of democracy and the development of social norms consonant with those practiced by the other members of the European Community. The end result was that by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the European Community, which until then had been an amalgam of individual nation-states sharing a common vision, had morphed into an alliance comprising two very different constituents with at times mutually exclusive aspirations.

This divide, which proved the price that the core EU had to pay for its accelerated and often thoughtless expansion, could not have happened at a worse time for the alliance.

The European Community was the brainchild of the center-right neoliberal vision that prevailed in Western Europe after the end of World War II. It was predicated on the wearing away of national borders among the member states and the creation of one single market, one single currency and one customs union. This single market, which would entail the free movement of goods, capital and people, would have a leveling effect that would slowly erode national and cultural identities, which would be amalgamated into an as yet undefined "European" personality.

The basic requirement of a single market is that the



goods that are offered fit a set of common norms. In order to define what became known the European Norms (EN), the European Commission went into overdrive. Over the decades, practically everything that could be standardized, from garage doors to protective gloves to fuel for stoves to helmets for cyclists to cork floor tiles, was. Most of the standardization, such as the one pertaining to cloth sizes or car safety features, made sense. Others, such as those pertaining to how curved a banana should be, less so. Others showed the disconnect between the faceless bureaucracy of the Commission and the social reality of its member states.

Flooring in Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece is mostly of tile. In England, the material of choice is carpeting. Attempts by the Commission to standardize the suction power of vacuum cleaners at a lower setting to save power were met with howls of protests by those countries of Central Europe where carpeting was the rule. The same happened when the Commission sought to standardize toasters and tea kettles. And while the outcry in England was disproportionate to the deed, it did reflect an undefined but growing feeling throughout Europe that an anonymous entity based in Brussels was in the process of depriving the people of Europe of their national identities.

In its urge to standardize, and motivated only by commercial considerations the Commission, over the decades, developed into an body which operated by its own rules and proved increasingly disconnected from the psychological makeup of the grassroots components of the member states.

This disconnect would probably have endured as a minor nuisance, albeit one that gave rise to considerable mirth, had it not dovetailed with two major crises. The first was the Greek debt crisis, which came close to bringing down the euro and which was ultimately contained as a result of German intervention. That the European Commission did not see the crisis coming and proved ineffective in bringing it under control mostly escaped the attention of Europe's public opinion. What did not was the migration crisis.

The conflict in Syria resulted in some 11 million Syrians being displaced. Of this number, 6 million were displaced internally while 5 million sought refuge abroad, initially mostly in Lebanon and Turkey. In a subsequent movement, close to a million Syrians moved from Turkey to Greece and from there to Germany, where in 2015 Chancellor Angela Merkel chose to grant them asylum. For the German chancellor the decision proved a watershed for in essence two reasons.

On the European level, the unilateral decision by Germany illustrated the glaring absence of a comprehensive EC asylum policy. Thus Germany was left to act alone. On the national level, Merkel's decision, hailed in some quarters as "humanitarian," provoked a massive negative backlash among a large segment of the population, which substantially increased the votes of the anti-immigration far right.

Merkel's decision, irrespective of its potential humanitarian dimension, underscored another failure of the EU system. Freedom of movement is one of the foundations of the EU. With countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy having massive unemployment rates and countries like Germany having labor shortages, one would expect unemployed Italians to fill the German labor gap. In practice, however, this expectation was not fulfilled. And while a considerable number of Poles in the construction industry moved to Britain, where their skills were in short supply, the average unemployed youngster from southern Italy preferred to stay home with his mother doing nothing rather than moving to Germany to learn a new language and acquire a new skill.

But not so the Syrians. Thus, ultimately, and irrespective of the humanitarian dimension of her decision, by opening her doors to the Syrians, Merkel was fulfilling a need provoked by a pressing labor shortage. Germany's industries applauded the move. The grassroots did not. Politically it was a cost from which her popularity never recovered.

In parallel to the Syrian crisis, another massive irregular population movement developed through the Mediterranean. During Muammar Gaddafi's rule, between 1 million and 2 million sub-Saharan Africans would come every year to Libya to work. Among this group the majority would return home, while an estimated 30,000 would try to move illegally to Italy. The Italian government had an informal agreement with Gaddafi by which all the African migrants intercepted by the Italian navy on the high seas would be returned to Libya, thus keeping the movement under control.

The overthrow of Gaddafi in 2011 not only deprived some 2 million Africans of a source of revenue but also turned Libya into a major avenue for irregular movement from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. With people smugglers capitalizing on Libya's state of anarchy, literally millions of sub-Saharan Africans took to the sea on mostly unworthy boats or rubber rafts in the hope of reaching Italy, and from there the likes of Germany, Switzerland or the UK.

The reactions of the European grassroots were not predicated on numbers. For Western Europe, receiving foreigners is an ongoing process. In Germany, some 6% of the population, equivalent to some 16 million, is foreign. In the UK the number reaches 14%. And as for Switzerland, a country where anti-foreigner feelings are practically non-existent, 24% of the total population is foreign.

Ultimately, however, it is not so much the number of immigrants but their origin that proved an issue. Thus in Switzerland, some 95% of the foreign residents are German, Italian or French and basically come from the same cultural and ethnic origin as the local population. Both visually and culturally they blend in with the local population, and while differences endure, they are not perceived as antagonistic by the indigenous population.

Conversely, the arrival of massive numbers of Africans or Arabs of Muslim faith can have a destabilizing effect on societies, which are in essence Caucasian and are imbued with Judeo-Christian traditions. The fact that the arrivals are irregular, are uncontrolled by governments and consist of people with no skills who harbor different social values and who often insist in retaining these values even if they are incompatible with those prevalent in the countries of destination, only compounds the problem.

Granted, the total number of irregular arrivals as compared with the number of inhabitants of the European Community as a whole was relatively small and theoretically manageable. However, this did not take into account the fact that the arrivals were not evenly spread among the EU member states but were concentrated in the likes of Italy, France, Germany and Sweden, while such countries as Bulgaria or the Baltic states were spared from the influx.

Faced with an influx it did not have the political will to address head-on, the European Commission in 2015 drew up a plan that would provide for the relocation of the arrivals among the 28 EU member states according to a quota system. The plan, which was rejected wholesale, proved a seminal moment in Europe's struggle with irregular migration.

Confronted with the incapacity both of the Commission and of their own governments to deal with the crisis, large segments of public opinion in some of the countries most exposed to the influx such as Germany, Italy, France and Austria started to cast their votes for right-wing anti-immigration parties that until then had been in essence marginalized. In parallel, some governments started to act unilaterally. Thus Germany prevailed on Turkey to close its border with Greece through which more than a million Syrians had transited on their way to Central Europe. As for Italy, it sought to enlist the assistance of several Libyan factions to prevent African migrants from proceeding onward by boat to Europe.

But the greatest divide within the EU followed a line that could have been foreseen had the bureaucracy in Brussels not been so focused on monetarist issues.

With the countries of entry struggling to keep the inflow from reaching their borders, the countries of destination, incapable of agreeing on a common migration policy and the Commission disconnected from the social reality prevailing in the member states, it was ultimately the new members that took a coordinated stand on the issue of migration.

After the failed 2015 attempt by the Commission to redistribute illegal migrants among all EU member states, the Visegrad group, which includes Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, announced that they would not agree to resettle either migrants or refugees. The paradox was that while none of these nations were countries of destination, they saw the potentially disruptive effects of the inflow on other member states and sought to insulate themselves from the influx.

This concern fueled the fear, real or imagined, of a population overflow from Africa and the Muslim world directed toward Europe that threatened the values on which its societies were created.

With the European institutions unable to address the inflow, and the traditional political parties also failing to do so, the electorate increasingly turned to right-wing anti-immigration parties.

Thus, ultimately, the failure of the European institutions to control immigration will have resulted not only in strengthening the extreme right in countries like Germany, Italy, Poland, Austria and Hungary — not to speak of Brexit — but also in creating a major divide within the Union between the Western member states and its more recent Eastern European partners.

That events took this turn could probably have been avoided, but this would have required that the EU's founding fathers, and the bureaucracy they spawned, to be willing to come to terms with the fact that economic integration is not an end in itself and that ignoring national identity carries a price.

Libya massacre sparks outcry over Fortress Europe

ASIATIMES — The deaths of over 50 people trapped in a migrant detention center prompt scrutiny over EU policies.

alls are growing for an end to an EU-backed policy of trapping migrants in Libya, after 53 people were killed and more than 130 wounded in an air strike on their detention center.



It was the second time the Tajoura facility, east of the capital Tripoli, had been hit by an air strike, according to Doctors Without Borders (MSF). In the aftermath of Wednesday's strike, some 250 migrants, many of them women and children, remained at the detention center, according to the International Organization for Migration.

While the strike itself has been blamed on forces loyal to warlord Khalifa Haftar — backed by France, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt in his bid to take Tripoli — the fact that so many people were left trapped and exposed in the midst of a civil war has been blamed squarely on the Europe Union.

The EU, namely Italy and France, funds the Libyan Coast Guard, which is charged with turning back refugees and migrants who attempt to make crossings to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. Human Rights Watch in March called on France to suspend a delivery of six ships to the force and instead allow rescue operations and disembarkation at safe ports.

"Over the course of the conflict, which has now been raging for three months of fighting in the city of Tripoli, we have seen thousands of people who have been intercepted at sea and returned to detention centers even whilst there is conflicts raging around the city," Sam Turner, the head of MSF's Libya operations, told PRI.

Turner said that when he visited the Tajoura detention center after the previous air strike in May, he saw a piece of shrapnel that went through the roof of the women's section and landed a meter away from where a baby had been sleeping.

He blames EU politicians for "complicity." "They believe that it acts to dissuade other refugees and migrants from attempting to make the crossing," he said.

Such reasoning is similar to that of US President Donald Trump, who tweeted last week amid outcry over family separations and overcrowding, harassment and unsanitary practices in detention facilities, that if migrants do not wish to experience such conditions, they should not attempt to enter the United States. "All problems solved!" the US leader said.

EU digs in In the wake of the migrant massacre, the International Organization for Migration and the UN Human Rights Council called for "an immediate end to detention of migrants and refugees" in Libya. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet echoed that call.

"I have repeatedly called for the closure of all migrant detention centers in Libya, where UN human-rights staff have documented severe overcrowding, torture, ill-treatment, forced labor, rape, and acute malnutrition, among other serious human-rights violations.

"I also repeat my call for the release of detained migrants and refugees as a matter of urgency, and for their access to humanitarian protection, collective shelters or other safe places, well away from areas that are likely to be affected by the hostilities," she said.

The head of the UN refugee agency, Filippo Grandi, said there were three key lessons to take from the deaths of the migrants.

"They must NOT be detained; civilians must NOT be a target; Libya is NOT a safe place of return," he tweeted.

The European Union denounced the attack on the Tajoura center, but appeared to reject calls to end migrant returns to Libya.

Brussels emphasized that more than 45,000 migrants have been allowed to return to their countries of origin while others have been granted emergency evacuations to a center in Niger, with the prospect of further resettlement.

Fueling the war Koert Debeuf, who tracks European policies toward Libya at the online newspaper EU Observer, says the bloc is to blame not only for sending migrants back to their deaths, but also for fueling the war.

While Brussels, like most of the international community, stresses its support for the UN-backed government in Tripoli, in practice European capitals are divided.

"They always say they support the UN. But at same time Italy and France are fighting for power — not only power but oil and gas. France is supporting militarily and politically Haftar, while Italy is supporting [Prime Minister] Sarraj. It's a complete mess," Debeuf said.

Haftar and his Libyan National Army — an umbrella of militias — in April launched a bid to capture Tripoli, where Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj heads the interim Government of National Accord. Thousands of people have been displaced and hundreds killed, with the attack on the Tajoura migrant center accounting for the biggest single loss of civilian life.

"The big problem with stopping these people and sending them back to Libya is it's not a safe place. There's a war going on, chaos, anarchy, and a massive problem of human trafficking. What the EU is doing is sending people back to hell," he said. Debeuf says Europe must end its end its fight for power in Libya and craft a sustainable migration policy.

"I do understand that after 2015, and a million and half people entering Europe [...] it did complicate politics. But right now they're just creating a big wall instead of having a migration policy — there's no policy," he told Asia Times.

Just last week, the chaos reached European shores when an activist German ship captain defied an Italian naval blockade and entered the port of Lampedusa with 42 migrants aboard. She had rescued them off the coast of Libya, after which they were stranded at sea without a port of entry.

"For two weeks, we had been informing the authorities that the situation of the people on board was becoming more and more critical and that the medical conditions of migrants were getting worse, day after day," the captain, Carola Rackete, told The Guardian newspaper. "But it was like talking to a brick wall."

The action incensed Italy's far-right deputy prime minister, Matteo Salvini, who has vowed to prevent activist rescue ships from docking in Italy, which is only now emerging from its third recession in a decade.

Had those migrants been intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard, the EU would not have had to deal with the controversy of their asylum claims — which is the point.

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Scientists have a new idea about Mars' methane mystery and its implications for life

For centuries, scientists have speculated about the existence of life on Mars. But it was only within the past 15 years that the search for life (past and present) really began to heat up.

It was at this time that methane, an organic molecule that is associated with many forms of life here on Earth (i.e. a «biosignature») was detected in Mars' atmosphere.

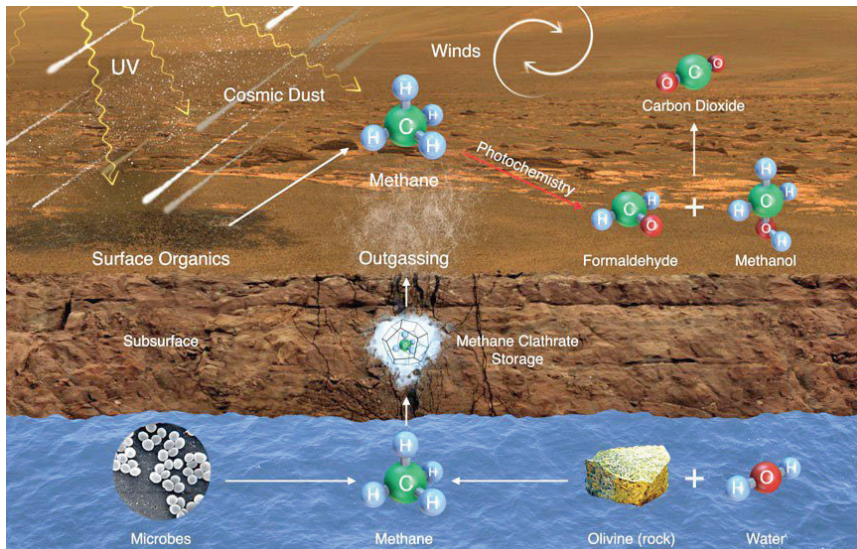
Since that time, attempts to study Mars' atmospheric methane have produced varying results. In some cases, methane has been found that was several times its normal concentrations; in others, it was absent.

