



**Imam Khamenei's message to the members of Jihadi groups and Basij** **3**



**Khani named new Iranian Privatization Organization head** **4**



**Ex-Arsenal forward Adebayor linked with Tractor: report** **15**



**"Karun" wins Green Planet Award at Rhode Island festival** **16**

# No need for foreign forceas in Persian Gulf

**Rouhani says Iran will take next step to limit nuclear commitments**



See page 2

## IRGC chief: Iran has tied security to progress

**TEHRAN** — The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps said on Wednesday that for Iran security and progress are interdependent.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks while addressing a ceremony in Urmia, West Azarbaijan province, where a number of development projects were inaugurated and some anti-poverty

projects were launched.

With a reference to the harshest ever sanctions implemented against Iran by the Trump administration, Salami said, "The enemies had envisioned that the sanctions would be a crippling threat to us. But we learned to produce on our own and stand on our feed without relying on foreigners and celebrate our happiness together." ➔ **3**

## Non-oil exports up 45% in weight

**TEHRAN** — Head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran has said the country's non-oil exports rose by 45 percent in terms of weight during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) compared to the same period last year.

Mohammad Reza Modoudi put the

volume of exports at 40 million tons, an increase of 12 million tons year on year, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

According to the official, non-oil exports from the country has experienced an upward trend in the current year so that nearly \$11.5 billion worth of commodities have been exported since the beginning of the year. ➔ **4**

## ' Hamas will shower Israel with barrages of missiles if Gaza attacked'

**TEHRAN** — The leader of Hamas resistance movement in the Gaza Strip has warned the Israeli military against waging a new military campaign on the besieged coastal sliver, stating that his fellow fighters will prevail over Israeli troops if the latter enter the enclave in any future conflict.

"We will break the defeated occupation army if it crosses into the Gaza Strip. We know what we say and mean what we utter,"

Yahya Sinwar said in a speech delivered to Palestinian families in his hometown of Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

"If Israel launches a campaign in Gaza, we will shower their cities with hundreds of missiles in one go," he added.

Sinwar then praised the August 1 operation in the southern Gaza Strip, where Palestinian man Hani Abu Sallah was killed and three Israeli soldiers ➔ **13**



### PERSPECTIVE

**Hanif Ghaffari**

Head of the Tehran Times Politics Desk

## The end of John Bolton's political life

In recent days, some media have been reporting the possibility of the removal of US National Security Adviser John Bolton. Accordingly, Donald Trump is likely to oust Bolton by year 2020. The popularity of Trump's foreign policy with American citizens has also fallen sharply. Some Trump supporters are deeply concerned about the US government's foreign policy becoming a weakness for the president in next year's presidential election.

John Bolton is no doubt a symbol of the utter failure of US foreign policy. He also became a symbol of the defeat of the White House under the Bush administration under President George W. Bush. However Trump preferred to use this burnt, failed nut again at the White House! Bolton's presence at the White House has been Trump's worst betrayal of the American nation.

These days, even the few John Bolton fans have no hope of continuing in power. Obviously, Trump is mad at Bolton and Pompeo because their plans and suggestions have not solved any of U.S. foreign policy problems and have only reduced Trump's popularity in key states. However, Trump might still have doubts about removing them, because by doing so he will almost certainly lose the support of Tea Party Movement and Neo-Conservatives.

Ultimately, John Bolton has no destiny other than failure. The time of the political death of the U.S. National Security Adviser has come.

John Bolton, continues to promote war and terror and violence in his foreign policy. Bolton's title is basically tied to crime, war, and terror. Many American analysts say the National Security Adviser to the Trump government has become the symbol of the White House's failure in the international system.

As mentioned, In George W. Bush's presidency, people like Dick Cheney and John Bolton have become the messengers of the White House's defeat in the world. This time Bolton has also become a messenger for defeating Trump and the US in the world. The US National Security Adviser is having difficult days. John Bolton has not been able to achieve his goals toward the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## Nigeria government, U.S. hampering Sheikh Zakzaky's treatment in India: IMN

**TEHRAN** — The Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), whose leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky has been transferred to India to receive medical care, says the Nigerian and U.S. governments have been trying to hamper the cleric's treatment.

In a statement published on Wednesday, the IMN complained that the Nigerian government was trying "to frustrate doctors from offering emergency treatment" to Sheikh Zakzaky through the security agents that it has sent along with the sheikh to India.

It said the Nigerian security agents were colluding with foreign security agents, who are believed to be working for the U.S. government.

The IMN further quoted a source as saying that before Sheikh Zakzaky's arrival at New Delhi's Madanta Hospital, officials from the American Embassy in India had "threatened"

the hospital's management not to admit the clergyman.

"Even as the doctors were enthusiastically waiting to receive the Sheikh to save his life, the American secret agents have threatened the hospital officials not to go ahead to treat the Sheikh at the hospital," the IMN said.

The group urged the international community to call on the Nigerian government "to stop playing with the life of" the senior Muslim cleric.

Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife had been kept in custody since December 2015, when security forces killed more than 300 of IMN members during a raid on the city of Zaria.

The cleric lost his left eyesight and his wife also sustained serious wounds in that raid.

Earlier this month, the couple was granted bail by a court in order to seek treatment abroad.

### NGO demands respect for Zakzaky's rights

In a related development on Wednesday, the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), a London-based NGO, urged human rights campaigners to write to their respective countries' envoys in India about Zakzaky's situation.

In a sample letter released on its website, the IHRC urged activists to demand that the Indian authorities cease their harassment of Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife. "I am writing to ask you to make immediate representations to the Indian government to respect the rights and freedoms of the Sheikh and his wife and allow their medical treatment unmolested and without restrictions. It appears from reports that the Indian police and security services are collaborating with the Nigerian security services in perpetuating the illegal detention of the pair," the letter reads.

## Facebook admits it listened to users' audio messages

**TEHRAN** — Facebook has admitted it uses an external company to listen to audio messages sent between users in an attempt to improve its voice recognition systems.

According to a report by Bloomberg, Facebook paid contractors to transcribe audio messages sent between users. Those contractors did not know who the audio was from and how Facebook obtained it.

In response to the report, Facebook said users who had their audio transcribed confirmed this option in its Messenger app, and that the practice had since stopped.

"Much like Apple and Google, we paused human review of audio more than a week ago,"

the company said.

However, Bloomberg noted that in its data-use policy, there is no mention of humans interacting with the audio.

The policy only mentions "vendors and service providers who support our business" by "analyzing how our products are used".

Facebook is the fourth company in a couple of months to receive criticism for having humans listening in on voice messages of their users.

Amazon, Apple and Google all admitted that real humans were listening to and transcribing audio from voice services from Alexa, Siri and Google Home respectively, all claiming the aim

was to improve voice recognition.

The companies have since said they have stopped doing this as privacy organizations raised concerns over the practice.

Over the last couple of years, many large tech companies have come under heavy scrutiny from legislators and privacy advocates over their practices related to the collection of large amounts of data on their users.

Last week, a federal appeals court rejected Facebook's effort to undo a class-action lawsuit claiming that it illegally collected and stored biometric data for millions of users without their consent.



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## Navaye Rahmat Intl. Daf Festival opens in Sanandaj

**TEHRAN** — The 9th Navaye Rahmat International Daf Festival opened on Tuesday during an open-air ceremony in the Shano Park of the city of Sanandaj, which is considered as the birthplace of the daf instrument

A large number of daf players from across Iran and several neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan packed into the park to take part in the opening performance of the four-day festival.

Music ensembles from Iran as well as groups from India, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been invited to perform in various categories of the festival, which has selected the motto "Art, Unity and Kindness". ➔ **16**

## Critical points in the meeting between Yemeni delegation and Iran's Leader

By Hamed Sheikhpour

**TEHRAN** — Over the last few days, the media all over the world have put their focus on a meeting between Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution and a delegation of Yemeni resistant group, Ansarullah. Different think tanks are now trying to analyze this important meeting from a variety of aspects.

The meeting was particularly important in the following respects:

### The attendants

According to official protocols and formalities, this delegation was not as high as others who meet the Leader. In fact, it was the first time that Ayatollah Khamenei had a face to face meeting with a spokesperson of a people-based resistant movement.

Anyhow, the Leader greeted them like a high-level official delegation and all the standard formalities that are applied in meetings between the highest international officials were also observed in this meeting, and there were even more intimacy and warmth between the two parts. This shows the importance of Yemen and the resistance of its people for the Leader and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### The time of the meeting

The meeting was held in one of the most critical points in Yemen's modern history. Four years and four months of brutal attacks, the invaders of Yemen are now starting to turn on each other as their alliance is falling apart. Last week, the last strongholds of Saudi Arabia in Yemen collapsed by their closes ally, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Saudis also lost the control of Aden which was previously the capital of Mansour Hadi's puppet government.

### Delivery of a message

Over the meeting, a letter from Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of Ansarullah was handed to Ayatollah Khamenei who immediately opened the letter and read it. Obviously, the Leader could have read the message later but he did this as a gesture to show his affection for the revolutionary movement of Yemen. Contrary to this, two months ago when the Japanese Prime Minister tried to deliver a message from the United States president to the Leader, he refused to receive the message altogether. ➔ **13**



## Zarif's diplomatic skills prompted U.S. to sanction him: Russian expert

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Vladimir Batyuk, a senior fellow with the Moscow-based Institute of the USA and Canada, has said that Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's skills and abilities at diplomacy have made the United States sanction him.

In an interview with IRNA published on Wednesday, he described Zarif as one the most remarkable foreign minister.

He added that Zarif has been able to defend Iran's rights at the international arena.

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. The decision followed after Zarif, while in New York for a UN meeting, rejected an invitation to meet Donald Trump at the Oval Office.

The move has been criticized by the world.

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



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

He also said the U.S. is "afraid" of Zarif.

Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, wrote a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on August 6 protesting the U.S. sanctions on Zarif, saying that this move signifies a "gross violation" of the UN Charter.

Ugochi Daniels, the United Nations Human Settlements Program Coordinator and Resident envoy to Iran, has said that 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 her as saying in an interview published on Saturday.

In an article published by LobeLog on August 1, Robert E. Hunter, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO, said Washington's act in imposing sanctions on Zarif will undermine U.S. diplomatic credibility.

"In the first place, it is most unusual to place the chief negotiator for an unfriendly (or even enemy) nation on the 'unwelcome' list. It is a direct violation of accepted diplomatic practice, going all the way back to the Greeks a few thousand years ago, as well as of Article 31 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which governs the way in which countries agree to treat foreign diplomats," Hunter stated.

Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on August 1, saying that imposition of sanctions on Zarif indicates the "U.S. government's frustration".

"The U.S. new sanctions reveals this government's weakness and fear of the Islamic Republic of Iran's wise and logical diplomacy," the statement read.

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

Also in a tweet on August 1, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said the U.S. is extremely fearful of Zarif's "logic" and "art of negotiation".

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said that Zarif is "the powerful language of Iran's diplomacy and powerful representative of Iran in the international arena".

Dianne Feinstein, a California Democratic senator, criticized the move, saying it was a "mistake" to sanction Zarif and described him as a "capable" diplomat.

"President Trump says he pulled out of the Iran nuclear agreement to force Iran back to the negotiating table, but this move limits the opportunity to do exactly that," she said.

France said on August 1 that along with its partners the UK and Germany it was concerned by the U.S. decision to apply sanctions on Zarif.

The French Foreign Ministry said, "We think that all diplomatic channels should stay open, especially at this moment of increased tensions."

Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy slammed the U.S. move, arguing that the measure will block the way for any dialogue.

Polyanskiy said the sanctions go against diplomacy, stressing that Moscow is against any type of bans, as they do not help find a solution.

At a news conference on August 1, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also condemned the move.

"The U.S. has only one tool — sanctions. This tool does not work. This tool has not approved itself. This tool has discredited both itself and those who apply it," she remarked.

## Rouhani to attend annual UN meeting in New York

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi announced on Wednesday that President Rouhani will participate at the annual United Nations conference in New York in September.

"If there will be no problems the president will participate at the United Nations General Assembly conference," Vaezi told reporters.

The 74th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 74) will open on September 17.

On participation of Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif at the UN summit since he has been sanctioned by the U.S., the presidential chief of staff said, "This is the right of countries, especially foreign ministers, to attend the important United Nations sessions."

Vaezi himself acted as the second-ranking diplomat for some years when Ali Akbar Velayati was Iran's foreign minister.

# No need for foreign forces in Persian Gulf, Rouhani says

### Rouhani says Iran will take next step to limit nuclear commitments if demands not met

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday insisted on Iran's position that there is no need to foreign forces to maintain security in the Persian Gulf region.

"Major powers, especially America, seek nothing except causing division and emptying treasury of the Islamic countries. The Persian Gulf littoral states can maintain security and stability in the region," Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

The United States has called on its European and Asian allies to form a maritime force to supposedly monitor safe shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf.

Rouhani said such a move will not help regional security.

"The regional countries can maintain security through unity, solidarity and dialogue. Undoubtedly, the United States' claims and actions will bring them [regional countries] no benefits. The regional countries have always been and will be 'brothers' and division only serves the enemies' interests," Rouhani remarked.

In an interview Al-Jazeera on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said, "We believe that the best the U.S. can do for the protection of maritime navigation is to just leave people alone; don't interfere."

Zarif added, "What we have called for, and repeat, is that our neighbors - all of us - belong to this region, we cannot leave this region. Others will leave this region; others will not secure us; others will not provide us with the security umbrella that we need. We can provide each other with that security umbrella. We extend our hand, and our hand remains extended, to all our neighbors."

■ **"Hollow words"**  
Rouhani described an announcement by the Zionist regime of Israel to join the U.S.-led coalition in the Persian Gulf as "hollow words".

"There is clear response to such claims. Israelis protect their own security if they can! They have caused insecurity, carnage and terrorism wherever they have gone. The main factor behind war and carnage in the region is the Zionists and the occupant regime of Israel," he noted.

Zarif said on August 9 that the Persian Gulf is a "national security priority for Iran" and that Tehran will not "hesitate to safeguard its



security" in this strategic waterway, which he described as a "vital lifeline" for the Islamic Republic.

The chief diplomat warned that military presence of extra-regional forces is absolutely a "source of insecurity".

"Mindful of this reality, any extra-regional presence is by definition source of insecurity - despite propaganda," Zarif wrote on his Twitter account.

Prior to the warning by Zarif, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the possible presence of Israel in the self-declared military coalition in the Persian Gulf is an "open threat to Iran's national security" and that Iran "keeps the right to counter this threat in line with the country's defense policies".

Foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also warned that the Zionist regime and the U.S. will be responsible for "entire consequences of this dangerous move".

On August 8, Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami also reacted to Israel's decision to join the coalition, saying, "Such a possible move could be very provocative, and can have catastrophic implications for the region."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Hakim said on Monday that Baghdad rejects the participation of Israel in any force to secure the passage of ships in the Persian Gulf.

Writing on his Twitter post, Al-Hakim also said the presence of Western forces in the Persian Gulf will fuel regional tension.

"The presence of Western forces in the region will increase tension," he warned.

He added the regional states "can together secure the transit of ships".

The chief Iraqi diplomat said his country is "seeking to reduce tension" in the region "through calm negotiations".

Washington's call to form the coalition has fallen on deaf ears. So far, only Britain and Israel have agreed to join the coalition.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in a press conference on July 31 that his country "would not participate in the mission the United States plans to form."

A German government spokeswoman also said on August 5 that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the whole German government do not see Germany taking part in a U.S.-led naval mission in the Strait of Hormuz.

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

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

■ **"We have always been ready to interact with world"**

In his Wednesday remarks in the cabinet, Rouhani also said that Iran has always been ready to negotiate and interact with the world. "We are totally prepared in the area of

the policy of interaction on the condition that other side shows commitment," he said.

■ **"Iran to start next step to reduce nuclear obligations after second 60-day deadline"**

Rouhani also described Iran's move in reducing nuclear commitments step by step as a "wise" decision and said that Tehran will start the next step of reducing nuclear obligations after the second 60-day deadline.

The third step can include installation of more centrifuges.

"We are holding talks with the neighboring countries and other countries in the world in line with boosting relations and we will continue talks in the course of reducing nuclear commitments. However, if we will not reach any result at the end of the second 60-day deadline, we will definitely start the third step. We will give another 60 days in order to reach a right and logical solution," he stated.

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. 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 purity level of 4.5% as the Europeans missed the 60-day deadline to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

Under the JCPOA, Iran is allowed to possess 300 kilograms of uranium enriched to 3.67 percent.

Iran's nuclear spokesman, Behrouz Kamalvandi, announced on Tuesday that Iran's stockpile of uranium has reached 370 kilograms.

Iran says its decision to reduce its commitments are in line with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which has provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.

Officials in Tehran have insisted if the remaining parties to the JCPOA compensate sanctions effects Iran will reverse its decision.

## Europe must fulfil JCPOA commitments: MP

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a veteran MP sitting on the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said that Europe must fulfil its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

In an interview with the Tasnim news agency published on Wednesday, he said that Iran's talks with the European countries should be on the nuclear deal and not any other issue.

According to 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.

Iran says its actions are in conformity with the paragraph 36 of the JCPOA. Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.

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 nuclear agreement, saying that China has also made huge efforts in saving the JCPOA.

On Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said Tehran has not received any noteworthy or definite offer from France in the course of efforts to save the JCPOA.

On a report by Al-Monitor that French President Emmanuel Macron has proposed establishing a \$15 billion credit line for trade with Iran, Mousavi said, "Following the Islamic Republic of Iran's reactions to the inaction of the Europeans, a number of European countries launched a series of efforts and have been seeking to overcome the problems."

He added, "The president of France... has begun measures in order to reduce tensions, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it welcomes such efforts and would not reject them," Tasnim reported.

## Lebanese Islamic resistance front proved it is possible to defeat Israel: Zarif

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the Lebanese Islamic resistance movement has proved that it is possible to defeat the Zionist regime of Israel.

"The Lebanese people and the Islamic resistance have proved to the world the truth that the Zionist entity can be defeated. No matter how much this entity wants to wage wars, set fires and shed the blood of the people in this region, it cannot," he told in a joint interview with Al-Ahed and Al-Nour Radio published on Tuesday. He made the remarks on the occasion of anniversary of Lebanon's victory in 33-day war.

"This victory was a victory for the entire region, international rights and proper international relations," Zarif added.

"The people of the region and the world owe it to the resistance of the Lebanese people, the Islamic resistance and Hezbollah who confronted the arrogance of the Zionist entity. They also confronted the terrorism of the Takfiri group Daesh. They resisted this terrorist and Takfiri threat which was



a scourge for the world," he said.

The 2006 Lebanon War, also called the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War, was a 33-day military conflict between Hezbollah and the Israeli Defense Forces in Lebanon, Northern Israel and the Golan Heights.

The Hezbollah victory shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army. It caused a political earthquake in Israel. Israel lost more than 100 soldiers in the war.

A five-member Winograd Committee, appointed to examine Israel's performance in the 2006 war, concluded in January 2008 that the war "was a big and serious failure" for Israel.

## Iran warns of plots to partition war-ravaged Yemen

**(Press TV)** — Iran says it supports a unified Yemen, warning against plots aimed at dividing the war-ravaged Arab country.

"The coalition of Saudi and Emirati invaders, along with their mercenaries, who have over the past five years failed to break the will of people by using advanced weaponry, massacre and massive destruction and now see their defeat in the face of the spirit of resistance and resilience of people across Yemen, are seeking to partition Yemen through a suspicious plot," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Wednesday.

He reaffirmed Iran's support for "a unified Yemen" and said that all Yemenis shared the responsibility for maintaining the solidarity of the country.

He expressed hope that a halt to the war in Yemen would pave the way for the country's different political groups to launch intra-Yemeni negotiations toward forming an inclusive government.

The Iranian official echoed warnings by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei who called for strong

resistance against the Saudi-led plots to divide Yemen.

The Leader said the Saudis, the Emiratis and their supporters, who have perpetrated great crimes in Yemen, are after "disintegrating Yemen, a plot that should be confronted decisively," adding that the scheme is doomed to failure.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the comments in a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday with a visiting delegation from Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement, led by its spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam.

Tens of thousands of people have died since March 2015, when Saudi Arabia and its allies — most notably the United Arab Emirates — launched a U.S.-backed war against the Arab world's most impoverished nation aimed at reinstating Yemen's former Riyadh-friendly government and crushing the Houthis.

The comments come against a backdrop of tensions in southern Yemen, where UAE-backed separatist groups have engaged in fighting with militiamen loyal to the Saudi Arabia.



# IRGC chief: Iran has tied security to progress

The notion of negotiation has been destroyed in mentality of Iranian people, General Salami says

**➔** The top general said so long the Iranians remain united and stick to the principles of Islam they will remain safe from harms.

"As long as we are united around Islam and Iran, no enemy in the world will be able to inflict the smallest damage on the body of this united ummah."

He boasting the pride of the Iranian nation in the course of history.

"We are a great nation. History has proven this fact very beautifully. We have grown up in real battlefields and our glory lies in fighting enemies and not stopping against them.

We have trodden a harsh path of 40 years in order to reach this dignity and power. The world is praising this majesty and is seeing that this nation is not surrendering."

The general added "the enemies had decided to disintegrate Iran and subjugate the people of this land to their own evil will" but the nation has resisted "bullies and ill-wishers".

The top military commander went on to say that the Iranian nation has turned threats into opportunities.

"Any threat that the enemy has created has been an opportunity for Iran to pull itself up to the zeniths of power and majesty. As much as our enemies have made decisions to pressure the Iranian nation, the people of Iran have turned these pressures into an opportunity to grow powerful."

"The enemy put us under economic war and pressure.

They thought Iran would surrender in the economic war.

But Iran and its great Leader turned this threat into an opportunity to boost production and wean the country from its oil-based economy."

Salami also said that with the Takfiri scheme, the enemies tried to prevent the dissemination of the ideal of the Islamic



**"Whatever the enemy says is a prescription for our defeat. Negotiation is a deception."**

revolution.

"But everybody said that not only did these policies not prevent that, but a unified front was formed against the Zionist regime; and Lebanon's Hezbollah, through the experience of fighting against proxy wars, has reached a degree of power that in a hypothetical war with the Zionist regime, it will wipe the regime off the map

single-handedly."

He also cited the resistance of the Yemenis against the Saudi invaders with a logistical support from the United States.

The Yemenis, he said, were inspired by the Islamic Revolution in Iran to resist the invaders.

The general suggested that the well-being of nations lie in staying away from

**"The enemy put us under economic onslaught and pressure. They thought Iran would surrender in the economic war. But Iran and its great Leader turned this threat into an opportunity to boost production and wean the country from its oil-based economy."**

the ill-wishers, indirectly suggesting that the revocation of the 2015 nuclear deal by the United States and return of sanction coupled with a failure by the Europeans to honor their commitment have left a negative image in the mind of the Iranian people about dialogue with the West.

"The path to safety for nations is to keep away from enemies.

Negotiations is a logic which has been forgotten and destroyed in the mentality of the people of Iran... Whatever the enemy says is a prescription for our defeat.

Negotiation is a deception, not even a solution.

In the negotiations, the enemies increase pressure and amplify their demands and want us to surrender rather than to have dignity."

He said the enemy is "mischievous" and wants the nations abandon resistance against pressures.

"The Iranian nation knows this fact and will not respond to it.

Through resistance, we preserve our dignity and eradicate poverty and improve our military and defense power."

The commander went on to note that "besides resistance, we also care for happiness, security, and eradication of poverty. The Islamic Republic of Iran does not see security in the barrels of guns, but we have tied security to progress, development, and eradication of poverty which is the crystallization of faith through the talks of people."

Salami also said, "Whenever the enemy is, we are there beforehand. We are wearing the service garment in order to make sure that the nation lives in security and happiness and that we bury the hopes of enemies.

We believe in God and his help, and it has been through such help that we have been successful so far."

## Imam Khamenei's message to the members of Jihadi groups and Basij

**(khamenei.ir)** – Imam Khamenei's message to the members of Jihadi groups and Mobilized Forces for Construction, August 1, 2019.

