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Syria seeking Iran's investment in its reconstruction projects

TEHRAN — Syrian Deputy Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Rania al-Ahmad said that attraction of Iran's investment and also importing Iranian products is a priority for Syria in the process of reconstructing the country.

Making the remarks in a conference on investment and trade opportunities in Syria held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Sunday, the

Syrian official said, "Our government has prepared a post-war reconstruction plan in which all organizations, universities and experts play some parts".

She invited Iranian traders and businessmen to make investment in Syria and said, "We are going for attracting Iran's investment for reconstruction and we will provide the condition to make it possible." **→4**

IRGC seizes foreign tanker smuggling fuel

TEHRAN — Forces of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have seized a foreign oil tanker in the Persian Gulf that was smuggling fuel to Arab countries.

Ramezan Zirahi, a commander of the local IRGC forces, was quoted by Fars news agency as saying on Sunday that the vessel was carrying 700,000 liters of fuel from Iran. Seven crew members, all foreigners, were arrested and taken to the southern port city of Bushehr, the official said.

Iran's huge subsidy to fuel has made

smuggling very tempting.

In the meantime, Al Jazeera's Assed Baig, reporting from Iran's capital, Tehran, said the tanker was seized on Wednesday near Farsi Island.

"The Revolutionary Guards say that they carried out this operation once they had acquired the appropriate permits from the judiciary."

Iran is still holding a British-flagged tanker it captured in the Strait of Hormuz for marine violations.

E3 Expo leaks the personal information of over 2,000 journalists

TEHRAN— A spreadsheet containing the contact information and personal addresses of over 2,000 games journalists, editors, and other content creators was recently found to have been published and publicly accessible on the website of the E3 Expo.

The Entertainment Software Association,

the organization that runs E3, has since removed the link to the file, as well as the file itself, but the information has continued to be disseminated online in various gaming forums. While many of the individuals listed in the documents provided their work addresses and phone numbers when they registered for E3, many others, **→13**



ARTICLE

Ebrahim Fallahi
Tehran Times journalist

Have Iranian oil exports really fallen to 100,000 bpd?

Recently some reports have been published by ship tracking companies and industry sources regarding Iranian oil exports in July which have put the county's shipments at near 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the mentioned month.

Although the reported figure is just one among numerous speculations on the Islamic Republic's oil exports in the months following the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions amid the country's silence policy regarding the amount of its crude shipments, however it raises the question that how much really the country's oil exports have been in recent months.

Many experts and analysts believe that estimating the exact level of Iranian exports is not possible for the time being since the country has stopped reporting its production figures to OPEC and it is exporting some of its oil under the radar.

In this article, we will take a look at what the news agencies, industry sources and tracking data companies have been claiming about Iran's oil exports and in the end I will once again raise the question of "how real these claims could be?" and hopefully you will be able to answer that question.

Numbers and speculations

As I mentioned earlier, since the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions in November 2018, there has been great discrepancy among industry experts and analysts on the actual volume of Iran's crude exports.

On July 30, Reuters reported that Iran's July crude oil exports have fallen to 100,000 bpd, citing anonymous industry sources.

In the same month, Refinitiv Eikon, which is another data tracking company, put Iran's crude shipments including gas condensate (which is a type of light oil) at 120,000 bpd.

Sara Vakhshouri, an analyst at SVB Energy International, a consulting firm based in Washington and Dubai, put the country's oil exports at between 225,000 and 350,000 bpd in July.

The mystery of Iran's daily crude exports becomes more complex when some other industrial sources raise the figures even more. **→5**

Israel arrested 420 Palestinians including 62 children in July

TEHRAN— Israeli occupation forces arrested last July 420 Palestinians, including 62 children, 10 women, and one member in the Palestinian legislative council, according to a report issued by Palestine Prisoners Centre for Studies.

The report documented 14 arrests from Gaza, 4 of which were against fishermen, who were on Gaza seashores. 10 others were arrested on the separation barrier, including children.

Member of the Palestinian legislative council Azzam Salhab (63 years old) was also arrested in the same month after breaking into his house and vandalizing properties.

The report revealed that Israel targeted children, arresting 62 of them including children as young as 7 years old.

Other younger children were summoned for interrogation; like Muhammad Elayyan (4 years old) and Qais Obeid (6 years old), accusing them of throwing stones at Israeli military vehicles.

'Israel' also continued to arrest Palestinian women. 10 women were reportedly arrested, while a 6-year-old girl from Hebron called Malak Sider was interrogated after an Israeli raid into her family's house, accusing her of "harassing settlers".

According to Qudsnet, a 63-year-old lady

called Fathiyyeh Barghouthi was held while on her way back from Jordan and interrogated for 6 hours.

Other ladies and female minors were also arrested for being relatives to imprisoned or killed Palestinians.

The total of Palestinian martyrs, who were killed in Israeli jails increased to 220 after the death of Nassar Taqatqa (31 years old), who was tortured to death.

The Israeli authorities continued to issue administrative detention orders against Palestinians, issuing 100 administrative order which included 28 new and 72 renewed orders.

We are working to defeat the hostile West blockade against Syria: PM

TEHRAN— Prime Minister Imad Khamis said we are working to defeat the hostile West blockade against Syria.

He described the West's blockade against the Syrian government and nation as aggressive and aggressive.

Western sanctions targeting war-torn Syria have further deepened the suffering of the Syrian civilian population as the country struggles to press ahead with post-war reconstruction, according to a report.

During the past year, with the Trump administration tightening sanctions against Syria, "living conditions have become steadily worse, compounding the daily struggles of a worn-out population that has lived through eight years of conflict," the Associated Press reported.

Since 2011 at the onset of the foreign-backed terrorism in Syria, the European Union and some Arab states have imposed sanctions on the country, restricting Syria's oil imports, certain forms of investment and a number of institutions and officials.

Washington has also been imposing sanctions on hundreds of companies and individuals that it accuses of involvement in developing "chemical" munitions in Syria.

This is while Damascus surrendered its stockpile of chemical weapons in a process monitored by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in 2013.

Withstanding more than eight years of foreign-backed militancy, Syria, aided by its allies Russia and Iran, has managed to greatly contain

terrorists as conflict is winding down.

The AP report, however, reveals that the sanctions have greatly exacerbated suffering among the traumatized Syrian populace following the war that has killed nearly half a million people and displaced half the population.

Damascus says Syria's losses from sanctions are billions of dollars.

Syria, once an oil exporter, currently relies heavily on oil imports to sustain its economy. Higher fuel costs caused by the sanctions have led to increased prices in nearly every sector.

The currency has so far lost a third of its value in 2019, standing at 600 Syrian pounds to the dollar. According to the United Nations, eighty percent of Syrians now subsist beneath the poverty line, making less than \$100 a month. **→13**



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Domestic companies show airplane overhaul capabilities

On Sunday, the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari attended the opening ceremony of a national event aimed to introduce achievements and capabilities of 30 domestic knowledge-based companies in overhauling airplanes.

Meanwhile, six other companies are introducing technological needs of this field. Holding B2B sessions in order to identify needs and capabilities are among the programs during the event, which will wrap up today.



ARTICLE

By Mahmood Khaghani
Oil expert

Boris and the English Job

A new book, "The English Job", by former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw documented Iran's long (and merited) history of distrust of the British motives and actions. I note that the new British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, comes from the heart of the British or (as better known in Iran) English 'Establishment' which was largely responsible for the decisions and actions which generated this mistrust.

President Rouhani's congratulatory note to the new British prime minister expressed hope that he may play a major role in easing current tensions in the Persian Gulf region. This encouraged me to investigate whether Boris Johnson has taken on the English Job which Iranians always see lurking behind Washington's policies. So, I asked a Senior Research Fellow at an Institute of University College London, Mr. Chris Cook whether he considered the new Prime Minister would improve on his dismal predecessor.

He said: "I believe Boris Johnson's appointment by his party members is immensely promising for British-Iranian relations for several reasons. Firstly, he is an optimist and is inherently positive and constructive in outlook. Secondly, he is both self-centred and expedient to a fault: as Groucho Marx used to joke, if you didn't like his principles, he had others. Third, he is in fact extremely intelligent, and takes an interest in the strategic big picture and sweep of history. Finally, if you believe what his father Stanley recently said in an interview with Press TV outside the British Parliament, while his son made his first appearance as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson is, like his father, an admirer of Iran's great culture and history".

Many observers point out that Boris Johnson's performance as British Foreign Secretary was very poorly regarded, in particular for his highly criticised visit in December 2017 to Tehran. Why is he criticised in this regard? What went wrong? Chris Cook believes: "Firstly, and famously, Boris Johnson simply does not 'do detail'. His tenure as Mayor of London demonstrated a love for high profile announcements, and a tendency to delegate implementation to trusted staff. Secondly, he is the complete opposite to Theresa May, who was a notorious control freak who detested contact with the average man or woman on the street, whereas even his worst enemies will confirm Boris Johnson has a gift for charming almost everyone he meets. **→3**

Australia, Bangladesh, UNICEF envoys meet with Zarif

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Australia's ambassador to Iran, new ambassador of Bangladesh and new representative of the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) in Iran met separately with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday.

According to a report by Foreign Ministry's media department, Australian Ambassador Ian Biggs had a farewell meeting with Zarif at the end of his tenure in Tehran.

UNICEF's new representative in Iran, Mandip O'Brein, submitted her credentials to Zarif.

Also Bangladesh's new Ambassador to Iran, AFM Gousal Azam Sarker, in a meeting with Zarif submitted a copy of his credentials to the chief Iranian diplomat.

Official: Still no conclusive decision on Caspian Sea legal regime

TEHRAN (IRNA) — Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman says negotiations among five littoral states of the Caspian Sea on its legal regime are still going on and no final conclusion has been reached on this issue so far.

Abbas Mousavi made the remarks in an interview with IRNA on Sunday, saying, "All current speculations about the Caspian Sea's legal regime are incorrect ... [because] no new development has taken place with regard to its legal regime and related discussions have been limited to negotiations between individual countries."

Addressing concerns surrounding the issue of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, Mousavi said Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's latest participation at a session of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) held to discuss the sea's legal regime, was just aimed to answer a question posed by the Iranian lawmakers on this issue last year, and Iran's top diplomat explained that no legal discussion has been finalized with respect to the legal regime yet.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that the issue of the Caspian Sea has its own complications as the sea has been engulfed by five states, which is why its legal regime has yet to be determined.

Mousavi said all the five littoral states have been trying to reach a solution on the issue, which demands intensive technical and legal work, adding that the words around the matter are just hearsay and lack logical basis.

While addressing an open session of the parliament last month, Zarif said the foreign ministry would not compromise on the country's territorial integrity with anybody, including with regard to Iran's territorial waters.

"When it comes to Iran's territorial integrity and waters, we will stand on ceremony with nobody and will not negotiate with any party about honors Iran has gained during the past 40 years The administration is committed to this issue and the Majlis has the final say on it," Iran's top diplomat told lawmakers.

Zarif noted that the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea was signed "with open eyes" by leaders of the five littoral states on August 12, 2018, adding that Iran would never compromise on its interests on the basis of mere trust in other countries.

The Caspian Sea convention was signed by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his counterparts from Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, namely Vladimir Putin, Ilham Aliyev, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, respectively, after the 5th Caspian Summit in the Kazakh port city of Aktau.

New Yorker: Zarif was invited to meet Trump in the Oval Office

Just weeks before the Trump administration placed sanctions on the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, he was invited to meet with the president at the White House, New Yorker reported on Friday in a report by Robin Wright, a summary of which goes below.

Last month, amid a rapid-fire escalation in tensions between Washington and Tehran Zarif received an unexpected invitation to meet President Donald Trump in the Oval Office. The diplomatic overture was made by Senator Rand Paul, the Kentucky Republican, during a meeting with Zarif in New York on July 15th, according to American and Iranian sources and a well-informed diplomat.

With President Trump's blessing, Paul had been working on the idea for several weeks, in consultation with the White House and the State Department. An intermediary had reached out to the Iranians on Paul's behalf three weeks before Zarif was due in New York for meetings at the United Nations.

On July 15th, Paul and his senior adviser, Doug Stafford, met Zarif. This was Zarif's first meeting with Paul, who is on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The two men initially talked about long-standing issues, notably Tehran's nuclear program, and also recent flare-ups in the Persian Gulf, according to the sources.

During an hour-long conversation, Zarif offered Paul ideas about how to end the nuclear impasse. He later outlined some of them to our group of journalists and subsequently in more detail to me. "As a diplomat, I have to always think about alternatives," he told us. Among them was the idea that the Iranian Parliament could codify, in law, a fatwa issued by Iran's Supreme Leader, originally in 2003 and again in 2010, that forbids the production or use of nuclear weapons.

But, if Trump wanted more, he would also have to offer more, Zarif suggested. Another possibility was moving forward one of the later steps of the nuclear deal brokered between Iran and the world's six major powers in 2015—the accord that Trump abandoned in May, 2018. Zarif said that Iran could bring forward ratification of the so-called Additional Protocol, which is currently due to be implemented by 2023—potentially this year. The protocol allows more intrusive international inspections—on both declared and undeclared nuclear sites in member states—in perpetuity. In exchange, Zarif suggested, Trump could go to Congress to lift sanctions on Iran, as originally provided under the 2015 nuclear deal but not ratified in legislation. Both sides would then feel more secure in the commitments sought in the original deal.

Paul proposed that the Iranian diplomat lay out the same ideas to Trump in person. The president, Paul said, had authorized him to extend an invitation to meet in the Oval Office as early as that week, the U.S., Iranian, and diplomatic sources told me.

Zarif told Paul that the decision to meet Trump in the Oval Office was not his to make; he would have to consult with Tehran. He expressed concern that any meeting might end up as little more than a photo op, without substance, the sources told me.

Larijani: U.S. dishonest in Afghan peace talks

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has said that the U.S. is not genuinely after establishing peace in Afghanistan, noting that Washington is after obstructing foreign investment in the war-torn country.

Speaking during a joint press conference with his Afghan counterpart Fazl Hadi Moslem Yar in Tehran on Saturday evening, Larijani also said, "The security of Afghanistan is important to the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The senior lawmaker pointed out that some countries are after creating insecurity in Afghanistan with terrorist measures. "Their final objective is to undermine economic investments in this country."

"The Americans have held countless rounds of negotiations with the Taliban while this is not the right path and all measures must be undertaken with the central role of the Afghan government," he said, criticizing the U.S.-Taliban talks for trying to push the Afghan government aside.

He then cautioned that the current situation in Afghanistan is sensitive, highlighting that the White House is "acting insincerely" in its relations with Afghanistan.

"While they claim to be after negotiations, they are following a different path," the top lawmaker stressed.

Larijani reiterated Iran's support for Afghanistan's territorial integrity, adding that the Tehran-Kabul ties are historical and deep. "Your presence in Tehran will certainly bring about more growth in political and economic relations between Iran and Afghanistan," Larijani told Moslem Yar.

For his part, Moslem Yar said that Afghan-



istan strongly condemns the U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran as the Islamic Republic has been supportive of Afghanistan in all these years.

"The Americans are not after genuine peace in Afghanistan and they are the common enemies of Iran, Afghanistan, Islam and the human kind" the Afghan speaker remarked,

“The Americans are not after genuine peace in Afghanistan and they are the common enemies of Iran, Afghanistan, Islam and the human kind” Afghan Parliament Speaker Fazl Hadi Moslem Yar says.

Iran's robust, effective diplomacy cannot be sanctioned: Shamkhani

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, has said that Iran's "robust and effective" diplomacy cannot be put under sanctions.

Following U.S. sanctions on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Shamkhani, a former marine chief, wrote a commentary in which he said U.S. President Donald Trump's so-called maximum pressure approach toward Iran has failed.

"By quitting the JCPOA [Iran nuclear deal] and adopting a maximum pressure approach against Iran, Trump tried to belittle his domestic rivals as well as the international community, with the hope to show that he is a different man and can gain the biggest benefit with smallest setback through his new-fangled ways," Shamkhani wrote.

That is where the maximum pressure policy was pursued with measures aimed at

weakening the pillars of the Islamic Republic, meaning the Leadership, the people, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and the diplomatic system, he noted, adding that sanctions were also employed as the least-costly measure to batter Iran.

According to Shamkhani, Iran's "cold, revengeful response," along with the constant improvement of national economy, effective beef-up of mobility at regional and international levels, as well as unwavering stances adopted by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, started to wear down on Trump's

hopes and put him face to face with a huge amount of criticism from the international community, his allies, and rivals at home.

"Imposing sanctions on the foreign minister after he turned down Trump's offer of a meeting showed that the train to 'maximum pressure' has come to a halt at the 'Disappointment Station', leaving those on board with the sole option to change the rail and move towards upholding their commitments and recognizing the Islamic Republic of Iran's legal rights."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's robust and effective diplomacy cannot be put under sanc-

“Imposing sanctions on the foreign minister after he turned down Trump’s offer of a meeting showed that the train to ‘maximum pressure’ has come to a halt at the ‘disappointment’,” Shamkhani writes.

Top Iranian official in Baku to pave ground for trilateral Sochi summit

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president's chief of staff, has visited Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, to prepare grounds for next week's trilateral Russia-Azerbaijan-Iran summit that is set to be held in the Russian city of Sochi in the current month.

The presidents of Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia last met together in Tehran in November 2017.

Iranian and Azeri presidents have met 12 times over the past five years, according to Vaezi, who called the visits as "foundation of good bilateral relations".

Speaking to Azeri Economy Minister Shahin Mustafayev on Saturday evening, Vaezi said that Tehran and Baku are moving towards expanding their relations by connecting the Iranian railways to the Azeri ones, linking their national



electrical grids, developing customs cooperation as well as expanding trade, sport and tourism ties.

Vaezi expressed hope that bilateral relations between Iran and Azerbaijan would further develop.

Iran-Azerbaijan ties have developed further despite the U.S. sanctions on Iran, said Vaezi.

"Tehran and Baku have good cooperation in pharmaceutical, car manufacturing, joint investment, regional issues and border issues," he noted.

He also thanked the Azeri officials for rescuing the crew of a sunken Iranian ship in the Caspian Sea last month.

Mustafayev, for his part, underlined that the U.S. sanctions haven't affected the Baku-Tehran ties.

He said that Iranian companies in Azerbaijan have augmented their activities over the past two years, resulting in a rise in bilateral annual trade volume.

Party chief: Zarif ban big lesson for ‘naïve and pro-dialogue’ politicians

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The imposition of sanctions on Zarif by the Trump administration is an important lesson for those who naively pushed for talks with the bullying U.S., says secretary general of the Islamic Coalition Party.

"The Zarif ban was a big lesson for the naïve persons who think they can obtain concessions from the bullies through negotiations," said Asadollah Badamchian, Mehr reported on Sunday.

While condemning the U.S. move against the chief Iranian diplomat, Badamchian said Iran should further rely on friendly nations and governments in order to boost its international status.

On the one hand the U.S. asks for talks with Iran and on the other it imposes sanctions on Iran's foreign minister, he said.

"Such wrong, illogical and irrational approach has left no dignity for the Trump administration," he added.

On Wednesday, the Trump administration put sanctions on Zarif, with the Treasury Department claiming it has frozen his assets in the U.S. and barring Americans from doing business with him.

The foreign minister dismissed the measures, saying that he and his family do not have any "property or interests outside of Iran."

According to experts, the U.S. measure dealt a blow to the prospects of talks between Washing-

ton and Tehran and cast doubt over the Trump administration's claims that it wants dialogue.

A member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy said the move was a violation of the UN Charter.

Iran should file a complaint through the UN secretary general against the U.S. for sanctioning Zarif, Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said on Sunday.

Alireza Rahimi, a member of the Majlis presiding board, said the move blocks the road of diplomacy and it contradicts the U.S. claim of advocating for talks.

Rahimi described the ban as one of the most idiotic measures taken by the United States, saying Trump has brought shame and discredit



on the U.S.

"When the chief diplomat of a country is sanctioned it means that the road of diplomacy is blocked," he added, according to ISNA.

U.S.-planned Persian Gulf coalition meant to blockade Iran: commentator

(Press TV) — A political commentator says a United States-planned force seeking to sail in the Persian Gulf would be a prelude to the enforcement of a blockade against Iran.

Author and commentator Nasir al-Omari said on Press TV's The Debate program on Saturday that although the plan has been presented to the U.S.'s allies as a means of protecting the vessels sailing across the Hormuz Strait, "I think that the world understands that these moves are really intended to be a blockade of Iran."

"Once you have these warships, then this turns quickly into a blockade," he said.

The U.S. has said the naval force would be ensuring the

safety of foreign vessels sailing through the Strait of Hormuz in the strategic Persian Gulf. However, key Washington allies Germany and Japan have refused to join, and France has expressed reservations.

Omari said the rejection of the American initiative was "a positive indication" that the international community was not rushing toward a confrontation with Iran.

In order to tackle the standing escalation of tensions between Washington and Tehran at its root, he said, one has to aim for the underlying cause of the situation.

"The root problem has not been solved, and that is the sanctions against Iran," Omari said.

Washington left a multilateral nuclear accord with Tehran and other states last year and re-imposed the sanctions that the deal had lifted. It has since been imposing further sanctions as well.

Keith Preston, an independent journalist and researcher who was also on the program, referred to Japan and Germany's refusal to be part of the force and said, "The U.S. alliances are far weaker than perceived."

He said Tokyo and Berlin had refused because of Washington's performance in the past, when it left the nuclear agreement with Iran "against the objection of virtually every U.S. ally" and engaged in "disastrous" regional military interventions.

U.S. deprived itself of dialogue by banning Zarif: government

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The Americans have deprived themselves of dialogue by sanctioning Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Sunday.

“Zarif is in charge of the country’s foreign policy and diplomacy ... By sanctioning Zarif, they (Americans) deprived themselves of dialogue,” Rabiei told a press briefing.

On Wednesday, the U.S. government announced imposition of sanctions against Zarif, a move which was interpreted as a total rejection of diplomacy repeatedly claimed by the Trump administration.

Ever since the announcement, there has been a huge torrent of support for the chief Iranian diplomat both at home and abroad.

Rabiei said the overwhelming support for the foreign minister demonstrated Washington’s failure in isolating Iran on the world stage.

“The unprecedented aggression and clumsy sanction against Zarif is not an aggression against an individual, but it’s



The government spokesman says it is utterly absurd that the U.S., which claims to be an advocate of dialogue, has sanctioned Iran’s foreign minister right after inviting him to hold talks.

an aggression against the foundations of the Iranian government and nation,” he stated.

“The U.S. is still not free of the disease and addiction of [plotting] coups,” he said, adding, “I see the same mindset behind sanctioning Zarif.”

U.S. President Donald Trump has withdrawn the United States from the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA), reimposed the “harshest sanctions” on Iran and at the same time pushed for talks with Tehran.

Tehran says a U.S. return to the JCPOA and lifting of the illegal sanctions are necessary prerequisites for any further collaboration with Washington.

The government spokesman said it is utterly absurd that the U.S., which claims to be an advocate of dialogue, has sanctioned Iran’s foreign minister right after inviting him to hold talks.

“If this action is not ridiculous then what is it?” he added.

Rabiei said domestic support for Zarif, especially as given by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and military, showed internal unity in the face of U.S. hostilities.

Commander: Army ready to ‘nip any threat in the bud’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Chief of the Army Ground Force Kiamars Heidari says his forces are ready to nip any foreign threat in the bud.

“The Army Ground Force, like other armed forces, is at the height of its readiness and if any threat emerges, it will nip it in the bud,” Tasnim quoted Brigadier General Heidari as saying on Sunday.

“Today, the armed forces are ready to respond strongly to any threat in the shortest possible time,” he said.

He also pointed to the recent changes in the Army Ground Force, saying, “Some changes have been made in the nature of the Army Ground Force... and our forces’ readiness is at its highest level.”

The remarks came against the backdrop of increasing tensions between Tehran and Washington which peaked when the Islamic Republic shot down an advanced U.S. spy drone after it intruded into Iranian airspace.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on June 20 that a U.S. spy drone that violated the Iranian territorial airspace in the early hours of the day was shot down by the IRGC Aerospace Force’s air defense unit near the Kooh-e-Mobarak region in the southern province of Hormozgan.

