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Development projects worth \$2.38b come on stream

TEHRAN — Some 518 development projects worth over 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) were inaugurated during President Rouhani's visit to East Azarbaijan Province on Thursday.

As reported by IRNA, the inaugurated projects include four major power plant, water and dam projects as well as 370 construction and infrastructure projects plus several economic, agri-

culture and mining projects.

■ **Development of Tabriz Refinery**

One of the major projects which was inaugurated during the president's visit to the province was the development project of Tabriz Refinery in which the refinery's gasoline and gasoil quality were upgraded to Euro 5 and production units for base and lubricating oils were added to the refinery complex. → **4**

Tehran, Abu Dhabi sign MOU on maritime security cooperation

TEHRAN — The United Arab Emirates and Iran on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance maritime border security cooperation.

The document was signed during a meeting in Tehran by the commander of Iran's Border Police Brigadier General Qassem Rezaie and the UAE Coastguard Commander Brigadier General Moham-

mad Ali Mosleh al-Ahbabi.

This was the first time in six years when senior officials from Iran and the UAE met in the Iranian capital to discuss ways of boosting maritime security.

Following the meeting, the Iranian border police chief said the document was designed to boost border cooperation and interaction between the two Persian Gulf states. → **2**

U.S. formally abandons INF, Moscow announces missile treaty's demise

TEHRAN — The United States has officially withdrawn from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, blaming Russia for the Cold War-era treaty's collapse.

"Russia is solely responsible for the treaty's demise," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement on Friday, announcing Washington's withdrawal.

"With the full support of our NATO allies, the United States has determined Russia to be in material breach of the treaty, and has subsequently suspended our obligations under the treaty," he said.

Following the U.S. announcement, Moscow also declared the formal end of the arms control treaty. → **13**

Belgian globetrotters share us their new perception of Iran

By Afshin Majlesi, Mehdi Sepahvand

TEHRAN — Last Monday, a Belgian couple, who are on an overland journey to China, paid a visit to The Tehran Times, where they let us share their views, experiences and feelings about Iran in a cozy chat with the daily.

Ciara Reid and Lennart Gheysens in particular noted that the hospitality of Iranian people was beyond their expectations, saying "One of the reasons that we love Iran so much is the hospitality and kindness of the people."

"I think that is what a lot of other nationalities can take as an example and learn from it," Ciara said.

When it came to driving in Iran, Lennart, however, didn't give a good score, saying he had heard that Georgian people had earned a bad reputation for driving carelessly, but he thinks that the situation is even worse in Iran!

The couple also showed us various parts of their camper van, which was like a well-made miniature home equipped with almost everything including a bed, a dining table, chairs, a stove, sets of closets, cabinets, a toilet, a shower, a sink, electronic equipment and other amenities! There were powerful solar panels to charge the batteries that powered their moving home.

The transcript of the interview is given below:

■ Is this the first time you're visiting Iran?

Lennart: No, the second time. We visited in 2016 and that was only Iran that we visited [during that trip].

Ciara: We visited Iran in 2016 in a trip that was recommended by a friend of ours. And when we were here we really fell in love with the country. We never had that [experience] before. Everything is so beautiful and people

are so friendly. And at that time we said we definitely want to go [come] back and then maybe all the different countries around Iran, maybe they're beautiful too. And European people usually don't get to see them so that's why we decided to go on a trip along the Silk Road so it was really our trip in Iran in 2016 that sparked the idea of our current trip.

■ Please tell us more about the itinerary of your trip.

Lennart: We drove from Belgium quite fast through all the European countries like the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia because we want to focus on the Caucasus region and then central Asia. We drove from Croatia to Albania, Montenegro, and then Greece to Turkey, where actually the real trip started for us. We started to take things slower. So we are driving from Belgium to China. → **10**

Saudi mercenaries killed as Yemeni missiles hit Najran

Several Saudi-sponsored militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, have been killed when Yemeni army forces and their allies launched a missile strike against their camps in Saudi Arabia's southern province of Najran.

The media bureau of the Houthis Ansarullah movement announced in a statement that Yemeni missile defense units fired five domestically-manufactured Zelzal-1 (Earthquake-1) missiles and artillery rounds at positions of Saudi mercenaries in al-Sadis area of the region, located 844 kilometers (524 miles) south of the Saudi capital Riyadh.

The statement added that the missiles hit the designated targets with great precision, leaving

a number of Saudi-paid militiamen killed and injured.

Earlier in the day, scores of Saudi mercenaries were killed and injured when Yemeni troopers and fighters from allied Popular Committees struck their positions in Moraba'a al-Shaja'a area of the same Saudi region.

Separately, Yemeni forces and their allies launched a barrage of artillery rounds at the strongholds of Saudi mercenaries in the Qa'atabah district of the southern Yemeni province of Dhale, leaving a number of the Riyadh-backed militiamen dead and injured.

■ **Dozens of Saudi mercenaries killed as Yemeni retaliatory attacks hit**



PERSPECTIVE

M.A. Saki

Deputy editor-in-chief

Zarif's intelligence cannot be sanctioned

In line with its "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, the U.S. on Wednesday imposed sanctions on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

While the Trump administration claims it is seeking diplomacy with Iran, sanctioning Zarif is closing the door to diplomacy. It is pure hypocrisy. The action is being opposed by France, Britain and Germany, three Washington's allies which are party to the 2015 nuclear deal. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democratic senator, has also criticized the move, saying, "This doesn't move us closer to peace, it further escalates an already tense situation."

Trump and his Iran hawks such as John Bolton and Mike Pompeo are envious of Zarif's competence in exposing the illegal moves of the U.S. against Iran. They are angry that Zarif, a professor of international law, has succeeded to isolate the hardliners in Washington through his logic.

Zarif dropped the bombshell when in an interview with the Fox News on April 27 he publicly revealed that the B-Team, including Bolton and Bibi Netanyahu, are trying to lure Trump into a war with Iran.

Also, remarks by Zarif that it is the first time in modern history that a country - the United States - is punishing other countries for observing international law sounded like a huge earthquake in the White House. Zarif was in fact referring to the secondary sanctions against countries that do legal trade with Iran in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the nuclear deal. Bolton and Pompeo feel helpless and irritated when Zarif tells the world, especially the American people, that the U.S. sanctions against Iranian people are examples of "economic terrorism".

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin claimed that Zarif "spreads the regime's propaganda and disinformation" on social media. But the point is that hardliners in Washington and Tel Aviv are rattled by tweets that this man of intellect and diplomacy posts on his Twitter page.

By sanctioning Zarif the United States is acting like a dictatorial regime which tortures and imprisons its political opponents to silence them but at the end they will lose the battle against opponents.

Trump and his team also will not be able to sanction the mind and intelligence of Zarif.



ARTICLE

Somayyeh Khomarbaqi

Mehr News Agency journalist

The scenarios ahead of the Deal of the Century

The fate of the deal of the century is unknown as the deal continuous running into problems. The West struggles with new plans to put the deal into operation, but these plans can be easily derailed if the right strategies are adopted.

The deal, initially proposed by the United States President Donald Trump and his allies, targets the conflict between Palestine and the Zionist regimes, but instead of solving the problem, it aims to delete it by trying to remove Palestine altogether. The deal was first suggested around a year ago, but to the Washington's surprise, it has not yet come to any conclusion.

The deal has been designed based on Trump's business outlook to everything and seeks to solve the issue by luring in the Palestinians with offering economic rewards. In fact, the deal has regarded one of the most important issues in the world as a commodity that can be traded and has paid no attention to the humanitarian side of the problem and coming up with a just solution that respects the rights of all people involved in the issue.

The future prospect of the Deal of the Century

According to the Deal of the Century, the Palestinians will be settled only in Gaza Strip and some parts of the West Bank. The deal will cancel the return of displaced Palestinians who currently live in other countries (mostly Arab countries like Lebanon and Jordan) to their homeland and they have to remain in their residing country. The plan also envisages assigning \$10 billion for development of the remnants of Palestine by building industrial towns, new cities, airports, and ports in the Gaza Strip.

The deal doesn't move Israelis out of the Palestinian lands they invaded in 1976, including the West Bank and the area around Al-Quds. In this deal, U.S. has offered Abu Dis village, in the east of Al-Quds (Jerusalem), as the new capital of Palestine. In return, Israel would retreat from three to five Palestinian villages around Al-Quds that were occupied by the Zionist usurper regime in 1976. → **7**



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Khorasan Razavi Hosts Women's National Cricket Championship

Iran Women's National Cricket Championship commenced in Khorasan Razavi from Wednesday 31st July and was expected to be over in three days.

A total of five teams participated in the Women's National Cricket Championship, including: Ardabil, Khorasan Razavi, Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman and Tehran.

This tournament's importance for the players was due to the fact that the coaches of the National Team and the officials of the federation have been monitoring the players since the beginning of the competition.

Tehran, Abu Dhabi sign MOU on maritime security cooperation

1 → He added that regular meetings between officials of the two countries could help further increase border interaction, facilitate matters for business persons and fishermen from the countries, and also help fight moves to disrupt maritime security. Al-Ahbabi, for his part, described the MOU as a "positive step" which can serve the two countries' interests in the region, augment border security, ease border control and facilitate crossings. Tehran and Abu Dhabi held their last such gathering in Tehran in October 2013. The latest meeting comes following a chain of naval accidents in the region's waters.



In May, explosions hit four commercial vessels from the UAE and Saudi Arabia off the Emirati port of Fujairah in the Persian Gulf. A month later, two blasts hit a Japanese and a Norwegian-owned vessel in the Sea of Oman. Iranian naval forces gave a quick response to the distress calls from those ships and rushed to rescue their crew members.

The United States soon tried to implicate Iran in the incidents to suggest that the Islamic Republic was trying to retaliate for bids by Washington and its allies to trouble the Islamic Republic's international oil sales.

On June 15, however, Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said his country did not have enough evidence to blame any country for the previous month's naval attacks.

Japan and Germany also refuted Washington's accusations against Iran in the second incident.

Iran has roundly rejected Washington's claims of Tehran's involvement in such incident. It has also voiced concern about adventurism by foreign players to disrupt maritime navigation in the Persian Gulf region.

Tehran has also said that, one way or another, it would sell its oil despite the illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran, but has categorically rejected recourse to violence to make that happen.

Spain, Japan reject to join U.S.-led Persian Gulf coalition

By staff and agency

Madrid and Tokyo have rejected an official request from Washington to participate in a naval coalition in the Persian Gulf.



Spanish newspaper El Confidencial said on Thursday Madrid had received an official request from the United States to participate in these forces. However, the same sources said that "the Spanish government has currently no intention to participate in joint U.S.-led forces," Middle East Monitor reported.

Japan's Mainichi Shimbun also reported that Tokyo won't send ships to join the U.S.-led maritime force.

During a press conference on Wednesday, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas also said his country "would not participate in the mission the United States plans to form."

The U.S. has announced plans to form a Washington-led maritime force to supposedly secure the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, which hosts considerable international oil shipments.

'IRGC Ground Force capable of growing into global power'

(FNA) — The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has lauded the potentials and capabilities of the Ground Force of the IRGC, saying that the force is able to claim global superiority.

"The IRGC Ground Force is enjoying the capacities and capabilities to turn into a superior power on global scale," Major General Hossein Salami said on Thursday, while paying an inspection visit to the forces stationed in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, along the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Meeting with personnel and commanders in the province, the top commander thanked the round-the-clock efforts of the IRGC Ground Force in establishing people-based peace and security to defuse enemy-hatched plots in the province.

"The IRGC's Ground Force is at the forefront of all armed forces and defenders of the country in this region confronting a comprehensive collection of anti-revolution and anti-establishment enemies," Salami highlighted.

Underlining that the enemies have dispatched a range of strategic, tactical, and operational capabilities to the sensitive region to fight against the interests of the Iranian nation, the commander added, "Sistan-Baluchistan is the conjunction where all the plots by regional, extra-regional and local enemies come together."

The IRGC is actively engaged in security operations against anti-Iran terrorist groups and accordingly is attacked by entities and terrorist groups which hold grudge against Tehran.

On February 13, a bus carrying the IRGC personnel was hit by an explosives-laden truck on a road from the city of Khash to Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchistan province, where 27 IRGC members were martyred and 13 others wounded.

Ten days later, Iranian security forces identified and arrested 13 individuals linked to the suicide bombing.

Sanctions on diplomacy

Foundations of the White House shaken by Zarif's logic, Rouhani notes

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In separate statements on Wednesday, the U.S. Treasury and State Department announced imposition of sanctions against Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, a move which was interpreted as a total rejection of diplomacy repeatedly claimed by the Trump administration.

At home there was a huge torrent of support for Foreign Minister Zarif who is liked by the people and even his moderate opponents. They all consider him a highly qualified diplomat and treasure him for his rationality.

Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri lauded Zarif's diplomatic capability, saying, "Even wise enemies are aware of his intellect, skill, his rare competence in negotiations, creating opportunities, and avoiding conflict and war."

"Sanctioning Zarif is another reason for (U.S.) hypocrisy and lying in calling for negotiations," Jahangiri wrote on his Twitter account.

■ "U.S. is afraid of Zarif"

President Rouhani described the U.S. move against his foreign minister as a "childish behavior".

In a televised address, Rouhani said, "They were claiming ever day 'we want to talk, with no preconditions' ... and then they sanction the foreign minister."

He also said the U.S. is "afraid" of Zarif. "They are afraid of our foreign minister's interviews. It is completely clear that the foundations of the White House have been shaken by the words and logic of an informed, devoted and diplomatic individual," the president pointed out.

He added, "Our enemies are so helpless that they have lost the ability to act and think wisely."

On Wednesday, Zarif responded to sanctions on himself in a tweet.

"The US' reason for designating me is that I am Iran's 'primary spokesperson around the world'



Is the truth really that painful?" Zarif wrote.

Zarif said the move shows that Donald Trump and his team consider him as a "huge threat" to their plots against Iran.

"Thank you for considering me such a huge threat to your agenda."

Zarif added, "It has no effect on me or my family, as I have no property or interests outside of Iran."

■ 'Sanctioning Zarif a show of frustration in the U.S.'

Iran's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement on Thursday saying that imposition of sanctions on Zarif indicates the "U.S. government's frustration".

"The U.S. new sanctions reveals this

government's weakness and fear of the Islamic Republic of Iran's wise and logical diplomacy," the statement read.

It added, "Imposing sanctions on the foreign minister will have no effect on the Foreign Ministry's efforts and actions and also the foreign minister, as responsible for the country's foreign policy, in upholding the Iranian people's righteousness, defending the national interests and countering economic terrorism."

Also in a tweet on Thursday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said the U.S. is extremely fearful of Zarif's "logic" and "art of negotiation".

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also said in a message on his Instagram page

“Sanctions cannot silence the telling and reasoned language of Zarif,” Takht Ravanchi notes.

Russia: Persian Gulf mission crude attempt by U.S. to pressure Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — On Thursday Russia spoke against a U.S.-proposed naval coalition in the Persian Gulf, saying it is a pretext for Washington to further pressure Tehran and destabilize the Persian Gulf region.

Speaking at a news briefing in Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said, "Events there [Persian Gulf region] are really moving to a dangerous point and there are risks of a large-scale military clash," Press TV reported.

She also noted that Russia believes the U.S. is merely looking for a "pretext to whip up the situation, continue its aggressive rhetoric towards Iran, and to shift to a hotter more active phase of the conflict."

Amid its attempts to trouble Iran's foreign oil sales as part of its sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic, the U.S. has announced plans to form a Washington-led maritime force to supposedly secure the Strait of Hormuz in

the Persian Gulf, which hosts considerable international oil shipments.

On Tuesday, the U.S. officially asked Germany to participate — alongside Britain and France — in the coalition, a request that was declined by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas a day later.

Maas said on Wednesday that there was no military solution to the ongoing standoff in the region and Berlin would rather pursue a policy that prevents further escalation of tensions.

"Germany will not take part in the sea mission presented and planned by the United States," Maas told reporters on a trip to Warsaw, the Polish capital.

By its own admission, the United States has spent astronomical sums on its wars in this region, without either succeeding or performing in a way that could result in a successful outcome.

Back in February 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump famously said during a White House address that the country



had spent \$6 trillion in Middle East wars.

Trump said since the U.S. first invaded Afghanistan, and 17 years later, the region is still a "hornet's nest". He added that "we never win" and "we don't fight to win."

Americans wobbling in political chaos: Iranian minister

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's minister of defense has said that the ruling power in the United States is "wobbling in political chaos", Fars reported on Friday.

Speaking in reaction to the U.S. sanctions on Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Amir Hatami said, "The behavior of White House officials lacks international credibility."

The defense minister added that armed forces stand behind Zarif and the country's diplomatic system.

By putting Zarif under boycotts, American leaders proved that they do

not follow any logic or yardstick, he noted.

"By imposing sanctions on the legal foreign minister of a government and other high-ranking officials of a country, the dictatorial system of America showed that they are not honest even in their calls for holding talks with Iran without a precondition," the defense chief remarked.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on Zarif on Wednesday because he "acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Leader: Jihadi discourse should become the public discourse

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — "We should make the jihadi discourse turn into a public discourse," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution told a meeting of jihadi groups on Thursday.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statements in the meeting were published in a tweet thread by Ali Asgari, a member of the Office for Preserving and Promoting the Works of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

During the meeting, the 42 members of the jihadi groups presented reports of their activities in remote and underdeveloped areas around Iran.

"Try to push forward as much as you

can," the Leader told them. "Think as much as you can and put the thought into action."

"Let us witness an enormous collection of the Islamic Revolution generation in our country, who have reached a level of thought, management skills, services, establishment of justice, and standing up for the right which are unconquered by the normal minds of man," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He added, "It is the jihadi movement discourse which has created you. We should do something so this discourse becomes a public discourse."

UN chief calls for 'maximum restraint' in Persian Gulf region

By staff and agency

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for "maximum restraint" to prevent further escalation of tensions in the Persian Gulf region.

According to Xinhua, Guterres said on Thursday that he has "consistently conveyed a clear message to leaders both publicly and privately in numerous meetings and calls" and "that message can be boiled down to two words: maximum restraint."

"I once again urge all parties to refrain from any actions that will escalate tensions further," he added.

He noted, "A minor miscalculation could lead to a major confrontation. The last thing the world needs is a major confrontation in the [Persian] Gulf that will have devastating implications on global security and the global economy."

Tensions in the Persian Gulf have been on the rise in the past several months.

On 4 July, Royal Marines were involved in the seizure of Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 off Gibraltar, claiming that ship was carrying oil to Syria in breach of EU sanctions. Iran called it an act of "piracy".

Days later, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps seized British-flagged Stena Impero in the Strait of Hormuz.



In an interview with Sky news on Tuesday, Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad said the release of the seized Iranian tanker could help secure the freedom of the British-flagged vessel detained by Tehran.

"Of course one issue can help resolution of another issue but these are two separate issues that need to be tackled separately," he said.

He also said, "We're very keen to see the UK is doing all the measures necessary to release as soon as possible the Grace 1."

Baeidinejad said, "That ship collided with a fishing boat in the area...the fishing boat was damaged and there have been injuries."

He also said Stena Impero had "entered the Strait of Hormuz from the exit lane, which is against the law".

The ambassador added, "We have tension in the region because of the U.S. policies - that ship should have been very careful not to violate any laws."

Baeidinejad denied Grace 1 was heading for Syria but repeatedly declined to identify the ship's destination.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said Iran cannot reveal the destination of the tanker because of the U.S. sanctions.

In remarks on July 23, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran will not let disturbance in shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

"Iran will make any effort to maintain security in this region, especially in the Strait of Hormuz, and will not allow any disturbance in shipping in this sensitive region," he said during a meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in Paris.

IRGC, Army denounce U.S. sanctions on Zarif

Americans furious with the way Zarif exposed their ‘wicked nature’, says IRGC

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian Army have denounced the new U.S. sanctions on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif as a “ridiculous” move which showed Washington’s “humiliating defeat” against the Islamic Republic.

On Wednesday, the U.S. departments of state and treasury announced the imposition of sanctions against Zarif because he “acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran”.

On Thursday, the IRGC announced its condemnation of the “illegal” measure, saying the move was in line with the United States’ policy of mounting maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic, Mehr reported.

It said the U.S. move was ineffective and foreseeable, and demonstrated the American rulers’ anger at the Islamic Revolution’s inspiring and anti-hegemonic message for the world.

The statement said the U.S. was furious with the way the top Iranian diplomat exposed their “wicked nature”.

Back in April, the IRGC itself was black-listed by the U.S. as a “foreign terrorist organization”. In retaliation, the Iranian Supreme National Security Council named the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) a terrorist organization.

Also on June 24, U.S. President Donald Trump announced new sanctions against Iran, targeting office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and top commanders of the IRGC.

■ Army slams U.S.’ empty rhetoric on freedom of speech

In a separate statement on Thursday, the Iranian Army said sanctioning Zarif lay bare



the humiliating defeat which was inflicted on the U.S. by Iran.

“This baseless, empty move revealed the American rulers’ shaky intellectual and political foundations, especially the president of that country,” the statement read.

“Sanctioning our country’s foreign minister showed that freedom of speech is nothing but an empty rhetoric and that the White House officials are worried about the strong logic of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” it added.

■ Zarif: Thank you for considering me such a huge threat

Zarif responded to the U.S. move as well. “The US’ reason for designating me is that I am Iran’s ‘primary spokesperson around the world’. Is the truth really that painful? It has no effect on me or my family, as I have

no property or interests outside of Iran,” he tweeted on Wednesday.

“Thank you for considering me such a huge threat to your agenda,” he added.

In another tweet, the top Iranian diplomat said, “We know that calling for dialog & peace is an existential threat to #B_Team. And since reason for designating me is my words, would ‘US persons’ need OFAC license to ‘engage’ with me by reading my writings or listening to interviews?”

■ U.S. once again ‘ridiculed’ itself, Velayati says

The sanctions were also widely condemned by Iranian officials and top figures.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said the U.S. has once again “ridiculed” itself before all countries, in particular its

Western allies.

“The U.S. does not even have the power to confront the Islamic Republic’s precise statements and logic,” said Velayati who was Iran’s foreign minister from 1981 to 1997.

The U.S. is being incrementally isolated in the world and imposing sanctions on Foreign Minister Zarif is another sign of its helplessness and despair in the face of Iran’s clear logic, he added.

■ Advisor: Trump team has got severe ‘political vertigo’

Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, said sanctioning Zarif demonstrated the Trump administration’s political vertigo.

“FM Zarif sanction is clear reason behind the U.S. decision-makers’ illogical and uncivilized behavior,” Amir Abdollah tweeted.

He added, “Donald Trump is capable neither for waging war nor compelling Iran to negotiate under threat. The Trump team has got severe ‘political vertigo’. No doubt it will end up downfall.”

Tensions between Tehran and Washington escalated ever since the U.S. administration of Donald Trump adopted a distinctly hostile approach toward Iran, which included pulling out of the historic Iran nuclear deal and re-imposing sanctions on Tehran.

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

In comments made a few hours after the incident, IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami said the shooting down of the U.S. drone had a straightforward message that any foreign intrusion into Iranian territories would draw a crushing response.

China, EU agree to safeguard nuclear deal

By staff and agency

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini agreed on Thursday to continue safeguarding the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Both sides also agreed to safeguard the United Nations-centered multilateralism and oppose the campaign of “maximum pressure,” while calling on relevant parties to maintain restraint and prevent the escalation of the situation, Xinhua reported.

Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, and Iran have been trying to salvage the pact since the U.S. withdrew from it in May 2018 and returned sanctions.

The European Union announced on June 28 that its special purpose vehicle for trade with Iran, known as INSTEX, has gone into effect.

Tehran says the mechanism is far short of Iran’s expectation. Iran has been insisting that the mechanism should include Iran’s oil purchases.

The remaining JCPOA parties held an emergency meeting in Vienna on Sunday to discuss Iran’s moves in reducing its nuclear commitments and explore ways to save the nuclear deal.

Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister and a top nuclear negotiator who represented Iran in the meeting,



called the talks “constructive”. However, he warned Iran would continue to reduce its nuclear commitments if Europeans failed to salvage the pact.

