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Iran-Iraq \$20b trade target not out of reach: CBI governor

TEHRAN — Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati held talks with Iraqi Finance Minister Fuad Mohammed Hussein on Monday night to discuss expansion of banking relations between the two countries, IRNA reported.

"The two countries' \$20-billion trade target is easily attainable if the two sides expand their banking relations to facilitate

expansion of trade," Hemmati wrote in an Instagram post after meeting with Fuad.

"The development of monetary and financial relations between the two countries will play an important role in furthering this goal as soon as possible," he stressed.

Fuad visited Iran along with a high-ranking trade delegation headed by the Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi. **→4**

Majlis urges release of prominent cleric Zakzaky

TEHRAN — A number of Iranian MPs issued a statement on Tuesday urging release of Nigerian Muslim cleric Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaky.

The statement was signed by 198 lawmakers.

Zakzaky is the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) and has been detained since December 2015 in a raid on his residence in which he lost

his left eyesight.

The raid by security forces that left more than 300 of his followers and three of his sons dead. His wife also sustained serious wounds.

In 2016, Nigeria's federal high court ordered Zakzaky's unconditional release from jail following a trial, but the government has so far refused to set him free. **→3**

Afghanistan wants explanation after Trump's 'wipe out' rant

TEHRAN — The Afghan government has demanded an explanation from the United States following an assertion by U.S. President Donald Trump who suggested that the U.S. could end the long war in Afghanistan by effectively nuking it.

Ahead of a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday, Trump told reporters at the White House that he could win the prolonged war in Afghani-

stan "in a week" but did not want to wipe the country "off the face of the Earth."

"I just don't want to kill 10 million people," Trump said.

In response, Sediqi Sediqi, a spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, said on Tuesday that Kabul had sought an explanation regarding Trump's remarks through diplomatic channels, considering the comprehensive bilateral ties between the two nations, Press TV reported. **→13**

Another big blunder: Trump maybe mistaking humans with insects

By M.A.Saki

Consequent to his continued reckless remarks, Donald Trump claimed on Monday that if he wanted to win the war in Afghanistan he could wipe the country "off the face of the earth" but he chose not. "If we wanted to fight a war in Afghanistan and win it, I could win that war in a week. I just don't want to kill 10 million people," Trump said. "I have plans on Afghanistan that if I wanted

to win that war, Afghanistan would be wiped off the face of the Earth," Trump added.

By such remarks Trump either is indirectly threatening to use banned weapons, such a nuclear arms, against his adversaries or that he is mistaking humans with insects.

Such a statement is highly appalling and disgusting. How can such words come out of the mouth of a president?

Such awful remarks, though a huge blunder, are a humiliation of the Afghan nation and a shock to the world.

Even with weapons of mass destruction, it is difficult to imagine killing 10 million Afghans in a week. Nearly three-quarters of the Afghan 36-million population live in rural and often remote areas. To kill such number of people, it means to nuke or gas almost the entire Afghanistan. **→13**

Ferdowsi, Shahnameh and Kashmir

By Quayyum Raja

Since I often had discussed Sadi, Rumi, Ghazali and wrote an article describing my experiences at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad where I am learning Persian, a Ph.D. student named Masumeh Mahmudi was kind enough to take me for a visit to the resting place of Ferdowsi and Ghazali in Tus on July 18, 2019. I had no idea that this visit would take me back to my childhood.

Masumeh told me how Ferdowsi protected and promoted Persian. She also mentioned the Shahnameh, which took me back to the early 1970s when my sister-in-law used to teach me selected verses from the Shahnameh. Before I became old enough to grasp the concepts of the Shahnameh and its historical background, Pakistan changed the Kashmiri syllabus in its part of Jammu Kashmir, as did India. Both occupiers

competed with each other on changing our identity by imposing their own syllabus.

Pakistan has now imported a syllabus from Britain making English the language of instruction. I do not object to learning English as a language of choice, but I believe that it is an injustice to our children to have English--which they don't speak at home--imposed upon them as a language of instruction. **→16**

Iran Is Almost Certainly Telling the Truth about CIA Spies update

By Robert Steele

I believe the Iranians are telling the truth about having captured a number of Iranian traitors, and about having photographic and other (audio visual) evidence showing their CIA clandestine case officer handlers.

Everyone forgets that two of my classmates, Jay and Lane, were video-taped by the Cuban intelligence service, in Cuba, because all of our Cuban agents passed the polygraph but were in fact double-agents — Cuba knew all of the dead drops, all of the signal sites, they had it all. As best I can recall, Cuba Operations Group (COG)

was not being held to "Moscow rules" standards, never mind the polygraph being worthless against properly trained double-agents.

The Cubans subsequently released a made for TV movie showing my classmates actively performing clandestine operations in Cuba. Bummer.

CIA has never been serious about counter-surveillance outside of Moscow, and it has never been serious about counterintelligence generally. I believe the Iranians noticed the Cuban triumph, and have been patiently waiting to drop the network while not harming any US spies directly — as with their ability to drop a US car-

rier electromagnetically without actually killing anyone or sinking the ship — they have moved into a new dimension of war that avoids arousing the American public while totally frustrating the US military-intelligence complex.

If I were asked today whom to believe — Mike Pompeo or anyone speaking for Iran — it is a no-brainer. Pompeo is a lying lard-ass who sold his soul to the Zionists for a pump to State, and he has no idea where to find the truth about anything. If he and Gina Haspel are lying to our President, who has just made a total ass of himself publicly by parroting their lies, they should both be fired.



ARTICLE

By Hossein Askari
George Washington University professor

Follow the leader — the UK's ill-advised piracy on the high seas

The United Kingdom should recognize what has become its position in the world — an important nation with an imperialistic history but now a much diminished global power. Blindly following the United States into hazardous waters could have dangerous results: America might not reward subservience or could change course in its own self-interest. While following George Bush into Iraq is now widely conceded in the UK as having been ill advised, British leaders seem to have forgotten the consequences of that disastrous decision.

On July 4, UK forces seized an Iranian supertanker, Grace I, off the coast of Gibraltar. At first, the reason for the seizure in news reports was that London was responding to a request from the United States because the tanker was carrying oil to the Syrian refinery of Banias in violation of UN sanctions. This report was quickly 'corrected' by Jeffrey Hunt, the UK Foreign Minister. The official word was that the Iranian vessel had been seized yes because the oil was destined for Syria, but which was in violation of EU (not UN) sanctions on Syria. Iran objected vehemently to this seizure and clearly retaliated by seizing a British tanker, the Steno Impero, on July 19 in the Persian Gulf. Then Jeffrey Hunt went on the warpath and threatened Iran with "serious consequences" if Iran does not release the tanker, a rhetoric further inflamed by the British defense minister branding the seizure "a hostile act."

Three things stand out for us — the UK in fact seized the Iranian tanker at the request of the U.S., Mr. Hunt has made matters worse by his rhetoric and the UK and the U.S. are now boxed in without a face-saving exit. Let me explain.

The premise that the oil was destined for Syria is a tough claim that cannot be substantiated. How can the British Foreign Minister prove that the oil was so destined? Even if he had irrefutable proof, couldn't Iran at some point have changed its mind and diverted the tanker? If every country acted so, seizing goods because they may be destined to a sanctioned country, world commerce would become entangled and come to a standstill. **→6**



ARTICLE

Batool Subeiti
Journalist from London

Why world needs to speak for Sheikh Zakzaky

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), and members of his organization faced a brutal crackdown in December 2015 in what came to be known as the Zaria massacre. It was carried out by the Nigerian Army at the behest of the Nigerian regime and its foreign backers in which over a thousand civilians, mostly followers of the movement, were slaughtered in cold blood and hundreds more were arrested.

Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife, Muallima Zeenah, were shot during a deadly raid at their home by the Nigerian authorities, in which three of their children were mowed down in front of their eyes. A total of six of their sons have been killed by the Nigerian Army, in addition to Sheikh Zakzaky's sister, Malama Binta Yaqoub, who was burnt alive, along with many other women and children.

Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife have since then been unlawfully detained, despite the Federal High Court in Abuja ruling their detention as illegal and ordering Zakzaky's unconditional release from jail following a trial. The Buhari regime in Nigeria has so far refused to set him free.

Worse still, Sheikh Zakzaky has been denied medical treatment, putting his life at risk as a result of grave injuries sustained from previous attacks, in which he also lost sight in one eye and the use of one arm. He has also been subjected to worse form of custodial interrogation, according to his aides. His personal doctor has asked for him to be flown abroad for specialised treatment, which is not available in Nigeria, but this request has not been granted so far.

On 6th of July 2019, his only surviving son Mohammad said he was shocked by his father's deteriorating health after visiting him, stressing that he needed to be immediately hospitalized as "large and dangerous quantities of lead and cadmium have been found in his blood."

"The time has virtually run out. This has always been an assassination in progress, and it is almost done. The assassins were clearly determined to see it through," he was quoted as saying. **→7**



Hooman Seyyedi accepts the award for best director in the national competition for "Sheeple".

Japan's "Shoplifters" crowned best at Shahr film festival

TEHRAN — Japanese drama "Shoplifters" by Hirokazu Kore-eda was picked as best feature film in the international section of the 7th Shahr International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Monday.

The film is about a family whose members routinely shoplift goods to cope with a life of poverty, believing that stealing things that have not been sold is fine as they don't belong to anyone. **→16**

Fighting smuggling should become systematic: Rouhani

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has urged systematic fight against smuggling “from the start to the end point”, citing the fight a key factor in improving Iran’s economy.

Speaking at a meeting of the Central Headquarters on Fighting Goods and Currency Smuggling in Tehran on Tuesday, Rouhani said while Iran is under sanctions, extra care should be given to stopping the smuggling of “hard-won” currency.

“Today, all necessary technical tools exist for monitoring and containment in all areas,” the president said.



Elsewhere in his speech, Rouhani said commercial companies which are known to respect laws and work transparently should be supported by the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade.

He also said it is necessary that residents of border areas be able to sell fuel at modest discounts to the other side of the border, because “people residing in border areas are the greatest guardians of our borders and they should enjoy the benefits.”

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On December 19, 2018 a government spokesman said everyday 11.5 million liters of gasoline is smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s Energy Committee has quoted various sources as putting the figure at 10, 15 and even 20 million liters a day.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, another member of the committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per litre profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the same as the country’s annual development budget.

In addition to gasoline smuggling, other fuels such as kerosene and diesel are also smuggled; not in lesser quantities.

Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh once ruled out that figure, saying it is logistically impossible to carry that much gasoline across the border every day.

Rouhani also appreciated measures to counter the smuggling of gas oil out of Iran. “Good measures have prevented the daily smuggling of 8 million liters of gas oil from the country,” he said and stressed the role of startup companies in monitoring, tracing, and controlling incoming and outgoing goods in order to fight smuggling.

In mid-July, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps seized a foreign tanker and 12 crew members accused of smuggling Iranian fuel.

Quoting a Guard statement, the media said the tanker was caught transporting smuggled Iranian fuel to unspecified foreign customers.

In his Tuesday meeting, Rouhani also called for swift action against companies which have received dollars at state rate (lower than free market rate) for import of essential goods, but have not kept their promise to import the goods they must have.

“If the receiving end of the currency has not imported the goods they should have, they are in default of law. They have in fact smuggled currency. Things should be clarified and the criminal should face legal action,” he stressed.

Currently, Iran has three exchange rates: the open market rate, the official rate and the NIMA rate.

The open market range is the exchange rate that most accurately reflects how many rials it takes to buy one U.S. dollar. The most accessible and commonly quoted rate throughout the country, the open market rate more than tripled in the past year and a half. But in the last three months, it’s roughly stabilized, with around 120,000 rials now fetching \$1.

NIMA is the Persian acronym for an online currency system launched by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CBI) in April 2018. Put simply, it’s a market where Iranian exporters can sell their foreign currency earnings for Iranian rials. The NIMA exchange rate places a higher value on the rial than the open market rate.

Alavi: World acknowledging Iran’s intelligence power

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Tuesday that the world acknowledges in Iran’s great anti-intelligence power.

“Enemies and various countries in the world believe in Iran’s intelligence power and the Islamic Republic of Iran has nipped many plots in the bud,” he said on the sidelines of a ceremony.

He also said whenever necessary the people will be informed about the intelligence forces’ actions.

The Intelligence Ministry announced on Monday that it had broken up a CIA spy network and arrested 17 professional spies, some of whom have been sentenced to death by the Judiciary.

According to the director general of the Intelligence Ministry’s counter-espionage department, the spies were employed in sensitive and vital state and private sectors in economic, nuclear, infrastructural, military and cyber centers, where they collected classified information.

“Some citizens were trapped by the U.S. exploitation of their visa requests and were encouraged to spy in exchange for receiving a visa,” the official said. “Some others were blackmailed by the CIA due to their need of maintaining or extending their visas.”

The official added that the move was in violation of the United States’ laws and some of the CIA’s victims succeeded to escape from the trap with the help of their lawyers.

None of the 17 arrested individuals were citizens of other countries, the official stated.

He also said since President Donald Trump assumed office, the United States’ espionage measures against the Islamic Republic have intensified.

Zarif to brief MPs on recent trip to New York: lawmaker

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will brief the parliament on his recent trip to New York and the latest diplomatic developments, spokesman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said on Tuesday.

“On Sunday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will attend a meeting of the Majlis national security committee,” Hossein Naqavi Hosseini told the Mehr news agency.

“In this meeting, Zarif is expected to describe the latest diplomatic and foreign policy developments as well as the outcomes of [his] trip to the U.S.,” he added.

Zarif visited New York in July 14 to attend the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

In an interview with CNN’s Faeed Zakaria on Wednesday, Zarif said Iran “will never start a war,” but “will defend its territory” against any act of aggression.

He said the hawkish administration of U.S. President Donald Trump is already waging an economic war against Iran’s civilians.

“There is a war going on right now. It’s an economic war, an economic war against



Iran targets civilian population,” he stated. Zarif also told reporters in New York on Thursday that he was holding meetings with some members of Congress, but not with U.S. administration officials or envoys.

He would leave it to the U.S. lawmakers he met with to identify themselves if they wish, Zarif told UN reporter Susan Modares.

After departing New York, the top Iranian diplomat on Saturday addressed the recent American provocations, warning Washington to “not play with Iran.”

“We say, ‘You may start a war, but you won’t be the ones who end it,’” he said, adding, “We will survive; we will prosper, long after President Trump is gone.”

Tensions have mounted since the U.S. withdrew from the multilateral 2015 nuclear deal last May and imposed unilateral sanctions both on Tehran and the countries that do business with it.

Iran has recently suspended some of its nuclear deal commitments in order to push the remaining signatories to uphold the deal and protect it from Washington’s unilateral measures.

‘Downing Street acts according to U.S. plots’



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The British act according to anti-Iran plots orchestrated by the United States, a lawmaker said on Tuesday, invoking the British government’s seizure of a supertanker carrying Iranian oil.

“The British showed right after seizing the oil tanker that they moved according to plans designed by the U.S.,” said Mohammad Ebrahim Rezee, a member of the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

Rezee said after the U.S. became isolated in confronting Iran, it attempted to bring other countries on board with its policies, ISNA reported.

“In the current situation, the only way the British have is to respect Iran and release our oil tanker,” he remarked. “If this happens, we will release their oil tanker as well, because we are not seeking to continue tensions.”

“It’s them who create tensions,” the MP asserted.

Tensions broke out between Tehran and London on July 4, after Britain’s naval

forces unlawfully seized oil tanker Grace 1 and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil in the Strait of Gibraltar, under the pretext that the supertanker had been suspected of carrying crude to Syria in violation of the European Union’s unilateral sanctions against the Arab country.

Reports, however, said the confiscation took place at the request of the U.S.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top Iranian leaders denounced the seizure as act of “piracy” which would not go “unanswered”.

On Friday, Iranian forces seized a British-flagged oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz for involvement in an accident with an Iranian fishing boat, after the tanker ignored distress calls.

Allah-Morad Afifpour, head of Ports and Maritime Organization in southern Hormozgan Province, said that the 30,000-ton Stena Impero tanker had collided with a fishing boat on its route, adding that according to law, after an accident it is necessary that the causes are investigated.

Iran urges Nigeria to provide Sheikh Zakzaky with prompt medical care



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has urged the Nigerian government to immediately provide medical care for the top Shia cleric Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaky and his wife.

“Nigerian authorities are expected to take immediate measures to transfer Sheikh Zakzaky out of detention and provide him with appropriate and prompt medical services,” Mousavi said on Tuesday, Mehr reported.

Mousavi also expressed deep concerns about the recent unrest in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja, and condemned the government’s use of force against protesters.

He underlined the need to ensure security and peace in Nigeria and called on the government to observe tolerance toward the protesters.

On Monday, Nigerian security forces killed at least six protesters who were demanding the immediate release of Sheikh Zakzaky, who has been locked up in a government jail since 2015.

The deadly clashes occurred in Abuja, where security forces attacked a group of

pro-Zakzaky protesters and opened fire on them using live bullets.

The Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), led by Sheikh Zakzaky, was the organizer behind the protest rally, the latest in a series of demonstrations for the release of the top cleric.

Zakzaky, now 66, has been in detention since December 2015 after his residence in the city of Zaria was raided by Nigeria’s forces, during which he was beaten and lost vision in his left eye.

During the brutal arrest, three of his sons were also killed, his wife sustained serious wounds, and more than 300 of his followers were killed.

Zakzaky was charged in April 2018 with murder, culpable homicide, unlawful assembly, disruption of public peace, and other accusations. He has pleaded not guilty, vehemently rejecting all accusations brought up against him.

Recent reports said that his health has been deteriorating, but prison authorities have prevented him from getting much-needed treatment.

China slams U.S. ‘bullying’ after new Iran oil sanctions

(Press TV) — China has strongly denounced U.S. sanctions on a Chinese company for allegedly violating unilateral American sanctions on Iran’s oil industry.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on Tuesday China strongly opposes the hostile measures against energy company Zhuhai Zhenrong Co Ltd.

“We are opposed to the U.S. bullying behavior of wantonly cracking down, suppressing and sanctioning Chinese companies and individuals based on U.S. domestic law. We are firmly opposed to it and strongly condemn it,” she said.

On Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the Chinese company had “knowingly engaged in a significant transaction for the purchase or acquisition of crude oil from Iran”.

“We strongly urge the U.S. to immediately rectify its wrong behavior, and stop imposing illegal sanctions against Chinese companies and individuals. China will take all necessary measures to firmly preserve the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies and individuals,” Hua said.

Zhuhai Zhenrong is one of China’s largest state-backed oil companies for transporting Iranian crude oil.

The company and its chief executive, Youmin Li, will be barred from engaging in foreign exchange, banking or property transactions under U.S. jurisdiction.

However, Zhuhai Zhenrong which is already under U.S. sanctions for supplying gasoline to Iran in 2012 has little overseas exposure.

Energy traders said the company is also largely disconnected from the Chinese financial system, which would limit the “contagion” of the sanctions to other entities and banking systems.

Trade war to flare up

The sanctions, nevertheless, are likely to inflame tensions between the United States and China which are locked in a trade war.

China is Iran’s largest oil importer and fiercely opposed to the U.S. sanctions which have failed to stop shipments



from the Middle Eastern energy powerhouse.

Iranian oil flow to China has continued since May when the Trump administration scrapped waivers which allowed eight countries to keep buying from Iran.

Last month China received its first delivery of an Iranian oil cargo since the Trump administration scrapped exemptions.

Zhuhai Zhenrong has strong links to Iran and accounts for more than 60% of China’s trade with the Islamic Republic, according to its website.

It was the sole importer of Iranian crude into China 25 years when the company established trade with Iran. Now, it is the first Chinese oil company to face sanctions since the U.S. ended the exemptions.

In 2012, when the Obama administration slapped the company with sanctions, Zhuhai Zhenrong said it would continue to import crude from Iran, and that the sanctions would not affect it because it had little business with any U.S. firm.

The company joins several Chinese aluminum producers which were recently slapped with U.S. sanctions over trade with Iran.

China’s embassy in Washington rejected the U.S. decision.

Navy chief: Iran to use its ‘intercontinental drones’ if necessary

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Navy Chief Hossein Khanzadi has said Iran possesses intercontinental drones and will use them if necessary.

“Now we have this type of drones and will definitely use them if necessary,” Rear Admiral Khanzadi said in an interview with the Young Journalists Club (YJC) published on Tuesday, Press TV reported.

Iran manufactures drones as a low-cost piece of military equipment to keep watch on the region, he said.

The admiral also said the Islamic Republic is monitoring U.S. ships in the Persian Gulf and has a large archive of moment-by-moment movements of vessels belonging to the U.S. and its allies.

“We can bravely declare that we observe all enemy ships, particularly Americans, point-by-point from their starting point until the moment they enter the region,” he said.

He added that the Iranian armed forces also possess information about the type of their missions and their conduct in the region.

He also censured the British seizure of an oil tanker carrying Iranian oil in the Strait of Gibraltar on July 4, adding that the era of “bullying” in the sea is over, and that the interests and sovereignty of all nations should be respected.

Pointing to the June 19 unsafe maneuver by the British-flagged Stena Impero tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, which led to its detention by Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Khanzadi said the British tanker violated Iranian and international maritime law, entered the Strait of Hormuz from a busy exit lane, turned off its trackers, and had incomplete documents.

MP faces questions for his U.S.-related proposal

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Lawmaker Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh is under investigation by the Supervisory Board on Representatives’ Conduct, says the board’s spokesman, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Mohammad Javad Jamali said a complaint has been submitted to the supervisory board about Falahatpisheh’s remarks a few months ago when he was chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

The remarks were about Iran-U.S. relations which contradicted the Islamic Republic’s policy of non-negotiation with the U.S., Jamali said.

The complaint will be addressed during the supervisory board’s next session with Falahatpisheh’s attendance, he added.

According to the complaint, Falahatpisheh had proposed formation of a joint Iran-U.S. chamber in Qatar and Iraq, which the U.S. misconstrued that Iran had accepted to hold negotiations.

“However, Mr. Falahatpisheh has said that his words were not about holding negotiations but they were about reducing tensions,” Jamali said.

Falahatpisheh, a centrist, was voted out of his chairmanship on June 23 by conservative MP Motjaba Zonnour, as Tehran-Washington tensions soared.

The tensions initially rose between Iran and the U.S. last May when U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

Trump has occasionally offered to hold dialogue with Iran, while at the same time putting enormous economic pressure on the Islamic Republic.

Last month, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei categorically rejected the notion of talks, saying Iran will not at all “repeat the bitter experience” it gained from the negotiations that led to the nuclear deal and later ditched by Trump.

No wise man would enter talks with a country that has reneged on all agreements, the Leader asserted.

