

Congratulations on Eid al-Ghadir



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Iran-Syria joint chamber of commerce to recruit members

TEHRAN — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has published an announcement, inviting capable private companies to join Iran-Syria joint chamber of commerce's founding board. As reported by the portal of ICCIMA, establishing Iran-Syria joint chamber is put on the ICCIMA's agenda for the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020) and all interested companies can

hand in the required documents to be assessed in order for registration. Iran and Syria agreed on establishing a joint chamber of commerce in business forum in October 2018. The forum was held on October 20 in Tehran with the participation of 50 Syrian businessmen headed by secretary general of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce Mohammad Hamshou. → 4

Majlis moves to retake oil money from UK, U.S. after 1953 coup

TEHRAN — Members of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) have presented a 10-point anti-U.S. plan to the Majlis presiding board, a member of the board revealed on Sunday. Ali Asghar Yusofnejad said the plans include obliging the government to "retake America and England's revenues from Iranian oil after the 28

Mordad (1953) coup d'etat and also to redeem the rights of the victims of the coup." According to the lawmaker, among the plans also is one to support anti-arrogance research institutes, as well as barring representatives of foreign media outlets whose countries support U.S. sanctions against Iran. → 2

ISIL claims Afghan wedding suicide blast that killed 63

TEHRAN — The ISIL terrorist group claimed responsibility on Sunday for a suicide blast at a wedding reception in Afghanistan that killed 63 people, underling the dangers the country faces even if the Taliban agree a pact with the United States. The Saturday night attack came as the Taliban and the United States try to negotiate an agreement on the withdrawal of

U.S. forces in exchange for a Taliban commitment on security and peace talks with Afghanistan's U.S.-backed government. ISIL fighters, who first appeared in Afghanistan in 2014 and have since made inroads in the east and north, are not involved in the talks. They are battling government and U.S.-led international forces and the Taliban. → 13

REPORT
Ramin Hossein Abadian
Mehr News Agency
journalist

Tel Aviv's new plot against Iraq's Hashd al-Shaabi

Recently, some news are published in the media about suspicious activities of the Zionist regime in Iraq. Apparently, the Zionists are preparing some plans against the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) (al-Hashd al-Shaabi).

In this regard, a security analyst who has close relations with Iraqi intelligence services, Fazil Abu Raqif has announced that the Zionist regime aims to bombard the weapon storage of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

Raqif made the remarks in an interview with Russia Alyawm (RT Arabic).

Moreover, around a month ago, an air strike was launched on one of PMF's bases in the city of Amerli in Saladin Governorate of Iraq.

According to a Lebanese news agency, Alahednews, in three strikes, three spinning explosive warheads attacked PMF's stored weapons which were mostly IAI Harop, a loitering munition developed by the MBT division of Israel Aerospace Industries.

Alahednews noted that the explosive warheads are either automatic or controlled from a ground base and can fly up to 1,000 kilometers and be on the air for six hours.

According to Alahednews, the Zionist regime is the only entity in the region who has this type of weapons. Iraqi news agency, Almasalah also quoted the British news ELINT which had also reported of the invasion of the Zionist regime on PMF's bases in Iraq.

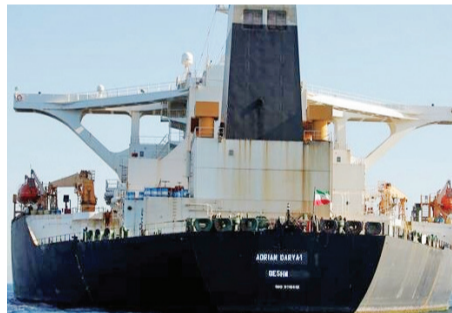
Anyway, it is crystal clear that the Zionist regime, like its close ally the United States, is trying to run different schemes in Iraq and cause turmoil and division in the country.

To carry out this plan, Washington tries to make it look like that different political parties and movements who criticize the government are trying to topple the current government ruled by Adil Abdul-Mahdi, but in fact the reports reveal that it is Americans themselves who are trying to overthrow the Iraqi government. → 13

The catastrophic costs of America's repeated mistakes

Analysis
TEHRAN — Finally, after about a month of illegal detention, the Adrian Darya oil tanker, which carries oil from the Islamic Republic of Iran, was released by Gibraltar's Supreme Court. The United States and Britain have made great efforts to extend this illegal detention by pressing the court, but have failed. Since the release of the tanker, a U.S. court has issued a re-arrest warrant. This is while the Iranian oil tanker has not yet come out of the waters of Gibraltar.