“The atmosphere was constructive. Discussions were good. I cannot say that we resolved everything. I can say there are lots of commitments,” the senior nuclear negotiator told Reuters.

Helga Schmid, secretary general of the European External Action Service (EEAS), also issued a statement on Sunday saying that “participants reaffirmed their continued commitment to preserving the JCPOA.”

In a phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday, President Hassan Rouhani said the first step that Europe should take to save the

nuclear deal is to normalize oil and banking ties.

“Unfortunately, despite Iran’s full commitment to its obligations, only a small part of Iran’s economic interests has been met, and after the withdrawal of the United States, we have not only not seen any serious action by Europe in this respect, but also some European companies left Iran following United States’ unilateral sanctions,” Rouhani stated.

Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the UN-endorsed JCPOA in May 2018 and imposed the toughest ever sanctions against Iran in line with his administration’s “maximum pressure” policy against Tehran.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrew from the multi-nation nuclear agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran, Tehran said its “strategic patience” is over and announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions’ effects.

In follow-up to that deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67% as the Europeans missed the 60-day deadline to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

Big haul of opium seized near Bandar Mahshahr

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Forces of Iran’s Coast Guard have seized a big haul of opium off the coast of the southwestern port city of Bandar Mahshahr, according to Tasnim.

Lotfali Pakbaz, chief of Khuzestan Province’s border police, said on Thursday that the drug haul was seized following thorough intelligence activities in the Persian Gulf’s northern waters.

Pakbaz said the Coast Guard captured two light fishing boats filled with illicit drugs in the operation.

1,588 kilograms of opium was found in the two boats, he said.

The drug smugglers had plans to smuggle the haul of drugs into Iran, he said, adding that three people have been arrested in the operation.

In comments on July 9, Iran’s Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said 3,815 Iranian police forces have lost their lives and over 12,000 others have been wounded in the war against drug trafficking over the past 40 years.

In the past three decades, Iran has seized approximately 11,000 tons of different types of narcotics and psychotropic substances, he added, saying that in 2018 alone, Iranian forces carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers, seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

According to the “World Drug Report 2019” of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in 2017, Iran had seized “the largest quantity of opiates ...



accounting for 39 percent of the global total,” Takht Ravanchi stated.

U.S.-led Persian Gulf coalition doomed to fail: general

TEHRAN (Press TV) – A senior commander of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has described a United States plan for forming a naval coalition to interfere in the Persian Gulf as a self-defeating initiative.

“The enemy should know that it cannot do anything. As have its previous coalitions, this one, too, will definitely go to rack and ruin and fail to materialize,” the IRGC deputy commander for political affairs, Brigadier General Yadollah Javani, said in Tehran on Thursday, Tasnim News Agency reported.

“The region’s security is provided by its nations, Iran, and our Armed Forces,” he asserted.

Amid its attempts to trouble Iran’s foreign oil sales as part of its sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic, the U.S. has announced plans to form a Washington-led maritime force to supposedly secure the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, which hosts considerable international oil shipments.



On Tuesday, the U.S. officially asked Germany to participate — alongside Britain and France — in the coalition, a request that was declined by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas a day later.

Maas said on Wednesday that there was no military solution to the ongoing standoff in the region and Berlin would rather pursue a policy that prevents further escalation of tensions.

“Germany will not take part in the sea mission presented and planned by the United States,” Maas told reporters on a trip to Warsaw, the Polish capital.

By its own admission, the United States has spent astronomical sums on its wars in this region, without either succeeding or performing in a way that could result in a successful outcome.

Back in February 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump famously said during a White House address that the country had spent \$6 trillion on Washington’s so-called war on terror.

Trump said since the U.S. first invaded Afghanistan, and 17 years later, the region is still a “hornet’s nest.” He added that “we never win” and “we don’t fight to win.”

Cleric to U.S.: Go ahead with Zarif sanctions ‘if that pleases you’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari, an interim Friday prayer leader in Tehran, has censured the U.S. sanctions on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, telling the White House to go right ahead with the sanctions “if that makes you happy.”

“The U.S. diplomacy of begging reached nowhere, therefore they sanctioned our foreign minister,” Haj Ali Akbari told worshippers on Friday. “It seems that this makes them happy. Then go ahead if that makes you happy.”



The cleric further said the U.S. sanctions are a “source of pride” for the chief Iranian diplomat, and demonstrate “the fall of ethics and politics in America.”

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on Zarif on Wednesday because he “acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

The U.S. Treasury Department also said in its statement that Zarif is Iran’s “primary spokesperson around the world,” and that the ban “is sending a clear message that Iran’s ‘recent behavior is completely unacceptable.”

■ Sanctioning Zarif rooted in desperation: Iranian military

Meanwhile, in a statement on Thursday, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic underlined the illegal nature of the U.S. measure and described it as an action rooted in desperation.

It said the undiplomatic attempt followed in the footsteps of the other instances of the U.S. violations of international law concerning the Islamic Republic.

The General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces added that by imposing sanctions on Iran’s chief diplomat, Washington thinks it can ramp up pressure on Iran and compensate for its back-to-back losses in the regional and international arenas.

Iran to adopt tit-for-tat in case of aggression: ex-IRGC chief

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran would attack the enemy with missiles should it conduct missile attacks against Iran, says former IRGC Chief Mohsen Rezaee.

Rezaei, who currently acts as the secretary of the Expediency Council, made the remarks in an interview on state TV on Wednesday night, according to Mehr.

He said Iran has been actively countering threats posed by the enemy and is ready to strike back in case of any aggression.

Rezaee also pointed to a recent downing of an intruding U.S. drone by the IRGC and the Guards’ confiscation of a British tanker after Britain seized a supertanker carrying Iranian oil.

“We are currently carrying out an active resistance. We respond to the enemy,” Rezaee said.

“We know if we do not respond, they would attack,” he argued.

On June 20, the IRGC shot down an intruding American spy drone in the country’s southern coastal province of Hormozgan. The incident was not met with an immediate military reaction from the U.S.

On July 4, British Royal Marines in Gibraltar stormed the Iran-operated supertanker Grace 1 off the coast of Gibraltar. On July 19, Iranian forces seized a UK-flagged oil tanker in the Persian Gulf after it tried to flee the scene of a major collision with an Iranian fishing boat.

Rezaee was the first political figure who proposed a tit-for-tat action in response to the seizure of Grace 1 by Britain.



Iran, Russia discuss Syrian peace initiative

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran and Russia have reviewed the recent developments in Syria, and discussed the agenda of the 13th meeting of the Astana process in Kazakhstan’s capital Nur-Sultan.

Ali-Asghar Khaji, the Iranian foreign minister’s senior assistant in special political affairs, and his accompanying delegation held the first round of negotiations within the framework of the 13th meeting of the Astana process with Russian President’s special envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin.

The meeting was held in Nur-Sultan, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on Thursday, August 1, 2019.

In the meeting, the two sides reviewed the political and field developments in Syria, and discussed the agenda of the 13th meeting of Astana process, particularly with regard to the inclusion of two new members (observers) in the Astana process, namely Lebanon and Iraq.

The Iranian delegation also held separate talks with the Iraqi, Lebanese and Syrian sides participating at the 13th meeting of Astana process.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	254445.7
IFX	3374.36

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,403 rials
GBP	50,937 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.14/b
WTI	\$55.25/b
OPEC Basket	\$63.79/b
Gold	\$1,449.20/oz
Silver	\$16.21/oz
Platinum	\$849.30/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Intl. poultry, livestock exhibit slated for late Aug.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 17th International Exhibition of Livestock, Poultry, Fisheries, and Related Industries of Golestan (GOLPOLEX 2019) is set to be held during August 27-30 in Golestan Province, northern Iran, the portal of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

According to Director General of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Agricultural Export and Alternate Industries Coordination Office Mohammad Bazari, the exhibition is aimed to introduce the country's latest achievements and capabilities in this industry.

The exhibition aims to introduce the latest achievements in the field of livestock and poultry, and to present a platform for start-up companies to enter this industry, Bazari said.



Exploring ways of improving the livestock and poultry industry, providing investment opportunities to promote the industry, identifying trade competitors and organizing programs to enter the global market were other goals mentioned for this exhibition.

The exhibition covers a variety of areas in the livestock and poultry industry including, feedstuff, veterinary drugs, equipment, fisheries and aquaculture, ornamental fish, pets, services and related industries.

India slips to 7th spot in global GDP rankings of 2018, France, UK push ahead: WB

India has slipped down to the 7th place in the global GDP rankings of 2018, reveals data compiled by the World Bank. According to the 2017 World Bank (WB) report, India had become the fifth largest economy, displacing UK and France.

As stated by jagranjosh.com, in accordance with the 2018 data, the UK and France once again moved ahead of India to reclaim their 5th and 6th spots respectively in the global GDP rankings.

The United States continues to top the list with a GDP of \$20.5 trillion, followed by China at second place with GDP of \$13.6 trillion and Japan at third place with a GDP of \$5 trillion.

India recorded a GDP of \$2.73 trillion in 2018, which is less than that of the UK and France, which had a GDP of \$2.82 trillion and \$2.78 trillion respectively in the same year.

India had emerged as the fifth largest economy in 2017, pushing ahead of the UK and France in the global GDP table. While the UK was pushed to sixth place, France was pushed to the seventh position. In the Global GDP rankings of 2017, India had recorded a GDP of \$2.65 trillion, while the UK's GDP was \$2.64 trillion and France's \$2.59 trillion.

The drop in India's position on the global GDP table reflects the slump in India's overall economic growth. India's GDP in 2018 shows a growth of mere 3.01 percent in dollar terms in 2018, as against 15.72 percent in 2017. On the other hand, the UK's GDP grew by 6.81 percent and France's economy expanded by 7.33 percent.

Economists say India has slipped to the 7th place in Global GDP ranking due to currency fluctuations and a slowdown in economic growth.

Indian rupee depreciated

While in 2017, the Indian rupee had appreciated by 3 percent against the dollar, in 2018 it depreciated by 5 percent against the dollar.

The Indian economy grew by 11.2 percent in 2018-19 in rupee terms, while it grew by 11.3 percent in 2017-18.

India is, however, still the fastest-growing major economy in the world. According to a research firm, IHS Markit, India will overtake the UK as the fifth-largest economy in the world in 2019 and is likely to even overtake Japan and emerge as the third-largest economy by 2025.

In the Union Budget 2019-20, the Indian government set a goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. To achieve this goal, India will need to sustain a GDP growth rate of 8 percent.

India has identified certain key areas to boost work upon such as Indian MSMEs, increasing focus on private investment, introducing people-centric policies and invoking a behavioral change to address issues such as gender equality, a healthy and a beautiful India, savings, tax compliance and credit quality.

Development projects worth \$2.38b come on stream

1 → Some 54.15 trillion rials (about \$1.29 billion) of investment was made to complete the Tabriz Refinery development project.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of this project, Gholamreza Baqeri, the managing director of the refinery announced that currently all the 3.5 million barrels per day of the refinery's gasoline output is of Euro 5 quality.

Gas supply to rural areas

The Managing Director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hassan Montazer Torbati who accompanied the president in his visit inaugurated a project for connecting 53 villages in East Azarbaijan Province to the national gas network on Thursday.

The project, worth 380 billion rials (about \$9 million) is going to supply gas to over 3000 households in the mentioned province.

On behalf of the president, Torbati also inaugurated other gas supply projects including connecting industrial parks to the national gas network and the Varzaqan-Ahar gas pipeline which is



President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated the development project of Tabriz Refinery in East Azarbaijan Province on Thursday.

also connected to the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline.

Agricultural projects

During President Rouhani's visit to

Domestic producers of import-banned commodities honored

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During a ceremony organized by Iran's Chamber of Cooperatives, a number of domestic units producing the goods, that their import has been banned in line with the country's policy of achieving self-reliance to tackle the sanctions, were honored, Press TV reported on Thursday.

Those Iranian firms received government recognition for their efforts to create opportunities out of challenges caused by the unilateral U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The ceremony brought together science-based companies mostly active in civil engineering and construction-related industries to be recognized for their efforts in compensating for the adverse effects of the U.S. sanctions.

The current Iranian calendar year of 1398 (began on March 21) is named as the year of "Pickup in Production" by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

The realization of this motto toward Iran's self-reliance is in fact the only way to tackle the U.S. cruel sanctions on Iran's economy.

To this end, Iranian government has put supporting domestic producers a top agenda in the current year.

Providing the required working capital for the production units and offering them facilities is one of the major measures being pursued by the government to support these units.

As previously announced by Deputy Industry Minister

Mohsen Salehinia, during the current Iranian calendar year the government plans to provide facilities under the framework of subsidies for projects with more than 60 percent of physical development, to supply working capital of firms, to renovate production units and etc.

He said that 360 trillion rials (about \$857.1 million) of facilities will be granted to the industrial units in this year in the framework of production flourishing plan.

Also, Abdolnaser Hemmati, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), has specified providing of working capital for the production units as the major priority of the Iranian banks in the current year.

Bringing back the inactive production units to the production cycle is the other step by the government, as Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani has announced that 2,200 industrial units will come back to the production cycle by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020).

The minister said, We have some plans for removing the problems of the units which are facing serious challenges.

There are some units that enjoy high potential and capacities, but due to some problems such as inadequate working capital they cannot work with full capacity, Rahmani noted, adding, Our priority in the current year is to facilitate the condition for such units.

In addition to support the production units in different



ways, the government is taking some other approaches to encourage domestic producers, for example through banning imports of some products into the country some competitive condition will be created for Iranian producers to produce new products and also promote the quality of their products.

While banning imports of foreign products, the government also is seriously following up the policy of supporting and publicizing domestically-made products.

All these supports and facilities as well as other related strategies provided for domestic production units are hoped to strengthen Iranian producers in a way to make the country more self-reliant and beat the sanctions.

INSTEX develops new service in bid to fast-track Iran transactions

The state-owned company at the center of European efforts to save the Iran nuclear deal is entering its next phase of development. In a push to process transactions more quickly, INSTEX is rolling out a new factoring service for European exporters. The company is also making new hires that will enable it to expand operations in the coming year.

Having reached the end of his six-month contract, Per Fischer is stepping down as the president of INSTEX, the state-owned company established by France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to support trade with Iran. Fischer's replacement is former German ambassador to Iran Bernd Erbel. A career diplomat, Erbel has been posted in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and served as ambassador to Iraq prior to his stint as ambassador to Iran.

The change in leadership comes as INSTEX finalizes several other management hires. By filling these roles, INSTEX will enter a new phase of operation as a standalone company based in Paris. Until now, both INSTEX's outreach to European companies and its coordination with its Iranian counterpart, STFI, has been led by civil servants at the foreign and economy ministries of the company's three founding shareholders.

Fischer, a former Commerzbank executive, had been selected as the company's first president due to his banking background. But Erbel, who lacks commercial experience, will have a different mission as he assumes his leadership role. Erbel will leave key commercial responsibilities to the new managers, focusing instead on ensuring a constructive



working relationship between INSTEX and STFI. In recent weeks, cooperation between the two entities has slowed. Iranian authorities have called for INSTEX to be funded by Iran's oil revenues a move that would leave INSTEX vulnerable to sanctions from the United States.

Erbel's deep knowledge of Iran may help him navigate the tensions surrounding the INSTEX project in Tehran and reassure Iranian stakeholders of the seriousness of European efforts to develop the mechanism further.

The goal for INSTEX remains to ease Europe-Iran trade by developing a netting mechanism that eliminates the need for a cross-border financial transactions. In this model, INSTEX will coordinate payment instructions between companies engaged in bilateral trade between Europe and Iran, enabling European exporters to receive payment for sales to Iran from funds that are already within Europe. The counterpart entity, STFI, will then mirror those transactions, allowing Iranian exporters to get paid with funds already in Iran.

Delayed by political disagreements, IN-

STEX and STFI remain in the process of establishing the netting mechanism. But in a bid to fast-track transactions, INSTEX has opted to roll out a new service that does not require the direct participation of its Iranian counterpart. INSTEX is now in advanced negotiations to a provide factoring service to an initial cohort of European companies.

In factoring transactions, INSTEX will purchase the expired invoices of European exporters who have failed to receive payment for sanctions-exempt goods sold to Iran. The focus on expired invoices allows INSTEX to avoid lengthy French regulatory approvals for a full factoring service. Importantly, INSTEX will not require the goods in question to have been delivered to the Iranian buyer in order for the European exporter to factor its receivables. In this sense, the service approximates a kind of trade finance.

According to a draft contract between INSTEX and a European company seen by Bourse & Bazaar, the purchase price paid to the European exporter by INSTEX would amount to 95 percent of the assigned receivable. In other words, INSTEX will charge a 5 percent fee as part of its factoring service. This fee will vary based on the transaction.

Such costs are not negligible for European exporters, especially when considering that INSTEX will require each transaction to undergo third-party due diligence at the exporter's expense. Yet they are commensurate with the transaction fees typically charged by banks in those cases in which the bank is willing to accept funds originating in Iran. Moreover, for European companies

burdened with unpaid invoices, the certainty of payment from INSTEX, a state-owned European company, is inherently attractive.

In some respects, the factoring service is a more appealing solution for companies than the netting mechanism service which INSTEX still intends to operationalize. However, factoring is inherently less scalable as it requires significant capital to be made available to INSTEX in order purchase invoices. INSTEX will also assume the burden of seeking payment from the Iranian debtor.

However, should the factoring solution prove popular, it may be the case that INSTEX could subsequently transfer its newly assigned receivables to STFI, making it possible for Iranian importers to pay STFI for goods purchased from European exporters. Alternatively, INSTEX could open an account either in Iran or at the Iranian bank branch based in Europe in order to receive payment for the outstanding invoices. While conceived as a stopgap solution, the experience with factoring could help INSTEX develop a more robust netting mechanism.

As it welcomes new leadership and pivots to a new service, INSTEX resembles any ordinary startup at a key stage of its development. Like all startups, INSTEX continues to face many hurdles its success is far from assured, particularly in the darkening political climate. But the individuals responsible for its development are responding to pressure from demanding shareholders and skeptical customers with creative solutions an encouraging sign.

(Source: bourseandbazaar.com)

Trump's trade war with China is hurting the U.S. economy more

President Donald Trump's former top economic advisor says the trade war with China is unwinnable and is hurting the U.S. economy.

As per cnbc.com, Gary Cohn told the BBC in an interview that aired Thursday that tariffs were raising the cost of importing much needed products from China and were in fact neutralizing Washington's plan to stimulate growth through tax cuts.

When you build plant equipment, you're buying steel, you're buying aluminum, you're buying imported products and then we put tariffs on those, so literally the tax incentive we gave you with one hand was taken away with the other hand, said Cohn.

Cohn, the former director of the U.S. National Economic

Council, announced his resignation in April 2018 after Trump decided to impose import tariffs on steel and aluminum.

In the BBC interview, he described himself as openly anti-tariffs before adding that everyone loses in a trade war.

The former Goldman Sachs president said Trump's plan to force Beijing's hand on trade imbalances via tariffs was a view that the president had held forever but were in fact offering Chinese bureaucrats a convenient excuse.

I think the Chinese economy was going to slow down with or without a trade war, Cohn said before adding it was having a real impact in parts of the U.S. economy such as automobile manufacturing and farming.

Trump has been placing public pressure on the Federal

Reserve to cut rates at a steeper clip than the quarter-point reduction announced Wednesday.

Following the decision, the first cut to rates by the Fed since December 2008, Trump kept up the criticism, tweeting that Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell let us down.

Cohn said the central bank had been set up as an independent agency and once the chairman and governors were appointed, the president must relinquish any attempts to influence monetary policy.

It's not supposed to be a political agency. And I very much believe in those separation of powers, said Cohn.

Cohn said he thought Powell is doing a very good job in a world of extraordinarily low interest rates.

Energy projects worth \$7.6b to be inaugurated by March 2020

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Thursday that 217 major energy projects worth 320 trillion rials (about \$7.62 billion) will be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020).

Speaking in the opening ceremony of a dam project in East Azarbaijan province, Ardakanian noted that the ministry will also commence 23 new projects worth 360 trillion rials (nearly \$8.6 billion) during the current year.

The official underlined the inauguration of 60 trillion rials (over \$1.42 billion) of water and electricity projects during President Rouhani's visit to East Azarbaijan province, saying that this is an indication of the government's determination in improving the country's energy infrastructure more than ever.



The official further announced that by the end of the current Iranian calendar year over 1,440 villages will be supplied with drinkable water through pipelines.

The statistics indicate that every week 30 villages are getting connected to the country's national water supply network and this is a significant achievement for the government, Ardakanian said.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, including some cabinet members, Rouhani paid a one-day visit to East Azarbaijan province.

Some 518 development projects worth Over 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) were inaugurated during President Rouhani's visit to the northwestern province.

As reported by IRNA, the inaugurated projects included major power plant, water and dam projects as well as construction and infrastructure projects plus several economic, agriculture and mining ones.

Major projects planned to prevent flare gas waste

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Ministry has major plans to make use of flare gas burnt or vented in oil and gas facilities across the country, Press TV reported, quoting an official with the ministry, as saying.

Hamid Chitchian, a former minister who currently advises the government on energy issues, said on Wednesday that Iran was planning to economically and technically benefit from a huge stock of flared gas that is currently wasted through the stacks in refineries.

According to Chitchian there is about 16 billion cubic meters (over 52 billion cubic feet) of flare gas that could be used for various economic purposes, including power generation.

The official said research centers affiliated with the oil and energy ministries had reached valuable achievements

in their joint efforts to optimize the use of flare gas in Iran, according to remarks covered by Iran's Oil Ministry news service Shana.

The use of flare gas is one of the challenges of the oil sector, said Chitchian, adding, "Thus we are planning to attract investment from the private sector and offer loans in the two ministries for this purpose."

He didn't elaborate whether foreign companies with experience in the field would be involved in flaring projects in Iran. However, the announcement comes as Iran is seeking to offset the impacts of U.S. sanctions on its oil industry.

Once a pure crude exporter, Iran has managed to expand downstream operations in the oil and gas sector both to meet a growing domestic demand for energy and to open up new markets for its refined products.

Commercializing flare gas would enable Iran to diversify



energy resources for power plants and industrial units while it can also be exported to other countries.

Oil prices regain ground after overnight plunge on tariffs

Oil prices rose around 2% on Friday, regaining ground after the biggest falls in years as U.S. President Donald Trump imposed more tariffs on Chinese imports, intensifying the trade war between the world's two biggest economies and crude consumers.

According to reuters.com, Brent crude futures LCOc1 slumped more than 7% on Thursday, their steepest drop in more than three years. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures CLc1 fell nearly 8%, posting its worst day in more than four years.

The collapse ended a fragile rally built on steady drawdowns in U.S. inventories, even as global demand looked shaky because of the trade dispute.

Brent futures rose \$1.21, or 2%, to \$61.71 a barrel by 0657 GMT, while WTI futures gained 87 cents, or 1.6%, to \$54.82 a barrel.

Trump said on Thursday he would impose a 10% tariff on \$300 billion of Chinese imports from Sept. 1 and could raise tariffs further if China's President Xi Jinping fails to move more quickly to strike a trade deal.

The announcement extends Trump's tariffs to nearly all of China's imports into the United States and marks an abrupt end



to a temporary truce in a trade war that has disrupted global supply chains and roiled financial markets.

The gains may mean investors are reassessing the move by Trump and its effects, Stephen Innes, managing partner at VM Markets told Reuters by email.

Just like in shooting wars: the buildup and each stage of campaigns have triggered risk-off events but with diminishing impact over time, he said.

Much the same could be true right now about the escalation of tariffs (and) with time, investors have managed to sidestep them and returned to the familiarity of focusing on the data, which in the case of the U.S. economy, still looks good, Innes said.

The U.S. economy expanded by 2.1% in the second quarter, government data showed on July 26, which beat economists expectations, though it was lower than first quarter growth.

Still, there are some signs of the economic toll of the trade dispute between the United States and China, which this week reported slowing manufacturing activity in July.

