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Steel products export up 20% in a quarter on year

TEHRAN — Iran's exports of steel products rose 20 percent during the first quarter of current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) compared to the first quarter of the previous year, the public relations department of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced on Monday.

As reported, the country exported 758,000 tons of steel products during the three-month period of this year.

IMIDRO also put the export of steel ingots at 1.425 million tons in the first quarter of current year, falling 23 percent from 1.854 million tons in the same time span of the past year. **→4**

Iran's health minister calls U.S. sanctions crime against humanity

TEHRAN — Iran's Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Monday that the U.S. sanctions are "crime against humanity".

"The U.S. administration's actions in sanctioning medicine that the Iranian patients need, and Washington's pressure in the area of health are crime against humanity," he said in a joint press conference with Lebanese Health Minister Jamil Jabak in Tehran.

Namaki also said the U.S. sanctions

in the area of medicine are "illogical" and "inhuman".

Jabak described sanctions against Iran as "cruel".

He also said there is no restriction for Lebanon to cooperate with Iran.

President Hassan Rouhani said in June the U.S. sanctions against Iran constitute examples of "crime against humanity and economic terrorism" because they have targeted ordinary people's "lives and needs". **→3**

Zakzaky granted bail for medical care abroad

TEHRAN — A Nigerian court has granted bail to Muslim cleric Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaky so that he can fly to India for medical care, his lawyer says.

"The judge has ordered that Zakzaky be flown to India for proper medical attention," his lawyer Femi Falana told AFP on Monday.

Zakzaky, the founder of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), has been in detention since December 2015 after his residence in the city of Zaria was raided by Nigeria's forces, during which he was beaten and lost vision in his left eye. **→13**

Who has the main lead on Amano's death?

By Hanif Ghaffari

TEHRAN — The sudden death of Yukiya Amano, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) left many in shock. American and Zionist officials are now trying to make his death seem natural, but the sudden appearance of symptoms and his quick death is very suspicious, especially at a time when both Washington and Tel Aviv were quite unsatisfied with him leading the UN nuclear watchdog.

A year before Amano's death, something happened that might lead us to find traces of involvement of American and Zionist intelligence services in this case.

In May 2018, right at the peak of international controversies over the sudden withdrawal of the United States from Iran nuclear deal, the Head

of IAEA's Inspection and Supervision Department abruptly announced that he is resigning from his position.

Tero Varjoranta was a Finnish diplomat who worked as Deputy Director General of the IAEA and was majorly tasked with inspecting nuclear projects.

Varjoranta's sudden resignation did not receive much media cover, as the world news were mostly focused on Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal. However, Varjoranta's resignation came at a time that the Zionist regime was putting heavy pressures on IAEA to start new studies and inspections. At the time, Amano and other top officials of the IAEA accepted Varjoranta's resignation in less than 24 hours and did not let the media to reveal the reasons of his resignation. Varjoranta himself also never said anything about

the reasons behind his resignation. He seems to be worried that revealing the real reasons that led to his resignation, might cost him his life.

Now, the main lead of Amano's death is in the hands of the Finnish diplomat. Varjoranta had 30 years of experience in nuclear energy. He also served as Director of Nuclear Recycle and Safety in Finland for many years.

Since 2013, he also became the Deputy Director General of IAEA, Head of the Department of Safeguards and Director of IAEA Inspectors who verify countries' compliance with the prohibition of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Anyway, we don't know if he finally breaks his silence or not, but what we do know for sure is that he knows many things about the lobbies of Americans and the Zionists for taking Amano down.

Failure in Yemen to be 'death sentence' of Saudi monarchy: Prof. Cavell

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN (MNA) — Professor of political science Colin S. Cavell believes that failure of Saudi Arabia "to reassert its hegemonic control over Yemen will be a death sentence on the continuation of the Saudi monarchy."

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Colin S. Cavell, full professor of political science at Bluefield State College in Bluefield, West Virginia, pointed to different aspects of Saudi-waged war against the Yemeni people and Western's countries' continued support for the aggression despite human rights concerns.

He noted that "Saudi Arabia is bogged down in a quagmire which it will be difficult to extricate

itself from but instead will eventually call into question the continued existence of the Kingdom itself."

"Failure on the part of Saudi Arabia to reassert its hegemonic control over Yemen will be a death sentence on the continuation of the Saudi monarchy. A Yemeni victory in their war of independence from Saudi Arabia will provide hope and inspiration for the captive population of Saudi Arabia to rise up an install a legitimate peoples' government." He also noted that "disparate economic interests" of various countries, including US, UK and France, are why the UN Security Council "cannot agree to stop this devastating war on the people of Yemen." He added

that "morality for Trump consists in whether US industries are profitable despite resulting in unparalleled death and destruction."

Here is the full text of the interview:

■ UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued a report on Friday, July 26, 2019 noting that the Saudi-led coalition has killed 729 children in 2018 in the Yemen war, deciding to blacklist the coalition for the third year for child-killing crimes. Despite all these human rights reports, we see that western countries are still providing the coalition with weaponry. Why all these reports have failed to stop arms sales of the western countries, especially the Trump administration, to the Saudi-led coalition? **→7**



ARTICLE

Habib Ahmadzadeh
Novelist

Trump, Zarif and we Iranians

President Trump, in his latest Tweet, claims that "Iranians never won a war, but never lost a negotiation." As a world citizen, and a veteran of Iran-Iraq war with firsthand experience of the bitterness of war, I have a couple of suggestions and responses for the president of the United States.

First, I would like to recommend to him, never use the word win and winning to describe any war. Besides, American history is filled with bitter experiences of war and losing. There is no need to remind the president of the United States the result of American wars in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and even the engagement in Yemen. None of these horrifying experience and any other war for that matter has ever reached its goals.

As a veteran and a peace activist, I would like to suggest to the president of the United States, that the first step in any combat is understanding the adversary. Sir, as an experienced Iranian war veteran, I strongly suggest you study the culture and history of an old civilization like Iran. Iranians, those you label as a "terrorist nation" are proud and pleased for not initiating a war in the past 250 years. We proudly have never invaded, intruded and oppressed any other nations, either in our neighborhood or even in response to revilers and foes.

Nonetheless, there is a delicacy in the sophisticated culture of Iran that separates the ancient nation of Iran with you, Mr. President, and your hawkish #BTeam. That is the view we each have toward war. War for us, is not an option; we never choose to go to war; we only respond to war.

In 1915, amid the WWI, Rais Ali Delvary, a young man from along with his small group of men, from a tiny village near the Persian Gulf, defended the country from the British invaders. They stopped the intruders who ignored Iran's neutrality during the War. Rais Ali's slogan of the time stood with the nation to this very day. "We are in this war not to win over invaders' capital and assets; we are in this war to save our capital and assets from loss." That is how we define, losing, and winning in a war. Rais Ali and his people won that war, as his disciples did the same thing almost a century later and will do it again if they have to. **→7**



ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

Iran's strength lies in continued patience

It's said that Donald Trump is likely to win re-election in 2020 if he avoids war with Iran, keeps up the tariff and political pressure on China, and if the Democrats nominate a neoliberal like Joe Biden, or even Kamala Harris.

Conversely, if the U.S. attacks Iran militarily (the U.S. and the world are going to regret it mightily), Trump won't win re-election. And it's also likely that there are only two candidates, both of them often scorned or ignored, one for his "socialist" policies and the other for an anti-war posture, who have any chance of beating Trump assuming Trump does not bomb Iran. They are Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii. Both these Democrat candidates are consistent, recognize the failures of U.S. policies, and don't seem to have been bought off by anyone to any significant degree, it at all.

But there is a caveat, too.

Trump is absolutely desperate in the face of slowly souring economic data in the U.S. and also in Asia and Europe, to weaken the dollar (and improve U.S. exports) and to keep the U.S. equity market near or above its recent all-time high. Trump "owns" the markets now, because he has been crowing for two years about how "great" he is and that his policies have caused the markets in the U.S. to rocket to all-time highs, and he has also claimed he is responsible for low unemployment (almost exclusively in very low-wage jobs) in the U.S., too. But all his claims are a chimera. The only thing that has happened since the crises of 2008-09 is that the Federal Reserve Bank printed trillions of dollars to bail out businesses and banks that ought to have gone bust and all the extra money went largely to further "credit" (debt) creation and into the stock markets while many corporations were buying back their shares -- which was illegal until 1982 when Reagan was President -- to boost quarterly (and annual) per share profits. Really, there has been almost a decade-long orgy of misallocated fiat "capital" and the chickens are soon going to come home to roost with what may become the worst economic contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s, which affected the entire world. **→7**



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Opening of the Fourth Deep Diving Tournament of World Armies

Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Deep Diving Tournament of World Armies was held on Sunday afternoon on Kish Island.

The opening ceremony was attended by Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi, Army Coordination chief Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Kish Free Zone CEO Qolamhossein Mozaffari, and a group of Army commanders.

Iran to review nuclear decision if other sides fulfil commitments: MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Naghavi Hosseini, the spokesman for the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said Iran will review its decision to reduce its nuclear commitments if other sides take practical actions to fulfill their obligations.

“Increasing purity of enriched uranium and using advanced centrifuges are Iran’s next steps on the issue of the JCPOA. However, Iran will review its decision to reduce nuclear commitments if other sides take practical actions in fulfilling their obligations,” he tweeted on Monday, according to ISNA.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said Iran will take the next step in reducing commitments under the JCPOA if the remaining parties to the agreement do not honor their obligations.

“It is the Islamic Republic of Iran who should take decision in this respect. This step will be taken in continuation of previous actions if other sides do not fulfil their obligations,” he told ICANA in an interview published on Saturday.

He noted that Iran’s actions are within the framework of the JCPOA, the official name for the nuclear agreement.

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

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

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

The remaining parties, particularly the European sides, have failed to honor their commitments since the U.S. reimposed the sanctions.

The remaining JCPOA parties held an emergency meeting in Vienna on July 28 to discuss Iran’s moves in reducing its nuclear commitments and explore ways to save the nuclear deal.

Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister and a top nuclear negotiator who represented Iran in the meeting, called the talks “constructive”. However, he warned Iran would continue to reduce its nuclear commitments if Europeans failed to salvage the pact.

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

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

She also said, “They recalled that both nuclear commitments and sanctions-lifting are essential parts of the agreement.”

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

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

Germany reiterates it will not take part in U.S.-led naval coalition

By staff and agency

A German government spokeswoman said on Monday that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the whole German government do not see Germany taking part in a U.S.-led naval mission in the Strait of Hormuz.

“The chancellor does not see a participation in a U.S.-led mission in the current situation and at the current time - everyone in the German government agrees on that,” a government spokeswoman told a news conference, according to Reuters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nathalie Tocci, special adviser to European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, has said that the Europeans will opt for “dialogue” and “diplomacy” with Iran on the issue of security in the Persian Gulf region.

“So long as [Europeans] see a chance of freedom of navigation being secured through dialogue and diplomacy with Iran, they will opt for this route,” Politico quoted her as saying on Friday.



Larijani lauds Zarif as a capable and hard-working diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — To show strong support for Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who has been sanctioned by the Trump administration, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani met with Zarif on Monday describing him as a “symbol of a seasoned and hard-working” diplomat.

Larijani, who once was Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator with the West in the capacity of Supreme National Security Council secretary, said Zarif has brought many achievements for the Islamic republic system through his diplomatic competence.

“You, as chief of the country’s foreign policy, defend the national interests with determination and perseverance. Enemies have sanctioned you because your efforts at the international arena have been effective,” Larijani remarked.

For his part, Zarif said, “We will defend and support national interests and the people’s rights at the international arena will all power.”

■ **‘Sanctioning Zarif shows U.S. frustration’**

Ebrahim Raeisi, the Judiciary chief, said on Monday that sanctioning Zarif shows frustration at the White House.

Downplaying the U.S. moves against the country and its latest sanctions against Zarif, the top judge said “the future is bright”.

In separate statements on Wednesday, the U.S. Treasury and State Department announced imposition of sanctions against Zarif, a move which was interpreted as a total rejection of diplomacy repeatedly claimed by the Trump administration.



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

In a press conference at the Foreign Ministry on Monday, Zarif said sanctions against foreign minister is synonymous with “defeat in diplomacy”.

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

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

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

Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri lauded Zarif’s diplomatic capability, saying, “Even

wise enemies are aware of his intellect, skill, his rare competence in negotiations, creating opportunities, and avoiding conflict and war.”

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

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

“The US’ reason for designating me is that I am Iran’s ‘primary spokesperson around the world’

Is the truth really that painful?” Zarif wrote. Zarif said the move shows that Donald Trump and his team consider him as a “huge threat” to their plots against Iran.

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

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

Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri said on Saturday that Zarif is “the Iranian people’s voice” and sanctioning him shows Washington’s weakness.

“Sanctioning the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the U.S. indicates that all the enemy’s plots have been foiled. And the U.S. does not intend to sanction Zarif but does not want the world hear the Iranian people’s voice,” he told reporters.

In an article published by LobeLog on Thursday, Robert E. Hunter, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO, said that Washington’s act in imposing sanctions on Zarif will undermine U.S. diplomatic credibility.

While in UN I was told to go to White House or be sanctioned U.S. isolated, unable to form alliance, Zarif asserts

By Mehdi Sepahvand

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told a press conference on Monday that while he was in New York the Americans told him that if he did not accept to go to the White House to meet President Donald Trump he will be sanctioned in two weeks.

Zarif visited New York in mid-July to participate at the annual session of the UN Economic and Social Council (UNOSOC).

“In the trip to New York it was announced to me to accept the invitation of the White House for negotiations otherwise I would be sanctioned in two weeks,” Zarif said, marking Press Day in Iran.

On Thursday, July 31, the United States declared sanctions on Zarif, a move which was interpreted as a declaration of sanctions on diplomacy, which the Trump administration repeatedly claims it wants with Tehran.

■ **‘Sanctions on me is failure of diplomacy’**

Zarif slammed the decision to impose sanctions on him, calling the move a “failure” for diplomacy.

Despite its calls for talks, Zarif said, the U.S. was not interested in diplomacy to resolve the nuclear standoff.

“Imposing sanctions against a foreign minister means failure [for any efforts at negotiations],” said Zarif, adding that it also meant the side imposing the measures was “opposing talks”.

■ **‘I was sanctioned after I revealed intentions of the B-Team’**

Zarif said the U.S. decided to sanction him when he revealed that the B-Team, among them White House national security advisor John Bolton and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is trying to lure Trump into a war with Iran.

“The U.S. decided to sanction me when I introduced the B-Team,” Zarif remarked.

However, Zarif said, he does not think that Trump is not seeking war with Iran.

On whether it was necessary that the United State be a party to the negotiations that led to the conclusion of the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal, Zarif said the involvement of the U.S. in the JCPOA was a “necessary evil” because



the country is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and for lifting the UN sanctions it was necessary that it be included.

The chief diplomat also blamed the U.S. for fueling tension in the Persian Gulf.

The United States is seeking a maritime coalition to guard what it calls “safe shipping” in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

“The United States is responsible for fueling fire in the Persian Gulf and it cannot be a firefighter,” Zarif noted.

In another part of his statements, Zarif criticized the UK for assisting the United States in “economic terrorism” against Iran, saying, “The British government has been complicit in America’s economic terrorism against Iran.”

The Iranian top diplomat was referring to British naval forces’ seizure of an Iranian-operated supertanker in the Strait of Gibraltar off Spain on July 4. The UK seized the vessel on the allegation that it was carrying Iranian oil to Syria in violation of the European Union’s unilateral sanctions on the Arab country.

“If the Europeans are worried about their future, they should stand up against such bullying acts, because in the future the Americans may say they have no right to work with China or buy gas from Russia.”

Iran considering technical needs when downscaling nuclear commitments: Kamalvandi

By Mehdi Sepahvand

TEHRAN — Any time Iran decides to downscale its commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal, it will see what it technically needs to decide on the kind of limitations it will overlook, the country’s nuclear spokesman says.

Speaking to the Tehran Times on Monday, Behrooz Kamalvandi said this has been the case already since March 8 when Iran decided to limit its level of commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in retaliation for the U.S. official withdrawal from the deal.

“What we are doing is, if we feel there is need for some technical measures, and on the other side we are going to abandon some of our commitments, we go for the option which can remove our technical problems as well,” Kamalvandi stated.

“We decide based on our needs, which has been the case for the three measures we have already taken, including

surpassing the limit on 300 kilograms [of low-enriched uranium], disregard for the 130-ton limit [on heavy water supply], and producing [uranium] at the level of 4.5 percent purity,” Kamalvandi explained.

“Based on the time we will look into what our needs are,” he added.

On July 1, Tehran announced it was leaving the 300 kilograms of low-enriched uranium limit allowed under the nuclear accord behind, no longer willing to stand by and be the sole party that has been putting into action its part of the deal.

On the same day writing on Twitter, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif insisted Iran was not violating the deal, citing the “Dispute Resolution Mechanism” of the treaty, which Tehran believes the so-called E3+2 — Germany, France and the UK plus Russia and China — have not brought to a successful conclusion.

Iranian officials had warned that the country would

likely exceed the uranium limit if the remaining signatories to the nuclear deal — China, Germany, France, Britain and Russia — failed to find a way for Tehran to receive the economic benefits promised in exchange for limiting its nuclear program.

Iran is allowed to enrich up to 300 kg of uranium to 3.67% under the terms of the JCPOA. Iran also went beyond the 3.67% enrichment level on July 7 as it had promised before.

Falling back under the 300 kg is easily reversible, and the remaining parties to the JCPOA would only become concerned if enrichment levels were ramped up to 20%, Francois Nicoulaud, a former French ambassador to Iran, told AFP last month.

“As long as Iran does not get close to a threshold of a ton of lightly enriched uranium, there is no pressing concern,” Nicoulaud said. But if Iran “amassed, for example, a stock of 200 to 300 kilograms of uranium enriched to nearly 20% there would be cause for great concern.”

■ **‘Countries embarrassed to have their names next to America’**

“Other countries are embarrassed to have their names on a list next to America,” he said, adding that wherever the Americans deployed their forces, they failed, like in Afghanistan.

Now, 18 years after they invaded Afghanistan, they have been forced to negotiate with the Taliban with humiliation, he noted.

His remarks came after reports in recent days that the U.S. has found it difficult to build a maritime coalition in the Persian Gulf, receiving a lukewarm response from European and Asian allies.

Australian Defense Minister Linda Reynolds has said his country was carefully weighing up the United States’ request to join the coalition.

On Friday, Japan said it would not join the mission, adding that it may send its warships independently to protect Japanese ships in the world’s most important oil artery, according to the Mainichi newspaper.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas also said recently that his country would not participate in the U.S.-proposed naval mission.

■ **‘JCPOA not a holy thing and if necessary, we will quit it’**

During his Monday press conference, Iran’s foreign minister also said the country’s third step to limit its JCPOA commitments will neither be its last step, nor will it be a walkout from the deal.

“The third step will neither be the last step, nor will it be quitting the JCPOA. The action will fall within the framework of the JCPOA. But the JCPOA is not a holy thing and if necessary, we will quit it. However, we do not see it necessary to do so right now.”

He also warned the European Union about their passivity in the face of U.S. excessive demands.

“If the Europeans are worried about their future, they should stand up against such bullying acts, because in the future the Americans may say they have no right to work with China or buy gas from Russia,” Zarif said, posing the question if the U.S. has any right to tell a continent what to do or not to do.

Iran, Russia sign classified military deal: Navy chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian and Russian armed forces have signed a “classified” agreement to expand cooperation through a series of projects, Chief of Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi announced on Sunday.

Khanzadi made the announcement during the opening ceremony of an international military diving competition on the southern Iranian Kish Island.

He said one of the projects will be joint military drills in the Persian Gulf before the end of the year, Press TV reported.

The admiral said he signed the deal with the Russian Defense Ministry on behalf of the Iranian military during his trip to Moscow last week.

“Some articles of this agreement are classified but overall; it is aimed at expanding military cooperation between the two countries,” he said.

“Of course, a large part of it includes the naval forces of the two countries and the agreement can be called the first of its kind



between the two sides,” he said, describing the agreement as a “turning point” in military ties between Iran and Russia.

Khanzadi also dismissed as insignificant

recent actions by the United States and the United Kingdom to escalate tension in the Persian Gulf region.

“Nothing has happened in the region...

and the show that arrogant countries, most importantly the U.S. and Britain, put on is only a big bluff and a dishonest act aimed to create the impression that the region is unsafe,” the admiral pointed out.

“This is while the region is perfectly safe,” the commander said, calling such efforts futile.

The United States has been pushing its regional allies to form a coalition force that would supposedly ensure the safety of foreign vessels sailing through the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf.

Britain has also dispatched three warships to the Persian Gulf after Iranian forces detained a British tanker that had collided with a fishing boat in the Strait and refused to heed its distress calls afterwards.

Both Washington and London have been trying to justify escalation in the strategic waters by accusing Iran of trying to destabilize shipping activities in the Persian Gulf in response to renewed American sanctions, especially on its exports.

Government: Zarif is a media outlet which is being silenced

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Government spokesman Ali Rabiei has highlighted the role Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif plays against U.S. hostilities toward Iran, saying Zarif himself is a media outlet and was targeted with U.S. sanctions for the important messages he passes on to the world.

“I’m glad to say that Zarif himself is a media [outlet], a producer of content and a message transfer tool,” Rabiei said on Monday in an opening to Zarif’s press conference ahead of Journalist Day.

He further pointed to the U.S. sanctions on Zarif, saying the White House has never been as hostile as it is today toward the Iranian nation and government, Mehr reported.

The spokesman deplored Washington for trying to silence the chief Iranian diplomat.

Rabiei has also said the Americans have deprived them-

selves of dialogue by sanctioning Zarif.

“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 Sunday.

He 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 at the White House.

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

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. The announcement has been met with widespread condemnation in Iran and throughout the world, with President Hassan Rouhani describing it as a



“childish behavior” and an act out of fear.

Zarif himself has scoffed at the act, saying he and his family do not have any “property or interests outside of Iran.”

Iran’s health minister calls U.S. sanctions crime against humanity

Lebanese health minister describes sanctions on as “cruel”

I → “It should not be said that the U.S. has imposed sanctions on us, because they are not sanctions. They are crime against humanity. They could be called sanctions if they targeted some of our sensitive industries, but they are crime against humanity and economic terrorism when they target the people’s lives and needs,” he said in a cabinet meeting.

Kianoush Jahanpour, spokesman for Iran’s Food and Drug Administration, told ISNA in an interview published on November 13, 2018 that the claim by Washington that medicine is exempt from sanctions is a “big clear lie”.

Sanctions include food and medicine and the only point is that these two items have not been mentioned in the sanctions list announced by the Trump administration, he said.

Farhad Ehteshamzad, the head of the Iran Auto Importers Association, has also told ISNA that foreign banks refrain from interacting with Iran, because they fear



to be punished by the U.S. which also impedes importing certain commodities such as food and medicine.

In a tweet on November 12, 2018 U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed that “the U.S. does not, and never did, sanction food and medicine. They are exempt from sanctions.”

Scientific Societies for Medical Sciences in Iran wrote a letter to UN Secretary General António Guterres in March 2019 condemning the U.S. sanctions against Iran, urging the international community to resist sanctions targeting “medical needs” and “humanitarian aid”.

“Scientific Societies for Medical Sciences in Iran call on int’l community to: condemn U.S. sanctions on Iran; strongly resist the targeting of medical needs [and] humanitarian aid; and thwart targeting of research [and] scientific advancement,” Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his twitter account in March 2019.

Astana group insists there is no military solution to Syria crisis

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran, Russia and Turkey – guarantors of the Syrian peace process – have issued a joint statement insisting that “there could be no military solution to the Syrian conflict”.

The statement was issued on Monday (August 5) as the three countries held their 13th round of talks in Nursultan, the new name of Kazakhstan’s capital, on August 1-2.

Nursultan is the new name of Astana. It has been the host of talks between the three countries as well as the United Nations and the warring sides in Syria. The talks are known as the Astana process or format.

In this round of talks international bodies such as the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross were also present.