Although the Iranian oil tanker bans have caused a costly political and legal defeat for the United States, it should not be forgotten that any other unreasonable action by Washington will bring more costs and, of course, more irreparable costs, to Washington. So the best way for U.S. officials at this point in time is to accept the less



expensive failure of the Adrian Darya oil tanker. The Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces in the event of the overthrow of the U.S. drone showed that they do not tolerate the smallest violation of the territorial integrity of Iran, and subsequently, the

country's interests throughout the world. Therefore, any U.S. action to re-arrest or interfere with the oil tanker (and other Iranian oil tankers) will face severe and decisive treatment from our country. No doubt, then, people such as John Bolton and Mike Pompeo will not be able to appear as messengers of the failure of U.S. foreign policy and attempt to justify their subsequent defeats against the Islamic Republic of Iran, just as they have not been able to do so thus far.

Undoubtedly, developments at the international stage, and in particular the events that have taken place in recent weeks in the Persian Gulf and Gibraltar, are clear signs of the Trump administration's desperation against Iranian sovereignty, the measurement of whose limits is virtually beyond the reach of the U.S. security and political apparatus.

Syrian Army captures Khan Sheikhoun Farms in southern Idlib

TEHRAN — The Syrian Army resumed their offensive in southern Idlib this evening after taking a 24 hour hiatus to secure the areas they recently captured.

Led by the Tiger Forces, the Syrian Army began tonight's attack by storming the Khan Sheikhoun Farms near the strategic city of Khan Sheikhoun.

Not long after storming the defenses of Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham in this area, the Syrian Army declared that the Khan Sheikhoun Farms were under their control.

Following the capture of the Khan Sheikhoun Farms, the Syrian Army began storming the nearby town of Rakaya and hilltop of Tal Nar.

Preliminary reports say that the Syrian Army is already in control of Tal Nar; however, this has not been confirmed by the military yet.

The recently captured areas are all located northwest of the extremist stronghold of Khan Sheikhoun.

The army forces dealt a heavy blow to the terrorists by reportedly capturing a strategically important town in the province and a small village near Khan Sheikhoun.

The army has been engaged in clashes with Nusra Front terrorists in the outskirts of Khan Sheikhoun for the past two days, forcing them to flee to the north. Last week, The Syrian army recaptured four strategic villages in Idlib province from the terrorists.

Top Saudi ringleader killed in Khan Shaykhun

Meanwhile, there are unconfirmed reports that a Saudi ringleader of terrorists in Syria has

been killed in the Syrian offensive near Khan Shaykhun.

An informed source told Iraq's Buratha news that Abdullah al-Muhaysini, a notorious Saudi member of Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, has been most probably killed in southern Idlib.

Al-Muhaysini was a cleric known for having served as a religious judge in the so-called Army of Conquest.

According to Press TV, Khan Shaykhun lies on a key highway coveted by government troops. The road runs through Idlib, connecting the capital Damascus with the strategic northern city of Aleppo.

Syrian government forces have been regaining control of further areas once held by militants in Idlib province.

ARTICLE
Martin Love
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North Carolina

Crises everywhere and Trump and supporters are completely vapid

Follow the best minds one has ever read on media applications and the overwhelming impression one gets is a world that has lost whatever moorings it may have once had and seems to be careening towards one disaster or another, all more or less fomented by Western "leaders" who have become desperate to maintain various narratives of control and dominance. And this in particular in the case of the U.S. with Trump as President.

And it is exceedingly difficult to figure out which of numerous extant or budding crises around the world warrants the most attention on the presumption that if just one or two of them is somehow resolved positively and with an outcome that generally satisfies the basic interests of disputants, the rest of the various crises may find an adequate solution in turn and in time.

At the top of the list must be, ultimately, the environmental crisis in a world where, just in recent lifetimes, world population has burgeoned from some 2 billion people to almost 8 billion, and largely because of what may have become the biggest bane ever in the past 100 years, which sparked the population explosion and even relative prosperity — the discovery of abundant and cheap oil and gas (energy) in countries like the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Russia and a few others scattered across the Middle East and in other locations. As much as say Iran, for example is a relatively rich country with its natural resources, and basic prosperity has expanded, it has expanded in the face of ever more demands by a growing population on those natural resources both for internal use and as a means of earning "money" to feed and house multitudes of citizens.