Seeking to answer this mystery, an interdisciplinary team from Aarhus University recently conducted a study where they investigated a possible mechanism for the removal of methane from Mars' atmosphere.

On Mars, methane production appears to be seasonal in nature, fluctuating from about 0.24 parts per billion (ppb) in the northern hemisphere during winter to about 0.65 ppb during the summer.

At the same time, extended plumes have been detected which shows that it is also periodically released from discrete regions. On two occasions, the Curiosity rover happened to be in the vicinity of plumes; in December of 2014 and again back in June.

Various mechanisms have been proposed for both the production and disappearance of this methane over the years. In terms of production, these have ranged from non-biological processes such



as serpentinization (interactions between water, carbon dioxide, and olivine rock) to biological production by microbes.

As for how it is removed, that has remained a mystery as well, but even more so.

The most obvious mechanism is photochemical degradation, where UV radiation from the Sun causes the methane to break down into carbon dioxide, formaldehyde, and methanol. However, this process cannot explain how atmospheric methane disappears so rapidly, which is the most important part of the process.

For the sake of their study, which recently appeared in the scientific journal *Icarus*, the research team from Aarhus University's Mars Simulation Lab proposed that «saltation» could be responsible. Essentially, they argue that wind-driven erosion could be responsible for the ionization of methane into compounds like methyl (CH₃), methylene (CH₂), and carbyne (CH).

Using Mars-analog minerals like basalt and plagioclase, the team found that these solids could be oxidized and gases ionized

during the erosion processes – thus showing that ionized methane reacts and bonds with mineral surfaces. They also found that the silicon atoms in plagioclase (a major component in Mars' surface material) bind with the carbon atoms present in the methyl group derived from the methane.

Based on these results, the team concluded that this mechanism is much more effective than the photochemical process and could explain how methane is removed from the Martian atmosphere and deposited within its soil in the observed timeframes. But what is perhaps most interesting is the implications these findings have on the possible existence of Martian life.

In addition to its effects on methane, the study also showed that these minerals research can lead to the formation of reactive oxygen chemicals like peroxides, superoxides and other chemicals that are very toxic to organisms – including bacteria. The presence of these compounds essentially means that there is little chance that life could exist on or near the Martian surface.

The results of these investigations will hopefully shed additional light on a key question related to the search for life on Mars – i.e. how organic materials are preserved in the Martian environment. They will also inform future missions to Mars that will be looking for indications of life, like the ESA's ExoMars 2020 rover and NASA's Mars 2020 rover (both of which are scheduled to arrive in 2021).

(Source: Science Alert)

Citizen scientists discover cyclical pattern of complexity in solar storms

Citizen scientists have discovered that solar storms become more complex as the Sun's 11-year activity cycle reaches its maximum -- a finding which could help forecasters predict which space weather events could have potentially devastating consequences for modern technologies at Earth.

'Protect our Planet from Solar Storms', a research project launched by the University of Reading, the Science Museum Group and Zooniverse in May 2018, asked volunteers to evaluate pairs of images of Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) and decide which seemed the most visually complex.

Overall, the project ranked the complexity of 1100 observations of CMEs taken by the wide-angle Heliospheric Imagers on-board NASA's twin STEREO spacecraft. The results was presented at the RAS National Astronomy Meeting in Lancaster and will feature in the exhibition The Sun, which opens at the Science and Industry Museum,

in Manchester, on 20th July.

"The STEREO spacecraft capture images of solar storms as they erupt from the Sun. Some CMEs look very simple, like bubbles, while others are far more complex, like shattered light bulbs. Surprisingly, we found that the annual average complexity values actually follow the solar activity cycle," said Shannon Jones of the University of Reading.

CMEs are a key driver of hazardous space weather that, if directed at Earth, can cause serious damage to electricity grids, satellite navigation and communication infrastructure. Current prediction methods, based on the direction of the magnetic field within solar storms, are only really effective around an hour before the storm hits our planet. The complexity of an eruption could provide advanced warning about its likelihood of causing disruption.

"The most damaging storms have a magnetic field that is offset by 180 degrees to Earth's. Because complex storms have a magnetic field that keep changing direction, they are more likely to move into this alignment at least for a short period of time. The link between complexity and the solar cycle is important because not only are there more storms during solar maximum, their variability makes them more likely to contain an orientation of magnetic field that may affect our modern technologies," said Chris Scott of the University of Reading, who devised the study.

The Reading team has now launched a new phase of experiments on Zooniverse, where volunteers will assess the impact of brightness on complexity, weigh up how to quantify complexity, and study differences in the STEREO A and B cameras.

(Source: Science Daily)

Deep-CEE: The AI deep learning tool helping astronomers explore deep space



Galaxy clusters are some of the most massive structures in the cosmos, but despite being millions of lightyears across, they can still be hard to spot. Researchers at Lancaster University have turned to artificial intelligence for assistance, developing "Deep-CEE" (Deep Learning for Galaxy Cluster Extraction and Evaluation), a novel deep learning technique to speed up the process of finding them. Matthew Chan, a PhD student at Lancaster University, is presenting this work at the Royal Astronomical Society's National Astronomy meeting on 4 July at 3:45pm in the Machine Learning in Astrophysics session.

Most galaxies in the universe live in low-density environments known as "the field," or in small groups, like the one that contains our Milky Way and Andromeda. Galaxy clusters are rarer, but they represent the most extreme environments that galaxies can live in and studying them can help us better understand dark matter and dark energy.

During 1950s the pioneer of galaxy cluster-finding, astronomer George Abell, spent many years searching for galaxy clusters by eye, using a magnifying lens and photographic plates to locate them. Abell manually analyzed around 2,000 photographic plates, looking for visual signatures the of galaxy clusters, and detailing the astronomical coordinates of the dense regions of galaxies. His work resulted in the 'Abell catalogue' of galaxy clusters found in the northern hemisphere.

Deep-CEE builds on Abell's approach for identifying galaxy clusters but replaces the astronomer with an AI model that has been trained to "look" at color images and identify galaxy clusters. It is a state-of-

the-art model based on neural networks, which are designed to mimic the way a human brain learns to recognize objects by activating specific neurons when visualizing distinctive patterns and colors.

Chan trained the AI by repeatedly showing it examples of known, labelled, objects in images until the algorithm is able to learn to associate objects on its own. Then ran a pilot study to test the algorithm's ability to identify and classify galaxy clusters in images that contain many other astronomical objects.

"We have successfully applied Deep-CEE to the Sloan Digital Sky Survey" says Chan, "ultimately, we will run our model on revolutionary surveys such as the Large Synoptic Survey telescope (LSST) that will probe wider and deeper into regions of the Universe never before explored.

New state-of-the-art telescopes have enabled astronomers to observe wider and deeper than ever before, such as studying the large-scale structure of the universe and mapping its vast undiscovered content.

By automating the discovery process, scientists can quickly scan sets of images, and return precise predictions with minimal human interaction. This will be essential for analyzing data in future. The upcoming LSST sky survey (due to come online in 2021) will image the skies of the entire southern hemisphere, generating an estimated 15 TB of data every night.

"Data mining techniques such as deep learning will help us to analyze the enormous outputs of modern telescopes" says Dr John Stott (Chan's PhD supervisor). "We expect our method to find thousands of clusters never seen before by science."

(Source: Science Daily)

Some animal hearts can adapt to survive without oxygen, and scientists are intrigued



During winter time, some snapping turtles like to hibernate in ponds and lakes. Safely tucked away underneath a thin layer of ice, these freshwater reptiles can survive up to six months without any oxygen to speak of.

How their bodies can cope with this depends on the way they were raised, it turns out. New research has revealed that when turtle embryos are exposed to low levels of oxygen, it programs their hearts to be more resilient to such conditions for the rest of their lives.

From the very start of their existence, it appears these incredible creatures are primed for a life of aquatic hypoxia. Developing in nests deep beneath the water, their embryos can sometimes be subject to as little as 11 percent oxygen, and this can permanently alter their cardiac structure and function.

"We're excited to be the first to show that it is possible to change the degree of tolerance that turtles have for low oxygen environments by early exposure to hypoxia during development," says cardiac biologist Ilan Ruhr from the University of Manchester.

Survival in hypoxic conditions depends on the ability of the heart to continue delivering nutrients and removing waste. When humans suffer from heart attacks, their hearts are usually damaged by the resulting hypoxia, and the same thing can happen during heart transplants.

Yet reptiles like turtles and alligators can withstand these extreme environments and still maintain their metabolism and muscle function. To figure out what was happening on a cellular level, the researchers studied a group of juvenile Common Snapping Turtles (Chelydra serpentina), half of which developed under normal oxygen conditions of 21 percent, and half of which developed under oxygen levels of just 10 percent.

Isolating muscle cells from the heart, the cells were then subjected to lower levels of oxygen, allowing the team to measure changes in pH, intracellular calcium (which helps contract the heart muscles), and chemicals called reactive oxygen species (ROS).

Even when oxygen was reintroduced, something that causes extensive tissue damage in mammals, the heart cells showed little apparent injury.

The findings suggest that developmental oxygen is an important environmental cue for turning on and off certain genes, which allow the turtle's heart to tolerate zero oxygen.

The early exposure not only reduces the amount of ROS, a molecule that can become toxic when tissue reoxygenates too quickly, but it can also protect their heart muscles from damage, allowing them to contract normally even in the complete absence of oxygen.

"Collectively, these results suggest developmental hypoxia alters pathways involved in ROS management that might protect the heart against oxidative stress," the authors conclude.

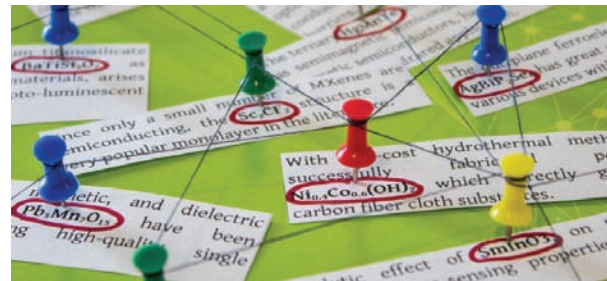
One day, the researchers hope this knowledge can be used to keep the human heart alive and well under hypoxic conditions. For instance, in the future a drug may be able to switch on the same mechanisms and protect the human heart from oxygen deprivation.

"Heart cells in turtles and humans are anatomically quite similar," explains comparative physiologist Gina Galli from The University of Manchester, "so if we can learn to understand what factors allow them to survive in an oxygen-free environment, we'd hope to be able to apply that to a medical scenario."

(Source: sciencealert.com)

With little training, machine-learning algorithms can uncover hidden scientific knowledge

Sure, computers can be used to play grandmaster-level chess (chess computer), but can they make scientific discoveries? Researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) have shown that an algorithm with no training in materials science can scan the text of millions of papers and uncover new scientific knowledge.



A team led by Anubhav Jain, a scientist in Berkeley Lab's Energy Storage & Distributed Resources Division, collected 3.3 million abstracts of published materials science papers and fed them into an algorithm called Word2vec. By analyzing relationships between words the algorithm was able to predict discoveries of new thermoelectric materials years in advance and suggest as-yet unknown materials as candidates for thermoelectric materials.

"Without telling it anything about materials science, it learned concepts like the periodic table and the crystal structure of metals," said Jain. "That hinted at the potential of the technique. But probably the most interesting thing we figured out is, you can use this algorithm to address gaps in materials research, things that people should study but haven't studied so far."

The findings were published July 3 in the journal *Nature*. The lead author of the study, "Unsupervised Word Embeddings Capture Latent Knowledge from Materials Science Literature," is Vahe Tshitoyan, a Berkeley Lab postdoctoral fellow now working at Google. Along with Jain, Berkeley Lab scientists Kristin Persson and Gerbrand Ceder helped lead the study.

"The paper establishes that text mining of scientific literature can uncover hidden knowledge, and that pure text-based extraction can establish basic scientific knowledge," said Ceder, who also has an appointment at UC Berkeley's Department of Materials Science and Engineering.

Tshitoyan said the project was motivated by the difficulty making sense of the overwhelming amount of published studies. "In every research field there's 100 years of past research literature, and every week dozens more studies come out," he said. "A researcher can access only fraction of that. We thought, can machine learning do something to make use of all this collective knowledge in an unsupervised manner -- without needing guidance from human researchers?"

The team collected the 3.3 million abstracts from papers published in more than 1,000 journals between 1922 and 2018. Word2vec took each of the approximately 500,000 distinct words in those abstracts and turned each into a 200-dimensional vector, or an array of 200 numbers.

"What's important is not each number, but using the numbers to see how words are related to one another," said Jain, who leads a group working on discovery and design of new materials for energy applications using a mix of theory, computation, and data mining. "For example you can subtract vectors using standard vector math. Other researchers have shown that if you train the algorithm on nonscientific text sources and take the vector that results from 'king minus queen,' you get the same result as 'man minus woman.' It figures out the relationship without you telling it anything."

Similarly, when trained on materials science text, the algorithm was able to learn the meaning of scientific terms and concepts such as the crystal structure of metals based simply on the positions of the words in the abstracts and their co-occurrence with other words. For example, just as it could solve the equation "king -- queen + man," it could figure out that for the equation "ferromagnetic -- NiFe + IrMn" the answer would be "antiferromagnetic."

Word2vec was even able to learn the relationships between elements on the periodic table when the vector for each chemical element was projected onto two dimensions.

So if Word2vec is so smart, could it predict novel thermoelectric materials? A good thermoelectric material can efficiently convert heat to electricity and is made of materials that are safe, abundant and easy to produce.

The Berkeley Lab team took the top thermoelectric candidates suggested by the algorithm, which ranked each compound by the similarity of its word vector to that of the word "thermoelectric." Then they ran calculations to verify the algorithm's predictions.

Of the top 10 predictions, they found all had computed power factors slightly higher than the average of known thermoelectrics; the top three candidates had power factors at above the 95th percentile of known thermoelectrics.

Next they tested if the algorithm could perform experiments "in the past" by giving it abstracts only up to, say, the year 2000. Again, of the top predictions, a significant number turned up in later studies -- four times more than if materials had just been chosen at random. For example, three of the top five predictions trained using data up to the year 2008 have since been discovered and the remaining two contain rare or toxic elements.

The results were surprising. "I honestly didn't expect the algorithm to be so predictive of future results," Jain said. "I had thought maybe the algorithm could be descriptive of what people had done before but not come up with these different connections. I was pretty surprised when I saw not only the predictions but also the reasoning behind the predictions, things like the half-Heusler structure, which is a really hot crystal structure for thermoelectrics these days."