U.S. manufacturing activity also slipped last month, dropping to a near three-year low, and construction spending fell in June as investment in private construction projects tumbled to its lowest level in 1-1/2 years, data showed on Thursday.

The economic slowdown has translated into falling oil demand in the United States, the world's biggest oil consumer.

The amount of crude processed at U.S. oil refineries averaged 17.2 million barrels per day over the past four weeks, down 1.3% from the same time a year ago, U.S. government data showed this week.

Why energy storage is proving even more disruptive than cheap renewables

By Jeff McMahon

The falling price of renewable energy has been dominating the headlines, but more dramatic change is happening behind the scenes, where battery storage is disrupting the way utilities provide power.

The change is driven not just by cheap renewables and cheap batteries, but by the electronics that link them together, said Mark Ahlstrom, the president of the non-profit Energy Systems Integration Group.

"Unlike all the old spinning generators that were electromechanically coupled to the grid, these are using power electronics, computers, state-of-the-art technologies that scale really well, as we've seen with other industries," said Ahlstrom, who also serves as

vice president for renewable energy policy at NextEra Energy. "And it really is the digital revolution finally hitting the power industry.

"We saw it coming a little bit with wind and solar and what we're really doing with storage is going to push it over the edge in a big way."

In the past, utilities had to "take what they could get" from slow, inflexible fossil-fuel plants, Ahlstrom said. Their primary concern was having enough energy to meet peak demand.

Now, utilities will have abundant cheap power from renewables. Paired with batteries, that power can be deployed by computer in microseconds to ensure reliability or fulfill other ancillary services.

"What really surprised me this is all I

work on now is hybrid projects," Ahlstrom said at a workshop hosted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. "What happens when you tightly couple storage with solar PV, what you end up with of course is a solid-state computer-controlled power plant. When you really step back and think about this means, we're really talking about virtual power plants becoming real. It's very dramatic."

"We're a time of just amazing transition here. We're going from slow and heavy to fast and light. These new resources can move at lightning speed," Ahlstrom said. "We've always worried about having enough energy. In the future we're going to have lots of energy and what we're going to need is flexibility and balancing. The reliability of the grid is

dependent on keeping the balance."

That reliability will be watchdogged by the resources themselves, networked across the grid:

"I do think the days of top-down control of how we run our resources is going to be replaced by what we've seen in all the other industries that have been digitized in the digital revolution. It's going to eventually be a much larger population of intelligent agents that are going to cooperate to figure this out," he said. "It's a different world, guys."

Less than a week after Ahlstrom made these remarks, NextEra announced a new 700 MW renewables+battery hybrid plant described as America's largest so far in Anadarko, Oklahoma, the heart of oil country. (Source: forbes.com)

Shell's investment decisions unaffected by low LNG price: CEO

The currently bearish global LNG spot price is challenging but it doesn't affect Shell's investment decisions, CEO Ben Van Beurden said during the company's financial results presentation Thursday.

According to spglobal.com, an unfavorable macro-economic environment was part of the cyclical. The LNG trading portfolio had been designed to be resilient to such cycles, he said.

Chief Financial Officer Jessica Uhl added: "We are strong believers that LNG demand will grow by 50% by early 2030, which will require more supply to meet that demand."

Shell has 70% of its LNG contracts linked to oil, which means that low Asian prices since last winter have had a limited effect.

The benchmark JKM Asian LNG spot price dropped as low as \$4.263/MMBtu in June from a high of just over \$12/MMBtu in September last year, according to S&P Global Platts price assessments.

"Spot is not determinant in our performance given the nature of our business," she said. "If we manage our trading effectively we can actually benefit from some of these low prices," she added.

She pointed to resilient performances in the second quarter against the macro environment, such as earnings of \$1.7 billion and cash flow of \$8 billion.



■ Slightly increasing year on year

LNG liquefaction fell 3% on the year to 35.46 million mt in the first half of the year, but volumes are expected to increase slightly year on year in Q3, mainly due to project ramp-ups in Australia and Trinidad and Tobago, according to Shell's earnings report published Thursday.

Asked about Brexit, Van Beurden said that while the company was preparing for the entire range of eventualities, he did not see a significant, immediate impact on Shell's business overall.

New UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he is

committed to taking the UK out of the EU on October 31 with or without an exit deal.

On the Strait of Hormuz, Van Beurden said Shell's executives were closely following the geopolitical tensions which had a direct impact on guaranteeing safety at sea and the protection of assets.

"Currently there are no UK-flagged vessels. If there will be, it will be accompanied by the Royal Navy," he said, adding that Shell was working with all the major oil companies to deal with the issue.

The strait is crucial for LNG shipments from Qatar which represents about a quarter of global LNG supply.

Asked about environmental concerns, Van Beurden said the company would invest further in tools such as carbon capture and storage to achieve the target of zero net emissions by around 2050.

More specifically on the U.S. Permian shale gas basin, the CEO said Shell would like to operate to world-class environmental standards, including not flaring and with clear principles on water.

"If we look at the strategy that we have deployed on the horizontal drilling, on artificial intelligence in these areas, on fundamental understanding of the shale geology and how we approach the fracking strategy, I do believe that we have superior insights and superior operations," he said.

Global Energy Storage Systems Market set for rapid growth

The global Energy Storage Systems Market report delivers the clean elaborated structure of the Energy Storage Systems Market comprising each and every business-related information of the market at a global level.

The complete range of information related to the global Energy Storage Systems Market is obtained through various sources and this obtained bulk of information is arranged, processed, and represented by a group of specialists through the application of different methodological techniques and analytical tools such as SWOT analysis to generate a whole set of trade-based study regarding the global Energy Storage Systems Market.

The global Energy Storage Systems Market supports market-linked various associations, industries, vendors, firms, and organizations by offering a broad stage revealing opportunities time-to-time to rise higher in the market.

Some of the chief contenders including pre-established businesses and newly-emerging firms are contending with one another for global trade expansion in terms of production, supply, demand, income, and after-sales services.

The global Energy Storage Systems Market report presents the detailed extensive study regarding the market in an efficient way by dividing the whole market into different segments on the basis of type and form of product offered by the industries, product processing methods and techniques, end-user applications, and others.

■ Market based on the regions

Not only this, but the market study also categorizes the market based on the regions. The report also comprises the market growth forecast information calculated by the professional on the basis of previous information about the market and its-related industries as well as the current trends followed by the market. The report also provides the market's CAGR forecast for the specific period of the upcoming time.

The report also highlights the various key factors as well as administrative guidelines that may impact the market in both the ways, either direct or indirect.

The global Energy Storage Systems Market report is embedded with several charts, figures, graphs, and diagrams to make it better understandable for the clients.

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Is there enough spare capacity to absorb an oil shock?

While oil market participants have been focused on above-average global oil stocks and faltering demand growth, OPEC's spare capacity has been rising because of the production cuts aimed at drawing down stocks and bolstering oil prices.

As per oilprice.com, thanks to the production cuts being extended into 2020, OPEC now sits on more than 3 million barrels per day (bpd) of spare production capacity, which makes the cartel, as well as the International Energy Agency (IEA), confident that the market can withstand a sudden major supply outage.

The risks of such an oil supply disruption have increased in recent months with the flare-up of tensions in the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz, the transit lane of 21 percent of daily global petroleum liquids consumption.

Despite assurances from organizations and agencies, some analysts say that even with OPEC and allies vowing to take 1.8 million bpd off the market, the world's spare capacity is below the capacity seen in periods of previous major disruptions in 1979 and 1990, Paul Sheldon, chief geopolitical adviser at S&P Global Platts Analytics, tells S&P Global Platts Paul Hickin.

Global spare capacity is currently well below the levels of those periods, even with OPEC+ production cuts in place, so in that respect markets are relatively susceptible to an outsized, disruptive, geopolitical event, Sheldon told S&P Global Platts.

■ Tightening the oil market

Yet, in 2019 unlike in 1979 or in 1990 two major forces are countering the efforts of the OPEC+ coalition to tighten the oil market and boost oil prices. Those are U.S. shale production growth thanks to the shale revolution of the past decade, and weaker oil demand growth as economic growth cools, especially in the world's top oil importer China, which just saw its second-quarter economic growth slowing to the slowest pace in 27 years.

A Clear message from our first look at 2020 is that there is plenty of non-OPEC supply growth available to meet any likely level of demand, assuming no major geopolitical shock, and the OPEC countries are sitting on 3.2 mb/d of spare capacity, the IEA said in its June report, suggesting that the market will be well-supplied.

In the July report, the IEA noted the heightened tension in the Middle East, but said that For now, maritime operations in the region are close to normal and markets remain calm due to economic weakness, high oil stocks and a significant spare production capacity cushion.

The tension in the Middle East continued to simmer throughout July. Despite the increased geopolitical risk to oil supplies, the market reaction was muted due to the stubborn glut, faltering demand, and most of all, rising U.S. shale production.

Consumers can be reassured that 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.

Countries members of the IEA hold 1.55 billion barrels of public emergency oil stocks, said the Paris-based organization which was created after the Arab Oil Embargo in the 1970s.

In addition, 650 million barrels are held by industry under government obligations, and can be released as needed. These IEA emergency stocks are large enough to cover any disruptions in oil supply from the Strait of Hormuz for an extended period, according to the organization.

Organizations and industry observers are fairly certain that a currently well-supplied market and spare capacity within OPECin-creased over the past two years because of the cartel's production cuts can cushion a major blow from an oil supply outage. Weaker demand growth this year and continuously rising U.S. production also support the view that the market is well supplied, although they weigh heavily on oil prices, capping gains in the Middle East.

U.S. deploys forces in KSA to Keep Al Saud in Power: Analyst

IFP — An analyst believes the US forces entering Saudi soil has nothing to do with Iran, and is due to the problems and possible crises gripping Riyadh's domestic policy as Washington wants to keep the ruling elite in Riyadh at the helm.

The US military began to deploy hundreds of troops, jet fighters and missile systems at a military base near Riyadh after the Saudi king gave the green light for the deployment and welcomed American troops on Saudi soil. This comes as tensions in the Persian Gulf have peaked and there is much speculation in that regard. The Saudis regard the US deployment as boosting mutual cooperation in order to ensure regional security and stability. The US Central Command also already announced that the deployment comes at the request of Saudi Arabia. The CENTCOM further said the move would give them further deterrence capability and redouble their ability to protect their interests and troops. Meanwhile, reports suggest that a full Patriot system has recently been deployed at the military base as part of the US Air Force movements in Saudi Arabia.



To discuss the issue further, Khabar Online news website has held an interview with Sabah Zanganeh, an expert on Middle East issues and a former Iranian ambassador to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Excerpts from the interview follow.

There is much speculation about the United States deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia. What do you think the main objective of this move is?

Most American survey centres have suggested that the reason for this move is a disruption of the political system in Saudi Arabia and the emergence of possible chaos as a result. All this comes amid pressure and the repercussions of the Yemen war as well as differences within the Saudi royal dynasty plus the possible demise of the country's king, i.e., King Salman. Accordingly, US authorities, too, are seeking to monitor developments closely and keep control of the situation. In the meantime, the base that Washington has chosen is located near Riyadh, the political hub of Saudi Arabia.

■ What is it that has made the Americans worried about Saudi Arabia's domestic issues?

A: As we know, several religious figures and princes were imprisoned during the course of domestic political developments in Saudi Arabia. This has triggered protests that could flare up on the future. Accordingly, these developments can touch off dissatisfaction among religious people in Saudi Arabia, which, in turn, can further escalate the situation.

■ What goal is the US pursuing in Saudi Arabia's internal issues?

A: What is important is that uncertainty hangs over the future of Washington-Riyadh relations if the current Saudi rulers do not remain at the helm of affairs. Therefore, Washington seeks to keep the current ruling elite in power, and immediately replace those members of the Saudi dynasty who have died, so that close Saudi-US relations will not be harmed.

■ So, you don't believe that the deployment of US troops to Saudi Arabia is somehow aimed at confronting Iran?

A: The US does not need so many forces in order to confront Iran. The US already has around 100,000 other troops on the ground in regional countries such as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, etc. Moreover, given that the US also has bases in the region in addition to its troops, it seems the deployment of American forces to Saudi Arabia is due to Riyadh's internal concerns. The Saudis, too, would like to preserve their dynasty and their rule at any cost.

■ Saudi Arabia has announced that the deployment of American troops on its soil is aimed at striking a balance in the region as Iran, Russia and Turkey have gained considerable influence in the region, and Turkey has recently taken delivery of S-400 missile systems. To what extent is this proposition justifiable?

A: The Saudis have always resorted to such justifications, and they have repeated the same justifications this time again in order to somehow justify the presence of foreign forces on their soil. As we know, the Saudi society is generally a religious one, and such a society has been and will remain opposed to the presence of foreign troops in the country. So, bringing up such issues is aimed at deceiving the public opinion.

■ Given the recent developments in the region such the deployment of US troops to Saudi Arabia and tensions in the Persian Gulf, what do you think the future holds? Will tensions begin to ease, or are we going to witness conflict in the near future?

A: War in the region will be meaningless without the presence of the United States. This country is on the verge of entering the election season, and any involvement in tensions and conflicts would amount to a setback for US election plans. Furthermore, without the presence of the US, no regional country will have the power or the courage to get involved in a fresh war. On the other hand, it seems political and economic pressure as well as psychological warfare will increase.

However, whether or not these things can fill the void caused by a lack of US presence is another thing. We even see that the issue of escorting ships gradually begins to get out of the coalition mode and take on an individual form. We should look into the reasons behind the United States reluctance. Is it due to inability or domestic pressure, or are other considerations involved? At the end of the day, such a situation will make decision-making for other countries more difficult.

A deep crisis in the heart of America

What does the racist president say?

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The racism of U.S. President Donald Trump has caused outrage and discontent among its citizens. However, it looks like Trump can't hide his racist ideas! In recent days, dissatisfaction with Trump's racist policies, behaviors and tweets has reached a climax. Here's an overview of various news and analysis in the United States:

■ **More voters think Donald Trump is a racist than thought George Wallace was in 1968**

As CNN reported, A Quinnipiac University poll out this week shows that a majority (51%) of voters believe that President Donald Trump is a racist. Forty-five percent say that he is not. To opponents of the President, this poll may not be surprising. But think about it for a second. This isn't just the normal opposition you'd expect to a president. This is a majority of voters saying their president is a racist.

Compare these numbers to a Harris poll from September 1968. Former Alabama Gov. George Wallace, a segregationist, was running for president as an opponent to the Civil Rights movement. As he campaigned, 41% agreed when asked whether Wallace was a racist. That was basically even with the 40% who disagreed with the statement.

There are a few ways to look at these numbers, and none are complementary to Trump. You can say that more voters believe Trump is racist than believed a segregationist running for president in 1968 was. You could be generous to Trump and say that the spread between racist and not a racist (5 points in Trump's case and 1 point in Wallace's case) is closer because more voters were undecided on Wallace. Even so, the net margin for Trump being a racist is wider than it was in Wallace's case.

Perhaps, the one bit of decent news for Trump in these numbers is that they are fairly stable. Even before Trump's most recent comments, many voters thought he was racist. In the summer of 2018, 49% of voters said Trump was racist in a Quinnipiac poll. This was slightly higher than the 47% who said he wasn't racist.

Still, the latest polling indicates that the President was mistaken if he thought the latest attacks were going to help him. We don't just see that the President's attacks have been an electoral angle in the question about racism; we see it in Trump's approval ratings as well.

Trump's approval rating is 43% among all voters in a national average. A month ago, before his tweets against the four progressive congresswomen, his approval rating among voters was the same 43%.

It shouldn't be too surprising that Trump's approval rating has not gone up. Not only has his approval rating been steadier than any president in polling history, but we've seen him previously employ similar tactics that he did in his racist tweets. These methods have not moved the numbers.

Unfortunately for Trump, numbers such as these a year from now would mean that he would be an underdog for reelection. The last time Trump had an approval rating like this heading into a national election, the Democrats gained 40 House seats and won the House popular vote by 9 points.

Also New Yorker reported that Next month, Jamestown will mark four hundred years since the first slaves set foot in North America a year before the Mayflower's Pilgrims landed in Plymouth Harbor. There were only twenty and odd, according to an early account from John Rolfe, Virginia's first tobacco planter and the widower of Pocahontas. The slaves had been captured in Angola and herded, with hundreds of others, onto a slave ship bound for Veracruz, in today's Mexico. British pirates seized them in a raid on the high seas while searching for gold and silver. In Jamestown, the pirates exchanged their human loot for provisions. Jamestown became ground zero for slavery in the Americas. Among that first generation were Isabella and Antony, who worked in the household of Captain William Tucker. They were allowed to marry, according to historical accounts in Jamestown. In 1624, their son William was the first recorded birth of an African-American in what became the United States.

On Tuesday, President Trump visited Jamestown, which is also marking four hundred years since settlers there founded the first representative assembly in the Western Hemisphere. In 1619, twenty-two representatives of local settlements and plantations met in a small wooden church to create a new legislative body, the House of Burgesses. Jamestown was ground zero for democracy in the Americas, too. Four hundred years later, the theme on Tuesday was not the celebration of democracy but the stench of racism that has increasingly pervaded Trump's Presidency. Most recently, the President, on Twitter, attacked four congresswomen of color and Representative Elijah Cummings, an African-American politician who represents Baltimore. Cummings is the chairman of the House Oversight Committee, which recently subpoenaed the personal e-mails and texts of Trump, his inner circle, and his key associates. The President says he is simply attacking his critics, but his remarks repeatedly smack of racism.

As he left the White House, en route to Jamestown, Trump told reporters that he was the least racist person in the world. What I've done for African-Americans in two and a half years, no President has been able to do anything like it, he said. Unemployment at the lowest level in the history of our country for African-Americans nobody can beat that. You look at poverty levels. They're doing better than they've ever done before. (This is statistically true, but some experts question if Trump is solely responsible for it.) Trump added, So many things: opportunity zones, criminal-justice reform. President Obama couldn't get



it done. The biggest beneficiaries of his Presidency, he insisted, are African-Americans. He claimed that the White House had received more letters, e-mails, and phone calls about his stance against Cummings and, as he put it in tweets over the weekend, the disgusting, rat and rodent-infested mess in Baltimore than on any other subject. We have a large African-American population and they really appreciate what I'm doing, he said, and they've let me know it.

In Jamestown, a different Trump said the right words on racism in a carefully scripted speech; the President, for once, did not deviate from the teleprompter. The arrival of those first slaves, he said, was the beginning of a barbaric trade in human lives. On this day, he said, the United States also remembers every sacred soul who suffered the horrors of slavery and the anguish of bondage. He acknowledged that after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, it took another eighty-five years, and a civil war, to outlaw slavery, and then another century to extend the blessings of freedom to all Americans. He quoted Martin Luther King, Jr., and lauded African-Americans who built, strengthened, inspired, uplifted, protected, defended, and sustained our nation from its earliest days.

The African-Americans in Virginia's democracy today didn't buy it. The Black Caucus in the Virginia legislature boycotted Trump's appearance in Jamestown. It is impossible to ignore the emblem of hate and disdain that the President represents, the lawmakers said, in a statement. Trump's repeated attacks on black legislators and comments about black communities make the President an ill-suited choice to commemorate a monumental period in American history. . . . The current President does not represent the values that we would celebrate at the 400th anniversary of the oldest democratic body in the western world.

One elected African-American to attend Trump's speech was Democratic Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax, but he too took a swipe at the President. The two commemorations, he said in an essay posted on Medium, far supersede the petty and racist actions of the current occupant of the White House. He added, The bigoted words of the current President will thankfully soon be swept into the dustbin of history. Our democracy, born in Virginia, will live on.

In the middle of the Trump's speech, a lone state assemblyman, Ibraheem Samirah, stood up in the audience and shouted, You can't send us back. Virginia is our home. He unfurled three signs that read 'Go back to your corrupted home, Deport hate, and Reunite my family and all those shattered by systematic discrimination. Samirah is Palestinian-American. In a subsequent tweet, the Democratic lawmaker wrote, I just disrupted the @realDonaldTrump speech in Jamestown because nobody's racism and bigotry should be excused for the sake of being polite.

A poll released by Quinnipiac University on Tuesday also contradicted Trump's claims of support among African-Americans. Eighty per cent of African-American voters said Trump is racist. Fifty-five per cent of Hispanics agreed. Among all Americans, a simple majority—fifty-one per cent—said the President has racist views. (In a striking split between the genders, fifty-nine per cent of women described Trump as a racist, while fifty-five per cent of men said he wasn't.)

Trump's hypocrisy about race was reflected when he returned to the White House from Jamestown, two hours later. Pressed by reporters about just who among the African-American community had called to express support for his badgering of Cummings and Baltimore, Trump replied, A lot of people, but offered no names. The President was then asked what was the driving strategy behind his recent rampage of Twitter attacks on members of Congress of color. In what may be the most telling indicator of his Presidency, he said, I have no strategy. There's zero strategy, he said. It's very simple. Or maybe simpliminded. And a tragic comment on the four hundredth anniversary of the most abominable practice in our democracy.

■ **Patti Davis: America won't survive Donald Trump's racism revival if we give it oxygen**

Patti Davis wrote in USA TODAY that it was more than 50 years ago and his eyes still haunt me. The civil

rights movement was strong and growing, but there were still too many men in white robes burning crosses on the lawns of Americans who weren't white. Racism was stitched into the fabric of American society.

At my co-ed boarding school in Arizona, there was no one of color, until my junior year in 1968, when the school decided to integrate. Their idea of integrating was to bring in one black boy and one Hispanic boy.

Both boys kept to themselves; they were quiet and seemed as if they wanted to be invisible. Who could blame them, being dropped off in a sea of white high schoolers? The Hispanic boy was particularly shy. One afternoon, I heard from a group of giggling students that, the night before, several boys had lashed him to a bunk bed and dripped warm water on his wrists, which was supposed to make him pee. Apparently, it worked.

This is nothing new: I saw the KKK burn crosses in North Carolina. 'Send her back' chants can't shock me now.

After he wet his pants, they untied him and let their laughter float behind him as he ran from the room. The story went around the school, and I'm sure it got to the teachers, but no students were ever punished. I remember one of the boys bragging about it, laughing cruelly, and saying that the boy never should have come here; that he doesn't fit in.

I said hello to him whenever we were near each other, but my memory is that I never heard his voice again. His eyes, however, traveled to a place deep inside me and scored themselves on the walls of my heart. Eyes full of wound, of helplessness, of a bitter acceptance that simply because his skin was brown, he had to watch his back and be on guard. Eyes that preferred to look down rather than meet anyone else's gaze.

I thought about him the other day when an African American friend said to me that things are getting worse in this country, and too many people are looking the other way. This conversation was after President Donald Trump tweeted about the four congresswomen of color and how they should "go back" to where they came from. Since then, the president has also attacked another African American lawmaker, civil rights activist Rep. Elijah Cummings.

Just when I was getting comfortable: Ilhan Omar is me. Trump's 'go back' tweet is painful reminder America won't accept us.

I thought about the other eyes that haunt me now. The cold blue steel of Donald Trump's gaze as he let the chant of 'send her back!' reverberate around him for 13 seconds. And the eyes of those in the crowd chanting they were having fun, enjoying themselves. They might as well have been singing "Happy Birthday."

If you avert your eyes from this, if you will lull yourself into thinking that we'll be okay, that America will survive this gleeful resurgence of racism, then you are in fact helping to make hatred synonymous with patriotism. Eyes that look away will doom us as much as those that are filled with cruelty.

■ **Don't give Trump's rhetoric any oxygen**

This is going to get worse. Donald Trump is on a roll and he isn't going to stop. He'll unleash his racist insults at anyone of color who stands up to him. And the hatred he has set free will result in more incidents like Republicans defending or refusing to condemn the president's racist remarks; like the memorial for Emmett Till being shot at and vandalized by students posing in front of it with guns; like the murder at Charlottesville, Virginia.

I have a suggestion. What if the media ignored his racist tweets? There is no value in giving them or him any more attention. We know enough about the president's character and opinions not to need any further evidence or reinforcement. I have no idea if Fox News and other Trump-supporting media outlets would participate in a blockade on this president's tweets, but it really doesn't matter.