This is the case across every country that, like Iran, is rich in petroleum and gas resources, and this includes the U.S. It is a scenario that is largely insoluble in the longer run, and dangerous. Dangerous because resources eventually run out or can be depleted to such an extent that they can no longer support societies to the extent they have come to rely on them, not to mention the environmental havoc. → 13



Traditional and Ritual Theater Festival honors four veterans

TEHRAN — Four Iranian veteran theater artists including prominent tazieh performers Gholam-Ali Ayyubi and Abolfazl Kababian have been honored with lifetime achievement awards during the closing ceremony of the 19th edition of the Traditional and Ritual Theater Festival.

Ru-hozi performer Mohammadreza Shahsavarifard and veteran traditional and ritual theater artist Parviz Sang-Soheil also received lifetime achievement awards during the ceremony, which was held at Tehran's Sangelaj Hall on Saturday. → 16

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Iran assembles several IR6 centrifuges in new hall

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Several IR6 centrifuges have been assembled in a newly-built hall and are ready for operation, according to the Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi.

"We have built new and modern halls to assemble centrifuges and nearly 20 IR6 centrifuges have been assembled in the hall," MP Hamidreza Haji Babayee quoted Salehi as saying in a meeting with a number of MPs in Tehran on Sunday.



According to the source, Salehi said the move comes after Iranian officials recently held a meeting on options for the third step of the nuclear undertakings modifications.

Salehi also underlined Iran's capability to return to the pre-nuclear deal conditions, saying, "You will hear good news from Arak (heavy water reactor) in the next few months."

He added that the Iranian experts have worked on the IR6 and IR7 centrifuges, noting that designing and building IR8 is also on their agenda.

Following sanctions which were imposed last year when U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran has rowed back on its nuclear commitments twice in accordance to articles 26 and 36 of the 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

As a first step, Iran increased its enriched uranium stockpile to beyond the 300 kilograms set by the JCPOA.

In the second step, Tehran began enriching uranium to purity rates beyond the JCPOA-limit of 3.76 percent.

Iran has said its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral U.S. sanctions.

Last week, AEOI spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi announced that the volume of the country's enriched uranium stockpile has reached close to 370kg.

Earlier this month, Kamalvandi asserted that his country will take the third step of modifying its commitments under the nuclear deal in a month if European signatories to the deal fail to meet their obligations.

"Iran will take the third step in scaling back its commitments under the JCPOA with world powers in a matter of a month if European signatories to the JCPOA, continue to renege on their obligations," Kamalvandi told reporters on August 5.

"If the opposite side fails to live up to its commitments in the remaining one month [set as a deadline], the third phase of reducing JCPOA obligations will start as per what the president has previously declared in his capacity as head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council," Kamalvandi added.

As previously announced, the AEOI official said, "Iran's next steps will lead to suspension of its commitments. Therefore, those commitments are not totally discarded, but are rather suspended, and if they (the European signatories to the JCPOA) start to honor their commitments, Tehran will also reciprocate and go back to its obligations."

Kamalvandi went on to say that the reduction of Iran's nuclear commitments would include surpassing a 130-ton limit on heavy water production.

Zarif: Our active diplomacy continues

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted late on Saturday that Iran will continue its "active diplomacy".

Zarif made the tweet after he addressed a meeting held to celebrate the return of the first group of Iranian prisoners of war (POWs) from Iraq and his meeting with Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Takeo Mori.

Zarif also boasted the growing ties between Iran and Iraq, saying despite eight years of war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, now Iraq is Iran's top economic partner.

The chief diplomat also praised a trilateral meeting on the Yemen conflict in Tehran involving Iran, Ansarullah and the ambassadors of Germany, Italy, France, and Britain to Tehran.

Zarif also headed to Kuwait on Sunday for talks with top officials of the country.

"Our active diplomacy continues. Today: - Addressed war vets on the 29th anniversary of freedom of our proud POWs. Today, Iraq is top trade partner. - Fruitful meeting with Japan DFM - Interview with NBC's Lester Holt - Yemen-E4-Iran mtg in Tehran - Now in Kuwait for high-level talks," Zarif tweeted.

Majlis moves to retake oil money from UK, U.S. after 1953 coup

I → Another plan calls on the government to sue Hollywood and the U.S. cinema and TV industries "for insulting the Iranian nation and history," according to Yusofnejad.



The source added that another plan "obliges military forces to reveal America's military and security information in West Asia within national interests."

There are also plans to support the production of anti-American movies as well as to sanction some U.S. officials, he said.