The full text of the statement is as follows:

The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey as guarantors of the Astana format:

1. Reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter;
2. Reaffirmed in this regard the respect for universally recognized international legal decisions, including those provisions of the relevant UN resolutions rejecting the occupation of Syrian Golan, first and foremost UN Security Council resolution 497;
3. Reviewed in detail the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area and highlighted the necessity to establish calm on the ground by fully implementing all agreements on Idlib, first and foremost the Memorandum of 17 September 2018. They expressed serious concern with the increased presence of the terrorist organization “Hayat Tahrir al-Sham” in the area and reaffirmed the determination to continue cooperation in order to ultimately eliminate DAESH/ISIL, Al-Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or DAESH/ISIL, and other terrorist groups,

as designated by the UN Security Council. While deploring civilian casualties, they agreed to undertake concrete measures, based on the previous agreements, to ensure the protection of the civilian population in accordance with the international humanitarian law as well as the safety and security of the military personnel of the guarantors present within and outside the Idlib de-escalation area;

4. Discussed the situation in the north-east of Syria and emphasized that long-term security and stability in this region can only be achieved on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country;

5. Rejected in this regard all attempts to create new realities on the ground under the pretext of combating terrorism, including illegitimate self-rule initiatives, and expressed their determination to stand against separatist agendas aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria as well as threatening the national security of neighboring countries;

6. Expressed their conviction that there could be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and reaffirmed their commitment to advance the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process in line with the UN Security Council resolution 2254 and the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi;

7. Held detailed consultations on the trilateral basis as well as with the representatives of the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen on the conclusion of formation and launching of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, in accordance with the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi. They expressed satisfaction with the progress made on finalization of the composition and the rules of procedure of the body and reiterated their readiness to facilitate the convening of the committee as soon as possible;

8. Welcomed the fourth successful operation on mutual release of detainees/abductees held on 31 July 2019 within the framework of the respective Working Group of

the Astana format. They underscored that the Working Group was a unique mechanism, that had proved to be effective and necessary for building confidence between the Syrian parties, and agreed to take measures to continue and step up its work;

9. Emphasized the need to increase humanitarian assistance to all Syrians throughout the country without preconditions. In order to support the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Syria and the progress in the process of the political settlement, they called upon the international community, the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies, to enhance the assistance to Syria, inter alia by developing early recovery projects, including the restoration of basic infrastructure assets - water and power supply facilities, schools and hospitals as well as the humanitarian mine action. They also discussed the idea and exchanged views on the perspectives of holding the International Conference on the Humanitarian Assistance to Syria;

10. Highlighted the need to facilitate safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their original places of residence in Syria, ensuring their right to return and right to be supported. In this regard they called upon the international community to provide appropriate contributions and reaffirmed their readiness to continue interaction with all relevant parties, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other specialized international agencies;

11. Welcomed the participation of the delegations of Iraq and Lebanon as new observers of the Astana format. They expressed their conviction that the observers (Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon) would contribute to the efforts to bring peace and stability in Syria;

12. Expressed their sincere gratitude to the Kazakh authorities for hosting in Nur-Sultan the 13th International Meeting on Syria in the Astana format;

13. Decided to hold the next International Meeting on Syria in the Astana format in Nur-Sultan in October 2019.

Academics urge govt. to cite ramifications of trusting the West

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – More than 2,000 Iranian university professors and scholars have called on the Rouhani government to narrate the consequences of trusting the Western countries.

“Now that the trustworthy Iranian negotiators have realized the disloyalty of the U.S. and its European accomplices, it is necessary that they narrate the consequences of their misplaced trust to the West for the Iranian nation, who have shown great patience for six years,” the senior Iranian academics said in an open letter to Rouhani and Zarif, Mehr reported on Monday.



They also urged the top officials to put self-sufficiency, instead of relying on the West, high on their agenda to push the country’s development plans forward.

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.

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.

According to experts, the new U.S. measure dealt a blow to the prospects of talks between Washington and Tehran and cast doubt over the Trump administration’s claims that it wants dialogue.

Iran sympathizes with American people over mass shootings

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Tehran has sympathized with the American people over the death of tens of people in the latest mass shootings in the United States.

In a statement on Sunday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi voiced her sympathy with the American people, especially families of the victims of the incidents, Tasnim reported.

Mousavi also wished speedy recovery for those wounded in the tragic incidents.



Within 13 hours on Saturday and Sunday, at least 29 people were killed in mass shootings in the U.S. cities of El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio. Law enforcement officials arrested Patrick Crusius, a 21-year-old white man from Allen, Texas, which is about a 10-hour drive from the Walmart in El Paso where he opened fire on Saturday and killed 20 people. Early Sunday in Dayton, police killed the gunman within one minute of hearing shots fired into a popular night-life spot in the city. The gunman, Connor Betts, 24, was wearing a mask, body armor and hearing protection and was carrying a high-capacity magazine that can hold 100 rounds of ammunition. Nine people were killed, including the gunman’s sister

285kg of opium seized in Semnan province

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The police have confiscated 285kg of opium in central province of Semnan, a provincial police chief has announced.

Abdollah Hassani said on Monday the police forces seized the illicit drugs which were destined for Semnan province from Sistan-Baluchestan province, Mehr reported.

During the operation one smuggler was arrested, Hassani added.

Iran, which has a 900-kilometer-long border with Afghanistan, has been used as the main conduit for smuggling Afghan drugs to narcotics kingpins in Europe.



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

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

According to the “World Drug Report 2019” of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in 2017 Iran had seized “the largest quantity of opiates ... accounting for 39 percent of the global total,” the envoy stated.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	256698.2
IFX	3406.85

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,732 rials
GBP	51,032 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.17/b
WTI	\$55.07/b
OPEC Basket	\$63.79/b
Gold	\$1,459.70/oz
Silver	\$16.52/oz
Platinum	\$858.25/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Private sector invests over \$269m in mining projects since last December

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said the country's private sector has invested 11.3 trillion rials (about \$269.04 million) in the mining sector since the last December, Mehr news agency reported on Monday.

"This amount of investment is a turning point in the private sector's contribution to the development of the country's mining industries," Khodadad Gharibpour said in an IMIDRO deputies meeting. The official noted that in the current situation when the country is subject to unjust sanctions, such investments over this short period of time is a remarkable sign that the private sector has a positive outlook for this sector. Gharibpour also stated that with the aim of removing barriers from the way of IMIDRO's key sectors such as exploration and infrastructure, the budget ceiling for such areas is removed.

"Unrestricted exploration budget means that we will fund as many exploration projects as there are," he explained.

"In addition, the infrastructure budget has also quadrupled," he added. The IMIDRO head further said that in the face of tough economic conditions, production has not slowed down but it has also increased, adding that during the first three months of this Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), the production of steel products, sponge iron and steel ingot grew by 16 percent, 10 percent and five percent, respectively.

Putin's pledge to ditch the dollar is slowly becoming a reality

Russia is acting on a pledge by President Vladimir Putin to shrink the role of the dollar in international trade as tensions sour between Washington and Moscow.

As per themoscowtimes.com, the shift is part of a strategy to "de-dollarize" the Russian economy and lower its vulnerability to the ongoing threat of U.S. sanctions. But while the central bank was able to quickly dump half of its dollar holdings last year, progress in trade has been slow due to ingrained use of the greenback for many transactions.

The share of euros in Russian exports increased for a fourth straight quarter at the expense of the U.S. currency, according to central bank data. The common currency has almost overtaken the dollar in trade with the European Union and China, and trade in rubles with India has surged. The dollar's share in import transactions remained unchanged at about a third.

"There's been a strong incentive to change, not just for Russia but for its trading partners too," said Dmitry Dolgin, an economist at ING Bank in Moscow. The "European Union is also now facing trade pressure from the U.S." pushing it to try to reduce dependence on the dollar, he said.

The euro came close to replacing the dollar as the currency of choice for Russian exports to the European Union, with its share climbing to 42% in the first quarter from 32% a year earlier.

Russia still relies on the dollar for more than half of its \$687.5 billion in annual trade, though less than 5% of those deals are with the U.S. Part of Russia's motivation to shift is that companies suffer delays on as much as a third of international payments in dollars because Western companies have to check with the U.S. whether the transactions are allowed, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said in December.

The euro's share also increased

The euro's share also increased in Russia's \$108b in annual trade with China, jumping to more than a third of export settlements in the first quarter from almost nothing at the start of 2018. This shift, which covers commodity sales and big state contracts, has been accelerated by the development of payment infrastructure at the central bank and other lenders, according to Sofya Donets, an economist at Renaissance Capital in Moscow.

Trade in yuan is difficult because of capital restrictions that limit foreigners' access to Chinese assets, Dmitry Timofeev, who heads the Finance Ministry's sanctions department, told the RBC newspaper. The "yuan isn't completely convertible, which means it can't play a significant role in world trade," Timofeev said.

The most dramatic shift is visible in Russia's \$11b in trade with India. The ruble accounted for three quarters of total settlement in exports between the two emerging markets after they agreed on a new payment method through their national currencies for multi-billion-dollar defense deals.

The "trend is likely to continue because the infrastructure for transactions in alternative currencies is improving," Renaissance Capital's Donets said. "Russia won't be able to give up using the dollar completely though, especially for trade of oil."

Steel products export up 20% in a quarter on year

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

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

The official noted that it is expected for the exports from the country's mining sector to, at least, reach the last year's \$8.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020).

Also, during a meeting with the members of Iran Steel Association on Sunday, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the country has achieved a



proper self-reliance in steel industry.

Steel industry is one of the industries in which some good investment has been made and today it has become a production

advantage, the minister further underscored.

Iran's annual steel production is planned to reach 45 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022),

Private sector propelling economy during sanctions: industry min.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Private sector is the main factor for domestic economy to grow during the sanctions time, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani stated.

Making the remarks during the third session of the supreme council of supervising Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Sunday, the minister said that private sector should help the country pass the sanctions and move toward development and progress, ICCIMA portal published.

"Without private sector and ICCIMA we would have faced many problems under this condition", Rahmani stressed.

He referred to the activity of unions and private sector as one of the strategies to tackle the sanctions and economic invasion and said that activity of private sector should be facilitated and in this due the role and status of ICCIMA should be more in decision making and following up the affairs.

To support his remarks, the minister also said, "We are ready to transfer some authorities to the private sector's unions and associations both in decision making and in enforcing".



Govt. introduces new rules to regulate cryptocurrency market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iranian government has introduced new rules for regulation of cryptocurrency market as more people enter the market to access international currencies in the sanctions era.

As reported by Press TV, according to a new bill approved by the cabinet and published on Sunday, any trade activity involving cryptocurrencies inside the country is illegal.

According to this bill, the government and the banking system would not recognize cryptocurrencies as legal coins and the Central Bank of Iran would not guarantee their value.

However, the bill said mining digital currencies would be allowed inside Iran under certain conditions, including if miners obtain the approval of Iran's industry ministry, do not mine the currencies inside a 30-kilometer boundary of all provincial centers except for the capital Tehran and the central city of Isfahan where tougher restrictions apply.

It said the miners should also observe rules set by Iran's standardization and communications authorities for mining machines, adding that certain fees will be applied for the energy used for mining the currencies. As for the energy prices, the bill said authorized mining farms should be



charged for the electricity, or the natural gas used to generate electricity, based on prices applied for the electricity exports. It said mining farms would be taxed like industrial manufacturing units unless the owners return the money earned from the export of their digital currencies back to Iran's economic cycle. The bill said Iran's ministry of industry shall be free to devolve its powers to authorities in special economic zones if foreigners want to set up mining farms in those areas. The new rules come more than a month after reports suggested that mining farms were mushrooming across Iran in places where subsidized electricity was on offer.

Authorities had hinted in the midst of a crackdown on those farms that they would recognize cryptocurrency mining as it could ease government's access to sources of foreign currency at a time of U.S. sanctions.

Iran to hold intl. stone expo in early October

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—The 12th edition of Iran's international stone exhibition (Iran Stone Expo 2019) will be held from October 8 to 11 in Mahallat and Nimvar cities, in central province of Markazi, Fars news agency reported.

More than 6,000 businesspeople active in the field of decorative stones from around the world will visit the exhibition, according to the head of Markazi Province's Trade Promotion Department.

Some 400 Iranian and foreign companies have announced readiness to take part in Iran Stone Expo 2019, Mohammadreza Hajipour said on Saturday.

"Representatives from India, Turkey, China and Italy announced that they will take part at the exhibition," he added.

In June, Vice Chairman of Iran Stone Association (ISA) Malek Rahmati said that his country was among the top five producers in the world. He said Iran exported about 13 million tons of decorative and facade stones in the last Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018- March 20, 2019). Rahmati said on June 18 that Iran exported about \$350 million worth of decorative and facade stones last year, putting the annual production volume of decorative and facade stones at 13 million tons.

Accordingly, Iran is among the world's



top five decorative stone producer, he stated.

Statistics show that the country is home to over 2,000 decorative-stone mines, he said, adding, "Of a sum of 2,000 mines, 1,200 are active in the country."

He put the annual active production capacity of mines in the country at 30 million tons, so that decorative-stone mines of the country have generated employment opportunities for 380,000 job-seeking people directly and indirectly. In March 2018, Head of Iran's Mines House Mohammadreza Bahraman announced that the country is ranked the second in the production of decorative stones in the world.

"Data and information shows that Iran annually produces 12 million tons of decorative stones which shows the capabilities in this sector," Bahraman said. In 2017, an executive of Iran Stones Association said that the country holds three billion tons of decorative stones.

Damascus Int. Fair to host large number of Iranian exhibitors

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Figures show that the 61st Damascus International Fair will witness wide-scale participation of Iranian firms, Mehr news agency reported. Bahman Hosseinzadeh, the managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC), told SANA's reporter in Tehran that holding the 61st edition of Damascus International Fair shows Syria's recovery from the crisis, adding that Iran wants to increase its investments in Syria.

Hosseinzadeh said the fair is an ideal opportunity for improving trade exchange, and that Iranian companies are eager to participate in it, noting that a special company has been licensed to arrange Iranian participation in the fair.

Also, Mehdi Saeedozakerin, the CEO of Pars Rastak Company for organizing fairs and conferences, said that around 100 Iranian companies will be participating in the fair, which represents an important opportunity for them to showcase their products in the fields of infrastructure and technical and engineering service

es needed by the Syrian market. Meanwhile, Mohammadreza Modoudi, the acting head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said this year will mark the biggest Iranian participation in the fair, with active participation by the state-run and private sectors and companies and more cooperation. Set to be held from August 28 to September 6, Damascus International Fair in Syria is an international exhibition held in Damascus annually since 1954 and is one of the oldest, majestic and largest international exhibitions in the Middle East. The exhibition is attended by dozens of countries from different continents and hundreds of Syrian, Arab and international companies distributed over 45 different wings.

Syrian Deputy Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Rania al-Ahmad has 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."

Addressing the same gathering, head of 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".

Take long-term view in Singapore's economic strategies: Chan Chun Sing

By Aw Cheng Wei

Singapore must maintain this approach even as it deals with current challenges, says minister.

Singapore has to adopt a targeted and long-term perspective in its economic strategies, even as it tackles short-term headwinds posed by the challenging global environment, said Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing.

The government is monitoring developments closely as Singapore's economic growth slows, and stands ready to support Singaporeans - particularly the most vulnerable - should conditions worsen, he said Sunday.

But one has to first be clear about the cause of the "illness" to deliver the right medicine, he added, as he set out why the current downturn is unlike past financial crises. Speaking at a National Day dinner, Mr. Chan also made the point that a key factor behind Singapore's success is that the country has constructive politics and a government with coherent policies.

"We have always been transparent and

honest with our people on our challenges, opportunities," he told grassroots leaders and residents gathered at the Tanjong Pagar Community Club. He began his 40-minute speech by explaining the factors contributing to the uncertain external environment, and outlined the strategies Singapore is taking to stay ahead in such a climate.

Singapore's economy growth

Advance estimates have shown that Singapore's economy grew by 0.1 percent in the second quarter of this year, the lowest in a decade. Mr. Chan also flagged growing downside risks arising from the latest round of tariffs by the United States on China, the protests in Hong Kong, as well as Japan and South Korea expelling each other from their trade white lists. He noted that during the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the global financial crisis between 2007 and 2008, Singapore's economy experienced sharp but short downturns triggered by a sudden loss of confidence in global financial markets. The current downturn is driven by

weaker external demand and a deepening slump in the global electronics cycle, he said, worsened in part by the uncertainty caused by the U.S.-China trade conflict. The downturn in electronics has also spilled over to sectors such as precision engineering and wholesale trade, said Mr. Chan, who also spoke in Malay and Mandarin. "We have seen these cycles before, and we should not panic. There are still bright sparks within our economy in the infocomm industries, in the professional industries and so forth," he added.

But concurrent structural changes are complicating matters, he said, pointing to longer-term shifts in supply chains and production patterns, a pull-back from globalization and an erosion of the multilateral trading system. It will take a much longer time for the global economy to settle into a new equilibrium, he said.

Pro-business environment

Singapore, he added, has to build on its fundamentals like its stable and pro-business environment, to create the conditions for its

longer-term success. Mr. Chan also cited the country's progressive regulatory environment, its connections to markets in Asia and beyond, its skilled workforce and tripartism.

These fundamentals are why Singapore has managed to maintain its competitiveness and attract high-quality investments from companies such as ExxonMobil and Linde, he added.

He also said Singapore has to diversify and deepen its access to markets, work with like-minded countries to explore new areas of cooperation, and press on with efforts to renew the domestic economy.

Rounding up, Mr. Chan expressed confidence that Singapore will be able to weather the uncertainties and achieve even more, if Singaporeans can continue to work together and build on the country's core strengths. "So long as we work together, one united people with a cohesive society and a coherent government, we will continue to achieve even greater heights for ourselves and our country," he said.

(Source: elevenmyanmar.com)

NIOC to begin new exploration operations in northeastern Iran

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – The director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s Exploration Department said plans are underway for beginning new exploration operations in northeast of the country, Shana reported on Monday.

"Given the importance of energy supply in the region, exploration activities in the area are among NIOC's top priorities," Seyed Saleh Hendi said.

The official noted that although exploration activities are costly and with more risks in this area but considering the region's great distance from the country's energy resources in the center or south, NIOC has put it on the agenda to start such operations.

"We expect drilling equipment to start operation in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021)," he said.

Hendi further mentioned some unsuccessful drilling operations done in the region, saying that "This time we will use new technologies and by more intensive studies we will take all the steps with more precision."

Elsewhere in his remarks the official



mentioned new research agreements signed between NIOC's Exploration Directorate and the country's knowledge-based companies and universities and noted that such agreements will lead to new technologies and knowledge in this industry.

Last week, (NIOC)'s Exploration Directorate 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.

Considering the challenges of exploring hydrocarbon resources in specific regions in the country, 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 U.S. 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.

Oil prices fall as trade war concerns hit demand outlook

Oil prices fell on Monday on renewed global economic growth concerns after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to escalate a trade war with China with more tariffs, which could limit fuel demand in the world's two biggest crude consumers.

Brent crude futures LCOc1 were down 71 cents, or 1.15%, to \$61.18 per barrel by 0840 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures CLc1 were also down 71 cents, or 1.28%, to \$54.95 a barrel.

"One man, one tweet. That's all it took for oil prices to suffer their steepest daily decline in several years," PVM Oil Associates analyst Stephen Brennock said of Trump.

Both crude benchmarks fell last week, with Brent down 2.5% and U.S. crude falling 1% after plummeting by more than 7% on Thursday after Trump's tweet to the lowest level in about seven weeks.

The "scene is set for a ramped trade war between both sides. The prospect of an escalating U.S.-China trade war will do no favors for the shaky global economic outlook."

Asian equity markets dropped to a six-month low on Monday

while gold prices climbed as investors sought safe-haven assets.

Trump last week said he would impose a 10% tariff on \$300 billion of Chinese imports starting on Sept. 1 and said he could raise duties further if China's President Xi Jinping failed to move more quickly towards a trade deal.

The announcement extends U.S. tariffs to nearly all imported Chinese products. China on Friday vowed to fight back against Trump's decision, a move that ended a month-long trade truce.

On Monday, China let the yuan tumble beyond the key 7-per-dollar level for the first time in more than a decade, in a sign Beijing may tolerate further currency weakness because of the trade dispute.

A lower yuan would raise the cost of dollar-denominated oil imports in China, the world's biggest crude oil importer.

Signs of rising oil exports from the United States also pressured prices on Monday. U.S. shipments surged by 260,000 barrels per day (bpd) in June to a monthly record of 3.16 million bpd, U.S. Census Bureau data showed on Friday.

The U.S. weekly oil rig count, an indicator of future production,



fell for a fifth week in a row as most independent producers cut spending even though majors were still pushing ahead with investments in new drilling.

Oil price correction triggers shale meltdown

By Nick Cunningham

It was a rough week for the U.S. shale industry.

A series of earnings reports came out in recent days, and while some drillers beat expectations, there were some huge misses as well.

Concho Resources, for instance, saw its share price tumble 22 percent when it disclosed several problems at once. Profits fell by 25 percent despite production increases. Concho conceded that it would slash spending and slow the pace of drilling in the second half of the year.

It also said that one of its projects where it tried to densely pack wells together, which it called "Dominator," the results were not as good as they had hoped. The project had 23 wells, but production disappointed. The "30 and 60 day production rates were consistent with our other projects in that area, but the performance has declined," Leach said. So, the company will abandon the densely packed well strategy and move forward with wider spacing. In the second quarter the company had 26 rigs in operation, but that has since fallen to 18. At the start of the year, the company had 33 active rigs.

■ Adjusting our drilling

"We made the decision to adjust our drilling and completion schedule in the second half of the year to slow down and not chase

incremental production at the expense of capital discipline," Concho's CEO Tim Leach told analysts on an earnings call. He said the company's aiming for a "free cash flow inflection in 2020." The company reported a net loss of \$792 million for the first six months of 2019. As Liam Denning put it in Bloomberg Opinion: "It's sobering to think that Concho, valued at more than \$23 billion in the spring of 2018 and having since absorbed the \$7.6 billion purchase of RSP Permian Inc., now sports a market cap of less than \$16 billion."

The reason these results are important is because they may not be one-off problems for individual companies, but are more likely indicative of the problems plaguing the whole sector.

"There is little doubt this is a big event for the sector and a brake of this nature will create lasting impact," Evercore analyst Stephen Richardson wrote in a note, referring to Concho's poor results.

"How companies still, after all these years we have wailed and gnashed our teeth, manage to over-promise and under-deliver, remains an infuriating mystery," Paul Sankey wrote in a note for Mizuho Securities USA LLC.

Whiting Petroleum had an even worse week. Its stock melted down on Thursday, falling by 38 percent after reporting a surprise quarterly loss that badly missed estimates.



The company announced that it would cut its workforce by a third.

According to the Wall Street Journal and Wood Mackenzie, a basket of 7 shale drillers posted a combined \$1.58 billion in negative cash flow in the first quarter, four times worse than the same period a year earlier.

■ New tariffs on China

While the results, in many cases, were bad, the declines in share prices were hugely amplified by the announcement of new tariffs on China, which caused a broad selloff not just in the energy sector, but for equities of all types. Here is a sampling of how the share prices of some oil companies fared on Thursday: But the poor quarterly performances were true before President Trump took to twitter. Even with oil down and stocks perhaps looking cheap, "it's hard to call it

a contrarian opportunity right now," Matt Maley, chief market strategist at Miller Tabak, told CNBC. "This group has really been dead money most of this year."

Investors are clearly souring on the sector. As Bloomberg notes, speculative positioning from traders fell to the lowest level since March 2013, a sign of "investor apathy" towards crude oil and energy stocks.

While shale E&Ps languish, the oil majors are not slowing down. Exxon said that its oil production rose by 7 percent, driven by the Permian. In fact, its production from the Permian rose 90 percent in the second quarter from a year earlier. Earnings dropped by 21 percent, however, and the company cited lower prices and poor downstream margins.

But the majors aggressive bet on U.S. shale is a sign of the times. Small and medium drillers are getting hammered and seeing their access to capital close off, which is forcing budget cutbacks and otherwise leading to steep selloffs in their share prices.

The majors, on the other hand, are only in the early stages of a multi-year bet on shale. They can stomach losses on individual shale projects for years, scaling up while they earn profits elsewhere.

So, despite the widespread financial losses for the shale sector, it's not clear that production is set to grind to a halt.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Taylor presses nuclear button, as energy wars enter dangerous new phase

By Giles Parkinson

Australia's energy minister Angus Taylor has campaigned against renewables since before he entered parliament in 2013, appearing at anti-wind events organized by an anonymous and unpleasant website, and vowing on many occasions to scrap the renewable energy target.

He has been powerless to stop the build out of wind and solar, although he has complained about it often enough. But now Taylor and the Coalition government have taken their war against wind and solar to its next inevitable phase: They've pressed the nuclear button.