The intruding drone was shot by Iran’s homegrown air defense missile system “Khordad-3rd”.

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.

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.

Also last week, the U.S. targeted Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif with sanctions.



Boris and the English Job

1 → In my view, Boris Johnson came to Tehran believing that he could fulfil an understanding that repatriation of long-outstanding Iranian funds would be reciprocated by a humanitarian gesture of goodwill by Iran. Unfortunately, he was over-ridden by Theresa May when the US got wind of this, and the outcome was to confirm Iran’s low (English Job) opinion of her government”.

Many analysts have observed that the recent British seizure of Iranian oil tanker off Gibraltar, and Iran’s subsequent seizure of a British tanker in the Straits of Hormuz, appears to have made a bad situation worse? But, the Senior Research Fellow at UCL Institute for Strategy, Resilience & Security says:

“This was the final misconceived political judgment of probably the least politically astute British Prime Minister of recent times. I have no doubt an accommodation can be reached but it must necessarily commence with a strategic understanding between Britain and Iran, followed by an implementation road-map rather than through fragmented tactical expedients.”

In the course of collaboration with Mr. Chris Cook from 2002 to 2004 in respect to the Kish Island International Oil Bourse project, he and I came to share the view that whatever may be the political or religious differences between nations, it is always possible to collaborate in relation to resources such as water and energy which are of existential importance.

On that basis, I asked Mr. Cook whether he considered PM Johnson may be interested in a strategic regional initiative based upon Energy for Peace.

“In my view, an ambitious Energy for Peace initiative is exactly the kind of strategic and wide-ranging grand bargain which will not only appeal to Johnson’s sense of history, but will also represent a radically constructive approach to international trade and development.

The first element of the FINSTEX proposal would be for Iran’s participation in the North Sea Rhum gas field asset to form the basis of issuance of Gas Energy Credit Obligation (GECO) instruments which Iran could accept in payment for the flow of Rhum field gas instead of £ sterling paid into a frozen account.

The £400m amount of British debt due to Iran could then provide further collateral for issuance of GECO instruments which would operate in parallel to



the INSTEX Euro payment mechanism.

Since banks are not gas producers and therefore cannot issue GECOs, FINSTEX would not involve banks in payments, although they could potentially retain a role in banking services such as risk management, administration, advice & the introduction of gas investors to ‘gas loan’ investments.

In my view FINSTEX is a great label. In fact, I recall that Mr. Cook first proposed a gas-based unit (which he then called the Petro) in Tehran in 2008.

In Moscow in May 2018, he then presented an updated version of his 2008 Petro proposal (renamed GasCoin, because Venezuela had called their cryptocurrency the Petro) at the invitation of the Russian Deputy Energy Minister and he further elaborated on GasCoin in Moscow in September 2018.

As Mr Cook pointed out during his February visit to Tehran, change never comes from within.

Now that PM Johnson has been appointed with an explicit mandate from his party to deliver Brexit, with one foot inside the EU and one outside, Britain and the city of London are well placed to originate a FINSTEX which is additional or complementary to the Euro-centred INSTEX. Furthermore, through a constructive and pos-

itive FINSTEX proposal Britain could guide further de-escalation of current difficulties through an agreed road-map and deliver Energy for Peace.

Turning now to developing regional cooperation between Iran, Russia and Turkey following the recent Astana summit, and the announcement of a joint cooperation commission meeting between Turkey and Iran during coming September, Mr. Cook observed:

“I have always agreed with the strategic view of Iran as the ‘Golden Gate’ and Turkey as a ‘Golden Bridge’ for strategic regional energy flows and indeed we were both disappointed that the workshop convened on 12 October 2016 on the sidelines of the World Energy Council chaired by the Energy Charter Treaty and involving both Iran’s TAVANIR and Turkey’s TEAS was not followed up.”

Upon reflection, Mr. Cook considered it would be more immediately fruitful to focus upon regional physical natural gas supply swaps with financing/funding via FINSTEX to bring together both Eastern Mediterranean and Caspian regions within a holistic clearing union agreement.

■ World Energy Strategies

The upcoming World Energy Strategies Congress and Exhibition 2019 (WESCE-2019) at the YILDIZ TECHNICAL

CAL University in Istanbul through 26-28 August 2019 aims to create a unique international platform for discussing challenges, opportunities and future directions in energy strategy. Mr. Cook and I have been invited to participate alongside invited ministers, energy leaders and experts as plenary and keynote speakers to elaborate on the physical and financial energy strategies underpinning the FINSTEX concept.

So, Mr. Cook recommended during our conversation that the Joint Turkey /Iran Commission should review the role of governments in facilitating research, development and commerce and act to create new complementary international frame work agreements for public, private & academic collaboration.

He further proposed that an International Resilience Network should be established. He recalled that this concept received a positive reception at his February 2019 Tehran workshops not least from the British ambassador during a concluding courtesy visit.

So with the support of the Turkish hosts at the aforementioned WESCE-19, he hopes in cooperation with Research Institute for Energy Management and Planning –University of Tehran and Education and Research Institute (ICCIMA), to develop this concept further in Istanbul.

My final question was to ask what role the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Trade & Development Bank based in Istanbul could play in FINSTEX.

Mr. Cook replied that as he highlighted earlier during our discussions, since banks are not gas producers they cannot issue gas Energy Credit Obligations (GECOs).

It follows that a regional FINSTEX would not involve ECO banks in payments, but would rather offer a value-added role in services such as risk management, administration, advice & introduction of gas investors to ‘gas loan’ investments. He considered that the ECO Trade & Development Bank could provide banking services to what could essentially be - in every sense - FINSTEX for the ECO nations.

So, finally I recall that the concept of the Kish Oil Bourse initiative in 2004 incorporated the basic legal design of the concepts which have now evolved into FINSTEX.

Let’s hope policy makers and decision takers accept the fact that 21st century problems may not be resolved with 20th century solutions.

So, 15 years later, is it now too late to start? To which Mr. Cook responded: “We have a saying – better late than never!”

Military conflict in Persian Gulf highly unlikely, says Iranian general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Head of the Iranian Army’s Strategic Studies believes that the possibility of a military conflict in the Persian Gulf region is decreasing as no state wants to see a new crisis in the region.



“The Persian Gulf is like a tinderbox and explosion of the first firecracker can lead to a huge disaster,” General Pourdastan says.

“At first glance, it may seem that the situation in the Persian Gulf is heading towards a military conflict but when studying the situation more closely, we see that chances for such a conflict are low,” Brigadier General Ahmadreza Pourdastan told the Mehr news agency on Sunday. “The existing course of affairs and events show that our diplomacy will definitely fulfill our desired results,” Pourdastan said. He highlighted the capability of Iranian armed forces, saying the enemies won’t dare launch an attack against Iran. “The Persian Gulf is like a tinderbox and explosion of the first firecracker can lead to a huge disaster,” he added. Top Iranian military commanders have repeatedly said Tehran is not seeking war against any country but it has the power to defend itself.

“As repeatedly announced before, the Islamic Republic of Iran doesn’t seek war against any country,” Chief of the Iranian Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said last month.

Parliament to use all potential to help resistance forces: MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The Iranian parliament will use all of its potential to help the resistance forces in the region, a senior MP has said.

Mojtaba Zonnour, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, made the remarks in a meeting with Iraq’s al-Nujaba Movement spokesman Nasr ash-Shimmari, Tasnim reported on Sunday. The Iraqi resistance groups created a lasting epic by fighting Daesh (ISIL), the top MP said, pointing out that Daesh was created by the U.S., Britain and Saudi Arabia.

He also said the enemy is seeking to drive a wedge among different Shia groups and also between Shias and Sunnis.

UAE, Saudi Arabia prefer diplomacy with Iran, says Emirati minister

By staff and agency

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash says the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia prefer a political approach to their problems with Iran.

Emphasizing continued cooperation between the two Arab countries, Gargash tweeted on Friday that the two states believe in a political approach rather than confrontation with Iran.



Previously, some regional media reported a change in UAE’s position regarding Iran. The Anadolu news agency in Turkey had also reported that Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the prime minister of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Dubai, has called for a change in the UAE’s policy vis-a-vis Iran.

In a sign of rapprochement, on July 30 a delegation from the United Arab Emirates Coast Guard met with Iranian counterparts to discuss border security, illegal crossings, fishing rights, and shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. In another development, while reports from Iran and the rest of the region said the UAE has withdrawn from the Saudi-led coalition against Houthi rebels in Yemen, Gargash said developments regarding UAE forces’ move from Yemen have taken place in coordination with Saudi Arabia. Iran has been a fierce critic of the Saudi-led war against Yemen. In late June, the UAE moved out a large part of its forces from Yemen, giving rise to speculations about its withdrawal from the Saudi-led coalition. Dubai, one of Iran’s leading trading partners in the region and a major hub for exports to Iran has suffered losses as a result of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

According to a Reuters report, things have been changing in Dubai’s Murshid Bazaar, once frequented by Iranian businessmen.

Businesses have closed and properties are up for rent after Iranians abandoned the market.

Also the insecurity in the Persian Gulf as a result of tensions between Iran and the United States have affected business. On July 31, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said “Iran is prepared for dialogue if Saudi Arabia is also ready.” During a visit to Iraq in late May, Zarif proposed “regional non-aggression pact”.

According to IRNA, Russia has taken steps to mend ties between Iran and the two Arab nations based on the proposal.

On August 2, Zarif wrote on his twitter page that as Iran’s regional dialog and non-aggression pact is advancing the B-Team shrinks. Zarif has pioneered the term “B-Team” to refer to White House national security advisor John Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, all of whom, he believes, are unified in their anti-Iran agenda.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	255530.3
IFX	3406.85

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,670 rials
GBP	51,067 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.89/b
WTI	\$55.66/b
OPEC Basket	\$1,441.75/oz
Gold	\$1,441.75/oz
Silver	\$16.26/oz
Platinum	\$847.80/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

‘Syria seeking Iran’s investment in its reconstruction projects’

1 → Addressing the same gathering, head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said that Syria needs other countries’ cooperation for meeting some daily needs and also for its reconstruction and such condition offers an opportunity for long-term presence of Iranian investors in that country.



“Given the current positive condition for activity in the Syrian market, presence of Iranian traders and investors in that country and enjoying the available opportunities is of high significance”, Mohammadreza Modoudi noted, adding, “We will introduce the best projects for investment to the Iranian companies after investigating them”.

Car output at 266,961 in 4 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**– Iranian carmakers manufactured 266,961 vehicles during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), IRNA reported citing the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry. The ministry’s data show that car manufacturing in Iran has fallen 38.3 percent in the four-month period of this year from 432,528 cars manufactured in the same time span of the previous year.

Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani has said that the policy of domestic manufacturing of auto parts should be seriously followed up.



The minister also stressed that in this due the capable manufacturers should be seriously supported.

In mid-May, Rahmani issued a directive on “strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts”.

Addressing two of his deputies, Farshad Moqimi, deputy for industrial affairs, and Mohammad-Baqer Ali, the board chairman of Iran’s Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO), the minister put emphasis on using the highest potential of human resources for strengthening domestic manufacturing of auto parts which are currently imported to the country.

Highlighting the orders of the Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on supporting production in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), which is named the year of “Pickup in Production” by the supreme leader, Rahmani stressed that cooperation among all car makers, auto part manufacturers, knowledge-based companies and enterprises is vital for strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts. This movement should be all-out promoted to combat sanctions and also prevent from exit of foreign currency from the country, the minister noted.

IME’s worth of trade rises 15% in July

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**–The value of trade at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 15 percent during July, IME Public Relations Department reported.

While different trading floors of this stock market witnessed trading of more than 2.6 million tons (MT) of commodities worth over \$2.51 million, the amount of trading also experienced a growth of 21 percent.

During the last month, the oil and petrochemical trading floor of IME played host to trading of 1.276 MT of commodities worth more than \$1.512 million.

On this trading floor, more than 353.301 MT of bitumen, 240.546 MT of polymer products and 111.523 MT of chemical products, 413.770 MT of VB feed stock, 116.050 MT of lube cut oil, 29.620 MT of sulfur, 6.679 MT of insulation, 5.140 MT of slaps waxes and 20 MT of argon were traded by customers.

The metal and mineral trading floor witnessed trading over 780.272 MT of commodities worth more than \$994 million.

On this trading floor 749.662 MT of steel, 8.130 MT of copper, 680 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 60 MT of precious metals concentrates, 100 MT of zinc, 5,000 MT of iron ore, 8.640 MT of aluminum as well as 8 MT of coke were traded by customers.

The report declares that the agricultural



trading floor witnessed trading of 15 kg of saffron strands.

The side market of the IME experienced trading of 528 MT of enamel bitumen, 80 MT of toluene, 1.876 MT of sodium sulfate as well as 1.000 MT of steel scrap, 12 MT of nitrogen fertilizer and 42 MT of pipe coating.

On June 24, during the meeting of IME shareholders, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad said that this ex-

change has prepared ten macro plans to improve its performance during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

He mentioned development of underlying assets through existing instruments, development of financial instruments for commodity-backed securities, expansion of market size and depth, increasing co-operation with other organizations, and strengthening IME brand as some of the

mentioned macro plans.

Soltani-Nejad has previously announced that IME accounted for 39 percent of the value of the total trades in the Iranian capital market during the past Iranian calendar year.

He put the value of IME trades at 1.78 quadrillion rials (about \$42.3 billion) in the past year.

The value of trades at IME rose 52 percent in the past calendar year from its previous year.

Over 24.84 million tons of commodities valued at 884.3 trillion rials (about \$21.05 billion) were traded at the physical market of IME, showing seven percent fall in the amount and 77 percent rise in the worth of trades year on year.

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was one of the achievements of the country’s exchange markets during the past year.

In this due, IME launched “option” in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.

Option is a contract which gives the buyer (the owner or holder of the option) the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specified strike price prior to or on a specified date, depending on the form of the option.

Iran elected vice-chair of Asian Reinsurance Corporation

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – In its 13th shareholders’ meeting on July 28, Asian Reinsurance Corporation (ARC) members selected Gholamreza Soleimani, the governor of Iran’s Central Insurance (CII), as the corporation’s vice chairman and board member.

As reported by IRNA, Soleimani was voted by the members of ARC, to become the vice chairman of the corporation for two years.

Speaking about the ARC’s new decision, Soleimani noted that using ARC’s international potentials and capabilities, he will try to expand Iran’s insurance activities in the region.

The Asian Reinsurance Corporation is an intergovern-

mental organization established in May 1979 under the auspices of the UN-ESCAP.

According to the corporation portal, membership is open to all state members or associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

ARC has been set up with the aim of expansion of reinsurance coverage between regional countries.

Iran’s membership in ARC’s board of directors indicates that despite the U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran, the country’s insurance industry has been expanding ties with the countries in the region.



Tehran, Kabul ink MOU for customs co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Customs of Iran and Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Saturday for joint collaboration in electronic exchange of information between the customs administrations of the two countries.

As reported by Shada, the MOU was signed by Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi, and Director General of Afghanistan Customs Department Ahmad Reshad Popal in Tehran.

Based on the MOU, the information regarding the two neighbors’ trade and customs processes will be exchanged electronically. This will consequently accelerate and facilitate trade and reduces related costs while eliminating the possibility of counterfeiting and smuggling.



Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration Mehdi Mirashrafi (2nd L) and Director General of Afghanistan Customs Department Ahmad Reshad Popal signing an MOU for customs cooperation in Tehran on Sunday

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Mirashrafi emphasized the need for expansion of economic ties between the two countries, saying “Afghanistan is one of Iran’s top five trading partners, however given the two countries’ existing capacities and interest in expanding trade and economic cooperation, the volume of bilateral trade could be increased beyond the current level.”

“IRICA has a wealth of experience in implementing ICT-based projects, which can be useful for Afghanistan’s customs,” he said.

The official further pointed to holding training courses, establishing joint customs gates at the borders, electronic exchange of information and the use of the North-South Corridor potentials as ways through which the two sides can reduce trade costs and increase customs operations at the borders of the two countries.

Rashed for his part, expressed satisfaction with the development of customs cooperation between the two countries, and underlined issues like synchronizing the two customs work hours, strengthening training cooperation, managing risk and eliminating transit problems.

During his four-day visit to Iran, the Afghan customs chief and his accompanying delegation also visited the customs borders of the two countries in Sistan-Baluchestan, Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan provinces as well as Chabahar port in southern Iran.

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

EXTENSION OF INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 98-02/105

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
Supply of Equipment and Development of an Infrastructure management system according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Saturday August 10, 2019.**

Place of Receiving Documents:
Secretariat of Tenders’ Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 22,500 (equivalent to 2,925,000,000 Rials)** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Wednesday September 11, 2019** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes:
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Sunday September 15, 2019** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.
Presenting at least ‘Rank 2’ from the Supreme Council of Informatics in the field of computer-telecommunications data networks, producing and presenting non-Main Frame computers, producing and backing up customer order software and security of production space and information exchange

For more information, please contact the following phone numbers: **0098-21-22166313**
It is obvious that cost of publishing two advertisements shall be borne by the winner of tender.

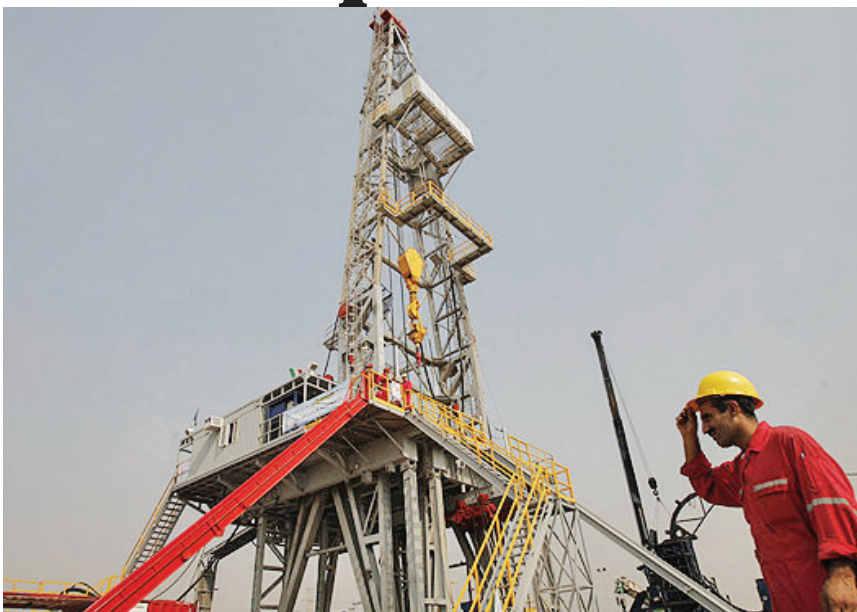
Public Relations Dept. of IRIB

NIOC inks 4 research agreements to develop oil industry

E N E R G Y TEHRAN – National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s Exploration Directorate, on Sunday, signed four agreements with Iranian universities and knowledge-based companies for research in various fields of geophysics, geochemistry, unconventional hydrocarbon resources and drilling.

The agreements include, a project for quantitative interpretation (QI) of Abadan plain's seismic cube, research studies on Lorestan Province's shale oil resources and geochemical study of some hydrocarbon reservoirs in southern Iran as well as a project for producing 10,000 barrels of a High Pressure, High Temperature (HPHT) drilling fluid.

According to the report, considering the challenges of exploring hydrocarbon resources, NIOC's Exploration Directorate has identified various research projects and created a roadmap based on the country's sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021) and in line with its organizational strategies.



Since the reimposition of sanctions, Iran has been encouraging domestic companies' presence in its oil and gas projects, both in exploration and in development sectors.

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

According to Ali Vatani, an advisor to vice president for science and technology, currently about 300 knowledge-based companies are active in the field of oil industry in Iran.

As the official said the government fully supports knowledge-based companies which are active in providing equipment and components for the oil industry and petrochemical production.

A number of universities and research centers are now responsible for exploiting oil resources, Vatani said.

"Tasking a specific university with conducting activities related to extraction and increasing recovery rate of oil reserves could help us reach our objectives sooner", he proposed.

Have Iranian oil exports really fallen to 100,000 bpd?

1 → Kepler, believes that "Iran had loaded 417,000 bpd of crude and condensate onto tankers in July, down 115,000 bpd from June."

Distancing hugely from other sources, TankerTrackers put Iran's oil exports in the mentioned month at between 500,000 bpd-1,000,000 bpd in an email to Reuters.

As you can see, the figures announced for Iran's daily crude exports in July, though not similar, at least do not confirm Reuter anonymous source's 100,000 bpd.

■ A yardstick for more clearance

Considering all these various estimations, and with regard to the ambiguity of the real amount of Iran's oil exports, how can we now which estimation is closer to the truth, or better to say, which one is further from reality.

One rational yardstick in this situation is the price of crude grades similar to Iranian oil, to see how they have fluctuated in the past few months.

Normally, when a crude grade falls short of the demand level, the prices for similar grades surge since the refineries

which are set to process that specific grade would have to get their crude from those similar sources and consequently the market gets more competitive.

So it is logical to conclude that if Iranian crude exports had actually fallen to the 100,000 bps which the Reuters source claims, most probably it must have imposed a shift to the market of similar grades in the region.

For instance, as Russel puts it, considering Basra Heavy, a crude similar to much of Iran's output, indicates that although this grade has outperformed the benchmark light crude, the rise is not that significant.

This means that such grades' refining customers in Asia have not been trying to secure alternative supplies to those from Iran.

Overall, from what we have seen in this article, one can conclude that although Iran's crude oil exports have fallen in the months after the U.S. ended its waivers for buyers of Iranian oil, but estimating the exact number is not easy to achieve.

However, it is also clear that number like 100,000 bpd does not seem to be the real amount of Iran's oil exports.



Bear Ridge Solar developer responds to local opposition

Opposition to a proposed solar project in the Cambria and Pendleton area has become more intensified as residents have formally organized into a group and elected officials at the local and state level have expressed their opposition as well.

Cypress Creek Renewables, the company proposing the Bear Ridge Solar Project, would like to lease 900 acres of private land throughout a 5,000-acre project area in southern Cambria and a portion of northern Pendleton.

The developers plan to install solar panels mounted in rows on racking systems up to 12 feet high.

The panels would be visible from a distance of about 1-1/2 miles, including from sites on Bear Ridge Road and IDA Park Drive in Lockport.

Recently, residents have formed the grassroots group, Cambria Opposition to Industrial Solar, to organize against the project. The Cambria Town Board also officially opposed the project because it would violate the town's zoning ordinance.

■ Interested in the project

Kevin Kohlstedt, the project developer with Cypress Creek, said he is aware of the group, and added that the company values input from anybody in the community that is interested in the project.

"We've heard voices of support and voices of concerns ... our job as a developer is to answer questions," Kohlstedt said. He added that they attended a Cambria town board July meeting to try and answer some questions attendees had.

Kohlstedt said he would "absolutely be interested" in attending one of the group's meetings if he was invited.

He added that Cypress Creek is finishing up its community outreach office, and he expects it to be open by the end of August.

"We really look forward to meeting folks in the community," Kohlstedt said.

State Sen. Rob Ortt, R-North Tonawanda, attended the grassroots group's meeting last week and criticized the lack of local representation on the state board in charge of the project.

Kohlstedt said he saw Ortt attended the meeting and that, "It's great that local elected officials are taking an active role in the project and that they are taking the time to consider the communities interests."

Susan Fischer, a Cambria resident and member of the grassroots group, said Cypress Creek Renewables is not invited to its meetings because they are closed meetings for opponents of the project.

She said they do not want the company turning the town into an industrial zoned



area because the town is mostly an agricultural area and the company was offered an industrial area but turned it down.

■ Next generation to deal with

"We don't want them changing the atmosphere of our beautiful agricultural town and turning it into a solar prison with fences and barbed wire around it," Fischer said. "We don't want toxic panels ruining our farmland in future years for our next generation to deal with. Our town is not benefiting from the solar project what so ever. We don't need it and we don't want it."