Multiple ambassadors submit credentials to Rouhani

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In separate meetings on Sunday, President Hassan Rouhani received the credentials of the new ambassadors of Afghanistan, Italy, Bangladesh and Bolivia to Iran.

During the meeting with Afghanistan's ambassador Abdulghafour Lival, Rouhani said that any peace initiative which is not engaging the people of Afghanistan or their representatives is doomed to failure, reiterating that Tehran is after sustainable peace in its eastern neighbor.

"Any peace without the vote of the Afghan nation and their representatives is meaningless and surely it will not last," Rouhani said while receiving Lival's credentials.

"Tehran supports Afghanistan's national sovereignty and unity and is always ready to help establish lasting security and peace in the country," Rouhani highlighted, according to his official website.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the presence of foreign forces in any regional countries creates problems and we are certain that the military presence of America in Afghanistan is not beneficial to the security in the country and its people," Rouhani remarked.

The president added, "Iran has always stood alongside the people of Afghanistan and we have given services to the dear people of Afghanistan, like we have to our own people."

Tehran is ready to strengthen sustainable peace and security in Afghanistan, he said, adding, "Sustainable security will encourage Afghan immigrants to go back to their homeland and enhance trade relations and investment in both countries."

Rouhani pushes for religious unity in Afghanistan

Stressing the need for unity among different ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan, the president said, "Shiites and Sunnis, and different religious groups must feel that they are members of a big family named Afghanistan."

"Any terrorist act by any group is condemned by Iran, and Tehran is determined to deepen its friendly relations with the Afghan nation and government," Rouhani said, condemning recent terrorist acts in Afghanistan.

Earlier on the day, the Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly deplored a recent suicide attack in a wedding ceremony in Kabul which killed and wounded hundreds of people, emphasizing Tehran's continued support for Afghanistan.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi extended his condolences to the Afghan people and government as well as the family members of the victims of the inhumane act, and described the culprits behind the attack as enemies of humanity, peace, security and stability of Afghanistan.

For his part, Lival said, "The number of Afghan immigrants in Iran is higher than some other countries' population, and the Afghan government and nation appreciate the great Iranian nation's hospitality."

Afghanistan is ready to develop cooperation and relations with Iran, he said, adding, "Afghanistan will not let any country to use its soil to attack the Islamic Republic of Iran."

'Iran firm to deepen ties with Italy'

Also in his meeting with the new Ambassador of



Italy to Tehran, Giuseppe Perrone, Rouhani said, "We are determined to develop the friendly, long-standing relations with Italy, and we consider this beneficial to both nations".

"We are also determined to prevent the unilateral, illegal sanctions of the United States from affecting these relations," he added.

Rouhani also referred to economic relations, saying, "The current (sanctions) conditions are temporary, and the efforts of the two governments and how they treat these conditions will remain in both nation's memory".

He added, "In the current conditions, we need to take advantage of initiatives to promote the cooperation and increase investment for stronger relations, which will be beneficial to both nations and the region".

The president also praised Italy's constructive approach toward Iran's nuclear negotiations, saying, "After the nuclear deal, very constructive and positive economic relations were established between the two countries, which needs to be continued by relying on the political will of both governments".

Perrone, for his part, said that Rome is willing to deepen ties with Tehran in all fields of mutual interest.

He added, "We believe that the current conditions are short-lived and the relations between the two countries must keep growing and developing".

Rouhani thanks Bangladesh for hosting Rohingya Muslims

Also, receiving Bangladesh's new ambassador Gousal Azam Sarker, Rouhani expressed thanks to the Bangladeshi nation and government for hosting Rohingya Muslims. Rouhani stressed that Iran is willing to help the refugees pouring into Bangladesh.

The president also said that relations between Iran and Bangladesh have always been friendly and expressed hope that these relations expand bilaterally and internationally.

Rouhani said, "Tehran and Dhaka have many common cultural points and we are ready to develop our economic, political and cultural relations".

For his part, Ambassador Sarker said, "My mission is deepening relations between the two countries".

"The two countries' cooperation has been based on long-standing relations and close cultural roots and stances in international stages," he added.

Sarker also invited Rouhani to attend the upcoming D8 Summit in his country.

Bangladesh is expected to host the next D-8 summit towards the end of 2019 or early 2020 and assume the D-8 chairmanship.

'Tehran, La Paz stand together to realize strategic goals'

In his meeting with Bolivia's new ambassador Romina Guadalupe Perez Ramos, Rouhani also said,

"Our region and Latin America have long been facing issues, which we consider as having one root cause, and that is the interference and abuse by major powers."

