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## Appeals court overturns U.S. verdict allowing seizure of Iran-linked skyscraper

A federal appeals court on Friday threw out a jury verdict allowing the U.S. government to seize a midtown Manhattan office tower linked with Iran, citing several errors by the trial judge.

According to Reuters, the 3-0 decision by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan is a defeat for the Department of Justice, which went to trial hoping to

sell the 36-story building at 650 Fifth Avenue, perhaps for close to \$1 billion.

Jurors had found in June 2017 that the nonprofit Alavi Foundation, which had a 60% stake in the partnership that owned the building, violated U.S. sanctions imposed against Iran in 1995 because it knew that the 40% owner, Assa Corp, was a front for an Iranian state-owned lender, Bank Melli. **→3**

## 1,100 Iranian SMEs exporting products to global markets

**TEHRAN** — More than 33,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are currently active in Iran of which 1,100 are exporting their products and services to foreign destinations, head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced.

According to Mohsen Salehinia, currently 43,650 SMEs are based in

over 800 industrial parks across the country, of which nearly 78 percent or 33,800 are active.

Salehinia made the remarks in a press conference held on the occasion of National SMEs Day at Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry on Saturday.

What follows is a summary of the official's remarks in this event. **→4**

## Failure of Saudi war in Yemen bad news for Israel

**TEHRAN**— The failure of the Saudi war on Yemen will have grave consequences for Israel as Tel Aviv fears that Washington's bid to isolate Tehran is unwinding, according to a report published by Israel's leading daily Haaretz.

"Oil sites in Saudi Arabia and the Emirates have been attacked by drones and Saudi airports have been targeted by Scud missiles... The apparent outcome is that the Emirates has abandoned the war

in Yemen, the Saudi effort has failed," wrote Haaretz on Friday.

"Without military support from the Emirates, it seems that the Saudi ambition to defeat Houthi rebels will fail conclusively," it said, adding that amid a Washington and Tel Aviv-led bid to isolate Tehran and its allies in the region, "this is not good news".

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies, namely the United Arab Emirates, launched a devastating **→13**



### EDITORIAL

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## Israelis playing with fire if join U.S. coalition in Persian Gulf

The Zionist regime's recent interest in joining the United States self-proclaimed maritime coalition is expected to stir up tensions in the Persian Gulf region.

Following Washington's proposal to create a military coalition in the Persian Gulf under the pretext of safeguarding the strategic waters, and after the refusal by its allies except for the UK, now the Israeli regime has announced readiness to join the coalition.

Shortly after the announcement, Iran warned the Israeli regime over the consequences of such decision.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said the Islamic Republic considers possible Israeli presence in a U.S.-led coalition in the Persian Gulf as a clear threat to its national security and reserves the right to counter it within the framework of the country's deterrence and defensive policy.

"The U.S. regime and the illegitimate Zionist regime are responsible for all the consequences of this dangerous move," he added.

Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz said on August 7 that the regime would be part of the U.S.-led coalition to "protect the security of the Persian Gulf".

Katz claimed that Israel was determined to stop "Iranian entrenchment" in the Middle East region and strengthen Tel Aviv's relationship with Persian Gulf countries.

The Zionist regime's possible presence in the coalition comes with multiple goals, hence brings various consequences:

1. Containing Iran; one of the main reasons behind the Israelis' interest in joining the coalition is to seize the opportunity to make their wish come true to contain Iran in the Persian Gulf.

2. Accompanying the U.S. in its anti-Iran policies to boost such hostilities.

3. Ensuring the Arab countries' security under the U.S. protective umbrella; although the Israeli regime does not have any navy, the so-called coalition would give it the opportunity to claim its protective role for the Persian Gulf's Arab states. **→13**

## 'Free Kashmir' slogans reverberate in Tehran

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

**TEHRAN** — In solidarity with the people of Indian-controlled Kashmir, hundreds of people, mostly university students, staged a demonstration in front of the Indian Embassy in Tehran on Thursday morning.

Organised by student groups at Tehran University and Elm o Sanat University, the protest saw participation of people from different walks of life, who expressed grave concern over recent developments in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Raising pro-Kashmir slogans, the protestors denounced latest move of the Indian government to revoke special provisions given to J&K and change its disputed character.

Wearing black shirts and holding placards with evocative messages, the protestors stood

in front of the Indian embassy in central Tehran and denounced India's Kashmir policy and what they termed 'atrocities committed against the people of Kashmir'.

Slogans like 'Until death no humiliation', 'Kashmir is a disputed territory', 'Kashmir belongs to Kashmiris', and 'We want freedom' reverberated in the humid morning air.

There were emotional scenes also as students spoke about not being able to contact their families and concerns about safety and well-being of their loved ones.

"I have not spoken to my family in four days, there is complete communication blackout and the whole valley has been turned into a cage for its inhabitants," said Abid Hussain, a Kashmiri student who came from Qom province to take

part in the protest.

"What India is trying to do in Kashmir is not only against the country's own constitution but also against international legal and humanitarian norms. The world needs to stand up and speak in once voice for oppressed Kashmiris," said Mazhar Hussain, a university student in Tehran.

Speaking at the demonstration, one of the organisers said it is the duty of every person with conscience to speak truth to power because 'today it is them, tomorrow it could be us'.

On Monday, Indian government abrogated Article 370 and 35A, thus ending special status given to J&K state under the Indian constitution. The government also moved a bill to bifurcate the state into two union territories (UN). **→6**

## Kyrgyz ex-president charged with corruption

**TEHRAN**— Kyrgyz former President Almazbek Atambayev has been charged with corruption over his alleged role in the release of a convicted criminal, Atambayev's lawyer said Friday after police had to battle protesters to secure his arrest. Atambayev surrendered to police late Thursday during the second raid on his country home outside the capital Bishkek.

His supporters had repulsed the first raid in clashes with state security special forces a day earlier.

The conflict between Atambayev and his former protege, current President Sooronbai Jeenbekov, has raised fears for political stability in Kyrgyzstan, which hosts a Russian military air base and a giant Canadian-operated gold mine. "[Atambayev has been] charged with corrup-

tion although previously he was just summoned for questioning as a witness," his lawyer Sergei Slesarev said by telephone.

Slesarev said the charge was linked to the case of Aziz Batukayev, who was serving a 16-year prison term on charges of owning illegal weapons and drugs and taking part in mass riots.

Kyrgyz authorities caused a public outcry when they set Batukayev free in 2013, roughly halfway into his term, citing terminal cancer. He immediately left for Russia and six years later, there have been no reports of his death from any illness.

Kyrgyzstan's Interior Ministry said Friday it believed Atambayev, who was president at the time, had personally ordered Batukayev to be freed. It did not say whether there was any particular as-

sociation between the two men.

The Central Asian country is a former Soviet republic and one of Russia's closest political allies.

Atambayev, who served one six-year term as president, met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow last month. But after their meeting, Putin publicly expressed support for Jeenbekov.

According to Reuters, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who was in Kyrgyzstan Friday for a meeting with counterparts from several other ex-Soviet republics, said Moscow regarded the Atambayev case as Kyrgyzstan's domestic affair.

But Medvedev said he would discuss the matter in his meetings with the Kyrgyz leadership, Russia's TASS news agency quoted him as saying Thursday.

## Kashmir needs peace not war

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Kashmir is once again in the limelight not because of war, but because of India's surprising move to revoke Kashmir of its special status.

India's parliament passed a bill to scrap the autonomy of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The move would mean the area would be under the direct control of the central government, and has already ignited intense emotions from the region's residents and from India's neighbor, Pakistan.

The revocation of special status and autonomy per Article 370 enjoyed by J&K since the 1947 partition of British India has infuriated the people in the Muslim-majority region because they fear their autonomy and representation has been snatched. **→7**



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### PERSPECTIVE

**Majid Rafae**  
political analyst

## Will Democrats' return revive JCPOA?

We Iranians have a proverb, 'the yellow dog is the brother of the Jackal', that implies "none of these two people is better than the other, both of them are bad and vicious".

Its etymology is as follows:

Once there was a mischievous jackal living in a village, he annoyed people so much that they expelled him from there. But he returned again in disguise and as a yellow dog. Since people had a good opinion about dogs, they accepted him and called him "the Jackal's brother" (because he looked like the jackal). This time the jackal continued his vicious actions in secret so the people couldn't find out the truth; but in a rainy day, the yellow color was washed off the jackal's body and the people found out the truth, so they said "Oh, look! The yellow dog or 'the jackal's brother' is the jackal himself!"

In this proverb, "the yellow dog" is the symbol for a bad person, and "the jackal" is the symbol for a worse one. Although one of them seems better than the other, in fact both of them are horrible and act vicious. So to the people, there is no difference between them in practice.

The difference between the .? Democratic and Republican parties for Iranian people is like the difference between the yellow dog and the jackal as mentioned in the Iranian proverb above. Both parties are the same against Iranian government and nation. In other words, both parties have repeatedly shown their hostility towards the Iranian government and nation as soon as they have come to power.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal which includes various clauses and a number of legal attachments for both sides was a good benchmark for testing the honesty of the international community, especially the Americans to verify Iran's nuclear behavior.

What has happened so far is that the Iranian side has adhered and implemented JCPOA provisions while the other sides have not fulfilled their commitments under the JCPOA. To understand that how honest the other signatories to the deal have been, we can refer to change of policy in the US after Republicans took office, Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the deal as well as delay of European to implement the JCPOA. **→13**



## Zarif says U.S. worried about its diplomatic failure

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that the United States is afraid of its foreign policy failure.

“The U.S. is worried about its failure at diplomatic stage,” Zarif said in a meeting with members of the Majlis diplomatic faction.

He also said, “The U.S. pressure on Iran is due to Iran’s power.” At the meeting the MPs thanked the foreign minister for his diplomatic performance and denounced the U.S. for sanctioning him.

## Sanction on Zarif a blow to diplomacy: envoy

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s permanent envoy to UN organizations in Vienna has cautioned that recent U.S. sanctions against Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif were a backward move for diplomacy.

In a letter to his international counterparts in Vienna, Kazem Gharibabadi cautioned on the adverse effects of the U.S. sanctions on Zarif and called on the international community to confront the unlawful act, IRNA reported.



Gharibabadi argued that the main reason for the sanctions is because of Zarif’s high capability in representing Iranian people at the international level.

He said that imposing sanctions against a foreign minister of a state-member of the United Nations was a flagrant violation of the principle of international law and damage to diplomacy and multilateralism.

Arguing that the sanctions against Foreign Minister Zarif are a grave backward move for diplomacy and a fatal blow to diplomatic procedures, Gharibabadi said that the U.S. measure is endangering interactions among states.

The Iranian diplomat added a restriction of movement imposed on Zarif by Washington during his recent visit to New York was a gross violation of Article 105 of the UN Charter, Convention 1945 and norms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961.

Resolution 73/212 of the General Assembly calls on the host country to avoid any restriction on diplomats that are resulted from bilateral relations, he said.

The sanctions against Iran’s foreign minister are an offense against diplomats across the world, he said, adding that the U.S. imposed the restrictions on Zarif at a time that the world is in urgent need of diplomacy.

The Iranian representative called on the international community to strongly condemn the illegal move by the U.S. He said that affiliated organizations of the UN and the state-members should get united in defense of the basic principles of international law and against the prejudice.

## To avoid Iran ire, Japan may send ships off Yemen: report

**(Press TV)** — Japanese government sources say Tokyo is not willing to join a U.S.-led naval mission purportedly aimed at protecting shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf, but is mulling over sending ships off Yemen.

The sources told Kyodo news agency that the administration of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is reluctant to participate in the U.S.-led coalition of escorting vessels through the Strait of Hormuz to counter the alleged “Iran threat” amid concerns about possible damage to Tokyo-Tehran friendly ties.

Earlier this week, U.S. Pentagon chief Mark Esper urged Japan to “strongly consider” getting “involved in this type of monitoring of the strait.”

As a compromise, the sources said, Japan is considering sending Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers and P-3C Orion surveillance planes to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait between war-torn Yemen and the Horn of Africa.

“We can’t just do nothing,” a senior Abe administration official said.

The Japanese ships would not be part of the U.S.-proposed mission, though the area of their operations would overlap.

The Japanese government sources noted that Abe hopes to discuss the issue with U.S. President Donald Trump during a meeting on the sidelines of a G7 summit in France later this month.

The United States has been trying to persuade its allies into an international coalition with the declared aim of providing “security” for merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz — though which about a fifth of all oil consumed globally pass — and other strategic Middle Eastern shipping lanes.

Washington claims Tehran has played a role in two separate attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman in May and June, without providing any credible evidence to support the accusations, which Iran has categorically rejected.

Germany and France have so far rebuffed requests from the Trump administration to join the military coalition in the Persian Gulf.

### ■ U.S. pressures Germany to join coalition

A spokesman for the U.S. embassy in Berlin confirmed that Ambassador Richard Grenell and other top diplomats have pressured Germany to join the mission to no avail.

“We’ve formally asked Germany to join France and the UK to help secure the Straits of Hormuz,” a senior embassy official told The Washington Free Beacon.

“Members of the German government have been clear that freedom of navigation should be protected.”

Recently, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas stressed that his country would not join the U.S.-led mission, and warned that it was rather difficult to make progress on the initiative.

Many German politicians have reportedly expressed grave reservations about a U.S.-orchestrated naval mission in the Persian Gulf and fear that any such move could increase the risk of a military aggression on Iran.

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami warned this week that a U.S.-led naval coalition “will only increase regional insecurity”.

Tehran says, over the course of history, Iran has been and will continue to be the most principal preserver of security and shipping freedom in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Sea of Oman.

# Solving problems must be main objective in policy making: Rouhani

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan

Rouhani said on Saturday that solving people’s problems must be the main objective of policy making and decision making.

Rouhani made the remarks at a session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination in which the parliament speaker and Judiciary chief were present among others.

With an indirect reference to the reimposition of sanctions on Iran by the Trump administration, the president said, “Both the people and the government have passed difficult times, however, decisions can be taken in line with economic stability and progress and the people’s prosperity.”

Last year, the Trump administration abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal and ordered old and new sanctions on Iran. The move resulted in a great devaluation of national currency and high price rises. However, nearly after a year the economy is stabilizing.

Rouhani said his administration is making efforts to resolve the people’s economic



problems.

To counter the effects of sanctions, the government is taking compensatory measures.

During the previous session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination

on July 27, four strategies to compensate for budget deficit were approved.

Transferring government’s assets, using forex reserves, selling Islamic bonds, and withdrawing 450 trillion rials (about \$10.714

## Hajj is great opportunity to combat ‘deal of the century’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has issued a message to the great Hajj congregation in which he says unity by the resistance front will make the U.S.-proposed “deal of the century” over the occupied Palestinian lands to fail.

In the message, issued on Saturday, Leader says, “We are inviting everyone to active participation in overcoming this stratagem by the enemy.”

Following is the text of the message posted on khamenei.ir:

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace be upon his exalted, trustworthy messenger, Muhammad the last of the prophets, and his pure progeny, especially the one remaining with Allah on earth, and on his chosen companions and those who faithfully followed them, until the Day of Judgment.

Every year, the time of Hajj is the resort for the Islamic Ummah where they receive the Lord’s mercy. Quran’s call of “And proclaim Hajj among men” [Quran 22:27] is a call to everyone throughout history to come to this distribution of mercy, so that their God-seeking hearts and souls, and their thoughts and views benefit from its blessings; and every year, the lessons and teachings of Hajj propagate throughout the Muslim world by congregations of people.

The Hajj presents a miniature scale of a set of fundamental pillars of the Islamic society by placing the elixir of Dhikr and servitude—which is the main element for the cultivation, progress, and growth of individuals and the

society—next to congregation and unity, which are the symbols of the unified Ummah; the movement around a unique center, and on the path towards a common goal—which are the keys to the endeavor and livelihood of the Ummah based on monotheism—;and through harmony among every Hajj pilgrim, where there is no distinction—which is the sign of removing discrimination and providing everyone with the same opportunity. Every one of the rituals of Hajj including Ihram, Tawaf, Sa’i, wuquf, ramy, movement and repose, is a symbolic reminder of a part of the picture presented by Islam of its ideal society.

Exchange of knowledge and assets between people of different countries and places far apart, and spreading awareness and experience, asking for the news of one another, removing barriers of misunderstanding, bringing the hearts closer, and storing strength to confront common enemies are the vital and magnificent outcomes of Hajj, which otherwise would not be achieved through hundreds of the usual and typical gatherings.

The ritual of Bara’ah which means refusing every instance of mercilessness, cruelty, wrongdoing and corruption of the tyrants of any time, and rising against intimidation and extortion by the arrogant throughout history, is one of the great blessings of Hajj, and an opportunity for oppressed Muslim

nations. Today, repudiating the front of shirk [polytheism] and kufr [disbelief] made up of the arrogant powers—the foremost of them being the U.S.—equals refusing the killing of the oppressed, and waging wars. It equals condemning the sources of terrorism, including ISIS and the American Black Water. It is the Islamic Ummah’s shout at the child killers of the Zionist regime, and their backers and cohorts. It is a condemnation of the United States and their associates’ warmongering, in the sensitive regions of West Asia and North Africa, who have pushed the nations’ pain and suffering beyond limits and who impose on them new catastrophes every day. It means refusing racism, and discrimination based on geography, race, and color of skin. It means detesting the arrogant and vicious behavior of aggressive and seditious powers against dignified, noble and just behavior recommended to everyone by Islam.

These are some of the benedictions of the Abrahamic Hajj that the pure Islam calls us to. And this is the incarnation of an important part of the ideals of the Islamic society that every year, through every one of the participating Muslims, and directed by Hajj, puts on a grand and rich spectacle, calling everyone through a clear language, to try to create such a society.

**The stratagem of the ‘deal of the century’ prepared by the oppressive U.S., and its treasonous cohorts, is a crime against the society of humankind, and not just the Palestinian nation.**

## UN official calls Zarif ‘champion of multilateralism’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ugochi Daniels, the United Nations Human Settlements Program Coordinator and Resident envoy to Iran, has said that Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is “champion of multilateralism”.

“In my encounters with Zarif, he has, on multiple occasions, emphasized the importance of multilateralism; he is a champion of multilateralism,” IRNA quoted him as saying in an interview published on Saturday.

On escalating tensions between Iran and the United States, she said the UN stance is supporting dialogue instead of resorting to measures that fuel escalation.

The Trump administration is tightening sanctions pressure against Iran and is showing teeth to Iran by deploying sophisticated



weaponry including aircraft carriers, B-52 bombers and F-22 fighter jets in the Persian Gulf region.

“The secretary-general has asked for maximum restraint at all levels. We - at the UN - encourage actions for multilateral dialogue and cooperation,” she said.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday that a letter by Iran, which asks the United Nations for pushback against the U.S. sanctions on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad “is being circulated to the Security Council”.

Dujarric added the UN chief calls on all parties to avoid any actions that would escalate an already very tense situation, according to Xinhua.

In separate statements on July 31, 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.

Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran’s permanent representative to the United Nations, wrote a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio

Guterres on Tuesday protesting the U.S. sanctions on Zarif, saying that this move signifies a “gross violation” of the UN Charter.

“Ironically, the officials of the current administration of the United States have claimed that the illegal sanctions have been imposed due to the role and position of our Foreign Minister, who is the responsible authority for the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Infatuated with rogue, unreasonable conducts at the international level, this well signifies that the U.S. regime despises diplomacy, which is one of the greatest achievements of humanity to preserve and uphold peace and security among nations. It reveals the deeply-rooted hypocrisy of the United States’ authorities in their different but paradoxical claims,” he said.

During a session of the council on July 13, the amendments to the national budget plan for the current calendar year (started on March 21) had been approved.

The generalities of a modified budget plan, which has been restructured in line with the country’s “resilience economy”, were approved.

The modifications consist of four major parts, which are “sustainable revenue resources”, “effective expenditure”, “promoting stability, development and justice” as well as “fundamental modifications of budgetary system”.

They are aimed at reducing the country’s dependence on oil money and promoting economic stability under the umbrella term “resistance economy”, ordered by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

It was decided in that session that the council would study the priorities in the amendment plan in its next gathering.

The elite of the Muslim world, some of whom are now present at Hajj from different countries, have a crucial and important duty. These lessons must be transferred to all nations and the public through their efforts and ingenuity, and moral exchange of ideas, motivations, experience, and knowledge must be realized by them.

Today, one of the most important issues of the Muslim world is Palestine, which is at the top of Muslims’ political issues, regardless of their school of thought, race, and language. The greatest injustice in recent history has happened in Palestine. In this painful affair, all that a nation had—their land, homes, farms, belongings, dignity, and identity—was confiscated. With God’s assistance, this nation has not surrendered to defeat and has not given up, and today, they are on the battlefields more enthusiastic, and braver than yesterday. But the ultimate outcome requires assistance from all Muslims. The stratagem of the ‘Deal of the Century’ prepared by the oppressive U.S., and its treasonous cohorts, is a crime against the society of humankind, and not just the Palestinian nation. We are inviting everyone to active participation in overcoming this stratagem by the enemy, and with the power and help of God, we consider this and every other ruse by the Arrogant Front doomed to failure against the efforts, and faith of the Resistance Front.

Almighty Allah said: “Or do they intend a plot? But those who defy Allah are themselves involved in a Plot!” [Quran 52:42]. True is what Almighty Allah said. I supplicate Almighty God for success, blessing, comfort, and acceptance of prayers for every one of you respected pilgrims.

## China, France to work on reducing tension on Iran nuclear issue

*By staff and agency*

In a phone conversation on Friday with Emmanuel Bonne, diplomatic counselor to French President Emmanuel Macron, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing is willing to work with France to prevent further escalation of tensions on the Iran nuclear deal.

According to Xinhua, during the phone talks, Wang expressed China’s support for the mediation efforts France has made to resolve the stalemate on the Iran nuclear agreement, saying that China has also made huge efforts in saving the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Adhering to the deal means safeguarding multilateralism, safeguarding fairness and justice, and safeguarding regional security and stability, said Wang.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, China is willing to join hands with France to safeguard the authority and validity of the international agreement, encourage all parties to show flexibility, and, in particular, prevent further escalation of the tensions,

said Wang.

For his part, Bonne briefed Wang on the current situation of the nuclear deal, expressing willingness to enhance coordination and cooperation with China in a bid to create conditions for easing the tensions through dialogue.

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.

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.



# U.S. attempt to form military coalition in Persian Gulf failed miserably: general

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Brigadier General Ahmadreza Pour-dastan, head of the Iranian Army's Strategic Studies, said on Saturday that that U.S. attempt to form a military coalition in the Persian Gulf has failed miserably.

Pointing to the small number of countries that have accepted the U.S. request to take part in its coalition, Pourdastan said the move failed even before it started, Fars reported.

"The Americans intend to form a coalition but when we review this issue, we see that except for one or two countries, other states have rejected to join the coalition," he said.

The general underlined that all moves on the ground, air and sea as well as those in and outside borders are monitored and analyzed by the Iranian armed forces.

He added that Iran adopts necessary measures and makes preparations proportionate to those moves.

The United States has been trying to persuade its allies into an international coalition with the claimed aim of providing "security" for merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz — which accommodates around a third of global seaborne oil traffic — and other strategic Middle Eastern shipping lanes.

Washington's call has, however, been met



with little interest from its allies, which are concerned that joining such an alliance could drag them into a conflict with Iran.

Many European and Asian countries have, in one way or another, declined to join the alliance.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Monday said Berlin favored a European mission but warned it was rather difficult to make progress on the initiative.

"At the moment the Britons would rather

join an American mission. We won't do that," said Maas.

On Wednesday, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami, in separate phone talks with his Qatari, Omani and Kuwaiti counterparts, warned that the military coalition that the U.S. is attempting to form in the Persian Gulf will undermine regional security. General Hatami also highlighted Iran's continued efforts to maintain peace and security all over the Persian Gulf, the Sea

of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz.

He stressed that the region's security should be provided by the regional states, calling for a constructive dialogue among the neighboring countries to boost their cooperation regarding the matter.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also condemned the attempts, stressing that the presence of trans-regional military forces in the strategic region would act as a "source of insecurity."

Washington claims Tehran has played a role in two separate attacks on oil tankers in the Sea of Oman in May and June, without providing any credible evidence to support the accusations.

Iran has categorically rejected the charges.

Tensions have been running high between Iran and the U.S. since Washington's decision in May last year to abandon the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions on Tehran as part of a "maximum pressure" campaign.

The tensions hit a new high after Iran shot down a U.S. spy drone on June 20, following its violation of Iranian airspace. Iran has warned Washington that it wouldn't hesitate to shoot down more drones.

## Army unveils homegrown surveillance radar system

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Army on Saturday unveiled a new surveillance radar system, named Falaq, which can track different air threats.

