



**Judiciary chief:
Violating people's
rights is forbidden** **3**



**Aoun : Victory will be
repeated If war
is repeated** **13**



**Iran claim CAFA
U19 Championship
2019 title** **15**



**Show of Hands Festival puts
focus on solo woodwind
instruments improvisation** **16**

Legal victory



See page 2

Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan to set up INSTC working group

TEHRAN — In a meeting on Thursday, transport ministries of Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan agreed to form a working group in order to activate the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The meeting was held in Russia's Sochi port, attended by Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, Russia's Minister of Transport Yevgeny Dietrich, and Transport Minister

of Azerbaijan Ramin Gholizadeh. During the trilateral meeting, the ministers discussed issues related to the corridor as well as the roadmap to make the corridor operational. INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route for transporting freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. ➔ **4**

Iranian center uses NGS to prevent genetic disorders, disabilities

TEHRAN — For the first time in Iran, the next-generation sequencing (NGS) in pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) testing is being used at the Avicenna Specialized Center for Infertility, Mehr reported on Thursday. The method prevents genetic disorders and can be used in families suffering from genetic diseases and disabilities, genetic

expert Maryam Rafati said. Fortunately, healthy babies are born using this method at the center, she continued. The center uses advanced genetic techniques, by which the biopsy can be applied on a fetus single cell to diagnose monogenic and chromosome disorders, she explained. ➔ **11**

Sheikh Zakzaky returns to Nigeria

TEHRAN (MNA) — Nigeria's senior Muslim cleric Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky returned to his hometown after sabotaging attempts of the Nigerian government on the process of his treatment in India, Al-Alam news network reported. Meanwhile, leader of Islamic Movement of Nigeria had earlier informed of his return to Nigeria in a video message. "Nigerian government has created problems over giving accurate information to

the Indian government about my health condition, so I prefer to move to another country for undergoing medical treatment," Sheikh Zakzaky said on Thursday. Unlike a predetermined plan, Nigerian authorities first intended to transfer him to another hospital. "Nigerian officials later provided Indian government with false and incorrect information about my health condition and this issue has disrupted the treatment process," he added. ➔ **13**



EDITORIAL
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The message behind the release of Iranian oil tanker

The Gibraltar court ordered the Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 to be released. The tanker was seized by the British Royal Marines about a month ago.

This verdict was the ending of an elaborate game designed by John Bolton National Security Advisor of the United States and Mike Pompeo, carried out by the Britain government.

With seizing the tanker, Bolton was trying to put psychological and political pressures on Iran and force other countries to form a consensus against Iran, but he couldn't fulfill any of these goals.

Iran's firm, logical and wise answer to the seizure of Grace 1 (like making solid legal arguments) and the seriousness of our country's armed forces in giving a proper response to Britain's contemptuous act, made the White House lose the lead on reaching its ends.

Washington imagined that the seizure of Grace 1 will become Trump's winning card against Iran, but the release of the tanker (despite disagreement of the U.S.) became another failure for the White House in dealing with Iran.

Obviously, London was also a total loser in this game. It is worth noting that U.S. was so persistent about keeping the oil tanker in custody that John Bolton traveled to London and insisted on British officials to continue the seizure of the ship. Their failure, however, clearly shows that the White House and its traditional ally, Britain, have lost a big part of their power in their relations with Iran.

Clearly, the illegal seizure of the Iranian oil tanker by Britain proceeded by the seizure of a British tanker by Iran and the following interactions between the two countries is not the whole story and there is more to it that will be revealed in coming days.

What we know for sure is that London has to pay for its recent anti-Iran plot in order to satisfy Washington; the smallest of these consequences was that Britain lost some of its legal credibility in international arena as it illegally captured an Iranian oil tanker.

The order of the Gibraltar court revealed that London had no legal right to seize the Iranian oil tanker and nobody can defend this unlawful action. Surely, Iran will take all necessary legal actions to further pursue the matter. ➔ **2**

Poll shows Trump losing to Biden, Warren, Sanders, Harris

TEHRAN — A Fox News poll released on Thursday showed President Donald Trump losing head-to-head matchups against four of the top Democratic presidential primary contenders.

The poll found Trump with 39 percent support among registered voters in head-to-head matchups against Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

The poll found Sanders beating Trump with 48 percent, Warren winning over Trump with 45 percent and Harris winning with 46 percent support.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, meanwhile, beat Trump in the theoretical matchup with 50 percent support among those surveyed, compared to Trump's 38 percent.

Among Democratic primary contenders, Warren saw the largest gain in support in the poll — an 8 percent jump from last month's survey. Warren, according to the poll, took second place behind Biden with the support of 20 percent of

Democratic primary voters. Sanders dropped to third, now at 10 percent in the poll and the only other candidate aside from Warren and Biden scoring double digit support among voters.

Biden dropped slightly in the poll from a previous Fox News poll in July, from 33 percent to 31 percent, but remains the clear front-runner in the race according to the survey.

Also, according to a new poll released on Thursday, more than half of voters would not consider reelecting Trump in 2020. The Hill-HarrisX poll found that 53 percent of respondents said they would not consider supporting Trump's bid for reelection, compared to 39 percent of those who said they would support it. Just 8 percent said they were unsure.

Support for Trump's reelection broke down along party lines.

Eighty-seven percent of Democrats said they would not consider reelecting Trump, while 11 percent of Republicans said same the same.

North Korea rejects further peace talks with South in protest over joint war drills with U.S.

TEHRAN (FNA) — Pyongyang signaled its unwillingness to continue negotiations with its Southern neighbor, blaming the diplomatic deadlock on South Korea's decision to participate in joint military exercises with the United States.

In a statement, North Korea announced that Seoul's military posturing made dialogue impossible, RT reported.

"Even at this moment, South Korea continues its joint military exercise and to speak of a peaceful economy or a peaceful regime, it has no right to do so," the statement read.

Pyongyang also expressed its displeasure with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who said in a speech on Thursday that he envisioned a united Korean Peninsula by 2045. The statement described Moon as a "shameless man" who "mentions 'talks' between North and South while playing out war scenarios that plan to destroy most of our armies in 90 days".

While criticizing Seoul's military drills, North Korea has been participating in some military flexing of its own.

Independents sided with Democrats on the issue at 57 percent.

The poll comes amid rising fears of a recession, which could threaten Trump's chances of reelection. US stock markets on Wednesday suffered their biggest drop of the year, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunging 800 points before bouncing back slightly on Thursday.

Wednesday's plunge follows turmoil in the US bond market and weak economic data from Germany and China. It also comes after the yield on 10-year US Treasury bonds dipped below the yield on two-year bond, a phenomenon that is considered a leading indicator of a possible economic downturn.

Trump has adamantly denied any role in the global economic downturn, maintaining that his ongoing trade war with China is working.

"We are winning, big time, against China," Trump tweeted shortly before the stock market closed Wednesday. ➔ **13**



PERSPECTIVE
M.A. Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Release of Grace 1 marks a suicide for Bolton

When Britain impounded the Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 on July 4, John Bolton, Donald Trump's ultra-hawkish national security adviser, tweeted: "Excellent news".

On the same day, acting Spanish Foreign Minister Joseph Borrell said the seizure had followed "a demand from the United States to the UK." On July 19, Reuters reported, "Several diplomatic sources said the United States asked the UK to seize the vessel."

However, on Thursday, August 15, when the Supreme Court in Gibraltar decided to release the ship the United States unsuccessfully tried to prevent the release. In fact, the U.S. was unhappy that authorities in London took steps to defuse tensions with Tehran.

The Gibraltar government revealed on Thursday morning that the United States had applied to seize the vessel, the New York Times reported.

Filled with the anger that its illegal demands had gone unanswered by the Supreme Court, the United States childishly threatened a visa ban on the crew of the supertanker.

All these things suggest that Bolton lighted the fuse of tanker standoff between Iran and Britain. In fact, Britain was deceived and fell victim to the Trump administration's extra-territorial sanctions. The move promoted Iran to retaliate in kind and capture a British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero near the Strait of Hormuz on July 19.

Lina Khatib, head of the Middle East and North Africa program at Chatham House, said the U.S. request on the Grace 1 was based on its own imposed sanctions on Iran, and not the EU's sanctions on oil exports to Syria.

The U.S. order to Britain to seize the oil tanker was part of a great game to strangle the Iranian economy and deprive the country from its sovereign rights for international trade.

The evidence reveals that Bolton was actively involved in targeting the ship from the time it began its journey in May as part of the broader Trump administration campaign of "maximum pressure" on Iran. ➔ **13**



ISNA / Farzad Khabooshani

Tehran exhibit showcasing achievements of villagers, nomads

The 4th national exhibition for showcasing achievements of villagers and nomads opened on Thursday, August 15, at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri and Vice President for Women's and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar attended the opening ceremony.

The event aims to introduce successful production and job creation plans in rural areas. Participant villagers and nomads have put some of their products up for sale to visitors.

The exhibition will run until Sunday, August 18.

Hezbollah chief condemns U.S. sanctions on Zarif

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The secretary general of the **d e s k** Lebanese Hezbollah movement has expressed support for Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who has been sanctioned by the U.S. administration.

In a letter released on Wednesday, Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah praised Zarif for standing against the U.S. by disclosing the truth, saying the U.S. plots against Iran are doomed to failure, like those hatched against Lebanon in the 2006 war.



The following is a translation of Nasrallah's letter according to Iran Front Page news website:

Dear brother, Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran; May the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you;

When the American authorities announced the imposition of sanctions on you and added you to the list of the honorable people, my brothers and I decided to send you a message to express our solidarity and respect; but I preferred to postpone issuing the message until today, August 14, the day on which the Lebanese resistance could defeat the U.S. and so-called Israel with the full support and backing from the Islamic Republic of Iran during a 33-day war in July and August 2006.

The decisions and plots in that cruel war and grave invasion were made in America, and were under the authority of the powerless administration of George Bush the son, Condoleezza Rice, and John Bolton. The Israeli army, alleged by them to be the strongest army in the region, was merely an instrument for operation in that war.

Bolton, the then U.S. envoy in the (UN) Security Council, had told one of the Arab officials in that war, "There is no room for diplomatic activity, because the war would not end unless with Hezbollah's destruction or surrender." But a few weeks later, Bolton told that Arab official, "We must finish the war right now."

"Did you destroy Hezbollah?" the Arab official asked him. "No," Bolton said.

"Did you force Hezbollah to surrender?"

"No."

"So why are you ending the war?"

"Because if the war continues, 'Israel' will be gripped by a tremendous catastrophe," Bolton replied.

Mr. Minister, our dear friend;

Bolton, who threatens to overthrow the Islamic Republic's establishment, has had no achievement or victory in his life. On these days back in 2006, the U.S. retreated and was defeated in the face of popular resistance from a country with a small area and embroiled in internal disunity, let alone in the face of a great regional country, a united nation, a coherent establishment, and an august leadership.

Mr. Minister; you are a loud voice in all international venues, who discloses the truth, expresses what is rightful, and shouts it before the eyes of the world's unruliest tyrants, namely the U.S. and (Donald) Trump and all individuals of the same type, and this is the biggest jihad.

They sought to besiege you, push you away, and intimidate you, but your presence and influence were strengthened and your position was elevated; and God willing, you will continue to remain an advocate of the oppressed and those resisting in the same way.

Iranian ambassador submits credentials to Algerian interim president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's newly-appointed **d e s k** plenipotentiary ambassador to Algeria has submitted his credentials to Algerian interim president Abdelkader Bensalah.



In the meeting which was held on Thursday, Hossein Mashalchizadeh described relations between Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria as friendly, emphasizing the determination of the Islamic Republic for strengthening and expanding relations in various fields with Algiers, Mehr reported.

For his part, Bensalah conveyed his warmest greetings to his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani and wished evermore success for the ambassador in his new post in line with strengthening bilateral ties.

Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel and head of Algeria's Presidential Office also attended the meeting.

Mashalchizadeh replaced Reza Ameri, former Iranian ambassador to Algeria.

The message behind the release of Iranian oil tanker

1 → In this situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is firm on its position that it doesn't have to follow the sanctions imposed by the European Union on other countries (including Syria).

No entity can undermine this argument as it is based on legal terms; therefore, Iran will keep supporting Syrian nation and government to fight terrorism. This is the strategic policy of the Islamic Republic and will not be changed under the pressure or influence of any other third country.

Finally, it should be noted that the release of Grace 1 oil tanker was not only a legal and political failure for Washington and London and their allies but it was also a strategic failure. Undoubtedly, the vast consequences of this failure will be revealed in near future.

That U.S. sanctions are harming Iranians patients is not a mythology: Foreign Policy

By staff and agency

In an article published by Foreign Policy on Wednesday, it has been illustrated that how sanctions are taking tolls Iranian patients.

The article, written by Abbas Kebriaeezadeh, shows that the U.S. sanctions on patients are not "mythology".

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has also said the United States officials can read the effects of sanctions on Iranian patients in their own media, referring them to a report by the Foreign policy published on August 14.

"Don't take it just from me: Foreign Policy illustrates one impact of the Trump administration's economic terrorism on Iranians; from those directly involved in producing medicine for cancer patients," Zarif tweeted on Friday.

The article, headlined "U.S. Sanctions Are Killing Cancer Patients in Iran", said, "Last month, the U.S. Department of State released a video addressed to the people of Iran. In the video, Trump administration official Brian Hook claims that it is a "myth" that sanctions target Iran's access to medicine... Our findings make clear that the harms being inflicted on Iranian patients are not mythology."

It is said that the U.S. sanctions function as a tool of economic war in practice and have "serious detrimental impact on the health and lives" of Iranians individuals.

"Under U.S. President Donald Trump, the situation has gotten worse. Census Bureau data shows that the United States exported an average of \$26 million of pharmaceutical products to Iran annually during the Barack Obama-era sanctions. Exports have averaged just \$8.6 million a year in the last two years under the more draconian sanctions policies of Trump," the article said.

It added that the Trump administration has made it more difficult for European countries to export medicine to Iran.

"Last year, several of my colleagues who work in the field of pediatric oncology published a note in the Lancet showing that chemotherapy drugs such as asparaginase, the leukemia treatment mercaptopurine, and even the basic pain killer paracetamol had run out of stock, threatening the treatment of thousands of children. Access to these medications is being significantly disrupted as a result of U.S. sanctions against Iran," says the writer.

FP

ARGUMENT: U.S. Sanctions Are Killing Cancer Patients in Iran

These purchases may form only just a small proportion of total demand, but they relate to specific medications vital for the well-being of many patients, particularly those with advanced or chronic diseases.

Last year, several of my colleagues who work in the field of pediatric oncology published a note in the Lancet showing that chemotherapy drugs such as asparaginase, the leukemia treatment mercaptopurine, and even the basic pain killer paracetamol had run out of stock, threatening the treatment of thousands of children. Access to these medications is being significantly disrupted as a result of U.S. sanctions against Iran. This disruption takes three primary forms.

First, sanctions impact the availability of imports. While imports represent just 3 percent of Iran's total demand by unit, they account for 39 percent of the country's needs by value, reflecting the fact that imported medicines are typically five times more expensive than domestically-made equivalents and the fact that Iran tends to import specialized drugs, which are generally more expensive.

Iran's Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on August 5 that the U.S. sanctions are "crime against humanity".

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

Namaki also said the U.S. sanctions in the area of medicine are "illogical" and "inhumane".

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

Legal victory

Presidential chief of staff calls oil tanker release diplomatic win

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mahmoud **d e s k**

Vaezi, the Iranian president's chief of staff, said on Friday that release of the supertanker Grace 1 is a "diplomatic victory" for Iran.

The tanker "Grace 1" was seized last month in a British Royal Navy operation off the coast of Gibraltar. Authorities claimed it was violating European Union sanctions on oil shipments to Syria.

Iran had vehemently rejected any claims that the tanker was destined for Syria. Iran has further said the sanctions on Syria does not apply to non-EU members.

"Release of oil tanker Grace 1 with supports from the government and all bodies of the system and the country's lawyers and diplomats

is a diplomatic victory," Vaezi told reporters.

The Gibraltar government, a semi-autonomous territory ruled by London, released on Thursday the Iranian supertanker Grace 1, despite the U.S. attempt to block the release of the vessel.

"Authorities in Gibraltar have released the Iranian supertanker Grace 1, which was seized on July 4 on suspicion it was shipping 2.1 million barrels of crude oil to Syria in breach of EU sanctions," the Gibraltar Chronicle reported on Thursday.

In a tweet on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called detention of the tanker "100 percent unlawful".

"Our London Embassy note to UKFCO: -Protested the illegal detention of Grace1; -Re-

peated public statements about destination; & -Made it crystal clear that EU sanctions do NOT apply to Iran—a position shared by most Europeans. Nothing changes the fact: detention was 100% unlawful," he tweeted.

UKFCO is an abbreviation for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

In another tweet, Zarif said, "Having failed to accomplish its objectives through its economic terrorism—including depriving cancer patients of medicine—the U.S. attempted to abuse the legal system to steal our property on the high seas."

Zarif added, "This piracy attempt is indicative of Trump admin's contempt for the law."

Also, government spokesman Ali Rabiei said in a tweet message on Friday that the tanker

was released despite the U.S. pressure and this is a "defeat" for Washington.

This victory is result of upholding the Iranian people's rights, Rabiei added.

■ **"Humiliating defeat"**

Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidnejad also tweeted on Thursday, saying that the U.S. was desperately trying to prevent release of the tanker and faced a humiliating defeat.

"The U.S. in a last minute attempt made a futile effort to block the release of the oil tanker and were faced with humiliating defeat. With recent attempts, all necessary preparations and technical issues to release the tanker to an open sea have been arranged and the ship will soon leave Gibraltar," he wrote on Twitter, in Farsi.

'Intl. community is responsible to guarantee Iran's benefits from nuclear deal'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Agnes Von **d e s k**

Der Muhll, the French Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, has said that the international community is responsible to guarantee Iran's benefits from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

All parties, not just Europeans, are responsible to ensure that Iran gains economic benefits of the deal, she said according to IRNA.

She noted that France will continue making efforts to preserve the deal.

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 so far failed to honor their commitments since the U.S. returned sanctions and imposed new ones.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the multi-nation nuclear agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran, Teh-

ran 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.

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.

In a phone conversation with Macron in late July, Rouhani said the first step that Europe should take to save the JCPOA is to normalize oil and banking ties.

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

"Full compliance with the commitments by Iran while the other side does not meet its least commitments is not acceptable for



the Iranian people," Rouhani said.

He also said that Iran can reverse its decision to reduce nuclear commitments as soon as Europe meets the country's economic interests.

So far, Europe has presented a mechanism, called INSTEX, for trade with Iran but it falls far short of European obligations based on the JCPOA. It only allows sale of medical equipment, medicine, and food, items which are not subject to sanctions.

Iran's nuclear program peaceful, but defense cannot be compromised: diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's deputy foreign **d e s k**

minister for political affairs has said that Tehran's nuclear program is completely peaceful, but the Islamic republic will not compromise its right to conventional defense.

Abbas Araqchi made the remarks in Tehran on Wednesday in a meeting with an Indonesian parliamentary delegation headed by Abdul Kharis Almayshari, chairman of the Defense, Intelligence, Foreign Affairs and Information Commission of the People's Representative Council of Indonesia.

Stressing the defensive nature of Iran's military power, Araqchi warned that any offense against the Islamic Republic will draw a crushing response.

"In its modern history, Iran has not started any war, and will not do so hereafter either. However, it would not have the slightest hesitation in defending itself, and will respond to any aggressor immediately and crushingly," the Foreign Ministry website quoted him as saying.

Underlining that the United States' baseless accusations come despite that fact that Iran's nuclear program is quite peaceful, the top diplomat said, "According to the fatwa



(religious edict) of the Supreme Leader, we deem any kind of non-peaceful use of nuclear energy haram (forbidden)."

"We have locally developed this (nuclear) technology within the framework of a peaceful program, with the capabilities of our own scientists," he stated.

However, Araqchi stressed that reinforcement of Iran's

defense capabilities is for deterrence and not against any third country.

Araqchi also emphasized that the U.S. cruel sanctions against the Iranian nation are illegal and inhumane in nature, saying, however, that Iran is determined to turn them into an opportunity by reforming its economy.

For his part, chairman of the Indonesian parliamentary commission lauded Iran's self-confidence and independence, stressing the need for the enhancement of parliamentary cooperation between the two countries.

He also voiced Jakarta's readiness for cooperation with Iran in all areas including fight against extremism and terrorism.

In July, Iranian and Indonesian officials sealed an agreement in Jakarta to further increase mutual cooperation in legal and judicial grounds, migration and extradition of prisoners in particular.

In a meeting between Iran's Ambassador to Jakarta Valiollah Nasrabadi and Indonesian Minister of Law and Human Rights Yasonna Laoly at the end of Nasrabadi's mission, the two sides inked a draft agreement for increasing judicial cooperation.

Navy chief warns extra-regional forces to leave region or face humiliating retreat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Navy Chief Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi has warned the extra regional forces to immediately leave the Persian Gulf region or face a humiliating retreat.

“The enemies must leave the region as soon as possible, otherwise, they would experience a humiliating retreat,” Khanzadi said on Wednesday, according to Tasnim.

He also warned the U.S., Britain, the Zionist regime and their accomplices in the region that the era of showing off in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is over.

The commander said foreign governments are wasting their resources and risking the lives of their servicemen by deploying forces to a region thousands of miles away from their maritime border.

“A maritime Islamic resistance front is being shaped and developed. The era of plundering the region’s assets is over, and the enemies must leave the region as soon as possible,” he asserted.

Khanzadi’s comments came amid heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S., especially after the White House announced plans to create a new security initiative in the Persian Gulf by forming a coalition for escorting commercial ships.



However, 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.”

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

In remarks on Wednesday, President

Hassan Rouhani described Israel’s decision to join the U.S.-led coalition in the Persian Gulf as “hollow words.”

“There is clear response to such claims. Israelis [should] 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.

On August 8, Defense Minister Amir Hatami also reacted to development, saying, “Such a move could be very provocative, and can have catastrophic implications for the region.”

In an interview with Al-Jazeera on Monday, 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.”

Kashmir issue is one of Muslim world’s tragedies: cleric

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hojjatolislam Kazem Seddighi, the interim Friday prayer leader of Tehran, has said the issue of Kashmir is one of the tragedies of the Muslim world.

Addressing worshippers on Friday, Seddighi said the Indian government was expected to abide by international law.

“Their action is contrary to human conscience, fairness and even the domestic laws of that country,” the cleric remarked.

He was making a reference to the Indian government’s recent decision to strip autonomy of the Kashmir region and its crackdown on the Muslim majority region.

The cleric further advised India to reconsider their decision and “know that oppression would not end [well].”

Seddighi also criticized mistreatment of the top Nigerian Shia cleric Sheikh El-Zakzaky in India, where he went to receive medical treatment but had to return to Nigeria after Indian medical authorities refused to provide him with



adequate treatment.

He said that the actions against Sheikh Zakzaky were contrary to human rights.

Elsewhere in his sermon, the cleric referred to the situation in Yemen, offering condolences on the martyrdom of the brother of the Yemeni leader al-Houthi.

He added that the Yemenis will emerge victorious in the end as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei predicted in a meeting with a Yemeni delegation earlier this week in Tehran.

Zarif to visit Kuwait, Finland, Sweden, Norway

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif plans to visit Kuwait and the three Scandinavian countries of Finland, Sweden and Norway in the upcoming days.

According to ISNA, Zarif is set to pay a one-day visit to Kuwait on Saturday, after which he will depart for the Finnish capital of Helsinki on Sunday.

During his visit to Helsinki, Zarif will meet Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto on Monday.

The top Iranian diplomat will also meet Finnish Minister of Development and Trade Ville Skinnari.

In a press release on Thursday, Haavisto highlighted the importance of maintaining dialogue with Iran.

The Finnish foreign minister welcomed the visit and said he was “looking forward to the discussion with Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif.”

He stressed that tensions in the Persian



Gulf “have an impact on the entire world. The importance of maintaining dialogue is emphasized in this situation.”

He added that discussion topics in the meetings will include bilateral relations, international and regional issues, human rights issues and Finland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Zarif will later leave Helsinki for Stockholm and Oslo, where he is scheduled to hold talks with top Swedish and Norwegian officials.

Northwestern mountaintops under full control of IRGC: Salami

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says all of Iran’s northwestern mountaintops are under full control and dominance of the pious forces of the IRGC.