FM Zarif meets Bolivian president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met on Tuesday with Bolivian President Evo Morales.



During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral ties as well as the recent regional and international developments, ISNA reported.

Zarif arrived in Bolivia on the last leg of his tour of Latin American nations to hold talks with senior officials of the country on issues of mutual interest.

Upon his arrival, Zarif was officially welcomed by Bolivian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Carmen Almendras.

Majlis urges release of prominent cleric Zakzaky

1 → The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), based in London, said earlier in July that the cleric’s health condition had further deteriorated, since he was reportedly poisoned in prison.

The cleric’s son, Mohammad, told Press TV on July 6 that his father was in dire need of medical treatment, as “large and dangerous quantities of lead and cadmium have been found in his blood.” He said that the authorities intended to murder his father since they refuse to take any measures.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	251278.4
IFX	3270.08

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,017 rials
GBP	52,328 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.80/b
WTI	\$55.90/b
OPEC Basket	\$62.93/b
Gold	\$1,422.70/oz
Silver	\$16.41/oz
Platinum	\$850.40/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

VP inaugurates Mapna locomotive unit’s development project

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri inaugurated a development project of Mapna Group’s locomotive manufacturing complex in Alborz Province on Tuesday, IRNA reported.



In his one-day visit to the province, Jahangiri also inaugurated several other development and industrial projects, including a fish farming plant.

As reported, the new project, which is operated by Mapna Locomotive Engineering and Manufacturing Company (MLEMC), a subsidiary of Iran’s MAPNA Group, is going to create 100 direct job opportunities and manufacture 25 locomotives every year.

Mapna Locomotive Engineering and Manufacturing Company is the main company in Mapna Group’s rail section.

This company was established in 2007 and started activity with a huge scale project, the production of 150 ER24 Locomotives under license of Siemens Company.

Germany’s Siemens signed a deal with Iran’s Mapna Group for manufacturing of electric locomotives and also transferring relevant knowledge to the country in 2017.

On June 12, Iran’s transport minister unveiled an Iranian-made freight locomotive on the sidelines of the 7th International Exhibition of Rail Transportation, Related Industries and Equipment, dubbed RAILEXPO 2019. According to Mohammad Eslami, Iran-made locomotives can reduce supply costs to one-sixth while being able to compete with foreign rivals.

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

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

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

German auto and construction slowdown is hitting aluminum demand, Hydro CFO says

One of the world’s largest aluminum producers has warned that it is witnessing a slowdown in Germany with auto and construction sectors lowering their demand.

As per cnbc.com, Oslo-based Norsk Hydro missed expectations in the second quarter Tuesday after it reported a drop in underlying profit to 875 million Norwegian krone (\$101 million). Hydro blamed lower aluminum prices, production restraints and the effects of a cyber-attack.

The Chief Financial Officer of Hydro, Eivind Kallevik, told CNBC’s “Street Signs” on Tuesday that demand weakness was most acute in Europe and particularly in the bloc’ biggest economy, Germany.

“We see construction being low and generally there is also a concern around auto demand and auto production which impacts aluminum demand,” said Kallevik.

The CFO added that there was also “somewhat low growth” in China but at the same time there was little change to the supply side, meaning the market was approaching a balance for the first time in “many, many years.”

Hydro’s Alunorte plant in Brazil refines bauxite into alumina which is then used to produce aluminum.

The refinery has been affected by a partial shutdown due to heavy rains and flooding but Kallevik said production was back up to 85% in June which had exceeded expectations. He added that 95% of full production capacity was hoped to be reached by 2020.

Hydro’s operations also suffered a blow in March this year when a cyber-attack impacted several operations.

The company stock moved up by around 4% Tuesday morning on to the reports of increased production in its bauxite and alumina divisions. Despite Tuesday’s increase, the share price is around 20% lower year-to-date.

Iran-Iraq \$20b trade target not out of reach: CBI governor

1 → It was Abdul-Mahdi’s second visit to Tehran as Iraq’s prime minister, he first paid a two-day visit to Iran in early April during which an Iran-Iraq business forum was held in Tehran. The visit came after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s landmark visit to Iraq in March.

During the business forum, the two sides called for further expansion of the trade ties between the two countries.

Later that month, Hemmati also traveled to Baghdad and met some Iraqi senior officials to explore the ways for the expansion of banking relations between the two countries.

During that visit, he met Abdul-Mahdi, Mohammed Hussein and Central Bank of Iraq Chairman Ali Mohsen Al-Allaq.

On the sidelines of his meeting with the Iraqi officials, Hemmati stressed that



Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati (L) held talks with Iraqi Finance Minister Fuad Mohammed Hussein in Tehran on Monday.

Iran-Iraq banking relations would be eased to lubricate transactions between the two countries’ businessmen.

He said that regarding the ever increasing trade transactions between the two sides and Iran’s exports of gas and oil to Iraq besides Iranian private sector’s exports to the country, the exports value from Iran to Iraq has increased recently up to \$12 billion per year.

“There are some banking difficulties about which negotiations were made with the Iraqi minister today and as accorded, to ease Iranian tradesmen’s activities in Iraq the impediments will be removed soon”, CBI governor said.

Iran and Iraq are determined to boost their trade turnover to \$20 billion in near future and to meet this target many officials and delegations from each side have been recently visiting the other side.

EGFI ranks 1st among Aman Union members

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) has been ranked first in terms of performance among the members of the Aman Union, IRNA reported on Monday, quoting the EGFI head.

Afrouz Bahrami, who is visiting Iraq to attend an Iran-Iraq joint trade committee, said “The performance of the Iranian Export Guarantee Fund has been ranked first among all the similar funds in the region.”

The official further noted that to provide better services to the Iranian exporters of goods and services in Iraq, two EGFI representative offices are going to be established in the Kurdistan and southern Iraqi regions.

“We need the Iraqi authorities’ support and cooperation in order to accomplish this goal, although the first office is already ready to be inaugurated in the Kurdistan region,” she said.

Elsewhere in her remarks, Bahrami stated that in order to facilitate and develop the cooperation between the two countries in the field of engineering services, the two sides have discussed replacing contract-based warranties issued by EGFI with bank guarantees.

“The two sides reached an agreement

on the matter and now it only requires correspondence and follow-up by Iranian officials in Baghdad,” she added.

The Iran-Iraq joint trade committee is aimed to pursue the agreements reached between the two countries during the Iranian presidential trip to Iraq.

The committee will examine two basic issues of addressing the priorities of co-operation between the two countries in order to realize the two sides’ \$20-billion trade target and removing barriers to trade.

The committee focuses on eight key factors in Iran and Iraq’s economic ties, including trade, banking issues, standards, customs, industrial and investment issues, technical and engineering services, transportation and transit, and solutions for increasing interactions between the two countries.

Aman Union was launched in October 2009 following an agreement between the Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (DHAMAN) and the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC) to join their efforts for establishing a union for commercial and non-commercial risks Insurers and Reinsurers in their respective Member Countries.

IMIDRO to implement projects worth \$4.5b by March 2020

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) will put projects worth \$4.5 billion into operation by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020), IRIB reported quoting the head of organization as announcing on Monday.

As reported by the Public Relations Department of IMIDRO, Khodadad Gharibpour made the announcement after a meeting with directors of large mining companies, contractors, as well as deputies of the organization on investigating and reviewing this year’s projects, and said that after a number of meetings and reviewing the projects to be implemented this year, the number and worth of projects were decided to be increased.

IMIDRO had previously announced that projects worth nearly \$3.5 billion will be put into operation by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

On July 18, IMIDRO’s Deputy and Executive Advisor Abbas Naiemi said with these projects going operational up to 50,000 new job opportunities will be created across the country.

Boosting production, creating jobs, providing infrastructure and making joint venture with the private sector are the main pivots of IMIDRO’s plans.

Given the policies of IMIDRO, planning for stable development of the chain of products, taking the most benefits of the private sector’s capabilities, cooperation with the guilds and associations, reducing the risk of investment making, and indigenization of technology will be taken into account once implementing the mentioned projects.

Meanwhile, Gharibpour has recently stressed that his organization has accomplishing semi-finished projects as its top priority.

The official also said in mid-June that IMIDRO was planning to establish a consortium in order to accelerate exploration projects in the mining sector.

He said, “The consortium is going to help us in areas like exploration and identification of new mines and minerals”.

According to the IMIDRO head, based on the mining potentials and research and academic capabilities of the country’s provinces, 10 mining regions have been defined in order to manage projects and also utilize the country’s academic potentials in this industry.

Gharibpour noted that in the framework of the country’s Sixth National Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2021), efficiency, productivity and maximum utilization of the capacities of the country’s mining industry have been given great importance and so should be considered in every step from exploration up to the production processes.

“In all areas including human resources, this [efficiency] should be taken into account. For example, we are far behind in employee education in the coal sector. Many of the work-related accidents in this sector are due to the lack of education that is why efficiency and productivity is a priority in all the IMIDRO agreements,” he said.

In late May, Gharibpour had said that the country’s mining sector currently requires 18 billion euros of investment.

“The mining sector is one of the country’s most profitable areas for investment so that 30 percent of the profits in the capital market is pertained to the mining and mineral sector,” he said.

■ Integrated policies to nullify sanctions

During the Monday meeting on this year’s projects, IMIDRO head also underlined the organizations’ integrated polices for nullifying the sanctions.

ICCIMA to dispatch trade delegation to Turkmenistan in early Aug.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) plans to send a trade delegation to attend Turkmenistan’s first Caspian Economic Forum (CEF) which is due to be held in Awaza on August 11-12.

As reported by ICCIMA portal, senior officials and economic representatives from Turkmenistan, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Iran will attend the event and various trade fairs, exhibitions, multilateral and bilateral talks are also scheduled to be held on the sidelines of CEF.

The Iranian delegation will be comprised of representatives of the country’s private sector active in a variety of areas including transportation (especially sea transport), tourism, food industry, energy, construction materials, mining and joint ventures.

In late June, the Turkmen Ambassador to Tehran Ahmad Ghorbanov held talks with ICCIMA’s Deputy Head for International Affairs Mohamadreza Karbasi to discuss Iran’s

presence in CEF.

An exhibition of business and trade capabilities of the Caspian Sea littoral states is also among the scheduled events to be held on the sidelines of this forum in which the exhibitors will showcase their latest achievements and products, according to Ghorbanov.

In the meeting Karbasi expressed Iran’s readiness for attending this forum saying “this economic forum could have great achievements for all the parties, so it is necessary to take accurate planning in this respect.”

He also suggested that the private sectors of the Caspian Sea nations would be given the opportunity of B2B meetings with each other to explore avenues of cooperation and familiarity with each other markets.

The Caspian Economic Forum will cover a variety of issues and subjects including project implementation and joint plans, exchange of experiences on the development of special economic zones, legislation and standards, digital economy, cooperation between coastal regions and joint ventures.



He said all subsidiaries of IMIDRO are moving in a coordinated path with their policies integrated toward removing the barriers in the way of implementing the projects.

Gharibpour further referred to the emphasis put by President Rouhani on implementation of the projects and said Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani has also ordered that these projects will be launched based on a monthly schedule by the yearend.

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

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

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

The official noted that it is expected for the exports from the country’s mining sector to, at least, reach the last year’s \$8.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

And on July 1, IMIDRO head said that the export markets of Iran’s minerals have been preserved despite the sanctions imposed by the U.S.

Making the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to celebrate the National Day of Industry and Mine, the official said, “As compared with the other economic sectors the mining sector’s reliance on foreign sources is less, it could preserve its export markets despite all pressures from the sanctions.”

Japan keeping wary eye on impact from slowing China economy, white paper says

By Kyodo, Jiji

Japan is on the lookout for any negative impacts the slowing Chinese economy and U.S.-China trade tensions are having on its economic recovery, a government report said Tuesday.

China’s slowdown has already impacted Japanese domestic production and exports to the world’s second-largest economy, according to the white paper on the economy and finances for fiscal 2019.

China, hit by contracting demand for smartphone parts, remains in a trade dispute with the United States and the spat

between the world’s two biggest economies is threatening to curb global growth, the annual paper said.

“Special attention should be paid to uncertainties over overseas economic policies and situations, including the slowing Chinese economy, the impact of U.S.-China trade issues and Britain’s (planned) exit from the European Union,” it said.

In an economic assessment earlier this year, the government said that the world’s third-largest economy was likely in the midst of its longest expansion phase since the end of World War II, on the back of improving labor and

wage conditions. But the white paper made no reference to that view.

■ Boosting consumer spending

The paper recommended that Japan should improve productivity to raise wages and address its serious labor shortage, steps that should both help boost consumer spending.

In April, the government went some way to dealing with the labor issue by introducing new visa statuses to allow companies to hire more foreign workers. It is also seeking to increase women’s participation in the labor market, and is encouraging elderly people to remain in the workforce. **→13**

NISOC launches project to manage drilling wastes

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Head of National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) said the company has launched a project for composting oil well drill cuttings in order to manage drilling wastes, Shana reported.

According to Ahmad Mohammadi, this new method which is 50 percent less costly in comparison to older approaches like “Zero Discharge” is being executed completely by Iranian experts.

“This method is significantly more efficient in removing contaminants and accelerating the cleaning of contaminated soils,” Mohammadi said in the ceremony for launching the project.

The official noted that since the past 10 years, National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has equipped seven of its drilling machines with Zero Discharge technology in order to use them in fields with high environmental priorities.



“By using these drilling equipment in the oil-rich areas in the south, more than 100 wells have been excavated without any pollution in urban or protected areas,” he added.

Mentioning the fact that this method has been implemented experimentally, Mohammadi expressed hope that in the near future it would be used in digging operations in other environmentally sensitive regions.

In December 2018, Mohammadi had said that NISOC will start implementation of at least 14 mega projects on oil fields during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2019).

Making the remarks on the sidelines of a specialized session on preserving and boosting production from the 28 oil fields under development by NISOC, Mohammadi also announced that 8-10 new contract packages are being finalized in line with the technical and operating objectives of the company and also creating jobs in the region.

Oil rises on Mideast tensions, glum demand outlook caps gains

Oil prices edged up on Tuesday on concerns about possible supply disruptions in the Middle East, but a weaker demand outlook kept a lid on gains, helped by a vow by the International Energy Agency (IEA) to keep global markets adequately supplied.

Brent crude futures climbed 29 cents, or 0.5%, to \$63.55 a barrel by 0643 GMT. The international benchmark rose more than 1% in the previous session.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 20 cents, or 0.4% at \$56.42 per barrel.

“Downward revisions on global oil demand, along with rising challenges in the macroeconomic environment, have capped bullish gains for oil prices,” said Benjamin Lu Jiaxuan,

commodities analyst at Singapore-based Phillip Futures.

Meanwhile, the IEA said it was closely monitoring developments in the Strait of Hormuz as relations between Iran and Britain remain tense.

The “IEA is ready to act quickly and decisively in the event of a disruption to ensure that global markets remain adequately supplied,” it said, adding that executive director Fatih Birol has been in talks with IEA members, associate governments and other nations.

The oil market is currently well supplied, with oil production exceeding demand in the first half of 2019, pushing up global stocks by 900,000 barrels per day, the IEA said in a statement.

That comes against the backdrop of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and some non-affiliated producers, including Russia, withholding supplies since the start of the year to prop up prices.

The potential for disruption in the Middle East has come amid a more fundamental souring of market sentiment in recent days, with hedge funds, producers and traders all taking a more bearish tack in response to what they see as weakness in worldwide demand.

“I’m struggling to identify a clear direction at the moment but, I’m becoming increasingly bearish due to non-OPEC supply and softening global demand,” said Harrison Fleming, research analyst at Frame Funds in Sydney.

Oil glut could worsen as Libya’s civil war ends

By Cyril Widdershoven

While the Persian Gulf crisis continues to escalate, oil markets have put Libya’s ongoing civil war on the backburner. This weekend, the shutdown of OPEC producer Libya’s giant Sharara field however put it again in the spotlight.

On Saturday July 20, Libya’s National Oil Corporation (NOC) stated that production at its El Sharara oilfield was halted. As a direct result of this, the NOC also has stopped the shipment of crude oil in the Port of Az Zawiyah. The closure on Saturday resulted in the loss of 290,000 bpd production, the oil company indicated.

In a reaction to the press, NOC’s chairman Sanallah, said that criminal activities forced the NOC to declare the state of emergency. Production however is reported to have resumed on July 22, while the NOC lifted the force majeure on loadings of its crude oil from the Zawiyah terminal.

Officials have indicated that an unidentified group shut a valve on the pipeline linking it to Zawiyah, 49 km (30.4 miles) west of Tripoli. Production at present is at more than half its peak production. The force-majeure brought official NOC production below the 1 million bpd mark, from a level of around

1.2-1.3 million bpd.

Sharara is operated by a joint venture between the NOC and Total SA, Repsol SA, OMV AG and Equinor ASA, known formerly as Statoil ASA. Production at the nearby El Feel oilfield is unaffected, the NOC said.

■ Precarious oil and gas sector

The situation in Libya’s oil and gas sector could however become precarious if rumors about an upcoming new military offensive of the Libyan National Army (LNA), led by strongman general Haftar, against Tripoli will take place. LNA commander Fawzi Al Mansouri stated on Sunday that a military offensive is being prepared. Al Mansouri indicated that LNA forces were preparing to launch a “decisive and lightning” operation to liberate Tripoli. When Haftar will give the orders, the offensive will start, which could be in the next day(s).

This offensive could not only confront Libyan militias and the UN-supported GNA government in Tripoli but also Qatari and Turkish military and advisors.

On Saturday, the LNA claimed to have downed a Turkish drone in southern Tripoli. Clashes have already occurred, and around 8 LNA members were killed by GNA forces in the last couple of days. The Tripoli gov-

ernment has stated that they expect a military operation very soon. If the clash will be decisive, and Haftar gains full control, the West will possibly need to reconsider its alliances in Libya.

At present Haftar already has the support of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Italy and U.S. president Trump. A Haftar victory also will put more pressure on Turkey, as the latter has been a staunch supporter of the GNA and Muslim Brotherhood aligned militias opposing Haftar.

Global oil market analysts should be keeping an eye on the Libyan developments, as this country has historically been one of OPEC’s leading producers. Libya produced around 1.6 million bpd in 2012, during the reign of dictator Muammar Ghaddafi.

People, however, forget that Libya produced around 3 million bpd in 1970.

In 2018, the NOC said that it targets to increase production to 2.2 million bpd by 2023, and mentioned that this would need around \$18 billion of investment.

■ Libya’s current oil

Libya’s current oil and gas production is an ugly duckling, as Tripoli based NOC is still the only oil seller to global markets, but most producing fields and infrastructure are

in the hands of Haftar’s militias. International oil companies and investors are sitting on their hands, not willing to invest or re-open fields as long as the fighting is continuing.

A decisive win by Haftar could result in the revival of Libya’s oil crescent, as it would restore the NOCs operations. A stable situation in Libya would accommodate the return of several European operators, especially Total, ENI and possibly Shell. Next to the Europeans, U.S. companies and the Russians will be vying for assets too.

The hard needed cash will be available and could come from Haftar’s backers in Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These three are already on the shortlist to secure deals in Libya’s hydrocarbon sector. Libya’s oil is clearly a bone, but its gas potential (re-member Shell’s LNG plans) could be even more tempting.

The only hiccup here could be increased downward pressure on regional, and even global crude prices. A full renaissance of the country’s upstream and downstream sector, combined with increased non-OPEC production could worsen the global supply overhang. Stability in Libya could bring instability for OPEC, forcing hard choices in the coming months.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Jamaica closer to energy mix target with new LNG terminal, PM says

By Balford Henry

Prime Minister Andrew Holness says that Jamaica is on track to achieve its ambitious target of 50 percent of its electricity needs being generated by Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and renewables by 2030. Confirming that he is in a celebratory mood, at last Friday’s commissioning of New Fortress Energy’s floating storage and regasification terminal in Old Harbour, Holness said Jamaica would reach almost 44 percent input of renewables and other clean fuels into its energy mix with the completion of the project, which he described as a “major achievement”.

“Completion of the terminal will firmly establish the island as a premier liquefied natural gas hub. It is the first of its kind in the Caribbean and will supply 190 megawatts (MW), from its Old Harbour plant, through its natural gas pipelines,” he noted.

“Jamaica is now firmly rooted in the LNG industry, and that is what I want to convey to the Jamaican people — that it is one thing to just have infrastructure, but (to) have all the support services that go into making the infrastructure work... Jamaica will benefit from that,” he pointed out.

In addition, he noted that the management of the platform is largely Jamaican, and while the ship and crew are mainly from overseas, Jamaicans are being trained as they

get more exposure, and will eventually be able to not only manage the ship but also manage and maintain the pipelines.

“So we are going to be firmly rooted,” Holness remarked.

The terminal will provide environmentally friendly, lower-cost fuel to several facilities, including the Jamaica Public Service’s soon-to-be-completed 190-megawatt power plant in Old Harbour, as well as the new co-generation power plant at Jamalco’s alumina refinery in Clarendon.

New Fortress is also supplying LNG to The University of the West Indies and local beer company, Red Stripe, and the terminal is also providing LNG for other local companies including Caribbean Products, Appleton, IGL Limited, CB Group, Clarendon Distillers Limited, Wisynco, and Seprod.

New Fortress erected a new floating regasification vessel called the Golar Freeze offshore Old Harbor, under a long-term deal which is expected to generate \$22 million in revenues annually.

Holness said the New Fortress Company is able to do this because it has the support of Caribbean Maritime University.

“And we must do everything in our power to protect that university, because it is from those classrooms, those teachers and lecturers and labs that we will get the skills necessary to not just maintain this (project), but to expand the industry and provide labor and technical skills,” he added.

■ Global energy infrastructure

New Fortress Energy, a subsidiary of global energy infrastructure company Fortress Investment Group, is headed by billionaire investor Wesley Edens. Edens is an American businessman and private equity investor who is also a co-founder of Fortress Investment Group and founder of New Fortress Energy. He is also a co-owner of the Milwaukee Bucks — the prominent American National Basketball Association franchise based in Wisconsin — and the Aston Villa football team in the United Kingdom, which returns to the top-rung English Premier League next season.

Edens paid tribute to Holness and the JPS, whose “vision and commitment” he said has dramatically changed the country’s energy landscape in just a few years.

“Just three years ago, oil-based fuels generated all the country’s electricity. By next year natural gas and renewable energy will power most of Jamaica’s grid. Economic conditions are improving, new jobs are being created, and the reduction in emissions will be equivalent to planting 10 million trees,” Edens informed the Jamaica Observer.