Trump's supporters in the media and the electorate are outnumbered by many other news organizations and Americans who could make the collective decision to simply deny them the space to grow. Hatred is like a tangled weed that needs oxygen and sunlight to survive. If all it finds is a vacuum, it will have trouble growing. And then, maybe, America will survive.

What does Israel want in Iraq?

By Abdolrahman Fathollahi

IFP— An Iranian political analyst has enumerated the reasons behind the Israeli regime's willingness to get closer to Iraq, saying Tel Aviv's main objective is to cut off Iran's links with the axis of anti-Israel nations in the Middle East.

The following in an article by Abdolrahman Fathollahi, written exclusively for the Iran Front Page website:

Only 10 days after an Israeli attack on the Hashd al-Shaabi's base in Amerli in the Saladin province of Iraq, media reports indicate that Tel Aviv has once again launched an attack, this time on "Abu Muntazir al-Mohammad-awi" base, formerly known as Camp Ashraf, located in Diyali province north of Baghdad. However, Hashd al-Shaabi commander, Talib al-Mousawi, has dismissed the reports of such an attack, drawing a link between the attempts to prompt speculation about the issue and the Hashd al-Shaabi's move to detonate and dismantle the remaining weapons of war inside Camp Ashraf. Moreover, news reports show that an investigation committee formed to probe into the Amerli incident has concluded that there has been no attack. On the other hand, it seems that a visit by Maryam Rajavi, leader of the MKO terrorist group, and the launch of the recent attack was not a coincidence. Above all, the MKO's perfect familiarity with the region after 30 years of presence there could have been taken advantage of by Israel for carrying out the attack.

Furthermore, according to the estimates provided by a number of Iraqi security and intelligence officials, the July 19 attack has involved the launch of three "Harop" loitering munitions from F-16 fighter jets. Since Israel is the only actor in the Middle East in possession of such weapons, it seems that Tel Aviv has perpetrated the strike against that base in Amerli of Saladin province.

In addition, what has become apparent is that the actual developments taking place in the Middle East, particularly at the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, have resulted in an escalation of tensions. The path initiated by Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of sanctions



was also affected by a security approach later; meanwhile, the deployment and presence of warships from the European and Southeast Asian countries could add to the security atmosphere in the region.

In the wake of these developments, one of the focal centers of the White House's attempts to mount pressures on Tehran will be definitely Iraq, a country and actor with which Iran has established the highest degree of economic, political, diplomatic, military and security cooperation. The two nations have also strong cultural and religious commonalities.

Specifically mindful of this fact, Washington is seeking to turn Iraq into its trump card in the pressure campaign.

While the US has imposed economic sanctions and has also put its forces in Iraq at a high level of alert –citing concerns about some military and security developments in the wake of a possible skirmish with the military forces allegedly affiliated with Iran, Hashd al-Shaabi in particular– the ground has been prepared for Israel to look for a role in Iraq in order to exert an influence over Iraq's ties with Syria and over the ongoing developments in the war-hit country on the one

hand and, on the other, to overshadow Tehran-Baghdad relations in the current delicate situation.

In this regard, the news reports that Israeli intelligence agents had patrolled and scouted around downtown Baghdad with American military forces in 2018 and early 2019 certainly reveal that Tel Aviv had been seeking a metamorphosis of Iraq in relation to the regional developments for the pivotal purpose of improving the West Asia's view of Israel, amid the period of heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington in the wake of Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Israelis' reasoning is that Iraq is the main bridge linking Iran to Syria, and then to Lebanon, Palestine and the occupied territories, so they believe that if Iraq's role and position in such axis diminishes for any reason, it will definitely affect Tehran's connection with those regions, and will therefore decrease Iran's activities and role-playing along the border of Israel. All these facts have now made Iraq into a country with special significance for Israelis, especially after a series of anti-Israeli armed forces rose to power, like Hashd al-Shaabi which, after the defeat of ISIS, has turned into an influential actor

in Iraq's security, intelligence, military and even political-diplomatic interaction with Syria, Lebanon and Iran in the course of strengthening the anti-Israeli axis in the Middle East.

Israel's concerns about the role of such Iraqi forces reached the highest degree in October 2018, when reports came out that a number of short-range ballistic missiles had been transferred from Iran to Iraq and to its western border regions near Jordan. As a result, it was already predictable that Israel's focus on Iran's presence and activities in Iraq on various pretexts would pave the way for the Israelis to launch attacks on Iranian-sponsored forces in Iraq.

Besides, Israel is pursuing a step-by-step plan for Iraq apart from those attacks. Tel Aviv is trying to force Iraq into a situation that would encourage it to seek normalization of ties with Israel, like a number of Persian Gulf littoral Arab states. Some cases of the Israeli ploy include a recent visit to Israel by Nobel Peace Prize 2019 laureate, Nadia Murad, and by Lamiya Aji Bashar, winner of 2016 Sakharov Prize, with a 15-strong delegation. Nadia Murad had already visited Israel back in July 2017. The other clues include the comments by Iraq's Ambassador to Washington Fareed Yasseen a few weeks ago on the possibility of normalization of Iraq's relations with Israel, as well as the last year's trips to Israel by three Iraqi delegations comprised of Sunni and Shi'ite figures.

For the second step, Tel Aviv is trying to change the policies of Baghdad towards the ongoing developments in Syria, the military and security cooperation between Baghdad and Damascus along the common border, and above all towards the broad interaction between Iran and Iraq in all areas, in an attempt to exclude Iraq from the anti-Israeli axis in the region.

Nonetheless, the Iraqi political leaders, including Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Head of the Badr Organization Hadi Al-Amiri, national security adviser Fali Al-Fayyadh, President Barham Salih, and many others emphasize the necessity for Iraq to stay away from any foreign or regional tension, and even stress the need for Iraq's role in reducing the tensions.

James Corbett: Bilderberg group solve crisis themselves creating

TEHRAN (FNA) — James Corbett, investigative journalist, says the Bilderberg group allows state capitalism to keep governments in charge of their failures, making an excuse to justify its future control over the countries and impose their will.

Speaking with FNA in an exclusive interview, James Corbett said those who are invited to the meeting are "the upper crust of the upper crust of the leaders of industry, royalty, financiers, and those who belong to the core power. They are there deciding what they want to do with the world completely in secret".

James Corbett is an American journalist based in Tokyo. He is an independent critical analyst. He covers important issues from 9/11 truth and false flag terror to the imperialist police state, eugenics, geopolitics, the central banking fraud, etc.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ There is a vaguely general description of the Bilderberg group meetings available in online sources. The old-fashioned sound rather look like conspiracy. Apart from conspiracy, what is the Bilderberg group, and what are the purposes of the meetings?

A: I think we can take the Bilderberg Group as its own word about its purpose and function back in the very first meeting in 1954 of which there is an audio recording. The co-founder of the group, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, said, "I have in mind a completely frank and open exchange of views. This is essential to you and it is essential for our success. There is no quotation of anybody in there is no press, so you are quite free to let yourselves go." I think that is essentially the purpose and function of the Bilderberg Group. It is a talking shop for people to come together and discuss things really outside of the eye, the press and public opinion; but, the real crux of the

matter is who is invited to the group? They are the upper crust of the upper crust of the leaders of industry, royalty, financiers, and those who belong to the core power. They are there deciding what they want to do with the world completely in secret.

■ Do you believe Trump will counter what the Bilderberg group is doing regarding their world order program?

A: Trump is in a sense a threat to the version of the world order that is propounded by a certain clique of would-be managers of the society. He destabilizes the vision of globalization that has been pushed for the past couple of decades by most of the political class. But it does not fundamentally challenge the question of world order itself. In the Trump Administration, there are people who want a different version of that world order. That is the kind of conflict that we see playing out. The European contingent of Bilderberg has been against or not necessarily in line with the American attendees of that group. It does not mean that America is a threat to world order in general, it is just that they wanted to be the stewards of that world order. There is some tension there between different members often likened to a rival gangs basically fighting over territory fight with each other but they all still want essentially a system of games ruling over the masses.

■ Globalization by the Bilderberg is in contrast with many governing systems like capitalism, socialism, etc. practiced by the states. Do you believe the Bilderberg policies will eventually topple such state policies?

A: What the vision of the future for the Bilderbergers does involve a version of what could be termed "state capitalism" where we stayed in charge of many of the core functions of the markets and sells. I think they essentially want more state control over various functions



of the capitalist system, so I think they intend to frame any failures on the Free Market and then use that as an excuse to further impose their will over the other system as it exists. As we saw in the 2008 economic crisis, where it was blamed on the free markets and the failure of the free market; therefore, we need more government intervention, more interference in day to day life which has translated into even stricter control of the economy. The ultimate goal of this group is different. Every year a crisis that happens as a failure of free markets and us, there is a need for greater control and I think we see that happening in Europe with the Eurozone crisis that have developed over the last several years always, resulting in greater calls for greater control by the European Central Bank. The Bilderberg Group solve crises that they themselves are creating.

America role in Saudi crimes in Yemen

TEHRAN (FNA) — Bipartisan bills that blocked US arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which were vetoed by President Trump earlier this month, has survived another vote in the US Senate, where they failed to get enough votes to override the vetoes. The vote was 45-40.

These arms sales were authorized on an "emergency" basis to bypass Congress, though since they weren't being rushed to the purchasers, Congress still had ample time to debate and vote against the sales. Until that happens, the US will continue to be complicit in Saudi war crimes in Yemen.

Washington is agonizingly slow at learning from its mistakes too. Over the last five years or so in that critical but chaotic part of the world, the United States has repeatedly witnessed the limitations of using the blunt instrument of American military force to win that complicated political, social, economic and religious conflict. There is, of course, no better example of this failure to understand the limits of American military power than its disastrous invasion and

occupation of Iraq as well. And yet it is now back to making the same mistake, this time in Yemen.

For five years, the United States has supported a coalition led by Saudi Arabia that is waging war inside Yemen, trying to oust a government made up of members of the Houthi Ansarullah movement. US role in the coalition is significant – it sells bombs and weapons to the Saudis, it helps them pick targets inside Yemen, and it refuels their planes in the sky.

To anyone paying attention, it's clear that the United States is engaged in a war in Yemen. And yet this war has not been authorized or debated by Congress. Its involvement started quietly under President Barack Obama, and now President Donald Trump has increased US participation. And it's not as if US participation in the Yemen conflict hasn't come with serious consequences.

Yemen has become a hell on earth for the civilians caught within its borders. More than 90,000 innocents have been killed in the Saudi-led bombing campaign since the beginning of the

civil war, according to the UN. Targets have included schools, hospitals, weddings, funeral parties and school buses carrying children.

More than 22 million people - three quarters of the population - require humanitarian assistance and protection. The country is on the brink of famine and is in the midst of the worst cholera outbreak in the world. To date, an estimated 85,000 children under the age of 5 in Yemen may have died from starvation and disease. In many ways, this suffering is an intentional byproduct of the Saudi coalition, which has targeted water treatment plants, health clinics and even a Doctors Without Borders hospital, all with US assistance.

There is a US imprint on each of these civilian deaths. As the humanitarian nightmare worsens, it also provides the fuel to recruit young men into terrorist organizations, which have been able to thrive in the power vacuum created by the war.

It's time for Congress to reclaim one of its most fundamental duties - deciding when and where the United States goes to

war. For too long, it has been content to sit on the sidelines and cede this power to the executive branch. But in doing so, it is repeating the same mistakes it has made with regard to US foreign policy in the Middle East in the last several years. It's time to end this disastrous engagement in Yemen, and it's time for the Congress to this shameless war on a defenseless nation.

The United States is failing in Yemen (and the entire Middle East, for that matter) ethically and strategically. America is complicit in the collapse of an impoverished, failed state that has spread the anti-American spirit all over the Middle-East. The US role in Yemen counts not only because millions may die, but because it matters how Americans are viewed in the world. The Yemen war has brought Riyadh and Washington mere defeat and failure and filled the world with hate for the Saudis and their American backers. Even if one is loath to discuss morals or human rights, consider it this way: Withdrawing support from Saudi aggression could save millions of civilian lives.

The scenarios ahead of the Deal of the Century

1 ➔ However, the old part of Al-Quds will remain under the sovereignty of Israel.

According to Amos Harel, the journalist of Israeli news agency, Haaretz, the Deal does not give any suggestions for retreatment of Israelis from their current residential areas including the settlements in Ariel, southern Nablus, Gush Etzion (near Bethlehem) and Ma'ale Adumim.

Trump's plan is a shrunk Palestine that has no army or weapons to defend itself.

The essence of the Deal of the Century is not negotiation; conversely, it aims to force the terms and conditions of the Zionist regime and the U.S. on the Palestinians. It is not a mutual deal, but a one-sided one, so it cannot be regarded as an offer for reconciliation.

Over the past year, everything Washington did about Palestine issue were unilateral actions that led to the Deal of the Century. These actions included recognition of Al-Quds as the capital of the Zionist regime, transferring American embassy from Tel Aviv to Al-Quds, closing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), stopping the usage of the word "refugee" for displaced Palestinians and trying to settle them down in other Arab countries.

Possible future scenarios of the Deal of the Century

1. The failure of the deal

According to this scenario, the deal will fail. As described above, the Deal of the Century is a completely pro-Israel deal, so any of the Palestinian groups, even the ones who are in favor of reconciliation will not accept this deal.

If the Palestinians resist the deal, they can derail it. Over the last 70 of Israel-Palestine conflict, tens of similar plans for reconciliation were thwarted. On the other hand, it is unlikely that Arab countries pressure Palestine to accept the deal as the current trend is against the deal.

2. Carrying out the deal after making concessions to Palestine and Arab countries

In this scenario, the Americans and the Israelis will stop dictating their demands on the Palestine and will suspend their interference in Palestine's core issues such as the fate of Al-Quds, the Palestinian refugees and the ownership of lands.

This will definitely be a victory for the Palestinians and Arab countries, as a new deal with new terms will be derived out of the previous deal.

For example, Israel may become less strict over Palestine ruling over the West Bank and Palestine may gain more control over the eastern areas of the Al-Quds. Some older parts of Al-Quds can be jointly run by Palestine and Israel.

Also, Tel Aviv may stop building new residential areas over the West Bank and stop expanding the current settlements.

It will also be agreed that a Palestinian government will be established over a short time-frame and some rules will be revised including the ones about Palestine's sovereignty over some lands and its economic independence. The siege of the Gaza Strip will stop, new ports and airports will be built and a safe route will be established between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

According to this scenario, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas will hand over the control of the Gaza Strip to Palestinian National Authority in Ramallah and a proper environment will be established for resuming the reconciliation process.

3. The success of the Deal of the Century according to the terms and conditions forced by the U.S. and the Zionist regime.

According to this scenario, U.S. will threaten the Arab countries to stop helping them in dealing with their regional conflicts and even in dealing with their own nations. Also, Washington will threaten Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian National Authority with getting him removed and replacing him with someone who would agree to their all terms and conditions.

Considering all the above options, it seems that the first scenario is more likely to happen as all Palestinian groups are against the deal and the resistant Palestinian groups are in full power; also, many Arab countries are against the deal and the U.S. itself is not confident about its foreign policies in the Middle East.

There are other reasons to assume that the Deal of the Century will fail. The operation of the deal has been long delayed; furthermore, over this time, many demonstrations and groups have showed their opposition to the deal, an example is the "return demonstrations" that have been held every week over the Gaza Strip over the past year.

Despite all the oppositions in thwarting the Deal of the Century, stopping the deal still needs more effort, some strategies are suggested here.

Strategies to stop the Deal of the Century

- Developing Palestinians' national unity and concentrating all their powers in order to thwart the deal.
- Writing a declaration that will bind all Palestinians to commit to upholding the principles and goals of the Palestinian nation and rejects any treaty that would violate their rights, including the Deal of the Century.
- Saving the Palestine National Reconciliation Agreement which was signed in 2011 and Beirut Agreement which was signed in 2017. Plus running Palestine National Council in order to revive the Palestinian National Authority and Palestine Liberation Organization in order to join all forces to serve Palestine's national interests.
- Quick removal of the sanctions imposed by Mahmoud Abbas on Gaza Strip.
- Inviting all Palestinians to unite under a single leadership, so that they can use all their powers to defend the rights of the Palestinians until Palestine Liberation Organization is reconstructed.
- Encouraging public-based organizations, groups and societies inside and outside of Palestine.
- Stopping any kind of military and security cooperation with Israeli usurpers.
- Increasing people's freedom in the areas under the control of Palestinian National Authority in order to maintain the dignity of Palestinian residents and use their unified will for making political, social and military progress.

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ESA satellite spots wildfires burning across Siberia

European Space Agency satellites are helping scientists track Siberian wildfires. From the vantage of space, dozens of wildfires are visible.

As UPI reported last week, wildfires are burning in Alaska, Greenland and throughout Siberia, releasing record amounts of CO2 into the atmosphere. This week, ESA images confirmed the fires continue to burn in Siberia.

According to Russia's Federal Forestry Agency, the fires, which have been burning for the last two months, have affected 3 million hectares -- or 11,000 square miles -- of Siberian forest and tundra.

The newly released Copernicus Sentinel-3 photograph showcases several fires in Siberia, the smoke from which has polluted the air in the Russian cities of Kemerovo, Tomsk, Novosibirsk and Altai. Strong winds have helped spread the Arctic fires, while also carrying smoke to distant population centers.

Arctic fires aren't unheard of -- they're fairly common in the summer when lightning



strikes. But this season's blazes are more intense and spreading farther north than ever before. Scientists suggest the record-setting fire season was made possible by soaring temps brought on by climate change.

According to Mark Parrington, senior scientist with Europe's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service, the Arctic's fires have released approximately 100 megatons, 100 million metric tons, of CO2 since June -- a total Parrington said on Twitter "is getting close to 2017 fossil fuel CO2 emissions of Belgium."

Though there have been no casualties in Siberia as a result of the fire, Russian officials declared a state of emergency in the region.

Scientists are concerned the soot and ash from the blazes will be deposited on ice in Greenland and throughout the Arctic, causing ice to absorb more solar energy and melt more easily.

(Source: UPI)

Most detailed ever 3D map of Milky Way shows 'warped' shape

The most detailed three-dimensional map yet of the Milky Way has been revealed, showing that our galaxy is not a flat disc but has a "warped" shape like a fascinator hat or a vinyl record that has been left in the sun.

"The stars 60,000 light years away from the Milky Way's center are as far as 4,500 [light years] above or below the galactic plane -- this is a big percentage," said Dr Dorota Skowron of the University of Warsaw, first author of the latest research.

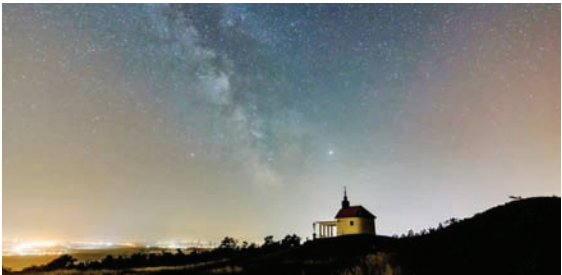
Both the new study and an earlier one published in February, which found a similar shape, are based on the distribution across the galaxy of stars known as Cepheids -- bodies whose brightness varies in a regular cycle over time. This phenomenon of dimming and brightening is the key to creating the maps.

While a star might be fainter because it is further away, it could also be because it is less luminous. For Cepheids, the maximum brightness of the star is related to the length of time the cycle of brightening and dimming takes, with brighter Cepheids having longer cycles. By comparing this intrinsic brightness with how bright the star appears to be, researchers can work out how far away a Cepheid is.

The new study, published in the journal Science, encompasses data from more than 2,400 Cepheids, allowing the team to build the most detailed three-dimensional map yet of the Milky Way.

"Cepheids are relatively young -- younger than 200m years -- whereas the Milky Way is believed to be about 10bn years old. This means that we can use Cepheids to study the relatively recent history of our galaxy," said Skowron.

The new research shows our galaxy, which Skowron notes



has a radius of about 70,000 light years and four spiral arms, is "warped", with the outer regions of one side bent "up" from the galactic plane towards the north galactic pole, and the other bent "down". The thickness of the disc is not the same all the way across -- it flares towards the edges, like a pair of 1970s jeans.

These findings also tally with other work showing a warp and flare, including studies of the distribution of hydrogen atoms across the Milky Way, although Skowron notes that uncertain distances mean the shape of the warp could not be unpicked from those studies.

Prof Richard de Grijs of Macquarie University, who co-authored the earlier Cepheid study, said there were a number of explanations for our galaxy's warp. These include mergers with smaller galaxies, or the gravitational pull of the Milky Way being weaker in its outer regions meaning bodies there might be deflected out of the galactic plane by the tug of other stars. Alternatively, he said, "gravitational interactions with nearby galaxies ... could distort the gravitationally weakly bound outer regions into a warp-like structure".

Skowron said warping was not seen in the central regions of the Milky Way because gravitational forces there were so strong that it was hard to deflect stars and gas out of the galactic plane.

The new study suggests the bending away from the plane of the galaxy begins about 26,000 light years from the center of the galaxy -- roughly where our solar system lies -- but becomes steeper from about 32,000 light years.

A warped galaxy was not unusual, said Skowron. "In fact, it is estimated that about half of the galaxies could have some detectable warping. However the warp of our galaxy is quite substantial in comparison with others."

As with the previous work, the new study shows the Cepheids disproportionately lie on one side of the warped galaxy, forming an arc-shaped spread.

The Polish team also found younger Cepheids lie nearer the center of the Milky Way, while older Cepheids are further out. A computer simulation revealed there would need to have been star-forming events 64m, 113m and 175m years ago to produce the distribution of Cepheids seen today.

Dr Vivienne Wild, an expert on galaxies from the University of St Andrews said it was much more difficult to explore the structure of our own galaxy than that of others.

"This is because we are inside it, and determining the distances to stars is really difficult," she said.

Wild welcomed the exploration of how and why the Cepheids are bunched up on one side of the galaxy. "By measuring the ages of the stars and plotting their 3D positions in the Milky Way's disc," she said, "we can see how they initially formed in the Milky Way's spiral arms up to 175m years ago."

(Source: The Guardian)

Scientists detail mechanism behind gamma-ray bursts



Scientists have uncovered the mechanism behind gamma-ray bursts, intense flashes of high-energy radiation originating from space.

The first gamma-ray bursts were observed by the Vela satellites, a constellation of space-based satellites designed to monitor nuclear testing and ensure the Soviet Union's compliance with the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty. Today, several satellite systems are dedicated to recording gamma-ray bursts.

In recent years, scientists have succeeded in tracing the powerful bursts to their origins. Long gamma-ray bursts are produced by the death and collapse of massive stars, while shorter gamma-ray bursts emanate from neutron star mergers.

Despite the revelations, astronomers remain puzzled as to how exactly gamma-ray burst radiation is produced. But as a new study recently revealed, clues are emerging.

Earlier this year, the gamma-ray detector onboard NASA's Neil Gehrels Swift satellite recorded an especially strong gamma-ray bursts, which scientists traced to a galaxy located 4.5 billion light-years away. The discovery of GRB 190114C prompted scientists to swing the MAGIC telescope in Spain toward the burst's location. MAGIC measured extremely high energy photons emanating from the distant galaxy.

The ultra-high energy TeV photons, recorded after the gamma-ray burst's peak, during the afterglow phase, were 10 times more energetic than the previous record for

most intense post-burst photon emission.

By combining the photon observations with observations of lower energy X-rays by the Neil Gehrels Swift satellite, scientists were able to identify the mechanism behind the gamma-ray burst. Scientists determined the burst's radiation was produced by a relativistic jet moving at the speed of light in the direction of Earth.

More specifically, the gamma-ray burst and high-energy photons were produced by what's known as the "inverse Compton mechanism," whereby extremely fast moving electrons -- accelerated to high speeds by the relativistic jet -- collide with slower-moving photons. The collision bumps up the energies of the photons.

Scientists detailed their latest discovery this week in the Astrophysical Journal Letters.