Fischer added that the solar panels will cause the housing values of residents to go down.

She noted that the group is not against renewable solar energy "at all," but that Cypress Creek is trying to use a state energy law process to turn the agricultural land to industrial land.

Fischer said the group's membership has grown to over 200 and continues to grow daily. The group meets weekly and is planning to have an informational table set up at the Cambria Tractor Pull and the Pendleton Farm and Home Days.

Town officials had said they were planning to meet with Cypress Creek about their concerns over the project violating the town's zoning ordinance.

Kohlstedt said they met last week with officials from Cambria and Pendleton and that he is "really encouraged by the constructive conversation we had."

Article 10 of the New York State Public Service Law puts an appointed board in charge of siting review and permitting of major electric generating facilities, which are 25 MW or more. As part of the process, they have to consult with the public first.

Representatives from Cypress Creek Renewables say the Bear Ridge Solar Project would generate about 100 MW or enough electricity to power an estimated 25,000 homes.

(Source: lockportjournal.com)

Weekly oil prices fall amid trade tensions

Oil prices decreased for the week ending Aug. 2 after an escalation of the trade tension sent oil prices plunging on Thursday, with the price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for September delivery down 0.96 percent and Brent crude oil for October delivery down 2.47 percent.

As per xinhuanet.com, WTI closed the week at 55.66 U.S. dollars a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, while Brent crude finished the week at 61.89 dollars a barrel on the London ICE Futures Exchange. WTI and Brent crude have increased 22.57 percent and 15.04 percent, respectively, so far this year.

During the week, WTI and Brent crude moved in the same directions, with four-day gains due to the move of Federal Reserve cutting interest rates and a larger-than-expected drop in U.S. crude inventories.

Oil prices fell sharply on Thursday as a slew of downbeat data and lingering concerns over global trade added fears of economic slowdown, which would potentially weaken energy demand. The WTI decreased by 4.63 dollars, or 7.9 percent, to settle at 53.95 dollars a barrel, the largest front-month contract percentage decline since Feb. 4, 2015 and the lowest settlement since June 19 of this year.



■ Decline in more than three days

Meanwhile, the international benchmark Brent crude decreased by 4.55 dollars, or 6.99 percent, to close at 60.50 dollars a barrel, the sharpest one-day decline in more than three years.

During the week, oil prices increased from Monday to Wednesday as market participants were expecting the Federal Reserve's upcoming decision on interest rates, and the interest rates cut announced on Wednesday continued to push the prices up.

U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday lowered interest rates for the first time since the 2008 global financial crisis, amid rising concerns over trade tensions, a slowing global economy and muted inflation pressures.

The Federal Open Market Committee, the Fed's rate-setting body, trimmed the target for the federal funds rate by 25 basis points to a range of 2 percent to 2.25 percent after concluding its two-day policy meeting, in line with market expectation.

"Concerns about demand have moved into the background, at least temporarily," due to the rate cut decision, "so market participants are instead focusing more on the rather tight supply at present again," noted analysts at Commerzbank.

The WTI climbed 0.67 dollar, 1.18 dollars and 0.53 dollar from Monday to Wednesday to settle at 56.87 dollars, 58.05 dollars and 58.58 dollars, respectively, while the Brent crude gained 0.25 dollar, 1.01 dollars and 0.45 dollar to close at 63.71 dollars, 64.72 dollars and 65.17 dollars, respectively.

■ Support to oil prices

Moreover, a larger-than-expected drop in U.S. crude inventories provided support to oil prices. In the week ending July 26, U.S. commercial crude oil inventories decreased by 8.496 million barrels from the previous week, larger than expected drop of 2.588 million barrels, implying greater demand and bullish for crude prices.

Oil prices gained on Friday, recovering some of the massive losses in the previous session. The WTI rose 1.71 dollars to settle at 55.66 dollars a barrel, while Brent crude climbed 1.39 dollars to close at 61.89 dollars a barrel.

Oil prices have kept gaining momentum since the start of the year due to some geopolitical concerns and OPEC's decision of production cut. The momentum has slowed down recently, mainly because of the concerns over downturn in demand for crude oil. Furthermore, the prolonged trade worries reignited concerns over weakening demand for oil.

The slowing global economy continued to be a major headwind for crude oil. The slower economic growth of the world will lead to less demand for oil, which in turn would put downward pressure on oil prices.

Moreover, a rising U.S. dollar in the past months has dragged down the greenback-denominated crude futures, as the U.S. Dollar Index has been keeping uptrend since mid-2018. The index managed to stand at 98.10 level for the week ending July 26, although it closed lower, retracing down from the 2019 high as the market expected that the Federal Reserve might cut rates again in September.

Launch of Villonaco projects to generate 110 megawatts

The launch of this tender, of the El Aromo (Manabí Province) Villonaco II and III (Loja Province) electrical projects, was held on Tuesday, July 30, 2019, in the Auditorium of the Government Financial Platform.

According to evwind.es, Enith Carrión, national coordinator of Renewable Energy of the Electric Corporation of Ecuador (CELEC), explained that it is the beginning of the public promotion for the tender of the Villonaco II and III wind projects to generate 110 megawatts. The call for the process will be held on August 28.

During these days, interested parties can review and download the documentation from the CELEC website, the specifications and even make their observations, prior to the application.

This contest will allow the concession of financing, construction, operation and maintenance of the Villonaco II and III wind project. The winning company will operate for 25 years in the area. In addition, it must comply with requirements that allow generating sources of employment in the sector. Enith Carrión said the objective is to take advantage of the wind resource in the area.

He said that for six years he was at the head of the Villonaco 1 Wind Power Plant, he saw how clean energy was generated. In addition, it allowed the development of the area of influence. The coordinator reported that environmental impact studies are available. In addition, that being an area of grassland does not affect the flora and fauna of the area.

The projects are expected to have a construction period of two years. Energy production will be purchased by the Ecuadorian State at 100%. In the tender launch event, 45 international companies specialized in planning, development and construction of non-conventional renewable energy plants from Germany, Denmark, Canada, Spain, China, Korea, Japan, United States of America, Colombia, Chile were present, among other countries that showed their interest in participating in this process.

Low prices take gloss off Chevron's outperforming WA LNG

The wide gap that has emerged this year between depressed LNG spot prices and contract tariffs has taken a toll on Chevron in the June quarter.

As per aff.com, better-than-expected production from the two WA ventures meant more LNG had to be sold on the weak spot market, where prices last week hit their lowest for more than three years.

Some maintenance work was also pushed back into the December quarter, while some long-term customers exercised their right to reduce their contracted deliveries, Chevron's executive vice president of upstream James Johnson told investors in a June quarter briefing on Saturday morning Australian time.

Chief financial officer Pierre Breber said realized revenues from Australian LNG were lower in the quarter, mostly due to lower spot prices and a higher ratio of spot sales within the total.

Mr. Johnson said that in the June quarter Chevron enjoyed "excellent performance" at both Gorgon, in which ExxonMobil and Shell have stakes, and Wheatstone, in which Woodside Petroleum has an interest.

"And so we had extra production coming from that. But at the same time we also deferred a turnaround, so we had a turnaround scheduled in the second quarter that's been moved to the fourth. So we had extra cargoes there that were exposed to spot," Mr. Johnson said.

■ LNG buyers in Asia are unhappy

LNG buyers in Asia are unhappy that contract prices are so much more than spot prices.

"We do have some downward flex that was exercised by our purchasers in the shoulder months and that occurred in the second quarter."



Spot LNG prices have plunged this year as a result of increasing output from new projects in Australia and the U.S., coinciding with mild weather conditions in north Asia that has tempered demand for imported gas.

Last week they reached as low as \$4.10 per million British thermal units, with at least two cargoes sold at less than \$4, according to Reuters.

But contract LNG prices in Asia are linked to crude oil, keeping them higher. That means some term contracts are now costing twice as much as spot prices.

Chevron still reported its highest quarterly earnings since the third quarter of 2014 when Brent crude oil was more than \$100 a barrel, with profits of \$4.3 billion. But the figure was inflated by a gain from a break fee payable to the U.S. major after the collapse of its agreed deal to acquire

Anadarko Petroleum.

Chief financial officer Pierre Breber said Chevron continues to expect production to grow by 4-7 percent this year, but noted that planned maintenance shutdowns at the North West Shelf venture in WA and other factors would impact production in the September quarter.

Johnson signaled Chevron was seeking to reduce its exposure to the spot LNG market by potentially signing more term contracts once it was confident that its plants could continue their improved performance.

Asked whether Chevron is still aiming to "debottleneck" production at Gorgon to raise it above rated capacity with limited additional investment, Mr. Johnson said Chevron's focus was on getting increasingly high reliability of production and learning how the plants perform throughout the year.

"At this point in time, I'd say we're probably 2 percent above where we expect it to be on Gorgon production, around 6 per cent above on Wheatstone," he said.

"But it's an ongoing effort as we move forward to get more out of our existing investments and infrastructure."

Breber noted that Chevron was still keen to expand its LNG position after the failure of its Anadarko deal, which would have given it a developing project in Mozambique.

"Adding LNG is something that absolutely we are interested in doing," he said.

"We've got a great position in Australia that Jay just talked about that's generating a lot of cash where we have opportunities to debottleneck and potentially add to that over time."

"We're always working the portfolio and LNG is one of the asset classes that we're interested in and we'll pursue opportunities in that space. That makes sense for the company and our shareholders."

U.S. troops are back in Saudia Arabia – This will end badly

By Maj. Danny Sjursen

ANTIWAR—It was big news. U.S. military forces streamed into Saudi Arabia in response to a supposedly serious threat to the kingdom's eastern region. The American troops were invited by nervous Saudi royals; it wasn't an American invasion per se. Everything unfolded smoothly at first; still, the consequences would be severe for the United States. Pick up the latest Military Times, or any other news source, and the story will seem recent, if not worthy of any special attention or alarm. Indeed, US troops are headed into Saudi Arabia right now, but that's not the situation described above.

No, that happened in August 1990, in response to the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq—a nation, few remembered, that the US had previously backed in its aggressive war with Iran (1980-88). The kingdom then served as a launch point for the U.S.-led Persian Gulf War (1991) which drove the Iraqis from tiny Kuwait. American soldiers pulled out of Saudi Arabia just over a decade later, in 2003. Now they're rolling back in. History, as it's said to do, seems to be repeating itself.



This time, however, the ostensible threat to Saudi Arabia comes from naughty Iran, the American national security state's current favorite exaggerated villain. And, of course, Iran—unlike our onetime “partners” in Iraq—hasn't invaded anybody. Thus, the US troop infusion is more preemptive than reactive. It's no matter: few Americans (or even most media/political elites) seem to notice.

Besides, what could go wrong? After all, the US stations its military personnel all over the Middle East, so why not in “friendly” Saudi Arabia too? After all, Jared Kushner, the son-in-law in chief, maintains a well-known bromance with his pen pal, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), and President Trump revels in the profits from massive arms sales to the kingdom. Still, the answer to the question is a stark one: Quite a lot can go wrong, actually. It has before.

Sadly, given the apathy, short memory span and ignorance of much of the American populace, a brief (if dark) recent history lesson is in order. The year was, again, 1990. The Cold War was winding down; the US confidently glowed in its new, powerful status as a unipolar hegemonic power. Except, Washington had set a few time bombs for itself—and boy would they explode.

First, the US government backed a megalomaniacal dictator in Iraq during his eight-year invasion of Iran. After that war ended in a draw, Saddam Hussein thought perhaps he'd test his American support and gobble up small, but oil-rich, Kuwait. When Riyadh panicked, feared for its own bordering oil fields and invited in the US military, the Saudi royals angered and alienated the other significant American time bomb: Osama bin Laden—the wealthy Islamist Saudi jihadi that Washington had backed (during the 1980s) in his fight with the Soviets in Afghanistan.

See, bin Laden believed his own legend: That his fellow foreign volunteers, known as “Afghan Arabs,” had turned the tide and driven the Soviets from Afghanistan. In reality, it was mostly native Afghan rebels, buoyed by generous American and Gulf States military aid, that had won the war—but that mattered little to bin Laden, the dogmatic, privileged son of a Saudi construction magnate. When Iraq swallowed Kuwait and threatened Saudi Arabia in 1990, the prodigal son offered to return, raise a new army of jihadis and defend the kingdom against Hussein's forces. Rebuked by the Saudi king and overshadowed by the massive US military, bin Laden developed a lifelong animus toward both the kingdom and America. The vendetta would prove extremely pivotal, a history-altering event.

After their swift victory in the Persian Gulf War, US service members stuck around in Saudi Arabia for quite some time. It's what the American empire does. Trouble was that not only Bin Laden, but an entire generation of Arab regional jihadis resented the US military presence in the kingdom—especially in the vicinity of the Islamic holy sites of Mecca and Medina.

Nineteen American troops were killed in the 1996 terrorist bombing of the Air Force's Khobar towers barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Not long after, in February 1998, America's former “freedom fighter” bin Laden went so far as to declare war on the United States. The first of three justifications he listed involved the American military presence in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, he wrote:

For over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.

Bin Laden was a veritable monster, but, well, he had a point. The rest, as they say, was history. The bombing of two American embassies in Africa (1998), the bombing of the USS Cole at the port of Aden, in Yemen (2000), and, most tragically, the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Thousands of Americans died in the combined attacks; President Bush the Younger started a war that's yet to end and can't be won. It's been going for nearly 18 years. The total cost (so far): 7,000 American troops dead, at least 244,000 foreign civilians killed and a cool \$5.9 trillion in US tax dollars wasted.

Perhaps American policymakers, pundits and the people at large ought to remember this tragic course of events, what the great author Chalmers Johnson referred to as “blowback.” If they did, it'd be clear that today's fresh infusion of US troops back into the vicinity of the Islamic holy places is a major event with potentially devastating consequences for the US military—and perhaps even the American homeland.

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN—The question that the politician has to answer!

The closer we get to the Democratic primary, the more questions about the position of US presidential candidates will come to the citizens' minds. Many American citizens are critical of U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign and immigration policies. However, many Americans want to know more about the immigration policies of other candidates, including Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders. They want to know what policies people like Sanders and Biden will face in the face of Trump's negative immigration policies.

On the other hand, many Latin Americans and those who are foreign-born and can vote in next year's presidential election are going to choose their final candidate from among the Democratic candidates.

Undoubtedly, one of the people who should be held accountable for his immigration policies and the Democrats is Joe Biden. Joe Biden has for years been the first Vice President of the United States, Barack Obama. Many US citizens believe that Biden's immigration policies will be the same as Obama's. Others, however, believe Biden will pursue stricter policies in this regard. In any case, the issue of immigration has been raised in the Democratic debate for Democratic candidates. Biden must take clear positions in this regard. Here's some news and analysis on Joe Biden's immigration policies:

What Biden doesn't get about immigration

As Vox reported, Former Vice President Joe Biden wants illegal immigration to stay illegal. That's what he said during the second Democratic primary debate, and it reveals just how little he understands about the nuances of immigration policy. Debate moderators had just questioned former HUD Secretary Julián Castro about his plan to decriminalize immigration, which would repeal Section 1325 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Under Castro's plan, it would still be illegal to enter the United States without a visa, but it would be a civil violation, not a criminal one. That simple change would drastically alter US immigration enforcement, because no one can be jailed for a civil infraction under federal law. That change could singlehandedly end much of the cruelty of an immigration enforcement system that has allowed President Donald Trump to separate families and put children in cages and internment camps.

Biden clearly doesn't understand this. When moderators questioned him about the rise of deportation under President Barack Obama, Biden pivoted. Instead, he suggested that decriminalizing immigration means Democrats want open borders.

“If you say you can just cross the border, what do you say to all of those people around the world who want the same thing — to come to the United States and make their case — that they have to wait in line. The fact of the matter is ... if you cross the border illegally, you should be able to be sent back. It's a crime,” he said. Biden was either intentionally misrepresenting the plan or just showed how little he knows about immigration policy. Either one is a bad look for him. But he stood by his nonsensical argument, repeating it a few minutes later.

“I have guts enough to say [Castro's] plan doesn't make sense. The fact of the matter is, when people cross the border illegally, it is illegal to do it unless they're seeking asylum,” he added. “People should have to get in line. That's the problem.”

That's not the problem. The problem is that current immigration laws allow the president to detain immigrants for months (even years) on a misdemeanor immigration charge while their cases go through court. This happened under the Obama administration. It happened under George W. Bush. The only difference now is that Trump is amping up the cruelty by keeping migrant children and families detained in awful, unsafe conditions. Decriminalizing immigration would stop this. And no one explained it better than Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ).

“No, Mr. Vice President, we are not going to let people cross the border,” Booker said. “An unlawful crossing is an unlawful crossing if you do it in the civil courts or the criminal courts. The criminal courts are giving Donald Trump the ability to violate the human rights of people coming to our country. They're human rights. And so doing it through the civil courts means you won't need these awful detention facilities that I've been to, seeing children sleeping on pavement, people being put in cages, nursing mothers, small children. This is not necessary. We have seen, using the civil system, pilot programs that have 100 percent compliance with the civil courts where people are evaluated. If they have

What is Biden's policy towards immigrants?



no reason to be here, they are returned.”

Booker isn't the only candidate who supports Castro's plan. So does Elizabeth Warren. It's one of several issues that have pushed the Democratic primary further to the left. But it also makes sense. How criminalizing immigration led to children in cages

Illegal entry has been a crime for 90 years, but only recently has prosecution for it become common. Decriminalizing illegal immigration is not open borders. People coming to the US without papers could still be deported if they were caught and brought before an immigration judge. But it would make unauthorized immigration purely a civil offense, instead of a criminal one. As Vox's former immigration writer Dara Lind explains, this distinction matters a lot:

Criminal prosecution of illegal entry was what gave the Trump administration the power to separate thousands of families in 2018. It referred thousands of parents for criminal prosecution for illegal entry — advertised as a “zero tolerance” approach — and thus separated them from their children to send them to criminal custody.

Right now, it's already a civil violation — not a crime — to be in the US illegally. If someone is arrested in the US and can't prove their legal status, they can be deported. But if border agents catch someone crossing the border between ports of entry without



papers, that's a federal misdemeanor. It's called “illegal entry,” and immigration judges can jail immigrants and fine them, in addition to deporting them. The crime has been on the books since 1929, but for most of the 20th century, it didn't really matter. Immigration agents didn't track down and deport people who came to the US without papers. Most presidents didn't think it was worth US attorneys' time to prosecute loads of misdemeanor immigration cases. Those who were caught crossing the border were generally informally returned.

“Under the Bush administration, however, as an independent immigration enforcement system began to develop and mature, both civil immigration cases (in separate immigration courts) and widespread criminal illegal entry prosecutions became common,” Lind writes. The result swamped federal criminal courts along the border. For the past several years, immigration offenses — illegal entry and reentry — have been the most common crimes for which people are convicted in US federal criminal courts. (In fiscal year 2016, immigration offenses made up a majority of all federal criminal prosecutions.) And the courts along the border where entrants are prosecuted are routinely the busiest in the country.

More recently, the Trump administration's attempts at “zero tolerance” prosecution of illegal entry were the legal basis for its widespread separation of families in 2018: Children were separated because their parents were being transferred to criminal custody for prosecution. That would end under Castro's immigration plan. Crossing the border without papers would be treated like the civil violation of being in the US illegally. It's a far cry from “open borders,” as Biden suggests.

Joe Biden fueled the Latin American migration crisis

As Consortiumnews reported, While campaigning for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination this year, former Senator and Vice President Joseph Biden has touted the crucial role he played in designing U.S. mega-development and drug war campaigns that transformed the socio-political landscape of large swaths of Latin America.

“I was one of the architects of Plan Colombia,” Biden boasted in a July 5 interview with CNN, referring to the multi-billion dollar U.S. effort to end Colombia's civil war with a massive surge of support for the country's military. According to Biden, the plan was a panacea for Colombia's problems, from “crooked cops” to civil strife. But Biden's plan for Colombia has contributed directly to the country's transformation into a hyper-militarized bastion of right-wing

rural campesinos have been in the streets protesting the privatization plans imposed on their country under the watch of Biden and his successors.

The gutting of public health services, teacher layoffs, staggering hikes in electricity prices, and environmentally destructive mega-development projects are critical factors in mass migration from Honduras. And indeed, they are immediate byproducts of the “Biden plan.”

“Biden is taking credit for doing something constructive to stop the migration crisis and blaming the concentration camps [on the U.S. -Mexico border] on Trump. But it's Biden's policies that are driving more people out of Central America and making human rights defenders lives more precarious by defending entities that have no interest in human rights,” explained Adrienne Pine, a professor of anthropology at American University and leading researcher of the social crisis in Honduras, in an interview with The Grayzone.

“So \$750 million U.S. taxpayer dollars that were allocated to supposedly address child migration are actually making things worse,” Pine added. “It started with unaccompanied minors and now you have children in cages. Largely thanks to Biden.”

In an interview with CNN on July 5, Biden was asked if he favored decriminalizing the entry of Latin American migrants to the United States. Responding with a definitive “no,” Joe Biden stated that he would be “surging folks to the border to make those concrete decisions” about who receives asylum. Biden argued that he had the best record of addressing the root causes of the migration crisis, recalling how he imposed a solution on Central America's migration crisis. “You do the following things to make your country better so people don't leave, and we will help you do that, just like we did in Colombia,” he said.

“What did we do in Colombia? We went down and said, okay, and I was one of the architects of Plan Colombia,” Biden continued. “I said, here's the deal. If you have all these crooked cops, all these federal police, we're sending our FBI down, you let us put them through a lie detector test, let us tell you who you should fire and tell you the kind of people you should hire. They did and began to change. We can do so much if we're committed.”

With the arrogance of a pith-helmeted high colonial official meting out instructions on who to hire and fire to his docile subjects, Biden presided over a plan that failed miserably in its stated goals, while transforming Colombia into a hyper-militarized bastion of U.S. regional influence.

Plan Colombia was originally conceived by Colombian President Andrés Pastrana in 1999, as an alternative development and conflict resolution plan for his war-torn country. He considered calling it the “Plan for Colombia's Peace.”

The proposal was quickly hijacked by the Bill Clinton administration, with Joe Biden lobbying in the Senate for an iron-fisted militarization plan. “We have an obligation, in the interests of our children and the interests of the hemisphere, to keep the oldest democracy in place, to give them a fighting chance to keep from becoming a narcostate,” Biden said in a June 2000 floor speech. When Plan Colombia's first formal draft was published, it was done so in English, not Spanish.

The original spirit of peace-building was completely sapped from the document by Biden, whose vigorous wheeling-and-dealing ensured that almost 80 percent of the \$7.5 billion plan went to the Colombian military. Five hundred U.S. military personnel were promptly dispatched to Bogota to train the country's military.

“If you read the original Plan Colombia, not the one that was written in Washington but the original Plan Colombia, there's no mention of military drives against the FARC rebels,” Robert White, the former No. 2 at the U.S. embassy in Bogota, complained in 2000. “Quite the contrary. [Pastrana] says the FARC is part of the history of Colombia and a historical phenomenon, he says, and they must be treated as Colombians.”

White lamented how Washington had abused the trust of the Colombians: “They come and ask for bread, and you give them stones.”

Plan Colombia was largely implemented under the watch of the headline right-wing President Álvaro Uribe. In 1991, Uribe was placed on a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency list of “important Colombian narco-traffickers,” in part due to his role in helping drug kingpin Pablo Escobar's obtain licenses for landing strips while Uribe was the head of Colombia's Civil Aeronautics Department. Under Uribe's watch, toxic chemicals were sprayed by military forces across the Colombian countryside, poisoning the crops of impoverished farmers and displacing millions.

‘Trump Phenomenon’ from political psychology standpoint

IFP — Historical experience shows the cause of many disasters through the course of history has been the mental problems of some country leaders.

Donald Trump, the 45th US president, is one of the characters who have come to power in recent years and whose behavior bears a striking resemblance to that of leaders who have caused destruction through history. In order to get a better understanding of Trump's psychological condition, IRNA has conducted an interview with Saeed Abdulmaleki, a faculty member at university and a political psychology development researcher. The full text of the interview follows:

Q: How do you analyze Trump from a psychological point of view?