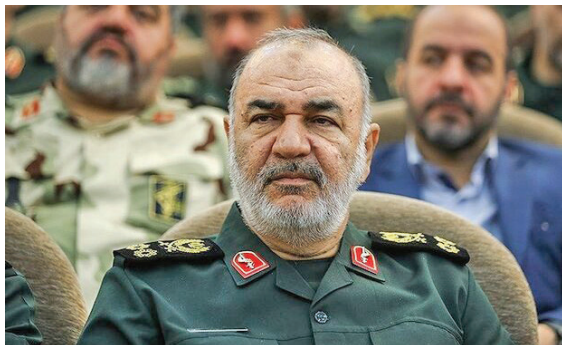
In a visit to Iran’s northwestern border points on Thursday, Major General Hossein Salami thanked the IRGC forces for their sacrifices in defending the country’s borders, Mehr reported.

He warned Iran’s enemies not to underestimate the Islamic Republic’s power in their calculations.

“The Islamic Iran has maintained its economic, political, cultural and military independence irrespective of the world powers,” Salami said.

The general added that Iran’s success in maintaining its independence has influenced nations and countries throughout the world.

In recent months, top Iranian generals have warned of Iran’s offensive power amid escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington.



Alireza Sabhi-Fard, commander of the army’s air defense unit, said on Wednesday that Iran’s defense capability cannot be tested.

“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,” he said.

Commander of the Iranian Army said last month that Iran’s offensive power would be “devastating” for the aggressors.

“Our offensive power and our capability to strike back after the start of an attack by the aggressors would be devastating and regrettable,” Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said.

Back in June, the commander of IRGC Aerospace Force rejected the idea that there is a specter of war against Iran, saying the enemy does not have the will power to attack the Islamic Republic.

“There is no specter of war against Iran, [because] the enemy lacks the will power, and this fact has become clear to everyone,” Amir Ali Hajizadeh said. Tasnim reported.

Hajizadeh’s remarks came after the IRGC Aerospace Force shot down an invading U.S. drone following several warnings.

Israel, UAE engaged in secret talks on Iran arranged by U.S.: report

(Press TV) — Israel and the United Arab Emirates have been recently engaged in secret talks, arranged by the U.S., to share their information and coordinate their efforts against Iran, a report by the Wall Street Journal says.

Quoting U.S. officials familiar with the secret talks, the WSJ says the meetings were arranged by U.S. special representative for Iran, Brian Hook.

The first meeting was held this spring, and the second took place more recently, the report quoted a U.S. official as saying.

“The discussions among U.S., Israeli and Emirati officials, although still in the preliminary stages, appear to indicate those contacts have gone beyond being symbolic and exploratory to mapping coordination on specific issues,” U.S. officials told the WSJ.

According to the report, the secret talks “were intended to increase diplomatic, military and intelligence cooperation in dealing with Iran.”

The report quotes people familiar with the discussions as saying that Hook has worked to bring anti-Iran elements together for secret meetings.

“Hook wants help from Israel and the Emirates in getting other countries in Europe and the Middle East to take a



tough stance regarding Tehran,” a former U.S. official said.

The report says “the exact dates and locations of the unpublicized meetings couldn’t be learned.” Therefore, it is not clear whether the secret talks took place before or after the recent efforts by the UAE to approach Iran and sign agreements with the Islamic Republic on the security of the Persian Gulf.

Amid heightened tensions in the Persian Gulf region, an Emirati delegation visited Iran on July 30, and signed an agreement with Iranian officials to bolster bilateral maritime security cooperation in first such

talks since 2013.

It was the sixth joint meeting addressing littoral security cooperation between the countries, and took place in line with bilateral coordination between the two sides aimed at maintaining and advancing the countries’ maritime border cooperation.

Also on August 1, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the commander of Iran’s border police, Brigadier General Qassem Rezaie, and Emirati Coastguard Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Ali Mosleh al-Ahbab during a meeting in Tehran.

The meeting came following a chain of

naval accidents in the region’s waters. In May, explosions hit four commercial vessels from the UAE and Saudi Arabia off the Emirati port of Fujairah in the Persian Gulf.

The United States soon tried to implicate Iran in the incidents to suggest that the Islamic Republic was trying to retaliate for bids by Washington and its allies to trouble the Islamic Republic’s international oil sales. On June 15, however, Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said his country did not have enough evidence to blame any country for the naval attacks.

Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi have no diplomatic ties and the UAE does not recognize Israel, but the two sides have increased backchannel cooperation in recent years.

On June 30, Israeli foreign minister Yisrael Katz visited the United Arab Emirates, where he met and held talks with senior authorities.

Last year, Israeli culture and sports minister Miri Regev traveled to the UAE to accompany Israel’s judo team at the Abu Dhabi Grand Slam 2018.

Her visit to the UAE marked the first of its kind by an Israeli minister to a Persian Gulf littoral state.

Judiciary chief: Violating people’s rights is forbidden

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Judiciary chief says violating people’s rights is forbidden.

“Do not let those who violate people’s rights, the criminals of society, find ground. This secure atmosphere should be preserved for people,” Ebrahim Raisi told judges in Kurdistan Province on Thursday.



“All organizations, employees, and judges are required to pursue people’s cases and the cases should not be prolonged in hearings.”

“We will not allow the law and the dos and don’ts be violated and will powerfully defend the law,” he said.

To violators of law, Raisi said, “Let you know that the end of your lives has approached.”

Advisor urges U.S. to change course on Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A change in the actions of the United States toward the Iranian nation is an essential prerequisite for any new decision by Tehran, says a top foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, regarding the possibility of Tehran-Washington talks.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with new South African Ambassador to Tehran Vika Mazwi Khumalo on Wednesday, Mehr reported.

The South African envoy, for his part, expressed regret over the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and re-imposition of sanctions.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA) in May 2018. The U.S. then reimposed the “harsh sanctions” on Iran but at the same time pushed for talks with Tehran.

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

Weeks ago, the U.S. announced imposition of sanctions against Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, a move which was interpreted as a total rejection of diplomacy repeatedly claimed by the Trump administration.

“Zarif is in charge of the country’s foreign policy and diplomacy ... By sanctioning Zarif, they (Americans) deprived themselves of dialogue,” government spokesman Ali Rabiei said afterwards.

Rabiei said it is utterly absurd that the U.S., which claims to be an advocate of dialogue, has sanctioned Iran’s foreign minister right after inviting him to the Oval Office for talks.

Cleric expresses Iran’s support for Sheikh Zakzaky’s treatment

(Tasnim) — The secretary general of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought (WFPIST) has assured Nigerian Muslim leader Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaky that Iran would do its utmost to help the process of his medical treatment.



On Thursday morning, Ayatollah Mohsen Araki had a telephone conversation with Sheikh Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) who is in India to receive medical treatment.

Learning about the physical and mental conditions of the ailing Nigerian cleric, Ayatollah Araki voiced concern about Sheikh Zakzaky’s health, and gave him an assurance that both Iran and the WFPIST would make every effort to contribute to the process of his medical treatment.

The Nigerian Muslim leader, for his part, expressed gratitude to Iran for its helpful efforts, saying the course of his treatment at New Delhi’s Medanta hospital has not still begun.

According to Ayatollah Araki, Sheikh Zakzaky’s morale was high. Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife flew out of Nigeria on Tuesday to get medical treatment in India.

The Arabic-language al-Ahed new agency reported on Wednesday that Sheikh Zakzaky has decided to leave India because the severe security restrictions have adversely affected the course of his medical treatment.

The top Shiite cleric has been held in detention since December 2015 and was charged just in April 2018 with murder, culpable homicide, unlawful assembly, disruption of public peace and other accusations. He has pleaded not guilty.

Zakzaky has lost his left eyesight in a raid by the Nigerian army on his residence in the northern town of Zaria in December 2015.

During the raid, the cleric’s wife sustained serious wounds too and more than 300 of his followers and three of his sons were killed.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	261391.5
IFX	3517.32

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,808 rials
GBP	50,632 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$59.30/b
WTI	\$55.45/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.47/b
Gold	\$1,523.30/oz
Silver	\$17.14/oz
Platinum	\$836.60/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Tehran hosting intl. poultry, livestock exhibition

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 18th International Exhibition of Poultry, Livestock, Dairy, and Related Industries (IRANPLEX 2019) is being held in the Iranian capital from August 15 to 18, IRIB reported.

Some 290 Iranian and foreign companies from different countries are participating in this year's event to showcase their latest products and findings in different fields including production, research, machineries, equipment, related services, veterinary medicine and vaccination, and etc.

The exhibition is held at the Tehran International Permanent Fairgrounds.

Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan to set up INSTC working group

1 → The route primarily involves transferring freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail and road. The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali, etc.

Nigeria in weaker position to defend self against economic shock, says Moody's

As the trade war between the two largest economies in the world, the United States of America and China, threatens to cause another recession, credit rating firm, Moody's says the Nigerian economy is too weak to make spending cuts if another shock hits.

As stated by saharareporters.com, in a statement made available to Sahara reporters, the topmost rating agency explained that cutting expenditure was easier than raising revenue in the event of an economic crisis and the Nigerian economy does not have much flexibility in implementing such a move at present.

Moody's said Nigeria was burdened by a lot of interest payment on debts — mandatory expenditure.



In the analysis of financial data from 17 sub-Saharan African countries, the rating agency said, "Nigeria and Gabon have relatively less flexibility to cut spending; in Nigeria, we capture only sending at the federal government level, where interest makes up a relatively large share of total spending, while the relatively low degree of spending flexibility reflects past fiscal consolidation which was skewed toward discretionary spendings — such as capital expenditure.

In Gabon, less flexibility to cut spending today reflects the composition of past fiscal consolidation."

Moody's noted that all the countries in focus were at weaker starting positions, in defending themselves against a recession. It attributes this to an increase in public debts by the 17 economies.

"As debt burdens are now higher than just five years ago, SSA sovereigns are more vulnerable to future shocks and have less capacity to employ countercyclical fiscal policy to absorb future shocks," it said.

The agency added that the falling prices of raw materials like crude oil, and weak investor confidence will increase the cost of borrowing for these economies in the near future.

The "region's governments face a number of possible negative fiscal shocks a slowdown in global growth could be more severe than we currently expect, with a possible negative impact on some commodity prices, and fragile investor confidence threatens to raise sharply the cost of already much less affordable debt for some sovereigns," it stated.

Based on its findings, Moody's said Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Rwanda, were best placed to cut back on spending if a shock wave hit them.

On the other side of the extreme are Namibia, Mauritius, South Africa, and Ghana.

Iranian section of Khaf-Herat railroad to be built by March 2020

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Transport and Urban Development Deputy Minister Abbas Khatibi said construction of the Iranian side of the Khaf-Herat railway will be completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).

"Khaf-Herat railroad is one of the largest projects we are working to put into operation by the end of this year," Khatibi told ISNA on Thursday.

According to the official, of the total 191 kilometers (km) of the railroad 132 km is going to be constructed by Iran.

"The 132-km project is divided into two major sections, 77 kilometers of which is inside Iranian territory and 62 kilometers is in Afghanistan territory," Khatibi said.

Regarding the project progress, Khatibi noted that the inland section is almost



completed and there is only one station under construction with about 40 percent of physical progress.

As the official informed, implementation of this railway project has been accelerated in Iran and to improve the trend in Afghanistan as well, Iran is to train some Afghan workers.

Although the Afghan side of the project has not yet been implemented, Sputnik recently announced that Afghanistan has been in talks with Italian companies to build the fourth section of the railway, and Afghans appear to be more determined to commence their part of the project this year.

Khaf-Herat is part of Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor. The project, started in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

Industry ministry to revive 2,000 idle production units

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry plans to revive 2,000 idle production units by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), IRIB reported.

According to the deputy industry minister Saied Zarandi, the ministry has allocated 15 trillion rials (about \$357 million) to this issue.

"Of the mentioned 2000 units, 1,338 are based in the industrial parks across the country and currently 400 of them are back into operation," Zarandi said.

The official also said the ministry plans to support increasing the production capacity of 4,200 production units across the country.

Earlier this month, head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced that ISIPO is following major programs in order to revive idle units and to help them to get back into business.

Speaking in a press conference Mohsen Salehinia mentioned some of his



organization's plans for supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), noting that the industry ministry is also fully supporting ISIPO's efforts in this regards.

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

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

CBI sees stable currency market after turbulent year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Governor of Iran's Central Bank (CBI) said the currency market is moving toward stability and predictability after a year of turmoil, IRNA reported.

"The currency market is gradually moving towards stability and predictability after a difficult period which was the result of sanctions and the negative expectations they brought about," Abdolnaser Hemmati twitted in Farsi on Friday.

The official further noted that over the past year CBI's efforts have been focused primarily on market management and regulation.

In recent months, the value of Iranian rial has been recovering against the U.S. dollar as the CBI policies for shielding the currency against the U.S. sanctions took effect.

The central bank sought ways to protect the currency with measures that include setting up a government-run foreign-exchange platform known as NIMA to quell the black market and controlling interest rates offered by lenders.



The advance in rial value has been a relief for Iranians who watched the currency plummet more than 50 percent after U.S. President Donald Trump scrapped the 2015 nuclear accord and reimposed sanctions on the nation.

According to Hemmati, the rial on the open market is now close to the Nima rate.

In early May, Hemmati outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

Recession fears raised as economic indicators flash red

By Simon Neville

Fears were raised on Thursday that the UK and countries around the world could be heading for a recession.

An inverted yield curve — where short term government bonds become less attractive than long term ones — in the UK and U.S. has particularly spooked markets.

A similar move happened in the buildup to the 2008 recession.

James Knightly, chief international economist at ING, explained the significance.

He said: "In normal times investors want to be compensated for the risk of lending for longer periods of time — you do not know what may happen over the next 10 years (will inflation spike, will a country get into debt problems etc.) — and they feel more comfortable lending over a shorter period of time.

"Hence why interest rates on two-year debt are normally lower than 10-year borrowing costs.

"However, the fact that this has flipped suggests that investors are seriously worried about a downturn, which will keep inflation low."

Some analysts were concerned about the shift, especially alongside the other global problems.

Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK, explained: "We've heard a great deal in the past few days over yield curve inversions and how they are often harbingers of upcoming recessions.



"It is certainly true that they have been good leading indicators of impending economic slowdown in the past, however they have also given off false signals as well.

"Throw in concerns about U.S., China trade, slowing growth, the risk of recession in Europe, particularly Germany, Brexit, the possibility of Italian elections, unrest in Hong Kong, as well as a crisis in Argentina, and tensions in the Persian Gulf and its perhaps not surprising that investors are moving into areas which generate a positive rate of return."

Experts warned that a recession could lead to company collapses and business struggles.

Singapore July non-oil exports drop 11.2% in 5th month of double digit contraction

Exports performed better than feared, though numbers continued to fall by double digits for the fifth straight month, dragged down especially by the electronics slump.

According to straitstimes.com, non-oil domestic exports (Nodx) fell by 11.2 percent in July, according to Enterprise Singapore data on Friday. Bloomberg pollsters had expected worse, tipping the Nodx drop at 15.4 percent.

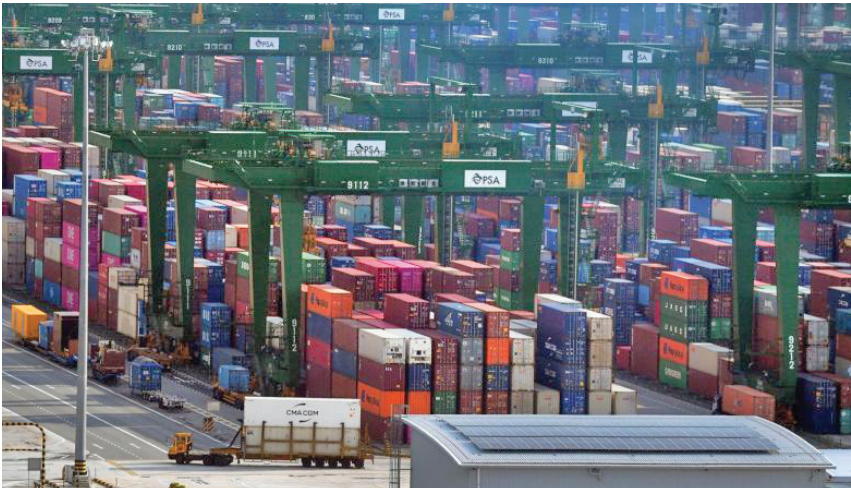
On a month-on-month basis, July exports reversed June's 7.8 percent fall with growth of 3.7 percent.

Exports had plunged a revised 17.4 percent year on year in June - the biggest drop since shipments sank 33.2 percent in February 2013.

CIMB Private Banking economist Song Seng Wun said that June's plunge could be the "bottom of the current cycle, but double digit declines might persist over the next few months".

"Leading indicators such as orders are still weakening," he said.

Year on year, electronic exports shrank by 24.2 percent in July, following the 31.9 percent drop in June, while non-electronic exports declined 6.6 per cent



in July, easing from the 12.6 percent fall in June.

The fall in non-electronic exports was led by pharmaceuticals (-32.7 percent), specialized machinery (-31.3 percent) and primary chemicals (-30.9 percent).

Falling shipments to Japan

Exports to all of Singapore's top 10

markets fell as well, except to the United States. Leading the decline were falling shipments to Japan, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Exports to emerging markets also declined by 29.6 percent last month, following a 17.0 percent fall in June.

Bank, said the U.S. market remains

Dr. Kerstin Braun, president of finance firm Stenn Group, said: "This is different to the last financial crisis.

Monetary policy not effective solution

"Companies were already struggling, the economy was starting to linger, and this time it's not a consequence of a financial bubble. Instead it's been caused by governments. Monetary policy is also no longer an effective solution."

Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, has previously said the UK has a one-in-three chance of heading for a recession, and several economic indicators have been in decline.

However, the UK could avoid a recession thanks to Brexit. In the build up to the last Brexit deadline of March 31, businesses started spending more to stockpile products and materials.

It led to a boost in business and helped the economy grow in the first quarter of the year — with GDP between January and March up 0.5%, compared with growth of 0.2% in the final quarter of 2018.

But, in the three months to the end of June GDP fell 0.2%. Two quarters of falls in a row is how a recession is technically described.

The UK managed to avoid a recession in 2012 thanks, in part, to the Olympic Games in London, which helped boost the economy, as the eurozone crisis led to European countries to suffer from a slowdown.

(Source: uk.news.yahoo.com)

insufficient to buffer the Nodx declines in the other major markets. She noted that the driver for Nodx to the U.S. market came from non-electronics exports (+18.3 percent) whilst electronics exports remained weak (-8.8 percent).

Going forward, she said the "macro headwinds remain intact for now", referring to the ongoing U.S.-China trade war stalemate, heightened uncertainties over the tech cycle, the rising risk of a no-deal Brexit and persistent protests in Hong Kong.

Said Ms Ling: "Nodx has already contracted 10.7 percent year on year for the first seven months of this year and we expect Nodx growth to remain weak around -8.1 percent to round up the full-year 2019 Nodx growth to -9.7 percent. If this materializes, it will be the worst full-year Nodx performance since 2009 when Nodx fell 10.5 percent."

Enterprise Singapore on Tuesday slashed its full-year Nodx forecast to -9 to -8 per cent from -2 to 0 percent after Singapore's export slump deepened in the second quarter, with Nodx contracting by 14.6 percent.

NISOC to offer 3 new contracts for developing oil reservoirs

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Oil Company (NISOC) has finalized three new development packages worth 39 trillion rials (about \$928.5 million) for developing southern oil reservoirs, IRNA reported, quoting an oil official as saying.

"The contractors for three new reservoirs have been determined and the projects worth 39 trillion (about \$928.5 million) will start in near future," NISOC Head of Technical Affairs Sadeq Fatholahi said.

According to Fatholahi, Iranian Oil Ministry has prepared 34 development packages for the country's oil reservoirs, 27 of which worth \$4.3 billion are aimed for southern regions.

The reservoir engineer noted that of the total 27 development packages considered for the southern regions, six projects worth 44 trillion rials (nearly \$1.1 billion) are currently being carried out by Iranian



companies, some of which are already drilling.

"Developing the region's 28 reservoirs will add 250,000 barrels of new capacity to the region's oil output while the same amount [250,000 barrels] is also saved through preventing production decline and enhancing recovery rate," Fatholahi said.

In December 2018, NISOC's Managing Director Ahmad Mohammadi that the company is going to implement of at least 14 mega projects on oil fields during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

Making the remarks on the sidelines of a specialized session on preserving and boosting production from the 28 oil fields under development by NISOC, the official also announced that 8-10 new contract packages are being finalized in line with the technical and operating objectives of the company and also creating jobs in the region.

3rd platform of SP phases 22-24 loaded

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Platform SPD-23, which is the third platform of the phases 22, 23, 24 of South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) development project was loaded at Sadra yard in the southwestern province of Bushehr on Wednesday.

According to Ali Asghar Sadeqi, deputy director of the phases 22-24 development project, the 2500-ton platform is going to add 500 million cubic feet (14 million cubic meters) of gas to the field's output and the total production capacity of the phases 22-24 will reach 1.5 billion cubic feet once SPD-23 is operational.

According to the offshore operations project manager Abdollah Mehrabi, the construction of phases 22-24 fourth (and last) platform is underway with a nearly 94 percent physical progress and the platform will be loaded to be installed on its offshore position in the near future.

Four platforms have been envisaged for the mentioned

phases and the three other platforms are scheduled to be installed on their designated offshore spots during the current Iranian calendar year (which ends on March 20), according to the Public Relations Department of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of the gas field development.

Phases 22-24 are expected to produce 56 million cubic meters of sour gas, 75,000 barrels of gas condensate, and 400 tons of sulfur per day, in addition to 50 million cubic meters of methane, 2,900 tons of LPG and 2,750 tons of ethane.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the



world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Oil rises more than 1% as recession fears recede



Crude oil prices rose more than 1% on Friday following two days of declines, buoyed after data showing an increase in retail sales in the United States helped dampen concerns about a recession in the world's biggest economy.

Brent crude LCOc1 was up 68 cents, or 1.2%, at \$58.91 a barrel at 0650 GMT, after falling 2.1% on Thursday and 3% the previous day.

U.S. crude CLc1 was up 63 cents, or 1.2%, at \$55.10 a barrel, having dropped 1.4% the previous session and 3.3% on Wednesday.

U.S. retail sales rose 0.7% in July as consumers bought a range of goods even as they cut back on motor vehicle purchases, according to data that came a day after a key part of the U.S. Treasury yield curve inverted for the first time since June 2007, prompting a sell-off in stocks and crude oil.

An inverted Treasury yield curve is historically a reliable predictor of looming recessions.

The "rebound has a corrective look about it on thin volumes, rather than a beachhead for an impending rebound," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst at OANDA. "Overall, U.S. data continues to be a bright spot in a dark economic universe."

Gains are likely to be capped after a week of data releases including a surprise drop in industrial output growth in China to a more

than 17-year low, along with a fall in exports that sent Germany's economy into reverse in the second quarter.

The "broader story around global economic growth has been a weak one, or a weakening one and expectations (are for) further weakening," Phin Ziebell, senior economist at National Australia Bank, said by phone.

The price of Brent is still up nearly 10% this year thanks to supply cuts led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies such as Russia, a group known as OPEC+. In July, OPEC+ agreed to extend oil output cuts until March 2020 to prop up prices.

"At what point will further output cuts be needed at the back end of this year from OPEC and Russia to keep things going the way they are?" Zeibell said, pointing to the broader economic outlook.

A Saudi official on Aug. 8 indicated more steps may be coming, saying: "Saudi Arabia is committed to do whatever it takes to keep the market balanced next year".

But the efforts of OPEC+ have been outweighed by worries about the global economy amid the U.S.-China trade dispute and uncertainty over Brexit, as well as rising U.S. stockpiles of crude and higher output of U.S. shale oil.

OPEC needs another 1 million bpd cut to boost oil prices



In the current gloomy market sentiment, OPEC would need to deepen the production cuts by 1 million barrels per day (bpd) if the cartel wants to move up the price of oil, Emma Richards, senior industry analyst at Fitch Solutions, told CNBC.

The oil market has recently become "incredibly sensitive to any kind of bearish indicator," Richards said, adding that it doesn't take a lot to see a big downward movement and it's really difficult to get oil prices to move upwards.

Oil prices plunged on Wednesday as new worrying signals about the global and U.S. economy flashed. Early on Thursday, both benchmarks continued the downward move, with WTI Crude down 1.21 percent at \$54.56 at 10:15 a.m. EDT, and Brent Crude down 2.07 percent at \$58.25.