Taylor revealed late Friday that he had asked the Environment and Energy Standing Committee to launch a new inquiry into nuclear energy, including its costs and issues of waste etc. They've got four months to produce a report.

Taylor insists that there is no intention to repeal the laws that outlaw nuclear energy in Australia. But that beggars the question. Why have the inquiry in the first place?

The answer is simple. As Taylor revealed in an interview on ABC's AM program, he simply doesn't accept that renewables can power the electricity grid.

■ The coal industry

A view that is loudly shared by many of his Coalition colleagues, the Murdoch media, and of course the coal industry.

The timing of the announcement is interesting. It comes just a couple of days after the end of the parliamentary sitting week (they won't be back again until September) and just as the country's far-right conservatives got ready to gather at the Australian Conservative Political Action Conference.

Tellingly, this is the first policy or initiative that Taylor has



announced since the shock re-election of the coalition government in May, and comes after a major push by the far right ideologues of this conservative government to reconsider the ban on nuclear.

And as we have noted before, the same Coalition MPs that have been pushing for nuclear are the very same Coalition MPs pushing for new coal generation, and the very same Coalition MPs who reject the science of climate change, or make a mockery of the urgings of young people that they should take it seriously.

This is no co-incidence. This is not about carbon emissions, and it is certainly not about cheap energy.

The common enemy of these people is wind and solar, and the shift from a centralized system based around "baseload" fossil fuel generators to a renewable system that is largely decentralized (and democratized), and based around renewables, storage and demand management.

■ At the forefront of regions

Australia is one of those regions – like Germany and California – that is at the forefront of this transition, and the fossil fuel industry view is that it cannot be allowed to succeed.

So it is no coincidence that the biggest industry supporter of nuclear is the coal lobby itself, in the guise of the Minerals Council of Australia, which is also pushing for new coal generators and urging the government to do as little as possible on climate.

The MCA is cosy with the Coalition – its former CEO and deputy CEOs are now key advisors in Prime Minister Scott Morrison's office, and its chair is the former Coalition minister Helen Coonan.

Its current CEO, Tania Contable, was appointed by the Coalition government to the board of the ABC, over-riding independent recommendations.

One of the noisiest opponents of renewable energy technologies is Trevor St Baker, pushing for new coal generators and whose Vales Point coal generator in NSW – currently in the queue to get federal government funding to remain open beyond its schedule closure date – is also the founder of a company SMR Nuclear that looking at new "modular" nuclear technologies that Taylor suggests could be a focus of this inquiry. Like St Baker, the likes of Constable argue that only nuclear is able to deliver 24/7 emissions free power.

They insist it is "cheap", but that is nonsense.

(Source: reneweconomy.com.au)

Energy networks back to normal operation in earthquake-hit region

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Head of Iranian Energy Ministry's

Crisis Management Office, Meisam Jafarzadeh, said water and electricity networks are back in normal operation after an earthquake measuring 5.2 on Richter scale shook Choram County in southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad Province on Monday.

"The urban and rural water supply network is unharmed and stable after the earthquake," IRNA quoted Jafarzadeh as saying.

"In the electricity network, however there were sporadic blackouts in the early hours, which is now completely resolved," he added.

The quake hit the area on 00:21 a.m. local time on Monday. It was 10 kilometers beneath the earth's surface. Rescue workers were soon dispatched to the affected area.

The closest cities to the earthquake were Choram, Doganbadan and Dehdasht in Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad Province.

Saudi Aramco cuts all oil pricing for September sales to Asia

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, lowered pricing for September sales of all crudes to Asia while raising prices to buyers in northwest Europe and the Mediterranean region.

As per Bloomberg, state-owned Saudi Aramco cut pricing for its flagship Arab Light crude to buyers in Asia by 75 cents, to a \$1.70 a barrel premium over the Oman-Dubai Middle Eastern benchmark, the company said on Sunday in an emailed statement. Traders and refiners that Bloomberg surveyed earlier had anticipated a premium of \$1.80 a barrel to the benchmark.

Saudi Arabia agreed in July to curb production for nine additional months alongside its OPEC+ partners. Even so, the kingdom has been able to export more to China than ever before, as increasing volumes to Asia have been offset by declining sales to the U.S., where buyers are awash with domestic supplies.

Pricing for other grades to Asia, Aramco's biggest regional market, declined to premiums ranging from \$3.05 a barrel for its Super Light grade to 65 cents for Heavy crude.

Aramco kept prices for all grades to U.S. buyers unchanged relative to the Argus Sour Crude Index, leaving Light at a premium of \$2.85 a barrel. For sales to northwestern Europe, the company raised pricing for Light crude by \$2.65 to a discount of 5 cents a barrel against benchmark Brent. Aramco increased prices for all grades to Mediterranean buyers, raising Light by \$2.70 to a premium of 40 cents over the benchmark.

LNG carrier market is driven by improvement in design of carriers

Due to increasing population and improved standard of living, demand for energy is growing globally. Trading of natural gas is expected to grow at speeding rates.

Gas reserves are unevenly distributed across the globe. On the other hand demand is expanding in every corner of the globe which makes transportation of natural gas a serious prerequisite.

According to themarketplan.com, with the cryogenic liquefactions LNG is created which reduces the volume of gas as compared to its original volume, making it viable to transport in a specialized LNG carrier. The most opportune way to carry natural gas is a pipeline which is subdivided into offshore and onshore pipelines where onshore is for medium to short distance and offshore for long distance. Other means of carrying LNG is through vessels.

The oldest LNG carrying technology Moss-Rosenberg containment system (commonly known as Moss) is still in use for new vessel construction.

The second type of large-scale LNG carrying technology is the membrane technology.

The segmentation of LNG carrier market is on the basis of the demand and supply of LNG. The main exporters of LNG are Africa, Qatar, Malaysia and Australia. The main importers are Japan, China and South Korea.

In North America, United States is expected to export shale gas owing to huge domestic production. In spite of Japan being concerned over environmental issues, pattern of increment in consumption of LNG in power sector can be seen in recent years.

Australia, the United States, and Russia are key countries that will lead world LNG trade growth over the next few years. China and India are likely to come forward as key sources of prospects for natural gas consumption growth and hence affect demand for LNG carriers.

■ Increasing natural gas demand

Increasing natural gas demand globally as various gas reserves are still unexplored. Natural gas is considered to be fuel of the 21st century; improvement in design of carriers is the key driver in the LNG carrier market. Restraints of LNG carrier market are infrastructure issues and Supplies from North America and Russia.

Due to geopolitical issues LNG supplies to Asia Pacific are endangered as Russia and North America are the key suppliers.

China is capable enough to diversify its natural gas supply from other countries and not become excessively dependent on countries that are politically sensitive. Natural gas prices vary radically between budding buyers and sellers of LNG.

LNG Carrier Demand is subjected to Natural gas quantity and prices transported by pipelines.

Value of LNG carrier market is expected to increase exponentially in coming years resulting in an immense opportunity.

LNG carrier market is expected to experience the growth in coming years reaching record creation of vessel output and capital expenditure. With the expansion of both LNG export and import infrastructure and very strong supply-demand dynamics of natural gas market, more LNG carriers are required.

Natural gas discoveries in North America are leading to LNG export terminal expansion on the continent. In addition to such terminals planned in Australia, will create more supply routes that need to be serviced by LNG vessels. Underpinning all this investment in LNG carriers is the significant arbitrage opportunity that exists between supply and demand markets. As the LNG spot market expands, a larger and more flexible LNG carrier fleet will be required.

There is also a justifiable interest in smaller LNG carriers as the economics of transporting LNG to isolated areas for power creation or for use as a transportation fuel improves.

World More Vulnerable to U.S.-Russia Nuclear War after INF Death: UK Pundit

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A political analyst based in London deplored Washington’s explanation for leaving the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Moscow as “a falsehood” and said the death of the treaty has made the world “more vulnerable” to a nuclear war between U.S. and Russia.

“With the death of the INF Treaty, the world has become all the more vulnerable to a nuclear exchange between America and Russia,” Marcus Papadopoulos said in an interview with Tasnim.



“And it is the U.S.’ insatiable lust for ever greater influence and power on the international stage that is responsible for having now increased the chances of a global thermonuclear war,” he added.

Papadopoulos is a political expert and the publisher and editor of Politics First, a non-partisan publication for the UK Parliament. He earned his MA in Modern History and his Ph.D. in Russian history from Royal Holloway, University of London.

His comments and interviews have appeared in various news outlets, including RT, Al Jazeera, Rossiya 24, TASS and RIA Novosti.

The following is the full text of the interview:

■ The US on Friday formally withdrew from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia. Washington said last year it would withdraw from the INF, accusing Russia of failing to comply with it.

Moscow denies it has violated the treaty and says the Trump administration is pulling out because it wants to pursue a new arms race.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also expressed concerns over the expiration of the INF, saying, “The world will lose an invaluable brake on nuclear war”. “This will likely heighten, not reduce, the threat posed by ballistic missiles,” he said. What is your assessment of the developments? What do you think about the US claims?

A: The American Government’s explanation for withdrawing itself from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty is a falsehood. Because it was during the tenure of George W. Bush that the INF Treaty was severely weakened and, in effect, scuttled by the US.

First, Washington withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, with Russia, in 2002.

And second, the American withdrawal from the ABM Treaty paved the way for the Americans to proceed in the construction of a missile defense system in Eastern Europe, specifically in Poland and in Romania, as part of the US’ Missile Defense Agency, and which is now in operation.

Those two decisions by America delivered a fatal blow to the INF Treaty. So the question is why did the Americans kill the INF Treaty, which had constituted a cornerstone in arms control for 32 years? Well, the reason is that Washington, conscious and anxious in the 1990s that Russia could one day resurrect its superpower status, decided to press ahead with creating and installing a missile defense shield on the western borders of the Russian Federation, in a bid to neutralize the Russian strategic nuclear deterrent and thereby derail any attempt by the Kremlin to restore its Soviet-era influence and power.

However, what prevented the Americans from carrying out their objective was the INF Treaty hence this treaty had to be torpedoed by the US, which was achieved by Washington’s withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and the American construction of a missile defense system in Eastern Europe.

■ The US president has said he wants a new nuclear pact to be signed by both Russia and China.

Do you think that countries like China would join the nuclear treaty that Trump is seeking to reach?

A: Donald Trump’s pledge is merely an attempt to deflect attention away from the sheer magnitude of America’s decision to withdraw from, and thereby kill, the INF Treaty.

As a result of the death of the INF Treaty, and how America has installed a missile defense system in Eastern Europe and also in the Far East, in South Korea, which is not only aimed at, again, neutralizing the Russian strategic nuclear deterrent but also China’s nuclear arsenal, neither Moscow nor Beijing will be hoodwinked by Trump’s insincere offer of concluding a new nuclear pact with them.

For the Russian Federation, which is the predominant nuclear power in the world, the quest will be to ensure that the American missile defense system in Poland and in Romania, which could also be made into an offensive system, can never upset the existing nuclear parity between itself and America because, otherwise, Russia would be at the mercy of a U.S. which is determined to subjugate the Russian lands.

■ With the expiration of the treaty, do you not think that the world order would be disrupted? In that case, who would be to blame?

A: With the death of the INF Treaty, the world has become all the more vulnerable to a nuclear exchange between America and Russia.

The potential for a nuclear arms race is, consequently, high, though one could argue that such a race is already underway between Washington and Moscow, although nowhere near to the scale of the arms race as seen during the Cold War.

And it is the US’ insatiable lust for ever greater influence and power on the international stage that is responsible for having now increased the chances of a global thermonuclear war.

Zarif Sanctioned after turning down Trump’s invitation: Report

IFP—U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to blacklist Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has come after the latter rejected the former’s invitation for a meeting in the Oval Office in Washington DC, a media report says.

Zarif has received an unexpected invitation to meet President Donald Trump in the Oval Office last month during his visit to New York, a report by the New Yorker said.

The American magazine has quoted US and Iranian sources and a well-informed diplomat as saying that the diplomatic overture was made by Senator Rand Paul, the Kentucky Republican, during a meeting with Zarif in New York on July 15th.

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, the report said.

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 14th, the day before leaving for New York, Paul had a discussion about Iran with the President, while playing a round at the Trump golf course in Sterling, Virginia.

On July 15th, Paul and his senior adviser, Doug Stafford, met Zarif at the elegant residence of Iran’s UN ambassador, on Fifth Avenue, a block from the Metropolitan Museum.

In his decades as a diplomat, Zarif, who studied under Condoleezza Rice’s PhD adviser, at the University of Denver, has built a modest rolodex with the private numbers of members of the House and Senate, the report claimed.

“I always see people from Congress,” Zarif told the New Yorker and a small group of journalists later that week, without naming names. But this was his 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. Paul’s mission was to break through the messy layers of conflict and launch a direct diplomatic channel, at the highest level. The overture was a miniature version of Trump’s tactic in circumventing traditional diplomacy by dealing directly with the North Korean leadership.

During an hour-long conversation, Zarif offered Paul ideas about how to end the nuclear impasse and address Trump’s concerns. He later outlined some of them to a group of journalists in the US and subsequently in more detail to New Yorker.

“As a diplomat, I have to always think about alternatives,” he told New Yorker. Among them was the idea that the Iranian Parliament could codify, in law, a fatwa issued by

Iran’s Leader, originally in 2003 and again in 2010, that forbids the production or use of nuclear weapons.

“We consider the use of such weapons as haraam [forbidden] and believe that it is everyone’s duty to make efforts to secure humanity against this great disaster,” Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said, in 2010.

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

Death of a nuclear arms treaty

TEHRAN (FNA)—It’s a grim tale of all-out regret, which echoes strangely and deeply in the Trump era. On August 2, more than 31 years of history came to a swift end when the United States officially withdrew from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Signed in 1987, the INF Treaty prohibited the US and Russia from fielding ground-launched cruise missiles that could fly between 310 and 3,400 miles. The agreement was supposed to improve bilateral relations toward the end of the Cold War too. However, the two nations still built up cruise missiles and went their separate ways. Quite the consequence.

This is not about who violated the landmark arms control treaty’s terms or who didn’t come back into compliance, hence putting the last nails in the coffin of INF Treaty. This is about a hellish fight down the line, and another step backwards for nuclear bombs going off in a new arms race, which could doom humanity on a planetary scale.

Thanks to the Trump administration’s decision to withdraw, there are now no on-site inspections: baseline, elimination, close-out, short notice, and perimeter portal monitoring. Under such a horrifying scenario, the world community has a herculean task to make sure the U.S. and Russia still fulfill their nuclear disarmament duties. If only.

Let’s get this straight: Arms control reduces the risk of nuclear war by limiting dangerous deployments and by creating channels of communication and understanding. President Donald Trump and his National Security Advisor John Bolton appear to have forgotten, or never learned, this Cold War era lesson. Instead, they are both fixated on exploiting not just fears and phantasms from abroad but fears and phantasms about “the other” at home.

At some deep level, the INF Treaty further prohibited the two countries from deploying both nuclear and conventional missiles. The main reason cited for US withdrawal is that Russia tested and deployed ground-launched cruise missiles the treaty prohibits. Russia denies that the missiles violated the treaty and has made its own accusations, foremost that US ballistic missile defense launchers installed in Eastern Europe could be used to house treaty-prohibited cruise missiles.

The treaty is still important for global stability. It remains

a key element of the arms control framework limiting nuclear weapons and arms racing. Often forward deployed and intermingled with other forces, the missiles the treaty prohibits are among the weapons most likely to lead to miscalculation or misadventure in a crisis. This is no longer simply being predicted. After US withdrawal, we are distinctly living it.

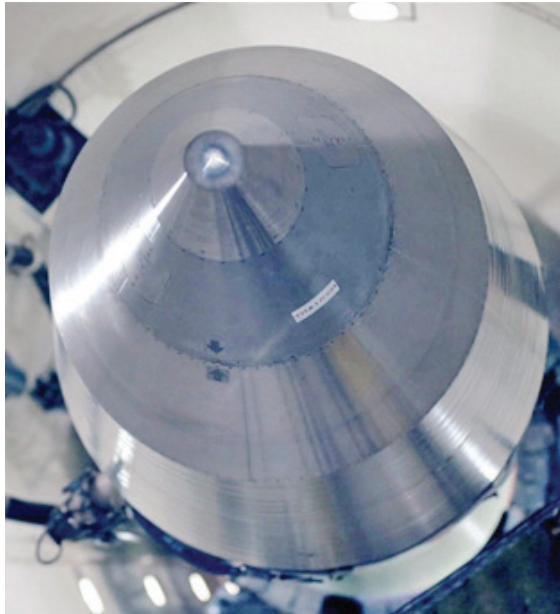
The treaty highlights the ethical imperative to achieve a nuclear weapons free world as well. It is designed to stimulate, support, and advance humanity’s quest for the security of a nuclear free world. With tensions growing among the two nuclear-armed countries in potential flashpoints like Ukraine, it is long past time for the nuclear-armed states to negotiate with each other. The best course would be to use the dispute over the INF Treaty as a moment to renew the negotiating frameworks and institutions and avoid catastrophe.

The problem is that Trump has expressed general hostility toward any international obligation that might limit US use of force or military capabilities. He sees negotiations as a zero-sum game to be won or lost. He doesn’t seem capable of imagining international agreements that benefit all parties and make the world a safer place.

Now, to put this in the context of the moment: The United Nations and the global anti-nuclear movement must act and leave space for new diplomacy. There is a legitimate question as to whether it is legal under international law for Washington to withdraw from the UN-ratified treaty. Despite Trump’s dangerous move, the US and Russia can still renegotiate agreements like the INF Treaty to address the riskiest elements of their nuclear confrontation. The time to start building a new climate for negotiations is now.

The US and Russia must fulfil their disarmament duties by either re-joining the INF Treaty and addressing its limitations of verification and other technical issues, or move forward in the process of negotiating a new nuclear weapons convention. Withdrawal, sitting on their hands, or offering no better way forward is inadequate and unacceptable.

As long as Washington, which has put aside 1 trillion US dollars to modernize and expand its nuclear-weapon facilities and missile silos, refuses to adopt the treaty, there is no other way to outlaw all nuclear weapon-related activities, set out measures for disarmament, address victim assistance and



environmental remediation, and acknowledge the disproportionate impact these weapons could have on humanity.

At their best, nuclear weapons don’t provide security. It is in the interests of all nuclear-armed states to reduce and eliminate the perceived value of their nuclear weapons, decrease economic incentives for nuclear-weapon production, and reject nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines.

The United Nations and the global anti-nuclear movement should also call on NATO member states to discuss changing their doctrine away from reliance on nuclear weapons and toward implementing their repeated commitments to nuclear disarmament. The existing security agreements for NATO and other US allies do not prevent these states from joining the nuclear ban. The obstacles are not legal, they are consciously and programmatically political.

Paul Pillar: UAE recognized failure of military intervention in Yemen

TEHRAN (FNA)—Paul R. Pillar, a retired CIA officer, says the UAE has come to recognize that its military cooperation with the Saudis in war on Yemen has failed to make any achievement.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, Pillar, who is now a nonresident senior fellow at Georgetown University’s Center for Security Studies, said, “There was no sign that the Houthis were being militarily defeated.”

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ Why has the UAE decided to retreat from Yemen? Does this withdrawal mean the Emirates defeat and failure?

A: Quite simply, the UAE recognized that the military intervention in Yemen was not accomplishing anything. There was no sign that the Houthis were being militarily defeated. The wars costs were adding up without comparable results. The Emiratis also no doubt took notice of how the Saudi-led war in Yemen

was coming under increasing criticism in the United States. Insofar as Iran, as a backer of the Houthis, is as another factor in the war, the UAE move probably also reflects a judgment that constantly increasing tension with Iran is in no one’s interests.

■ Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have started developing differences over Yemen. What do you think is their most important difference?

A: There are several differences in how the two allies were conducting the war and relating to factions inside Yemen. The Saudis were operating mostly in the air, while the Emiratis had more of a presence on the ground. The UAE has been more closely allied with Southern secessionist elements than the Saudis ever were. But probably the most important difference is that the war is closely identified with Saudi leader Mohammed bin Salman as his personal project, in a way that it



never was identified with leaders of the UAE.

■ Does the UAE retreat from Yemen mean neglecting Saudi Arabia and its agenda?

A: There will still be an alliance between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Mohammed bin Salman has close relations with UAE leader Mohammed bin Zayed. Expect to see some continuing differences in policy emphasis, however, including in dealings with Iran. Saudi Arabia will be more of an anti-Iranian hardliner than the UAE.

■ Why does Saudi Arabia insist on continuing the war on Yemen despite its failure in this war of attrition?

A: Mohammed bin Salman cannot just pull out of Yemen as the UAE is doing without suffering a considerable loss of face, due to how much he is personally identified with the war. He will look more than before, however, for some sort of negotiated settlement that would allow Saudi Arabia to get out.

Failure in Yemen to be ‘death sentence’ of Saudi monarchy: Prof. Cavell

1 → A: Currently, there are 193-member states of the United Nations, an International Governmental Organization (IGO) set up in 1945 to prevent another world war from killing millions of people as WWII did. While these 193 members are technically sovereign states, in truth, save for a handful of nations, most members are subservient to other, larger, more powerful states. The UN is a three-tiered organization with the 15-member Security Council able to set policy for the entire organization with the five permanent members of this Council—the United States, China, Russian Federation, France, and the United Kingdom—having a veto on all procedural issues, with ten non-permanent members who serve on the Council for two-year terms (five elected each year), with these ten non-permanent members elected by the third-tiered General Assembly of nations that comprise the majority of the UN. Given this organizational structure, and given the current differences between the five permanent members and their veto power, it has been near impossible for this international body to agree on stopping the reckless and deadly Saudi-UAE war on the people of Yemen.

The truth-seeking citizen will thus inquire why these five permanent members cannot agree to stop this devastating war on the people of Yemen, and the answer lies in the disparate economic interests of the various states. Specifically, the western states, led by the United States, perceive that their national security interests, require that they have secure and reliable access to energy resources to fuel their industries, and they believe that by politically controlling the energy resources of Iraq and Iran (the two nations of the Middle East with the largest stores of such reserves) will satisfy their national security objectives. Lacking such political control, then the US and its allies wish to deny the viability of these and other large-energy reserve countries—like Venezuela—from being able to function properly.

Given this perspective, it matters not to current US President Donald J. Trump, a quintessential representative of the capitalist economic system and default leader of the western coalition of states, whether the countries leading this assault on the Yemeni people, namely Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are engaged in a systematic genocide against the Yemeni people, whether their attacks exhibit any sort of proportionality or strategic logic, whether supporting such odious unelected and undemocratic regimes serves long-term US interests, or even whether US aiding and abetting this calamitous war is in violation of international law, given that the US, the UK, and France—all US allies on the UN Security Council—can prevent



the UN from stopping this war. However, what does matter to the US president is whether and how this conflict being waged by its two close allies in the Middle East, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and which is urged on and assisted by Israel, the US's closest ally in the Middle East, can benefit the United States economy. President Trump has concluded that the US will benefit if it is able to sell as many weapons and military equipment as possible to these warring parties and thus profit US military industries, which, in turn, will fatten the campaign coffers of President Trump and his Republican Party members of Congress.

In March of 2018, Trump effusively welcomed the heir-apparent to the Saudi throne and the architect of the Saudi-UAE-led war on Yemen, Mohammed bin Salman (MbS), on his first visit to the White House and promised to push through Congress arms deals worth billions of dollars in investment and additional jobs to the United States. As Trump said at the time, “Saudi Arabia has been a very great friend and a big purchaser of equipment and lots of other things.”

Thus, morality for Trump consists in whether US industries are profitable despite resulting in unparalleled death and destruction. Such a moral compass reflects a pole shift in direct contradiction to the morality espoused by either the Koran, the Bible, the Torah, or any other religious text or philosophical code. It is the morality of capitalism, an economic system which currently dominates much of the world and is centrally directed from the United States.

On July 28, 2019, a gunman killed three non-white people attending an annual festival in Gilroy, California. Earlier in the day, he posted on his Instagram account references to a fascist white supremacist

manifesto from the nineteenth century which challenges the basis of all Abrahamic religions that call on us all to serve each other, to lift up the weak, the impoverished, the neglected and instead argues for the rights of the strong, the mighty, the wealthy, the powerful. Spurred on by the cultural degeneration of President Trump, what now reigns as morality for US leaders is bullying, arrogance, bragging, excessive pride, and denigration of all those who are not white, wealthy, male, and powerful.