A: A sudden action by a leader can change the destiny of a nation and can even have an impact globally. For example, if Adolf Hitler had not existed, the Second World War would not have broken out. Harold Dwight Lasswell was a leading American political scientist and communications theorist. Based on his studies on the clinical cases of political activists, Lasswell arrived at the conclusion that political leaders present their hidden personal conflicts within the framework of public objectives and symbols and [present them] as something logical and rational which is beneficial to the general public. He also concluded that political movements are a product of making personal feelings flow into the current of public issues.

In 2007, Frederick Coolidge and Daniel Segal brought together five experts on Hitler and asked them to evaluate him base on DSM-IV psychopathological indicators and personality disorders. The experts reached the consensus that in terms of personality disorders, Hitler suffered from paranoia, sociophobia, narcissism and sadism to a great extent. In another study, Coolidge and Segal conducted the same survey on Saddam Hussein. There was a rather high correlation between the personality traits of the two men. Therefore, most political leaders have suffered from mental disorders, and, accordingly, they have been reflected in domestic and foreign political decision making. Freud believes the current trend in everybody's life is affected by their unconscious self, which is made up of everyone's past and childhood memories that constitute his or her character. Trump grew up in a family most of whose members



were businesspeople and had a lot of property and tenants.

Trump's view toward the outside world was formed by living in Queens and Brooklyn neighbourhoods in New York, which are basically dangerous environments and where people have always been armed. It seems Trump's viewpoint vis-à-vis the world and international politics as well as his mentality emanates from his living in those areas, the mentality that the world is a jungle and is a dangerous place where one should always be fighting. This mindset forms Trump's current approach on the international stage. On the other hand, Trump's personality is affected by an American self-concept in the general sense of the world. Americans have always regarded themselves as first-world citizens and better than others and believe they enjoy a kind of greater potentiality.

Q: Trump has divided the history of the world into the era before his presidency and the one after his presidency. He also likes to shuck off the past heritage form a new order himself. How do you analyze his easing of complex international issues in order to satisfy his sense of megalomania and narcissism?

A: As I mentioned earlier, we can generally describe Trump's character as a "narcissist authoritarian." Narcissist people seek power. Moreover, they have charisma as well. They come to power in times of crisis when people are looking for a powerful leader who can

improve the situation. Trump was elected US president at a time when Obama had, before him, degraded the US in the minds of international circles and the US society itself by adopting a policy of leniency as well as downplaying the United States' prestige and authority. Trump was somehow the symbol of the United States' lost narcissism which needed to be revived. So, there is no doubt that Trump will definitely be re-elected president for a second term in the upcoming elections.

In the typology of political leaders, Lasswell categorizes political leaders into three groups: agitators, reformers and managers. In Trump's estimation, the posture of an agitator is the same as an authoritarian's. It seems Trump seeks to make a superman of himself and upset the current regulations ruling international regulations in such a way that it will bring him confirmation and respect to tackle his unsolved mental complexes.

Q: In dealing with Iran, Trump frequently uses the policy of carrot (talks) and stick (sanctions and psychological warfare). Is there a proper psychological analysis of Trump's contradictory behaviour?

A: Trump's policy, especially toward Iran, is one of pressure and psychological warfare. Trump uses different options of talks as well as carrot and stick at the same time, so that one of them might work. He mostly uses techniques of psychological warfare and imposing his will on the other

side, and continues doing so until the other side comes down with mental and spiritual collapse and is forced into submission. This is a technique that he uses.

Q: So, based on what you said, I think our standoff with Trump is more of a psychological rather than diplomatic and political nature. How should our officials deal with Trump as the key decision-maker in the United States.

A: Look, the United States has a kind of historical mistrust and phobia vis-à-vis Iran. Due to the psychological wounds it has sustained over the past four decades, the US has adopted a policy of animosity and revenge. Moreover, from the standpoint of political psychology of international relations, the hegemony of the West, especially that of the US, hinges on the idea that no government, particularly those in the Middle East and Muslim countries, must not survive for more than 40 years because of the idealistic approach that exists. Because of these two reasons, the US is seeking a regime change in Iran.

In my opinion, we should do two things under these circumstances, one on the domestic policy front and the other on the international stage. We should stop putting the blame on others for our shortcomings and weaknesses, and solve our problems ourselves. We should first tackle the identity crisis we are suffering on the political, cultural and social front. We should stop being scatter-minded, and stop preferring individual, ethnic and sectarian interests to national interests and identity.

On the international stage, especially in dealing with the US, we should turn to confidence-building and settling conflicts. To that end, it is necessary to adopt a policy of open dialogue and speech therapy in order to resolve both within and without. Speech therapy will bring with it cognitive behavioral therapy and the elimination of intellectual and perceptual errors of both sides. By speech therapy and elaborating on Iran's intentions and explaining the fact that Iran's nuclear activities have a deterrent nature, we may be able to put an end to this misunderstanding and gradually settle the conflict and tensions and the difficult security situation and get the heart and mind of the international community to get on board with us. Of course, it would be an arduous and time-consuming task. All in all, each policy belongs to its special period of time.

‘Europe not doing enough to help Iran fight Narcotics’

IFP —Iran says it is paying a very high cost in its years-long war on drugs and the smuggling of narcotics from Afghanistan, but the Europeans are not contributing enough.

Over the past ten years, despite the fact that international commitments have always obliged signatory states to pay the global cost of fighting drug-smuggling, there have been fluctuations in the European Union's financial and equipment aid to the Islamic Republic of Iran to help combat narcotics smuggled out of Afghanistan.

The latest case is when the EU, under the pretext of sanctions, cut off its aid to Iran for war on drugs in May, 2018 when the US pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Saeed Sefatian, the former director-general for treatment affairs at the Iran Drug Control Headquarters, has, in an interview with the Etemad daily, weighed in on the European Union's disregard for diplomatic rules. The interview was published as part of a featured article entitled "War of Opium", published a few days ago.

Excerpts of the interview follow:

■ Over the past 6 years, secretaries general of the Drug Control Headquarters have warned that if Iran stops fighting drug-trafficking and the smuggling of narcotics, the illicit drugs produced in Afghanistan will reach European countries more easily. How do you analyze the warning by Iranian authorities?

A: In order to analyze this issue, we should examine how the situation in Afghanistan, Iran and Europe has been affected by the issue of drug-smuggling over the past two decades. After coming to power in Afghanistan, the Taliban reduced drug production for a short period of time. However, despite the presence of 41 European countries plus the United States (i.e., countries for which we become scapegoats with regards to narco-trafficking) in Afghanistan, drug production in Afghanistan has increased since the mid-1990s and over the past 20 years. The US government announced a few years ago that it had spent some \$8 billion on fighting narcotics during those years. This is a large figure, and if that budget had been directly provided for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), it would be equal to 20 years' worth of funding allocated to this international institution.

The Europeans, including Britain, France and the Netherlands, also spent a fortune to stop drug production in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the most powerful country in the Middle East region that fights narcotics is Iran. A testament to that is the more than three thousand forces killed and around 10,000 wounded during the course of combating illicit drugs. The number of those killed or disabled in the Iranian war on drugs equals that of countries in the European Union, North America, the Pacific and Asia. It is very true that we have kept Afghan narcotics from being smuggled into Europe, but the question is how much opium and heroin Afghanistan really produces. Unlike public announcement that some 230 or 250 thousand hectares of land are under poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, the actual figure is really not clear. Therefore, we cannot announce a figure for opi-



um production, either, especially when Afghan farmers have, in recent years, been using genetically modified seeds which produce poppies with bigger flowers and higher morphine content, thus producing more drugs.

■ What possible situation can emerge after Iran stops fighting the smuggling of heroin to Europe?

A: Let's suppose the Iranian government announces and implements a halt in fighting narco-trafficking and stops sealing the country's western borders. As the major part of the illicit drugs smuggled toward Europe is heroin, the price of heroin will drop as the risk of smuggling will drop, too. Today, hashish is the mostly-used drug in Europe. Following a huge amount of narcotics such as heroin flowing into Europe, the high rate of heroin consumption in Europe, even if not the highest in the world, will plunge the continent into crisis. The most important happening would be a row among active drug cartels in Europe. In addition to this chaos, European governments will also face challenges in offering light narcotics onto the market. As a case in point, the Dutch government will not be able to speak, as freely as today, of offering light drugs onto the market, and this time, the country may think of setting rules for the supply and demand market for the product. After two or three years and in the wake of serious social and cultural changes following a shift in the consumption pattern, European governments will definitely have to change rules and tighten regulations and even intensify preventive education.

■ Some time ago, a figure was announced with regards to the losses inflicted on the Iranian economy; 50 trillion toman, which includes the government expenditure for sealing borders and even the human and social costs of drug addiction. If this amount of money had not been spent on fighting drugs and measures to counter the transport of drugs, to what extent could it have contributed to the country's economy?

A: We conducted a survey in 2002 on the economy of narcotics. At that time, war on drugs had cost the nation around \$11 million, which is equal to some 200 trillion toman today. So, economy is the backbone of

drug trade. This economy is lucrative for drug cartels but detrimental to governments and citizens. A clear example of that is the 200-trillion-toman loss inflicted on Iran's economy.

■ How binding are international obligations for the signatories?

A: An international convention is binding for a country when it is in conformity with the structure and laws of that country. In my opinion, the Islamic Republic of Iran is among the countries which, during their campaign on narcotics, have been able to adapt themselves to conventions well. This is while European countries have acted contrary to what we have done, so much so that today, in comparison with 15 years ago, they have tremendously cut down on their aid to the Iranian government for fighting illicit drugs. Even the UNODC's funds for Iran's war on drugs have dropped considerably compared to 15 years ago. International aid, especially US and Europe's funding, to the UNODC has also decreased considerably. We should ask Europeans why they haven't involved themselves that much, especially when they know Iran is at the forefront of the campaign against narcotics and is suffering enormous economic pressure in that regard and is grappling with problems as a result of sanctions today.

Mogherini's Adviser: EU will continue efforts to save JCPOA despite U.S. ban on Zarif

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A special adviser to European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini described the Trump administration's move to sanction Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif as "paradoxical", noting that it will not



affect Europe's efforts aimed at saving the JCPOA.

"Sanctions on individuals are of course part of the foreign policy toolbox. But to sanction a diplomat, in fact, the top diplomat, of a country certainly is not the diplomatic norm," Nathalie Tocci told the Tasnim News Agency on Thursday.

She added that Europe will continue its work to salvage the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers regardless of the US decision.

Nathalie Tocci is Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen, and Special Adviser to EU HRVP Federica Mogherini, on behalf of whom she wrote the European Global Strategy and is now working on its implementation, notably in the field of security and defense. Previously, she held research positions at the Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, the Transatlantic Academy, Washington and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Florence.

Her research interests include European foreign policy, conflict resolution, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Her major publications include: Framing the EU's Global Strategy, Springer-Palgrave Macmillan, 2017 (author); The EU, Promoting Regional Integration, and Conflict Resolution, Springer-Palgrave Macmillan, 2017 (co-editor); Turkey and the European Union, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015 (co-author); Multilateralism in the 21st Century, Routledge, 2013 (co-editor); Turkey's European Future: Behind the Scenes of America's Influence on EU-Turkey Relations, New York University Press, 2011 (author); and The EU and Conflict Resolution, Routledge, 2007 (author). Nathalie is the 2008 winner of the Anna Lindh award for the study of European Foreign Policy.

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ The US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has imposed sanctions on Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. What is your take on the move? Is it a diplomatic norm?

A: Sanctions on individuals are of course part of the foreign policy toolbox. But to sanction a diplomat, in fact, the top diplomat, of a country certainly is not the diplomatic norm. Diplomacy is most needed when there are problems, conflicts or tensions to solve and address, and there are plenty of these between the US and Iran. To sanction the Iranian foreign minister is paradoxical, to say the least.

■ According to a statement by OFAC, Zarif continues to "spread the regime's propaganda and disinformation around the world through these mediums." What do you think?

A: There are different views of Iran's role in the world, and it is well known that the US administration's views are very negative. But it is difficult to dispute the fact that part of a foreign minister's job description is to promote through different communication mediums the positions and opinions of its government.

■ Following the announcement, Zarif took to Twitter and said, "The US' reason for designating me is that I am Iran's 'primary spokesperson around the world'. Is the truth really that painful?" What are your thoughts on this?

A: That indeed a foreign minister is the primary spokesperson of its government in the world. This is what the job is all about.

■ Is the move consistent with the Trump administration's claims about its willingness to talk with Iran?

A: Extremely difficult to see how it can be.

■ What implications may the move have for Europe since the EU is making every attempt to preserve the JCPOA?

A: Not many, in fact, I don't see why it should have any repercussions on European efforts to save the JCPOA. This work, hard as it is, will continue regardless.

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National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
02	PARTS FOR "RUSTON" GAS TURBINE. TYPE TB 4000 SER. NOS.9051 0177-1 THRU 4. 9051 1276-4&5. 9051 0377-2 THRU 5. 9051 0477-1 THRU 8. 9051 0577-1 THRU 3. 9051 0677-1 THRU 7 AND. 9051 0777-1 THRU 6.REF RUSTON GAS TURBINE LTD	75 NOS

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following fax number / Email address along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 21,334 EURO or 1,004,766,960 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

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7th floor, 600 sq.m, 9 master
bedrooms, fully furn, terrace spj
gym, 360° view, parking
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Apt in Zafaranieh
120 sq.m, 2 master bedrooms
furn, equipped kitchen, spj
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storage, parking, **\$1200**
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Andarzgoo bldg (\$10000) 5storey, 20bdrs, S/pool S, J, yard, & pkg lots	

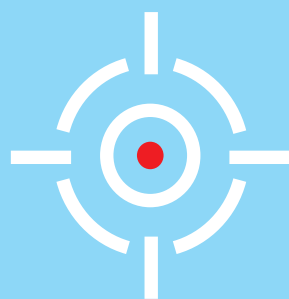
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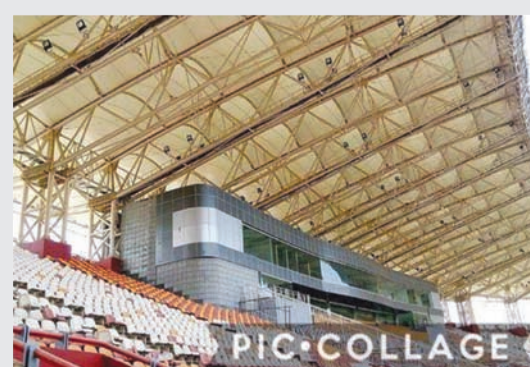
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Stars may keep spinning fast, long into old age

Stars may keep some of their youthful vigor as they age. Astronomers have spotted a star in its twilight years that spins much faster than expected. The discovery supports a new idea that, rather than continually slowing with age, some stars may have a magnetic midlife crisis that keeps them on a roll.

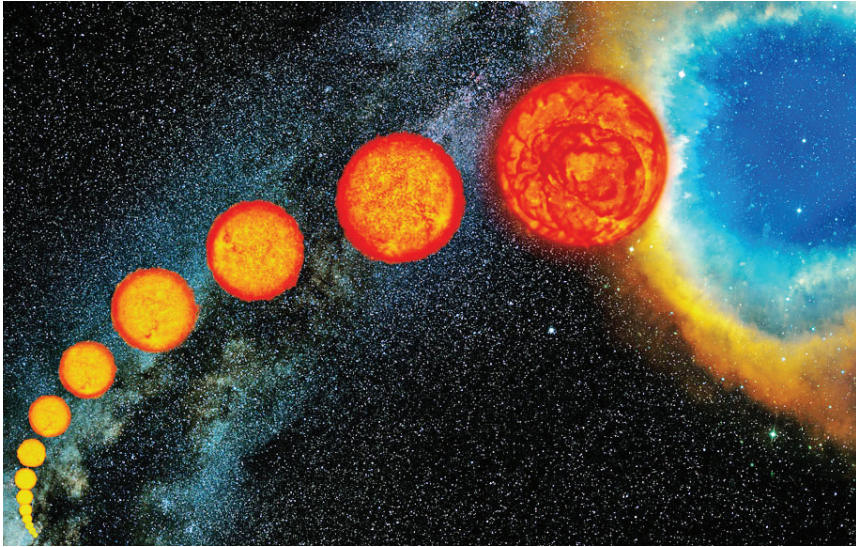
“This process of slowing rotation ... that we assumed happened indefinitely over the lifetime of a star may be interrupted in the middle of a star’s life,” says astronomer Travis Metcalfe of the Space Science Institute in Boulder, Colo. He presented new measurements of the star’s age July 30 at the first TESS Science Conference.

The star, 94 Aquarii Aa, is a member of a triple-star system in the constellation Aquarius about 69 light-years from Earth. Its color and brightness suggest that it’s in the part of a star’s life cycle called the subgiant stage, which happens near the end of a sunlike star’s life as it starts running out of fuel.

But it’s difficult to pinpoint a star’s age. Theories of stellar evolution predict that young stars rotate quickly but slow as they age and lose angular momentum, a process called spinning down. So astronomers often use a star’s spin rate to estimate age.

Recently, though, data have emerged that raise questions about whether that aging scenario is correct.

NASA’s Kepler space telescope, which watched distant stars for signs of orbiting planets from 2009 to 2018, tracked



how oscillations, or “starquakes,” ripple through a star’s interior, a technique called asteroseismology. Those ripples’ speeds are closely linked to the star’s mass and interior structure. Structure changes over the course of a star’s life, so asteroseismology is a good way to estimate a star’s age. In 2016, Metcalfe and colleagues reported in *Nature* that Kepler was finding old stars that rotated too fast for their ages. Young stars followed the spin-down trends, but around middle age, stars’ spin speed leveled off.

As an aging subgiant, 94 Aquarii Aa made a good test case, Metcalfe said. He used NASA’s Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, or TESS, the successor to Kepler, to estimate the star’s age and mass using asteroseismology. It’s about 6.2 billion years old, he found, and 1.2 times the mass of the sun. (In comparison, the sun is 4.5 billion years old.)

If it had been spinning down its whole life, a star of that mass should now be rotating once every 78 days. But previous measurements made from ground-based telescopes had

shown that the star rotates once every 47 days.

“The only way to explain a star of that age having that rotation period is that this stalled rotation has to kick in around middle age,” Metcalfe says. “It’s a smoking gun.” He hopes to repeat the experiment with hundreds of more stars over the course of the TESS mission.

Stars might stop slowing their rotation because of a midlife change in their magnetic field. A star’s magnetic field drives its stellar wind, which carries mass and angular momentum away from the star, contributing to its slowdown. But if the magnetic field changes its geometry around the middle of a star’s life, shifting from dominating the entire star to a more small-scale field, that could weaken the magnetic field’s control over the star’s rotation, Metcalfe says.

“This is the first time we’ve seen convincing evidence that you have to invoke [the stalled slowdown] to explain the rotation of a subgiant,” says Jason Curtis, an astronomer at Columbia University. Astronomers had a lot of skepticism about Metcalfe and colleagues’ previous work using Kepler data, he says, but “every time they look at it from a different angle, it becomes more convincing.”

Unfortunately, the result might mean that astronomers can’t use stars’ spin speeds to guess ages anymore. “If that stops working in old stars, that’s a bummer,” Curtis says.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

Scientists reproduce the dynamics behind astrophysical shocks

High-energy shock waves driven by solar flares and coronal mass ejections of plasma from the sun erupt throughout the solar system, unleashing magnetic space storms that can damage satellites, disrupt cell phone service and blackout power grids on Earth. Also driving high-energy waves is the solar wind -- plasma that constantly flows from the sun and buffets the Earth’s protective magnetic field.

Now experiments led by researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL) in the Princeton Center for Heliophysics have for the first time reproduced the process behind the source of such shocks. The findings bridge the gap between laboratory and spacecraft observations and advance understanding of how the universe works.

The experiments, reported in *Physical Review Letters*, show how the interaction of plasma -- the state of matter composed of free electrons and atomic nuclei, or ions -- can cause sudden jumps in plasma pressure and magnetic field strength that can accelerate particles to near the speed of light. Such shocks are “collisionless” because they are formed

by the interaction of waves and plasma particles rather than by collisions between the particles themselves.

The research produced measurement of the full run-up to shocks. “Direct measurement is an elegant way to see how the particles are moving and interacting,” said physicist Derek Schaeffer of PPPL and Princeton University, who led the research. “Our paper shows that we can employ a powerful diagnostic to study the particle motions that lead to shocks.”

The research, conducted on the Omega laser facility at the University of Rochester, produced a laser-driven plasma -- called a “piston” plasma -- that expanded at the supersonic rate of more than one million miles per hour through a pre-existing ambient plasma. The expansion accelerated ions in the ambient plasma to speeds of roughly half-a-million miles per hour, simulating the forerunner to collisionless shocks that occur throughout the cosmos.

The research unfolded in several stages: First, creation of the piston plasma reproduced the supersonic plasmas that form in outer space. The piston

acted like a snowplow, sweeping up ions in the ambient plasma embedded in a magnetic field.

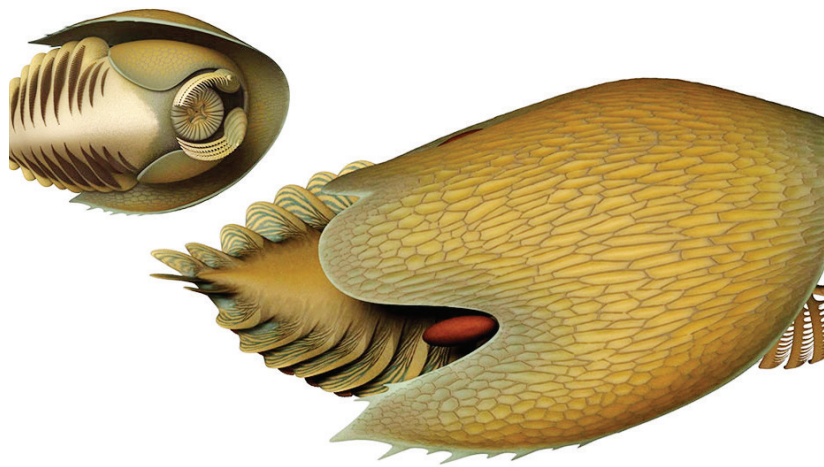
As more of these ions became swept up, they formed a barrier that kept the piston from acting further. “Once you’ve piled up enough ‘snow’, the shock decouples from the piston,” Schaeffer said.

The halted piston handed off formation of the shock to the highly compressed magnetized plasma, which gave rise to the sudden collisionless jump.

Researchers used a diagnostic called Thompson scattering to track these developments. The diagnostic detects laser light scattered off the electrons in plasma, enabling measurement of the temperature and density of the electrons and the speed of the flowing ions. The results, the authors write, show that laboratory experiments can probe the behavior of plasma particles in the precursor to collisionless astrophysical shocks, “and can complement, and in some cases overcome the limitations of similar measurements undertaken by spacecraft missions.”

(Source: Science Daily)

This newfound predator may have terrorized the Cambrian seafloor



A fierce predator, with spiny claws and a round, rasping mouth, terrorized the Cambrian seafloor 508 million years ago as it raked through the sand in search of food.

Dubbed *Cambroraster falcatus*, the predator was about 30 centimeters long -- which, to the tiny prey of the time, likely seemed monstrous enough. But *C. falcatus* also had a pair of jointed limbs that ended in rake-like claws, a round mouth lined with sharp, serrated plates and a broad, shield-shaped carapace that covered its head and most of its back, giving it a distinct resemblance to a horseshoe crab, or perhaps a spaceship.

Researchers, who describe *C. falcatus* for the first time July 31 in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, have now found hundreds of fossils of the ancient arthropod -- including one showing the critter’s entire body, both front and back -- in Canada’s Burgess Shale.

The creature’s round, tooth-filled mouth “is a type of mouth that doesn’t exist anymore,” and is characteristic of an extinct group of arthropods called radiodonts, says Jean-Bernard Caron, a paleontologist at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Radiodonts, in general, are rare in the fossil record, Caron says.