Rouhani also praised Bolivians for following an independent policy. "The Bolivians are a revolutionary nation who have always attempted to keep their independence."

The president added, "We deeply believe that any nation that stands up for its interests against aggressors will win, and history is a witness to this fact."

On the two countries' strategic and common goals at international level, Rouhani said, "The two countries have always stood alongside each other for realizing their goals, and will continue to do so."

Rouhani also expressed hope that economic, political and cultural relations between the two countries would strengthen during the term of the new Bolivian ambassador.

For her part, Ramos said, "Iran and Bolivia have many common points with each other".

She also delivered the greetings of President Evo Morales to Rouhani and said, "Tehran and La Paz both oppose to the United States' unilateral policies and arms race in the region, and we support each other's independence and democracy".

'Iranian ambassadors to Ivory Coast, and Uzbekistan meet with Rouhani'

Also, before leaving for their countries of mission, the newly-appointed ambassadors of Iran to Ivory Coast and Uzbekistan met with Rouhani.

In the meeting that took place on Sunday, Rouhani wished them success in carrying out their responsibilities and called on them to introduce the potentials and capabilities of the country, as well as encourage investors and private sectors for development of cooperation and relations.

Kourosh Majidi, Tehran's ambassador to Ivory Coast; and Hamid Nayerabadi, Iran's ambassador to Uzbekistan, also presented reports on relations between Iran and their countries of mission.

Leader thanks IRGC for downing U.S. spy drone, seizing British tanker

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has praised the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) for downing an invading U.S. spy drone and capturing a British oil tanker at the Persian Gulf.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's message of thanks was delivered by his representative in the IRGC, Hojjatolislam Abdullah Haji Sadeqi, on Sunday when he visited military forces in southern Iran.

"Before I went to visit the Persian Gulf islands, I met the Supreme Leader and asked for his recommendations about the trip," Haji Sadeqi said.

"He told me to relay his greetings (to the IRGC forces) and thank them and tell them that they have done a great job," he added.

Using indigenously built Sevvom Khordad surface-to-air missile system, Iran's air defense forces shot down a U.S. spy drone, a MQ4-C Triton, over Iran's territorial waters on June 20.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, said that his forces could have also shot down a U.S. P8 aircraft with 35 personnel on board which was violating Iran's airspace, but decided to shoot down the drone to only send a message to Washington.

"We intended to send a message to American terrorists in the region," General Hajizadeh said on June 21, adding that his forces had also traced a military P8 aircraft violating the airspace of Iran.

Also, on July 19, the IRGC Navy impounded the British tanker Stena Impero when it was passing through the

Strait of Hormuz en route to Saudi Arabia "for failing to respect international maritime rules".

"British tanker ship, the Stena Impero, has been detained by the vessels unit of the Guards Navy's First Naval Zone at the request of the Ports and Maritime Organization's office of Hormozgan province for disregarding international maritime rules and regulations as it was passing through the Strait of Hormuz this afternoon," an official statement by the Iranian authorities said.

The statement added that the ship had been escorted to the Iranian coastal waters in Hormozgan province and its control had been transferred to the Ports and Maritime Organization for further legal procedures and investigations.

Iran, Ansarullah, European diplomats urge end to Yemen crisis

(Press TV) — Representatives of Iran, Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement and four major European countries have stressed the importance of putting an immediate end to the ongoing devastating war in Yemen.

An Iranian delegation, headed by Foreign Minister's Senior Aide for Special Political Affairs Ali Asghar Khaji, Ansarullah representatives, led by its spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam and ambassadors and heads of missions of the four European countries of Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, known as the EU/E4, held a trilateral meeting in Tehran on the latest developments in Yemen.

During the meeting, the participants elaborated on their respective countries' views regarding the war-torn Arab country's situation, including the political and humanitarian issues.

They expressed deep regret over the continued critical situation in Yemen, which has resulted in the killing and injuries of tens of thousands of Yemenis and the destruction of the country's infrastructure.

The participating delegations emphasized that the ongoing crisis in Yemen should only be settled through political approaches and urged immediate delivery of humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its region-



al allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

A number of Western countries, the U.S., France and Britain in particular, are also accused of being complicit in the ongoing aggression as they supply the Riyadh regime with advanced weapons and military equipment as well as logistical and intelligence assistance.

At the end of their talks, the Iranian, Yemeni and European representatives called for the full implementation of an agreement reached in the Swedish capital

city of Stockholm in 2018 as a prelude to the final settlement of the crisis in Yemen.