In the Name of God

Dear young members of jihadi volunteering groups and Mobilized Forces for Construction!

In addition to the few words stated in person during last night's meeting [statements made during a meeting with a group of jihadi volunteering teams on August 1, 2019] I would like to tell you:

First: What you do is invaluable; expressing gratitude through words by people like me will never do justice [in thanking you]. May God's gratitude be upon you, may your efforts be gratified by God.

Second: Jihadi volunteering signifies making efforts out of faith as well as maximum implementation of mankind's capacities; and to these two there is no ending.

Thus, your jihadi volunteering today can expand, improve, and increase in quality ten to a hundred-folds.

Third: The intellectual and practical improvement of volunteers—which you reported on—should not distract them and turn them away from paying basic services and handworks. Reconstructing walls, roofs, and the house of an elderly woman in some village bless and brightens your great works.

Fourth: Publicize the slogan of "Paying service for the realization of justice and development".

Inform the millions of young people of the country on Islam's system of wisdom, which includes hundreds of lessons, ranging from the necessity of charity, the necessity of cooperation in doing good and observing piety, the necessity of benefitting

the people and the necessity of upholding justice and the like.

Fifth: The Jihad of paying service to the public benefits the volunteer even before benefitting the receiver of the service. Detaching oneself from personal interests in order to abet others brightens the heart, enhances the mind and the thought, strengthens the willpower, and above all, brings about divine satisfaction. Demonstrate this through your words and actions to those who have not stepped into the realm of voluntary service yet.

Sixth: Perfume your surroundings with the aroma of faith and good deeds by being nice and good-tempered, faithful actions, avoiding the religiously forbidden deeds, and adhering to the recommended religious deeds while doing voluntary service.

Seventh: Make sure you get the people of the region where you are volunteering

involved in the task of paying service; this is itself another great service to pay to them.

Eighth: Attend to establishing connections and cooperation among jihadi volunteering groups and with organizations capable of supporting, without falling for common frustrating bureaucratic relations.

Ninth: Artistically inform the public on your works, your progress, your achievements, and your increasing capabilities. Demonstrate how beautiful and enthusiastic your successful jihad is; which relies on only a segment of human aptitudes of the country.

God's peace and greetings be upon the purified soul of Imam Abi Ja'far al-Jawad (peace be upon him).

Friday; Dhu'l-Qa'dah 30

August 1, 2019

Sayyid Ali Khamenei

## Trump's sanctions on Iran block way for any kind of dialogue: professor

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A professor of political science and international relations at the University of California believes that U.S. President Donald Trump's sanctions on Iran block the way to any negotiation and diplomacy.

"Trump's decisions are taking place at the moment and are very stupid. His decisions complicate the situation and will block the way for any kind of dialogue and constructive engagement or other agreement between Iran and the United States," Ronnie Lipschitz told the Iran Labor News Agency in an interview published on Wednesday.

The Trump administration took the unusual step in late July of placing sanctions on Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, essentially cutting off the clearest avenue for talks with Iran by punishing the man who negotiated the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Zarif is an American-educated diplomat who is well connected throughout the United States.

Elsewhere in the interview, Lipschitz pointed to America's other sanctions on Iran, calling them a violation of human rights. "Washington's policy does not commit human rights whenever it comes to its rivals," he observed.

"Washington constantly accused Iran of violating human rights, while, in my opinion, Saudi Arabia was the main accused of human rights abuses in recent years. But the United States does not care about this because it is talking about a friend of America, Saudi Arabia."

"The United States and the government of Donald Trump do not care about how sanctions and strict laws can affect the lives of ordinary people and children who now more than ever, given [the early 2019] flood in Iran, need global help."

The heavy floods inundated more than two-thirds of the country in March and April.

Floods drove hundreds of thousands of people homeless and caused an estimated \$2.5 billion in damage to roads, bridges, homes and farmland.

While U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed at the time that Washington was ready to help via the Red Cross and the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), the IRCS said no foreign cash help had been given to the society due to the sanctions.

Lipschitz added, "I believe that Trump will not make these decisions alone; He is heavily influenced by Netanyahu."

He went on to say, "Trump has repeatedly referred to Iranian



**"The United States and the government of Donald Trump do not care about how sanctions and strict laws can affect the lives of ordinary people and children who now more than ever, given [the early 2019] flood in Iran, need global help," the University of California professor Ronnie Lipschitz says.**

missile tests to justify his actions, but I say that instead of worrying about Iran's missiles, Trump should be concerned about the widespread stockpiles of nuclear weapons in Israel."

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.

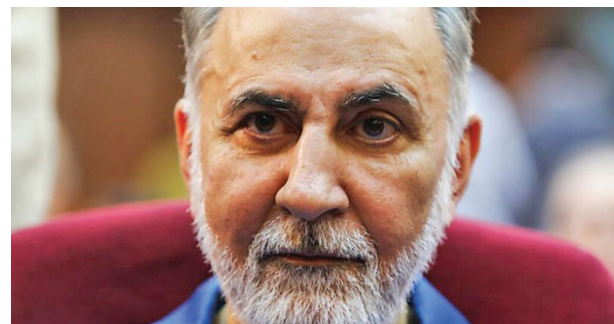
Netanyahu is one of the four people enlisted in the B-Team by Zarif. The other members of the team are White House national security advisor John Bolton, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, all of whom, the Iranian foreign minister has said, are unified in an anti-Iran agenda which pushes Trump towards the harshest-possible confrontation with Iran.

## Ex-Tehran mayor pardoned for murdering his wife

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Mohammad Ali Najafi, a former mayor of Tehran, has been pardoned for killing his wife, Mitra Ostad.

Mitra Ostad was Najafi's second wife.

Masoud Afraze, a lawyer representing the murdered wife, told ISNA on Wednesday that Mitra's brother, Masoud Ostad, had announced the pardon.



According to ISNA, Masoud Ostad had published a post on Instagram in which he cited a verse from the Holy Quran and announced the pardon.

According to ISNA, the post reads: "We pardoned Mr. Mohammad Ali Najafi and condoned the blood of our beloved. We are happy that we did not do any deal with the blood of that dear one."

On July 30, Judiciary spokesman Gholam Hossein Esmaeili announced that Najafi had been sentenced to death for murdering his wife.

Speaking at a press conference, Esmaeili said Najafi was convicted of murdering his wife with a handgun.

The sentence was open to appeal.

Najafi, 67, appeared in court on July 13 for the first time to stand trial.

Ostad was found dead at her home in Tehran on May 28 with gunshots in her chest. A few hours later, Najafi surrendered himself to the Criminal Police and confessed to killing his wife, citing family quarrels for the murder.

Najafi, a senior member of the Servants of Construction Party, was elected mayor of Tehran in August 2017, but resigned in April 2018 for what he called poor health conditions.

He had also served as deputy president under Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, and as education minister under Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

## Health official: U.S. claim not banning medicine and humanitarian aid is 'ridiculous'

**(ILNA)** - The deputy health minister of Iran has said that the American claim that medicine, food and humanitarian aid are not subject to sanctions is "ridiculous".

Speaking to ILNA correspondent, Alireza Raeesi said, "It is true that medicines and humanitarian goods are exempt from sanctions but when we cannot transfer money for supply of medicine it means sanctions exist."

"We also can't even deliver goods properly, so our country has been deprived of access to pharmaceuticals and medical equipment."

Raeesi added that this is a kind of game. They literally say no sanctions, but under the current circumstances, U.S. sanctions have targeted Iran's healthcare sector, he stated.

"We produce about 95% of the drugs, but we have faced difficulties for supplying raw materials for drug production and providing some drugs that we cannot produce in our country."

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

## Iran's deterrence power cannot be tested: Army air defense chief

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A top military commander said on Wednesday that Iran's defense capability cannot be tested, saying if the enemies don't dare to approach the Strait of Hormuz and are withdrawing their warships from the Persian Gulf it is because of Iran's deterrence power.

"If the enemy is stopped at 200 miles from the Strait of Hormuz and withdrawing its warships from the Persian Gulf it is because of the deterrence power of the armed forces," Alireza Sabhifard, commander of the army's air defense unit, told the students of the military academy.

The brigadier general added the Iranian army, by upgrading its deterrence power, has made the enemies to never think of violating "our country's territorial integrity".

## After 20 years, reformists still have no 'clear strategy': Zibakalam

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Sadeq Zibakalam, a vocal senior political analyst, has said despite the passage of 22 years reformists have not yet been able to formulate a "clear strategy".

By the 22 years Zibakalam refers to the time when reformists



won the presidential elections in a landslide victory in 1997.

In an interview with the Tasnim news agency published on Wednesday, Zibakalam said reformists suffer from a coherent leadership accepted by all groups within the reform faction.

For example, he said, there is talk of leadership by Mohammad Khatami (former president), Saeed Hajarian (a reformist theoretician), Mohammad Reza Aref (leader of the Hope parliamentary faction) and also by the Servants of Construction Party but there is still no clear-cut policy.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	261391.5
IFX	3517.32

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,920 rials
GBP	50,632 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$60.37/b
WTI	\$55.98/b
OPEC Basket	\$57.82/b
Gold	\$1,537.70/oz
Silver	\$17.12/oz
Platinum	\$855.70/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Non-oil exports  
up 45% in weight

**1 →** Over the past few years, in a push for an oil-free economy, Iran has been trying to develop its domestic production and increase non-oil trade with its neighboring countries.

In July, Modoudi announced that the country's non-oil exports has increased by 483 percent over the past 15 years.

In a statement published on TPO website on the occasion of the 15th establishment anniversary of TPO, Modoudi noted that the country's annual non-oil exports is currently \$44.3 billion, up \$36.7 billion from \$7.6 billion 15 years ago when TPO was established.

He added that non-oil exports to the neighboring countries has witnessed an even greater increase, with the figure jumping from \$3.2 billion to \$24 billion.

In June, Modoudi said that non-oil exports reached \$8.4 billion in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year, up 8.9 percent compared to the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the country's imports during the two-month period stood at \$6.7 billion, down eight percent year on year.

The official also put the country's exports of services at \$1.6 billion, up 17 percent from a year earlier.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, the country's non-oil trade stood at \$4.87 billion in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 20).

Meanwhile, non-oil trade registered a \$1.5-billion positive balance in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2018–March 2019).

Khani named new Iranian  
Privatization Organization head

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Davoud Khani was appointed as the new managing director of Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO), IRIB reported on Wednesday.

Khani, who is also a board member and IPO's deputy for planning, development of resources and support affairs, replaced Mir Ali Ashraf Abdollah Pouri-Hosseini, the previous managing director of IPO.

Pouri-Hosseini's resignation request had been recently accepted by Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand.

French jobless rate fell in  
second-quarter to lowest  
level since end-2008

France's unemployment rate fell back during the second quarter to reach its lowest level since the end of 2008 and offer some relief for President Emmanuel Macron in the face of a slowing economy and anti-government protests.

According to reuters.com, the INSEE national statistics office said the unemployment rate in France, which is the euro zone's second-biggest economy, fell to 8.5% in the second quarter from 8.7% in the first.

That marked the lowest level since it stood at 7.8% for the fourth quarter of 2008, although it remained above an unemployment rate of around 5% in Germany, the euro zone's biggest economy.

A steady improvement in the jobs market has given Macron some relief in the face of months of street protests against government policies often criticized for favoring the wealthier members of society.

French Labor Minister Muriel Penicaud said in a statement that the latest figures showed progress in terms of young people taking up apprenticeships and jobs.

The "government's reforms are starting to bear fruit for our citizens. A lot of jobs are being created, especially in terms of permanent contracts, because companies - especially small firms - are no longer scared to hire," said Penicaud.

In July, online retail giant Amazon (AMZN.O) announced 1,800 new jobs in France while luxury fashion company Hermes (HRMS.PA) announced 130 new jobs in June, although by contrast furniture retailer Conforama cut jobs.

OECD economist Stephane Carcillo said France still needed to do more in terms of cutting the unemployment level.

Others said the outlook for France and Germany remained uncertain given their broader economic slowdowns and exposure to the impact of global trade disputes, with Germany's economy having shrunk in the second quarter.

"Whilst the moderate fall in the French unemployment rate may be welcome for Macron, it is the very weak GDP growth numbers that will be of great concern," said Lorne Baring, managing director at Geneva-based investment firm B Capital.

The "French economy advanced only 0.2 percent in the last quarter, easing from 0.3 percent growth in the previous period and missing market expectations. The question is whether both France and Germany can exit the malaise that is ringing recession alarm bells for investors," added Baring.

Over €6.5b of non-oil income  
injected to NIMA since March

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** - Iran's non-oil exporters injected €6.68 billion of their revenues into the Forex Management Integrated System, locally known as NIMA, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21) up to August 11.

According to the latest data released by Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), of the mentioned figure, €6.1 billion has been returned into the market for imports, ISNA reported.

As reported, since July 23, 2018 up to August 11, 2019 a total of €17,780 million has been injected into the NIMA system, of which €15.5 billion has been used for imports.

Iran provides foreign currency for the country's exporters with significantly low exchange rates and the exporters are obliged to return the equivalent of the supplied fund in the form of foreign currency.

NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, creates competitiveness among exchange shops and promotes a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to domestic forex market. It was inaugurated to allow



exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

In mid-November last year, CBI issued the instructions on return details of the hard currency earned by exporters back

to the domestic financial system.

The instructions, aimed to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through NIMA, mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee bringing back to

TSE main index surpasses 261,000 points

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**- Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) main index (TEDPIX) gained 4,352 points on Wednesday to reach 261,441, IRIB reported.

As reported, 1.898 billion shares worth 5.99 trillion rials (about \$142.5 million) were traded through 200,015 deals in the stock market.

Based on the already released reports and data, Iran's exchange markets have been following a steady trend in the current Iranian calendar year while they witnessed much more fruitful performances and results in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019).

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was one of the main achievements of the exchange markets during the past year, as TSE officially launched "futures" in mid-December 2018 for more risk management and IME launched "option" in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.

TSE Head Ali Sahraei has recently announced that TSE plans to launch a new market named "prime market" in which the price range for the shares increase.

He said that only companies with a minimum transparency score of 70 (out of 100) and floating stock of at least 25

percent would be accepted in the prime market.

Sahraei also noted that there is no difference regarding rules governing market makers in this and other markets, adding that participation of market makers is mandatory in the prime market.

TEDPIX has increased 56,220 points or 20.4 percent to 234,879 during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21).

As reported, some 258,055 billion securities worth 723.503 trillion rials (about \$17.226 billion) were traded through 17.999 million deals at TSE during the three-month period.

Iranian province to boost economic ties with Malaysia

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** - In a meeting between head of commerce chamber of the Iranian province of Alborz with Malaysia's commercial attaché in Tehran, the two sides expressed readiness for expansion of mutual economic ties.

"Malaysia has been chosen as Alborz's trade and economic partner and developing ties with the country stands among our top priorities," head of Alborz commerce chamber Rahim Bana Molayi said.

"Accompanying an economic delegation, the Malaysian president is to pay a visit to Iran within a month to increase bilateral trade and economic ties," he said.

"In the held meeting, we decided to explore

possible and available sectors for improving bilateral economic ties before the Malaysian president's visit to Iran," the chamber's head added.

"We provided the Malaysian commercial attaché with required information about making joint investments, needed guarantees, and etc.," Bana Molayi said.

He named the banking difficulties and monetary exchange problems caused by the imposed US sanctions on Iran as the major impediments on the way of increasing economic ties with Malaysia.

"As decided in the meeting, the two countries will start swapping goods in case US sanctions remain problematic," he added.

SA needs more time, better economy for NHI: experts

By Simnikiwe Hlatshaneni

There is already evidence the NHI is set to fail and that it would ultimately drive healthcare professionals away, the SA Private Practitioners Forum said.

A better economy can make universal healthcare a reality, but South Africa needs more time to make the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill work, according to a market expert.

Private healthcare lobbyists and other interest groups are intensifying their warnings on the economic dangers of sidelining private healthcare and effectively shrinking its market – a common interpretation of what the NHI would effectively do.

Head of capital markets research at Intellidex, Peter Montalto, said even if South Africa sorely needed NHI, it simply couldn't afford to make it work.

Estimates from the Davis Tax Committee's last report on the NHI suggested that the system would cost an additional R165 billion to the fiscus, according to Montalto. But for all intents and purposes and given a better economic outlook for South Africa, there was reason to believe that it could work.

Partially modelled on the British national health system, the NHI had some key political differences in its inception, Montalto said.

The "British system obviously had a much earlier start and one of the differences is that(South Africa) already has



a well-developed private healthcare system which is an established market and is meeting needs.

"Private healthcare had not been built up in the UK, so there is a different dynamic.

■ Private healthcare in England

"In SA, it means replacing something that is already there with something of better quality, so that will be more of a political problem. In England, most people don't have private healthcare so that makes the comparison a bit harder."

German economy contracts as global trade slowdown takes a toll

The German economy shrank in the three months to June, as trade tensions between the U.S. and China weighed on its export-heavy manufacturing sector and sharpened the pressure on politicians in Berlin to loosen the fiscal purse strings.

According to Financial Times, Germany's output fell 0.1 percent in the second quarter from the previous three months. The new figures mean Germany's economy grew by 0.4 percent in the year to June, its slowest rate for six years, underlining how Europe's largest economy has gone from being the powerhouse of the region to one of its main laggards.

The figures published on Wednesday by the Federal Statistics Office (Destatis) represent a sharp reversal from Germany's first-quarter 0.4 percent expansion, and a

notable underperformance compared with the 0.2 percent second-quarter growth across the Eurozone as a whole.

Destatis said a slowdown in foreign trade had been partly offset by growth in domestic consumption and capital formation. It added that a contraction in foreign trade "slowed down economic growth because exports recorded a stronger quarter-on-quarter decrease than imports".

Having narrowly escaped a technical recession last year, many economists now fear Germany faces the threat of a prolonged contraction in output as weakness in its manufacturing sector seeps into its previously buoyant services and consumer spending.

■ World's fourth-largest economy

A combination of turmoil in Germany's carmaking industry, the escalating trade

war between the U.S. and China and the prospect of a chaotic UK exit from the EU are all weighing on the world's fourth-largest economy.

On Tuesday, the Zew survey of financial market experts revealed that German economic sentiment in August had dropped to minus 44.1, its lowest since the Eurozone financial crisis in 2011 and much gloomier than estimates from analysts.

The European Central Bank is set to cut interest rates further into negative territory next month, becoming the latest central bank to loosen monetary policy. ECB President Mario Draghi has, however, repeatedly insisted that Eurozone governments should not rely on monetary policy alone to save the bloc from a prolonged period in the economic doldrums.

the country the foreign currency amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

In late May, CBI unveiled a new directive package to provide the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

As for other exporters, at least 50 percent of the total earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and a maximum 20 percent could be distributed in form of hard currency and the rest can be used for imports.

Earlier that month, the CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had said that "so far the country's exporters have re-injected 60 percent of their total exports revenues in the form of foreign currency into the country's financial system."

According to CBI, last year some \$18.7 billion of foreign currency was returned into the country's financial system by the exporters.



The South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF) suggested there was already evidence the NHI was set to fail and that it would ultimately drive healthcare professionals away.

SAPPF said it remained concerned with the ability of government to successfully implement the Presidential Health Compact to radically improve the quality of the public sector.

"Failure of the health compact to turn around every facility in the public healthcare sector will mean that the public sector facilities will not be of sufficient quality to contract with the NHI fund. The continued implementation of NHI, without confirming that the Presidential Health Compact was successful, could do immense damage to the healthcare system and could result in a shortage of public sector service providers for the NHI fund to contract with."

The group was also concerned with the lack of clarity around the compensation of private practitioners, leaving it up to the executive to make regulations on such reimbursement models.

Freedom Front Plus blamed healthcare giant Discovery Group's historic dip in share price on the recent tabling of the NHI Bill.

The party suggested the effect on the economy was already being felt, with Discovery Group's shares falling 8.5% on the JSE last week.

(Source: citizen.co.za0)



# North Yaran oilfield to increase output

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – Installing the second Electric Submersible Pump (ESP) in the well No.4 of the North Yaran oilfield is going to increase the field's output by 1,000 barrels per day (bpd), Shana reported on Wednesday.

According to Mohammad-Ali Ajdari, the North Yaran oilfield development project manager, the ESP has been installed at a depth of 2,300 meters, and it is stabilized 24 hours after installation.

The performance of this ESP will be a guide for selecting and applying maintenance and recovery methods in West Karoun oilfields, Ajdari stated.

As reported, the pump has an external diameter of 5 inches and its total length is about 15 meters.

In March, managing director of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) announced that production of oil from West Karoun oilfields reached 350,000 barrels bpd in the past Iranian calendar year



(ended on March 20).

Touraj Dehqani said the figure is planned to reach 400,000 bpd in the current year.

North Yaran oilfield's development project commenced in 2016 with a daily production of 30,000 bpd, however after a while, the field's production experienced some decline.

In this regard, the first ESP was installed in Well No. 14 of the oilfield in July 2018, aimed for maintaining and increasing its production.

Yaran is one of the five oilfields known as West Karoun oilfields. It is divided into two parts namely North Yaran and South Yaran, 120 kilometers west of Ahwaz, the capital city of southwestern province of Khuzestan, on the border line with Iraq.

The field is adjacent to Azadegan oilfield in east and to Iraq's Majnoon oilfield in west.

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

## NIOC research directorate to conduct 25 major projects

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – Head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Research and Technology Directorate said his office is going to conduct 25 major research projects worth nearly 700 billion rials (about \$16 million).

Following a well-established plan, we will try to implement the projects in a parallel approach, during the current year and the next calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), Ebrahim Taleqani told Shana on Wednesday.

The official further mentioned NIOC Exploration Directorate's agreements with Iranian universities and knowledge-based companies for research in various fields, saying that the Exploration Directorate is tasked to sign seven research agreements, four of which have been signed.

Earlier this month, NIOC Exploration Directorate signed

four agreements with universities and knowledge-based companies to conduct research in a variety of oil-related areas including geophysics, geochemistry, unconventional hydrocarbon resources as well as drilling.

Taleqani also noted that other NIOC subsidiaries have also been tasked to increase their research activities and in this regard almost all of them are going to sign similar research agreements in near future.

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

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



## Oil prices fall as China economic data disappoints, U.S. inventories gain

Oil prices fell on Wednesday on disappointing economic data from China and a rise in U.S. crude inventories, erasing some of the sharp gains in the previous session after the U.S. said it would delay tariffs on some Chinese products, easing trade tensions.

Brent crude was down 46 cents, or 0.8%, at \$60.84 a barrel at 0639 GMT, after rising 4.7% on Tuesday, the biggest percentage gain since December.

U.S. oil was down 62 cents, or 1.1%, at \$56.48 a barrel, having risen 4% the previous session, the most in just over a month.

China reported a raft of unexpectedly weak data for July, including a surprise drop in industrial output growth to a more than 17-year low, underlining widening economic cracks as the trade war with the United States intensifies.

"Deteriorating China industrial output and consumer spending suggest the fundamental picture isn't great and the demand for energy may be under the pressure," said Margaret Yang, market analyst at



CMC Markets. Profit taking after Tuesday's sharp gains also weighed on crude prices on Wednesday, analysts said.

The "moves in oil were so outsized overnight, that some profit taking in Asia was

logical," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst, Asia Pacific at OANDA.

Benchmark crude prices surged on Tuesday after U.S. President Donald Trump backed off his Sept. 1 deadline for 10% tariffs on

some products affecting about half of the \$300 billion target list of Chinese goods.

But with about \$110 billion worth of Chinese imports still subject to the tariffs increase next month, the delay will not solve the core issues between the U.S. and China, said Yang.

"Markets will perhaps soon come down to earth and face the reality of a world of elevated trade tariffs, slower growth and policy inconsistency," Yang said.

Markets have been pummeled in recent weeks amid tough talk from Trump on trade.

China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that U.S. and Chinese trade officials spoke on the phone and agreed to talk again within two weeks.

Data from industry group the American Petroleum Institute (API) showed U.S. crude stocks unexpectedly rose last week.

Crude inventories increased by 3.7 million barrels to 443 million, compared with analyst expectations for a decrease of 2.8 million barrels, the API said.