Given this diametrically opposed system of values, it is impossible to for the interested states to mutually recognize what the problem is, much less how to resolve the problem.

■ What were the main aims of Saudi Arabia in the Yemen war? And are these aims achieved up to now?

A: The Yemeni people rose up in January of 2015 after decades of existing under foreign rulers installed by their neighbor Saudi Arabia and forced then-President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi to resign. When Saudi Crown Prince MbS decided to intervene into Yemen in March of 2015 in an attempt to restore their puppet, Hadi fled the country to the Saudi city of Riyadh, as the Saudi bombs rained down upon the Yemeni revolutionaries forcing them to organize against the imperial intervention that has killed over 70,000 people in the last four years. Seeking to reassert their hegemony over the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia denies the Yemeni people have any legitimate grievances and instead wants the outside world to believe that the Yemeni people are activated and instigated by the country of Iran from across the Persian Gulf. The United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and other western powers have traditionally relied upon Saudi Arabia as a guarantor of reliable oil and natural gas for western industries and

have utilized the Saudi monarchy as a cash machine to bail out their economies from time to time, to launder their ill-gotten gains, and to police the Middle East to serve western hegemonic interests. With thousands dead, Yemen's infrastructure destroyed, financial costs to the Saudis now well over \$100 billion, with its international reputation in tatters even amongst its allies, with MbS's leadership credibility a running joke, with the Yemeni people stronger and more united than ever, Saudi Arabia is bogged down in a quagmire which it will be difficult to extricate itself from but instead will eventually call into question the continued existence of the Kingdom itself.

■ Reports indicate that the UAE is planning to withdraw forces from Yemen in several stages. Do you think this withdrawal is a real one or just a tactical strategy? Why has the UAE made this decision, and what are the consequences of such a move on the future of Yemen?

A: The United Arab Emirates is very worried that its participation in the Saudi invasion of Yemen will open itself up as a target of Yemeni attacks, just as Saudi Arabia is now being regularly attacked by Yemeni fighters, Yemeni missiles, and Yemeni drones. But, as a junior partner in the Saudi-led axis war against the Yemeni people, it is, in reducing its direct troop involvement in the war, following orders from the imperial directors of this organized carnage situated in Washington and London who are orchestrating the unfolding of this imperial drama. Thus, it appears, at present, to be solely a tactical disengagement from direct fighting in Yemen.

■ There are also other reports outlining that Saudi Arabia may have plans to wrap up the Yemen war by the end of 2019. Since Mohammad bin Salman strongly supported aggressive policies of Saudi Arabia, such as in Yemen, do you think that a Saudi defeat in Yemen will change the political fate of bin Salman and Saudi Arabia?

A: Failure on the part of Saudi Arabia to reassert its hegemonic control over Yemen will be a death sentence on the continuation of the Saudi monarchy. A Yemeni victory in their war of independence from Saudi Arabia will provide hope and inspiration for the captive population of Saudi Arabia to rise up an install a legitimate peoples' government. Losing its reliable source of energy and financial launderer in the Middle East is why the western hegemony is so intent on excusing the Kingdom of its crimes from the death and dismemberment of journalist Jamal Khashoggi to the financing of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

Trump, Zarif and us Iranians

1 → Mr. President, Iran has never initiated any war. Iran has never seized others' resources, belongings, means, lives, and existence to gain wealth and benefit of its own. Iran, only and of course, vigorously has and will defend its belonging, resources, life, and identity. Iran has done that throughout its four thousand years of history and will do it again if it has to. Rais Ali and his team did it in 1915. People in my generation did it in 1980-88. When the whole world stood behind Saddam Husain and helped him throughout the eight years of war, Iranians stood firmly and defended their home.



Under the world's watch, Saddam Husain dropped bombs and used chemical weapons on civilians. In the end, he was not able to seize even an inch of our homeland. Iranians became one body and stood and defended their home and their families.

To this day, Iranian, despite their differences, they are all proud of the eight years defending their home. Not sure if you agree, but losing so many precious lives is a significant loss and the nation still mourns for the precious lives lost during those eight years. However, we stood firm in defending our home and family. The country is proud and satisfied with the result, Iran is still Iran without losing an inch of its terrain.

Mr. President, that is the difference in Iran's view of loss and win in a war. In our lexicon, the one who starts a war is the only loser. The one who plans to steal happiness, life, and the being of others' is the real loser.

War is not our business, but negotiation and diplomacy are. War is not our purpose. Peace is our mission. Peace is our philosophy in life, and you are right, diplomacy is our art. Iran has proved its mastery in the art of diplomacy.

Diplomacy and winning, forbearance and contentment are inclinations that cannot be achieved by billions of dollars of weapons. The United States allies in the region; Bin-Salman and Bibi Natanhayou both can testify to that. Their loss to Iran with billions of dollars in arms sales are the testimony to that.

Just be aware Mr. President, your friends the B team, desperately are pushing you into the same dilemma they have been dealing with in the past decades. Finally, the only conclusion they got to was tiding the hands of the master of diplomacy Mohammad Javad Zarif. Interestingly, they must have learned their lesson by now that they might be able to knot the hands of chess players, but they cannot control their mind and moves. A chess player with tiding hands still can move the solders and the horses. And finally, last but not least, watch out not to playing checkers with chess-players.

Iran's strength lies in continued patience

1 → Also, the world is being fed truckloads of propaganda by the Trump gang about China and the Federal Reserve as the scapegoats for systemic economic problems made worse by the policies Trump pushed like financial heroin since taking office, but which originated during Barack Obama's tenure in the White House.

Indeed, U.S. hostility towards Iran, aside from the ever-present, crude and greedy Zionist demands and the Saudi fear of competition in West Asia, is sparked by what appears to be a tide of growing solidarity between Asian countries, led by China, to create a world of secured and growing trade ties that, because of U.S. intransigence and paranoia, threatens to exclude the U.S. Iran has become one of the key countries in this tidal movement given its location and size and its wealth of resources both human and natural. Moreover, the UNDP has designated Iran far ahead of most other countries as “very high” on human development. Anyone with a scintilla of knowledge about Iran loves its cinema, its poetry and its deep culture -- one honed over thousands of years -- and even its food. And there is no basis for the hostility except: solidarity with other countries battered by Western imperialism, Iran's support of Syria under attack by Western funded terrorists and mercenaries, and Iran's moral support of Palestinians living under a cruel apartheid system that makes South Africa's apartheid system before Nelson Mandela was freed and rocketed from jail to the Presidency look like something far milder but still reprehensible.

Iran has been threatened by the U.S. and its “allies” in the Middle East with something at least a destructive as what the Mongols meted out to West Asia in the 13th century, and it is stunningly bad as policy. But slowly and surely, counter moves are developing, and most recently one move involves deeper ties and potential military cooperation between Russia and Iran.

The Trump Administration witnesses this expansion of cooperation between Russia and Iran along with other developments across Asia and seems to be inadvertently pushing the U.S. into the terminal phase of its unsustainable “empire”, and this would only be hastened by any military attack on Iran. Quite aside from the dangerous threats of climate change, for example, it has even been suggested humanity itself may not long survive if the U.S. and its “allies” start yet another war in the Middle East.

Iran, meanwhile, has been scaling back its commitments inherent in the more or less defunct and disrespected JCPOA, which makes sense. Making no sense at all is Trump's sanctioning of Foreign Minister Javad Zarif because, some have opined, he “intimidated” with his deftness and smarts the bully Mike Pompeo, who has become a laughing stock. If anything, this sanction tells you a lot about the fragility of the U.S. government under Trump and minions. This fragility will be increasingly apparent, too, when the U.S. economy and markets unravel in the next year or two.

Stephen Lendman: U.S. Untrustworthiness Proved by Trump's pullout from JCPOA

TEHRAN (FNA) — US columnist Stephen Lendman says Trump's abrogation of the nuclear deal with Iran, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018 was further proof that the US can never be trusted.

“Dark forces in Washington want Iran transformed into a US vassal state, restoring fascist tyranny eliminated by the 1979 revolution,” Lendman told FNA in an exclusive interview.

Stephen Lendman was born in 1934 in Boston, MA. In 1956, he received a BA from Harvard University. Two years of US Army service followed, then an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1960. After working seven years as a marketing research analyst, he joined the Lendman Group family business in 1967. He remained there until retiring at year end 1999. Writing on major world and national issues began in summer 2005. In early 2007, radio hosting followed. Lendman now hosts the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network three times weekly. Lendman is a 2008 Project Censored winner and 2011 Mexican Journalists Club international journalism award recipient. Lendman lives in Chicago. His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

What follows is FNA's interview with author and writer Stephen Lendman.

■ The United States recently imposed new sanctions against senior Iranian officials. What is the purpose of these sanctions?

A: The Trump regime is waging war on Iran by other means, illegal sanctions and malicious propaganda are its main tactics.

The aim of its hardliners is to make Iran's economy scream and immiserate its people, believing these tactics can topple its legitimate government that the US wants replaced with a pro-Western puppet rule it controls.

Key for US hardliners is eliminating Israel's main regional rival and gaining control over Iran's vast oil and gas reserves, along with its other resources. A major US geopolitical aim is gaining control over world oil and gas supplies to be able to control other nations globally if this objective is achieved. It's a futile aim, never achieved before, and highly unlikely to be achieved ahead.

Sanctions were also fail to achieve their objectives. They haven't worked against Cuba for nearly 60 years, Iran for 40 years, nor against other countries targeted. Washington's agenda makes more enemies than friends. Most nations support multi-world polarity.

They oppose Washington's destructive imperial unipolar agenda.

Trump regime tactics against Iran risk things turning hot by accident or design. White House hawks want war on Iran, manipulating Trump to go along.

He's a geopolitical know-nothing. He showed profound ignorance of the fallout from wars, telling Fox News on Wednesday:

If his regime wages war on Iran, it “would not last very long” and won't involve invading the country, adding:

“We're in a very strong position...(We're (not) going to send a million soldiers. I'm just saying if something would happen, it wouldn't last very long.”

He also tweeted: “Any attack by Iran on anything American will be met with great and overwhelming force. In some areas, overwhelming will mean obliteration.”

The Islamic Republic never preemptively attacked another country — what the US and its imperial partners do repeatedly. Will Iran be next? The risk is high because Trump's sanctions war hasn't worked and won't likely succeed ahead.

■ It seems that following the shooting down of the American surveillance drone, Trump has resorted to placing sanctions on senior Iranian officials in a reciprocal move to soothe his pain. What do you think?

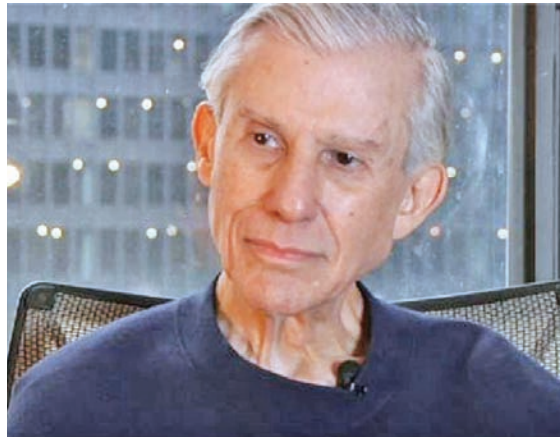
A: Russia confirmed Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif's information that the US spy plane was downed in Iranian airspace — ignoring multiple warnings before the IIRG acted in self-defense against the hostile intruder. Imposing further sanctions on high-ranking Iranian officials was symbolic alone because there's virtually nothing more to be sanctioned. It was an offensive action drawing a sharp Iranian rebuke followed by an expected Trump Twitter reaction.

■ US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has recently offered unconditional talks with Iran in an apparent retreat from his earlier policy that required a dozen prerequisites from Iran before any kind of talks could kick start. What is the reason behind this change of heart?

A: The US doesn't negotiate. It demands, in return for empty promises to be broken, why talks with its officials would accomplish nothing.

■ The United States is speaking of negotiations and intensifies sanctions simultaneously. How can this paradoxical attitude be explained?

A: Years of talks led to the establishment of the JCPOA, an international agreement adopted by the Security Council making it binding international law. Trump's pullout in May



2018 was further proof that the US can never be trusted. Dark forces in Washington want Iran transformed into a US vassal state, restoring the fascist tyranny eliminated by the 1979 revolution.

Trump and hardliners surrounding him are militantly hostile toward Iran. Claiming he wishes to negotiate with its officials is belied by his propaganda and sanctions war, along with Pompeo and Bolton seeking coalition partners for war on the country.

■ Although Trump withdrew the United States from the Iran nuclear deal last year, the suspension of some of Iran's nuclear commitments has caused his discontent. How can this discontent be explained?

A: The world community opposes Trump's abandonment of the JCPOA — except for Israel, the Saudis, UAE, and a few small Pacific islands controlled by the US.

European countries support the nuclear deal rhetorically, but did little to observe its principles, showing they're unreliable partners, siding with the US on most issues — though opposing war on Iran; Britain is a possible exception, of course. War on the Islamic Republic would make the region boil over more than already. When the US goes to war or plans one, it seeks coalition partners of the willing and public support, establishment media backing usually automatic. If Pompeo and Bolton fall way short of enlisting their goal of 20 coalition partners for war on Iran, Trump will be hard-pressed to go this far.

heir failure is the best chance to avoid it, but I'm greatly concerned about how things are moving in the wrong direction. What's unthinkable is possible because of US rage to dominate other countries, especially resource rich ones.

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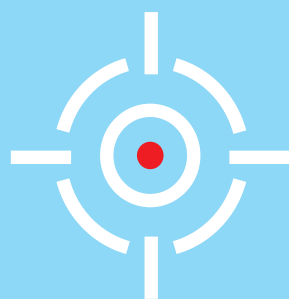
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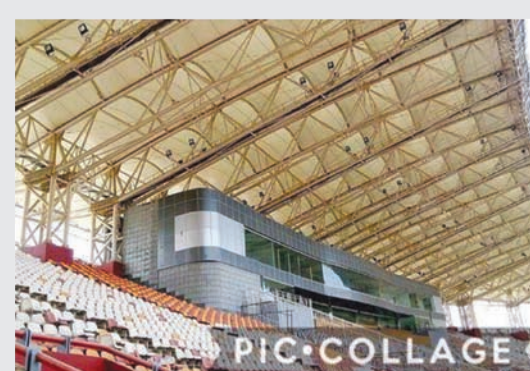
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NASA scientists visit NT site which could eventually blast rockets to the Moon

NASA scientists famous for scouring the red planet on rovers have travelled to the red dirt of remote Northern Territory to an area where rockets are expected to be launched within the next year.

Todd Barber and Tom Nolan, both employed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California, were this week taken to land surrounding the now-named Gulkula Launch Site, outside of Nhulunbuy, in north-east Arnhem Land.

"When I first saw the land here and I saw the color, I said, 'this is Mars,'" Mr. Nolan said. "We have fake Mars at JPL to do things, and this is exactly what it looks like ... the color and the texture. We're here."

Earlier this year it was announced that NASA — the U.S. aeronautical agency responsible for putting man on the Moon — would be shooting at least three suborbital rockets from the site in 2020.

Mr. Nolan said the site's remoteness was a distinct advantage.

"We need remoteness. We can't launch out of Los Angeles — it's not going to work," he said.

"So having the remote area is the beginning ... being out in the middle of nowhere



is a great advantage. It's unpopulated. It's a great opportunity."

The launch zone sits in a bushy, isolated 65-hectare patch of Yolngu-owned land, not far from the site of the annual Garma Festival.

It has been sub-leased to space venture Equatorial Launch Australia (ELA) by the Gumatj clan, which will then be loaned as a sub-orbital rocket launch site to aeronautical organizations including NASA.

"When I heard that NASA made a contract with ELA I just jumped up and down ... what an opportunity for NASA, what an opportunity for the whole area here up in Northern Territory," Mr. Nolan said.

"NASA will have more places to launch, but it's not just about NASA, we need the whole international partners, all of industry to come and use this place for more and more and more launches."

Mr. Barber said he believed the space center "could really fuel the local economy". "From what I've seen today it just looks like an excellent opportunity for future STEM [science, technology, engineering and maths] careers," Mr. Barber said.

"If this space port is built here, they're going to need so many kinds of jobs."

No infrastructure has yet been built on the site, as the companies await development proposals to be processed, but Gumatj chief executive Klaus Helms said he wanted to get started in 2019.

"We hope that within this year I'd like to be able to put the roads in and start a clearing, if all the applications come through," Mr. Helms said.

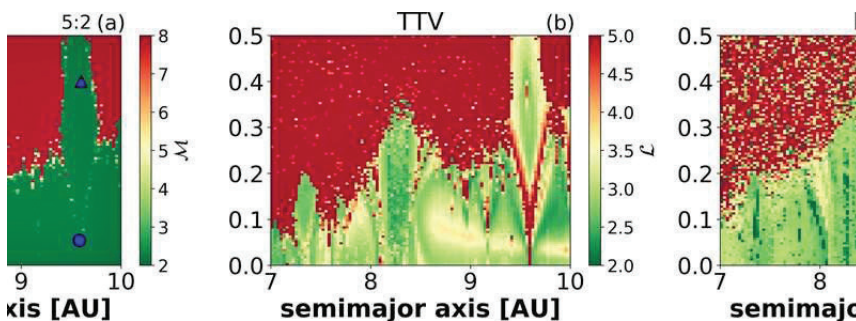
(Source: ABC.Net)

At the edge of chaos: New method for exoplanet stability analysis

Exoplanets revolving around distant stars are coming quickly into focus with advanced technology like the Kepler space telescope. Gaining a full understanding of those systems is difficult, because the initial positions and velocities of the exoplanets are unknown. Determining whether the system dynamics are quasi-periodic or chaotic is cumbersome, expensive and computationally demanding.

In this week's Chaos, from AIP Publishing, Tamás Kovács delivers an alternative method for stability analysis of exoplanetary bodies using only the observed time series data to deduce dynamical measurements and quantify the unpredictability of exoplanet systems.

"If we don't know the governing equations of the motion of a system, and we only have the time series -- what we measure with the telescope -- then we want to transform that time series into a complex network. In



this case, it is called a recurrence network," Kovács said. "This network holds all of the dynamical features of the underlying system we want to analyze."

The paper draws on the work of physicist Floris Takens, who proposed in 1981 that the dynamics of a system could be reconstructed using a series of observations about the state of the system. With Takens' embedding

theorem as a starting point, Kovács uses time delay embedding to reconstruct a high-dimensional trajectory and then identify recurrence points, where bodies in the phase space are close to each other.

"Those special points will be the vertices and the edges of the complex network," Kovács said. "Once you have the network, you can reprogram this network to be

able to apply measures like transitivity, average path length or others unique to that network."

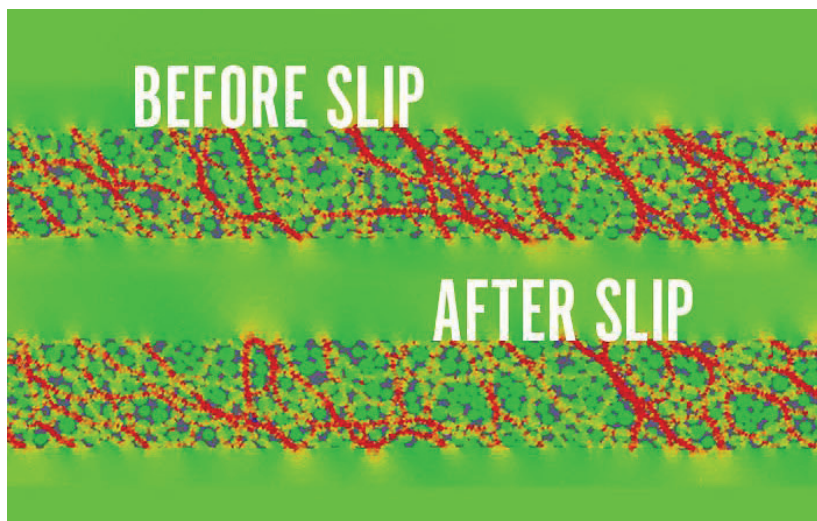
Kovács tests the reliability of the method using a known system as a model, the three-body system of Saturn, Jupiter and the sun, and then applies it to the Kepler 36b and 36c system. His Kepler system results agree with what is known.

"Earlier studies pointed out that Kepler 36b and 36c is a very special system, because from the direct simulation and the numerical integrations, we see the system is at the edge of the chaos," Kovács said. "Sometimes, it shows regular dynamics, and at other times, it seems to be chaotic."

The author plans to next apply his methods to systems with more than three bodies, testing its scalability and exploring its ability to handle longer time series and sharper datasets.

(Source: Science Daily)

Mathematical model identifies acoustic signal preceding seismic shake



Researchers have identified a unique acoustic signature that may precede seismic ruptures.

In the lab, scientists deployed an earthquake machine to produce seismic waves. Researchers used numerical simulations to analyze the seismic signatures produced by the synthetic ruptures.

Their analysis -- detailed this week in the journal Physical Review Letters -- revealed a unique acoustic signal preceding the seismic rupture.

"Previous machine-learning studies found that the acoustic signals detected from an earthquake fault can be used to predict when the next earthquake will occur," Ke Gao, a computational geophysicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, said in a news release. "This new modeling work shows us that the collapse of stress chains inside the earthquake gouge emits that signal in the lab, pointing to mechanisms that may also be important in Earth."

Stress chains are formed by a bridge of molecules linking each side of the fault block. Stress can be transported from one side of the block to the other via the molecular bridge.

According to the new research, analysis of the acoustic signal can offer scientists a status update on the stress present in the fault. Previous studies have identified the same kind of acoustic signals within real fault systems.

By analyzing the signals in the lab,

scientists are beginning to understand what exactly they mean and how they can be used to predict an impending rupture.

"Using the numerical model that we developed at Los Alamos, we examine and connect the dynamics in a granular system of fault gouge to signals detected on passive remote monitors," Gao said. To identify the stress-related mechanisms behind the signals, scientists relied on numerical models run by supercomputers at Los Alamos. The models were able to simulate grain-to-grain interactions and analyze how stress influences the acoustic signals produced by the granular system.

The models successfully simulated the ways a fault's evolution alters grain-to-grain interactions. The simulations also reproduced the formation and evolution of stress chains.

Thanks to the simulations, scientists are beginning to understand how acoustic signals can reveal the evolution of stress within a fault structure. Eventually, these acoustic signals could be used to predict earthquakes many hours, perhaps days, in advance.

"The stress chains endow the layer with resistance to shear and on failure launch broadcasts into the formation," researchers wrote in their paper. "These broadcasts, received as acoustic emission, provide a remote monitor of the state of the granular layer of the earthquake system."

(Source: UPI)

If aliens are flashing laser beams at us, we now have a way to detect them



Are aliens using super powerful flashlights to get our attention? Astronomers think there's a chance they are.

Since the invention of the radio, humans have been silently listening to the stars, wondering if we are alone in the universe. But if intelligent alien life does exist, the extraterrestrials could be using other forms of technology to communicate. Astronomers are beginning to not only listen to the cosmos but also gaze toward it for other signs of alien tech: laser beams.

Breakthrough Listen, the most extensive Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) program in history, announced that its team will begin looking for new signs of alien technology using the Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System (VERITAS) at the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory in Amado, Arizona.

"When it comes to intelligent life beyond Earth, we don't know where it exists or how it communicates," Yuri Milner, billionaire particle physicist and founder of Breakthrough Listen, said in a statement. "So our philosophy is to look in as many places, and in as many ways, as we can. VERITAS expands our range of observation even further."

Using VERITAS, astronomers will begin scanning the night sky for nanosecond flashes of light from nearby stars. Like a lighthouse beacon for the cosmos, these brief pulses of optical light would outshine any nearby stars and could indicate a method of alien communication.

"With the addition of VERITAS, we're sensitive to an important new class of signals: fast

optical pulses," Andrew Siemion, the director of Berkeley's SETI Research Center, said in the statement. "Optical communication has already been used by NASA to transmit high-definition images to Earth from the moon, so there's a reason to believe that an advanced civilization might use a scaled-up version of this technology for interstellar communication."

VERITAS has looked for such laser pulses from the mysteriously dimming Tabby's Star after some had speculated there could be an alien megastructure surrounding it that caused the odd dimming. If the most powerful lasers on Earth were used at Tabby's Star and pointed in our direction, VERITAS could detect them. Of the 1 million stars on the Breakthrough Listen target list, most of them are 10 to 100 times closer to Earth than Tabby's Star, meaning even weaker laser flashes from intelligent aliens could be detected.