The advanced radar system was unveiled at a ceremony attended by Chief of the Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard, Mehr reported.

Based on Gamma surveillance radars, Falaq can track different ballistic and cruise missiles as well as UAVs in a range of 400 kilometers.

As a consequence of sanctions, Iran has not been able to repair its imported Gamma radars, which eventually caused Iranian experts of the Air Defense Force to recreate the system.

"Once again, the brave youths of the Army Air Defense

Force succeeded in overhauling another system which was out of operation for so long.

They carried out a difficult job which even the manufacturers of this system couldn't do," said General Sabahifard while addressing the ceremony.

Sabahifard added that Falaq has lots of capabilities and is able to identify different cruise and ballistic missiles as well as stealth and unmanned aircraft.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great headways in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the defense sphere.

Tehran maintains that its military might poses no threat

to regional countries, stressing that the Islamic Republic's defense doctrine is entirely based on deterrence.

Iran plans to unveil a homegrown long-range air defense system, named "Bavar-373", on the National Day of the Defense Industry, which falls on August 22 this year.

Bavar-373 is a domestically built long-range mobile air defense system which was developed after the UN Security Council passed a resolution banning the sale of advanced weapons to the Islamic Republic, which in turn suspended Iran's purchase of the Russian S-300.

A distinguishing feature of Bavar-373 is its vertical launching system with square launchers, mostly used for air defense on warships.

## Le Drian to Trump: 'No permission' needed for dialogue with Iran

By staff and agency

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Friday that Paris "needs no permission" to engage in dialogue with Iran, responding to an earlier tweet by President Donald Trump scolding French President Emmanuel Macron over the matter.

"On Iran, France speaks with complete sovereignty. It is working hard for peace and security in the region, it is working to facilitate a deescalation in tensions and it needs no permission to do so," Le Drian said in a statement.

Trump had earlier blamed Macron for sending "mixed signals" to Tehran.

In May 2018, Trump unilaterally abandoned the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — the official name for the nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers — and introduced old and new sanctions on Iran. Trump's administration has also sought to further scupper implementation of the deal by pressuring remaining signatories, specifically the European parties to the deal.

While expressing opposition to the U.S. revocation of the deal, European signatories (France, Britain and Germany) have so far failed to ensure that Iran receives the economic benefits promised under the deal but hampered by U.S. sanctions.

Trump's comments chastising Macron came two days after the French president spoke with his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani.

During the phone call, Macron stressed that France was committed to upholding the JCPOA and finding a solution that could both benefit Iran and be accepted by all sides of the deal, Press TV reported.

Macron also welcomed a proposal from Rouhani calling for the formation of a joint panel of experts seeking solutions to regional and international disputes.

Macron recently stepped up diplomatic contact with Tehran in a bid to allegedly cease the U.S. economic war against Iran and deescalate tensions in the region.

"That's what President Macron is doing, in full transparency with our partners, above



all our European partners," Le Drian said of the initiative, adding that Macron was "obviously keeping American authorities informed".

The French diplomatic push comes as the U.S. has taken a quasi-warlike posture against Iran in recent months, stepping up provocative military deployments in the Middle East and calling for the formation

of a "multinational maritime" naval deployment in the region.

The initiative has so far failed to receive much support among Washington's key allies.

Iran has repeatedly stressed that foreign presence in the Persian Gulf is a lead cause for tension and that only regional cooperation between neighboring countries can assure the security of the vital international energy hub.

## Russian envoy warns about ultra-regional presence in Persian Gulf

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Russia's ambassador to Iran has warned about any mistake by the ultra-regional forces in the Persian Gulf.

Levan Dzhagaryan, speaking to national TV in an interview broadcast on Saturday, emphasized that the U.S.-led maritime coalition has already faced opposition, including by Washington's allies.

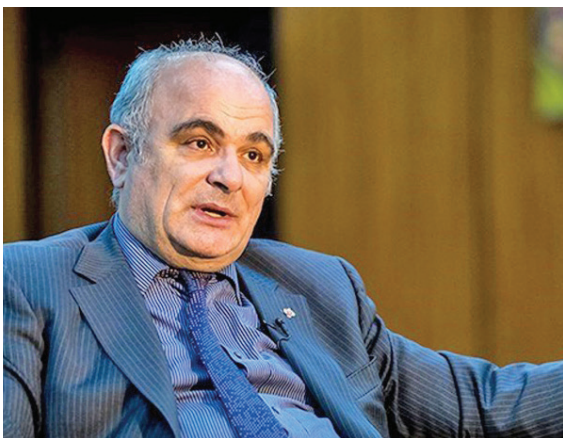
"The U.S. seems so far away from its aims. Some of the countries do not want to be puppets of the U.S. and we support such policy for it is a realistic one," said Dzhagaryan.

The United States has been trying to persuade its allies into an international coalition under the claim that it wants to provide "security" for merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz — through which about a fifth of all oil consumed globally pass — and other strategic Middle Eastern shipping lanes.

Washington claims Tehran has played a role in two separate attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman in May and June, without providing any credible evidence to support the accusations. Iran has categorically rejected the claims.

Germany and France have so far rebuffed requests from the Trump administration to join the military coalition in the Persian Gulf.

Asked about Moscow's proposal to build a security system in the Persian Gulf, Dzhagaryan said, "Although Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has



discussed the issue at a recent news conference, I would like to explain further that the recent suggestion made by the Russian Federation is focused on the security consortium in the Persian Gulf."

The Russian diplomat went on to say that the proposed plan was introduced at the UN Security Council to the Persian Gulf states. He also highlighted that Russia has good and friendly ties with Iran and its neighbors, calling the proposed plan an invitation for dialogue and

in the rule of law."

A spokesman for U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman in Manhattan, whose office represented the government, declined to comment.

"We are obviously pleased," Alavi's lawyers Daniel Ruzumna and John Gleeson said in a joint statement. "All we have ever wanted and asked for is a fair shake."

## Appeals court overturns U.S. verdict allowing seizure of Iran-linked skyscraper

**1 →** But in Friday's decision, Circuit Judge Richard Wesley faulted trial judge Katherine Forrest, who is now in private practice, for "a troubling pattern of errors on relatively straightforward issues."

Wesley said these included admitting videotapes of former Alavi board members repeatedly invoking their constitutional right against self-incrimination, and re-

fusing to let Alavi gather evidence to show the government sued too late.

"If this case returns to trial, a properly informed jury may or may not find for the government - a topic on which we have no opinion," Wesley wrote. "But getting to any outcome requires a fair and procedurally adequate process, something that has been lacking in this case. There are no shortcuts



## Ambassador says U.S. sanctioning of 80 million Iranians equals 'economic terrorism'

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to Iraq, Iraj Masjedi, said on Saturday that the U.S. unilateral sanctions imposed on 80 million Iranians amounts to "economic terrorism".

Masjedi said the United States' hegemonic government has violated all the legal norms and the international humanitarian law by imposing arbitrary sanctions on Iran and initiating a full-scale economic war against the Iranian people, IRNA reported.



This economic war has been rightly described as economic terrorism, the ambassador said.

With the grace of God, the criminal acts of the U.S. and its allies will fail once again, he predicted.

U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed several rounds of sanctions on Iran after he withdrew the U.S. from the multinational nuclear deal last year.

Trump has even introduced full ban on Iran's oil export, a move which has been described as an economic war against Tehran.

The sanctions were imposed regardless of Iran's full compliance with its commitments under the nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was struck between Iran and six major powers, including the United States in July 2015 and went into effect in January 2016.

Iran's leaders have described Washington's "maximum pressure" policy toward Tehran as an act of "economic terrorism" aimed to pressure the Iranian people.

In an interview with BBC Persian in November 2018, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Iranian officials must listen to Washington "if they want their people to eat".

## Army chief: Iranian armed forces are 'invincible'

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's armed forces are invincible and have no fear of mounting threats by enemies, the commander of the Army Ground Force has said.

Speaking to IRNA in an interview published on Sunday, Brigadier General Kiumars Heidari said the forces under his command are well-prepared, especially at the border areas, to defend the country.

He added that armed forces are deployed at borders but it does not mean that there is any threat to Iranian border areas, saying all movements of the enemies are being monitored by the ground force to ensure full security.

Armed forces take advantage of domestic equipment, techniques and tactics, Heidari said, adding that Iran will thwart the enemies' foolish and excessive demand.

Elaborating on a rapid-deployment strategy of the Army Ground Force for urgent operations, he said that all units of the Army have changed into combative arrangement to respond to threats in the shortest possible time.

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

The drone was shot by homegrown air defense missile system called "Khordad-3rd".

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

Failing against Iran single-handedly, U.S. President Donald Trump has recently been calling for an international coalition to maintain military presence in the Persian Gulf region.

Earlier this month, Heidari told reporters that Iranian forces are well-prepared to defend the country against any threat being posed by trans-regional forces.

On July 17, the Ground Force of the Army unveiled a brand new drone capable of detecting, intercepting and targeting threats on missions inside and outside Iranian airspace.

The fully indigenous Mohajer 6 was made in cooperation between the Army, the Ministry of Defense, and Quds Aviation Industries, said Commander of Specialized Drone Manufacturing Unit of the Army Brigadier General Shahram Hassannejad back then.

## Guardian Council says won't be affected by pressure

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council will not be influenced by pressures when vetting candidates for the 2020 parliamentary elections, its spokesman said on Saturday.

"Our criterion to vet the candidates is law and we will not be influenced by pressures," Abbasali Kadkhodaei said, Fars reported.

Under Article 99 of Iran's Constitution, the responsibility to supervise elections lays with the Guardian Council.

The body consists of six theologians appointed by Supreme Leader and six jurists nominated by Judiciary and approved by parliament.

Iran's next parliamentary election will be held on February 21, 2020.

The candidates will have until December 7 to register.

Last month, Guardian Council secretary Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said the council's senior clerics and jurists do not consider political and factional rivalries when doing their duties.

"They do not apply their personal opinions and their criterion is to carry out their legal duty," he said.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	255306.4
IFX	3433.33

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,347 rials
GBP	50,547 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$58.53/b
WTI	\$54.50/b
OPEC Basket	\$57.82/b
Gold	\$1,498.45/oz
Silver	\$17.04/oz
Platinum	\$864.55/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Paper, cardboard production up 4% in 4 months on year

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**– Production of paper and cardboard in Iran rose four percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22) compared to the same period of time in the previous year, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday, quoting Deputy Industry Minister Farshad Moqimi as saying.

The official has recently announced that export of papers and cardboards from Iran has risen 63 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019) from its previous year.

Moqimi, who was speaking in one of the specialized meetings on investigating domestic industry status attended by some representatives from paper production associations, also said that Iran's paper and cardboard import has fallen 18 percent in the previous year, IRNA reported.

IMF says trade war threatens China's growth, pushes for an equitable resolution

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is urging the world's two largest economies to resolve the escalating trade war quickly and fairly.

As per cnbc.com, in a new report published Friday by the executive board at the IMF, directors recommended a "comprehensive" agreement on trade that avoids "undermining the international system."



"China and its trading partners should work cooperatively and constructively to settle their disputes in a rules-based multilateral framework and make joint efforts to reform the WTO in a good faith and win-win approach," Jin Zhongxia, executive director for China at the IMF, said in a press release. "That is not only good for China and the U.S., but also for the international community as a whole."

The report outlined tariff-related headwinds for China's economy. Directors emphasized that China would benefit from "further opening up of the economy and other reforms that enhance competition." The country's GDP growth slowed to 6.6 percent in 2018 and is projected to moderate to 6.2 percent this year, according to the IMF. China's planned stimulus was offset by the U.S. imposing tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods.

The IMF said trade tensions have "inevitably affected" the Chinese economy, "but the impact is manageable."

"While a moderate slowdown is expected in 2019, uncertainty around trade tensions remains high and risks are tilted to the downside," the IMF directors said.

The trade war boiled over

The trade war boiled over this week as China announced it would stop buying American agricultural products in retaliation for Trump's surprise tariffs threat. China also allowed its currency to drop against the dollar to a key level unseen since 2008. The Trump administration later labeled Beijing a "currency manipulator."

The IMF pushed back on that designation in the report and said that "estimates suggest little FX intervention by the PBC." Still, the IMF said greater exchange rate policy transparency would be important. Some directors called for disclosure of currency interventions by China.

On Friday, President Donald Trump said that the U.S. government will no longer do business with Chinese telecom giant Huawei. The administration blacklisted Huawei in May over national security concerns.

This comes after Trump abruptly ended the cease-fire with China by announcing 10% tariffs on \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods last week, claiming China failed to buy U.S. farm goods as it promised. The threat sent shock waves through financial markets and caused the S&P 500 to have its worst day of the year on Monday.

"In the event a comprehensive and durable agreement is not reached, uncertainty is likely to persist and weigh on both the near- and longer-term outlook as China's access to foreign markets and technology may be significantly reduced," the IMF said.

1,100 Iranian SMEs exporting products to global markets



Plans for reviving idle SMEs

Underlining the importance of SMEs in the country's economy, the official mentioned some of his organization's plans for supporting such enterprises, noting that the industry ministry is also fully supporting ISIPO's efforts in this regards.

"Although the SMEs have the potential to provide nearly 900,000 job opportunities across the country, but currently 22 percent of the SMEs are idle and there are only 710,000 people working in active units," Salehinia said.

One of the major programs that ISIPO is following regarding the SMEs is reviving idle units and helping them to get back into business.

"ISIPO plans to help revive 1300 idle SMEs by the end of the current year [Iranian calendar year which ends on March 19, 2020]," Salehinia said.

Activities and exports

Elsewhere in his remarks the ISIPO head mentioned the Iranian SMEs major areas of activities, saying "Iranian SMEs are currently operating in a variety of areas including industry, petrochemicals, food sector, energy and etc."

According to the data provided by the official, nearly 17 percent of the country's SMEs are active in the food industry, while 22 percent are working in petrochemicals sector, 27 percent in steel and metal products, 12 percent in non-metal minerals, five percent in textile, six percent in services, six percent in cellulose products and etc.

The official noted that SMEs exported about \$4 billion worth of commodities in



the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019).

He further said that for the time being, 210 foreign investors are collaborating with Iranian SMEs by which \$2 billion worth of investment has been attracted.

"Over 68 export consortiums have also been formed by domestic SMEs in order to export similar products," he added.

ISIPO plans for supporting SMEs

Further in his remarks, Salehinia mentioned some of his organization's plans and programs for supporting the country's small and medium-sized enterprises including financial support through government funds and the budget allocated for supporting domestic production and providing guarantee for SMEs which require bank facilities through

Iraq, Iran consider removing dollar from bilateral trade: envoy



ECONOMY TEHRAN

– Iraqi Ambassador to Iran Sa'd Javad Qandil said his country and Iran are considering mechanisms to use local currencies in their bilateral trade to reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar, Mehr news agency reported.

The two neighbors are holding talks to find the best way to facilitate their financial transactions, the ambassador noted.

The Iraqi diplomat once again reiterated his government's clear stance against the U.S.' unilateral sanctions against Iran, saying such restrictions are against the international rules and regulations.

Noting that the bilateral trades between Iran and Iraq have not been affected by the sanctions in the past year, Qandil expressed his country's readiness to increase the level of cooperation with Iran in various economic spheres.

Iraq is currently Iran's biggest trade partner and the two countries have been taking significant steps to improve their mutual trade over the past few years.

In early February, central banks of Iran and Iraq reached

an agreement to set up a payment mechanism to facilitate banking ties and boost trade between the two countries.

In the meeting, Central Bank of Iran Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati who visited Iraq to discuss expansion of banking relations, expressed hope that the trade balance between the two neighboring countries would increase even more.

In early May, officials from the two countries held a meeting in Tehran to discuss establishing an Iran-Iraq trade committee.

According to Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), in the meeting, the two sides discussed several issues including joint investment and establishment of industrial zones, facilitating the transit of goods, facilitating business travels, organizing pilgrimage and health tourism, as well as solving the existing problems regarding mutual trade.

Iran's exports to Iraq have increased by 37 in the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) and the two neighbors have it on agenda to boost their mutual trade to \$20 billion by 2021.



Auto part makers calling for Industry Ministry's new policies



ECONOMY TEHRAN

– Domestic auto part manufacturers want Industry Ministry to make new policies that facilitate their activities, the secretary of Iranian Auto Part Manufacturers Association told IRNA on Saturday.

Arash Mohebi-Nejad mentioned four major problems that auto part manufacturers are facing as lack of liquidity, prices which should be modified, difficulty of supplying raw materials both from inside and outside the country, and settling credit purchases.

He said some of the problems can be removed through policies made by the Industry Ministry and through cooperation of the auto part manufacturers, for example floating prices for the parts could be a resolution.

Industry Ministry has been recently following up the policies for supporting domestic auto part manufacturers.

In mid-May, Industry Minister Reza Rahmani issued a directive on "strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts".

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

Highlighting the orders of the Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on supporting production in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), which is named the year of "Pickup in Production" by the supreme leader, Rahmani stressed that cooperation among all car makers, auto



part manufacturers, knowledge-based companies and enterprises is vital for strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts.

This movement should be all-out promoted to combat sanctions and also prevent from exit of foreign currency from the country, the minister noted.

UK economy contracts for first time since 2012 amid Brexit worries



Johnson set up showdown

On winning the top job last month, Johnson set up a showdown with the EU by vowing to negotiate a new divorce deal and threatening that, if the bloc refused, he would take Britain out on Oct. 31 without a deal.

But the economic hazard warning lights are flashing just as the trade battle between the United States and China unsettles the world economy.

"This is a challenging period across the global economy, with growth slowing in many countries," finance minister Sajid Javid said.

"But the fundamentals of the British economy are strong – wages are growing, employment is at a record high and we're forecast to grow faster than Germany, Italy and Japan this year."

Many investors say a no-deal Brexit would send shock waves through the world economy, tip Britain into a recession, roil financial markets and weaken London's position as the pre-eminent international financial center.

The Bank of England last week predicted that growth will only stage a limited pick-up to a quarterly rate of 0.3% during the current quarter and that growth for the year as a whole will drop to 1.3%.

Britain mired in recession

June manufacturing data was also unexpectedly poor and output for the quarter contracted at the fastest rate since early 2009, when Britain was mired in recession.

Private-sector business surveys have shown the manufacturing and construction sectors both contracted in July, while the larger services sector eked out only modest growth.



Britain's economy has slowed since June 2016's vote to leave the EU, with annual growth rates dropping from more than 2% before the referendum to expand by 1.4% last year.

Ever since the 2016 EU referendum, the pound has gyrated to the rhetoric of the Brexit divorce: after the result was announced, it had the biggest one-day fall since the era of free-floating exchange rates was introduced in the early 1970s.

The finance minister-in-waiting for the opposition Labour Party, John McDonnell, said: The "Tories' Brexit bungling, including Boris Johnson now taking us towards no-deal, is breaking the economy."

"It's time for an end to this incompetence from successive Conservative governments – we need a general election and a Labour government to turn this country around."



# Karoun Power Plant to supply electricity to Yadavaran Oilfield

**E N E R G Y** TEHRAN — Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) plans to connect Yadavaran Oilfield to West Karoun Power plant, a measure that will ensure continuous and uninterrupted production of oil in this joint field, Shana reported on Saturday.

"The Yadavaran Oilfield development project is the first project which will be powered through the West Karoun Power Plant," Hojat Norouzi, director of Yadavaran Oilfield development project at PEDEC, said.

According to Norouzi, PEDEC put it on agenda to supply the project's electricity from the mentioned power plant in order to avoid interruptions in oil production due to electricity shortages.

The official said connecting the field to West Karoun Power Plant was one of the prerequisites of the Yadavaran Oilfield development plan, adding that "After conducting necessary studies and coordina-



tion with the power plant, the required equipment were prepared and drilling of cabling channels will begins this week."

As reported, Yadavaran Oil field development project is currently consuming 17 megawatts (MW) of electricity which is

being supplied by five gas generators. Three of the five generators are in service and the other two are on standby.

In late July, PEDEC Head Touraj Dehqani said the first phase of Karoun Power Plant is nearly finished and will go operational soon.

"Uninterrupted production of oil in the West Karoun region depends on the continuous and reliable supply of electricity, which is why construction of the West Karoun Power Plant is of particular importance," Dehqani told Shana.

"According to the plan, within the next two months, electricity supply for Yadavaran Oilfield and West Karoun Pump House would be ensured," he said.

Yadavaran is one of the five oilfields known as West Karoun oilfields.

West Karoun region which includes five major fields namely North Azadegan, South Azadegan, North Yaran, South Yaran and Yadavaran is prioritized among the country's top development projects.

## Oil demand growth almost halves amid fears of economic slowdown

The world's demand for oil is growing at the slowest rate since the financial crisis over fears of a global economic slowdown, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.

As per theguardian.com, the agency said fears about the economic impact of the U.S. trade war with China have caused oil prices to slide despite flaring tensions in the Middle East which would typically cause markets to spike.

Oil demand growth almost halved in the first five months of the year compared with the same period last year, according to the IEA.

Its latest monthly report revealed that demand grew by just under 600,000 barrels of oil a day this year, the weakest growth since 2008 when fears over the looming global recession caused demand growth to stall.

Growth was almost solely driven by rising demand in China, where oil demand grew by 500,000 barrels a day.

Meanwhile, oil demand across the OECD countries fell for the third consecutive quarter.

"There have been concerns about the health of the global economy expressed in recent (IEA reports) and shown by reduced expectations for oil demand growth. Now, the

situation is becoming even more uncertain," the IEA said.

### ■ The future oil demand is fragile

The Paris-based group added its outlook for future oil demand growth was "fragile" and more likely to fall again than to be revised upwards.

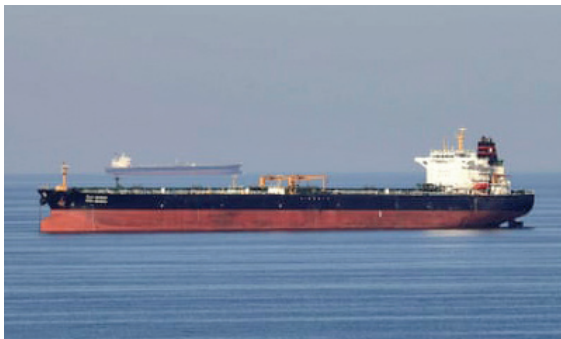
The gloomy oil market forecasts come after global oil prices slumped this week amid rising U.S.-China tensions, and signs the trade war may drag on.

The oil price has tumbled by over 10% in recent weeks, from around \$64 (£53) a barrel at the end of July to less than \$57 (£47) a barrel this week. The market is down by almost a quarter from May when oil traded at almost \$75 (£62) a barrel. The oil price slide has come despite a tense standoff between Iran and the U.S. in the Strait of Hormuz.

Saudi Arabia is leading plans to rein in oil output to avoid an oversupply in the market and further price falls.

The IEA warned that by next year, rising oil supply output from non-OPEC countries is expected to grow by 2.2m barrels a day in 2020, which could cause oil prices to fall further if there is not enough demand to absorb the extra supply.

The U.S. investment bank Goldman Sachs has predict-



ed that the U.S.-China trade war could extend beyond the November 2020 U.S. presidential election, as both sides toughened their stances this week.

Beijing accused the U.S. of "deliberately destroying international order" with "unilateralism and protectionism", just days after Washington accused China of acting as a currency manipulator.

## Asian LNG prices edge higher as buyers return

Asian spot prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) edged up this week amid increased market activity driven by hot weather in parts of Japan, South Korea and China, with several buyers looking for cargoes.

As per hellenicshippingnews.com, spot prices for delivery in northeast Asia in September are estimated at \$4.20 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), up 10 cents from last week. Prices for October are estimated at around \$4.75/mmBtu.

After some deals were done below \$4.00/mmBtu last week for the first time in the past three to four years, this week's deals were concluded largely slightly above \$4.00/mmBtu, trade sources said.

China's Guangzhou Gas has bought a cargo for August delivery from Glencore for over \$4.00/mmBtu and India's Reliance Industries bought a September cargo above \$4/mmBtu.

Japan's Tohoku Electric Power was seeking a cargo for delivery from late August to early September.

In the Atlantic, Colombia's Calamari im-



port project was seeking a small cargo for late August-early September delivery.

Some winter demand started to appear, with Turkey's Botas closing a tender for four winter delivery cargoes.

Pakistan issued a tender for the supply of 10 liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes between the start of October and the end of December closing on Sept. 5. In northeast Asia, winter demand is expected to emerge later, however.

"Weather forecasts for northeast Asia now suggest that much of the rest of August will be

hotter than normal," Energy Aspects said in its Global LNG Panorama report this week.