“We are especially proud of all the hard work of our Jamaican employees and countless local partners. With the creation of many new jobs and our economic partnerships with local universities, a skilled LNG workforce is developing in Jamaica that will drive innovation throughout the Caribbean,” he noted.

(Source: jamaicaobserver.com)

EN-Bank Returns to Economy Cycle Successfully



Sayed Mehdi Sadidi Chief Executive of Tose’e Melli (National Development) Group considered attaining «VBANK» to five seats of Board of Directors of EN-Bank as an effort to return the bank to the cycle of economy, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Nevertheless, “we managed to take control of the bank after 17 years but Tose’e Melli Development Group does not have to continue its economic activities, rather,

the Group will embark on transferring stocks of the bank to the real private sector.”

CEO of «VBANK» pointed to safeguarding and maintaining structural discipline in EN-Bank and considered reorganizing and profitability of the bank as priorities of the Group.

About 51 percent of shareholders of the bank attended the Ordinary Annual General Assembly July 22. With winning five seats of the Board of Directors, Tose’e Melli Group succeeded in managing EN-Bank, the report ended.



Italian, Chinese majors vie for Pakistan’s LNG tender

Italian oil major Eni, China’s PetroChina and two trading houses are hoping to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Pakistan in one of the largest tenders ever, worth billions of dollars, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

According to kalkanishenergy.com, the 240-cargo, 10-year tender, which is likely to be worth from \$5 billion to \$6 billion, according to Reuters calculations and the estimates of another source based on current market conditions, was issued last month and closed last week.

Pakistan is expected to be a significant growth driver in global LNG demand, with Wood Mackenzie estimating the country will need 25 million tons a year (Mtpa) as domestic supplies dwindle and its economy grows.

Eni and PetroChina’s Singapore unit were joined by the trading arm of Azeri state oil company SOCAR and commodities trader Trafigura in placing offers, the sources told Reuters.

Pakistan LNG, the state-owned company that issued the tender, declined to name any bidders. The “technical bids for our long-term LNG supply tender were received and opened ... evaluations are underway,” it said.

SOCAR confirmed it had bid, while Trafigura said it does not comment on tenders. A spokesperson noted Trafigura was a stakeholder in the terminal due to receive the tendered LNG.

“Trafigura owns 150 (million cubic feet a day) of LNG import capacity in that facility, which is key to its plan to supply LNG and gas to Pakistan’s private sector,” the spokesperson told Reuters.

The tender is watched due to its size and because Pakistan, gripped in an anti-corruption drive under the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan, is expected to publish the lowest prices offered by the companies.

This will give valuable insight into the LNG market, which is characterized by closed bilateral trades, secret long-term supply agreements and an over-the-counter spot market.

■ The largest tender

The largest tender in recent years was issued by Egypt in October 2016, for 96 cargoes, but that was for a two-year period between 2017 and 2018 after the country suffered an acute gas shortage.

Pakistan, like most Asian buyers, purchases LNG priced against Brent crude oil, expressed as a percentage of the oil contract.

In the last short-term tender, Pakistan said the lowest offers came in at 7.13% and 8.54% of Brent, or roughly \$4.40 to \$5.30 per million British thermal units (Mmbtu) at the prices on June 14.

But multi-year contracts in the past year have tended to use a higher, so-called price slope — around 11% to 12%. That would place the price tag for the 240 cargoes — over 15 million tons in total — at between \$5 billion and \$6 billion.

Pakistan LNG issued the tender in early June to import 240 LNG cargoes of 140,000 cubic meters each for delivery over a 10-year period for the country’s second LNG terminal.

The cargoes will be sent into the Pakistan GasPort Consortium Ltd terminal, with first delivery expected between September 2019 and March 2020.

Both counterparties will also have the option for a price review after five years from the start of the contract, according to the bid documents, Reuters reported.

The country’s biggest supplier currently is Qatar, with which it signed a deal in 2016, for 3.75 Mtpa of LNG for 15 years. It also has a five-year import deal with commodity trader Gunvor and a 15-year agreement with Eni.

Kenya unveils continent’s largest wind power farm

By Lucie Morangi

Kenya has launched the largest wind power farm in Africa, setting the country on course to meet its goal of providing 100 percent green energy by 2020.

The wind farm, known as the Lake Turkana Wind Power, has 365 wind turbines with a capacity of 850 kilowatt each. The \$680 million project is located on the eastern shores of Lake Turkana, which is located in northern Kenya and borders Ethiopia. It lies in the Turkana corridor wind, dubbed “the windiest place on earth,” that blows all year round.

The project, commissioned by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta last week, will inject 310 megawatts into the national grid - enough to power up to 1 million homes. It will boost Kenya’s electricity generating supply by 13 percent.

Rizwan Fazal, the executive director of the project, said the wind farm is the largest private sector investment in the country’s history, occupying an area of about 40,000 acres (16,187 hectares).

The wind farm underpins Kenya’s commitment to pursue clean sources of energy to address climate change and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The East African nation has scaled up investments in renewable energy over the recent years. It is now among leading countries with an energy mix in which about 70 percent is provided by renewable sources. Geothermal energy provides the largest share.

According to the Renewables 2018 Global Status Report, Kenya ranks 9th in the world for its geothermal power generating capacity.

■ The new wind farm

Kenyan economist Rajneesh Bhuee said the new wind farm is a major boost to the country’s industrialization process. Kenyatta has vowed to expand the manufacturing sector.

The “electricity cost certainly plays a central role in determining the cost of production and is a major consideration to foreign investors. High energy costs have made Kenyan manufacturers less competitive in the region,” said Bhuee.

Kenya’s manufacturers have continued to dig deeper in their pockets. Industrial consumers pay \$0.15 per kilowatt-hour. The cost of electricity for industrial consumers in Ethiopia is as low as \$0.03. In Egypt, it is \$0.06 and South Africa \$0.09.

Besides paying high electricity costs, at least 18 million Kenyans still do not have access to electricity, according to a World Bank report. Kenyatta, who announced plans to move the country to 100 percent green energy by 2020 during the Paris Peace Forum in France last year, said power from the wind farm would help the government reach its goals of ensuring housing, healthcare, jobs and food security to all citizens.

Kenya aims at achieving a universal access to electricity by 2022. An estimated 9 million Kenyan households have access to off-grid renewable energy and this figure is set to rise, according to the government.

The wind farm project had stayed idle for more than a year after a foreign company that had been contracted in 2011 to build a 428-kilometer line failed to deliver. A consortium of Chinese companies were awarded the \$96 million contract to complete the transmission line.

(Source: chinadaily.com.cn)

Follow the leader — the UK's ill-advised piracy on the high seas

1 → If the initial media reports were to be believed, namely, that supplying oil to Syria is in violation of UN sanctions, who determined this? Leaving aside the claim of a UN sanctions violation, the British Foreign Minister is clearly reported as saying that the UK took this action because of the EU embargo on oil supplies to Syria. Who in the EU reached this conclusion and made the decision to seize the Iranian tanker? The lie becomes even worse when we note that the EU embargo on oil supplies to Syria applies to EU member states, namely, EU countries cannot supply Syria with oil. This rule does not apply to supplies from Iran or any other third country. Surely the British Foreign Minister must be familiar with EU resolutions seeing as the UK is still in the EU! Clearly this seizure was not triggered by a violation of EU, but was most likely in response to a U.S. request.

There is another perplexing aspect to this tanker seizure. Even if the EU or just simply the UK had imposed sanctions on the delivery of fuel from any country to Syria, would the seizure of a tanker be "legal" as claimed by a number of UK politicians and military personnel? If so, then any nation could sanction whoever they wished and seize tankers, or any other vessel, at will! This would be an unusual interpretation of legality and thus justification of piracy by the powerful.

But the Foreign Minister's untruths have become magnified after his ill-advised rhetoric. The folks who run Iran's IRGC (Revolutionary Guards) are not traditional military leaders and diplomats. They are intelligent and street smart and have an image to uphold in Iran and in the region. Mr. Hunt clearly has no understanding of their thinking and how they might react to provocation. As to be expected, Iran seized the British tanker, Steno Impero, in retaliation. But Mr. Hunt threatened Iran much as he might have done when Great Britain was an imperial power and ruled the waves. Again, with little comprehension of the IRGC and its leadership.

As a result, Mr. Hunt has now backed the UK into an even tighter box. What are the UK's options? They could release the Iranian tanker and get the British tanker released. But this would hurt Britain's global image. They could do nothing, again a stand that would not work well at home and would humiliate Great Britain at the hands of a lesser power. Or they could join forces with the U.S., [P]GCC countries and Israel to bomb or possibly invade Iran, start a regional war and incur the wrath of most Iranians inside and outside of Iran and many other Muslims around the world for years to come.

The short and the long of this is that the seizure of the Iranian tanker was a monumental policy blunder. The UK is trying to divorce itself from its European partnership but is in the process falling in line as a devoted follower, not partner, of a power whose influence has already crested. It now does not have a favorable strategy for an exit from its blunder. Future British foreign ministers would do well to better understand the thinking of Britain's adversaries and how they might react, as well as the motives of their closest ally.

By Dave DeCamp

ANTIWAR-President Trump held a rally in North Carolina on Wednesday after a week of criticizing certain freshman members of Congress, drawing much media attention. Of course, the cries of racism from the left are nothing new to hear, but in specifically targeting Rep. Ilhan Omar (Dem-Minn) the president hit a new low. Omar needs to be defended. Despite what you think of her domestic policy, she has been one of the most consistent antiwar voices in Congress.

When Trump brought up Omar the crowd started chanting "send her back." As disgusting as that chant is, it's no surprise to hear at a Trump rally. Xenophobia is nothing new from Trump or his base. It's what he built his campaign on. But just calling Trump "racist" doesn't work, the Democrats should have learned this from the 2016 election. What needs to be addressed is the falsehood of Trump's claims against the congresswoman.

Trump started his attacks on Omar during the rally with, "Representative Omar blamed the United States for the terrorist attacks on our country, saying terrorism is a reaction to our involvement in other people's affairs." The crowd responded with boos, clearly not educated on Osama bin Laden's motives for the attacks on September 11th.

Bin Laden's 1996 fatwa was entitled "Declaration of Jihad Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holiest Sites. (Expel the infidels from the Arab Peninsula)." Bin Laden's jihad against the US started because we were occupying his holy land (a point this author has been making a lot lately).

Even George W. Bush's Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz admitted in 2003 that US troops in Saudi Arabia had "been Osama bin Laden's principal recruiting device." It doesn't seem like President Trump learned this lesson of history. The US is preparing to send 500 ground troops to Saudi Arabia amid tensions with Iran, two US defense officials told CNN (although it has not been formally announced). Of course, if Omar criticizes this move the president will probably use it as proof that she is "pro al-Qaeda." But trying to prevent more terrorist recruitment is in the interest of the American people and the troops overseas.

Trump was referring to comments Omar made in 2013 after an al-Shabab attack in Kenya. "Nobody wants to face how the actions of the other people that are involved in the world have contributed to the rise of the radicalization and the rise of the terrorist acts," the congresswomen said on a local Twin Cities TV show. "Nobody wants to take accountability of how these are byproducts of the actions of our involvement in other people's affairs."

Somehow acknowledging or even questioning

In defense of Ilhan Omar



the cause of terrorism is considered radical in this country. We are supposed to believe that we were attacked on September 11th because those crazy Muslims hate our way of life and are jealous of our freedom, not because we occupy their land. For Trump, it's just too easy for him to make Omar's point about terrorism seem so crazy. Especially since she is a black Muslim immigrant who wears a headscarf and speaks with an accent.

"She smeared US service members involved in 'Black Hawk Down' — in other words, she slandered the brave Americans who were trying to keep peace in Somalia," Trump said, referencing a tweet by Omar from 2017. Omar did not "smeared" any US troops. She responded to a twitter user who said the worst terrorist attack in Somalia's history was the battle of Mogadishu, also known as "Black Hawk Down." The twitter user listed US service member casualties and left out Somali casualties to which Omar responded, "In his selective memory, he forgets to also mention the thousands of Somalis killed by the American forces that day!"

The tweet was resurfaced in April of this year, and of course Omar's critics came out in full force. God forbid a Somali refugee wants the deaths of innocent Somalis — caught up in that disastrous military operation — to be remembered.

One of the more ridiculous claims Trump made this week was that Omar and her freshman colleagues are "pro al-Qaeda," based on nothing. If anybody is "pro al-Qaeda" it's the president who arms Saudi Arabia, while it is known the Saudis are arming al-Qaeda in Yemen. What makes this claim even more baseless is that Omar has been fighting to stop US arms sales to Saudi Arabia and end US involvement in the war in Yemen altogether.

Trump brought up Omar's criticism of his policy of aggression towards the Maduro regime in Venezuela, "Omar blamed the United States

for the crisis in Venezuela." But all Omar did was speak the obvious truth that US sanctions play a role in the suffering in Venezuela. No matter what is to blame for the country's failing economy, US sanctions do not help.

"A lot of the policies that we have put in place has kind of helped lead the devastation in Venezuela and we have sort of set the stage for where we are arriving today," Omar told "Democracy Now!" "This particular bullying and the use of sanctions to eventually intervene and make regime change really does not help the people of countries like Venezuela and it certainly does not help and is not in the interest of the United States."

The Center for Economic and Policy Research had determined US sanctions were responsible for the deaths of 40,000 Venezuelans in a report they released in April.

Omar is one of the very few members of Congress who oppose intervention in Venezuela. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), when asked about US intervention in Venezuela said, "I defer to caucus leadership on how we navigate this." Caucus leadership wants regime change in Venezuela, lining up with Trump and his neocons.

The Somali-born congresswoman has been nothing but consistent on her antiwar views. She has been part of the effort against US involvement in the war in Yemen, an outspoken critic of Trump's Iran policy and signed a bipartisan letter to the president, supporting his announcement of withdrawing troops from Syrian and Afghanistan.

Omar even criticized President Obama's foreign policy, when she said he was just a "pretty face" who got "away with murder." "We can't be only upset with Trump. ... His policies are bad, but many of the people who came before him also had really bad policies. They just were more polished than he was," Omar told Politico in May. "And that's

not what we should be looking for anymore. We don't want anybody to get away with murder because they are polished. We want to recognize the actual policies that are behind the pretty face and the smile." A refreshing thing to hear a Democrat in Congress say.

And of course, Omar has been a critic of Israel's influence on US politicians. Omar's very mild criticism of Israel has gotten her the most backlash. She tweeted, "It's all about the Benjamin's baby," when referring to a story that journalist Glenn Greenwald shared on twitter. The story was about a US politician condemning Omar's criticisms of Israel. When asked who was paying politicians to be pro-Israel Omar responded in another tweet, "AIPAC!" The American Israeli Public Affairs Committee is one of the largest pro-Israel lobbying organizations in the US and has lots of influence on US politicians. Both republicans and democrats condemned these statements as "anti-Semitic"

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and other House Democrats released a statement on Omar's tweets, "Congresswoman Omar's use of anti-Semitic tropes and prejudicial accusations about Israel's supporters is deeply offensive." This no doubt paved the way for Trump to attack Omar.

In the middle of these attacks from the president, Omar introduced legislation on Wednesday to protect our constitutional right to boycott Israel. The resolution said, "Affirming that all Americans have the right to participate in boycotts in pursuit of civil and human rights at home and abroad, as protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution."

Fox News Host Tucker Carlson recently had a segment on his show criticizing Omar saying, "Ilhan Omar is living proof that the way we practice immigration has become dangerous to this country."

Omar responded to Carlson by calling him a "racist fool." But what if she takes a different approach to the criticism? Carlson is known to be opposed to regime change wars and may even have the president's ear. President Trump has made opposing endless war part of his rhetoric, although his actual policy has not shown that. Imagine how powerful it would be for Omar to request a closed-door meeting with Trump about war, or ask Carlson if she can come on his show? Carlson often says he is a fan of open dialogue between people with opposing views. Omar should challenge him to see if he really means that. The chants of "send her back" should be condemned, but just calling everybody "racist" will only further divide the country. Omar should try to work with her enemies to end our wars and stop the suffering of Muslims in the Middle East at the hand of the government she is now a part of. Don't let these attacks distract you congresswoman, keep fighting for peace.

EORC Closes Statements of Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2019 by Paying 800 Rials DPS

The Ordinary Annual General Assembly meeting of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) for the fiscal year closing on Esfand 29, 1397 (March 20, 2019) was held at the venue of Shahid Mohammad Montazeri Township on Wednesday last week July 17 in the presence of about 88 percent of its shareholders.

In this meeting, 800 rials was determined as Dividend per Share (DPS) for each share of the company, the amount of which was approved by shareholders of the company unanimously.

■ EORC, 1st Rank in Production of Oil Gas Products in Nationwide

In the beginning, Chief Executive of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) Morteza Ebrahimi delivered a comprehensive report on the performance of his company and projects commissioned.

Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) is busy active in the industry of oil products, coke and nuclear fuel, he said, adding, "presently, 10 refining companies are busy active in this field. According to the reports on the performance of refining companies in last year in 1397 (ended March 20, 2019), Esfahan Oil Refining Company stands at the second rank in terms of receiving crude oil feedstock and gas condensates."

EORC stands at 1st rank in terms of production of oil gas products, second rank in terms of liquefied gas production, third rank in terms of production of kerosene, 3rd rank in terms of fuel oil production and 5th rank in terms of production of gasoline, he added.

He evaluated the status of projects of the company in a yearlong as "acceptable" and added, "not having any accident and incident is the salient characteristic of the company. Fortunately, the company did not face any incident in the past year in 1397 (ended March 20, 2019)."

Basic repair and maintenance services of the company have been conducted according to the scheduled program every year, he said, reiterating, "manipulating ISOMAX units is considered as one of the salient activities which has been conducted for the first time in Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC)."

He put the current production capacity of ISOMAX at 25,800 barrels, he added.

■ Significant 2% Reduction of Production Costs in EORC Last Year

With the studies made in this regard, the company managed to reduce its production costs as much as two percent in the last Iranian calendar year in 1397 (ended March 20, 2019), he added.

Given the financial turnover of the company, 2% reduction in the production cost is very significant, he emphasized.



Many projects were implemented in the refinery last year (ended March 20, 2019), about five of them were put into operation officially, he added.

■ Construction of Transfer Line, Pumping Station, Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant in EORC

Elsewhere in his remarks, CEO of the company pointed out that projects were defined for the supply of water during drought and dryness of Zayandehroud River, the most important of which is related to the construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant in Shahinshahr. In line with optimal consumption of water, transfer line, pumping station and urban wastewater treatment plant were constructed in Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC), he added.

This project was launched by the company for the first time in the country in order to treat and industrial use of urban wastewater with the approach of reducing consumption of resources (drinking water) with the capacity of 750 cubic meters/hour.

Considering the water crisis in Isfahan province, EORC has used urban wastewater for producing industrial water required for the project.

This giant project come on stream within 24 months, costing over 100 billion tomans.

■ Implementation of Private 230-Kv Power Transmission Line and 230/33-kV High-Pressure Substation

He then pointed to the launch of power substation in Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) and added, "construction of EORC's private 230-kV power transmission line and also 230.33 kV high-pressure substation is unique of its kind in the country."

Turning to this project, he said, "in order to supply power to its operational units constantly and sustainably, Esfahan Oil Refining Company has embarked on

buying MW60 Demand from Isfahan Regional Power Company. This plan has been launched within the framework of two projects i.e. 230-kV from Shahid Montazeri Power Plant as long as 5.5km and also 230/33 kV substation."

He pointed to the supply of power shortage of operational units of the refinery, enhancing the capability of confidence, stability and safety of power grid of the refinery, reduced water consumption volume of the refinery and also saving in energy consumption as the salient characteristics of this plan.

■ Operation of Several Important Environmental Projects in 2018

CEO of the company pointed to the operation of Liquefied Gas and Distillation Unit No. 3 and also some important environmental projects and said, "total oil production capacity of the company is 375,000 barrels of oil per day."

With the launch of Distillation Unit No. 3, moreover monotonous and uniform distribution of feedstock in the operational units, safety co-efficiency has increased, he said, adding, "given the newness of parts and equipment of this unit, quality of manufactured products has increased considerably."

■ Reducing Production Volume of Fuel Oil and Increasing Production of Products with Added Value

Ebrahimi added, "with the launch of EORC's Distillation Unit No. 3, Viscosity Reduction Units were excluded from the operational circuit of crude oil and became operational."

These changes have caused reduction of production volume of fuel oil, increase of products with added value such as gasoline, kerosene, plane fuel and gas oil, he added.

Major part of equipment and machinery of this

unit has been designed by the capable domestic engineers under the strict supervision of Iranian Oil Construction and Engineering Company, he opined.

Presently, this unit was put into operation in such a way that between 800 and 900 billion tomans will be earned in the country as a result of launch of Distillation Unit.

■ Large Portion of Gasoline Produced in EORC Observes Requirements of Intl. Eur-5 Standard

Elsewhere in his remarks, CEO of EORC pointed to the quality of manufactured products and added, "gasoline is one of the main products of the company which is evaluated and monitored strictly."

Fortunately, the company has not faced any problem in the field of producing quality gasoline, he added. All gasoline products produced by the company in 2015 observed requirements of EUR-4 standards, he said, adding, "presently, a large portion of the gasoline produced in the company observes requirements of EUR-5 standards."

Statistics showed that the company has earned 900 billion tomans profit in Gasoline Production Unit of the refinery, he said, adding, "the changes carried out in Gasoline Production Units played a very important role in profitability of the company."

Ebrahimi pointed to the 'fuel oil' as one of the main problems of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) and reiterated, "if fuel oil is not processed, EORC will move towards closure. In this regard, 'desulfurization project from fuel oil has been put atop agenda and a contract of this project has been signed."

■ Life of EORC Strictly Hinges on Implementation of Projects Related to Quality of Products

Managing director of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) emphasized that those projects that are related to the quality of products is the life of refinery, so that the refinery would be dragged towards closure if these projects are not implemented.

These projects would be put into operation under the auspices of unflinching cooperation and collaboration of shareholders of the company, he added.

He reiterated, "implementation of these projects is essential, so that motto of the company on 'EORC, Leader of Oil Products' Producer by 2021' would be realized."

■ Measures Taken by EORC in Line with Fulfilling Social Responsibilities

Ebrahimi also pointed to the report on social performance of the company in the last year in 1397 (ended March 20, 2019) and said, "some of activities

and measures taken by the company in line with fulfilling social responsibilities include as follows: helping the Fund to support Agricultural Support Services of the province according to the bylaws ratified by the Working Group, dealing with water shortage problem, helping reconstruction of Adab School in Sar Pol-e Zahab, cooperating in completion of some provincial development projects, helping release and free unintentional prisoners, purchasing artificial respiratory device for Goldis Hospital of Shahinshahr, cooperation for holding provincial Prayers Headquarters, sponsoring the 2nd National Congress of Water and Wastewater Engineering and Sciences, etc."