The array of four 12-meter optical telescopes is traditionally used to detect gamma rays — high-energy radiation emitted by extreme cosmic objects like exploding stars and even black holes — in the night sky. When gamma rays hit Earth's atmosphere, they produce very faint blue flashes of light called Cherenkov radiation, because the particles travel faster than the speed of light through air. So the blue flashes are the light equivalent of a sonic boom. The telescope array's ability to detect and pinpoint the source of these short-lived blue flashes made it the perfect candidate to search for laser beams from distant stars and galaxies.

(Source: Live Science)

An asteroid bigger than the Empire State Building will pass Earth soon. But don't worry.

On Aug. 10, Asteroid 2006 QQ23 will fly within 0.049 astronomical units (4.6 million miles) of Earth at about 10,400 mph (16,740 km/h). This might not seem close, but it is close enough to classify the object as a near-Earth asteroid. Additionally, because it is within 0.05 astronomical units (4.65 million miles), it is close enough to be labeled as potentially hazardous.

The space rock measures about 1,870 feet in diameter, which is greater than the height of the Empire State Building, which stands 1,454 feet tall. Now, while it might seem unnerving that a "potentially hazardous" asteroid about the size of a landmark building is coming close to Earth (or relatively close by cosmic standards), we shouldn't worry about the rock crashing into our planet. The object is "more or less benign," Lindley Johnson and Kelly Fast, who track near-Earth objects with NASA's Planetary Defense Coordination Office, told CNN.

NASA tracks comets and asteroids that veer close to Earth, not because they are imminent threats, but rather to ensure that they do not become threats. Every year, about six space objects about the size of Asteroid 2006 QQ23 pass by Earth, making this close approach a routine event.

Currently, there are about 900 near-Earth objects measuring more than 3,280 feet, much larger than Asteroid 2006 QQ23, in our solar system, according to NASA JPL's Center for near-Earth object studies.

Now, while NASA doesn't think that an asteroid will crash into Earth anytime soon, the agency does monitor near-Earth objects and both NASA and other space agencies are developing efforts to deflect asteroids if they threaten to impact our planet.

In fact, NASA is developing the Double Asteroid Redirection Test, or DART, which will be a planetary defense spacecraft. The agency plans to slam the spacecraft into asteroids that could potentially pose a threat to Earth. This is NASA's first planetary-defense mission and the agency hopes that DART will keep Earth safe from rogue asteroids that might head our way.

(Source: Live Science)

Plant roots began following gravity 350 million years ago

To make the transition from sea to land, plant roots had to learn to grow downward, to follow gravity. This ability, gravitropism, helped plants anchor to the soil and retrieve water and nutrients.

New analysis of this vital adaptation suggests the ability first emerged roughly 350 million years ago.

Scientists have studied gravitropism in flowering plants, but until now researchers had not surveyed root growth patterns across the entirety of the plant kingdom. The survey, published this week in the journal Nature Communications, offered scientists new insights into the evolutionary origins of gravitropism.

For the study, scientists observed the root growth of several different plant types, including mosses, ferns, conifers and flowering plants. Researchers watched as the roots grew horizontally, waiting for them to bend downward and follow gravity.

The survey showed gravity-driven root growth is slowest among primitive plants like mosses and ferns. Gymnosperms and flowering plants, which emerged 350 million years ago, boasted more robust gravitropism.

To determine when plants evolved gravity-driven root growth, scientists analyzed the underlying mechanisms: gravity perception, gravitropic signaling and growth response. Scientists found plant organelles called amyloplasts, granules that synthesize and store starch, working like gravity sensors. The granules sediment in response to gravity, but they only do so in gymnosperms and flowering plants, where the granules are found concentrated at the root tips.

Scientists also identified the hormone auxin as essential to the transportation of gravitropic signals. The hormone enables the production of PIN proteins, which encourages root production. Auxin and PIN proteins work together to direct root production in the proper location in response to the gravity detection signals.

When scientists genetically modified plants to disrupt the production of PIN proteins, the plants became less efficient at directing root growth downward.

"Now that we have started to understand what plants need to grow stable anchorage in order to reach nutrients and water in deep layers of the soil, we may eventually be able to figure out ways to improve the growth of crop and other plants in very arid areas," Yuzhou Zhang, a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria, said in a news release. "Nature is much smarter than we are; there is so much we can learn from plants that can eventually be of benefit to us."

(Source: UPI)

Chinese state agency to launch rocket for commercial use in August

A Chinese government space agency is expected to launch its first rocket meant for commercial use in August, putting pressure on other domestic rocket firms to develop their own launch vehicles ahead of an expected commercial satellite boom.

A unit of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp (CASC), the nation's main space contractor, is working on the final assembly of its Smart Dragon-1 rocket, with a maiden flight expected in August, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) said on Thursday.

China envisions constellations of commercial satellites that can offer services ranging from high-speed internet for aircraft to tracking coal shipments. Reliable, low-cost and frequent rocket launches will be key.

Last week, Beijing-based iSpace became the first private firm to deliver a satellite into orbit on its rocket. Since late last year, two other startups have attempted but failed.

It would take just six months to produce a Smart Dragon rocket and 24 hours to prepare for its launch, according to Chinese state media.

(Source: Reuters)

THE WORLD

Thai baht's strength weighs on tourism and exports

Thailand's economy is slowing, arrivals for its core tourism industry are plateauing, and a drought is hurting a farming sector that employs millions — but the baht is holding up buoyantly. In a trend that would seem to contradict the key economic indicators, the Thai baht has risen 5.4 percent against the dollar this year, making it south-east Asia's best performing currency and one of the strongest of any emerging market anywhere.



Foreign portfolio money is flowing into Thailand, analysts say, because of the kingdom's healthy current account surplus, an election in March that laid to rest investors' worst fears about political risk and the Bank of Thailand's hawkish stance on interest rates. Thai assets are yielding healthy returns relative to the rate at which investors can borrow money elsewhere, at a time when many central banks are easing, with the most recent example being the U.S. Federal Reserve, which cut rates on Wednesday. However, the flow of hot money puts Thai policymakers in a tight spot: while the strong baht is hurting the competitiveness of Thailand's tourism and goods exports, analysts say the central bank is avoiding cutting rates because of concerns about rising household debt. "The Bank of Thailand think if they cut rates, it could encourage more risk-taking in the financial sector," said Charnon Boonnuch, south-east Asia economist with Nomura in Singapore. "That implies that the rates differential in Thailand will widen further. This has also helped to marginally support the baht's strength." The soaring baht is a paradox and a burden for an economy not performing at its best. The resultant drag on competitiveness could further fuel the slowdown in south-east Asia's second-largest economy. Central bank data showed manufacturing output fell by 5.5 percent in June compared with a year ago, the sharpest drop in more than five years.

Tourist arrivals rose just 1.5 percent year on year in the first half of this year, according to tourism ministry data. However, the number of visitors from China — now the biggest source of tourists — dropped by 5 percent.

The BoT has twice revised down its growth forecast of late, most recently to 3.3 percent from 3.8 percent — an anaemic performance relative to most of Thailand's neighboring economies, giving support to some analysts' claim that the country is the "sick man of south-east Asia".

But Thailand looks better when viewed from abroad. Global benchmark indices for stocks and bonds recently increased their weighting of Thai assets, and rating agencies upgraded their outlooks after the election.

Prayuth Chan-ocha, the military dictator, was installed as prime minister in June in a vote that civil society groups widely dismissed as an undemocratic sham. But the election calmed investors' nerves about a return to the mass unrest seen in recent years.

Portfolio managers are now deciding how much weight to give assets as they evaluate the prospects for either an upward or downward move in interest rates.

Mark Baker, fund manager for emerging markets debt at Aberdeen Standard, said rate cuts were a poor way to weaken the baht. The BoT's single rate rise in December gave it far less leeway to ease than the U.S. Fed, which before Wednesday's cut had tightened nine times since 2015.

(Source: Financial Times)

ROUND THE GLOBE

Sukur Cultural Landscape

Sukur is an ancient settlement with a recorded history of iron smelting technology, flourishing trade, and strong political institution dating back to the 16th century. The Sukur Cultural Landscape has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, situated on a hill above the village of Sukur in the Adamawa State of Nigeria, along the country's border line with Cameroon.



The landscape is characterized by terraces on the farmlands, dry stone structures and stone paved walkways. The terraced landscape at Sukur with its hierarchical structure and combination of intensive and extensive farming is remarkable. In addition, it has certain exceptional features that are not to be found elsewhere, notably the use of paved tracks and the spiritual content of the terraces, with their ritual features such as sacred trees. The Palace of the Hidi (Chief) is nestled on a hill dominating the villages below. The revered position of the Hidi as the political and spiritual head of the community is underscored by the magnificent dry stone architectural work of his palace, in and around which is a concentration of shrines, some ceramic. The villages situated on low lying ground below the Hidi Palace have their own characteristic indigenous architecture. Among its features are dry stone walls, used as social markers and defensive enclosures, sunken animal (principally bull) pens, granaries, and threshing floors.

(Source: UNESCO)

The ancient art of making ships in southern Iran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Maritime trade, shipping and shipbuilding have long been practiced in Iran. There have been many small or big shipyards across the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. If you are planning to travel to the southernmost parts of the country, we suggest to visit the Persian Gulf in trace of seeing the process of crafting and sailing traditional Lenj boats, which has passed down from father to son. The hand-built vessels are used for sea journeys, trading, fishing and pearl diving.

Entering a shipyard is like stepping back into the ancient times, with some local artisans working on gigantic timbers to shape a reliable vessel.

Such expertise of the Iranian shipbuilders was registered on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2011 under the title "Traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf."

Lenjes were initially used for long routes, for instance to China and Africa, but now, locals usually embark on shorter journeys in the Persian Gulf. Nowadays, many goods such as electronics and home appliances, textiles and foodstuff are transported between Iranian ports, Dubai and Oman.

It is said that a Lenj takes some two years to build, depending on its size that reveals portions of its hardship, care and detail of the craftsmanship. Moreover, different kinds of wood are needed for the various components that are mainly imported from India and Africa as there are no forests in southern Iran.

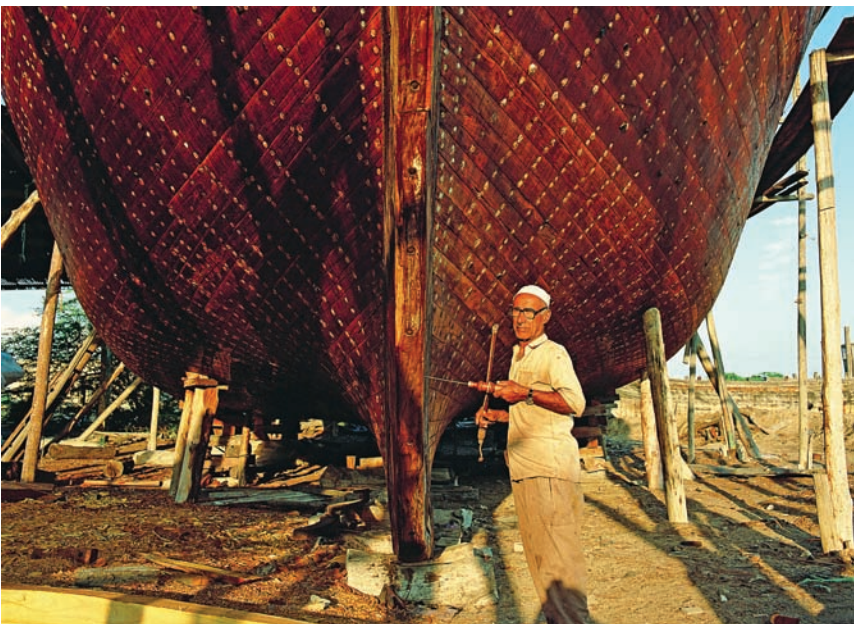
Iran's history of seagoing is deep rooted in time. As of nearly the sixth century BC, the northern sides of the Persian Gulf became dominated by a succession of Persian empires including the Median, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid empires. Under the leadership of the Achaemenid king Darius the Great (Darius I), who reigned from 522 to 486 BC, Persian ships found their way to the Persian Gulf, laying a strong foundation for maritime petrol and navigation in the region.

For avid travelers, it is also recommended



to go on a tour to the Qeshm Island, where traditional boat-makers are making a living. Situated at the narrowest part of the

Straits of Hormuz, a waterway separating Iran and Oman, the sun-scorched island is fringed with biologically diverse mangrove



Shiraz named national city of handicrafts

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iran's Cultural Heritage, **d e s k** Handicrafts and Tourism Organization has recently designated Shiraz, the capital of southern Fars province, as the city of handicrafts, Mehr reported on Monday. "We have put in a great deal of effort to earn such a title for Shiraz since Abadeh [a city in Fars province] gained the same title for wood carving in 2018," provincial tourism chief Mosayeb Amiri said.

In the same year, Abadeh was also named a world crafts city for woodcarving by the World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR).

Currently over 20,000 craftspeople are active in Shiraz, of whom 12,872 have been granted production licenses, the official said.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, Shiraz has become synonymous with educa-



tion, nightingales, poetry and crafts skills passed down from generation to generation. It was one of the most important

cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand dynasty (1751–1794).

Over two million artisans are currently working in various fields of handicrafts across Iran, CHHTO deputy director Pouya Mahmoudian, said in February.

"Until now, some 400,000 craftspeople have been registered by the CHHTO," she added.

Handicrafts exports from the Islamic Republic reached \$289 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019), a three- percent growth year on year, according to data compiled by the Organization.

Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are among Iranian exports to Iraq, Afghanistan and Germany, the U.S., the UK and other countries.

Archaeologists shed light on mysterious Neolithic society behind rise of ancient Egypt

By Joel Irish, Czekaj-Zastawny Agnieszka, and Jacek Kabacinski

To many, ancient Egypt is synonymous with the pharaohs and pyramids of the Dynastic period starting about 3,100BC. Yet long before that, about 9,300-4,000BC, enigmatic Neolithic peoples flourished. Indeed, it was the lifestyles and cultural innovations of these peoples that provided the very foundation for the advanced civilizations to come.

But who were they? As it turns out, they haven't actually been studied much, at least relative to their successors. But our excavations of six burial sites — with some of the analyses recently published — have now provided important insights into their mysterious ways of life.

One reason why we know so little about Neolithic Egypt is that the sites are often inaccessible, lying beneath the Nile's former flood plain or in outlying deserts.

With permission from Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) we — members of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition — explore Neolithic sites in Egypt's western desert. The sites we are currently excavating lie along the former shores of an extinct seasonal lake near a place called Gebel Ramlah.

Though not lush, the Neolithic was wetter than today, which allowed these ancient herders to populate what is now the middle of nowhere. We focus on the Final Neolithic (4,600-4,000BC), which was built on the success of the Late Neolithic (5,500-4,650BC) with domesticated cattle and goats, wild plant processing and cattle burials.

These people also made apparent megaliths, shrines and even calendar circles — which look a bit like a mini Stonehenge. During the final part of the Neolithic period, people started burying the dead in formal cemeteries. Skeletons provide critical information because they are from once living people who interacted with the cultural and physical environments. Health, relationships, diet and even psychological experiences can leave telltale signs on teeth and bone.

In 2001-2003 we excavated three cemeteries from this era — the first in the western desert — where we uncovered and studied 68 skeletons. The graves were full of artefacts, with ornamental pottery, sea shells, stone and ostrich eggshell jewellery.

We also discovered carved mica (a silicate mineral) and animal remains, as well as elaborate cosmetic tools for women

and stone weapons for men.

We learned that these people enjoyed low childhood mortality, tall stature and long life. Men averaged 170cm, while women were about 160cm. Most men and women lived beyond 40 years, with some into their 50s — a long time in those days.

Strangely, in 2009-2016, we dug two more cemeteries that were very different. After analyzing another 130 skeletons, we discovered that few artefacts accompanied them, and that they suffered from higher childhood mortality as well as shorter lives and stature.

We're talking several centimeters shorter and perhaps ten years younger for adults of both sexes.

Astonishingly, the largest of these two cemeteries had a separate burial area for children under three years of age, but mostly infants including late-term foetuses. Three women buried with infants were also found, so perhaps they died in childbirth. In fact, this is the world's earliest known infant cemetery.

■ **Interpreting the findings** So what can this tell us about these peoples, let alone their descendants? As it turns out, a lot. We can use the findings to make interpretations about gender, life-stage, well-being, status and other things.

For example, why were there such differences between the two grave sites? They could have been separate populations, but it is unlikely based on overall physical similarities. So perhaps they imply variation by status — with one graveyard being for the elite and the other for workers. This is the earliest such evidence in Egypt.

The sites also shed light on the family structures of the time. The overall sex ratio across all cemeteries is three women to each man, which may indicate polygamy.

However, the total number of burials and a lack of reference to individual houses suggests these were extended family cemeteries.

We also believe that attainment of "personhood" — the age children are socialized into being "people" — was from three years, given their inclusion in adult cemeteries.

There is also clear evidence of respect for previously buried people by later mourners reusing the graves to bury their dead. When coming across old skeletons, they often carefully repositioned the bones of these ancestors.

In some interesting cases, they even made attempts to



"reconstruct" the skeletons by replacing teeth that had fallen out back into the skeleton — and not always correctly (see lead image).

These behavioral indicators, together with the seemingly innovative technological and ceremonial architecture mentioned earlier, such as the calendar circles and shrines, imply a level of sophistication well beyond that of simple herders. Taken together, the findings provide a glimpse of things yet to come in Ancient Egypt.

■ **Conservation of sites** A key component of our work involves conservation of Egyptian (and world) heritage. We found no evidence of grave looting, unlike for sites in the Nile Valley.

The last people to touch Neolithic material at Gebel Ramlah lived during that time. However, wind-related erosion has reached a point where once-buried remains lie on or near the surface.

In fact, the pace of destruction has increased significantly since 2001. Once exposed, the context of these sites can be lost and organic material can get sandblasted to bits.

This means that if we hadn't discovered these remains when we did, they would have soon been lost forever. But sadly this likely means that other sites from the time are literally disappearing.

For that reason, we and the SCA have decided that, when we have studied our material, all will be reburied on site to, hopefully, survive for thousands more years. The Conversation (Source: Science Alert)

Blockchain and future of digital marketing

By Setareh Behrooz

Blockchain, a term that you are hearing more than ever these days, is a concept beyond bitcoin. Blockchain is an advanced technology and cryptocurrencies like bitcoin is a small part of it.

Shanbeh, a Persian language startup mag, in an article has explained blockchain and its widespread usage. This article is about the use of blockchain in digital marketing and content marketing and how to get synchronized with this technology in businesses.

Blockchain encompasses different aspects of business and communication, the most important part is banking and financial transaction. As you know, buying a service or product online is considered as a financial transaction and blockchain has a great effect on digital marketing, but how?

■ No more data collection

Today, most of people have access to internet, which is actually possible with internet service providers (ISPs) and web browsers. As you may know, companies which manage these items can monitor all of our data. They can sell data to other companies about what we buy online, websites we visit and even articles we read.

They can analyze behaviors of citizens, their needs and interests and sell related data to other companies or even politicians. Big advertising companies are the main official or unofficial customers of the information. They buy the data and set their advertising strategy and even choose the words they need for their advertising. They even set content strategy and content marketing procedures for their customers according to these data, which may lead to selling of low-quality products and services to customers.

But what can be the role of blockchain? Actually blockchain can solve this misusage of data and data collection by using Blockstack browser. Blockstack is a decentralized



computing network and app ecosystem that puts users and apps protect your digital rights and are powered by the stacks of blockchain. In this way, no company can collect data and sell them to others.

No data breach and no one can misuse your data on internet. The Blockstack browser allows you to create and manage Blockstack IDs and explore decentralized apps.

■ No middleman for SEM

According to wordstream.com, search engine marketing, or SEM, is one of the most effective ways to grow your business in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Search engine marketing is the practice of marketing a business using paid advertisements that appear on search engine results pages (or SERPs). Advertisers bid on keywords that users of services such as Google and Bing might enter when looking for certain products or services, which gives

the advertiser the opportunity for their ads to appear alongside results for those search queries. These ads, often known by the term pay-per-click ads, come in a variety of formats.

As you see, Google is a middleman between the advertisers and host website. With blockchain, there is no need for any intervenes between advertisers and ad hosting website.

■ Digital marketing via SEO and content marketing

Believe it or not, a world without middlemen is very better place to live in. Your success depends on your skills and there is no middleman to pay for introducing your services and products anymore and no one can misuse your online data and content.

But how we can use blockchain to improve SEO and content marketing? You can use the untapped potentiality of digital marketing in blockchain focusing on mentioned items.

■ Honesty is the best policy

You can share your expenses in different stages of manufacturing your products via blockchain, which makes your customers to trust you more than ever.

As you know all financial transactions are recorded in blockchain, which is available for everybody. In this way, customers can be assured about quality and price of the product.

■ CSR in the limelight

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of companies become transparent in blockchain system. Blockchain provides transparent documents about the amount of money companies donate during crises.

■ Branding and blockchain

By using blockchain and cryptocurrencies in your business, you can introduce your products and services in a modern way. As you know, innovative businesses have a high speed in branding.

One should consider content strategy as well. You can use this strategy in order to attract more customers today. A modern business has more credit amongst customers.

Content remains important in blockchain system as well. In the future, search engines will use blockchain data to verify quality of products and services, which makes a great change in SEO we know today.

Probably the content quality is verified by the readers not back links and keywords as blockchain is a user-oriented system. By blockchain, fake products are known very quickly and as you see SEO techniques are not beneficial anymore.

■ The bottom line

Were all the above mentioned just a probability or it can be realized one day by blockchain technology? No one knows how much of this technology would be available for the public. However, entrepreneurs should regard this emerging technology as a crucial event that can affect their businesses in the near future. Maybe it changes lives of people who live in the online world.

Team Cup to gather app developers for children, young adults

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – Team Cup, an android programing competition, has called Iranian programmers and application developers for attending the event in order to introduce their products for children and young adults.

The competition will be held in seven stages in different parts of the country with the motto of “entrepreneurship and job creation”.

Applicants can submit their particulars and ideas until August 6 to the secretariat of the event, Tasnim reported on Monday.



Attractiveness, applicability, commercialization and market size of the applications are some criteria considered by the jury.

Winners of the first stage are supported for development and commercialization of their products.

The first stage focuses on initial production, the second stage is aimed at attracting 2,000 users, the third stage is aimed at attracting 5,000 users, and the number of users should increase to 200,000 in the final (eighth) stage.

In December 2018, the Education Ministry announced that about 20 million internet users out of 56 million users in the country are below 18.

In November 2018, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Ministry announced that it plans to introduce parental control applications in the near future.

According to a survey conducted by the ICT Ministry, only eight percent of Iranian parents monitor their children's online activity.

The survey revealed that Iran is not very successful in content creation for children and to control children's online activity.

Sharif University to hold interdisciplinary meeting on neuroscience

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Sharif University of Technology will host a meeting on “Neuroscience, Cognitive Science and Philosophy: From Memory to Awareness” on September 3 and 4, Mehr reported.

The event is cosponsored by the Department of Philosophy of Science at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, and Iran's National Brain Mapping Laboratory.

According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, cognitive science is the interdisciplinary study of mind and intelligence, embracing philosophy, psychology, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, linguistics, and anthropology. Its intellectual origins are in the mid-1950s when researchers in several fields began to develop theories of mind based on complex representations and computational procedures.

Its organizational origins are in the mid-1970s when the Cognitive Science Society was formed and the journal Cognitive Science began. Since then, more than one hundred universities in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia have established cognitive science programs and many others have instituted courses in cognitive science.

Robots as a service: a technology trend every business must consider

From all indicators, robots as a service (RaaS) is growing rapidly. ABI Research predicts there will be 1.3 million installations of RaaS by 2026 generating \$34 billion in revenue. Let's look at what robots as a service entails, the reasons for its growth and some companies that offer RaaS solutions and the tasks it can support.

■ What is Robots-as-a-Service (RaaS)?

Many are now familiar with the concept of software as a service (SaaS) or big data as a service (BDaaS), the pay-as-you-go or subscription-based service model. In a similar set-up, those who sign up for robots as a service get the benefits of robotic process automation by leasing robotic devices and accessing a cloud-based subscription service rather than purchasing the equipment outright. The headaches of ownership, such as paying off an expensive piece of equipment plus handling maintenance issues that spring up, are avoided with RaaS.