## Aramco's \$3 trillion float now looks like a pipe dream

By Stephen Bartholomeusz

Saudi Arabia's Aramco gave its first-ever earnings briefing on Monday. The oil market backdrop for the earnings call wasn't, however, the best setting for a group that still harbors hopes of a \$2 trillion (\$3 trillion) share market listing as early as next year.

The call was, apparently, rather desultory and not especially informative, although the first-half numbers were impressive given the context of falling oil prices and production cut-backs. Aramco's profit was down 12 percent to \$46.9 billion, which is pretty impressive for a half-year.

Aramco is the world's most profitable company, generating more cash and earnings than all the listed oil majors combined. Its free cash flow for the half, after capital expenditures, was \$38 billion.

Even so, most analysts believe the group's ambition of listing 5 percent of itself for \$100 billion - which would be the world's biggest IPO and provide the market capitalization of \$2 trillion - is overly optimistic by a significant margin.

Whether the Saudi's can float the state-owned group next year or in 2021 at prices that are palatable will depend on the oil market at the time. If the current conditions persist, it might be a difficult sell.

OPEC's output is at eight-year lows after the "OPEC+" grouping of OPEC members and non-members, including Russia, agreed to extend pre-existing production cuts this month. The Saudis have borne the brunt of those cuts - they are producing about 7 million barrels a day at present, down from more than 11 million barrels a day late last year.

### Continuing constraints on production

Despite the continuing constraints on production, including the near-total withdrawal of Iranian oil from the market because of the renewed U.S. sanctions and Venezuela's because of its economic chaos, the oil price has fallen from more than \$74 a barrel in April to \$53.80 a barrel on Monday. Last year it peaked at more than \$85 a barrel.

The dilemma facing the cartel is that the oil price hasn't responded to the production cuts, not because the U.S. shale producers have significantly ramped up their production (although it is running at record



levels) but because demand growth has slowed to its lowest levels since the financial crisis.

The explanation for that is obvious - Donald Trump's trade wars are slowing global growth and China's growth in particular.

Unless Trump is prepared to do an about-face and negotiate a deal on trade that China finds acceptable, which is most unlikely, global conditions and demand for oil are unlikely to improve anytime soon.

Indeed, financial markets are signaling an expectation that the global economy will continue to deteriorate, with a significant risk of a global recession.

The strength of the U.S. dollar as capital flows to the perceived safe haven of the U.S. bond market isn't helping oil either, given that it makes the commodity more expensive for non-U.S. buyers.

It was Trump's attacks on the "OPEC monopoly" and its "manipulation" of oil prices and the pressure he imposed on the Saudis to lift production last year that derailed the planned initial public offering of Aramco, which was originally scheduled (after being deferred several times) for this year.

The Saudis and their fellow cartel members did lift production but were blind-sided when Trump initially granted waivers to some key Iranian customers, including China, from its sanctions. That led to the market being over-supplied, to oil prices slumping and a new round of so-far ineffective production cut-backs.

Saudi Arabia's Aramco raised \$12 billion via its first issue of bonds in April.

The Aramco float is supposed to be the centerpiece of the economic and social reforms being sponsored by the Saudi's controversial Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman, as part of a long-term strategy of diversifying the economy away from its dependence on crude oil, while modernizing the governance of Aramco, whose affairs and finances are entangled with those of the state.

### Providing greater transparency

The debt raised was to help fund the \$69.1 billion acquisition of 70 percent of the Sabic petrochemical group from the Saudi's sovereign wealth fund and to provide greater transparency for its financial affairs. It didn't actually need the money, given that it has almost no debt.

On Monday it also announced it was buying a 20 percent stake, for a reported \$15 billion, in the refining and chemicals division of India's Reliance Industries conglomerate.

The two transactions are designed to increase Aramco's exposure to downstream activities to lower its vulnerability to volatile crude oil prices - a greater exposure to refining would act as a natural hedge against fluctuations in the oil price - and to lock in downstream customers for its oil.

While that might make it more resilient, it doesn't by itself make Aramco worth \$2 trillion.

To get anywhere close to the number the Crown Prince wants, the Saudis will need a far higher price than the levels at which oil has been trading and, while the trade wars continue to depress global growth, is likely to trade at for the foreseeable future.

Unless he is willing to accept a valuation far lower than \$2 trillion - probably well below \$1.5 trillion - the float might have to be deferred, again, indefinitely while the Saudis wait for a global economic uplift but that might be years away.

(Source: amh.com.au)

## SZOGPC self-sufficient in manufacturing, repairing oil industry equipment

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – South Zagros Oil and Gas Production Company, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company, has manufactured or repaired the 521 items needed in the oil and gas industry.

SZOGPC's operations director, Seyed Mahmoud Mirbagheri said on Tuesday that 499 of the company's needed items were supplied by domestic contractors.

The other 22 were also repaired by Iranian companies, he added.

He said the company had prioritized identification of proficient domestic companies that could supply or manufacture the items needed in SZOGPC's oil and gas projects, adding that the engineering section of the company had formed technical and specialized teams in various sectors like electricity, mechanic and measuring instruments in order to define research



projects for manufacturing or repairing the items domestically.

The official said repairing a VGV Controller, three electronic feed cards and manufacturing of the Siemens SGT 400 turbine coupling bolt, which is one of the state-of-the-art oil and gas turbines, were among SZOGPC's achievements in the current year.

Furthermore, repairing all kinds of valves, electromotors, hydraulic pumps, transformers and manufacturing of all types of O-rings, washers, gear, cutting machinery, etc. are other items which have either been manufactured or repaired by domestic companies for SZOGPC.

SZOGPC is one of the most active companies in Iran's oil industry. Estimates show its reserves hold a total of 3.7 trillion cubic meters of in-place gas, some 2.7 trillion cubic meters of which are deemed recoverable.

The company also holds 425 million barrels of crude oil reserves, of which 12 million have so far been extracted. Its crude output is expected to stand at 6,100 barrels per day in the next fiscal year that starts on March 21.

The company operates 11 oil and gas fields, including Aghar, Dalan, Nar, Kangan, Tabnak, Sorkhoun, Homa, Varavi, Shanol, Sarvestan and Sa'adatadab fields in Fars, Bushehr and Hormozgan provinces. All the fields are located in five regions, namely Nar and Kangan, Aghar and Dalan, Parsian, South Sorkhoun and Gashou, as well as Sarvestan and Saadatadab.

## Solar panels on farmland could meet global energy demands, study finds

Installing solar panels on farmland is the best way to maximize their productivity, a new study has found.

According to environmentjournal.online, the study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, found that global electric energy demands could be met if just 1% of agricultural land was converted to solar panels.

The findings also bring into question the current common practice of constructing large arrays of solar panels in deserts.

Chad Higgins, associate professor in Oregon State University (OSU)'s College of Agricultural Sciences and corresponding author of the study, said: 'Our results indicate that there's a huge potential for solar and agriculture to work together to



provide reliable energy.

'There's an old adage that agriculture can overproduce anything. That's what we found in electricity, too. It turns out that 8,000 years ago, farmers found the best places to harvest solar energy on Earth.'

The research team led by Oregon State University analyzed power production data collected by a Tesla solar electric array installed on farmland owned by the university.

They combined the Tesla information with data from micro-climate research stations installed at the array, which recorded variables like mean air temperature, wind speed and direction and incoming solar energy.

Based on those results, the university created a model for photovoltaic efficiency based on air temperature, wind speed and relative humidity.

'We found that when it's cool outside the efficiency gets better,' Higgins said. 'If it's hot the efficiency gets worse. When it is dead calm the efficiency is worse, but some wind makes it better.'

'As the conditions became more humid, the panels did worse. Solar panels are just like people and the weather, they are happier when it's cool and breezy and dry.'

The researchers then used global satellite imagery to apply the model worldwide, crossing 17 classes of land cover including croplands, mixed forests, urban and savanna.

Croplands were found to be the most productive places to place a solar panel, while snowy or icy environments turned out to be least productive.

The scientists then re-evaluated their model to assess agri-voltaics' potential to meet the projected global electric demand determined by the World Bank.

The findings follow previous research by OSU that found that placing solar panels on agricultural fields could improve crop yield. Solar energy is the fastest-growing source of power worldwide and could become the world's largest electricity source by 2050, according to the International Energy Agency.



## Was Epstein murdered to protect members of the U.S. elite?

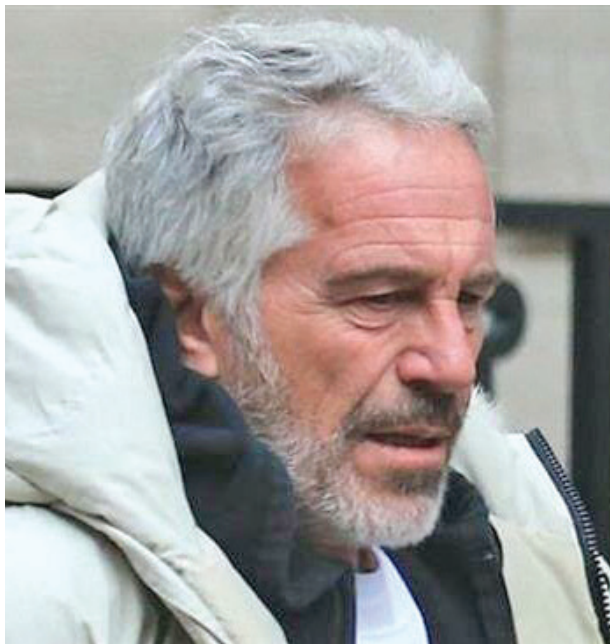
By Paul Craig Roberts

I appreciate my readers' confidence in me. However, I cannot clear up the Jeffrey Epstein matter for you. Perhaps I can help you to think about it in a careful way.

First of all, many jail "suicides" are murders. In 1995 Jesse Trentadue's brother, Kenneth, was mistakenly identified as the possible "missing man" who was thought to be involved in the Oklahoma City bombing and beaten to death in a federal prison by federal agents.

The prison claimed Kenneth hung himself in his cell. The state coroner refused to confirm the suicide verdict and only much later after much pressure ceased his resistance to the coverup.

The prison wanted to cremate the body rather than return the body to family for burial.



But Jesse, a Salt Lake City attorney was suspicious. When the body was returned, it was covered in heavy makeup.

Investigation revealed head lacerations, bruises and burns all over and other contusions that obviously were not self-inflicted and could not possibly have occurred from hanging. Apparently, Kenneth was tortured and beaten to death in an effort to get a confession.

Jesse has been trying to get to get justice for the family for 24 years, but has been stonewalled by the US Department of Justice (sic).

It is not possible to commit suicide when a person is on suicide watch. Former inmates and prison guards and correctional personnel have stated with certainty that Epstein did not commit suicide by hanging himself.

The only questions before us are: Was Epstein murdered in order to protect members of the elite?

Was Epstein switched out by the Deep State and a dead person of similar appearance left in his place?

Last week those who said that Epstein would not make it to trial because so many prominent people would be implicated were dismissed as "conspiracy theorists." This week we know the "conspiracy theorists" were right. Epstein did not make it to trial.

But we don't know that he is dead. This report on Intellihub might be a fabrication posted to attract readers.

Or it might be a false report put out by the Deep State to distract attention from a suspicious suicide. James Jesus Angleton, head of CIA counter-intelligence, once told me that when the CIA pulls off something, it muddies the waters by placing different and conflicting stories in the media.

The result, he said, is that there is too much to investigate, and people end up arguing with one another over which story is correct, and the facts of the event are never investigated. Today with the Internet all sorts of stories can be put into play in order to cover an event in confusion.

When you hear someone trying to discredit a view by calling it a "conspiracy theory," be suspicious. The CIA invented "conspiracy theory" in order to control the explanation of President John F. Kennedy's assassination by discrediting skeptics of the official explanation.

We won't know that Epstein is not alive and enjoying life with underage females in a CIA safe house until people who knew him well and are not endangered by investigation of his pedophile activities identify the body, and non-official, non-governmental experts identify the body via DNA. Even with these steps, we cannot know that investigators were not bribed or threatened.

Much will be done to add to the confusion and doubt. Already we have a delayed autopsy report, and involvement of a pathologist who supported the unbelievable single bullet explanation of President Kennedy's murder.

Contradictory information grows by the day. Now there are reports, allegedly from official sources, that Epstein was taken off suicide watch shortly before his "suicide."

This report is necessary to support the verdict of suicide as suicide is not possible in a suicide-proof cell.

The odds are heavy against us ever being given a clear and convincing explanation.

The only way you can know is to study the situation very carefully, consider the ever-changing story, and make up your own mind. Official explanations, such as President Kennedy's assassination, Robert Kennedy's assassination, Martin Luther King's assassination, the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty, and 9/11, are never correct.

Epstein's trial would have discredited the American elite and simply was not permitted to happen.

For the same reason, we will never know what really happened to Epstein.

Dr. Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan Administration and associate editor of the Wall Street Journal. The article was first published by the author's website -- <https://www.paulcraigroberts.org/>. Dr. Roberts has granted permission to Press TV to republish his articles.

## Kevin Barrett: Nation state law exposed truth about apartheid nature of Zionist Israel

**TEHRAN (FNA)**— Journalist and activist Kevin Barrett says the "Nation State Law" proved the fact that the regime in Tel Aviv does not represent all the citizens, and the non-Jews "are considered subhuman vermin fit only to be subjugated, expelled, or exterminated".

Kevin Barrett, in an exclusive interview with FNA, said that such ideas supported by the likes of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who were once considered extremist, are "now the nearly unanimous view of the Jewish population of Zionist-occupied Palestine." He further added that "such a rabidly genocidal apartheid state is unlikely to be tolerated by the region, or the world, for very long."

Dr Kevin Barrett is a journalist, radio host, activist and a former university lecturer. He is a member of the Scientific Panel for the Investigation of 9/11 (SPINE) and a founding member of the Muslim-Jewish-Christian Alliance (MUJCA), established in 2004 with the stated aim of improving "interfaith dialogue, coexistence, and understanding" in light of the events of 9/11.

FNA has conducted an interview with Kevin Barrett about Israel's brutal crackdown on Palestinian protesters, the Israeli legislation known as the Nation State Law and also Trump's so-called "deal of the century".

Below you will find the full text of the interview.

■ It seems that killing scores of people and maiming thousands more over the past several months isn't an indication of what Israel thinks is enough to keep Gaza in check. Do you think Israel's deadly clamp down on Palestinian protesters is going to end anytime soon?

A: Israel's treatment of the people of Gaza will continue to worsen, for two overriding reasons. First, the Jewish majority in Israel is becoming increasingly extremist and genocidal. A few decades ago, the Likud party, representing the heirs of Jabotinsky, was a fringe movement. Today it is considered centrist. Polls show that Israeli Jews (unlike Israeli Arabs) almost unanimously approve of the horrendous periodic massacres of the people of Gaza. They approve of raining white phosphorous on the heads of women and children. They approve of bombing ambulances and hospitals and schools and UN facilities and blowing innocent children, women, and men to pieces. They love this insane cruelty — perpetrated against helpless inmates of



the world's largest open-air concentration camp — so much that whenever Israel decides to "mow the lawn" and stage another mass slaughter, Jewish Israelis throw huge barbecue parties on hilltops overlooking the carnage and cheer the ongoing massacres.

So the horror will continue because it is popular politically. The other factor driving it is strategic desperation. The Zionists, despite their murderous fanaticism and their domination of global media and the world's biggest financial centers, have been unable to quell Palestinian resistance. Nor have they been able to prevent the world from gradually learning the truth and siding with the Palestinians. And they cannot change the demographic factors that give Palestinians, and the other Arabs and Muslims in the region, a long-term advantage. So they know, deep down inside, that their project is doomed. For that reason, driven by deep-seated unconscious desperation, they lash out viciously like cornered rabid rats.

■ It's been a year since the start of the protests known as the 'Great March of Re-

turn.' What do you think the march has accomplished so far?

A: The Great March of Return has sent the world a loud and clear message: Palestinian resistance lives! The Zionist-dominated global media has done its best to obscure the justice of the Palestinian assertion of the Right of Return. But gradually the world is coming to understand the truth about the Palestinian Holocaust of 1948 and the slow-motion holocaust ongoing ever since. Today, even a small but growing segment of the global Jewish population supports a one-state solution which would necessarily involve an acceptance of the principle of Right of Return. The Great March is a leading factor pushing this once-marginal (in the West) idea into the mainstream. And the more brutal the Zionist response, the more the world sees the truth about Zionist oppression and tyranny.

■ How do you think the US and some Arab states are complicit in crimes against the Palestinians especially in light with the discreet links between Israel and Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states?

## East Asia trade deal faces head winds

By Chen Yang

**GLOBALTIMES**—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration has adjusted its East Asia policy after securing the majority of seats in the House of Councillors, or the Upper House, in July. To begin with, Japan and South Korea are going through the darkest hour in their relationship. The Japanese cabinet removed South Korea from its white list of trusted trading partners on August 2. In a tit-for-tat move, South Korea announced its plans on Monday to remove Japan from its "white list" of trusted trade partners from September. As a result, Tokyo-Seoul ties have reached their lowest point since diplomatic relations were established in 1965. Signs of improvement have yet to be seen.

The trade conflict involves only the two Northeast Asian countries, but the dispute has impacted the framework of regional security. Both Japan and South Korea are US allies and play key roles in US intervention in regional affairs. If Tokyo-Seoul disputes become a long-term issue, the US-Japan-South Korea alliance would be challenged and result in major security changes in the region.

Meanwhile, China-Japan ties have reached new levels. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng and Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Akiba held a new round of strategic dialogue on Saturday. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of common concern.

Strategic dialogue is an essential channel for the two governments to strengthen strategic communication and is significant for the development of bilateral ties. The discussions resumed after seven years, indicating Beijing-Tokyo relations are improving.

The changes are not accidental, but a stark reflection of the Abe administration's East Asia policy. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Japan in May 2018. The visit was followed

by Abe's official visit to China in October 2018. Japan-China High-Level Economic Dialogue resumed in April 2019 and the two countries' strategic dialogue resumed in August. The moves indicate joint efforts aimed at strengthening mutual trust. Japan is likely to maintain positive policies toward China, which will help shape a new East Asian order.

In the meantime, sluggish Japan-South Korea relations will be a feature of the new East Asian order. The bilateral relationship nosedived due to historical issues and new trade disputes. The Abe administration omitted the phrase "South Korea is our most important neighbor" in the Diplomatic Bluebook 2018, and this year it deleted the expression that Tokyo-Seoul relations should be developed "in a forward-looking direction." The Japanese government will "lower South Korea's standing as an important security cooperation partner" in an upcoming defense white paper set to be released next month, reported The Japan Times.

The subtle moves from Tokyo underscore a feature of Japan's policy toward South Korea - neglecting South Korea. It is estimated that this will be the tone of Japan's South Korea policy in the coming years. Against the backdrop, whether the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Agreement can be reached has come into focus. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the cooperation between China, Japan, and South Korea. Trilateral cooperation and exchanges in economy, trade, culture, education, and disaster management have yielded fruitful results in the past two decades. The trilateral cooperation mechanism has been continuously strengthened and a comprehensive and multilevel system is in place. In this context, if established, the China-Japan-South Korea free trade zone would help build an economic circle with 1.5 billion consumers, a total GDP of about \$21 trillion, accounting for 20 percent of the world GDP. This will greatly invigorate the global economy.

Unfortunately, the reality is that the agreement has yet to



be realized due to historical, territorial issues among the three nations and interference from countries beyond the region. The rise of global trade protectionism is supposed to be a vital push to accelerate the free trade agreement, but as Japan-South Korea relations continue to decline, negotiations will remain hindered. It is unlikely an agreement will be reached in the short term. The geopolitical changes in East Asia can only play a limited role in promoting the process.

Is South Korea willing to expand trade ties with Japan after being sanctioned by the latter? The three countries need a solid trilateral economic and trade relationship.

## U.S. farmers face permanent loss of soybean market

**GLOBALTIMES**—Thanks to the US-launched trade war, China is turning to Russia for soybean supplies. Some American farmers consider this to be a temporary plan to fill the gap left after China curtailed imports of US soybeans, but those people may be deeply disappointed by the result.

China attaches importance to long-term stable cooperation with Russia in soybean imports. Some Chinese companies have showed enthusiasm for growing soybeans in Russia that are then exported to China. JBA, a joint venture between companies including Joyvio Group and Heilongjiang Agriculture Co, has announced a plan involving 1 billion yuan (\$142 million) to plant crops - including soybeans - in Russia.

Once Chinese companies develop soybean planting bases in Russia, the nation will offer a stable source of the crop for the Chinese market. US farmers face the risk of losing China's soybean market forever, even if US President Donald Trump ends the trade war with China.

US soybeans are cheap on the world market, so some analysts forecast that Chinese importers will turn back to buying US soybeans if the two countries lift all the punitive tariffs put



in place since the trade war began. However, Chinese investment is changing the outlook in this sector.

As China and Russia expand cooperation in fields such as agriculture, Russian soybeans will become more competitive in the Chinese market. The Russian Far East is adjacent to China's northeastern provinces, which are themselves a major soybean producing area in China. Chinese soybean technology can help

Russian farmers achieve higher average yields and meet the demand of the Chinese market.

China and Russia agreed in June to upgrade relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era. Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country is committed to deepening cooperation with China in a range of fields including agriculture, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

China and Russia have large potential for

A: Trump and the corrupt [Persian] Gulf dictators, along with their partner in crime al-Sisi, are enslaved to Zionist money-power. Zionists dominate the Western segment of the global financial system. So corrupt individuals and nations who want to be players in that system, and profit from it, are forced to obey Zionist orders, and become complicit in Zionist crimes.

■ In July 2018, the so-called nation state law was adopted by Israeli Knesset. What do you think the legislation shows about the nature of the regime in Tel Aviv?

A: The nation state law merely stated the truth: Zionist "Israel" is an apartheid state. It does not represent all its citizens, just the Jewish ones. The others are considered subhuman vermin fit only to be subjugated, expelled, or exterminated. This view, once considered extremist when espoused by the likes of Jabotinsky, is now the nearly unanimous view of the Jewish population of Zionist-occupied Palestine. Such a rabidly genocidal apartheid state is unlikely to be tolerated by the region, or the world, for very long.

■ Many believe that the continuing illegal Israeli settlement activities have hammered nail after nail into the coffin of a diplomatic solution. What do you think about that?

A: Israeli settlements have doomed the two-state solution. Zionist Israel could have made itself sustainable through that two-state solution. But by rejecting the prospect of peace held out by Arafat and other Palestinians who deluded themselves into believing that the Zionists had good intentions and were capable of making and living up to an agreement, the Zionists have dug their own grave and sealed the fate of their peculiar experiment.

■ The current administration in the US has been boasting about their new plan for Palestine and even calling it the deal of the century. What do you think would be in the new deal for the Palestinians?

A: The so-called Kushner peace plan is a joke. Kushner is from an organized crime family. He is a thug and a rabid Zionist. The idea that such a person could play a role in any peace process is beyond absurd.

The only new deal for Palestinians will come when the genocidal Zionist experiment finally implodes. Not just Palestinians, but also everyone who cares about justice, should work assiduously toward hastening that implosion.

agricultural cooperation related to soybeans. Some statistics show that the area dedicated to soybean cultivation in Russia is just 2.5 million hectares, accounting for only about 3 percent of the country's arable land. Russia has the potential to expand its soybean planting area.

In 2018, trade between China and Russia reached \$107 billion, less than the amount between China and Malaysia. The potential of China-Russia trade is far from being fully exploited. Soybean purchases offer an opportunity for Beijing and Moscow to strengthen their economic ties.

A trade deal between China and the US now looks far off. Until any such agreement is formally signed, Chinese companies will keep investing in Russia's agriculture sector. This will result in irreversible losses for US soybean farmers.

There is only a small window of time for Washington to help US farmers save their market share in China before Chinese companies finish reshuffling their supply chains by diversifying trading partners. Hopefully, Trump can seize the chance.