"While this is likely to lead to a bigger run on LNG stocks than if the weather was near average, particularly in Korea and Japan, any replacement buying is only likely to start showing up in late September or October," the report added.

Some support to spot prices came from a jump in European prices late last week, an LNG trader said, adding that a deal was done at around \$4.40-4.50/mmBtu on the price jump.

The rise in European prices was driven by short covering, however, with prices levelling off this week as European market is facing a full storage situation next month.

### ■ Keeping global LNG market oversupplied

LNG supply offers remained ample, keeping the global LNG market significantly oversupplied. In the Atlantic basin, Angola LNG offered a late August-early September delivery cargo, while GAIL (India) offered three cargoes from its U.S. offtake for loading over October, November and December. In Asia Pacific, projects in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Brunei and Australia were among those that issued sell tenders. Australia is expected to maintain strong exports, a market source said.

A Chevron executive told investors last week its Australian facilities' output was better than expected.

"Reliability is coming up, we have extra production over and above what we had planned and so all that production is going to be exposed to spot prices," he said.

## Key to those record-low solar bids? Rosy merchant income assumptions

By Jason Deign

Solar developers are relying on merchant sales to supplement their revenues as bids fall below a level that can be sustained through power-purchase agreements alone. Or at least that's the view taken by analysts who can't work out how the projects will survive otherwise.

Last week, for example, an auction in Portugal saw bids hit a worldwide record low of 14.76 euros \$16.48 per megawatt-hour.

Such prices are not reflective of the true levelized cost of energy for utility-scale solar in Portugal, said Tom Heggarty, senior analyst at Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables.

"We believe that bidders are planning to sell into the wholesale power market at the end of the 15-year contracts on offer, and as such they're making a bet on merchant pricing from years 16 to 30 of the asset's lifetime," he said.

It's a risky bet. Wood Mackenzie analysis suggests the Portuguese auction bidders would need to get wholesale power prices averaging at least €30 (\$34) per megawatt-hour to get a positive equity internal rate of return (IRR).

To see a positive IRR-weighted average cost of capital spread, meanwhile, the wholesale price would have to be around €50 (\$56). And all of this is with some pretty optimistic assumptions on the part of the analysts.

### ■ The capital expenditure estimations

Heggarty said the analysis assumed projects would be built at a price of just €600 (\$670) per kilowatt of installed capacity, at the low end of capital expenditure estimations for Portugal.

The calculations also assumed a capacity factor of around 24 percent, most likely only achievable using bifacial modules on single-axis trackers.

"Such bets clearly represent a significant risk due to the many uncertainties around forecasting wholesale power prices 15 to 30 years ahead," Heggarty said.

By the time these projects reach the end of their PPAs, Portugal should be well on the way to 100 percent renewable power penetration, he said.

"We would expect to see significant daytime wholesale



power price erosion, without a lot of build-out of energy storage," said Heggarty. This level of spreadsheet optimism is not unique to Portugal, nor to the solar industry for that matter.

In a tweet last month, the vice president of development at U.S.-based Scale Microgrids claimed it was "apparently common practice" to bid on PPAs that produce negative net present values (NPVs) "with a 'thesis' for getting it positive later." He said a financier had told him that these bids were going forward because "it's my team's job to win deals and HQ has deployment targets."

Bloomberg New Energy Finance's head of solar analysis, Jenny Chase, confirmed that seemingly negative NPV PPA bids had been seen "a lot" since the advent of renewable energy auctions. Calculating the levelized cost of energy needed to match many auction results was "incredibly difficult with the assumptions we have from mainstream providers," she said. "What you have to do (is) stretch those assumptions to really painful levels."

### ■ Overly optimistic assumptions

In some cases, developers could be excused for making

overly optimistic assumptions because they could reasonably rely on technology and maintenance cost reductions taking place before a project was commissioned.

This is a fair bet with rapidly evolving technologies such as offshore wind and was certainly the case with solar in the earlier stages of its evolution. But in recent years, levelized cost of energy reductions for solar have been tapering off.

Instead, the hope is that merchant sales will bulk out the figures once a project's PPA expires. "No financiers will be actively looking for negative NPV," asserted Heggarty.

"What we're seeing is that as assumed project lifetimes increase to 30 years and in some cases beyond, investors are seeing that they need less revenue from the contracts they're bidding on through auctions."

And while that's a big gamble, Chase said the potential downside has to be viewed in context. "By and large, what will happen is that the equity investors in the plant will not get quite what they were looking for," she said.

"But if they end up getting 4 percent instead of 6 percent, it's probably not the end of the world."

(Source: greentechmedia.com)

## Strong OPEC cuts slightly tightening oil market in the short term

OPEC's crude oil production dropped by 200,000 bpd in July from June, and helped by additional cuts of 100,000 bpd from the non-OPEC part of the production cut coalition, the market balance in the short term has tightened slightly, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Friday, but warned that the slightly tighter market is a "temporary phenomenon."

According to IEA's estimate reported by TASS, OPEC's compliance with the production cuts that were extended into 2020 in early July was 119 percent last month, while the non-OPEC countries part of the deal showed overall compliance of 107 percent with their share of the cuts.



"Robust compliance with OPEC+ supply cuts and losses from Venezuela and Iran saw OPEC oil production fall by 2 mb/d versus July 2018," the IEA said in its Oil Market Report.

Saudi Arabia's production in July was 700,000 bpd below its quota under the OPEC+ deal, "in a clear sign of its determination to support market re-balancing," the IEA said.

On Thursday, reports emerged that Saudi Arabia had approached other members of OPEC to discuss possible steps they can take to arrest a slide in oil prices that have brought them to the lowest in seven months.

Deeper production cuts at leading producer Saudi Arabia, lower output at Iran, and outages in Libya and Venezuela sent OPEC's crude oil production in July falling to its lowest level since 2011, the monthly Reuters survey found last week.

The IEA estimates that OPEC's crude oil production was 29.7 million bpd in July. Should the cartel keep that output level through the rest of the year, this would imply a draw in global stocks of 700,000 bpd in the second half of 2019, also assisted by slowing growth pace of non-OPEC production, the Paris-based agency said.

The slight market tightening, however, will be shattered again next year, as the IEA expects "very strong" non-OPEC production growth at 2.2 million bpd, which, under the current assumptions, will mean that "the oil market will be well supplied."

## Lekela reaches financial close for its wind farm in Egypt

Renewable power generation company Lekela has achieved financial close for its first wind farm project in Egypt, called West Bakr Wind, according to a press statement on Thursday.

According to ewind.es, the statement said that construction will shortly begin, delivering 250MW of clean, reliable power at a highly competitive price. Once the project is fully operational in 2021, it will produce over 1,000GW per year and power more than 350,000 homes.

CEO at Lekela Chris Antonopoulos said, "As our first project in Egypt, we have enjoyed working closely with partners and stakeholders, including the Egyptian Electricity Transmission Company and the New and Renewable Energy Authority, to get to this point. We see great opportunity to invest in wind energy in Egypt, and we look forward to working in the country for years to come."



Faisal Eissa, General Manager of Lekela Egypt, said, "We have reached this milestone with our financial partners, International Finance Corporation (IFC), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). We can now concentrate on the completion of the project, and will work closely with Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy, the EPC contractor for the West Bakr project, on the final steps before the project's full operation scheduled in 2021."

### ■ Creating long-term value

As part of Lekela's strategy to create long-term value for the communities in which it operates, the project has developed a Community Investment Plan focusing on enterprise, education and environment initiatives.

Local employment opportunities will be created alongside skills development and training to improve future employment prospects.

During peak construction, the project will employ up to 550 people. West Bakr Wind is located on an important bird migration path, so Lekela is working closely with authorities to ensure that wildlife is protected.

The company is participating in a "shut down on demand" program, meaning that when birds are detected the turbines are able to be stopped.

Lekela has also signed a protocol with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency and its Migratory Soaring Birds project to contribute towards the funding and implementation of the Migratory Birds Monitoring training program.

Located 30km north-west of Ras Ghareb, West Bakr Wind is part of the Government's Build, Own, and Operate (BOO) scheme. It will increase Egypt's wind energy capacity by 14%, as the country strives to meet its target of generating 20% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2022; which includes 67% partnership with the private sector. The project will also reduce more than 550,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year.



## John Steppling: Zarif more popular in America after U.S. sanctions

**TEHRAN (FNA)**— John Steppling, American philosopher, says with Washington's move to sanction Iran's Top Diplomat, people of America cannot help but comparing Zarif as an intellectual statesman, dignified and articulate with the US Administration's people like Bolton, Pompeo or even Trump himself.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, Steppling said although "the Trump government is failing, and increasing the bellicosity of their rhetoric... [However] there is a growing sense, almost subconscious, in the US that Iran is not the enemy".

He further added the counter result can be a positive sign, showing that "all the attempts to bully the world are suddenly not working."

John Steppling is an American philosopher an author, based in Norway. His articles appear in various media and news outlets.

Below is the full text of the interview:



■ It has been revealed that Zarif has declined an invitation to the White House in his July trip. A few weeks later, the White House sanctioned him. How do you view the development?

A: The real issue here is much broader. Trump and his administration do all kinds of unprecedented and irrational things. Many of his statements are almost nonsensical. There is a clear tension in the upper echelon of the US state. Mike Pompeo is a very dangerous man. First because he is a zealot, and second a zealot who imagines himself the smartest guy in the room...any room. He is, in fact, a very pedestrian thinker. It does not matter how influential Bolton is at this point, because Pompeo is the voice that matters here. Both of these men (and a number of others close to them, like Brian Hook for example, and Gina Haspel) are almost fanatical in their hatred of Iran. So stigmatizing Zarif, or calling the Revolution Guard terrorists is just theatre in a sense. The real issues are the lack of international support for the US in its targeting of Iran. When Germany refused to participate in the so called mission...navel mission...there was a sense in NATO that the other shoe would soon drop. The US appears very weak right now and that is scary, but in another sense it is perhaps a positive sign. It means that all the attempts to bully the world are suddenly not working.

■ What is the nature of the US move to sanction the Foreign Minister of a country?

A: I think it is just a kind of dysfunctional administration where many people of high rank are at odds with each other. Of course ultimately the ruling class have the same goals, but this is a time of great unrest globally. We see global fascism rising but there is another sense that the tactic of intimidation, used by the US, by the Saudis too, and Israel, has lost some of its power. The US has still not solved how to get rid of Assad and no amount of propaganda against him has really worked. Many Americans think he is a ruthless dictator, but a surprising number do not believe it, and same with Iran. There is a growing sense, almost subconscious, in the US that Iran is not the enemy. They have done nothing. Zarif is the very image of an intellectual statesman, dignified and articulate. And people, even if not quite able to articulate this, sense this and they cannot help but compare a Zarif with a Bolton or Pompeo or Trump himself. Of course it is also election season in the US and strange events tend to become easier during this madness. For example, even if the US surrounds Iran with military bases, they still cannot solve what to do with Iran. You have many countries (let's point to Pakistan and Turkey which border Iran, but Russia too and others) which are going to make a unilateral attack by the US very difficult to achieve. Others, too, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and even Iraq have all indicated they will not follow US diktats. So the Trump government is failing and increasing the bellicosity of their rhetoric, but in the end what are they going to do?

## 'Free Kashmir' slogans reverberate in Tehran

➔ Speaking at the demonstration, one of the organisers said it is the duty of every person with conscience to speak truth to power because 'today it is them, tomorrow it could be us'.

On Monday, Indian government abrogated Article 370 and 35A, thus ending special status given to J&K state under the Indian constitution. The government also moved a bill to bifurcate the state into two union territories (UN). The move came for widespread criticism in and outside India, with observers lambasting the Narendra Modi led government in New Delhi for the 'unconstitutional move' and 'murder of democracy'.

According to observers, the move hailed as Modi's 'political masterstroke', has brought back focus on the longstanding Kashmir imbroglio with people terming Kashmir as 'South Asia's Palestine'.

Anticipating public backlash, the Indian government had in advance announced stringent restrictions in the state, banning movement and assembly of people and ordering communication blockade.

However, despite restrictions, people have managed to come out and protest. According to unconfirmed reports, there have been some casualties in central and south Kashmir in police action.

Observers believe yet another season of unrest has set in and it will be difficult for the Indian government to contain the situation this time.

"It is an unprecedented situation in terms of panic, fear and anger among people and they will not take it lying down. Even pro-India politicians have been detained, which was quite shocking" said Hilal Ahmad, a Kashmir-based commentator. "Peace in Kashmir has received a heavy blow." Meanwhile, many regional countries have issued statements, expressing umbrage over the move. China has conveyed its 'objections' in no inexplicit terms while Iran has said it is closely watching the developments unfolding in the Indian-controlled Kashmir.

On the other hand, Pakistan has decided to downgrade its ties with India and suspend trade in reaction to India's controversial moves in Kashmir, according to reports. The United Nations has also expressed its 'concern' over restrictions imposed on people in the disputed territory and warned that it "will exacerbate the human rights situation".

# Asir, Najran and Jizan used to be the northern regions of the Yemeni state for centuries: Brecht Jonkers

By Damir Nazarov

■ Last years we see how in South Yemen militants al-Islah have confrontation vs. Southern Transitional Council. Why that organizations unleashed a war each other?

A: The Southern Transitional Council (STC) has unfortunately decided to opportunistically ally itself with the United Arab Emirates after they invaded Yemen in March 2015.

While South Yemen used to be a progressive state in the region prior to Yemeni unification in 1990, and while the South Yemen movement used to be dominated by the Yemeni Socialist Party for much of the 1990s, in the present time the dominant ideology in the separatist movement seems to be ethnic nationalism and tribalism. This has led to an alliance between some separatists, united in the STC and the Security Belt militias, and the UAE invaders.

The UAE has apparently promised the south-erners an independent state under Emirati supervision. This rump state would provide a highly strategic access point for the Emiratis to the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and thus also the Indian Ocean. By having South Yemen as a puppet state, the UAE could also circumvent the Persian Gulf completely, which would mean they would have less reason to fear Iranian activities in the Strait of Hormuz if conflict were to ever break out between Abu Dhabi and Tehran.

However, the Emirati plan for an independent South Yemen is direct violation of the original plan the Saudi-UAE alliance went to war for in 2015. Riyadh has always aimed at restoring the rule of ousted former president of Yemen Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. Hadi, widely seen as a Saudi puppet, could steer Yemen back into a position of subservience to Saudi interests, as it was between 2011 and 2014. For Saudi Arabia, there is no benefit to splitting Yemen in half, especially if it means giving up the strategic southern coasts of Yemen to Emirati control.

While Saudi Arabia has not reacted openly to the Emirati plans, they have their own agents on the ground in Yemen. The al-Islah party, the



Yemeni branch of the Muslim Brotherhood that is led by former Saleh henchman Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, is in control of the southern city of Taiz. The Wahhabi militias tied to Islah have been confronting the Security Belt and STC militias for years now, but the conflict has only gotten more intense over the past few weeks.

■ Ansar Allah has amazing success in the fighting on territory Saudi Arabia. What is the cause success?

A: One of the most important things to know about the region of Saudi Arabia that Ansarullah is active in, is that this used to be part of Yemen. Asir, Najran and Jizan used to be the northern regions of the Yemeni state for centuries, up until the Saudi conquest of it in 1934.

In Yemen, the loss of such a significant territory to Saudi invaders still evokes feelings of anger and humiliation. This explains why crossing into official "Saudi territory" is not considered a far-fetched retaliation for the defenders of Yemen. Aside from this, there is still considerable discontent towards Riyadh in these regions, which makes the advance of the Yemeni forces all the easier.

The guerilla style warfare that Ansarullah has displayed in the southern Saudi frontline has borne fruit, with significant gains having been made ever since the beginning of the war. In Najran, Asir and Jizan, this strategy has also proven its success.

■ Houthis have allies in South Yemen?

A: The exact political composition of southern Yemen is hard to gauge, because of the repression by Saudi and UAE-backed forces and mercenaries active there. However, what is for certain is that a significant part of the South Yemen Movement is actively cooperating with the National Salvation Government in Sana'a in order to find a peaceful solution.

The factions of the South Yemen Movement that are participating in the National Dialogue Conference have openly condemned and rejected the actions of the Security Belt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These southern activists condemned what they called a campaign "aimed at sowing discord and establishing civil conflicts by inflaming the strife of racism and regionalism" being waged by the Emirati-backed militias.

■ Delegation from Houthis not rare visiting Moscow. What role Houthis see in Russia on

## U.S. claim on Russia's violation of INF nothing but pretext: American Analyst

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — A former US Senate foreign policy analyst said Washington accused Moscow of violating the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty to use it as a pretext to "dump the treaty" and "threaten a new arms race". "One has the distinct impression that the US simply made the accusation as a pretext to dump a treaty that may have been considered inconvenient to military planners trying to make Russia's European security situation untenable," Washington-based political analyst James Jatrass said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

"...The US chose to crash the existing treaty, threaten a new arms race, and accuse Russia (I think in bad faith) for being responsible," he noted.

James George Jatrass is Deputy Director of the American Institute in Ukraine, a privately funded American NGO. Based in Washington, DC, he is a former US diplomat and adviser to the US Senate Republican leadership.

The full text of the interview with Jatrass is as follows:

■ 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? How do you think about the US claims?

A: I can't be sure there's nothing behind the US claims but if there were, why doesn't Washington produce the evidence? This unfortunately fits into a pattern like Syrian poison gas, Iraqi WMDs, genocide in Kosovo, rape rampages in Libya, Iran's nuclear program, the Skripal poisonings, Magnitsky, MH17, Russian election meddling, and many more where the US considers it sufficient to make the accusation, which is then considered tantamount to proven fact — even though

proof should be easily available if the accusation were true. Not only has no such proof been brought forth with respect to INF, treaty mechanisms for addressing possible violations were not invoked by the US. For a long time, the Americans would not even tell the Russians which launch system the US allegedly considered to be in violation. One has the distinct impression that the US simply made the accusation as a pretext to dump a treaty that may have been considered inconvenient to military planners trying to make Russia's European security situation untenable.

■ 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: I hope it's possible but I doubt it. The INF agreement was reached in 1987 under Reagan and Gorbachev. Technology has moved on since then. There are other important players today besides Washington and Moscow, especially Beijing. There would have been more than ample groups for the US to propose a new round of negotiations to update the treaty and expand it to include other countries. If that had been done, I think there's a good chance some progress could have been made. Instead, the US chose to crash the existing treaty, threaten a new arms race, and accuse Russia (I think in bad faith) for being responsible. Then, Trump says "I hope we're able to get everybody in a big, beautiful room and do a new treaty that would be much better." But after previous US disregard for commitments, from expanding NATO to pulling out of the JCPOA, not to mention INF itself, why should anyone, especially Moscow and Beijing, put any stock in anything they hear from Washington? Maybe Trump figured this was just the "art of the deal" (like he seems to have had in mind with the JCPOA): destroy the existing framework, make dubious accusations against the other side, turn up the pressure, then flip around and expect to sign a "better" deal. Maybe that works in New York real estate but Trump doesn't seem to understand that for the likes of Bolton and Pompeo torpedoing arms control



agreements — like torpedoing the JCPOA — is an end in itself.

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

A: Ironically, most observers think that from a purely technical standpoint Russia is better able to fill the space left by the end of the INF agreement than the US is, at least in the short term. There's even speculation that the Russians wanted the US to behave as we did because now they have no impediment to deploying new systems targeting America's European allies — whose security will be most at risk now, not that of the US which is out of the INF range from Russia. Ironically, this may produce anti-US sentiment in Europe. There may also be consequences for US deployment of supposed anti-missile systems in Poland and Romania — to "defend" against nonexistent Iranian weapons — but which the Russians believe is just a mask for offensive deployments. Also, the demise of INF sends an ominous signal about prospects for the START treaty on intercontinental weapons that expires in February 2021. If the goal of Trump's team is to destroy the security framework left over from the first Cold War, they are well on their way. In doing so, they are re-creating an existential danger to the US and indeed to the whole world that those of old enough to remember thought buried for good in 1991.

## U.S. operates thuggish diplomacy in Hong Kong

**GLOBALTIMES**—Hong Kong netizens recently exposed a photo of a US diplomat meeting with several radical opposition figures including Joshua Wong during a sensitive period. Hong Kong media further reported that the diplomat, Julie Eadeh, political unit chief of the US consulate general in Hong Kong, had been involved in "color revolutions" in other countries. The article said her husband is also a US diplomat. It quoted a US church publication and mentioned her other family members.

The US administration has played a disgraceful role in the Hong Kong riots. Washington publicly supports the protests and never condemns violence that targets police. The US consulate general in Hong Kong is stepping up its direct interference in Hong Kong's situation. The US administration is instigating turmoil in Hong Kong the way it stoked "color revolutions" in other places worldwide.

However, the US State Department accused the Hong Kong media report for "leaking an American diplomat's private information" and called China "a thuggish regime." Again, Washington wants to call white black and distort truth.

The main idea of the Hong Kong media's article was to report the US diplomat's interference in Hong Kong affairs, and her involvement in plotting subversive actions in

the Middle East. The report has no intention at all to threaten Eadeh or her family. This is completely different from Hong Kong extreme opposition's acts: "Flesh search" Hong Kong police and their families and intimidate and persecute them.

Hong Kong media has the right to report on US diplomats who actively participate and interfere in Hong Kong's situation, and help people understand the situation. This is media's job and has nothing to do with the government.

The US State Department slanders the Chinese government and discriminates against Hong Kong media's rights, acting like an unreasonable political thug.

The US has diplomatic ties with China and thus has a consulate general in Hong Kong. The consulate general interferes in Hong Kong's affairs, which seriously violates international law provisions on the role of diplomatic missions.

The US State Department said, "This is what American diplomats do every single day around the world." Indeed, many countries are disturbed by thuggish US diplomacy. No matter how powerful the US is, it cannot justify instigating and interfering in other countries' affairs. Hong Kong's situation shows that the extreme opposition and violent groups are destroying the rule of law and intimidating citizens. They are becoming the thuggish



protesters that impact on Hong Kong's order. Some also compare them to a "super gang," while others call them a "democratic gang" because they do things in the name of democracy but act against democracy. The US is their ringleader. They have together formed a "political thug" that messes up Hong Kong's situation.

But they forget that turmoil is against the fundamental interests of the public.

Yemen conflict?

A: Important Ansarullah figures and leaders in the National Salvation Government, such as Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, have repeatedly called on Russia to play a decisive and positive role in pressuring on the international stage for the end of the conflict and a negotiated settlement in Yemen.

On August 4, Mohammed al-Houthi praised the solutions suggested by Russia, stating: "We welcome the Russian vision of a transition towards peace, good neighborliness and development and ensuring a sustainable political settlement in Yemen and Syria as a priority." The Yemeni senior political figure especially expressed his support for the "international legal obligations, the most important of which is to not use force or threats in order to settle disputes, and to respect the sovereignty and integrity of states in the region," that Russia had proposed.

■ Why Mohammad bin Salman attached great importance relations with Putin?

A: Saudi Arabia and Russia are two of the world's most important petroleum producers and exporters, and as such have certain similar interests in the economic sphere.

Added to this, it is not unthinkable that Mohammed bin Salman fears possible Russian interference with the Saudi plan for domination of the Arab Peninsula.

Knowing that Russia has stood by Syria through its darkest days, and has helped the Syrian Arab Republic withstand the onslaught of Saudi-backed terrorism, MBS has reason to fear possible Russian actions in the region. Obviously, the destruction of Yemen and the total domination of either Saudi Arabia or the UAE, both of which are key strategic US allies, will not benefit Russia in any way. Aside from this, it violates Moscow's long-held policy of non-interference and resistance against imperialist ambitions, especially in a volatile region like the Middle East. It is therefore far from certain that MBS will be able to coax Russia into cooperating with the highly aggressive plans the Saudi kingdom is making.



# Boris Johnson and the riddle of leaving Europe

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — Britain's departure from the European Union remains a difficult and complicated process. Although some analysts in Britain thought Boris Johnson's presence at the top of London's political and executive equations could solve this complex puzzle, the available evidence does not show that! At present, London and Brussels continue to threaten each other, and they do not back down on any of their demands for the UK to leave the EU! Brexit has long been a foggy point in the security, political, social, and economic equations in Britain and United Europe. Conflicts and debates over Brexit have increased in the UK, and opponents of Britain's exit from the European Union are about to hold a referendum again. Three years have passed since the referendum was held over the Brexit, which ended up in the victory of the proponents of the UK exit from the EU. But the details of this departure remains ambiguous among the British authorities, and this ambiguity seems to be intensified in 2019.

## ■ Is Boris Johnson planning an election?

As The Guardian reported, It might not be welcome news for voters, let alone MPs, but the UK could be facing its third general election in little more than four years. With many pundits predict an autumn poll, here is a list of reasons why that might happen. And one why it might not.