■ What has caused RaaS to gain in popularity?

Businesses are increasingly intrigued with RaaS because of its flexibility, scalability, and lower cost of entry than traditional robotics programs. These attributes allow small- and medium-sized businesses to benefit from robotics without the often cost-prohibitive initial investment.

Typically, robots are used to replace lower-paying jobs done by humans at companies. But, since robots are quite expensive, it can take years before companies do realize a return on their investment. This reality has kept many smaller organizations from investing in robots. That's one of the reasons RaaS is quite appealing today. RaaS also gives organizations the ability to scale up and down rapidly and easily in response to changing market conditions and client needs. It offers more predictable costs and less upfront capital to get started.

Globalization has also reduced the cost of hardware. It's also easy to sign up and find powerful and cheap cloud computing solutions that allow robots to be offered as a variable cost service with subscription packages. Additionally, companies are already comfortable with the business model, thanks to many of them already using the software as a service model.

There are many companies in several industries that are benefitting from RaaS from warehouses and fulfillment centers to healthcare and security. As other sectors realize uses for robots, RaaS lowers the barrier to entry for them to test them out and experiment with robotic solutions.

(Source: euronews.com)

Iranian nanotech company exporting equipment to China

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — An Iranian nanotechnology company is exporting nanotech equipment and training packages to China, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The company signed a five-year deal in 2015 with the Chinese side and has so far exported 27 nanotech equipment to China, the company's managing director Faeqeh Eslamipour announced.

According to the agreement, the company will export 105 pieces of equipment worth one million dollars to China by the end of the fifth year, she said.

Electrospinning, sputtering and exploding wire equipment are amongst the items, she noted.

The company has previously held educational workshops in India, Indonesia, Turkey and Oman and has attended several related meetings and exhibitions in other countries, she added.

“We have also held nanotechnology workshops for stu-

dents in China.”

The company has also signed an agreement with an Omani company in order to launch an educational portal in Oman, which is now available in Arabic and English languages.

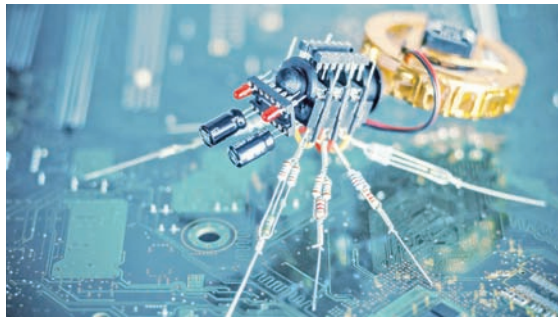
The portal covers three stages of elementary, intermediate and advanced levels, useful for school and university students, she explained.

In July 2018, the second branch of Iran Nanotech China Center (INCC) opened in Guangzhou. The first branch of the INCC was set up in Suzhou in May 2015.

The centers aim to facilitate cooperation between Iran and China in the field of nanotechnology and to boost cooperation between Iranian and Chinese nanotech companies.

■ Iran nanotechnology market

In May 2018, Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council announced that during the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019), there were 180 nanotech prod-



ucts, which has increased to 580 types

Iran exported \$65 million of nanotech products during 1397 and it is planned to increase the amount during the current year.

Parents, sometimes you're the problem when it comes to tech use

Elise Potts picked up her 17-month-old daughter, Eliza, from daycare recently. When they got home they were greeted by a strange scene.

“My husband ... he's waving his arms around like a crazy man,” Potts says. “He has these things in his hands, he has a black box on his face ... and [Eliza] looks and she points, all confused, and she says, ‘Daddy?’”

Daddy, it turned out, had a new Oculus virtual reality headset.

Potts, who lives in Seattle, can't help but wonder what her daughter is making of all the digital technology that surrounds her. Eliza's reaction, she says, is “really cute, but it's also terrifying, because I think of it from her perspective. What does that mean to her?”

It's a good question. The mobile tech revolution is barely a decade old, and it brings special challenges to parents and caregivers, says pediatrician Jenny Radesky, who sees patients at the University of Michigan and is one of the top researchers in the field of parents, children and new media.

“The telephone took decades to reach 50 million global users, and we had Pokémon Go do that within, like, two and a half weeks,” Radesky says. “So we all feel like we've been blown over by a tidal wave of all this new stuff.”

Most of us feel like we're failing, at least at times, to manage the competing bids for attention that come from work, kids, and partners and from our digital devices.

While she doesn't want to come off as “judgy of parents,” Radesky and other experts shared four takeaways from the research that can guide parents who want to improve their relationships both with their kids and with technology.

Put your phone away whenever possible when you're with your kids.

Most of us would balk at a family member coming to the dinner table with headphones in, let alone a VR headset. But phones can be just as disruptive to small interactions with children — a phenomenon that some researchers have dubbed “technofence.”

For Potts, like many parents, this is a point of contention. “It just really drives me crazy when we're all sitting at the dinner table and [my husband] will get a notification on this phone, and he thinks as long as he holds the phone out of [Eliza's] eyesight that it's OK.”

Parents of young children pick up their phones an average of almost 70 times a day, according to a pilot study Radesky recently published. But most of the parents in that study underestimated both how often they picked up their phones



and how much time they spent on them.

If glancing at the phone is partly an unconscious habit, as Radesky's study suggests, it could get dangerous. In at least two situations, distracted parenting can be a literal life or death issue — when you are driving and when you are at the pool.

But Radesky has insights about the more subtle, emotional effects of this dynamic — what she calls the “micro-interactions” among parents, kids and screens.

Potts frets over this situation with her daughter: “We're on a bus, we stayed out a little too long somewhere and we're going home and we're late for nap time and she's going to have a meltdown ... so I pull out the phone.”

She wants to know, “Is that a bad thing?”

Radesky says this is incredibly common. Her research has found a correlation between behavior problems and screen use by children and by their parents.

By following families over time, her research has documented what she calls a “bi-directional flow” between parents' screen use, kids' screen use and kids' emotional issues, whether tantrums and acting out, or conversely, becoming more withdrawn.

In other words, the more kids act out, the more stressed parents get. The more stressed parents get, the more they turn to screens as a distraction — for themselves and for their kids.

But, the more parents turn to screens, for themselves or their kids, the more their kids tend to act out.

Radesky adds that when you check out by pulling out your phone in tough moments, you miss important information that can help you be a better parent — and help prevent more tough moments in the future.

“We need to be watching, listening and gathering evidence so we can respond in the right way and help our children

develop their own self-regulation skills,” she says.

- Use apps like Moment or Screen Time to track your screen use and block the phone from working at certain times — like during dinner.

- Keep it out of sight and out of mind: Create a charging station near the front door; leave it in your bag during stressful times like the morning or evening routine.

- Turn off notifications, so you decide when to check the phone.

But life isn't perfect, and sometimes we need to be in two places at once. If you do need to use your phone around your kids:

Wait for moments your kids are truly engaged and happy doing something else.

Narrate what you are doing, says researcher danah boyd. “Let's check the weather to see what you should wear to school,” for instance, or, “Let's ask Mom to pick up milk on her way home from work.”

If you are in the habit of using a screen to calm your child, instead try a short video or audio track that teaches more mindful calming techniques. Radesky suggests an Elmo “belly breathing” video from Sesame Street. GoNoodle has similar videos targeted to older kids.

A British study found that parents share about 1,500 images of their children by the time they are 5. Stacey Steinberg, a law professor at the University of Florida, believes we should think twice about this behavior, which she calls “sharenting.”

Steinberg specializes in children's rights. She's also a photographer and mother of three, and she started to wonder: “How could we balance our kids' right to privacy with our interest in sharing our stories?”

Steinberg wants parents “to consider the well-being of their kids not only right now but years into the future if they were to come across the information that had been being shared.”

What Families Need To Know About Screen Time This Summer

Give kids veto power over what you share as soon as they are old enough to grasp the concept of “sending Grandma this picture” — 3 or 4.

Don't openly share personally identifiable information of your children, like their faces, names, birthdays or exact addresses. That can expose them to data brokers, who build profiles and sell them to marketers; or to hackers, who can create fraudulent accounts and spoil kids' credit before they start kindergarten.

(Source: npr.org)

Rare Baillon’s crake spotted in Gandoman wetland

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Rare bird species of Baillon’s crake have been spotted for the first time in Gandoman wetland located in the southwestern province of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, said Shahram Ahmadi, the provincial department of environment chief.

The Baillon’s crake (Porzana pusilla), or Marsh crake is a very small water bird of the family Rallidae, which are 16–18 cm in length, and have a short straight bill, yellow or green without a red base.



Their breeding habitat is sedge beds in Europe, mainly in the east, and across Asia. They used to breed in Great Britain up to the mid-19th century, but the western European population declined through drainage.

Baillon’s crakes are listed as threatened on IUCN Red List of threatened species 2016. However, their conservation status varies from state to state.

The bird has been sighted by a ranger and other rangers have identified it, IRNA quoted Ahmadi as saying on Monday.

There have been no reports of the Baillon’s crakes in the province so far, he said. “Then, the bird was registered by the Bird Records Committee. With the observation of this species, the number of identified species in the province reached 272,” he explained.

Gandoman wetland, stretching to 1,070 hectares, is located in Borujen county. It is one of Iran’s top five birdwatching sites and the country’s most important permanent habitat for migratory birds.

Warm weather may make 2019 a boom year for butterflies, say experts

The common blue butterfly could be booming in the UK thanks to recent spells of hot weather, according to a conservation charity.

Experts are predicting that the July heatwave and Met Office forecasts for above-average temperatures in August might mean that the common blue has its “best ever summer”, Butterfly Conservation said.

The butterfly has been struggling for the last 40 years, according to the charity, but common blue populations increased by 104% in the summer of 2018 compared with the previous year, thanks to warm weather.

Last summer, overall butterfly numbers were up 110% on 2017 in England and 94% in Wales, according to the charity.

The top of the male common blue’s wings is bright blue and unmarked, whereas females have orange crescents and dark spots near the edge of their wings that vary from purple to dark brown, with a tinge of blue near to the body.

Dr Zoe Randle, Butterfly Conservation’s senior surveys officer, said: “People should be able to spot these butterflies in national park areas as their caterpillars mainly feed on the wildflower and common bird’s-foot trefoil.” It could also be a record year for the painted lady butterfly, which is covered in orange, brown and white markings, she added.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Nepal in Crisis

(June 4, 2001)
A new King has been crowned in Nepal. The second in three days. Elizabeth Blunt reports:

The **coronation ceremony** inside Kathmandu’s old palace was **solemn and dignified**. Gyanendra - King Birendra’s younger brother - was installed on a **throne modelled on** that of the god Vishnu, with a many-headed golden serpent on the back. But when his carriage emerged into the streets of Kathmandu, the new King, still wearing his **plumed** crown, was **jeered** and whistled at by the crowds. Prince Gyanendra - as he then was - **managed** to escape the palace massacre because he was out of Katmandu, in Western Nepal, at the time. But his wife and son were there, and his wife was wounded in the shooting. His son - Prince Paras - may be one reason for the new King’s **unfriendly reception**; he has the reputation of being a rich man who spends most of his time enjoying, and when a popular musician was killed in a road accident last year, the Nepalese press carried reports that Prince Paras - who now becomes Crown Prince - had been **at the wheel**.

In a curious twist, this is actually King Gyanendra’s second coronation; he was briefly installed as king once before - as a three-year-old boy - when the rest of the royal family fled to India amid threats of a revolution. But in his adult life he has **to some extent** managed to escape the **hothouse atmosphere** of the royal family, and build an outside life for himself as a businessman and conservationist. This greater **worldliness** may be his **best asset** as he attempts to establish himself as the new King of Nepal.

■ **Words**
coronation ceremony - a formal event where a King or Queen is crowned
solemn - serious rather than cheerful
dignified - calm and impressive
a throne - a special chair used by a King or Queen
modelled on - based on or inspired by
plume - a large bird’s feather
jeer - if you jeer at someone you say rude or unfriendly things
unfriendly reception - the way people react to the King is unfriendly
at the wheel - driving
In a curious twist - a twist in a story is an unexpected development
to some extent - partially, not completely
hothouse atmosphere - a hothouse is a heated glass building where plants grow. It is also used to describe a place where there is a lot of intense intellectual or emotional activity going on
worldliness - experience of life in the outside world
asset - something that is useful or helpful to a person
(Source: BBC)

Will Iran experience above-normal rainfall during autumn?

ENVIRONMET d e s k **TEHRAN** — According to the forecasts, El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), is in a neutral phase during autumn, not contributing to a rise in precipitations in the country, especially during autumn and winter, Iman Babaeian, head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran’s Meteorological Organization has said.

The ENSO cycle has three phases called the neutral phase, El Niño and La Niña. It is a scientific term that describes the fluctuations in temperature between the ocean and atmosphere in the east-central Equatorial Pacific (approximately between the International Date Line and 120 degrees West).

In the neutral state (neither El Niño nor La Niña) trade winds blow east to west across the surface of the tropical Pacific Ocean, bringing warm moist air and warmer surface waters towards the western Pacific and keeping the central Pacific Ocean relatively cool. The thermocline is deeper in the west than the east.

The term El Niño refers to the large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate interaction linked to a periodic warming in sea surface temperatures across the central and east-central Equatorial Pacific.

La Niña is mainly referred to as the cold phase of ENSO and El Niño as the warm phase of ENSO. These deviations from normal surface temperatures can have large-scale impacts not only on ocean processes, but also on global weather and climate.

El Niño and La Niña episodes typically last nine to 12 months, but some prolonged events may last for years. While their frequency can be quite irregular, El Niño and La Niña events occur on average every two to seven years. Typically, El Niño occurs more frequently than La Niña.

■ **How ENSO affects autumnal rainfall in Iran?**

Referring to the impact of ENSO on



The term El Niño refers to the large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate interaction linked to a periodic warming in sea surface temperatures across the central and east-central Equatorial Pacific.

Iran’s autumnal rainfall, Babaeian said that forecasting centers and models in Australia, the U.S. and Europe that have been specially envisioning ENSO, have consistently predicted in the past few months that ENSO will continue in weak El Niño phase until this winter.

El Niño led to an increase in precipitation in the Middle East and Iran in particular, but the latest forecast of these centers has emphasized that during autumn and winter this year, ENSO will be in neutral phase, he added.

According to the forecasts, ENSO is in a neutral phase during autumn, thus not

contributing to a precipitation rise in the country, especially during autumn and winter, he said, ISNA reported on Monday.

During the second month of autumn, precipitation is expected to reach above normal averages in the northwest of the country, while other areas will experience below normal rainfall, he added.

■ **Iran meets normal rainfall averages**

This month, due to the eastern waves in the southern half of the country and the positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), the average rainfall in the southern and southeastern coasts of the

country fluctuates from normal to above normal, he explained.

The IOD is an irregular oscillation of sea-surface temperatures in which the western Indian Ocean becomes alternately warmer and then colder than the eastern part of the ocean. It involves an aperiodic oscillation of sea-surface temperatures, between “positive”, “neutral” and “negative” phases. A positive phase sees greater-than-average sea-surface temperatures and greater precipitation in the western Indian Ocean region, with a corresponding cooling of waters in the eastern Indian Ocean, which tends to cause droughts in adjacent land areas of Indonesia and Australia.

Precipitation in western part of the Caspian Sea is expected to meet normal or lower than normal averages over the next month (August 23- September 22), while other parts of the country are forecasted to experience normal rainfall, he explained.

Also, during the next two months all provinces across the country will receive normal rainfall except for Gilan province which is anticipated to experience below normal precipitation, he noted.

■ **Temperature to rise nationwide**
Elsewhere in his remarks, he stated that temperature across Iran rises on average by 1.5 degrees Celsius during this month and next month, while increases by 2 degrees Celsius during the first month of autumn compared to the long-term averages.

Sadeq Ziaeian, director of the national center for drought and crisis management, affiliated to the Meteorological Organization has said that Iran experienced an average 1.7 degrees Celsius temperature rise during the past Iranian calendar month of Tir (June 22-July 22) compared to the long-term mean.

Melting Greenland ice sheet threatens coastal cities around world, scientist warns

A Cambridge scientist has warned that the “decaying” of the Greenland ice sheet risks pushing up the sea level and threatens coastal cities around the world.

Peter Wadhams, professor of ocean physics and head of the Polar Ocean Physics Group at the University of Cambridge, said he had observed first hand drastic changes to conditions in the Arctic.

The 71-year-old, who has led 55 expeditions to the region during his career, compared flowing melt water to the “Niagara Falls” as ice in the region disappeared.

Speaking to the Press Association from near the settlement of Kangerlussuaq on the south-west edge of Greenland, Mr Wadhams said there had been “large changes” to the area since his last visit five years ago.

“It’s certainly a far more rapid rate of ice loss going on now than at any time in the past,” he said.

Mr Wadhams added: “The rate of global sea level rise ... is really completely dependent now on the loss from the Greenland ice sheet, that’s going to be going up quite rapidly.

“The first time I was here 30 years ago, there was never any melt from the Greenland ice sheet even in summer.”

The professor, who first visited the Arctic in 1969, said the melting of ice had moved from the low altitude edges of the Greenland ice sheet to include its surface at the centre in global sea level after melting of Greenland ice sheet

“It’s coming down more or less like Niagara Falls, down through holes all over the ice sheet,” he said.

His comments came after a period of record-breaking temperatures that hit the world in recent months.

According to the World Meteorological Organisa-



tion (WMO), July 2019 had at least equaled and possibly exceeded the record for the hottest month in history.

It followed data showing the world had experienced the warmest June on record.

Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK all saw new national temperature records on 25 July.

The Met Office said it took a recording of 38.7C at Cambridge Botanic Garden, officially the highest temperature recorded in the UK.

Wildfires struck areas of Siberia in Russia in July, with the plumes of smoke visible from space.

According to the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre, the loss of ice extent in the Arctic in the first half of July matched rates from 2012, the year with the lowest September sea ice extent in the satellite record.

Mr Wadhams said 300 cubic kilometers of ice was

lost from the Greenland sheet every year.

If the entire Greenland ice sheet melted the sea level would rise by seven meters, flooding most of the world’s coastal cities, the professor warned.

“It’s decaying and decaying quite rapidly,” he said.

WMO secretary-general Petteri Taalas said of global weather conditions: “This is not science fiction. It is the reality of climate change.

“It is happening now and it will worsen in the future without urgent climate action.”

In Greenland, Mr Wadhams said there was now “a huge epidemic of icebergs being emitted” as water flow drives glaciers out to sea.

“Most of the other glaciers in the world are already more or less gone,” he said.

“So there’s not much extra water to add from glaciers from other parts of the world.

“Greenland is now the driver for global sea level rise and will be until the ice has gone from [the country].”

He described witnessing “a raging torrent” passing beneath a bridge in Kangerlussuaq and the appearance of “black ice” as centuries old dirt is left behind by melting ice.

“Some of it is really dark, it means that it reflects less of the radiation of the sun that falls on it,” the professor said.

“That means it’s absorbing radiation and warming it faster still.”

Mr Wadhams is in Greenland to help scope out a suitable location for a new global electric car rally.

Extreme E will see teams race head-to-head in the Arctic, the Himalayas, the desert, the Amazon rainforest and an island in the Indian Ocean.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ع

Persian literature Olympiad to be held internationally next calendar year

Persian literature Olympiad will be held internationally in Iran in the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), deputy director at National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents affiliated to Education Ministry has said.

In a collaborative attempt between National Library of Iran, ECO Cultural Institute, Allameh Tabatabaei University, Sadi Foundation and Academy of Persian Language and Literature, the Olympiad will be held in Iran, Fars news agency quoted Enayat Salarian as saying on Wednesday.

Moreover, he added, the first international student Olympiad on stem cells and regenerative medicine in the name of Iran will be held in 2020.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ectomy”

■ **Meaning:** removal

■ **For example:** Remember, no two people undergoing an **appendectomy** are alike.

PHRASAL VERB

Tell somebody off

■ **Meaning:** if someone in authority tells you off, they speak to you angrily about something wrong that you have done

■ **For example:** Shelley was one of those kids who was always getting told off at school.

IDIOM

Packed (in) like sardines

■ **Explanation:** very tightly or snugly packed together, especially in a small space

■ **For example:** We didn’t want to take more than one car, so we had to drive for about four hours packed like sardines in Jeff’s little sedan.

المپیاد ادبی از سال ۹۸ به صورت جهانی برگزار می‌شود

معاون مرکز ملی پرورش استعدادهای درخشان گفت: المپیاد ادبی از سال ۱۳۹۸ به صورت جهانی برگزار می‌شود.

عنایت سالاریان در گفت‌وگو با خبرگزاری فارس در تشریح المپیادهای علمی امسال اظهار کرد: المپیاد ادبی از سال ۱۳۹۸ با کمک تعدادی از سازمان‌های فرهنگی مثل کتابخانه ملی، موسسه فرهنگی اکو، دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی، بنیاد سعدی و فرهنگستان ادب فارسی به صورت جهانی برگزار می‌شود.

سالاریان ادامه داد: همچنین در سال ۲۰۲۰ اولین المپیاد جهانی سلول‌های بنیادی به میزبانی و با ابداع ایران برگزار می‌شود.

India revokes disputed Kashmir's special status with rush decree

TEHRAN — The Indian government has rushed through a presidential decree to scrap a special status for India-administered Kashmir, the most far-reaching political move on the disputed region in nearly seven decades.

Home Minister Amit Shah told parliament on Monday that the president had signed a decree abolishing Article 370 of the constitution that gave a measure of autonomy to the Muslim-majority Himalayan region.

"The entire constitution will be applicable to Jammu and Kashmir state," Shah said to loud protests from opposition legislators who were against the repeal.

Article 370 of the constitution forbid Indians outside the state from permanently settling, buying land, holding local government jobs and securing education scholarships.

The decree, which was issued hours after imposing a major security clampdown in the disputed region, said the measure came into force "at once".

Critics of such a measure say that in doing away with Article 370, the government hopes to change India-administered Kashmir's Muslim-majority demographics by allowing in a flood of new Hindu residents.



Shah said the government also decided to split the state into two union territories - Jammu and Kashmir, which will have a legislature, and Ladakh, which will be ruled directly by the central government without a legislature of its own.

Despite the blackout on internet services in the region, Jammu and Kashmir's former

Chief Minister Mehbooba Muft tweeted that the government's decision is "illegal" and "unconstitutional".

"Today marks the darkest day in Indian democracy," Mufti wrote.

■ What is Article 370?

Regional parties in Jammu and Kashmir had earlier called attempts to revoke Article

370 an aggression against the 7 million people living in the disputed region.

The law dates to 1927, when an order by the administration of the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir gave the state's subjects exclusive hereditary rights.

Two months after India won independence from the British rule in August 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, signed a Treaty of Accession for the state to join the rest of the union, formalized in Article 370 of the Indian constitution.

Further discussions culminated in the 1952 Delhi Agreement, a presidential order that extended Indian citizenship to the residents of the state but left the maharaja's privileges for residents intact.

Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan and both claim the region in its entirety.

The Indian-administered part of the territory has been in the grip of a rebellion for three decades that has left tens of thousands dead.

Article 35A of India's constitution permitted the local legislature in Kashmir to define permanent residents of the region. The article came into being in 1954 by a presidential order under the constitution's Article 370, Al Jazeera reported.

U.S. seeks to renew Pacific islands security pact to foil China

TEHRAN — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday negotiations have begun with three Pacific island nations to renew a national security agreement that would help Washington counter growing Chinese influence in the region.

Under the terms of the deal, known as the Compact of Free Association, the U.S. military have exclusive access to airspace and territorial waters of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau. In exchange, the small islands receive financial assistance.

"Today, I am here to confirm the United States will help you protect your sovereignty, your security, your right to live in freedom and peace," Pompeo told reporters in Pohnpei State, one of four members of the Federated States of Micronesia.

"I'm pleased to announce the United States has begun negotiations on extending our compacts ... they sustain democracy in the face of Chinese efforts to redraw the Pacific."

Pompeo, who is the first U.S. Secretary of State to visit Micronesia, spoke after meeting the leaders of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

The three tiny Pacific nations have gained greater strategic significance in recent years due a push by China into the region. During a visit to Sydney on Sunday, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper described China's actions as both "aggressive" and "destabilizing."

Laying the foundations for negotiations, U.S. President Donald Trump in May hosted the leaders of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau - a rare state visit for such small countries - Reuters reported.