In December 2018, representatives from Ansarullah and the Riyadh-sponsored government of Hadi reached a truce deal during UN-mediated peace talks in Sweden.

Under the deal, they agreed to the withdrawal of their troops and the deployment of UN monitors to the port city of Hudaydah, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

In a meeting in Tehran last Tuesday with the visiting delegation from Ansarullah, led by Abdul-Salam, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei warned that the Saudi regime and the United Arab Emirates — which have been

leading a military campaign against Yemen — are after partitioning the war-torn Arab country, calling for strong resistance in the face of the plot.

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

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the Saudi-led war has claimed the lives of over 60,000 Yemenis since January 2016.

The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

An international law group has submitted a new report to the British government providing evidence that the Saudi-led coalition has been covering up its unlawful airstrikes on civilian targets and its war crimes in the war on Yemen.

The 288-page report said the Saudi attacks violate international humanitarian law by "targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure."

If a nuclear battleship attacked there will be no drinking water for Persian Gulf states: IRGC Navy chief

U.S., Britain presence in Persian Gulf brings insecurity, Tangsiri warns

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, the IRGC Navy chief, said on Sunday that the presence of the U.S. and Britain in the Persian Gulf brings insecurity to the region.

"We warn the Persian Gulf countries that if an incident was to occur for one of the atomic battleships in the Persian Gulf, they wouldn't even have drinking water anymore," Tangsiri said, ILNA reported.

Tensions have spiked between Iran and the U.S. in the Persian Gulf after the U.S. announced plans to form a military coalition to counter what it calls the "Iran threat".

Only Israel and the UK have welcomed the call, which has been rejected by other allies of Washington.

The U.S. claims Tehran has played a role in two attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman in May and June, which Iran has categorically denied.

"Today, we can establish security in the Persian Gulf through the empathy and con-



vergence of other countries," Tangsiri said. "Iran is the flag-bearer of establishing security beyond its borders in the Indian Ocean and other regions," he stressed.

He further said that the seven countries to the south of the Persian Gulf plus Iran were fully capable of establishing security in the region.

Israel's welcoming of the U.S. plan has been met with condemnations by Iranian officials and commanders.

In an interview with the Lebanese TV channel Al Mayadeen last week, Tangsiri warned that any Israeli presence in the Persian Gulf may result in a war in the region, and the responsibility for the consequences of such illegal presence lies with the U.S. and the UK.

"The United States and the United Kingdom must assume responsibility for the Zionist regime's illegal presence in the Persian Gulf waters," he warned.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also warned that the Islamic Republic considers possible Israeli presence in the U.S.-led coalition as a clear threat to its national security, and reserves the right to counter it.

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

Resistance is the only way to confront bullying, says Kharrazi

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Kamal Kharrazi, chief of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, has said the only way to stand up to the enemies' bullying is resistance.

"Today, the Iranian people are glad that they managed to resist against U.S. bullying and show their power," Kharrazi said on Sunday, Mehr reported.

He said the country should be ready to confront the threats since there is no end to the enemies' plots against Iran.

Kharrazi, who has served as Iran's foreign minister under President Khatami, also described the release of the Grace 1 oil tanker as a diplomatic victory for Iran and a defeat for Britain, which had detained the supertanker illegally.



"Surely, these actions of the enemies will not end here and they will always plan new conspiracies against us and we should be ready to confront them," he reiterated.

On Thursday, Gibraltar's government announced it was releasing Grace 1 supertanker despite pressure from the U.S. for the vessel's continued detention.

The announcement came just before the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) unveiled a warrant for the seizure of the Iran-operated ship.

Tensions broke out between Tehran and London on July 4, after Britain's naval forces unlawfully seized oil tanker Grace 1 and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil in the Strait of Gibraltar, under the pretext that the supertanker had been suspected of carrying crude to Syria in violation of the European Union's unilateral sanctions against the Arab country.

Tehran strongly rejected the claim.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top Iranian leaders had denounced the seizure as act of "piracy" which would not go "unanswered".

Nearly two weeks after, Iranian forces seized a British-flagged oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz for involvement in an accident with an Iranian fishing boat, after the tanker ignored distress calls.

Allah-Morad Afifipour, head of Ports and Maritime Organization in southern Hormozgan Province, said that the 30,000-ton Stena Impero tanker had collided with a fishing boat on its route, adding that according to law, after an accident it is necessary that the causes are investigated.

Kharrazi describes the release of the Grace 1 oil tanker as a diplomatic victory for Iran and a defeat for Britain.