No 10 feels very much on an election footing. No sooner are they finding their feet in their new departments than ministerial special advisers, or "spads", non-civil service appointees whose careers are tied to those of their minister, have suddenly been told to cancel any holiday plans. An email from Boris Johnson's own senior adviser, Edward Lister, warned spads that, barring exceptions and pre-booked cases, no holiday time would be allowed before the Brexit day of 31 October.

## ■ A stream of policy announcements

He might have been prime minister for little more than a fortnight, but Johnson and his team have already pushed out a series of election-friendly policy announcements, from more police to a cash boost for schools and the NHS. On Thursday, Johnson even used an election-style Facebook address to the nation from his No 10 office to unveil a plan to ease immigration rules for scientists post-Brexit.

## ■ A one-year funding settlement

Adding to the sense of clearing the decks before an election, it has emerged that the



government is to ditch the planned three-year spending review and rush through a one-year version next month, setting out how the spending pledges will be paid for. This would head off accusations that Johnson's promises were un-costed.

## ■ MPs are on alert

For most MPs, recess in August is either about catching up on constituency casework or spending a couple of weeks on the beach. But many are instead busy preparing election machinery, even trailing the streets to knock on doors and talk to constituents. Others are plotting ways to undermine Johnson's apparent ambition to remove the UK from the EU without a deal on 31 October. It could be the only way to stop a no-deal Brexit.

While there are grandiose plans being made by some MPs to seek to block a no-deal departure, for example by amending the motion needed for parliament to break for party conferences in mid-September, or by amassing some government of national unity, more likely would seem to be a Labour-led vote of no confidence against the government. Under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act (FTPA), if no new administration can be formed within 14 days of such a vote being successful, an election would happen — though perhaps falling after Brexit day.

## ■ The Commons arithmetic is against Johnson

After the Conservatives lost the Brecon and Radnorshire byelection to the Liberal Democrats at the start of the month, the government's working majority fell to just one. With rumours swirling that several disaffected Tory moderates could be on the

verge of quitting, even this could evaporate by autumn. And even if there was no vote of no confidence, leading a minority government is hugely difficult and Johnson could be tempted to seek a more secure mandate.

## ■ Countdown to an election?

The arithmetic for a vote of no confidence looks incredibly tight — as well as needing virtually all opposition MPs to back the measure, it would require several Tories to vote to bring down their own government, which is a big ask. If it looks shaky, Labour might delay and try other methods to stop no deal. Johnson himself could call an election under the FTPA if two-thirds of MPs support the move. But it would be a big risk — an election amid the uncertain chaos of no deal, banking on the hope that the core pro-Brexit vote would all go to the Conservatives while the remain-minded supporters would fragment. Theresa May tried a similar tactic in 2017, and we all know how that ended.

## ■ Preparing For No-Deal Brexit Should Be 'Top Priority,' Boris Johnson Tells Civil Servants

Also Isabel Togoh wrote in Forbes that A no-deal Brexit looks increasingly likely as civil servants have been told to make preparations for it a "top priority," while aides to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson have been told not to take vacations until after Britain leaves the EU.

Special advisors to the PM, known as "spads," received an email from a senior advisor who effectively cancelled their holidays until after the Brexit deadline, which falls on Halloween. According to the Guardian, the email read: "There is serious work to be done between now and October 31st and we

should be focused on the job." Recipients are said to be exhausted.

The move led to speculation that Johnson could be preparing to call a general election after October 31 if Britain leaves the EU without a deal. This would happen if he is faced with a vote of no confidence and refuses to resign until after Brexit, in order to achieve his "do or die" deadline commitment.

Opposition Labour MPs have been threatening to force a vote of no confidence in Johnson when MPs return from recess on September 3. The move would trigger a 14-day cooling-off period that could see an incumbent PM gather parliamentary support to prove that the government can keep going or allow another majority government to form.

Labour has said it would try to form a government within the 14-day period. The party is urging MPs opposed to a no-deal to support its bid, which could see leader Jeremy Corbyn become PM. However his leadership is unlikely as there does not appear to be enough parliamentary support for him. MPs can block a no-deal Brexit either through a vote of no confidence or proposing a law that would force Johnson to ask Brussels for a deadline extension. In both cases, the remaining 27 EU leaders will need to agree on an extension.

Following a no-confidence vote, a "national unity" coalition of MPs against no-deal could take over for a few days with the purpose of delaying Brexit by extending Article 50. Such governments are usually formed during war or times of national emergency.

Crucial quote: "Preparing urgently and rapidly for the possibility of an exit without a deal will be my top priority, and it will be the top priority for the civil service too," Johnson wrote in a letter to civil servants on Friday afternoon. Key background: On Thursday, Corbyn wrote to cabinet secretary Mark Sedwill, accusing Johnson of an "unprecedented, unconstitutional and anti-democratic abuse of power" in response to the possibility that Johnson could delay a general election until after the Brexit deadline.

In Brussels, renegotiation of a withdrawal deal between Britain and the EU looks increasingly unlikely, as the bloc's leaders have reportedly accepted that the U.K. will leave without an agreement, while the European Commission has refused to "reopen" the deal. The deadlock was worsened after Johnson suggested that the Irish backstop should be scrapped. The measure is a key component of the deal that would prevent a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

## Hiroshima and the New Arms Race – No Winners

By Robert Dodge

**ANTI WAR** — Seventy-four years ago today the United States dropped the first atomic bomb over the city of Hiroshima, Japan. This nuclear weapon resulted in the deaths of an estimated 140,000 individuals. Three days later on August 9, a similar attack was carried out on the city of Nagasaki, Japan killing an additional 80,000 people. These events changed history and made the U.S. the most feared and ultimately most dangerous country in the world. That danger continues to this day as the new arms race unfolds. Following World War II the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union resulted in our most immediate existential threat and the bloated nuclear stockpiles of today that contain 13,850 weapons. The vast majority, 91 percent, of these weapons are controlled by these two countries with the rest in seven other nuclear states. Most of today's weapons are many times more powerful than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs.

For decades, arms control treaties have been the mainstay of efforts to contain and check the arms race and continue a dialogue with Russia and its predecessor, the Soviet Union. At the height of the Cold War there were in excess of 60,000 nuclear weapons. This resulted from a false sense of security derived from the theory of deterrence where if my enemy had two weapons, I was safer with three? and so on to 60,000 weapons! It was as though the superpowers existed together in a pool of gasoline and one had a single match and the other had one and wanted more to be "safer." There can be no winner with that thinking.

The 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) committed the nuclear powers to work in "good faith" to eliminate nuclear weapons under Article VI. The non-nuclear nations — almost all the nations on Earth, signed that agreement not to develop nuclear weapons on that condition, that promise, which is so broken it means other nations, betrayed, seek their own nukes. Safer?

In 1987, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), negotiated at the peak of the Cold War, went into force. This landmark treaty eliminated an entire class of exceptionally dangerous weapons capable of immediate launch-on-warning and first-strike capacities. In total, 2,692 short, medium and intermediate range nuclear missiles with a range of between 550- 5,500 km were eliminated. The treaty which contains language to address concerns and compliance was terminated on August 2nd of this year when the United States withdrew from this treaty. This move was just the latest by the Trump administration following on the withdrawal of the US last year from the multinational Iran Nuclear Deal. Safer?

Unfortunately, with this latest move coupled with others before, the United States has lost its credibility in arms control. The new arms race began in 2011 as President Obama made his "grand bargain," when he agreed to modernize the US weapons arsenal in trade for needed Republican support to ratify the New Start Treaty. This renewed arms race has been estimated to cost \$1.7 trillion over the next 30 years



with inflation. And again with deterrence theory, each of the seven nuclear nations, not to be outdone is following suit in rebuilding and expanding their arsenals. In January, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, identified the risk posed by nuclear weapons and climate change as the "new abnormal" announcing their Doomsday Clock setting at 2 minutes till midnight where midnight represents nuclear apocalypse, the closest at any point during the Cold War.

Then in June, the United States inadvertently showed its hand, temporarily, when the Joint Chiefs briefly published online and later took down their "Nuclear Operations" Document 3- 72. It outlines plans for fighting and "winning" a nuclear war. Incredibly, the document states:

Using nuclear weapons could create conditions for decisive results and the restoration of strategic stability... Specifically, the use of a nuclear weapon will fundamentally change the scope of a battle and create conditions that affect how commanders will prevail in conflict. These statements fly in the face of scientific fact and reality. Nothing but death will "prevail" in any nuclear war.

Nuclear war and climate change are the two existential threats we face today. As the planet warms, competition for scarce natural resources increases causing conflict potentially involving the superpowers as they vie for influence and access in their proxy states. The current presidential debates have seen minimal questioning on proposed climate change policy, but no significant questions have been asked of candidates regarding their positions about the eminent threat of nuclear war. As if a code of silence existed between our corporate media and political parties, or a complete lack of understanding of this risk, the silence persists. Fortunately, the United States medical and scientific communities working with the international community continue to speak out, warning of these threats. Identifying the humanitarian and climate effects of

even a small nuclear war, Physicians for Social Responsibility in the "Nuclear Famine: 2 Billion People at Risk" report, has documented that even a limited regional nuclear war using less than 1/2 of one percent of the global nuclear arsenals would result in the potential deaths of two billion people on the planet. There is no adequate medical or humanitarian response to nuclear war. Prevention is the only answer and that can only be achieved with the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Civil society and the non-nuclear states have responded. With the leadership of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the international community has spoken. The 2017 United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is their response. This Treaty, now with 70 signatory nations and 23 states parties, is positioned to go into effect in 2020 once 50 nations have ratified it. At that point nuclear weapons will join all other weapons of mass destruction in becoming illegal. From that point forward it will be a breach of international law to have, develop, produce, transfer or threaten the use of nuclear weapons.

American citizens, faith communities, scientific, medical and NGOs are endorsing a growing movement supporting the abolition of nuclear weapons. This is a national movement called "Back from the Brink" that supports the Treaty and the precautionary steps necessary while waiting for it to go into effect and while nuclear arsenals still exist. All organizations and individuals are invited to endorse the campaign. Ultimately, our security policy has relied on luck to protect us from nuclear attack either by accident, miscalculation or intent and time is running out. Now is the time to make our voices heard. When the people lead, the leaders will follow.

When our children's children look back, it will be noted and remembered what side of history we were on when our planet was threatened. The choice is ours.

## Radical western extremists threaten global security

By Yu Jincui

**GLOBALTIMES**—Is China an ideological rival? Is the country challenging Western ideology by exporting its values, political system and development ideas? With China's rise, these issues have increasingly raised concerns from some Western politicians, observers and media outlets. They stubbornly believe that as China rises in a different model from that of the West, it will inevitably pose a threat to Western values, economy and security, thus undermine the current international order.

Australian Liberal MP Andrew Hastie, an infamous China hawk, on Thursday warned Australia against underestimating China, comparing the West's attitude to China to France's inadequate defense against Nazi Germany in the 1930s. He also argued that the West has ignored the role of Communist ideology in China's foreign policies.

The explosive comments show Hastie's strong ideological prejudice against China. China and Australia have no major conflicts of interest. Instead, the two countries have maintained a close economic relationship. It's perplexing why some Australian political elites are so fearful and paranoid about China. In the US, Kiron Skinner, the State Department's director of policy planning, trumpeted China is an "ideological competitor" that seeks a kind of global reach. It's obvious some Westerners, especially some ideological extremists, are misreading and misinterpreting China.

China has no strategic motive to export ideology or values, nor does it have the will to subvert the existing international order. China pursues a defense policy that is purely defensive in nature. It has expanded global footprints through developing win-win cooperation with other countries. The warnings against communist ideology in China's foreign policies are totally redundant. China has long insisted on that foreign policies serve the domestic economy, trying to avoid ideological differences which may affect foreign relations.

The fear of some Westerners toward China's rise is out of their ideological prejudice. Their obsession with Western centrism makes them unable to view China's rise in an objective manner. They are stuck in stereotypes that Western ideologies, political systems and civilizations are superior to others and should be emulated. However, no ideology can claim to be superior to others. Believing their ideologies and civilizations were superior, the British colonists slaughtered indigenous Australians. They even thought the massacre removed the inferior people. Such an ideology of Western superiority was similar to that of Adolf Hitler.

Now, some Westerners believe in the absolute superiority of Western civilization. This is a type of extremism. In reality, such a mind-set can easily cause frictions, even conflicts, between different civilizations, making it a serious global challenge.

With the rapid rise of non-Western countries, especially Asian countries, the comparative advantage of the West has become weakened. Some Westerners have thus become even more sensitive and narrow-minded. Their vigilance, mistrust and hostility toward other civilizations have exacerbated. They should learn to face up to and adapt to the rise of non-Western civilizations. It's fair to say ideological extremists stuck to Western centrism are the biggest security threats to the world, as there are risks they might provoke a war.

Due to the rhetoric that fueled the "China threat" theory of some Australian politicians, China-Australia relations have been strained in recent years. Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said earlier this month that repairing bilateral relations has been "unsatisfactory." Canberra should be mindful, and not allow radical politicians like Hastie to derail the reset of the bilateral ties.

## Kashmir needs peace not war

**1 →** Immediately after India's move, Pakistan's foreign ministry strongly condemned it stating that «no unilateral step by the Government of India can change this disputed status, as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council resolutions.» But with the legal provision, India wants to make Jammu and Kashmir a matter of its sole internal affair, essentially declaring the entire area as India's, something that Pakistan disputes.

As the Article 370 was revoked, influential politicians from the state were put under house arrest and a large number of additional security forces were deployed to the area, while tourists and pilgrims were asked to return. Though the opponents of the announcements are irked, the Narendra Modi-led government offers a pleasing surprise to the supporters. For them stripping the special status of J&K is historic in the sense that it safeguards India's sovereignty.

Among other amendments, the new provision has allowed people from across India to reside and purchase land in J&K, something that was earlier banned. Earlier, the state lawmakers had the power whether or not to allow one to buy the land. This very condition put in place is the tactical move of the Modi government to bring in people from other religious communities. However, those backing Modi and other Hindu ultra-nationalists in India have received this as a bold decision and fulfillment of the past commitment by Modi.

«Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have earned a place in history,» outgoing minister Arun Jaitley tweeted. It is an internal issue that India decided. But, this will have regional and international ramifications and more tensions cannot be ruled out in the future, something that should be avoided at all costs.

The unrest and serious voices of dissent in India could pose threats to regional peace, stability and to the image of India as the world's largest democracy and seventh largest economy. In addition, the Ladakh region in Jammu and Kashmir is now under the direct control of the central government. The region is more sensitive because of its borders with China's Aksai and Pakistan's Gilgit Baltistan. However, first and the foremost, the declaration could face legal challenges.

So the history will judge the latest Kashmir episode as the beginning of another conflict or an end to the decade-long conflict between the two nuclear-powered South Asian countries since the 1947 partition. But, the recent step should not ignite unrest but make efforts to bring situation towards normalcy to prevail peaceful order in Jammu and Kashmir. Otherwise, the catastrophic consequences could be severe.

Pakistan insists the Kashmir dispute is an international one and no unilateral steps should change the status quo. But India maintains that Kashmir is an integral part of the country and says the latest steps will promote peace and development there. With the two sides as far apart as ever, there's no sign that the deep divisions will be healed any time soon. But New Delhi could do at least one thing: end the siege on the civilians and stop the heavy-handed tactics against the population.

The world is feeling grave concern about violence against the civilian population in Kashmir as we are not hearing good news from the region, if anything.



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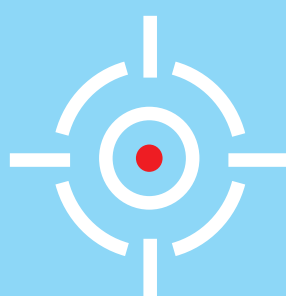
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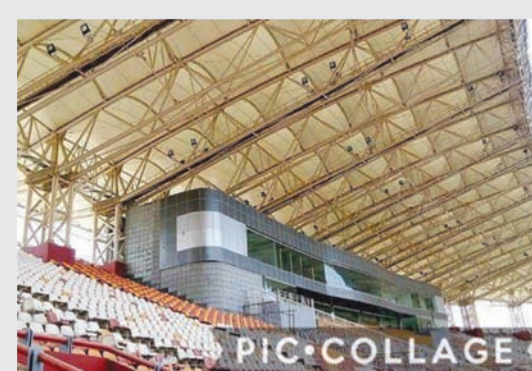
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# Perseid meteor shower peaks in mid-August

Shooting stars are about to rain down from the heavens and illuminate the night sky as the best meteor shower of the entire year, known as the Perseids, reaches its peak. However, clouds may interfere with some stargazers' plans to watch the celestial light show.

"The Perseids are the most popular meteor shower as they peak on warm August nights as seen from the Northern Hemisphere," the American Meteor Society explained on its website.

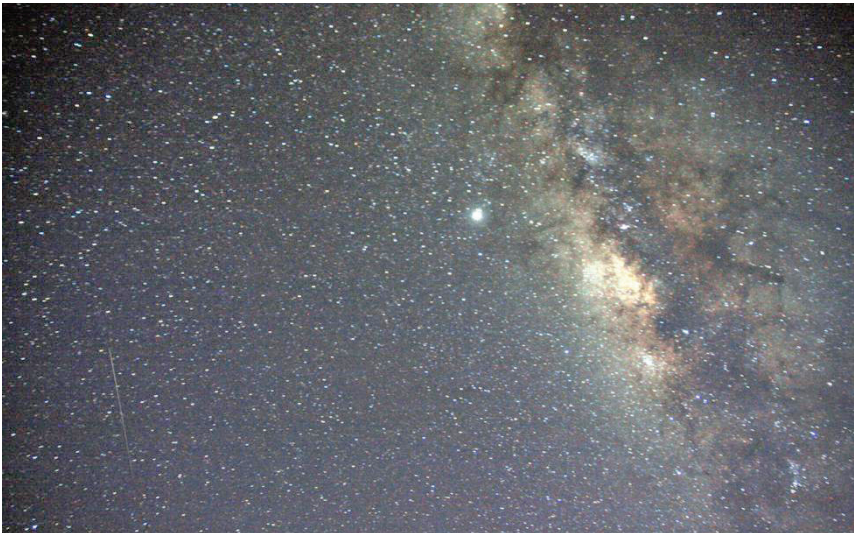
This year, the peak of the highly anticipated meteor shower falls on Monday night, into the early morning hours of Tuesday, according to the AMS.

Not only does the shower peak during the warm nights of mid-August, but it boasts an impressive number of meteors, second only to the Geminids in December.

"Up to 100 meteors per hour will occur during the peak night," AccuWeather astronomy blogger Dave Samuhel said.

"Perseids are not only numerous, they are beautiful. Most of the meteors leave a glittering trail as they pass," Samuhel said. "They are multicolored and many are bright."

However, this year the moon is likely to play a role in the number of shooting stars able to be seen on the peak night. The nearly full moon will be shining bright nearly all night long, making it difficult to see many of the dimmer meteors. Cloudy conditions may also be an issue for some spectators.



Cloud-free conditions will lead to uninterrupted viewing conditions for some of the best stargazing locations across the country on Monday night as the Perseids peak. This includes most of the western United States, the southern Plains and a swath of the Midwest, mid-Atlantic and New England.

Although onlookers in big cities, such as Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and Phoenix are forecast to have favorable weather, they may want to consider traveling to a darker area away from the light pollution in the city.

For those across the southeastern United States, north-central United States and most of Canada, clouds are in the forecast that will obscure the sky most of the night.

Shooting stars will be most numerous on Monday night into Tuesday morning, but this is not the only time when stargazers can see some of the shower.

"People should consider viewing meteors during the nights leading up to the peak," Samuhel said. "There will still be plenty of meteors and you will not have to battle as

much moonlight."

As for when to head outside under the stars, folks may want to brew a cup of coffee if they hope to see the Perseids in all their glory.

"The Perseids are most active after midnight through daybreak. However, there are so many meteors during this shower, don't hesitate to view during the evening," Samuhel said.

As with every meteor shower, the Perseids are named after the part of the sky in which they originate, known as the radiant point. If you trace back all of the meteors during the upcoming shower, they will all originate from a part of the sky near the constellation Perseus.

The radiant point will be in the northeastern sky, but you do not need to focus on this area of the sky to see the meteor shower. In fact, meteors will be able to be seen in all areas of the sky.

Due to the moon, spectators this year should try to keep the moon out of their sight and look to the darkest part of the sky. This will help to increase the odds of seeing some meteors.

After the Perseids, stargazers will need to wait until October for the next opportunity to watch a meteor shower.

The Draconid meteor shower is the next meteor shower, which falls on Oct. 8, followed by the Orionid meteor shower, which will take place on Oct. 21.

(Source: UPI)

## NASA publishes atlas of 13.3m wildfires spotted from space since 2003

NASA scientists have produced a global wildfire map. Researchers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center plotted the 13.3 million fires spotted by NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer instruments, or MODIS, between 2003 and 2016.

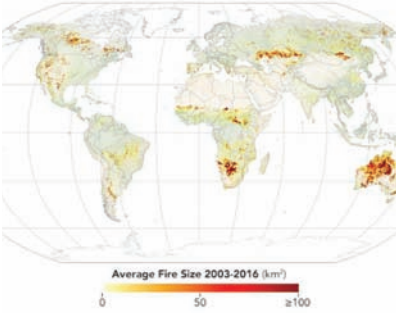
"Something is always burning somewhere," Goddard scientist Niels Andela said in a news release.

The newly published interactive map contains details about each fire that burned during the 13-year period: when and where it began, when and where it burned out and which direction and how quickly it spread.

"With the breadth and granularity of data in the Global Fire Atlas, we can start addressing nuanced questions like how fires respond to winds or to year-to-year variability in rainfall," said Douglas Morton, chief of the Biospheric Sciences Laboratory at Goddard. "We know factors like these influence fire behavior, and the atlas is helping give us a clearer view of these impacts."

The largest fire detailed by the new atlas scorched 15,454 square miles of earth in Australia's Northern Territory in 2007. The fire was 20 times bigger than the largest North American fire.

In North America and Europe, forests and grasslands are more likely to be interrupted by human development, limiting the scale of wildfires. Fire fighters regularly put wildfires out before they get too big. In Australia, fires in remote regions are sometimes allowed to burn themselves out naturally.



The data detailed in the Global Fire Atlas revealed the influence of El Niño and La Niña cycles, an ocean and atmospheric pattern in the Pacific, on wildfires. In 2007, a La Niña pattern brought large amounts of rain to Australia, fueling vegetation growth -- fuel for future wildfires. The precipitation was followed by a prolonged period of hot and dry weather, prime conditions for fire.

Many of NASA's satellites help scientists study Earth, tracking storms and fires. Recently, the agency's Earth-facing satellites have been helping scientists observe the unusually large number of fires burning in the Arctic. Satellite images have revealed fires burning farther north than ever before.

Several studies suggest wildfires are likely to get bigger and burn more frequently as the planet warms. Last year, scientists claimed global warming explained the especially devastating fire season in California.

(Source: UPI)

## Dark matter may predate the Big Bang

Dark matter may have existed before the Big Bang, according to astrophysicist Tommi Tenkanen, a postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins University.

Scientists can only intimate the presence of dark matter by measuring its gravitational effect on regular matter. What it is, exactly, remains poorly understood.

Scientists do know, however, that dark matter and dark energy influences the formation and evolution of galaxies and galaxy clusters. Dark matter is an integral part of the story of the universe.

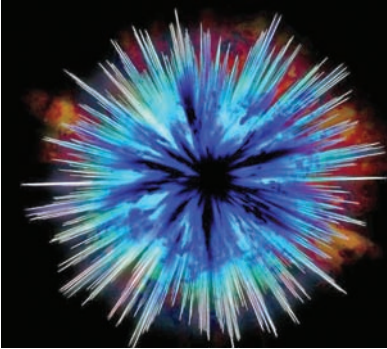
According to Tenkanen, if dark matter came first -- before the Big Bang -- it's powerful influence on the evolving structure of the universe makes sense.

"The study revealed a new connection between particle physics and astronomy. If dark matter consists of new particles that were born before the Big Bang, they affect the way galaxies are distributed in the sky in a unique way," Tenkanen said in a news release. "This connection may be used to reveal their identity and make conclusions about the times before the Big Bang too."

Previously, scientists hypothesized dark matter was leftover from the Big Bang, but experiments have failed to confirm the theory.

"If dark matter were truly a remnant of the Big Bang, then in many cases researchers should have seen a direct signal of dark matter in different particle physics experiments already," said Tenkanen.

Tenkanen developed a straightforward mathematical equation that showed dark matter may have been created prior to the



Big Bang. The period before the Big Bang is known as cosmic inflation.