S. Korea, U.S. hold 'war games' despite North Korea warnings

TEHRAN — South Korea and the United States were to begin a joint annual military exercise on Monday, defying warnings from North Korea that the war games will jeopardize nuclear negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington.

"Our joint exercise to verify [Seoul's] capabilities for its envisioned retaking of wartime operational control is being prepared," a South Korean defense ministry official said.

The exercises will be focused on verifying Seoul's capabilities for its planned retaking of wartime operational control

of its troops from Washington. It did not confirm reports that the drills began on Monday.

The drills come after Pyongyang tested a series of short-range projectiles in recent days, calling one of them a "solemn warning" to Seoul against pursuing the mainly computer-simulated drills with Washington.

The North had also warned that it might call off its unilateral suspension of nuclear and long-range missile tests if the drills take place.

Under the U.S.-South Korea security

treaty, an American general will take command of their combined forces in the event of war, but Seoul has long sought to reverse the position.

Analysts say the military activities by both sides could delay talks on the North's weapons programmes - which have seen it subject to multiple sets of the United Nations Security Council sanctions - until later this year.

After a year of mutual threats and mounting tensions, U.S. President Donald Trump and the North's leader Kim Jong Un held an historic meeting in

Singapore last year, when the latter signed a vague pledge to work towards "denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula".

A second summit in Hanoi in February broke up amid disagreement on sanctions relief and what the North might be willing to give up in return.

Trump and Kim agreed to resume nuclear talks during their impromptu June meeting in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, but that working-level dialogue has yet to begin, Al Jazeera reported.

'Continuation of Yemen occupation perilous for UAE'

TEHRAN — The leader of the Houthi Ansarullah movement has warned the United Arab Emirates (UAE) against its continued occupation of Yemen, advising the Persian Gulf country to fully pull out its troops from the crisis-hit Arab country.

Addressing his supporters via a televised speech broadcast live from the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, on Sunday afternoon, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi called on Abu Dhabi to cease its occupation of Yemen and to implement withdrawal plans.

Houthi stated that the UAE should pull its military forces out of Yemen, otherwise the situation would become perilous for the country.

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

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

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

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

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Ansarullah chief urged Saudi authorities to understand what is in their best interests in the Middle East, and avoid stoking tensions there.

Houthi then warned the Riyadh regime that retaliatory attacks by Yemeni army soldiers and fighters from allied

Popular Committees would increase in case it presses ahead with its military aggression against Yemen.

"We caution Saudi Arabia and its allies, including the United States, against Yemeni mortal blows and their aftermath," he said.

The Ansarullah head then stated that colonial powers are seeking to advance divisive plots in the southern Yemeni port city of Aden, emphasizing that stirring up insecurity in southern Yemen is aimed at such an objective.

He called on all Yemeni factions to respect Islamic teachings and work together in order to frustrate enemies' schemes.

Houthi finally condemned Saudi Arabia's politicization of Hajj pilgrimage and creating obstacles for Yemenis who want to perform the Islamic ritual, Press TV reported.

Turkish, U.S. officials meet for talks on Syria safe zone

TEHRAN — Turkish and American military officials met Monday for negotiations about establishing a safe zone in northeastern Syria to address Ankara's concerns about U.S.-allied Syrian Kurdish-led forces in that region.

The Turkish defense ministry tweeted that the meetings were taking place in Ankara.

Turkey wants to control - in coordination with the U.S. - a 19-25 mile-deep zone

within Syria, east of the Euphrates River, and wants no Syrian Kurdish forces there. Turkey sees the Syrian Kurdish fighters as terrorists aligned with a Kurdish insurgency within Turkey.

American troops are stationed in northeastern Syria, along with the Kurdish forces, and have fought Daesh (ISIL) together.

In recent weeks, Turkish-U.S. negotiations

on the safe zone stalled, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened a new military operation. Sunday, Erdogan renewed that threat.

For their part, the Syrian Kurds say Ankara's statements mask a grab of territory inside Syria that the Kurdish forces had liberated from Daesh militants.

The Syrian Democratic Council issued a

statement Monday saying that its military wing - the U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces - is a "force to defend" Syria's ethnic and cultural pluralism, AP reported.

The council added that Ankara "is trying to deceive the public" and to get the U.S. and other parties to "participate in the crimes that Turkey is committing against humanity."

Hong Kong leader warns protesters trying to 'destroy' city

TEHRAN — The chief executive of Hong Kong has warned that pro-democracy protesters are trying to "destroy" the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city as the financial hub is rocked by two months of rallies and clashes.

Carrie Lam said on Monday that anti-government protests and clashes with police over extradition laws have pushed Hong Kong towards a "very dangerous situation."

The pro-Beijing leader also accused protesters of using chaos in the financial hub over the past months as a cover to hide "ulterior motives."

"They say (they) want a revolution and to liberate Hong Kong. These (actions) are already far beyond their original political demands, and challenge our national sovereignty. These illegal actions endanger the 'one country, two systems', and destroy Hong Kong's prosper-

perity," Lam said.

The Chinese-controlled city has been paralyzed by months of anti-government protests in reaction to an extradition bill that would have allowed criminal suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial, with demonstrators demanding Lam's resignation and a permanent withdrawal of the controversial bill.

Moreover, a general strike is underway in Hong Kong amid widespread protests and rallies, which have disrupted businesses, shut down government offices and blocked roads in the Asian financial center.

Official reports state that over 100 flights were cancelled at the city's airport and rail operators also announced the suspension of services in major districts.

During the morning rush hour, activists descended on key subway stations in Hing Kong and deliberately kept

doors open to stop trains from departing, causing long queues and triggering sporadic scuffles between angry commuters and protesters.

Hong Kong police said 44 people were taken into custody and dozens more have already been charged with rioting, Press TV reported.

"Such extensive disruptions in the name of certain demands or uncooperative movement has seriously undermined Hong Kong's law and order and are pushing our city, the city that we all love and many of us helped to build, to the verge of a very dangerous situation," Lam said.

The Hong Kong's chief executive added that widespread disruptions and violence were putting the residents "in a state of great anxiety" and she vowed to continue cracking down on the violence and disorder.

Zakzaky granted bail for medical care abroad

➔ During the brutal crackdown, three of his sons lost their lives, his wife sustained serious wounds, and some 350 of his followers were killed.

Since then, the government has been violently cracking down on the IMN and its members.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), based in London, said last month that the cleric's health condition had further deteriorated, since he was reportedly poisoned in prison.

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

Recently, a Nigerian court granted the government permission to label the IMN as a "terrorist" group, a move that many believe would give the officials the opportunity to clamp down harder on it.

According to Press TV, IMN members regularly take to the streets of the Nigerian capital to call for the release of Zakzaky.

In recent weeks, dozens of demonstrators have been killed after Nigerian troops used live ammunition and tear gas. The IMN says it has lost at least 20 of its members during the clashes.

Russia will be 'forced' to make new missiles if U.S. does same: Putin

TEHRAN — President Vladimir Putin Monday said Russia would be "forced" to develop new missiles if the U.S. does the same, after Washington pulled out of a Cold War-era nuclear arms deal last week.

"Russia will be forced to begin the full-scale development of similar missiles" if it receives information the United States has completed new systems, the president said in a statement, AFP reported.

Trump proposes tighter gun control tied to immigration reform

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump suggested Monday that Republicans and Democrats agree on tighter gun control and link this to his pet project of immigration reform.

"Republicans and Democrats must come together and get strong background checks, perhaps marrying this legislation with desperately needed immigration reform," Trump tweeted as he prepared to address the nation on two weekend mass shootings that left 29 dead and dozens wounded in Texas and Ohio.

"We must have something good, if not GREAT, come out of these two tragic events!" Trump wrote, AFP reported.

Drone attack kills dozens at wedding in Libya

TEHRN — At least 40 people have been reported killed and dozens injured after an air attack hit a wedding ceremony in southwestern Libya, according to media reports.

Reports said forces loyal to strongman Khalifa Haftar launched the attack on Sunday in the town of Murzuq. Al Jazeera learned that the victims were attending a wedding when the attack took place.

Nearly 1,100 people have been reported killed since Haftar, based in eastern Libya, launched an offensive against the capital Tripoli on April 4.

On Saturday, Libya's UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) said it had downed an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) of Haftar's forces.

According to Al Jazeera, UN envoy Ghassan Salame has proposed a ceasefire for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, which starts around August 11, and has called for relaunching negotiations.

On Friday, the European Union had also called for Libya's warring sides to establish a permanent truce and return to UN-led talks to prepare for quick elections.

On Sunday, France's President Emmanuel Macron spoke with Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah el-Sisi about the situation in Libya calling for a ceasefire "very soon" between the warring sides.

Yemen forces launch drone attacks on two airports, airbase in Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN — Yemeni forces have carried out drone attacks on two airports and an airbase in Saudi Arabia in retaliation against the kingdom's deadly aggression on their impoverished country.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said in a statement on Monday that in the first drone attack, domestically-developed Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) targeted Najran Regional Airport in the kingdom's southwest.

The air traffic came to a halt after the attack, he added.

The second attack, Saree said, targeted military and strategic positions at King Khalid Air Base near the city of Khamis Mushait in the southwestern province of Asir.

Also in Asir, the Yemeni drones attacked Abha International Airport on Monday, suspending flights.

Saree noted that the attacks were in response to the crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition, referring to the 21 Saudi airstrikes that have hit Yemen over the past 48 hours.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies -- including the United Arab Emirates (UAE) -- launched a brutal war against Yemen in March 2015.

Barcelona skipper Messi out of U.S. tour with calf strain

Barcelona skipper Lionel Messi will not travel to the United States for the club's pre-season tour after sustaining a calf problem on his return to training from a close season break, the La Liga champions said on Monday.

The Argentine forward experienced discomfort in his right leg during Monday's training session and tests confirmed that the 32-year-old had suffered a grade one calf strain, forcing him out of the tour.

"Messi will remain in Barcelona... his availability to come back to action will be dictated by his recovery," Barcelona said in a statement on their website.

Barcelona are set to travel to the U.S. later on Monday, with two friendly matches scheduled against Italian Serie A side Napoli on Aug. 7 (Miami) and 10 (Michigan).

(Source: Reuters)

Man City in talks to sign Juventus' Cancelo in swap deal with Danilo

Manchester City are in talks with Juventus over a deal to sign Portugal right-back Joao Cancelo with Brazil full-back Danilo moving the other way.

There is no agreement yet but City manager Pep Guardiola is keen to strengthen his options on the right.

City, who also have £45m England right-back Kyle Walker in their squad, are expected to pay a fee in addition to 28-year-old Danilo joining Juve.

Cancelo, 25, has also played further forward as well as at left-back. He joined Juventus from Valencia for £35m in 2018 after spending a season on loan at Inter Milan.

Cancelo was part of the Portugal squad that won the Nations League earlier this summer although he did not play.

City signed Danilo from Real Madrid for £26.5m in 2017.

He has been involved in the Blues' back-to-back Premier League title wins but has rarely been viewed as a first-choice.

Danilo has made 60 appearances in all competitions but only 22 league starts, the last of which came against Cardiff on 3 April.

(Source: BBC)

Aussie swimmer Horton says no regrets over Sun podium protest

Mack Horton said he would have carried out his anti-doping podium protest against China's Sun Yang even if he had known fellow Australian swimmer Shayna Jack failed a drugs test.

The Olympic 400 metres gold medallist snubbed Sun for a photo-call and refused to shake his hand after a medal ceremony at last month's world championships in South Korea, following a drug-testing controversy involving the Chinese star.

His stance won support among fellow competitors but provoked a furious reaction in China, which only intensified when it emerged Jack failed an out-of-competition test in the lead-up to the world titles.

She returned home before the meet started and Horton only learned of her positive result -- which she has vowed to fight -- after his protest. But he insisted it would not have affected his decision to take a stand.

"It was hard. It's really hard," he told Channel Seven late on Sunday, describing his reaction on hearing about Jack's positive test. But Horton added that "nothing changes" about his podium protest. "The difference being, as soon as she returns a positive sample, she's returned to Australia, she's not competing at a world championships," he said.

"That gives me faith in the Australian system. We won't let our own athletes get away with it. (so) we can question and demand more from the rest of the world."

(Source: France 24)

The email that could prove Griezmann negotiated with Barcelona in March

Sevan Karian, one of Antoine Griezmann's representatives, reportedly sent an email to the player's sister Maud and his father Alain in March.

This email is said to have contained information on Barcelona's offer for the Frenchman, as well as a draft containing salary proposals.

This is according to El Mundo, who have had access to the email and who report that Atletico Madrid chief executive Miguel Angel Gil Marin also has a copy of the email.

This document could, therefore, be a key piece of evidence in Atletico Madrid's case against Barcelona.

The capital city side are claiming that Barcelona should have paid 200 million euros for Griezmann because this was the amount stated in his release clause before it dropped on July 1 to 120m euros, the figure the Catalan club ended up paying.

Their argument is that Barcelona were negotiating with their player before the release clause dropped, although the Blaugrana deny that a pre-contract agreement existed.

(Source: Marca)

Kyrgios edges Medvedev to win ATP Washington Open title

Shaking off back spasms to blast 18 aces, Australia's Nick Kyrgios kept his composure and captured the ATP Washington Open title Sunday, defeating Russia's 10th-ranked Daniil Medvedev 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/4).

The 24-year-old Aussie, who struggled through the opening set, claimed the \$365,390 top prize and his sixth career ATP crown at the US Open tuneup event.

"This is probably my best memory of a final," Kyrgios said. "I left it all on the court."

Kyrgios, 5-1 this year against top-10 rivals, won his second title of the season after Acapulco in March and will jump 25 positions to 27th in Monday's new rankings, his first top-30 appearance in 43 weeks.

"This has been one of the greatest weeks of my life. I've made massive strides," Kyrgios said. "This whole week has been amazing. It's a week I won't forget."

Known for his fiery temperament and inconsistency, Kyrgios was resilient all week, breaking racquets but holding his emotions together -- "super proud" of his composure.

"In the past six months, it's crazy to think how much I've been able to turn it around," Kyrgios said. "I'm working hard to be better as a player and a person."

(Source: AFP)

Man Utd make Maguire world's most expensive defender



"Harry is one of the best centre-backs in the game today and I am delighted we have secured his signature," he said.

"He is a great reader of the game and has a strong presence on the pitch, with the ability to remain calm under pressure - coupled with his composure on the ball and a huge presence in both boxes - I can see he will fit well into this group both on and off the pitch.

"He has a great personality and is a fantastic addition to the club."

Manchester City had been interested in Maguire, but Pepe Guardiola admitted on

Sunday that the champions couldn't afford his huge fee.

■ Meteoric rise

Maguire, 26, shot to prominence for his performances at last year's World Cup as England reached the semi-finals for the first time since 1990.

United were interested in his signature last summer, but baulked at Leicester's asking price.

A year on and with the heart of their defence brutally exposed in finishing sixth in the Premier League last season to miss out on Champions League qualification, the

Red Devils finally paid the fee the Foxes' demanded.

Solskjaer had made strengthening central defence a priority, with that need only becoming more acute when Eric Bailly suffered a knee injury during the pre-season tour of China which is expected to keep him out for at least four months.

Maguire's arrival also continues the trend of United targeting young British talent rather than big-name foreign imports. The English giants have already splashed nearly £70 million on promising youngsters Daniel James and Aaron Wan-Bissaka.

Maguire started his career at Sheffield United before making the leap into the Premier League with Hull in 2014.

After impressing even as the Tigers were relegated two years ago, he joined Leicester in a £17 million deal.

His England debut followed in October 2017 and he emerged as one of the unlikely stars of the World Cup, where he featured in all of the Three Lions' seven games and scored in the quarter-final victory over Sweden.

That signified a meteoric rise for Maguire who just two years previously had travelled as a fan to support England at Euro 2016.

Nicknamed "slab head" by former Leicester teammate Jamie Vardy for his physical prowess in the air, Maguire has also impressed with his ability to play out from the back.

However, City were less in need to break the bank for the 26-year-old after winning the first ever domestic treble of trophies in English football history.

(Source: AFP)

Hamilton hunts down Verstappen to win in Hungary

Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton hunted down Max Verstappen to win the Hungarian Grand Prix for a record-extending seventh time on Sunday and surge 62 points clear in the championship standings.

Dutch 21-year-old Verstappen, who had started from pole position for the first time, was runner-up after being reeled in and overtaken four laps from the end with his tyres worn to the limit.

"That was definitely a tall order but I'm grateful we did it," said Hamilton of a strategy that left him with a gap of almost 20 seconds to close in the final 22 laps.

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel finished third and more than a minute behind -- an eternity in Formula One terms -- as the top two waged their own private battle in the heat of the Hungarian racing.

Hamilton, who also triumphed in Hungary last year and is heading inexorably towards a sixth title, now has 250 points, with team mate Valtteri Bottas on 188 and Verstappen closing in fast on 181.

The win in the last race before the August break was Hamilton's eighth in 12 rounds this season and the 81st of his career -- 10 short of seven-times champion Michael Schumacher's all-time record.

Bottas, starting on the front row, finished a forlorn eighth after a fight back from last place following an early stop to change a front wing damaged as he and Hamilton made light contact on the opening lap.

Hamilton, using fresher and faster medium tyres on a switched two-stop strategy after starting third, lapped all but the three cars behind him in a complete turnaround from his poor performance in Germany the previous weekend.



"It was difficult to get by, the defence was great, and I didn't know if I could catch that 19-second gap," said the Briton of a battle with Verstappen that ebbed and flowed throughout the race.

"I just kept my head down, and each lap was like a qualifying lap. I know if (late Mercedes non-executive chairman and triple champion) Niki (Lauda) was here today, he would take his hat off."

Verstappen, who made a late pitstop after being passed and then made sure of an extra point for the fastest lap, crossed the line 17.7 seconds behind Hamilton.

"They rolled the dice and it worked for them, unfortunately. But you drove your heart out," team boss Christian Horner told the youngster.

"I think Lewis today was on fire as well," Verstappen told reporters.

"We were just not fast enough but I tried everything I could on those hard tyres to stay alive. Unfortunately it wasn't enough but, to finish second with the fastest lap, it was a good weekend overall."

(Source: Reuters)

'Smiling Cinderella' Shibuno claims stunning Women's British Open triumph

'Smiling Cinderella' Hinako Shibuno completed a fairytale week by winning the Women's British Open in her first LPGA event at Milton Keynes on Sunday.

The 20-year-old Japanese rank outsider, who earned her nickname because of her radiant smile, rammed home a lengthy birdie putt of just under 20 feet at the final hole to edge out American Lizette Salas by one stroke.

Playing outside Japan for the first time as well as in her first major, Shibuno reacted with glee and astonishment, covering her mouth with her hand after the winning putt rattled in at Woburn for a closing four-under-par 68.

She finished on 18-under 270 to become the second Japanese woman to win a major, after Hisako 'Chako' Higuchi in 1977.

Salas, two behind overnight, caught Shibuno on the front nine and thought she had done enough with a seven-under 65 final round.

But Shibuno, ranked 559 in the world at the start of the year, found five birdies on the way home.

"I still feel like I'm going to vomit," Shibuno said moments after her victory.

"I was more nervous on the front nine but I was OK on the back nine. I felt like I was going to cry on the 18th but the tears didn't come out."

Shibuno, who started the day with a two-shot lead, double-bogeyed the third hole, which perhaps was a blessing in disguise in that it relieved the pressure of being the frontrunner.

"I don't think many people, including me, like to be in a situation where you're leading," she said.



"I feel like it's better to be behind than leading. That was true today and I was able to play easier when I was in that position."

"I was looking at the board all the time, and knew my position, where I stood in the tournament. That was also true before the putt on the 18th and I was also thinking about if I were to make this putt, how I was going to celebrate."

Runner-up Salas rued a five-foot birdie putt at the final hole that tipped out.

"I'm not going to lie, I was nervous," she said. "I haven't been in that position in a long time. I gave it a good stroke. I controlled all my thoughts. It just didn't drop, so congrats to our winner."

South Korean Ko Jin-young (66) finished two shots behind in third place, completing a magnificent major campaign that included victories at the ANA Inspiration in April and last week's Evian Championship.

"I had a little pressure, but I like that pressure," world number one Ko said.

(Source: Eurosport)

Malcom could leave Zenit just three days after move over racist abuse

Malcom could be forced out of Zenit St Petersburg just three days after joining the club, after supporters unveiled a racist banner rejecting black players during his debut on Saturday.

The Brazilian winger moved to the Russian club from Spanish giants Barcelona for an initial fee of £41million only last week.

However, when making his first appearance for his new employers against Krasnodar on Saturday, fans displayed a banner that slammed the club for moving away from the supporters' wishes of not recruiting black players.

The controversial sign, that it is claimed was displayed for around 10 minutes, sarcastically read: 'Thanks to the leadership for loyalty to the traditions'.

Another said 'RIP Selection 12', making reference to a manifesto created by Zenit fans that sets out their desired recruitment policy.

A statement from the supporters in question insisted the move was not racially motivated but that signing a black player would 'cause only backlash'.

It read: 'We are not racist and for us the absence of black players is just an important tradition, emphasizing the identity of the club and nothing more.'

'We, as the northernmost club of the major European cities, have never been mentally connected with Africa, however, as with South America or Australia or Oceania.'

'We have absolutely nothing against the inhabitants of these or any other continents, but at the same time we want players who are close in spirit to speak for Zenit.'



'Now, black players for Zenit are being forced almost by force, and this causes only backlash. Let us be what we are.'

Zenit also issued a statement denying that the banner was racist. It read: 'Zenit Football Club are aware a banner was revealed by a small number of individuals that read "Thank you leadership for believing in tradition" and that the meaning of this statement has been misrepresented in various parts of the media, and based on these misrepresentations, incorrect conclusions have been drawn that have no basis in reality.'

It is now being reported by Spanish outlet AS that

the club are looking to sell Malcom in January in a bid to appease supporters.

The 22-year-old, who joined Barcelona last season from French club Bordeaux, made just 24 appearances for Ernesto Valverde's side in his debut campaign.

This is not the first time that the club's supporters have come under the microscope.

Back in 2012, Zenit's largest fans' group, Landscrona, said in an open letter that black players are 'forced down Zenit's throat'.

They added that gay players are 'unworthy of our great city'. Dietmar Beiersdorfer, Zenit's former director of sports, insisted at the time that players were selected 'without any limitation regarding origin, religion or skin colour'.

Zenit were the only top-flight Russian team without a black player until the summer of 2012 when they signed Brazilian striker Hulk and Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel for £64m.

It is the latest racial incident to shame Russian football. Zenit's Krestovsky Stadium was the scene of disgusting racial chants aimed at French duo Paul Pogba and Ousmane Dembele before the country hosted the World Cup last summer.

Meanwhile, in January 2018 Spartak Moscow uploaded a video of black players training outside with the message: 'See how chocolate melts in the sun.' The Twitter message was also accompanied by chocolate bar emojis.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Iran Greco-Roman team win 2019 Cadet World

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran Greco-Roman team claimed the title of the 2019 Cadet World Championships on Sunday night in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Reza Saki from Iran, a 2019 Cadet Asian silver medalist, defeated Russian Stepan Starodubtsev, who was second at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games, for the crown at 71 kg.

Starodubtsev led, 1-0, at the break, but just moments into the second period, Saki scored on a four-point arm throw. He held onto the lead for the remainder of the bout, winning gold with a 4-1 victory.

For the title at 51 kg, Saeid Esmaeili used a first-period takedown to give him an eventual 2-1 win over Elmir Aliyev from Azerbaijan. It was both wrestlers' first World Championships.

To open the night, 2019 Cadet Asian champion Samatbek IZIMGALI (KAZ) spent only 59 seconds on the mat to claim the gold medal at 45 kg, defeating Asadbek BAKHRAMAOV (UZB) by fall.

Iran had previously won two gold medals in the opening day. Amirreza Dehbozorgi had defeated Ziya Babashov from Azerbaijan 3-1 in the 48kg final bout and Shahrokh Mikaeili emerged victorious over Armenian Razmik Kurdyan in the 110kg final.

Securing two individual champions on Sunday, Iran won the team title with 148 points, followed by Azerbaijan with 123 points and Russia with 99 points.