With due observance to the said issues, Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) has invested 293,322 million rials for the implementation of the aforementioned projects."

■ EORC's Underway Projects, Costing 40,808 Billion Rials

With regard to the measures taken by the company in the field of saving energy, he said, "in line with the implementation of standard, energy policy has been compiled and micro and macro objectives as well as energy projects have been prioritized. With the coordination made in this regard, energy index of the company will decrease from 3,043 mega modules/ton to 2,366 mega module/ton of crude oil within the next five years."

Turning to the underway projects of the company, Ebrahimi added, "construction of gasoline treatment plant, project for the construction of utility and off-site unit, construction of gasoline purification plant, construction of Distillation No. 3, new boilers, DM Hydro Unit, modernizing refinery's electricity system, construction of loading platforms and also 230/33 kV substation, pumping station, wastewater treatment plant in Shahinshahr, construction of utility of domestic project, modernization and reconstruction of water cooling tower, construction of natural gas pressure-reduction station, etc. are of the underway projects of the company, totally costing about 40,808 billion rials and also €929 million."

It should be noted that reports of freelance and independent auditor and legal inspector of the company were submitted to the Ordinary annual General Assembly meeting of shareholders of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC). Also, Managing Director of the company responded to the questions raised by attending shareholders. In the end of the meeting, 800 rials dividend was distributed among shareholders of the company for each stock of the company in the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2019).

The ambiguous fate of the European Union End to Mrs. Chancellor!

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel is approaching the end of her power in Berlin and the European Union. Another less commonplace in the European Union and the eurozone is Merkel as the most powerful politician in this collection!

What is certain is that today many analysts of European issues feel at risk as to what is happening in the political and executive equations of Europe. The removal of Angela Merkel from European political equations does not have a good meaning for the survivors of this collection. A review of the latest analyses on the status of German Chancellor can provide us with a clear picture of today's Europe:

What the departure of Angela Merkel could mean for Europe

As Christine Keillholz wrote in "Open Canada", Angela Merkel has repeatedly said she wants to remain chancellor of Germany until 2021, when the next Bundestag will be elected. But what if she does not? Speculation of a possible Merkel exit has been spreading in recent weeks. Merkel's party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), has scheduled a meeting of its top officials to take place shortly after the European Parliament elections, which run May 23-26. There's a lot to talk about for Germany's ruling party. In the polls, it has slipped below 30 percent, and the elections may not turn out well for the CDU. Could Merkel resign sooner than we thought?

The 64-year-old German chancellor has become the face of the European Union, as the French are busy with social protests that have been raging for months and the United Kingdom is struggling to negotiate its leave of the group. When Merkel resigned as her party leader last fall, many around the world were alarmed. She announced then that she would not run again in the next elections in 2021. This was the first clear date for the end of the Merkel era.

Since then, lamentations have been sung of this "historical giant," as an Italian paper called her, even by those who take issue with a strong Germany in the middle of the EU. France's President Emmanuel Macron, for example, said he is worried about losing a companion against right-wing forces coming up all over the continent. Merkel's withdrawal — be it in coming months or in 2021 — doesn't mean the lights go out in Europe, however. Instead, her departure opens the door for a rebirth of the union as a more democratic community of countries. The pastor's daughter from East Germany is admired for her calm, reliability and ability to execute informed decisions. But she also represents the kind of Europe that many Europeans are tired of — the kind in which the leaders of the powerful member states, especially Merkel, make decisions in informal meetings, often bypassing the elected European Parliament.

Chief of the most populous member country and largest economy, Merkel has acquired an image as a preserver of stability. Being in office since 2005, longer than any other major world leader, makes her seem like a rare stoic motherly figure in politics. Here's someone who knows everyone in Europe, and all the tricks of how to negotiate at a European level as well. Merkel's reputation as a problem solver comes from all the challenges European states have faced since she became chancellor nearly 14 years ago. The 2008 financial crisis spawned into a crisis over Greece in 2010 and resulted in bailouts, where much money was distributed in informal sessions by the heads of the Eurozone members. The Germans had the money the Greeks needed badly, so it was Merkel's task to form an alliance of donors. Quick decisions were needed, for which the EU Parliament and Commission seemed too cumbersome.

During the geopolitical conflict over Ukraine, which began in 2013, happenings in Berlin and Paris were considered more significant than those in Brussels, revealing friction between members over their approach to Russia.

A decisive turning point in Merkel's term of office was the European refugee crisis, which revealed cracks in the union. When Merkel let refugees from Budapest come to Germany in September 2015, it was interpreted by some countries as a gesture of humanity given on behalf of the other 27 partner countries. Other countries took it as a coercive measure by which powerful Germany made them susceptible to unwelcome immigration.

It was in fact Merkel's attempt to recognize and adhere to a Europe without internal borders. Many of the EU's current problems are related to migration. Effective protection of Europe's external borders has failed until now due to lack of cooperation between the 28 club members. Resentment over immigration was considered to be a



factor in the Brexit vote in 2016. It is also the cause of a split between Western and Eastern Europe, where new member states — especially those coming from behind the Iron Curtain, like Hungary and Poland — still dream of ethnically pure societies without immigrants. But even in Germany, many don't understand Merkel's refugee strategy, and have caused her party painful electoral losses.

The 2016 deal with Turkey was meant to cut off refugee flightlines in return for money from the EU. The deal did diminished the stream drastically but this highly controversial agreement left in the general population's memory images, taken in 2015, of Merkel and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the autocratic president of Turkey, sitting next to each other on golden thrones. Divisions aside, Merkel has undoubtedly changed the appearance of the EU. Before her, pictures of European leaders showed groups of men in black suits. With her came a woman wearing a coloured blazer, standing in the middle, smiling. Outward appearance aside, her approach to governance has also been different from other European leaders. "All the governments she has led were pro-European," Peter Becker, from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, told OpenCanada. Her pro-European policies were "not about hollowing out, weakening or splitting the Union."

In Germany, Merkel, with her unboastful style of governance, has softened the image of the bureaucratic monster in Brussels. Her worldwide popularity is far higher than any other leader's. A 2018 survey by the Pew Research Institute in 25 countries revealed that 52 percent of people questioned have confidence in her — twice as much as the percentage of those who have confidence in US President Donald Trump. Who else could stand up against Trump in a world where the US is breaking out of the Western phalanx?

However, her popularity does not make Europeans feel less uneasy about the cracks in the EU architecture. And Merkel may never have had a strong vision of where Europe could go in the future. "In recent years, not a single significant European policy initiative has emanated from her," political scientist Edgar Grande told OpenCanada.

Dealing with the imperfect system the EU has turned out to be something she has been good at. But that won't be enough for the future of the union. Something has to change — Europe must make it clear to its citizens what unity is good for, and it must give them the opportunity to have a say. Merkel's withdrawal may be a suitable opportunity for that kind of change.

France's Macron realized this when Merkel did not reply directly his big European reform proposal in March. He appears to be committed to making the EU a powerful representation for all who are opposed to climate change, immigration and the power of internet corporations. Yet Merkel let the opportunity pass. It was another sign that, although her withdrawal will undoubtedly be a turning point for the EU, it may not be a tragedy, despite all the lamentations.

Merkel's shaking sends world's media into a frenzy. It could mark a new start for Germany

As CNN reported, The world's media got into a frenzy on Thursday. "Merkel seen shaking uncontrollably for a second time," reported The Sun, a British tabloid newspaper.

Such stories might not be surprising in a paper that, since the refugee crisis in 2015, has wasted few opportunities to predict impending doom for Angela Merkel, Germany's Chancellor and Europe's most powerful politician. Only this time, they were joined by more even-handed media outlets. "She is fine," was the official message from 1 Willy-Brandt-Strasse, the official address of the German chancellor, and the equivalent of the White House. Yet,

there was silence from Merkel's official spokesperson Stefan Seibert. Indeed, his Twitter account only reported that Merkel had been present at the swearing-in of the new minister of justice Christine Lambrecht. But he did not report what happened at the ceremony. Perhaps because it was here that she was shaking.

The footage shows Merkel standing next to the new minister and Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Suddenly, while the president spoke, Merkel started shaking. Not, to be fair, "uncontrollably," as some suggested. But she was visibly unwell as she held her arms tightly across her body. She was given a glass of water, but she did not drink it.

Such incidents would be newsworthy on any day. What makes the matter even more alarming is that Merkel suffered a similar episode of the shakes when she met the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier this month. That incident was blamed on the warm weather and Merkel said she'd not been drinking enough water. Her spokesperson's failure to mention the incident and the fact that it came only a week after a similar episode, needless to say, is a cause for concern. Aged 64, Merkel is still relatively young. But working long days for 14 years (she became chancellor in 2005) is not healthy for anyone.

That the most powerful female politician in democratic history is unwell at a time of crisis is a cause for concern. And her ailment could not come at a worse time. If she is indeed ill, Germany, and hence the rest of Europe, is facing a crisis at a very inopportune moment. Or so it is said.

The hope in Germany was that Merkel would remain as Kanzlerin until the next federal election in 2022. But her own party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) has suffered calamitously low poll ratings; at 25% they are neck-and-neck with the Green Party. Moreover, Merkel's coalition partner, the center-left Social Democrats (SPD), is suffering even more catastrophic poll ratings. At 12% the party is only marginally ahead of the far-right AfD Party.

If Merkel were to step down due to illness, her designated successor Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (known as AKK) cannot be certain of taking over as Bundeskanzlerin. But neither the SPD, nor the CDU (and its sister party CSU) are interested in elections. So, what happens?

According to conventional wisdom, there are two scenarios: either Merkel recovers and serves out her term or AKK takes over as leader of the CDU-SPD coalition. But neither of these seem plausible in the light of Merkel's illness, nor in the light of the poor showing for the CDU at the European Parliamentary elections.

Another possibility is that Merkel steps down and the AKK forms a coalition government with the Green Party and the free-market Free Democrats. Such a coalition currently exists in the state of Schleswig-Holstein, where the Green Party Leader Robert Habeck is deputy Premier. This coalition would have a majority in the Bundestag, and would enjoy popular support. Hence, Merkel's potential illness might lead to a more stable government. German politics is shaken by rumors of the Chancellor's health, but it is not stirred.

What is the cause of Angela Merkel's shaking fits?

Also The Week reported that Angela Merkel's health is back in the spotlight after the German chancellor was seen shaking during a public appearance for the third time in as many weeks. Merkel, who turns 65 next week, appeared to tremble uncontrollably

as she stood with Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne during military honours in Berlin to mark his visit.

The chancellor was able to regain her composure after "an extended period of time", says German newspaper Deutsche Welle, which claims that "Wednesday's incident was not as severe as the prior cases". Last month, Merkel was filmed "gripping her arms as her body was shaking" while attending an event with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, CNN reports. At one point, she was offered a glass of water, which she rejected, before the shaking subsided after several minutes.

The Daily Telegraph notes that the German leader was first seen shaking during a similar incident eight days earlier, on 18 June, when she was caught on film "desperately trying to maintain composure as she shook from head to foot" at a reception for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the German capital. Merkel later claimed her shakes were the result of dehydration after standing in the hot sun throughout the ceremony, and said she had felt better after drinking water.

No explanation has been given for the more recent incident. At a press conference alongside PM Rinne, the German leader insisted simply that she was "fine," reports Sky News. "People don't need to worry about me," Merkel said, adding that she is still in a "processing phase" after her first shaking spell mid-June. "This is apparently not yet completely finished, but progress has been made."

German media has noted that the chancellor is "always accompanied on major international trips by a doctor", says The Local.

Merkel experienced a similar onset of trembling in 2017 while in Mexico City for a state visit. And in 2014, she postponed a television interview at the last minute amid reports that she was feeling weak and faint. Some sources have speculated that she may be suffering from Parkinson's disease, a condition that usually causes uncontrollable tremors. However, the BBC reports that "leading Bavarian GP" Jakob Berger has cast doubt on that theory, saying her trembling had been more pronounced than is typical with Parkinson's. Fellow specialist Dr Christoph Specht argues that the chancellor may have contracted an infection, as "shivering indicated an infection that was flaring up again", the broadcaster adds.

Meanwhile, GP and medical nutritionist Dr Sarah Brewer told the Daily Mail that the shaking might be caused by an overactive thyroid, which is ten times more common among women than men. The shaking might also a side effect of medication, Brewer added. However, other medical experts say the shaking could be connected to an emotional trigger. The Times' medical correspondent, Dr Mark Porter, points to "essential tremor", a neurological disorder.

"Essential tremor often starts in the arms and may be intermittent at first, typically gradually spreading to other parts of the body including the head and tongue," Porter writes. "The shaking is generally aggravated by stress, embarrassment, anger, fatigue and hunger, and relieved by sleep and alcohol." In the past, Merkel has joked that she could manage for days on just a few hours of sleep as long as she had a decent rest at the weekend, calling herself a "sleep camel".

Why world needs to speak for Sheikh Zakzaky

➔ Since then, the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) has announced that it received reports about Sheikh's health condition and that it had worsened after he suffered two strokes in one week.

Despite the relentless oppression unleashed on Sheikh and his followers in recent years, the international community has collectively and shockingly failed to hold the Nigerian government accountable for its crimes, be it the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the corporate mainstream media in countries that raise the hue and cry over 'human rights'. This begs the question: WHY?

It is pertinent to note that while the oppression Sheikh and his followers are facing is being carried out by the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian authorities themselves are being pushed to carry out such aggression by those who view this movement as a greater threat — namely those countries that wish to usurp the rights of others and bully sovereign nations to give into their corrupt demands and narrow interests, whilst waving the banner of 'freedom' and 'democracy'.

Nusaibah Zakzaky, daughter of Sheikh Zakzaky, when asked why she thinks a movement that is so popular with millions of followers has faced such brutal crackdown, gave a thought-provoking answer: "The Nigerian military cannot just act on their own, they must be following orders. This isn't the first time they have done something like this, they have been doing it for years and they are never held accountable for their actions. We are the only people in Nigeria that really challenge corruption and injustice. The Nigerian Army views us as a threat; throughout our more than 30 years of existence, we have never attacked anybody even when they attack us."

Islamic Movement in Nigeria, since its establishment around 4 decades ago, has been raising the banner of justice and resistance in all spheres, which is why it is deemed as a threat by the Nigerian regime, which has been demonstrated by the brutal crackdown on multiple occasions. Surely, the nature of oppression Shiekh Zakzaky and his followers have had to face shows the strength and relevance of such a movement, particularly since oppressors are the corrupt powers.

The IMN has been known to be a non-violent, non-sectarian Islamic movement for decades, having organised peaceful pro-Palestinian demonstrations on an annual basis across Nigeria for over 33 years, primarily in the state of Kaduna, of which the movement's gatherings have been attacked several times by both Boko Haram and the Nigerian army.

Every year, the Islamic republic of Iran holds an international conference of Shia and Sunni eminent scholars and other Muslim participants from all over the world under the banner of Islamic Unity Week, which is one of the prime activities the IMN is involved in. Nusaibah Zakzaky says in this regard: "My father has never identified himself as a leader of a sect, or the Islamic movement as a sect. So, in this event, Muslims from all over are invited so that we celebrate our similarities rather than our differences."

Given the nature of this movement, it is not strange at all that the Nigerian army is carrying out such crimes. IMN is one of the many revolutionary movements in the region, such as movements in Lebanon, Syria, Iran and Yemen that is confronting the global hegemonic powers ruling the world and it is most certainly posing a threat to countries in the region such as Saudi Arabia, which feels its legitimacy and authority is being threatened and undermined by such movements.

Saudi Arabia has taken active interest in encouraging the Nigerian government to curb IMN activity where in early 2018 it sent the Nigerian government \$10 million in military equipment. Saudi Arabia has also been active in propagating its Wahhabi ideology in Nigeria, which it believes is an ideology that would sustain its despotic regime, through the establishment of the Izala Society, founded in 1978 with Saudi support to spread the kingdom's brand of Salafism in Nigeria. The society remains an active promoter of Riyadh's radical school of Islam and is influential in multiple levels of government. Researchers have identified Izala as a fundamentalist group which shares many theological views with the deadly Boko Haram and the organisation is generously sponsored by Saudi Arabia, and is responsible for stirring sectarian hate against Shia and Sufi Muslims in Nigeria.

Surely, the Nigerian Army needs to be held accountable, however, those who deem the movement a greater threat and are pushing the Nigerian authorities to commit such crimes are equally, if not more, responsible. The silence of Western governments, particularly the British government, which is sleeping over such atrocities and is actively cooperating and supporting terrorist governments such as Saudi Arabia need to be questioned and held to account as well.

The West is surely looking with a microscope at such a movement that threatens their manipulation in the region, and it is their overt and covert backing which is the main reason Saudi Arabia feels it can act in such a way.

Second Announcement



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P/F "WENZEL" HYDRAULIC FISHING JAR 4-1/4 IN. ID.; 2 IN. OD. ID.; 2-7/8 API IF CONN. REF. WENZEL DOWNHOLE TOOLS LTD. VALVE HOUSING. VALVE MANDREL HOUSING. HYDRAULIC VALVE. PISTON	23
P/F "WENZEL" HYDRAULIC FISHING JAR 4-3/4 IN. OD.; 2-1/4 IN. ID.; 3-1/2 API IF CONN. REF. WENZEL DOWNHOLE TOOLS LTD. VALVE MANDREL HOUSING. VALVE HOUSING. HYDRAULIC VALVE.	19

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 14,180 EURO or 677,274,500 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab. ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P. NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHA JARI, IRAN. PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL. NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID.

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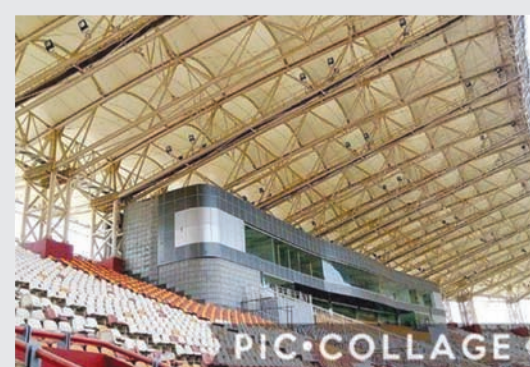
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India’s moon mission lifts off, hopes to probe lunar south pole

India launched a rocket into space on Monday in an attempt to safely land a rover on the moon, its most ambitious mission yet in the effort to establish itself as a low-cost space power.

If successful, the \$146 million mission will allow Indian scientists to carry out studies on the presence of water at the moon’s south pole, unexplored by any other nation before.

“This mission will offer new knowledge about the Moon,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, praising the scientists responsible for what he called a fully indigenous mission.

China, Russia and the United States are the only other nations to have sent missions to the moon.

A live broadcast showed images of the rocket, carrying the unmanned Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft, blasting off from a space center in southern India as thousands of onlookers cheered the launch, which was delayed for a week by a technical snag.

The boosters separated safely as the craft began its nearly 50-day journey, after which the lander will attempt a controlled landing to deploy a rover at the moon’s south pole.

The spacecraft has successfully entered the earth’s orbit, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) said.

The next month and a half will see the spacecraft perform crucial maneuvers to ensure a smooth landing, ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said, as the agency’s officials congratulated each other with handshakes



and bear hugs after the launch.

“We are going to experience 15 minutes of terror, to ensure that the landing is done safely near the south pole,” he told reporters, describing the final moments before the craft is expected to touch down on the moon, about 47 days from now.

The space agency has previously said the descent on the moon could be complex, with potential problems from variations in lunar gravity, terrain and dust having

to be taken into account.

Globally, Chandrayaan-2, whose name means “moon vehicle” in Sanskrit, will be the year’s third bid at a moon landing, following China’s successful launch of a lunar probe and the Beresheet spacecraft, which failed and crashed on the moon in April.

India’s space agency suspects the south pole region of the moon contains water in the form of ice as well as craters that could reveal fossilized information about

the early solar system.

Last week saw the 50th anniversary of humankind’s first steps on the moon in 1969.

India has had a space program for decades, and has for years carried out low-cost satellite launches for foreign commercial and government players as well as national programs including missions to the Moon and Mars.

Modi’s nationalist government has in particular been active in advancing India’s space policy and projecting India as a space power. India’s 2019/20 budget for space research stood at 124.7 billion rupees (\$1.81 billion), rising by some 75% since Modi came to power in 2014.

In March this year, India shot down one of its own satellites to demonstrate its anti-satellite weapon capabilities, with Modi making a public announcement of the event and hailing India’s arrival as a space power.

India has also announced plans for a manned space mission with a targeted flight in December 2021, besides proposing missions to study Venus and the sun, although some of these had been proposed before Modi came to power.

On Monday, Modi tweeted an image of himself following the Chandrayaan-2 event on a television screen and applauding the liftoff. “The launch of #Chandrayaan2 illustrates the prowess of our scientists and the determination of (1.3 billion) Indians to scale new frontiers of science,” he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Astronomers make first calculations of magnetic activity in ‘hot Jupiter’ exoplanets

Gas-giant planets orbiting close to other stars have powerful magnetic fields, many times stronger than our own Jupiter, according to a new study by a team of astrophysicists. It is the first time the strength of these fields has been calculated from observations.

The team, led by Wilson Cauley of the University of Colorado, also includes associate professor Evgenya Shkolnik of Arizona State University’s School of Earth and Space Exploration. The other researchers are Joe Llama of Northern Arizona University and Antonino Lanza of the Astrophysical Observatory of Catania in Italy. Their report was published July 22 in Nature Astronomy.

“Our study is the first to use observed signals to derive exoplanet magnetic field strengths,” says Shkolnik. “These signals appear to come from interactions between the magnetic fields of the star and the tightly orbiting planet.”

More than 3,000 exoplanet systems containing over 4,000 planets have been discovered since 1988. Many of these star systems include what astronomers call “hot Jupiters.” These are massive gaseous planets presumed to be like the Sun’s Jupiter but orbiting their stars at close distances, typically about five times the star’s diameter, or roughly 20 times the Moon’s distance from Earth.

Such planets travel well inside their star’s magnetic field, where interactions between the planetary field and the stellar one can be continual and strong.



Previous studies, the team says, have placed upper limits on exoplanet magnetic fields, for example from radio observations or derived purely from theory.

“We combined measurements of increased stellar emission from the magnetic star-planet interactions together with physics theory to calculate the magnetic field strengths for four hot Jupiters,” says lead author Cauley.

The magnetic field strengths the team found range from 20 to 120 gauss. For comparison, Jupiter’s magnetic field is 4.3 gauss and Earth’s field strength is only half a gauss, although that is strong enough to orient compasses worldwide.