During cosmic inflation, space was expanding exponentially. Models predict this rapid expansion produced unique particles known as scalars. The Higgs boson is the only scalar so far discovered by scientists.

"We do not know what dark matter is, but if it has anything to do with any scalar particles, it may be older than the Big Bang," Tenkanen said. "With the proposed mathematical scenario, we don't have to assume new types of interactions between visible and dark matter beyond gravity, which we already know is there."

According to Tenkanen, his mathematical formula -- published this week in the journal Physical Review Letters -- offers a simple explanation for dark matter, one that can be tested by analyzing the signatures dark matter left on the structure and distribution of ordinary matter in the early universe.

(Source: UPI)

## ALMA dives into black hole's 'sphere of influence'

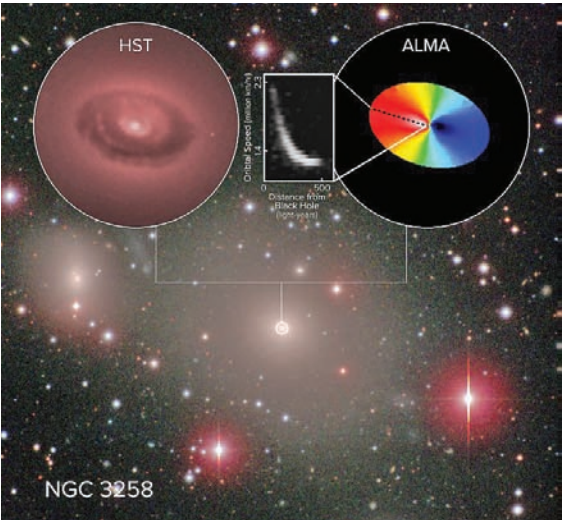
What happens inside a black hole stays inside a black hole, but what happens inside a black hole's "sphere of influence" -- the innermost region of a galaxy where a black hole's gravity is the dominant force -- is of intense interest to astronomers and can help determine the mass of a black hole as well as its impact on its galactic neighborhood.

New observations with the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) provide an unprecedented close-up view of a swirling disk of cold interstellar gas rotating around a supermassive black hole. This disk lies at the center of NGC 3258, a massive elliptical galaxy about 100 million light-years from Earth. Based on these observations, a team led by astronomers from Texas A&M University and the University of California, Irvine, have determined that this black hole weighs a staggering 2.25 billion solar masses, the most massive black hole measured with ALMA to date.

Though supermassive black holes can have masses that are millions to billions of times that of the Sun, they account for just a small fraction of the mass of an entire galaxy. Isolating the influence of a black hole's gravity from the stars, interstellar gas, and dark matter in the galactic center is challenging and requires highly sensitive observations on phenomenally small scales.

"Observing the orbital motion of material as close as possible to a black hole is vitally important when accurately determining the black hole's mass," said Benjamin Boizelle, a postdoctoral researcher at Texas A&M University and lead author on the study appearing in the Astrophysical Journal. "These new observations of NGC 3258 demonstrate ALMA's amazing power to map the rotation of gaseous disks around supermassive black holes in stunning detail."

Astronomers use a variety of methods to measure black hole masses. In giant elliptical galaxies, most measurements come from observations of the orbital motion of stars around the black hole, taken in visible or infrared light. Another



technique, using naturally occurring water masers (radio-wavelength lasers) in gas clouds orbiting around black holes, provides higher precision, but these masers are very rare and are associated almost exclusively with spiral galaxies having smaller black holes.

During the past few years, ALMA has pioneered a new method to study black holes in giant elliptical galaxies. About 10 percent of elliptical galaxies contain regularly rotating disks of cold, dense gas at their centers. These disks contain carbon monoxide (CO) gas, which can be observed with millimeter-wavelength radio telescopes.

By using the Doppler shift of the emission from CO molecules, astronomers can measure the velocities of orbiting gas clouds, and ALMA makes it possible to resolve the very

centers of galaxies where the orbital speeds are highest.

"Our team has been surveying nearby elliptical galaxies with ALMA for several years to find and study disks of molecular gas rotating around giant black holes," said Aaron Barth of UC Irvine, a co-author on the study. "NGC 3258 is the best target we've found, because we're able to trace the disk's rotation closer to the black hole than in any other galaxy."

Just as the Earth orbits around the Sun faster than Pluto does because it experiences a stronger gravitational force, the inner regions of the NGC 3258 disk orbit faster than the outer parts due to the black hole's gravity. The ALMA data show that the disk's rotation speed rises from 1 million kilometers per hour at its outer edge, about 500 light-years from the black hole, to well over 3 million kilometers per hour near the disk's center at a distance of just 65 light-years from the black hole.

The researchers determined the black hole's mass by modeling the disk's rotation, accounting for the additional mass of the stars in the galaxy's central region and other details such as the slightly warped shape of the gaseous disk. The clear detection of rapid rotation enabled the researchers to determine the black hole's mass with a precision better than one percent, although they estimate an additional systematic 12 percent uncertainty in the measurement because the distance to NGC 3258 is not known very precisely. Even accounting for the uncertain distance, this is one of the most highly precise mass measurements for any black hole outside of the Milky Way galaxy.

"The next challenge is to find more examples of near-perfect rotating disks like this one so that we can apply this method to measure black hole masses in a larger sample of galaxies," concluded Boizelle. "Additional ALMA observations that reach this level of precision will help us better understand the growth of both galaxies and black holes across the age of the universe."

(Source: Science Daily)

## Dead planets could be sending signals through space, scientists say

Dead planets could be sending signals through space that we are able to pick up on Earth, scientists say.

An unusual phenomenon means that the worlds could be able to shoot intense blasts through space, which could be tuned into by scientists here.

Scientists now hope to listen into them, in the hope of finding the cores of planets and learn more about the universe.

The researchers looked at planets that orbit stars that have destroyed them: as the sun burns away all of its fuel and sheds its outer layers, it destroys nearby objects and burns away their outer layers.

The cores that are left behind could be seen through the universe and stay around for long enough to be detected from Earth.

The technique used to observe the planet relies on a similar technique that researchers used to find the very first confirmed exoplanet. To spot that one, scientists spotted radio waves that were flung out by its star, and hope they can now see white dwarfs by watching for similar bursts of energy.



A white dwarf and its stripped planetary core can together create a circuit. It helps to amplify the signal and blast it through space, meaning that it could be picked by radio telescopes on Earth.

Scientists needed to do more work to learn how long the cores can live on after they have had their outer layer torn away, and whether they would keep broadcasting through space. They found that those cores can survive for up to a billion years, meaning that the messages could live on for long enough that spotting them from Earth could be likely.

Researchers now hope to turn observatories towards potential candidates, and spot the messages.

"There is a sweet spot for detecting these planetary cores: a core too close to the white dwarf would be destroyed by tidal forces, and a core too far away would not be detectable," said lead author Dr Dimitri Veras from the University of Warwick. "Also, if the magnetic field is too strong, it would push the core into the white dwarf, destroying it. Hence, we should only look for planets around those white dwarfs with weaker magnetic fields at a separation between about 3 solar radii and the Mercury-Sun distance."

"Nobody has ever found just the bare core of a major planet before, nor a major planet only through monitoring magnetic signatures, nor a major planet around a white dwarf. Therefore, a discovery here would represent 'firsts' in three different senses for planetary systems."

The research could help reveal the future of our solar system.

"We will use the results of this work as guidelines for designs of radio searches for planetary cores around white dwarfs," said Alexander Wolszczan from Pennsylvania State University. "Given the existing evidence for a presence of planetary debris around many of them, we think that our chances for exciting discoveries are quite good."

Dr Veras added: "A discovery would also help reveal the history of these star systems, because for a core to have reached that stage it would have been violently stripped of its atmosphere and mantle at some point and then thrown towards the white dwarf. Such a core might also provide a glimpse into our own distant future, and how the solar system will eventually evolve."

(Source: The Independent)

## New dinosaur species discovered in South Africa

Researchers in South Africa have discovered a new species of dinosaur. The newly named dino remains had been laying misidentified in storage collections for three decades.

"This is a new dinosaur that has been hiding in plain sight," Paul Barrett, researcher at the Natural History Museum in London, said in a news release. "The specimen has been in the collections in Johannesburg for about 30 years, and lots of other scientists have already looked at it. But they all thought that it was simply an odd example of Massospondylus."

Kimberley Chapelle, a doctoral student at the University of the Witwatersrand, working under Barrett, suspected the remains represented a new species. Analysis by Chapelle and her research partners determined the dinosaur fossil was unique enough to warrant not only a new species designation, but also a new genus.

Scientists named the new species of sauropodomorph Ngwevu intloko, which translates as "grey skull" in the Xhosa, the language spoken by the Xhosa people, a native tribe in South Africa. Researchers described the new species this week in the journal PeerJ.

"In order to be certain that a fossil belongs to a new species, it is crucial to rule out the possibility that it is a younger or older version of an already existing species," Chapelle said. "This is a difficult task to accomplish with fossils because it is rare to have a complete age series of fossils from a single species."

"Luckily, the most common South African dinosaur Massospondylus has specimens ranging from embryo to adult," she said. "Based on this, we were able to rule out age as a possible explanation for the differences we observed in the specimen."

Analysis of the near-complete fossil suggests the newly named species was stocky and walked on two legs. A long, slender neck attached its boxy head to its chunky body. The sauropodomorph stretched nearly ten feet in length. Researchers suspect the species ate both plants and small animals.

The discovery suggests the evolving ecosystems of the late Triassic and early Jurassic periods were more diverse than previously thought.

"This new species is interesting, because we thought previously that there was really only one type of sauropodomorph living in South Africa at this time," Barrett said. "We now know there were actually six or seven of these dinosaurs in this area, as well as variety of other dinosaurs from less common groups. It means that their ecology was much more complex than we used to think. Some of these other sauropodomorphs were like Massospondylus, but a few were close to the origins of true sauropods, if not true sauropods themselves."

(Source: UPI)



## British involvement in Interrail travel scheme back on track

Britain will not leave Interrail, the decades-old European scheme popular with young travelers, the UK’s industry body has said.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) announced it was a reversing a decision made on Wednesday that British train services will be excluded from Interrail or Eurail passes after January 1, 2020.

“Britain’s train companies never wanted to leave Interrail,” it said in a statement.

“Following the strong reaction to news of our departure, we and Eurail, the company which runs Interrail, renewed talks.



“We are pleased to be able to tell passengers that we have reached an agreement and will be remaining part of both the Interrail and Eurail passes.”

Eurostar trains were set to remain in the scheme, with pass-holders unable to get beyond its London St Pancras terminal.

The decision, which RDG said was unrelated to Brexit, was met with criticism on Twitter with many claiming it would put young people off travelling beyond London.

RDG blamed the decision on a dispute with the company responsible for the Interrail scheme, Eurail Group.

“Eurail group has decided to end our membership from January 1, 2020, despite us wanting to remain part of the group,” spokesman Robert Nisbet said on Twitter.

Interrail passes have provided unlimited borderless train travel for Europeans since the early 1970s, creating a rite of passage for generations of young travelers and providing a tangible symbol of European harmonization.

An equivalent pass, called Eurail, is available to non-European residents, although prices and conditions for the two schemes were recently harmonized.

The European Union gave away thousands of free passes to teenagers in order to promote cross-border values.

Mark Smith, a European rail travel expert and creator of the website The Man in Seat 61, had said it was “a sad day” and that the decision was bad for British tourism.

“Inbound visitors will be discouraged from venturing beyond London as that will cost extra,” he wrote.

Smith said the decision appeared to be prompted by British train operators withdrawing from only the Eurail scheme — a position no longer tenable amid efforts to merge the Eurail and Interrail schemes.

(Source: Euronews)

ROUND THE GLOBE

### Ironbridge Gorge

A World Heritage, the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage property covers an area of 5.5 km2 (550 ha) and is located in Telford, Shropshire, approximately 50 km north-west of Birmingham.

The Industrial Revolution had its 18th century roots in the Ironbridge Gorge and spread worldwide leading to some of the most far-reaching changes in human history.



The site incorporates a 5 km length of the steep-sided, mineral-rich Severn Valley from a point immediately west of Ironbridge downstream to Coalport, together with two smaller river valleys extending northwards to Coalbrookdale and Madeley.

The Ironbridge Gorge provided the raw materials that revolutionized industrial processes and offers a powerful insight into the origins of the Industrial Revolution and also contains extensive evidence and remains of that period when the area was the focus of international attention from artists, engineers, and writers.

The property contains substantial remains of mines, pit mounds, spoil heaps, foundries, factories, workshops, warehouses, iron masters’ and workers’ housing, public buildings, infrastructure, and transport systems, together with the traditional landscape and forests of the Severn Gorge. In addition, there also remain extensive collections of artifacts and archives relating to the individuals, processes and products that made the area so important.

Today, the site is a living, working community with a population of approximately 4000 people as well as a world renowned place to visit.

#### ■ Integrity

The boundary of the property is clearly defined by the steep sided Gorge and encompasses an extraordinary concentration of mining zones, foundries, factories, workshops and warehouses which coexist with the old network of lanes, paths, roads, ramps, canals and railroads as well as substantial remains of traditional landscape and housing.

(Source: UNESCO)

## Official borders open to foreign travelers without passport stamps

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – All Iranian border crossings let foreign nationals in without passport stamps according to a presidential decree that orders for the waiver of physical stamping on travelers’ passports upon entering or leaving the country, Interior Ministry’s spokesman has said.

“According to the president [Hassan Rouhani]’s order to waive [physical] stamping on foreigners’ passports, this issue was investigated by a taskforce of the [Supreme] National Security Council to be implemented at all official borders,” Seyyed Salman Samani said in an interview with IRNA on Friday.

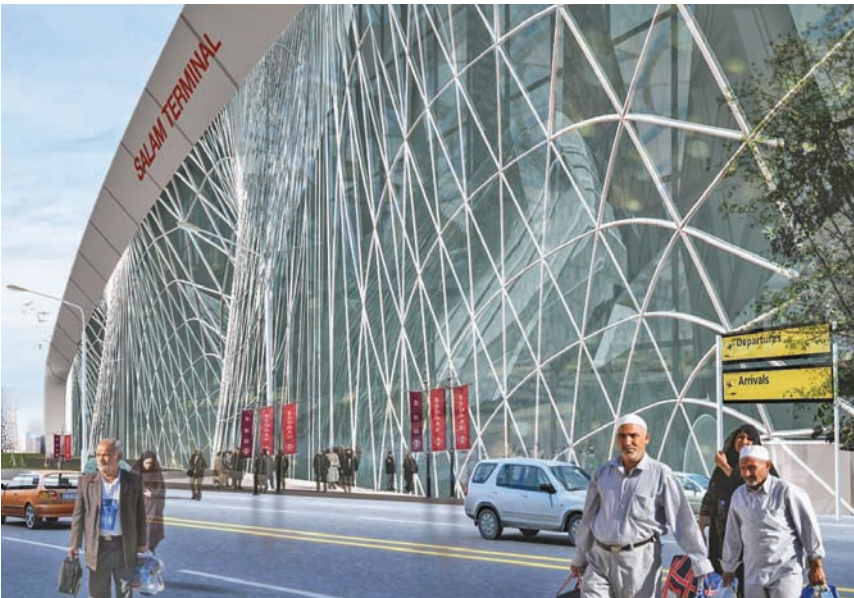
He underlined that in cooperation with the Police Department of Immigration and Passports and other related bodies, the decree

is now implemented in all land, air and sea borders of the country.

In June, Rouhani issued an order for the waiver of physical stamping on travelers’ passports upon entering or leaving the country. He ordered Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli to arrange to waive visa-stamping and not to mark passports of foreign nationals visiting the country.

The decision is expected to facilitate travels to the country without fear of possible U.S. penalties. Last year, Washington announced travelers to some certain countries including Iran would face restrictions to enter the U.S.

Last November, the Islamic Republic started a pilot project in a select of its airports, issuing electronic visas -- without any entry or exit stamps -- for those arriving in



Passengers are seen in the Imam Khomeini International Airport

Iran, in a bid to facilitate tourist inflow and to cope with sanctions recently reimposed by the U.S.

Iran welcomed some 7.8 million foreign

nationals last year, which shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year. The ultimate goal of the Islamic Republic is to attract 20 million foreign tourists annually by 2025.

## Over 58,000 visit Dutch show in downtown Tehran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Over 58,000 Iranian and foreign nationals have toured a landmark loan exhibit from the Drents Museum, which is underway at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran.

A total of 58,420 people have so far visited the exhibit titled “Dutch Archaeology and Art: Highlights from the Drents Museum” since it opened to the public on October 2, 2018, Mehr reported.

The show, which was scheduled to end on April 6, showcases 331 objects including stone tools, jewelry, and natural human mummies in three sections of archeology, pottery, and paintings, the latter is dedicated to artworks of the 18th to the 20th centuries.

The Drents Museum, which is located in Assen, in return, was showcasing some 200 Iranian antique items in an exhibit titled “Iran – Cradle of Civilization”. The



A poster for the exhibition “Dutch Archaeology and Art: Highlights from the Drents Museum”

exhibit was running from June to November 2018.

“Iran, Cradle of Civilization” is now on show at the Archeological Museum of Alicante (MARQ) in southeastern Spain, running from March 14 to Sept. 1.

Back in March, Harry Tupan, the director of the Drents Museum paid a visit to the National Museum of Iran, saying that he was thrilled to visit such a museum.

“I am very happy that I was able to visit this museum today and am excited to see these amazing historical works,” CHTN quoted Tupan as saying.

He also called for strengthening cultural cooperation between Iran and the Netherlands.

The Dutch museum also won an audience prize from New York’s prestigious Global Fine Art Awards on March 12 for its contribution to host such an enormous exhibit of the history of Persia.

## Karim Khan Citadel, a top-rated tourist attraction in Shiraz



**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Photos depict people visiting the centuries-old Karim Khan Citadel (locally known as Arg-e Karim Khan), a top-rated tourist attraction in downtown Shiraz, on August 10, 2019.

The immense brick fortress is named after Persian monarch Mohammad Karim Khan Zand (r.1751 to 1779), the founder of the Zand Dynasty, who selected Shiraz as his capital.

The massive walls of the citadel feature ornamental brick-work designs in particular on the four circular tower-like structures punctuating each of its corners. Well-worth to visit inside.

The southeastern tower generally catches the eyes of the passersby due to its noticeable lean, having subsided into a concealed cistern which once supplied the bathhouse of the Arg.

Walking inside, one encounters a typical design of the Persian garden that interweaves different fields of knowledge such as water management and engineering, architecture, botany and agriculture.

The citadel was used to be a prison for a while in the 20th century, however the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization has turned it into a museum showcasing aspects of Zand-era Iran.

It also features a variety of wax figures and effigies representing the king, his courtiers and some others who are clad in traditional outfits.

Frescoes embellishing the walls and ceilings, well –furnished rooms along with rich architecture of the interior contribute to the charm of the place.

It is a standout attraction that you won’t miss while touring Shiraz. For some it is a strong reminder of the leaning tower of Pisa in Italy!



© TEHRAN TIMES / Milad Raia

## The best travel gadgets of 2019

With the ongoing advent of new technology, packing checklists have grown to more than outfits and toiletries to include a long list of electronics, gear, and the many wires and chargers needed to support them. Not only are travelers thinking about how they’re going to dress and where they’re going to go—they’re worried about how to photograph themselves in those outfits, plus how to get the best shots of the sights and, probably, their food.

But it’s not just frivolous items either—in an ever-connected world, even leisure travelers are frequently expected to stay productive and check in with work emails. And what about those photos of the kids that grandma is expecting? That means making sure devices like phones, cameras, tablets and laptops stay charged and ready to go.

Looking to streamline your travel checklist? From clip-on lenses for high-quality phone photos to universal adapters and the best battery charger on the market, here are the nine best travel gadgets to bring on your work trips and vacations.

#### ■ Skyroam Solis X

Speaking of connectivity: While traveling internationally is easier than ever, staying truly connected while abroad can still be tricky, what with costly phone plans and weak data coverage. Enter the Skyroam, whose original Skyroam Solis was named by Forbes as the best Wi-Fi hotspot on the market last year. This month, however, the company is launching its Skyroam Solis X, an even more powerful hotspot that they’re billing as “the world’s first Wi-Fi-hotspot.” You can either purchase

or rent the device, which essentially gives you a gigabyte of worldwide full-speed 4G LTE mobile data for a monthly fee of \$9. The Solis X specifically allows you to connect up to ten devices, and is also fitted with a virtual assistant, remote camera, and power bank.

#### ■ ASUS MB160B+ Portable Monitor

For those in creative professions (or really anyone accustomed to working with dual-screen setups in the office), losing a monitor can slow down productivity significantly. Thankfully, today’s portable monitors are sturdier, brighter and lighter than ever. The best among these is perhaps this 15.6-inch, full-HD monitor—the slimmest and lightest on the market—from ASUS, which is powered entirely by USB. Included in the bundle is the sleek, metallic screen, a two-way adjustable stand and a protective sleeve.

#### ■ Aukey Ora iPhone Clip-On Lens

The quality of mobile photography continues to improve at a rapid rate. For under 20 bucks, you can take your phone photos to the next level with the best adjustable clip-on lenses out there. Aukey’s lens kit includes a wide-angle option with a 140-degree view and a 10x macro lens for zooming in. Made of aluminum alloy, they’re tough enough for outdoor trips and adventure photos. If you’re packing light, this is a great alternative to dragging along a bulky DSLR and camera bag.

#### ■ Bestek Universal Travel Adapter

Running out of power on the go is every traveler’s nightmare. So get you an adapter that can do it all. Amazon’s bestselling universal travel adapter allows you to charge seven de-

vices simultaneously—there are three outlets and four USB ports. There’s a built-in voltage converter, should you want to power a hair dryer or electric toothbrush. It’s light and compact, and comes with a 5-foot detachable power cable to reach even the most inconveniently located hotel outlets. And interchangeable plugs that work on every continent.

#### ■ Anker PowerCore 13000 Portable Charger

For truly portable power, consider Anker’s selection of high-speed chargers. These include this compact two-port option, which can charge an iPhone 8 almost five times and an iPhone X three times. If you have a new Macbook, Anker’s also got this option with a USB-C connection.

#### ■ Fancii Cool Mist Personal Humidifier

For those who travel to areas with high elevation or who, like me, have experienced respiratory issues with dusty or dirty hotel air-conditioning units, it’s a good idea to pack a portable humidifier. The benefit of this particular device is that there’s no special water bottle required—simply twist on a regular plastic bottle and you’re good to go. The unit can be powered via a USB cord or by 3 AA batteries that will last up to 18 hours.

#### ■ GoPro HERO7 HD Waterproof Action Camera

Relive all your underwater adventures with this 4K60, 12-megapixel action camera. Built-in stabilization ensures quality videos as deep as 33 feet (any deeper and you’ll need a waterproof case). For those needing

advanced functionality, the camera offers 30x speed increase, voice control and Facebook live-streaming capabilities.

#### ■ Lemontec Portable Garment Steamer

If you travel often for business, forget that clunky hotel ironing board and remove wrinkles with this portable mini steamer. The device takes about a minute to heat up and offers about 9 minutes of steam ironing. While smaller options exist, their water capacity means you’ll need to refill constantly; meanwhile, Lemontec’s device takes a good 6 ounces.

#### ■ Sennheiser PXC 550 Wireless Over-The-Ear Noise Cancelling Headphones

We’ve all been on a plane with a crying child or intrusively loud adult conversations. So when you need to block out the din, these noise-cancelling Bluetooth headphones from Sennheiser offer a high level of comfort and audio quality. Additional features include voice prompts, touch controls, smart pause and automatic on/off power.

#### ■ Victorinox Swisscard Lite Pocket Tool

If you need the functionality of a multi-tool while traveling, this pocket-sized, 13-tool option from Victorinox—the company behind Swiss Army Knives—includes a small detachable blade (more of a letter opener, but you still need to remove it if you’re traveling), scissors, a straight pin, ballpoint pen, tweezers, magnifying glass, two screwdrivers, ruler and a LED mini light. The best part? It fits right in your wallet.