So it was all the more remarkable to find so many specimens of *C. falcatus* in one location, where the animals may have gathered thanks to abundant food. A mass molting event may also have occurred at the site, the researchers speculate, which would

help explain the clusters of appendages and carapaces.

The team spotted what turned out to be the first specimen of *C. falcatus* in 2012. “But we didn’t know what we were looking at” because the specimens were mostly just bits and pieces, Caron says. Then, in 2016, Caron and paleontologist Joseph Moysiuk of the University of Toronto found the key to the puzzle: a nearly complete fossil of the creature.

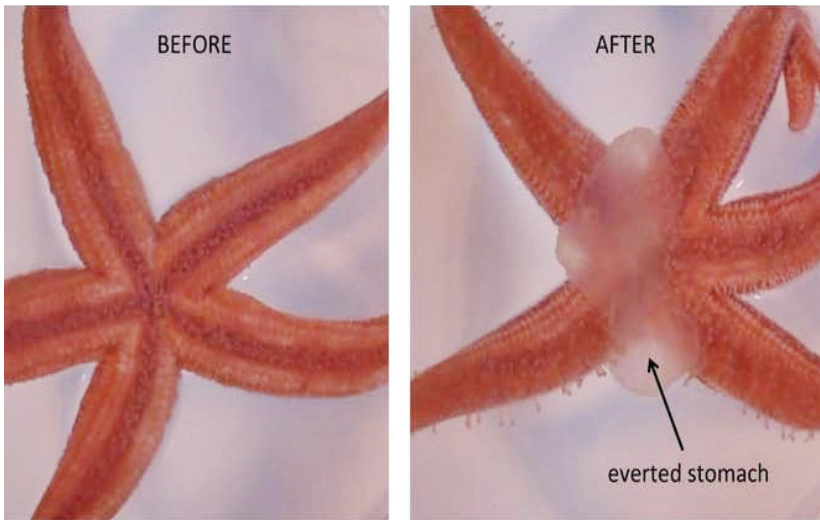
Cambroraster refers both to the Cambrian Period when this critter reigned and to the rake-like shape of its front claws, and *falcatus* to the sickle shape of the carapace. *C. falcatus* may have used its long, spiky claws to rake through the sand and form a kind of basket in which it trapped animals such as worms, small arthropods and even small fish. It may also have plowed through sediment with its spaceship-shaped head.

“What’s striking about this animal is that it opens a new window into predation during the Cambrian,” Caron says. Previous fossil finds sketched a relatively simple ecosystem structure, he says: Shrimplike predator *Anomalocaris* was at the top, and some smaller specialized arthropods like trilobites scuttled along the seafloor.

But *C. falcatus* was something else, he says: a remarkable and fierce predator that occupied its own niche, with adaptations “that really allowed it to feed on anything living in the mud.”

(Source: sciencenews.org)

Mysterious human ‘love hormone’ turns starfish stomachs inside out, study finds



The mysterious “love hormone” released in humans when they fall head over heels for someone causes starfish to turn their stomachs inside out, scientists have discovered.

Oxytocin is an ancient hormone that has different functions across species -- previous studies have shown it makes mice lose their appetite and makes some birds more generous.

In the latest research, scientists injected the chemical into starfish and found it triggered their mechanism of “everting” -- turning out their stomachs in the posture they use for eating.

Researchers from Queen Mary University of London said the experiment could help control the feeding patterns of the starfish species called the crown of thorns. This species feeds on coral and has “a devastating impact” on Australia’s Great Barrier Reef.

Lead author Professor Maurice Elphick said: “Our study has provided important new evidence that oxytocin-type molecules are important and ancient regulators of feeding in animals.

“So oxytocin is much more than a ‘love hormone’ -- perhaps especially for animals like starfish that don’t fall in love.”

Dr Esther Odekunle, formerly a PhD student at the university, added: “This research may provide a basis for the development of novel chemical methods to control their appetite for coral.”

Oxytocin-type molecules have been acting in the nervous systems of animals for more than half a billion years.

In humans, oxytocin molecules bind with receptors in the brain and in doing so influence maternal care, social interactions and stress and anxiety levels. The hormone has also been suggested as a treatment for anxiety, depression, addiction, anorexia and schizophrenia owing to its ability to promote social and bonding behavior.

Starfish were injected with the hormone and within a few minutes started bending their arms and adopted a “humped” posture, similar to that used when feeding -- and the stomach was then everted from the mouth.

The animals feed by climbing onto shellfish and adopting this posture, then using the tiny tube feet under their arms to pull apart the two valves of their prey.

The starfish then evert their stomach into the gap they have created, before digesting the soft tissues into a soup-like mixture and drawing this back into their body to eat, according to the study published in the journal *BMC Biology*.

Professor Elphick said: “What is fascinating is that injecting the hormone in starfish induces what is known as fictive feeding. The starfish are behaving as if they are feeding on a mussel or an oyster but no mussel or oyster is there to be eaten.”

The researchers also found the effect of oxytocin was so powerful it made starfish two to three times slower at righting themselves when flipped over -- an important defense mechanism when they are upturned by strong waves.

(Source: The Independent)

Stargazing in August: What to look out for in the skies this month

The summer skies can never rival the firmament of winter, spangled with its profusion of brilliant, glittering stars. But there are wonders to be found if you seek them out.

It’s high summer now, and if you look overhead, you’ll see the sky is dominated by a triangle of three bright stars. The “Summer Triangle” isn’t a constellation in its own right, but a giant shape formed by the brightest stars from: Aquila, Cygnus and Lyra.

The stars appear roughly the same brightness, but it’s amazing what cosmic tricks distance can play. Altair in Aquila is the closest, at a mere 17 light years, where a light year -- the distance a ray of light travels in one year -- is almost 10 trillion kilometers. This young white star spins ferociously, with a “day” of nine hours (as compared to over 25 days for the sun). This frenzied rotation rate means that Altair is close to breaking up.

Pure-white Vega is in Lyra. It’s the fifth-brightest star in the sky, and is 25 light years away. Because the Earth’s axis gradually “wobbles” (an effect called precession), Vega will become our pole star around AD14000. It’s surrounded by a disc of dust that may be forming into planets.

Deneb, in Cygnus, is the rule-breaking member of the trio. Although it looks roughly as bright as Altair and Vega, that’s an illusion. This celestial beacon is estimated to lie between 1,500 and 2,000 light years away from the sun. This means that Deneb is some 50,000-200,000 times more luminous than our local star.

The constellations these stars head up are no less fascinating. True, Aquila is a bit insipid to look at, but it does resemble a flying eagle. It boasts a star -- Eta Aquilae -- that pulsates and varies regularly in brightness, and is one of the brightest of the Cepheid variable stars that are used for measuring distances to other galaxies.

Cygnus is a glorious flying swan, neck and wings outstretched, flying along the Milky Way. Sweep the constellation with binoculars or a small telescope: you’ll discover glowing patches of fuzzy brightness. These are just a few of the star clusters and nebulae embedded in the Milky Way.

Make your way down to the “head” of the swan (opposite direction from Cygnus). There you’ll see a great dark cloud -- the Cygnus Rift -- silhouetted against the Milky Way. This is an agglomeration of dark cosmic dust (interstellar soot) that will be a birthplace for future stars.

While you’re at the head, take in Albireo. If you have a small telescope, you’ll see its double star of gold and sapphire. We rate Albireo as the most beautiful double star in the sky.

Lyra is the smallest of the three constellations. Perfectly-formed, it looks like a tiny lyre -- but it’s packed with goodies. To the left of Vega, you’ll spot a star; and -- if you’re keen-sighted -- you’ll notice that it’s double. Now take a small telescope to it... Yes, each of the components is double. This is Epsilon Lyrae: but everyone calls it the “Double Double”.

Now for Lyra’s hidden gem; but you’ll need a medium-sized telescope for this. Between the bottom two stars of the constellation lies a beautiful -- but ghostly -- star corpse, a planetary nebula (a name coined by William Herschel, as these objects resemble Uranus, a planet he’d discovered).

The Ring Nebula looks like a cosmic smoke-ring. It’s the remains of an unstable red giant which puffed its atmosphere into space when it ran out of nuclear fuel. At the centre of the ring is the collapsed core of the old star: its fate will be to dwindle into a cold, black cinder.

It’s a reminder of the destiny of our sun -- but at least we have 7 billion years to go.

As it grows dark, you can’t miss brilliant Jupiter, low in the southwest. The giant planet shines brighter than any of the stars, and a small telescope -- or even binoculars held steadily -- will reveal its four biggest moons.

The reddish star to Jupiter’s lower right is Antares, the heart of Scorpius, the celestial scorpion. And the “star” rather further to the left of Jupiter is the planet Saturn. Through a telescope you can spot the famous rings girdling this cream-colored world.

If you’d like a harder planetary challenge, set your alarm for the early hours any morning around the middle of the month. Scan with your eyes -- or binoculars -- along the eastern horizon between 5 and 6am, for a glimpse of tiny Mercury, the planet that most closely hugs the sun as it speeds round in a “year” that lasts only 88 of our days.

We have two special events in store this month. On the night of 12-13 August, the Earth runs into a stream of debris from Comet Swift-Tuttle. Tiny dust grains hurtle into the atmosphere, and burn up in a shower of meteors. These shooting stars seem to stream outwards from the constellation Perseus, so they’re called the Perseids. Although one of the most reliable and prolific of the regular meteor showers, the Perseids this year are competing with light pollution from bright moonlight, and we’ll only be able to see the brightest shooting stars.

And on the night of 23-24 August watch the moon carefully after it rises around midnight. The bright star nearby is Aldebaran, marking the red eye of the celestial bull, Taurus. Between them lie the stars of the Hyades cluster. Observe through the early hours, preferably with binoculars or a small telescope, and you’ll see the moon move in front of several of the Hyades. They blink out, and reappear, suddenly behind the sharp airless edge of the moon.

(Source: The Independent)

Russian spaceship brings 3 tons of supplies to space station

An unmanned Russian spaceship carrying tons of supplies to the International Space Station has docked with the orbiting laboratory.

The Progress 73 cargo ship blasted off atop a Soyuz rocket at 1210 GMT Wednesday from the Russian space complex in Baikonur, Kazakhstan, and docked with the ISS about 3 ½ hours later after two orbits.

The Progress is carrying about 3 tons (2.7 metric tons) of food, fuel and supplies to the space station, which currently has six astronauts aboard.

Those on the space station now include Nick Hague, Christina Koch and Andrew Morgan of the United States, Russians Alexander Skvortsov and Alexey Ovchinin and Luca Parmitano of Italy.

(Source: AP News)

Yazd festival offering local Iranian dishes

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A wide variety of dishes, indigenous to many corners of Iran, are being offered to visitors under one roof in the city of Yazd, central Iran.

The gastronomy festival also features foods of various Iranian nomads and tribes, ISNA reported.



Iranian cooking can be seen as a metaphor for the country itself: It's tart, sweet, fragrant and vastly complex. It's one of the world's oldest, yet largely obscure, culinary landscapes, with roots dating back to the Persian Empire.

Experts say that food is not merely an organic product with biochemical compositions. However, for members of each community, food is defined as a cultural element.

Organized in close collaboration with the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, the festival will be running through August 16.

Singapore Airlines adds free in-flight Wi-Fi for first class passengers

Singapore Airlines has offered free Wi-Fi to select premium passengers for a number of years now. However, free Wi-Fi was restricted with data caps, even in First Class and First Suites.

Additionally, passengers traveling in Business Class and select upper-tier elite frequent flyers will receive free Wi-Fi with a higher data cap.

All other passengers will still have the option to purchase in-flight Wi-Fi.

Passengers who receive free Wi-Fi access will need to activate their session via the in-flight Wi-Fi portal through the "complimentary access" page.

While free unlimited Wi-Fi is a fantastic addition to First Suites and First Class, it should be noted that Wi-Fi speeds vary on Singapore Airlines. Nonetheless, premium passengers can now kill time in the sky sending emails and checking Twitter without having to worry about restrictive data caps.

(Source: MSN)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Tugendhat Villa in Brno

The Tugendhat Villa, which is a UNESCO World Heritage, stands tall in Brno, in the district of Cerna Pole, in the south of South Moravia in the Czech Republic.

The villa was designed by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and built on a commission from Grete and Frits Tugendhat, members of rich industrial families of Brno, in 1929–1930.



The prominent German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe designed not only the villa but also its furniture and the adjacent garden. Moreover, Mies van der Rohe closely supervised the execution of the building project to achieve perfection.

The Tugendhat Villa in Brno is a pioneering work of modern 20th century residential architecture. It embodies innovative spatial and aesthetic concepts that were developed in housing at that time to meet the new needs arising from the modern way of life, by taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by modern industrial production.

Designing the interior residential area as a space without limits determines the architecture of the Tugendhat Villa. The villa also reflects the desire of Mies van der Rohe to create an architecture concentrating on the essential and aiming at the purest expression in each detail as well as in the whole.

A winter garden occupies almost two-thirds of the entire floor space of the main floor. Subtle divisions made of rosewood and onyx separate spaces of this same floor, such as the reception hall, the music corner and the library.

■ Integrity

The main components of the property, namely the house and the garden, are still present and are located within the boundaries of the property. The protective zone of the urban heritage reservation serves as the buffer zone of the Tugendhat Villa. The views of the villa and those from the villa of the town have been preserved. All risks of the erection of buildings that could compromise the visual field of the villa are kept under control by the bodies responsible for heritage preservation.

(Source: UNESCO)

HERITAGE & TOURISM

AUGUST 5, 2019

Iran introduces gigantic handwoven carpet

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday unveiled a gigantic handwoven carpet during the opening ceremony of an international carpet fair, running in Tabriz from August 1 to 4.

Measuring 600 square meters, the carpet is said to be worth some \$100 million, Tasnim reported.

Tabriz International Carpet Fair featured handwoven carpets from Isfahan, Gilan, Qom, Tehran as well as East and West Azarbaijan provinces. It also showcased tens of works by foreign exhibitors.

Tabriz, which is capital of northwestern East Azarbaijan province, was named the world city of carpet by the World Crafts Council in 2015.

Tabriz carpets usually show a medallion

decorative scheme, ranging from a single medallion to the complexity of a star centerpiece with pendants and cartouches, reflected by quarter-medallions similarly elaborated in the corners of the field. The ground pattern often features coiled arabesque vine work.

Over 5,397,000 tons of Iranian carpets, worth \$424.451 million, were exported to over 70 countries with the U.S. standing on top of the importers list, during the past fiscal year (ended March 20, 2019). Germany, the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden and Norway as well as Hungary, Romania, Poland and Ireland are major importers of Iranian carpet.

Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and good quality.



President Hassan Rouhani stands on a 600-square-meter handwoven carpet in an international carpet exhibit in Tabriz, August 1, 2019.

UNESCO-tagged Bisotun hosting workshop for tour guides

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's UNESCO-tagged Bisotun is hosting a 5-day professional workshop for tourist guides as the country is trying its best to draw more sightseers.

Organizers have invited some world experts to share their knowledge on tour guiding and its world standards and to provide a deeper insight on UNESCO world heritage sites, CHTN reported.

Mohammad-Hassan Talebian and Vali Teymouri, who are deputies for the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts

and Tourism Organization, along with several cultural officials attended the opening ceremony of the event that runs through August 8.

Situated in western Kermanshah province, Bisotun comprises immense life-size carvings depicting the Achaemenid king Darius I and several other figures. It also bears three different cuneiform script languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian.

Measuring about 15 meters high and 25 meters wide, the inscription was cre-

ated on the order of Darius I in 521 BC. It was the first cuneiform writing that was deciphered in the 19th century.

UNESCO says that Bisotun bears an outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Nearly 7.8 million foreign nationals visited the Islamic Republic during the past year (ended March 20), which shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year.

Visitors to West Azarbaijan museums almost doubles yr/yr

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — With its rich culture and unique natural landscapes, Iran's West Azarbaijan province is becoming an increasingly popular destination for local and even international travelers.

The province has seen a nearly 100 percent rise in the number of visitors to its museums during the Iranian calendar month of Tir (June 22-July 22) in comparison to the same month last year, a provincial tourism official said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

Nearly 19,174 people toured museums across the northwestern province during the month, according to the report.

Along with museums, cultural heritage and historical sites such as the two UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), as well as the



archaeological site of Tepe Hasanlu and the ruined Bastam Citadel were also hosted many more visitors, the official added.

There are eleven heritage museums across the province that harbor some 30,000 objects, testifying its vibrant history, arts and architecture.

Azarbaijan is bounded on the north by the Aras River, which separates it from Azerbaijan and Armenia, and on the west by Iraq and Turkey.

The region was a center of several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

How the black travel movement is gaining momentum

Fed up of constant job rejections, 29-year-old Craig Kingston decided he need to do something drastic.

So the South Florida native quit the nine to five role he hated, booked a one way ticket to Vietnam and sold all his stuff.

But he wasn't quite prepared for the attention he'd receive once he made the move to the Southeast Asian country.

"One of the biggest things I face being black and abroad, especially in Vietnam, is the staring," he tells CNN Travel.

"There aren't a lot of black people in Vietnam compared to Thailand and Malaysia, so people stare at you to a point where it becomes uncomfortable.

"I literally saw someone almost get into an accident on their bike staring at me."

■ Challenging stereotypes

In some respects, the reactions he got weren't surprising. The assumption -- for some anyway -- is that black people don't travel.

According to Mandala Research Firm, 17% of African Americans take one or more international trips and travel locally more than six times per year.

However, travel publications often paint a picture of a stereotyped Western tourist usually gazing at the horizon from the edge an infinity pool.

"If you look at major campaigns or advertisements for travel -- especially luxury travel -- you don't see brown faces," says Marissa Wilson, general manager of Travel Noire, a media company founded in 2014. "That causes an issue because, psychologically, it makes those people feel like this isn't made for them.

"Like they're not supposed to be traveling. We wanted to infiltrate that narrative and flip it on its head."

Besides addressing the under representation of travelers of color, Travel Noire aims to challenge limiting beliefs around the accessibility of travel while providing access to resources that cater to their needs.

This means a big part of its work involves curating imagery of black people traveling

across the globe.

"We were amazed at how hard it was to find a community of travelers who looked like us, much less find high quality images or stories about them online," Wilson says.

"Travel Noire created a space for people of color to see themselves in the travel industry: by curating beautiful images, by placing people all over the world, and by making the travel industry a space that was for us."

But this is about a lot more than just images.

With nearly five million black millennial travelers in the U.S. (this group spent at least \$63 billion there in 2018), there's a huge business opportunity for brands that successfully cater to this market.

"There's a lot of disposable income being spent on international travel but also a lot of people that aren't being catered to in the travel industry," says Simone Ashley White, associate director of business development for Blavity, Inc. (the parent company of Travel Noire).

"The goal is to push people to travel even more and also to work with the countries they're traveling to.

"We're partnering with tourism boards to think about how we tell that story, how we bring more dollars to different countries, and how we reach black travelers where they are."

Travel Noire has invested heavily in its online presence in order to reflect the digital world we live in.

The brand reaches over a million people on social media, and also produces a newsletter that goes out to more than 150,000 people every day.

"We often work with influencers for marketing campaigns as well as curating our own city guides," White says of its custom itineraries, which provide actionable content for over a hundred destinations worldwide.

"We want people on the ground experiencing these things. That's important, because we know we can't tell you what's happening in other countries day to day from the U.S."

■ Cultural insight

The goal is to work with local tour com-



panies and businesses, while also partnering with content creators and online influencers as major players in the travel movement.

Given that the most popular destinations span all parts of the planet, from Cape Town to Colombia, Bali to Barbados, and Ghana to Greece, this can be challenging at times.

"For destinations throughout Africa and the Caribbean, there's a keen interest in landing in a place that has a significant population of black natives," says Wilson.

"Apart from these spaces being absolutely beautiful, there's a sense of connection, comfort, and excitement in traveling to places where a huge part of the population looks like you.

"And for destinations throughout Asia and Central/South America, I think there's a huge curiosity for what life is like for locals."

Kingston made his move to Vietnam over a year ago and says he has no plans of returning to the United States.

"There's nothing there for me," he admits. "Why go back to work another dead job because I don't have eight years of experience with my degree for most high paying positions, when I can live life, be happy, and travel the world?"

Travel Noire helps to share stories like Kingston's by inviting its audience to write about their travel experiences, whether it's about becoming fearless in Thailand or finding peace in Japan.

"Overall, black travelers are interested in going to destinations they are curious about; where they feel a sense of connection, an opportunity to be challenged, and have the chance to step outside their comfort zone and be transformed," Wilson says.

"And, just like every other group that travels, they want an opportunity to get away from everyday life and enjoy everything the world has to offer."

Travel Noire is building on its digital success -- it regularly offers live webinars that reach up to 10,000 people at a time -- by organizing in-person meet-ups. These act as opportunities for people to come together in the real world.

"People are building a life around exploration and it helps to give others actionable steps on how they can achieve this," Wilson says.

"That's important, especially for folks who might just be starting their travel journey from the beginning."

(Source: CNN)

New breast milk bank opened on World Breastfeeding Week

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN – The fifth breast milk bank in Iran was established in the city of Shiraz during a ceremony on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Week, an annual celebration which is being held every year from August 1 to 7.

According to studies, breast milk is the best choice for infants and increase their IQ nine notches in comparison with babies who do not consume human milk, the head of Iranian Scientific Breastfeeding Promotion Society, Farid Imanzadeh, said during the ceremony.

He also pointed to emotional links between infants and mothers during breastfeeding, saying, the breast milk bank is for mothers who cannot feed their babies and provides them with sterilized breast milk.

The bank collects breast milks of volunteer mothers and keep them after pasteurization and sterilization for infants who cannot be fed with breast milk, he explained.

The first breast milk bank was established in the city of Tabriz, northwestern Iran, in 2016.

Other Iranian cities namely Ahvaz, Mashhad and Isfahan are also equipped with breast milk banks.

In recent years, mothers tend to use formula for their newborns, but the health ministry promotes breastfeeding nationwide, the deputy health minister said during the ceremony.

Alireza Raeisi said that breast milk prevents several diseases and is one of the best



foods for newborns.

The health ministry plans to prescribe formula for newborns suffering from diseases or mothers who cannot feed their infants, he said.

“Recent statistics released by the health ministry show 14% growth of breastfeeding in comparison with previous years and we anticipate more growth in coming years.”

Meanwhile, neonatologist Ali-Akbar

The bank collects breast milks of volunteer mothers and keep them after pasteurization and sterilization for infants who cannot be fed with breast milk

Iranian researchers working on EBS to cure addiction, obesity

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN – Iranian researchers at Shahid Beheshti University’s Institute for Cognitive and Brain Sciences are working on devices for electrical brain stimulation (EBS) in order to cure addiction and obesity, ISNA reported on Sunday.

EBS, also referred to as focal brain stimulation (FBS), is a form of electrotherapy and technique used in research and clinical neurobiology to stimulate a neuron or neural network in the brain through the direct or indirect excitation of its cell membrane by using an electric current.

“The human brain have two main aspects of chemical and electrical. The drug treatment targets the chemical aspect of brain for rehabilitation,” the faculty member of the institute Hamed Ekhtiari explained.

However, it is hoped to facilitate treatments for some diseases through focusing on electrical aspect of brain with some changes, he said.

Studies show that electrical brain stimulation is useful for treatment of some diseases, he said, adding, “We are trying to develop this technology in Iran to cope with some diseases like addiction, depression and convulsion.”

“We are now in research stage and we hope that with development of cognitive technology and investment of research centers, we can manufacture devices to treat pains,” he explained.

Now, there are several devices related to electrical brain stimulation that are planned to be produced in Iran, he announced.