At the start of last week, the U.S.-China trade war and a looming currency war rattled oil markets, while two days later Saudi Arabia rushed to contain the price slide by saying that despite what it sees as healthy demand in all regions, it continues to keep its exports below the 7-million-bpd mark and will do so at least through September.

Also last week, reports emerged that

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

Asked whether the Saudis would really push for some kind of action, Richards told CNBC that it's possible, and that at the moment, OPEC's de facto leader is just trying to talk up the market.

Given where oil prices are now and given where demand is headed, it's very likely that OPEC+ will extend the production cut deal at least until the end of 2020, according to Richards.

It's possible that the producer group will "put deeper cuts in place, but they have already done so much and I think to actually move the price they'd have to do something pretty significant, another million barrels per day perhaps, whether or not they can build consensus for that is another question," the analyst told CNBC.

Fitch has recently downgraded its Brent forecast to \$67 for 2019 and since it put out that forecast, oil prices have lost another \$5-6 a barrel. The balance of risk is certainly skewed to the downside, Richards told CNBC.

21 new power plants to go operational by March 2020

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said 21 new power plant projects worth 210 trillion rials (\$5 billion) will go operational by the end of the current calendar year (March 20, 2020) to add 3000 megawatts (MW) to the country's power generation capacity.

The official made the remarks in the inauguration ceremony of a 7 megawatt solar power plant in South Khorasan province in northeastern Iran on Thursday.

As reported, the €6-million power plant has been fully constructed by Iranian experts in a six-month period.

Accompanied by senior officials from the country's water and electricity sectors, Ardakanian traveled to South Khorasan province on Thursday to visit the region's energy infrastructure and inaugurate some projects.



Ardakanian inaugurating a 7MW solar power plant in Sarbisheh county in South Khorasan province on Thursday.

Iran's current power generation capacity stands at about 81 gigawatts, of which nearly 6 percent or 760 MW is the share of renewable power plants.

A total of 115 renewable power plants were active across Iran as of July 2019 and the construction is ongoing for another 32 plants to supply an extra 380 megawatts of renewables to the national power grid.

According to PAVEN, currently renewable power plants have created 43,450 job opportunities across the country and the volume of private investment in this sector has exceeded 124 trillion rials (over \$2.95 billion).

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

In early May, the energy ministry had announced that the government plans to inaugurate 22 new power plant units with a total capacity of 3,933 MW in the current Iranian year along with upgrading and increasing the efficiency of existing power plants to add another 461 MW of new capacity.

Discovery in de la Cuvette deposit could produce 983,000 bopd of oil for Congo

The recent onshore discovery made in the Delta de la Cuvette deposit in the Republic of Congo is a game-changer for Congo and Africa. The discovery was announced on August 10th by SARPD Oil and PEPA, a Congolese consortium working as operators on the Block.

According to devdiscourse.com, early projections indicate that the discovered deposits could produce up to 359 million barrels of oil, or 983,000 bopd, from Congo's central province. This could in effect quadruple Congo's production, which currently stands at over 330,000 bopd according to OPEC's latest figures. Production has been steadily increasing in recent years, with a target set by the government of reaching 400,000 bopd by 2020.

"This is our first onshore discovery and it gives us a lot of hope that we shall make more discoveries especially now that we are to award more blocks for oil exploration in the ongoing oil licensing round," said the H.E. Jean-Marie Thystère-Tchicaya, Minister of Hydrocarbons of the Republic of Congo.

The Delta de la Cuvette deposit covers 9,392 m2 and comprises four wells, the first has been drilled in March of this year. When fully exploited, the license could propel Congo as Africa's third-largest oil producer, ahead of Algeria and Libya.

"This is in effect one of the largest African oil discovery in decades," declared NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber and CEO at the Centurion Law Group. "Africa has been an exploration hotspot where major oil & gas discoveries have been made in recent years by international explorers. The Oyo discovery in Congo, however, is the result of indigenous efforts made by Congolese companies. It speaks volumes to the value that local content development can create when local companies and entrepreneurs are given an opportunity to contribute to their industry. I want to urge the government to work with the industry to expedite the approvals for the necessary field development efforts. This is a win for Congo and for Africa."

■ A game-changer discovery

The discovery is also a game-changer for Congo's energy scenario, with most oil & gas production currently coming from offshore fields. The Republic of Congo has been pushing for years to open up energy access to its central and northern provinces, notably through the planned 1,200km pipeline between Pointe Noire and Ouesso. The exploitation of such large oil deposits in the center of the country could open up a whole new energy frontier for Congo and the rest of the region.

The African Energy Chamber looks forward to seeing the full development of the license creating jobs for Congolese, and opportunities for Congolese companies and entrepreneurs to service one of Central Africa's largest upcoming onshore development.

Such a discovery has the potential to spur considerable economic growth for Congo and its central and northern provinces, especially as the country keeps recovering from a recent economic crisis due to plummeting oil prices. The IMF predicts a GDP growth of 5.4% in 2019, the highest in Central Africa.

Congo has 2 billion barrels of proven oil reserves from about 20 fields being exploited and about 10 permits granted and waiting to be developed. Its proven gas reserves stand at 200bn standard cubic meters over 20 years, according to the government, including 70bn of associated gas.

While gas production stands at about 400bcf, various gas valorization and monetization projects are being supported by the government to generate diversification and economic growth. Congo estimates that it can monetize about 100bn standard cubic meters of gas by integrating various gas valorization projects in the country via a gathering and transportation system which is to be operational by 2020.

ExxonMobil, Sinanju ink charter deal for Singapore's first LNG-powered bunker tanker

ExxonMobil Asia Pacific and the tanker operating arm of Singapore's Sinanju Tankers Holdings have entered into a two-year time-charter agreement for a new-build bunker tanker.

According to businesstimes.com.sg, soon to be christened Marine Vicky, the vessel will be the first bunker tanker powered mainly by liquefied natural gas (LNG) to be deployed in Singapore waters, Sinanju announced on Friday.

The tanker will deliver ExxonMobil's new low-sulphur marine fuels to ocean-going vessels within Singapore port limits, starting from the first quarter of 2020.

"This will help ensure that ExxonMobil's customers can bunker the high-quality, compliant options they need," Sinanju said.

Registered vessels that are serviced by alternative or cleaner marine fuelled harbor crafts during their port stay — such as receiving bunker from LNG-powered tankers — stand to receive a 10 percent port dues concession, under



the Maritime Singapore Green Port Program.

Ju Kai Meng, managing director of Sinanju, said: "We are stepping up to promote the use of LNG as a sustainable alternative marine fuel to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and we encourage more of such bunker tankers to operate

in Singapore."

Sinanju has a "budding but comprehensive" infrastructure to support the supply and use of LNG as a marine fuel at the world's largest bunkering port, Mr. Ju added.

Sinanju is also preparing to embark on ship-to-ship LNG bunker deliveries from 2021.

Koh Sing Liang, Asia-Pacific sales director of ExxonMobil Marine Fuels, said: "We are committed to doing our part to meet the demand for cleaner marine fuel supplies safely and reliably, while at the same time, reduce environmental impact and provide sustainable solutions."

Marine Vicky has a carrying capacity or deadweight tonnage of 7,990 tons. It is 103 meter long and 19 meter wide, equipped with a 55 cubic meter LNG tank paired with a fuel gas supply system on deck for engine propulsion.

The vessel is being built at Keppel Offshore & Marine's shipyard in Nantong, China, under the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore's LNG bunkering pilot program.

Australia need not follow U.S. script on its relationship with China

GLOBALTIMES—In his recent book, *How to Defend Australia*, Australian security analyst and commentator Hugh White reiterates his argument that Australia is embroiled in an ever-escalating contest of power between China and the US. He emphasizes that the choice Australia makes will be pivotal and decisive to its future place in the new era, and in the new Asia-Pacific region.



Australia's traditional defense and security alliance with the US is the outcome of the post World War II world order, but the end of the Cold War and the peaceful rise of China in recent decades have ushered in a new international scenario. In particular, since US President Donald Trump assumed office in 2017, Australia has increasingly found itself caught up in an unimagined and unprecedented conundrum - whether to blindly cling to the anti-China stance that Washington has been belligerently championing while demanding all-round support from its allies, or to embrace the challenging situation and make innovatively strategic changes to its diplomacy. The extraordinary transformation in Australia's neighboring region and the whole world has caused profound anxiety among some strategists, policymakers and politicians Down Under who have been adhering to the Cold War mind-set and refused to move ahead with the historic headway provided by sweeping global development.

For example, the recent incendiary vilification of China by West Australian Liberal member of parliament (MP) Andrew Hastie, who on August 8 compared China's growing influence to the rise of Nazi Germany, showed the effect of Washington's ballistic rhetoric and crusade to contain China and hinder its development. It also reflects his inability to adapt to the massive geopolitical and geo-economic changes. Hastie, the jingoistic former special air service regiment captain, could not distinguish today's world from 1940's Europe and sermonized on the necessity of "geopolitical struggle" against the so-called China's intrusions that exist in his fantasies and those of his ilk. The fact that he divided the world into friends and enemies based on systemic and ideological differences is simplistic and out of date.

It is pathetic that some Australian politicians have been reduced to pliable marionettes of such anti-China puppeteers as the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to persistently fuel the so-called China threat theory as a way to seek security guarantee from a country that has in fact been hijacking the world economy to serve the prioritized political and economic interests of its own.

It was prudent for Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison to stress recently that Australia's relationship with China could withstand any challenges. Such challenges may originate from the systemic and social differences between the two countries, but more importantly they come from coercive pressures of US agenda of thwarting China's development in the region as well as around the world. However, there is no point in Australia closing ranks with the US in taking on China as a rival. It is disturbing that a number of Australian federal MPs support and have been defending Hastie's drivel, echoing his conspiracy theory about China. However, luckily there are still sensible voices such as Western Australia's Premier Mark McGowan, who criticized the MP and urged him to "stop damaging the relationship and threatening WA (Western Australia) jobs with extreme and inflammatory language."

It is in China's national interest to maintain and develop the comprehensive strategic partnership with Australia. Both countries need to cherish and promote the bilateral relationship that has been reaping mutual benefits for 47 years. Neither side wishes to see deterioration of the relationship in all aspects. As Penny Wong, Australian Labor Party's foreign affairs spokeswoman, recently emphasized, Australia's relations with China are critical and consequential. In face of the Trump administration's reckless disruption of the world's rules-based trade order that has been threatening to wreak more and further havoc on the economy of many countries including Australia, Canberra needs to recalibrate its diplomatic policy to better serve its own national interest rather than being in cahoots with Uncle Sam as the latter's surrogated deputy sheroiff in the Asia-Pacific region. The world today is characterized by diversity and multiplicity. China's answer to the current challenges in the world resonates with the Confucian wisdom - to seek harmony instead of imposing uniformity. China respects Australia as a country of economic dynamism, social openness, and multicultural resilience. China expects Australia to show the same respect and trust which would contribute to further cooperation between Beijing and Canberra.

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Johnson's dangerous decision

Will Washington fool London again?

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — A recent visit by US National Security Adviser John Bolton and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Britain's exit from the European Union showed clearly that Washington was trying to impose some of its demands on London. This is something that Boris Johnson will probably agree with. Better yet, London will once again become a victim of US policies in the international system.

As BBC reported, Donald Trump wants the UK to be "first in line" for a trade deal with the US, according to his national security adviser John Bolton. Speaking following a meeting with Boris Johnson on a visit to London, the White House official said the US could focus on striking bilateral trade deals in certain sectors like manufacturing and car-making and work out more complicated areas later. A prior American president said that if the United Kingdom left the European Union, it would go to the back of the queue on trade deals, "Mr Bolton said. "To be clear, in the Trump administration, Britain's constantly at the front of the trade queue, or line as we say."

He added: "I think here we see the importance and urgency of doing as much as we can agree on as rapidly as possible because of the impending 31 October exit date."

"You could do it sector by sector, you could do it in a modular fashion in other words," Mr Bolton said. "You could carve out some areas where it might be possible to reach a bilateral agreement very quickly, very straight forwardly. "That would then lock that in and when the other areas that might be more difficult were concluded later, you could combine it in one overall agreement. "So the objective is either one document or a series of agreements that would be comprehensive."

"In order to expedite things and enhance the possibility for increasing the trade and investments between the two countries, doing it in a sector-by-sector approach or some other approach that the trade negotiators might agree with, we are open to that."

Asked whether piecemeal trade agreements are allowed under WTO rules, Mr Bolton said: "Our trade negotiators seem to think it is. The idea of doing it in pieces rather than waiting for the whole thing is not unprecedented."

The UK is barred from opening talks with a third country before exiting the EU on 31 October, at the earliest.

Mr Bolton also said the UK and US could avoid discussing contentious issues like Iran, China, and Huawei until after Brexit. "The message I wanted to convey on Iran, and on some other issues in which I include China, 5G, Huawei, that cluster of issues, is that the President and the US government fully understands that in the next few days the UK government has a singular focus on the Brexit issue, so that we are not hoping for anything on these broad and complex questions," he said.

"We just ask that, as issues come up, we resolve them individually and we reserve the time to have a larger conversation on some of these important issues at a moment that is really right for the new government. We just felt we owe them that." Obviously we have views on these issues, I think that is appreciated by the new government. They said in particular that looking really from square one on the Huawei issue that they were very concerned about not having any compromise in the security of telecommunications in the 5G space."

He added: "We don't want to put you under pressure on these issues. There will be time enough to talk, that is really all we ask for."

In May 2019 the US published its negotiating objectives for a future trade deal with the UK. These suggest that Britain will not enjoy softer treatment compared to other US allies in any trade deal.

The blueprint indicates that the nation would demand greater access to food markets, allowing it to sell the UK chlorine-washed chicken and hormone-pumped beef. The objectives also suggest "full market access for US products", which could potentially lead to spiralling NHS drug costs.

Mr Bolton criticised the EU for its approach to Brexit, while talking to journalists after his meeting with the prime minister. "The fashion in the European Union when the people vote the wrong way from the way that the elites want



to go, is to make the peasants vote again and again until they get it right," he said.

He added that it was "hard to imagine" people in the UK did not know "what was at stake" when they voted to leave the EU in 2016.

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He added that it was "hard to imagine" people in the UK did not know "what was at stake" when they voted to leave the EU in 2016.

So there's been some progress, but not yet enough. "You can't simply roll over everything - these existing agreements will have references to EU law, so you cannot avoid some negotiation," says Alan Winters, director of the UK Trade Policy Observatory at University of Sussex. Some countries may also be apprehensive in signing deals right now, given that it is so unclear what Brexit will ultimately look like, adds Prof Winters.

So what could the consequences be if trade arrangements are not fully in place and the UK leaves the EU with no deal? With the countries where the UK has no formal trade agreement, both would have to trade under the rules overseen by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Trade would not stop if this were to happen but some barriers would go up, says Alex Stojanovic, from the Institute for Government think tank. "There is a reason you have trade agreements, it's that they give you better trade preferences than WTO terms." So some businesses will be harmed by tariffs coming into play," he says.

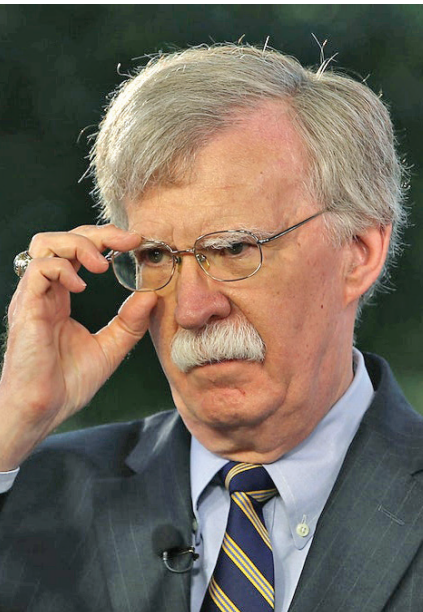
Trump envoy's cheap Brexit promises Also Politico reported that John Bolton's proposal for sectoral U.S.-U.K. trade deals post Brexit has caused excitement in London, but cynical trade experts are not convinced.

Promises come cheap, they point out. When the U.S. asks Britain to sign on the dotted line, it will be Congress, U.S. farmers, and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer who dictate the conditions, not Trump's national security adviser.

"What Bolton is proposing is not realistic," said Sam Lowe from the Centre for European Reform. "Why would Congress sign off on anything that doesn't have agriculture included?"

Any trade deal with the U.S. needs to be ratified by Congress — where Democrats have a majority in the House of Representatives, and interest groups, in particular farmers, work to make sure any trade deal is in their favor. "All Congress cares about is agriculture and dismantling the EU's regulatory approach to food and chemicals," Lowe argued. Any deal that falls short of that would not be ratified, regardless of Bolton's assurances.

Case in point: Congress has been holding up Trump's new USMCA deal with Canada and



Mexico for months over dairy exports, lumber tariffs, and weak labor rights protections. It has made clear the U.S. won't even consider negotiating a trade agreement with the EU that doesn't include market openings for U.S. beef and chicken.

Bolton did not mention this inconvenience during his visit in London, likely because he had other goals in mind. "For Bolton, the promise of a trade deal is a carrot to get U.K. cooperation on security issues," Lowe said. The need for Boris Johnson's administration to show that Brexit will be a success has not gone unnoticed in Washington. Promising trade deals gets Bolton friends in Downing Street without costing anything.

"Remember that Bolton is not a trade expert. All he cares about is getting leverage to get the U.K. to follow the U.S. on Huawei, Iran and China."

David Henig, director of the U.K. Trade Policy Project, pointed out another flaw in Bolton's proposal: "Partial trade deals that reduce tariffs in one sector are not legal under WTO rules."

While "Trump and Bolton have shown before that they care little for WTO rules, the U.K. on the other hand needs a well-functioning WTO," he added. It's what London will have to rely on to trade with the EU and other countries if it leaves the bloc without a deal. A Department for International Trade spokesperson said: "We have already laid the groundwork for an ambitious, creative trade deal with the U.S. and are working hard to take advantage of the golden opportunity to increase trade between our countries as we leave the EU. We will set out our approach to negotiations in due course."

So a trade deal along Bolton's lines is unlikely to ever see the light of day. As Lowe put it: "The U.S. didn't get to where they are in the world by being unnecessarily nice to countries that are slightly desperate."

Boris Johnson takes note of Trump's game theory to keep EU guessing on Brexit

As The Guardian reported, "Two cars are hurtling towards each other down a narrow country lane. Both have the option to pull over but neither driver wants to give way first. What happens next?"

This is the sort of scenario that lies at the heart of game theory, the use of models to show how rational decision-makers interact with each other. Game theory is big in economics and, in the current circumstances, that's hardly surprising because two key political issues lend themselves to game theory analysis.

The first is the US-China trade war, with the two cars heading towards each other down the country road being driven by Donald Trump and Xi Jinping. The vehicles have already ignored plenty of passing places along the way and a head-on crash is a distinct possibility. Both drivers are aware of the risks but neither wants to lose face in the game of chicken. Trump has made getting concessions out of China a totemic issue for his political base; Xi is another self-styled strongman already facing an internal threat to his authority from the protests in Hong Kong.

Last week, trade talks between officials from Washington and Beijing were held in Shanghai. This was seen as a hopeful sign — an indication that the leaders of the world's

two biggest economies were fully aware of the dangers of protectionism.

But Trump's way of playing the game is to keep his opponent guessing. So he chose this moment to announce something unexpected: plans for a 10% tariff on \$300bn of Chinese imports into the US, which — if actually implemented on 1 September — will mean virtually nothing China sells to the US will be exempt from duties.

Trump says he wants a deal with Xi and that is true. But he wants a deal that involves Xi slipping into the passing place while he zooms past. His strategy for getting what he wants involves putting his foot on the accelerator rather than on the brake. The White House is assuming that this is a rerun of the Cuban missile crisis — another classic example of game theory — in which John F Kennedy's threat to push the nuclear button forced Nikita Khrushchev to back down.

Xi, meanwhile, has continued to trundle down the road at a steady pace. He thinks Trump will be wary of spooking the stock market and of making American consumers pay more for their smartphones and laptops. After four decades of rapid economic growth, Beijing reckons it is in a much stronger position today than the Soviet Union was in October 1962.

In the real world, head-on collisions happen relatively rarely. More often, both drivers slam on their brakes at the last minute and after waving their fists at each other grudgingly work out a way to pass. But accidents do happen. And when they do they cause lots of damage.

The "game" between the US and China has been between two well-matched opponents. Up until now, the "game" between the UK and the EU over Brexit has been much more one-sided. Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator, operated from the outset on the assumption that for all her tough talk, Theresa May would always be the first to blink. And in the negotiations that culminated in the draft withdrawal agreement last autumn, he was proved absolutely right.

The dynamics of the game, though, have changed since the start of the year when it first became clear that the inclusion of the Northern Ireland backstop in the withdrawal agreement meant May could not get her deal through parliament. May's failure to actualise the result of the referendum led to the rise of the Brexit party, which came first in the elections for the European parliament. Conservatives — aware that the party is facing an existential crisis — dumped May and replaced her with someone they thought could see off the threat posed by Nigel Farage.

Boris Johnson has arrived in Downing Street and has reshaped the cabinet so that it is run by Brexit true believers rather than those who backed remain in the referendum. Preparations for a no-deal departure have been ramped up in order to show the rest of the EU that the government means what it says. Johnson has made it clear that he is in no hurry to start negotiations and, by spraying money, is creating the impression that he would be willing to call a general election in order to get a mandate for his tougher Brexit approach. From a game theory perspective, all this makes complete sense. Like Trump with Xi, the prime minister is trying to keep the EU guessing.

What is potentially helpful to the new prime minister is that the eurozone economy is in worse shape than it was a year ago. Germany, in particular, is struggling. Its manufacturing exports have been hit by the global slowdown and Berlin fears it will be targeted by Trump when he launches the second front in the trade war. Angela Merkel does not want a no-deal Brexit. So far the EU has kept to its course, refusing to countenance the idea that it might need to reopen the withdrawal agreement. That is because it thinks parliament will wrench the wheel out of Johnson's hands at the last minute to prevent a crash.

That may prove correct but the new sense of nervousness in Dublin is a measure of how the nature of the UK-EU game of chicken has changed. Leo Varadkar is worried about the impact of a no-deal Brexit on the Irish economy. What should also concern the taoiseach is whether the EU would be prepared to sell Ireland out in order to avoid one.

Afghanistan a proving ground for U.S. arms

TEHRAN (FNA) — Some 18 years into the war, and at a time when the people of Afghanistan seek the international community's help for peace and prosperity, the Pentagon regime has found Afghanistan as a nice proving ground for a lot of different new military technology, hoping to show that new artificial intelligence efforts and cloud computing can make information-sharing in an occupation more efficient.

The Afghan war has gone really badly, of course, and better than what they had isn't a tall order. In addition to the computer upgrades they're getting, US Army forces are also being given pocket-sized drones to deploy for the first time. The drones are to allow the Pentagon to say these things have been tested in war conditions, for their funding going forward and use in America's presumptive future wars.

Translation: The United States has decided to scrap their pullout plans once again, leaving thousands of occupying troops behind through the end of President Trump's first term in office. The silly argument by those in favor of increasing the American troops in place — amid the dodgy peace talks — is largely the same throughout the war, that

the Afghan government isn't capable of beating the Taliban on their own, and that a US pullout would add pressure to that struggling military.

Conceivably, American troops may end up being there for many decades because this is where the action and the 'proving ground, is. What's more, newly minted US generals say they need more troops. In this fallacy, their call for a bigger deployment has forced Trump to consider different options while Republicans have lambasted him for letting political motivations — his campaign promises to end the war — override the needs of commanders.

The Pentagon insists Trump's failure to promptly back their surge could dishonor America, while corporate media say no matter what the president wants, it will be very hard to stop the army generals. And that's exactly what Trump, mired in proverbial perplexity, is not doing right now: In Washington, the Pentagon and the warmongers have the final say. Not that Trump doesn't like it!

"Avoiding another Vietnam," says this school of thought, "requires a figurehead government — one that delegates all

military decision-making power to generals and effectively strips it from elected civilians who will supposedly be too politically motivated." This authoritarian ideology explains not only the spiteful reaction to Trump's Afghanistan deliberations but also some of the most anti-democratic statements ever uttered by American leaders.

It explains, for instance, assertions that "public opinion doesn't matter when it comes to military policy." Nevertheless, it is the US Constitution which gives political figures in Washington the final say: Article I empowers Congress "to declare and finance wars," and Article II states that "while the White House may require the opinion of military officers, ultimately the President shall be Commander in Chief."