"MAGIC has found the Rosetta stone of gamma-ray bursts," Tsvi Piran, an astrophysicist and professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said in a news release. "This unique detection enables us for the first time to discriminate between different emission models and discover what are the exact conditions in the explosion. We can also understand now why such radiation wasn't observed in the past."

As scientists detect more and more gamma-ray bursts, each time, using an array of telescopes to interpret the burst and its aftermath, they expect to gain further insights into the mechanisms behind the cosmic phenomenon.

(Source: UPI)

Monkeys can use basic logic to decipher the order of items in a list



Monkeys can keep strings of information in order by using a simple kind of logical thought.

Rhesus macaque monkeys learned the order of items in a list with repeated exposure to pairs of items plucked from the list, say psychologist Greg Jensen of Columbia University and colleagues. The animals drew basic logical conclusions about pairs of listed items, akin to assuming that if A comes before B and B comes before C, then A comes before C, the scientists conclude July 30 in Science Advances.

Importantly, rewards given to monkeys didn't provide reliable guidance to the animals about whether they had correctly ordered pairs of items. Monkeys instead worked out the approximate order of images in the list, and used that knowledge to make choices in experiments about which of two images from the list followed the other, Jensen's group says.

Previous studies have suggested that a variety of animals, including monkeys, apes, pigeons, rats and crows, can discern the order of a list of items. But debate persists about whether nonhuman creatures do so only with the prodding of rewards for correct responses or, at least sometimes, by consulting internal knowledge acquired about particular lists.

Jensen's group designed experimental sessions in which four monkeys completed as many as 600 trials to determine the order of seven images in

a list. Images included a hot air balloon, an ear of corn and a zebra. Monkeys couldn't rely on rewards to guide their choices. In some sessions, animals usually received a larger reward for correctly identifying which of two images came later in the list and a smaller reward for an incorrect response. In other sessions, incorrect responses usually yielded a larger reward than correct responses. Rewards consisted of larger or smaller gulps of water delivered through tubes to the moderately thirsty primates.

Monkeys consistently learned list orders in both reward conditions, making relatively few errors by the end of the sessions. Giving rewards for correct responses produced slightly faster list learning, the team found.

Jensen's study adds to evidence suggesting that, like humans, monkeys can mentally link together pairs of items into lists that guide later choices, says psychologist Regina Paxton Gazes of Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa.

That's probably a valuable ability in the wild, she says, because many animals need to monitor where group mates stand in the social pecking order. "An ability to construct, retain, manipulate and reference ordered information may be an evolutionarily ancient, efficient [mental] mechanism for keeping track of relationships between individuals," she says.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

The definition of a species is not so clear cut

A koala bear isn't actually a bear, it's a marsupial. Whales aren't fish, they're mammals. Tomatoes aren't vegetables, they're fruit. Almost nothing is actually a nut. Peanuts, brazil nuts, cashews, walnuts, pecans and almonds: none of them are really nuts (for the record, peanuts are legumes, brazils and cashews are seeds, and the others are all drupes). Hazelnuts and chestnuts are the exception: they are the elite, the "true" nuts.

We've all heard facts like this before. But they are more than just ammunition for pub conversation. They reflect an area of science known as biological taxonomy, the classification of organisms into different groups. At the core of this area lies the notion of the species. The basic idea is very simple: that certain groups of organisms have a special connection to each other. There is something that you and I have in common -- we are both human beings. That is, we are members of the same species.

Biological taxonomy's core aim is to sort all of the organisms of the world into species. Of course, this job really matters, both inside biology and out. The task of evolutionary biology is to track the evolution and development (and eventual extinction) of species. Outside of biology, conservation programs routinely put various species on "endangered" lists, and urge us to donate money to stop them dying out. In order for any of this to make sense, we need to know how many species there are, and what a species even is.



So, what even is a species? The truth is, we don't really have any idea.

The most famous definition of a species comes from the 20th century German-born biologist Ernst Mayr, who emphasized the importance of interbreeding. The idea (roughly) is that two organisms are of the same species if they can breed with one another to produce fertile offspring. That is why a donkey and a horse aren't the same species: they can breed and produce offspring, but not fertile offspring.

Mayr's way of thinking about species has some amazing consequences. Recently, due to rising temperatures in the Arctic, polar bears and grizzly bears have been coming into increased contact, and have been producing fertile offspring. The offspring are (adorably) called grolar or pizzly bears. What this suggests is that polars and grizzlies may actually be the same species after all, despite radical differences in size, appearance, hibernation behaviors, diet and so on.

But it wasn't long before the problems with Mayr's approach became apparent. The definition makes use of the notion of interbreeding. This is all very well with horses and polar bears, but smaller organisms like bacteria do not interbreed at all. They reproduce entirely asexually, by simply splitting in two. So this definition of species can't really apply to bacteria.

So maybe we should look for a different approach to species. In the 1960s, another German biologist, Willi Hennig, suggested thinking about species in terms of their ancestry. In simple terms, he suggested that we should find an organism, and then group it together with its children, and its children's children, and its children's children's children. Eventually, you will have the original organism (the ancestor) and all of its descendants. These groups are called clades. Hennig's insight was to suggest that this is how we should be thinking about species.

But this approach faces its own problems. How far back should you go before you pick the ancestor in question? If you go back in history far enough, you'll find that pretty much every animal on the planet shares an ancestor. But surely we don't want to say that every single animal in the world, from the humble sea slug, to top-of-the-range apes like human beings, are all one big single species?

This is only the tip of a deep and confusing iceberg. There is absolutely no agreement among biologists about how we should understand the species. One 2006 article on the subject listed 26 separate definitions of species, all with their advocates and detractors. Even this list is incomplete.

The mystery surrounding species is well known in biology, and commonly referred to as "the species problem". Frustration with the idea of a species goes back at least as far as Darwin. In an 1856 letter to his friend Joseph Hooker, he wrote:

"It is really laughable to see what different ideas are prominent in various naturalists' minds, when they speak of 'species'; in some, resemblance is everything and descent of little weight -- in some, resemblance seems to go for nothing, and creation the reigning idea -- in some, sterility an unfailing test, with others it is not worth a farthing. It all comes, I believe, from trying to define the undefinable."

Darwin even dreamt of a time when a revolution would come about in biology. He proposed that one day, biologists could pursue their studies without ever worrying about what a species is, or which animals belong to which species. Indeed, some contemporary biologists and philosophers of biology have taken up this idea, and suggested that biology would be much better off if it didn't think about life in terms of species at all.

Scrapping the idea of a species is an extreme idea: it implies that pretty much all of biology, from Aristotle right up to the modern age, has been thinking about life in completely the wrong way. The upshots of this new approach would be enormous, both for our scientific and philosophical view of life. It suggests that we should give up thinking about life as neatly segmented into discrete groups. Rather, we should think of life as one immense interconnected web. This shift in thinking would fundamentally reorient our approach to a great many questions concerning our relation to the natural world, from the current biodiversity crisis to conservation.

And, in a way, this kind of picture may be a natural progression in biological thought. One of the great discoveries of evolutionary biology is that the human species is not special or privileged in the grand scheme of things, and that humans have the same origins as all the other animals. This approach just takes the next step. It says that there is no such thing as "the human species" at all.

(Source: The Independent)

Iran, Japan mark 90 years of diplomatic ties at Tehran event

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — On Wednesday evening, symbols of Iran and Japan, such as Mount Fuji and Persian rugs, were projected onto the outer walls of the Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site in downtown Tehran.



Iran's deputy tourism chief Mohammad-Hassan Talebian

The Japanese government held a projection mapping event at the premises of the palace to mark 90 years of diplomatic ties with Iran. The event was attended by tens of Iranian officials and the mission of Japan to the Islamic Republic.

"Our cultural relations with Japan was at its height during the Sassanid era (224–651). Relics of that time, especially silk and Sassanian coins, show that relationships," Iran's deputy tourism chief Mohammad-Hassan Talebian said, addressing participants.

"Even Iran's silk in the 6th and 7th centuries had the most popularity in East Asia, especially in Japan," he added.

Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kenji Yamada, for his part said that Japan wants to promote the historic bilateral relationship despite the harsh situation in the region.

The first Japanese diplomat to be sent to Iran presented his credentials at the palace in 1929, NHK, Japan's national broadcasting organization, reported on Thursday.

Shinzo Abe became the first Japanese prime minister to visit Iran in 41 years in June. Abe held talks with President Hassan Rouhani and the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in a bid to deescalate the tensions between Iran and the United States.

On August 1 and 2, people are given free entry to the palace for the event that is organized in close collaboration with the Embassy of Japan, director of the World Heritage site Masoud Nosrati said on Tuesday.

At present, Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates. UNESCO has it that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Timgad

A UNESCO World Heritage, Timgad lies on the northern slopes of the Aures mountains and was created ex nihilo as a military colony by the Emperor Trajan in AD 100. With its square enclosure and orthogonal design based on the cardo and decumanus, the two perpendicular routes running through the city, it is an excellent example of Roman town planning.



The Colonia Marciana Traiana Thamugadi was founded in 100 CE by Trajan, probably as an encampment for the 3rd Augustan Legion which, thereafter, was quartered at Lambaesis.

Its plan, laid out with great precision, illustrates Roman urban planning at its height. By the middle of the 2nd century, the rapid growth of the city had ruptured the narrow confines of its original foundation.

Timgad spread beyond the perimeters of its ramparts and several major public buildings are built in the new quarters: Capitulum, temples, markets and baths. Most of these buildings date from the Severan period when the city enjoyed its Golden Age, also attested by immense private residences.

A strong and prosperous colony, Timgad must have served as a compelling image of the grandeur of Rome on Numidian soil. Buildings, constructed entirely of stone, were frequently restored during the course of the Empire: the Trajan Arch in the middle of the 2nd century, the Eastern gate in 146, and the Western gate under Marcus-Aurelius.

The streets were paved with large rectangular limestone slabs and, as attested by the 14 baths which still may be seen today, particular attention was paid to the disposition of public conveniences. The houses, of varying sizes, dazzle by their sumptuous mosaics, which were intended to offset the absence of precious marbles.

Authenticity

The ensemble of the vestiges and artefacts excavated bear witness to the Outstanding Universal Value that enabled inscription of the property. The abandonment of the antique site, although at a later period, and the conduct of archaeological excavations almost continually since 1881 to 1960 has enabled the city of Thamugadi to avoid the construction of recent buildings, as the mechanical means required would have disturbed the ancient vestiges.

(Source: UNESCO)

Belgian globetrotters share us their new perception of Iran

1 → Some foreign travelers say that driving in Iran resembles a video game. What do you say about that?

Lennart: Yes, it is. We had heard that Georgia is very bad [when it comes to reckless driving] but I think in Iran it's even worse. But for us, our big car helps us to somehow avoid accidents. [Our rule is] to try to drive like a local... because in Europe, this is your lane and you cannot drive over it or whatever, but here....

What about the quality of roads and highways in Iran?

Lennart: Actually, very good, I mean, for me, it's comparable with European roads... actually the roads in Iran are quite good, they are almost flat and smooth.

What's your opinion about the Iranian hospitality?

Lennart: Well, it's famous for a reason, because it's true, one of the reasons that we love Iran so much is the hospitality and kindness of the people, like, the first time that we got here in 2016, we were in a taxi and the taxi driver invited us to his home and even though he couldn't speak English, we were talking on Google Translate to each other.

It was very nice to meet his wife and their toddler and a friend of whom we also met in Mashhad. We're still friends now and we are staying with his family here in Tehran and I mean [while in Iran] everybody likes to help you.

For example, all of a sudden we were in Tabriz and one gas station after the next said we don't have diesel, we don't have diesel, and we were like "Oh my God!"

You know, our car, runs on diesel -- not a lot of cars running on diesel in here, only the trucks and buses.

Ciara: And we posted something on Instagram and said oh we're scared, we don't have any more diesel.... And then some Iranian people picked it up and posted their own [massages] on our Instagram page and suddenly we were like flooded



Ciara contemplates broken Iranian mosaics used to fix a missing tile (Photo: Ciara Reid, for The Tehran Times, July 29, 2019)

Western media don't help very much to give a clear picture.



Ciara, Lennart and Tehran Times correspondents stand by the couple's camper van (Photo: Maryam Kamyab, July 29, 2019)

If this happens in Europe, they will just leave you at the side saying it's your own fault, no one will help you. So we told this story to people back home where a lot of people were saying us "Oh Iran is dangerous"! But for me it is one of the safest countries.

Taiwan rebukes China for tourism ban amid rising tension

TAIPEI (Reuters) — Taiwan's president rebuked China on Thursday over its decision to ban individual travel permits for Chinese visitors to the self-ruled island, saying the move aimed to manipulate presidential elections in January.

China cited the state of ties with what it considers a wayward province for the travel ban, which came into force on Thursday. The loss of Chinese visitors will be a blow for Taiwan, which saw robust economic growth in the second quarter partly thanks to a spurt in mainland travelers.

"Using tourists as political tools would only create antipathy in Taiwanese people," President Tsai Ing-wen told reporters in the presidential palace in Taipei, criticizing what she called a major strategic mistake. "Tourism shouldn't be politicized,"

she said, adding that past experience had shown China manipulated politics by clamping down on tourist numbers ahead of elections.

A spokeswoman for China's foreign ministry said history would show which side was making the mistake.

"Saying this is a mistake, I think that history will demonstrate who was on the correct side and who made a mistake," Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing when Reuters sought comment on Tsai's remark.

Taiwan's relations with China are precarious. Beijing has long viewed Tsai with caution since she became Taiwan's president in 2016, suspecting that she is pushing for the island's formal independence.

China has never ruled out the use of force to bring the island under its control,

if necessary.

However, Tsai faces an uphill battle in January's election, amid criticism over her party's reform agenda and as China ratchets up diplomatic and military pressure.

"(Tsai's) Democratic Progressive Party is continually pushing activities to promote Taiwan's independence and inciting hostility toward the mainland, seriously undermining the conditions for mainland travelers to visit the island," said Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office.

"I believe compatriots on both sides of the strait hope relations will return to a correct track of peaceful development, allowing travel by mainland residents to Taiwan to return to normal as soon as possible," Ma was cited as saying by

mainland state television.

Tsai said China had triggered regional tension with military drills this week near Taiwan, describing them as intimidation ahead of the election.

"The Chinese military threat is targeting all Taiwanese and impacting peace, stability and safety in the region," she said.

The exercises came days after Beijing reiterated it was ready to fight if there was any move toward independence for Taiwan.

Taiwan is among a number of flashpoints in U.S.-China ties, which also include a trade war between the two countries and China's increasingly muscular military role in the South China Sea, where the United States also runs freedom-of-navigation patrols. Last week, a U.S. warship sailed through the Taiwan Strait, angering China.



Ciara and Lennart in their camper van (Photo: Maryam Kamyab, July 29, 2019)

with.... "Do you still need diesel?", "You can get it there!", "I can help you!", and "We have diesel!"

Some ten people reached out to us that we didn't know... just out of kindness saying oh these are foreigners, they are in trouble, we can help!

Yes, this is a phenomenon that Iran is famous for.

Ciara: I think that is what a lot of other nationalities can take as an example and learn from it. One time in 2016, we wanted to go to Yazd and in the bus station we went to different offices saying Yazd, Yazd, Yazd -- we were in Shiraz at that time -- and we [finally] took a wrong bus!

On the Google Map we found the bus was going all the way to the south so we asked the driver, saying Yazd? And the driver said, Bandar Abbas, Bandar Abbas! And we were like "Uh-oh!"

The driver pulled to the side, a bus full of people just stopped to the side. The driver said get out! We thought what we were going to do with our packs... we were thinking like "Oh my God! They want to leave us here on the side of the road!"

Then a man showed up. He said "Come with me, come with me!" And he drove us to a police station where there were a lot of taxis and he even paid us the taxi to get back to the bus station and we were very excited.

If this happens in Europe, they will just leave you at the side saying it's your own fault, no one will help you. So we told this story to people back home where a lot of people were saying us "Oh Iran is dangerous"! But for me it is one of the safest countries.

Have you selected a motto or a theme for your whole journey?

Ciara: Not really a theme but we actually want to see more of the countries along the Silk Road, so the "Silk Road"

maybe our theme. We prefer to focus more on nature than cities during our journey!

We are also very amazed of the diversity of nature in Iran.

Tell us more about your portable home!

Lennart: We chose a Mercedes [camper] because it's easy



Ciara and Lennart speak to The Tehran Times (Photo: Maryam Kamyab, July 29, 2019)

And we posted something on Instagram and said oh we're scared.... Some ten people reached out to us that we didn't know... just out of kindness.

to find parts for Mercedes everywhere and because it's also very reliable so we bought it second hand in Holland.... We removed everything from its back and started to modify everything from electricity to water and heating because I am a handy guy we did all the carpentry, installing a solar panel, air vents, curtains Everything!

And now, a tough question! Before your first visit Iran in 2016, you had a perception of the country, whatever it was, and after you felt the country, encountering its people, you developed another perception. How do you compare them, the first which was mainly shaped by Western media, and the one you have developed in person?

Lennart: Yeah, in the beginning for us, Iran was not very well known, just a Middle Eastern country, some said don't go there because it's dangerous So in the beginning we had a perception that it was very dangerous and also some (European) people didn't know the difference between Iraq and Iran and the Western media don't help very much to give a clear picture.

But then some friends of ours visited Iran and we read a lot about it ourselves and yeah we saw that its people are very friendly, it is so safe and we like it so much.

Ciara: I think a funny anecdote is that we told our family and friends that we wanted to travel to Iran, everybody said "Oh you're crazy! It's very dangerous, you wanna get killed!"

And we said "No! It's safe, it's safe," and then when we arrived in Iran we heard the bombings and attacks in Paris and an Iranian taxi driver asked where we are from and we said we are from Europe. "Europe? It's so dangerous!" the driver said. So when we were back home in Belgium and people said "Oh, how was your trip to Iran?" we said, "Well it was actually much safer than it was in Europe!"

One in every five Iranian couple is infertile: expert

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Approximately, from every five Iranian couples, one is infertile, the head of Avicenna fertility center, affiliated to Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, said.

Generally, the prevalence of infertility in the country is about 15 to 20 percent, which is close to the world levels of infertility, but the rate is higher in some provinces of the country, ISNA quoted Dr. Mohammadreza Sadeqi as saying on Tuesday.

The most up to date methods for treating infertility are now practiced in the country, but the fertility services and centers are not equally available in different parts of the country. For example, there are more than 50 fertility clinics and centers in Tehran, but there is only one of such clinics in some provinces.

The prevalence of infertility in some areas is due to the growth of slums around the cities, the environmental features, the urban life style and the increasing age of marriage.

■ The age of marriage in Iran

According to a report released by Statistical



The prevalence of infertility in some areas is due to the growth of slums around the cities, the environmental features, the urban life style and the increasing age of marriage.

Center of Iran, the average age of marriage, both for men and women, increased by 39 months during the past four decades.

The statistics was released based on the 8th nationwide census, surveying the age of marriage from Iranian calendar year 1355 (March 1976-March 1977) to 1395 (March 2016-March 2017).

According to the statistics, in the year 1395, the average age of first marriage in Iran was 27.4 for men and 23 for women, up from 24.1 for men and 19.7 for women in 1355.

Mohammad Baqer Abbasi, an official with National Organization for Civil Registration, said in July 2018 that in the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), some 146,000 babies were born a year or less after their parents' marriage, which constitute 10 percent. While some 18 percent of births occurred up to two years after the date of the marriage.

The latest Iranian census conducted in 2016 put Iran's population at 79,926,270 with a male to female ratio of 1.027.

12.5 percent of Iranians suffer from depression: expert

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Some 12.5 percent of Iranians suffer from depression, the head of the Association of Iranian Psychiatrists said, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Maryam Rasoulizadeh added that two thirds of the depressed people think about suicide and 15 percent of them commit suicide.

She noted that the annual congress of the Association of Iranian Psychiatrists will be held from October 15 to 18 in Tehran.

The congress aims to increase the society's mental health literacy, she said, adding that a website is being launched to improve public awareness in the field of mental health.

Depression is one of the prevailing illnesses which will have negative effects if neglected, she said.

The association also plans to launch a campaign to help people cope with depression.

A depressed person feels joyless and highlights the negative aspects of his or her life, she added.

Depression is different from sadness. Depression is a combination of sadness, low energy, and low concentration, and poor function.

■ Over 300 million people affected with depression

Depression is a common illness worldwide, with more than 300 million people affected. Depression is different from usual mood fluctuations and short-lived emotional responses to challenges in everyday life. Especially when long-lasting and with moderate or severe intensity, depression may become a serious health condition.

It can cause the affected person to suffer greatly and function poorly at work, at school and in the family. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide. Close to 800,000 people die due to suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds.

Although there are known, effective treatments for depression, fewer than half of those affected in the world (in many countries, fewer than 10%) receive such treatments. Barriers to effective care include a lack of resources, lack of trained health-care providers, and social stigma associated with mental disorders. Another barrier to effective care is inaccurate assessment. In countries of all income levels, people who are depressed are often not correctly diagnosed, and others who do not have



the disorder are too often misdiagnosed and prescribed antidepressants.

More women are affected by depression than men and at its worst, depression can lead to suicide.

However there are effective psychological and pharmacological treatments for depression.

Telling a 'white lie' may affect one's ability to recognize emotions

If you lie to someone, you may find it more difficult to tell what that other person is thinking or feeling. This is the main takeaway of a new study that examines the 'unintended consequences of dishonest behavior.'

Even a minor dishonest deed can impair our ability to read others' emotions, new research finds.

Whether it is suffering or joy, empathy helps us feel what another person feels, and a lot of the time our ability to empathize is the reason why we choose to do good deeds and help one another.

But does this mean that empathy and ethical behavior are one and the same? What is the relationship between dishonest acts and empathetic feelings?

New research, led by Ashley E. Hardin, assistant professor of organizational behavior at Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis., answers some of these questions by looking at how unethical, or dishonest acts affect "empathic accuracy," or the ability to read another person's emotions.

Hardin and colleagues found that dishonest deeds can "harm interpersonal relationships through a particular channel: individuals' ability to detect others' emotions."

The researchers published their findings in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: General.

■ Dishonesty affects 'empathic accuracy'

Hardin and colleagues carried out eight



studies totaling more than 2,500 participants whom they placed in various scenarios.

Hardin and colleagues concluded that there is a "causal relationship" between a person's dishonest behavior and their ability to empathize with another person's emotions. Lying and cheating make people less able to read another person's feelings accurately.

The research also identified an underlying mechanism for this relationship. The team found that people who are more prone to dishonest behavior are less likely to define themselves relationally, or "in terms of close relationships" with their relatives or friends.

Could 'mirror neurons' explain brain mechanisms of empathy?

Could 'mirror neurons' explain brain

mechanisms of empathy?

These neurons could explain why we can share another person's pain.

Also, the study revealed that "impaired empathic accuracy" has negative consequences that may trickle down into further interactions with people.

Because an initial dishonest act impairs a person's ability to detect another's emotions, this may lead to increased dehumanization of the other and an increased number of immoral acts. "It can be a vicious cycle," explains lead author Hardin.

"Sometimes people will tell a white lie and think it's not a big deal. But a decision to be dishonest in one moment will have implications for how you interact with people

subsequently."

Finally, when people are more socially sensitive, the research found, they are less likely to behave in a dishonest way.

Hardin and team measured social sensitivity by examining the participants' "vagal reactivity" a standard physiological measure of compassion and empathy with the suffering of others.

"When individuals are lacking their physiological capacity for social sensitivity, they may be more susceptible to the social distancing effects of engaging in dishonest behavior," the researchers explain.

■ Empathy and morality are distinct

The subject of empathy has been on many people's lips in the past few years.

From neuroscientific studies exploring the consequences of brain damage on empathetic behavior to philosophical essays arguing against the moral value of empathy, the subject has always been crucial to the broader discussion of what it means to be a good person.

But equating empathy with morality is a mistake argue the authors of the new research. Their study, they point out, helps to set a clear boundary between the two concepts.

"Our work adds to this dynamic tension between dishonesty and empathy by showing [...] that one's empathic accuracy can be affected by the specific psychological state produced by one's dishonest behavior," write Hardin and colleagues.