# Will Johnson be Brexit's third victim?

By Ali Azimi

**TEHRAN** — The puzzle of Brexit in the UK and the European Union is becoming more and more difficult to solve. Some Western sources even speculate about the possibility of early elections in Britain. Meanwhile, the two traditional British parties, the Labor Party and the Conservative Party, have not yet been able to adapt to the components and principles of their country's exit from the European Union. The key question is what will the British Prime Minister do about solving the Brexit puzzle? Will Boris Johnson succeed or become Brexit's third victim? Here's a look at some of the analysis and news on Britain's exit from the EU:

**Boris Johnson Doesn't Want a No-Deal Brexit. He Wants to Win an Election.**

As Foreign Policy reported, The British prime minister's tough talk is designed to provoke Remainers into blocking Brexit—and give him a villain to blame during an election campaign. When he was campaigning to become the leader of the Conservative Party and, by extension, Britain's new prime minister, Boris Johnson claimed that the chances of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union without a deal were “a million-to-one against.” Yet, since he entered Downing Street, all signs appear to indicate that Johnson's government is actively trying to increase the odds of a no-deal Brexit.

On his first day in office last month, Johnson filled his cabinet with hard-line Brexiters. The Home Office and the Foreign Office, two of what are regarded as the great offices of state, are led by Priti Patel and Dominic Raab, respectively, both of whom are Brexit absolutists. Dominic Cummings, the director of the Vote Leave campaign, has been brought in as a senior advisor and assistant to the prime minister. Johnson has, thus far, refused to even meet EU leaders for discussions until they agree to completely scrap the contentious Irish backstop from Theresa May's withdrawal agreement. Given the EU's firm position that such an insurance policy is needed to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, if he maintains this position, a no-deal Brexit becomes the only possible outcome.

Although all signs suggest Johnson is leading the U.K. off the no-deal cliff, the likelihood is that he doesn't really want to crash out of the EU. His commitment to leaving the EU on Oct. 31 with or without a deal, “come what may,” might appear to be an intractable red line, but in reality it should be seen as a deliberate challenge to his opponents in Parliament to stop him from leaving without a deal.

If Johnson was truly set on pushing through no-deal, he would have shown greater subtlety and gone about his plans more covertly so as to avoid alarming his opponents. If Johnson was truly set on pushing through no-deal, he would have shown greater subtlety and gone about his plans more covertly so as to avoid alarming his opponents. Instead, he has set out to cause maximum panic, which has had the effect of spurring a cross-party coalition against no-deal into action: Within days of Johnson's entry into Downing Street, it was reported that the recently resigned chancellor, Philip Hammond, held meetings with Labour's shadow Brexit secretary, Keir Starmer, and other Tory rebels where they began mapping out a strategy to block no-deal in the autumn. This bipartisan group is so concerned by the signals coming out of No. 10 that it intends to meet throughout the summer to plan its strategy in detail to maximize its chances of succeeding.

Johnson is well aware that the fallout from a no-deal Brexit would threaten his government as well as the long-term reputation of the Conservative Party. But he is unable to soften his rhetoric because it would provoke a furious backlash from absolutist Brexiters within his own party and among the wider electorate. To keep his cabinet on his side and to dissuade Conservative voters (some 61 percent of whom voted to leave the EU in 2016) from defecting to Nigel Farage's Brexit Party, Johnson needs to be seen as a committed no-dealer.

This balancing act depends upon provoking hostile members of Parliament into blocking no-deal and forcing him to seek yet another extension to the Article 50 deadline so he doesn't have to suffer the consequences of climbing down on his own accord.

This balancing act depends upon provoking hostile members of Parliament into blocking no-deal and forcing him to seek yet another extension to the Article



**This balancing act depends upon provoking hostile members of Parliament into blocking no-deal and forcing him to seek yet another extension to the Article 50 deadline so he doesn't have to suffer the consequences of climbing down on his own accord.**

50 deadline so he doesn't have to suffer the consequences of climbing down on his own accord.

Johnson would then be able to spin the Brexit delay as an act of sabotage by a Remainer-dominated Parliament and use it as justification for a snap general election. Indeed, it has been reported that Johnson and Cummings have already been laying the groundwork for a “people versus politicians” general election, long before Parliament has even made a move.

Commentators have long speculated that Johnson would call fresh elections within months of entering Downing Street so he can boost his working majority, which as of now depends on the hard-line Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and is currently down to a single MP. By vocally committing to no-deal, Johnson is trying to consolidate the Leave vote ahead of a future election by signaling to potential Brexit Party voters that the Tories are the party best placed to secure a no-deal Brexit in a political landscape littered with Remainers.

This strategy appears to be working: Since Johnson entered Downing Street, a “Boris bounce” has seen support for the Brexit Party drop five points, down to 14 percent, while the Conservatives have risen six points up to 31 percent. Labour and the Liberal Democrats, meanwhile, are neck and neck at 22 and 21 percent respectively, which points to a split in the Remain vote. This makes an early election ever more tempting for Johnson, because according to Robert Ford, a professor of political science at the University of Manchester, “under first past the post, a consolidated Leave vote will overcome a fragmented Remain vote often enough to deliver the Conservatives victory in many seats and thus a majority overall.”

When he won a 66-seat majority despite taking only 35.2 percent of the vote—a mere 2.8 percent more than the Conservatives. Even with a slender majority of some 30 seats, Johnson would have far more leeway to push his own revised Brexit deal through Parliament. The most straightforward way of doing this would be to alter the Irish backstop provision so that it only applies to Northern Ireland rather than the entire U.K., as the EU originally proposed in a draft withdrawal agreement in February 2018.

This arrangement would suit both the EU and English Brexiters, as it would maintain an open border on the island of Ireland while allowing Great Britain to strike its own trade deals, because it would be outside of the European customs union. However, Johnson is unable to pursue this route, because it would alienate the 10 DUP MPs who currently prop up his government. The Tories are currently just 10 seats short of a working majority, so even a modest improvement on their 2017 general election result would allow Johnson to cut the DUP loose and push through a withdrawal agreement with a Northern Ireland-only backstop. In trade terms, this would effectively move the border between the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland into the Irish Sea and result in customs checks on goods traveling between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Calling an election would be a dan-

gerous gamble for Johnson, especially after the hubristic calamity of 2017, when Theresa May squandered the Conservatives' parliamentary majority. Calling an election would be a dangerous gamble for Johnson, especially after the hubristic calamity of 2017, when Theresa May squandered the Conservatives' parliamentary majority. But perhaps the call won't be his to make: Labour will almost certainly put forth a no-confidence motion against the prime minister in the fall, and if just a handful of Tories make good on their threats to stop a no-deal Brexit by siding with the opposition, Johnson's government will fall and a general election will likely follow soon after, unless either Johnson or the opposition can assemble a parliamentary majority during the 14-day window set out in the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act.

With the opposition divided, there is reason to suspect that Johnson is actively trying to engineer such a situation, because it would look like he was forced into an election against his own will by traitors within his own party. And should he then fail to expand the Conservatives' majority, he would be well placed to shirk responsibility by blaming the election on his internal opponents. However, recent reports suggest that Johnson could refuse to resign in the event of a successful no-confidence vote and wait out the following 14 days before setting an election date in early November that would ensure that Britain crashes out of the EU by default. Technically, this remains a possibility: A minimum of 25 business days must pass between the dissolution of Parliament and election day, but it is the incumbent prime minister who gets to choose the date of the poll. Although such an outcome cannot be ruled out, these plans look like yet another provocation designed to push Parliament into action.

It would be easier to win over Leave voters by spinning a “people versus the politicians” narrative that plays to their biases rather than convincing every other demographic to back the Conservatives at a time when there's rioting in the streets. It is highly implausible that Johnson would attempt to fight an election in the days after no-deal. Most mainstream experts believe that a no-deal crash out would be an economic disaster that could result in food shortages, and the government has tested plans to deploy 10,000 police officers to deal with any violent disorder that might erupt in a no-deal scenario. Even Cummings himself has previously said that “triggering [Article 50] quickly without plan and legal preps for no deal would be like putting a gun in mouth and kaboom.”

This shows that underneath the bravado, the Johnson camp isn't nearly as relaxed about no-deal as it appears. Its rhetoric is designed to neutralize Farage ahead of a pre-Brexit election, because all logic suggests that it would be easier to win over Leave voters by spinning a “people versus the politicians” narrative that plays to their biases rather than convincing every other demographic to back the Conservatives at a time when there's rioting in the streets. The Brexiters have repeatedly argued that Brussels needs to think that Britain is serious about leaving

without a deal, as this is the only way to achieve a good agreement. Johnson recently repeated this mantra when he said that the EU needs to “look into our eyes and think, well, this time the Brits really do intend to come out on Oct. 31.” But the reality is that it's Brits, not Brussels bureaucrats, whom Johnson wants to take his threats seriously.

He's bluffing both sides of the Brexit divide at home in an attempt to consolidate the Leave vote and provoke his opponents into saving him from the near-certain catastrophe of a no-deal Brexit, which would threaten to destroy the Tories' reputation for economic competence for a generation. Leaving the EU was never Johnson's priority: It was seizing power. And now that he's moved into Downing Street, Johnson will do everything he can to stay there.

**Brexit: judge fast-tracks challenge to stop Johnson forcing no deal**

As Guardian reported, A Scottish judge has fast-tracked a legal challenge backed by 75 MPs and peers to prevent Boris Johnson proroguing parliament to force through a no-deal Brexit. The cross-party group, led by the Scottish National party MP Joanna Cherry QC, alleges it would be illegal and unconstitutional for the prime minister to suspend the Commons to prevent MPs blocking a no-deal Brexit before 31 October. They told Lord Doherty in the court of session “the petition raises legal issues of profound constitutional significance, and these require to be considered and determined as a matter of extreme urgency.”

Doherty ruled an urgent hearing of the case should take place on Friday 6 September, giving both sides only 10 days to prepare their legal arguments and four more days to revise them. The case has been brought by a cross-party group of Labour, SNP, Liberal Democrat and former Tory MPs who quit the party over Brexit, and the Good Law Project, the anti-Brexit campaign group set up by Jolyon Maugham QC. Another two MPs are due to join the group before the next hearing. It follows a historic victory for a cross-party group of Scottish parliamentarians and Maugham in the European court of justice last December, which said the UK was legally able to revoke article 50 without the EU's approval.

In two minor victories for the UK government, Doherty refused the group's plea for the case to be immediately sent to Scottish appeal judges to speed the process up, and also accepted the government's compromise proposal for costs should be capped and shared between both sides. David Welsh, the advocate acting for the parliamentarians and Maugham, told the court they feared the government would block and slow down the case as much as possible. He said the applicants were running desperately short of time: in order for a final judgment on whether proroguing parliament was lawful before 31 October, the case needed to be heard by the ordinary court, the appeal court and finally the UK supreme court in only 11 weeks.

Welsh warned that legal delays in reaching a final decision meant Johnson could prorogue parliament before the case had ended. A no-deal Brexit would have “severe and irreversible” consequences. “It is a rather exceptional request against a highly exceptional and unusual background,” he added. Andrew Webster QC, the government's lawyer, denied that ministers wanted to obstruct the case and accused Welsh of “misreading and mischaracterising” the government's view it would be wrong to immediately refer the case to the appeal court.

Webster told Doherty the UK government also wanted it heard and decided before the UK's departure deadline. “The respondent is willing to seek to deal with these matters before 31 October provided that is done in a fair and proportionate manner,” he said. He admitted this was a “challenging timetable” but said allowing the main case in the lower court to be heard in five weeks, gave the appeal court and supreme court six weeks to finally decide.

The case will hinge on whether Johnson would be breaching established constitutional law and both the EU Withdrawal Act 2018 and the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 if he asked the Queen to prorogue parliament. The petition argues the EU Withdrawal Act requires parliament to ratify the final Brexit deal and the Northern Ireland act was amended by Dominic Grieve, the former attorney general, to ensure parliament sat from September to December 2019, and heard fortnightly reports by ministers, to scrutinise the Brexit process.

## Mehran Kamrava: U.S. Persian Gulf coalition to fail

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Mehran Kamrava, Professor and Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, said the US efforts to form a coalition in the Persian Gulf to contain Iran's power will prove a failure.



Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, Professor Mehran Kamrava said the US has long tried various means to contain Iran's military presence and its influence in Persian Gulf region. In doing so, the Americans have not followed a coordinated, thoughtful, and long-term strategy and have always failed.

Mehran Kamrava is Professor and Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He is the author of a number of journal articles and books, including, most recently, *Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf* (Cornell University Press, 2018); *Inside the Arab State* (Oxford University Press, 2018); *The Impossibility of Palestine: History, Geography, and the Road Ahead* (Yale University Press, 2016); *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2015); *The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World War*, 3rd ed. (University of California Press, 2013); and *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). His edited books include *The Great Game in West Asia: Iran, Turkey, and the Southern Caucasus* (2017); *Fragile Politics: Weak States in the Greater Middle East* (2016); *Beyond the Arab Spring: The Evolving Ruling Bargain in the Middle East* (2015); *The Political Economy of the Persian Gulf* (2012); *The Nuclear Question in the Middle East* (2012); and *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf* (2011).

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ The United States has moved to form a new military coalition in the Persian Gulf. What is the purpose of this coalition?

A: Over the years, the US has tried various means to contain Iran's military presence and its influence in Persian Gulf region. In doing so, the Americans have not followed a coordinated, thoughtful, and long-term strategy. And, despite pushing to make the Peninsula Shield a viable military force in the [P] GCC, they have failed to do so. This latest attempt, to create a new military coalition, appears to be part of yet another attempt by the United States — uncoordinated and without a long-term strategy — to maintain a military presence in the Persian Gulf and to share the costs of doing so. It does not appear to be heading for any meaningful success.

■ The UK also first called for a separate Persian Gulf coalition that was welcomed by France but rejected by Germany. Why do you think the UK called for a separate coalition in the first place?

A: The Europeans have tried to distance themselves from the erratic, uncoordinated, and confrontational policies of the United States. This is not to say that European diplomacy has been any more successful, and clearly evident by the Grace 1 tanker debacle, which Britain now doesn't know how to resolve. Nevertheless, the Europeans are eager to show a military presence, but at the same time distance from Donald Trump's foreign policies.

■ Another Plan for Persian Gulf security order was raised by the Russians that is close to Iranian views. The Russian plan merely envisages a supervisory or observer role for the trans-regional powers in the Persian Gulf. How practical do you believe this plan is?

A: In theory this plan makes a lot of sense, and the security of the region should be the responsibility of the regional actors. But in reality there is great mistrust among regional actors, especially when it comes to security issues. The recent announcement of collaborative security arrangements between Iran and the UAE is a very positive sign, and hopefully there will be more similar developments between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The smaller sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf feel vulnerable to the military powers of countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, and Iran and Russia and other actors need to do what they can to lessen this feeling of vulnerability and threat — unreasonable as they are — that the smaller states feel. Only then would a viable regional security arrangement be possible.

■ Iran's proposed plan for the Persian Gulf is based on the establishment of security by the littoral states. How feasible is this plan, specially under the present circumstances?

A: Any viable and meaningful regional security arrangement needs to start with confidence-building measures. For several years now, Iranian diplomacy has been designed to reduce regional tensions and to build confidence among neighbors. For the longest time, the Saudis and the Emiratis were not willing to listen to the voices of calm and reasoned diplomacy coming out of Tehran. The tide seems to be turning in the UAE. And there are positive signs that Riyadh may also be reducing its animosity toward Iran. Let's hope this trend continues.

■ After 16 years, American troops returned to Saudi Arabia once again. How does this redeployment affect the security situation in the region?

A: This is more symbolic than militarily important. So far, the troop deployment has been only 500. But for the Americans it shows the expansion of their footprint in the Middle East, literally, and for the Saudis it ensures the continued acquisition of US military hardware at a time when the Congress is firmly opposed to it. As far as the security of the region is concerned, in the long run it makes the region only more insecure. No one likes foreign troops on their soil, and the people of Saudi Arabia are no exception. And the 500 troops are not going to enhance the security of the Kingdom, but only deepen its security dependence on the US. This is yet another ill-advised and short-sighted move by the Trump White House on the one side and by Mohammed bin Salman on the other.



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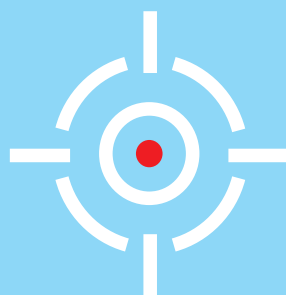
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# Exomars: Parachute test failure threat to launch date

A European-Russian effort to land on Mars has been hit by another parachute failure, during a drop test in Sweden.

It's the second test mishap involving the parachutes, so with launch under a year away, the Exomars project cannot afford another failure.

It means the next test is critical if the mission is to avoid a delay to its targeted launch date of July 2020.

The plan is to send a Russian surface platform and a European rover down to the Martian surface.

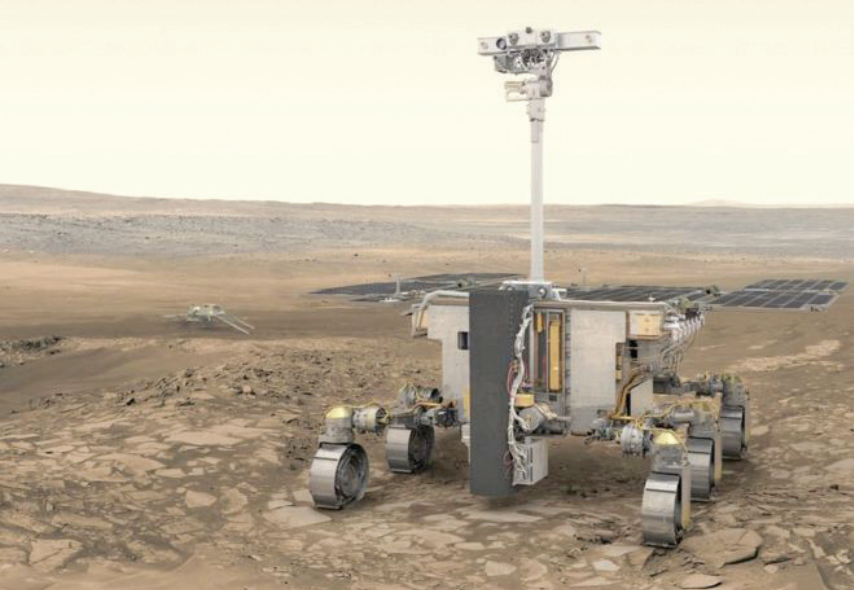
The European Space Agency's (Esa) Rosalind Franklin rover will collect samples of soil with a drill and analyze them for the presence of organic material. This could provide clues to the presence of past or even current life on Mars.

The rover and the Russian Kazachok lander will be encapsulated in a carrier module during their six-minute journey down to the surface.

During a high-altitude test on 5 August in Kiruna, Sweden, a test mass designed to represent the combined lander and rover was dropped from a stratospheric helium balloon at the height of 29km.

Engineers were testing the largest of two main parachutes, measuring 35m in diameter, designed to slow the vehicle to a speed required to land safely on Mars. The European Space Agency says it's the largest ever to fly on a Mars mission.

However, the test article crashed into the ground at high speed. Preliminary analysis shows that the initial steps in the parachute's deployment were carried out correctly. However, specialists spotted radial tears in the canopy of the parachute prior to its inflation.



As result, the test module descended under the drag of the pilot chute alone.

The same tearing problem was seen on a previous test at the Swedish Space Corporation's Esrange site, on 28 May. The balloon drop test was designed to test the deployment of the two main parachutes and the pilot chutes designed to extract them from bags on the descent module.

Changes were made to the design of the parachutes and bags following that test, but they evidently didn't solve the problem.

"The test took place eight days ago so, as you

can imagine, the analysis is still running. We have to have a good understanding of the root cause because we have only one more chance to fix this issue," said Nico Dettmann, human and robotic exploration development projects group leader at Esa.

"We have two remaining test windows. One is in November, the other is in February next year. If those tests are okay then we are on for a flight in July. However, if one of them was to fail, we would not take the risk. Our mission success is the first priority."

He told BBC News: "But at the moment we

are confident we will be able to find a fix and implement it in time."

If Exomars misses its launch window in 2020, the next opportunity to fly the mission will arrive in 2022, when Mars and Earth make another close approach.

But Nico Dettmann emphasized that there was more involved in such a decision than favorable planetary alignment. "This doesn't happen automatically. There are a number of programmatic questions to be clarified with the main stakeholders.

"The main stakeholders are not only our Russian partners, but also our member states. If we have to defer it will obviously cost some more money. This is something which is not yet under discussion because we are still optimistic that we can make the 2020 launch."

A low-altitude test conducted in March 2018, in which a test mass was dropped from a helicopter, had been successful.

The Rosalind Franklin rover is in its final stages of completion at Airbus' facility in Stevenage, UK. Engineers have been running through the end tasks of assembly and expect to get the six-wheeled vehicle out the door before August is up.

Roscosmos' Kazachok landing platform (the name translates as "little Cossack"), will carry a suite of instruments developed in countries including Belgium, Spain and Finland - in addition to Russian-built experiments. It is also nearing completion.

As it currently stands, the mission should launch on a Russian Proton rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan in July next year.

(Source: BBC)

## These structures can make objects 'invisible' to water waves

Scientists have designed devices that can hide objects from water waves similar to how invisibility cloaks hide objects from light waves. The inventions might one day help reduce the drag on ships and submarines or shelter vessels in port.

In the past 15 years or so, researchers have created intricate structures that can behave like the invisibility cloaks once thought of solely as the province of "Harry Potter" or "Star Trek." The structures, known as metamaterials, channel light waves around cloaked objects so that the waves continue on the other side as if they had encountered nothing.

Researchers have also made cloaking devices that can hide objects from other kinds of waves, such as thermal and sound waves. However, devising a cloaking material for water waves has proven challenging due to factors such as viscosity.

Now, two groups of scientists have overcome these challenges, in different ways. One group from South Korea and the United States designed a cloak made of 10 concentric rings of tiny silicone rubber pillars surrounding the cloaked object. The size and spacing of these pillars deflected the flow of water so that the object in the middle of the rings felt zero drag. Although



far more research into factors such as complex turbulent flows is needed for practical applications of this work, it might one day help reduce the drag that vehicles feel when moving in water or wind, said study lead author Juhyuk Park, a materials scientist at MIT.

Another cloak developed by scientists in China and the United States consists of a pair of long, thin iron platforms placed on the bottom corners of a water tank. The platforms funnel waves around objects such as a toy boat floating in the middle of the tank. In principle, such a cloak "would be useful for a safe port for ships, if we can test it near the seashore," said study co-author Huanyang Chen, a physicist at Xiamen University in China.

(Source: Inside Science)

## India's moon-bound Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft set to leave Earth's orbit

On Tuesday night, Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft will leave Earth's orbit and begin making its way toward the moon.

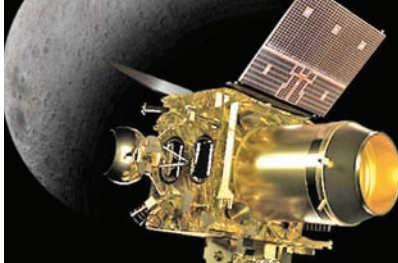
Early Wednesday morning, after leaving Earth's orbit, engineers with the Indian Space Research Organization will direct the spacecraft to perform an important maneuver called Trans Lunar Insertion. The move will put the spacecraft on a trajectory that will put the probe into orbit around the moon on August 20.

"Subsequently, we have planned to have a series of maneuvers around the moon and finally, on September 7, we will be landing on the moon near its south pole," Kailasavadivoo Sivan, ISRO chairperson, told reporters.

India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle launched Chandrayaan-2 in July. The small probe, which houses a lander and rover, has been circling Earth for the past few weeks. The probe used its propulsion system to slowly increase its orbital distance from Earth, preparing for Tuesday's escape from Earth's orbit.

Next week, as the probe approaches the moon, the propulsion system will slow the spacecraft's speed, allowing it to be captured into orbit by the moon's gravity.

Once in orbit around the moon, the probe will release the lander, Vikram, which will



perform a series of breaking maneuvers to execute a soft landing on the south polar region of the nearside of the moon. After landing, Vikram will release Pragyan, the rover.