In this new world order geopolitical business, Trump and congressional leaders have however decided to defy public will — and international law — by making the terrible choice to prolong the Afghanistan war. This is while the illegal occupation has reached its sell-by date. A majority of Americans now tell presidential candidates the mission was a mistake and must end.

Jordan following U.S. dictates on Iran to get brownie points

By Ali Mousavi Khalkhali

IFP—Jordan King Abdullah II (right) and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (left)

Fearful of US National Security Advisor John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, Jordan is acting against Iran to get brownie points.

The Arab countries are trying to reduce tensions in the region and have entered the phase of direct talks with Iran, and even a country like the United Arab Emirates that had adopted the policy of hostility has shifted its attitude and has entered the course of interaction. Meanwhile, Jordan is still sticking to another path and refuses to exercise interaction with Iran, although it is believed to be deeply upset at the US and Israel.

Jordan is a small country with very tough economic conditions that tries to overcome its economic crises with financial assistance from the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. However, its policy has met with little success so far. Jordan's economy is suffering from two major problems, inflation and fuel — the two factors that have always put pressure on the Jordanian governments, have triggered occasional social or economic protests against the governments, and have brought them down. Economy is the Jordanian government's Achilles' heel. This has encouraged different countries, particularly the US, to pressurize Jordan's government to fulfill their own interests.

Amman has so far stood idly by in the face of the US pressures, to the extent that US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, National Security Advisor John Bolton, and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, who is in charge of the so-called "deal of the century" case, visit Amman, humiliate Jordanians, give orders, and force Jordan to follow their



dictates. The Jordanian officials maintain that those three American officials are very tough and stern, and that they have no choice but to obey their orders, because disobedience will cause a lot of problems given the country's fragile economy.

Jordan is dissatisfied with the deal of century and is well aware that the initiative will damage its interests and may even pose a serious threat to its territorial integrity, but is supporting the plan reluctantly. Jordan attended the Manama meeting on the deal of century only under pressure from the United States and approved the half-baked and peculiar American and Israeli plans.

Such passiveness and submission has made Jordan side with the US over Iran's case. Informed sources reveal that Jordan has turned into a center for anti-Iranian activities, in a way that the hostile and

anti-Revolutionary groups such as the Muhajedhin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) and PJAK are there, but the Jordanian government is not preventing any of those hostile measures. Since the very first day after the overthrow of deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, many remaining members of Iraq's Ba'ath Party fled to Jordan and are still active there. During the fall of Mosul, Jordan had become a think tank for the Ba'athist masterminds of ISIS. Even amid the Syrian crisis, Jordan was an operations room for the American and Saudi measures against Bashar al-Assad's government. Several big hostile terrorist operations against Syria and Assad's government have been orchestrated from inside Jordan, nearly all of which ended in failure. Even at present, the Ba'athists are in

contact with the MKO members through Jordan, but the Amman government has given a muted response to such connections. Moreover, the MKO members make contacts with Israelis via Jordan's soil, while the intelligence agency of Jordan prepares the ground for those contacts in some cases.

There are also reports that Jordan, under the US pressure, plans to create a think tank against Iran. One of the measures that Jordan has taken under this policy has been its attempt to reach out to Iraq with the purpose of keeping Iraq away from Iran. Americans have urged Jordan to satisfy Iraq's economic demands as much as possible to help it reduce economic dependence on Iran. The US has put heavy pressures on both Amman and Baghdad to achieve that objective. In such a hostile approach, Israelis play a role, too. Under pressure from the US, Jordan even rejects an envoy from Iran and refuses to do anything for normalization of ties with Tehran. Amman has adopted such an approach while Iran has not taken any measure against Jordan and has never taken a retaliatory action for the big venue Jordan has provided for the anti-Iranian elements.

Amman needs to realize that keeping up the hostile policies against Iran, even if adopted reluctantly, will be ultimately detrimental to itself.

With blind obedience, Amman is simply following orders from Bolton, Pompeo and Kushner, and has turned a blind eye to the fact that unquestioning obedience to American orders could finally backfire against Jordan itself. The public opinion and history have not still forgotten the Black Friday in Jordan, in which the Americans had a direct role and were acting against Amman, while they pretended to be a friend of the Jordanian government.

Alberto Garcia Watson: UK's seizure of Grace I clear example of maritime piracy

TEHRAN (FNA) — Alberto Garcia Watson, political analyst and activists, says following the ruling of the European Parliament, its laws are not adopted in Gibraltar, and UK's enforcing EU laws there is only for justifying British maritime piracy to seize Grace I.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Watson shed light on the territorial rules violated by the UK's seizure of Grace I supertanker in Gibraltar.

"Gibraltar is a war booty which Britain has maintained because of logistical interest... The treaty of Utrecht in 1713, brought peace after the bloody wars of succession... According to the treaty, this territory/colony would not be entitled to jurisdictional territorial waters or airspace. Nevertheless, over the years the United Kingdom no longer respects the agreements reached in this treaty."

Alberto Garcia Watson is a political analyst, journalist and human rights activist. He was a contributor to various TV channels and written press as a political expert and analyst.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ The vessel is claimed to ship oil to Syria. Even if true, does the UK have the legal right to seize Grace I?

A: The British navy was unaware of the destination of the ship Grace I, on the 5th of July; but they decided to intercept it and accuse it of making for a Syrian port, before even verifying the documents.

This is a flagrant case of maritime piracy and it makes no difference where this vessel was going; what is frankly serious is that while Syria is suffering an aggression provoked by the US and Israel, financed by the [Persian] Gulf Wahhabi monarchies, it is on the brink of a humanitarian crisis, not only as a result of the war imposed by the West and their proxies in the region, but even worse because of the sanctions which are strangling a country in a situation of collapse.



Syria, which in the past has extracted 400,000 barrels of crude oil a day (before the attack of the Jihadists, disguised as "Arab Spring" in 2011, can now only reach a production of scarcely 24,000 barrels per day, since 80% of the oil fields lie within areas controlled by the USA and where Kurdish militias intend to form a Kurdish State in the future. Kurdish representatives have already met with Israeli authorities in the US, with a view to sealing an agreement to exploit Syrian crude. This is the real crux of the problem, that a country which exports oil has no access to its own natural resources and is forced to turn to friendly countries to supply them with fuel, because theirs is being stolen by Israel, always with the loyal help of the USA and mercenary Kurdish militias.

■ Why do you think Spain has condemned the British forces' inspection and detention of the tanker?

A: The Spanish Foreign Minister, Josep Borrell, pointed out that the attack on the tanker, carried out by the British naval authorities and Gibraltar shore police at the request of the USA in Spanish territorial waters, has

caused a diplomatic protest to the British authorities.

The treaty of Utrecht in 1713, brought a peace after the bloody wars of succession, imposing the French Borbon dynasty in exchange for ceding the island of Menorca and the rock of Gibraltar to the British crown. According to the treaty, this territory/colony would not be entitled to jurisdictional territorial waters or airspace. Nevertheless, over the years the United Kingdom no longer respects the agreements reached in this treaty, recently attacking fishing boats in the Bay of Algeciras, which they believe to be British waters.

According to the history of its origins, Gibraltar is a pirate port, engaged in money laundering of drug trafficking and corruption being a tax haven and headquarters of drug and tobacco trafficking, situation recognized by the UE and OCDE.

■ Gibraltar is not an EU member state. Why do you think the UK administers the EU laws on such a territory?

A: Gibraltar is a war booty which Britain has maintained because of logistical interest, being the entrance to the Mediterranean and as a financial point of capital of dubious precedence; one more case of pure British colonialism.

This offshore territory, with its nearly 6.8 square km, has 24,000 registered companies and is denominated as "offshore", where important financial entities take their business and part of their patrimony to avoid taxes.

Nevertheless, Gibraltar is not a territory with full rights within the European Union. It is a colony as has been determined recently in a sitting of the Euro parliament and is ruled by special laws very different from the European and as such, the attack on the ship does not hold to any law and represents, as a great majority of experts indicate, and is a clear example of maritime piracy.

Futile for Washington to play HK card

GLOBALTIMES—Washington in recent days has ratcheted up rhetoric on the Hong Kong issue and grossly interfered in China's domestic affairs. US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi demanded that the Hong Kong chief executive and Legislative Council accept the conditions raised by the extreme opposition. John Bolton, US national security adviser, warned the Chinese government against any potential crackdown on the Hong Kong protesters, saying "it would be a big mistake" to create a new memory like the June 4th political incident in Hong Kong. US politicians are blatantly pointing their fingers at China. It's obvious that they fail to understand the era they are living in.

Washington has the ability to fool Hong Kong's radical protesters and incite them to stage a color revolution. But it is unable to influence Beijing's attitude on the Hong Kong issue. US politicians themselves know best that their rhetoric against Beijing is merely a bluff. US President Donald Trump tweeted on Wednesday that "Of course Hong Kong wants to make a deal. Let them work humely with Hong Kong first!" Western media outlets widely interpreted it as the White House's intent to link the China-US trade talks to the Hong Kong issue. However, such an interpretation reflects the wishes of those who are hostile against China in the Western media.

Those tweets didn't show the White House intends to link the two issues, as it would be a futile effort. After the US launched its trade war and exerted enormous economic pressure on China, Washington has had no additional cards to play on China. All US sanction threats on China are empty shouts now.

Beijing hasn't decided to forcefully intervene to quell the Hong Kong riots, but this option is clearly at Beijing's

disposal. The People's Armed Police assembling in Shenzhen has sent a clear warning to the Hong Kong rioters. If Hong Kong cannot restore the rule of law on its own and the riots intensify, it's imperative then for the central government to take direct actions based on the Basic Law.

The Hong Kong issue is China's internal affairs that cannot be interfered by external forces, not only because it's a matter of sovereignty but also because China is the only one which is truly responsible for Hong Kong's future. The US and the West eulogize the radical protesters as they won't get hurt from Hong Kong's turmoil.

Worse still, the US would rather mess Hong Kong up, using Hong Kong as a new bargaining chip in its strategic competition with China. What those politicians are doing and will do with Hong Kong is to turn things more unfavorable to China. This is China's perception of the US attitude.

Under such a situation, the US can neither win the trust of China nor intimidate China. Its frequent statements on Hong Kong affairs are political bubbles that can only bewitch radical protesters. They cannot increase US influence on the Hong Kong issue.

Washington is becoming increasingly selfish. It refuses to give in any of its profits and hopes to grab more from the world through rogue tactics - mostly political pressure and intimidation. Fewer countries are viewing Washington as a constructive player.

The incident in Hong Kong won't be a repeat of the June 4th political incident in 1989. Washington will not be able to intimidate China by using the turmoil 30 years ago. China is much stronger and more mature, and its ability to manage complex situations has been greatly enhanced.

American economist: Income, wealth inequality worst in recorded U.S. history

TEHRAN (FNA) - Mark Thornton, American economist, says the US capital owners and stock holders are enjoying US President Donald Trump's tax cut policies and Federal Reserve ultra-low interest rates loans, while ordinary Americans are shared with a very small portion of the US economic growth's benefits.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, Professor Thornton said, "The 6.6% increase for those at the bottom is mostly people coming off the bare minimum wage rate which would be less than 50 cents per hour... In contrast, a 3.3% increase for those at the top of the income distribution would get an increase in income that is greater than the total annual income for those at the bottom."

Mark Thornton, received his Ph.D. in Economics from Auburn University in 1989. He has taught economics in several US universities. He received Faculty Research and Scholarship Award in Columbus State University in 2002. He is now a publisher and Senior Fellow at the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ The official statistics show increase in employment rates and growth in the US economy. Are all Americans benefitting from this boosting economy?

A: There are regular reports concerning people living paycheck to paycheck and the nearly total lack of personal savings. Americans have nearly \$2 trillion in credit card and student debt. The quality of jobs also matters. Right now, there are plenty of high skill jobs, but many Americans do not have high skills, primarily due to the rotten public schools in most of America. Income and wealth inequality, as it is currently calculated, is the worst in recorded American history.

■ How are the benefits of the claimed US economic growth distributed among people?

A: Most of the benefits do go to the rich and powerful. That is OK under certain regular circumstances, but the main reason is insidious and evil. The Federal Reserve is the cause. By keeping interest rates ultra-low and pumping the economy full of loanable funds, it helps the wealthy capital owners and hurts labor. Very low interest rates help capital owners and stocks, but does not help labor except to lure them into more debt than they can afford. Trump's claims are based on the stock market and the unemployment rate and both those measures are misleading. Very often economic statistics set record bests just before an economic crisis begins. That certainly happened here in 1929, 1970, 2000, and 2007. The Federal Reserve giving banks and corporations ultra-low interest rates loans is like the government giving the only licensed bakery in town free flour. The bakery is going to make a great deal of money!

■ How do you view Trump's tax cut policy? Is that a favor to the 1% super rich? Do 99-percenters benefit from this policy?

A: The first set of statistics indicates that low income earners did not benefit because of the tax cut and that the benefits went to upper income people. The second set from President Trump's economic council would seem to suggest that the bottom 10% did better than the top of the income distribution. The second set is misleading. The 6.6% increase for those at the bottom is mostly people coming off the bare minimum wage rate which would be less than 50 cents per hour, or they might be simply working more hours. In contrast, a 3.3% increase for those at the top of the income distribution would get an increase in income that is greater than the total annual income for those at the bottom.

■ The US national debt surpasses \$22 trillion dollars. How would that affect the US economy? How would it affect public/state investors?

A: There is little discussion of government debt in the US and the huge government deficit budgets. Without all that extra government spending taken into the accounting of GDP, the US would actually be shrinking. If interest rates stay low the deficit spending could go on for some time, but its interest rates spike higher, which I suspect will happen, the federal budget would be busted in short order. If I were an investor, I would "short" the US and developed economies and I would move my money to cash, gold, and emerging markets and commodity-based economies.

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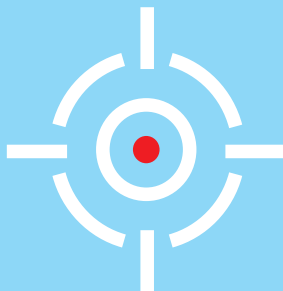
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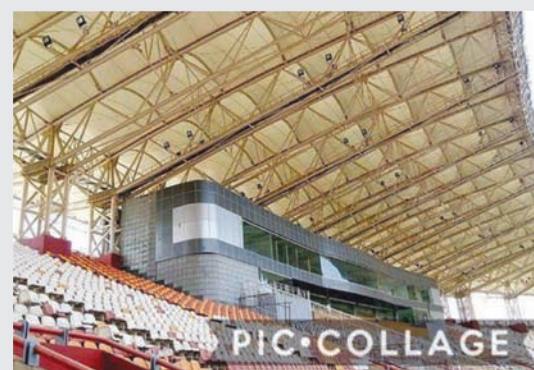
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Planet 10 times Earth's mass may have smacked Jupiter long ago

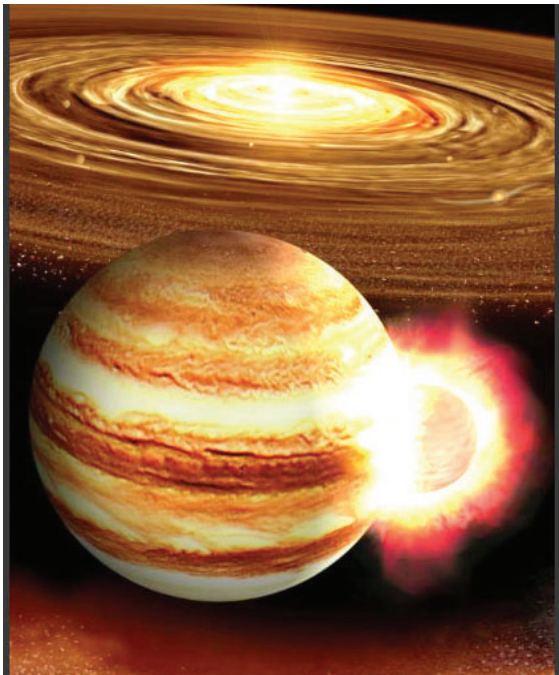
Jupiter, the solar system's largest planet, may have been smacked head-on by an embryonic planet 10 times Earth's mass not long after being formed, a monumental crash with apparent lasting effects on the Jovian core, scientists said on Thursday.

The violent collision, hypothesized by astronomers to explain data collected by NASA's Juno spacecraft, may have occurred just several million years after the birth of the sun roughly 4.5 billion years ago following the dispersal of the primordial disk of dust and gas that gave rise to solar system.

"We believe that impacts, and in particular giant impacts, might have been rather common during the infancy of the solar system. For example, we believe that our moon formed after such an event. However, the impact that we postulate for Jupiter is a real monster," astronomer Andrea Isella of Rice University in Houston said.

Under this scenario, the still-forming planet plunged into and was consumed by Jupiter.

Jupiter, a gas giant planet covered in thick red, brown, yellow and white clouds, boasts a diameter of about 89,000 miles (143,000 km). Interior models based on Juno data indicated Jupiter has a large "diluted" core representing about 5 to 15 percent of the planet's mass comprised of rocky and icy material unexpectedly mixed with light elements like hydrogen and helium.



"Juno measures Jupiter's gravity field to an extraordinary precision. Scientists use that information to infer Jupiter's composition and interior structures," said Shang-Fei Liu, associate professor of astronomy at Sun Yat-sen University in Zhuhai, China, and lead author of the research published in the journal Nature.

Computer models indicated that a head-on collision with a protoplanet - a planet in its formative stages - of roughly 10 Earth masses would have broken apart Jupiter's dense core and mixed light and heavy elements, explaining Juno's findings, the researchers said.

This protoplanet, with a composition similar to Jupiter's primordial core, may have been slightly less massive than the solar system's most distant ice giant planets Uranus and Neptune and would have become a full-fledged gas giant if it had not been swallowed by Jupiter, Liu said.

Jupiter already would have been fully formed at the time, with its strong gravitational pull perhaps precipitating the collision. Jupiter's mass is about 320 times that of Earth.

Liu said tens of thousands of computer simulations indicated at least a 40% chance that Jupiter was hit by a protoplanet early in its history, with this impact scenario offering "by far the best explanation" for the nature of Jupiter's core.

(Source: Reuters)

Chemists have created and imaged a new form of carbon

An elusive wreath of carbon has made its long-awaited debut.

Scientists created a molecule called cyclocarbon and imaged its structure, describing the ring of 18 carbon atoms online August 15 in Science. The work unveils a new face of one of chemistry's most celebrated elements.

"It's not every day that you make a new form of carbon," says chemist Rik Tykwinski of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, who was not involved with the research. The result had eluded chemists for so long that Tykwinski had placed a bet about whether cyclocarbon would be created and imaged.

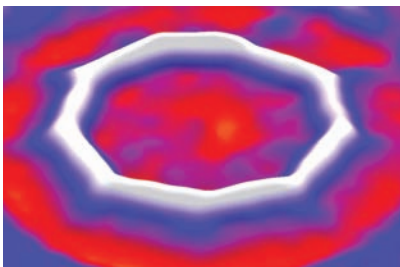
Cyclocarbon joins other forms of the versatile element, including diamond, graphite, thin sheets called graphene, tiny spheres known as buckyballs and miniature cylinders called carbon nanotubes.

Chemists thought that it should be possible to create the ring-shaped molecules of carbon. But until now, nobody knew what their properties would be, says physicist Katharina Kaiser of IBM Research in Zurich. "It's really amazing that we found it and it's absolutely great that we could characterize it."

In the lab, Kaiser and colleagues started with molecules of cyclocarbon oxide, which consist of carbon atoms arranged in a loop with additional carbon monoxide groups attached to the atoms. Removing the carbon monoxide to create the coveted new form of carbon is no easy task; those groups help to stabilize the molecule. Using an atomic force microscope, the researchers managed to pluck off the extraneous carbon monoxide by applying voltages to the molecule.

Eventually, the procedure yielded a bare ring of carbon, which the team imaged with the microscope. Cyclocarbon reacted easily with other substances, so to isolate it, the team created the new carbon molecule on an inert surface of table salt.

Previous research had found hints of



cyclocarbon molecules in a gas. But that work didn't satisfy chemists' curiosity because it wasn't possible to image the molecule and confirm its structure. In particular, it was unclear if the bonds between each atom would alternate between longer and shorter lengths, known as single and triple bonds, or whether all the bonds would be the same length, or double bonds. The new study resolves the debate, revealing that the carbon atoms are held together by alternating single and triple bonds.

That conclusion could help scientists refine the complex computer calculations that are used to predict the structures of unknown molecules. "There's still a big question whether many of these ... calculations give the right answer, so it's very important to confirm by experiment," says chemist Yves Ruben of UCLA, who was not involved with the study.

Previous work on new forms of carbon has been received with great excitement. The discovery in the 1980s of buckyballs and the family of molecules that includes them, fullerenes, garnered a Nobel Prize and much additional research. Likewise, the 2004 discovery of graphene was honored with a Nobel and followed by investigations of potential applications in electronics, for example.

But because cyclocarbon isn't stable, it can't be bottled up for further study. So, for now, it's not clear how wide-ranging the new molecule's impact will be.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

Stash of ancient diamonds is discovered near the Earth's core

An ancient reservoir of diamonds that is older than the moon has been discovered near the Earth's core, more than 410km below the surface.

The diamonds had lain undisturbed for more than 4.5 billion years before being brought to the surface by a violent volcanic eruption in Brazil.

An international group of scientists measured helium isotopes - different atomic forms of helium - in the diamonds to find the ancient reservoir, according to a study published in Science.

Researchers say they acted as "perfect time capsules" that gave them an insight into the tumultuous period shortly after the planet formed. During this period there was so much violent geological activity that almost nothing of the young planet's original structure remained.

However, amid all this change, it had long been suspected there was an area of the mantle somewhere between the crust and core which had been relatively undisturbed. Until now, there was no proof it existed.

The first clues came in the 1980s when scientists noticed some basalt lavas from particular locations had a ratio of helium-3 to helium-4 isotopes that was higher than usual. What was particularly interesting was that this ratio mirrored the isotope ratio found on early meteorites that had crashed into Earth.

This suggested the lava had come from some deep reservoir in Earth which hasn't changed for billions of years.

"This pattern has been observed in 'ocean island basalts', which are lavas coming to the surface from deep in the Earth, and form islands such as Hawaii and Iceland," said Dr. Suzette Timmerman, from the Australian National University, who led the research.

"The problem is that although these basalts are brought to the surface, we only see a glimpse of their history. We don't know much about the mantle where their melts came from," said Dr. Timmerman.

To find out more, researchers studied helium isotope ratios in super-deep diamonds that



formed between 150 and 230km below the Earth's crust. "Diamonds are the hardest, most indestructible natural substance known, so they form a perfect time capsule that provides us a window into the deep Earth," she said.

"We were able to extract helium gas from 23 super-deep diamonds from the Juina area of Brazil.

"These showed the characteristic isotopic composition that we would expect from a very ancient reservoir, confirming that the gases are remnants of a time at or even before the moon and Earth collided."

By studying the diamonds, scientists could tell they came from an area called the 'transition zone' which is between 410 and 660km below the surface of the Earth.

"This means that this unseen reservoir, left over from the Earth's beginnings, must be in this area or below it," said Dr. Timmerman.

No one knows the size of the reservoir and they believe there could be more than one of them.

Professor Matthew Jackson from the University of California, Santa Barbara, who was not involved in the research, said the result was "interesting" and would help scientists map out where these ancient domains are in the Earth's deep interior.

"This work is an important step towards understanding these reservoirs, and points the way to further research," he said.

Scientists will present their work at the Goldschmidt conference in Barcelona later this month.

(Source: The Independent)

First cells may have emerged because building blocks of proteins stabilized membranes

Life on Earth arose about 4 billion years ago when the first cells formed within a primordial soup of complex, carbon-rich chemical compounds.

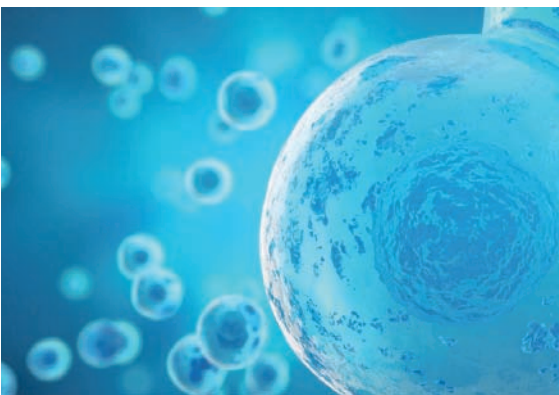
These cells faced a chemical conundrum. They needed particular ions from the soup in order to perform basic functions. But those charged ions would have disrupted the simple membranes that encapsulated the cells.