He added: "This study shows that if this algorithm were in place earlier, some materials could have conceivably been discovered years in advance." Along with the study the researchers are releasing the top 50 thermoelectric materials predicted by the algorithm. They'll also be releasing the word embeddings needed for people to make their own applications if they want to search on, say, a better topological insulator material.

Up next, Jain said the team is working on a smarter, more powerful search engine, allowing researchers to search abstracts in a more useful way.

The study was funded by Toyota Research Institute. Other study co-authors are Berkeley Lab researchers John Dagdelen, Leigh Weston, Alexander Dunn, and Ziqin Rong, and UC Berkeley researcher Olga Kononova.

(Source: Science Daily)

Over 4 million visit Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad in a year

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Over four million people, mostly domestic travelers, toured Iran’s Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), MP Qolam-Mohammad Zarei, who represents the southwestern province, said on Monday.

He made the remarks at the opening ceremony of a vast ethno-cultural exhibition, which turns the spotlight on nomadic life, traditions, arts, handicrafts and souvenirs in the capital city of Yasuj, IRNA reported.



The substantial role of nomads in serving the county is highlighted through their way of life in tribal black tents, their seasonal migration to different parts of the country in order to achieve better pastures for livestock breeding and production of dairy products and handicrafts, he explained.

A total of 100 stalls and 24 black tents have been set up for the exhibit in which tribespeople from 25 provinces are promoting skills through July 11.

Sightseers in Iran may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. Diverse natural setting of the country has long made it a destination for nature lovers.

Ancient water system in Peru could fix water shortages

Sometimes modern problems require ancient solutions.

A 1,400-year-old Peruvian method of diverting water could supply up to 40,000 Olympic-size swimming pools’ worth of water to Lima each year. That information comes from a new study published in Nature Sustainability.

It’s one example of how ancient methods could support existing modern ones in countries without enough water.

More than a billion people across the world face water shortages. Man-made reservoirs store rainwater and water overflow for use during drier times. But reservoirs are costly, require years to plan and can still fail to meet water needs. Recently, for example, the reservoirs in Chennai, India, went almost dry. The city’s four million people had to then depend on water transports from the government.

Peru’s capital, Lima, depends on water from rivers high in the Andes Mountains. It takes only a few days for water to flow down to the city. So when the dry season begins in the mountains, the water supply quickly disappears. The city suffers shortages of 43 million cubic meters during the dry season. It resolves this with modern structures such as man-made reservoirs.

These reservoirs are not the only solution, however. Over a thousand years ago, indigenous people developed another way to solve water problems.

Boris Ochoa-Tocachi is a researcher at Imperial College London and lead writer of the study. He explored one of the last remaining water-harvesting systems in the small mountain community of Huamantanga, Peru. The system was developed even before the ancient Inca civilization.

(Source: Voice of America)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Gelati Monastery

A World Heritage, Gelati Monastery reflects the ‘golden age’ of medieval Georgia, a period of political strength and economic growth between the reigns of King David IV ‘the Builder’ (1089-1125) and Queen Tamar (1184-1213).

The property is situated on the lower southern slopes of the mountains of the Northern Caucasus.



It was David who, in 1106 began building the monastery near his capital Kutaisi on a wooded hill above the river Tskaltsitela. The main church was completed in 1130 in the reign of his son and successor Demetre.

Further churches were added to the monastery throughout the 13th and early 14th centuries. The monastery is richly decorated with mural paintings from the 12th to 17th centuries, as well as a 12th century mosaic in the apse of the main church, depicting the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels.

Its high architectural quality, outstanding decoration, size, and clear spatial quality combine to offer a vivid expression of the artistic idiom of the architecture of the Georgian “Golden Age” and its almost completely intact surroundings allow an understanding of the intended fusion between architecture and landscape.

Gelati was not simply a monastery: it was also a center of science and education, and the Academy established there was one of the most important centers of culture in ancient Georgia.

(Source: UNESCO)

First groups of Hajj pilgrims leave for Saudi Arabia

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — On Monday, first batches of Iranian Hajj pilgrims departed from nine airports for Saudi Arabia.

The Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC), for its part, has started a 24-day handling project of Hajj flights to dispatch 30,000 pilgrims, who are from provinces of Tehran, Qom, Alborz, Qazvin, Lorestan, and Kordestan, as well as cities of Arak and Kashan. The process will be continued until August 5, according to the IKAC.

A ceremony was held at the airport to bid farewell to the first batches of

Iranian Hajj pilgrims that was attended by the Leader’s representative in charge of hajj affairs, Hojjatoleslam Abolhasan Navab, head of Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, Alireza Rashidian, CEO of Imam Khomeini Intl. Airport, Ali Rostami, and head of the Civil Aviation Organization, Ali Abedzadeh, the report said.

This year, some 86,550 Iranians will travel to Mecca to perform the religious pilgrimage.

Performing Hajj is compulsory on every Muslim at least once in their life. It is one of the largest annual



A formal ceremony was held at the Imam Khomeini International Airport to bid farewell to the first batches of Iranian Hajj pilgrims, July 8, 2019.

gathering of human beings on earth, with approximately three million people gathering each year for three to five days between the eighth and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, the last month

of the Muslim calendar.

The pilgrimage has been occurring annually since 630 CE when the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) led his followers from Medina to Mecca.

Rare dovetail-joints found in UNESCO-tagged Pasargadae

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Personnel of Pasargadae have recently found two rare dovetail-joints, which used to attach massive stone slabs, pillars and columns in the UNESCO World Heritage site that was once the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great (559–530 BC), who ordered its construction.

The dovetail joint technique probably pre-dates written history. Some of the earliest known examples of the dovetail joint are in ancient Egyptian furniture entombed with mummies dating from First Dynasty, as well as the tombs of Chinese emperors. The dovetail design is an important method of distinguishing various periods of furniture.

Over the past couple of centuries, some people pulled the dovetail-joints out of their place in order to use its lead for making slugs for shotguns as the abuse have caused a lot of damage to the stone blocks and the architecture of the buildings, ILNA quoted Afshin Ebrahimi, director of the World Heritage site, as saying on Friday.



It’s the first time that such well flawless dovetail-joints are found in Pasargadae, perhaps they have remained hidden from the eyes of the abductors,

2,000 pieces of pottery on show at Tehran exhibit



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A vast collection of ceramics and potteries, comprising 2,000 pieces by Iranian crafter Zahra Kavian, is currently on show at the headquarters of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization in Tehran.

In an interview with CHTN, Kavian, who works as a potter for over ten years, said that the exhibit titled “Golneh” aims to introduce ceramics and earthen products in both practical and decorating techniques.

Golneh is capable to have a word with art lovers of every society, she said, adding that she tries to realize the previously put forwarded idea of “Iranian Home”, an approach that embeds traditional handicrafts in modern homes.

“Iranian Home” made its debut at the 28th National Crafts Exhibition in 2017 to promote Iranian crafts through presentation of their usefulness in practice.



Five professions for millennials who want to travel for free

Exiting and entering the country, exploring popular attractions and traveling to remote destinations are a dream for many people. But often the biggest obstacle to traveling is the cost.

For this reason, many people long to travel for free, and there are more ways to travel for free than many people think. One way is to make traveling part of your job, such as the following professions that are especially suitable for millennials as compiled by Kompas.com.

■ 1. YouTuber

This profession is certainly familiar to millennials, and becoming a YouTuber can indeed be quite promising. Forbes Magazine even released a list of the richest YouTubers in the world, in which the top spot was occupied by Ryan Toys Review, a 7-year-old boy whose income reached \$2 million a year.

But of course, creating a YouTube account and creating channels doesn’t necessarily make you famous or let you travel for free. Creativity in creating content is needed so that your channel can attract public attention. Once you have a lot of viewers and subscribers, some publishers may invite you to work together. They may start to offer products, money or even free travel.

Even without waiting for an offer, you can ask for offers if you have many viewers and subscribers. But of course, if you really aim to travel for free, then your content should also be related to travel.

■ 2. Blogger

The difference from YouTubers is that bloggers are



more about writing content with personal blog media. There are quite a lot of famous travel bloggers in the country that you can make reference to, such as Trinitiy, Fahmi Anhar, the late Mas Toro Cumi Lebay, etc.

To become a blogger who gets hits, you can’t just write content. You also need technical skills, such as in SEO techniques, HTML and website management.

■ 3. Celebgram

Celebgram can also be a way to get to travel for free. It is undeniable that social media like Instagram often contribute to making a place famous. This is what publishers are looking for. They need celebrity Instagrammers to become influencers who popularize their products or review certain places.

Of course the number of followers and Instagram content factor in to whether or not publishers endorse you. Therefore, if you really intend to become a celebrity, start organizing Instagram feeds and looking for tips to optimize it.

■ 4. Volunteer

Volunteers can travel if they have expertise as a health worker, education personnel, technical personnel, etc.

Take an education volunteer for example. Try to find a volunteer position in the field of education that will put you in various regions in Indonesia. By volunteering in a certain area, you can explore the place as well.

But keep in mind that when you become a volunteer, you must prioritize the goal of your voluntary mission. Do not let your goal of free travel make you think you can take it easy with work. Even though you volunteer, acting responsible is absolutely necessary.

■ 5. Travel agent

Opening a travel agency would improve your chance of being able to travel for free. By opening a travel agency you can be both a travel guide and travel consultant for your customers. This is so that you can participate in the experience of traveling just like your clients when you travel with them.

Good communication skills, capital, marketing knowledge and extensive networking are needed to make it in this field.

(Source: The Jakarta Post)

Homegrown android operating system developed

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — A group of students at the Sharif University of Technology have developed a homegrown android operating system (OS) in order to confront Google sanctions against the country, the information and communication technology minister wrote on his Instagram account on Sunday, IRNA reported.

“When I was a child, there was a grocery in our neighborhood, who sometimes added certain neighbors on his blacklist without any reason. After a while, another grocery was opened in the neighborhood, so the blacklist was not functional anymore! Poor thing! After that he disputed with his son,” Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said in a video clip published with a metaphorical caption.

“Google cannot remove the Iranian operating system. A smartphone produced by the GLX Company supported the homemade operating system,” the video says.

“The Iranian developers can release their apps without any concern from U.S. sanctions on the platform.”

Meanwhile, the managing director of Telecommunication Infrastructure Company, Hamid Fattahi, told IRNA that there are



no limitations for installing foreign apps. Moreover, this is an opportunity for the Iranian application market to be developed.

In April, the Google Play removed some

Iranian applications including two messaging apps called ‘Hotgram’ and ‘Talamgram’.

Hotgram and Talamgram are two messaging apps produced by the Iranian company

Google cannot remove the Iranian operating system. A smartphone produced by the GLX Company supported the homemade operating system

Rahkar Sarzamin Hooshmand (Smart Land Strategy) using Telegram’s open source code and servers. With 25 million users in Iran, the applications were warmly welcomed since the Telegram was banned in the country on April 30, 2018.

Following the action, Azari Jahromi reacted to the removal, saying that the U.S. economic terrorism is also moving toward digital economy.

The move came a few months after Apple banned Iranian apps from App Store.

The homegrown operating system is not only developed by Iran. In March 2019, the CNBC published a news on Huawei that built software for smartphones and laptops in case it’s blocked from using U.S. software from Microsoft and Google.

It was reported that Google — which makes the Android operating system that Huawei uses in its handsets — has suspended the transfer of hardware, software or technical services to Huawei except what’s available via open source.

Huawei has faced intense political pressure from the U.S. which says its networking equipment could be used by the Chinese government for espionage. The company has repeatedly denied the claims.

Iranian experts manufacture gas-powered generator

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian experts have managed to manufacture a gas-powered electricity generator, which can be used non-stop by industries and generate power at a reasonable price, Mehr reported on Monday.

The head of Power Energy Industry Research and Technology Fund, Mansour Fat’hali, said that the experts plan to establish a firm for mass production of the generator for the purpose of distributed generation, an approach that employs small-scale technologies to produce electricity close to the end users of power.

The conversion of natural gas energy into useful electric power, which is done by the gas-powered generator, is very efficient and is more eco-friendly in comparison with fuel-powered generators, he explained.

Distributed generation and regional power plants, different industries and firms as well as the agricultural



sector, also commercial and office spaces, deprived areas, medical centers including hospitals can benefit from the

gas-powered generator.

According to kovaicorp.com, technological advancements have resulted in the increased popularity of gas gen-sets. Examples of significant technology advancements include the optimization of engine speed, integrated approaches to generator paralleling, and bi-fuel—or combined diesel and gas fuel—operations.

Power densities and transient performance can be improved by increasing the operating speed of gasified engines.

Using these speed-optimized, spark-ignited gas engines, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are connecting smaller gas gen-sets and consolidating their output in an integrated approach to set up larger plants with generator paralleling.

Another growing interest within the gas gen-sets segment is the popularity of mobile gen-sets. These units are essentially used for backup and standby demand during power.

Sharif university, Aras free zone team up for S3

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Sharif University of Technology and Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone signed an agreement to boost cooperation in the field of Smart Specialization Strategies (S3), ISNA reported on Sunday.

S3 means the national or regional innovation strategies which set priorities in order to build competitive advantage

by developing and matching research and innovation own strengths to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts.

The deputy director of policymaking research center of Sharif University of Technology, Ali Maleki, and the managing director of Aras Free Trade-

Industrial Zone, Mohsen Nariman, signed the agreement during a meeting in Tehran.

During the meeting, Maleki explained about details of the strategy and depicted its perspective for the future.

Nariman also expressed hope over the economic prosperity and development of the zone following the implementation of S3.



Blockchain for the food, how industry makes use of the technology

As blockchain continues to push for mass adoption, the food and beverage industry is shaping up to be one of the most inclusive destinations for the technology: Just over the past few months, a variety of players — including juggernauts like Nestlé, Carrefour and Starbucks — have reported on their latest blockchain-powered initiatives within the field.

Indeed, in 2019, blockchain has been piercing the food industry at an accelerated pace. According to recent research, 20% of the top-10 global grocers will use blockchain by 2025. So, what makes the technology so appealing for the food industry participants, and are there any obstacles that can be a hurdle to potential adoption?

■ Empowering customers with more data and tracking food illness

There are at least two essential problems in the food industry that blockchain has been presumed to solve. First, the trust issue: According to a 2018 study released by the United States-based Food Marketing Institute (FMI), the public demand for transparency is growing within the market. Essentially, customers are becoming more health-conscious and want to know as much as possible about the food they get.