The mission's lander is named for Vikram Sarabhai, considered the father of India's space agency and an important figure in the development modern science, physical research and atomic energy. Sarabhai died in a plane crash in 1966.

"Today, on his birth anniversary, we remember the exemplary Dr. Vikram Sarabhai," Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, wrote on Twitter this week. "His contribution to Indian science and innovation is tremendous. His efforts ensured India made rapid strides in science and space."

(Source: UPI)

## Study shows we like our math like we like our art: Beautiful

A beautiful landscape painting, a beautiful piano sonata -- art and music are almost exclusively described in terms of aesthetics, but what about math? Beyond useful or brilliant, can an abstract idea be considered beautiful?

Yes, actually -- and not just by mathematicians, reports a new study in *Cognition*.

Coauthored by a Yale mathematician and a University of Bath psychologist, the study shows that average Americans can assess mathematical arguments for beauty just as they can pieces of art or music. The beauty they discerned about the math was not one-dimensional either: Using nine criteria for beauty -- such as elegance, intricacy, universality, etc. -- 300 individuals had better-than-chance agreement about the specific ways that four different proofs were beautiful.

This inquiry into the aesthetics of mathematics began when study co-author and Yale assistant professor of mathematics Stefan Steinerberger likened a proof he was teaching to a "really good Schubert sonata."

"As it turns out, the Yale students who do math also do a statistically impressive amount of music," said Steinerberger. "Three or four students came up to me afterwards and asked, 'What did you mean by this?' And I realized I had no idea what I meant, but it just sounded sort of right. So, I emailed the psych department."

Yale professor of psychology Woo-Kyoung Ahn replied to Steinerberger and, after further discussion, gave him the name of a psychology graduate student with whom she thought he would get along.

Enter Samuel G.B. Johnson, study co-author and now an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Bath School of Management, who was still completing his Ph.D. in psychology at Yale when he connected with Steinerberger. Johnson studies reasoning and decision making. "A lot of my work is about how people evaluate different explanations and arguments for things," he explained.

Steinerberger said Johnson understood immediately how to design an experiment to test his question of whether we share the same aesthetic sensibilities about math that we do about other modalities, i.e. art and music, and if this would hold true for an average person, not just a career mathematician like himself.

"I had some diffuse notion about this, but Sam immediately



got it," said Steinerberger. "It was a match made in heaven."

For the study, they chose four each of mathematical arguments, landscape paintings, and piano sonatas. Because the similarities between math and music have long been noted, Johnson explained, they also wanted to test people using another aesthetic modality -- art in this case -- to see if there's something more universal about the way we judge aesthetics.

Johnson divided the study into three parts. The first task required a sample of individuals to match the four math proofs to the four landscape paintings based on how aesthetically similar they found them; the second required a different sample to do the same but instead comparing the proofs to sonatas; and the third required another unique sample of people to independently rate, on a scale of zero to ten, each of the four artworks and mathematical arguments along nine different criteria plus an overall score for beauty.

They derived these criteria from "A Mathematician's Apology," a 1940 essay by famous mathematician G.H. Hardy, which discusses mathematical beauty. The researchers' nine dimensions elaborated from Hardy's six were: seriousness, universality, profundity, novelty, clarity, simplicity, elegance, intricacy, and sophistication. When Steinerberger and Johnson analyzed the ratings given by participants in part three, they found that for both the artworks and math arguments a high rating for elegance was most likely to predict a high rating for beauty.

The final step was to calculate the "similarity scores" for the participants in group three, which revealed how aesthetically similar they considered each proof and painting were to each

other based on the separate beauty criteria. They then compared these scores to the results from the first group of participants, who were asked to simply match proofs with paintings based on their own intuitive sense of aesthetic similarity -- much like Steinerberger's initial analogy of the proof to a "good Schubert sonata."

When the results came in, Steinerberger and Johnson were surprised but pleased. They were able to take the similarity scores from participants in the third task to predict how the participants would behave in the first task. Participants in the third group agreed about which arguments were elegant and which paintings were elegant while, likewise, participants in the first group tended to match the argument the third group rated as most elegant with the painting they'd rated most elegant. Laypeople not only had similar intuitions about the beauty of math as they did about the beauty of art but also had similar intuitions about beauty as each other. In other words, there was consensus about what makes something beautiful, regardless of modality.

"I'd like to see our study done again but with different pieces of music, different proofs, different artwork," said Steinerberger. "We demonstrated this phenomenon, but we don't know the limits of it. Where does it stop existing? Does it have to be classical music? Do the paintings have to be of the natural world, which is highly aesthetic?"

While quick to point out that they are not education scholars, both Steinerberger and Johnson see eventual implications of this research for math education, especially at the secondary-school level.

"There might be opportunities to make the more abstract, more formal aspects of mathematics more accessible and more exciting to students at that age," said Johnson, "And that might be useful in terms of encouraging more people to enter the field of mathematics."

"I think if you understand what people consider beautiful in math, then it could give insight into how people understand math in the first place and how they process it," added Steinerberger. "There's also the human implication of the question: How are we actually thinking about things as human beings? I think we have an obligation to collaborate with psychologists on this."

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## ISS astronauts say goodbye to their waste as it blazes into fading darkness

Astronauts on board the International Space Station (ISS) have to do just about everything for themselves. Living within this constantly orbiting laboratory, they're not only crew members, they're also plumbers, janitors and housekeepers.

Just last week, in fact, the team of six astronauts currently on board began a month-long chore that requires taking their trash out and unloading new supplies from Earth.

Making room for a fresh Russian resupply rocket, called Progress 73, astronauts were forced to say goodbye to their former cargo vessel, Progress 72.



Four months before, this payload had arrived from Earth carrying 3.7 tons of supplies and gear, including oxygen and air, water, and spare parts.

Now that its main mission was done, there was one last thing the vessel needed to do. On Monday, after filling the craft with trash and discarded gear, astronauts undocked Progress 72 and sent it hurtling back to Earth.

As the vessel plunged into our planet's atmosphere, ISS expedition 59/60 flight engineer Nick Hague caught the fiery incineration in action. "Say goodbye to Progress 72 today to make room for 73P showing up on Wednesday," tweeted Hague on Monday.

"Caught this shot of it during reentry. It looked like a big firework that lasted minutes -- flickering, sparking, and pulsing with brightness before it faded into the darkness."

Two days later, the un-piloted Russian Progress 73 cargo ship took its place, just hours after it was launched from Earth.

All this may sound a bit crude, but according to NASA, so-called "destructive reentry" is a perfectly safe way of destroying ISS trash. Astronauts on board have been taking out their waste this way for years, and the whole thing is quite the game of Tetris.

"Something big or heavy being launched on one vehicle means less available mass for other items," explains NASA e-book The International Space Station: Operating an Outpost in the New Frontier. "Program personnel put forth considerable effort analyzing the stowage configuration throughout the increment based on the visiting vehicle traffic plan along with the expected trash generation and disposal plan."

Of course, NASA is always looking to improve its methods. Last year, in partnership with NineSigma, NASA announced a crowdsourcing challenge to find new ideas for recycling in space.

Currently, the waste disposal method takes up room; additionally, as it may sit there for months, it puts the health of astronauts at risk. Plus, returning the trash to Earth or incinerating it in the atmosphere won't be feasible options for missions beyond Earth's low orbit.

"Along with a commitment to explore and pioneer, comes a commitment to use the resources at our disposal fully, efficiently and responsibly," Anne Meier, lead research engineer at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, stated last year.

"Recycling in space and repurposing all or as much of the mass that we launch up to space is key for sustainable long-duration space travel. Waste conversion and volume reduction will free up volume for more science, more exploration, and is the heart of closing the loop on human spaceflight, and logistics reduction and reutilization."

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Repeating outbursts of 40,000-degree wind discovered near black hole

About 25,000 light-years from Earth, astronomers have discovered intensely hot, screaming winds near a black hole. And those outbursts repeat every eight minutes. It's the first time researchers have observed this around a black hole, according to a new study.

The study was published this week in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*.

The same system showed signs of a violent outburst in 2011. Then, it happened again in 2017. But this time, scientists noticed the repetitive behavior and took a look with the largest telescope in the Southern Hemisphere, the South African Large Telescope.

In the system, there's a low-mass star like our sun and a black hole compact object that's six times the mass of the sun.

The black hole compact object is pulling material from the star into a disk that separates the two of them. When the star's material grows hot, it becomes unstable. This is the cause of the energetic outbursts, the researchers said.

In 2011, the researchers noticed dips in the system's brightness, which shifted as the outburst evolved -- not something they had observed before.

"The cause of these remarkable, fast dips has been a hot topic of scientific debate ever since their discovery," said study author and lead researcher Phil Charles of the University of Southampton. "So it was with great excitement that astronomers greeted the second outburst of this object in mid-2017, presenting an opportunity to study this strange behavior in greater detail."

The telescope enabled the researchers to capture the different wavelengths of light associated with the dips in its brightness -- even though the black hole compact object is 10,000 times dimmer than the faintest stars visible to the human eye.

Within the spectrum gathered by the telescope, the researchers were able to spot energized helium in the system that had been heated to 40,000 degrees Kelvin and reached speeds of 600 kilometers per second.

"But what really astonished us was the discovery that these spectral features were visible only during the optical dips in the light-curve," Charles said. "We have interpreted this quite unique property as due to a warp or ripple in the inner accretion disc that orbits the black hole on the dipping timescale. This warp is very close to the black hole at just 1/10 the radius of the disc."

The wind is moving toward Earth rather than the black hole, and the researchers believe this is due to the pressure of the radiation being generated by X-rays so close to the black hole.

Such intense radiation should appear brighter than it does in the spectral data, but the black hole is pulling in material that probably obscures the light from our view. We're also looking at the system's edge, rather than head-on, because of its orientation.

Studying this intriguing system will allow astronomers to learn more about the end of star evolution and the formation of compact objects, like neutron stars, white dwarfs and black holes.

"These short-period binary versions are a perfect way to study this physics in action," Charles said.

(Source: CNN)



## European movement discourages air travel due to emissions concerns

A European movement known as “flight shaming” is encouraging travelers to take the train rather than to travel by air, citing concerns about the emissions put off by aviation.

The aviation sector is responsible for an estimated 2.5% of carbon dioxide emissions globally, but participants in the flight-shaming movement say their abstinence has significant impacts.

According to The Washington Post, one ticket for a single passenger can eliminate almost a year's worth of environmentally-friendly living. By choosing train travel, an individual can cut their travel emissions by around 80%.

In some countries, the movement has begun to accomplish its goals. In Sweden, where flight-shaming is particularly popular, air travel was down 3.8% from 2018. However, in Europe as a whole, air travel increased by about 4.4%.

Other factors contribute to a traveler's preferred methods of transportation, such as convenience. Despite being less environmentally damaging, traveling by train can be significantly costlier in terms of time. A two-hour flight can quickly turn into a more than 24-hour journey across multiple forms of ground transportation.

Some airlines such as Scandinavian airline SAS are responding to the movement by attempting to reduce their emissions. Planes have been encouraged to reduce weight and increase fuel-efficiency by ending in-flight duty-free sales and asking that passengers pre-book their meals.

(Source: Indiana Environmental Reporter)

## Ancient Roman house in southeast Turkey to welcome visitors next year

House of Muses, a Roman-era house named after the muse mosaics found in the area located in the ancient city of Zeugma in south-eastern Turkey's Gaziantep province will welcome first visitors at the end of next year after the excavations are completed.

The excavations, which also unearthed the famous “Gypsy Girl” mosaic have been carried out in the ancient city located in Nizip district near the Euphrates River since 2007.

The mosaics found in the ancient house include some nine fairies which are believed to be the inspirations of writers, poets, musicians, historians and philosophers of the period.

The house is also one of the most important examples of Roman-era housing structures with its rich architectural decoration, well-preserved mosaics, and frescoes.

Professor Kutalmis Gorkay from the Classical Archeology Department of Ankara University who leads the excavations told Anadolu Agency that the House of Muses will offer its visitors a chance to see the home environment of the Roman-era, taking them on a journey across the centuries.

(Source: Daily Sabah)



### ROUND THE GLOBE

## Cocos Island National Park

A World Heritage, Cocos Island National Park is located in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, covering an area of 202,100 hectares some 530 kilometers off the Costa Rica mainland.

The island itself, “Isla del Coco”, also known as “Treasure Island”, is the only landmark of the vast submarine Cocos Range. With a surface area of 2,400 hectares it supports the only humid tropical forest on an oceanic island in the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

The remaining 199,700 hectares protect not only diverse marine ecosystems, mostly pelagic but also, the most diverse coral reefs of the entire Eastern Tropical Pacific. Thanks to its remote location and conservation efforts, the biologically highly



diverse property constitutes one of the best conserved marine tropical waters, well-known as a world-class diving destination.

Natural population densities of large top predators indicate a near pristine conservation status of a property that is among the most important sites in the Eastern Tropical Pacific for the protection of large pelagic migratory species, such as the endangered Scalloped Hammerhead Shark and the near-threatened Silky Shark and Galapagos Shark.

Cocos Island National Park is of irreplaceable global conservation value, reminding us what parts of tropical oceans historically looked like.

### ■ Integrity

The isolation of Cocos Island National Park contributes to the safeguarding of evolutionary processes, which are the basis of the notable richness and abundance of land and marine life forms.

Provided that alien invasive species of both flora and fauna can be controlled, the conservation prospects on land are promising. In the marine areas, the large aggregations of top predators, including but not limited to numerous shark species, demonstrate the integrity within an intensively fished marine region.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Foreign visits to Fars province’s historical sites on the rise

### TOURISM

**TEHRAN** — Visits by international travelers to historical sites in Fars province rose 12 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21) compared to the same period a year earlier.

The Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization has registered over 253,000 visits to the province's museums and historical sites by foreign nationals, which shows 12 percent growth year on year, provincial tourism chief Mosayeb Amiri said on Monday, CHTN reported.

Based on the CHHTO statistics, French, Italian and German travelers constituted respectively the highest number of visits to the historical sites, Amiri said.

UNESCO-registered Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam (an ancient necropolis near Persepolis), and Hafezieh (a memorial garden where illustrious Persian poet Hafez is laid to rest) were named the most-visited sites,



File photo: People visit Naqsh-e Rostam, an Achaemenid-era necropolis, in Fars province, southern Iran. Mostly referred to as “a must-see” destination, Naqsh-e Rostam is home to several spectacular massive rock-hewn tombs and bas-relief carvings.

## No more ban on foreign travelers riding big motorcycles

### TOURISM

**TEHRAN** — Foreign travelers with motorcycle above 250cc are now allowed to enter and ride in Iran, deputy tourism chief has said.

Last year, Iran imposed the ban on trading heavy motorcycles (with engine capacity of more than 250cc) due to a law concerning customs and anti-smuggling issues. The law created restrictions and sometimes difficulties to a number of foreign tourists who wanted to enter the country, Vali Teymouri told ISNA on Wednesday.

Following correspondence and consultations between tourism organizations, customs and other relevant bodies, at this stage, motorcycles above 250cc can be entered to the country (by foreign cyclists), moreover, their problem of

riding on the roads has been resolved, the official explained.

However, a request is to be submitted to the government in order to reach a more official, permanent solution, Teymouri noted.

Many international travelers to the country say that traversing Iran equals an endless charm, as it embraces so many diverse cultures and landscapes.

Last year, the Islamic Republic enacted many measures to lessen the pressure of U.S. -led sanctions, which were aimed to cripple its economy, particularly oil and banking sectors.

The sanctions were imposed regardless of Iran's full compliance with its commitments under the 2015 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.

## Tehran-Ankara train resumes service after 4 years

### TOURISM

**TEHRAN** — Turkey and Iran have resumed a train service between Ankara and Tehran after a four-year hiatus. The train is scheduled to leave the Iranian capital every Wednesday at 21:50 local time.

Last Wednesday, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (IRIR) Saeid Rasouli, flagged off the first train service during a ceremony attended by a number of officials, when the Trans Asia Express, carrying passengers and freight, left Tehran railway station for the Turkish, Press TV reported.

The five-car train, which had 200 passengers on board, took about 60 hours to arrive in Ankara on Saturday.

The decision to resume the service came in May after meetings between Iranian and Turkish officials. Trains between the eastern Turkish city of Van near the Iranian border and Tehran resumed in late June.



The new service involves two train travel segments and a ferry journey. The IRIR train

leaving Tehran will have a layover in the Iranian city of Tabriz before heading to Lake

Van in eastern Turkey.

Passengers will then ride a ferry across the lake before taking a train operated by Turkey's state railway agency to Ankara.

The service marks yet another milestone in burgeoning trade ties between Iran and Turkey whose leaders have dismissed unilateral U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic, the report said.

Iran topped the list of international arrivals in Turkey in the first two mounts of the past Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21, 2018). Over 350,000 Iranians visited Turkey in the two-month period, which contributed to 11.7 percent share of its total arrivals.

In January-November 2018, 1.894 million Iranian tourists visited Turkey, 18.17 percent less than the same period in 2017, according to data compiled by Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

## Traveling in hurricane season: is it worth the risk?

There are bargains aplenty in hurricane-prone areas, but make sure you have your bases covered in case of a storm.

Hurricane season in the Atlantic Ocean — and that includes the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico and destinations in the Bahamas and Florida — runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Hurricanes can strike at any time, but peak season runs August through October, when the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration says 96 percent of major hurricanes have struck.

That period, and extending through November, is also when resorts in the Caribbean, especially, offer rock-bottom rates, enticing budget travelers to risk a storm. For example, Calabash Cove Resort and Spa in St. Lucia currently has an all-inclusive deal for two people for five nights at \$1,572 through Dec. 23 versus \$3,485 in high season. Atlantis, Paradise Island in the Bahamas has rates from \$189, or 30 percent off high-season prices this fall, including a \$100 resort credit. The all-inclusive Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa in Jamaica is offering rooms in September from \$213, a 45 percent discount.

Betting on good weather is always a risk. But what does it cost to cover the risk of your investment in the event of a hurricane? It's hard to put an exact figure on it, given the many variables of travel, but the cost of hurricane disruption can run from nothing — assuming the airline waives change fees and the hotel accommodates penalty-free rebooking — and start at roughly \$50 a person to insure it. Below are some questions to ask before you commit to your trip.

### ■ Does your hotel have a hurricane-protection policy?

Many resorts offer their own protection policies in case a hurricane strikes, providing some assurance to travelers. For example, Club Med, which operates six resorts in the Caribbean, offers a Hurricane Protection

Program that issues a future travel certificate equal to the value of the guest's vacation for the number of nights affected by a Category 1 or higher-level hurricane, allowing guests to rebook for a future date without penalty.

The key is to ask about policies before you book, as terms vary. For example, once the United States National Hurricane Weather Center has issued an official hurricane warning, the Sonesta hotels on St. Maarten, including the Sonesta Ocean Point and Sonesta Maho Beach Resort Casino & Spa, will allow those unable to arrive to rebook at their original rates within the same calendar year. If a hurricane watch or warning is issued within 14 days of arrival at the Atlantis Paradise Island in the Bahamas, the resort's hurricane guarantee allows guests to change their reservations without penalties, as long as they rebook within 60 days and are willing to pay whatever the prevailing rates are. (The rebooked trip must also be completed within a year of your original reservation.) On St. Lucia, a dozen hotels offer a Holiday Guarantee permitting guests to cancel their stay without penalty in the case of a hurricane and apply deposits to future bookings.

### ■ Does your airline allow penalty-free flight changes?

Anticipating storms, most airlines have adopted proactive programs to encourage travelers to avoid them by offering options to change flights voluntarily without penalties a few days before or after a storm is expected to strike. This would apply to airports visited en route — for example, you are flying to Jamaica via Charlotte, N.C., and a storm is threatening the Carolinas, necessitating a new transit airport — or your final destination, in this case Jamaica. If your flight is canceled by the airline, you may rebook without penalty or receive a refund.

Other than flying within the storm-related window prescribed by the airline, which is

usually within the week, changing your flight plans to an entirely new date — for example, you decide to try Jamaica in January instead — normally incurs a change fee and any fare difference between the original ticket and the one rebooked for January. For example, American Airlines charges \$200 for a change to a domestic ticket and up to \$750 for international travel; JetBlue change fees range \$75 to \$200.

Though change fees are a risk, each storm is different, and depending on the damage to a destination, American Airlines “will implement policies that take care of our customers,” a spokesman said.

Among major carriers, only Southwest Airlines does not charge a change fee. The carrier flies to several coastal and island destinations, including Belize, Cancun, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Grand Cayman, Puerto Rico, Nassau and the Turks and Caicos.

### ■ Have you looked into travel insurance?

You can insure both the airline ticket and lodging costs as well as any nonrefundable tours booked by buying travel insurance. But the key is to buy it before a storm hits; travel insurance is only available before a storm is identified.

“Insurance is designed to protect from the unforeseen and the unexpected,” said Beth Godlin, the president of Aon Affinity Travel Practice, which provides insurance to a number of travel companies. “It's important for customers to know, if you're going to buy, buy early.”

Travelers buying insurance can expect to spend between 4 and 10 percent of the cost of the trip, said Stan Sandberg, the co-founder of Travelinsurance.com, a website that compares policies.

Prices vary based on what they cover and how generous they are with pay outs. Some cover 100 percent of trip interruption, and others 150 percent. Remuneration for lost

bags can run \$500 to \$1,000. Medical evacuation may be covered at \$50,000 or \$150,000. Consumers should compare benefits before buying and, in the case of hurricane coverage, check applicable terms. Most will cover policy holders when a destination is deemed uninhabitable, as was Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria struck in 2017, or evacuation is mandatory.

It's also worth noting that buying travel insurance is a consideration that goes beyond weather. For example, cruises usually reroute during storms, rather than cancel, but Bob Levinstein, the chief executive officer of CruiseCompete.com, a cruise-comparison website, generally encourages clients to buy it for other reasons, such as a medical emergency, routine travel delays or job interference.

To evaluate policies financially, add up the cost of nonrefundable expenses in a worst-case scenario, such as airline costs, lodging deposits, the lodging balance you would be responsible for in the case of last-minute cancellation, and the price of any tour or cruise booked.

Running a few scenarios through the website Travelinsurance.com showed that a solo traveler from New York seeking to cover an \$800 trip could find policies between \$22 and \$74, with the average at \$46, or 5.7 percent of the total trip. A couple from Illinois, both age 33, spending \$1,500 on a trip would spend on average \$120 on joint travel insurance, or 8 percent of the trip. A family of four from Massachusetts — parents, age 42, and children ages 10 and 8 — would spend close to \$200 for all four to be insured for a \$2,500 trip, also 8 percent of the trip's cost.

Depending on your risk tolerance, \$46 to \$200 doesn't seem high in a season in which you may be saving \$100 a night or more.

It's important to note that basic travel insurance doesn't cover a change of mind in the aftermath of a storm.

(Source: The New York Times)



# Iranian experts develop energy, water management system

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian knowledge-based company has developed software and hardware based on the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system in order to supervise and control energy and water consumption, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

SCADA is a control system architecture that uses computers, networked data communications and graphical user interfaces for high-level process supervisory management, but uses other peripheral devices to interface with the process plant or machinery.

Parvaneh Karimi, the company's manager, said the SCADA-based system has been developed with the aim of monitoring energy consumption in the country.

The system monitors and analyzes data on energy consumption, she added.

Using data loggers in different parts, the volume of consumption is registered and monitored, she noted.

The main server registers different consumption parameters and the SCADA-



**The system has already been installed on six water gateways at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad to provide online water consumption data**

based software analyzes the data in order to find the exact amount of consumption and other data for more efficiency, she explained.

"The system can be used in buildings for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems as well as for research and educational purposes."

Detailed reports and data provided by the software can be a great help for researchers in order to develop new technologies, she added.

The system has already been installed on six water gateways at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad to provide online water consumption data, she said.

The system saved the university 800 billion rials (about \$19,000) in consumption of water, which is normally around six trillion rials (about \$143,000), she explained.