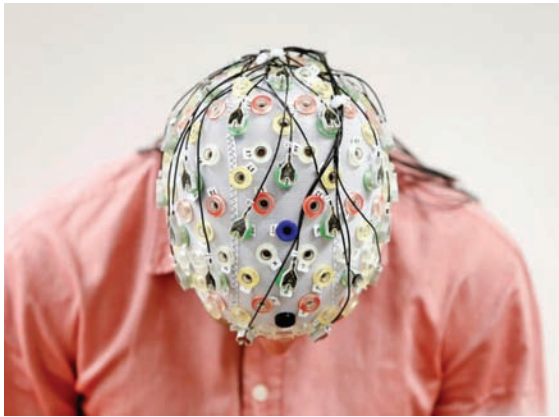
“In this project, we aim to stimulate some parts of brain in order to develop personal control on habits. People suffering from obesity can control what they eat and addicted people become able to avoid using drugs.”

Investment in cognitive science comes after investment in biotechnology and nanotechnology, however the change speed is considerable in this field, he said.

Moreover, cognitive studies deal with everyday problems of people like addiction, convulsion and depression, he concluded.

How does EBS work?

According to sciencedirect.com, electrical brain stimulation can serve as a powerful reward. Rats actively seek out such stimulation, vigorously performing tasks such as lever pressing or alley running. This phenomenon of ‘brain stimulation reward’ (BSR) has been seen across the vertebrate phylum, in fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals, including humans. The neural activity triggered by the electrode can compete with, summate with, and substitute for natural rewards, such as food and water and may mimic signals that act as currencies for the evaluation and selection of goals.



The rewarding effect is potentiated by many dependence-inducing drugs and attenuated during withdrawal. BSR sites are distributed widely, from the olfactory bulbs to the caudal brainstem. Dopamine-, acetylcholine-, and serotonin-containing neurons contribute to BSR, perhaps by modulating transmission in the reward-related circuitry or by relaying signals from the directly activated neurons to later stages of the circuitry.

Could dementia and anemia be linked?

A recent study has concluded that people with both higher-than-normal and lower-than-normal levels of hemoglobin have a higher risk of developing dementia as they age.

A new paper looks at the link between hemoglobin and dementia risk.

Hemoglobin is a protein present in red blood cells.

It is responsible for carrying life giving oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body.

Low levels of hemoglobin normally signify anemia.

Anemia is one of the most common blood disorders; worldwide, it affects an estimated 1.62 billion people.

Low hemoglobin levels are linked to a number of adverse health outcomes, including stroke and coronary heart disease. However, there is little information regarding how hemoglobin levels might relate to the risk of dementia.

Anemia and dementia

Recently, researchers from the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, decided to look for links between hemoglobin levels, anemia, and dementia. They published their findings this week in the journal *Neurology*.

Earlier experiments had found an association between anemia and dementia, but most studies only followed participants for an average of 3 years.

Because of the relatively short duration of these investigations, subtle changes in behavior, diet, or metabolism during the early phases of dementia (before diagnosis) might explain the association they found.

The researchers decided to extend this time frame to develop a clearer picture.

In all, they took data from 12,305 individuals with an average age of 65. None of the participants had dementia at the start of the study. The scientists checked their hemoglobin levels at the beginning of the trial, and 6.1% of the participants



(745 people) had anemia.

In males, anemia rates increased with age, but in females, anemia was most common before menopause.

During the 12-year follow-up period, 1,520 of these individuals developed dementia.

The researchers also had access to brain scans of 5,319 of the participants. This allowed them to assess blood flow throughout the brain, signs of vascular disease, and connectivity between brain regions.

Significant increase in risk

During their analysis, the scientists accounted for a range of variables that might skew the results. These included age, sex, smoking, alcohol consumption, body mass index (BMI), diabetes, kidney function, and cholesterol levels.

The scientists found that people with high and low hemoglobin levels had an increased risk of dementia compared with individuals with mid range levels. The authors write:

“Compared [with] no anemia, the

presence of anemia was associated with a 34% increase in the risk of all cause dementia, and [a] 41% increase for [Alzheimer’s disease].”

When the scientists analyzed the MRI data, they found a parallel correlation. People with higher and lower levels of hemoglobin had a greater number of lesions in their white matter and reduced connectivity between brain areas.

The researchers also showed that individuals with anemia were 45% more likely to have at least one microbleed than those without anemia. Microbleeds are tiny brain hemorrhages, most “likely caused by structural abnormalities” in blood vessels. Having more microbleeds is associated with cognitive decline and dementia.

This study cannot prove that hemoglobin levels cause dementia. For instance, the authors ask if underlying or associated vascular or metabolic changes, perhaps involving iron or vitamins B-9 and B-12, might be driving the association.

Similarly, the researchers note that anemia can occur as part of many

Sayyari said breast milk contains several antibodies and is sterile. Breast milk is nutritious enough for a baby after six months of age.

No other diet is recommended during breastfeeding for mothers, he said.

World Breastfeeding Week 2019

According to World Health Organization (WHO) website, the WBW encourages breastfeeding and improve the health of babies around the world. It commemorates the Innocenti Declaration signed in August 1990 by government policymakers, WHO, UNICEF and other organizations to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

This year, WHO is working with UNICEF and partners to promote the importance of family-friendly policies to enable breastfeeding and help parents nurture and bond with their children in early life, when it matters most. This includes enacting paid maternity leave for a minimum of 18 weeks, and paid paternity leave to encourage shared responsibility of caring for their children on an equal basis.

Breastfeeding promotes better health for mothers and children alike. Increasing breastfeeding to near-universal levels could save more than 800,000 lives every year, the majority being children under 6 months. Breastfeeding decreases the risk of mothers developing breast cancer, ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. It is estimated that increased breastfeeding could avert 20,000 maternal deaths each year due to breast cancer.

Rabies on the rise in Iran: official

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN – The number of cases of rabies in Iran increased in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018 – March 2019), compared to its preceding year, said Behzad Amiri, the head of zoonotic diseases department at the ministry of health, ISNA reported on Sunday.

There were 182, 818 cases of rabies reported in 1396, while the figure rose to 207, 227 in 1397, he explained.

Rabies, an infectious viral disease spread to people through animal bites, is treated free of charge in health centers for rabies prevention nationwide, he said.



He previously announced that there are some 700 rabies prevention centers nationwide. If a person is bitten by an animal, he or she should refer to these centers and take preventive measures.

Each rabies vaccine costs seven euros and each rabies serum costs 56 euros, which imposes a great financial burden on the ministry, he lamented.

However, only six people got rabies last year, he said.

In October 2018, Amiri announced that rabies impose 1.8 trillion rials (about \$42 million) on the country annually.

He said that several working groups were formed to deal with stray dogs, which is one of the main causes of rabies.

According to WHO, rabies is almost always fatal following the onset of clinical symptoms. In up to 99% of cases, domestic dogs are responsible for rabies virus transmission to humans.

Globally, rabies deaths are rarely reported and children between the ages of 5–14 years are frequent victims.

People with furious rabies exhibit signs of hyperactivity, excitable behaviour, hydrophobia (fear of water) and sometimes aerophobia (fear of drafts or of fresh air).

Paralytic rabies accounts for about 20% of the total number of human cases. This form of rabies runs a less dramatic and usually longer course than the furious form. Muscles gradually become paralyzed, starting at the site of the bite or scratch. A coma slowly develops, and eventually death occurs.

Calorie density — how to lose weight eating more food

Calorie density describes the number of calories in a given volume or weight of food.

Understanding how it works can help you lose weight and improve your diet.

What’s more, focusing on low-calorie-density foods allows you to eat a large volume of food while still cutting back on calories.

This can have many health benefits, including increased nutrient intake and weight loss.

This article explains everything you need to know about calorie density.

What is calorie density?

Calorie density is a measure of the calorie content of food relative to its weight or volume.

It is also called energy density and is usually measured as calories per 3.5 ounces (100 grams) of food.

Choosing foods with a low calorie density can help with weight loss. It makes you automatically eat fewer calories while still eating large and filling portions.

An easier way to make sense of this is to imagine a full plate of food. The fewer calories the plate contains, the lower the calorie density of the meal.

A vegetable with 30 calories per 100 grams has a low calorie density, while chocolate that has 550 calories per 100 grams has a very high calorie density.

Although calorie density may be less well known than other weight management concepts like calorie counting, choosing foods based on this measure may be simpler and more effective.

For example, basing your diet on low-calorie-density foods tends to limit you to predominantly healthy and nutrient-rich whole foods.

It can quickly clean up your diet, eliminating most calorie-dense, processed foods that are generally unhealthy and easy to overeat.

How does calorie density affect weight?

Eating too many calories is a key factor in weight gain.

Several studies have shown that individuals who consume low-calorie-density diets also eat fewer total calories per day. This is linked to a lower body weight, body mass index (BMI), and waist circumference.

Accordingly, studies reveal that those whose diets comprise mostly high-calorie-density foods have an increased risk of weight gain and obesity.

Calorie density also affects hunger.

Low-calorie-density foods tend to provide less fat and more water and fiber. This is great for making you feel full and reducing your daily calorie intake.

In contrast, many calorie-dense foods are highly processed and extremely palatable, making them easy to overeat.

Research indicates that whole foods tell your brain to stop eating, while this effect is delayed when you eat highly processed foods.

In one study, participants ate 56% more calories when provided a high-energy-density meal, compared with a low-energy-density one.

Another study compared calorie intake for high- and low-calorie-density meals that were matched for palatability and macronutrients.

People ate an average of 425 more calories when given the calorie-density meal than when given the low-calorie-density one.

A low-calorie-density diet helps you lose weight

It focuses on whole foods and limits your intake of processed foods, naturally increasing your intake of protein, vegetables, and fruit.

All of these foods have been shown to aid weight loss by reducing total calorie intake per meal or per day.

A low-calorie-density diet can lessen hunger since your stomach senses the volume of food you have consumed in a meal.

A low-calorie-density meal also fills your plate. This helps your meal last longer and forces you to chew more, further increasing your feelings of fullness.

(Source: healthline.com)

(Source: medicalnewstoday.com)

Collapse at ice cave kills one

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — One person lost his life when tons of ice and rock collapsed in an ice cave in the southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province on Friday, deputy director of the provincial Red Crescent Society has said.

The collapse took place at Chama ice cave located in the central part of Koohrang city, a popular spot for people wanting to get away from the heat.

An injured woman was rescued by the Red Crescent forces, but no one trapped under the snow, Mehr quoted Reza Zaheri Abdeh-Vand as saying.

“After locals reported the collapse, we dispatched five teams of relief and rescue forces,” he noted, adding, “After arriving at the incident scene, we saw a huge ice and rock fall.”

“Due to not being aware that whether any tourists have been trapped under the ice, we had to chop a huge pile of ice and snow with special equipment but finally found out that no one is beneath it,” he explained.

Unfortunately, a young man from Kerman province lost life immediately after the collapse, he concluded.

Last year on August 24, Chama ice cave collapsed leaving one dead. Also a year earlier, two tourists from Shiraz, Fars province, were killed in a similar incident.

Falling glacier kills three men on boat

Three men are believed to have been killed by ice falling from a melting glacier in Alaska.

Two German citizens and an Austrian man were found dead in Valdez Glacier Lake, around 120 miles east of Anchorage.

The bodies were discovered in an area that “was littered with floating icebergs, glacial slush and challenging terrain for recovery,” according to a Valdez City spokesperson.

Those conditions, plus the location of the remains near the lowest end of Valdez Glacier, suggested that falling glacial ice killed the boaters.

“Because of the ice debris in the area where they were found, that is what leads us to suspect that is what happened,” the spokesperson added.

At least one of the victims was left with a severe head trauma. There were no eyewitnesses to the deaths. The three bodies were found by kayakers on Tuesday.

The state medical examiner’s office will determine what killed the men shortly, the spokesperson said.

The victims were identified as Manfred Brida, 62, of Austria, and Maria Elisabeth Schroer, 68, and Albrecht Paul Thomas Schroder-Shroer, of Germany.

The three had been boating in an inflatable canoe-type craft, which was recovered from the scene, along with the victims’ other belongings.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

South Africa Arms Deal

(May 28, 2001)

In South Africa, public hearings are due to begin today (Monday, 28 May 2001) into a controversial 6 billion dollar arms deal. There have been allegations of fraud and corruption surrounding the deal since it was signed a year and a half ago. From Johannesburg, Nick Childs reports.

Opinion on these hearings is divided, just as it is over the whole **arms deal**. Supporters say the public inquiry is a genuine effort to provide some background and context to the controversial deal. Critics say it’ll be a **whitewash** that could **undermine** and prejudice the three separate criminal investigations which are also underway. Since the contract was signed at the end of 1999, its opponents have accused senior officials of the governing African National Congress of **corruption**. One of the allegations has involved the alleged supply of luxury cars to senior officials. One of those **in the spotlight** is the ANC’s chief whip, Tony Yengeni. The government of President Thabo Mbeki has been **attacked** for its handling of the affair and it’s been accused of attempting a **cover-up**. Its appeared increasingly on the defensive. Among the claims are that it’s **sidelined** the country’s most effective investigation unit in the **probes** which have been set up.

The deal has become one of the most **highly charged issues facing** President Mbeki’s administration and has provided ammunition for **wider criticism** of his leadership. The ANC has consistently denied the allegations, and while there’s been much **heat**, there’s been little actual **light shed on** the charges. But as well as the claims of corruption, there’s also been growing criticism over the **mushrooming** cost of the deal. The government says the armed forces urgently need **modernization**, but opponents say the country can’t afford it, and the money would be **better spent elsewhere**.

■ **Words**
arms deal: an agreement to sell or buy weapons, tanks, planes and other types of military equipment.
whitewash: an attempt to hide unpleasant facts about something
undermine: if something is undermined then its ability to do something is weakened
corruption: dishonesty and illegal behavior (by people in positions of power or authority)
in the spotlight: if you are in the spotlight then you are receiving a lot of public attention
attacked: (in this case) strongly criticized
cover-up: an attempt to hide a crime or mistake
sidelined: if you sideline someone, you make them seem unimportant and stop them being included in what other people are doing
probes: investigations
highly charged issues: an issue is an important subject that people are discussing, a highly charged issue is a subject that has become very tense and emotional
facing: if you face something, then you have to deal with it
wider criticism: if there is wider criticism of something then even more people are expressing their disapproval of it
heat: (in this case) intense or highly focused attention
light shed on: if you shed light on something then you provide information or facts about it
mushrooming: quickly increasing in size or quantity (like the mushroom shaped cloud of an atomic bomb explosion)
modernization: if you modernize something then you introduce new equipment and/or methods of working
better spent elsewhere: if money is better spent elsewhere, then that money would be more effectively used to buy something different to what it was already being spent on

(Source: BBC)

Tehran exposed to landslide, land subsidence

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Landslide and land subsidence are the two major threats in the Iranian capital city of Tehran, which will pose threat to the lives of at least 3 million people, Ali Beitollahi, secretary of the national working group on natural disasters has warned.

Referring to the differences between landslide and land subsidence, he noted that landslide refers to a wide range of ground movements, such as rock falls, deep-seated slope failures, mudflows and debris flows. It is triggered by some specific events such as heavy rainfall, earthquake, slope cut to build a road, and many others, although this is not always identifiable.

“Subsidence is the sudden sinking or gradual downward settling of the ground’s surface with little or no horizontal motion. It may be caused by natural processes or by human activities. The human activities include sub-surface mining or extraction of underground fluids, or groundwater.”

Iran is greatly affected by both phenomena, while landslide is more common in the capital, he lamented, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Referring to the areas prone to landslide in Tehran, he noted that southern part of the city is more exposed to the threat due to shaking caused by underground transport system.

“Landslide causes huge holes to open up in the ground, which makes it different with land subsidence, however, both are threatening the country.”

He went on to say that Tehran districts 17, 18 and 20 are prone to land subsidence, which is mainly caused by excessive ground-water withdrawal; when large amounts of groundwater have been withdrawn from certain types of rocks, such as fine-grained sediments, the rock compacts because the water is partly responsible for holding the ground up.

“So, when the water is withdrawn, the rocks falls in on itself, and land subsidence



cannot be noticed early because it can occur gradually over large areas rather than in a small spot.”

For example, in southern Tehran, ground sinks about 20 to 25 centimeters annually on a large scale, if it continues over a long period of time, the land downwards about 6 meters over a thirty-year period, leading to cracking of the buildings as well as gas, oil and sewer pipes, he explained.

Southern areas of the capital are extremely old, which are highly vulnerable to subsidence and landslide, he stated, adding, about 3 million people are residing the areas affected by both threats.

■ **Landslide harshly hit Lorestan province**

Meanwhile, Reza Saki, an environmentalist, has warned that Lorestan province cannot bear the consequences of rainfall, the city is highly vulnerable to flood, Mehr reported on Sunday.

The province of Lorestan has been haunt-

ed by flood on March 19 which caused huge devastations in addition to landslides which occurred in 1,300 parts of the province, he lamented.

Large holes have been found in in the province, especially in oak forests, he said, adding, many mountain rocks have been moved and displaced, and a large amount of soil flowed downward carrying many trees.

Each 500-year old oak tree is worth \$200,000 for its ecological value, while flood has depleted an oak tree aged over 800 years in the province, he noted.

“More importantly, even when a forest burns, we may be able to start reforestation months later and regenerate the area in the long run, but when a landslide occurs, trees are completely depleted and almost gone forever.”

On the other hand, when landslide wipe out the trees, the area will be more vulnerable to flooding, as the trees act like barriers to flood and reduce its devastation, but the

province is currently suffering from lack of trees and vegetation, so the next flood might wash off the whole province, he regretted.

He further called on the responsible bodies to help save the province of Lorestan, reforestation and water resources management are the two most important measures which must be taken urgently.

■ **Land subsidence an overlooked threat to the country?**

Yahya Jamour, deputy director of Iran National Cartographic Center, said in April that although land subsidence is too subtle to be detected, it must be tackled before incurring great loss, which has been proved to be more destructive than flood and earthquake.

“Recent floods were not the first natural disasters and definitely will not be the last, so we must be prepared before the incidents.”

In September 2018, geologist Mohammad Javad Bolourchi said that over 300 plains in Iran are at high risk of experiencing land subsidence, and as long as there is virtually no reduction in illegal overuse of groundwater resources, curbing subsidence will coincide with depletion of aquifers.

Studies in the Iranian calendar years 1388 (March 2009-March 2010), 1390 (March 2011-March 2012), and 1392 (March 2013-March 2014), indicated that the plains in southern Tehran are subsiding by an average of one millimeter a day (36 centimeters a year).

In the Iranian calendar year 1384 (March 2005-March 2006), the subsidence rate in Tehran plain has been measured at 17 centimeters a year, it has been measured 12 centimeters in Varamin county, in southern Tehran.

This is while the run-down in plains of Mashhad or Rafsanjan, which has set the record high for this phenomenon since the Iranian calendar year 1345 (March 1966-March 1967), is certainly higher, regarding the reduction in precipitation rate.

Smart system assessing students on career aptitude launched

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — An online system has been launched to assess the student’s personality from different aspects to help them discover the right career path and make better decisions when choosing a field of study before the university entrance exam (Konkur), director for association of educational psychology has said.

The Iranian university entrance exam, is a standardized multiple choice test used as a means to gain admission to higher education in Iran. High school graduates compete in an attempt to seek a place in one of the public universities after finishing the 12-year compulsory education.

After the exam results are announced, students can choose their desirable field of study.

In Iran, as in many other countries where a university entrance exam is a sole criterion for student selection, it provides advantages to some candidates with better education and preparation, so, the exam remains an impediment to equal education access or right field of study based on the students’ personality or proper careers which fit well with who they really are.

“So, for the first time, researchers active in the fields



of psychology and psychometric have launched a system to recolonize the student’s career aptitude assessing their abilities, emotions and intelligence,” Fariborz Dortaj said.

The traditional way of choosing field of study due to ignoring intelligence, personality and abilities of the students resulted in academic failure, expulsion, and college dropout, he lamented.

All applicants can refer to the system and choose courses tailored to their cognitive ability, interests, and personality traits, prior to the exam results announced, he noted, ISNA reported on Sunday.

He went on to say that but for the next few days when the results are announced, the applicants can choose their field of study more accurately regarding their ranks.

No such system in the world has ever been designed that can simultaneously measure intelligence, talent, creativity, ability and interest, he highlighted, adding, one of the problems with psychology and other academic fields is one-dimensional approach, so that only the intelligence of the candidates is measured through the tests, but this system determines whether the person’s talents and ability regardless of the intelligence is compatible to study a field.

For example, an introvert should study in fields such as chemistry and laboratory sciences that require minimal communication, he said.

He concluded that the system also helps the parents distinguish their children’s abilities or talents from their early childhood.

Record heatwave ‘made much more likely’ by human impact on climate

The record-breaking heatwave that roasted Europe last month was a one-in-a-thousand-year event made up to 100 times more likely by human-driven climate change, scientists have calculated.

Around the globe, July at least equalled and may have surpassed the hottest month on record, according to data from the World Meteorological Organization. This followed the warmest June on record.

Temperature records were broken in many countries, wildfires continue to devastate vast areas of Siberia, the Greenland ice sheet is melting at a near record rate, and the risk of drought has grown more acute across wide areas of central and eastern Europe.

The extreme heat is particularly unusual because it is not an El Niño year – the phe-

nomenon usually associated with prolonged temperature surges. Instead, scientists say it is driven to a large extent by carbon emissions from car exhausts, power plant chimneys, burning forests and other human sources.

How much these factors loaded the dice in the two- to three-day heatwave during the last week of July was the subject of an attribution study by a consortium of meteorologists and climatologists at the UK Met Office, Oxford University and other prominent European institutions.

It found that the extreme heat in France and the Netherlands, where temperatures peaked above 40C, was made at least 10 times and possibly more than 100 times more likely by climate change. In the UK, which set a record of 38.7C on 25 July, the

human impact on the climate made the high temperatures at least two to three times more probable.

There was considerable variation from place to place, but in all the studied locations the scientists said it would have been 1.5C to 3C cooler without climate change.

Although the recent heat has been described as historic, it is unlikely to remain that way for long, according to the authors of the study. “It will not make history. These records will be broken in few years,” said Friederike Otto, of the University of Oxford. “What we see with European heatwaves is that all the climate models are underestimating the change that we see.” She said further study would investigate how likely it was to have two



intense heatwaves in the space of two months.

The paper says the extreme heat will have an impact on human wellbeing, though the data on this often lags, which can mean it fails to draw much public attention.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads

Some 90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads in Iran, an official with traffic police has said.

The old taxis are being used 8 times more than private cars, YJC quoted Mohammad Tarahhomi as saying on Monday. There are 1.5 million clunker vehicles and 9 million clunker motorcycles in Iran, he regretted, adding that unfortunately scrappage of old, high-emission vehicles is linked with importation of vehicles which is now banned.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dia-”

■ **Meaning**: through or across
■ **For example**: This lesson is designed to help students identify and measure the **diameter** of a circle.

PHRASAL VERB

Tell of somebody/something

■ **Meaning**: to describe an event or person
■ **For example**: The poem tells of the deeds of a famous warrior.

IDIOM

Find (one’s) feet

■ **Explanation**: to reach a level of comfort in a new situation
■ **For example**: It took a while, but I’ve finally found my feet in my job.

۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در جاده‌های کشور تردد می‌کنند

رئیس اداره حقوقی پلیس راه گفت: ۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در ایران وجود دارد.

به گزارش باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان سرهنگ محمد ترجمی گفت: میزان تردد این تاکسی‌ها هشت برابر خودروهای عادی است.

وی افزود: یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار خودروی فرسوده و ۹ میلیون موتورسیکلت فرسوده در کشور وجود دارد. متأسفانه حیات اسقاط به واردات گره خورده است و از آنجا که واردات ممنوع شده است، اسقاط نیز صورت نمی‌گیرد.

U.S. rocked by two mass shootings in 24 hours

TEHRAN— At least 29 people were killed and dozens wounded in two separate mass shootings as the U.S. was rocked by a week-end of gun violence.

Police and FBI investigators in Texas searched for clues on Sunday to explain what drove a young gunman from the Dallas area to kill 20 people at a Walmart store hundreds of miles away in the border city of El Paso.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott said Saturday morning's rampage appeared to be a hate crime, and police cited a "manifesto" they attributed to the suspect as evidence that the bloodshed was racially motivated.