Specifically, the report found that as much as 75% of consumers are more likely to switch to a brand that provides more in-depth product information — beyond what’s provided on the physical label. When shoppers were asked the same question in 2016 in a similar study conducted by Label Insight, just 39% declared they would switch brands. Blockchain, being an easily accessible, immutable distributed ledger by design, seems to be the go-to solution for that case, as it can provide consumers with concrete, immutable data about their food. Matron Ven, the chief marketing officer at blockchain-powered farm-to-table food traceability solution company Te-Food, told Cointelegraph:

“Food companies implement traceability because they see that the consumers require transparency and credibility. Blockchain’s immutability helps them to prove that the information the different supply chain companies provide is uncorrupted.”



Traceability is not just the customer’s whim, however, but a crucial component for the industry at large, in which investigations into foodborne illnesses require extra swiftness to prevent human loss. Rachel Gabato, the chief operating officer at Ripe.io, a San Francisco-based blockchain startup working with the food supply chain, told Cointelegraph:

“One of the primary drivers for food providers to consider blockchain technology is the ability of the technology to collect data from various sources and create a single view of the transaction.

This plays an important role in the ability to track the food product back to its origin driving more efficiency when a food safety issue arises.”

For instance, in 2017, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) investigated a fatal Salmonella outbreak linked to papayas imported from a Mexican farm. In order to allocate the disease’s original source, the agency conducted over a hundred interviews and studied various mango samples in lab conditions. Blockchain can reduce the process of finding the responsible supplier to seconds: By using the technology, stakeholders can track the corrupt harvest of mangoes from a particular farm and then surgically remove it from the supply chain.

Indeed, as the food industry entails numerous participants — farmers, vendors, retailers, customers, etc. — within the supply chain, the process of tracking goods from farm-to-table is notably complex. Consequently, the very idea of having a blockchain encourages suppliers and retailers to get their data straight, says John G. Keogh, a research associate at Henley Business School and University of Reading, who co-authored an academic article on the topic. He told Cointelegraph:

“A key benefit not discussed is the fact that data needs to be cleansed, structured and verified before it goes onto a Blockchain. This is one of the key benefits and in the use cases I have examined closely, 75% of the effort was in fixing the data.”

■ IBM’s blockchain solution continues to dominate the field

The most mainstream and adopted blockchain tracking solution within the field is IBM’s Food Trust, which is based on the Hyperledger Fabric blockchain protocol. With the first product trials spearheaded by Walmart in China in December 2016, Big Blue’s food-tracking ecosystem has since amassed numerous industry giants, including Carrefour, Nestlé, Dole Food, Kroger and Unilever. The platform officially went live in October 2018. According to IBM, during the testing period, “millions of individual food products” were tracked by retailers and suppliers using the Food Trust blockchain.

In 2019, the tech behemoth will continue to recruit participants for its blockchain traceability program, as revealed by Nestlé S.A. So far this year, Big Blue has already signed Albertsons Companies, a leading food and drug retailer in the U.S. At first, the retailer will use the Food Trust initiative to track the supply chain for romaine lettuce, but it aims to branch out into other products in the future.

Additionally, it has been reported that the U.S. seafood trade association National Fisheries Institute (NFI) is now working with IBM’s Food Trust to trace seafood. Purportedly, this is the first effort to track multiple seafood species, an initiative jointly pursued by multiple companies. Just a couple of months prior to that, North America’s largest branded shelf-stable seafood firm, Bumble Bee Foods, launched a blockchain platform for seafood traceability in collaboration with German tech company SAP. Based on the SAP Cloud Platform Blockchain service, the new platform can purportedly monitor the supply chain of yellowfin tuna from Indonesia to end customers.

Meanwhile, earlier Food Trust members have been expanding the scale of IBM blockchain’s application this year. For instance, in

April, Nestlé and French retail giant Carrefour reportedly started using the technology to track the supply chain of Mousline, a well-known brand of instant mashed potatoes. As per the initiative, customers are able to scan a QR-code with their smartphones to know exactly where the potatoes in a specific packet came from, as well as their journey to the exact Carrefour store.

■ New blockchain-based food traceability tools continue to emerge

Additionally, in March, Carrefour introduced its own blockchain-powered solution for tracking milk, called Carrefour Quality Line (CQL). CQL is reported to guarantee consumers complete product traceability across the entire supply chain — from farmers’ fields to the store shelves. As per the press release, consumers will get access to meticulous information, including GPS coordinates of the farmers producing the milk, details on when it was collected and packaged, as well as the list of stakeholders involved in the product line. Other notable blockchain initiatives happening within the food industry this year include the U.S. National Pork Board partnering with Ripe.io to test out a blockchain platform for pork supply chains. The company’s representative told Cointelegraph of the initiative:

“The ripe.io platform will enable the NPB ecosystem of pork producers to monitor, evaluate and continuously improve their sustainability practices based on six defined ethical principles guiding the U.S. pork industry. These principles provide industry standards in food safety and public health, animal well-being, protecting the environment, and improving the quality of life for the industry’s people and communities.”

Further, in the beginning of 2019, World Wildlife Fund-Australia (WWF-Australia) and global corporate venture BCG Digital Ventures (BCGDV) jointly launched a blockchain-powered supply chain tool dubbed OpenSC. The system reportedly allows both businesses to track products they produce, as well as consumers to view the origins of said products via a “unique blockchain code at the product’s point of origin.”

(Source: cointelegraph.com)

Coworking is flourishing in Iran: expert

By Setareh Behroozi

TEHRAN — Coworking, as the self-directed, collaborative, flexible and voluntary work style for shared workplaces, are supported by the Innovation Acceleration Center at the Pardis Science and Technology Park, an expert at the center Davoud Ebrahimi said in an interview with the Tehran Times.

Today there is an entrepreneurship funnel in the world, which includes coworking spaces, accelerators, incubators, technology parks and so on, he explained.

The center recently supports and issues license for coworking spaces, as a place, which makes a network for entrepreneurs, he said.



The coworking spaces can hold educational courses and through acceptance of different types of entrepreneurs and freelancers they provide a dynamic place, which improves innovation, he added.

No one can deny the role of freelancers and entrepreneurs in the national economy, he stressed.

He also explained about innovation accelerators and their great role in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Innovation accelerator, as the private sector, aims to boost entrepreneurship and innovation by supporting ideas and startup teams, he explained.

Training as well as financial support, which is in form of seed money, are provided by the accelerators in order to grow and have their own market share in future, he added.

The accelerator become shareholders at the startups and they benefit from the growth of the startups, he added.

The Pardis Science and Technology Park supports the initiation of the accelerators in financial aspects and help them to obtain necessary licenses, he said.

The accelerator are mostly eager to invest on the online platforms but today we have specialized accelerators in different fields including medicine, health, oil and gas, he said.

Different types of accelerators including business accelerator, corporate accelerator for big holdings, HR accelerators are being established in Iran, he explained.

The center is also active in the field of holding events in different fields of training and development, he added.

The Innovation Acceleration Center aims to raise hope amongst the entrepreneurs and innovation ecosystem through providing facilitation and financial support, he concluded.

According to their website, a total of 38 accelerators received their licenses from the center and the documents of 70 accelerators are being assessed.

The accelerators provide facilities for 988 startup teams, creating 1025 job opportunities.

Data can now be stored inside the molecules that power our metabolism

DNA isn’t the only molecule we could use for digital storage. It turns out that solutions containing sugars, amino acids and other small molecules could replace hard drives too.

Jacob Rosenstein and his colleagues at Brown University, Rhode Island, stored and retrieved pictures of an Egyptian cat, an ibex and an anchor using an array of these small molecules. They say the approach could make storage that is less vulnerable to hacking and that could function in more extreme environmental conditions.

Inspired by recent research showing that it is possible to store data on DNA, Rosenstein’s team wanted to see if smaller and simpler molecules could also encode abstract information.

■ Digital sugar

To test this out, they created mixtures of common metabolites — solutions containing sugars, amino acids and other small molecules that humans and other living organisms use to digest food and to carry out other important chemical functions. Their idea was to use the presence or absence of particular metabolites in the mixtures as the binary 1s and 0s that can encode digital information.

For instance, to generate the picture of the ibex, the team used mixtures of six different metabolites dotted onto a plate by liquid-handling robots. They produced 1024 dots in total, and within each dot the six metabolites were either absent or present, providing enough binary information to encode the 6142-pixel image.

Rosenstein and his colleagues were then able to retrieve the data with around 99 per cent accuracy. They did this by using a mass spectrometer to analyse the chemical mix within each dot. They also made an even higher resolution image of a cat from an Egyptian tomb using mixtures of 12 metabolites.

■ Dense data

They used standardized plates, the size of the palm of your hand, to encode the roughly thumbnail-sized images. But Rosenstein says the physical size of metabolite storage devices could be much smaller.

Metabolite molecules are much smaller than DNA and proteins, and there is a wide variety of them. This means they can represent small amounts of data more densely than DNA, he says.

“They do not require any energy once written, and depending on the molecules and the environmental conditions, the data can last for months or years,” says Rosenstein. In fact, molecular memory could be more stable than electronic memory in conditions such as extreme temperature, pressure and mechanical forces, depending on the characteristics of the molecules.

Molecular storage could also make it possible to store large amounts of data offline, rather than in the cloud, providing protection from hacking.

Read more: Lee Cronin: Can we make computers with chemicals?

So far, the technology Rosenstein and his colleagues created is slow compared with electronic computers. However, it does have some advantages over DNA memory.

“Compared to DNA, our metabolite data has low latency, in that we can write and read data sets quickly from start to finish,” says Rosenstein, adding that DNA is still currently superior for encoding large data sets.

“These ideas are ready to be used in research labs, but we would need to speed things up and shrink the size of the analysis hardware before it would be practical outside the lab,” says Rosenstein.

(Source: newscientist.com)

Magnitude 5.7 quake hits southwestern Iran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A magnitude 5.7 earthquake jolted southwestern Khuzestan province on Monday, Tasnim reported.

According to the data published on Iranian Seismological Center (IRSC), affiliated to Tehran University, the first quake struck Masjed Soleiman at about 11:30 a.m. at the depth of 17 kilometers beneath the earth’s surface.



Four other quakes measuring 3-4.7 on the Richter scale shook the area within 40 minutes.

Fairly powerful quakes shook the capital city of Ahvaz and other cities across the province, while it even affected the western province of Lorestan.

Some 64 persons have so far been injured.

Summer heats foster air pollution spikes in Tehran

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Tehraners breathed foul air not experiencing a single day of clean air since the beginning of summer (June 22), Tasnim news agency reported on Monday.

The report highlights that for 1 day the capital’s air quality reached a level which was unhealthy for all the people.

While in the same period last year no polluted air quality was reported.

An air quality index (AQI) is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.

The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), good (51-100), lightly polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), moderately polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

According to the Air Quality Control Company, Tehran’s air was good for 8 days during this month, while good air quality reported for 8 days, and a day of polluted air.

During the same period last year, 10 days of good air quality was reported in Tehran, while, the residents experienced lightly polluted air 7 days.

It was mostly due to the raise of ozone pollutant and particulate matter; as the statistics show concentration of ozone increases in the capital during summer heats.

It is anticipated that ground level ozone concentration will even exacerbate during the next weeks.

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.

Although, the concentration of other pollutants in Tehran has decreased since the beginning of spring (March 21) compared to the same period last year, however, during this month, ozone reached up to a level which is unprecedented in the past 17 years.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Pink flamingos arrive in Kenya

(December 28, 2000)

BBC east Africa correspondent Cathy Jenkins reports on the return after 64 years of pink flamingos to Lake Nakuru in Kenya. From afar the **flamingos** which line the edge of Lake Nakuru are a **shimmering** carpet of pink. Close up they’re a **cacophony** of flapping wings, about eight hundred thousand pairs of wings, according to researchers and there are soon to be more. For the first time since 1936 the pink flamingos have **chosen to breed** at Nakuru and people like Daniel Koros, of the Worldwide Fund for Nature are very happy about it.

«I think we are quite excited that they are doing this now. We’ve already **observed** several birds sitting on eggs in the north of the lake and also a few to the south.»

But the breeding is one bright note in an otherwise worrying picture. Lake Nakuru is under pressure both from natural factors like changes in the weather and from the **pollution** which comes from the factories on the edge of Nakuru national park. The scientists are worried about a **buildup** of heavy metals in the water including lead, zinc and mercury. These are **absorbed by the algae** which are eaten by the pink flamingos. Doctor Gideon Motelin, lecturer at nearby Egerton university, says that overall the population of pink flamingos is **on the decline**. To try to reverse the trend environmentalists have approached the local factories asking them **to cut down on** the harmful waste they produce. But out of a hundred and sixty factories only sixteen **have taken the environmental issue onboard** and even these, according to a report, mostly lack the technical expertise to introduce effective changes.

Words

flamingos: birds with pink feathers, long thin legs and a curved beak
shimmering: shining with a faint light
cacophony: a loud unpleasant mixture of sounds
chosen to breed: the flamingos have <decided> to mate and produce new offspring at this particular location.

observed: watched

pollution: unpleasant and harmful substances in the air, the water and the environment

a buildup of: a gradual increase in

absorbed by the algae: taken in by the small plants that the flamingos eat

on the decline: becoming fewer

to cut down on: to reduce

have taken the environmental issue on board: have considered and accepted there is an environmental problem

‘3,000 tons of plastic waste is produced daily in Iran’

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The use of plastic is on the rise among Iranians, as over 3,000 tons of plastic waste is generated per day in the country, the director of environment and sustainable development department of Tehran Municipality has said.

“The amount reaches 1 million tons in a year,” Fars news agency quoted Sadr-o-din Alipour as saying on Monday.

The consumption of plastics and its environmental consequences has become a global issue, hence the European Union, considering growing plastic pollution, has proposed a ban on the use of disposable plastics by 2025, he explained.

Alipour went on to explain that leaching of chemicals into environmental matrices, and entry into the food chain, risks of chronic exposure to plastics and their additives, increase of insects and pests, visual and air pollution caused by burning waste are among the environmental and health problems caused by plastic bags.

So, since the Iranian calendar year 1391 (March 2012- March 2013), Iran observes July 12 as plastic-bag-free day annually, on which several schemes and programs are carried out across the capital, aiming to raise awareness about plastic pollution which is negatively impacting daily lives.

Through which, NGOs and environmentalists distribute biodegradable bags at different locations, innovative educational and cultural programs on the benefits of using



biodegradable plastic are held, he said, adding that providing solutions for cutting down on plastic consumption and holding workshops are other plans of this day.

In April, Kiyomars Kalantari, director general of Tehran province department of environment, said that everyday 8,000 tons of waste is being transferred to landfills in Tehran but not even 1 kilogram of it is recycled as waste segregation at source is not

being practiced.

Meanwhile, Parvaneh Tishehzan, assistant professor at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, has explained that plastic waste constitutes 28 percent of the total waste produced in Iran.

How plastic pollution affects the world

While plastic has many valuable uses, we have become over reliant on single-use or

Air pollution in Birmingham ‘shortens lives of children by half a year’

City one of five required by government to set up a clean air zone to tackle nitrogen dioxide and PM2.5s.