The astrophysicists used telescopes in Hawaii and France to acquire high-resolution observations of emission from ionized calcium (Ca II) in the parent stars of the four hot Jupiters. The emission comes from a star’s hot, magnetically heated chromosphere, a thin layer of gas above the cooler stellar surface. The observations let the team calculate how much energy was being released in the stars’ calcium emission.

Says Shkolnik, “We used the power estimates to calculate magnetic field strengths for the planets using a theory for how the planets’ magnetic fields interact with the stellar magnetic fields.”

Cauley explains, “Magnetic fields like to be in a state of low energy. If you twist or stretch the field like a rubber band, this increases the energy stored in the magnetic field.” Hot Jupiters orbit very close to their parent stars and so the planet’s magnetic field can twist and stretch the star’s magnetic field.

“When this happens,” Cauley says, “energy can be released as the two fields reconnect, and this heats the star’s atmosphere, increasing the calcium emission.”

Astrophysicists have suspected that hot Jupiters would, like our own Jupiter, have magnetic fields produced deep inside them. The new observations provide the first probe of the internal dynamics of these massive planets.

(Source: phys.org)

Milky Way cannibalized entire galaxy 10 billion years ago, scientists say



Our Milky Way ate another huge galaxy 10 billion years ago, new research has found.

Smaller galaxies – like the Milky Way in its earlier life – merge together and create larger ones. As they do, they form and evolved over time.

Now researchers claim to have found when our Milky Way ate one of the other galaxies that would go on to create the vast mass of swirling stars and matter that surround us.

Scientists have long known that our galaxy had a significant merger in its past, by studying the chemical make-up of those stars. But it has been difficult to understand when that might have happened.

Carme Gallart, from the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias in Spain, and colleagues have built what they say is an accurate image of the age distribution of stars in the current disk and inner halo of the Milky Way.

They find the majority of stars in the halo of the Milky Way closer to the Sun have ages ranging up to 10 billion years old.

Using simulations, the authors identified this as the point when the precursor of the Milky Way merged with one of its then companions, Gaia-Enceladus.

Research suggests the Gaia-Enceladus galaxy had about 30% of the mass of stars in the main originator of the Milky Way,

but scientists stress this ratio remains quite uncertain.

This would indicate a total mass ratio of around 4:1 between the two galaxies, given the relation between stellar mass and total mass.

The authors pinpointed stars that were present before the merger and those that originated after it, using the knowledge of their exact ages.

Stars that are redder in appearance due to their higher metal content, trace the original stars formed in the Galaxy pre-merger.

The researchers say the merger heated up some of the stars formed in the Galactic disk to be part of its halo.

It also provided the Milky Way with material to create new stars and give it its current appearance.

The authors say accurate distances to individual Milky Way stars now provided by the Gaia spacecraft mission have allowed them to derive the ages.

They add: «Because accurate stellar ages were lacking, the time of the merger and its role in our Galaxy’s early evolution remained unclear.

«Here we show that the stars in both halo sequences share identical age distributions, and are older than most of the thick-disk stars.

(Source: The Independent)

Communications satellite firm OneWeb plans to start monthly launches in December



Internet firm OneWeb plans to begin launching 35 to 40 communications satellites a month in December, and has 27 Soyuz rocket missions lined up through European launch company Arianespace to send them aloft, company officials said in Florida on Monday.

“Those are the best rockets we could find for the quality, price and capability we were looking for,” OneWeb founder and executive chairman Greg Wyler said. “We will not be launching from Florida for now.”

Company officials emphasized that OneWeb is a commercial firm looking to make a profit, but also has a mission to provide high-speed Internet access to parts of the globe where access is difficult. It plans to work with schools in developing nations to help them afford Internet connectivity.

OneWeb announced in 2017 that it had purchased five launches from Jeff Bezos’ rocket company, Blue Origin. That firm is building its planned New Glenn rocket near OneWeb’s satellite plant next to Kennedy Space Center. But that’s off the table for the immediate future, Wyler said. The New Glenn still is being developed.

“At some point, we will launch with Blue Origin,” Wyler said. “They are building a large rocket safely.”

Blue Origin and SpaceX are focused on reusable rockets, while Soyuz rockets are not reusable. But Wyler said he’s not

convinced reusability always is cheaper.

Although he did not mention SpaceX, which has become the most frequent launch operation in Florida, Wyler said he is open to all launch providers if they meet the company’s needs. SpaceX is developing its own Internet satellite network.

On Monday morning, OneWeb hosted an array of VIPs at its new plant’s opening ceremony, including U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai and U.S. Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla.

Ross praised OneWeb’s emphasis on safety in space. The satellites have grappling hooks on them to allow retrieval if they malfunction, and are designed to burn up in the atmosphere at the end of their useful life.

“You’re improving the prospect of millions of people to connect to the Internet,” Ross said.

The satellite plant is part of a joint venture with European aerospace giant Airbus. It aims to make two satellites per day soon. Eventually, OneWeb wants to have a network of 2,000 satellites in orbit.

“OneWeb is doing for satellites what Henry Ford did for cars,” Pai said.

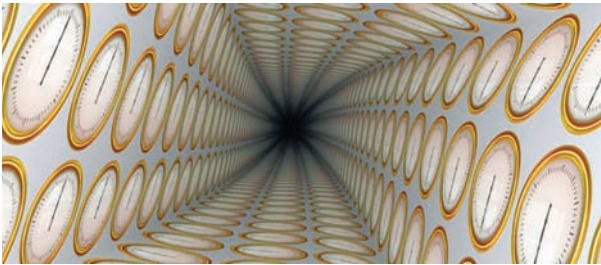
The plant employs about 150 people, and should have nearly 250 employees by year’s end, said Kai Schmidt, the human resources director.

(Source: UPI)

Physicists have reversed time on the smallest scale by using a quantum computer

It’s easy to take time’s arrow for granted - but the gears of physics actually work just as smoothly in reverse. Maybe that time machine is possible after all?

An experiment earlier this year shows just how much wiggle room we can expect when it comes to distinguishing the past from the future, at least on a quantum scale. It might not allow us to relive the 1960s, but it could help us better understand why not.



Researchers from Russia and the US teamed up to find a way to break, or at least bend, one of physics’ most fundamental laws on energy.

The second law of thermodynamics is less a hard rule and more of a guiding principle for the Universe. It says hot things get colder over time as energy transforms and spreads out from areas where it’s most intense.

It’s a principle that explains why your coffee won’t stay hot in a cold room, why it’s easier to scramble an egg than unscramble it, and why nobody will ever let you patent a perpetual motion machine.

It’s also the closest we can get to a rule that tells us why we can remember what we had for dinner last night, but have no memory of next Christmas.

“That law is closely related to the notion of the arrow of time that posits the one-way direction of time from the past to the future,” says quantum physicist Gordey Lesovik from the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology.

Virtually every other rule in physics can be flipped and still make sense. For example, you could zoom in on a game of pool, and a single collision between any two balls won’t look weird if you happened to see it in reverse.

On the other hand, if you watched balls roll out of pockets and reform the starting pyramid, it would be a sobering experience. That’s the second law at work for you.

On the macro scale of omelettes and games of pool, we shouldn’t expect a lot of give in the laws of thermodynamics. But as we focus in on the tiny gears of reality - in this case, solitary electrons - loopholes appear.

Electrons aren’t like tiny billiard balls, they’re more akin to information that occupies a space. Their details are defined by something called the Schrödinger equation, which represents the possibilities of an electron’s characteristics as a wave of chance.

If this is a bit confusing, let’s go back to imagining a game of pool, but this time the lights are off. You start with the information – a cue ball – in your hand, and then send it rolling across the table.

The Schrödinger equation tells you that ball is somewhere on the pool table moving around at a certain speed. In quantum terms, the ball is everywhere at a bunch of speeds ... some just more likely than others.

You can stick your hand out and grab it to pinpoint its location, but now you’re not sure of how fast it was going. You could also gently brush your finger against it and confidently know its velocity, but where it went... who knows?

There’s one other trick you could use, though. A split second after you send that ball rolling, you can be fairly sure it’s still near your hand moving at a high rate.

In one sense, the Schrödinger equation predicts the same thing for quantum particles. Over time, the possibilities of a particle’s positions and velocities expands.

“However, Schrödinger’s equation is reversible,” says materials scientist Valerii Vinokur from the Argonne National Laboratory in the US.

“Mathematically, it means that under a certain transformation called complex conjugation, the equation will describe a ‘smeared’ electron localizing back into a small region of space over the same time period.”

It’s as if your cue ball was no longer spreading out in a wave of infinite possible positions across the dark table, but rewinding back into your hand.

In theory, there’s nothing stopping it from occurring spontaneously. You’d need to stare at 10 billion electron-sized pool tables every second and the lifetime of our Universe to see it happen once, though.

Rather than patiently wait around and watch funding trickle away, the team used the undetermined states of particles in a quantum computer as their pool ball, and some clever manipulation of the computer as their ‘time machine’.

Each of these states, or qubits, was arranged into a simple state which corresponded to a hand holding the ball. Once the quantum computer was set into action, these states rolled out into a range of possibilities.

By tweaking certain conditions in the computer’s setup, those possibilities were confined in a way that effectively rewound the Schrödinger equation deliberately.

To test this, the team launched the set-up again, as if kicking a pool table and watching the scattered balls rearrange into the initial pyramid shape. In about 85 percent of trials based on just two qubits, this is exactly what happened.

On a practical level, the algorithms they used to manipulate the Schrödinger equation into rewinding in this way could help improve the accuracy of quantum computers.

It’s not the first time this team has given the second law of thermodynamics a good shake. A couple of years ago they entangled some particles and managed to heat and cool them in such a way they effectively behaved like a perpetual motion machine.

Finding ways to push the limits of such physical laws on the quantum scale just might help us better understand why the Universe ‘flows’ like it does.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Why are noses missing from so many Egyptian statues?

One of the most common questions you will hear within art history's circles is "Why are the noses missing from so many ancient Egyptian statues?" Is it just a coincidence, or could it possibly be a conspiracy?



Busts of Akhenaten and Nefertiti

■ **Natural erosion has played a role**
Several archaeologists have suggested erosion could be one of the main reasons this happens to many ancient statues. Harsh winds, shifting mud and sand dunes, the flowing of water, and thousands of years of feet and hands pitter-pattering over relatively delicate materials such as marble and stone will most likely have a pretty damaging effect. Many of these ancient statues have been exposed to these elements for a very long time, while others have been buried under tons of mud and sand for centuries, it's usually the extremities, such as arms, legs and noses that get damaged the most and eventually disappear.

■ **Human intervention is definitely another major factor**

Vandalism could be another major factor as to why this phenomenon appears so frequently. A recent example, not in Egypt, is the statue of the famous philosopher Aristotle, which is welcoming visitors at the entrance of the ancient Assos site, in Turkey. The statue of Aristotle, known as the founder of the first philosophy school in history, was erected in 2009 by the Culture Ministry of Turkey at the entrance to the ancient Assos site in the Ayvacık district, but in 2015 it was vandalized after its right arm was removed, while severe distortion was noted on the statue's face as well.

It has also been noted before that several archaeologists during the late 19th and early 20th century, lacking the finer instruments and procedures we have today and in a hurry to be the first to discover the "next big thing", were responsible for some of the most hideous damages ever committed against classical sculpture.

■ **Could it be racism?**
According to some scholars, there was a deliberate attempt by early Egyptologists to deny and hide that Ancient Egypt was an African culture. According to the written account of Vivant Denon, a French artist, writer and archaeologist who etched the image of the Sphinx of Giza around 1798, the facial features of the famous monument appeared to be of African origin.

However, this theory fails to explain why so many ancient Greek and Roman statues are de-nosed and dismembered as well. Noses on the vast majority of ancient Greek and Roman stone sculptures are missing too. While some of these have inevitably broken off accidentally, it's pretty evident that an overwhelming number of them have been deliberately targeted. Since it's historically, archaeologically and scientifically proven that the ancient Greeks and Romans were of European (Caucasian) origin, in this case racism wasn't likely to have been a reason for the intentional de-nosing of those statues.

(Source: Ancient Origins)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Manu National Park

A World Heritage, the Manu National Park is a globally renowned haven of terrestrial biodiversity at the meeting point of the Tropical Andes and the Amazon Basin in Southwestern Peru.

As a vast, geographically and economically isolated watershed, the still roadless property has been spared from most human impacts and is difficult to access to this day.



The originally inscribed area was extended to 1,716,295 hectares in 2009, spanning the complete altitudinal gradient of the Eastern slope of the Andes from around 350 to above 4,000 m.a.s.l.

The in some places precipitous transition includes high Andean Puna grasslands, mountain cloud forests, Yunga forests and lowland rainforest.

Fed from numerous whitewater creeks in the mountains, the Manu River meanders through the lowland forests, before it joins the mighty Madre de Dios River at the Southern edge of the property. As evidenced by Incan and Pre-Incan ruins and petroglyphs, there is a long history of indigenous occupation.

The local legend of Paititi, according to which the "Lost City of the Incas" is located within what is today the property, has lured researchers and adventurers alike.

Today, various indigenous peoples are the only permanent inhabitants. Some of them are sedentary and in regular contact with the "modern world", while others maintain a semi-nomadic lifestyle as hunter-gatherers in so-called "voluntary isolation" or "initial contact", respectively.

The immense variety of Manu National Park in terms of altitude, microclimate, soils and other ecological conditions results in a complex mosaic of habitats and niches.

(Source: UNESCO)

Health tourism: Iran is the world capital of rhinoplasty

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — If you have chosen Iran as your destination for rhinoplasty, you need to know that you're traveling to the world's capital of rhinoplasty, ISNA cited in a recent article.

"Rhinoplasty in Iran has the highest average annual rate among all countries in the world. Apart from the health tourists, the Iranians are also interested in rhinoplasty. This has led to an increase in the number of experienced doctors, specialized clinics, and the quality of health care services."

The article says that rhinoplasty in Iran begins with the friendly and specialized consultation with the doctor. At the end of the meeting, the patient will have a better idea of the outcome of their surgery. The new technologies, taking into account age, gender, and race, help you to get the best possible outcome.

In addition to the technological innovations and expert doctors, the cost of a nose job in Iran is also incredible. The agencies providing medical tourism services, plan a complete trip for rhinoplasty in Iran in seven days. This package includes treatment visa, hotel, transfers, doctor's visit, the surgery, the post-operative care, and the revision, which will eventually cost less than half of the cost of this surgery in the United States or Europe.

■ **Hair transplant in Iran**
Hair transplant in Iran has made remarkable progress over the past years. All



new methods of hair transplant are carried out in Iran. FIT, FUT, and SUT are the most popular methods of this cosmetic surgery in Iran.

The whole hair transplant surgeries are performed in subspecialty clinics with VIP rooms and the newest technologies of this field. Apart from the method of hair transplant, you can choose the final style of

your hair and the manner of hair extension line. The whole suggested patterns by your doctor are also designed to fit the special shape of your head and the result will be completely natural.

Hair transplant in Iran is not limited only to the hair and bread and mustache transplant in Iran are also among your options. The costs of hair transplant just like

rhinoplasty have a significant difference with the similar surgeries in the United States or Europe. The usual cost would be around one-third of the cost of the same surgery in the United States and a bit less than half of the cost of this surgery in European countries.

Many domestic experts say that medical tourism in Iran produces win-win outcomes as the country yields considerable benefits to international health-care seekers, offering affordable yet quality treatment services.

Iranian hospitals admitted 70,000 foreign patients over the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2018 – March 2019), said the head of medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health. According to Saeid Hashemzadeh, 169 hospitals which have the necessary permits, admit foreign patients in Iran, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Some 90% of foreign patients in Iran are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and other countries around the Persian Gulf, Hashemzadeh explained.

"The number of foreign patients in Iran grew by 1.5 percent over the last year compared to its preceding year; and this year we expect the figure to double as we have done some medical marketing."

Medical tourism made an economic contribution of around \$1.2 billion to the country in the last Iranian calendar year (March 2018-March 2019), according to data compiled by the medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health.

Visa-free stay for Chinese travelers extended to 21 days



TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Visa-free validity for Chinese visitors to Iran has been extended from a previously announced 15 days to 21 days, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri said, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

In late June, the Iranian government, in a unilateral measure, approved to waive the visa requirement for Chinese passport holders, a measure that took effect as of July 16.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei announced in June that Iran has decided not to stamp the passports of foreign tourists to help them skip the U.S. travel ban.

"President Hassan Rouhani assigned the airport police not to stamp passports of foreign tourists. Taking into con-

sideration the fact that America is practicing the economic terrorism plans, and people who travel to Iran may feel a bit afraid that they may be pressured by America," Rabiei told reporters in Tehran. He added that this can invite more tourists to Iran.

Nearly 7.8 million tourists traveled to Iran in the last fiscal year (ended March 20), showing a 52.5 percent growth compared with the preceding year.

The country boasts hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

7200 travelers accommodated in Ilam province during spring

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — More than 7200 travelers were accommodated in hotels, hostels and guest houses across the western Iranian province of Ilam, which is trying its best to be marked on the country's tourism map.

"Over 7200 domestic and foreign passengers stayed in hospitality units across Ilam province during the first three months of the [current Iranian calendar] year (started on March 21)," provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh announced on Monday, CHTN reported.

"Of the passengers, some 6500 were Iranian nationals and 700 came from overseas," the official said.

There are 11 hotels, five motels, 63 guest-houses and 24 eco-lodged that are operational in Ilam, constituting 3200 beds for the hos-



pitality sector of the province, he explained.

Representatives of Ilam province, along with fellows from nine other western provinces including Lorestan, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad and Kermanshah, came together in June, exploring ways to expand tourism. The ten provinces are going to hold two-day follow-up conference in the near future.

Traditionally, Mazandaran, Gilan, Khorasan Razavi, Isfahan, Fars, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Khuzestan are amongst most visited provinces during summertime, Noruz, or other break holidays, which results in heavy traffics and extra rise of costs.

Iran's deputy chief of tourism Vali Teymouri, earlier in May, suggested that lesser-known travel destinations should be properly introduced to people in order to have a balanced domestic tourism.

Airbus unveils hybrid-electric regional airliner concept

Airbus has unveiled a bird-like conceptual airliner design with the goal of motivating the next generation of aeronautical engineers, underscoring how they can make a difference by applying technologies researched at the company in hybrid-electric propulsion, active control systems, and advanced composite structures.

The theoretical design is a hybrid-electric, turbo-propeller aircraft for regional air transportation. Inspired by efficient mechanics of a bird, it has wing and tail structures that mimic those of a bird of prey, while featuring individually controlled feathers that provide active flight control.

While not intended to represent an actual aircraft, Airbus' Bird of Prey is based on realistic ideas – providing an insight into what a future regional aircraft could look like. It includes a blended wing-to-fuselage joint that mirrors the graceful and aerodynamic arch of an eagle or falcon, representing the potential of biomimicry (the design and production of

materials, structures and systems inspired by nature).

"Our Bird of Prey is designed to be an inspiration to young people and create a 'wow' factor that will help them consider an exciting career in the crucially-important aerospace sector," explained Martin Aston, a senior manager at Airbus.

"One of the priorities for the entire industry is how to make aviation more sustainable – making flying cleaner, greener, and quieter than ever before. We know from our work on the A350 XWB passenger jet that through biomimicry, nature has some of the best lessons we can learn about design. Who can't help but be inspired by such a creation?"

The Bird of Prey concept, unveiled at the Royal International Air Tattoo event, is backed by the GREAT Britain campaign, the Royal Aeronautical Society, the Air League, the Institution of Engineering, and the Technology and Aerospace Technology Institute.

(Source: Aerospace Manufacturing and Design)



Rise in mobile bookings in Middle East creates new online travel competition

The Middle East traveler has been going digital across all touchpoints of the travel journey, fueling a surge in the online travel market that is projected to reach \$15 billion by 2023 across the region. That will mark an increase of 140 percent from current levels, according to research company Mena Research Partners.

In the last few years, multiple online travel booking agencies and travel search engines have entered the Middle East to cater to this growing market, from international entrants to homegrown brands. All these companies have registered growth in bookings and interest from the regional population in their services.

A challenge for all the online travel agencies, however, is to be profitable.

The concern for the online travel agencies is generating profits, after putting

such a large focus on acquiring customers and generating turnover, said Jamal Abdul Nazar, CEO of the United Arab Emirates-headquartered travel agency Cozmo Travel.

"The challenge for OTAs [online travel agencies] is to make money, and the major expense for OTAs are marketing costs," Nazar added. On a global level, a chunk of this marketing is digitally focused. In Sojern's latest State of the Industry: The 2019 Report on Travel Advertising, digital was almost half of all travel advertising spend in 2018, and that number is predicted to rise, with two-in-three travel marketers planning to spend more in 2019.

■ **Mobile movement**
The digital spend in the Middle East's travel sector is inevitable; the online travel sector is showing huge potential with

smartphone penetration in the region standing at more than 75 percent, coupled with large disposable incomes and a greater trust with online payments than in previous years.

Breaking it down, mobile searches and bookings are being increasingly used over desktop computers and tablets.

India's Cleartrip and Saudi Arabia's Flyin (which Cleartrip acquired in 2018) released research in 2019 showing that within the online travel segment, mobile bookings are increasingly popular across the Middle East's biggest cities.

■ **Signing partnerships**
These are strong numbers that show no sign of abating, and hotel operators are increasingly aligning themselves alongside online travel agencies that cater to the local population through a variety of

languages including Arabic.

One of the more recent partnerships is Accor's with Saudi Arabia-based Al Tayyar Travel Group. Under the terms of the agreement, the entire Accor portfolio of 4,800 hotels and resorts across 100 countries will be available through Al Tayyar's online and retail channels, with direct access to real-time rates and availability. However marketing hotel inventory through these channels – while great for spreading brand awareness among a potentially brand agnostic traveler – does seem to go against the grain of direct booking campaigns that most operators are working on.

Tourism boards are not far behind, and their partnerships are aimed at increasing awareness and driving searches for the cities or countries they are trying to promote.

(Source: Skift)

Rapid BMI rise raises hypertension, diabetes risk in adulthood: study

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — A rapid rise of body mass index (BMI) during puberty and adolescence is linked with a risk of hypertension and diabetes in adulthood, a new study suggests.

Conducted by Shahid Beheshti Medical University's Research Institute for Endocrine Sciences over the course of 12 years, the study reviewed the BMI changes in adolescents and their effects on hypertension and diabetes in adults.

The study suggests that the trend of change in BMI during a period of time is more important than obesity in young adults.

The speed of weight gain is also an important factor.

Those girls whose weights are increased sharply are more at risk of hypertension and diabetes in comparison with girls who suffer from obesity or the ones whose weights are increased during time.