(Source: nbcnews.com)

Tehrani blood donors enjoy queue management app

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — An application of online queue management system for Tehrani blood donors was introduced during a ceremony held on the occasion of the national blood donor day, July 31, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

The managing director of the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization's (IBTO) department in Tehran, Seyyed Morteza Tabatabaei, and the director of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Ali Asghar Peyvand, attended the ceremony.



Fortunately, the application provides facilities for blood donors to find the best time for going to blood transfusion centers, Tabatabaei said.

Developed by Iranian engineers, the app covers three blood transfusion centers in Tehran and two other centers will be added soon, he said.

■ 50 million Iranians donate blood in 45 years

Since the establishment of the IBTO on July 31, 1974, some 50 million Iranians have donated blood, the IBTO head, Ali Akbar Pour Fathollah, said.

He added that the first generation of blood donors are now retired and the young generation should be active in donating blood.

In February 2018, the IBTO announced that with the blood donation rate of 27 per 1,000 people, Iran attained the first place among 21 countries in Eastern Mediterranean region.

According to WHO, blood transfusion saves millions of lives every year. It can help in the proper management of women experiencing bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth, children with severe anaemia, patients with inherited disorders such as thalassemia, and victims of trauma, emergencies, disasters and accidents.

■ Dialysis filter production technology imported

On Tuesday evening, an agreement was signed between an Iranian company and a Swiss company for importing the technology for producing dialysis filters.

Iran needs 5.4 million dialysis filters annually.

As reported, the Swiss company has eight branches worldwide and export its products to 51 countries.

65% duty imposed on imported cigarettes

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — According to the value-added tax law, a 65% duty is imposed on imported cigarettes, announced the deputy health minister for management and resources development.

According to the law, a 40% tax should be levied on cigarettes that are produced inside the country with foreign brands and 24% on cigarettes that don't have a foreign brand, Kamel Taqavinejad said.

He made the remarks during a meeting on reviewing tobacco taxes, IRIB reported on Tuesday.

Moreover, there should be a 10% duty on raw imported tobacco and 35% on processed tobacco, he added.

According to the law, the taxes on tobacco should annually increase by 5%, he said.

The tax rate ceiling for local products is at 60%, 95% for foreign brands of cigarettes that are produced locally and 125% for imported cigarettes, he added.

Over the meeting, Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi, said the 150% increase in cigarette price is good, but not enough.

The rising price of cigarette was not only caused by taxes, but also by inflation, said Raisi.

Iran has successfully complied with World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), except from the frameworks' 6th clause which was about levying higher taxes on tobacco, he said.

In [Iranian calendar] year 1393, a proposal was made for increasing tobacco tax revenues from the current 20 trillion rials (around \$476 billion) to 120 trillion rials (\$2.8 billion), but unfortunately the plan did not go into operation, he added.

The WHO FCTC was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic. The spread of the tobacco epidemic is facilitated through a variety of complex factors with cross-border effects, including trade liberalization and direct foreign investment. Other factors such as global marketing, transnational tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and the international movement of contraband and counterfeit cigarettes have also contributed to the explosive increase in tobacco use.

Article 6 of this treaty proposes price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco.

■ Tobacco use rising in the country

In January, the vice chancellor of Tehran University of Medical Science, announced that tobacco use in Iran has increased by seven times over the past decade, growing from 2,000 tons to 15,000 tons.

According to Abdolrahman Rostami, tobacco tax revenue for the next Iranian calendar year (starting March 21, 2020) is estimated at 28 trillion rials (around \$666 billion) but it should grow to 150 trillion rials (around \$3.5 billion).

Earlier in June, Tobacco Prevention and Control Research Center announced that about 12 percent of Iranian adults above 15 years old are daily smokers.

Including hookah smokers, the percentage of smokers reach about 20 percent, the report added.

According to the head of the center, Gholamreza Heidari, about 20 percent of men and two to three percent of women are daily smokers.



'Night owls' can change into early risers within a few weeks, study finds

Simple tweaks to the sleeping patterns of those who are habitually late to bed could make them less stressed and depressed, according to a study.

As well as suffering poorer mental wellbeing, night owls can often struggle to fit into typical work and school schedules that are out of sync with their preferred sleep patterns.

But researchers have now found it is possible for those whose internal body clocks dictate later-than-usual sleep and wake times to retrain them within just three weeks.

A study involving 22 night owls, whose average bedtime was 2.30am with a wake-up time 10.15am, found the benefits of consistently getting an early night included feeling less stressed and depressed, as well as less sleepy during the day.

For a period of three weeks, they were asked to bring their sleep and wake times forward by two or three hours, keeping the timings fixed on working days and days off.

They were also told to get plenty of sunshine in the mornings, to eat breakfast soon after waking up, to eat lunch at the same time every day and to eat dinner no later than 7pm.

The findings of the research, by the universities of Birmingham and Surrey, and Monash University in Australia, was published in the journal Sleep Medicine.

The results showed an increase in cognitive (reaction time) and physical (grip strength) performance during the morning, while peak performance times shifted from evening to afternoon.

Co-author Dr. Andrew Bagshaw, from the University of Birmingham's Centre for Human Brain Health, said: "Having a late sleep pattern puts you at odds with the standard societal days, which can lead to a range of adverse outcomes from daytime sleepiness to poorer mental wellbeing."

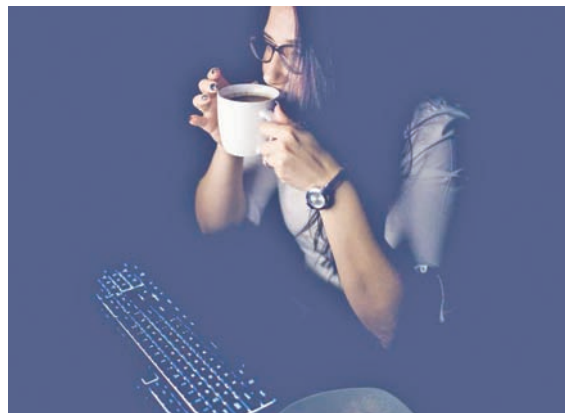
We wanted to see if there were simple things people could do at home to solve the issue.

This was successful, on average allowing people to get to sleep and wake up around two hours earlier than they were before.

Most interestingly, this was also associated with improvements in mental wellbeing and perceived sleepiness, meaning that it was a very positive outcome for the participants.

We now need to understand how habitual sleep patterns are related to the brain, how this links with mental wellbeing and whether the interventions lead to long-term changes.

Lead researcher Dr Elise Facer-Childs, from Monash University's Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health,



added: "By acknowledging these differences and providing tools to improve outcomes we can go a long way in a society that is under constant pressure to achieve optimal productivity and performance."

(Source: independent.co.uk)

Iran, Pakistan to enhance co-op on women’s empowerment

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian vice-president for women’s and family affairs, Masoumeh Ebtekar, and the Pakistani ambassador to Iran, Riffat Masood, discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the field of women’s empowerment.

The two officials agreed to expand cooperation and exchange knowledge during a meeting held on Wednesday, according to the portal of vice-presidency for women’s and family affairs.

“In November 2018, we proposed and submitted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to Pakistan’s Ministry of Human Rights, while awaiting an answer concerning the beginning of cooperation in the mentioned areas,” Ebtekar said.



Measures have been taken in recent years upholding women’s rights in Iran including, supporting female heads of households, women’s employment and entrepreneurship, and providing safe shelters for breadwinner women, and prohibiting child marriage, as well as holding courses on promoting women’s rights, Ebtekar explained.

“We are trying to form a national family and intergenerational dialogue center. We are taking steps toward reducing the generation gap.”

Under the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2021-2025), gender equality is emphasized to provide equal opportunities in all areas, including health, education, as well as women’s political and economic participation, she highlighted.

Although, there is no gender parity in the parliament or elections in Iran, according to the president’s declaration issued in 2016, 30 percent of managerial positions in all provinces and government agencies should be allocated to women, she added.

She went on to say that appointment of women has increased by 65 percent in provincial state-run organizations and by 17 percent in government bodies.

Furthermore, many foreign nationals are being supported and receiving education in the country, Ebtekar noted, and added that a number of NGOs are also active in the field of supporting foreign nationals.

Masood, for her part, expressed satisfaction over expanded cooperation between the two countries and said that Iran and Pakistan can cooperate in different areas including science, technology and the environment.

Referring to the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in Pakistan focusing on women and girls, she lamented that “we have limitations in women’s political and economic participation, especially in the parliament or city councils.”

The Pakistani official further proposed a joint meeting in the field of women and entrepreneurship and the exchange of experiences, concluding that using the experiences of a country such as Iran in the field of female education would be greatly beneficial and effective.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Italy’s richest businessman, Silvio Berlusconi, wins Italian General Election

(May 16, 2001)

In Italy, the centre-right coalition led by media mogul Silvio Berlusconi, has swept to victory in Sunday’s General Elections. The BBC’s Frances Kennedy reports from Rome.

The media tycoon who governed Italy briefly in 1994 will return to the Prime Minister’s office in a much stronger position. Mr Berlusconi’s **alliance of moderate and right-wing** parties has an absolute majority in the Senate - a hundred and seventy-seven seats to the a hundred and twenty-eight of the Centre-left Olive Alliance. In the lower house, they will have an even **bigger margin**. The **decisive result** followed an especially **bitter campaign** concentrating closely on the persona of Mr Berlusconi, Italy’s wealthiest businessman. Concerns about the **conflict** between private and public interests expressed by the international media seem to have had little **influence** on voters. Appearing live on a television talk show from his villa near Milan, Mr Berlusconi said he would maintain his electoral promises and his first moves would be to **abolish inheritance tax** and **block a reform** of Italy’s school system. Mr Berlusconi received a congratulatory message from President Bush, though the White House **has not released the text**. Some European governments have been **reticent** in recognizing the government of Mr Berlusconi.

Words

alliance: if a group of two or more countries or political parties formally unite to work together for the same aims, they have formed an alliance

moderate: something or someone that does not have extreme views or opinions

right-wing: something or someone that supports conservatism and capitalism

bigger margin: (in this case) winning even more seats than others

decisive result: an outcome that was very clear

bitter campaign: a campaign is a plan of action to achieve something, such as social or political change, and a bitter campaign is one which is fought fiercely and angrily

conflict: a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one

influence: the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself

abolish: if you abolish a system or practice, you put an end to it

inheritance tax: money paid to a government from the estate of a dead person

block: prevent something from happening

reform: change or improve a system, law or institution

has not released the text: has not made it public

reticent: if you are reticent about something, you do not want to talk about it

(Source: BBC)

Special committee aims to prevent negative population growth

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — In a letter to the heads of medical science universities and colleges across the country, Health Minister Saeed Namaki ordered the formation of a special committee aimed to prevent the country’s population from declining, ISNA reported Tuesday.

“Following a decline in the population growth rate of the country, especially in the coming years, a concern raises due to its tendency for being negative,” the letter reads.

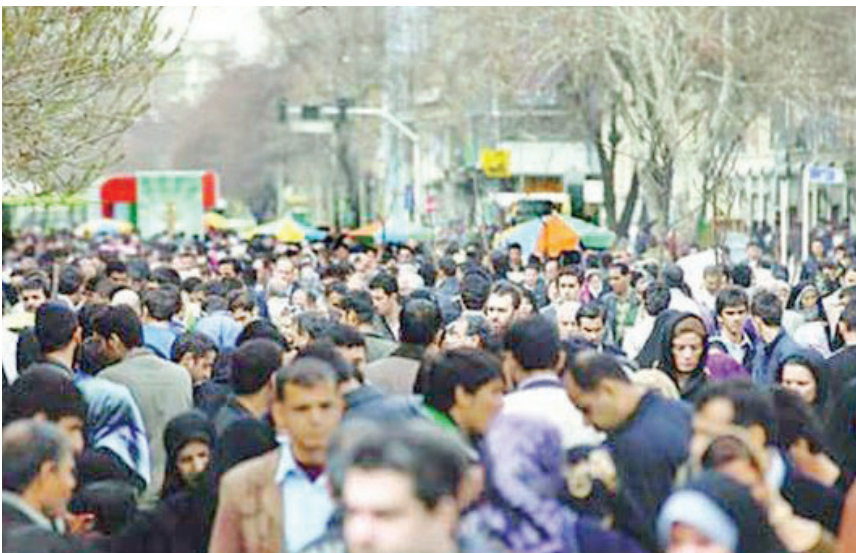
In spite of the instructions issued in the Iranian calendar year 1393 (March 2014-March 2015), in which the share of responsible bodies and their tasks toward the issue are mentioned, it has not been followed up precisely, he lamented.

“So, we decided to form a special committee to supervise the measures taken in this regard and report it to the ministry,” he added.

“In the following years, we could reduce child mortality and increase life expectancy using health network, vaccination, oral fluid therapy, acute respiratory disease reduction, promotion of breast feeding, growth charts recording, reduction of malnutrition, as well as pregnancy and postpartum care.”

However, it is necessary to intensify and expand prenatal care in less developed areas, as well as to provide postpartum care in deprived areas, so it is imperative to quickly review and announce the facilities required in the deprived areas.

Prioritize the development of infertility treatment centers to serve couples who need



treatment due to physiological problems, so that all medical universities should establish an infertility treatment center and inform the residents about the establishment. Whole services at these centers should be free of charge. Required resources will be provided by the Ministry’s headquarters.

It is essential to form an expert team to encourage and educate couples who refuse childbearing years after marriage, in addition to informing them of the possibility of infertility in the years ahead.

Highlighting the benefits and positive effects of having a second child in single-child

families, using the capacity of psychologists and experienced health professionals, especially in the field of mental health, is necessary.

Obviously, university chancellors should take advantage of cooperation with other departments in line with this important goal, while at the same time coordinating other departments to pace up this national movement to develop the infrastructure needed for the future.”

Iran’s population reached up to 80 million, while its growth rate declined to 1.2 percent a year. Censuses in 1350s-1360s (1971-1991), showed that population grew

from 34 million to nearly 50 million, corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 3.9 percent (3.2 percent from births and 0.7 percent from net migration).

The country experienced the highest population growth rate over a 5-year period between 1980 and 1985, when the population grew by nearly 4 percent per year.

Decade later, however, in the Iranian calendar year 1374 (March 1996- March 1997), the results of census showed a rapid decline in the population growth rate due to fertility decline, which dropped from 6.2 births per woman to 2.5 births per woman, over a decade.

According to the data released by the National Organization for Civil Registration, comparing past three years, some 1,366,509 infants were born in the country, whose births were registered last year, while 1,487,913 births occurred a year before it, and 1,528,053 births have been recorded in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), a difference of roughly 100,000 per year.

Several socioeconomic factors led to fertility rate decrease and reproductive behavior in the country, including urbanization, education, financial issues, first marriage age, as well as increased access to family planning services along with increased time gap between the first born and marriage.

Iran currently achieved a demographic window of opportunity which must be seized now before its working-age population starts to shrink and get older in 2050s.

Old taxis soon reach up to 192,000

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — There are currently 150,000 clunker taxis in the country, which will reach up to 192,000 by the end of this year (March 2020), Morteza Zameni, director general of urban taxi drivers union has said.

The number of old taxis is expected to reach 240,000 by the next 2 years, which constitutes 75 percent of the country’s total taxi fleet, he lamented, IRNA reported on Friday.

Referring to the renovation scheme of 90,000 clunker taxis started since past three years, he noted that some 186,000 taxis were extremely old, aged 10 or more and required to be replaced with newer ones.

This year, regarding economic conditions and sanctions, car prices have increased several fold, and this has led to a halt to the renovation scheme, but negotiations with Iran Khodro car manufacturing company led to a contract to receive some 10,000 cabs by the end of this year, he explained.



He went on to regret that no banks provide low-profit loans for the renovation of the taxi fleet, and taxi owners cannot afford to pay back the loans, so the process has been halted.

Rise in global sea level after melting of Greenland ice sheet

Greenland is experiencing “extreme” temperatures as the record-setting heatwave that blasted Europe last week hovers over the region.

Up to half the surface of the island’s ice sheet is thought to be currently melting, with runoff equivalent to a 0.5mm rise in global sea levels in July alone.

It comes less than a week after Britain saw its hottest-ever day, with a high of 38.7C recorded at Cambridge botanic garden last Thursday. Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands also experienced record-high temperatures due to a plume of air from north Africa.

Greenland has seen abnormally high temperatures so far this summer, scientists have told The Independent, with melting expected to rival the record levels seen in 2012.

Dr Andrew Sole, a glaciologist from the University of Sheffield, said: “This year Greenland and other parts of the Arctic have experienced some record-breaking

temperatures. In mid-June, temperatures along the eastern coast of Greenland were up to 9C above the 1981-to-2010 average.

82 degrees north, experienced a temperature of 21C in mid-July.”

Dr Amber Leeson, of the University of Lancaster, said that temperatures had breached the 0C mark “in even the highest and coldest” areas of Greenland, where the mercury ordinarily hits an average of -10C at this time of year. “The Danish Meteorological Institute thinks that yesterday, about half of Greenland’s ice surface was melting – that’s twice as much as is normal for July,” she told The Independent.

And Dr Twila Moon, of the University of Colorado’s National Snow and Ice Data Centre, told The Independent that temperatures over large areas of the ice sheet reached 5C or more above average on Wednesday.

“These are extreme temperatures for the ice sheet, and communities around the Greenland coast are likely bracing

for flooding from ice melt,” she added. “Forecasts for this week suggest that this may be the second-largest melt event – in terms of surface area of melt – since records began in the 1950s.”

Ruth Mottram, of the Danish Meteorological Institute, told CNN this week that an estimated 180 billion tons of Greenland’s ice had melted into the ocean since 1 July, raising sea levels by about 0.5mm.

The current level of melting is a symptom of global climate change, said Dr Ryan Neely of the National Centre for Atmospheric Science, a research centre in Leeds. He said conditions at the Summit observation station at the top of Greenland’s ice sheet “have been the most extreme we have ever observed”.

He told The Independent: “We have observed melt events before at Summit but never the multiple days of melt that we have observed this week. Previous to the last couple of days, we had a melt event on 12 June, 2019. Before that was on 11 July,

2012. Before that was in 1889.”

However, one researcher sounded a note of caution regarding the severity of the current weather.

While record-breaking temperatures in parts of the northern hemisphere were a “sure sign” of climate change, said Professor Jeffrey Kargel of Arizona’s Planetary Science Institute, “at this time we cannot say that a couple of days of hot weather in Greenland will result in a sea level change, or that a subsequent period of colder weather than normal might negate this heatwave”.

He added: “We need to wait for scientists to go about producing, vetting, and releasing scientific results before we can say that any significant changes have occurred to the melting rate due to this heatwave.”

News of Greenland’s heatwave came as the UK’s Met Office revealed the country’s 10 hottest years on record had all occurred after 2002. None of the 10 coldest have taken place after 1963, analysis showed.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Some 50 people die in traffic-related accidents per day

Everyday 40 to 50 people in the country lose their lives on a daily basis in traffic-related accidents, an official with traffic police has said. Police has taken all necessary measures to decrease the number of traffic related deaths, and considering the current conditions of roads and the budget there is nothing much left to do, Fars news agency quoted Mohammad Hossein Hamidi as saying on Saturday. Revising the traffic laws and adopting stricter laws, improving road conditions and increasing vehicle safety are essential to decrease the number of road crashes, Hamidi noted.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“cerebro-, cerebr-”

■ **Meaning**: brain

■ **For example**: Passive smoking is considered a major cause of **cerebrovascular** disease, which causes strokes.

PHRASAL VERB

Think something up

■ **Meaning**: to produce a new idea, name etc. by thinking

■ **For example**: She was trying to think up an excuse.

IDIOM

Give somebody a (good) run for their money

■ **Explanation**: to make your opponent in a competition use all their skill and effort to defeat you

■ **For example**: They’ve given some of the top teams a run for their money this season.

جان باختن ۵۰ نفر در تصادفات رانندگی کشور در هر روز

رئیس پلیس راه راهور ناجا گفت: روزانه بین ۴۰ تا ۵۰ نفر در تصادفات رانندگی کشور کشته می شوند.

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری فارس، سردار محمدحسین حمیدی با اعلام خبر فوق اظهار داشت: اقدامات پلیس به حد نهایی خود در کاهش تلفات تصادفات رسیده و با وضعیت فعلی اعتبارات، سفرها و ... نمی‌توان بیش از این تصادفات رانندگی را کاهش داد وی تأکید کرد: اصلاح قوانین و افزایش بازدارندگی آنها و اصلاح وضعیت راه و افزایش ایمنی خودروها از جمله ضروریات برای تداوم کاهش کشته های تصادفات رانندگی است.

U.S. formally abandons INF, Moscow announces missile treaty’s demise

➔ “On Aug 2, 2019, at the initiative of the U.S. side, the treaty between the Soviet Union and the U.S. on the elimination of their medium-range and shorter-range missiles ... was terminated,” Russia’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

The U.S. was scheduled to leave the treaty on August 2, a deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump in February.

NATO also blamed Russia for the demise of the missile treaty and vowed to respond in a “measured and responsible way” to Moscow’s deployment of a cruise missile.

“Russia bears sole responsibility for the demise of the Treaty. NATO will respond in a measured and responsible way to the significant risks posed by the Russian 9M729 missile to Allied security,” the transatlantic alliance said.

Washington had said Moscow’s failure to comply with the treaty was the main reason behind its pullout decision. Russia, however, says it has not breached the accord and believes the US planned to abandon the deal as part of its plan to develop its own sophisticated missiles.

According to reports, Washington sees a



benefit in developing new weapons as part of its new policy to confront both China and Russia.

Last month, newly confirmed Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said abandoning the treaty would free up the U.S. military “to

deal with not just Russia, but China.”

Other U.S. officials, however, have warned the decision would jeopardize the country’s future missile testing and research programs as the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives will not provide adequate funding.

Recently, the House declined to fund the Trump administration’s request of about \$96 million for the development of the missiles in its version of a fiscal-year 2020 budget and military policy bill.

Washington has been deploying its missiles in Eastern Europe and near Russia’s western borders, a provocative move denounced by the Kremlin.

According to Press TV, Moscow has repeatedly warned Washington not to deploy such missiles in the vicinity of Russia’s borders, vowing to deploy its own missiles, capable of reaching all parts of Europe in response.

The treaty -- concluded in 1987 by then U.S. president Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev -- limited the Cold War powers’ medium-range missiles, both conventional and nuclear.

Trump to Europe: Take back your Daesh fighters or they will be released

U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened Europe that if the 28-member bloc fails to repatriate European Daesh members captured in Syria and Iraq, he may release the terrorists to return to the place where they came from.

Speaking to reporters at the White House lawn on Thursday, RT quoted Trump as saying, “You’ll always gonna have somebody around, but right now we’ve captured over 10,000 – we have 2,500 ISIS fighters that we want Europe to take, because they were going back into Europe, into France, into Germany, into various places.”

The European Commission announced recently that more than 2500 persons, who had once left various European countries to join the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq or Syria, are currently unaccounted for.

According to Julian King, the European Commissioner for security, at least 5,500

foreign terrorist fighters left the continent to travel to Iraq and Syria.

Trump further slammed Europe’s unwillingness to repatriate and prosecute its nationals and said, “So we have thousands of ISIS fighters that we want Europe to take and let’s see if [they] take them. And if they don’t take them, we’ll probably have to release them.”

This is not the first time that the US president is demanding European leaders act more decisively and take back their nationals. Back in February, he posted a tweet calling on Europe to take them back or Washington would be “forced to release them.”

European countries have shown mixed reactions to this, with some rejecting Trump’s demand because they fear that those returning home will be a security challenge for years to come, Press TV reported.

N. Korea increases pressure with latest missile launches

TEHRAN — North Korea fired missiles for the third time in eight days on Friday, a series of launches that analysts say are designed to improve military capabilities and pressure the United States and South Korea as they seek to restart denuclearization talks.

U.S. officials, who have been hoping to revive the stalled talks with North Korea, played down the launches. The North has been testing missiles despite U.S. President Donald Trump’s June 30 meeting with its leader Kim Jong Un, where they agreed to revive the talks.