Primary school children who grow up in Birmingham could lose half a year of their lives due to illegal levels of air pollution in the city, a new report warns.

The study examines levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution (PM2.5) in the city and calculates that an eight-year-old child could die up to seven months early if exposed over their lifetimes to toxic air. The loss of life expectancy is worse in Birmingham than some other major cities in the UK including Manchester, researchers found.

Birmingham is one of five cities required by the government to set up a clean air zone to reduce toxic air, as part of plans to tackle the illegal levels of pollution in 38 out of 43 areas of the country.

But in Birmingham and Leeds the start date of January next year has been postponed because of government delays in providing vehicle-checking software.

On Monday research commissioned by UK100 – a network of local leaders across the country – for the first time examines the burden air pollution places on mortality in major cities.

The report, carried out by Kings College London, said the health cost of the city’s toxic air was £470m every year.

The study examined NO2 and PM2.5, two of the leading causes of poor health from air pollution, in the city’s 10 constituencies. It found that air pollution had the greatest impact in the most deprived areas, and that men are more likely to be affected than women. In Erdington, up to 91 deaths are attributable annually to air pollution, compared with up to 59 in Edgbaston and 57 in Hall Green.



More than half of children in Birmingham live in the top 10% of the most deprived areas of the country, and about 8,000 children in the city are growing up in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the UK, according to a report by the Children’s Society.

Waseem Zaffar, cabinet member for transport and environment on the city council, said the results were shocking.

“They demonstrate the sheer scale of the major public health crisis we are dealing with in Birmingham today,” he said.

“One life cut short by poor air quality is one too many, so this is exactly why the city is taking forward measures such as the clean air zone and why we continue to work with other cities across the country to tackle this problem together, but we also need strong leadership on this issue at a national government level.”

Sue Huyton, coordinator of the Clean Air Parent’s network, said action was needed now.

Toxic caterpillars spark health scare across Germany

Marauding caterpillars with toxic hairs have brought parts of Germany to a standstill, leading to closures of swimming pools, restaurants, public parks and sections of the motorway.

Oak processionary moth caterpillars, named after the nose-to-tail processions they form to travel between the oak trees they devour, have fine, long hairs with an irritating toxin that can cause blistering rashes, feverish dizzy spells and asthma attacks.

For years, the caterpillar used to be a relatively rare sight in Germany, found only in isolated areas of woodland. But following this year’s mild spring and warm, dry summer, the oak processionary’s nests have been found in large numbers all over the country.

Cities and towns in Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia have been particularly badly affected.

In the city of Münster, six people had to have eye operations to remove caterpillar hair that got stuck in their corneas. In Mülheim, nine children were taken to a hospital last month after suffering rashes and breathing problems during a sports day.

“It’s terrible everywhere,” Thomas Schwolow, an administrator in the municipality of Issum, where numerous trees have been affected, told Rheinische Post. “It would be great if it would rain so that at least all the hair on the leaves and in the air could be washed away,” he added.

Dortmund’s Fredenbaumpark, where nearly 500 trees were found to be infested, was closed for three weeks, broadcaster Deutschlandfunk reported.

“The oak processionary infestation this year is very intensive – much more than last year,” said the park’s manager, Frank Dartsch.

In Nuremberg, organizers of a rock festival had to hire a private company to remove processionary nests that had infested about 50 trees where the concert was due to be held.

In Frankfurt, authorities have used helicopters in the battle against the caterpillar, spraying 220 hectares of forest with biocides that stop the larvae from eating oak leaves and makes them die off.

Near Hamburg in northern Germany,

disposable plastic with severe environmental consequences. Around the world, 1 million plastic drinking bottles are purchased every minute. Every year we use up to 5 trillion disposable plastic bags. In total, 50 percent of the plastic we use is single use, according to World Environment website.

Nearly one third of the plastic packaging we use escapes collection systems, which means that it finally ends up clogging our city streets and polluting our natural environment. Annually, up to 13 million tons of plastic leak into our oceans, where it smothers coral reefs and threatens vulnerable, precious marine wildlife. The plastic that ends up in the oceans can circle the Earth four times in a single year, and it can persist for up to 1,000 years before it fully disintegrates. It is also harmful to wildlife where nearly 100,000 marine animals killed by plastics each year.

Over 380 million tons of plastic is produced in the world each year; and half of all plastic manufactured becomes trash in less than a year.

■Solution to plastic pollution

Bring your own shopping bags to the supermarket, pressure food suppliers to use non-plastic packaging, refuse plastic cutlery, pick up any plastic you see the next time you go for a walk on the beach or forest, bring your own coffee mug to work, and most importantly pressure local authorities to improve how they manage the city’s waste.

“It’s awful that children living in the UK are breathing air that may shorten their lives. As a parent, you want to do everything you can for your children, but when it comes to air pollution you can feel helpless – that’s why those in power must step up.

“We need the government and Birmingham city council to take ambitious action to tackle the toxic air in this city, and we need them to do it now.”

Air pollution has been identified by Public Health England as the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Evidence shows that it can cause or worsen a range of lung and heart conditions including asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic heart disease and stroke. Research suggests air pollution caused by NO2 and PM2.5 could cause 36,000 deaths per year.

Polly Billington, director of UK100, said the report should be a wake-up call to policy makers.

“We need to tackle this invisible killer which is cutting the lives of children and causing health misery for thousands of adults. By working together, local councils and central government can put in place ambitious and inclusive clean air zones to tackle the most polluting sources of dirty air and let us breathe freely.”

The government has been forced by the courts to improve its plans to clean up the air, after losing legal action taken by environmental lawyers Client Earth.

A government spokesperson said: “We are aware of concerns over delays and are carrying out work to develop key components of the system to support the Charging Clean Air Zones for January 2020.”

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

140 swarms of desert locusts eradicated in southeastern Iran

Desert locust breakout contained in 400,000 hectares of lands and some 140 swarms have been eradicated, Esmaeel Najjar, head of Iran’s Crisis Management Organization has said.

The responsible bodies to fight the swarms hitting agricultural lands are Iran Plant Protection Organization as well as Agriculture Ministry, while the situation is exacerbated all the related organizations must cooperate, he further highlighted, Fars news agency reported on Saturday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“deka-, deca-, dec-”

■ **Meaning:** ten

■ **For example:** In a large bowl put the 40 **dekagrams** of flour.

PHRASAL VERB

Own up

■ **Meaning:** to admit that you have done something wrong, especially something that is not serious

■ **For example:** No one owned up to breaking the window.

IDIOM

As the crow flies

■ **Explanation:** distance measured in a straight line

■ **For example:** It’s two miles from here to the station as the crow flies, but of course it’s much further by road.

Yemeni armed forces display new domestically-built missiles, drones

TEHRAN — Yemeni Armed Forces have unveiled new domestically-built military hardware, including ballistic and winged missiles in addition to unmanned aerial vehicles, which Sana'a says could act as game changers in the face of the Saudi-led military aggression against the Arab country.

The media bureau of Yemen's Operations Command Center announced that the defense achievements were showcased during an exhibition dubbed Martyr Saleh al-Samad — the late president of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, who was killed in a Saudi airstrike in the western province of Hudaydah in April 2018 — in the Yemeni capital city of Sana'a on Sunday afternoon.

Among the participants in the ceremony were Chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, President of the Supreme Political Council Mahdi al-Mashat, Speaker of the House of Representatives Yahya al-Ra'i, Prime Minister Abdel-Aziz bin Habtour, Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs Major General Jalal Al-Ruwaishan, Defense Minister Major General Mohammad Nasser al-Emati and Chief of General Staff Brigadier General Yahia Saree.

The new pieces of military hardware are as follows: Quds-1 winged missile, the high-altitude Sammad-1 (Invincible-1) reconnaissance drone, long-endurance Sammad-3 (Invincible-3) unmanned aerial vehicle as well as Qasef-2k (Striker-2k) combat drone.

Yemeni air defense units and allied fighters from Popular Committees had earlier



made use of Sammad-3 and Qasef-2k drones, but they had not been put them on display until today.

■ 'New hardware to change balance of power'

Mashat said the next phase of engagement with the Saudi-led military alliance against Yemen will be full of surprises, emphasizing that the new weapons will make a profound difference in the balance of power.

Emati, for his part, stated that Yemeni Armed Forces have reached an advanced

stage in the field of military industries, highlighting that the newly-unveiled weapons have been successfully tested in several operations and proved their efficacy and accuracy to hit designated targets.

The Yemeni defense minister further noted that the next stage of retaliatory attacks against the Saudi-led forces of aggression will be the greatest and most painful, unless the aggressors broker peace and put an end to their military campaign and siege against the Yemeni people.

"The detection, tracking and targeting ca-

pabilities of the new armament will turn a new page in the history of the Yemeni military, especially as the advanced weapons have undergone successful experimental stages and proved their effectiveness," Saree had pointed out in a statement released on June 26.

"Yemeni armed forces are working strenuously to develop their defense capabilities to stop the (Saudi-led) aggression and lift the blockade of Yemen. This falls within the framework of our legitimate rights to defend ourselves, our country, our people, our religion and our dignity," the senior Yemeni official said at the time.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a non-profit conflict-research organization, estimates that the Saudi-led war has claimed the lives of over 60,000 Yemenis since January 2016.

The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

Former Erdogan ally resigns from AK Party, hints at rival party



TEHRAN — Former Turkish deputy prime minister Ali Babacan said on Monday he was resigning from President Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party over "deep differences" with the party's direction and said that Turkey needed a new vision.

Babacan, along with former president Abdullah Gul, plans to launch a rival political party this year, according to people familiar with the matter, in a move that could further erode support for Erdogan following a stinging electoral defeat in Istanbul last month.

In a statement that appeared to hint at the formation of the rival party, Ba-

bacan said it had become impossible to remain a member of the AK Party (AKP).

"Under the current conditions, Turkey needs a brand new vision for its future. There is a need for correct analyses in every area, newly developed strategies, plans and programs for our country," Babacan said.

According to Reuters, Babacan served as economy and foreign minister in the first years of AKP government before becoming deputy prime minister, a role he held from 2009 to 2015. Gul was president from 2007 until 2014, when then-prime minister Erdogan moved to the presidency.

Conservative leader Mitsotakis becomes Greek PM after comfortable election win



TEHRAN — Conservative politician Kyrillakos Mitsotakis was sworn in as Greece's new prime minister on Monday after storming to victory on a pledge to create jobs and lure investment to the economically stricken nation.

Mitsotakis's New Democracy party won an outright majority with 158 seats in the 300-seat legislature. His pledges for more investments, well-paid jobs and fewer taxes won over Greeks worn out by years of EU-prescribed austerity and the euro zone's highest unemployment.

"Today we get started on the hard work. I have absolute confidence in our abilities to rise to the occasion," Mitsotakis said after

he was sworn in at a ceremony officiated by Greek Orthodox clergy at the presidential palace in Athens.

According to Reuters, he was later welcomed by outgoing premier Alexis Tsipras, a leftist who steered Greece out of bailouts, but was blamed for botching negotiations with international lenders and saddling the nation with more debt after he took over in 2015.

"Strong mandate for big changes," conservative Kathimerini newspaper said on its front page.

Another conservative-leaning paper, Ta Nea, said Mitsotakis now had "absolute domination", making him an "all-powerful prime minister" for the next four years.

African states establish \$3.4 trillion economic bloc

TEHRAN — African leaders launched a continental free-trade zone that if successful would unite 1.3 billion people, create a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc and usher in a new era of development.

After four years of talks, an agreement to form a 55-nation trade bloc was reached in March, paving the way for Sunday's African Union summit in Niger where Ghana was announced as the host of the trade zone's future headquarters and discussions were held on how exactly the bloc will operate.

It is hoped that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) - the largest since the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1994 - will help unlock Africa's long-stymied economic potential by boosting intra-regional trade, strengthening supply chains and spreading expertise.

"The eyes of the world are turned towards Africa," Egyptian President and African Union Chairman Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said at the summit's opening ceremony.

"The success of the AfCFTA will be the real test to achieve the economic growth that will turn our people's dream of welfare and quality of life into a reality," he said.

Africa has much catching up to do: its intra-regional trade accounted for just 17% of exports in 2017 versus 59% in Asia and 69% in Europe, and Africa has missed out on the economic booms that other trade blocs have experienced in recent decades.

Economists say significant challenges remain, including poor road and rail links, large areas of unrest, excessive border bureaucracy and petty corruption that have held back growth and integration.

Members have committed to eliminate tariffs on most goods, which will increase trade in the region by 15-25% in the medium term, but this would more than double if these other issues were dealt with, according to International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates.

According to Press TV, the IMF in a May report described the free-trade zone as a potential "economic



game changer" of the kind that has boosted growth in Europe and North America, but it added a note of caution.

"Reducing tariffs alone is not sufficient," it said.

UK regrets leak of memos calling Trump administration 'inept'

TEHRAN — Britain said on Monday it had contacted Washington to express regret for the leak of confidential memos in which its ambassador described U.S. President Donald Trump's administration as "dysfunctional" and "inept".

The memos from Kim Darroch, ambassador to Washington, were divulged to a Sunday newspaper, annoying Trump and embarrassing London.

"Contact has been made with the

Trump administration, setting out our view that we believe the leak is unacceptable," Prime Minister Theresa May's spokesman told reporters. "It is, of course, a matter of regret that this has happened."

Trade minister Liam Fox, who is visiting Washington, told BBC radio he would apologize to Trump's daughter Ivanka, whom he is due to meet.

"I will be apologizing for the fact that

either our civil service or elements of our political class have not lived up to the expectations that either we have or the United States has about their behavior, which in this particular case has lapsed in a most extraordinary and unacceptable way," he said.

"Malicious leaks of this nature ... can actually lead to a damage to that relationship, which can therefore affect our wider security interest."

The revelations come at a time when Britain is hoping to strike a major trade deal with its closest ally after it leaves the European Union, an exit currently scheduled for Oct. 31.

According to Press TV, Trump told reporters, of Darroch: "We are not big fans of that man and he has not served the UK well, so I can understand and I can say things about him but I won't bother."

Unraveling the secret deal between Britain and Bolton

➔1

Some experts believe that John Bolton has promised British top leaders to help them in Brexit and put pressure on Brussels in favor of London. This plan of Britain was completely obvious in the recent statement of Boris Johnson, British former Secretary of State who is among the top candidates for becoming the next Prime Minister. In his statements, Johnson announced that if he becomes the Prime Minister he will immediately leave the European Union without any conditions.

Finally, we should wait a little to hear more news about the deal between Britain and Bolton, which surely will not be free of challenges.