Foreigners have no choice but to leave Persian Gulf, Zarif says in Kuwait

"Iran's proposal for Regional Dialogue Forum and non-aggression pact trumps reliance on extraneous actors," Zarif notes

POLITICAL TEHRAN – "Foreigners" have no place in the Persian Gulf region and have to leave, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a meeting with Kuwait's crown prince on Sunday.

Zarif, who received a warm welcome from Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, reiterated Iran's long-held policy that Tehran is prepared to expand ties and dialogue with Kuwait, noting it will serve the interests of the region.

Zarif also hailed "brotherly" relations between Iran and Kuwait, calling for deepening relations, Press TV reported.

Pointing to escalating tensions in the Middle East and the need for increasing cooperation among the regional states, Zarif said, "We are the ones who will definitely remain in this region and foreigners are meant to leave."

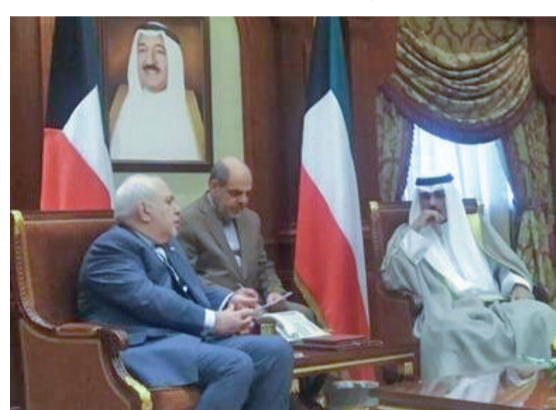
Later on Sunday, Zarif discussed regional issues and

the existing conditions in the Persian Gulf region with his Kuwaiti counterpart, Sheikh Sabah Al Khaled Al Hamad.

The two chief diplomats reviewed ties, regional issues with special emphasis on Syria and Yemen, the ongoing situation in the Persian Gulf region, important international issues as well as other topics of mutual interest.

The Iranian foreign minister visited Kuwait on Saturday. Later in the day, he held an official meeting with members of Iran-Kuwait Friendship Association, exchanging views on regional issues. In a post on his Twitter account on Saturday night, Zarif said he is "in Kuwait for high-level talks" after a busy day of "active diplomacy".

After concluding his talks with the top-ranking Kuwaiti officials, Zarif wrote on his Twitter post that Iran's proposal for non-aggression pact with the Persian Gulf states "trumps reliance on extraneous actors".



No U.S. politician wants Islamic Republic to exist: ex-diplomat

POLITICAL TEHRAN – No American politician – whether Republican or Democrat – wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to exist, says Hamid Reza Asefi, a former Iranian diplomat.

"The mistake began when we thought the Americans wanted us to exist but change," Mehr on Sunday quoted Asefi as saying, while referring to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He made the remarks in a TV program. "I do not believe that Barjam (JCPOA) was based on optimism or misplaced trust," he said, adding, "Rather, it might have been based on inaccurate analysis."

The former diplomat continued, "No American politician wants the Islamic Republic to be, and in this regard, there's no difference between the Republicans and Democrats."

Pointing to the Trump administration's anti-Iran policies, Asefi said he believes if



Barack Obama was still president, he would have done the same but in a different way.

Asked if there are people in the Foreign Ministry who believe the country's problems can be resolved through dialogue with the U.S., Asefi said, "It is

possible that some experts in the Foreign Ministry think to resolve the problems, [Iran] should cooperate or establish good relations with the U.S."

"There are also diplomats on the other side who do not think this way," he added.

Asefi, who has served as Foreign Ministry spokesman and ambassador to Paris, said while Zarif is bound by the policies of the Islamic Republic, some of his policies can be criticized.

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., France, Russia, Britain, China and Germany, struck the JCPOA in 2015, with Zarif acting as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator.

The JCPOA has since been widely criticized by Iran's conservative figures, some of whom have described the accord as "treasonous".

Domestic attacks against the JCPOA reached its peak right after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal and reimposed sanctions on Tehran, which had scaled back its nuclear activities and remained fully committed to the deal.

However, as tensions grew between Tehran and Washington, Iranian politicians preferred to take steps toward unity in the face of the foreign threats.

Renaming supertanker not aimed to bypass U.S. sanctions: envoy

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad has said the renaming of the Iranian oil tanker, Grace 1, has no relations with circumventing the U.S. sanctions.