(Source: Forbes)



# What to expect from next generation fleet technology

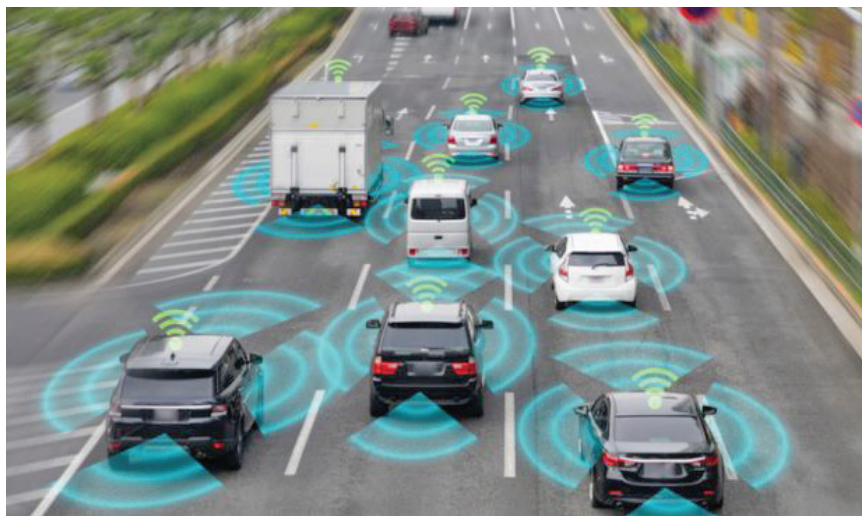
When we think of the next generation of fleet operations, most attention is given to the concept of autonomous vehicles. But the timeline for the widespread adoption of truly autonomous vehicles is anyone's guess. Tesla founder, Elon Musk, famously claimed that the company's cars would be "fully autonomous" by 2017 (a fact which has yet to pass), but that year, one of the motor industry's main proponents of autonomous vehicle technology said that "true autonomous cars will not happen within the next decade."

As a result, it is more productive for future-looking fleet managers to consider the cutting-edge technology which can help fleet-based operations compete now, instead of replacing the concept of a human driver. Today's emergent fleet technologies are, for the most part, focused instead on empowering drivers and fleet managers to work more efficiently. Here we look at a handful of innovations that are already being adopted in the industry, as well as a look ahead to how operations may change as a result.

## Processing power

Computer processing through algorithms or machine learning, along with data storage advances, have opened up possibilities that seemed unimaginable even just a few years ago. For example, an autonomous vehicle collects and analyses more than a terabyte of data in real time, each day. This ability to collect, analyse and process huge volumes of data has spawned on demand services that enable us to watch TV, stream music, order a taxi, or book a hotel room on our phones or online almost instantly – and it has increased expectations of what should be possible for both consumers and mobile workers.

With additional processing power, managers can look at multiple data sources to gain bigger samples or correlate different data sets to provide more detailed information. At the same time, greater processing creates new ways to make extra data easier for people to understand and even automate tasks. This



will advance even further as the industry harnesses the ability to collect more contextually relevant data from a combination of devices such as vehicle, mobile devices and other internet enabled sensors.

While the widespread adoption of autonomous vehicles may be some time off, the computing power of non-autonomous vehicles is growing significantly. Vehicles are now capable of reporting more information to managers than ever before. From engine diagnostic details such as temperature, oil or fuel levels, and wear and tear on parts, to things inside the vehicle such as seatbelt use, number of passengers to even what was on the radio.

## Management benefits

This enables more effective management of vehicles. Managers can foresee potential engine troubles, and schedule vehicle maintenance before they occur. Or they could gain other insights that could help employee safety or wellbeing and improve customer satisfaction. For example, if a vehicle's engine is not switched on it's a fairly safe bet,

the driver may be delayed – which can be automatically communicated to customers or other workers. Or if the vehicle's heater is constantly on, managers could provide better uniforms to help drivers stay warm and avoid getting sick, along with reducing fuel consumption.

Mobile workers could soon expect an almost frictionless experience, where they no longer need to manually input data or update a manager while performing a task, while managers will automatically gain valuable insights to improve decision making. For example, imagine you had a worker in the field who was installing a satellite dish for a customer. If the installation was taking longer than expected, contextual data collection and analysis would be able to determine this automatically and assign their next job to another field service worker or communicate an accurate expected arrival time to the next customer – all without intervention from the worker, or manager.

## Voice recognition

The rapid take-up of voice recognition

technology shows how far the software has come. While it used to be rather unreliable, voice dictation is beginning to replace typing in online queries. Twenty percent of mobile queries were made via voice in 2016, while accuracy is now about 95 percent. Improved voice recognition is a powerful tool for the mobile worker, enabling hands free input of data, activation of tasks and communication with managers. It means that mobile workers can do their job more effectively, without having to take their eyes of the task at hand. This is especially useful in the fleet space – helping create a better, safer field working experience.

Years ago, the concept of streaming films, TV or live sporting events in high definition over the internet didn't seem possible. But through improved connectivity and video compression technologies, we can create more visually-led communications between mobile workers and the office. Visual sensors between the office and the mobile worker can enable more effective service – enabling remote diagnostic detection or instruction from a manager. For example, an engineer working on a site could use video to remotely consult with someone in the office to find an appropriate solution, rather than having to leave the site or send another worker out.

Mobile and field-working will continue to be improved by technology. The best deployment of technology will reduce the burden on staff, rather than adding to the workload. For workers it will help make life easier, requiring less intervention and creating an almost frictionless process for reporting back to the office. For managers, technology will give increased visibility on how their field workers are performing. There is seemingly no limit to what data can be collected, correlated and analyzed to help to improve how the organization is run, making it safer, more profitable and more enjoyable.

(Source: [techradar.com](http://techradar.com))

## Clothes that grow: 10 bold ideas to reduce ocean plastics

Sky Ocean Ventures teams up with the UK's innovation agency to invest in 10 UK firms fighting the world's plastics crisis.

Microbeads made from plants not plastic and clothes that stretch as a baby grows are some of the ideas to be awarded a slice of £6m to prevent further ocean pollution.

Ten companies have been picked to receive investment by the government and Sky Ocean Ventures, the campaign which backs the development of new ocean-saving technologies.

One of them is Petit Pli, which turns recycled plastic bottles into clothes that expand with the young child who wears them.

Ryan Mario Yasin, who founded the start-up, said: "We are using a patent-pending structure embedded within the garment which gives them mechanical properties.

"You can fit seven sizes within a single garment and what this allows you to do is reduce the waste within the fashion industry. "It's trying to make sustainability desirable through innovation."

Another company, Naturbeads, has created cellulose microbeads as an alternative to the 30,000 tonnes of plastic ones washed into the sea each year... the equivalent of five billion plastic bottles.

A UK ban was brought in last year but only in rinse-off products like face scrub.

The minuscule bits of plastic, described as "tiny timebombs" by the creators of the plant-based alternative, are capable of ab-



sorbing chemicals from the environment before being washed into the sea, ingested by fish and then potentially eaten by us.

Another firm to receive funding is DAME, a subscription service providing women with organic cotton tampons and the first-ever reusable applicator.

Every year in the UK, 1.3 billion plastic applicators are thrown away.

Co-founder Alec Mills said: "For decades we have been consuming and throwing away and there is only one Earth and it's not going to survive unless we take drastic changes to reverse climate change and that means consuming less... that means reusing products and ultimately thinking long-term, making better products that last."

Sky Ocean Ventures has pledged a total of £25m to help young companies and entrepreneurs develop their ideas.

"By investing in innovative new products and materials, we will help turn off the plastics tap."

(Source: [skynews.com](http://skynews.com))

## This radar image highlights the growth of the small satellite industry

On Friday, Finland-based imaging satellite startup Iceye announced that it's now capable of producing radar images with a resolution of less than one meter. This is a major milestone for the company, which launched its first satellite in January 2018, and also highlights the growing sophistication of the small satellite industry, particularly in the area of remote sensing.

Iceye, which now operates three satellites, doesn't take images with a camera. Instead, it uses synthetic aperture radar (SAR), a technique that uses satellite flight paths to simulate a large radar antenna. The resulting images provide data of interest to a wide variety of customers, ranging from oil and gas companies to emergency responders. The information is especially useful because it can be gathered no matter the weather—the process of gathering SAR images ignores clouds, which often obscure traditional satellite visuals.

For Iceye, the ability to get those SAR images to resolutions of less than a meter is "one more milestone achievement, effectively pushing through the boundaries of capabilities you might not have thought you could reach with a small satellite," says Pekka Laurila, the company's cofounder and chief strategy officer.

Iceye is one of several satellite imaging companies founded earlier this decade that took advantage of the miniaturization of technology to create satellites that are



much smaller than traditional imaging satellites. Its satellites are about 9 feet long and 150 pounds, compared to larger communications satellites that can be the size of a small car.

Although those larger satellites, which are typically in geosynchronous orbit, can typically achieve higher resolutions than smaller satellites, the latter have the advantage of being able to be deployed more quickly and in lower orbits, meaning that parts of the planet can be revisited on a more regular basis—sometimes as often as twice a day. As Friday's announcement shows, smaller satellites are catching up on image quality as well. And because they're less expensive and can be deployed more quickly, they're easier to scale to the market.

"What's new about small satellites is you can be extremely reactive, you can maintain exactly the number of satellites that there's demand for at any given point," says Laurila.

(Source: [forbes.com](http://forbes.com))

## Those robocall blocker apps are hanging up on your privacy

If you downloaded an app to block spam calls, its privacy policy is likely giving up your personal information.

Do you hate robocalls enough to let an app give your data to third parties in exchange for blocking the spam? Researchers found that's exactly what's happening to millions of people using the most popular robocall-blocking apps.

Robocalls have become an epidemic, as lawmakers and phone carriers seek to stomp out the massive number of spam calls sent per day. A study found that there were 26.3 billion robocalls made in the US in 2018, and it's the No. 1 source of complaints to the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission.

But when you're downloading robocaller-blocking apps, you could be trading one evil for another, found Dan Hastings, a security researcher at NCC Group. He looked at the privacy policy on the top robocaller-blocking apps in the iOS App Store and compared it with network traffic data actually being sent from the apps.

Hastings found that a majority of them were collecting personal data on people's devices without their explicit consent and sharing it with analytics firms.

"If most people took the time to read and try to understand privacy policies for all the apps they use (and are able to understand them!), they might be surprised to see how much these apps collect," the researcher said in a statement.

Hastings is presenting his findings at Defcon's Crypto & Privacy Village on Sunday.



While robocalls are the top consumer complaint to the FTC and the FCC, privacy is also a major concern for the agencies. The FTC levied a record \$5 billion fine on Facebook for the social network's privacy violations, and people are becoming more aware of all the ways tech giants siphon personal data.

Free apps that provide one solution can turn out to be creating another problem for people's privacy, like when an innocuous-seeming weather app turns out to be selling your location data. Robocall blocking apps are no different, Hastings found.

These apps are sharing people's phone numbers with data analytics firms, looking at your text messages and phone calls, and can learn what apps you have on your device, the researcher said.

The top robocaller-blocking app, TrapCall, is sending people's phone numbers to three data analytics companies, Hastings

found. This was happening even though it wasn't explicitly stated in the privacy policy when Hastings did his research. The company has now changed its privacy policy to tell users that they are sharing their data with third parties.

TrapCall said that its users agree to the privacy policy when they install the app, and that the data was not being abused by the analytics companies.

"TrapCall only shares phone numbers with service providers who power our internal analytics and app messaging platforms. Additionally, service providers are prohibited from using TrapCall data for their own or any other purpose," the company said in a statement.

Hiya, another top robocalling app, also sends people's phone data to three data analytics firms -- and that happens before users even agree to the privacy policy, Hastings found.

"While it is true that Hiya currently sends some basic device data to third party services upon opening the app (a standard industry practice in compliance with Apple's guidelines), that does not and has never included phone numbers or any Personally Identifiable Information (PII)," the company said in a statement.

In its permissions on Android, Hiya requests for access to photos, location data and web activity logs -- features that have nothing to do with blocking phone calls. The company said that it requests location data so that people can find nearby businesses more easily.

(Source: [cnet.com](http://cnet.com))

## How facial recognition became the most feared technology

Two lawmakers are drafting a new bipartisan bill that could seriously limit the use of the technology across the U.S.

Facial recognition is having a moment.

Across the U.S., local politicians and national lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have started introducing rules that bar law enforcement agencies from using facial recognition technology to surveil everyday citizens.

In just the past few months, three cities — San Francisco, Oakland, and Somerville, Massachusetts — have passed laws to ban government use of the controversial technology, which analyzes pictures or live video of human faces in order to identify them. Cambridge, Massachusetts, is also moving toward a government ban. Congress recently held two oversight hearings on the topic and there are at least four pieces of current federal legislation to limit the technology in some way.

And now, Recode has learned that two top lawmakers, Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), plan this fall to introduce a new bipartisan bill on facial recognition, according to representatives from both legislators' offices. The specifics of the bill are still being hashed out, but it could include issuing a pause on the federal government's acquisition of new facial recognition technology, according to a staffer from Jordan's office.

Facial recognition is a rare case where regulators are working together — on a bipartisan level, no less — to try to get ahead of technology instead of catching up to it. That's because this powerful new technology has the potential to infringe on Americans' civil liberties — no matter their political persuasion — and to have a chilling effect on free speech.

"It seems like there's a huge moment right now for regulating facial recognition. We've been working on surveillance issues broadly for years, and now something about this is striking a nerve with people," said Evan Greer, director of the advocacy group Fight for the Future, which has been pushing for a national ban on the technology. Greer said she believes that, in the next few months, many more cities or states will regulate the technology; four states have already introduced facial recognition legislation.

So far, this impending wave of legislation hasn't prevented private companies from using the technology. Even in cities like San Francisco with facial recognition bans, companies like Apple are still free to sell cellphones that have facial recognition built into their products. That's a different and less controversial application of the technology, mainly because consumers have the choice not to use it. And if companies don't properly notify users when it employs this tech, like a federal court recently found Facebook guilty of, they could face legal and financial penalties.

But when facial recognition technology is used by law enforcement agencies, the general public is often unknowingly having their faces monitored, scanned, and tracked. That's why lawmakers are increasingly setting a higher bar for government agencies using the tools.

Some police departments and advocates of the technology have argued that outright bans are going too far, and that the technology can help law enforcement more effectively stop crime. Already, dozens of local police departments across the US use the technology to match driver's license pictures and mug shots to criminal databases. But the recent uptick in regulation has the potential to slow down that process.

One of the main reasons why facial recognition technology is being legislated is simple: It's scary.

Unlike your cellphone or computer, there's no way to turn off your face. Indeed, in China, the technology is already ubiquitous and used for mass surveillance of ordinary citizens in public life — most alarmingly to target the Uighur Muslim ethnic minority in what's been called "automated racism." For many Americans, a society where government is always watching you is inherently un-American.

"I think people are understanding that this technology is different," said Neema Singh Guliani, senior legislative council with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). "The idea that the government may be able to identify or track people when they're at a protest or visiting a doctor is especially concerning."

People are also concerned about the way facial recognition has been rolled out; in many jurisdictions, it's been done in secret and without much community input. The fear is that the powerful software can be used by law enforcement agencies to track anyone they deem suspicious, without any reasonable evidence that they've committed a crime.

A few years ago, police in Orlando, Florida, started piloting Amazon's facial recognition software — called Rekognition — that connects data from live video feeds with facial recognition technology to watch and track people in real time. The pilot, which placed four surveillance cameras in public areas around the city (which the police department said was only used to test on its own officers), was rolled out without any public notice or legal guidelines. After sustained public scrutiny and reports of technical limitations, the department decided in June to drop its contract with Amazon. The Orlando case was an example of how, in a lawless environment, facial recognition technology can escalate into a PR nightmare.

Three years ago, the ACLU started working with cities to pass legislation that would let those cities take control over the rollout of surveillance technology — including facial recognition as well as other tools such as license plate scanners — in what's called the Community Control Over Police Surveillance ordinance. Now, 13 US cities have passed such laws, and several other cities and states are working on passing similar legislation.

But all this local regulation doesn't stop federal law enforcement from using facial recognition. The Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law Center discovered last month that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had access to databases of drivers' license photos from 21 states. That means if you live in one of those states, your drivers' license photo could be used without your knowledge in a digital version of a criminal line-up.

The fact that ICE is using facial recognition to help deport immigrants is a major reason liberal politicians, particularly those in sanctuary cities, want to rein in government use of the technology. But though the first cities to ban facial recognition have been liberal strongholds like San Francisco and Oakland, several Republican lawmakers are also raising concerns. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) co-chairs the House Oversight Committee, which held recent hearings on the technology, and has been a conservative leader on the topic.

"Facial recognition is concerning from the perspective of government having too much power," said a spokesperson from Jordan's office at the House Oversight Committee. "That's where the congressman is coming from. It's an instinctive civil libertarian and constitutionalist perspective."

Jordan plans to introduce legislation in the coming months with Cummings, and his office anticipates the bill will have broad support in Congress.

(Source: [vox.com](http://vox.com))



## SDSs haunting southeastern Iran, dozens hospitalized

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Severe sand and dust storms (SDSs) has left 127 patients hospitalized due to respiratory problems in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, head of provincial disaster mitigation and management organization has said.

So far, 465 people have referred to hospitals due to respiratory, ocular and heart problems, 338 of whom have been provided with outpatient care, while the rest have been hospitalized, Tasnim quoted Abdolrahman Shahnavazi as saying on Saturday.

SDSs reaching speeds up to 112 kilometers per hour, and particulate matters (PM) concentration peaking at 26 times above the safe levels has caused respiratory problems for the residents, he stated.

He further called on people, especially patients, children and the elderly, to take safety measures, and to use air-filtering masks when exposed to increased concentrations of PM and air pollution.

Sistan, located north of Sistan-Baluchestan province, is frequently hit by sand and dust storms, as well as drought and even destructive floods.

It was announced that strong SDSs with as fast as 100 kilometers per hour speed have stricken Sistan-Baluchestan province over 19 times since last year.

PM concentration even peaked at 60 times above the safe levels in the region.

## Giant river animals on verge of extinction, report warns

Populations of the great beasts that once dominated the world's rivers and lakes have crashed in the last 50 years, according to the first comprehensive study.

Some freshwater megafauna have already been declared extinct, such as the Yangtze dolphin, and many more are now on the brink, from the Mekong giant catfish and stingray to India's gharial crocodiles to the European sturgeon. Just three Chinese giant softshell turtles are known to survive and all are male. Across Europe, North Africa and Asia, populations have plunged by 97% since 1970.

The killing of the animals for meat, skins and eggs is the cause of the decline, along with humanity's ever growing thirst for fresh-water for crops, its many dams, as well as widespread pollution. The scientists assessed 126 species, covering 72 countries, and found numbers had plunged by an average of 88%.

Many of the creatures are keystone species in their eco-systems, such as beavers, and the researchers said their loss will have knock on effects on all fauna and flora and on the many millions of people that depend on the waterways for their livelihoods.

"The results are a wake-up call to us about the plight of these species," said Zeb Hogan from the University of Nevada, US, who participated in the research team. "Many of them are at risk of extinction, and almost all of them need our help. It's a race now to see what can be understood and protected before it's too late."

The Mekong river in southeast Asia is home to more giant fish species than any other river on Earth and Hogan has worked there for two decades. But he said populations have dropped to almost zero as the rapidly increasing human population has escalated the pressure on them.

The Mekong is also home to the world's largest catfish, which can weigh almost 300kg (661lb), and the biggest carp and freshwater stingray species. All are now classified as critically endangered, one step from extinction.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Former King wins Bulgarian elections

(June 18, 2001)

In Bulgaria the movement established by the former King, Simeon II, has won a clear victory in the parliamentary elections. Winners and losers are discussing a coalition government. The BBC's Nick Thorpe reported from Sofia.

There were no wild celebrations following the former king's victory. The 64-year-old business consultant, who has lived most of his life **in exile** in Spain, spoke slowly, almost **awkwardly** to his people, promising **stable** government in which no corruption would be **tolerated** and an acceleration of the country's integration into the EU and NATO.

He politely **brushed aside** reporters' questions about his own possible role in the new government, which he said would be decided later. From the government's side, the outgoing Prime Minister, Ivan Kostov, conceded victory **graciously**, and admitted personal responsibility for his party's **crushing defeat**.

In the corridors of the Palace of Culture, where all party leaders had **gathered** to follow the results, **election rivals** began **patching up** contacts with one another, damaged by **sharp exchanges** during the campaign.

The former king's movement says it wants to rule in **coalition**; there are two **conservative parties** in parliament now - the winners of this election and the defeated government. And some, at least in Ivan Kostov's United Democratic Forces, appear **open to** cooperation with the National Movement for Simeon II.

#### ■ Words

**in exile:** the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

**awkwardly:** if you say something awkwardly, you say it in an uncomfortable, nervous or embarrassed way

**stable:** not likely to suddenly change or end

**tolerated:** things that are allowed to exist or happen even though you disagree with them, are tolerated

**brushed aside:** refused to answer

**graciously:** behaving in a polite and pleasant way

**crushing defeat:** a complete victory over an opponent

**gathered:** came together in a group

**election rivals:** competitors during an election

**patching up:** repairing damaged relationships

**sharp exchanges:** sudden and angry disagreements

**coalition:** a temporary alliance for combined action, especially of political parties forming a government

**conservative party:** a conservative party is the main right-of-center party in Britain

**open to:** if you're open to ideas and suggestions, you're prepared to consider them

(Source: BBC)

# ‘More natural disasters on the way to Iran; think of a solution’

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — More natural disasters caused by climate change will occur in Iran which needs to be tackled urgently; so, think of a solution, Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), has said.

The recent flood was just the beginning of the environmental incidents that will soon turn into an ordinary occurrence in Iran, she told Khabaronline on Wednesday.

Heavy rainfall, beginning on March 19, led to flooding in 28 out of 31 provinces of Iran affecting 42,269,129 inhabitants in 253 cities and causing widespread damage to municipal facilities, including health centers and hospitals.

Climate change is a crisis which is making the world's climate characteristic more irregular, as well as increasing environmental disasters such as floods, dust storms, droughts, etc., she said, adding, climate change in many regions could have deadly consequences, just like what happened in Iranian cities during the spring.

Countries must plan for these catastrophes from now on to reduce the number of victims and the extent of damages possibly caused by natural disasters, she highlighted.

She went on to say that according to the latest data, climate change will have more impact on Iran in the future, unfortunately the severity of natural disasters will increase in the region, as well.

On the other hand, Iran is located in an arid area, and therefore will suffer desertification and deforestation as a subsequence of climate change, she noted, adding, the region must seek an economic-social solution to



alleviate the crisis.

"An economic-social solution can be divided into two parts; first, we need to get people ready for such accidents; the more people are prepared, the fewer the number of casualties and the consequences of climate change," she explained.

Referring to the ways getting people prepared, she said that natural disasters must be constantly monitored, using new technologies, and countries like Iran can work with other countries to use these technologies.

Responding to the question of how to use advanced technologies regarding the sanctions, she stated: "In a trip to Tehran, I found out that Iran can reach different technologies domestically due to having the capabilities to produce some of which needed to cope with the climate change."

"Although sanction is a very unfortunate situation, I hope to be resolved in the near future."

The second issue is adaptability, for example, Iran has to adapt to sand and dust storm events finding out what causes the incident initially, she stated.

To adopt, if climate change is the source of SDSs, Iran alone cannot solve the problem and an international consensus is needed, which might need countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, she added.

She also said that in Indonesia, a country very vulnerable to such incidents, mostly mountain landslide, sometimes moves people from areas prone to such incidents, while sometimes adapt people to live a balanced life in those areas, being aware.

## Persian lions at Tehran zoo introduced to live together

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — The lion couple kept in captivity at Tehran Zoological Garden for reproduction of the endangered species have been introduced to each other to live together, a veterinarian at Tehran's Eram Zoo has said.

A male Persian lion, born 6 years ago, was sent to Tehran Zoological Garden from Britain's Bristol Zoo on May 1, under a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA).

A female lion of the same subspecies from Ireland also sent to Iran to accompany the male lion through the conservation program.

The female lion has so far met her male companion, but this time they are going to live in together after two months after being introduced to each other, Mehr quoted Iman Memarian as saying on Saturday.

Most animals recognize other animals by sight or smell, although other cues could be used, such as sounds. Odors are also used as cues to familiarity or genetic relatedness in mammals, birds, amphibians, fish and insects; odors mainly come from general sweat glands or from specialized glands in the skin, he explained.

"Some wild species even kill each other after being introduced; therefore, we are so cautious about the lion couple and are under supervision since next few days," he added.

Referring to reproduction of Asiatic lion, he said that there is not a specific plan yet unless one is announced by European Endangered species Programme (EEP).

Currently, the two animals are controlled with contraceptives, he stated, adding, they undergo birth control measures as long as the purpose for their captive



breeding is determined.

Over the past years, Tehran Zoological Garden has succeeded in becoming a member of EAZA, and it is being supervised to ensure the animal's safety, he highlighted, adding, "We met the internationally defined standards."

He went on to add that the male lion is the only Persian lion, as its twin sibling died due to severe respiratory problems.

Considering that Persian lion is a symbol in Iran's wildlife, since past 80 years, many efforts have been taken to turn the valuable species back to the country which faced failure due to different reasons, he noted.