The diplomatic process may have some bumps but conversations with North Korea are “going on even as we speak,” U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in Bangkok, where he is attending a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

South Korea’s government said the latest

projectiles fired by the North appeared to be new short-range ballistic missiles.

They flew 220 km (135 miles) and reached an altitude of 25 km (15 miles), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in Seoul said.

A U.S. official said U.S. intelligence had detected at least one projectile, and possibly more, that did not pose a threat to North America. U.S. officials said initial information indicated they were similar to two other short-range missile tests by Pyongyang since last week.

North Korean state media said Kim oversaw the firing of what they described as a new large-caliber, multiple-launch guided rocket system on Wednesday. He also observed the launch of a short-range ballistic missile last week.

The launches appear intended to put pressure on South Korea and the United States to stop planned military exercises later this month and offer other concessions.

Multiple blasts hit Thai capital as it hosts top U.S. diplomat

TEHRAN — Six explosions have rocked Thailand’s capital, Bangkok, as it plays host to a major South-east Asian security summit of top diplomats from the U.S., the UK, China, Russia and a number of other countries.

The Friday morning blasts come as Bangkok is hosting a regional security meeting with the participation of top diplomats from a number of countries, including U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

At least three people were slightly injured as the result of the explosions, which followed the evacuation of the Royal Thai Police headquarters Thursday night, after a man was observed planting a suspicious package.

Although the suspect was apprehended, his identity has not been revealed and no one has claimed responsibility for the blasts on Friday.

The bombings took place just before a keynote speech



by America’s top diplomat Pompeo, in which he praised Thailand for rejoining the “democratic fold” after five years

of outright junta rule.

Thailand’s government urged the media to avoid speculation on the motive for the bombings.

“On the bombing this morning, I would like to condemn those causing the situation which destroys peace and damages the country’s image,” Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha said.

Police said two street cleaners had been hurt by what appeared to be a homemade bomb at a government complex hosting several ministries in the city’s northern district of Suan Luang.

According to Press TV, eyewitnesses said a security guard had also been wounded near the 77-story King Power Mahanakhon building. The area was partly cordoned off as police searched the area.

None of the blasts on Friday were in the immediate area of the meeting’s venue.

Australia urged to end arms sales to Saudi, UAE

TEHRAN— Human rights groups called on Australia to immediately stop selling weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the two Arab countries leading a deadly war against the people of Yemen.

Unlike many western nations, Australia has decided to ignore international outrage over the war in Yemen and maintained its arms deals with both the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the Guardian reported Thursday.

Last week, arms shipments destined for Saudi and UAE forces were pho-

tographed as they awaited shipment inside Sydney’s international airport.

Mwatana for Human Rights, a group investigating violations of humanitarian law in Yemen, has accused Australia of encouraging the war and “contributing to the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.”

The organization says Australia should “immediately suspend arms exports” to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, arguing that distance did not justify Australia abrogating its responsibility towards the Middle East region and the Saudi-led

coalition’s crimes.

“The behavior of the coalition in committing violations of [international humanitarian law] and war crimes would not continue if the allies of Saudi Arabia and UAE, including [Australia], took a firm position and suspended the arms sales,” a Mwatana spokesman, Osamah Al-Fakih, told Guardian Australia.

“Instead of fueling the armed conflict with arms, Australia must take positive steps toward accountability for the violations committed by all parties to the conflict and toward justice for all

victims of human rights violations in Yemen,” he added.

According to Pres TV, many countries, including the UK, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Belgium, have all suspended arms exports either upon court orders or receiving evidence that the weapons were indeed used against civilians in Yemen.

Australia, however, says it has put in place extensive checks to ensure its weapons are not used by Saudi and Emirati militaries in violation of humanitarian law.

Saudi mercenaries killed as Yemeni missiles hit Najran

➔ The report cited a Houthi military spokesman as saying that the parade being staged in preparation for a military move against the provinces of Taiz and Dalea, which are under the control of Ansarullah movement.

Meanwhile, the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya al-Hadath channel put the number of those killed at 40.

A military source confirmed the death of the commander loyal to Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, the former Yemeni president.

A witness told Reuters that “a group of soldiers were crying over a body believed to be of the commander,” referring to pro-Hadi militants.

■ Missile attack on Dammam

In a separate retaliatory attack on Thursday, Yemeni forces targeted a military base in the city of Dammam in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province with ballistic missiles.

There were no immediate reports about the possible casualties and damage from the attack.

Foreign mercenaries in Yemen are being funded and armed by Saudi Arabia and some of its regional allies.

The army and Ansarullah forces have intensified their retaliatory strikes to force Riyadh to stop its onslaught against its neighbor.

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 Ansarullah movement.

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

13th round of Syria talks held in Kazakh capital

TEHRAN — A 13th round of talks aimed at finding a political solution to the ongoing conflict in Syria has officially gotten has been held in Kazakhstan’s capital Nur-Sultan.

Delegations from three guarantor states of the Syria peace process - Iran, Russia and Turkey - along with UN representatives arrived in the city, seeking an end to the eight-year conflict in Syria.

Observers from Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq were also reportedly joining the talks for the first time.

According to Syria’s official news agency SANA, a Syrian government delegation headed by UN Ambassador Bashar al-Ja’afari arrived in Nur-Sultan on Thursday morning to participate in the two-day talks. Representatives of some armed Syrian opposition groups have also confirmed their participation.

On the sidelines, the Syrian government delegation held separate meetings with the Russian president’s special envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev and Ali Asghar Khaji, the Iranian foreign minister’s senior aide for special political affairs, to discuss the latest developments in Syria.

The talks are expected to deal with the situation in Syria in general, and in the northwestern region of Idlib in particular where the foreign-backed terrorist organization of Jabhat al-Nusra controls the majority of the area.

The Syrian army is in the midst of an offensive, which began more than some months ago, in the militant-held province to liberate it from the grip of Takfiri terrorists.

Turkey, which backs some militant groups operating in Idlib, opposes an upcoming Syrian army liberation operation in the province fearing a fresh wave of refugees. However, Iran and Russia strongly support the planned counter-terrorism battle.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has recently stressed his government’s determination to eliminate terrorist groups which are holed up in Idlib and attack civilians in neighboring areas.

According to press TV, the Thursday talks are also expected to concentrate on forming a committee on discussing Syria’s new Constitution, the return of the displaced Syrians, and the means to help Syria reconstruct the country.

‘UN failure to address Israel crimes against Palestinian kids inexcusable’

TEHRAN — A senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has censured the United Nations for its failure to include Israel in its annual blacklist of armed forces that commit atrocities against youths, arguing that the world body’s falling short of recognizing Israeli crimes against Palestinian children is inexcusable.

“This failure is inexcusable, given Israel’s dismal human rights record and its documented abuses against Palestinian children, including the arbitrary detention of hundreds of children every year, its use of torture against them and other grave violations, including the deliberate killing and maiming of roughly 2,800 Palestinian children in 2018 alone,” Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the PLO’s executive committee, said in a statement on Thursday.

“Turning a blind eye to Israeli crimes and failing to apply such nominal standards of accountability emboldens the occupying power to escalate its flagrant violations, as documented and reported by human rights organizations,” she added.

According to Press TV, Ashrawi noted, “In light of the international community’s abdication of its responsibilities vis-à-vis international law, it is no surprise that Israel continues to commit war crimes and violate international law and human rights on a daily basis with shameful impunity.”

“Additionally, the right-wing in Israel is exploiting the current US-Israeli partnership to create new facts on the ground with absolute disregard for international law and declared rejection of the internationally-endorsed requirements of peace, including Palestinian statehood,” Ashrawi pointed out.

She stressed that “the international community and world bodies have a legal and moral obligation to hold Israel accountable for its relentless criminality and rogue conduct, to preserve the reputé and relevance of international rules, and to ensure that Palestinian people enjoy their inalienable and absolute rights to self-determination and freedom.”



‘An insult to boxing’ – De la Hoya angry as IBF strips Alvarez of belt

Promoter Oscar de la Hoya has called the IBF’s decision to strip Saul ‘Canelo’ Alvarez of his middleweight title “an insult to boxing”. Alvarez - the sport’s best-paid fighter - won the title from Daniel Jacobs in May to hold the IBF, WBA and WBC belts.

But his failure to agree a bout with the IBF’s mandatory challenger saw him stripped of the title on Thursday.

De la Hoya said the decision “validates already existing concerns about the credibility of the IBF championship”.

He added: “This is an insult to boxing and more importantly an insult to the boxing fans of the world.”

Mexican Alvarez, 29, was mandated to face Ukraine’s Sergiy Derevyanchenko but the parties failed to reach an agreement despite extensions being made to the IBF’s deadline.

De la Hoya said Derevyanchenko’s team had been offered an “unprecedented amount of money for a fighter of his limited stature and limited popularity”.

Alvarez, who has lost once in 55 bouts, signed a broadcast deal worth £278m with streaming service DAZN in October, making him the sport’s biggest earner.

But he has now also lost his traditional WBC belt after the organisation controversially upgraded him to a newly formed ‘franchise champion’ status, with American Jermall Charlo taking his original title.

He is now expected to pursue a fight with WBO champion Demetrius Andrade, while Derevyanchenko is reportedly set to agree a bout for the now vacant IBF belt with former unified world champion Gennady Golovkin.

(Source: BBC)

Alves joins Sao Paulo on free transfer

Former Paris St Germain right-back Dani Alves has joined Sao Paulo on a free transfer, the Brazilian top-flight club said on Friday.

Brazil captain Alves, 36, signed a deal until Dec. 2022 after leaving PSG at the end of his contract in June.

Alves is the only player to win 40 trophies across club and international football and Sao Paulo referred to the signing as the “the most victorious player in the history of football”.

The former Barcelona and Juventus right-back will play Brazilian club football for the first time since 2002, with Bahia.

“Daniel Alves is the embodiment of what this management envisions for Sao Paulo,” Sao Paulo president Carlos Augusto de Barros e Silva said.

“He is also a socially engaged citizen and passionate about our country. Sao Paulo, therefore, wins on every possible front.

“One day I told Daniel that he would come to play at Sao Paulo. Today, I have the immense joy and pride to have kept that promise.”

(Source: Goal)

Hazard is struggling to take off

Real Madrid’s summer transfer window will likely be defined by the purchase of Eden Hazard, yet the former Lille prodigy is yet to impress those in the Spanish capital.

Having long been heralded as the Premier League’s best player Hazard arrived to much fanfare in Madrid, however his pre-season hasn’t been anything to be blown away by.

Those at Valdebebas aren’t overly concerned with the fitness issues of the Belgian and they are altogether more bothered about how he is adapting to the team and the new environment.

Hazard must be completely ready to hit the ground running in LaLiga Santander, hence why Zinedine Zidane has given him so many minutes in pre-season.

He needs to understand how to play with his teammates and it’s interesting to note that his best football for Los Merengues has come alongside Isco and Karim Benzema.

Wednesday’s Audi Cup meeting with Fenerbahce saw the trio combine well, with the kind of short-interchangeable passing moves that leave defences dizzy.

Confidence has also played a part in Hazard’s struggles and the pressure to lead Real Madrid’s attack is only going to increase.

His usual go-to move of cutting in from the left hasn’t been dangerous this summer and his decision-making near the opposition goal has been lacking the hint of genius that we’ve come to expect from him.

Vinicius has been shifted to the right when on the pitch with Hazard and he just isn’t the same over there.

With Marco Asensio set to miss the 2019/20 season, Zidane doesn’t have an abundance of options at his disposal he needs to find tactical solutions soon.

(Source: Marca)

Mbappe: I don’t want Neymar to leave PSG

Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe has said he wants teammate Neymar stay at the Parc des Princes despite speculation over a summer return to former club Barcelona.

The Brazil international joined from Barca for a world-record €222 million in 2017 but has not taken part in any preseason action with PSG hopeful Barca would make an acceptable offer.

But that has not happened and speaking ahead of Saturday’s Trophee des Champions clash with Rennes, Mbappe said his wish is that Neymar stays put.

“Everybody knows about his situation,” Mbappe said at a news conference in Shenzhen. “I do not want him to leave. He knows what I think of him and his situation.”

Coach Thomas Tuchel added that Neymar has trained well since returning for preseason and was involved in a group session ahead of the Rennes encounter despite the fact he is suspended following a clash with a supporter after their penalty shootout defeat in the Coupe de France final.

Asked about his public challenge to PSG at the UNFP awards ceremony in May, Mbappe was apologetic and underlined it was never his intention to attempt to force a summer exit

“No desire to leave, my words were ambiguous,” the 20-year-old said. “True, it was not the right time, nor place.

(Source: ESPN)

Women’s tennis tournament offers historic \$4.75 million prize money to winner

As the debate around pay parity in sport rumbles on, one women’s tournament in China is offering the biggest prize money in the history of tennis (yes, that even includes the men’s tour).

This year’s Shiseido WTA Finals in Shenzhen will award its winner an eye-watering \$4.75 million check if she manages to go the entire competition unbeaten.

The champion’s prize will eclipse the \$4 million handed to the entire USWNT team that won the FIFA Women’s World Cup and is over double what Tiger Woods earned from clinching this year’s Masters.

The ATP finals, the equivalent competition on the men’s tour, only set aside \$2.71 million for an undefeated champion last year -- demonstrating the work being done to uphold equal pay in tennis.

Current world No. 1 Ashleigh Barty says the prize money is the «icing on the cake» as she thanked sponsors for staging such a lucrative competition.

«As tennis professionals, we are very fortunate to make a living from playing the sport we love, and to be rewarded so well for it is a real privilege,» Barty told CNN Sport, in a written statement.

«I also take my hat off to all the amazing players over the years who helped make tennis so popular with fans around the world.»

■ <Truly amazing>

The WTA finals is the season-ending spectacle which brings together the eight best players on tour.

Competitors compete in two round robin



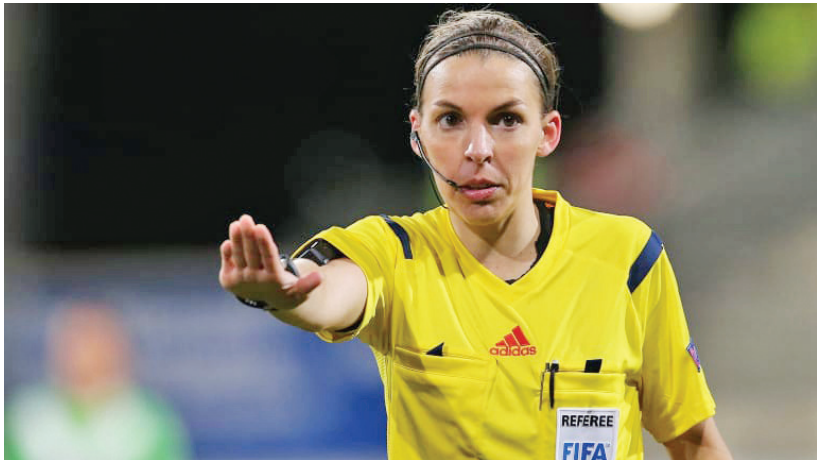
groups and knockout rounds to be crowned the WTA champion.

Eight of the last 16 winners have gone undefeated, the latest being 2018 victor Elina Svitolina.

The players vying for the bumper prize are decided based on the Porsche Race rankings, with points accumulated from 53 WTA tournaments and the four grand slams.

All will be keen to claim a share of the \$14 million prize purse which has been doubled from last year -- thanks, in part, to the tournament’s new title sponsor, beauty company Shiseido.

Frappart first woman to referee major UEFA men’s competitive match



Stephanie Frappart will referee the UEFA Super Cup final between Liverpool and Chelsea, becoming the first woman to take charge of a major men’s European game.

Frappart will lead a team largely made up of female officials as the Champions League winners face the Europa League holders on 14 August in Istanbul.

In July, the Frenchwoman refereed the Women’s World Cup final in Lyon.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said he was “delighted” at her appointment.

“I have said on many occasions that the potential for women’s football has no limits and I am delighted that Stephanie Frappart has been appointed to officiate at this year’s UEFA Super Cup,” Ceferin said.

Frappart will be joined by assistant referees Manuela Nicolosi (France) and Michelle O’Neal (Republic of Ireland), and fourth official Cuneyt Kalkir (Turkey).

“As an organisation we place the utmost importance on the development of women’s football in all areas,” Ceferin added.

“I hope the skill and devotion that Stephanie has shown throughout her career to reach this level will provide inspiration

to millions of girls and women around Europe and show them there should be no barriers in order to reach one’s dream.”

The 35-year-old took charge of the 2017 UEFA Women’s Euro semi-final.

In April, Frappart created history domestically as she became the first female referee to officiate a Ligue 1 match before being promoted to join the pool of Ligue 1 referees on a permanent basis for the 2019/20 season.

“Stephanie has proved over a number of years that she is one of the best female referees, not just in Europe but across the world,” said UEFA chief refereeing officer Roberto Rosetti.

“She has the ability to officiate on the biggest stage, as she proved at this year’s Women’s World Cup final. I hope this match in Istanbul will provide her with yet more experience as she enters the prime of her refereeing career.”

Frappart follows the steps of former female referee Nicole Petignat of Switzerland, who officiated three UEFA Cup qualifying round games between 2004 and 2009.

(Source: BBC)

Esports - FIFA gamers converge on London chasing \$250,000 jackpot

Thirty two of the world’s best esports players are flexing their fingers and thumbs in readiness for the FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final at London’s O2 Arena this weekend.

Millions set out on the road fame and fortune but only one player will be left holding the \$250,000 winners’ cheque come Sunday in the cavernous Thames-side arena.

Thirty million fans are expected to view the action online on Facebook, Twitch, Twitter and YouTube with commentary in Arabic, Chinese, English, German, Portuguese and Spanish.

Around 1,500 spectators will watch Sunday’s finale inside the darkened arena when Mosaad ‘MsDossary’ Aldossary from Saudi Arabia hopes to become the first player to defend the title since the tournament began in relative obscurity in 2004.

He will face stiff opposition from a host of players best-known for their gaming names, such as English duo ‘F2Tekkz’ (Donovan Hunt) and ‘Stokes’ (Tom Stokes).

Brazil has the biggest representation with five players including ‘Resende’, ‘Fifilza’ and ‘Zezinho’, the latter who represents an esports team endorsed by Dutch great Ruud Gullit.

While some may still scoff at the notion of ‘professional’ esports players, the money at stake is substantial, if not quite in the \$30 million league of the Fortnite World Cup.

This year’s pot is \$500,000 (£413,052.46), although players like 18-year-old Hunt, this year’s favourite, has already amassed 200,000 pounds in prize money.

Soccer’s world governing body FIFA no longer regards



esports as purely a marketing tool either, with a department now focussed solely on growing it alongside the real game.

■ Sustainable sport

“We want to build a healthy, sustainable and professional sport,” Christian Volk, FIFA’s Director of efootball and gaming, told reporters on Thursday in a hotel alongside the O2 Arena.

“We have a lot of ambitions, we are here for the long run. We are just starting.

“We have had a very successful 25-year relationship with EA Sports who have built the most successful sports simulation in the world and on the other side you have the governing body of the world’s biggest sport. Combined we can bring things to the table that are rather rare. It’s a dynamic ecosystem.”

■ Record breaking

All four of tennis’ grand slams now offer equal money to both its men’s and women’s singles champions, although it took until 2007 for Wimbledon to make the move.

However, this year’s WTA Finals can boast a more lucrative winner’s check than any of the major tournaments on the circuit.

Even if the eventual winner loses one of her group games, she will still walk away with \$4,420,000 and should she lose two, she will claim \$4,115,000.

It could also be a record breaking tournament for the women’s doubles champions

-- an undefeated duo will earn \$1 million.

WTA chief executive Steve Simon says the prize money on offer is an indication of the significant growth of women’s tennis around the world.

«For five decades the WTA has been committed to equal pay and equal opportunity, beginning with the pioneering efforts of Billie Jean King and all of the «Original Nine,»» he said, in a written statement provided to CNN Sport.

The «Original Nine» were the group of women -- King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey, Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville Reid, Julie Heldman, Peaches Bartkowicz, Kristy Pigeon and Valerie Ziegenfuss -- who helped set up the Virginia Slims Circuit, which later became the WTA Tour.

«Working with the Gemdale Group in Shenzhen, we are excited to provide an unprecedented level of investment that supports the founding principles of the WTA,» added Simon.

Despite the obvious step forward in terms of pay parity, many still feel the sport has a long way to go.

The top male players consistently earn more than the top female players and the likes of Serena Williams have had to continuously defend equal pay at the grand slams.

In 2016, Williams wrote an open letter calling for more equality in sport: «It frustrates me because I know firsthand that I, like you, have done the same work and made the same sacrifices as our male counterparts,» it read.

(Source: CNN)

Australia’s Jack to ‘fight’ doping charge and return to pool



Australian swimmer Shayna Jack said on Friday she would fight to clear her name in the wake of a positive drug test that embarrassed the nation’s swim team at the recent world championships.

The 20-year-old freestyle swimmer was withdrawn from the team days before the championships in Gwangju, having tested positive for Ligandrol, a banned anabolic agent, in an out-of-competition test on June 26.

Facing a mandatory four-year ban, she claimed on social media that she did not know how the substance entered her body.

After a briefing with Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) officials in Brisbane on Friday, Jack said investigations were under way to clear her.

“We’ve started the process which is really great,” she told reporters.

“I’m really happy with how everything’s going and I’m not going to stop until I prove my innocence and fight to get myself back in the pool because that’s my dream and I’m never going to let that go.”

Jack, a member of Australia’s 4x100 metres freestyle relay team which set the world record at the Commonwealth Games

in the Gold Coast last year, reiterated her claim that she did not know how the drug entered her body.

“It’s still ongoing investigations, we can’t clear that with anyone at the moment,” she said.

“We’re still looking into it but we’re not going to let any stone unturned.”

Jack revealed her drug test on social media in the final days of the world championships, embarrassing the team after compatriot and Olympic champion Mack Horton declined to share a podium with Chinese swimmer Sun Yang in an act of protest.

Sun, who served a three-month doping ban in 2014, was competing under a cloud at Gwangju, with the World Anti-Doping Agency seeking to review a decision which cleared him of wrongdoing after an aborted drug test last year.

National governing body Swimming Australia’s (SA) handling of Jack’s case also drew widespread criticism, given Jack’s test result was kept under wraps for weeks.

SA claimed they were bound by a confidentiality agreement with ASADA.

(Source: Eurosport)

Iran freestyle team runners-up at Cadet World

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Russia produced three World champions on the final night of men’s freestyle action to edge out Iran by two points in the team race on Wednesday at the 2019 Cadet World Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Winning gold medals at 51 kg, 60 kg and 71 kg, Russia collected 168 team points, while Iran went 1-2 in its gold-medal matches to finish with 166 points.

The first champion of the night for Russia was two-time U15 European champion Mukhamed KHANIEV (RUS). Wrestling at 51 kg, Khaniev defeated Zhakhongir AKHMAJANOV (KAZ), 10-5.

Following up Khaniev’s performance was Arip ABDULAEV (RUS), who is also a two-time U15 European champion, unitedworldwrestling.org reported.

Abdulaev won a crucial head-to-head over Iran’s Erfan Mohammad ELAHI (IRI), 9-6, in the 60 kg finals. The win was critical in helping push Russia past Iran in the team race.

At the very next weight, 71 kg, Soslan TIGIEV (RUS) wrapped up his first World tournament with a Cadet World championship, defeating 2017 U15 Balkan champion Krisztian BIRO (ROU) in a 13-11 shootout.

Iran did win a gold medal at 92 kg as 2019 Cadet Asian champion Soheyl YOUSEFI SANGANI (IRI) outlasted Zagid KARIMOV (RUS), 3-1.

In the 43 kg gold-medal bout, 2018 Cadet Pan American freestyle and Greco-Roman champion Marc-Anthony MCGOWAN (USA) won the first medal of the tournament for the United States with a late takedown over 2019 Cadet Asian champion Ali Mehran ARAB FIROUZJAEI (IRI) for a 3-1 win.

Rounding out the top-five in the team race was India with 106 points, Japan with 83 points and USA with 78 points.