Maduro ratifies Padrino as Venezuela's defense minister

TEHRAN — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has reinstated Vladimir Padrino as defense minister who oversaw a U.S.-led attempt to engineer a military coup against the country fall flat.

Maduro broke the news during a military ceremony, which was broadcast on television on Sunday.

"I've decided to ratify ... Vladimir Padrino as minister so that he can continue to shine with his disposition, his intelligence, with his military leadership," he said.

The military under Padrino's rule has remained loyal to the elected government of Maduro during months of street demonstrations and a botched coup attempts by the opposition.

The country plunged into a political crisis after opposition figure Juan Guaido unilaterally declared himself "interim president" of Venezuela in January.

He orchestrated a coup against the government on April 30 during which a small group of armed troops accompanying him clashed with soldiers in the capital, Caracas, Press TV reported.

Turkey 'neutralizes' high-ranking PKK militant in northern Iraq

TEHRAN — Turkish military forces have killed a high-ranking member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group during a counter-terrorism operation in Iraq's northern semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

Turkish sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Sunday that Diyar Garip Muhammed, better known by the nom de guerre Halmat Diyar, was "neutralized" during an offensive on June 27 in the Qandil Mountains.

The sources added that Muhammed was a member of the so-called executive council of the PKK, and its umbrella group, the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK).

The Turkish military generally uses the term "neutralize" to signify that the militants were killed, captured or they surrendered, Press TV reported.

Afghans, Taliban talk in Qatar about a peaceful future as war rages at home

TEHRAN — Wary representatives of Afghan society met Taliban officials in Qatar on Monday for a second day of talks, with bloody insurgent attacks back home casting a pall over efforts to end Afghanistan's years of war.

The Taliban on Sunday detonated a car bomb outside a government security compound in central Afghanistan killing 14 people and wounding 180, including scores of children.

The attack came at the onset of a two-day meeting between Afghan citizens and the militants, meant to open the way to an Afghan peace process that should build on a hoped-for deal between the United States and the Taliban to end the longest ever U.S. war.

"It is very hard to sit across from those men who are waging a war against innocent Afghans, but it is also a test of our commitment to peace," said a senior Afghan government official involved in the talks.

The Taliban and U.S. officials are trying to strike a deal on a Taliban demand for the withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign forces and a U.S. demand that the Taliban not let Afghanistan be used as a base for terrorism.

But the Taliban have refused to negotiate with the U.S.-backed Afghan government, denouncing it as a U.S. puppet.

So while the 60-member delegation of Afghan representatives in Qatar includes government officials, they are not there in their official capacity, Reuters reported.

Australia says Chinese warship 'collect information' on U.S.-Australia drills

TEHRAN — Australia says China has sent a high-tech surveillance ship toward its waters in an effort to "collect information" on an underway U.S.-Australia war game, from outside the territorial waters.

Chief of joint operations at the Australian Defense Force, Greg Bilton, said on Monday that the Auxiliary General Intelligence (AGI) vessel was probably headed to Australia's northeast coast to get a first-hand look at the war game.

"We're tracking it," Bilton said. "We don't know yet its destination but we are assuming that it will come down to the east coast of Queensland and we will take appropriate measures in regards to that."

"It's a vessel that collects information, so it's not a great threat but we'll take appropriate action," he said, adding that "it is international waters; they have the right to sail there."

According to Press TV, at least 25,000 Australian and U.S. military forces on board warships equipped with strike jets will be taking part in bi-annual Talisman Sabre war games over the next month.

The vessel appeared in the region just weeks after three Chinese warships docked in Sydney harbor to the surprise of many, including NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

VAR won't take a tough stance on handballs in Premier League

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) will not be used to police a hard line on handballs when the technology is used in the Premier League for the first time next season, referees' chief Mike Riley has said.

VAR made a controversy-filled debut in the women's game at World Cup level, baffling players and coaches as well as frustrating fans.

Riley said several penalties awarded for handball at the tournament, as well as in last season's Champions League, would not be given in the Premier League.

"There are still areas of interpretation around the way the new handball has been written — effectively what you consider to be an unnatural position of hands and arms," he told The Times on Monday.

"In this country we have always said — and this is the players and managers saying it to us — that arms are part of the game and as long as you are not trying to extend your body to block a shot then there is more scope so that we don't penalise.

"What we don't want to create is a culture when defenders have to defend with their hands behind their back or where it is acceptable for attackers to try to drill the ball at their hand to win a penalty."

The new law states that players "taking a risk" by having hands or arms above shoulder height or in an "unnatural position" and making the body "unnaturally bigger" should be penalised, even if the handball is not deliberate.

(Source: Reuters)

Griezmann defies Atletico Madrid by missing pre-season gathering

Atletico Madrid and France striker Antoine Griezmann delivered on his threat and failed to show up for the club's pre-season gathering on Sunday, a club spokesman told AFP.

"Griezmann had an official summons to be at the club at 20.30 this Sunday and when he did not present himself, we opened a file and will study the case," said the spokesman.

Griezmann, a Barcelona target, had already said he would not turn up, Madrid sports daily Marca reported on Saturday, with Atletico then telling AFP that "it changes nothing".

"He us under contract with our club until 2023 and must resume training tomorrow like all the other players," they added.

On Sunday evening, the club tweeted pictures of players arriving at Los Angeles de San Rafael where Atletico traditionally hold their pre-season training, including recent record signing Joao Felix, a teenage Portuguese striker.

Griezmann announced in May that he would be leaving Atletico but could not reveal his destination until his release clause dropped from 200 million euros (\$225 million) to 120 million euros on July 1.

On Friday, Atletico accused Barcelona and Griezmann of a "lack of respect" after the Catalan giants' president Josep Maria Bartomeu revealed that the two clubs had held talks about the France international.

Atletico confirmed that they had held a meeting on Thursday, at Barca's behest, to discuss a deal for World Cup winner Griezmann at the lower price.

(Source: Goal)

Top seed Barty knocked out of Wimmledon

Australia's world number one Ashleigh Barty has been knocked out of Wimbledon, losing her fourth round match against American Alison Riske.

World number 55 Riske fought back from a set down to win 3-6 6-2 3-6 in one hour 36 minutes on court two to reach a first Grand Slam quarter-final.

French Open champion Barty, 23, had not dropped a set at the tournament.

Riske will face the winner of seven-time champion Serena Williams' match with Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro.

"I couldn't begin to say what it means to me. To have overcome the matches the way I have is what I'm most excited about," said Riske, 29. "Getting to the quarter-finals is amazing but what's most exciting for me is the way I've been fighting.

"The grass definitely brings out the best in me. Hopefully it will rub off and happen in other places too. I think my game is just well-suited to it."

Barty set the early tone as she took the opening game with four successive aces, before a delightful sliced back-hand set up break-points as the Australian raced into a 4-1 lead.

Unshaken, Riske - who won the pair's only previous meeting in 2016 - brought the set back on serve, only for the world number one to take the final two games and pocket the opener in 32 minutes.

The American rallied in the second set, breaking Barty's faltering serve twice more as the momentum was swiftly stolen away from the Australian.

(Source: BBC)

UEFA denies inviting Argentina to Nations League

UEFA has denied reports it would entertain inviting Argentina into its European competitions following the 2019 Copa América.

Argentina finished third at the Copa but captain and star man Lionel Messi voiced complaints following the semi-final and the third-place play-off, during which he was controversially sent off.

Messi described the officiating during the loss to Brazil as "bull****" and suggested his side were victims of "corruption" after beating Chile, which led to a strong rebuttal from CONMEBOL who described his comments as "unacceptable" and "unfounded".

It was subsequently reported UEFA could invite Argentina to enter its Nations League.

However, European football's governing body has denied this is the case, insisting such an offer would never be forthcoming.

A statement read: "There is no truth whatsoever in the suggestion that Argentina has been asked to participate in UEFA competitions, nor to become a member of UEFA.

"UEFA has never entered into any discussions on this matter and would never do so.

"However, in the spirit of friendship and camaraderie and as an inclusive organisation, UEFA will, of course, invite Argentina as special guests to watch any UEFA competition at any time."

(Source: AS)

Rapinoe shines brightest at story-packed women's World Cup

The United States cemented their position as the dominant force in women's football on Sunday by winning their fourth World Cup in eight editions, beating the Netherlands 2-0 in the final.

AFP Sport looks at the biggest stars and stories from France as a landmark tournament comes to a close:

■ Rapinoe steals show

If there is one person to come out of the tournament with their profile raised to that of a global star it's Megan Rapinoe, winner of the Golden Ball and Golden Boot as she conquered her second World Cup on the pitch and won hearts off it.

The 34-year-old, who broke the deadlock from the penalty spot on Sunday, became the face of the tournament for her decisive performances and the way she handled being attacked online by Donald Trump.

Rapinoe scored braces in the USA's wins against Spain and France before being ruled out of their triumph over England in the semi-finals with a hamstring injury.

Her double against France came in the middle of a media storm after her comments about not going to the White House elicited a furious reaction from Trump, who accused her of disrespecting the country.

Rapinoe did not back down and became an icon with her commitment to social justice, goals and what she described as a "shit-eating grin".

Trump's congratulatory message for the USA team on Sunday is unlikely to change



her opinion of the president.

■ VAR causes anger, heartache

It was fitting that the penalty from which Rapinoe scored in the final came from a VAR-assisted decision following a tournament in which the video technology and the application of new laws have attracted criticism.

After a relatively smooth use of VAR at the men's World Cup last year, there were accusations that FIFA were using the women's tournament as a testing ground

for law changes.

VAR punished several goalkeepers for stepping off the line at spot-kicks, while razor-thin offside and penalty decisions proved decisive in matches as big as the USA's semi-final win over England.

First Ellen White's leveller was chalked off for offside by what looked like millimetres, before VAR gave her a penalty for a foul that slipped by the referee -- a spot-kick missed by Steph Houghton.

Scotland were hit hardest with VAR spot-

ting minimal infractions from goalkeepers on penalties, as Florencia Bonsegundo's retaken kick following her missed first effort sealed a comeback from three goals down for Argentina to draw 3-3 and dump the Scots out.

■ Goalkeepers improve their standing

Criticism of women's football before this World Cup often centred on the quality of the goalkeeping, but France has seen a number of world-class displays from stoppers, the Netherlands' Sari van Veenendaal chief among them.

Incredibly the 29-year-old is without a club after leaving Arsenal but will surely have suitors queueing up after star turns in the extra-time semi-final win over Sweden and in the final.

Van Veenendaal's vanquished last-four opponent, Hedvig Lindahl, also shone. The Swede's spectacular save from Vivianne Miedema's powerful header in that game was a highlight before she was eventually beaten in extra time.

Chile's Christiane Endler was described as "world-class" by USA coach Jill Ellis after a stunning display in a 3-0 defeat to the holders.

England coach Phil Neville also noted the improvements in goalkeeping after Argentina's Vanina Correa kept the Lionesses down to one goal with a display that included a penalty stop from Nikita Parris, highlighting what can be achieved with increased access to specialised coaching.

(Source: AFP)

Copa America: Jair Bolsonaro takes center stage as Brazil seals title



Some Presidents extend an invitation, others just crash the party.

While debate surrounds whether the victorious US Women's National Team will attend the White House to meet President Donald Trump, Brazil's leader left no such ambiguity as his country won the Copa America on home soil.

Jair Bolsonaro was front and center alongside those in the famous yellow shirt of Brazil after a 3-1 victory over Peru in Rio de Janeiro sparked celebrations across the country.

Bolsonaro had watched Brazil win its ninth Copa America title, its first since 2007, which was secured despite being forced to play the final 20 minutes of the contest with 10 men after Gabriel Jesus was sent off.

Jesus, rarely out of the action, endured a mixed evening with the Manchester City star assisting his side's first goal and scoring its second before being dismissed after receiving a second yellow card in the 70th minute.

Clearly unhappy with the decision, Jesus walked off the field of play before taking out his frustration on the video assistant referee (VAR) monitor which fell to the ground.

"I want to apologize," Jesus told reporters after the game. "I could have avoided it and I also need to grow up a lot."

Leading 2-1 courtesy of goals from Ever-

ton Soares and Jesus, Brazil added a third right at the death through Richarlison's penalty to seal the win.

Peru, which defeated defending champion Chile in the last four, had threatened to spoil the party earlier in the tie when Paolo Guerrero leveled at 1-1 from the penalty spot.

But La Blaquirroja, who had not reached the final since 1975, was unable to cope with Brazil's group of superstars, including its captain Dani Alves.

For Alves, this was a particularly sweet triumph.

At the age of 36, he has now won a staggering 40 major titles. Voted the tournament's best player and a key part of the Brazil defense that conceded just once in six games, Alves' performances belied his years.

But while some spectators may have been surprised by Alves' levels of performance, the man himself was rather less shocked.

"If you have respect for your profession and look after yourself it's easy to maintain your level," he told reporters ahead of the final.

"Some people are surprised about my performances here, I am not."

Peru coach Ricardo Gareca had said on Saturday they needed to prevent Brazil from dominating possession, but that was easier said than done.

(Source: CNN)

Dos Santos powers Mexico to eighth Gold Cup title



Mexico's Jonathan dos Santos scored in the 73rd minute to give his side a 1-0 win over the United States in the CONCACAF Gold Cup final on Sunday.

The victory over the defending champions at Chicago's Soldier Field earned Mexico a record-extending eighth title at the biennial tournament, which crowns the continental champions of North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

"This was what we came here for" said Mexico's Andres Guardado. "We did it and in an unforgettable setting. We're very happy. The whole team was spectacular."

Mexico took control midway through the second half and got their goal when Dos Santos received a back-heel pass from Raul Jimenez and fired home off the underside of the bar.

The United States had a series of corners late in the game and in the 87th minute one delivery caused havoc in the Mexico box but Hector Moreno made a big block with his face to preserve their lead.

The hosts threw everyone forward in the two minutes of stoppage time but Mexico held firm to reclaim the title they last won in 2015.

"I thought we had a good start to the game. If anything the beginning of the

second half wasn't what it needed to be," said American midfielder Michael Bradley.

"They were able to get some momentum and got their goal. Tough way to lose."

The game got off to a frenetic start and it was the United States who had the better chances early on while Mexico, who entered the tournament as favourites, looked shaky at the back as they weathered the early storm.

Christian Pulisic nearly opened the scoring in the fifth minute when he used his speed to break in alone after a smart through ball from Jozy Altidore but was denied by a brilliant save from Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa.

Moments later Tim Ream found Altidore with a ball over the top and the striker, with only Ochoa to beat, put his left-footed effort wide.

Mexico's best chance of the half came in the 16th minute when Guardado looked ready to tap home a cross from the left only for Paul Arriola to arrive out of nowhere and put him off at the last second.

Tempers flared after the break when Moreno pushed Altidore over and then dropped onto his back. American Weston McKennie quickly jumped in and several players converged but no cards were issued.