The early risk factors can be diagnosed in order to prevent from the spread of diseases, which would be a great help to have a healthy society.

■ BMI in children, teens, and adults
According to Medical News Today, Body mass index, or BMI, is a measure of body size. It combines a person's weight with their height. The results of a BMI measurement



can give an idea about whether a person has the correct weight for their height.

Carrying too much weight can lead to a variety of health conditions, such as type 2

The study suggests that the trend of change in BMI during a period of time is more important than obesity in young adults

Health Ministry takes precaution against West Nile virus

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Iran's Health Ministry has taken precaution against the spread of West Nile virus (WNV) in the country.

WNV is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the continental United States. It is most commonly spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Cases of WNV occur during mosquito season, which starts in the summer and continues through fall.

"Fortunately, no one has been so far infected by the virus in the country," said Behzad Amiri, the Health Ministry's head of zoonotic diseases department, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Border health centers examine people who want to enter the country from affected countries and give them necessary advices, he noted.

West Nile virus is most commonly spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito, which is become infected after feeding on infected birds, mostly wild and migratory ones, he said.

Infected mosquitoes then spread West Nile virus to people and other animals by biting them.

■ More details about West Nile virus
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, the most effective way to prevent infection from West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Mosquitoes bite

during the day and night. Use insect repellent, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, treat clothing and gear, and take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors.

There are no vaccines to prevent or medications to treat WNV in people. Fortunately, most people infected with WNV do not feel sick.

● Symptoms
No symptoms in most people. Most people (8 out of 10) infected with West Nile virus do not develop any symptoms.

About 1 in 5 people who are infected develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with this type of West Nile virus disease recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

About 1 in 150 people who are infected develop a severe illness affecting the central nervous system such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord).

● Diagnosis
See your healthcare provider if you develop the symptoms described above.

Your healthcare provider can order tests to look for West Nile virus infection.

To learn more about testing, visit our Healthcare Providers page.



● Treatment
Over-the-counter pain relievers can be used to reduce fever and relieve some symptoms.

In severe cases, patients often need to be hospitalized to receive supportive treatment, such as intravenous fluids, pain medication, and nursing care.

If you think you or a family member might have West Nile virus disease, talk with your health care provider.

‘Stay positive’ isn’t good advice for chronically ill people

"Have you considered listing all the positive things happening in your life?" my therapist asked me.

I winced a bit at my therapist's words. Not because I thought gratitude for the good in my life was a bad thing, but because it glossed over the complexities of all that I was feeling.

I was talking to her about my chronic illnesses and the way it impacts my depression — and her response felt invalidating, to say the least.

She wasn't the first person to suggest this to me — not even the first medical professional. But every time someone suggests positivity as a solution to my pain, it feels like a direct hit to my spirit.

Sitting in her office I began to question myself: Maybe I do need to be more positive about this? Maybe I shouldn't be complaining about these things? Maybe it isn't as bad as I think?

Maybe my attitude is making all this worse? Positivity culture: Because it could be worse, right?

We live in a culture steeped in positivity. Between memes spouting messages meant to uplift ("Your life only gets better when you get better!") "Negativity: Uninstalling", online talks extolling the virtues of optimism, and countless self-help books to choose from, we are surrounded by the push to be positive.

We are emotional creatures, capable of experiencing a wide range of feelings. However, the emotions that are deemed preferable (or even acceptable) are far more limited.

Putting on a happy face and presenting a cheery disposition to the world — even when going through really tough stuff — is applauded. People who push through hard

times with a smile are praised for their bravery and courage.

Conversely, people who express their feelings of frustration, sadness, depression, anger, or grief — all very normal parts of the human experience — are often met with comments of "it could be worse" or "maybe it would help to change your attitude about it."

This positivity culture transfers over to assumptions about our health, too.

We're told that if we have a good attitude, we will heal faster. Or, if we're sick, it's because of some negativity we put out into the world and we need to be more conscious of our energy.

It becomes our job, as sick people, to make ourselves well through our positivity, or at the very least to have a perpetually good attitude about the things we're going through — even if that means hiding what we're truly feeling.

I admit that I have bought into many of these ideas. I've read the books and learned about the secret to manifesting good into my life, to not to sweat the small stuff, and how to be a badass. I've attended lectures about visualizing all I want into existence and listened to podcasts about choosing happiness.

For the most part I see the good in things and people, look for the silver lining in unpleasant situations, and see the glass as half full. But, despite all that, I'm still sick.

I still have days where I feel most every emotion in the book except for the positive ones. And I need that to be okay.

■ Chronic illness can't always be met with a smile

While positivity culture is intended to be uplifting and helpful, for those of us dealing

with disabilities and chronic illness, it can be detrimental.

When I'm on day three of a flare-up — when I can't do anything but cry and rock because the meds can't touch the pain, when the noise of the clock in the next room feels excruciating, and the cat's fur against my skin hurts — I find myself at a loss.

I'm grappling with both the symptoms of my chronic illnesses, as well as guilt and feelings of failure associated with the ways I've internalized the messages of positivity culture.

And in that way, people with chronic illnesses like mine just can't win. In a culture that demands we face chronic illness inauthentically, we're asked to deny our own humanity by concealing our pain with a "can-do" attitude and a smile.

Positivity culture can often be weaponized as a way of blaming people with chronic illnesses for their struggles, which many of us go on to internalize.

More times than I can count, I've questioned myself. Did I bring this on myself? Am I just having a bad outlook? If I'd meditated more, said more kind things to myself, or thought more positive thoughts, would I still be here in this bed right now?

When I then check my Facebook and a friend has posted a meme about the power of a positive attitude, or when I see my therapist and she tells me to list the good things in my life, these feelings of self-doubt and self-blame are just reinforced.

■ 'Not fit for human consumption'
Chronic illness is already a very iso-

diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular problems.

In adults, BMI values are not linked to age and are the same for both sexes.

However, measuring BMI in children and teens is slightly different. Girls and boys develop at different rates and have different amounts of body fat at different ages. For this reason, BMI measurements during childhood and adolescence take age and sex into consideration.

Health professionals do not categorize children by healthy weight ranges because they change with each month of age, male and female body types change at different rates and they change as the child grows taller.

BMI is a useful tool, but it cannot identify whether a person's weight is made up of muscle or fat.

For example, an athlete with a lot of muscle tissue may have a higher BMI than a person who is not very active. But, this does not mean that the athlete is overweight or unhealthy.

In addition, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure are more likely to occur in people who have additional fat — known as visceral fat — around their middle rather than their hips.

Persian beverages help you cope with heat exhaustion

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Hot days of summer can cause heat-related illnesses and heat exhaustion, which can be life-threatening. The overexposure to heat leads to loss of body fluid through sweating and dehydration.



The hot, dry and red skin, high body temperature, muscle pain and even unconsciousness can be the symptoms of heat-related illnesses.

Several Persian beverages and herbal drinks can be helpful for individuals having heat-related symptoms, an expert with Iranian traditional medicine Keyvan Bahrami suggested, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Sekanjabin, an Iranian drink made of honey, mint and vinegar, has great benefits in hot weather. Drinking it with ice cubes will cool the whole body decreasing its temperature, he said.

"Boiling jujube in water adding some brown sugar is a great combination for hot days. Cool down the drink and serve it."

Flixweed, known as khak-e shir in Iran, as well as cucumber and watermelon are very beneficial during hot summer days, he added.

"One of the best drinks is a combination of jujube and barberry boiled and added with some sugar to treat heat exhaustion. The iced flixweed drink added with lemon juice is also great."

Basil weed syrup is another option, he said, concluding that heat exhaustion can also be cured with a syrup made of rose water and some ice cubes.

‘Electronic tongues’ may help diagnose early stage bladder cancer

New research presents a complex electronic device as a possible new, efficient, simple, and cost-effective way of detecting bladder cancer in its early stages and monitoring people living with bladder cancer.

New research suggests that cutting-edge electronic devices can help doctors diagnose early stage bladder cancer.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimate that bladder cancer will affect 80,470 people in the United States this year.

About 17,670 deaths are likely to result from these cases, the ACS caution.

Doctors diagnose approximately half of all bladder cancers while the cancer is still in situ, while in about 1 in 3 cases, the disease has already spread to other parts of the bladder. In the remaining cases, cancer will have spread to nearby tissues or lymph nodes around the bladder.

Currently, the most common ways of detecting bladder cancer are cystoscopies and urine cytology tests. The former are costly, invasive, and heavily reliant on how the operator performs them, while the latter are not very effective at detecting cancer in its early stages.

Additionally, cytology tests are prone to error, as they are not the best tool for telling the difference between inflammation and malignancy.

So, in a quest to find a better way of diagnosing bladder cancer, Spain-based researchers from the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV), the La Fe Health Research Institute (IIS-La Fe) in Valencia, and the Centre for Biomedical Research in the fields of Bioengineering, Biomaterials and Nanomedicine in Madrid set out to develop a noninvasive method that harnessed the power of "taste-detecting" sensors.

Electronic tongues are a voltammetric device that can "mimic" the mechanism of human taste by using pattern-information software and sensors that can detect soluble compounds.

Scientists use the device to analyze food, water, wine, or explosives, but they can also use it to test samples of biofluid to detect diseases.

The researchers presented the application of electronic tongues for detecting bladder cancer at the XIII International Workshop on Sensors and Molecular Recognition, which took place in the Higher Technical Design Engineering School in Valencia.

■ Device useful for diagnosing and monitoring

For this new research, the scientists built on previous studies that revealed metabolic differences in the urine of people who had bladder cancer.

These previous studies used established metabolomic techniques, such as liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, to look at the metabolic profiles both before and after surgery.

The researchers suggest that using electronic tongues to test these urine samples may prove to be a cheap and easy-to-use technique for detecting bladder cancer in its earliest stages.

"There are several trials that have received the approval of the FDA — Food and Drug Administration of the United States — for their use in the diagnosis and monitoring of bladder cancer, but none of them improves the results of a cystoscopy," explains Javier Monreal, one of the authors of the project and a doctoral researcher at the UPV.

Carmen Martínez Bisbal, also a co-author on the project, says, "The preliminary results of this study, with a 75% accuracy rate, indicate that the shapes of current waveforms induced in urine through pulse voltammetry could allow, with an appropriate processing of the data, for a noninvasive diagnosis in the monitoring of patients with bladder cancer."

Bladder cancer has a high relapse rate, which is why monitoring patients is particularly important.

In 2012, bladder cancer "was the ninth most common malignancy worldwide, with 430,000 newly diagnosed cases." (Source: medicalnewstoday.com)

WHO says Congo Ebola outbreak is health emergency

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday called the year-old outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo a global health emergency, The New York Times reported.

The declaration, made by a panel of experts, follows news this week that the deadly infectious disease had spread to Goma, the largest city in eastern Congo.

Earlier this week, a preacher with Ebola arrived by bus to the city of 2 million, which is near the border with Rwanda. He has since died, WHO confirmed.

And as of Monday, the outbreak in the Congo has infected 2,512 people and killed 1,676 of them, the Times reported.

Declaring the epidemic an emergency is a rare step for the WHO, which typically reserves the move for outbreaks that could severely affect public health and/or spread to other countries. Such declarations typically spur increases in global attention and aid.

Wednesday's meeting was the fourth time experts have convened to assess the threat level since the outbreak began. However, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told

the Associated Press that the spread of Ebola to Goma was a potential "game-changer."

The Congo outbreak of Ebola is now the second largest ever recorded, with the largest being the West African epidemic of 2014-2016. That outbreak -- also declared a global emergency at the time -- infected nearly 29,000 people and caused over 11,000 deaths.

Some experts believe the emergency declaration for the Congo epidemic has been long overdue.

(Source: webmed.com)

Singapore seizes record haul of smuggled elephant ivory

Singapore has made its largest ever seizure of smuggled ivory, impounding a haul of nearly nine tons of contraband tusks from an estimated 300 elephants, according to authorities.

The illegal cargo, discovered on Sunday in a container from the Democratic Republic of the Congo also included a huge stash of pangolin scales – the third such seizure in as many months.



Officials said both the ivory and pangolin scales were in a container declared to be loaded with timber destined for Vietnam and passing through Singapore, a major transshipment hub for global trade.

On inspection, authorities found 8.8 tons of elephant ivory, the national parks board, customs and immigration and checkpoints authority said in a joint statement.

It said the ivory haul was valued at \$12.9m (£10.4m) and was the largest seizure of elephant ivory in Singapore to date, and was estimated to have come from 300 African elephants.

Also found in the container were 11.9 tons of pangolin scales estimated to be worth about \$35.7m. The scales were estimated to have come from 2,000 of the mammals.

It brought the total haul of pangolin scales since April to 37.5 tons, worth \$112.5m.

Singapore said the seized items would be destroyed.

Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are critically endangered. They are the world's most trafficked mammals because of their meat, which is considered a delicacy, and their scales, which some believe to have medicinal qualities.

Elephant ivory is coveted because it can be fashioned into items like combs, pendants and other exotic jewelry.

The global trade in elephant ivory, with rare exceptions, has been outlawed since 1989 after the population of the African animals dropped from millions in the mid-20th century to about 600,000 by the end of the 1980s.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

England's law on contempt of court

(April 11, 2001)

The collapse of the trial of two footballers has renewed debate about England's contempt of court laws. The BBC's British Affairs correspondent, Adam Brimelow, reports.

This is not the first time that a judge has halted a trial in England because of **prejudicial publicity**. But it's unusual for the case to be stopped so late in the legal process. The case centered on **allegations** that four men, including two well-known English footballers, Jonathan Woodgate and Lee Bowyer, attacked an Asian student in Leeds city center -- inflicting **grievous bodily harm**. All the defendants have **denied being involved**.

As the jury was deliberating its **verdicts** in the original trial, the judge called the proceedings to a halt, after deciding that a newspaper article about the case was potentially prejudicial. This area of law, known as **contempt of court**, is familiar to all properly trained journalists in England. They must avoid publishing or broadcasting any material that poses a substantial risk of seriously prejudicing a fair trial. Although the **stipulations** are laid out in law, the question of what **constitutes** a substantial risk is open to debate.

The legal **concept** of contempt is English in origin, and has been widely adopted throughout the English speaking world, apart from the United States. But even within the United Kingdom there are differences over the way the law is applied. **Scottish courts** are **renowned** for **interpreting** the contempt rules more strictly than English courts.

In the United States the rules are different. There juries are sequestered, or kept in isolation, so they cannot see media reports of the trial they are considering. It used to be common practice for juries considering their verdicts in England to be sent to hotels and kept away from anything that might prejudice them. But nowadays they are nearly always sent home. This case may lead to calls for the policy to be **reversed**.

■ **Words**
prejudicial publicity: information about a case which is not given in court but which could change the jurors' opinion
allegations: an allegation is a statement suggesting that someone has done something wrong
grievous bodily harm: very serious physical injury
denied being involved: said it was not true that they took part
verdicts: a verdict is the decision given at the end of a trial
contempt of court: the criminal offence of disobeying instructions from the judge or a court of law
stipulations: conditions: if you stipulate that something must be done, you state clearly that it must be done
constitutes: if something constitutes a particular thing, you can regard it as being that thing
legal: used to refer to things that relate to the law
concept: an idea or abstract principle
Scottish courts: Scots law is different from English law
renowned: well known
interpreting: if you interpret something in a particular way, you decide that this is its meaning
reversed: to reverse something means to change it to its opposite



Iranian students win medals at IBO, IMO 2019

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iranian students claimed 4 medals at the 30th International Biology Olympiad (IBO 2019), and 6 medals at the 60th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO 2019).

The students have won 3 silver medals and a bronze one at IBO 2019, held in Hungary on July 14-21, with students from 78 countries participating in the competition.

Alireza Tanoori, Mohammad Amin Kharagani, and Ali Yazdi all won silver medals, and Shayan Baqeri earned a bronze medal, Fars reported on Tuesday.

The IBO is an annual competition for secondary school students. Their skills in tackling biological problems, and dealing with biological experiments are tested. Interest in biology, inventiveness, creativity and perseverance are necessary.

In bringing together gifted students, the IBO competition tries to challenge and stimulate these students to expand their talents and to promote their career as scientists.



IUCN red list reveals wildlife destruction from treetop to ocean floor

From the tops of trees to the depths of the oceans, humanity's destruction of wildlife is continuing to drive many species towards extinction, with the latest "red list" showing that a third of all species assessed are under threat.

The razing of habitats and hunting for bushmeat has now driven seven primates into decline, while overfishing has pushed two families of extraordinary rays to the brink. Pollution, dams and over-abstraction of freshwater are responsible for serious declines in river wildlife from Mexico to Japan, while illegal logging is ravaging Madagascar's rosewoods, and disease is decimating the American elm.

The red list, produced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is the most authoritative assessment of the status of species. The list published on Thursday adds almost 9,000 new species, bringing the total to 105,732, though this is a fraction of the millions of species thought to live on Earth. Not a single species was recorded as having improved in status.

A landmark planetary health check published in May concluded that human civilisation was in jeopardy from the accelerating decline of the Earth's natural life-support systems. Wildlife populations have plunged by 60% since 1970 and plant extinctions are running at a "frightening" rate, according to scientists.

"Nature is declining at rates unprecedented in human history," said Jane Smart, director of the IUCN biodiversity conservation group. She said decisive action was needed to halt the decline, with next year's UN biodiversity convention summit in China seen as crucial.

The red list highlights the plight of wedgefishes and giant guitarfishes, known as rhino rays because of their elongated snouts. They are now the most imperilled marine fish families in the world, with all but one of the 16 species critically endangered – meaning they are one step from extinction. Intensified and unregulated fishing is to blame, with the

rays usually snared as bycatch.

Among the seven primate species pushed closer to extinction, six are in west Africa where deforestation and bushmeat hunting is rife. There are now just 2,000 Rioloway monkeys left in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, meaning their population is precariously small. Their relatively large body size and the value of their meat and skin have made them a preferred target for hunters.

Humanity's thirst for fresh water, particularly for farming, is having an especially big impact on river and lake wildlife. The red list update reveals that more than half of the freshwater fish in Japan and over a third in Mexico are now threatened with extinction. Recent research found two-thirds of the world's great rivers no longer flow freely.

"The loss of these freshwater fish species would deprive billions of people of a critical source of food and income, and could have knock-on effects on entire ecosystems," said William Darwall, head of the IUCN freshwater biodiversity unit.

The red list update also added 500 deep-sea bony fish species, such as bioluminescent lanternfishes, which face



potential threats from deep-fishing, oil and gas drilling and seabed mining. The scaly-foot snail is the first mollusc that lives on deep-sea hydrothermal vents to be added to the list and is assessed as endangered.

The IUCN has new assessments for most of the dry forest trees in Madagascar, including 23 rosewoods and palisander species, and it finds that 90% are threatened. Their wood is prized for furniture and is the world's most illegally trafficked wild product. The American elm has entered the red list for the first time as endangered. The once common tree has declined over decades due to an invasive fungal pathogen, Dutch elm disease.

"Invasive diseases, together with air pollution and climate change, have decimated populations of numerous North American tree species that once provided abundant food for native wildlife, as well scenic beauty," said Healy Hamilton, at NatureServe, a network of biodiversity scientists.

Fungi are a growing feature of the list, with the update revealing that at least 15 species that grow in the traditional countryside of many European countries are now threatened with extinction. The bright red splendid waxcap, found in the UK and Germany, is one which has suffered as semi-natural grasslands have been converted to intensive agriculture.

Other species added include the Hungarian birch mouse, now extinct in 98% of its former range due to intensive farming, and the Lake Oku puddle frog, once the most abundant frog at Lake Oku in Cameroon but possibly extinct due to a devastating fungus that has ravaged amphibians around the world.

"Loss of species and climate change are the two great challenges facing humanity this century," said Lee Hannah at Conservation International. The red list addresses both, he said, by including the threat of global heating in the assessment of extinction risk. "The results are clear: we must act now on both."

(Source: The Guardian)

Huge swathes of the Arctic on fire, 'unprecedented' satellite images show

Vast swathes of the Arctic are suffering from "unprecedented" wildfires, new satellite images have revealed.

North of the Arctic circle, the high temperatures are facilitating enormous wildfires which are wreaking ecological destruction on a colossal scale.

It comes after the world's hottest June on record which has been followed by a devastating heatwave in the US, with Europe forecast for the same treatment later this week.

Satellite images reveal fires across Greenland, Siberia and Alaska, with warm dry conditions following ice melt on the enormous Greenland icesheet commencing a month earlier than average.

Pierre Markuse, a satellite photography expert, posted images showing smoke billowing across massive areas of uninhabited and wild land.

The pictures show forest fires and burning peat. They also reveal the extent of the damage the fires leave behind. In Alaska wildfires have already burned more than 1.6 million acres of land.

Mark Parrington, a senior scientist at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecast, said the amount of CO2 emitted by Arctic wildfires between 1 June and 21 July 2019 is around 100 megatonnes and is approaching the entire 2017 fossil fuel CO2 emissions of Belgium.

"I think it's fair to say July Arctic Circle wildfires are now at unprecedented levels, having surpassed previous highest #Copernicus GFAS estimated July total CO2 emission (2004/2005), & last month's 50 megatonnes ... and still increasing," he tweeted.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has described the fires in the northern hemisphere as "unprecedented"

and warned of the enormous impact they are having on CO2 levels contributing to the climate crisis.

"Since the start of June, the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (Cams) has tracked over 100 intense and long-lived wildfires in the Arctic Circle," the WMO said in a statement.

"In June alone, these fires emitted 50 megatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which is equivalent to Sweden's total annual emissions. This is more than was released by Arctic fires in the same month between 2010 and 2018 combined."

"Although wildfires are common in the northern hemisphere between May and October, the latitude and intensity of these fires, as well as the length of time that they have been burning for, has been particularly unusual," the organisation said, quoting Dr Parrington.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran well rid of 153 swarms of desert locusts

Some 153 swarms of desert locusts from Saudi Arabia which penetrated into the southeastern provinces have been controlled, Esmail Najjar, head of Iran's Crisis Management Organization has said. Since the [Iranian calendar] month of Bahman (starting on January 21) we fought swarms of desert locust in approximately 532,000 hectares of farming lands, IRNA news agency quoted Najjar as saying on Saturday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“extra-”

■ **Meaning:** beyond
■ **For example:** We've made *extra*ordinary progress as a society in that regard.

PHRASAL VERB

Piddle around

■ **Meaning:** to waste time doing things that are not important
■ **For example:** We should stop piddling around and get busy.

IDIOM

A cut above

■ **Explanation:** someone or something that is a cut above the others is better or of higher quality
■ **For example:** The articles in this magazine are a cut above the others.