The shooting immediately reverberated on the U.S. presidential campaign trail, with several Democratic candidates denouncing the rise of gun violence and repeating calls for tighter gun control measures.

At least two candidates, Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, and El Paso native Beto O'Rourke, a former congressman, drew connections to a resurgence in white nationalism and xenophobic politics in the United States.

"America is under attack from homegrown white nationalist terrorism," Buttigieg said at a candidates forum in Las Vegas.

On Twitter, U.S. President Donald Trump branded the shooting "an act of cowardice," adding, "I know that I stand with everyone



in this country to condemn today's hateful act. There are no reasons or excuses that will ever justify killing innocent people."

According to Reuters, police said the suspect opened fire with a rifle on shoppers, many of them bargain-hunting for back-to-school supplies, then surrendered to officers who confronted him outside the store.

■ **Ten people, including gunman, killed in Ohio mass shooting**

Meanwhile, a gunman dressed in body

armor opened fire in a downtown district of Dayton, Ohio, early on Sunday, killing nine people and wounding at least 26 others, authorities said, in the second deadly mass shooting in the United States in less than a day.

Police officers who were on routine patrol nearby arrived on the scene in less than a minute and shot the attacker dead, likely preventing a much higher casualty toll, police and the city's mayor said.

Assistant Police Chief Matt Carper told reporters the incident began at 1 a.m. local time in Dayton's Oregon District, a downtown historic neighborhood popular for its night-clubs, restaurants art galleries and shops.

The motive behind the shooting was not immediately clear, and investigators believe the individual had acted alone, Carper said. The authorities did not disclose the shooter's identity.

A total of 10 people were killed, including the assailant. Twenty-six others were injured and taken to hospitals across the area, Mayor Nan Whaley told reporters, though the extent of their injuries was not known.

She said the suspect was wearing body armor and was armed with a rifle firing .223-caliber rounds with high-capacity ammunition magazines.

Had police officers not confronted the suspect as quickly as they did, "hundreds of people in the Oregon District could be dead today," the mayor said.

FBI agents were assisting in the investigation.

The shooting in Dayton, a riverfront city of about 140,000 people in southwestern Ohio, came just 13 hours after a mass shooting at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, where 20 people were killed and 26 others wounded. The 21-year-old suspect in that shooting was arrested.

Dissident cleric dies because of 'medical negligence' in Saudi prison

TEHRAN— A dissident Saudi cleric has reportedly died of health complications he developed in the kingdom's jails due to "medical negligence," as a crackdown led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman against pro-democracy campaigners, Muslim preachers and intellectuals continues in the country.

The rights group Prisoners of Conscience, which is an independent non-governmental organization seeking to promote human rights in Saudi Arabia, announced in a post on its official Twitter page that Sheikh Saleh Abdulaziz al-Dumairi passed away at Tariya prison in Saudi Arabia's north-central city of Buraydah on Saturday.

Dumairi was apparently suffering from heart problems, and was being kept in solitary confinement.

According to Press TV, the dissident cleric had been detained on several occasions in the past over his political activism, and support for prisoners of opinion.

The development came only a day after Amnesty International called for the immediate and unconditional release of prominent Saudi dissident Muslim cleric Sheikh Salman al-Awdah.

"The hearing of Sheikh Salman al-Awdah has been adjourned again after a year of several postponements. We continue to demand Saudi authorities to release the Sheikh immediately and unconditionally, drop all charges against him, and respect international human rights standards in his trial," the London-based organization said in a post published on its Twitter page.

Ex-Israeli minister Lieberman calls Netanyahu 'liar, unfit for office'

TEHRAN— Avigdor Lieberman, who was formerly minister of military affairs under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, says the premier tells lies "every day, every hour" and is unfit for office.

Lieberman, head of the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party, told Israel's Channel 12 on Saturday that Netanyahu was "in a desperate situation" ahead of repeat elections in September.

He "pitied" Netanyahu, who is head of the right-wing Likud party, for having to "resort to lying every day, every hour" by calling Lieberman a leftist.

He, however, said that his proposed sit-down with Netanyahu was unlikely to happen because the prime minister "is afraid, he knows his situation is dire."

Back in May, Israel's parliament dis-

solved and called new general elections because Netanyahu had failed to form a cabinet despite a win in elections in April. Coalition talks had reached a stalemate over disagreements between ultra-Orthodox parties and Yisrael Beiteinu on a military conscription bill.

According to Press TV, the ex-Israeli minister of military affairs had at the time described Netanyahu's inability to form a cabinet a "huge, unprecedented failure."

In his Saturday remarks, Lieberman said Netanyahu's behavior "calls into question his fitness to function as prime minister; maybe the years have taken their toll."

Israel's ruling party, he said, should present an alternative candidate if Netanyahu failed to form a cabinet again after the upcoming vote.

U.S., Taliban push for peace deal in new round of Doha talks

TEHRAN— The U.S. and the Taliban will seek to iron out a peace agreement to end Afghanistan's 18-year conflict during a fresh round of talks in Qatar's capital, Doha.

The negotiations, now in their eighth round, began on Saturday and were due to resume on Sunday morning.

A Taliban source told AFP news agency that efforts were under way to organise a direct meeting between U.S. envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban co-founder Mullah Baradar, who heads the movement's political wing.

The U.S., which invaded Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban in 2001, wants Taliban guarantees that

Afghanistan will not become a haven for "terrorists", while the Taliban is focused on ensuring the withdrawal of all U.S.-led foreign forces from the country.

Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman for the organisation's political office in Doha, said on Twitter on Saturday that if an agreement was finalised, "it will allow all foreign forces to exit Afghanistan within a certain time period and open the door for talks" with the Afghan government.

Taliban representatives have been holding peace talks with U.S. diplomats for nearly a year, but have so far refused to speak to the government, which they

call a "puppet regime" of the West.

According to Al Jazeera, Washington is hoping to strike a peace deal with the Taliban by September 1 - ahead of Afghan polls due the same month, and U.S. presidential elections due in 2020. But any deal requires the Taliban to talk to Kabul.

"We are pursuing a peace agreement not a withdrawal agreement, a peace agreement that enables withdrawal," Khalilzad tweeted on Friday as he arrived in Doha after talks with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad.

"Our presence in Afghanistan is conditions-based, and any withdrawal will be conditions-based."

Pakistan calls for Trump mediation on Kashmir as region remains tense

TEHRAN— Tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir have the potential to blow up into a regional crisis and it is the right time for U.S. President Donald Trump to mediate, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Sunday.

Khan's comments come a day after Pakistan accused India of using illegal cluster bombs, killing two civilians and wounding 11, in the disputed Kashmir region. India denied it had used such weapons.

"President Trump offered to mediate on Kashmir. This is the time to do so as situation deteriorates there and along the LOC (line of control) with new aggressive actions being taken by Indian occupation forces," Khan said on Twitter, referring to the heavily militarized de facto border that divides the two parts of Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

"This has the potential to blow up into a regional crisis," Khan said.

India's foreign affairs ministry and the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Khan's remarks.

In July, Trump told reporters that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked him during a meeting in Japan if he would like to be a mediator on Kashmir. India denied Modi ever asked for any mediation.

Muslim-majority Kashmir, claimed by both India and Pakistan, has long been a bone of contention between the two. Tensions

flared after a vehicle laden with explosives rammed into an Indian police convoy on Feb. 14, killing 40 paramilitary police, and leading to aerial clashes between the two nations.

According to Reuters, India accuses Pakistan of funding armed militants, as well as separatist groups in India's portion of the region. Islamabad denies the Indian accusation, saying it provides only diplomatic and moral support to a separatist movement.

Sudan generals, protest camp sign accord on road to civilian rule

TEHRAN— Sudan's army rulers and protest leaders Sunday signed a hard-won constitutional declaration that paves the way for a promised transition to civilian rule following more than seven months of often deadly street rallies.

The agreement, signed at a ceremony in Khartoum, builds on a landmark July 17 power-sharing deal and provides for a joint civilian-military ruling body to oversee the formation of a transitional civilian government and parliament to govern for a three-year transition period.

Protest movement leader Ahmed Rabie and the deputy head of the ruling military council, General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, signed the declaration at the ceremony attended by African Union and Ethiopian mediators.

"We turned a tough page of Sudan's history by signing this agreement," Daglo, who flashed a victory sign after making a short speech, told reporters.

The signing was met by a wave of applause in the hall as representatives from both sides shook hands.

Overnight, thousands of jubilant Sudanese already took to the streets of the capital to celebrate when the



deal was announced before dawn.

A formal signing in front of foreign dignitaries is due to take place on August 17 - the date on which ousted president Omar al-Bashir is due to go on trial on corruption charges - another protest leader, Monzer Abu al-Maali, told AFP.

The next day, the generals and protest leaders are expected to announce the composition of the new

transitional civilian-majority ruling council, he said.

"Members of the ruling sovereign council will be announced on August 18, the prime minister will be named on August 20 and cabinet members on August 28," Abu al-Maali told AFP.

Sunday's accord was the result of difficult negotiations between the leaders of mass protests which erupted last December against Bashir's three-decade rule and the generals who eventually ousted him in April.

The talks had been repeatedly interrupted by deadly violence against demonstrators who have kept up rallies to press for civilian rule.

They were suspended for weeks after men in military uniform broke up a long-running protest camp outside army headquarters in Khartoum on June 3, killing at least 127 people according to doctors close to the protest movement.

They were briefly suspended again earlier this week when paramilitaries shot dead six demonstrators in the city of Al-Obeid, four of them schoolchildren< Reuters reported.

Saudi drone downed in Jizan as Yemenis step up counter-attacks

TEHRAN— Yemen's ruling Houthi Ansarullah movement says that its military has successfully shot down a Saudi spy drone flying near Yemen's northern borders.

The Houthis said in their official TV channel al-Massirah that the Saudi drone had been downed in Juhfan region in Saudi Arabia's southern province of Jizan.

Yemeni air defense units have successfully targeted Saudi drones over the past weeks. A squadron of such drones was shot

down last week in Jizan's Tawal region, the area where the Yemenis had targeted other unmanned planes earlier in July.

Houthi-led forces also shot down three Saudi drones in Jabal al-Daoud region in Jizan last month.

Yemen's attacks on Saudi military targets have been meant to compensate Riyadh's incessant bombardment of civilians in the impoverished country.

Tens of thousands of people have been

killed in Yemen since Saudis started their military aggression in March 2015 as they sought to restore power to a fugitive president.

Earlier in Saturday, Yemeni army forces targeted a military base in Saudi Arabia's southern province of Najran with a domestically-manufactured ballistic missile.

A military official said that Yemeni missile defense units had hit a newly-built military base in the southern parts of the Saqqam area with Badr-F ballistic missile.

Dozens of Saudi-led mercenaries stationed in the base were either killed or wounded, said the official.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia's years-long military aggression has taken a heavy toll on Yemen's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories.

The United Nations has already warned that more than 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

WFP, Yemen's Houthis agree deal that could lift partial aid suspension

TEHRAN— The World Food Programme (WFP) and Yemen's Houthi movement, which controls the capital Sana'a, have said they had reached a deal that could lift the UN agency's partial suspension of aid which has affected around 850,000 people.

The UN agency halted some aid in Sana'a on June 20 out of concern that food was being diverted from vulnerable people, but said it would maintain nutrition programs for malnourished children, pregnant and nursing mothers.

The warring parties in Yemen's conflict have both used access to aid and food as a political tool, exacerbating what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Of Yemen's 30 million people, three-quarters need humanitarian assistance.

A Houthi official tweeted late on Saturday that the group, had inked a deal with the WFP.

"Cash distribution will soon begin, God willing, in accordance with the [WFP] mechanism," said Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, head of the Houthis' Supreme Revolutionary Committee.

Cash transfers to those in need so they can buy goods is a common method of aid distribution.

WFP spokesman Herve Verhoosel said the agreement represented an important step toward safeguards that guarantee "the accountability" of the agency's operations.

"We are hopeful that technical details can be agreed in the coming days," Verhoosel said in emailed comments to Reuters, without giving further details of what was agreed.

The aid ban resulted from a dispute over control of biometric data between the WFP and the Houthis< Reuters reported.

French 'Flying Man' crosses Channel on jet-powered hoverboard

TEHRAN— French inventor Franky Zapata on Sunday succeeded in crossing the English Channel on a jet-powered hoverboard he designed, zooming over the Strait of Dover in just over 20 minutes.

After a previous bid in July that ended with him falling into the sea, Zapata took off from Sangatte, just outside Calais in France at about 0617 GMT, on a little platform powered by five small jet engines and carrying kerosene in a backpack.

Flanked by three helicopters, he reached Britain after a stop on a boat halfway through the 35-km crossing to refuel, waving to onlookers before landing safely in Saint Margaret's Bay, close to Dover on Britain's southern coast.

"For the last five to six kilometers I just really enjoyed it," Zapata told reporters on arrival. "Whether this is a historic event or not, I'm not the one to decide that, time will tell."

"We made a machine three years ago...and now we've crossed the Channel, it's crazy," he said, before breaking into tears.

Dozens of people came to cheer on Zapata at take-off and a few residents and tourists gathered to watch the Frenchman land.

"I really didn't think he would make it but I was hoping," resident Helen Reed said in Saint Margaret's Bay. "Just to see him in the distance with my little binoculars, it was just amazing."

Zapata, who wowed crowds during France's Bastille Day celebrations on July 14 by soaring over a military parade in Paris on the device, said on arrival that the hoverboard had reached speeds of 160 to 170 km per hour during the crossing, Reuters reported.

E3 Expo leaks the personal information of over 2,000 journalists

➔ especially freelance content creators, seem to have used their home addresses and personal cell phones, which have now been publicized. This leak makes it possible for bad actors to misuse this information to harass journalists. Two people who say their private information appeared in the leak have informed Kotaku that they have already received crank phone calls since the list was publicized.

According to Kotaku, the existence of this document was first publicized in a YouTube video that journalist Sophia Narwitz posted to her personal channel on Friday night. In her video, Narwitz described how the file could be accessed: "On the public E3 website was a web page that carried a link simply titled 'Registered Media List.' Upon clicking the link, a spreadsheet was downloaded that included the names, addresses, phone numbers, and publications of over 2,000 members of the press who attended E3 this past year."

Again, the E3 website has since been updated to remove this link, but cached versions of the site do indeed show that a link titled "Registered Media List" used to appear on a "Helpful Links" page. For some time yesterday, even after this page was removed, clicking on the link in the easily-accessible Google cached version of the page would download the spreadsheet from the E3 website's servers.

We are working to defeat the hostile West blockade against Syria: PM

➔ Haji Abed, a taxi driver in Damascus speaking to AP, says he makes 12,000 pounds (\$20) a day, but is left with only about \$5 a day after paying for fuel. His rent is \$35 a month. What's left after that is barely enough for food and other expenses, he said.

Abed added that it was easier for him to make ends meet at the height of his country's war, when Damascus was regularly threatened by terrorist presence in the outskirts in the city.

Financial restrictions have also greatly hurt Syria's once nearly-independent pharmaceutical industry, making Syria reliant on imports of vaccines, medicines for cancer, blood derivatives and dialysis supplies and leading to sporadic shortages.

"Three months ago, there was no baby formula available," said pharmacist Samir Aftimos, adding that "People with children ran from one pharmacy to another to search for it." The issue was relieved when Iran sent supplies.

Syria is looking to firms in Russia, China, Iran and India for help on the matter.

F1 teams agree to 22 races in 2020

Formula One teams have agreed the calendar can expand to a record 22 races next year but without increasing the number of engines allowed, according to Mercedes boss Toto Wolff.

Commercial rights holder Liberty Media had asked the 10 teams, who need to approve any increase beyond the current 21 races, to consider the proposal.

“In a nutshell we’ve basically agreed to have a 22nd race,” Wolff told reporters ahead of Sunday’s Hungarian Grand Prix.

Team bosses met at the Hungaroring on Saturday to discuss the matter.

“We’ve got to let Liberty do their business and the business is to grow Formula One and if they are able to attract promoters, we’ve got to support them,” said Wolff.

“We are up for it. We shouldn’t change the technical regulations for an additional race, that was the debate we had ... it shouldn’t be seen as an opportunity; ‘Hooray, let’s increase the number of components’.

“Equally we’ve got to protect our people, and all of us, because it could come to a point where it’s not manageable any more with one single crew travelling to all races. So that becomes a factor that obviously needs solutions.”

Next year’s calendar could have 22 races with Vietnam and the Netherlands added to the current 21 and Germany looking likely to drop off.

Mexico remains a doubt for funding reasons, but Formula One is keen for the race to stay, while Spain and Italy have yet to sign contract extensions although local organisers and authorities have given the go-ahead.

(Source: Reuters)

Everton sign striker Kean from Juventus on five-year deal

Everton have signed 19-year-old striker Moise Kean from Italian champions Juventus on a five-year deal, the Premier League club said on Sunday.

Financial details of the deal were not disclosed but British media reported the transfer fee for the Italy international was about 36 million pounds.

“I am very proud and honored to wear the Everton shirt. I will give my best to this team,” Kean said in a statement.

“I was convinced to sign because Everton is a club looking to the future and so am I. I know about the size of the club, it has big ambition and I will work very hard to help us fulfil what we want to achieve.”

Kean, who made his debut for Juventus at the age of 16, scored six goals in Serie A last season as the Turin club won their eighth consecutive league title. He has also scored twice for Italy in three appearances since making his debut last year.

“A striker was one of our priority signings this summer,” Everton boss Marco Silva said. “Moise is strong, fast, with many good qualities as a striker and he is just 19 years old.

“He has talent and he is ready to work, ready to improve our squad and gives us different solutions.”

Kean became the Merseyside club’s fifth recruit of the close season after midfielders Andre Gomes, Fabian Delph, Jean-Philippe Gbamin and goalkeeper Jonas Loss.

Everton, who finished eighth last season, begin their campaign at Crystal Palace on Saturday.

(Source: Eurosport)

Mick Schumacher opens Formula 2 account

Mick Schumacher, the 20-year-old son of seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher, on Sunday claimed his first Formula Two victory ahead of the Hungarian Grand Prix.

The German driver won the 28-lap ‘sprint’ race for Prema Racing after starting from pole position in a reverse grid race. He had finished eighth in Saturday’s full-length feature race.



Schumacher, who is a member of Ferrari’s driver academy, finished 1.5 seconds ahead of Honda-backed Nobuharu Matsushita of Carlin. His previous best result was fourth at the Austrian Grand Prix in June.

“Amazing”, he said afterwards.

“The car was great and thanks to the team for that. It wasn’t easy, but I am just really happy.”

Schumacher is in his first season of Formula Two, the main feeder category of racing for Formula One.

(Source: Marca)

Barcelona agree 30m-euro Junior Firpo deal

Ernesto Valverde has found cover for Jordi Alba at left-back in the form of Junior Firpo, who will sign a five-year contract at Barcelona.

Barcelona have agreed a deal to sign defender Junior Firpo from Real Betis for a fee potentially rising to 30 million euros.

The Spain Under-21 international is set to ink a five-year contract at Camp Nou, which includes a buyout clause of 200m euros.

La Liga champions Barca have paid 18m euros up front, with a further 12m potentially due in add-ons.

While comfortable in multiple positions, 22-year-old Junior will primarily be expected to provide cover for Jordi Alba at left-back.

Ernersto Valverde reportedly considered Bayern Munich star David Alaba before deciding on Junior as a more cost-effective option.

He made 24 appearances in La Liga last season and scored three times, including once in a 4-3 victory for Betis at Camp Nou in November.

“What I cannot deny is that it is an honor and a source of pride to be associated with Barcelona, which is a great club and has a great team,” Junior last month told Mundo Deportivo when asked about the possibility of a transfer.

(Source: AS)

Eager Nadal leads ATP Montreal field

Defending champion Rafael Nadal heads the field for the ATP Montreal Masters that starts on Monday with Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer opting out of the key US Open tuneup.

With Djokovic and Federer putting a return to action on hold after their dramatic Wimbledon final, 33-year-old Nadal will be seeking to retain the title he earned last year in Toronto, when he beat rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

The Greek is back, taking the fourth seeding behind a pair of fellow young guns in number two Dominic Thiem of Austria and Germany’s Alexander Zverev, seeded third.

Federer and Djokovic aren’t scheduled to resurface until the Cincinnati Masters starts on August 12, giving them one tournament prior to the August 26 start of the US Open at Flushing Meadows, the final Grand slam of the year.

Federer has been training on hardcourt at home in Switzerland after falling to Djokovic in a dramatic five-set final at the All England Club three weeks ago, in which the Swiss great held two match points.

Djokovic has been pictured relaxing at various European beach resorts with his family prior to picking up the racquet once



again.

Nadal, meanwhile, is pacing himself after another season marred by injury, insisting despite the pleas and inducements of Cincinnati officials that he won’t decide whether to play there until he sees how he

feels after Montreal.

“Depending on what happens in Montreal, I’ll take a decision on Cincinnati,” he said. “Cincinnati is still an option. But I want to arrive well prepared and ready for the US Open, the last major of the season.”

Sancho stars as Dortmund down toothless Bayern to win German Super Cup



English winger Jadon Sancho starred for Borussia Dortmund on Saturday to help his side beat rivals Bayern Munich 2-0 to win their sixth DFL Super Cup and claim early bragging rights in the curtain raiser for the German Bundesliga.

The teenager was the key man, assisting one goal and scoring the other in front of the Dortmund faithful against a Bayern side looking a little lost without departed greats Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben.

Lucien Favre’s side tailed off in last season’s title challenge, finishing runners-up to Bayern who clinched a record 29th league trophy and the DFB Pokal. However, they showed their determination to put that right, captain Marco Reus forcing a diving save from Manuel Neuer in the very first minute.

Neuer was then lucky to not be beaten or force the referee to show him a red card when he ran out halfway into his own half after 15 minutes to dive at Paco Alcacer who knocked the ball past the goalkeeper, but it trickled past the open goal.

Alcacer made amends for his miss shortly after halftime. Sancho dazzled the opposition with his footwork on the right before

teeing up the Spanish striker on the edge of the box who found the bottom right corner.

Some last ditch defending stopped Bayern from equalising 10 minutes later, with Kingsley Coman, Thomas Muller and Robert Lewandowski all denied from close range in a matter of seconds.

But it was Sancho who stole the show, doubling Dortmund’s lead after collecting the ball and sprinting from almost the halfway line to slot it expertly past Neuer.

Bayern tried to find openings but were unable to find a way past a stubborn yellow wall, which will this season feature Mats Hummels after his return from Munich. The veteran defender was not able to face his former side due to a knock in training.

For Niko Kovac’s men, the result was a reminder that they have areas in their squad to improve and they will no doubt increase their efforts to land young winger and long term target Leroy Sane from Manchester City.

Dortmund, meanwhile, go some way to make up for their 5-0 capitulation to Bayern in April and go into the new Bundesliga season buoyed by winning the first silverware of the campaign.

(Source: Reuters)

Real Madrid have exceeded the foreign player quota



Real Madrid have found themselves immersed in an administrative nightmare as they have exceeded the allowed number of non-European Union players in La Liga. At the moment, Zidane has five non-EU players in his squad - Militão, Valverde, Vinicius, Rodrygo and Takefusa Kubo but he will only be able to register three with La Liga for the new season. Until now, the club has got around the foreign player quota issue by using the same strategy they used last season with Vinicius, when they managed to avoided to exceed the limit when they had Casemiro (who has since been nationalized) and Fede Valverde as their three non-EU players. The Uruguayan has been waiting to gain Spanish citizenship since April but it is a lengthy process and he is still waiting for it to be completed. Ukrainian goalkeeper Andriy Lunin and Serbian striker Luka Jovic, are not strictly from countries within the European Union but both are considered Community players under Article 39 of the Treaty which states that legally workers from third states should be allowed free movement and the same working conditions as those from member states.