A team of researchers at the University of Washington has solved this puzzle using only molecules that would have been present on the early Earth. Using cell-sized, fluid-filled compartments surrounded by membranes made of fatty acid molecules, the team discovered that amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, can stabilize membranes against magnesium ions. Their results set the stage for the first cells to encode their genetic information in RNA, a molecule related to DNA that requires magnesium for its production, while maintaining the stability of the membrane.

The findings, published the week of Aug. 12 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, go beyond explaining how amino acids could have stabilized membranes in unfavorable environments. They also demonstrate how the individual building blocks of cellular structures -- membranes, proteins and RNA -- could have co-localized within watery environments on the ancient Earth.

"Cells are made up of very different types of structures with totally different types of building blocks, and it has never been clear why they would come together in a functional way," said co-corresponding author Roy Black, a UW affiliate professor of chemistry and bioengineering. "The assumption was just that -- somehow -- they did come together."

Black came to the UW after a career at Amgen for the opportunity to fill in the crucial, missing details behind that "somehow." He teamed up with Sarah Keller, a UW professor of chemistry and an expert on membranes. Black had been inspired by the observation that fatty acid molecules can self-



assemble to form membranes, and hypothesized that these membranes could act as a favorable surface to assemble the building blocks of RNA and proteins.

"You can imagine different types of molecules moving within the primordial soup as fuzzy tennis balls and hard squash balls bouncing around in a big box that is being shaken," said Keller, who is also co-corresponding author on the paper. "If you line one surface inside the box with Velcro, then only the tennis balls will stick to that surface, and they will end up close together. Roy had the insight that local concentrations of molecules could be enhanced by a similar mechanism."

The team previously showed that the building blocks of RNA preferentially attach to fatty acid membranes and, surprisingly, also stabilize the fragile membranes against detrimental effects of salt, a common compound on Earth past and present.

The team hypothesized that amino acids might also stabilize membranes. They used a variety of experimental techniques -- including light microscopy, electron microscopy and spectroscopy -- to test how 10 different amino acids interacted

with membranes. Their experiments revealed that certain amino acids bind to membranes and stabilize them. Some amino acids even triggered large structural changes in membranes, such as forming concentric spheres of membranes -- much like layers of an onion.

"Amino acids were not just protecting vesicles from disruption by magnesium ions, but they also created multilayered vesicles -- like nested membranes," said lead author Caitlin Cornell, a UW doctoral student in the Department of Chemistry.

The researchers also discovered that amino acids stabilized membranes through changes in concentration. Some scientists have hypothesized that the first cells may have formed within shallow basins that went through cycles of high and low concentrations of amino acids as water evaporated and as new water washed in.

The new findings that amino acids protect membranes -- as well as prior results showing that RNA building blocks can play a similar role -- indicate that membranes may have been a site for these precursor molecules to co-localize, providing a potential mechanism to explain what brought together the ingredients for life.

Keller, Black and their team will turn their attention next to how co-localized building blocks did something even more remarkable: They bound to each other to form functional machines.

"That is the next step," said Black.

Their ongoing efforts are also forging ties across disciplines at the UW.

"The University of Washington is an unusually good place to make discoveries because of the enthusiasm of the scientific community to work collaboratively to share equipment and ideas across departments and fields," said Keller. "Our collaborations with the Drobny Lab and the Lee Lab were essential. No single laboratory could have done it all."

(Source: Science Daily)

Genetic study implicates humans in demise of prehistoric cave bear

Genetic research that reconstructed the past population dynamics of the cave bear, a prominent prehistoric denizen of Europe, implicates Homo sapiens rather than climate cooling in the Ice Age extinction of these brawny plant-loving bears.

Scientists said on Thursday they obtained genome data from 59 cave bears from bones unearthed at 14 sites in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Switzerland.



Using this, they detected a population downturn roughly 50,000 years ago coinciding with the arrival of our species in eastern Europe and then a dramatic decline starting about 40,000 years ago coinciding with the spread of Homo sapiens throughout Europe. It ultimately went extinct about 20,000 years ago.

The cave bear (scientific name Ursus spelaeus) was one of the charismatic inhabitants of Ice Age Europe alongside animals like the cave lion, woolly rhino, woolly mammoth and steppe bison. It was as big as a polar bear but strictly herbivorous. Firmly in the consciousness of humans in Europe, the bear was depicted in prehistoric cave paintings.

There has been a scientific debate about whether a cooling climate doomed the bears by reducing vegetation central to their diet or whether it was human encroachment including hunting and taking over the caves where the bears hibernated and gave birth.

The steep population decline identified in the study predated climate cooling associated with the most recent Ice Age, said paleogeneticist Verena Schuenemann of the University of Zurich in Switzerland.

The bear's population also had remained stable for long periods prior to that, including two pronounced cold stretches and multiple other cooling episodes, Schuenemann added.

Homo sapiens originated in Africa more than 300,000 years ago, later spreading worldwide. The study offered fresh evidence that the arrival of Homo sapiens presaged doom for numerous species across Eurasia, the Americas and Australia.

"There is more and more evidence that modern humans have played a determinant role in the decline and extinction of large mammals once they spread around the planet, starting around 50,000 years ago," biogeologist Hervé Bocherens of the University of Tübingen in Germany said.

"This happened not just by hunting these mammals to extinction, but by causing demographic decline of keystone species, such as very large herbivores, that led to ecosystems' collapse and a cascade of further extinctions," Bocherens added.

Before the arrival of Homo sapiens, the bear's population had remained robust even though it shared its territory with another human species, the Neanderthals, who also went extinct after Homo sapiens invaded Eurasia.

The research was published in the journal Scientific Reports. (Source: Reuters)

Physicists say they've discovered a new state of matter

Physicists at New York University claim they have uncovered a new state of matter that could boost the storage capacity of electronic devices and pave the way for the first generation of quantum computers.



"Our research has succeeded in revealing experimental evidence for a new state of matter -- topological superconductivity," Javad Shabani, an assistant professor of physics at New York University, said in a news release. "This new topological state can be manipulated in ways that could both speed calculation in quantum computing and boost storage."

Traditional computers process bits, which can only assume the value of a zero or a one. Quantum computers use quantum bits or qubits, which can assume the value of one, zero or both -- and an infinite number of values in between.

The team of NYU researchers analyzed quantum state as it transitioned from its conventional state to a new topological state -- a state with new quantum properties and new quantum behaviors. Specifically, scientists measured the energy barrier that separates the two topological phases. A system requires a certain energy input for it to reorganize and adopt new quantum properties.

The analysis, detailed in a paper published on arXiv, helped scientists understand how a new topological superconductivity phase -- a new state of matter -- is created.

Researchers were particularly interested in observing Majorana particles, fermions that are their own antiparticles -- particles with the same mass but the opposite physical charge. Some scientists suggests Majorana particles could be used to store quantum information.

Unfortunately, quantum physicists have struggled to find a natural host for Majorana particles. However, the topological superconductivity phase, newly measured by scientists, could be used to house Majorana particles, which can insulate quantum information from environmental noise.

"The new discovery of topological superconductivity in a two-dimensional platform paves the way for building scalable topological qubits to not only store quantum information, but also to manipulate the quantum states that are free of error," Shabani said.

(Source: UPI)

Modi urges Indians to visit 15 domestic tourism sites, but practicality doubted

MUMBAI (Reuters) – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday came up with one idea to get India’s stuttering economy humming again - get every Indian to visit 15 domestic tourist destinations over the next three years.

The proposal might help to pump up domestic travel, which has struggled as many Indians cut back on consumer spending, and it could also create badly-needed jobs.



But it left some in the travel industry scratching their heads over how India’s far from fully developed transport and tourism infrastructure could cope if many of its 1.25 billion people took Modi up on his challenge.

“By 2022, before India celebrates its 75th year of independence, I would like to request that all of you should travel to at least 15 local tourist destinations,” Modi said in his Independence Day speech.

If everyone did it there would be 18.75 billion trips, or 6.25 billion a year. That compared to 1.8 billion domestic tourism trips by Indians last year, according to an April report by Google and consultancy firm Bain.

Local trips by domestic travelers have grown at a compounded annual growth rate of around 8% in the last four years, the report said.

“The main issue is beyond that of infrastructure at trains stations and airports,” said Imtiaz Qureshi, of the Travel Agents Association of India, who runs his own travel agency in the southern city of Hyderabad.

“It is the last mile connectivity to remote tourist destinations.”

Although Modi’s government has made great efforts to build new roads to link towns and villages, and improve railway services, as well as expand existing airports and construct new ones, it still has a long way to go.

Qureshi said the incremental costs of travel to remote areas without sufficient infrastructure can soon add up and make foreign travel to places such as Malaysia seem cheaper and easier.

Modi, to be sure, did not promise the travel would be easy, saying people should pledge to visit these destinations even if they lack good hotels and other amenities.

It would be “for the sake of employment of the local youth,” he said, adding that once people started traveling, basic amenities would spring up.

Modi himself has been an avid traveler, visiting many remote parts of the country as a young ascetic after he left home, books about him say.



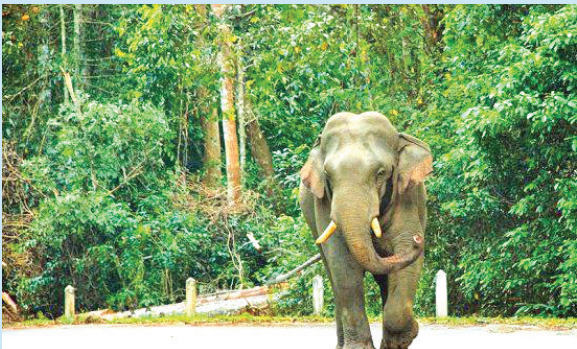
ROUND THE GLOBE

Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex

Home to more than 800 species of fauna and located in northeast Thailand, Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (DPKY-FC) covers 615,500 hectares.

A World Heritage, the property comprises five almost contiguous protected areas of Khao Yai National Park, Thap Lan National Park, Pang Sida National Park, Ta Phraya National Park, and Dong Yai Wildlife Sanctuary.

The complex spans 230 kilometers from Ta Phraya National Park on the Cambodian border in the east and Khao Yai National Park at the western end of the complex.



Internationally important for its biodiversity and the conservation of globally threatened and endangered mammal, bird and reptile species, the property is home to one critically endangered (Siamese crocodile), four endangered (Asian elephant, tiger, leopard cat, banteng) and 19 vulnerable species.

The property protects some of the largest remaining populations in the region of many important wildlife species and is the only known location where White-headed and Pileated Gibbon species have overlapping ranges and interbreed.

The Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, with its high annual rainfall, acts as a critically important watershed for Thailand, draining into and feeding five of the country’s major rivers: Nakhon Nayok river, Prachin Buri river, Lamta Khong river, Muak Lek river, and Mun river. The waterfalls and creeks within the property, together with the variety of flora and fauna and dramatic forested landscapes, attract millions of visitors every year for recreation and education purposes.

More than 80% of Khao Yai National Park remains covered in evergreen or semi-evergreen forest, with much of it tall, good quality primary forest. There are significant areas of primary forest in each of the component protected areas of the complex, with moist and dry evergreen forests occurring in all the Protected Areas of the complex.

(Source: UNESCO)

Visits to North Khorasan museums increase by fourfold

T O U R I S M **TEHRAN** – Visits to archaeological and cultural heritage museums in North Khorasan province have increased by fourfold during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), compared to the same period last year.

“Over 32,000 people toured historical and cultural heritage museums of the province during the first four months of the year and the figure is four times more than that of the same period in the past year,” provincial tourism chief Habib Yazdanpanah said on Wednesday, CHTN reported.

“6557 people paid visits to museums in the four-month period last year,” he added.

Hosting 24,039 sightseers, Mofakham historical-cultural complex received highest number of visitors during the first four months of the current year, he said.

The [Qajar-era] complex [which is located

in Bojnurd], was closed for restoration purposes for one year and a half after it was damaged by an earthquake [in May 2017], Yazdanpanah explained.

Though North Khorasan province may not be the first choice of travelers, but its tourism is getting momentum.

For the time being, 133 eco-lodges are active across the province and 20 new ones will come on stream by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (Mach 19, 2020), a provincial tourism official said earlier in July.

According to Lonely Planet, most foreign tourists pass straight through North Khorasan in transit between Mashhad and Gorgan, but if you have time to explore, it’s worth diverting south from the capital, Bojnurd, towards Esfarayen, famed for its wrestling tournaments, the remarkable citadel of Belqays and the partly preserved stepped village of Roein some 20km north.



A view of the touristic village of Masuleh in Gilan province. It features earth-colored houses that are stacked photogenically on top of one another like giant Lego blocks, clinging to a mountainside so steep that the roof of one house forms the pathway for the next.

Foreign arrivals in Gilan province jump 93% in 3 months on year

T O U R I S M **TEHRAN** — The number of foreign arrivals in Gilan province soared 93 percent in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) from a year earlier, a provincial tourism official has said.

“In the first three months of this year, the number of foreign nationals traveling to the province increased 93 percent compared to the same period last year. Moreover, accommodations by foreign tourists in the province’s residential units increased 9 percent,” CHTN quoted Shahroud Amir-Entekabi as saying on Wednesday.

Amir-Entekabi, however, didn’t referred to the number of foreign travelers but he implicitly said that a majority of them were passing through Gilan to reach other destinations.



A view of Mofakham historical-cultural complex, one of major tourist destinations in Bojnurd, the capital of Iran's North Khorasan province.

Although a lot of new building spoils the effect in parts of the village, Roein is considered Khorasan’s answer to the well-

known Masuleh and is a possible starting point for hikes to little-visited mountain villages.

Ancient Roman temple unearthed below Kent building site

Historians have stopped a 2,000-year-old temple from being bulldozed by developers by offering to rebuild it in their village. The Romano-Celtic temple was unearthed by archaeologists in April on a plot of land earmarked for housing in Newington, Kent.

They found rare coins, pots, a well, an iron smelting kiln and foundations of the inner temple. It follows the discovery of an entire Roman town in Newington last year.

The 18-acre settlement was found to be in exceptional condition and has been hailed as one of the most significant finds in regional archaeological history. Remains of the ancient temple have been placed in storage this week, after Newington History Group (NHG) sought permission off archaeologists to re-site it in their village.

Dean Coles, chairman of NHG, said: ‘We’re excited and proud to have obtained Watling Place Temple for the village.

‘When news of the finds became public, villagers were upset at the thought of them being buried again. ‘We looked



at how we could save the temple, recognizing its unique and immense historic value to the village.’ ‘Now the temple will be a physical reminder of Newington’s long and fascinating heritage.’

It is hoped the temple will become a focal point in Newington and illustrate how the village developed as a Roman town.

There are only 150 known sites of Roman Temples in England, meaning those which are found are considered to be of national importance. Dr Paul Wilkinson, director of SWAT Archaeology, said the discovery strengthens the likelihood that Newington could be part of the long-lost Roman town of Duroeovum.

He said: ‘The industry, residential quarter and temple tell us that Newington could be Durolevum. ‘It is wonderful that part of our Roman heritage is to be rescued and preserved by the efforts of the local community.’ An exhibition of the excavations will be unveiled to the public next month.

(Source: metro.co.uk)

How to take better travel photos, without a new camera

By Geoffrey Morrison

These tips can help you take better vacation images, and maybe save you from spending big on a new camera.

I have a secret to tell you: You don’t need an expensive camera. Don’t get me wrong, I love my big digital camera, huge lenses and all. I love taking photos too. It’s a hobby as well as part of my job. But it’s a myth that a “real” camera instantly makes all photos better. Sure, there are some photographs only possible with big lenses and a real camera, but these situations are less common than you’d think.

A good photographer can take award-winning photos with whatever camera is available. Or to put it another way, your photos aren’t going to get better just because you have an expensive camera. Anyone can make sounds with a guitar, but you have to learn how to make music with it, and it takes a lot of work to master it. A camera is the same.

Before you spend money on a new camera, try improving the photos you take with your current camera or phone. You may be happy enough with the results that you’ll skip the new camera completely.

■ How to line up that perfect shot

While there are no “rules” with photography, there are certainly “good practices” worth learning. For example, unless you’re specifically going for symmetry with the background, try placing your subject off-center. In the camera settings, enable grid lines. These will help you line up a more visually interesting shot.

Try different angles. Dogs, for instance, look way cuter if you photograph them from their eye line. Photograph children from that same low point of view, they’ll look hilariously huge. Adults generally look better with the camera positioned slightly above them. Looking down at a camera puffs out the chin and neck, and no one looks good like that.

Try different distances and positioning. Instead of capturing your family with Big Ben far in the background, you’ll have a more interesting shot with the clock tower close behind or towering above them. Photographs with people especially benefit from being close to the camera.

When outside, try to shoot with the sun behind you, as

the light will be better. As for timing, the best light is the hour after sunrise and the hour before sunset, the so-called “Golden Hour.” Want to get that epic photo of your partner on the beach in Fiji? That’s probably the best time to take it. The worst will be midday, with the strong light coming from directly above.

Also, turn off the flash. Only use it if you absolutely have to. Most modern phones and cameras can take decent photos in pretty low light, and your shots will look better if the flash is off. Even so, check the result after you’ve snapped a photo. It’s possible there’s not enough light, and you can adjust.

■ How to make your photos shine before your share them

The next tool in your photography toolbox are free photo editing apps and software, like Adobe’s Photoshop Express, Google’s Snapseed and even the manual adjustments in Instagram. They all allow you to easily change the look of a photo, often dramatically. Yes, there are stock filters everyone uses on their photos, but play with the toggles and see what each setting does. It may seem daunting at first, but basic adjustments are easy and make a big difference.

Nearly every photo will benefit from subtle tweaks to contrast, brightness, shadows and saturation. If you’re not sure what those terms mean, check out the apps and experiment with some of your own photos. On my Instagram account, I adjust my photos to be more visually interesting, a sort of idealized version of what you’d see in real life. Everyone has their own style, though. As you experiment, you’ll start to figure out yours, and that variety and personalization are what makes photography awesome.

■ Don’t be afraid to experiment

Experimenting is the key, no matter what camera you’re using. For every amazing image a professional photographer takes, there will be hundreds, probably thousands, of images that are terrible and never see the light of day. Like everything, this takes practice and experimentation to see what works.

If you still want a fancy camera for your trip though, buy it well in advance to understand how it works. Play with the settings extensively. A complex camera left in “Auto”



mode isn’t going to be much different than the camera on a mid- to high-end phone. Maybe it will be a little better at night, or offer a real zoom, but this mode is like owning an expensive guitar and not using half the strings.

Wirecutter, a New York Times company that reviews and recommends products, has multiple camera suggestions. I recommend one of the smaller ones with a decent optical zoom (digital zooms on most phones are basically useless). A good small camera with myriad manual adjustments is an excellent tool to learn photography. Once you master that, you’ll know exactly what you want in a full-size, interchangeable-lens camera.

Oh, and one last crucial tip for phones and cameras alike: Make sure your lenses are clean. Nothing ruins a photo more than a smudgy lens.

(Source: The New York Times)

Iranian researchers produce odor sensitivity test kit

HEALTH TEHRAN — Iranian researchers at Iran University of Medical Science have built the first odor sensitivity test kit based on local odors, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

A few years ago, researchers at Amirkabir University of Technology had built the Iranian version of the odor sensitivity test that was designed in University of Pennsylvania, but the new kit is tailored to Iran natural environment and the common smells in the country, said Dr. Mohammad Farhadi, the head of otorhinolaryngology, head and neck research center at Iran University of Medical Science.

According to Farhadi, the kits are of three kind. The first kind tests 24 different odors common in Iran. The second one tests the users' ability to identify the smells, differentiate between them and their overall olfactory sense.

The third type is a highly rapid test that examines five different common smells in the country in less than two minutes, he added.

Producing these kits took about five years, the kits are portable and simple to use as they are in the form of pens. The pen shape is also perfect for restoring the



smells and testing the users' olfactory ability, said Farhadi.

Each pen can restore each odor for about six months, after that the pens need to be recharged, he added.

■ Finding common odors

According to Farhadi, in the past, the foreign odor sensitivity kits were used, but

they entailed odors that were not familiar for Iranians.

"To come up with a version suitable for Iran, we identified 24 common odors according to different ethnic groups in Iran."

"Contrary to common believes, the sense of smell (olfaction) is very important in people's quality of life, using such kits help

us to detect disorders that are associated with feeble sense of smell," he said.

Currently the olfaction is screened in Iran University of Medical Science, said Farhadi, expressing hope that other olfaction screening clinics use the new locally-modified test kits as well.

■ Olfactory disorders

According to WebMD, without your sense of smell, food tastes different, you can't smell the scent of a flower, and you could find yourself in a dangerous situation, unknowingly. For example, without the ability to detect odors, you wouldn't smell a gas leak, smoke from a fire, or sour milk.

Taste and smell disorders send hundreds of thousands of Americans to the doctor each year. Fortunately, for most people, anosmia is a temporary nuisance caused by a severely stuffy nose from a cold. Once the cold runs its course, a person's sense of smell returns.

But for some people, including many elderly, the loss of a sense of smell may persist. In addition, anosmia can be a sign of a more serious medical condition. Any ongoing problems with smell should be checked out by a doctor.

First collection of elite cow embryos created

HEALTH TEHRAN — After ten years, Iranian researchers compiled the first collection of cow embryos with outstanding genetics.

Embryo Transfer (ET) is an advanced reproductive technology and a progressive tool that can help you produce more offspring from an elite cow and can extend the impact of outstanding cattle genetics.

The project was carried out in the Department of Biological Technologies of Avicenna Research Institute, the institute reported on Thursday.

Avicenna Research Institute has imported a limited number of cows with outstanding genetics. Now, a collection of embryos from different breeds including beef cattle, dairy cattle and dual-purpose (milk and meat) cattle is made, raising hopes among the cattle ranchers to easily access the best cattle inside the country.

According to the institute, the national project is aimed at using the most up-to-date reproductive technologies in order to reduce costs and increase the production.

Based on the project, the elite cows in every herd are selected; then, by using in-vitro fertilization (IVF), new embryos are created in laboratory and are placed into recipient females.

The project aims to annually produce 60 embryos from every elite cow.

The national project of "Breeding Elite Cows with using IVF" was officially selected as the "top project" in Biological Technologies Department of Avicenna Research Institute in the Iranian year 1396 (March 2017- March 2018) and many governmental and private organizations expressed their readiness to preorder its final products.

According to Avicenna Research Institute, the project can reduce the import of elite breeds of cows such as Jersey cattle, Simmental cattle and Charolais cattle. Importing such breeds of cattle is very costly and is among the largest problems of Iran's cattle industry.

The cattle industry involves the production of cattle



for various purposes, including beef, hides, dairy, and other products. Cattle also provide us with many other by-products — parts of the cow that are used to make products for home, health, food and industry. Byproducts are value-added products other than beef that come from cattle. They are of considerably less value than the primary product, which is beef.

Why short-term stress and anxiety can actually be good for you

It's impossible to go through life without dealing with some stress and anxiety.

Nor would you necessarily want to, mental health experts say.

Chronic stress is usually cast in an unhealthy light. And with good reason.

Heart disease, diabetes, decreased libido, gastrointestinal problems, and disruptions in sleep and appetite are just on the short list of health problems linked to elevated stress over long periods of time.

In 2018, Harvard researchers reported that people with high levels of the stress hormone cortisol performed worse on memory tests.

"The main reason we view stress so negatively is the dominant narrative put forth by stress research. [It] focuses on the negative impacts of stress, such as chronic and debilitating diseases like hypertension, obesity, and type 2 diabetes," said Jennifer Wegmann, who teaches stress management at Binghamton University's Decker School of Nursing.

Wegmann notes that 2017 research from the American Psychological Association (APA) found that 20 percent of Americans said they were experiencing extremely high levels of stress.

"If Americans can learn to utilize stress in a positive way, it could not only help mitigate the negative outcomes people are experiencing, but lead to improved well-being, more productivity, and personal growth," she told Healthline.

"Stress causes harm when it exceeds any level that a person can reasonably absorb or use to build psychological strength," Lisa Damour, PhD, author of the book "Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls," said in a presentation this week at the APA's annual convention in Chicago.