"As selling or buying animals in European zoos is banned, after 8 years of efforts, we could turn the couple back due to our compliance with the EAZA standards," he said.

Disappeared for 80 years, Persian lion once prowled from the Middle East to India, while currently only a fraction of these magnificent animals survive in the wild, which range is restricted to the Gir National Park and environs in the Indian state of Gujarat.

On the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, it is listed under its former scientific name Panthera leo persica as Endangered because of its small population size and area of occupancy. It was also known as "Indian lion" and "Persian lion".

Historical records in Iran indicate that it ranged from the Khuzestan Plain to the Fars in steppe vegetation and pistachio-almond woodlands. It was widespread in the country, but in the 1870s, it was sighted only on the western slopes of the Zagros Mountains, and in the forest regions south of Shiraz. Some of the country's last lions were sighted in 1941 between Shiraz and Jahrom in Fars province, and in 1942, a lion was spotted about 65 km northwest of Dezful. In 1944, the corpse of a lioness was found on the banks of Karun River in Khuzestan province.

Conflicts with humans, wildfires, poaching, canine distemper virus, decreases in population sizes of native ungulates are of the threats to the lions.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

### Persian leopard to receive artificial insemination next week

For the first time, a Persian leopard will undergo artificial insemination in Tehran Zoological Garden next week.

"The precious female leopard has lost a hand being injured in a hunting trap in Golestan province, who is being kept in the Garden," Mehr quoted Iman Memarian, Tehran Zoological Garden director, as saying on Monday.

Referring to European Endangered Species Programs (EEP), he noted that EEP is a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA).

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “dys-”

■ **Meaning:** bad

■ **For example:** All the siblings in their extremely **dysfunctional** family lost contact as adults.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Leave somebody/ something behind

■ **Meaning:** if a person, country, or organization is left behind, they do not develop as quickly or make as much progress as other people, countries, etc.

■ **For example:** In class, a child with poor eyesight can soon get left behind.

## IDIOM

### Your guess is as good as mine

■ **Explanation:** I do not know either; I have no idea. Typically said in response to a question

■ **For example:** A: "Where's Hank?" B: "Your guess is as good as mine. He didn't say anything to me."



# Clashes between UAE, Saudi militants intensify in Aden

**TEHRAN**— UAE-backed southern separatists and Saudi-led militia have engaged in fresh fighting in Yemen’s southern port city of Aden amid a growing rift within the Riyadh-led coalition in its war on the impoverished Arab country.

Aden residents said the clashes resumed Saturday dawn between the southern separatists and Saudi-backed militants loyal to ex-Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The battles, they added, centered on the all-but empty presidential palace and in a neighborhood, where self-proclaimed interior minister Ahmed al-Mayssari lives.

The minister, however, had left his home during a lull in fighting the previous night, unnamed sources told Reuters.

Saturday’s fighting marked a fourth straight day of militant infighting in Aden, a gateway for commercial and aid supplies.

At least eight civilians were killed during Friday’s confrontation, according to medical sources.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), a humanitarian NGO, warned that civilians have been trapped in their homes with dwindling food and water supplies.



“There has been heavy, continuous shelling. We’re still hearing clashes in my neighborhood,” said Amgad, an NRC staff member. “There is no way to get out of the city. Roads are closed and it is not safe. People are scared. We hope this will end soon.”

Also on Saturday, UN Secretary General

Antonio Guterres voiced concerns about the violent Aden clashes.

In a statement, he urged rival parties to cease hostilities and “engage in an inclusive dialogue to resolve their differences and address the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis.”

## Heatwave caused nearly 400 additional fatalities in Netherlands

**TEHRAN**— Almost 400 people more died in the Netherlands during Europe’s recent record-breaking heat wave than in a regular summer week, Dutch national statistics agency CBS said Friday. In total, 2,964 people died in the Netherlands during the week that started on July 22, the CBS said, which was around 15 percent more than during an average week in the summertime. Temperature records tumbled across Europe during late July’s heat wave, and for the first time since records began topped 40 degrees Celsius in the Netherlands on July 25.

The death toll in the Netherlands during that week was comparable to the rate

during two heat waves in 2006, which were among the longest ever in the country, the researchers said.

About 300 of the additional fatalities were among people aged 80 years and older.

Most of the deaths occurred in the east of the Netherlands, where temperatures were higher and the heat wave lasted longer than in other parts of the country.

The Netherlands has a total population of around 17 million.

The heat wave was the second to hit Europe in a month, and climate specialists warn such bursts of heat may become more common as the planet warms up due to greenhouse gas emissions, Reuters reported.

## Scores killed in Tanzania fuel tanker explosion

**TEHRAN**— At least 60 people have been killed and scores more wounded in a fuel tanker explosion in Tanzania, according to local police.

The explosion occurred on Saturday on the outskirts of Morogoro, a town about 200km west of the capital Dar es Salaam after a crowd had gathered around the tanker, which had overturned trying to avoid a motorbike.

Many of those killed and injured had been siphoning petrol from the vehicle when it burst into flames, according to police and witnesses.

A video shared on Twitter by ITV Tanzania appeared to show a large group of people carrying buckets and jerry cans

towards the tanker, while images from the aftermath appear to show the area around the tanker littered with charred corpses and the burned-out wreckage of motorbikes.

Morogoro Governor Stephen Kebwe said the bodies of 60 victims were at the morgue of local hospital, where more than 70 people were also being treated for injuries, Al Jazeera reported.

Wilbrod Mufafungwa, the town’s police commissioner, told reporters that work was ongoing to reach a “conclusive” number of those killed.

“Unfortunately fire broke out and burned a lot of people, a lot of people have lost their lives in this incident,” he said.

## Israeli forces fatally shoot four Palestinians near Gaza fence

**TEHRAN**— Israeli forces have shot dead at least four Palestinians near the fence separating the besieged Gaza Strip from the occupied territories.

Ma’an news agency said the Palestinians lost their lives in clashes with the Israeli army east of the Gaza city of Deir al-Balah early on Saturday.

The Israeli military claimed that the Palestinian victims had been “armed with AK-47 assault rifles, RPG grenade launchers & grenades—one of which was thrown.”

One of the Palestinian men, it added, had crossed the

Gaza fence and fired at Israeli troops.

It also noted that Israeli lookout troops had already spotted the Palestinians approaching the Gaza fence and alerted soldiers stationed nearby.

Israeli troops regularly opens fatal fire on Palestinians, accusing them of seeking to attack them. Human rights groups have repeatedly slammed the Tel Aviv regime for its shoot-to-kill policy.

Gaza has been under a crippling land, air and sea blockade by Israel since 2007 and witnessed three wars since 2008.

The coastal enclave has also witnessed deadly tensions since March 30, 2018 which marked the start of the Great March of Return protests, with participants demanding the right to return for the Palestinians driven out of their homeland.

According to Press TV, Israel carries out regular attacks on Gaza under the pretext of hitting positions belonging to the Hamas resistance movement

Also on Friday, Israeli aircraft targeted an alleged Hamas outpost near near Deir el-Balah in central Gaza.

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## Trump says Kim ready to start? egotiations as soon as U.S.-South Korea drills over

**TEHRAN**— U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in a letter expressed his readiness to start negotiations with Washington as soon as U.S.-South Korea joint drills were over.

“In a letter to me sent by Kim Jong Un, he stated, very nicely, that he would like to meet and start negotiations as soon as the joint U.S./South Korea joint exercise are over. It was a long letter, much of it complaining about the ridiculous and expensive exercises”, Trump tweeted.

Trump added that the letter contained “a small apology” for Pyongyang’s test of the short-range missiles and a statement that this testing “would stop when the exercises end”.

“I look forward to seeing Kim Jong Un in the not too distant future! A nuclear free North Korea will lead to one of the most successful countries in the world!” he added.

According to Sputnik, Pyongyang has previously stressed that the test of two short-range ballistic missiles was “an occasion to send an adequate warning to the joint military drill now underway by the U.S. and South Korean authorities”.

According to researchers in South Korea and the U.S., the weapon used in the tests was most likely the KN-23, a mobile ballistic missile system first seen in a 2018 parade. However, North Korea hasn’t confirmed these reports.

## Disgraced U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein dies by suicide

**TEHRAN**— The wealthy U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein, indicted on charges he trafficked underage girls for sex, committed suicide in prison, U.S. news media reported Saturday.

Epstein, who had hobnobbed with politicians and celebrities over the years and was already a convicted sex offender, hanged himself in his cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center and his body was found around 7:30 Saturday morning, The New York Times and other media said, quoting officials.

Epstein, 66, had been found in his cell in late July with marks on his neck after an apparent suicide attempt.

The hedge fund manager was denied bail in late July after appearing at a New

York court charged with one count of sex trafficking of minors and one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors.

He denied the charges and had faced up to 45 years in prison – effectively the rest of his life – if convicted.

The Metropolitan Correction Center, a federal facility in Manhattan that is often used to house suspects awaiting or during trial, is considered one of the most secure penal establishments in the US.

The infamous Mexican drug trafficker Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman spent more than two years there before being convicted and transferred to a federal prison in Colorado, Daily Star reported.

stand firm against Washington, it said.

“This is bad news for the anti-Iranian alliance and possibly indicates a trend that should concern the American president and his close friend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,” wrote Haaretz.

The paper added that doubt regarding the success of the U.S. administration’s regional policy was growing, with pessimism “trickling into” Tel Aviv despite nothing being “said of it in public”.

The war on Yemen and an ensuing blockade has taken a heavy toll on the infrastructure on the impoverished Arab country, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories and killing more than an estimated 60,000 Yemenis.

On Friday, thousands of Yemenis converged outside Sana’a International Airport in the capital to protest the U.S.-backed blockade.

## Blasts rock Russian ammo depot in Siberia

**TEHRAN**— New blasts tore through a Siberian ammunition dump on Friday during a clean-up operation, four days after it was destroyed by explosions that forced thousands of people to evacuate nearby areas.

Nine people were reported injured in Friday’s explosions during the clean-up of the ammunition dump on a military base in Russia’s Krasnoyarsk district. The initial incident on Monday killed one person and injured 13.

“A shell exploded, wounding five servicemen and damaging a vehicle during work on de-mining and eliminating the consequences of the emergency situation in Kamenka,” local authorities in Krasnoyarsk said in a statement.

The number of injured people rose to nine, RIA news agency cited an emergency services source as saying, Reuters reported.

## Danish capital hit by second blast in four days

**TEHRAN**— An explosion damaged a police station in Copenhagen early Saturday, the second blast to hit the Danish capital in four days.

No one was injured in the blast outside a small unstaffed police station in the area of Norrebro, just outside the city centre, Chief Police Inspector Jorgen Bergen Skov said.

On Tuesday, one person was slightly injured in an explosion outside the Danish Tax Agency’s office in what police said was a deliberate attack.

Skov said Saturday’s blast was also a deliberate act, but it was too early to say whether the two blasts were connected.

“This was not an accident, but a deliberate act,” Skov said, adding that while the investigation was still underway, nothing suggested it was terror-related.

“These were attacks against buildings, not people,” he said. “But it is too early to say anything about the motive.”

## Israelis playing with fire if join U.S. coalition in Persian Gulf

➔1 4. Normalizing ties with Arab countries. Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion had once said he was afraid of Arabs’ all-out invasion, wishing to normalize the Zionists’ relations with them. In the same vein, Katz has expressed hope that the Zionists manage to sign agreements on complete normalization of ties with the Persian Gulf littoral Arab states as the regime’s first step.

5. The possible presence of Europeans, including France and Germany in the coalition will be equal to the violation and complete death of the Iran nuclear deal.

6. The Israelis’ presence in the Persian Gulf will foment the tensions and add to the volatility of the region, and will be considered as an element threatening Iran’s security; however, Iran has warned that it reserves the right to defend itself against the Zionists’ threats.

7. The presence of the mentioned coalition, just like any other trans-regional coalition, is basically against the United Nations Charter. Besides, creating a military coalition against a member-state of the UN will need the organization’s permission. According to the UN Charter’s Article 52, the international body recognizes establishing regional arrangements to maintain international peace and security. But, firstly the U.S.-proposed coalition is not a “regional” organization since the trans-regional states play the major role in it; and secondly, under the UN Charter’s Article 53, the UN Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority, and no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Council.

8. By joining the collation, the Israelis seek to show Iran as the main threat in the region; that is somehow the Zionists’ way of projection to divert the attention from their occupation, which is in fact the main reason behind the region’s conflicts.

9. Linking the Persian Gulf security to that of the Bab-el-Mandeb in line with the Saudis’ plans is aimed at curbing Iran’s regional policies and engaging other international players in the regional developments. This is while the Persian Gulf legal status must be determined by its states, as the right to ensure the safety of vessels in the international waters is reserved for the littoral countries.

10. Establishing a coalition with the leadership of the United States basically means the provision of the grounds for triggering a war in the region and will bring multiple consequences with it.

11. Although the Arab front that had worried Ben-Gurion has been eliminated due to some Arab ruler’s parallel policies with the Israelis, the Resistance Front is still making the regime lose sleep.

12. Israelis presence in this coalition will be a clear declaration of war against the Islamic Republic, and any offensive against the Zionist regime in the Persian Gulf will be within the UN Charter’s frameworks in order to defend Iran’s integrity and security.

## Will Democrats’ return revive JCPOA?

➔1 Here is a question. Will the dimmed JCPOA be revived If Trump’s term comes to end and the Democrats return to the White House?

The answer is NO. Just look at the debates going on among the Democratic candidates. They believe in returning to JCPOA with new terms and conditions including expanding of it to more issues like human rights, missile technology, and ultimately putting more pressure on Iran. All these precondition are not acceptable to Iran at all.

In short, there is not enough evidence showing that the JCPOA could be revived with Democrats’ return.

Remarks of some democrats such as Mark Dubowitz, the CEO of the hawkish Foundation for the Defense of Democracies indicate that return of the White House to the JCPOA without preconditions is impossible. He has recently called on building a strong wall of additional sanctions against Iran so that the wall remain firm even after Trump.

Some of these kinds of statements and request have already come true by imposing new sanctions under under the pretext of issues such as terrorism, human rights and missile program. The new sanctions on Iran’s iron, steel, aluminum and copper sectors under the pretext of human rights are example of a new American approach.

Considering all these facts, does anybody still believe that the Democrats’ return may revive the JCPOA?

## Failure of Saudi war in Yemen bad news for Israel

➔1 war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of Saudi-allied former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Resistance by Yemen’s armed forces, led by Ansarullah, has, however, pushed the Saudi war to a stalemate, with Yemeni forces deploying increasingly sophisticated retaliatory attacks against the Saudis.

The stepped-up Yemeni retaliatory strikes come as the UAE has announced the gradual withdrawal of its troops from the conflict, largely because Abu Dhabi believes the war appears to have become “unwinnable”, according to U.S. reports.

Saudi Arabia relied greatly on the Emirati forces in advancing its war in Yemen, with observers believing that a Saudi-led tribal alliance may eventually disintegrate with factional infighting due to a lack of Emirati oversight.

Clashes between Emirati-backed separatists and Saudi-backed militia were reported earlier this week.

### ■ ‘Bad news for Israel’

According to Haaretz’s Friday article, the defeat of the Saudi war effort will enable Houthis, which have adamantly voiced their opposition against the Israeli occupation, to facilitate arms exports to Palestinian resistance groups and restrict Israeli presence in the strategic Bab al Mandeb Strait.

The article, however, pointed that the gravest outcome of a Yemeni victory would be the gradual unraveling of what was meant to be a firm regional anti-Iran alliance.

According to Press TV, UAE’s withdrawal from the Saudi war effort and recent negotiations with Iranian officials indicated that Persian Gulf states are open “to reconsider their policy with respect to Iran” as Tehran and its allies



## Osaka number one again despite defeat by Williams

Naomi Osaka will return to the top of the women's tennis world rankings despite losing to Serena Williams in the quarter-finals of the Rogers Cup.

Williams beat Osaka 6-3 6-4 to set up a semi-final against Marie Bouzkova.

But Osaka's number one status was confirmed after Karolina Pliskova lost 6-0 2-6 6-4 to Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu in Toronto.

Pliskova, number one for eight weeks in 2017, needed to win the tournament to regain top spot.

Ashleigh Barty replaced Osaka at the top in June, but the Australian's run ended with her loss in round two.

Williams' meeting with Osaka was the first since last year's US Open final when the American argued with the umpire late in the match and Osaka was awarded a game as a penalty on her way to winning a first Grand Slam title.

Williams, the 23-time Grand Slam winner, is yet to drop a set this week in Toronto. "It's definitely not where I want to be, but I'm getting there," she said. Bouzkova, ranked 91st in the world, progressed to the semis after her opponent Simona Halep retired hurt having lost the first set 6-4.

Andreescu, 19, is currently 22nd in the rankings and will play Sofia Kenin in the semi-finals after the American defeated Ukrainian sixth seed Elina Svitolina 7-6 (7-2) 6-4.

(Source: BBC)

## Neymar to miss season opener for Paris St Germain - club source

Brazilian soccer star Neymar will not play in Sunday's season opener for Paris St Germain, a source at the club said on Saturday, as speculation continues to swirl over whether or not Neymar will remain at PSG.

"It is important we make a decision swiftly. We are still in



talks over moving things forward, to see if he will stay or not," said the source on Saturday, who added it was important that the PSG team "stays focused on the championship".

"Neymar is not in top physical condition," added the source.

(Source: Goal)

## 'Big plans': Reus eyes league opener after Dortmund see off Uerdingen in cup

Borussia Dortmund captain Marco Reus said his team had "big plans" for the coming season after they secured a routine 2-0 win over third-division side KFC Uerdingen in the first round of the German Cup on Friday.

Reus' second-half goal set Dortmund on their way to a comfortable victory, just a week after they beat Bayern Munich 2-0 in the German Supercup.

"The two wins were important for us to find our rhythm," Reus told Sport1.

"We are not yet quite at the level that we were at last season, but we have big plans this year, and we want to show that when the Bundesliga starts next weekend." Dortmund, who host Augsburg in their Bundesliga opener next Saturday, were forced to be patient against a well-organised Uerdingen defence which included former Dortmund fan favourite Kevin Grosskreutz.

Grosskreutz, a World Cup winner in 2014 and two-time Bundesliga winner with Dortmund, denied his old team early on with a goalline clearance. The underdogs then gave Dortmund a scare at the other end shortly before half-time. English striker Osayamen Osawe skewed a shot wide after pouncing on a mistake by Mats Hummels, who was making his first appearance for Dortmund since returning from Bayern Munich in June.

Unfazed, Dortmund took the lead just after half-time, Reus flicking in Manuel Akanji's long ball as the Uerdingen defence came fully undone for the first time.

With 20 minutes to play, Alcacer put the game beyond reach with a brilliant direct free-kick.

Borussia Moenchengladbach fought to a 1-0 win over second-division minnows Sandhausen thanks to a debut goal from new signing Marcus Thuram. Thuram, the son of French 1998 World Cup winner Lilian, headed in the winner on 19 minutes to get new coach Marco Rose's reign off to a winning start.

(Source: Mirror)

## Inter-Bayern deal for Perisic

Inter have agreed terms for Ivan Perisic to join Bayern Munich on loan for €5m with option to buy for €20m, with reports the Croatian has given the all-clear.

According to Sky Sport Italia, Sport Mediaset and others in Italy today, Perisic has been left behind when the team travelled to Valencia for tonight's friendly. The two clubs have a basic deal in place for a loan at €5m – an increase from the original €3m offer – and option to buy at the end of the season for €20m.

Because Bayern would also pay his full salary for the campaign, it'd effectively wipe Perisic off the Inter books for this season.

Antonio Conte has been very clear that the Croatian winger is not part of his plans, so has been using him as a make-shift striker, but now that Romelu Lukaku has arrived from Manchester United, that is no longer an option.

It was also reported that Perisic wanted to take 48 hours to make a decision, as he would prefer some guarantees he will make the move permanent next summer.

However, Sky Sport Italia updated that to confirm the former Borussia Dortmund and Wolfsburg man had accepted a return to the Bundesliga.

It's now just a matter of time before he flies out for a medical.

(Source: Football Italia)

# Ozil and Kolasinac to miss Newcastle trip due to security fears

Mesut Ozil and Sead Kolasinac will not be available for Arsenal's Premier League clash with Newcastle on Sunday as police investigate "further security incidents", the club has announced.

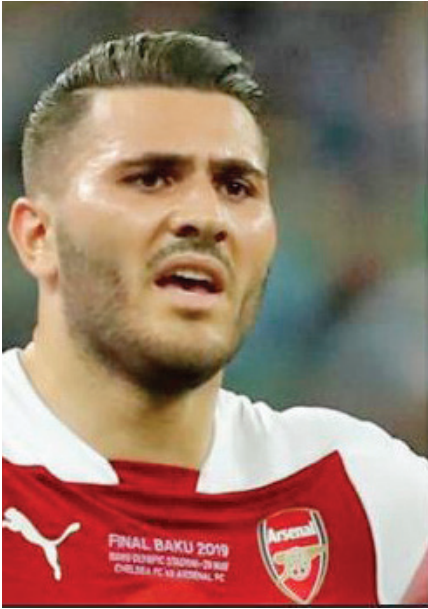
It's understood both players are unharmed and safe and that nothing untoward happened on Friday – although different incidents have occurred at different times over the past couple of days.

The pair were targeted by car-jackers in north London last month, with security camera footage showing Kolasinac confronting the offenders after they approached Ozil's car – with the two players unhurt during the incident in Golder's Green.

Neither featured in the Emirates Cup defeat to Lyon the following weekend after talks with head coach Unai Emery but had been expected to be in contention to face Newcastle in the season opener.

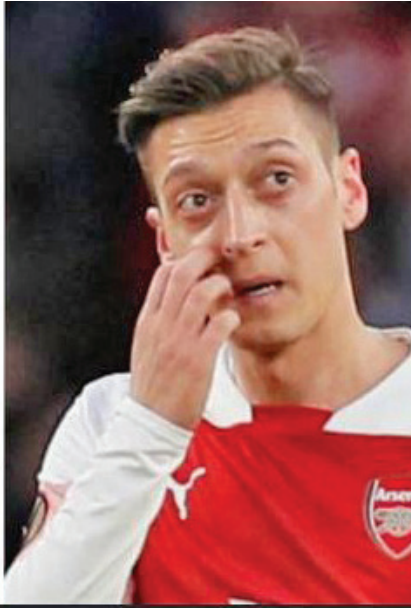
However, Arsenal released a statement on Friday evening announcing the two players would be unavailable for selection at St James' Park.

"Mesut Ozil and Sead Kolasinac will not be part of the squad for our opening match against Newcastle United following



further security incidents which are being investigated by the police," it read.

"The welfare of our players and their families is always a top priority and we have



taken this decision following discussion with the players and their representatives.

"We are liaising with the police and are providing the players and their families

with ongoing support.

"We look forward to welcoming the players back to the squad as soon as possible.

"We will not be making any further comment on the matter."

Despite Kolasinac claiming on social media that the pair were "fine" in the wake of last's month incident, the two players went on to sit out Arsenal's 2-1 win over Lyon in the Emirates Cup, with Emery revealing they were "not ready".

"This morning they came here but weren't ready to play the match," Emery said at the time.

"Every player is very important in the team, but also each moment and some circumstances give us a decision between the player and us.

"It's not a good moment to play because their mind is not now 100%. It's a very personal circumstance and the most important thing now is that they can feel good, they can feel safe, they can feel calm with their family.

"I spoke to them and decided it was best to continue their resting with their families and wait for a few days to hopefully come and start normally with the team."

(Source: Independent)

## Murray to make singles return in Cincinnati at Western & Southern Open



Andy Murray will make a return to singles action at the Cincinnati Masters next week - seven months after fearing he might have to retire.

Britain's former world number one has been playing doubles since June as he regains fitness after hip surgery.

Murray, 32, broke down in tears at the Australian Open in January, believing the resurfacing operation he had later that month could end his career.

Now the Scot is pain-free and feels the time is right to return to singles.

Murray has been given a wildcard and plays France's Richard Gasquet in the first round.

If Murray beats 33-year-old Gasquet, who is ranked 66th in the world after missing the first four months of the season with a groin injury, he will play Austrian world number four Dominic Thiem in the second round.

Murray's last singles match was a five-set loss to Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut in the first round in Melbourne.

Before the match the three-time Grand Slam champion said he planned to retire after this year's Wimbledon and feared the Australian Open could be the final tournament of his career.

But he returned to the doubles court in June after a career-saving operation with

renowned hip surgeon Sarah Muirhead-Allwood, whose previous patients have included the Queen Mother.