● **Finals results**

■ **45 kg**

GOLD - Marc-Anthony MCGOWAN (USA) dec. Ali Mehran ARAB FIROUZJAEI (IRI), 3-1

BRONZE - Tolga OZBEK (TUR) dec. Suraj Sanju ANNIKERI (IND), 8-6

BRONZE - Murad HAGVERDIYEV (AZE) dec. Vladislav NIKANDROV (KGZ), 10-8

■ **48 kg**

GOLD - Rahman Mousa AMOUZADKHALILI (IRI) dec. Kamronbek KADAMOV (UZB), 4-4

BRONZE - Yuto NISHIUCHI (JPN) dec. Stevo POULIN (USA), 8-6

BRONZE - Udit UDIT (IND) dec. Javid JAVADOV (AZE), 11-2

■ **51 kg**

GOLD - Mukhamed KHANIEV (RUS) dec. Zhakhongir AKHMAJANOV (KAZ), 10-5

BRONZE - Ato MARUYAMA (JPN) dec. Sunil SUNIL (IND), 3-2

BRONZE - Mykyta ABRAMOV (UKR) dec. Ali Abolfazl GHOLI ZADEGAN KOLOUKHI (IRI), 5-3

■ **55 kg**

GOLD - Umidjon JALOLOV (UZB) dec. Mahdi Mehرداد VEISI (IRI), 3-1

BRONZE - Aman AMAN (IND) dec. Muhammet KARAVUS



(TUR), 10-6
BRONZE - Riku SUGANUMA (JPN) dec. Robert HOWARD (USA), 5-4

■ **60 kg**

GOLD - Arip ABDULAEV (RUS) dec. Erfan Mohammad ELAHI (IRI), 9-6

BRONZE - Yoshinosuke AOYAGI (JPN) df. Farhad KARIMLI (AZE), injury default

BRONZE - Viktor TASHOHLO (UKR) dec. Daviti ABDALADZE (GEO), 5-2

■ **65 kg**

GOLD - Dzhabrail GADZHIEV (AZE) dec. Batyrbek TSKHOVREBOV (RUS), 6-4

BRONZE - Manish GOSWAMI (IND) dec. Kudratbek NURULLAEV (UZB), 5-2

BRONZE - Ryosuke KERA (JPN) dec. Davit PATSINASHVILI (GEO), 3-1

■ **71 kg**

GOLD - Soslan TIGIEV (RUS) dec. Krisztian BIRO (ROU), 13-11

BRONZE - Abolfazl VALIPOURKHATIR (IRI) dec. Kevin MAKOTA STROEM (SWE), 7-2

BRONZE - Alexander Joseph FACUNDO (USA) dec. Davit KUTCHUASHVILI (GEO), 5-2

■ **80 kg**

GOLD - Amirhossein Biglar FIROUZPOURBANDPEI (IRI) dec. Arslan BAGAEV (RUS), 8-1

BRONZE - Rakhim MAGAMADOV (FRA) dec. Emre

CIFTCI (TUR), 6-1
BRONZE - Denys SAHALIUK (UKR) dec. Ion DEMIAN (MDA), 10-4

■ **92 kg**

GOLD - Soheyl YOUSEFI SANGANI (IRI) dec. Zagid KARIMOV (RUS), 3-1

BRONZE - Bekzat TAZHI (KAZ) df. Gkivi BLIATZE (GRE), fall

BRONZE - Lyova GEVORGYAN (ARM) dec. Monu DAHIYA (IND), 7-4

■ **110 kg**

GOLD - Arsamag ZASSEEV (RUS) TF Giorgi CHIKHRADZE (GEO), 10-0

BRONZE - Adil MISIRCI (TUR) dec. Sergey SARGSYAN (ARM), 3-2

BRONZE - Kumar ANIRUDH (IND) dec. Salar Saeid HABIBIEHSANI (IRI), 8-1

■ **Team standings**

1. Russia – 168
2. Iran – 166
3. India – 106
4. Japan – 83
5. USA – 78
6. Uzbekistan – 68
7. Azerbaijan – 66
8. Ukraine – 59
9. Turkey – 58
10. Georgia – 54

Tajikistan complete the job to capture title

Dushanbe: Tajikistan completed a superb week on home soil, defeating Afghanistan 1-0 and confirming their status as CAFA U-16 Championship winners on Thursday.

A second-half strike from Abdulfatoh Khudoidodzoda ultimately sealed the title for Tajikistan, who won four matches in a row to finish the five-match programme on top of the table with 13 points.

Earlier in the day, Uzbekistan had kept their hopes of an improbable final day title bid alive with a thumping win over Turkmenistan, but Tajikistan’s success in the later match meant Azamat Abduraimov’s side finished as runners-up

■ **TAJIKISTAN 1-0 AFGHANISTAN**

Tajikistan put the seal on a week of fine performances to become Central Asian champions with a 1-0 over Afghanistan, going a step further than collecting the single point they required to win the title at Dushanbe Central Stadium.

The final match of the tournament began with three sides still in contention for the title. Tajikistan needed any positive result, and Uzbekistan remained in with a chance after their earlier win over Turkmenistan,



but Afghanistan – on seven points – could also have emerged victorious with a five-goal win on the night.

In the end, the decider provided the most logical outcome but it was far from straight forward for the hosts, who took until late in the 70-minute clash to seal their win.

With the match still scoreless at half-time Tajikistan’s title was far from set in stone, but Khudoidodzoda struck six minutes after the interval to provide some welcome breathing space.

Khudoidodzoda’s hero status was in question when he was sent off after receiving a second yellow card just 12 minutes later, but Tajikistan’s 10 men held firm to keep their fourth clean sheet in the tournament and celebrate a highly impressive week in the nation’s capital.

Their impressive forward Muhammadvoris Saidaliev was rewarded for a fine tournament with the Most Valuable Player Award, while Afghanistan’s Ahmad Zakaria Hussaini won the top scorer award.

The next challenge for Turdiev’s talented side will come at next month’s AFC U-16 Championship 2020 Qualifiers, where Tajikistan will face hosts Jordan, as well as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Kuwait in Group A.

■ **Roll of Honour**

Champions: Tajikistan
Runners-up: Uzbekistan
Third place: Islamic Republic of Iran
Most Valuable Player: Muhammadvoris Saidaliev (TJK)
Top Goalscorer: Ahmad Zakaria Hussaini (AFG)
Fair Play: Kyrgyz Republic

(Source: AFC)

K-League blasts Juventus ‘deception’ over Ronaldo no-show

South Korea’s K-League has accused Juventus of «deception» after superstar Cristiano Ronaldo sat out last week’s friendly in Seoul, enraging thousands of fans.

The Korean league said it felt «disappointed and cheated» and demanded an apology from the Italian football champions after the Portuguese forward spent Friday’s game on the bench.

A sell-out crowd of 65,000 made its displeasure known during the game against a K-League all-stars team, which was delayed for an hour after Juventus arrived late from the airport.

After a flight delay, Juventus requested a police escort and also asked for the game to be cut to two 40-minute halves -- a proposal that the K-League branded «ridiculous and insulting».

«K-League cannot help but feel disappointed and cheated by Juventus for its shamelessness,» a K-League statement said.

More than 2,000 fans plan to sue the sports agency that organized the game, one of a series of pre-season appearances



by European teams keen to promote themselves in Asia.

The K-League was unhappy with Juventus’s response to an initial complaint, saying it did not contain an apology or explanation.

The football body accused Juventus of a breach of contract by not playing

Ronaldo, rejecting its explanation that he was rested on medical advice.

«Ronaldo did not play even for a minute, contrary to the contract guaranteed that he will play for at least 45 minutes,» the K-League said.

«If Ronaldo was unable to play, it would be a blatant deception to include

Ronaldo as a substitute on the start list,» it added.

The K-League also criticized the club’s travel arrangements, and questioned its assertion that it took nearly two hours to get through the airport.

«K-League clearly register our profound indignation and disappointment to Juventus’s irresponsible behavior and manners, and we strongly urge Juventus to offer a sincere apology and explain the reason for Ronaldo’s no-show,» the statement said.

Fans have lashed out at Ronaldo, urging a boycott of products promoted by the five-time Ballon d’Or winner, while «doing a ‘Naldo» has become a popular term for avoiding work in the office.

The controversy was even dragged into the political arena when opposition lawmaker Na Kyung-won reportedly said: «There is one thing in common between (North Korean leader) Kim Jong Un and Ronaldo. They both perceive South Korea as a pushover.»

(Source: AFP)

Modibo Maïga reaches agreement with Persepolis

S P O R T S **TEHRAN**— Malian striker Modibo Maïga is on the verge of joining Iranian football club Persepolis.

The 31-year-old forward, who has most recently played at Buriram United of Thailand, arrived in Tehran early Thursday to undergo a medical.



Maïga is set to replace Croatian striker Mario Budimir who left Persepolis at the end of the season.

A full international for Mali since 2007, he was part of their squads at the four Africa Cup of Nations tournaments, helping them to third place in the 2012 and 2013 editions.

Maïga’s Cheick Tidiiane Diabaté has recently joined Persepolis’s arch rivals Esteghlal.

Iran beat Kyrgyzstan, finish in 3rd place at CAFA U-16 Championship

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran defeated Kyrgyzstan 5-0 in the final day of the 2019 CAFA U-16 Championship on Thursday.

Hossein Abdi’s side ended their campaign with a 5-0 win over Kyrgyz Republic in Hisor, leaving Nurlan Bukuev’s side without a win in the five-match tournament.

Iran raced into a 14th-minute lead through Yadegar Rostami, before substitute Sobhan Kamalvand made a near-instant impact to score on the stroke of half-time.

Rostami added his second to stretch the margin to three 11 minutes into the second-half, before Akbar Rangbar and Khaled Rohani added their names to the scoresheet to complete a happy ending to the competition for Hossein Abdi’s charges, who finished the tournament in third place.

Iran had defeated Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and lost to Afghanistan and Tajikistan in the tournament.

The CAFA Youth Championship is an international football competition in Central Asia for the member nations of the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA).

The competition was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Esteghlal Downs Machine Sazi in Friendly Match

TASNIM — Esteghlal football team defeated Machine Sazi in a friendly match on Thursday.

In the match held in Tehran’s Naft Complex, Daryush Shojaeian (26th), Farshid Esmaeili (30th), Mohammad Daneshgar (50th) and Ali Dashti (90th) scored for the Blues.

Persepolis also defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-0 at the Shahid Kazemi Stadium.

The teams are preparing for the new season of the Iran Professional League (IPL).

The exact date of the beginning of the new season has not yet been announced.

Soccer: Four Central Asian players get life bans for match-fixing

Four Central Asian players have been slapped with life bans for match-fixing during the Asian Football Cup (AFC) tournaments in 2017 and 2018, the continent’s soccer governing body said on Friday.

The Asian Football Confederation said on Friday three Kyrgyz players and one Tajik had been “found guilty of being involved in a conspiracy to manipulate match(es)” involving their clubs.

Kyrgyz national Kursanbek Sheratov was found guilty of supporting betting activity in connection with match involving Kyrgyz club Dordoi FC at the 2017 tournament.

Kyrgyz players Iliaz Alimov and Abduaziz Mahkamov conspired to fix matches involving their club FC Alay in the 2017 “and/or 2018 season of the AFC Cup,” the governing body said in a statement.

A third player from the Kyrgyz club Alay, Tajik national Abduaziz Mahkamov, was also guilty of fixing matches in the 2017 and 2018 AFC Cups.

The annual Asian Football Cup is the continent’s second-tier club competition for emerging nations behind the premier Asian Champions League. Asian soccer has long been riddled with corruption, particularly at lower levels, with players and officials regularly banned for match-fixing.

Six people, including a former referee and members of Indonesia’s national soccer association, were given jail sentences earlier this month in connection with a 2018 game in the nation’s third-tier league.

The AFC did not provide further details.

(Source: Reuters)

IPL: 2019-20 Season to Start on August 14

TASNIM — The Iran Professional League’s 2019/20 season will kick off on August 14.

The IPL new season was originally scheduled for August 1. Persepolis will start the campaign to win the title for the fourth time in a row.

The Iran Professional League is the highest division of professional football in Iran. The league was also known as the Persian Gulf Cup from 2006.

It is the top-level football league in Iran since its foundation in 2 November 2001.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

It is enough wisdom for you that it
clarified salvation and depravity for you.
Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Sculpture

■ An exhibition of sculptures by Mohammad Moqaddasi is underway at Tehran's CMA — Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Silence" will run until August 7 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

■ Sculptures by Alireza Faridani are currently on display in an exhibition at Idea Gallery. The exhibit named "Father's Land" will be running until August 6 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ A collection of sculptures by Leila Shoghi is on view in an exhibition at Basmeh Gallery. The exhibit titled "Birthing" will run until August 9 at the gallery located at Block A, Park Prince Bldg., Hakim-Azam St., North Shiraz St.
■ Mojtaba Ramzi, Mehrzad La'ali, Sadeq Musavi, Parizad Moshkzad and two other artists are showcasing their sculptures in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery. The exhibit named "Ring Narratives" runs until August 7 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

Painting

■ Negar Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Saba Bahrami, Zahra Shamsi, Mitra Nasr, Rozita Sarraf, Nader Mehranfar, Hamidreza Ghafari and several other artists.

The exhibit entitled "Contemporary Human 3" will run until August 7 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

■ A collection of paintings by Sepideh Ahmadi Monfared is on view in an exhibition at Saye Gallery.

The exhibit named "Until Mordad" will be running until August 7 at the gallery that can be found at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Shadi Ejbari is underway at Homa Gallery. Entitled "Manifestation of Monsters", the exhibit runs until August 13 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Paintings by Donya Abdollahi are on view in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery. The exhibit will be running until August 7 at the gallery, which can be found at Shirzad Alley, near Daneshju Park.

Multimedia

■ Paintings, photos and calligraphy works by Maryam Qodsi, Afsaneh Qorbani, Zahra Alizadeh, Fahimeh Ariadoost, Bardia Haddad, Mehdi Hosseini and several other artists are on display in an exhibition at Khorshid Gallery.

The exhibit named "Eternal Growth" runs until August 7 at the gallery located at 70 Tur Alley, off Africa Blvd.

■ Paintings, sculptures and calligraphic paintings by Mojgan Dabaghizadeh, Mona Sefidari, Farshid Abdi and Sudabeh Naderabadi are on view in an exhibition at Shalman Gallery. The exhibit titled "Evolution" will run until August 7 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

■ An exhibition displaying sets of installation, photos and videos by Raufeh Rostami is underway at Ag Gallery. The exhibit named "The Second Time" runs until August 8 at the gallery located at 43 Azodi St., Karim Khan Ave.

Peyman Maadi to star in "The Story of the Walnut Tree"

A R T TEHRAN — Peyman Maadi, the actor of "Camp X-Ray" and "Last Knights", will collaborate in Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's new film "The Story of the Walnut Tree", a public relations team of the project announced on Friday.

No further details were published about the story of the film, which has been written by Ebrahim Amini and will be produced by Seyyed Mostafa Ahmadi.

Maadi co-starred with Kristen Stewart in U.S. director Peter Sattler's debut "Camp X-Ray" in 2014 and collaborated in Japanese director Kazuaki Kiriya's action adventure "Last Knights" in 2015.

He also starred in "About Elly" and "A Separation" by Iranian prominent director Asghar Farhadi. He received the Silver Bear

for Best Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival for his role in "A Separation" in 2011.

Maadi also appeared in "The Night Of", a 2016 American crime drama television miniseries, broadcast on HBO.

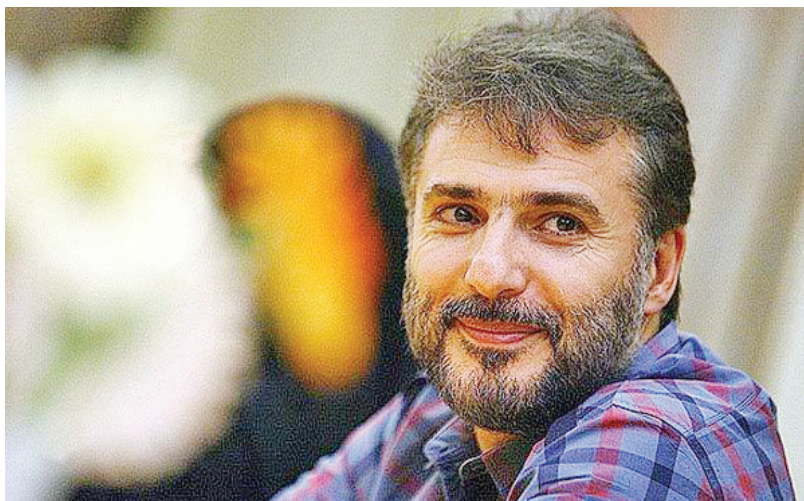
Mahdavian is the director of acclaimed dramas "Standing in the Dust", about Ahmad Motevasselian, an IRGC commander who was kidnapped by the Zionist regime in 1982 in Lebanon and "The Middy Event", a political drama that features the terrorist atrocity of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization in Iran of the 1980s.

He has also directed "Lottery", about trafficking Iranian women to Arab countries, and "Blood Trap", a sequel to his political drama "Middy Event".



This combination photo shows director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian (L) and actor Peyman Maadi.

Donald Trump to appear in Iranian musical "City of Cats"



Javad Hashemi in an undated photo.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Javad Hashemi plans to use an animated character of President Donald Trump in his new musical "The City of Cats".

"The film tells the story of people who dream of becoming singers, they choose the wrong way and leave their homeland to make their dreams come

true," Hashemi told the Persian service of MNA on Friday.

"Shooting will begin next month with actors Farhad Aiish, Amin Zendegani, Melika Abdorrazzagi and Amir Ghaffarmanesh," he added.

Hashemi directed the musical "Octopus 1: White forehead" in 2011. He made a sequel to the film named "White-Forehead 2".

Photos depict oppression of Kurds under Saddam Hussein at Tehran exhibit



A poster for "Land of Confusion", an exhibition of photos by Mohammad Sayyad.

A R T TEHRAN — A selection of photos putting the spotlight on the miseries of the Iraqi Kurds under Saddam Hussein who were forced to immigrate to Iran is on display in an exhibition at Tehran's Nabshi Gallery.

The photos are taken by Iranian photojournalist Mohammad Sayyad for the exhibition named "Land of Confusion".

During his career spanning nearly five decades, Sayyad has recorded different vital events, including the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. He also collaborated with the Associated Press News Agency for several years.

The exhibit will be running until August 30 at the gallery located at 51 Khosro Alley, Villa St.

Former TV host Rashidpur launches celebration to honor movies on Iran's attractions

A R T TEHRAN — Reza Rashidpur, the former host of the popular TV programs "Shabe Shishei" and "Hala Khorshid", has launched a celebration to honor movies and cineastes promoting Iran's natural and cultural attractions.

"Most Iranian films that are a box office success or win honors at international events portray Iran as a rundown place full of drug addicts, and neglect to depict even a minimum of the natural attractions of the country," Rashidpur said on Thursday during the opening ceremony of the first edition of the Cinema Tours Festival, which was held on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf.

He lamented the large supply of dubious money in Iranian cinema and noted the travel agency Top Tours Group sponsors the celebration.

"I've been seeking to organize the celebration over the past five years and I received proposals to accept both clean or dirty moneys to hold the celebration, but finally I agreed to collaborate with the Top Tours Group, whose source of incomes is



Actor Ali Nasirian (L) receives an award for his lifetime achievements from Information and Communication Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi during the Cinema Tours Festival on Kish Island on August 1, 2019. Left to right, CIO director Hossein Entezami and actors Amin Tarokh and Atila Pesyani are seen in the background. (Mehr/Mohammad Khodabakhsh)

clear," Rashidpur said.

He noted that he received no compensation for organizing the celebration, which went on with honoring a number of movies and cineastes.

Director Abbas Amini received an award for depicting parts of Hormoz Island's attractions in his drama "Hendi and Hormoz". Actor Hamed Alipour was also honored for his collaboration in the movie.

Director Hamid Nematollah's drama "Flaming" was also celebrated for developing people's awareness of the environment in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan region.

"Main Idea" by Azita Mugui and "The Underwater Cypress" by Mohammad-Ali Bashe-Ahangar also received awards.

Actors Ali Nasirian and Reza Kianian and cinematographer Mahmud Kalari were honored for their lifetime achievements.

Information and Communication Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi and Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami also attended the star-stud event.

Woodstock 50 music festival called off due to 'unforeseen setbacks'

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The troubled Woodstock 50 anniversary music festival planned for August was officially canceled on Wednesday, with organizers blaming a series of "unforeseen setbacks."

The three-day festival, meant to mark the 50th anniversary of the famed 1969 celebration of peace and music, was planned for Aug. 16-18.

"Woodstock 50 today announced that the three-day festival to celebrate its 50th anniversary has been canceled," the organizers said in a statement.

"We are saddened that a series of unforeseen setbacks has made it impossible to put on the festival we imagined with the great lineup we had booked and the social engagement we were anticipating," said Michael Lang, one of the original producers of the 1969 event.

The cancellation was widely expected after a troubled five months in which organizers were turned down at two proposed sites in upstate New York, lost funding and headlines including rapper Jay-Z and pop star Miley Cyrus pulled out.

Tickets never went on sale for the festival.

Organizers last week made a last ditch attempt to put on a free, scaled down event at an amphitheater in Maryland, but several of the 80 or so acts began pulling out despite having already been paid.

Lang said in his statement that the smaller event in Maryland would have been aimed at raising funds for non profits fighting climate change and organizations encouraging Americans to vote in the 2020 U.S. general elections.

Woodstock 50 was first planned for the Watkins Glen motor racing venue in upstate New York, but the site pulled out in June. Organizers then attempted in vain to seek permits in Vernon, New York.

The nonprofit Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, the current owner of the field where the 1969 Woodstock festival took place, also scaled back plans earlier this year for a three-day anniversary event. It will instead host separate concerts by Ringo Starr, Santana and the Doobie Brothers.

"My thoughts turn to Bethel and its celebration of our 50th Anniversary to reinforce the values of compassion, human dignity, and the beauty of our differences embraced by Woodstock," Lang said in his statement on Wednesday.

Judge narrows Woody Allen lawsuit against Amazon for quitting movie deal

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A federal judge in Manhattan on Wednesday narrowed Woody Allen's \$68 million lawsuit against Amazon.com Inc for backing out of a four-picture production and distribution agreement and refusing to distribute a film he had already completed.

U.S. District Judge Denise Cote's dismissal of four of Allen's eight claims means the filmmaker will have to show that Amazon wrongly abandoned agreements for individual films.

She dismissed claims covering two alleged breaches of the Aug. 2017 multi-picture agreement, an unjust enrichment claim, and an alleged breach related to the first film, the completed "A Rainy Day in New York."

Allen, 83, had sued two Amazon units in February, claiming they could not abandon their distribution plans because of a "baseless" allegation against his adopted daughter Dylan Farrow in 1992.

The allegation had gained renewed prominence in the #MeToo movement, which began in late 2017.

Allen has long denied the allegation, which was also made by Farrow's mother Mia Farrow, who appeared in a dozen of his films and was his longtime partner. He has not been charged.

Lawyers for Allen did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Amazon's lawyer Moez Kaba declined to comment.

Cote said Allen and his Gravier Productions Inc failed to allege an "actionable breach" of his so-called multi-picture acquisition agreement, or MAA.

"The MAA provides certain benefits to Amazon, such as an exclusive 'first look' at Allen's subsequent literary and visual materials and the right to publicize the parties' agreements, but the plaintiffs do not allege that they suffered damages from the termination of these provisions," the judge wrote.

Allen had originally sued Amazon Content Services LLC and Amazon Studios LLC. The latter is no longer a defendant because it had faced only the now-dismissed unjust enrichment claim.

Allen has won four Oscars, including best director for 1977's "Annie Hall", which also won best picture, and several actresses have won Oscars for work in his movies.

But the filmmaker has seen modest commercial returns for many of his films since his bitter breakup with Mia Farrow. Some actors and actresses have expressed regret for appearing in his films after Dylan Farrow's allegation gained renewed attention.