According to inductive automation, com, SCADA systems are crucial for industrial organizations since they help to maintain efficiency, process data for smarter decisions, and communicate system issues to help mitigate downtime.

## 97% of people with higher education use internet in Iran: report

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — Some 97 percent of people with higher education are internet users in Iran, according to statistics released by Information Technology Organization, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Moreover, 99 percent of people with higher education use mobiles and 93.4 percent of people use computers, the report added.

The internet penetration rate for illiterate people is 8.4 percent and the computer penetration rate is 8.1 percent. However half of illiterate people are mobile users.

The statistics show that 41.4 percent of internet users have elementary school education, 64.4 percent have middle school education, and 88.6 percent of internet users hold diplomas.

Meanwhile, 16.6 percent of internet users are elementary school students, 16.2 percent are middle school students, 35.9 percent are high school students and 29.4 percent are university undergraduates.

Amongst the internet users aged six years old and above, 94 percent use mobile internet. Some 80 percent use internet at their homes, 5.9 percent use internet at their workplaces, 6.7 percent use internet at their educational places, 1.2 percent use internet at libraries, and about 1.3 percent use internet at coffee nets, restaurants, and airports.

According to the statistics, about 29.4 million Iranians use internet at least once a day. Meanwhile, 3.5 million people use internet once a week and 749,000 people use internet once a month.

### Cellphone penetration rate

According to the statistics, some 99 percent of people with higher education use cellphones.

Some 80 percent of people with unofficial education and 58 percent of illiterate people use cellphones. About 97 percent of employed people, 91 percent of unemployed people, and 66 percent of students aged 10 and above use cellphones.

### Computer penetration rate

The computer penetration rate is 35.7 percent amongst people with elementary school education. The figure is 46.6 percent among people with middle school education.

The computer penetration rate is 48.6 percent amongst people who hold diplomas and is 93 percent amongst people with higher education.

## Facebook paid contractors to transcribe users' audio: Bloomberg

Facebook Inc (FB.O) has been paying outside contractors to transcribe audio clips from users of its services, Bloomberg reported on Tuesday, citing people familiar with the matter.

The company confirmed that it had been transcribing users' audio and said it was no longer doing so, Bloomberg reported.

Facebook did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Bloomberg, citing the company, reported that the users who were affected chose the option in the Messenger app to have their voice chats transcribed. The contractors were checking whether Facebook's artificial intelligence correctly interpreted the messages.

Shares of Facebook pared gains after the report and were up 1.66% at \$188.44.

The social media company has been facing broad criticism from lawmakers and regulators over its privacy practices.

Last week, a federal appeals court rejected Facebook's effort to undo a class action lawsuit claiming that it illegally collected and stored



biometric data for millions of users without their consent. The company also agreed to pay a record \$5 billion fine last month to settle a U.S. Federal Trade Commission data privacy probe.

Earlier this month, Apple Inc (AAPL.O) and Alphabet Inc's (GOOGL.O) Google globally suspended reviewing recordings from users interacting with their voice assistants, as concerns over data privacy mount.

(Source: reuters.com)

## Twitter will offer option to follow interests rather than people

Twitter users will be able to follow interests, in addition to people, by the end of the year, the company has revealed.

It is already testing the feature and plans to focus on sports topics first, with interests ranging from skincare to television series to follow. Users will begin to see a "follow topics" prompt and any topics they follow will be visible on their profile.

The tweets will be collated using machine learning tools which will pick up and pack tweets based on what is included in its text, the hashtag, who has written it and who is retweeting and liking it.

It is part of the company's wider commitment to improve conversation and break users out of their so-called social media "filter bubble" in which users are never exposed to conversations or people outside their inner circle or people who think similarly about things.

The underlying technology that



provides artificial intelligence linking topics to people is the work of Briton Rob Bishop, a product manager who joined Twitter after selling the artificial intelligence he co-founded, Magic Pony, to Twitter in 2016 for a reported \$150m (£120m).

He said: "We want to facilitate being able to see the topics people follow to find various commonalities."

(Source: The Telegraph)

## How AI is making buildings smart and intelligent

For decades, technological innovation has been revolutionizing businesses, offering them innumerable long-term benefits and growth. Now, these technologies are set to transform structures that form the foundation of cities and their development. Comparing the buildings of the present to what they were even a few years ago will show massive changes. Modern buildings are more than just four walls and a roof. In fact, building walls now even have ears and eyes, all thanks to digital technologies. According to studies, the global smart building market is expected to reach 36 billion US dollars by 2020.

With pervasive wireless connectivity, buildings today generate tons of data that can be used to improve efficiency and sustainability. With substantial advancements in technologies, several new technologies are extending their helping hand to bring buildings to life. One such technology that is bringing in new waves of change is AI. AI and smart buildings are an ideal combination to streamline, optimize, and innovate the functioning of buildings. With AI and smart buildings combined together, building managers can ensure improved structural reliability and minimized harmful ecological impacts.

### Smart buildings: welcoming buildings of the future

Smart buildings have been a buzzword for quite some time now. However, what's it all about? Well, there isn't any universally accepted definition that we can refer to. In simple terms, smart buildings can be referred to as automated structural models capable of responding to real-time events. The idea behind this concept is to provide a hassle-free experience to occupants while efficiently utilizing energy resources. Earlier, buildings deployed CCTV surveillance cameras, smoke detection sensors, and other light sensors for safety and efficiency. Today, several other smart sensors like temperature, humidity, CO<sub>2</sub>, and others are embedded in a building. Cameras and actuators are installed everywhere in a building. Data generated by these sources connect different building components and allow them to interact with each other. With such comprehensive data and intelligence, building managers have complete transparency and control of the buildings' different systems. Keeping the comfort, safety, and security of occupants in mind, managers can fine-tune



the operations for enhancing the tenants' living experience.

Smart buildings not only take complete care of residents' comfort and safety but also promote energy and financial savings. Now, combined with IoT, AI also contributes to making smart buildings even smarter and more intelligent than ever.

### AI and smart buildings: achieving smart and sustainable buildings goals

With the help of not-so-expensive, highly accessible, incredibly advanced IoT devices, large chunks of meaningful data are collected from every corner of a building. Data collected, if analyzed and processed effectively, has the potential to help managers with valuable, operational insights for making informed decisions. And to turn the raw data into actionable intelligence, AI plays a significant role. Without this incredible technology, the data gathered is futile or pointless. With AI, building managers can ensure operational efficiency to a larger extent, utilize assets reliably, and improve the comfort level of occupants. Let's understand how AI is helping buildings become smarter.

### Water management

We spend 90 percent of the time indoors. Imagine the amount of water that we consume on a daily basis for different purposes. There is a rough estimation that an average American family uses 300 gallons of water each day at

home. Imagine the amount of water consumed on a global scale. Water resources are becoming scarce. Hence, it is important to consider our water consumption levels and take appropriate measures to reduce it. Building managers should, therefore, closely monitor the water usage levels of each family or office. However, manually keeping track of water usage is nearly impossible. Here's where AI can be of great use.

Sensors embedded in water supply channels to toilets, bathrooms, and water tanks will give information on the standard water consumption of a single family or an office. The data from these sensors can be fed to an AI tool to check if any family or office is consuming more water than the expected levels. If yes, the tool will notify the manager and proper action can take place.

### Building maintenance

Everybody wants their building spaces to be clean, well-maintained and safe. By working with specialized cleaning companies, building managers can ensure that the structures are reliably clean and safe. Sensors and cameras can capture the details of every corner of a building. This data, when fed to an AI tool, can notify building managers about areas to carry out on-the-spot cleaning processes, providing improved service to occupants.

### Fault detection

Buildings must be constantly monitored for anomalies and faults to ensure safety. To do so, building managers need a dedicated team of professionals to handle building maintenance. However, this might become an ordeal depending on the complexity of buildings.

AI can constantly process the data that comes from various sources. The AI tool will analyze inputs, study patterns, and reveal hidden insights on any technical glitch or fault. For example, sensors and cameras installed in the lift will capture information about the performance of the lift. The data will then be processed by an AI tool to detect whether the lift is functioning well or about to breakdown. Proactive remedial actions can then be taken before the lift stops functioning properly.

(Source: forbes.com)

## Sharif University to host Mobile Programming Marathon

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — Sharif University of Technology will host the 7th Mobile Programming Marathon from September 19 to 21, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Each participant group consisting of a programmer, a graphic designer and an idea developer should develop a software application for cellphones within 48 hours.

The event aims to introduce top programming teams and promote their innovative ideas in the market.

According to Market Research Future website, growing dependency over smartphones has increased opportunities for IT industries to provide mobile apps for various applications to the users. Mobile applications are termed as software which runs on smartphones, tablets, and other devices such as internet TV and home automation devices.

The market of mobile application is based on fastest growth in IoT market as it allows seizing more information which is used to optimize and improve the application features used by end-consumers.



## 3D-printing organs moves a few more steps closer to commercialization

New successes in printing vascular tissue from living cells point to the accelerating pace of development of 3D-printing tissue — and eventually the ability to manufacture organs from small samples of cells.

Late last month Prellis Biologics announced an \$8.7 million round of funding and some significant advancements that point the way forward for 3D-printed organs while a company called Volumetric Bio based on research from a slew of different universities unveiled significant progress of its own earlier this year.

The new successes from Prellis have the company speeding up its timeline to commercialization, including the sale of its vascular tissue structures to research institutions and looking ahead to providing vascularized skin grafts, insulin-producing cells and a vascular shunt made from the tissue of patients who need dialysis, according to an interview with Melanie Matheu, Prellis' chief executive officer and co-founder.

The creation of a vascular shunt made from a patient's own cells should increase the chances of the procedure working successfully, says Matheu. "[If] that shunt fails there aren't many other options... and then people have ports put in their chest." The proposed treatment from Prellis could increase quality of life and longevity of people who are waiting for a kidney," according to Matheu.

A few months earlier, a team of researchers led by bioengineers Jordan Miller of Rice University and Kelly Stevens of the University of Washington (UW) with collaborators from UW, Duke University, Rowan University and the design firm Nervous System revealed a model of an air sac that mimicked the function of human lungs. The model could deliver oxygen to surrounding blood vessels — creating vascular networks that mimic the body's own passageways.

"One of the biggest road blocks to generating functional tissue replacements has been our inability to print the complex vasculature that can supply nutrients to densely populated tissues," said Miller, assistant professor of bioengineering at Rice's Brown School of Engineering, in a statement. "Further, our organs actually contain independent vascular networks — like the airways and blood vessels of the lung or the bile ducts and blood vessels in the liver. These interpenetrating networks are physically and biochemically entangled, and the architecture itself is intimately related to tissue function. Ours is the first bioprinting technology that addresses the challenge of multivascularization in a direct and comprehensive way."

Miller has launched a startup to commercialize the research called Volumetric Bio. While the researchers have made their findings freely available through open source licenses, they're hoping to commercialize the technology by selling their bioprinters and materials and reagents.

The technology that Miller and his team develops uses photoreactor chemicals that respond to light, so specific areas of liquid solidify while others can be rinsed away. The problem is that most of these chemicals have been found to cause cancer, so Miller and his team found a replacement to the traditional photoreactors in an unlikely place — the supermarket aisle.

The researchers surmised that food dye might do the trick and Miller just went to the supermarket and picked up a dye that's typically used in baking, according to a story in Scientific American.

"We were screaming with joy, because it was stunning how simple an idea it was; it immediately enabled us to make this dramatically more complex architecture," Miller told the magazine.

Prellis has made significant strides of its own. Alongside the funding, the company announced the successful implantation of tumors in animal subjects that were made using the company's vascular scaffolds. The target market for these tests is in drug discovery, where animal testing can prove the efficacy of new treatments before they're used on people in drug trials.

The printed structures, a combination of living cells and hydrogels, are designed to provide a sort of scaffolding that an animal's own cells can build on. In the study, conducted at Stanford University, Prellis was able to fully graft a tumor onto an animal using just 200,000 cells — far fewer than what's required for typical tumor studies, according to the company.

And, as the company noted, within eight weeks, researchers identified branched vasculature of up to 50 microns inside the transplanted structures, which indicated the animal's vasculature system had incorporated the scaffolding into its own circulatory system.

Prellis is actually pitching its pre-made vascular scaffolds to researchers for their work on 3D printed biologics. Scientists at pharmaceutical companies and universities including UC San Francisco, Johns Hopkins, UC Irvine, and Memorial Sloan Kettering, are developing tests with standardized tissue structures (something that's important for drug trials).

The drug discovery applications alone are a multibillion-dollar market, says Matheu, but the company is focused on its goal of fully transplantable 3D-printed organs, starting with kidneys. The company is going to do their first large animal studies for organ implantation by the end of the year.

"My goal has always been and will always be that we want this to cost the same amount as procurement from a human donor," says Matheu.

(Source: techcrunch.com)



## 500,000 stationery packages provided for underprivileged students

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Headquarters for Execut-ing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejraiy-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam, will distribute 500,000 stationery packages in deprived areas across the country prior to the new school year (starting on September 23), Fars reported on Wednesday.



Last year, some 300,000 stationery packages were provided for the financially struggling students, the Headquarters director, Mohammad Mokhber said.

“This year, we will distribute 500,000 packages, consisting 14 stationery products, 250,000 of which have been purchased by the benefactors,” he highlighted.

“We hope to help these vulnerable group to access education without financial problems.”

Each package is worth 2 million rials (around \$48), produced based on Iranian-Islamic designs, he noted.

The Headquarters annually provides stationery products for those who cannot afford the education costs, he said, adding, “We have granted the flood-affected children with 30,000 packages of stationery products so far this year.”

“Although, there should be more of such facilities in deprived areas, we try our best to fulfill most part of the needs,” he concluded.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and power grids, building roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, granting non-repayable loans and insurance especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Effects of global warming

(June 27, 2001)

Climate negotiators are meeting in The Hague today to see if they can rescue the Kyoto agreement, which was rejected by the United States earlier this year. The European Union wants to press ahead with the treaty, which is designed to deal with the problem of global warming, but it needs the support of the Japanese. Roger Harrabin reports.

The next session of the climate **negotiations proper** begin in Bonn in a fortnight and this week’s meeting’s designed to find out just how much remains of the Kyoto **consensus** since President Bush’s **bombshell**. Although the EU says it’s committed to **ratifying the treaty** anyway, it can’t come into force unless enough of the world’s big **polluters** have **signed up**.

Japan **holds the key**. Its government’s being urged by Tokyo newspapers to ratify the treaty, both **to salvage** national pride and to protect the climate. But ministers are **wavering**. Their foreign policy is **interlocked** with the United States. There’s also **pressure** from business leaders who say it won’t be fair if American firms escape controls on **emissions**. So far the Japanese government are **sticking to the line** that they hope to persuade America back into the agreement.

■ **Words**  
**negotiations:** discussions that take place in which different parties try to reach an agreement  
**proper:** placed after a word to emphasize that you are referring to the most important - the central part of something (here referring to the formal negotiations which follow)  
**consensus:** general agreement amongst a group of people  
**bombshell:** a sudden piece of bad or shocking news  
**ratifying the treaty:** formally accepting a written agreement  
**polluters:** those (countries) which are causing the pollution  
**signed up:** agreed to take part  
**holds the key:** is critical for the success of...  
**to salvage:** to manage to save something (from destruction)  
**wavering:** hesitating, not sure which way to go  
**interlocked:** very closely connected  
**pressure:** attempt to persuade someone forcefully  
**emissions:** something which is released into the atmosphere  
**sticking to the line:** not changing a policy or a promise but keeping to a single approach

(Source: BBC)



Without water,  
everything  
withers

# Hamoun wetland restoration plan prepared

**ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN** — Although rains have drenched Hamoun wetland after two decades of dryness, it is getting dried again due to high evaporation, hence a comprehensive plan for restoration of the wetland has been prepared, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The Hamouns are transboundary wetlands on the Iran-Afghan border made up of three lakes: Hamoun-e Helmand, which is entirely in Iran, Hamoun-e Sabari on the border, and Hamoun-e Puzak, almost entirely inside Afghanistan. The three lakes are linked and fed by water from the Helmand River which starts in the Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan.

In the last two decades, once fertile wetlands have drastically dried up. The Taliban government closed the sluices to the Kajaki dam on the Helmand until 2002, which aggravated the impact of the worst drought the region has experienced in many decades, brought about partially by climate change and warming temperatures.

The Department of Environment (DOE) has taken major steps toward determining the water right of the wetlands and rivers, and the water right of 35 wetlands have so far been identified, Masoud Baqerzadeh Karimi, deputy DOE chief, said.

Referring to the establishment of the national headquarters of wetlands, he said that “the water right of the wetlands will be determined and pursued.”

He went on to say that 95 percent of the water flow into Hamoun wetland should be granted by Afghanistan. Despite agreement between Iran and Afghanistan, which has specified that 820 million cubic meters of water should be provided to Iran each year, there are still controversy on floods in the region.

“And also, 820 million cubic meters is only the share of agricultural purposes, and Afghanistan should still grant the water right of the wetland separately,” he noted.

In 1973, Iran and Afghanistan signed an accord that accepted the flow of water into Iran at twenty-two cubic meters per second with an option for Iran to purchase an additional four cubic meters per second in normal water years.

In return, Iran agreed to allow the



**There must be comprehensive plans along with serious enforcement to revive the wetlands, otherwise, no wetland will survive being affected by climate change as well as mismanagement.**

ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar to be available to Afghanistan without preconditions. However, this agreement was neither ratified nor fully implemented due to the political developments in both countries.

Baqerzadeh Karimi also highlighted that to resolve the issue, a special working group has been set up to review Hamoun’s condition and prepare a joint comprehensive plan to revive the wetland.

Under the current circumstances, Hamoun’s water right has been determined by the DOE to be effective in negotiations, he added.

Wells around the Hamoun wetland is an issue which should be restricted by the Minis-

try of Energy, he said, adding, unfortunately, the amount of water released to Iran reaches a very small part of the wetland, which needs to be soon investigated.

■ **Jazmourian wetland to be revived**

Elsewhere in his remarks, Baqerzadeh Karimi noted that a restoration plan for Jazmourian wetland is also being prepared; as the amount of water needed to revive it has been determined.

Unfortunately, Jazmourian wetland has become a source of sand and dust storm due to water scarcity, he lamented, concluding that in the past, Jazmourian has been filled by the floods, which has been stopped due to some problems in recent years.

Nestled between the provinces of Ker-

man and Sistan-Baluchestan, Jazmourian is one of the two major wetlands in southeast Iran, which is on the knife-edge of complete desiccation as a result of climate change, excessive dam construction and the depletion of groundwater resources.

The excessive withdrawal of groundwater resources and permanent drought over the past years along with low precipitation and high temperature rates, have led the wetland to dry up.

■ **Precipitation brought back many wetlands to life**

Based on the latest data published by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center affiliated to Meteorological Organization since the start of the current water year (September 23, 2018) the whole country received 314.5 millimeters of rain.

Torrential rain has brought back many wetlands back to life across the country, for one, over 18,000 hectares of the Hamoun wetland have been drenched.

Jazmourian wetland also filled with water by 30 percent.

Moreover, water flowed Hour al-Azim wetland by 97 percent.

Also, Shadegan wetland fully filled after heavy rainfall poured over the province of Khuzestan.

The volume of rain amounted to 160.8 millimeters in the previous water year and 227.8 millimeters in the long-term. The numbers show a drastic increase of 95.5 percent compared to last water year. It also reveals a 38.5 percent increase compared to long-term means.

The province of Sistan-Baluchestan also received 128.9 millimeters of rain in the same period which indicates 330.2 percent rise compared to last water year and 11.6 percent increase compared to the long-term averages.

However, the rainfall fluctuations are not permanent and after hot seasons and scorching temperatures, the wetlands face high evaporation again and go dry soon.

Therefore, there must be comprehensive plans along with serious enforcement to revive the wetlands, otherwise, no wetland will survive being affected by climate change as well as mismanagement.

## More than half of world’s forest wildlife lost in 40 years, study finds

The amount of wildlife in the world’s forests has plummeted by more than half (53 per cent) in just over 40 years, conservationists have found.

Humanity is killing the Earth’s greatest natural ally in the fight against climate breakdown, our forests, according to the report by the WWF.

The charity is calling on world leaders to declare a planetary emergency and develop a “new deal for nature and people” to halt climate breakdown, restore nature and fix food systems.

The first ever global assessment of forest biodiversity shows that habitat loss and degradation, chiefly caused by people, account for 60 per cent of the threats to forests and forest species.

The report, ‘Below the Canopy’, written jointly by WWF and ZSL, found the drops in wild animal and bird populations were greatest in tropical forests such as the Amazon rainforest, where there is the most wildlife to lose.

Monitored populations of forest-living birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles declined, on average, by 53 per cent between 1970 and 2014, the most recent year with available data.

WWF says that forests, which are home to more than half



of the world’s land-based species, are vital to the health of the planet, absorbing damaging greenhouse gases.

The report outlines how in the vast tropical forests of South America and Africa, the carbon locked in would decline if large birds and primates in particular were lost.

“When animals are lost from forests this has severe im-

plications for forest health, the livelihoods of more than a billion humans who depend on forests, and our opportunity to mitigate against climate disaster,” WWF says.

Deforestation and forest degradation account for about 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Some scientists argue that an irreversible transformation of the Amazon is close as already about a fifth has been cleared, close to the tipping point of 20-25 per cent, where some rainforest could dry out into a savannah.

The report authors want heads of state to develop a new global agreement at the 75th UN General Assembly meeting next year, when they are expected to negotiate new 10-year targets for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Will Baldwin-Cantello, a WWF forests specialist, said: “Forests are complex systems that depend on the wildlife that live in them to keep them healthy, and the rapid decrease in forest wildlife in recent decades is an urgent warning sign.

“Forests are our greatest natural ally in the fight against climate breakdown. We lose them at our peril.

“We need global leaders to declare a planetary emergency and kickstart a global programme of recovery to keep our forests standing to protect our planet.”

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Clean air bill projected to create 10,000 green jobs

The clean air bill, proposed by the Department of Environment to curb air pollution, is projected to generate some 10,000 green jobs over the course of the sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021), an environmental official said.

In line with the one of the articles of clean air bill units of Health, Safety, and the Environment (HSE), with regard to health and safety of the employees, customers, and contractors as well as the protection of the environment are bound to be established in all industrial and manufacturing enterprises, Shina Ansari told ISNA news agency.

“Accordingly, those graduates in the field of environment can apply for job opportunities in HSE units,” Ansari added.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “dis-, di-, dif-”

■ **Meaning:** away or negative  
■ **For example:** This structure *diverts* water into the canal.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Get across

■ **Meaning:** to succeed in communicating an idea or piece of information to someone, or to be communicated successfully  
■ **For example:** It took him ages to get his point across.

## IDIOM

### Born with a silver spoon in one’s mouth

■ **Explanation:** a person who is born into a very rich family  
■ **For example:** She never has to worry about money; she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth.

## ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی نتیجه اجرای لایحه هوای پاک

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ضمن اشاره به مواد قانون هوای پاک - که به پیشنهاد سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اخیراً به تصویب مجلس شورای اسلامی رسید- از ایجاد ۱۰هزار فرصت شغلی طی برنامه ششم توسعه از طریق اجرای مواد این قانون خبر داد. شینا انصاری در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا افزود: در ماده ۱۶ لایحه هوای پاک، کلیه مراکز و واحدهای صنعتی و تولیدی، برای انجام امور مربوط به سلامت و ایمنی مشتریان و کارمندان و کارفرمایان مکلف به ایجاد واحدهای سلامت، بهداشت و محیط زیست (HSE) و به‌کارگیری نیروهای متخصص این حوزه هستند بنابراین تعداد زیادی از فارغ التحصیلان محیط زیست می‌توانند جذب هسته‌ها و بخش‌های زیست محیطی صنایع متوسط و بزرگ کشور به منظور پایش صنایع شوند.



# PM Khan: Modi has committed ‘strategic blunder’ in Kashmir

**TEHRAN**— Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has slammed his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for committing a “strategic blunder” by revoking the special status of Indian-administered Kashmir.