So like last year, Vinicius will be registered with Real Madrid Castilla, as will Rodrygo, while Take Kubo will be signed up with the Under-19s. Madrid consider the Brazilian pair to be integral members of the first team squad but while there is only one vacant place for a non-EU player, only one of the three (including Kubo, who will likely play for Castilla in spite of being listed with the U19S) can be called by Zidane for league games. Article 227 of the RFEF General rules states that players under the age of 23 who are registered at youth level can play for the first team squad for an unlimited period. Under the Spanish Sports Law of 1990, Vinicius, Rodrygo and Kubo are able to play in the Copa del Rey and in the Spanish Super cup - as neither are classified as professional competitions or organised by LaLiga. In 2007, the law against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in Sport prohibited a cap on the number of foreign players taking part in non-professional competition. The RFEF adhere to that arrangement as they confirmed ahead of last year’s Super cup between Barcelonaand Sevilla in Tangier.

(Source: AS)

Rebuilding Man Utd face uncertain future



United had problems at both ends of the pitch last season -- scoring 30 goals fewer than City in the Premier League and conceding 54 goals, the most they had conceded in a league season since 1978-79.

The 20-time champions desperately need a positive start to rebuild confidence that they can challenge at the sharp end of the Premier League.

Anything less and the knives could be out for Solskjaer.

■ **New faces:**

After a leaky defence played a key role in United’s struggles last season, Solskjaer made it clear he wanted Leicester’s Harry Maguire to plug the holes.

The England centre-back is reportedly on the verge of becoming the world’s most expensive defender, with United

said to have agreed an £80 million fee to land Maguire.

But have they signed enough faces to boost a squad that looked short of class compared with Manchester City and Liverpool last season?

Highly rated right-back Aaron Wan-Bissaka has joined from Crystal Palace, with Solskjaer describing the 21-year-old as “one of the best upcoming defenders in the Premier League”.

Winger Daniel James was bought from Championship club Swansea to add thrust on the flanks.

United have also been linked with a swoop for Juventus forward Paulo Dybala, but the Argentine is said to be unsure about joining a team outside the Champions League.

Romelu Lukaku could be on the way out of Old Trafford, with Juventus and Inter Milan both keen on the Belgium striker according to reports.

■ **Key man:**

This is the season when Marcus Rashford will have to step up and show emphatically that he deserves to wear the number 10 shirt at Manchester United.

Still only 21, Rashford scored 17 goals in 54 appearances last season for club and country but will have to boost those numbers if he is to be the undisputed leader of United’s attack.

Rashford signed a new four-year deal to remain at Old Trafford last month, saying it was “a privilege” every time he wore the shirt.

He has scored some sublime goals for the club but with a shortage of goal threat from elsewhere, Solskjaer will want to see him take his tally to 20-plus goals this season and become more of a poacher.

(Source: AFP)

Alireza Mansourian: Zob Ahan ready to face strong Al Ittihad

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Zob Ahan coach **d e s k** Alireza Mansourian says that Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia are very strong but they are ready to beat them.

Zob Ahan will meet Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia in the 2019 AFC Champions League Round of 16 on Monday in Zabeel Stadium in Dubai.

The two sides are meeting for the third time in the competition.

In the 2010 group stage, Al Ittihad surrendered a 2-0 half-time lead to settle for a 2-2 draw in Jeddah, while Zob Ahan walked away 1-0 winners at the Foolad Shahr Stadium.

"Al Ittihad are an attacking football team; however they have weak points as well. In the match against them, each Zob Ahan player should be his own coach. We are proud of Iran's sole representative in the competition," Mansourian said.

"In the match against Al Ittihad, all Iranian people are supporting us to win the match. We know that Al Ittihad take advantage of several good players and they have strengthened in areas where they needed to for the Round of 16. But we are fully ready for this match and will not surrender," he added.

"We had good comebacks against Al-Nassr and Al-Zawraa this season and they are inspiring for our players. We will start the competition while we have kept our main players. I am optimistic we will play well against Al Ittihad," Mansourian declared.



I taught American wrestler sportsmanship: Amouzad Khalili



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian wrestler Rahman Amouzad Khalili criticized his American rival after he refused to shake hand with him in the Freestyle Cadet World in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Iranian wrestler met Stevo Ross Poulin in the competition's semifinals and defeated him 12-0.

Khalili also defeated Kamronbek Kadamov from Uzbekistan in the 48kg bracket to win the title.

"It's important to teach our wrestlers how to show good sportsmanship.

I wanted to shake hand with him at the start of the second time but he refused to shake with me. Before the start of the match, he bragged that he was sure of victory. And I taught him sportsmanship after the end of the match," Amouzad Khalili said.

"I defeated him in a way he will bear in mind for the rest of his life. My role model is Gholamreza Takhti who is famous for his chivalrous behavior. Hassan Yazdani also is a role model for me because he displays great sportsmanship when he meets his rivals," he added.

Friendly: Iran basketball team defeat Jordan



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team defeated Jordan 82-70 in a friendly match on Saturday.

Mehran Shahintab's team will meet hosts Russia on Sunday.

Iran will also participate at a tournament in China, where they will face Nigeria, Montenegro and Poland from Aug. 19 to Aug. 25.

Iran have been drawn with world's second-ranked Spain, Puerto Rico and Tunisia in Group C of the 2019 FIBA World Cup. The competition will be held in China

from 31 Aug. to 15 Sept.

The 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup will be the 18th tournament of the FIBA Basketball World Cup for men's national basketball teams.

Also, the group stage will expand from 24 to 32 teams. The top eight teams, including Japan as the hosts of the 2020 Summer Olympics (and the top two teams from each of the Americas and Europe; and the top team from each of Africa, Asia and Oceania) in this competition will qualify for the men's basketball event in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Olympic champion Barker breaks collarbone in London crash

LONDON (Reuters) — Olympic champion Elinor Barker has confirmed she suffered a broken collarbone in a high-speed pile-up at the end of the women's Ride London Classique in London on Saturday.

Barker, part of the British women's team pursuit squad that won gold on the track in Rio in 2016, was brought down during the sprint to the line near Buckingham Palace.

"They say you're not a real cyclist until you've broken a collarbone — avoided joining the club for 15 years but not much I could do yesterday," she posted on Twitter.

Barker, 24, was riding for British road team Drops.

Dutchwoman Kirsten Wild, winner of the race in 2018, crossed the line first but was disqualified after inadvertently causing the mayhem. Lorena Wiebes (Parkhotel Valkenburg) was promoted to first place.

Barker jumped to the defense of Wild, who received online criticism for her part in the smash.

"A bit upsetting to see comments aimed at Kirsten though," she said. "It's easy to criticize from a slow-mo aerial shot."

"The real-time reality is that everybody is just hoping that their split-second decision benefits themselves without harming anybody else. Race accidents happen."

Preview - Round of 16: Al Ittihad (KSA) vs Zob Ahan FC (IRN)

Dubai: Al Wasl's Zabeel Stadium plays host to the first West Asia fixture of the 2019 AFC Champions League Round of 16, but it is Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad who are the home team as they face Islamic Republic of Iran's Zob Ahan on Monday.

The two sides are meeting for the third time in the competition. In the 2010 group stage, Al Ittihad surrendered a 2-0 half-time lead to settle for a 2-2 draw in Jeddah, while Zob Ahan walked away 1-0 winners at Foolad Shahr Stadium.

Despite a poor domestic season where they finished tenth in the league, Al Ittihad have shown strong form in the 2019 AFC Champions League group stage, with their sole group-stage defeat coming on Matchday Two at Al Wahda. Romarinho leads the Saudi side's scoring charts with three goals in the group stage.



Two-time continental champions, Al Ittihad have never been eliminated at the Round of 16 stage, and coach Jose Luis Sierra hopes to continue the club's tradition of competing in the latter stages and has strengthened his squad with the signings

of Palestinian-Chilean playmaker Luis Antonio Jimenez and Argentinian central midfielder Emiliano Vecchio.

With both Persepolis and Esteghlal eliminated at the group stage, Zob Ahan are IR Iran's sole remaining representatives in the

competition, and they earned their spot in the last 16 in style, going unbeaten in the group stage to top Group A with 12 points.

The Isfahan-based side have reached the knockout stage on four occasions, getting eliminated in the Round of 16 twice, including last year. Their best result was reaching the final in 2010, which they lost to Korea Republic's Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma.

Coach Alireza Mansourian's side have happy memories in Zabeel Stadium, where they beat Al Wasl 3-1 on Matchday Three of the group stage.

Amir Ahsan Motehari netted the second on that night, one of his three goals in the competition so far. Al Ittihad last played in this ground in September 2018, drawing with Al Wasl 0-0 in the Arab Clubs Championship.

(Source: the-afc)

Report: Lakers, Clippers to clash on Opening Day

NBA fans reportedly will see the first showdown for Los Angeles supremacy on Oct. 22 when LeBron James, Anthony Davis and the Lakers meet Kawhi Leonard, Paul George and the Clippers.

Shams Charania of The Athletic reported the opening

date on Saturday, adding the Toronto Raptors will begin defense of their NBA title that day against the new-look New Orleans Pelicans and No. 1 draft pick Zion Williamson.

On Friday, ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski also reported the Lakers and Clippers would meet in one of five Christmas

Day games. The others: Houston Rockets at Golden State Warriors, Milwaukee Bucks at Philadelphia 76ers, Boston Celtics at the Raptors and the Pelicans at Denver Nuggets.

The full schedule is expected to be released next week.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran Greco-Roman wrestlers win two golds at Cadet World C'ships

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers claimed two gold medals at the 2019 Cadet World Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria on Saturday. Amirreza Dehbozorgi won the gold medal at the 48kg after defeating Ziya Babashov from Azerbaijan 3-1 in the final.

Bronze went to Rupin Rupin of India, who beat South African Riehan Botha, and to Kazakhstan's Yerbol Kamaliyev, who defeated Alibek Amirov from Russia.

Shahrokh Abouzar Mikaeili also took a gold, beating Armenian Razmik Kurdyan in the 110kg final.

European champion Mate Gokadze from Georgia had to settle for the bronze medal after losing to Kurdyan in his semi-final, but got on the podium by defeating Poland's Dominik Krawczyk.

The other 110kg bronze went to Adolf Baszo, the Hungarian wrestler winning against Grigorios Kontovounisios of Greece.

(Source: Unitedworldwrestling)

Shahab Zahedi joins Olimpik Donetsk

TASNIM — Iranian striker Shahab Zahedi has joined Ukrainian club Olimpik Donetsk.

The 24-year-old played has joined Olimpik Donetsk on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Zahedi started his playing career at Persepolis in 2014 and joined Icelandic club IBV Vestmannaeyjar in July 2017. He became the first Iranian player to play football in Iceland.

Zahedi won the 2017 Icelandic Cup on 12 August 2017.

FC Olimpik Donetsk are a professional football team based in Donetsk, Ukraine.

The club currently compete in the Ukrainian Premier League.

Mehdi Taremi scores for Rio Ave at Allianz Cup

PLDC — Iranian striker Mehdi Taremi was on target for Rio Ave in the Allianz Cup Saturday night.

Carlos Carvalho's team overcame UD Oliveirense 6-1 in the second round of the Allianz Cup.

Nuno Santos (two goals), Filipe Augusto, Diego Lopes, Taremi and Tarantini scored for Rio Ave and Bouldini was on target for UD Oliveirense.

Also, Aves lost to Gil Vicente 3-2 and failed to book a place in the third round.

Iranian winger Mehrdad Mohammadi is a member of Aves.

The 2018–19 Taça da Liga is the 12th edition of the Taça da Liga (also known as Allianz Cup for sponsorship reasons), a football cup competition organized by the Liga Portuguesa de Futebol Profissional (LPFP) and contested exclusively by clubs competing in the top two professional tiers of Portuguese football.

It began on 21 July 2018 and will be finished in Braga on 26 January 2019.

Five-star Altyn Asyr lift Turkmenistan Super Cup

Reigning league champions Altyn Asyr FC have added another trophy to their growing collection, overcoming city rivals Köpetdag Ashgabat 2-0 to win the Turkmenistan Super Cup on Saturday.

The trophy, a play-off bringing together the country's defending league and cup champions from the previous season, has now been won five successive times by Altyn Asyr, who are chasing a sixth successive Yokary Liga title this season.

Currently fifth in the league standings, Cup winners Köpetdag gave a good account of themselves in the first half to keep the favourites quiet in a scoreless opening period, but Yazyguly Hojageldiyev's side assumed control after the interval.

A pair of Turkmenistan internationals made the difference, with Myrat Annayev opening the scoring in the 57th minute before Altymyrat Annadurdyev (pictured below) effectively sealed the win seven minutes later.

The Super Cup begins a busy August for Altyn Asyr and may yet prove to be the first of many honours for the club in 2019, with Hojageldiyev's charges currently leading the league and due to participate in the quarter-final stage of the Turkmenistan Cup later this month.

They have also advanced the knockout stage of the AFC Cup, where they are due to meet either Becamex Binh Duong or Hanoi FC in a two-legged Inter-Zone Semi-final on August 20 and 27.

Altyn Asyr became the first club from Turkmenistan to reach the AFC Cup Final in last season's competition, losing 2-0 to Iraq's Air Force Club in the decider in Basra.

(Source: the-afc)

U.S. women cruise to 3-0 win over Ireland in stateside return

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The U.S. women's soccer team cruised to a 3-0 win over Ireland in Pasadena in their first match on home soil since claiming back-to-back World Cup titles in France last month.

The team's "Victory Tour" got off to a winning start when Christen Press sent a high-arching pass to Tobin Heath, whose header found the back of the net in the 16th minute.

Lindsey Horan doubled the advantage 15 minutes later and Carli Lloyd scored through a header from distance before the break to put the game out of Ireland's reach.

The U.S. are still riding high after defeating the Netherlands 2-0 last month to claim their fourth World Cup title and said their match at the Rose Bowl, where the team won their second world title 20 years ago, was special.

"This is such a historic place and it has such memories for the U.S. Women's National Team," said defender Becky Sauerbrunn.

"We're just so thankful to get to celebrate with everyone who supported us in France."

"This is a great night."

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you speak, your worth will be known,
for, a man's worth is hidden under his
tongue.

Imam Ali (AS)

Photos to display old days of Hamedan at Tehran exhibit

A R T **TEHRAN** — Axkhaneh Shahr, Iran's photo museum in Tehran, plans to showcase a collection of photos of the western Iranian city of Hamedan in the old days in an exhibition, which will open on Tuesday.

The collection accumulated by photographer Samira Sabzi contains over 40 photos taken by Iranian and foreign photographers during the Qajar period (1789–1925) and Pahlavi era, the museum announced in a press release on Sunday.

Dome of eminent scientist Avicenna's mausoleum is seen in a photo from Samira Sabzi's book "History of Photography in Hamedan".

The photos selected from the archives of the Golestan Palace in Tehran, the Central Library and Archives of the University of Tehran, the National Library and Archives of Iran, the Harvard University Archives and several other organizations.

Sabzi originally collected the photos for her new book "History of Photography in Hamedan", which is scheduled to be unveiled during the opening ceremony of the exhibition titled "Old Frame of Hamedan".

The book studies those people who played a key role in the development of photography in Hamedan. It also provides materials about the outstanding photo shops and photographers of the city, which is home to the highly eminent and celebrated Islamic scientist Avicenna.

Besides its pre-Islamic sites, including the ruins of the ancient Median city of Ecbatana, the city also comprises some important monuments belonging to the Islamic period.

The exhibition will run until August 29 at Axkhaneh Shahr located in Bahare Shiraz Park near Bahare Shiraz Square.

Iranian publisher puts out new Persian translation of "Celestial Bodies"

CULTURE

TEHRAN

— A new Persian translation of Omani novelist Jokha Alharthi's "Celestial Bodies", the winner of the 2019 Man Booker International Prize, has been published in Tehran.

The book has been translated from an English version published by the Sandstone Press, an independent publisher in Scotland, Gooya, the Iranian publisher of the book, has announced.

Ali-Akbar Abdorrashidi who is a TV host is the translator of the book.

Alharthi is the first author who writes in Arabic to win the Man Booker award. She shared the prize equally with Marilyn Booth, the American translator of her book.

"Celestial Bodies" is set in the Omani village of al-Awafi and follows the stories of three sisters: Mayya, who marries into a rich family after a heartbreaking experience; Asma, who marries for duty; and Khawla, who is waiting for a man who has emigrated to Canada.

Another Persian translation of the novel by Narges Bigdeli from Arabic, the original language of the book, was published previously by Afraz Publications.

Richard Rodgers "Sound of Music" echoing through Tehran theater

A R T **TEHRAN** — An Iranian troupe is currently performing a stage adaptation of American composer Richard Rodgers' musical "The Sound of Music" at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

Hadi Qozzat is the director of the troupe, which will stage the musical until August 22.

A choir composed of 80 vocalists, 50 musicians and 20 actor-singers under the baton of conductor Nassir Heidarian are collaborating on the project.

"The Sound of Music" tells the story of Maria, who takes a job as governess to a large family in Austria while she decides whether to become a nun.

She falls in love with the children, and eventually their widowed father, Captain von Trapp, who is ordered to accept a commission in the German navy, but he opposes the Nazis.

Maria, who brings love and music into the lives of the family, marries the captain, and together with the children, they decide on a plan to flee Austria and find a way to survive the loss of their homeland to the Nazis.

American filmmaker Robert Wise made a screen adaptation of the musical with the same name in 1965, starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer.

The film received Academy Awards in five categories, including best film and best director, as well as the Golden Globe Awards for best motion picture and best actress.

It also received the Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement, and the Writers

Iranian director Hadi Qozzat's troupe performs Richard Rodgers' musical "The Sound of Music" at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on July 30, 2019. (Nava.ir/Mohammad Amini).

Guild of America Award for Best Written American Musical.

In 1998, the American Film Institute (AFI) listed "The Sound of Music" as the fifty-fifth greatest American movie of all time, and the fourth greatest musical movie.

A poster for the review session of "Russian Roulette: The Inside Story of Putin's War on America and the Election of Donald Trump".

Tehran session to review "Russian Roulette" on Russia's interference in 2016 U.S. elections

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — "Russian Roulette: The Inside Story of Putin's War on America and the Election of Donald Trump", a book on Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections, will be reviewed in a session in Tehran on Tuesday.

Written by American journalists Michael Isikoff and David Corn, the book has been translated into Persian by Elham Gerami and it has been published by Elmi Publications.

Experts Elaheh Kulai, Javad Salehi and Hossein Naqqashi, as well as the translator, are expected to attend the session that will be held at the House of Humanities Thinkers.

"Russian Roulette" is a story of political skullduggery unprecedented in American history. It weaves together tales of international intrigue, cyber espionage and superpower rivalry. After U.S.-Russia relations soured, as Vladimir Putin moved to reassert Russian strength on the global stage, Moscow trained its best hackers and trolls on U.S. political targets and exploited WikiLeaks to disseminate information

that could affect the 2016 election.

The Russians were wildly successful and the great break-in of 2016 was no "third-rate burglary." It was far more sophisticated and sinister -- a brazen act of political espionage designed to interfere with American democracy. At the end of the day, Trump, the candidate who pursued business deals in Russia, won. And millions of Americans were left wondering, what the heck happened?

The book chronicles and explores this bizarre scandal, explains the stakes, and answers one of the biggest questions in American politics: How and why did a foreign government infiltrate the country's political process and gain influence in Washington?

Isikoff is an American investigative journalist who is currently the Chief Investigative Correspondent at Yahoo! News. Corn is an American political journalist, author and the chief of the Washington bureau for Mother Jones magazine.

"Sheeple", "I Am Not Angry" lead nominations at Cinema Cinema Academy Awards

A R T **TEHRAN** — "Sheeple" by Hooman Seyyedi and "I Am Not Angry" by Reza Dormishian each received five nominations in various categories, including best film and best director, at the 2nd edition of the Cinema Cinema Academy Awards, Iran's first private film academy based in Tehran, the organizers announced on Sunday.

"Sheeple" is about brothers Shakur and Shahin, two lowlives who run a crystal meth laboratory hidden in Tehran. They do care about the honor of their family, however. When a video of their sister revealing her hair ends up on the internet, the brothers become the protagonists of some strange incidents.

"I Am Not Angry" tells the story of an expelled university student in Iran who struggles to control his anger at the injustices surrounding him.

Seyyedi and Dormishian are both also competing for the award for best screenwriter, and actor Navid Mohammadzadeh received nominations

Farhad Aslani (L) and Navid Mohammadzadeh act in a scene of "Sheeple" by Hooman Seyyedi.

for his roles in both of the films.

Other nominees in the categories of best film and best director are Peyman Maadi's "Bomb, a Love Story", Hamid Nematollah's "Flaming", Bahram Tavakkoli's "The Lost Strait", Mohsen

Amiryusefi's "Lovely Trash", Mani Haqiqi's "Pig" and Mohammad-Ali Bashe-Ahangar's "The Underwater Cypress".

Amiryusefi, Haqiqi, Maadi and Nematollah are also competing for the award for best screenwriter with Hamed Rajabi for "Dressage" and Mahmud Ghaffari for "No. 17 Soheila".

Nominees for best actor award are Farhad Aslani for his role in "Sheeple", Amir Jadidi in "Cold Sweat" and "Hat-Trick", Amin Hayai in "Flaming" and Javad Ezzati in "The Lost Strait".

Baran Kowsari received a nomination in the best actress category for her roles in "I Am Not Angry" and "Cold Sweat". Other nominees in this section are Sara Bahrami for "Axing", Zahra Davudnejad for "No. 17 Soheila", Negar Moqaddami for "Don't Feel Shy", Mahtab Nasirpur for "Astigmatism" and Shirin Yazdanbakhsh for "Lovely Trash".

The Cinema Cinema Academy Awards ceremony, which can be considered as the Iranian equivalent of the Oscars, will be held at Tehran's Enqelab Hotel on August 10.

Tehran Symphony Orchestra to perform with guest conductor Nicolas Krauze

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Tehran Symphony Orchestra will give a concert under the baton of guest conductor Nicolas Krauze from France at Vahdat Hall on August 21 and 22, the conductor has announced on his website.

Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi's opera "La Forza Del Destino", French composer Paul Dukas' symphonic poem "The Sorcerer's Apprentice", French composer Maurice Ravel's one-movement orchestral piece "Boléro"

and Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 will be performed during the concerts.

Krauze has conducted over 400 concerts with Nouvelle Europe, a chamber orchestra based in Paris, for which he is the principal conductor and artistic director.

He has also collaborated with orchestras such as the Paris Symphonic Orchestra, the Bari Symphony Orchestra in Italy, the Olomouc Symphony Orchestra in Czech and several other orchestras across the world.

French conductor Nicolas Krauze in an undated photo.

Clintons, Mariah Carey turn out for Barbra Streisand concert

NEW YORK (AP) — Barbra Streisand's return to New York City's Madison Square Garden for the first time in 13 years attracted figures from pop superstar Mariah Carey to Bill and Hillary Clinton for a concert that turned political.

The iconic singer performed a show-stopping concert Saturday night, receiving standing ovations from fans including Carey, who showed up to her seat as Streisand ended her first song of the night.

Former New York City Mayor David

Dinkins, U.S. Rep. Jerry Nadler and Rev. Al Sharpton also attended the show, where Streisand was backed by an orchestra with more than a dozen talented musicians.

In characteristic fashion, Streisand brought politics into the concert, warning Republicans in the audience to cover their ears before launching into a remixed version of "Send in the Clowns" that took jabs at President Donald Trump. Streisand had covered the Stephen Sondheim song for "The Broadway Album" in 1985.

"Maybe he's poor, till he reveals his returns who can be sure, who is this clown," she sang as the audience erupted in applause. "Something's amiss, I don't approve, now that's he's running the free world where can we move, maybe a town, who is this clown?"

After the song, a photo of the White House — with circus tent on top of it — appeared on the screen, followed by Trump in clown makeup. An altered version of his Time magazine 2016 Person of the Year cover

showed him with a red nose under the words "clown of the year."

Streisand, a proud Democrat who has supported the Clintons as well as Barack Obama, released a song last year that questioned Trump and pleaded for change called "Don't Lie to Me."

Streisand thanked the political figures in the audience for their efforts and said she wished she could have sung at Hillary Clinton's inauguration like she sang at Bill Clinton's 1993 inaugural gala.