۱۵۳ دسته از ملخ های صحرایی نابود شدند

رئیس سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور گفت: ۱۵۳ دسته از ملخ های صحرایی که به استان های جنوب شرقی کشور حمله ور شده بودند، نابود شده است. اسماعیل نجار روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار بحران ایرنا درباره آخرین اقدامات برای مبارزه با ملخ های صحرایی در کشور، گفت: از بهمن ۹۷ تاکنون در ۵۳۱ هزار ۸۸۸ هکتار مبارزه با ملخ های صحرایی انجام شده است.

‘Emirati troops not leaving war-torn Yemen despite drawdown’

TEHRAN — The United Arab Emirates Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Mohammed Gargash, says the Persian Gulf country, a key part of the Saudi-led military coalition pounding Yemen, is not leaving the war-torn country despite an ongoing drawdown and redeployment of Emirati forces.

“Just to be clear, the UAE and the rest of the coalition are not leaving Yemen,” Gargash said in an opinion piece published in The Washington Post daily newspaper on Monday.

He added, “While we will operate differently, our military presence will remain. In accordance with international law, we will continue to advise and assist local Yemen forces,” referring the militants loyal to the ex-president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Gargash went on to say that the Yemeni Houthi Ansarullah movement should view the UAE decision to reduce troops as a “confidence-building measure to create new momentum to end the conflict.”

“As the United Arab Emirates draws down and redeploys its forces in Yemen, we do so in the same way we began - with eyes wide open. There was no easy victory and there will be no easy peace. But now is the time

to double down on the political process,” the Emirati minister asserted.

An unnamed senior Emirati official told reporters on July 8 that the Persian Gulf country was planning troop drawdown in Yemen in what was claimed to be a shift from a military strategy to a “peace” plan instead.

He added, “We do have troop levels that are down for reasons that are strategic in (the Red Sea city of) Hudaydah and reasons that are tactical” in other parts of the country.

“It is very much to do with moving from what I would call a military first strategy to a peace first strategy, and this is I think what we are doing,” the Emirati official said.

In late June, Western diplomatic sources said the UAE was mulling over scaling back its military efforts in the war in Yemen to focus on threats posed by the rising U.S.-Iran tensions.

The UAE has triggered anger among loyalists to Hadi for its activities on Socotra Island in the Arabian Sea.

Emirati cargo flights have unloaded tanks, armored transports and heavy equipment on the scenery island.

According to Press TV, Hadi loyalists say



the UAE, which has been part of the Saudi-led coalition pounding Yemen, had abandoned an initial cause of fighting Houthis, and is instead providing support to those seeking a separation of southern Yemeni territories from the north of the country.

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 Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Hezbollah: Israel’s demolition of Palestine homes amounts to war crime

TEHRAN — Lebanon’s resistance movement Hezbollah has condemned as a “war crime” the Israeli regime’s demolition of Palestinian homes on the outskirts of the occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, saying such demolitions are the outcome of anti-Palestine plots hatched by the U.S. and its Arab allies.

In a Monday statement, Hezbollah said Israel’s destruction of Palestinian homes in the village of Sur Baher is aimed at expelling the Palestinians from their land and expanding the settlements built on occupied land.

The Lebanese resistance movement further criticized certain Persian Gulf littoral states for rushing towards normalization with Israel.

It said a U.S.-led conference held in Bahrain last month to rally support for U.S. President Donald Trump’s controversial

proposal for “peace” between the Israeli regime and Palestinians amounts to the normalization of Arab ties with the Tel Aviv regime.

The statement also denounced a first ever public meeting between Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifah and his Israeli counterpart Israel Katz in Washington last week, saying it is further proof of Arab normalization with Israel, Press TV reported.

The Lebanese resistance movement expressed “disgust” at attempts to harm the “Palestinian cause,” saying the measures are intended to cover up Israeli crimes against Palestinians in East Jerusalem al-Quds.

International condemnations are pouring in following the Israeli demolition of scores of Palestinian homes in the village of Sur Baher.

Palestinians drive Saudi man out of Al-Aqsa Mosque compound

TEHRAN — A Saudi man visiting the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem as part of an Israeli-sponsored trip has been driven out of the site by Palestinians.

Arab normalization with Israel is largely regarded as taboo, as it involves the recognition of the Israeli state and occupation at the expense of Palestinians..

Wearing his traditional Arab clothing, Mohammed Saud was recorded on Monday being chased out of the Old City of Jerusalem as Palestinians threw plastic chairs and hurled insults at him, accusing him of being a traitor and a Zionist.

Social media users circulated the videos using the Arabic hashtag “Saudi kicked out of Jerusalem”.

Saud, whose Twitter page says he is a law student, was in the city as part of a six-member Arab delegation of journalists officially hosted by the Israeli foreign ministry in the first visit of its kind.

The foreign ministry’s Twitter page in Arabic said that the delegation, which in addition to Saud included journalists from the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan, “will visit the Holocaust Museum, the Knesset and holy sites in Jerusalem”.

“The delegation will hold meetings with Knesset members and diplomats as well as embark on a tour of the country,” the ministry added.

According to Al Jazeera, Egypt and Jordan are the only Arab states to have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Boris Johnson becomes Britain’s new prime minister

TEHRAN — Boris Johnson has been elected leader of the United Kingdom’s Conservative Party and, by default, the country’s next prime minister.

The Brexit hardliner, a former London mayor, on Tuesday won the votes of 92,153 members of the ruling party, while his rival, Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt, won 46,656.

Johnson is set to become prime minister on Wednesday, after Theresa May formally steps down.

In his victory speech, the 55-year-old said his campaign message had been to “deliver Brexit, unite the country and defeat [opposition Labour leader] Jeremy Corbyn - and that is what we are going to do”.

“Do you look daunted? Do you feel daunted? I don’t think you look remotely daunted to me,” Johnson told party members at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in London. “We are going to get Brexit done.”

Joey Jones, former spokesman for Prime Minister Theresa May, told Al Jazeera that Johnson remained a divisive figure in large parts of the UK.

“I wondered if we might see a different Boris Johnson in this particular speech. A bit more sober, with the mantle of power and prime ministerial authority descending on to him,” he said.

“And I think he was actually very true to himself. It was quite serious and yet still with the big rhetorical flourishes. He wants to be true to Boris.”



■ Brexit negotiations

Johnson has vowed to negotiate a new Brexit divorce deal with the European Union before the scheduled October 31 deadline, but Brussels has insisted it will not reopen negotiations.

He has said he would ramp up preparations for a no deal to try to force the EU’s negotiators to make changes to the accord.

“We will of course be pushing our plan into action, and getting ready to come out on October 31, come what may ... do or die, come what may,” Johnson told Talkradio last month.

The only deal on the table has been rejected three times

by the British parliament and many legislators - including pro-EU rebels in the Conservative Party - are also vowing to block Johnson from trying to take Britain out of the EU without a deal.

EU leaders said they want to work with Johnson to ratify the Brexit withdrawal deal signed by his predecessor.

“We look forward to working constructively with PM Boris Johnson when he takes office, to facilitate the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement and achieve an orderly Brexit,” EU negotiator Michel Barnier said on Twitter after Johnson’s victory was confirmed.

Reporting from London, Al Jazeera’s Jonah Hull said the new leader faces difficult parliamentary arithmetic as well as divisions within his own party.

“Boris Johnson inherits a parliament that is as divided as it ever was under Theresa May, who failed to deliver Brexit. He inherits a majority that is frailer than Theresa May’s, just three seats in it, one of which they will almost certainly lose next week in a by-election,” he said.

“Others could go by the wayside, with rumours of MPs willing to defect to other parties. By the autumn it is conceivable that Johnson no longer has a majority and that would be the moment for Corbyn to call a confidence vote.”

A number of Conservative Party ministers have already announced they will resign to fight against a no deal Brexit, which experts warn would push the UK’s economy into a severe downturn.

Hashd al-Sha’abiis an undeniable fact: Iraqi PM

TEHRAN — Iraqi PM support Hasha al-Sha’abi and said this group has become an undeniable fact in the Iraqi scene.

Iraqi fighters from pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) have launched the second phase of a military operation to purge the vast desert in the country’s western province of Anbar along the border with Syria of Daesh terrorist group members.

The media bureau of the voluntary forces – better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha’abi –announced in a statement on Monday that the fighters and Iraqi army troopers, backed by military aircraft, mounted an offensive to flush out remaining Daesh terrorists in al-Jazeera region.

The forces added that Hashd al-Sha’abi fighters and government forces were now

heading towards al-’Awinah area.

The media bureau of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command later stated that government troops had destroyed two militant hideouts and as many vehicles rigged with explosives.

Iraq’s army and the voluntary forces began the first phase of the Will of Victory Operation early on Sunday, the military said in a statement, adding that the operation would last several

days and was aimed at securing the province of Anbar and the central and northern regions of Salahuddin and Nineveh.

“We press on the hands of our heroic forces that will achieve victory with the will of its heroes against the gangs of Daesh,” said Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

“May God protect you and make you victorious,” he added.

First Russian-Chinese air patrol in Asia-Pacific draws shots from South Korea

TEHRAN — Russia carried out what it said was its first long-range joint air patrol in the Asia-Pacific region with China on Tuesday, a mission that triggered hundreds of warning shots, according to South Korean officials, and a strong protest from Japan.

The flight by two Russian Tu-95 strategic bombers and two Chinese H-6 bombers, backed up according to Korean and Japanese officials by a Russian A-50 early warning plane, marks a notable ramping-up of military cooperation between Beijing and Moscow, Reuters reported.

That is something likely to worry politicians from Washington to Tokyo and could complicate relations and raise tension in a region that has for years been overshadowed by hostility between the United States and North Korea.

While troops and naval ships from Russia and China have taken part in joint war games before, they have not, according to Russia’s Ministry of Defence, conducted such air patrols in the Asia-Pacific region together until Tuesday.

“The joint patrol was carried out with the aim of deepening Russian-Chinese relations within our all-encompassing partnership, of further increasing cooperation between our armed forces, and of perfecting their capabilities to carry out joint actions and of strengthening global strategic security,” the ministry said in a statement.

Seoul and Tokyo, who both scrambled jets to intercept the Russo-Chinese mission, accused Russia and China of violating their airspace, an allegation Moscow and Beijing denied.

South Korean warplanes fired hundreds of warning shots

towards the Russian A-50 military aircraft, defense officials in Seoul said, saying it had entered South Korean airspace.

It was the first time a Russian military aircraft had violated South Korean airspace, an official at the South Korean Ministry of National Defense said in Seoul.

The Russian and Chinese bombers had entered the Korea Air Defense Identification Zone (KADIZ) together early on Tuesday, the South Korean defense ministry said.

The separate Russian A-50 airborne early warning and control aircraft later twice violated South Korean airspace over Dokdo - an island that is controlled by Seoul and claimed by both South Korea and Japan, which calls it Takeshima - just after 9 a.m. (midnight GMT Monday), according to the South Korean military.

Japan keeping wary eye on impact from slowing China economy, white paper says

➔4 Japan’s ingrained work culture and employment system, which includes excessive working hours and a seniority-based salary system, should be reviewed to attract more foreign workers, the paper said.

As the consumption tax is scheduled to be raised from the current 8 percent to 10 percent in October, the report said it is imperative to closely monitor what impact the tax increase will have on household income and spending — key pillars of domestic demand.

Given that spending by people in the 39 and younger age bracket remains weak, raising their salaries and increasing opportunities to spend more money by reducing long working hours are also necessary to spark consumption, it said.

The fiscal 2019 edition of the Annual Report on the Japanese Economy and Public Finance was submitted by economic revitalization minister Toshimitsu Motegi to a Cabinet meeting the same day.

The annual report also highlighted the need to pay attention to the effects that future developments in the Chinese economy may have on production and exports including those of information-related equipment and machine tools, both of which are becoming increasingly dependent on China.

■ China’s final demand

According to the report, the rate of dependence on China’s final demand reflected in production value in 2015 stood at 14.4 percent for the information and communications equipment sector and 10.2 percent for electrical machinery, including semiconductors, with both doubling from the levels seen in 2005.

The rate for chip making equipment and other general machinery also doubled, to 9.7 percent.

Of some \$2 trillion in industrial goods exported by China in 2015, \$34.6 billion was added value created by Japan through exports of parts to the neighboring country, the report said.

If the United States imposes additional tariffs on Chinese products, the move may have a negative effect on Japan through the supply chain due to an expected drop in exports from China, the report warned.

It, however, noted that the Japanese economy itself is expected to continue recovering moderately, led by domestic demand.

Learning lessons from a last-minute rise and subsequent fall in consumption that occurred before and after Japan raised the consumption tax rate from 5 percent to 8 percent in April 2014, the report stressed that it is important for the government to level off consumption around the time of a planned consumption tax increase from 8 percent to 10 percent in October.

(Source: japantimes.co.jp)

Afghanistan wants explanation after Trump’s ‘wipe out’ rant

➔1 Afghanistan, with a population of around 35 million, has been plagued by a U.S.-led war that started in 2001. The Asian country continued to be occupied by the invading forces.

The Taliban and Daesh groups have also been wreaking havoc in the country.

While the US attacked Afghanistan to remove a Taliban regime at the time, it has recently been directly talking to the group to find a way to disentangle itself.

Muslim U.S. congresswoman vows to impeach Trump

TEHRAN— U.S. Democratic Representative Rashida Tlaib, one of the four minority lawmakers targeted in President Donald Trump’s recent racist tweets, has vowed to hold her ground and fight the Republican head of state until he is impeached.

“I’m not going nowhere, not until I impeach this President,” Tlaib said at the NAACP annual convention in Detroit on Monday.

The Michigan lawmaker made the remarks against the backdrop of nationwide outrage over Trump’s continued attacks on “The Squad” — which besides Tlaib also includes Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts.

The president posted a series of racist tweets a week ago, calling on the four lawmakers, who are some of her most fierce critics, to “go back” to the “totally broken and crime infested places from which they came” and fix them before criticizing the way America is governed.

This is while Ocasio-Cortez, Tlaib and Pressley are natural-born U.S. citizens, and only Omar was born in Somalia and immigrated to the U.S. when she was younger.

When Trump raised the issue during a rally in North Carolina last Wednesday, the large crowd of his supporters responded with a “send her back” chant aimed at Omar.

According to Press TV, Trump did nothing to interrupt the apparently racist chant but claimed the day after the event that he disagreed and was “not happy” with it.

Another big blunder: Trump maybe mistaking humans with insects

➔1 Trump’s Army even dropped “mother of all bombs” in Afghanistan and it achieved nothing tangible, so how he could achieve such a victory is a very big question.

Rather than making such rash remarks, Trump is better to swallow his pride and say that his army has failed in Afghanistan.

Before the United States was humiliated in its 18-year war in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union had suffered such a humiliation.

It is the elementary lesson of history that no country, how much big or powerful it is, it cannot exterminate or annihilate a nation.

It is true that Afghanistan has become a safe haven for terrorists such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, or that a segment of the population has become radical because of foreign military invasions, the Afghans are a noble and resilient nation and nobody throughout the history has been able to defeat them.

Bale will not leave Real on loan, says his agent

Gareth Bale's agent has ruled out any loan deal for the Real Madrid forward as the Spanish side seek to offload the Wales international.

The 30-year-old is out of favour with Real and manager Zinedine Zidane has said the club are "working on his departure". "There will be no makeshift deals to get him out of the club," agent Jonathan Barnett told Sky Sports television on Tuesday. "Gareth is one of the best players on the planet. I can guarantee you he will not be going on loan to any club."

Bale has won four Champions League titles since joining Madrid from Tottenham Hotspur in 2013 for a then world record transfer fee of 100 million euros (£89.7 million) but struggled to hold down a starting spot last season.

The interest of European clubs in a permanent deal for Bale is likely to depend on his willingness to accept a salary cut.

Chinese Super League clubs Jiangsu Suning and Beijing Guoan have been linked to the player in media reports.

"Gareth is a Real Madrid player and for now he's staying as a Real Madrid player," said Barnett.

"If something comes along that suits us then things could change and he could be gone in a day or a week. Or he could still be a Real player in three years when his contract ends."

(Source: Mirror)

Aussie swimmer Horton warned over Sun podium protest

Australian swimmer Mack Horton has been warned by FINA after he snubbed his Chinese rival Sun Yang on the podium after the world 400 metres freestyle final.

Horton refused to step onto the top step of the podium for photos after the medal ceremony in Gwangju, as doping allegations swirl around Sun.

The highly visible protest reignited their row at the 2016 Rio Olympics, where the Aussie called Sun a "drug cheat" over a previous doping ban before pipping him to gold.

"The FINA executive... has decided to send a warning letter to Swimming Australia and to Mack Horton," said a statement from swimming's governing body.

"While FINA respects the principle of freedom of speech, it has to be conducted in the right context.

"As in all major sports organisations, our athletes and their entourages are aware of their responsibilities to respect FINA regulations and not use FINA events to make personal statements or gestures," it added.

Sun, who has always protested his innocence over the three-month suspension he served in 2014, is again under a doping cloud after a leaked FINA doping panel report alleged he smashed blood samples with a hammer after being visited by testers last year.

FINA cleared Sun to compete but the World Anti-Doping Agency has appealed the decision at the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"The matter over which Mack Horton was allegedly protesting is currently under review by CAS and therefore it is not appropriate for FINA to prejudice this hearing by commenting further," the FINA statement said.

Horton, who took silver behind Sun in the 400m, could clash with Sun again in the 800m freestyle.

(Source: France 24)

Chelsea spoil Antoine Griezmann's Barcelona debut

Chelsea beat Barcelona 2-1 in the 2019 Rakuten Cup on Tuesday to notch their first pre-season win and bounce back from Friday's disappointing defeat to Japanese minnows Kawasaki Frontale.

Tammy Abraham scored the breakthrough following a poor mistake from Sergio Busquets in front of Barca's defence, and Ross Barkley came off the bench to add a second from just outside the box.

Ivan Rakitic came off the bench to hammer home a long-range consolation in injury time but couldn't prevent the defeat.

Antoine Griezmann made his Barcelona debut and played the first 45 minutes of Barca's defeat at the Saitama Stadium in Saitama, Japan. Frenkie de Jong also made his first appearance in Blaugrana colours and played the entire second half.

Barcelona boss Ernesto Valverde remains without the likes of Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez, but Ousmane Dembele, Samuel Umtiti and Jordi Alba were among the stars dotted among his XI.

It took Barca just 27 seconds to win their first corner of the game, and Chelsea were initially pressed up against the wall in a bid to prevent the Catalans from imposing their will on the fixture.

After scoring 26 goals in 40 appearances on loan at Aston Villa last season, Abraham is in contention to lead Chelsea's line this season.

The youngster had an easy-looking attempt from six yards out go astray following some crafty work down the left flank from summer signing Christian Pulisic, making his first start for the Blues.

(Source: Bleacher Report)

Conte: Never close to Juve

Inter boss Antonio Conte insists he was never close to returning to Juventus and that he feels 'great responsibility to bring his club to their proper level'.

Conte has made no secret of his unhappiness about Inter's failure to sign Edin Dzeko or Romelu Lukaku, but the Coach cut a calmer figure before Wednesday's International Champions Cup clash with Juve.

"I didn't have to be reassured," he said.

"The President, directors and I spoke very calmly. I think we'll make some reflections. After that, decisions will be made for the good of Inter while taking everything into account, not only the field but also Financial Fair Play.

"Of course, decisions can also tip the balance and change expectations. Suning is bringing changes to the club, but time is needed to build a solid base and bring the club to their proper level."

The 49-year-old was put forward as a candidate to replace Max Allegri, so how close was he to a comeback?

"No, I've never been close to the Juventus bench. I never received any phone calls, it was always Inter who showed great affection and interest in me.

(Source: Football Italia)

Worth \$5 billion, the world's most valuable sports team is the Dallas Cowboys



domestic league. NBA side New York Knicks make up the top five.

Forbes' valuations suggest the NFL is the most powerful sports league in the world, accounting for more than half of

the current top 50. This is due to rocketing broadcast contracts that cannot be compared to with other sports.

The MLB has seven teams in the list while the NBA has nine and European

Guardiola hits back at Chinese media claims of Man City 'arrogance'



Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola has refuted claims his club behaved disrespectfully while on a pre-season tour to China.

In an opinion piece published by Chinese state news agency Xinhua, it was claimed that the Premier League champion showed "utter disrespect" to locals, treating the trip as "nothing more than a commercial obligation."

The report alleges that players refused to interact with fans and that the club allocated lengthier interview time to British, rather than local, media.

City defeated West Ham 4-1 in Nanjing but lost on penalties to Wolves in the final of the Asia Trophy in Shanghai.

"I should say I don't agree and also that it's false," Guardiola told reporters at a press conference in Hong Kong. "To make a statement like this they have to know exactly what happened here in our club.

"We had an incredible time in Shanghai. We were committed to the cooperation you have to do here in China. The people from the hotel, all the people were asking us to do things and we were ready to do that.

"To come to Asia and experience the

culture, the restaurants -- it's amazing to get to know other people. That's why I can't understand what people are saying. Maybe one journalist is a bit upset, I don't know why -- but it's far away from the reality."

He added that the amount of travel -- with the club next moving to Tokyo -- has caused added fatigue among the squad.

"We don't sleep too well during the nights but, even so, we make good training sessions for all the guys," Guardiola continued.

"I've been impressed with my players so far and let's see for the rest of the tour. I completely disagree with the journalist, that's not the reality."

After taking on Kitchee FC in Hong Kong on Wednesday and Yokohama F. Marinos in Japan later this week, City returns to the UK to prepare for its Community Shield clash against Liverpool.

The club's Premier League title defense gets underway against West Ham on August 10.

City has arrived in Hong Kong amidst a series of violent protests, but Guardiola said he and the players "feel safe."

(Source: CNN)

Cristiano Ronaldo will not face rape charge in Las Vegas



Portuguese soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo will face no charges in Las Vegas in connection with a 10-year-old sexual assault allegation because the case cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, prosecutors said.

Ronaldo, who is widely regarded as one of the greatest soccer players of all time and plays for the Italian club Juventus, has maintained he is innocent.

Kathryn Mayorga filed a civil lawsuit in September 2018 in state court in Nevada accusing the athlete of raping her in a Las Vegas hotel penthouse suite in 2009, then paying her \$375,000 in hush money.

A woman called Las Vegas police on June 13, 2009 to report that she had been sexually assaulted and police took her to the hospital for an examination, the Clark County District Attorney's Office said in a statement on Monday. She declined to identify the person who she said assaulted her.

The statement did not identify the woman, but Mayorga's civil lawsuit mirrors the allegation outlined by prosecutors.