Khan, while addressing parliamentarians in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on Wednesday, said the Indian government's decision to scrap the Muslim-majority region's autonomy will be “very heavy” on Modi and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as he reaffirmed his support for the Kashmiri people.

“Modi has committed a strategic blunder,” said Khan during his visit to Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. “He has played his last card. They have internationalized the Kashmir issue.”

Khan's visit to the disputed region, to mark Pakistan's independence day and show solidarity with the people of Kashmir, came more than a week after India issued a decree stripping the special status of its portion of the region.

Ahead of the August 5 decree, Indian authorities imposed an unprecedented lockdown in the region - cutting off communication lines and restricting movement - which is now in its 10th day.

Pakistan has launched a diplomatic offensive aimed at reversing the order and formally asked the United Nations Security Council late on Tuesday to hold an emergency session to address India's “illegal actions”.

Khan reiterated his opposition to India's move and vowed to serve as the “ambassador to raise the voice for Kashmir” globally.



“We will go to every international forum...we will go to the international court of justice.”

He also warned India against any attack on Pakistan-administered Kashmir to divert attention from human rights violations in the Indian-administered portion of the Himalayan region.

“We have decided that if India commits any type of violation we will fight till the end.”

■ **‘Nazi ideology’**  
Both India and Pakistan claim the entire region of Kashmir in full but rule it in part. The nuclear-armed neighbors have fought two of their three wars over

the disputed Himalayan territory.

India's crippling lockdown of the region was imposed to stave off a violent reaction to Kashmir's downgraded status after New Delhi revoked Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which granted the Muslim-majority region considerable autonomy.

India's revocation of special status for Jammu and Kashmir blocks the state's right to frame its own laws and allows non-residents to buy property there.

Modi's Hindu nationalist government has also decided to divide the state into two “union territories” to be controlled by the federal government.

“We are not at war with India, but we are against its ideology,” said Khan. “This ideology has been inspired from Hitler's Nazi party.”

“We are all concerned at the moment about truth of the humanitarian crisis and the atrocities created by this lockdown.”

According to Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik, restrictions on freedom of movement in the region will be eased after India's independence day on Thursday.

In Pakistan-administered Kashmir, residents told Al Jazeera that they have been unable to communicate with their family members on the other side of the Line of Control (LoC) - the de facto border dividing Kashmir.

“We spoke to a father whose daughters went on summer holiday and he said he doesn't even know if they are alive,” said Al Jazeera's Osama Bin Javadi, reporting from Muzaffarabad. “For the last 10 days, they have not been able to get in touch.”

On Tuesday, India's Supreme Court, which is reviewing a petition for the immediate withdrawal of severe government restrictions in Kashmir, said the security crackdown and communications blackout in the region should continue.

According to Al Jazeera, Amnesty International India condemned the court's decision, saying that its refusal to pass an order on lifting restrictions in Kashmir was “a blow to the people of Jammu and Kashmir”.

Rights groups and activists have expressed “deep concern” over the restrictions, warning of increased tensions and increased risk of human rights violations.

## U.S. missile deployment to South Korea ‘reckless act:’ North

**TEHRAN**— North Korea has warned against a potential move by the United States to deploy ground-launched, intermediate-range missiles in South Korea, saying such a move would spark “a new Cold War” between the regional powers.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) made the warning in an editorial on Wednesday, saying the potential deployment would be a “reckless act of escalating tension” in the region.

It also warned that any further deployment on the South's soil would be a “path to self-destruction” that could turn South Korea into a “bullet-shield.”

The plan for a potential deployment was announced by Pentagon chief Mark Esper, immediately after President Donald Trump terminated a Cold War-era treaty — the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) — with Russia, which banned missiles with ranges of 500-5,500 kilometers.

Many observers have already warned that the treaty's demise would lead to an arms race between the world nuclear powers.

The North Korean news agency also criticized South Korea's recent moves to

improve the military sites in the country that already host a U.S. missile system known as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) systems.

“It is a hard fact that the deployment of THAAD is pursuant to the U.S. strategy to contain great powers and hold supremacy in Northeast Asia, not the one for ‘shielding’ South Korea from someone's ‘threat,’” it said.

“The South Korean authorities should meditate before it becomes too late what its blind act of submission will bring,” the commentary added.

Another North Korean newspaper, the Rodong Sinmun, also published a commentary on the same day, saying the potential deployment would lead to a “challenge” to those who seek peace in the region.

■ **South Korea says no plan for U.S. missile deployment**

Meanwhile, and despite Esper's announcement, South Korea's Defense Ministry has said there has been no discussion about placing American missiles in the country and there are no plans to consider the idea.

## Turkish drones start operating in northern Syria: defense ministry

**TEHRAN**— Turkish drones have started operating in northern Syria where Washington and Ankara have agreed to create a safe zone, Turkey's Defense Ministry said Wednesday.

Turkey and the United States agreed last week to set up a joint operations center regarding the safe zone to be established in northern Syria. No agreement has been announced on key details such as the size of the zone and the command structure of joint patrols that would be conducted there.

A six-person U.S. delegation arrived in the southern Turkish province of Sanliurfa on Monday to work on the establishment of the operations center.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday that work was continuing to make the joint operations center in Sanliurfa operational.

It added that Turkish drones had started carrying out work in the area where the safe zone will be created, but did not provide further information on the drones' operations.

Washington and Ankara have been at

odds over plans for northeastern Syria, where U.S. allies on the ground in the battle against Islamic State include the Kurdish YPG militia, which Turkey considers an enemy and a terrorist group.

The allies have been discussing a safe zone near the Turkish frontier that would be kept free of combatants and heavy weapons, but Turkey wants it to extend more than twice as far into Syrian territory as the United States has proposed.

Turkey has suggested it will act militarily if the United States fails to agree a solution that will safeguard the border.

Turkey says the YPG is an extension in Syria of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since the 1980s.

Washington and Ankara are also at odds over other issues, including Turkey's purchase of the Russian S-400 missile defense system, as well as the trial of local U.S. consulate employees in Turkey on terrorism charges, Reuters reported.

## Jailed Saudi activist ‘told to deny torture in release deal’

**TEHRAN**— Prominent Saudi women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul has rejected a proposal to secure her release from prison in exchange for a video statement denying she was tortured in custody, her family has said.

“The Saudi state security has visited my sister in prison recently. They have asked her to ... appear on video to deny the torture and harassment,” her brother Walid al-Hathloul said on Twitter on Tuesday. “That was part of a deal to release her.”

There was no immediate reaction from Saudi authorities.

Hathloul, who recently marked her 30th birthday in jail, is among around a dozen prominent female activists who are currently facing trial after being detained last year, just as Arabia ended a ban on women driving cars, for which many of the detainees had long campaigned.

Al-Hathloul was among a few detainees who accused interrogators of torture and sexual harassment, a charge vehemently denied by the government.

Her brother said on Twitter she had initially agreed



to sign a document denying that she had been tortured, as a precondition for her release.

He added that her family had intended to keep the deal secret. But state security officials recently visited her again in prison to demand a video testimony.

“Asking to appear on a video and to deny the torture doesn't sound like a realistic demand,” Walid tweeted.

“When the state security asked her to sign the document for the video release, she immediately ripped the document. She told them by asking me to sign this document you are involved in the cover-up and you're simply trying [to] defend Saud Al-Qahtani who was overseeing the torture,” he wrote.

Al-Hathloul's siblings allege that al-Qahtani, a senior adviser to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who has also been implicated in the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, was present during some of the torture sessions and threatened to rape and kill her.

According to Al Jazeera, the Saudi public prosecutor has said his office investigated the allegations and concluded they were false.

Meanwhile, the activist's sister, Lina al-Hathloul, separately said her sibling was under pressure to deny the torture claim. “Loujain has been proposed a deal: deny the torture and she'll be free,” Lina wrote on Twitter.

“Whatever happens I am certifying it [one] more time: Loujain has been brutally tortured and sexually harassed.”

## Southern Yemeni separatists tell Saudi Arabia: evict Islah or lose the war

**TEHRAN**— Yemen's southern separatists vowed on Wednesday to keep control over Aden, warning the only way out of the impasse that has fractured a Saudi-led military alliance was for extremists and northerners to be removed from positions of power in the south.

The separatists, supported by coalition member the United Arab Emirates, effectively took over Aden, the temporary seat of the Saudi-backed Yemeni government, over the weekend by seizing government military bases.

Southern fighters are a major component in the coalition's battle against the Houthis. But the war has revived old strains between north and south Yemen - formerly separate countries that united into a single state in 1990 under then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The crisis has exposed a rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE as Abu Dhabi places national interests over their strategic alliance, distancing itself from Yemen and leaving Riyadh to deal with a messy war in the fractious Arabian Peninsula nation.

Abu Dhabi has echoed Riyadh's call for dialogue among Aden's warring parties but stopped short of asking the southern forces that it funds and arms to cede control.

“Giving up control of Aden is not on the table at the moment,” Saleh Alnoud, British-based spokesman for the Southern Transitional Council (STC), told Reuters in an interview.

## China slams ‘terrorist-like actions’ by Hong Kong protesters

**TEHRAN**— The government of China has called events at Hong Kong airport on Tuesday “terrorist-like actions” after clashes between police and protesters broke out.

The scuffles broke out after a small group of protesters said they had captured a Chinese ‘spy’ among them and tied up and beat a journalist, who was later identified as working for China's state-controlled Global Times.

In return, Beijing claimed the ‘spy’ was a citizen of neighboring Shenzhen city who was merely visiting Hong Kong.

Police responded by making arrests and firing pepper spray at the protesters.

One police officer was captured on video drawing his gun at protesters after they attacked him for trying to detain an unarmed woman, pinning her on the ground.

Other officers were also seen beating the protesters, Al Jazeera reported.

“We express the strongest condemnation of these terrorist-like actions,” said Xu Luying, spokeswoman for the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council.

According to Xu, the actions “seriously damage the international image of Hong Kong, and seriously hurt the feelings of a vast number of mainland China compatriots”.

She added that “extremely abominable violent crime must be severely punished according to the law”.

After Tuesday's late-night scuffle, which left several people injured, most of the protesters and police eventually cleared the terminal.

On Wednesday, operations at the airport were back to normal, according to Al Jazeera's Hoda Abdelhamid, reporting from the airport.

“We've seen some of the employees come back to their counters, and some of the stranded passengers trying to figure out when they will be able to catch their flights,” she said.

## ‘ Hamas will shower Israel with missiles if Gaza attacked’

➔1 wounded in an exchange of fire, as a heroic commando one.

“If a war occurs, we will strike on the occupation army and break its power once and forever. We are not joking,” he pointed out.

The Israeli military frequently bombs Gaza, with civilians being the main target of such attacks.

Israel has also launched several wars on the Palestinian coastal sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014. The military aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians. Over 11,100 others were also wounded in the war.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

The Israeli regime denies about 1.8 million people in Gaza their basic rights, such as freedom of movement, jobs with proper wages as well as adequate healthcare and education.

according to Press TV, Sinwar also pointed to the weekly anti-occupation protests along the fence separating the Gaza Strip from the Israeli-occupied territories, stating that “our march will go on until it achieves its goals.”

Palestinians have held weekly rallies on the Gaza border to protest the siege on the enclave and demand the right for refugees to return to their homes they were forced from during the 1948 creation of Israel.

At least 305 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in Gaza on March 30, 2018. Over 17,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on May 14 last year, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day (Day of Catastrophe), which coincided this year with the U.S. embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds.

“We will carry on with our efforts on the road of ending the internal division and achieving national unity based on the Palestinian project of resistance, liberation and return,” Sinwar said elsewhere in his remarks.

## Critical points in the meeting between Yemeni Delegation and Iran’s Leader

➔1 The subject of the meeting

Over the meeting, Mohammed Abdulsalam, the spokesman for Ansarullah delivered the warm regards of the movement's leader, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi and other Yemeni people who are fighting the invaders. He told Ayatollah Khamenei, “We regard your leadership as the continuing leadership after the Prophet Muhammad (S) and his successor Imam Ali (AS). Your attitude of seeking justice for the oppressed Yemenis is the same policy of Imam Ali (AS) and the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, this is the source of great blessing and hope for all the people.”

For his turn, the Leader said that

“every devoted nation who believes in God and the reality of divine promises, will definitely win. On this basis, victory will surely be with the oppressed and faithful people of Yemen.”

It is not the first time that the Leader is making such as firm prediction, as he made the same true promise before Lebanon's Hezbollah went into its 33-day war with the Zionists.

Ayatollah Khamenei also warned about the danger of Yemen's division. He said that invaders including Saudi Arabia and UAE are trying to divide Yemen, but the people should stand firmly against this scheme and defend a united, undivided and autonomous Yemen.

Ayatollah Khamenei added protecting the Yemeni territorial integrity in view of its diverse religious and ethnic diversity entails intra-Yemeni dialogue.

This advice was based on Yemen's social structure as the country consists of different ethnic and religious groups and some of the tribe who reside in southern parts are willing to get separated from the country. UAE, on the other hand is supporting these movements, so the country is at risk of getting divided and the only solution, as the Leader said, is an intra-Yemeni dialogue.

■ **Accreditation of Yemen's revolutionary government**

The people-based government of Yemen constitutes of Ansarullah and

its other revolutionary allies including the government, the Parliament and public committees and organizations that were established after the revolution, but it is still not accepted as an official government by the world countries and international organizations; conversely, the official status is given to Mansour Hadi's government which is now practically ended as he has fled the country and lives in exile.

The meeting between the Leader and the Ansarullah delegation was an ending to the policy of ignoring the legal government of Yemen which is born out of revolution and changing its De facto status to a De jure one in both regional and international arenas.



## Drug-hit hosts Thailand fail to lift ban for weightlifting worlds

Thai weightlifters will not be allowed to compete at the world championships despite the country hosting the event, the sport's global body confirmed Wednesday, dashing hopes of a late reprieve after a doping scandal.

Nine Thais including two reigning Olympic champions were suspended after positive drug tests since November, prompting Thailand to voluntarily ban itself from the September championships in Pattaya as well as next year's Olympics.

Last month the Thai Amateur Weightlifting Association (TAWA) changed tact, saying lifters who did not fail tests should be allowed to compete and have a shot at the Tokyo Games, while athletes and coaches were told to get ready.

But the International Weightlifting Federation has slammed the door shut after telling AFP that "no Thai athletes will be entitled to participate" in Pattaya.

"The IWF Executive Board will not be reviewing TAWA's decision at its meeting in September and therefore TAWA's self-suspension and the suspension of Thai athletes from competing in weightlifting events will remain in place."

The Thai association was not immediately available for comment on the IWF statement, which deepens the crisis enveloping Thailand's most successful Olympic sport.

Thailand maintains its lifters were given a pain relief gel by a former coach that, unbeknown to them, contained traces of an anabolic steroid.

Intarat Yodbangtoey, the honorary president of the Thai weightlifting association, last month told AFP he wanted to lift the blanket ban because the source of the problem had been discovered.

"I hope that executive board members will allow us to join and participate," he said at the time.

With five Olympic gold medals since 2004, all won by women, weightlifting has been a rare sporting success story for the Southeast Asian nation.

(Source: AFP)

## Hurting Serena withdraws from Cincinnati as US Open looms

Serena Williams withdrew prior to her opening match at the WTA Cincinnati Masters on Tuesday with a back injury, another blow to the 23-time Grand Slam champion's US Open preparations.

Williams retired from the WTA final in Toronto just four games in with back spasms on Sunday, handing the title to Canadian Bianca Andreescu.

The US superstar, who trained on Tuesday morning in Cincinnati, advised officials prior to her scheduled first-round match against qualifier Zarina Diyas that she wouldn't be able to play.

"I came to Mason (Ohio) on Sunday and have tried everything to be ready to play tonight, and was still hopeful after my practice this morning," Williams said in a statement released by tournament officials.

"But unfortunately my back is still not right."

It's another injury blow for Williams, who has been hampered by knee trouble this season.

She was eyeing her first title since the 2017 Australian Open in Toronto, where the 37-year-old said she first felt back pain in her semi-final win over qualifier Marie Bouzkova.

She trailed Andreescu 3-1 when she decided she couldn't continue in Sunday's final, telling reporters the back spasms were something she's dealt with before and that they were often fleeting.

Nevertheless her decision to pull out of Cincinnati struck an ominous note with the US Open starting on August 26.

Williams, who fell to Simona Halep in the Wimbledon final in July, remains one Grand Slam title away from matching Australian Margaret Court's record of 24.

Her place in the Cincinnati draw was taken by 56th-ranked Jessica Pegula, who captured her first WTA title in Washington this month with a victory over Camila Giorgi in the final.

(Source: France 24)

## Sources: PSG irked after Barca chat over Neymar

Paris Saint-Germain are unhappy with the way their first direct meeting with Barcelona went on Tuesday regarding the potential return of Neymar to Camp Nou, sources have told ESPN FC.

Despite numerous exchanges over the valuations of multiple players, there was no breakthrough, although the French champions have made clear to their Catalan counterparts what they will and will not accept.

As revealed by ESPN FC sources, negotiations over a cash-with-a-player exchange started in Paris this week with Philippe Coutinho and Ivan Rakitic the players Barca were keen to include in any potential deal.

However, PSG told the La Liga giants during this meeting that they want Coutinho, Nelson Semedo and €120 million in exchange for Neymar, while Barca's best offer so far is Coutinho, Rakitic and €80 million.



ESPN FC sources added that no major advances were made during the meeting, which the Blaugrana are viewing as the first contact between the two clubs as negotiations step up.

There will be another meeting between the pair on Thursday during UEFA's European Club Association gathering, which the Ligue 1 outfit's chairman and CEO Nasser Al-Khelaifi will be present for -- as will Barca counterpart Josep Maria Bartomeu.

The occasion, say ESPN FC sources, will give Real Madrid president Florentino Perez the opportunity to start negotiations with PSG as the Spaniard will also be present and maintains a great relationship with Al-Khelaifi.

Neymar and his father were in Portugal on Tuesday and both are now very confident that the Brazil international will be returning to Barca before the end of this summer's transfer window.

Meanwhile, ESPN FC sources indicated that Barca want a public gesture -- possibly via social media -- from Neymar to prove his commitment to the potential move.

(Source: Soccernet)

# Football player Sala and pilot likely exposed to carbon monoxide before fatal crash

Footballer Emiliano Sala and the pilot flying his plane when it crashed were likely exposed to "potentially fatal" levels of carbon monoxide, investigators announced on Wednesday.

"Toxicology tests found that the passenger had a high saturation level of COHb (the combination product of carbon monoxide and haemoglobin)," Britain's Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) said in a special bulletin.

"It is considered likely that the pilot would also have been exposed to carbon monoxide," it added.

The Argentinian was flying to Wales from France to join Premier League club Cardiff when his plane came down in the English Channel on January 21 during a night-time flight.

His body was recovered, but that of pilot David Ibbotson has never been found.

Toxicology tests on Sala showed a carboxyhemoglobin (COHb) saturation level of 58 percent, according to the AAIB.

"A COHb level of 50 percent or above in an otherwise healthy individual is generally considered to be potentially fatal."

The bulletin said that carbon monoxide poisoning was a particular risk in the type of aircraft they were travelling in.



"Piston engine aircraft produce high concentrations of CO that are conveyed away from the aircraft through the exhaust system,"

said investigators.

"Poor sealing of the cabin, or leaks into the heating and ventilation system from

## Frank de Boer calls equal pay in international football 'ridiculous'



Football coach and former player Frank de Boer has been criticized for calling equal pay at international level a "ridiculous" idea.

De Boer, who played over 100 times for the Netherlands in the 1990s and early 2000s, took charge of Atlanta United last year after the side had won its first MLS Cup under Tata Martino.

"It's the same like tennis," De Boer said in an interview with The Guardian. "If there are watching, for the World Cup final, 500 million people or something like that, and 100 million for a women's final, that's a difference. So it's not the same.

"And of course they have to be paid what they deserve ... and not less, just what they really deserve. If it's just as popular as the men, they will get it, because the income and the advertising will go into that.

"But it's not like that, so why do they have to earn the same? I think it's ridiculous. I don't understand that."

In June, the Dutch football federation -- whose women finished second at this year's World Cup -- reportedly committed to paying its male and female footballers

the same by 2023.

The US players, meanwhile, are currently engaged in a lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation in a quest to receive equal pay.

Last week, it emerged that the federation had enlisted lobbying firms to argue that the women's team isn't underpaid.

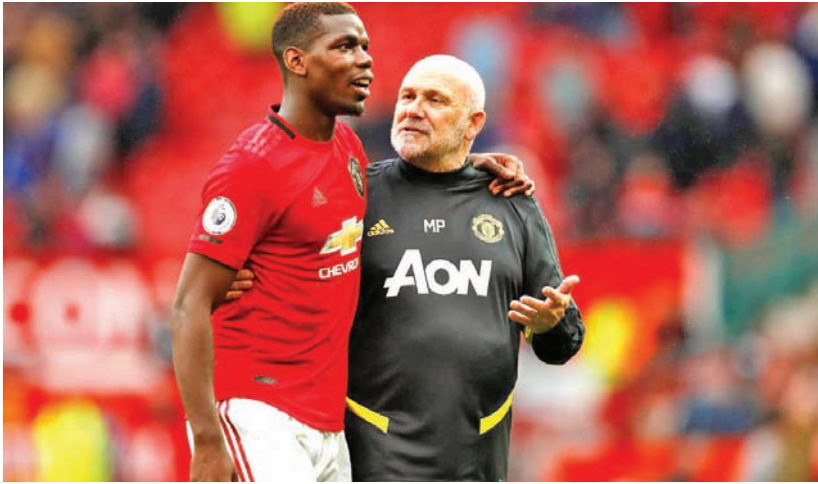
During the World Cup in France, chants of "equal pay" broke out amongst supporters, and US captain Megan Rapinoe called for the conversation to "move onto the next step" following her side's victory.

"Frank de Boer says it's ridiculous that men and women should be paid equally in football," tweeted Kieran Theivam, who covers women's football for The Athletic. "The Netherlands Women in the last two years have won a European Championship and reached the final of a World Cup. Frank De Boer did neither of those."

The New York Times' Andrew Das was also critical of the Atlanta coach, writing that "a toe-deep take without acknowledging or understanding how that disparity came to be is probably not how you want to enter the debate."

(Source: CNN)

## Manchester United close the door on Paul Pogba leaving



Paul Pogba will not leave Manchester United - not even for 200 million euros. The chances of the French midfielder joining Real Madrid ended when the Premier League transfer window closed last week. That is the consensus of club directors at Old Trafford and that is also how their counterparts at the Santiago Bernabéu view the situation.

The player, now resigned to the fact he will be going nowhere this summer, was the last to leave Old Trafford after Sunday league opener against Chelsea; he gifted his shirt to a fan on his way out of the ground in an attempt to reconcile with supporters. Minutes later, he told reporters in the Mixed Zone "the future will tell us" whether he leave United this summer or stays where he is. What has changed since then however, is that Manchester United's top brass have categorically ruled out Pogba moving for the time being at least.

It was always a slim possibility that the 26-year-old would end up joining Zidane's Madrid - even though at one point, United appeared to be open to selling him for a massive fee, and outside

the exhaust can provide pathways for CO to enter the cabin.

"In this type of aircraft, the cockpit is not separated from the cabin and it is considered likely that the pilot would also have been affected to some extent by exposure to CO."

Exposure to the gas can lead to damage to the brain and nervous system, with unconsciousness and heart attacks possible with COHb levels of over 50 percent.

"It is clear from the symptoms that exposure to CO can reduce or inhibit a pilot's ability to fly an aircraft depending on the level of that exposure," added the bulletin.

Attention had previously focussed on pilot Ibbotson, who it was reported was not authorized to fly at night.

The BBC said Ibbotson was color blind, which would have automatically disqualified him from night flights.

The AAIB also said the plane carrying Sala was not authorized to make commercial flights.

But the investigators pointed out that Ibbotson had in the past transported people on a cost-share basis, which is authorized by the regulation for small planes.

(Source: Reuters)

## Judgement day for Real Madrid as Zidane's second coming begins

Zinedine Zidane returned to save Real Madrid and the time has come for results.