Murray said the resurfacing of his hip, where the femur head is smoothed down and covered with a metal cap, was "life-changing" and took away the pain which dogged him for a number of years.

He has played five doubles tournaments since his return to competitive action, winning Queen's alongside Spain's Feliciano Lopez in a dream comeback.

Speaking after his quarter-final match at the Rogers Cup in Montreal on Friday, world number two Rafael Nadal said Murray's return was "good news for the sport".

"Especially great news for him. That means that he's healthy," he added.

Joining Murray in a star-studded draw at the Masters 1,000 event in Cincinnati are Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Serbia's world number one Djokovic and Swiss great Federer return to action for the first time since their historic Wimbledon final, while Nadal will be back in action for the second week running after starting his North American hard-court campaign at this week's Rogers Cup.

(Source: BBC)

## Liverpool's Alisson ruled out of Super Cup with calf injury



Liverpool's Brazil keeper Alisson Becker is out of Wednesday's UEFA Super Cup clash with Chelsea – and could face a longer lay off – after suffering a calf injury in the 4-1 Premier League opening day win over Norwich City at Anfield on Friday.

Becker went down in the 36th minute, slipping as he was playing the ball out and called for medical attention.

A stretcher was brought out but he was able to leave the field with the help of support staff.

Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp said it was too early to know the seriousness of the injury but Becker has no chance of playing in Wednesday's UEFA Super Cup match between the European champions and Europa League winners Chelsea in Istanbul.

"It's a calf injury.

He felt as if something hit him from the back. He won't be ready for Wednesday, I can say that already," said Klopp.

"It is not good but we will find a solution and move on," added the German.

"We have to see how serious it is and then we have to deal with it.

It's the calf and that's it. He couldn't carry on, that's not a good sign. We

have to see," he said.

"Wednesday (in the Super Cup), he will not play – with all my experience, I can say that already. He is injured, for sure, so we have to see how much."

Spanish goalkeeper Adrian, who signed for Liverpool on a free transfer on Monday, replaced Becker to make his debut.

"Adrian is a good goalie," said Klopp. "In possession he is calm and he is good at shot-stopping, that's why we signed him"

The 32-year-old Adrian made 125 league appearances for West Ham United before being released at the end of last season and Klopp said he was sure he could handle his new duties.

"He is a very confident guy and he came in and I don't think he wanted to sit only on the bench for the next couple of years.

He made himself ready.

"In a situation like this you want to have somebody who has played (in) the league and who is experienced. He is 32, a calm guy, emotional as well, good with his feet, as we saw, and that's really important for us."

(Source: Reuters)

## Saudis accused of 'sportswash' by hosting world heavyweight fight

Saudi Arabia will host the world heavyweight title rematch between Anthony Joshua and champion Andy Ruiz Jr in December, a controversial choice which immediately sparked accusations of the Gulf kingdom attempting to "sportswash" its tarnished human rights image.

The high-profile December 7 duel, dubbed 'Clash on the Dunes', will see Britain's Joshua trying to win back the IBF, WBA and WBO titles he sensationally lost to American fighter Ruiz in New York in June.

The bout will take place in Diriyah, which incorporates the UNESCO World Heritage site of Al-Turaif, on the outskirts of Riyadh -- a dramatic contrast to the iconic Madison Square Garden which hosted the first fight.

Promoters Matchroom Boxing said the fight details will be officially revealed at a news conference in London on Monday.

The rematch had been widely touted but Cardiff's Principality Stadium was tipped as favourite to stage the event.

The Saudis have faced intense diplomatic fallout over the murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi which took place in the conservative kingdom's consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

Saudi rulers, also under fire for the war in neighbouring Yemen, have utilised sport



as a tool to try and soften their international image and to provide a showcase, they claim, for reforms inside the oil-rich state.

But Friday's announcement was quickly denounced by human rights campaigners.

"If Anthony Joshua fights Andy Ruiz Jr in Saudi Arabia, it's likely to be yet another opportunity for the Saudi authorities to try to 'sportswash' their severely tarnished image," said Amnesty UK's head of campaigns Felix Jakens.

"Despite some long-overdue reforms on women's rights, Saudi Arabia is currently in the grip of a sweeping human rights crackdown

-- with women's rights activists, lawyers and members of the Shia minority community all being targeted.

"There's been no justice over the gruesome murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and the Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen is carrying out indiscriminate attacks on homes, hospitals and market-places with horrific consequences for Yemeni civilians."

Amnesty said Joshua should "inform himself of the human rights situation and be prepared to speak out about Saudi Arabia's abysmal human rights record".

In February this year, the Saudis hosted

a first European Tour golf event which was won by former world number one Dustin Johnson while the world's most gruelling motor sports race, the Dakar Rally, will be raced in the country in 2020.

In July, British boxer Amir Khan won the WBC international welterweight title with a fourth-round stoppage of Australian Billy Dib in Jeddah.

Khan said he did not regret agreeing to the trip despite Amnesty describing the Saudi human rights record as "abysmal".

Khan was reportedly paid £7 million to headline the event.

The former unified world welterweight champion is a Muslim and has embarked on pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia on a number of occasions, offering him his own perspective on the country.

"When I was there last, it had all changed. I started seeing women not wearing head scarves. Women were out driving," Khan said.

"They had a huge concert where everyone was dancing and enjoying themselves. I'd never seen that side of Saudi Arabia before.

"Maybe now they are changing to make it that new place where people can enjoy themselves and it's fair for women. I think they're trying to change now."

(Source: AFP)



# Iran female team win World Cadet Taekwondo Championships title

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian female team claimed the title of the 4th edition World Cadet Taekwondo Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Saturday.

Iranian girls won six gold medals and one silver in the event.

Iran's female team won the title with 818 points, followed by Thailand who came second with 366 points.

South Korea finished in third place with 197 points.

In the last day of the competition, Parnia Salmi won Iran's sixth gold on Saturday after defeating Sikhon Kamonchanok from Thailand in the women's -37kg.

Kazakhstan's Assel Abubakir and Yulia Vitko from Belarus won the bronze medals.

Abolfazl Abbasi also won a gold medal in the men's under-61kg after defeating Aiden Bevel from the U.S. in the final match.

Bronze medal went to Chia-Sheng Chen from Chinese Taipei and Moroccan Abarkan Hassan.

Iranian girls had already won five gold medals in the previous days.

Mobina Nematzadeh in the women's under-51kg, Zahra Zarin Naal in the women's under-41kg, Mobina Bakhshi in the women's under-47kg, Sanaz Abbaspour in the women's under-44kg and Pouneh Jafar Salehi in the women's under-55kg had claimed five gold medals.

A total of 550 athletes, aged from 12 to 14, from 64 countries competed at the Universal Sports Palace in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent.

The first was held in Azerbaijan's capital Baku in 2014, while the second was in Muju in South Korea in 2015 and the third took place in Egyptian city Sharm El-Sheikh in 2017.

For the first time, Protector and Scoring System headgear, which is standard in the adult format, used at the event.

The Championships provided many of the young athletes with their first world-level experience.



## Mes Sungun into AFC Futsal Club Championship quarters



Defending champions Mes Sungun Varseqan cruised into the quarter-finals of the AFC Futsal Club Championship Thailand 2019 after defeating Al Dhafra Sports & Cultural Club 5-0 in a Group D tie on Saturday.

Mes Sungun's win meant Japan's Nagoya Oceans, who

defeated Kazma SC of Kuwait 3-1 earlier on Saturday, also sealed their quarter-final spot.

Mes Sungun and Oceans will meet on Monday to decide the group winners.

Al Dhafra started aggressively and earned a free-kick just seconds in above the arc in Mes Sungun territory but the United Arab Emirates club failed to use the chance.

Mes Sungun kicked into gear and came close to finding the net but Mahdi Javid's effort was denied by the woodwork.

The Islamic Republic of Iran side opened the scoring in the third minute through Mohammad Shajari's strike from inside the box after excellent build up play.

Mes Sungun came close to increasing their advantage a minute later but Javid's effort from inside the box was disallowed due to an infringement on Hamdan Abdulla Alkatheeri.

Al Dhafra had to weather waves of attacks from Mes Sungun and relied on counter-attacks - one of which in the 11th minute nearly drew them level but Fabio Daniel's free-kick was parried away by goalkeeper Alireza Samimi.

Al Dhafra goalkeeper Hassan Ali Alhantoobi was called

into action three minutes later when he saved Javid's long-range effort and moments later, foiled the Iranian's effort from close range off Farhad Fakhim's free-kick.

The Emiratis, who lost 4-2 to Nagoya Oceans in their opening game, could have scored the equalizer a minute before the break but Bruno Takashi wasted his effort when he placed his header just off the mark.

Mes Sungun increased the intensity of their attacks in the second half and doubled their lead in the 23rd minute after Javid powered his free-kick over the Al Dhafra defence and into the net.

The 2018 MVP would find the target again in open play when Fakhim cut through the Al Dhafra players before laying off for Javid to score from close range.

Mes Sungun made it 4-0 just after the half-hour mark through Alireza Vafaei's strike from long range with Abolghasem Orouji assisting.

With five minutes left on the clock, Al Dhafra initiated the power play but it was Mes Sungun who went further ahead as Fakhim pounced on a stray pass and scored into an unattended goalmouth.

(Source: the-afc)

## Iran set the pace with opening win



their lead in the 75th minute.

The double blow was one from which Uzbekistan were unable to recover, making Saturday's clash with Afghanistan one of added importance, while Iran have the weekend off before

returning to action against Turkmenistan on Monday.

A late equaliser from Begenchmyrat Myradov rescued a point for Turkmenistan and denied Afghanistan a dream start as the sides shared the spoils in

an entertaining 2-2 draw in Friday's earlier match.

Afghanistan took the lead through forward Farshid Wojdi inside 10 minutes, but Aziz Kmabarov's young charges hit back just seven minutes later when defender Ruslan Priyev ventured forward to net the equaliser.

The goals kept flowing when Tareq Mohammadi restored Afghanistan's lead in the 25th minute, before what looked like developing into an opening day goal fest settled into a more reasonable tempo.

Kamabarov made six substitutions to the Turkmenistan line-up as the warm weather began to test the endurance of even the fittest players on the pitch, but it was one of the starters who came up with all-important equaliser, as Myradov made the most of an 89th minute opportunity to seal a point for his side.

The CAFA U-19 Championship will be decided on a round-robin basis, with the final Matchday to held next Thursday.

(Source: the-afc)

## “Our generation changed the dream of a nation” - Iran's Samad Nikkhah Bahrami

For the third straight time, Iran will be playing at the FIBA Basketball World Cup, and the significance of that is not lost on one of the team's living legends, Samad Nikkhah Bahrami.

«It's amazing to play at the World Cup,» he said. «Always amazing to be playing at this level with players who love basketball from all around the world, who practice hard to get there. I hope to see high-level basketball and hope to entertain basketball fans in China.»

Iran first broke into the World Cup scene in 2010 after they successfully qualified by winning the FIBA Asia Cup 2009 in the Chinese city of Tianjin. Ten years later and Team Melli will come full circle, returning to China for a World Cup where Iran has perhaps their best chance to make a big splash.

«It's going to be tough,» he said. «Everybody comes to compete and win. All I can say is my teammates and I will put all we have on the floor. We won't regret anything.»

Bahrami recalls, however, that it wasn't always like this. The 36-year-old remembers how, a decade ago, Iran were not even considered a legitimate international basketball power despite qualifying to the World Cup. Many felt they were flashes in the pan, but they continuously proved their

detractors wrong, winning one more Asia Cup and qualifying to the next World Cup in 2014.

Now, Bahrami knows that with this likely being his last tour of duty on the world stage alongside hulking center Hamed Haddadi, Iran really have to pull out all the stops. Bahrami will be among Iran's leaders in China along with Haddadi, and they will help usher in the next generation of stars expected to carry their country's colors for the foreseeable future.

«I remember when I just became a national team player,» he shared. «It was a dream to qualify for World Cup, but these days I am hearing people are talking about going to second round and going as far as we can. This shows what our generation did for Iranian basketball and how a group of players can change the dream of a nation.»

Iran have never advanced past the group stage in any World Cup, winning one game each in 2010 and 2014 for a compiled win-loss record of 2 wins against 8 losses.

This time around, they are in the same group as Tunisia, Puerto Rico and former champions Spain. Iran know they can hang with those teams, and Bahrami believes that with a confident mindset, they are capable of pulling off a few surprises.



«Our goal is to win any game that we can,» he declared. «We need to be united and play as a team. At the end of the day, this is a game, a basketball game, and anything can happen. We won't come to the game with a losing mindset. We will go at anybody who stays in front of us.»

(Source: FIBA)

## Iran overpower Mexico at men's Tokyo Volleyball Qualification

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran eased past Mexico in straight sets (25-18, 25-21, 27-25) at the men's Tokyo Volleyball Qualification on Saturday.

Porya Yali scored 20 points and Daniel Vargas had 19 points for Mexico.



Iran had started the competition with a hard-fought 3-2 victory over Cuba on Friday.

Team Melli will face Russia in Pool E on Sunday.

The teams are divided into six pools of four, with the table toppers punching their tickets for next year's Olympic Games.

The six table toppers will be joining Japan at Tokyo 2020, with the hosts having already claimed one of the 12 available berths.

A further five teams will emerge in January from the Continental Olympic Qualifying Tournaments to complete the Tokyo 2020 line-up.

## Iran chess player ranks third at int'l festival in UAE

**IRNA** — Iranian athlete Parham Maghsoodloo came third in the 26th International Chess Festival which is underway in Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the UAE.

All in all, he received 6.5 points to become third.

The Iranian athlete has already become champion in the world, Asian, and national contests.

The 26th Abu Dhabi International Chess Festival consisting of Masters, Open, Juniors, Blitz, Homeland, Family and Seniors tournaments started on August 2 and will wrap up on August 11.

## Wrestlers gain 11 more medals at 2019 Tbilisi Grand Prix

**MNA** — Iranian wrestlers snatched two gold, two silver and seven bronze medals at 2019 edition of Tbilisi Grand Prix of V. Balavadze and G. Kartoza in Georgia on Friday.

Tbilisi Grand Prix of V. Balavadze and G. Kartoza kicked off in Tbilisi, Georgia, on August 7 and it will wrap up on August 11. The event is underway in both Greco-Roman and freestyle categories.

On Friday and in the Greco-Roman event, Hamed Tab and Ramin Taheri earned gold medals of 67kg and 87kg categories respectively. Mohammad Ali Gerai settled for silver of 77kg while Shirzad Beheshti (60kg), Alireza Nejati (60kg), Mohammad Javad Rezaei (67kg) and Pejman Poshtam (77kg) received bronze medals.

In the freestyle competitions, Peyman Biabani gained a silver of 65kg and three other bronzes were earned by Alireza Sarlak (57kg), Abolfazl Hajipour (65kg), and Reza Afzali (74kg).

On Thursday, Iranian wrestlers collected three gold, one silver and three bronze medals of the event.

## Iranian judoka bags silver at Chinese Police World Championships

**IRNA** — Ali Matin, representing the Islamic Republic of Iran in the World Police Tournament, won the silver medal in 100-kg of judo on Saturday.

The tournament, which is known as the Police Olympics and is held every five years, is being held in Chengdu, China on August 8-18, according to IRNA.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Law Enforcement Team has participated with 7 athletes in judo, karate, taekwondo and step-climbing.

Representatives from more than 80 countries are participating in the tournament.

## Kuwait must learn from mistakes, says Al Harbi

Kuwait may be 90 minutes away from reaching the 2019 WAFF Championship Final, but Faisal Al Harbi wants his side to learn from the late goal which cost them a win against Jordan on Wednesday.

Al Harbi looked to have set the Kuwaitis on the path to a second successive win when he earned, then converted an early penalty kick against the Jordanians, but Mohammad Al Nassar was sent off, before Salem Al Alajin's 94th minute equaliser ensured the points would be shared at Erbil's Franso Hariri Stadium.

Kuwait still need only a draw against Bahrain on Saturday to reach the final as group winners, but Al Harbi is keen to ensure lessons are learned from Wednesday's missed opportunity.

«We produced a perfect first half but in the second half we dropped, especially after the sending-off, and Jordan managed to score the equaliser,» said 27-year-old.

«I hope we learn from the mistakes we made and take that into the future matches.»

While not going as far as Al Harbi in his assessment of Kuwait's opening 45 minutes, head coach Romeo Jozak was also delighted by his side's start to Wednesday's clash.

But despite their commanding first-half display, Jozak – who can count the likes of Luka Modric and Mario Mandzukic among his former apprentices – could sense a drop in his side's performance coming in the warm conditions.

(Source: the-afc)



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is a difference between two acts, one is an act whose joy is transient and causes much damage, and the other is an act which leaves a permanent reward.

Imam Ali (AS)

Pediatric patients’ painting festival to turn top works into toys

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – The director of the 5th International Festival of Pediatric Patients’ Painting (IFPPP), Nima Rezai, has said that they plan to turn images from a collection of top entries into dolls and toys.



A poster for the 5th International Festival of Pediatric Patients’ Painting (IFPPP).

Hamid Farzi also said, “The startup will give dolls and toys made based on images from the paintings to the children, and plans to display their paintings on our website to bring back smiles to their beautiful faces and inject hope into their hearts.” The festival has been organized by the Health and Art (HEART) Group, a major member of the Universal Scientific Education and Research Network (USERN), which is active in organizing festivals and events focusing on the mental health of pediatric patients.

“Citizenship” appears in Iranian bookstores

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – “Citizenship: Discourse, Theory, and Transnational Prospects” written by Peter Kivisto and Thomas Faist has recently been published in Persian by Gol Azin Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Mohsen Niazi and Vali Bahrami, the 2007 book discusses the important role of citizenship in the world’s liberal democracies and how it is evolving.

Long a neglected topic in the social sciences, citizenship is now at the forefront of scholarly discussions on democracy worldwide.

The book reviews the four broadly conceived themes that shape contemporary citizenship, inclusion, erosion, withdrawal and expansion, and highlights their interconnectedness.

Kivisto is a professor of social thought at Augustana College in the U.S. He is the author of several books and articles including “National Identity in an Age of Migration”, “Solidarity, Justice, and Incorporation: Thinking through the Civil Sphere” and “Religion and Immigration: Migrant Faiths in North America and Western Europe”.

Faist is a professor of transnational relations and development studies at Bielefeld University in Germany. His research focuses on international migration, ethnic relations and social policy, and he has published widely in these fields.

Hollywood star Gere visits stranded migrants on Open Arms ship

**MADRID (Reuters)** — American actor Richard Gere on Friday visited 121 migrants stranded for the past week on a rescue ship in the Mediterranean, as the European Union’s executive urged member countries to show solidarity in finding a solution. Arriving on a boat outfitted with a banner reading “You are not alone,” the 69-year-old Hollywood star brought water and other supplies to the ship Open Arms, speaking to several migrants about their experience of fleeing war-torn Libya. “The most important thing for these people here is to be able to get to a free port, to get off the boat, to get on land and start a new life,” Gere said in a video posted online. “Please support us here on Open Arms and help these people, our brothers and sisters.” The migrants, including 32 minors, were rescued last Thursday by the Barcelona-based charity and the ship is now floating in international waters near the Italian island of Lampedusa. The fate of the migrants has been in limbo since Italy and Malta rejected requests to disembark them.

IAF hosts retrospective of actor, artist Esmaeil Khalaj

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – A retrospective displaying works by the veteran stage and screen actor and artist Esmaeil Khalaj opened at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Friday.

Entitled “Shadow”, the exhibit reviews five decades artistic activity of the artist, the forum announced in a press release published on Saturday.

Khalaj is famous among his fans for his brilliant theatrical performances. He began his artistic career in the early 1970s and wrote several plays including “Hangout”.

His role in the TV series “Shadow of Neighbors” is also unforgettable. He has also played in several films such as “Awareness of Dream”, “Apple and Salma”, “Simple Reception” and “Scandal”.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Khalaj said that he was interested in painting when he was 8 and he began to paint seriously after he received a box of 12 coloring pencils at the age of 10.

“I was looking to present very creative and original works. This exhibit displays 14 oil colors. The shadows on the flowers are my own shadows,” he added.

The exhibit will run until August 20 at the forum located on Musavi St., off Taleqani Ave.



Actor and artist Esmaeil Khalaj attends the opening ceremony of his exhibit “Shadow” at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on August 9, 2019. (Honaronline/Sara Sasaki)

Iranian director to stage reading of “The Good Doctor” in Tehran



Iranian director Maryam Baqeri in an undated photo.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Maryam Baqeri plans to stage a reading performance of American playwright Neil Simon’s “The Good Doctor” at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater on August 17.

The performance will be held by a cast composed of Fariba Ramezanpur, Azadeh Akbari, Mir-Nader Mazlumi, Afshin Baqeri and Mehdi Mofidi.

The play is a musical comedy set in 19th century Russia, and consists of a series of short plays based on short stories and other works by Russian writer Anton

Chekhov. The only connecting thread between the series is the character of the writer, who is reminiscent of Chekhov.

“The Good Doctor” has previously been performed at several theaters in Tehran and other Iranian cities.

Earlier in July, Baqeri staged a reading performance of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen’s 1891 play “Hedda Gabler” at Tehran’s Mehregan Theater.

She also staged “Barefoot in the Park” by Neil Simon in 2017 and “Boluriha” by Iranian writer Farhad Naqdali in 2018.

“Crypt” on ancient Iranian tradition picked to compete in Seoul festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Iranian filmmaker Vahid Zarrabinasab’s drama “The Crypt” on the ancient tradition of Qanat Bride common in Iran’s central rural regions has been selected to be screened in the official completion of the Seoul International Film Festival during September.

According to the tradition, the elders of a village that is faced with an intense drought decide to perform the tradition of Qanat Bride, in which a virgin girl marries qanat, a gently sloping underground channel to transport water

from an aquifer or water well to the surface for drinking and irrigation, and every week she rinses herself with qanat water till it gets fertile. But she remains unmarried to the end of her life.

Starring Shaqayeq Farahani and Puria Purshorkh, the film will be competing with movies from the U.S., England, South Africa, Japan, France, Canada, China and several other countries.

The festival will take place in the capital of South Korea from September 20 to 26.



Shaqayeq Farahani (L) and Puria Purshorkh act in a scene from “The Crypt” by Iranian filmmaker Vahid Zarrabinasab.

Egyptian artist paints murals on houses to celebrate haj

Eid Al Salwaawi, 69, paints murals of the rituals of the haj pilgrimage on the walls of a house in Cairo’s Sayeda Zainab neighborhood.

Sometimes he volunteers to paint scenes that celebrate the haj and religious stories and lessons, other times he is paid.

Every year, Muslims travel from around the world to the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia to complete the haj, one of the five pillars of their faith. This year’s haj will conclude on Sunday.

Salwaawi said the haj scenes he saw on the walls of houses in his home village as a child in northern Aswan captured his imagination.

“So I draw camel caravans and soldiers wearing traditional hats guarding them,” he said.

He uses simple tools like a handmade palm frond brush and a mixture of paint, vinegar, rosewater, gum Arabic and glue.

One mural depicts women as they embark



The artist Eid Al Salwaawi paints murals about the holy Kaaba and the rituals of the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, in Cairo, Egypt, July 17, 2019. (Reuters/Hayam Adel)

on the pilgrimage, dressed in bright colors, another shows a caravan carrying the tapestry that covers the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam. He adorns his works with prayers and Koranic verses.

Each mural takes him between two and three hours.

Woodstock producer ‘pretty bummed’ at missed bid to recreate 1969 activism

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — The man behind the failed Woodstock 50 anniversary festival said on Friday he was “pretty bummed” at losing out on a chance to encourage people to take action on global warming.

Michael Lang, who was also one of the producers of the 1969 Woodstock music festival, said he had hoped that the new event would recreate the activism of the late 1960s.

“The reason to do it really was to engage people in activism and the efforts to stop global warming, which I think is probably the greatest threat to humanity that we’ve seen in our lifetime,” Lang told Reuters Television.

Lang was visiting a 50th anniversary Woodstock photo exhibit at the Morrison Hotel Gallery in New York following the cancellation last month of a planned three-day event to mark the festival that

became a symbol of 1960s counterculture. Woodstock 50 was called off after months of setbacks over venues, permits and financial backing.

Lang, now 74, recalled the lofty hopes of the 1969 festival, which also faced a late change of venue and huge logistical issues when some 450,000 people turned up.

“It was really about trying to see if, when (my generation) were in charge, things could work the way we hoped they would. And it did. Everybody really came together in a community of celebrating peace and music.

“We were kind of losing that dream for a better way to be on the planet. So for me, it was kind of a last-ditch effort to see that if we took the tribes out of the daily grind and the cities and came out to nature, with us in charge, we could actually make it work amongst ourselves,” Lang said.