Mayorga and Ronaldo reached a civil settlement in 2010 and law enforcement did not hear again from her until Aug. 28, 2018, when she asked police to reopen

soccer eight.

"The values of teams in major sports leagues are booming thanks to sky-high TV deals, both local and national," said Kurt Badenhausen, Senior Editor, Forbes Media.

"And with revenue growing faster than player salaries, franchises are more profitable than they have ever been."

The enterprise valuations are based on the team's current stadium deals and takes into consideration clubs from the world of NFL, NHL, NBA, MLB, F1, soccer, and NASCAR.

Incredibly, every NFL, NBA and MLB franchise is now worth at least \$1 billion.

Manchester United have dropped four places to sixth in Forbes Magazine's annual list of the world's most valuable sports teams.

NFL side the Dallas Cowboys, valued at \$5bn (£4bn), remain top, with Major League Baseball's the New York Yankees second on the list at \$4.6bn (£3.7bn).

Real Madrid are third, with fellow Spanish side Barcelona in fourth.

Manchester City (25), Chelsea (32), Arsenal (42), and Liverpool (45) are the other English clubs in the top 50.

(Source: Staff & Agency)

U.S. go high-tech to tackle Tokyo challenges



Kirwan said.

"We're also looking at straightforward stuff like ice baths. We're in middle of project with those to make sure our athletes are able to get access to the best quality ice baths that are out there."

Kirwan said USOPC sports science and medical staff would also work with national governing bodies of all sports to determine "appropriate sleep protocols" for athletes.

"We have experienced athletes, but travelling to Asia you need to be prepared for that," he said.

Some U.S. Paralympic athletes may have a chance to acclimate by training on U.S. military bases in Japan,

Julie Dussilieri, USOPC chief of Paralympic sport, said.

Dussilieri said officials were working with the Department of Defense to try to provide "unique training opportunities" for up to five parasport NGBs to place athletes at bases.

She said such a move "clearly gives us a little bit of a home court advantage in terms of being on a US base surrounded by other Americans with top-notch facilities and group support services."

■ 'Exciting time'

There has been plenty of turmoil in the U.S. Olympic movement since the 2016 Rio Games, with the US Olympic chiefs coming under fire for failing to react swiftly when first warned of abuse allegations surrounding former national gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar.

The scandal has brought Congressional scrutiny, and a reform commission has recommended an overhaul of the USOPC to increase athlete representation.

Amid continuing uncertainties, however, the US team for Tokyo is already taking shape.

Haley Anderson, a 2010 Olympic silver medalist, earned 10km open water silver at the FINA World Championships in South Korea last week to punch her ticket to Tokyo. Open water teammates Ashley Twichell and Jordan Wilimovsky also qualified.

While America's powerful pool swimmers and track and field athletes will be tested at World Championships this year before they try to qualify for the Games next year, the upcoming Pan American Games in Lima will offer competitors in some sports a path to Tokyo.

(Source: AFP)

Iran crowned Asian Junior Taekwondo champion

S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iran won the title of the 10th Asian Junior Taekwondo Championships on Monday.

The Iranian delegation claimed 10 gold medals, six silver and one bronze in the competition and won the title with 179 points.

In the boys' event, Iranian fighters snatched five gold, four silver and one bronze (99 points), winning the title for the first time in Iran's history. The powerhouse South Korea finished runner-up by earning two gold, two silver and three bronze (62 points). Uzbekistan came third with 54 points.

In the girls' event, Iranian athletes were crowned champion with 80 points earned from five gold and two silver medals. China and South Korea stood next with 52 and 48 points.

Alireza Hosseinpour (Juniors Male -48), Amirhossein Bahrabadi (Juniors Male -73), Ali Najafi (Juniors Male +78), Negar Esmaeili (Juniors Female -44), Yalda Valinejad (Juniors Female -63), Ali Tavakoli (Juniors Male -51), Amir Sina Bakhtiari (Juniors Male -59), Mobina Kalivand (Juniors Female -42), Ghazal Soltani (Juniors Female -52) and Anahita Tavakloi (Juniors Female -68) won 10 gold medals.

Pasha Atarodi (Juniors Male -55), Hamed Asghari (Juniors Male -63), Nastaran Valizadeh (Juniors Female -55), Amir Moevaladeh Shahrestani (Juniors Male -45), Pedram Jamshidi (Juniors Male -68) and Tina Modanlou (Juniors Female -59) claimed six silver medals.

Ali Akbari also won a bronze medal at the Juniors Male -78. South Korea came second with 110 points (3-4-7) and China finished in third place with 77 points (3-1-2).

A total of 385 athletes of 31 countries competed in the two-day competition which was held at the Princess Hamza Hall in Amman, Jordan.



Iran striker Mehdi Taremi signs for Rio Ave



S P O R T S T E H R A N — Portuguese football team Rio Ave have completed the signing of Al Gharafa forward Mehdi Taremi.

Taremi, 28, has penned a two-year contract with Primeira Liga side.

The details of his contract have not been revealed.

Taremi is the third Iranian player in the Primeira Liga this season. Amir Abedzadeh is a goalkeeper of Maritimo

and Mehrdad Mohammadi will play for Aves.

Taremi had been also linked with a return to Persepolis, where he played between 2014-2018 and twice emerged top scorer in the league.

Playing in Europe has always been the Iranian international forward's ambition and he will be hoping to power Rio Ave, who finished seventh in the Primeira Liga last season, to glory.

Italian club Torino eye Alireza Bairanvand: report



S P O R T S T E H R A N — Italian Serie A club Torino have reportedly shown interest in signing Iran and Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.

Beiranvand, whose contract with Persepolis runs out until 2021, has a 600,000 euros release clause, lagoleada.it reported.

Two more Serie A clubs Cagliari and Atalanta are monitoring the Persepolis goalkeeper.

The 28-year-old had been linked with a

move to Turkish top-flight football teams Fenerbahçe, Besiktas and Çaykur Rizespor.

Belgian club K.R.C. Genk and Dynamo Kiev of Ukraine were following the custodian.

Beiranvand saved a penalty from Cristiano Ronaldo in the match against Portugal in the 2018 World Cup and thrust his name into the international spotlight.

He also helped Persepolis win three successive Iran league title.



“The World Cup will be a fantastic tournament” - China’s Zhou Qi

With less than two months from the start of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 in his home country, Chinese big man Zhou Qi's excitement can hardly be contained.

“I am very excited, very excited for the start the competition and for the fans to see basketball's finest in China competing against each other,” he said.

“All the arenas are great, our fans are going to be incredible and the best players in the world are excited to come to our country. We have been waiting for a long time to host a competition like this, and I am really excited to play and face the guys that I used to watch on TV or saw when I was in America. All the elements are here for the FIBA World Cup China 2019 to be a fantastic tournament.”

At just 23 years old, the 7ft 2in (2.16m) Zhou is young enough to have watched and idolized many of the superstars who will grace the hardwood at the World Cup, and he knows that his fellow Chinese will be elated to see such grand icons of the sport in the flesh.

“Everyone is very excited to see (the top players) in China. Everyone is speaking about it, and our love for basketball is huge,” he explained. “The players are going to love it, the fans are going to love it, and everyone is going to love it. It's going to be a very good tournament, and we are going to make it one of the best tournaments ever hosted.”

Another reason for the fans' excitement, of course, is the return of the Chinese national team to the World Cup after missing the 2014 edition in Spain. Fresh from playing at the

NBA Summer League, China are returning home and are soon shifting their preparations into even higher gear as they hope to make a big splash in the quadrennial tournament.

“I think that we are doing pretty well, and we have some very good veterans, and some young guys that are impacting the team and showing that Chinese basketball has good days coming ahead,” he said. “We love to represent our country, and we are proud to show our fellow compatriots that we play with a lot of passion for the game and with a lot of intensity. I am pretty confident for our present and for our future.”

The World Cup draw has actually been seen as quite favorable to the national team as they avoided perceived heavyweights like the USA, Serbia, Spain, France, Australia

and Canada. Still, Zhou knows that the road ahead will be littered with hurdles, and the Chinese have to be on top of their game if they are to advance deep into the competition. China find themselves with Cote d'Ivoire, Poland and Venezuela in Group A.

“It's a great group and every team can go to the next round in my opinion,” he said. “We are very motivated, very enthusiastic for the start of the tournament and to face those very good national teams. We won't take anything for granted; we will play with a lot of intensity in order to go to the next round. We are here to make our fans proud, and to show the world that the Chinese national team is competitive. We have been waiting for this moment for so long now.”

(Source: FIBA)

Highly-acclaimed VAR Course to strengthen AFC’s capabilities

The Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) commitment to embrace the AFC Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system was demonstrated when the Continent's top 40 match officials completed the second edition of the VAR course on Monday in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Led by International Football Association Board (IFAB) Technical Director, David Elleray, and AFC VAR technical experts Ali Al Traifi, Subkhiddin Mohd Salleh, Farkhad Abdullaev and Hakan Anaz, the five-day course included match analysis of more than 20 matches.

Simultaneously, an additional team of VARs worked with a surrogate referee to reinforce the importance of communications, teamwork, the line of intervention as well as VAR protocol and procedures.



The two editions – held in April and July 2019 – have been organized in preparation for upcoming AFC competitions, following the successful introduction of VAR from the quarter-final stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 earlier this year.

The quality of AFC VARs has been widely recognized globally, after Australia's Christopher Beath and Mohammed Abdulla Hassan Mohamed from the UAE were hand-picked by FIFA to form part of a specially selected male crew for the FIFA Women's World Cup France 2019 in June.

Similarly, China PR's Fu Ming, Khamsi Al Marri from Qatar, and UAE's Ammar Aljaneibi were also selected as VARs in the FIFA U-20 World Cup Poland 2019 last month. (source: the-afc)

Iran lose to Italy at FIVB U21 World Championship

S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iran lost to Italy 3-1 (25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 31-29) in Pool F of the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship on Tuesday.



The Iranian team headed by Behrouz Ataei, who earned two 3-1 wins over Argentina on Monday, will meet host Bahrain on Wednesday.

The top two sides in each pool will qualify for Pools E and F, which will in turn offer two places each in the semi-finals.

The final will be held on July 27.

The 20th edition of the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship is taking place in Riffa, Bahrain.

Iran captain Marouf hits out at critics

TASNIM — Iran national volleyball team captain Saeid Marouf has launched an attack on Team Melli's critics.

Iran lost to Poland and Brazil and failed to book a place at the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) semifinals last week.

The Iranian team, who were looking for the VNL first medal, had participated in the competition with their main team, while the other teams had fielded their young players.

Many Iranian experts criticized the national team over failing to qualify for the semifinals with the main team.

“We don't care about what they say. They are nonsense claims in a way we are used to that. They are jealous of what we have accomplished in the high-level competition,” Marouf posted on his Instagram account.

Iranian double team win bronze at Ghana Badminton Tournament

IRNA — Iran earned a bronze medal in women's doubles of the 2019 JE Wilson Ghana International Badminton Tournament.

Soraya Aghaei and Samin Abedkhozasteh defeated Ghana and Benin but lost to Nigerian team consisting of Dorcas Ajoke Adesokan and Uchechukwu Deborah Ukeh 2-1 in the semifinal and claimed a bronze medal.

The tournament is one of the exclusive international tournaments under the sanctioned patronage of the Badminton World Federation, where badminton is gradually becoming a very important part of Ghanaian sports culture.

Twenty-seven countries from Vietnam, India, Luxembourg, Italy, Iceland, USA, Togo, Thailand, Switzerland, Malaysia, Egypt, Uganda, Slovakia, Maldives, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Australia, Iran, Portugal, Poland, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Benin, Pakistan and Ghana took part at the Trust Sports Emporium in Accra.

Badminton, which was considered a sport with a great future by experts, has become more important when it was upgraded to an Olympic Sport in 1992.

Iran volleyball player Mahmoudi comes out of retirement

TASNIM — Iran opposite spiker Shahram Mahmoudi officially returned to Team Melli after about three years.

Mahmoudi announced his retirement from international duty after the 2016 Olympic Games due to injury.



“I have been out of national team for more than two years but I have returned to the team to help my country to book a place at the 2020 Olympic Games. We have a big task ahead. Qualifying for the Olympics for the second successive edition will be a great job,” Mahmoudi said.

Iran are preparing for the 2019 FIVB Men's Volleyball Intercontinental Olympic Qualification Tournament.

Igor Kolakovic's team will raise the curtain on the competition with a match against Cuba on August 9 in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Team Melli will play Mexico and Russia in the following days, respectively.

“We have a difficult task ahead in Russia. Russia have recently won the 2019 Volleyball Nations League with the young players and Maxim Mikhaylov, Dmitry Muserskiy and Aleksey Verbov will join them to help their team,” he added.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A distressed man needs benediction more than a sound man who is not safe against distress.

Imam Ali (AS)

Reza Mirkarimi’s
“Castle of Dreams”
premieres in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Reza Mirkarimi’s drama “Castle of Dreams” premiered during a special ceremony at Tehran’s Charsu Cineplex on Sunday.

The film’s cast and crew and a large number of cineastes, including Asghar Farhadi, Majid Majidi, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Kamal Tabrizi, Homayun Asadian, Mohammad Rahmanian and Fereidun Jeirani, attended the ceremony.



A scene from “Castle of Dreams” by Reza Mirkarimi.

Actors Reza Kianian, Masud Rayegan, Saeid Rad, Amin Tarokh and Azita Hajian were also among the guests.

In his brief speech, Mirkarimi extended his thanks to the filmgoers and cinema experts, and asked them to promote his film.

“Castle of Dreams” is about two young children whose mother has just died, and their father, Jalal, after long years of absence, returns to sort things out, but he does not want to take the children with him.

The film won three main honors, including best film and best director awards, at the 22nd Shanghai International Film Festival in June.

The film’s star, Hamed Behdad, also shared the award for best actor with Chinese actor Chang Feng at the event.

“Among Waters” on Afghan
refugees on stage in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — The Tehran-based Afghan director Samereh Rezaei staged “Among Waters”, a play about Afghan refugees, at Tehran’s City Theater Complex on Monday.

She is also the writer of the play, which recounts her life story. The play gives a real insight into Afghan refugees who are born in Iran but cannot get Iranian citizenship. Therefore they do not have a bright future as they have no identity.

The only way open to them is to be smuggled into European countries via the Mediterranean Sea, in order to live a better life or to die on the way.

Mojtaba Musavi and Rezaei herself are the members of the cast for the play that will remain on stage until August 7.

Iran ponders legal action
against “Iran Modern: The
Empress of Art” authors

1 → The 200-page book contains a foreword by Farah Pahlavi who unveiled it during a ceremony in London in November 2018.

Raikhel-Bolot is also the managing director and co-founder of Art Advisory, an international firm that works with some of the biggest names in modern art and collecting.

Elsewhere, Mozaffari gave some details of the restoration process of the museum, and said that 60 percent of the renovation has been accomplished.

Studios from Czech, Italy, Ukraine join
Iranian director to make “Blue Land”

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Ali Fakhr-Musavi is making his new drama “Blue Land” in a co-production deal with film studios from Czech, Italy and Ukraine.

Shooting of the film has recently been completed on location in the northern Iranian town of Savadkuh, and the post-production phase will be pursued in Czech, Italy and Ukraine, a public relations team of the movie announced on Monday.

The film, which has been produced by the private sector in Iran, will have its world premiere in Europe and North America in the near future.

Starring Manuchehr Azar, Sahar Abdollahi and Mohammadreza Rahbari, the film is about Dr. Arash Peyro who has to leave Tehran to live in a remote border village where he finds out pieces in the puzzle of his past life.

“I didn’t want to make anymore films showing an Iranian family with a lot of children, all of whom must take turns wearing a single pair of shoes,” Fakhr-Musavi once said in an interview with the Persian daily Saba.

“I am bored with such images that movies are portraying about my country,” he added.

“Unfortunately, Europeans still deem us as nomads while they once knew us by Abbas Kiarostami’s ‘Taste of Cherry,’” he lamented.

“I have frequently told Iranian officials that if we don’t enter the international current, our



A scene from Iranian director Ali Fakhr-Musavi’s new drama “Blue Land”.

cinema will fade away,” noted Fakhr-Musavi, who has previously made “Autumn Memories” along with film studios in Czech and Ukraine.

The film is an anti-war love story about a young girl who loses her home and family in terrorist attacks but tries to find peace and love among the people of another war-torn area.

It won the Best Narrative Feature Film Award at the October edition of the Barcelona Planet Film Festival, a monthly international event in Spain.

Movies from Iran competing in
Rainbow Film Festival



Niki Karimi acts in a scene from Mohammad Hamzei’s drama “Azar”.

A R T TEHRAN — Two films by Iranians are competing in the 20th Rainbow Film Festival underway in East London.

“Azar” directed by Mohammad Hamzei has been selected to be screened in the feature film category and “Video Check” co-directed by Mahyar Seyfuri and Masud Mohammadi is competing in the short film section.

“Azar” is about a woman who is trying hard to manage a cafe-restaurant she has

opened with her husband who is now in jail. She also tries to compromise to get her husband released but things are not going as she has planned.

“Video Check” tells the story of a disabled child who loves volleyball.

The festival opened on July 21 and will run until July 28. It is organized every year by the Rainbow Film Society, a non-profit charity organization in the UK that promotes cultural awareness.

Tehran theater to host
“The Man-Trash”



A poster for the play “Deconstructed Theater or the Man-Trash” Iranian director Amir Ramezani will stage in Tehran next week.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Amir Ramezani plans to stage Romanian-French playwright Matei Visniec’s play “Deconstructed Theater or the Man-Trash” at Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater on July 28.

Written in 1993, the texts in the play are a collection of dialogues and monologues without any order as theatrical modules.

The pieces are parts of an original material as are the pieces of a broken mirror that needs to be repaired. The director tries to put the pieces together and every time the result is a new story. It also gives the director absolute freedom.

Mehdi Radinkhah, Siamak Soltani, Fariba Saremi, Sima Najafizadeh and Darya Vahab are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until August 21.

‘The Lion King’ rules with \$185 million debut

LOS ANGELES, (Variety.com) — Simba and Mufasa reigned supreme this weekend as Disney’s “The Lion King” dominated box office charts. Director Jon Favreau’s remake of the animated classic collected a massive \$185 million from 4,756 North American theaters during its first three days of release.

In yet another win for Disney, the movie landed the best domestic launch for a PG film and set a new record for the month of July. That figure represents the second-best domestic debut of the year behind Disney and Marvel’s “Avengers: Endgame” (\$357 million). The Buena Vista company now holds five of the top six biggest movies of 2018 so far.

Overseas, “The Lion King” felt the love with \$269 million for a global start of \$433 million. The film launched in China last weekend and has since earned \$98 million, boosting the worldwide haul to \$531 million.

“We have a lot to celebrate,” Cathleen Taff, Disney’s president of global distribution, said on a Sunday morning call. ““The Lion King’ has such a resonance in pop culture that you see all different types of people coming out. People want to be part of this.”

The state-of-the-art technology used to bring the Pride Lands and its inhabitants to life drew a polarizing response from reviewers, but the newest version of Disney’s crown jewel proved to be critic-proof, and the prospect of hearing Donald Glover’s Simba and Beyonce’s Nala harmonize to Disney classics was irresistible. Moviegoers flocked en masse to see Simba’s grand return to the big screen, and to much enthusiasm.

“The Lion King” holds an A CinemaScore.

Audiences also shelled out to see the hyper-realistic movie in the best quality possible. Imax theaters accounted for \$25 million of tickets sold, while 36% of global ticket sales came from 3D screens.

“The Lion King” provided a much-needed jolt to the domestic box office. Heading into the weekend, box office receipts were pacing over 9% behind last year. Now, theatrical earnings are down just over 7%, according to Comscore.

“The Lion King” is already one of the most recognizable stories across the world, but the remake



Cast member Donald Glover poses as he arrives for the World Premiere of “The Lion King” in Los Angeles, California, U.S., July 9, 2019. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni/File Photo)

benefited from an equally buzzy voice cast including Glover as Simba, Beyonce as Nala, Chiwetel Ejiofor as Scar, and Billy Eichner and Seth Rogen as Timon and Pumbaa. James Earl Jones reprised his role as Mufasa from the original movie. The updated version also includes a new song from Beyonce.

Disney has re-imagined five of its classics to mostly consistent success. Outside of “The Lion King,” 2017’s “Beauty and the Beast” had the strongest start with \$174 million, followed by 2010’s “Alice in Wonderland” launched with \$116 million. In 2016, Favreau’s “The Jungle Book” earned a strong \$103 million in its inaugural weekend. In May, Guy Richie’s “Aladdin” debuted with \$91.5 million and is approaching the \$1 billion mark globally. However, Tim Burton’s “Dumbo” stumbled with \$45 million earlier this year.

In a banner weekend for Disney, the studio is now home to the highest-grossing movie in history. “Avengers: Endgame” crossed \$2.7892 billion at the

global box office, officially dethroning the 10-year record of James Cameron’s “Avatar.”

Since other Hollywood studios refrained from releasing a movie against “The Lion King,” a number of holdovers filled out domestic box office charts. In a distant second place, Sony’s “Spider-Man: Far From Home” collected \$21 million during its third weekend in theaters, lifting domestic ticket sales to \$319 million. The web-slinging superhero adventure has generated \$569 million at the international box office.

Disney and Pixar’s “Toy Story 4” landed in third with \$14 million. In five weeks, the animated movie has generated \$375 million in North America and \$859 million globally, making it the seventh Pixar film to surpass the \$800 million mark.

At No. 4, Paramount’s alligator thriller “Crawl” generated \$6 million for a domestic tally of \$23 million. Rounding out the top five is Universal’s musical rom-com “Yesterday,” which pocketed \$5.1 million during its fourth weekend of release. The movie has grossed \$57.5 million to date.

Among specialty releases, Sony Pictures Classics opened its documentary “David Crosby: Remember My Name” in four locations, where it earned \$41,050.

Meanwhile, A24 expanded Lulu Wang’s “The Farewell” to 35 locations in its second weekend, generating a promising \$1.17 million. The comedic drama starring Awkwafina debuts nationwide on Aug. 2.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the moon landing, Neon’s documentary “Apollo 11” returned to theaters, making \$75,000 from 107 venues. With \$9 million in North America, it’s now the highest grossing non-fiction film of 2019. Neon owns the three biggest docs of the year so far with “Amazing Grace” (\$4.5 million) and “The Biggest Little Farm” (\$4 million).

“It’s remarkable to see ‘Apollo 11’ cross \$9 million to become the highest grossing doc of 2019 and on the 50th anniversary of the moon landing,” Elissa Federoff, Neon’s head of theatrical distribution said in a statement. “A true testament to an extraordinary piece of cinema and one of the best reviewed films of the year.”