Short-term stress, however, can be beneficial.

"It's important for psychologists to share our knowledge about stress with broad audiences: that stress is a given in daily life, that working at the edge of our abilities often builds those capacities, and that moderate levels of stress can have an inoculating function, which leads to higher than average resilience when we are faced with new difficulties," she told the APA conference audience.

Anxiety, too, has its purpose.

Damour likened it to "an internal alarm system, likely handed down by evolution, that alerts us to threats both external — such as a driver swerving in a nearby lane — and internal — such as when we've procrastinated too long and it's time to get started on our work."



ated too long and it's time to get started on our work."

"Likewise," she added, "anxiety becomes unhealthy when its alarm makes no sense. Sometimes, people feel routinely anxious for no reason at all. At other times, the alarm is totally out of proportion to the threat, such as when a student has a panic attack over a minor quiz."

■ Putting the body on high alert

Charley Melson, executive director of the addiction treatment program Praxis by Landmark Recovery in Louisville, Kentucky, and a licensed professional clinical counselor, tells Healthline the body adds adrenaline to the bloodstream when under stress. That causes physiological reactions, which include increased respiration and blood flow, slower digestion, and improved vision.

Kevon Owen, a clinical psychotherapist, likens anxiety to caffeine, which increases energy and improves alertness and reaction time.

"Caffeine is the external imitation of anxiety," the Oklahoma City counselor told Healthline.

He notes that caffeine use can also exacerbate anxiety.

"Stress is your mind's way of prioritizing and organizing tasks that need to be done," he said. "These things do not become negative until they interrupt or disrupt motivators or begin causing negative mental or physical anguish."

■ Stress and anxiety are motivators

Melson says moderate, normal psychological stress "can be used by students and professionals as a form of motivation to accomplish goals and meet deadlines."

"Similarly, stress can help keep you alert and focused, working almost like an adrenaline rush. It can even improve your

recall in some situations," she said.

As the Harvard researchers noted, however, the opposite may be true with chronic stress.

Experiencing "stage fright" and "testing anxiety" may also be mislabeled as universally negative, says Mary Joye, a licensed mental health counselor at Winter Haven Counseling in Florida.

"Anxiety is a wonderful propeller for accomplishment. It's also good for an edge in sports and entertainment if you're a performer. It keeps you on your toes as long as it's not out of control. It is also what will help you rehearse, study, and in general, motivate you to become your personal best," she told Healthline.

Inna Leiter, a licensed clinical psychologist at the Center for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Media, Pennsylvania, agrees. She notes that the Yerkes-Dodson law of psychology "dictates that performance will improve with physiological or mental arousal, but only up to a point."

"When levels of arousal become too high, performance starts to decrease," she told Healthline.

She adds that research shows that different tasks require different levels of arousal for optimal performance.

"For example, intellectually intensive tasks often require a lower level of stress for optimal performance due to a competing need for focus and good judgment, while tasks that require a great deal of persistence (like running a marathon) may be best performed under higher levels of stimulation," she said.

■ Are you experiencing 'eustress'?

There's even a clinical term for positive stress: eustress.

"When people are able to see the difference between positive eustress and nega-

tive stress, they can start using their stress and anxiety to their advantage," Kristen Fescio, clinical program manager at the stress-management firm Resiliety Health in Jacksonville, Florida, told Healthline.

"Just knowing this is helpful, because many people experience some anxiety, assume it will hurt their performance, and then get anxious about being anxious, and now they are too anxious," agreed Dr. Gail Saltz, an associate professor of psychiatry at the New York Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell School of Medicine, who advises viewing anxiety as a form of excitement rather than a source of worry.

Sheila Tucker, a licensed associate marriage and family therapist and owner of Heart Mind & Soul Counseling in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, tells Healthline that experiencing stress can have positive psychological benefits, too.

"Symptoms of stress and anxiety can show up when something is missing from your life, like free time, or when something is important to you," Tucker said.

"This is a great opportunity to take a step back and look at the situation. By reframing or shifting your perspective of your experience, the grip of stress and anxiety lessen. Not to mention, you gain valuable insight on what's really going on in your life," she added.

"Anyone feeling overwhelmed by stress should, if possible, take measures to reduce his or her stress and/or seek help from a trained professional to learn stress-management strategies," Damour said at the APA conference.

"For the management of anxiety, some people find relief through workbooks that help them to evaluate and challenge their own irrational thoughts. If that approach isn't successful, or preferred, a trained professional should be consulted. In recent years, mindfulness techniques have also emerged as an effective approach to addressing both stress and anxiety," she continued.

Damour also urged psychologists to counter the notion that people should feel calm and relaxed most of the time.

"We want to support well-being, but don't set the bar at being happy nearly all of the time. That is a dangerous idea, because it is unnecessary and unachievable," she said.

"If you are under the impression that you should always be joyful, your day-to-day experience may ultimately turn out to be pretty miserable."

(Source: healthline.com)

Iranian center uses NGS to prevent genetic disorders, disabilities

➔ These techniques are applied on people with infertility problems or recurrent miscarriages, she said.

The center does PGD testing and pre-implantation genetic screening (PGS) on couples who have genetic disorder records and disabilities in their families, she added.



■ What is next-generation sequencing (NGS)?

According to NCBI website, NGS has been introduced in genomic laboratories about 10 years ago. Its impact on technological revolution has important implications in human biology and medicine. After improvements in accuracy, robustness and handling, it became a widely used and an alternative approach to the direct Sanger sequencing.

The progress of NGS is leading to the increase of discovery of number of genes associated to human inherited disorders and to the elucidation of molecular basis of complex disease. Moreover, since on NGS platforms it is possible to perform a parallel sequencing of different target regions, NGS is widely used in diagnostics.

Recently, the use of NGS in clinical laboratories has become increasingly widespread, used in diagnostics of infectious diseases, immune disorders, human hereditary disorders and in non-invasive prenatal diagnosis, and, more recently, in the therapeutic decision making for somatic cancers

Rejuvenating brain stem cells may hold key to future MS treatments

Scientists have found a way to make older brain stem cells in rats more youthful. The discovery could lead to improved treatments for aging-related diseases that degrade the brain and nervous system.

Researchers managed to rejuvenate stem cells, inching closer to more effective treatments for MS.

The research concerns oligodendrocyte progenitor cells (OPCs), which are a type of stem cell, or immature cell. OPCs are essential for the healthy functioning of the brain and the rest of the central nervous system.

OPCs mature, or differentiate, into oligodendrocytes, which are the cells that produce the myelin sheath that surrounds nerve fibers and preserves the electrical signals that they carry.

Destruction of myelin is a distinguishing feature of multiple sclerosis (MS), and aging-related changes to OPCs contribute to the process. Aging can also reduce OPC function in healthy individuals.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom found that increasing stiffness in the aging brain impairs the function of OPCs.

When they transplanted OPCs from older rats into the brains of younger rats, the aged OPCs began to function like youthful OPCs.

■ Stiffening of stem cell niche

The team eventually established that the loss of function in the OPCs was a result of something happening in their microenvironment, or stem cell "niche."

"Here we show," write the authors in a recent Nature paper, "that the OPC microenvironment stiffens with age, and that this mechanical change is sufficient to cause age-related loss of function of OPCs."

A research review suggests that engineering stem cells could be a way forward for replacing damaged brain cells in Parkinson's disease.

It appears that the stem cell niche reflects the aging-related changes in the "chemical and mechanical signals" that it sends to the OPCs residing in it.

Once the transplanted aged OPCs sensed that they were in a more youthful, soft environment, they began to behave more like vigorous, younger OPCs.

To explore what was going on in more detail, the team ran some laboratory experiments with OPCs and "biological and synthetic scaffolds to mimic the stiffness of young brains."

■ 'Molecularly and functionally rejuvenated'

The researchers observed that when they grew aged OPCs on soft material scaffolds, they started to behave more like youthful OPCs.

The aged OPCs were "molecularly and functionally rejuvenated" as a result of being on the softer material.

Conversely, placing young OPCs on scaffolds comprising stiffer material, caused them to behave like older ones.

"We were fascinated," says co-senior study author Dr. Kevin J. Chalut, "to see that when we grew young, functioning brain stem cells on the stiff material, the cells became dysfunctional and lost their ability to regenerate, and in fact began to function like aged cells."

Chalut works in the Department of Physics and the Stem Cell Institute at the University of Cambridge.

He observes, however, that the more interesting finding was seeing the old OPCs growing in the soft material, and how "they began to function like young cells — in other words, they were rejuvenated."

"This suggests a new way forward to override the age-related loss of function in this important stem cell system," he adds.

■ Piezo1 signals niche stiffness

Further investigation led Chalut and his colleagues to focus on a "mechanoresponsive ion channel" called Piezo1, a protein that sits on the surface of OPCs. They found that Piezo1 tells the OPCs whether their niche is stiff or soft.

When they tested the reaction of aged OPCs lacking Piezo1, the researchers found that the stem cells behaved like youthful OPCs, even when they were growing on the stiffer scaffolding material. They also found that deleting Piezo1 in the OPCs in the brains of aged rats led to the stem cells behaving like they were young again. The cells resumed their normal ability to regenerate.

The MS Society, which is a registered charity in England and Wales in the U.K., part-funded the study. Their director of research, Dr. Susan Kohlhaas, says that the findings "have important implications" for the treatment of MS.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Europe has space for enough wind turbines to power the entire world, study finds

Europe has enough space to create millions of wind turbines that could power the entire world until 2050, according to a new scientific analysis.

An international team of researchers say there is 4.9 million square kilometers of land – 46 per cent of Europe’s total land – that would be suitable for wind turbines, according to the paper published in Energy Policy.

Building 11 million additional wind turbines could create 497 exajoules of power which would supply the world’s energy needs until 2050 when there is expected to be a global demand of 430 exajoules.



Reaching this target would mean ramping up onshore wind power production by a factor of more than 100, scientists say. They say we need to drastically increase wind power to avert climate catastrophe.

“The study is not a blueprint for development but a guide for policymakers, indicating the potential of how much more can be done and where the prime opportunities exist,” said co-author Benjamin Sovacool, professor of energy policy at the University of Sussex.

“Our study suggests that the horizon is bright for the on-shore wind sector and that European aspirations for a 100 per cent renewable energy grid are within our collective grasp technologically,” he said.

“Obviously, we are not saying that we should install turbines in all the identified sites but the study does show the huge wind power potential right across Europe.”

Scientists analyzed data from the European Copernicus satellite program and wind speed atlases.

They also used Geographical Information System data to find areas that might not be suitable for a windfarm due to roads and restricted access for military or political reasons.

Peter Enevoldsen, assistant professor in energy technology at Aarhus University, said: “Critics will no doubt argue that the naturally intermittent supply of wind makes onshore wind energy unsuitable to meet the global demand.

“But even without accounting for developments in wind turbine technology in the upcoming decades, onshore wind power is the cheapest mature source of renewable energy, and utilizing the different wind regions in Europe is the key to meet the demand for a 100 per cent renewable and fully decarbonized energy system.”

Large parts of western Europe are ripe for onshore farms because they have good wind speeds and flat land. Researchers say Turkey, Russia and Norway also have huge potential for future wind power density.

(Source: Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Bosnian Serbs face tribunal pressure

(July 4, 2001)

Slobodan Milosevic made his first appearance at the war crimes tribunal in the Hague this week. Paul Anderson reported on how Serbian and Yugoslav politicians are now finding themselves under pressure to surrender more war-crimes suspects.

For the past five days Yugoslavia has been run by a **caretaker government** after last week’s resignation of the federal prime minister. That in turn led to **concern about the future viability** of the Yugoslav Federation. The federal parliament is due to meet today to discuss the crisis and appoint a new prime minister and cabinet. More protests are planned by Serbian nationalists, several thousand of whom have been **out on the streets** in support of Mr. Milosevic over the past week. Now they’re calling for new elections. Most politicians though, like their people, **have no appetite** for more political uncertainty. They want to **get on with the job** of repairing the **destruction wreaked** on the Yugoslav economy during more than a decade of Milosevic **misrule**. **Tribunal** officials in Belgrade say the surrender of Mr Milosevic was a huge **breakthrough** but they want the authorities here **to follow it up with** more arrests and more transfers to the Hague. Meanwhile attention is also focused on the two most wanted Bosnia Serb war crimes suspects - Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. It’s **an open secret** that both are in the Bosnian Serb Republic. On Tuesday the entity’s government agreed to co-operate with the war crimes tribunal - the prime minister was due in the Hague on Wednesday for talks. However that’s unlikely to come to much until the Bosnian Serb parliament passes the law on co-operation and observers say **hard-line** nationalists are likely **to block** it.

Words

a caretaker government: a temporary government in power until a new government is appointed
concern about the future viability: worries about the future existence

out on the streets: protesting in public
have no appetite for: don’t want
get on with the job: continue doing the work
destruction wreaked on: damage done to
misrule: bad government

Tribunal: a special court or committee that is appointed to deal with particular problems

breakthrough: important development or achievement
to follow it up with: to take further action on (something)
;do something more

an open secret: something which is supposed to be a secret but that many people know about

hard-line: with a firm or extreme policy
to block: to prevent something from being done

(Source: BBC)

\$20m earmarked to mitigate SDSs in Sistan-Baluchestan

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A total **d e s k** budget of 865 billion (nearly \$20.5 million) has been allocated to counter sand and dust storms (SDSs) hitting southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for SDSs mitigation, has said.

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

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

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

Referring to the SDSs hitting southeastern part of the country causing the residents severe health problems, Tahmasebi noted the SDSs increase by 120-day winds, which usually starts from Late-April to Late-September.

120-day winds of Sistan raging from northeast to southeast with high speed in summer, affects large areas of Sistan-Baluchestan province, and when the temperature reaches the highest level, it will cause storms, soil erosion and vegetation depletion as well as carrying abrasive sand and particles.

These winds are the sequence of monsoon in India, which get power in Afghanistan especially in the Thar desert and then pass through the flat areas of Afghanistan to enter Iran.

The sources of these SDSs are both internal and external, he emphasized, adding, the SDSs usually raise from external hotspots in Afghanistan and move into the Sistan plain and the Hamoun wetland, which is dried and turned into a hotspot.

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 past two decades, water have still been flowing in Hamoun wetland and soil was moisturized; the storms fed with external hotspots have been largely controlled, he explained.

He went on to say that but now due to the dryness of the Hamoun, the SDSs have been increased. However, heavy rain this year filled Hamoun wetland and contained the issue.

He further lamented that last year not a sufficient budget have been allotted to curb sand and dust storms in Sistan, adding that this year some 865 billion rials (around \$20.5 million) have been allocated in this regard.

The budget will be distributed among the responsible bodies to take efficient measures, he said.

The Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization will receive 330 billion rials (about \$7.8 million) to plant vegetation in the areas and curb dust generation, he noted.

“Some 350 billion rials (about \$9 million) will be provided to the Ministry of Energy to dredge the river beds in order to facilitate water release into the Hamoun wetland.”

A part of the budget will also spend on new agricultural irrigation methods and reducing water consumption in the sector, holding training courses for locals, he highlighted.

“About 150 billion rials (around \$3.5 million) will be given to the Department of Environment, which will protect Hamoun wetland, deliver water to the wetland and distribute water in areas affected by wind erosion, adding, and provide health care and hospital services in Sistan region.”

According to the World Metrological Organization, sand and dust storms usually occur when strong winds lift large amounts of sand and dust from bare, dry soils into the atmosphere. Over the last decade, scientists have come to realize the impacts on climate, human health, the environment and many socio-economic sectors.

July was hottest month ever recorded in history, scientists confirm

July was officially the hottest month ever measured by humans on Earth, it has been confirmed.

Meteorologists had earlier released preliminary data suggesting the record had been broken, leading to warnings about the urgency required to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis.

But the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced on Thursday that July was 0.95C warmer than the 20th century average for the month and had narrowly topped the previous record set in 2016, by 0.03C.

Temperatures have been recorded every year since 1880. July 2019 was about 1.2C warmer than the pre-industrial era, according to the data.

Scientists have said the upward trend will probably continue because of human activity on the planet.

Following the publication of the preliminary results earlier this month, the World Meteorological Organization secretary-general, Petteri Taalas, said July had “rewritten climate history, with dozens of new temperature records at local, national and global level”.

Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary-general, also stressed his concern over the record-breaking heat.

“We have always lived through hot summers. But this is not the summer of our youth. This is not your grandfather’s summer,” he said this month.

“All of this means that we are on track for the period from 2015 to 2019 to be the five hottest years on record. This year alone, we have seen temperature records shattered from New Delhi to Anchorage, from Paris to Santiago, from Adelaide and to the Arctic Circle.

“If we do not take action on climate change now, these extreme weather events are just the tip of the iceberg. And,

Museum shrouds endangered wildlife exhibits in mourning veil

One of Britain’s largest natural history collections is to shroud its exhibits of extinct and endangered species in black mourning veils to highlight the global biodiversity crisis.

Isla Gladstone, a senior curator at Bristol Museum, said the museum wanted to respond to the seriousness of the scientific threats to wildlife and plants, identified in a recent UN report.

Gladstone said the inspiration came from children at Freshford primary school, near Bath, who wrote to the museum demanding it told the true story behind a fiercely-posed Bengal tiger exhibit, as well as other specimens. The tiger was one of 39 shot dead by King George V with a team of British officials in Nepal in 1911. Eighteen rhinos and four sloth bears were also killed during the expedition.

“The tiger has such a powerful story, shocking and devastating,” Gladstone said. “The children went away and started researching after their visit and were incredibly affected by it. There were 100,000 tigers in the wild when this one was shot. Today there are less than 4,000.”

“The extinction crisis is causing a lot of anxiety among people,” she added. “We have a unique role to play with our animal stories and histories, and in creating a space for conversation and doing something positive to raise awareness. We want to help people imagine a world without these incredible creatures.

(Source: The Guardian)



indeed, the iceberg is also rapidly melting,” Guterres said.

“Preventing irreversible climate disruption is the race of our lives, and for our lives. It is a race that we can and must win,” he said.

The results had been expected after several European countries reported new all-time temperature records in July.

According to the NOAA’s records, nine of the 10 hottest Julys on record have occurred since 2005 and last month was the 43rd consecutive July above the 20th century average.

June of this year had already set a record as the hottest seen in the past 140 years.

The record temperatures notched up in July were accompanied by other climate events that have caused concern. Average Arctic sea ice, for example, was almost 20 per cent below average in July, less even than the previous historic

low of July 2012.

Last month’s heatwave set the new highest UK temperature of 38.7C, recorded at Cambridge Botanic Garden. The previous record was 38.5C, in Faversham, Kent, in August 2003.

France also saw previous highs smashed, with temperatures hitting 42.6C in Paris – the same as a typical July day in Baghdad.

The northern city of Lille also saw 41.6C, which broke its previous record by 4C.

A 75-year-old record was broken in the Netherlands with temperatures reaching 40.7C in Gilze-Rijen?; Germany saw 42.6C in Lingen; and Belgium also recorded a new high of 41.8C in Begijnendijk.

Even in Helsinki, Finland, the mercury rose to a record 33.2C, while parts of the U.S. also suffered record-breaking conditions.

The high temperatures stimulated rapid ice melt in Greenland, which had already seen an extraordinary melting event between 11 and 20 July this year. Polar scientists believe 2019 could set new records for ice loss in the country.

North of the Arctic Circle the heat sparked massive wildfires, producing CO2 emissions equal to those of all of Colombia in 2017.

Hundreds of fires, many of which could be clearly seen from space, ravaged Siberia, affecting more than three million hectares of land.

Experts have said the heatwaves are linked to human activity, which has more than doubled their probability in some locations.

The year to date is also 0.95 C above the long-term average, but still slightly behind 2016.

(Source: Independent)

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 08-21-9740013

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	CASING, API GRADE N-80, SEAMLESS" BUTTRESS,THREAD.RANGE 3 (MAX LEN:40.5 FT)AS PER API 5CT / ISO 11960 PSL : 2 SIZE (OD) AS SPECIFIED MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5CT NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION : 1 (L.O.I:1) "QCP / MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM" " ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION" CASING 9-5/8 IN ., 53.SPPF DRIFT :8.500"	5000 LE

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their “ letter INTENT OF INTENT” via Fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender .will be disregarded

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit .a bid bond of 168,298 EURO or 8,090, 891,484 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P. NISOC’S WAREHOUSE, AGHA JARI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC’ S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

Kouy-e Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

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تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۸/۵/۲۳ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۵/۲۶

Syria : Army at gates of foreign terrorists' largest stronghold in Lattakia

TEHRAN — The Damascus army advanced in strategic areas in Northeastern Lattakia concurrent with its battle in Southern Idlib and Northern Hama, arriving at the entrance of Turkistani party terrorists' bastion town of Kabana over the past 24 hours.

"The army forces, supported by the Russian fighter jets, could regain control of the heights overlooking Kabana which is the Turkistani party's main stronghold at the border with Idlib," the Arabic-language website of Russia's Sputnik news agency quoted a field source as saying on Thursday.

Meantime, the Syrian army continued its military advances in other parts of Syria over past 24 hours. Tens of terrorists were killed and dozens more were injured during the Syrian army's operations in provinces across Syria.

The Syrian army advanced in strategic areas in Northeastern Lattakia concurrent with its battle in Southern Idlib and Northern Hama, arriving at the entrance of Turkistani party terrorists' bastion town of Kabana.

The Arabic-language service of Sputnik news agency quoted a field source as saying on Thursday that the army forces, supported by the Russian fighter jets, could regain control of the heights overlooking Kabana which is the Turkistani party's main stronghold at the border with Idlib.

He added that the Syrian army forces could recapture Jabal al-Zawiqa and the adjacent hills as the most important corridor leading to the strategic town of Kabana, noting that the terrorists' defense lines have collapsed given the Syrian army's concurrent advance in Northern Hama and Southern Idlib.

Kabana's freedom will pave the ground for the Syrian army to enter the Turkistani terrorists' most important bases and towns in



Jisir al-Shaour, Badama and al-Sarmaniyeh in Western and Southwestern Idlib.

The Syrian army continued military operations in Southern Idlib, regaining control of new regions at the entrance of the town of Khan Sheikhoun.

The army forces continued clashes with Tahrir al-Sham al-Hay'at (the Levant Liberation Front or the Al-Nusra Front) terrorists in the Western parts of Khan Sheikhoun in Southern Idlib on Thursday, retaking control of the towns of Horsh al-Abedin and Kharbat al-Abedin in the Northern parts of the town of al-Habit, Zaitouneh farm and the village of Madaya in the North of the town of Kafar Ain.

Meantime, a military source said that the Syrian army's special forces in clashes with Tahrir al-Sham took back control of regions from Zarai farms in the West of

Khan Sheikhoun to al-Salam checkpoint in the Western gate of the town and deployed in the area.

He added that the Syrian army troops also resumed advance in the Eastern parts of Khan Sheikhoun near the town of al-Tamane'ah in Southern Idlib.

Meantime, Tahrir al-Sham terrorist group replaced a number of its commanders to maintain regions under its control after the Syrian army's extensive advances in Southern Idlib.

The report came on Thursday after the Syrian army forces continued clashes with Tahrir al-Sham in al-Habit in Southern Idlib, regaining control of the towns of Kafar Tab and Abedin in the Northern parts of Kafar Ain in Western Khan Sheikhoun.

Field sources in Northern Syria reported that Tahrir al-Sham has changed a number of

its military commanders in Northern Hama and Southern Idlib and has set up a new military formation in these regions.

They added that after the Syrian army's advances, the terrorists in Northern Syria have engaged in internal differences, noting that Tahrir al-Sham has replaced its commanders to protect the remaining occupied regions against the Syrian army's impending attacks.

Informed sources reported that the Kurdish militants are holding talks with Damascus on delivering control of certain parts of Eastern Euphrates region to the Syrian army after the US agreement with Ankara to set up a safe zone in Syria.

The Arabic-language Bas News affiliated to the Kurds quoted the Kurdish sources as saying on Wednesday that a delegation of the Kurdish forces headed by Chairman of the Syrian Democratic Council Ilham Ahmad has recently met with senior officials in Damascus and Russia's military base in Humeimim on the fate of Eastern Euphrates region.

He added that during the talks, Damascus has urged the Syrian Democratic Council to return the heavy weapons they had taken from the Syrian army, withdraw the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militants from the centers of Qamishli and Hasaka cities, and deliver their control to the Syrian government.