(Source: Reuters)

Does Messi have a future with Argentina ?

Swap Jorge Burruchaga for Gonzalo Higuain and perhaps one of the doubts about Lionel Messi's place in the pantheon would have been put to bed years ago.

The eternal complaint: that Messi has not won a senior title with Argentina. The eternal comparison: with Diego Maradona in 1986.

In that year's World Cup final in Mexico, West Germany had fought back from two goals down to draw level.

Had they gone on to beat Argentina, Maradona's reputation would have suffered.

Instead, he slipped a pass through for Burruchaga, who kept his head to score, win the World Cup and seal Maradona's legendary status.

Messi, meanwhile, did much to carry Argentina to three finals in consecutive years.

Every time they went down to narrow defeats - 1-0 by Germany in the 2014 World Cup, and on penalties against Chile after goalless draws in the Copa America finals of 2015 and 2016. Every time the big chance of the match fell to Higuain - and every time it was wasted.

Perhaps Messi's international career was cursed from the start. He made his Argentina debut off the bench in a friendly against Hungary in 2005. He had only just come on when he launched into one of those trademark dribbles, ball tied



to his left foot, swerving and changing direction as he went.

He flew past a Hungarian defender, who held on to him in an illegal attempt to impede his progress. Messi fought to free himself - and was shown a red card for throwing an elbow.

It was a decision almost as bizarre as the red card he received against Chile in Saturday's Copa America third-place play-off. Paraguayan referee Mauro Diaz de Vivar appeared to be playing the old game of sending off one from each side in a vain bid to establish his authority in a difficult match,

and charged into the melee brandishing his red card after a flare-up between Messi and Gary Medel.

The Argentine had set the ball rolling with a little push, but was innocent thereafter when Medel turned around to confront him. Nevertheless, the card was out and Messi had to go.

Has he gone forever? Might those two red cards - the only ones of his career - bookend his time in the blue and white stripes of Argentina?

Messi, of course, announced his retirement from the national team immediately after that 2016 Copa defeat, when he seemed to arrive at the conclusion that things would never work out for him with Argentina.

He was soon coaxed back. However, the 32-year-old could now be dwelling on the view that he should have stuck to his original decision.

Since then, Argentina have fielded some dismal teams, while expecting the Barcelona great to provide all the solutions.

And he found plenty to moan about during this Copa America, including the standard of the pitches - "the ball is jumping around like a rabbit" - and the refereeing decision that provoked his outburst after the Chile game - "the Copa is fixed for Brazil" and "we don't have to be part of this corruption".

(Source: BBC)

Iran volleyball team face huge delays at Chicago airport

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian national volleyball team competing at the 2019 Volleyball Nations League Final Round, faced huge delays at Chicago airport on Monday.

The Iranian team arrived in Chicago after a 30-hour flight but was delayed for more four hours.

Director of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Department of the Americas, Mohsen Baharvand, protested the U.S. over mistreatment of Iranian players in the airport.

Iran volleyball federation has also lodged a complaint to the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) over the incident.

The same behavior was shown towards the young Iranian volleyball players last year too.

Igor Kolakovic, coach of the Iranian National Volleyball Team, said at the time that «the FIVB Nations League is



not organized in a proper manner. How can a team like Iran change continents once a week while teams from France, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, US, and Poland only travel to one or two continents? Why were our young team members not able to obtain a US or even an EU visa? This is not sports».

The VNL final round will be held in the Credit Union 1 Arena, Chicago, United States from July 10 to 14.

Iran have been drawn with Brazil and Poland in Pool B and hosts the U.S. are pitted against Russia and France in Pool A.

The Iranian team, who are looking for the VNL first medal, will start the competition with a match against powerhouse Poland on July 11.

Team Melli will meet Brazil on July 12.

This will be the first edition of the World League or the Nations League to have the Final Round hosted in North America.

Iranian athletes win nine medals at Kosanov Memorial Athletic Meet

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Nine Iranian athletes claimed medals at the G. Kosanov Kosanov Memorial Athletic Meet in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Reza Moghaddam won a gold medal in the men's hammer throw with 72.37 meters.

Mehdi Pirjahan seized Iran's second gold in the event in the men's 400 meters hurdles, clocking 49.95 seconds.

Hamideh Esmaeilnejad claimed a silver at the women's 200 meters with a time of 24.86 seconds.

In the women's long jump, Reyhaneh Mobini took a silver with a 5.82 meters jump.

Shahin Jafari snatched a silver medal in the men's shot put with a throw of 17.50 meters.

Amir Zamanpour also won a silver medal in the men's 1,500 meters with 3 minutes, 46.36 seconds.

Aylin Babaki clinched a bronze at the women's high jump by clearing a height of 1.75 meters.

Iran won a bronze medal in the women's 4 × 100 meter relay with a time of 50.63 seconds.

Hamideh Esmaeilnejad also took a bronze in the women's 100 meters, clocking 12.11 seconds.

Gusman Sittykovich Kosanov was a Kazakh sprinter. He completed for the Soviet Union at the 1960 and 1964 Olympics, in the individual 100 m and 4×100 m relay. He failed to reach the individual finals, but won a silver medal in the relay in 1960, becoming the first ethnic Kazakh athlete to win an Olympic medal.



Durant officially joins Nets, to wear No. 7

The Brooklyn Nets officially added forward Kevin Durant on Sunday, announcing his arrival as part of a sign-and-trade deal with the Golden State Warriors a week after the 10-time All-Star announced his intentions to join Brooklyn.

"Kevin is a champion, perennial All-Star and one of the great players of this, or any, generation," general manager Sean Marks said in a statement. "Adding a player of Kevin's caliber to our organization elevates our ability to compete with the elite teams in this league. His tremendous abilities and dedication to his craft have made him as talented an offensive player our game has ever seen and we, as well as all of Brooklyn, are thrilled to welcome Kevin and his family to the Nets."

Changing teams won't be new for Durant, after he left the Oklahoma City Thunder for the Warriors three summers ago, but he will be wearing a new



number for the first time since entering the NBA: No. 7.

Durant tweeted a photo Sunday evening on social media of a Nets No. 7 jersey hanging in a locker. He added a statement from his business, Thirty Five Ventures, explaining the decision to change numbers, reading:

"35 took my family and me from Seat Pleasant, MD and showed us the world. 35 allowed me to meet people that I never would've had the chance to meet, experience things I would never have had the chance to experience, and achieve things that I never would have been able to achieve. 35 allowed me to go to the University of Texas to play basketball. 35 allowed me to achieve my dream of playing in the NBA in Seattle. 35 allowed me to play basketball in Oklahoma City and form bonds and friendships that will last a lifetime. Lastly, 35 allowed me to go to the Bay Area and win two championships and form brotherhoods that no time or distance will ever break.

"35 was chosen in honor of someone very near and dear to me. I will always honor him and honor the number 35. But as I start this new chapter in my basketball life, the number I'll be wearing on my back is the number 7 next time you see me on

the floor. One time Brooklyn."

Durant has worn No. 35 since he was 16, first donning it to represent the age of one of his youth coaches who was shot and killed in Maryland, according to a New York Times feature published in 2017.

The Warriors last week announced they will retire Durant's No. 35. The Thunder have given out the No. 35 since Durant left, but the expectation is they will retire it in the future.

Durant, who turns 31 in September, is expected to miss the entire 2019-20 season because of the ruptured Achilles he suffered in Game 5 of the NBA Finals against the Toronto Raptors.

The former MVP averaged 26 points, 6.4 rebounds and 5.9 assists in 78 games for the Warriors last season. He has career averages of 27 points, 7.1 rebounds and 4.1 assists in 849 games.

(Source: Reuters)

Britain's richest man to purchase Nice

The takeover of Ligue 1 side Nice by Britain's wealthiest man Sir Jim Ratcliffe will be confirmed on Tuesday, sources have told ESPN FC.

The outgoing owners Chien Lee, Alex Zheng, Paul Conway and Elliot Hayes, who bought Nice in 2016 for €23 million, agreed to sell it to the boss of the chemical giant Ineos for €100m nine days ago.

Three years after their takeover, the Chinese and American businessmen, who also own part of Barnsley in England's second tier, will make a huge profit. There are now three final steps for the sale to be effective.

First, all the paperwork will be signed and become official on Tuesday morning during the club's central management meeting at the stadium. Then Ratcliffe and his team will face the DNCG, the French financial fair play, to present their project, their business model and declare how much money they will invest in the club.

Finally, they will face an interview with the Competition Authority council. The whole process will take between



four-to-six weeks and only after that will Ratcliffe, 66, officially be the Nice owner.

Ratcliffe is worth around €21 billion after founding Ineos and lives in Monaco. Nice manager Patrick Vieira, who took the team to seventh place in Ligue 1 in his first year at the club last season, has been informed his job is safe and he will remain in charge, sources have told ESPN FC.

The new owner has also promised to invest heavily in the club. He wants Nice to be in the Champions League in the next three years and hopes to compete with Paris Saint-Germain for the Ligue 1 title.

In November 2017, Ratcliffe bought Lausanne Sport, the Swiss football club and also owns Ineos, the cycling team which compete in the Tour de France.

He is partnering with Ben Ainslie to form Ineos Team UK, which will compete for the America's Cup in 2021. Ratcliffe is reportedly investing over £10m in the project.

Reports in England also linked him with the takeover of Chelsea a few weeks ago.

(Source: ESPN)

Chilean karate athlete Rodrigo Rojas enjoys Iranian hospitality

TASNIM — Rodrigo Rojas, a karate athlete from Chile, says Iranian people are so kind and hospitable.

Rojas is training with the Iranian karate fighters to prepare for the 2019 Pan American Games which will be held from July 26 to August 11 in Lima, capital of Peru.

"I am here in Iran to train with Iranian karate athletes since I'm preparing for the Pan American Games which serve as 2020 Olympic Games qualification," Rojas said in an interview with Tasnim news agency.



"Iranian karate athletes are well-known in the world. I am here for the second time and I want to thank the Iran karate federation and Iranian athletes for taking me into consideration. The Iranian athletes are very friendly," the +84kg karat athlete stated.

"Sajjad Ganjzadeh is undoubtedly one of the best karate fighters in the world. He could win a medal in each tournament. In my opinion, Sajjad is able to get a medal in the 2020 Olympic Games. I will win a medal at Olympics if I earn a quota place," the Chilean added.

"I've traveled to 30 countries and I have to say I am interested in Iranian culture. We have different rules in Chile and Iran and I was honestly afraid of being in your country but I traveled to Iran after consulting with some of world's karate athletes and they told me Iran is a safe and secure country," Rojas said.

"Iran is a beautiful country and the Iranian people are so kind and hospitable. I enjoy to be here to practice with the Iranian karate athletes," he concluded.

Brazilian Luciano Pereira extends contract with Foolad

IRNA — Brazilian striker Luciano Pereira Mendes has penned a one-year contract extension with Foolad on Monday.

Pereira along with his compatriot Kiros Stanley won the Iran Professional League (IPL) Golden Boot last year.

The 35-year-old forward had reportedly reached an agreement with Padideh but he extends his deal with Ahvaz-based football team.

Foolad finished in eighth place.

The team is headed by ex-Iran captain Javad Nekounam in the new season.

Arnautovic signs for Shanghai SIPG

Marko Arnautovic has completed his move from West Ham to Shanghai SIPG for an undisclosed fee, the Premier League club announced on Monday.

The Austrian scored 22 goals in 65 appearances in two seasons at the Hammers, but has been linked with a move to China since January.

"West Ham United can confirm that Marko Arnautovic has joined Chinese Super League champions Shanghai SIPG for an undisclosed fee," West Ham said in a statement.

Arnautovic will join forces with former Brazilian internationals Oscar and Hulk at the Chinese champions.

Shanghai SIPG are through to the 2019 AFC Champions League and will face Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds on August 27 and September 17.

(Source: AFP)

Italy's El Shaarawy and Kim Shin-wook join Shanghai Shenhua

Stephan El Shaarawy and Kim Shin-wook have signed for China PR's Shanghai Shenhua, the club announced on Monday.

El Shaarawy - nicknamed The Pharaoh because of his Egyptian ancestry - had only a year left on his contract with the Serie A club, having joined Roma in 2016 from AC Milan after a loan spell in Monaco.

Capped 23 times for Italy, he scored 11 goals in Serie A last season as Roma finished sixth and qualified for the Europa League.

Shenhua are bolstering their squad during the summer transfer window after slipping to 14th in the 16-team Chinese Super League, one point above the relegation places, at the season's midway point.

The club said last week that Spanish manager Enrique "Quique" Sanchez Flores had resigned for "personal reasons" after just half a season in charge.

Former Watford boss Sanchez Flores has been replaced by Korea Republic's Choi Kang-hee, who coached K League giants Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors for five years until 2018 when he moved to China's Tianjin Quanjian before moving to Dalian Yifang.

Choi will reunite with his former Jeonbuk frontman Kim Shin-wook after Shenhua also said that they have signed the Korea Republic international striker.

Kim, who spent his first six years as a professional footballer with Ulsan Hyundai, clinched his first AFC Champions League title in 2012, and his move to Jeonbuk in 2016 immediately paid dividends with the 31-year-old playing a crucial role in assisting the club to lift their second Continental trophy.

He then helped power Jeonbuk to back-to-back K League 1 honours in 2017 and 2018.

(Source: AFP)

Haifa Alnaqbi suspended for anti-doping violation

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) suspended United Arab Emirates powerlifter Haifa Alnaqbi for six months for committing an anti-doping violation.

The athlete who competes in the women's up to 73kg class returned an adverse analytical finding for Clomifene and its metabolite hydroxyclofemifene as well as tamoxifen metabolite 3-hydroxy-4-methoxy-tamoxifen in a urine sample provided on 11 September 2018 following competition at the 2018 World Para Powerlifting Asia-Oceania Open Championships in Kitakyushu, Japan.

This substance is included on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) 2018 Prohibited List under the category S4. Hormone and Metabolic Modulators.

As a result of her violation, Alnaqbi was ineligible for competition for six months from 11 September 2018, the date of the test, to 10 March 2019. All her results obtained from 11 September 2018 and onwards will be disqualified including forfeiture of any medals, points, records and prizes. This includes the bronze medal she won at the 2018 Asian Para Games in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the bronze medals (open and regional) she won at

the Asia-Oceania Championships.

Her medal from Kitakyushu in the open category will now go to Ireland's Britney Arendse, while the regional bronze medal will go to South Korea's Eun Mi Yang.

The IPC would like to remind all athletes the principle of strict liability applies to anti-doping matters and that any athletes who need to take a prohibited substance for medical reasons should seek a Therapeutic Use Exemption.