Finals matchups

45 kg
GOLD - Samatbek IZIMGALI (KAZ) df. Asadbek BAKHRAMAOV (UZB), fall 1:00
BRONZE - Tamazi GLONTI (GEO) df. Vladislav KURKURIN (UKR), 4-0

BRONZE - Farid SADIKHLI (AZE) df. Mahdi Kioumars AHADI ZENAB (IRI), 8-1
48 kg
GOLD - Amirreza Mohammadreza DEHBOZORGI (IRI) dec. Ziya BABASHOV (AZE), 3-1
BRONZE - Rupin RUPIN (IND) dec. Riehan BOTHA (RSA), 5-0

BRONZE - Yerbol KAMALIYEV (KAZ) dec. Alibek AMIROV (RUS), 6-1
51 kg
GOLD - Saeid ESMAEILI LEIVESI (IRI) dec. Elmir ALIYEV (AZE), 2-1
BRONZE - Volodymyr VOITOVYCH (UKR) df. Denis MIHAI (ROU), 12-9

BRONZE - Edmond Armen NAZARYAN (BUL) df. Arshad ARSHAD (IND), fall 2:56
55 kg
GOLD - Nihat Zahid MAMMADLI (AZE) df. Pravin Pandurang PATIL (IND), 9-0
BRONZE - Abror ATABAEV (UZB) dec. Seyitcan BEYTEKIN (TUR), 6-4
BRONZE - Firuz MIRZORAJABOV (TJK) dec. Omar BUDAEV (RUS), 6-5
60 kg



GOLD - Maksim SKURATOV (RUS) df. Mert ILBARS (TUR), 5-0

BRONZE - Arman VARDANYAN (ARM) df. Zhanbolot TURATBEKOV (KGZ), 6-0
BRONZE - Nika BROLADZE (GEO) df. Seyed Danial Seyed Shamsollah SOHRABI (IRI), 8-6

65 kg
GOLD - Dzmitry BONKA (BLR) dec. Sheraz OCHILOV (TJK), 6-2
BRONZE - Arman KHACHIKYAN (ARM) dec. Hojat Hassan REZAEI (IRI), 9-8

BRONZE - Attila Tamas TOESMAGI (HUN) df. Neeraj NEERAJ (IND), 10-2
71 kg
GOLD - Reza SAKI (IRI) df. Stepan STARODUBTSEV (RUS), 4-1

BRONZE - Furkan TAS (TUR) df. Aliaksei PIAKHOTA (BLR), 7-0
BRONZE - Alexandrin GUTU (MDA) df. Rauf Abdulla ALIYEV (AZE), 6-0

80 kg
GOLD - Mykyta ALIEKSIEIEV (UKR) df. Gabriel LUPASCO (MDA), 12-3
BRONZE - Maksat SAILAU (KAZ) df. Jonni Kunnari SARKKINEN (FIN), 8-0
BRONZE - Vigen NAZARYAN (ARM) dec. Kamran

Abdolreza ARGHASH (IRI), 5-3

92 kg
GOLD - Lachin VALIYEV (AZE) dec. Muhammed EVLOEV (RUS), 2-2
BRONZE - Oktay DEMIR (TUR) df. Maik HAIMOV (ISR), 8-0

BRONZE - Richard KARELSON (EST) df. Laszlo Csaba VARSANYI (HUN), 3-0
110 kg
GOLD - Shahrokh Abouzar MIKAEILI (IRI) dec. Razmik KURDYAN (ARM), 1-0

BRONZE - Mate GOKADZE (GEO) df. Dominik Tomasz KRAWCZYK (POL), 8-0
BRONZE - Adolf BAZSO (HUN) dec. Grigoris KONTOVOUNISIOS (GRE), 4-0

Team results

1. Iran – 148
2. Azerbaijan – 123
3. Russia – 99
4. Kazakhstan – 73
5. Armenia – 73
6. Turkey – 70
7. India – 63
8. Georgia – 63
9. Ukraine – 62
10. Uzbekistan – 49

Shahram Mahmoudi misses FIVB Intercontinental Olympic Qualification

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran opposite spiker Shahram Mahmoudi will miss the 2019 FIVB Men's Volleyball Intercontinental Olympic Qualification Tournament.

He came out of retirement in July but is not fully prepared for the competition which takes place in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Iran coach Igor Kolakovic has announced his 14-man team for the 2019 FIVB Men's Volleyball Intercontinental Olympic Qualification Tournament.

Iran will raise the curtain on the competition with a match against Cuba on Aug. 9 in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Team Melli will play Mexico and Russia in the following days, respectively.

Squad:

Saeid Marouf, Mohammad Mousavi, Milad Ebadipour, Farhad Ghaemi, Pouria Fayazi, Amir Ghafour, Mohammadjavad Manavinezhad, Al Shafiei, Masoud Gholami, Aliasghar Mojarad, Javad Karimi, Mohammadreza Moazen, Porya



Yali and Mohammadreza Hazratpour

Men's pools:

Pool A: Brazil, Egypt, Bulgaria, Puerto Rico
Pool B: USA, Belgium, Netherlands, Korea
Pool C: Italy, Serbia, Australia, Cameroon
Pool D: Poland, France, Slovenia, Tunisia
Pool E: Russia, Iran, Cuba, Mexico
Pool F: Canada, Argentina, Finland, China
The winners of these pools to be played in single round-robin format in August will join hosts Japan in the volleyball competition at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The Olympic qualification process will continue in January 2020 with each of the five continental confederations (AVC, CAVB, CEV, CSV, NORCECA) organizing its own Olympic qualification tournament to advance one team each per gender to Tokyo 2020.

The Olympic Games in Tokyo are from July 24 to August 9, 2020.

Iran basketball emerge victorious over Russia in friendly

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team defeated Russia 91-84 in Moscow Sunday night as part of preparation for the 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup.

Iran had already defeated Jordan 82-70 on Saturday.

Team Melli will leave Russia on Tuesday to participate in a tournament in Greece.

Iran will also partake at a tournament in China, where they will face Nigeria, Montenegro and Poland from Aug. 19 to 25.

Mehran Shahintab's side have been drawn with world's second-ranked Spain, Puerto Rico and Tunisia in Group C of the 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.

Rescheduled from 2018 to 2019, this edition will be the first FIBA Basketball



World Cup since 1967 that will not occur in the same year as the FIFA World Cup, but a year following the latter.

Also, the group stage will expand from 24 to 32 teams. The top eight teams, including Japan as the hosts of the 2020 Summer Olympics (and the top two teams from each of the Americas and Europe; and the top team from each of Africa, Asia and Oceania) in this competition will qualify for the men's basketball event in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Iran eye podium at 2019 FIVB U19 Boy's World C'ship: Coach

MNA — Iran U19 volleyball coach Mohammad Vakili said that his team have the chance and potential to stand at the podium of 2019 FIVB Boy's World Championship, which is slated to be held in Tunisia.

"Generally, there are eight teams that enjoy the chance of podium in the world events and Iran are among them," he said, adding that European teams have made a good investment on their youth generations.

"We have tried to analyze our rivals but we don't know them exactly since teams change dramatically in this age category in every edition of the competitions. We are the reigning champions and have the chance to win the title and we have to play well because all teams will try to show their best while facing off Iran."

Vakili made the remarks on Sunday after the team's training session in Tehran ahead

of the world event.

The team will depart for Tunisia on August 21, one week earlier than the official start of the competitions, he said, noting, "We have the chance to hold a mini-tournament with teams like Brazil in Tunisia."

The 2019 edition of FIVB Boy's World Championship will be held from August 21 to 30 in Tunis, Tunisia. According to FIVB, the 20 participating teams will be divided into four pools of five teams each and will play a round-robin tournament. The bottom-ranked team of each pool will play classification matches for 17th-20th place in a round-robin system.

The other 16 teams progress to the Eight Finals which consists of a playoff (first of Pool A against fourth of Pool B etc). The winners of the playoff matches will advance to the quarterfinals, semifinals and finals to

be classified from first to eighth while the losers of playoff match will play classification matches, with similar a quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals system, to be classified from ninth to 16th.

Iran are seeded in Pool B of competition along with Czech Republic, Italy, Colombia, and Bulgaria. Vakili's boys will face Bulgaria on August 22, the Czech Republic on August 23, Colombia on August 24 and Italy on August 25.

With two gold, two silver, and two bronze medals, Iran are the third most decorated team in the event after Brazil and Russia. Iranians won their first title in 2007 where they defeated China in the final. Iran have taken part in 11 out of 15 editions of the games so far managing to advance to the semifinal in eight ones.

Iran won the 2017 edition of the event,



under the guidance of Vakili, defeating Russia 3-1 in the final match in Bahrain. Amir Hossein Esfandiar was then awarded the Most Valuable Player of the event.

Modibo Maïga fails medical, Persepolis move called off

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Malian forward Modibo Maïga will not be joining Persepolis after he failed the mandatory medical exam.

The 31-year-old forward, who has most recently played at Buriram United of Thailand, arrived in Tehran early Thursday to undergo a medical.

But he failed to pass the medical since the MRI confirmed that he broke his ankle in the past.

A full international for Mali since 2007, he was part of their squads at the four Africa Cup of Nations tournaments, helping them to third place in the 2012 and 2013 editions.

Maïga's Cheick Tidiiane Diabaté has recently joined Persepolis's arch rivals Esteghlal.



Hadi Choopan denied U.S. visa ahead of Olympia 2019

Iranian bodybuilder Hadi Choopan still won't have his U.S. visa, preventing him from competing at the Olympia 2019.

Choopan has again been denied his U.S. visa just one month away from the Mr. Olympia 2019. This will prevent Choopan from competing at the competition despite qualifying again this year.

This comes shortly after Hadi Choopan had competed in the Vancouver pro — with no difficulties applying and being accepted for a Canada visa.

The difficulties may be stemmed from president Donald Trump's travel ban since Choopan is from Iran.

(Source: New York Post)

Iran's Mes Sungun look to defend title at AFC Futsal Club C'ship

Iranian futsal club Mes Sungun Varzeqan are going to defend their title at the 2019 AFC Futsal Club Championship.

Reigning champions Mes Sungun Varzeqan are primed to defend their title in Bangkok but will have to navigate past three-time champions Nagoya Oceans of Japan, United Arab Emirates' Al Dhafra Sports & Cultural Club and debutants Kazma SC of Kuwait in Group D, the-afc.com reported.

Mes Sungun Varzeqan will be aiming to win the AFC Futsal Club Championship title for the second time when the Iranian club starts the 2019 edition at the Bangkok Arena.

The defending champions returns to the competition with new additions - Italian forward Wesley Porfirio Machado and goal poacher Mahdi Javid, who was the 2018 MVP and top scorer.

The 2019 AFC Futsal Club Championship is the 10th edition of the AFC Futsal Club Championship, an annual international futsal club tournament in Asia organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

It will be held in Bangkok, Thailand between 7–17 August 2019. (Source: the-afc)

Pejman Montazeri joins Qatar's Al Kharaitiyat

TASNIM — Iranian international defender Pejman Montazeri joined Qatari football club Al Kharaitiyat.

The 35-year-old defender has joined Al Kharaitiyat on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Montazeri has already played in Qatari teams. He played in Umm-Salal and Al-Ahli from 2014 to 2017.

Montazeri started his playing career in Foolad in 2004 and joined Esteghlal after three years.

Al Kharaitiyat SC, based in the town of Al Kharaitiyat, are best known for their football team of the Qatar Stars League.

Renard targets teamwork and success for Saudi Arabia

Newly appointed head coach Hervé Renard has declared that a sense of unity will be key if Saudi Arabia are to have a successful future.

The Frenchman joined the Green Falcons ahead of their imminent FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Asian Qualifiers campaign, which begins in early September.

Renard - who became the first coach in history to win the Africa Cup of Nations title with two different nations when he led Zambia to glory in 2012 and succeeded again with Côte d'Ivoire three years later — was appointed following his resignation as Morocco national team head coach last month.

"Qualifying for the FIFA World Cup in 2022 is one of our main targets that we will work to achieve," said the 50-year-old who guided Morocco to last year's World Cup in Russia.

"We want to write history, but success will only happen if there is teamwork. Reaching the World Cup is a great experience, and I would like to repeat it again.

"However, we have to recognize that this thing will not be easy, and that we have to work together to achieve it."

With Saudi Arabia's Asian Qualifiers campaign set to begin against Yemen on September 10, Renard has revealed he will leave no stone unturned in order to achieve the success he wants — starting with this week's AFC Champions League Round of 16 fixtures.

"What is important for any coach is to adapt to the environment they find themselves in, so it is important for me to spend long periods of time in Saudi Arabia," he said.

"I am in Riyadh for AFC Champions League match between Al Nassr and Al Wahda and will then return to Jeddah to attend Tuesday's game between Al Ahli vs Al Hilal.

"These matches will give me and my technical staff a chance to assess the players who can best help me during my role with the national team." (Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When God abases a creature, He deprives him of art and knowledge.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iranian writers’ short stories on Syrian war published in “I Love You Damascus”

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Short stories on the Syrian war from a number of young Iranian writers have recently been published in a book titled “I Love You Damascus” in Tehran.

Published by Shahid Kazemi Publications, the collection contains 10 stories by 10 women writers, including Afsaneh Gudarzi, Sara Esmaeili, Zahra Tabatabai, Roqiyeh Babai and Zahra Akhlaqi.

The stories try to narrate the events which portray part of this crisis in the region.

Women, Iranian soldiers killed by Daesh, the domestic war in Syria, lives of women and children in captivity, and the Daesh 2017 attack on the Iranian parliament are among the main topics of the stories.

University of Toronto hosts Iranian film program

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Association at the University of Toronto (IAUT) is reviewing a lineup of Iranian films during a special program named “Didar”.

A scene from “Pale Mirrors” by Saleem Salavati.

Fourteen feature, short and documentary films have been selected to be screened in the program, which opened on July 24 and will be running until August 28, IAUT has announced on its website.

“Foruzan” by Mir Abbas Khosravinejad, “Vision” by Soheil Amir-Sharifi, “You Are Still Here” by Katayun Parmar and Mohammad Nurbakhsh, “Parviz” by Majid Barzegar, “Pale Mirrors” by Saleem Salavati and “Invasion” by Shahram Mokri are among the films.

Ariana Grande returns to acting roots in “Kidding”

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Ariana Grande returns to her acting roots with an appearance in Jim Carrey’s series “Kidding.”

The Grammy-winning singer with the big vocal range guests in season two of the Showtime series that returns on Nov. 3. And yes, she sings.

Carrey told a TV critics gathering on Friday that Grande was game to be silly and have fun. Carrey plays children’s TV host Mr. Pickles who has a difficult family life off-screen.

Carrey joked that he’s sure Grande was nervous singing with him. He calls Grande “a singular artist” whose vocal ability is like magic while he says he croaked out his performance.

In an Instagram post, Grande called it “the most special experience of my life.” She said she’s been a fan of Carrey since childhood.

Grande began her career as an actress, appearing on Broadway in the musical “13” and two Nickelodeon TV series.

Photos of historical Persian inscriptions from Caucasus on display in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — An exhibition displaying a large collection of photos of Persian inscriptions decorating historical monuments and ancient sites in the Caucasus opened Monday at the Lorzadeh Gallery of the Iranian Academy of Arts in Tehran.

The photos were taken over the past few years by Iranian scholar Morteza Rezvanfar who works for the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, the academy announced in a press release.

“The Inscriptions in the North Caucasus and the South Caucasus, which belong to the religious monuments dating back to the Safavid period (1501–1736) and the Qajar period (1789–1925), mostly read verses of Persian poems and religious texts or give information about the construction and restoration of the monuments,” the academy wrote.

Rezvanfar took the photos for a research project named “The Common Heritage of Iran and the World with a

Focus on Persian Inscriptions”.

He has traveled to China, Tanzania, Kenya, Turkey, Azerbaijan, India, Armenia and Russia at his own expense to carry out the research.

“The research began five years ago and is covering countries in Asia, Africa and Europe,” Rezvanfar said in the press release.

“From eastern China in Asia to Egypt in Africa and some countries in Europe, we find monuments that demonstrate our common history with these countries and this exhibition that is related to the inscriptions and architectural decorations in the Caucasus is part of this extensive research,” he added.

“These inscriptions, which are in Persian, are the best documents to prove the vast expanse of Iranian cultural civilization in the world,” he noted.

A number of the inscriptions also date back to the Sassanid period (224–651).

The exhibition will run until August 11 at the academy located on Vali-e Asr Street, near Taleqani Avenue intersection.



A poster for a photo exhibition of Persian inscriptions from the Caucasus at the Lorzadeh Gallery of the Iranian Academy of Arts in Tehran.

Iranian artists Pakdel, Darabian selected for Piracicaba cartoon exhibit jury

A R T **TEHRAN** — The renowned Iranian cartoonist Alireza Pakdel and his wife Saba Darabian, who is an illustrator, have been selected as members of the jury for the 46th Piracicaba International Humor Exhibition in Brazil, Irancartoon announced on Monday.

Works by the Iranian artists Ali Mirai, Amir-Reza Torkaman-Rahmani, Arash Forughi, Abbas Nasseri, Emad Salehi, Esmaeil Babai, Rahim Baqqal-Asghari Baghmishah and Yassan Delfan will go on display in various categories of the exhibition, which will be held in Piracicaba from August 10 to October 27.

Over 200 artists from 35 countries will be participating in event.

Pakdel and Darabian are scheduled to hold workshops on illustration and cartoon at the COTIP Technical College of Piracicaba on Wednesday.

Pakdel has received several awards for his works in various Iranian and international events, including the Golden Hithi Award at the 1st Ferizaj International Cartoon Contest in Kosovo, first prize at the PAPB International Cartoon Festival in Indonesia and third prize at A Colorful Human World International Cartoon



Iranian cartoonist Alireza Pakdel visits the 46th Piracicaba International Humor Exhibition in Piracicaba, Brazil on August 5, 2019. (Irancartoon).

Contest and Exhibition in Norway.

He also won the Grand Prix of the World Press Cartoon, one of the world’s largest and most prestigious annual press cartoon contests in Lisbon, Portugal in 2017.

Imam Musa Sadr’s “Man of Heaven” up for review in Tehran

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — “Man of Heaven”, a book containing Lebanese-Iranian philosopher and Shia religious leader Musa al-Sadr’s lectures and articles about Imam Ali (AS), will be reviewed during a session in Tehran on August 14.

Imam Ali’s outlook on life, his martyrdom, and the story of Ghadir, the day on which Imam Ali (AS) was appointed as successor to the Prophet Muhammad (S), are among the major topics of the book.

The Islamic science scholar Mohsen Esmaeili who is also a member of the Assembly of Experts will deliver a speech at the session, which is scheduled to be organized at the Imam Musa Sadr Cultural Research Institute located at 10 Abdolkarim Shariati Lane, Haft-e Tir Square.

Published by the Imam Musa Sadr Cultural Research Institute, the book has been translated into Persian by Ahmad Nazem.

In August 1978, Musa al-Sadr, also known as Imam Musa Sadr, disappeared with two aides on his way to attend ceremonies commemorating Libya’s Muammar



Front cover of “Man of Heaven” written by Imam Musa Sadr.

Gaddafi’s ascent to power.

When he was not seen in Tripoli, it was said he had left for Italy. While his fate is not known, it was widely suspected that he was kidnapped at the behest of Gaddafi, who may have viewed him as a religious rival.

Afghan Mahmudi brothers to make their new movie in Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Tehran-based Afghan brothers Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi plan to make their new movie “To Die in the Pure Water” on Afghan immigrants’ issues in Iran, a public relations team for the film announced on Monday.

The Mahmudi brothers’ latest film “Rona, Azim’s Mother”, a co-production between Afghanistan and Iran, is scheduled to go on screen at Iranian theaters in September.

Starring Iranian actors Mohsen Tanabandeh and Mojtaba Pirzadeh, the film is about Azim, an Afghan refugee who works as a janitor in Tehran. While helping with his mother and his brother’s family plan to smuggle themselves into Germany, he feels betrayed by his brother when he abandons their mother.

The film has received several awards in Iranian and international events, including Kim Ji-seok Award at the 22nd Busan International Film Festival in October



Afghan filmmakers Navid (L) and Jamshid Mahmudi in an undated photo.

2018 and best film award at the Sharm el-Sheikh Asian Film Festival in Egypt in March 2019.

“Rona, Azim’s Mother” was Afghanistan’s submission

to the 91st Academy Awards in the best foreign language film category in 2018, however, it did not make the shortlist.

The Mahmudi brothers’ other film “Parting”, which is another Afghan-Iranian co-production about love and migration, was Afghanistan’s submission to the 89th Annual Academy Awards in 2017.

The film tells the story of teenage lovers Nabi and Fereshteh who are separated by her family’s flight from Afghanistan. After years apart, Nabi decides to find Fereshteh and risk the hardships of flight and resettlement in Europe with a hope for a better life.

“Parting” was acclaimed at several international events, including the 9th Afghan International Film Festival in Stockholm and the Tripoli Film Festival in Lebanon.

Their 2014 film “A Few Cubic Meters of Love”, a love story between an Iranian worker and an Afghan immigrant, was also acclaimed by film critics and was awarded in several Iranian and international events.

“Hobbs & Shaw” is No. 1 but trails pace of “Fast & Furious”

NEW YORK (AP) — The first spinoff of the 18-year-old “Fast & Furious” franchise, “Hobbs & Shaw,” sped away with \$180.8 million in its worldwide debut, including \$60.8 million domestically — a strong opening that dethroned “The Lion King” after a two-week reign at No. 1 but couldn’t match the box-office pace of recent “Fast & Furious” films.

“Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw” was crafted as a buddy-movie left turn for the car-mad franchise. It teams two franchise regulars, Dwayne Johnson’s federal agent Luke Hobbs and mercenary Deckard Shaw (Jason Statham), for an adventure outside the previous eight films. Those will resume in May with “Fast & Furious 9.”

The deviation came with a slight risk for Universal Pictures. The “Fast & Furious” films have developed into one of the most bankable series in Hollywood. The last two entries each grossed more than \$1 billion. “The Fate of the Furious” took in \$1.2 billion in 2017. “Furious 7” made \$1.5 billion in 2015.

The opening for “Hobbs & Shaw,” while right on expectations, is the smallest domestic debut for a “Fast & Furious” film since 2006’s “The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift.” But the \$200 million release is aiming to do its largest damage abroad; it grossed \$120 million internationally over the weekend. That’s without China, where “Fast & Furious” films have excelled. It opens there August 23.

Jim Orr, distribution chief for Universal, pointed to strong audience response, across demographics, to “Hobbs & Shaw” as evidence of its widespread support and playability as a crowd-pleaser through the doldrums of August. While the film scored a 67% fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes, audiences gave it a 90%. The CinemaScore was A-minus.

“It’s super encouraging and really tells about how broad this franchise plays,” said Orr. “We are obviously all extraordinarily excited to see this homegrown ‘Fast & Furious’ franchise break out down another avenue.”

“The Lion King” slid to second in its third

weekend with \$38.2 million. The Disney remake earlier this week crossed \$1 billion worldwide, becoming the fourth Disney movie this year to do so. It joins “Avengers: Endgame,” “Aladdin” and “Captain Marvel” in that club, with “Toy Story 4?” (\$959.3 million) poised to soon join them. Not accounting for inflation, this “Lion King” (\$1.195 billion) has now out-grossed the 1994 original (\$968.5 million).

In its second weekend of release, Quentin Tarantino’s 1969 fable “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood” held strong with \$20 million. The Sony Pictures release, which cost \$90 million to make, has a way to go before it’s profitable. But the film’s glowing reviews and early Oscar buzz should lead to a long run.

The weekend’s other notables were smaller releases.

Lulu Wang’s acclaimed family drama “The Farewell” expanded to 409 theaters and grossed a hefty \$2.4 million, firmly establishing the A24 release, starring Awkwafina, as one of the year’s indie breakouts.

In limited openings, Neon’s “Luce” (a per-theater average of \$26,583 in five locations) and IFC’s “The Nightingale” (\$40,000 at two theaters) both started out well.

While there are significant releases to come, “Hobbs & Shaw” marks the last major tentpole of the summer. After some ups and downs, the season is running only 1.1% behind last year, according to data firm Comscore, a deficit that has been shrunk in large part by Disney’s juggernauts.

“While the summer has kind of taking a drubbing, critically and analytically, it has made a huge comeback,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. “We need to get it in perspective. But it ain’t over ‘til it’s over.”

In China, the locally produced big-budget animated film “Ne Zha” continued to pack theaters. With \$122.8 million in ticket sales in its second week, it has quickly become the biggest animated box-office success in China, overtaking Disney’s “Zootopia.”