In a packed-out press conference under the Santiago Bernabeu in March, the club's president Florentino Perez delivered the grandest of re-introductions.

"We need to start working on a glorious new era," said Perez. "That is why we welcome back Zinedine Zidane."

Some might have expected a bounce but nobody blamed the coach when performances continued to drag and the gap behind Barcelona, rather than narrowing, widened.

Zidane took over a team with nothing to play for and a squad he knew was in need of reform. He knew because he had left it nine months earlier, just before it was broken.

There was no quick fix. In his 11 games at the end of last season, Madrid won five, the only promise of progress the words Zidane kept repeating. "Things will change, for sure," he said.

Zidane denied it but they were seen as trials, every line-up scanned for clues as to who would survive the summer.

Yet in some ways, none of it mattered and the results, not to mention attendances at the Santiago Bernabeu, said as much. "The best thing for us is that it's over," said Zidane, after the season ended in defeat.

And now it begins again, the season, and Zidane's second era as coach.

Many wondered why he came back, risking everything after the perfection of



three Champions League titles out of three.

The assumption was he returned to a stronger hand, able to make demands the club were ready to meet and with the backing to rebuild in the way he had always wanted.

He might have been encouraged too, when Eder Militao, Ferland Mendy, Luka Jovic, Rodrygo and Eden Hazard all signed for a total close to 300 million euros.

Hazard was the headline act, a throw-back to a previous era that Zidane knew well, when the world's most glamorous

players seemed to walk through the doors every year.

"I'm not a galactico, not yet, but I hope I will be one day," said Hazard when he joined.

### ■ Bale stalemate

But Madrid's pockets are not as deep as they once were and sales were also needed, by the club and their coach.

Zidane showed no inclination to make soothe and use Gareth Bale, instead urging the Welshman to make a move to China.

"It is very close," Zidane said. "We hope he leaves soon, it would be best for everyone."

Bale's agent told AFP Zidane was a "disgrace" and if the Frenchman had hoped to push the deal over the line, he would be disappointed as Madrid changed their mind over the fee.

James Rodriguez is also yet to leave and there were others that proved more difficult to bring in such as Paul Pogba and even Neymar.

In other areas, Zidane has resisted change, backing experience over youth even if many believed experience last season had turned into apathy.

Marcelo, Casemiro and Keylor Navas have stayed while Marcos Llorente was allowed to join Atletico Madrid and Sergio Reguilon and Dani Ceballos were both sent out on loan.

For all the talk of upheaval, Madrid's line-up against Celta Vigo on Saturday is likely to have a distinctly familiar feel.

Yet there could be a new formation, with a 3-5-2 tried after some underwhelming showings in pre-season, allowing Marcelo and Dani Carvajal greater freedom as wing-backs and Hazard to play centrally behind Karim Benzema.

And a shift in focus. Madrid have won La Liga only once in the last seven years, their failures in Spain excused only by unprecedented success in Europe.

"For us next year, the league must be our number one priority," Zidane said in April.

(Source: AFP)



# Ex-Arsenal forward Adebayor linked with Iran's Tractor: report

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Arsenal and Real Madrid forward Emmanuel Adebayor has been linked with a move to Iranian football club Tractor.

The 35-year-old player most recently played at Turkish club Istanbul Basaksehir.

Adebayor has posted an Instagram story linking him with the Iranian club.

Tractor, headed by Mustafa Denizli, are going to replace the Togolese player instead of Irish forward Anthony Stokes who left the team at the end of the last season.

Adebayor has reached a two-year agreement with Tractor, Haberts.com reported.

He started his playing career at French club Metz and joined Monaco two years later.

On 13 January 2006, Premier League club Arsenal signed Adebayor for a reported £3 million. He was given the nickname «Baby Kanu» due to his resemblance to former Arsenal star Nwankwo Kanu, whom Adebayor had idolized as a youth.

He also played for Premier League clubs Manchester City, Tottenham Crystal Palace.

Adebayor had a short stint at Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Tractor are going to win Iran Professional League for the first time in their history.

The Tabriz based football team will start the new season with a match against Naft Masjed Soleyman on Aug. 22.

Adebayor was also eligible to play for Nigeria but chose to represent the country of his birth, Togo.

Adebayor helped Togo qualify for the 2006 Africa Cup of Nations after scoring 11 goals in the qualifiers, more than any other player in the African qualifiers.

On 10 February 2009, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) picked Adebayor as the African Footballer of the Year for 2008 at an awards ceremony held in Lagos, Nigeria. Adebayor beat final nominees Mohamed Aboutrika of Egypt and Ghana's Michael Essien in a vote that involved the national team coaches of CAF's 54 member-nations. It was the first time a Togolese won the award as Africa's best player.



## South Korean volleyball players not afraid of Iran

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Two South Korean volleyball players say Iran are a tough team to beat but they are not invincible in the Asian qualifying tournament in January next year.

The six pool winners from the FIVB qualifiers secured direct qualification for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and only the winners of the Asian qualifying tournament will qualify for the Olympics.

Before that comes the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in Iran in September. The top eight teams from the 16-nation event will qualify for the continental qualifiers. Iran, world No. 8, are considered the class of Asia, and Australia (No. 16) and China (No. 20) are both ahead of South Korea in the world rankings as well. South Korea have not competed in the Olympics since 2000.

South Korea Captain Shin Yung-suk said his mindset is to focus on the process and let the results take care of themselves.

"Iran and Australia will obviously be tough to beat, but they're not invincible," Shin told Yonhap. "If we want to play in the Olympics, we're going to have to get past those tough teams."

Opposite striker Park Chul-woo said he was hoping Iran would qualify for the Olympics in the intercontinental event so that it wouldn't have to go through the Asian qualifiers in January, but that doesn't mean he will be intimidated against the Middle East power.

"In January, our guys will be in top form because it'll be in the middle of our professional season in the V-League," Park said. "We'll have all the best players available."



## Frontrunners Iran and Tajikistan set up final day showdown

The CAFA U-19 Championship will go down to the wire, after Islamic Republic of Iran and hosts Tajikistan both extended their unbeaten records at Dushanbe Central Stadium on Tuesday.

While Iran made it three wins from as many matches with a 2-0 victory over Afghanistan, Tajikistan needed a 77th-minute Rustam Soirov goal to salvage a 2-2 draw against Uzbekistan, meaning the Iranians will only need to avoid defeat against the hosts in Thursday's finale to win the round-robin competition.

### ■ IRAN 2-0 AFGHANISTAN

A brace from 16-year-old forward Aria Barzegar proved decisive as Iran extended their CAFA U-19 Championship winning streak to three with a 2-0 success against already-eliminated Afghanistan.

Having scored against Turkmenistan on Monday, the impressive Barzegar netted a headed goal in each half to take Iran to within 90 minutes of the regional title as Sirous Pourmasavi's side kept another clean sheet to underline their quality at both ends of the pitch.

Barzegar opened his account in the 34th minute, finding the net at the near post after twisting his body to generate an impressive amount of power with a superb header following Alirzea Asad Abadi's cross from the right.

Afghanistan's bid for a first win in the competition suffered another blow



when they were reduced to 10 men in the 62nd minute, with the promising Tareq Mohammadi – scorer of two goals earlier in the competition – shown a second yellow card.

Their task became nearly impossible when Barzegar scored his second, nodding home a free-kick from captain Ahmed Reza Jalali as Iran enjoyed a trouble-free road to the final day of fixtures on Thursday.

### ■ UZBEKISTAN 2-2 TAJIKISTAN

The hosts' perfect record came to an end, but Rustam Soirov salvaged what may yet prove to be a crucial point as

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan played out an entertaining 2-2 draw in the evening kick-off.

The result means Zaynidin Rakhimov's side will still win the title if they can defeat Iran in what has developed into a virtual tournament final on Thursday.

Iran's earlier win against Afghanistan meant any chance of Uzbekistan retaining their regional title had been dashed before kick-off, but Otabek Gulyamkhodjaev's charges pushed Tajikistan all the way in a spirited encounter.

There was no early sign of the struggle

to come for the Tajiks, particularly when Amadonio Kamolov curled in a delightful 25-yard opener in just the fifth minute, but Uzbekistan levelled at the half-hour mark through an Odilbek Abdumajodiv header to go to half-time on level terms.

Tajikistan fell behind for the first time when they were caught cold by a quickly-taken free-kick in the 62nd-minute, with Ibrokhimkhalil Yuldoshev showing the composure required to beat Shohrukh Qirgizbaev from 15 yards to make it 2-1 to the visitors.

With their unbeaten record in jeopardy, the 4,000 strong home crowd – the tournament's biggest so far – urged Tajikistan on, and they were brought to their feet when substitute Soirov pounced on some sloppy defending to head home the equalizer with 13 minutes remaining.

The drama didn't end there. Uzbekistan's Hojimat Erkinov was shown a second yellow card in the second minute of stoppage time, and only goalkeeper Muminmirzo Qoirov's fingertips prevented Soirov from heading in what would have been a last-gasp winner a minute later.

Despite the action packed second-half, the sides couldn't be separated, leaving everything riding on Tajikistan's meeting with frontrunners Iran, while only pride will be on the line in Uzbekistan's remaining fixture against Turkmenistan.

(Source: the-afc)



force extra-time.

Fakhim then shook off his marker and scored from above the arc to give Mes Sungun the lead.

Bank of Beirut pushed hard in the remaining minutes but the equalizer was not to be as Mes Sungun advanced to the semi-finals.

(Source: AFC)

## Iranian freestylers win two golds at Junior World Championships

Two Iranian freestyle wrestlers claimed gold medals at the Junior World Championships underway in Tallinn, Estonia Tuesday night.

Iran's Abbas Ali Foroutan successfully defended his junior world title from last year's Trnava Junior World Championships.



Foroutan, backed by the defining Iranian chants pouring through the Tondiraba Hall, won his second consecutive junior world title with a punishing 10-0 win over Yonger Bastida Pomares from Cuba in the 97kg.

Amirhossein Maghsoudi was the second Iranian who carried his nation's flag around the mat after an 8-4 win over Kurban Shiraev from Russia in the 61kg finals.

Maghsoudi wrestled a tactical second period -- scoring on three one-point exchanges and improving on his second-place finish from a year ago with the 8-4 victory.

Iranian freestyler Mohmmadsadegh Firouzpour also won a bronze medal in the 70kg.

(Source: unitedworldwrestling)

## Farhad Tavakoli joins Kuwait futsal team

**IRNA** — Iranian international futsal player Farhad Tavakoli joined Kuwait futsal club on Tuesday.

The 30-year-old forward played in Chinese futsal club Qingdao Impulse Chenxi last season and is currently playing in Iraqi futsal club Naft Al Wasat at the 2019 AFC Futsal Club Championship underway in Bangkok, Thailand.

He has also played in Iranian futsal clubs Sherkat Melli Haffari and Farsh Ara Mashhad.

Tavakoli was a member of the Iranian national futsal team who won a bronze medal at the 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup.

## Esteghlal eye Syrian defender Moayad Ajan

**TASNIM** — Iran's Esteghlal football team are going to sign Syrian left-back Moayad Samir Ajan.

The 26-year-old player is currently playing at Al-Wahda of Syria. Ajan is a member of Syria national football team and has made 50 caps for the team and scored one goal.

Esteghlal coach Andrea Stramaccioni wants Ajan as a replacement for Armin Sohrabian.

According to arabia.eurosport, Egyptian football club Ismaily SC are also going to sign Moayad Ajan.

Esteghlal have signed Malian forward Cheick Diabate so far.

## Al Hilal SFC complete last eight cast

Al Hilal SFC rounded off the eight teams in the 2019 AFC Champions League quarter-finals despite suffering a 1-0 home defeat at the hands of Al Ahli Saudi FC in the second leg of the Round of 16 on Tuesday. A 4-3 aggregate score means Al Hilal are set to face arch-rivals Al Ittihad in the next round.

Bringing to an end a five-match winless run in the AFC Champions League knock-out stage was a must if Al Ahli were to reach the quarter-finals for the first time since 2013.

Furthermore, it needed to come with a three-goal difference to overturn the 4-2 defeat from the home first leg.

The first chance of the game came 14 minutes in when Salman Al Faraj fouled Danijel Aleksic 30 yards from Al Hilal's goal. The Serbian attempted a curled effort from the free-kick, but his shot went wide off target.

The hosts had to wait until the half-hour mark for their first sight at goal as Bafetimbi Gomis drove through Al Ahli's defence before firing a left-footed shot from just outside the box, forcing goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais into a fingertip save to push it behind for a corner.

It looked like the first half was headed for a goalless ending when Abdulfattah Asiri collected the ball from a poor defensive clearance, cut inside on his left and drilled a low strike that was deflected into the back of the net to the shock of goalkeeper Abdullah Al Mayouf who was left wrongfooted.

Cape Verdean international Djaniny nearly doubled Al Ahli's lead a minute later. The winger dribbled past his marker inside the Al Hilal box and fired from an angle, but his shot ended up hitting the side netting.

Al Hilal came back from the break a different side and looked determined to keep Al Ahli at bay by means of keeping the ball in the opposition half, which they did well for extended periods of the half, limiting Al Ahli to a Souza long range effort that sailed wide early in the second half.

Captaining the side on his return from a lengthy injury, midfielder Salman Al Faraj came close to equalising for Al Hilal. He took a Sebastian Giovinco corner on the volley but watched the ball land behind the opposition goal in the 72nd minute.

Despite Al Ahli's best efforts and four minutes of added time, there would be no more goals and Al Hilal sealed their place in the quarter-finals with the 4-3 aggregate victory.

The West Asia quarter-finals now take their full shape, with Al Hilal facing rivals Al Ittihad at King Abdullah Sport City Stadium in Jeddah on August 27 and at King Saud University Stadium in Riyadh three weeks later. Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr face Qatar's Al Sadd in the other quarter-final tie.

(Source: the-afc)

## Mes Sungun Varzeqan stay on course

Defending champions Mes Sungun Varseqan needed extra-time as they came from behind to defeat Bank of Beirut 3-2 in their AFC Futsal Club Championship Thailand 2019 quarter-final on Thursday.

Down 2-1 with just three minutes on the clock, Madhi Javid's strike took the game into extra-time and Farhad Fakhim struck the winner in the 44th minute as Islamic Republic of Iran's Mes Sungun - who will face the winners of Port FC-AGMK FC quarter-final - kept their hopes of back-to-back titles alive.

Mes Sungun got off to a rousing start when they scored in the third minute thanks to Javid's long-range effort off captain Fakhim's corner.

Bank of Beirut responded almost immediately as Ahmad Khair El Dine unleashed a shot from outside the box but Mes Sungun goalkeeper Alirzea Samim was equal to the effort as he blocked the ball.

The Lebanese side, however, drew level a minute later when Dragan Tomic beat Mohammad Shajari on the left before feeding Ali Tneich to score from above the arc.

Mes Sungun should have scored in the 11th minute from inside the danger area but Shajari's effort was tipped away by Bank of Beirut custodian Hussein Hamadani.

Bank of Beirut had been shading possession and took the lead a minute later when Tomic set up Ali El Homsy to score from above the arc.

They could have added another goal in the final minute of the half, but Samimi saved Tneich's effort from outside the box, while seconds later Mes Sungun wasted an opportunity to level the score through Fakhim's free-kick.

Mes Sungun began the second half with purpose as they went in search of the equaliser and came close through Shajari in the 24th minute but his shot was deflected by Hamadani.

As the Iranian side pushed forward, Bank of Beirut looked to hit them on the break and Mes Sungun were let off when Samimi repelled Suphawut Thueanklang's strike from the right flank.

A desperate Mes Sungun deployed the power play with four minutes left in the game and were rewarded in the 38th minute through Javid's strike from inside the box to



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The world is a snake; its exterior is soft and nice to touch, and its interior contains deadly poison. Stupid and ignorant people are charmed by it but the wise avoid it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Tehran Provincial Government says it will back street performers

A R T TEHRAN — Governor-General of Tehran Province Anushiravan Mohseni Bandpey said on Tuesday that the Tehran Provincial Government will support street performers by granting the necessary permissions.



Street performers give a performance in Tehran in an undated photo. (boxofficeiran.com)

“Street musical performances cause social joy and help keep people’s spirits up,” he noted in his meeting with the vice-president for women and family affairs. “I don’t consider street performances as begging,” he stated and added that the Tehran Provincial Government in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance will grant the street performers the necessary permissions. “Plans to eliminate poverty, unemployment and discrimination are related to each other and we need the help of the youth and women to implement the plans,” Mohseni Bandpey said. Street performances by single persons or groups are very common in Tehran’s public centers.

Navaye Rahmat Intl. Daf Festival opens in Sanandaj

➡ Pakistani qawwali groups are also scheduled to perform on the sidelines of the festival, which aims to promote religious mystical music. The daf is a frame drum, which is common in both the artistic music and popular traditions of Persia.

How ‘Woodstock’ movie shaped festival’s place in counterculture

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Michael Wadleigh never played a note and is not a household name, but he may be the person most responsible for securing Woodstock’s place in history as the epitome of Sixties counterculture.



Wadleigh filmed and directed the Oscar-winning “Woodstock” documentary about the three days of peace and music on a farm in upstate New York in 1969, but his focus went way beyond the performances on stage. “What people know of Woodstock today is our film. They don’t really know the reality in any other way than we put it,” Wadleigh told Reuters. “I think we were pretty faithful, but another filmmaker might have chosen to film all love songs and not really gone for the politics. But that was what I wanted to do,” he said. The 1970 documentary was not just about the protest songs from the likes of Richie Havens, Jimi Hendrix, Joan Baez and Country Joe McDonald’s anti-Vietnam war song “I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag”. The film also captured the impromptu yoga classes, the skinny dippers, the fringed jackets, bandanas, mud slip ‘n slides, announcements about bad acid, astounded townsfolk, and even the overwhelmed chemical toilets. “We talked ahead of time about ‘The Canterbury Tales.’ We tried to get profiles of people - the nude bathing, the couple on the road, the guy who was cleaning the toilets. He had such pride in what he was doing,” Wadleigh said.

“Karun” wins Green Planet Award at Rhode Island festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Ehsani’s short documentary “Karun” about the environmental threats to Iran’s limited water resources over the long term has won the Green Planet Award at the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF) in the United States, the organizers have announced. “Celebrating the vision of man’s shared humanity and achieving sustainability on our planet,” the jury said during the closing ceremony of the festival, which took place in several cities of the American state from August 6 to 11. The film portrays the rich cultural landscape the river Karun passes on its way — once the Iranian river most abounding in water. It also shows the devastating effects of improper water management on fish stocks, on unique biotopes and on the local ethnic groups. The grand prize in the feature film completion went to the Ecuador-France co-production “A Son of Man” directed by Jaimaica Noproblem. The Canada-Cuba co-production “Havana on High” by Pedro Ruiz won the grand prize in the feature documentary section. Five other films were screened in various section of the festival. Among the movies was “Umbra”, a narrative short by Saeid Jafarian about a young woman who is looking for her missing partner at midnight. “Brotherhood” by Javad Yaghmuri, “Ceremony Night” by Behnam Abedi, “The People Smuggler” by Amir Reza Jalalian and “Birthday Night” by Omid Shams were also screened at the event.



A scene from filmmaker Mohammad Ehsani’s short documentary “Karun”.

Tehran theater hosts Slawomir Mrozek’s “Party”



A poster for Iranian director Nima Aqakhani’s play, “The Party”.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Nima Aqakhani staged Polish playwright Slawomir Mrozek’s play “The Party” at Tehran’s Mehregan Theater on Monday. Written in 1962, the play is about three farmhands who hear the sound of music and go looking for the party. But when they finally get into the club room where

the party is supposed to take place, all they find is silence and emptiness. Theater critics believe that the play symbolizes post-war Poland, where hope was followed by bitter disenchantment with a new system promising a better tomorrow. Starring Reyhaneh Razi, Javad Farahani and Aqakhani himself, the play will remain on stage until August 28.

Madrid Animario picks Iran’s “Mr. Deer”



A scene from “Mr. Deer” by Iranian director Mojtaba Musavi.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Mojtaba Musavi’s animated movie “Mr. Deer” will be competing at the 2nd edition of the Animario International Contemporary Animation Festival of Madrid in Spain, Iran’s Art Bureau announced on Wednesday. The story of the short movie is

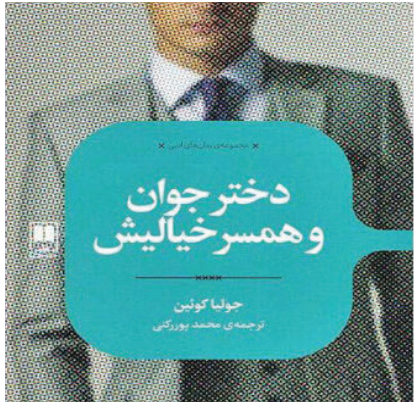
set in a modern but ruined subway in an unknown time. People in this society have animal faces, they have forgotten humanity and ethics, and they do not avoid sins. Meanwhile, someone with a deer face is trying to reform the society. The Animario festival will be held from September 26 to 29.

“The Girl with the Make-Believe Husband” comes to Iranian bookstores

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — Bestselling American historical romance author Julia Quinn’s “The Girl with the Make-Believe Husband” has been published in Persian in Tehran. Translated into Persian by Mohammad Purrokni, the novel has been released by Elmi Publications. The novel is about orphaned Cecilia Harcourt, her brother Thomas and his friend Edward Rokesby. With her brother Thomas injured on the battlefield in the Colonies, Cecilia has two unbearable choices: move in with a maiden

aunt or marry a scheming cousin. Instead, she chooses option three and travels across the Atlantic, determined to nurse her brother back to health. But after a week of searching, she does not find her brother but finds his best friend, the handsome officer Edward. He’s unconscious and in desperate need of her care, and Cecilia vows that she will save this soldier’s life, even if staying by his side means telling one little lie. When Edward comes to, he’s more than a little confused. The blow to his head knocked out three months of his memory, but surely he would recall getting married. He knows

what Cecilia Harcourt is—even if he does not recall her face—and with everyone calling her his wife, he decides it must be true, even though he’d always assumed he’d marry his neighbor back in England. Cecilia risks her entire future by giving herself—completely—to the man she loves. But when the truth comes out, Edward may have a few surprises of his own for the new Mrs. Rokesby. Quinn’s novels have been translated into 29 foreign languages, and she has appeared on the New York Times Bestseller List 19 times.



Front cover of the Persian version of Julia Quinn’s “The Girl with the Make-Believe Husband”.

LA Opera to investigate Placido Domingo over accusations



In this Nov. 5, 1994 file photo, Placido Domingo performs in the San Francisco Opera’s production of “Herodiade” in San Francisco. (AP Photo/Dwayne Newton) “before making any final decisions about Mr. Domingo’s future at the Met,” where he is scheduled to appear next month. The 78-year-old Domingo is one of the industry’s most powerful figures and more

than three dozen people in the opera world told the AP that his behavior has long been an open secret. The accusers who spoke to the AP — all but one of whom requested anonymity — said they had feared speaking out previously would kill their careers due to his immense standing. Domingo issued a statement to the AP calling the allegations “deeply troubling and, as presented inaccurate,” adding “I believed that all of my interactions and relationships were always welcomed and consensual.” The LA Opera said it would hire outside counsel to investigate the “concerning allegations” against Domingo. “Placido Domingo has been a dynamic creative force in the life of LA opera and the artistic culture of Los Angeles for more than three decades,” the company said in a statement. “Nevertheless, we are committed to doing

everything we can to foster a professional and collaborative environment where all our employees and artists feel equally comfortable, valued and respected.” In canceling its invitation for Domingo to sing at its Sept. 18 opening gala, the Philadelphia Orchestra issued a statement saying: “We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, respectful, and appropriate environment for the orchestra and staff, for collaborating artists and composers, and for our audiences and communities.” The San Francisco Opera said it would scrub a sold-out Oct. 6 concert featuring Domingo, which had been to mark his 50th anniversary with the company. It was promoted as a “special one performance-only event” with “one of the most influential singing actors in the history of opera” and was one of several gala events this year to celebrate his legendary career.