Each athlete is strictly liable for the substances found in his or her sample, and that an anti-doping rule violation occurs whenever a prohibited substance (or its metabolites or markers) is found in his or her bodily specimen, whether or not the athlete intentionally or unintentionally used a prohibited substance or was negligent or otherwise at fault.

As a signatory of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC), the IPC remains committed to a doping-free sporting environment at all levels. The IPC, together with the International Federations and the National Paralympic Committees, established the IPC Anti-Doping Code



to prevent doping in sport for Paralympic athletes, in the spirit of fair play. The IPC Anti-Doping Code is in conformity with the general principles of the WADC.

(Source: Paralympic)

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He who observes economy will never be indigent.

Imam Ali (AS)

Ten films shortlisted for Hafez Awards

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Ten films will be competing at the 19th edition of the Hafez Awards, the organizers of Iran’s first and only private awards in the film industry and TV productions, announced on Monday.

“Lovely Trash”, a film on Iran’s 2009 post-election unrest by producer and director Mohsen Amiryusefi, is one the highlights.

“Bomb, a Love Story”, whose story is set in 1988 at the height of the Iran-Iraq war as Tehran is bombed relentlessly, by producers Peyman Maadi and Ehsan Rasulof, will also compete for the award for best film.



Saber Abar acts in a scene from “Lovely Trash” by Mohsen Amiryusefi.

“The Lost Strait” by producer Saeid Malekan about the true story of an epic battle by Iran’s Ammar Battalion during the last days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, are among the nominees.

Also included are “Cold Sweat” by producer Mehdi Davari, “I Am Not Angry” by Reza Dormishian, “Murphy’s Law” by Mohammad Shayesteh, “Columbus” by Hatf Alimardani, “6.5 for One Meter” by Jamal Sadatian, “Flaming” by Mohammadreza Shafiei and “Sheeple” by Saeid Sadi.

Six filmmakers will also compete for the award for best director.

Among the nominees are Bahram Tavakkoli for “The Lost Strait”, Reza Dormishian for “I Am Not Angry” and Saeid Rustai for “6.5 for One Meter”.

Hooman Seyyedi for “Sheeple”, Hamid Nematollah for “Flaming” and Majidreza Mostafavi for “Astigmatism” are other nominees.

Earlier last week the organizers announced nominations for the TV series category.

“The Lady of the Mansion”, directed by Azizollah Hamidnejad about a Qajar prince who marries a young girl and brings her to his mansion full of dark secrets, is one of the nominees.

“Father”, by Behrang Tofiqi about two young university students who fall in love despite their different families and backgrounds, has also received a nomination.

“The Lovers” by Manuchehr Hadi about a middle-aged woman who lost her husband and son in an incident, and “Around Autumn” by Hossein Namazi about the Mina tragedy in which thousands of pilgrims lost their lives in Saudi Arabia in September 2015 have also been shortlisted for the award.

The Hafez Awards will announce winners in Tehran on July 12.

Troupe from Iran to perform Alfred Jarry’s “Ubu Roi” in Yerevan

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Alireza Daryabeigi will stage French symbolist writer Alfred Jarry’s play “Ubu Roi” at the Yerevan State Institute of Theater and Cinematography in Armenia.

“I previously staged the play at Tehran’s Hafez Hall last December. Now my troupe is scheduled to perform the play in Yerevan on July 26 and 27 at the invitation of the acting rector of the institute, Lilit Arzumanyan,” Daryabeigi told the Persian service of MNA on Monday.

“Ubu Roi”, which means Ubu the King, is about Ubu who leads a revolution and kills the king of Poland and most of the royal family. The play is a parody of Shakespeare’s Macbeth with bits of Hamlet and King Lear tossed in.

Shahrad Qadiri, Sara Moqadam, Shima Bakhtiari, Arameh Soltanieh and Amir-Hossein Rezai are the main members of the cast for the play.

Daryabeigi also said that he plans to stage “Chamber Music” by American absurdist playwright Arthur Kopit in Tehran in January 2020.

Written in 1962, the one-act play is set in 1938 and concerns eight famous women from different historical periods who all are interned in the same insane asylum.

The women believe they are author Gertrude Stein, martyr Joan of Arc, activist Susan B. Anthony, politician Queen Isabella I of Spain, pilot Amelia Earhart, silent-film actress Pearl White, explorer Osa Johnson and Constanze Mozart, wife of the famous composer.

They have come together to represent the women of the asylum in planning for an attack they believe is soon to come from the men’s ward.

Book on leadership in Iran published

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A book that chronicles the history of selecting Iran’s leadership after the victory of the Islamic revolution has recently been published.

Written by Seyyed Yasser Jebraili, “The Story of Leadership” was introduced during a meeting at Tehran’s Andisheh Cultural Center on Sunday.

Jebraili who attended the meeting said he has spent three years meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, to write the book, which was published by the Office for the Preservation and Publication of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei’s Works in early June.

He added that the book aims to answer two questions: first, who is highly qualified for the leadership of the Islamic Republic and second, how he should be selected for the position.

The book also covers the history of Iran’s leadership after the victory of the Islamic revolution in three chapters.

The first chapter explains how the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, began to assume the leadership of the system.

Selecting Ayatollah Hosseinali Montazeri as the Imam Khomeini’s successor and then his removal from the position has been discussed in the second chapter.

In the third part, the book describes how the leadership was transferred to Ayatollah Khamenei.

A member of the Assembly of Experts, Hajjtoleslam Mohsen Qomi, who was in attendance at the meeting called “The Story of Leadership” worthwhile due to its accuracy and the information contained of high quality.



Writer Seyyed Yasser Jebraili autographs a copy “The Story of Leadership” after a meeting held at Tehran’s Andisheh Cultural Center on July 7, 2019 to introduce the book.

Puppet show on water shortage on stage in Tehran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The puppet show “Water and Others”, centering on the universal problem of water shortage, is currently on stage at Tehran’s City Theater Complex.

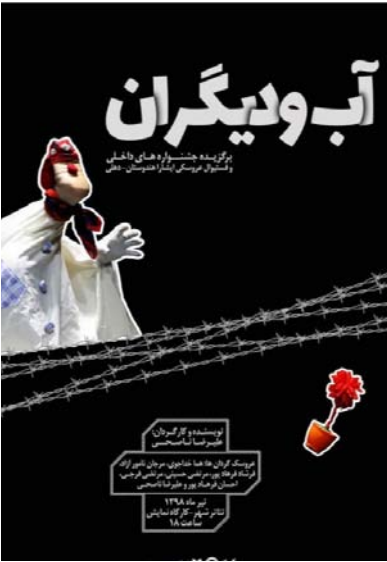
Alireza Nasehi is the director of the play, which was acclaimed at the 22nd International Theater Festival for Children and Young Adults in Hamedan.

The story of the play is about Mr. Foot who is seeking water for his flower vase, but the recent years of drought makes him begin a journey.

The puppeteers are Homa Khodajuy, Marjan Namvar-Azad, Farshad Farhadpur, Amir Nadali, Morteza Faraji, Alireza Nasehi and Morteza Hosseini.

Nasehi’s troupe performed the puppet show during the Ishara International Puppet Festival in India in 2016.

The play will be on stage at the complex until July 19 and will go on stage at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) the next month.



A poster for director Alireza Nasehi’s puppet show “Water and Others”.

Shahr film festival announces international lineup



A scene from Scottish director Lynne Ramsay’s “You Were Never Really Here” that will be screened in the official competition of the Shahr International Film Festival.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A lineup of 31 movies will go on screen in various sections of the international competition of the 7th edition of the Shahr (Urban) International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Monday.

Among the feature films are “Breaking the Limits” by Lukasz Palkowski from Poland, “Loveless” by Andrey Zvyagintsev from Russia, “You Were Never Really Here” by Lynne Ramsay from Scotland and “Shoplifters” by Hirokazu Kore-eda from Japan.

“The Human Shelter” by Boris Bertram from Denmark, “New Town Utopia” by Christopher Ian Smith from England and “The Experimental City” by Chad Freidrichs from the U.S. will go on screen at the documentary section.

The movies for the short competition are “Being More Like Bagsy” by Mikkel Storm Glomstein from Norway, “My New Year” by Arusyak Simonyan from Armenia, “Drop”

by Ghulam Yahya Jafari from Afghanistan, “The Tables” by Jon Bunning from the U.S. and “Samvel” by Evgeniy Bakirov from Russia.

In the animation section, “Fire in Cardboard City” by Phil Brough from New Zealand, “Hybrids” by Florian Brauch from Canada, “Negative Space” by Ru Kuwahata and Max Porter, “Scrambled” by Bastiaan Schravendeel and “Sound” by Laureline Paul-Constant, all from France, will be screened.

Earlier this week, the festival organizers announced the national lineup consist of 18 Iranian movies.

An exhibition of photos and paintings by 50 artists will also be held on the sidelines of the festival, which will take place in Tehran 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.



Croatian pianist Janja Knapic in an undated photo.

Croatian pianist Janja Knapic to join Tonal Choir for Tehran concert

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Croatian pianist Janja Knapic will soon be in Tehran to accompany the Tonal Choir during two performances at Rudaki Hall on July 18 and 19, the organizers announced on Monday.

Works by Croatian composers and pieces from folk music and contemporary choral and pop compositions of the country are scheduled to be performed during the concerts that will be organized in collaboration with the Iran Music Association.

Led by Milad Omranlu, Tonal Choir has been awarded in several Iranian and international events.

It won two gold medals at the 4th Asia Pacific Choir Games in 2017 and three silver medals at the 9th World Choir Games in 2016.

In 2009, the ensemble received a gold medal in the 11th International Folksong Choir Festival in Barcelona as well as gold and silver medals at the 2nd Asian Choir Games in South Korea.

“Spider-Man: Far From Home” debuts with heroic \$185 million

LOS ANGELES, (Variety) — Superheroes were once again around to save the day as “Spider-Man: Far From Home” ignited a much-needed boost in the domestic box office. The web-slinging adventure easily dominated in North America, delivering a \$185 million debut from 4,636 venues during its first six days in theaters.

But even your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man isn’t immune to a little sequel slump. “Spider-Man: Far From Home” got a head start by opening on the Tuesday ahead of Independence Day, but it collected \$93 million over the traditional three-day weekend. That’s a stellar start to be sure, but a drop from the \$117 million debut of its predecessor, 2017’s “Spider-Man: Homecoming.” However, the July 4th weekend isn’t a traditionally busy time for moviegoing.

“Spider-Man: Far From Home” set a number of records this week, including biggest Tuesday ticket sales of all time (\$38 million), best Wednesday grosses for a Marvel movie (\$27 million) and the second-largest Fourth of July holiday (\$25 million). It also marks Sony Pictures’ biggest six-day opening weekend ever.

Overseas, the 23rd movie in Marvel’s Cinematic Universe earned \$395 million, boosting its global tally to a mighty \$580 million after 10 days. The superhero tentpole is performing ahead of fellow comic-book universe titles “Captain Marvel” and “Spider-Man: Homecoming” at the same point in their release cycles.

Boosted by solid reviews, “Spider-Man:

Far From Home” also benefited as the must-see followup to the epic finale that was “Avengers: Endgame.” Younger males accounted for most of opening weekend audiences. Boys and men comprising 60% of crowds, while 58% of ticket buyers were under the age of 25.

“Spider-Man: Far From Home,” which carries a \$160 million price tag, picks up after the events of “Avengers: Endgame” and sees Peter Parker (Holland) on a class trip to Europe. While overseas, he is reluctantly enlisted by Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) and Mystério (Jake Gyllenhaal) to help take down threats from an alternate dimension. Zendaya, Cobie Smulders, Jon Favreau and Marisa Tomei all returned for the sequel.

Also opening this weekend was A24’s “Midsommar,” director Ari Aster’s sophomore feature. The R-rated folk horror film nabbed sixth place on box office charts, generating \$6 million over the weekend and \$10.9 million during its first five days of release. “Midsommar” received mostly positive reviews, though audiences seemed more divided. The movie, about a group of friends who travel to Sweden for a festival, has a mediocre C+ CinemaScore.

While in line with studio projections, “Midsommar’s” debut is roughly half of what Aster’s first film “Hereditary” made in its inaugural weekend. “Hereditary” launched with \$13 million last June and is still A24’s highest-grossing movie to date with \$44 million in North America and \$79 million globally.

Martin Charnin, Tony-winning “Annie” lyricist, dies at 84

NEW YORK (AP) — Martin Charnin, who made his Broadway debut playing a Jet in the original “West Side Story” and went on to become a Broadway director and a lyricist who won a Tony Award for the score of the eternal hit “Annie,” has died. He was 84.

He died Saturday at a White Plains, New York, hospital, days after suffering a minor heart attack, his daughter, Sasha Charnin Morrison, told The Associated Press.

“He’s in a painless place, now. Probably looking for Cole Porter and Ira Gershwin,” Morrison wrote Sunday on Instagram.

Charnin was a keeper of the “Annie” flame, protective of what he created with songwriter Charles Strouse and book writer Thomas Meehan. The 1977 original won the Tony as best musical and ran for 2,300 performances, inspiring tours and revivals that never went out of style.

Charnin attributed the success of “Annie” in part to its sweet optimism and its message that things were going to get better. After all, it was written during a period of instability, he told The Associated Press in 2015.

“We were living in a really tough time. Right in the middle of Nixon. Right in the middle of Vietnam. There was an almost-recession. There was a lot of unrest in the country and you can always feel it and a lot of depression — emotional depression, financial depression. We wanted to be the tap on the shoulder that said to everyone, ‘It’ll be better.’”

“Annie” nearly didn’t make it past the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut in 1976. But Charnin brought in noted stage and film director Mike Nichols, who signed on as a producer, and helped him revise the show.

With Andrea McArdle replacing Kristen Vigard as the red-haired moppet Annie and Dorothy Loudon added as Miss Hannigan, the production went on to open in New York in April 1977 with a bang.

The musical contained gems like “Tomorrow” and “It’s the Hard Knock Life.” Charnin’s lyrics, which earned him and Strouse a Tony for best score in 1977, are playful and moving: “You’re never fully dressed/without a smile” and “No one cares for you a smidge/when you’re in an orphanage.”

The 1982 film version, which featured Carol Burnett in Loudon’s role, was not nearly as popular or well-received. A stage sequel called “Annie Warbucks” ran off-Broadway in 1993.

The original show was revived on Broadway in 2012 and made into a film starring Quvenzhané Wallis in 2014. Charnin, who won a Grammy Award for the “Annie” cast album, found shares of his work also included in Jay-Z’s 1998 Grammy-winning album “Vol. 2... Hard Knock Life.” His song “Tomorrow” has been heard on soundtracks from “Shrek 2” to “Dave” to “You’ve Got Mail.” In 2016, Lukas Graham used parts of the chorus from “Annie” for his “Mama Said” hit.