The source also referred to the Damascus' demand from the Kurdish forces to pave the ground for the Syrian army's deployment in Hasaka province, and said an agreement will soon be made between the two sides to give control of Raqqa and al-Tabaqaah to the Syrian government.

He added that at present, the problem is the US opposition, noting that Washington intends to receive some advantages from Russia first.

Aoun : Victory will be repeated If war is repeated



Marking the anniversary of July 2006 Israeli aggression against Lebanon, President Michel Aoun said on Friday, "if war is to be repeated, then we hope victory will be repeated as well," the National News Agency reported.

The 2006 Israel-Hizbullah War and known in Lebanon as the July War, was a 34-day military conflict in Lebanon. It continued until a United Nations-brokered ceasefire went into effect in the morning on 14 August 2006.

On another level, the President stressed the importance of the financial paper that had been drafted at Baabda Palace in his presence and that of Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister, Saad Hariri.

Last Friday, a high-level economic-financial meeting chaired by Aoun was held at the Baabda Palace, after which Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced that the conferees expressed their commitment to the stability of the Lebanese lira.

"We are working for Lebanon's best interest, regardless of all external positions on the reconciliation. Of course, the problem is over. The effects will remain, but they will eventually subside," Aoun added in reference to Qabshmoun ordeal.

The reconciliation Aoun was referring to managed to end weeks of political deadlock and tension between Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblat and Lebanese Democratic Party chief Talal Arslan.

Maduro accuses ex-Colombian president of plotting his assassination

TEHRAN (FNA) — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro stated that Colombia's former President Alvaro Uribe Velez had planned to hire mercenaries to assassinate him.

The last failed assassination of Maduro took place in early August 2018 during a military parade in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas, as the presidential box was hit by an explosion caused by two bomb-laden drones, leaving Maduro unharmed, while seven security officers were injured in the incident, RIA Novosti reported.

Back then, Venezuela's Foreign Ministry also mentioned former Venezuelan Prosecutor General Luisa Ortega Diaz, Colombia's former President, Juan Manuel Santos, and one of the Venezuelan opposition leaders, Julio Borges, among those behind the attempt to assassinate Maduro, alongside Uribe.

"I have learned about a plan coordinated by Alvaro Uribe Velez involving Colombian Ambassador to the United States Francisco Santo [...] to send 32 mercenaries to Venezuela to try to kill me", Maduro said in a speech, aired live on his Twitter late on Wednesday.

Maduro has repeatedly claimed that the United States instructed Colombia

to organize his assassination, something denied by both Bogota and Washington.

Last week, the Venezuelan president noted that he had evidence, proving that US National Security Adviser John Bolton had masterminded the 2018 attempted assassination of the Venezuelan leader. In December 2018, Maduro accused Bolton of preparing a plan to overthrow and kill him.

Both Bogota and Washington have also denied any involvement in the incident.

Venezuela is experiencing a political crisis that intensified in January after the US-backed opposition leader, Juan Guaido, illegally proclaimed himself interim president.

The United States immediately recognized Guaido, after which some 50 other countries followed suit. Russia, China, Cuba, Bolivia and a number of other states have, in the meantime, voiced their support for the legitimate government of constitutionally-elected Maduro.

The United States, as well as the European Union, has imposed several rounds of sanctions on Venezuela and froze its assets.

Maduro has called Guaido a US puppet and accused Washington of orchestrating a change of government in order to claim Venezuelan natural resources.

Israel blocks visit by Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib

TEHRAN (FNA) — Israel has decided to block a visit by United States Democrat members of Congress Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely stated.

"The decision has been made, the decision is not to allow them to enter," Hotovely told Israel's Reshet Radio on Thursday, shortly after US President Donald Trump warned Tel Aviv against allowing the two Muslim members of his country's Congress to visit.

"It would show great weakness if Israel allowed Rep Omar and Rep Tlaib to visit," Trump said in a tweet on Thursday.

"They hate Israel and all Jewish people, and there is nothing that can be said or done to change their minds," he added.

The US president last month had again targeted Omar, Tlaib and two other Democratic congresswomen of colour with racist attacks, saying the four politicians should "go back" to where they came from.

Tlaib, 43, who was born in the United States, draws her roots to the Palestinian village of Beit Ur al-Fauqa in the occupied West Bank. Her grandmother and extended family live in the village.

Omar, 37, who immigrated to the US from Somalia as a child, represents Minnesota's fifth congressional district.

The two Democrats planned to tour the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem. No date was formally announced for their trip but reports suggest they planned to visit this weekend.

Tlaib and Omar, the first two Muslim women elected to Congress and members of the Democratic party's progressive wing, have voiced support for the pro-Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Earlier on Thursday, Israel's Channel 12 television



reported a decision to ban their entry had been made and that it would be announced after a review by government legal experts.

It would show great weakness if Israel allowed Rep. Omar and Rep. Tlaib to visit. They hate Israel & all Jewish people, & there is nothing that can be said or done to change their minds. Minnesota and Michigan will have a hard time putting them back in office. They are a disgrace!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 15, 2019

Under Israeli law, backers of the BDS movement can be denied entry to Israel. But Israel's ambassador in the US Ron Dermer said last month Tlaib and Omar would be let in, out of respect for the US Congress and the US-Israeli relationship.

An Israeli official stated that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other senior members of his cabinet held consultations on Wednesday on a "final decision" about the visit. Speaking from West Jerusalem, Al-Jazeera's Harry Fawcett said that US pressure may have influenced Israel's decision to block the two congresswomen from entering the country.

"We had this Trump tweet come out well in advance of the official statement from the deputy Israeli FM. It is pretty clear that there has been a good deal of US pressure. Either Trump was trying to increase that pressure with this tweet or he already knew that the decision has been made in favour of what he was advocating," Fawcett added.

Denying entry to elected US officials could further strain relations between Netanyahu, who has highlighted his close ties with Trump in his current re-election campaign, and the Democratic leadership in Congress.

Political commentators said a reversal of Israel's original intention to approve the legislators' entry likely stemmed from a desire to mirror Trump's hard line against them.

"Netanyahu has an election coming up. Presumably it does him good on the Israeli right to make this decision," stated Fawcett, adding, "It's [the decision] being reported here [Israel] very much as a gift from Netanyahu to Trump."

Netanyahu stated on Thursday that barring a visit by Tlaib and Omar was meant to prevent them harming Israel.

"There is no country in the world that respects the US and the American Congress more than Israel," Netanyahu said in a statement, adding, "However, the itinerary showed that the congresswomen's sole intention was to harm Israel."

The holy compound in Jerusalem that houses Al-Aqsa Mosque is revered by Jews and Muslims alike.

The flashpoint site is in an area of Jerusalem that Israel captured along with the West Bank in the 1967 war and annexed in a move not recognised internationally.

Violence erupted there on Sunday between Israeli police and Palestinians amid tensions over visits by Jewish pilgrims on a day when the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha and the Jewish fast day of Tisha B'Av overlapped.

Hundreds of sexual assault claims filed in New York

TEHRAN (FNA) — Hundreds of people who say they were victims of sexual assault filed lawsuits against prominent institutions in the US state of New York - including the Roman Catholic Church and the Boy Scouts of America - as a new law that extends the statute of limitations on those cases went into effect.

The state's landmark Child Victims Act, which legislators passed earlier this year, lifts the statute of limitations on sexual abuse cases for one year, giving alleged abuse victims in New York a second chance to sue, even if the crime happened decades ago, Al-Jazeera reported.

Previously, most victims of childhood sexual abuse only had until the age of 23 to bring criminal charges or to seek damages in civil lawsuits in New York. Under the law, after the year-long window closes, accusers will have until the age of 55 to file lawsuits and until the age 28 to seek criminal charges.

Advocates, mental health experts and victims say it often takes years for people who were molested as children to speak out about their trauma, even to a loved one. Hundreds of lawsuits had been filed by early afternoon on Wednesday, the first day the law went into effect, according to local reports.

Many who said they had spent years of suffering following the alleged abuse said they felt a renewed hope for justice.

Peter Vajda, now 75, filed a lawsuit naming the archdiocese of New York as a defendant on Wednesday. He accused a religious brother of molesting him when he attended a Catholic boarding school in the Bronx in the early 1950s.

"Now, it's their turn. Now it's their time," said Vajda, according to The Associated Press news agency.

"And I want them to get everything they deserve in the way of punishment," Vajda added.

The law was passed after a decade of debate among legislators, in which the year-long window to file suits became a major sticking point. Some major institutions, such as the Roman Catholic Church, argued that opening the floodgate of lawsuits could cause catastrophic financial harm to any organisation that cares for children.

The church dropped its opposition to the bill this year. About 85 people had filed lawsuits against the church in New York by late morning, according to New York County Supreme Court records. Most of them accused priests of sexually abusing them as children and church leaders of covering up the alleged crimes.

James Grein, now in his 60s, said that he was sexually abused as a child for years in New York and elsewhere by the priest who had baptised him, Theodore McCarrick. The priest went on to become one of the most powerful figures in the church, serving as archbishop of Washington from 2001 to 2006, before he was finally defrocked in February of this year when the Vatican found him guilty of sexually abusing children and adults.

During a news conference in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, Grein told reporters he was both joyful and "shaking like a leaf" after filing a lawsuit against the church for negligence, according to Reuters News Agency.

"It's our historical gift from God that we can possibly go forward today and get this done," Grein stated, adding, "I've been waiting years. I've suffered many, many years."

The lawsuits also targeted specific individuals, schools, hospitals and the Boy Scouts of America, a youth organisation.

Within minutes of the window opening, at least 45 former Rockefeller University Hospital patients had filed lawsuits against a prominent doctor.

"We only get one childhood, one adolescence," stated Jack Traub, a 55-year-old Staten Island lawyer who said he was molested by the doctor at the Manhattan hospital 45 years ago, according to AP.

The plaintiffs filing lawsuits also included a woman who noted she was raped as a teenager in 2002 by financier Jeffrey Epstein, who was found dead in his prison cell on Saturday while facing sex trafficking and conspiracy charges. She is suing Epstein's estate and three of his associates.

Sheikh Zakzaky returns to Nigeria

➔ **1** Indian physicians told him that they are not informed of his illness and all medical tests should start from the beginning. "Moreover, Indian physicians were not even informed of existence of any bullet in my body," Zakzaky highlighted.

"Indian government gave us a deadline for two hours in order to decide whether to accept hospital terms and condition or to return to Nigeria. So, I disagreed with proposal of Indian physicians and told them that I want to return to my country. Despite elapse of 24 hours, they [Indian physicians] have not still responded to me."

There are many countries in the world, he said, adding, "if one of these countries accepts our terms and conditions, we will go there to undergo medical treatment."

It should be noted that senior Muslim cleric Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky and his wife arrived in India's Apollo hospital on Aug. 13 for their medical treatment.

Release of Grace 1 marks a suicide for Bolton

➔ **1** According to the American Conservative, detailed evidence of Bolton's deep involvement in the British seizure of the tanker surfaced in reporting on the withdrawal of Panamanian flag status for the Grace 1.

The pretext for detaining the vessel was that it was delivering oil to Syria in violation of EU sanctions. But the UK had no legal right to enforce those sanctions against the ship because EU sanctions on Syria does not apply to non-EU members. Iran had rejected the claim that the ship was destined for Syria, saying such a huge tanker cannot anchor in Syrian ports. However, it refused to reveal where the vessel was headed because of the illegal sanctions on Iran by the Trump administration.

Summarily speaking, the seizure was a blatant violation of the clearly defined global rules that govern the passage of merchant ships through international straits.

Among other his anti-Iran missions, Bolton visited London on Monday to prevent the release of the tanker. Though no details were released on the talks, the office of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed Iran was discussed during Johnson's meeting with Bolton.

Now the ship is freed. However, Bolton is disappointed and the Trump administration has become more isolated and humiliated. The release of the ship will be remembered as a suicide for Bolton and his master's illegal moves against Iran.

Poll Shows Trump Losing to Biden, Warren, Sanders, Harris

➔ **1** However, economists have pointed to his trade war as a prime source of uncertainty and rising costs. Prior to the economic downturn, Trump announced

that he would delay additional tariffs one China until mid-December, providing relief to shoppers ahead of the holiday season.

The US president has instead blamed

Federal Reserve and the "Fake News Media" for Wednesday's downturn, stating on Thursday, "The Fake News Media is doing everything they can to crash the economy

because they think that will be bad for me and my re-election". Trump has frequently touted stock markets and their steady rise as an indicator of his economic performance.

Goalkeeper headache for Klopp after freak injury to Adrian

Liverpool goalkeeper Adrian is doubtful for Saturday's Premier League trip to Southampton after sustaining a freak injury while celebrating their UEFA Super Cup victory over Chelsea, manager Juergen Klopp said on Friday.

Adrian, signed on a free transfer earlier this month, only came into the side to fill in for first-choice keeper Alisson who suffered a calf injury in the opening Premier League victory over Norwich City last week.

The Spaniard became a club hero only days after joining by blocking Tammy Abraham's penalty to hand Klopp's side a 5-4 shootout victory on Wednesday.

However, he was left with a swollen ankle after a supporter who invaded the pitch to join in their celebrations slipped and kicked his foot.

"When we were all together (celebrating after the match), a supporter jumped over something, was chased by some security guys, slipped and kicked his (Adrian's) ankle," Klopp told a news conference.

"So yesterday it was swollen — today it is better, but we have to see... it would help him a lot if it was 100% clear he can play tomorrow... it's not funny.

"He will not go for a scan. We wait for the swelling to go down. It went down already. You can imagine, you have that and then you fly four hours back and that doesn't help swelling."

The setback leaves Liverpool short of their two main keepers, but Klopp said back-ups Andrew Lonergan and Caoimhin Kelleher were ready if needed.

"We need to think about Saturday to find a way to win the game. Andy Lonergan is in training with Kelleher and we have them if we have to make a decision," Klopp said.

(Source: Reuters)

Halilhodzic hired as Morocco coach

Vahid Halilhodzic signed a four-year contract as the new coach of Morocco but was handed a tough list of targets by his new employers.

The 67-year-old Bosnian replaces Herve Renard, who quit after Morocco were eliminated in the last-16 of the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt despite being one of the favorites.

It is a return to national team management for the former Yugoslavia international striker, who took Algeria to the last-16 of the 2014 World Cup.

He also helped Ivory Coast qualify for the 2010 World Cup and Japan for the 2018 edition in Russia but on both occasions he was fired before the tournament.

Halilhodzic will receive a monthly salary of 80,000 euros (\$89,000), Moroccan soccer federation president Fouzi Lekjaa said in a news conference.

But the new coach has been tasked with reaching the semi-finals of the next Africa Cup of Nations in 2021, qualifying Morocco for the Qatar World Cup the year after and winning the Cup of Nations in 2023.

"Failure to achieve any of these targets will automatically result in termination of the contract," said Lekjaa.

"It is a big responsibility to coach Morocco, a challenge and an honor," the new coach told reporters.

(Source: Goal)

Alibaba co-founder Tsai set to own all of NBA Nets: reports

Joseph Tsai, co-founder of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, is expected to purchase full control of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets from Russian businessman Mikhail Prokhorov, according to multiple reports Thursday.

The New York Post, New York Times and ESPN reported a deal is close to completion that would have the Taiwanese-Canadian businessman buy the remaining 51 percent of the club he doesn't currently own.

Tsai bought 49 percent of the Nets last year for \$1 billion, with the chance to purchase more shares before the 2021-22 campaign began.

The deal, according to reports, is expected to be announced this week and cost \$2.35 billion, the highest price ever paid for a US sports team if confirmed.

Tilman Fertitta paid a record \$2.2 billion for the NBA's Houston Rockets in 2017, the same price hedge fund owner David Tepper paid last year to buy the NFL's Carolina Panthers.

Tsai has an estimated net worth of \$9.4 billion, according to Forbes magazine.

Prokhorov bought the Nets in 2010 and guided their move from New Jersey to Brooklyn into the Barclays Center, an arena the Post reported in March that Tsai was interested in purchasing as well.

The Nets made two huge free agency signings in the early minutes of the transfer period, landing two-time NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Kevin Durant and star guard Kyrie Irving.

While Durant is likely to miss all of the 2019-20 campaign with a torn Achilles tendon, the Nets are likely to improve on last season's 42-40 mark and could become a serious Eastern Conference contender upon his return to form.

(Source: AFP)

Hazard injured and out of Real Madrid's trip to Celta

Eden Hazard will miss Real Madrid's 2019/20 LaLiga Santander opener against Celta Vigo after suffering an injury to his left thigh, and is set to be out for a few weeks.

A statement on the official Real Madrid website read: "Following tests carried out after training today, our player Eden Hazard has been diagnosed the Real Madrid Medical Team with a lesion in the recto anterior muscle of the left thigh. Pending evaluation."

The injury is a setback as Hazard was Real Madrid's marquee signing this summer, and the only new player who has secured his place in the starting XI.

Gareth Bale, James Rodriguez, Vinicius, Luka Jovic and Lucas Vazquez, who weren't considered starters, are now vying to replace the Belgian.

(Source: Marca)

Super Cup win gives Liverpool a sense of how difficult it will be to eclipse last season's success

It was 17 minutes before 1 a.m. when goalkeeper Adrian saved Tammy Abraham's penalty to win the UEFA Super Cup for Liverpool. It was half an hour later by the time captain Jordan Henderson and his teammates had paraded the club's second European trophy in the space of three months around the pitch.

This was football's version of «A Hard Day's Night» for both Liverpool and runners-up Chelsea.

Winning is an intoxicating feeling for any competitor, and the sight of manager Jurgen Klopp and his players sprinting across the turf at Vodafone Park following Adrian's save highlighted just how much victory meant to Liverpool. They appeared as ecstatic in Istanbul as they did in Madrid after beating Tottenham to win the Champions League in June.

But it is only when the dust settles on this 5-4 penalty shootout win against Europa League winners Chelsea, following a 2-2 draw after 90 minutes and extra-time failed to separate the two English rivals, that Liverpool will discover the true cost of this success.

However their season pans out from this point on, the 120 minutes plus penalties in Turkey, when they started on a Wednesday and finished on Thursday, might just prove



to be their season in microcosm.

It is going to be a tough, long and demanding slog all the way to the finish line. If Liverpool are to build on their Champions League win and end a 30-year wait for

the English title in May, they are facing an even greater test of their resolve and fitness than last season, when they came so close to wrestling the Premier League trophy from Manchester City's grasp.

‘Embarrassment’ Kyrgios hits new low, say Aussie media



Explosive tennis star Nick Kyrgios is an embarrassment to Australian sport, domestic media screamed Friday, branding his latest meltdown a "vile" new low.

The temperamental 24-year-old was fined US\$113,000 after smashing two racquets, launching an abusive tirade at chair umpire Fergus Murphy before appearing to spit at him during his Cincinnati Masters defeat to Russia's Karen Khachanov.

The ATP warned him that he could also face another suspension from the sport once a full investigation has taken place.

Veteran Channel Nine television sports presenter Tony Jones said he should be immediately banned from the upcoming US Open.

"Yet again Nick Kyrgios has proved himself to be an embarrassment to Australian sport. Quite possibly world sport," he said on the broadcaster's website.

"Surely tennis authorities need to show something that resembles a backbone and deal with him accordingly." It's time the ATP adopted a heavy-handed approach and ban Kyrgios from this month's US Open," added Jones, who hosts Nine's Australian Open coverage.

Former Australian Sports Anti-doping Agency boss Richard Ings, who used to be an ATP Tour umpire and administrator, called him "despicable".

"Nick Kyrgios's behavior in this match was, yet again, that of a jerk," he said on Twitter, adding that Murphy was well-

respected on the tour.

"No umpire deserves to be treated as Nick Kyrgios treated Fergus. It was despicable behavior rightly fined by ATP."

The Australian newspaper was brutal in its assessment of Kyrgios' behavior, saying his "most vile outburst yet" was "akin to a child having a tantrum", while the tabloid Sydney Daily Telegraph said: "The Nick Kyrgios show has sunk to a new low."

Kyrgios, who picked up four fines of US\$20,000 each for unsportsmanlike conduct plus another US\$20,000 for verbal abuse, has a history of poor behavior.

In 2015, in one of his more notorious outbursts, he was fined for making a sexually disparaging remark in Canada about the girlfriend of three-time major winner Stan Wawrinka.

The following year, he was banned for eight weeks after being accused of not trying at the Shanghai Masters.

While the fiery Australian won some support on Twitter, with one user noting that "until his performance no one even knew there was a tennis tournament in Cincinnati", the reaction was largely negative.

"Get him off the tennis circuit until he stops behaving like a toddler," said one tweet, while another noted that "in any other workplace, Nick Kyrgios alleged verbal abuse of the ref, explosive aggression even to equipment would likely get someone sacked".

(Source: Mirror)

Federer suffers his fastest defeat in 16 years at the Cincinnati Masters



Roger Federer has suffered his fastest defeat in 16 years after crashing out of the Cincinnati Masters Thursday.

The 20-time grand slam champion was roundly beaten 6-3 6-4 by Russian qualifier Andrey Rublev in just 62 minutes.

Federer, who has won this event seven times before, was facing his 21-year-old opponent for the first time and the Swiss star said he'd been impressed by the strength of the Russian's game.

"He was super clean. Defense, offense, serving well," Federer said of his opponent after the match.

"Didn't give me anything. He was everywhere. It was tough for me, but an excellent match by him."

Despite the loss, Federer said he was pleased to have come through the Cincinnati Masters injury free and has already turned his attention to the US Open later this month.

The world No. 3 is looking to clinch his sixth title at Flushing Meadows, his first since 2008.

"I worked very hard coming into Cincinnati and in that little season we had since Wimbledon, so I can maybe also utilize a couple of days off," the 38-year-old added.

"I'm going to train, do exactly what I need to do for the US Open and that's it. It's fairly simple, but I've got to work hard."

For a start, they must somehow recover their physical and mental freshness in time for Saturday's 3 p.m. local trip to Southampton, after a four-hour return flight to England on Thursday afternoon. Chelsea, who restored pride and showed promise after Sunday's 4-0 defeat at Manchester United, do not play until Sunday, and they also have the benefit of being at home against Leicester rather than travelling again, as Liverpool must do.

The merits of playing the Super Cup in mid-August, just days after the start of the Premier League season, and then forcing the two teams to endure 30 minutes of extra-time before penalties is perhaps a debate for another day, when the wisdom, or otherwise, of playing for two hours is properly scrutinized. Klopp, certainly, was bemused by the decision to play extra-time rather than go straight to penalties at the end of 90 minutes.

«I don't think anyone in the stadium wanted to see twice 15 minutes,» Klopp said. «It was really a killer, but that's how it is. Nobody wanted extra-time.

«We play on Saturday and we have to find a way to be ready. At 90 minutes, [Chelsea manager] Frank Lampard asked where and when we play next. I told him Southampton on Saturday, and he laughed and said, «Congratulations.»

(Source: ESPN)

PSG and French football braced for Neymar exit



Foot injuries saw him miss three of the four Champions League knockout matches the Qatar-owned club have played in since his arrival. Without him, they lost in the last 16 to Real Madrid in 2018 and then to Manchester United this year.

"I like Neymar, I want to keep playing with him, with Kylian and with everyone," coach Thomas Tuchel said last weekend.

"But the reality is that we must find solutions without 'Ney'. You can't lose Neymar and just find someone else who will do the same things."

Mbappe added that "without Neymar, it's not the same team," but PSG can still improve by investing in a more balanced squad -- summer signings made so far under sporting director Leonardo are a step in the right direction.

Centre-back Abdou Diallo, midfielders Ander Herrera, Pablo Sarabia and Idrissa Gueye have arrived. With the

money recouped from the eventual sale of Neymar, not to mention the saving on his 36 million-euro annual wage, more reinforcements can be brought in.

■ Off-field circus

The off-field circus around Neymar has been an unwelcome distraction for too long. On the field, Paris will still have Mbappe.

The other side of the coin is what this means for PSG's brand. After all, Neymar's following on social media far outstrips that of his current club.

Similarly, when the French league (LFP) put their television rights up for auction last year, they capitalised on the Brazilian's presence. Rights for the four seasons from 2020 were sold to Chinese-owned group Mediapro for 1.15 billion euros a year, a huge increase on previous deals.

Television stations could be forgiven for being a little concerned now, but LFP chief Didier Quillot remains bullish.

"It's always better to have several stars in your league. That said, during the Champions Trophy in China, it was Kylian Mbappe who was the star. His popularity is growing around the world," he told sports daily L'Equipe.

In any case, Ligue 1 is in a constant state of renewal, forever prepared to see star players move abroad. Nicolas Pepe, Ferland Mendy, Tanguy Ndombele and Ismaila Sarr have all left this summer.

The game in France can move on from Neymar, and everyone will be relieved to let the football on the field do the talking if and when he departs.

(Source: France 24)

Iran claim CAFA U19 Championship 2019 title

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran U19 football team became the champions of the second edition of the Central Asian Football Association's (CAFA) on Thursday.

The Persians were held to a 1-1 draw by hosts Tajikistan and won the title with 10 points.

Tajikistan striker Rustam Soirov continued a fine tournament with a lovely opening goal in the first half, but the hosts suffered a setback when Maucher Safarov was sent off just before half-time.

Mehdi Rahimabadi equalized the match in the 80th minute and the Iranian team lifted the trophy.

Iran won two more award in the tournament.

Iran goalkeeper Amirhossein Nikpour was named the most valuable player of the second edition of the CAFA U19 Championship while Tajikistan's Shahrom Samiev emerged as the top scorer. Iran also took home the fair play award.

Tajikistan came second with eight points and Uzbekistan finished in third place with five points.

Sirous Pourmousavi's team had already defeated Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan in the tournament.

A total of five nations took part in a round-robin tournament that was held in Dushanbe from August 9 to August 15.

Uzbekistan won the first edition of the CAFA junior tournament having defeated Kyrgyz Republic 1-0 in the final held in Tashkent in 2016.

The CAFA championship acted as a prelude to the AFC U19 Championship 2020 Qualifiers which will begin in November 2019.



Iran name 12-man squad for FIBA World Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran National Basketball Team released the final 12-man roster that will head to China for this summer's 2019 FIBA World Cup.

Iran have been drawn with world's second-ranked Spain, Puerto Rico and Tunisia in Group C of the 2019 FIBA World Cup.

The competition will be held in China from 31 Aug. to 15 Sept.

The 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup will be the 18th tournament of the FIBA Basketball World Cup for men's national basketball teams.

Squad:

Hamed Haddadi, Mohammad Hassanzadeh, Hamed Hosseinzadeh, Mohammad Jamshidi, Sajjad Mashayekhi,

Meisam Mirzaei, Michael Rostampour, Behnam Yakhchali, Arman Zangeneh, Samad Nikkhah Bahrami, Aron Geramipour and Rasoul Mozafari

Rescheduled from 2018 to 2019, this edition will be the first FIBA Basketball World Cup since 1967 that will not occur in the same year as the FIFA World Cup, but a year following the latter.

Also, the group stage will expand from 24 to 32 teams. The top eight teams, including Japan as the hosts of the 2020 Summer Olympics (and the top two teams from each of the Americas and Europe; and the top team from each of Africa, Asia and Oceania) in this competition will qualify for the men's basketball event in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Ali strike seals maiden title for Sousa's Bahrain

A solitary goal from Isa Moosa Ali helped Bahrain to their first WAFF Championship title, beating tournament hosts Iraq 1-0 in the final at Karbala Sports City on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old struck shortly before half-time to silence the capacity crowd, before Bahrain held on to become the competition's sixth winners since it was held for the first time in 2000.

Bahrain's win caps a spectacular start to life at the helm for Portuguese head coach Hélio Sousa, who emerges from his first tournament in charge of the side with a regional title and four consecutive clean sheets.

In front of an expectant home crowd, and on a scorching Karbala evening, Iraq had plenty of the ball but little of the early chances, while the visitors looked for counter-attacking opportunities through Ali and Mohamed Al Romaihi.



Despite the contrasting styles, neither goalkeeper was kept particularly busy before Bahrain took the lead in spectacular style through Ali in the 39th minute.

In a half where neither team had been afforded much space in the final third, Ali went temporarily unnoticed to find plenty of room on the left-hand side, then – after being played in by Mohamed Abdulwahab Shaban – emphatically slammed the ball

high past Iraqi goalkeeper Jalal Hasan at his near post to make it 1-0 from eight yards.

It had been Mohanad Abdulraheem who had dragged Iraq back into the contest from behind to beat Palestine earlier in the tournament, and the Al Zawraa forward looked to do the same here, but this time he was unable to conjure a quick reply as his header flew over the crossbar to close out the first-half.

Srecko Katanec's men had 45 minutes to turn the final around but, unfortunately for the hosts, the early stages of the second half largely followed the precedent set before the interval. Iraq had ample possession, but a vigilant Bahrain defense meant genuine scoring chances remained a rarity.

In fact, it was the visitors that created one of the better openings in the match when Al Romiahi forced Hasan into an important near post save in the 55th minute, shortly

before Alaa Abbas came the closest any Iraqi player had so far with a header that went narrowly over the crossbar after a fine Dhurgam Ismail cross.

The intensity of Iraq's search for the equalizer only increased as the minutes ticked away, with Mahdi Kamil and Amjed Attwan both sending the ball wide of the target with efforts in the latter stages.

But despite the best efforts of the hosts, and the hopes of the majority of the 34,500 in attendance, Iraq's goal never came, and their night ended in further frustration when Ahmed Ibrahim was sent off in the fifth minute of added time.

With three goals in the tournament, Iraq's Hussein Ali won both the top scorer and MVP awards, but it was Bahrain's time to celebrate after completing a dream start to Sousa's tenure.

(Source: the-afc)

Preview - Final: Mes Sungun, Nagoya Oceans promise an epic

The final of the AFC Futsal Club Championship Thailand 2019 between Mes Sungun Varseqan and Nagoya Oceans – two of the best teams in Asia – has all the ingredients to be a classic.

The 10th edition of the Continental club competition has produced several exciting matches but none came close to the Mes Sungun-Nagoya Oceans group stage encounter, which showcased the best of Asian club futsal.

Oceans won 3-2, ending Mes Sungun's unbeaten run which stretched back to their 2018 title-winning campaign and the Islamic Republic of Iran side are eager for revenge.

They will have no margin for error though as Japanese side Oceans are the in-form team in the Championship and are determined to win a record-extending fourth AFC Futsal Club Championship title.

Head coach Esmail Taghipour said Mes Sungun have already forgotten the group stage defeat.

"This is the final and it will be a different Mes Sungun from the one that lost to Nagoya in the group stage. We did not show all of our cards in that match," said Taghipour.

Head coach Juan Zamora said Oceans are looking forward to playing Mes Sungun again.

"Our game plan has not changed since we beat them and it will be the same when we face them in the final," said the Spaniard.

Last line of defence

In goal, Mes Sungun have one of the best shot stoppers in the business in Iran's national team goalkeeper Alireza Samimi.



"From the beginning of the competition we had just one goal – to win the tournament. Tomorrow's match will be epic against Nagoya and we will win the title," said the 31-year-old, who has conceded 10 goals.

Samimi's opposite number, 27-year-old Yushi Sekiguchi, has been equally brilliant for Oceans, letting in three less than Samimi, with an average ratio of 1.4 goals conceded per game.

Engine room

Captain Farhad Fakhim has been a pillar for Mes Sungun throughout the competition. His ability to read the game is second to none and he can transform defense into attack in an instant.

Playing off the 34-year-old Fakhim are Alireza Vafaei and Mohammad Shajari, who have been in outstanding

form for the defending champions.

"Everybody has a goal in life. I'm always thinking about my team's success. From the beginning, I've always had this drive to score goals for my team in every match," said Vafaei.

Oceans captain Ryuta Hoshi has been equally outstanding, and his ability to stop counter-attacks with his strong physical presence and vision has helped his team time and again in Bangkok.

The 31-year-old has marshalled the centre with great effect alongside Nishitani Ryosuke and Yoshikawa Tomoki.

Goal poachers

Mes Sungun's Mahdi Javid is one of the best players in Asia. The 2018 MVP was the top scorer in last year's edition and is always a danger, even when not at his best.

Javid, who has scored seven goals, is also a goal provider and has the highest number of assists in the competition with six.

Playing alongside Javid is Alireza Askari Kohan, who is quick on the wings and has shown his creative ability with two assists to his name.

Shota Hoshi and Pepita are the attacking force for Oceans.

The duo have combined to score 10 goals while Hirata Neto Antonio and Ryosuke Nishitani are clever at holding up play.

It surely promises to be an epic final between two equally-matched teams.

(Source: AFC)

Kim leads charge as AFC female match commissioners create history

Korea Republic's Kim Se-in will make Asian football history by becoming the first female match commissioner to take charge of the Asian Qualifiers Round 2 game between Guam and Maldives after FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) confirmed her appointment.

Kim will be joined by three other female match commissioners in the Asian Qualifiers – Nguyen Thanh Ha of Vietnam, Lau Cheuk Chi of Hong Kong and AFC Executive

Committee member Kanya Keomany of Laos – who were confirmed by FIFA after being nominated by the AFC.

The appointment of the female match commissioners for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Joint Qualifiers underlines the AFC's steadfast commitment to promote women in Asian football.

AFC General Secretary Dato' Windsor John said: "The Asian football family is proud

to have four female match commissioners appointed to manage the Asian Qualifiers. The AFC values the contribution of women in the sport and we will continue to support women in the workforce.

"The AFC encourages more women to take up the varied roles in football and we hope more will follow in the footsteps of all the women who have – and continue – to play pivotal roles in the success and development of the sport."

It will be a proud day for the experienced Kim when she oversees the Guam and Maldives tie which will be played at the Guam FA Field on September 5 as 40 Asian countries begin their journey to qualify for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

The other female match commissioners will also play their part in future Asian Qualifier matches.

(Source: Fox Sports)

Iran come third in in freestyle team title at Junior World Championships

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran finished in third place in the freestyle team title of the Junior World Championships in Tallinn, Estonia on Wednesday.

Russia reeled in the team title 48 points ahead of second-place the United States.

Iran's Amir Zare was defeated against American wrestler Mason Parris in the 125kg in the competition's final day.

Amirhossein Maghsoudi in the 61kg and Abbasali Foroutan in the 97kg had claimed two gold medals.

Mohmadsadeh Firouzpour also took a bronze medal in the 70kg.

RESULTS

Final Freestyle Team Scores

GOLD - Russia (168 points)

SILVER - United States (120 points)

BRONZE - Iran (119 points)

Fourth - Japan (84 points)

Fifth - India (80 points)

Persepolis target Brandao to undergo medical on Sunday

TASNIM — Brazilian forward Junior Brandao will travel to Tehran on Sunday to undergo medical exam.

The 24-year-old forward currently plays for Goiás on loan from Bulgarian club Ludogorets.

The Iranian club have confirmed that they have reached an agreement with Brandao, futebolinterior.com.br reported.

Persepolis are going to find a replacement for its Croatian forward Mario Budimir.

Brandão started his playing career at Brazilian club Atletico Juventus in 2015 and has also played for Brazilian clubs Ferroviaria, Novo Hamburgo and Primavera.

Persepolis will start the new season of the Iran Professional League with a match against Pars Jonoubi on August 22.

Alamiyan brothers win bronze at 2019 ITTF World Tour in Bulgaria

MNA — Nima and Noshad Alamiyan collected a bronze medal of men's double at 2019 ITTF World Tour ASAREL Bulgaria Open.

The Iranian team conceded a 3-0 defeat in the seminal to Japan, comprised of Yukiya Uda and Kazuhiro Yoshimura, to receive the bronze medal.

Alamiyan brothers had edged past Hong Kong 3-2 in the Round of 16 and then were announced winners in the quarterfinals after their rival, Hungary, pulled out of the competition.

In the other semifinal match, South Korea defeated China. The final match will be held on Saturday.

2019 ITTF World Tour ASAREL Bulgaria Open kicked off on August 15 in Panagyurishte, Bulgaria and will go through August 18.

The Bulgaria Open is the fourth out of six events in the ITTF Regular Series, and the eighth event overall as the players fight for points to qualify for the season-ending Seamaster 2019 ITTF World Tour Grand Final from December 12 to 15.

Iranian female referee to officiate at AFC U-19 Women's C'ship

MNA — Iranian female football referee Mahsa Ghorbani will officiate at the 2019 AFC U-19 Women's Championship, the Asian Football Confederation said in a statement.

The tournament will be held in Thailand from October 27 to November 9, with a total of eight teams competing.

According to the AFC report, Ghorbani will be one of the referees to officiate the games.

The top three teams of the tournament qualify for the 2020 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in Nigeria as the AFC representatives.

Ghorbani has so far judged several international matches. The 30-year-old Iranian began her career as a referee at the age of 20. Her name has been on the Asian Football Confederation's list of elite referees due to her good performance.

She passed a refereeing course held by the AFC in 2016 and after that the confederation introduced her as an international referee in 2017. Her portfolio includes refereeing the AFC Cup qualifiers and the Asian Youth Games.

Andrea Stramaccioni to stay at Esteghlal

PLDC — Andrea Stramaccioni, who intended to leave Esteghlal FC by mutual consent, is going to stay in the Iranian team.

The former Inter and Udinese coach signed on June 13, with a contract that was meant to run to June 2022.

Italian site Tuttomercatoweb had reported that the tactician was in talk with Esteghlal to break off the deal before the season even begins.

Stramaccioni is seemingly irritated at the breakdown in negotiations for several players he had requested, including Manuel Pucciarelli and Boukary Drame.

The Persian Gulf Pro League side signed former Benvento striker Cheick Diabate.

Now, the Italian sports journalist Gianluca Di Marzio has reported that Stramaccioni has reached an agreement with Esteghlal officials to stay in the team.

The Blues will start the new season with a match against Machine Sazi on August 23.

Esteghlal as one of the Iranian most popular football teams have not won the title since 2013.

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SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGWhen you fear an action, engage in it, for the effect of fear is much more intense than fear itself.
Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Javid Andalib is underway at Ace Gallery.

The exhibit named "The First Man Painting" will run until August 26 at the gallery located at 1831 Shariati Ave. near the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

■ Paintings by Chakameh Taranama are currently on view in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Shadof" will be running until August 21 at the gallery located at Shirzad Alley, near Daneshju Park.

■ Akram Izadi, Mohaddeseh Zandi, Elaheh Haji-Arab and Sediqeh Ghafurizadeh are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition will run until August 22 at the gallery, which can be found at Ayrik Center on Eastern Ferdows Blvd.

■ Homa Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mohammad Abbasi.

The exhibit named "The Boat Series" runs until August 27 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Hamed Sahihi, Farhad Fozuni, Samira Eskandarfar and Rozita Sharafjahan is underway at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Human-Plant" will run until August 21 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

■ A collection of paintings by Erika Hedayat is on display in an exhibition at Dastan Gallery.

Entitled "Bread and Circus", the exhibit will be running until September 13 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.

Sculpture

■ An exhibition of sculptures by Hamidreza Fotuhi is underway at Sareban Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Around About" will continue until August 26 at the gallery located 130 Hoveizeh St. off Sohravardi St.

Multimedia

■ A large number of artists, including Bahman Mohammadi, Vahed Khakdan, Ramin Jamshidi, Donya Rostami, Reza Baharvand and Sharareh Zandian is showcasing their paintings and sculptures in an exhibition at Mah Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Summertime" will be running until September 17 at the gallery that can be found at 26 Golestan Blvd., Africa Ave.

■ An exhibition displaying sets of installation, videos, paintings and sculptures by Nushin Nafisi, Negar Nuran, Marjan Qorbani, Hoda Haddadi, Melisa Valipur and 14 other artists is underway at Artibition Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until August 25 at the gallery that can be found at Qandi Alley, Sasani-pur St., Golsabi St. off Shariati Ave.

Drawing

■ A collection of drawings by Nazila Moqaddam is on display in an exhibition at Hoor Gallery.

The exhibition runs until August 19 at the gallery located at 12 Naeimi Alley, North Mirza Shirazi St., off Motahhari Ave.

Critics honor "The House of Bernarda Alba" director Ali Rafiei

Director Ali Rafiei (R) receives the award for best play of the year from Theater Forum director Shahram Gilabadi during the 18th Celebration of Iran's Critics and Theatrical Writers Society in Tehran on August 15, 2019. (Mehr/Mahmud Rahimi)

A R T TEHRAN — Iran's Critics and Theatrical Writers Society of the Theater Forum picked "The House of Bernarda Alba" by director Ali Rafiei as the best play of the year.

The 18th Celebration of Iran Critics and Theatrical Writers Society took place at the Farabi Cinema Foundation on Thursday.

Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca's 1945 play "The House of Bernarda Alba" tells the story of an elderly woman, Bernarda, whose husband has just died, and she asks her five daughters to go through an eight-year mourning period according to her family's tradition.

"For me, this performance was intended

as the formation of a professional troupe. Theater has never been a single act, it is a group task and working with this troupe made the most memorable moments in my life. If I was making plans for a new project I would like to work with this troupe again," Rafiei said in his acceptance speech.

Roya Teimurian, Maryam Saadat, Maedeh Tahmasbi, Nasrin Derakhshan, Parisa Saburi and Reyhaneh Salamat were the main members of the cast for the play, which was on stage at Vahdat Hall in December 2018 and January 2019.

Having a Ph.D. in theater from Sorbonne University in France, Rafiei is also the director

of the acclaimed plays "Fox Hunting", "It Does Not Snow in Egypt", "Crime and Punishment", "The Maids" and "Nightmares and Memories of a Bath Attendant about the Life and Murder of Amir Kabir".

"Nightmares and Memories of a Bath Attendant about the Life and Murder of Amir Kabir" was selected as the best play of the year in 2016 by Iran's Critics and Theatrical Writers Society of the Theater Forum.

The ceremony went on honoring actor Saied Pursamimi with a lifetime achievement award.

Actress Gohar Kheirandish called Pursamimi an example and symbol of acting, and actor Iraj Raad said that Pursamimi is remembered

as a great actor in the history of the art of Iran.

"Solidarity and respect for each other goes back to my generation," Pursamimi said onstage amid applause after receiving his award, and asked the younger generation of theater to support culture and avoid any damage to the theater of the country.

The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO also honored director and playwright Bahram Beizai who could not attend the celebration. In addition, media expert Seyyed Vahid Aqili was honored.

The Mostaqel Theater Troupe by Iranian director Maryam Kazemi was named the best troupe of the year.



Shams and Rumi festival opens in Khoy

A R T TEHRAN — The 2nd National Festival of Shams and Molana opened on Thursday in the northwestern Iranian city of Khoy, which is home to the tomb of Shams, the mentor of the Persian mystic and poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

The festival is being held in the three categories of poetry, music and typography.

The poetry section was held on Thursday and Friday while the typography section will continue until August 22.

The music section will open today and 12 top ensembles from different Iranian cities will be performing for three days.

The winners of each section will be announced during the closing ceremony of the festival on August 22.

Rumi (1207-1273) undertook one or two journeys to Syria, during one of which he met the dervish Shams.

However, he was deeply influenced by Shams during their second visit in Konya on November 30, 1244.

For months, the two men constantly interacted, and as a result, Rumi neglected his disciples and family, who could not



A poster for the 2nd National Festival of Shams and Molana.

tolerate the close relationship.

One night in 1247, Shams disappeared forever. This experience turned Rumi into a poet. The Divan of Shams is a true translation of his experiences into poetry.

Isfahan festival to screen children's favorite films of classical Iranian cinema

A R T TEHRAN — A selection of five favorite children's movies from Iranian cinema during the 1980s and 1990s as well as restored versions of seven other films will go on screen during the 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan, the organizers announced on Friday.

The favorite films will be screened in the Memorable Films Section, while the restored versions will go on screen in the Preserved Classics Section.

"Once Upon a Time" and "Kolah-Qermeh", both directed by Iraj Tahmasb, "Long Lost Sisters" by Kiumars Puraahmad, "The Singing Cat" by Kambozia Partovi and "The City of Mice" by Marzieh Borumand are the films selected for the Memorable Films Section.

The films in the Preserved Classics Section are "Harmonica" by Amir Naderi, "Where Is the Friend's Home" by Abbas Kiarostami, "Niaz" by Alireza Davudnejad, "Tales of the Shahnameh" by Ali-Akbar Sadeqi, "The City of Mice" by Marzieh Borumand, "Thief of Dolls" by Mohammadreza Honarmand and "Patal and Little



A combination photo shows posters for the movies selected to be screened in the Preserved Classics Section of the 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan.

Dreams" by Masud Keramati.

The festival will be running in the central Iranian city of Isfahan from August 19 to 26.

Show of Hands Festival puts focus on solo woodwind instruments improvisation

A R T TEHRAN — The third edition of the Show of Hands Festival has put its spotlight on solo woodwind instruments improvisation, the organizers announced on Thursday.

Over 10 top musicians from across the world have been invited to perform during the event, which will take place at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center.

Italian jazz musician Francesco Cafiso who plays alto saxophone and Norwegian jazz saxophonist Håkon Kornstad will give their performances on the opening day of the event on August 23.

Iranian clarinetist Soheil Peyghambari and Swiss alto saxophonist and clarinetist Stefan Haselbacher, who is also known as Sha, will perform on the second day of the

festival.

The festival will go on with performances by Swiss jazz clarinetist Simon Wyrsch and Iranian clarinetist Mona Riahi.

Flutist and saxophonist Anders Hagberg from Sweden and jazz saxophonist Yuri Honing from the Netherlands will go on stage on August 26.

On the next day, performances will be held by German saxophonist and clarinetist Klaus Gesing and French saxophonist David Prez.

Polish jazz saxophonist Adam Pieronczyk and German trumpeter Markus Stockhausen are the performers for the closing day on August 28.

All the musicians will hold workshops during the festival and young Iranian musicians are scheduled to give ten-minute

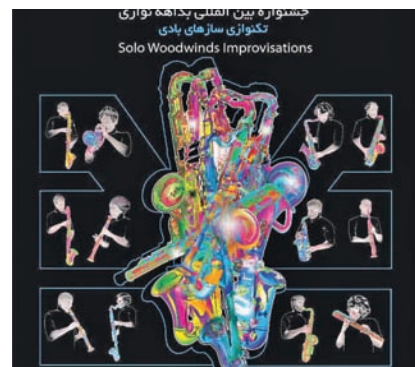
performances before the main program each night.

Several documentary films are also scheduled to be screened on the sidelines of the festival.

German filmmaker Julian Benedict's 2006 film "Play Your Own Thing: A Story of Jazz in Europe" about the history of European jazz is one of the documentaries.

American director John Scheinfeld's 2016 documentary "Chasing Trane: The John Coltrane" about American jazz saxophonist John William Coltrane will also screen.

"Wayne Shorter: Zero Gravity" directed by American filmmaker Dorsey Alavi in 2019 about her fellow American jazz saxophonist Wayne Shorter is also among the films.



A poster for the 3rd Show of Hands Festival that will be organized at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center.



A scene from the film "Boarding Pass" by Mehdi Rahmani.

A R T TEHRAN — Several films from Iranian directors will be competing in different sections of the Reading Film Festival taking

place in the city of Reading, Pennsylvania from October 31 to November 3, the organizers have announced.

"Boarding Pass" by Mehdi Rahmani, "Flying Fishes" and "The Snail", both by Mohammad Torivarian, "Cradle of Silence" by Mostafa Mehraban and "Are You Volleyball?" by Mohammad Bakhshi are among the films.

Also included are "Elephantbird" by Masud Soheili, and "Ako" by Nabi Qolizadeh. "Boarding Pass" is about body packers who swallow pre-packaged drugs willfully or under duress to transfer them across the borders. They usually carry drugs sealed in layers of plastic wrap. But the story begins when a package is not sealed properly and

starts leaking.

"Cradle of Silence" depicts Rasul who has to deliver a cradle to his martyr friend's widow. With Rasul returning from the southern warzone to the northern part of the country, his wife Laya plans on going back to the warzone with him. The cradle becomes an excuse for Rasul to reject his wife's request.

"Are You Volleyball?" tells the story of a group of Arabic-speaking asylum seekers who arrive at the border of an English-speaking country and can go no further. There are scuffles with the border guards every day until volleyball becomes the catalyst that improves relations.

"Elephantbird" shows a minibus that

is on a journey across the mountains to Kabul. Each person on the bus has a reason to take this journey. An old man is traveling to give a turkey to his grandchild, as his last wish before dying. However, the main road is blocked by insurgents. They decide to use an alternate road, which is not very secure, and there is still the possibility of getting caught by insurgents.

"Ako" shows Tehran's Grand Bazaar. Every product has a story and every porter has a secret. Ako does not want anyone to know his secret.

"The Snail" is about three young Iranian boys along with a smuggler who are clandestinely smuggling across the Iran-Turkey border.

Iranian films line up for Reading Film Festival