"The renaming of the oil tanker carrying Iranian oil in Gibraltar sent out this false implication that this act was carried out for circumventing the sanctions," Baeidinejad tweeted on Sunday.

"This is while this measure was necessitated after Panama's objection to continuation of the oil tanker's path under that country's flag," he added.

The Iranian ambassador underscored that the tanker is under no sanctions and is carrying oil under the permission of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

In another tweet, the envoy said the oil tanker was registered under its new name, Adrian Darya, on July 15, which is more than a month ago.

Britain's naval forces unlawfully seized the Grace 1 and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil in the Strait of Gibraltar on July 4 on the pretext that the supertanker had been suspected of carrying crude to Syria in violation of the European Union's unilateral sanctions against the war-torn country.

Tehran, however, rejected London's claim, slamming the seizure as "maritime piracy".

On Thursday, a Gibraltar judge ordered the release of the Grace 1, six weeks after it was detained, rejecting a last-minute legal move by Washington demanding that the ship remain detained.

However, the United States on Friday issued a warrant for the seizure of the tanker.

According to the warrant, the U.S. Department of Justice also ordered the seizure of \$995,000 in an account at an unnamed U.S. bank associated with Paradise Global Trading LLC, which it called a shell company associated with businesses which act for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

There was no immediate word from Britain or Gibraltar over whether they would act on the warrant, as Iran said it was sending a new crew to pilot the tanker.

"This U.S. complaint alleges that Iran has violated U.S. sanctions after the U.S. pulled out the 2015 nuclear deal last year," said Al Jazeera's John Hendren, reporting from Washington, DC.

On July 4, 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."

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.

Attack at wedding ceremony in Kabul shows enmity against humanity: Iran

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has denounced suicide attack at a wedding ceremony in Kabul which resulted in the death of about 70 people and injury of 180 others, reiterating Tehran's unwavering support for peace and security in Afghanistan.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi described the attack as "inhumane" and said the culprits behind the attack are enemies of humanity, peace, security and stability in Afghanistan.

He also extended his condolences to the Afghan people and government as well as the bereaved families.

"Afghanistan is living through a difficult and decisive period and is facing many problems and obstacles on this path; we rest assured that Afghanistan can go through these

problems by unity among the government, nation and all groups and tribes as well as patience and prudence," he said, Fars reported.

At least 63 people were killed and scores wounded in an explosion targeting a wedding in the Afghan capital, officials said on Sunday, the deadliest attack in Kabul this year.

The suicide blast took place on Saturday evening in the men's reception area at the Dubai City wedding hall in Western Kabul, in a minority Shiite neighborhood, packed with people celebrating a marriage.

Women and children were among the casualties, interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said on Sunday.

The Taliban denied any involvement in the attack, calling the blast "forbidden and unjustifiable".



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	260992.0
IFX	3509.98

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,634 rials
GBP	51,031 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$58.64/b
WTI	\$54.87/b
OPEC Basket	\$58.87/b
Gold	\$1,523.60/oz
Silver	\$17.08/oz
Platinum	\$851.80/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran-Syria joint chamber of commerce to recruit members

Hamshou and Tehran Chamber of Commerce Chairman Masoud Khansari co-chair the forum.

The two sides also agreed on the optimal benefit from the potentials provided by the Free Trade Agreement signed between the two countries in 2011 with the aim of developing and upgrading the level of trade exchange between Syria and Iran.

Iranian private sector has repeatedly expressed readiness to cooperate with Syria in various areas including construction, transportation, power plants, renewable energy, infrastructure and etc.

The two countries have also been exchanging numerous trade delegations in the past few months and Iranian private companies are already investing in different areas like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction projects in Syria.

In August 2018, a delegation comprised of Iranian economic experts traveled to Syria to explore investment opportunities and finalize the reconstruction plans of the war-stricken country.

Also in January, the 14th preparatory meeting of Iran-Syria high joint technical committee of economic cooperation was held at Damascus.

Africa development bank says risks to continent's growth 'increasing by the day'

The U.S.-China trade war and uncertainty over Brexit pose risks to Africa's economic prospects that are "increasing by the day," the head of the African Development Bank (AfDB) told Reuters.

According to arabnews.com, the trade dispute between the world's two largest economies has roiled global markets and unnerved investors as it stretches into its second year with no end in sight.

Britain, meanwhile, appears to be on course to leave the European Union on Oct. 31 without a transition deal, which economists fear could severely disrupt trade flows.



Akinwumi Adesina, president of the AfDB, said the bank could review its economic growth projection for Africa — of 4 percent in 2019 and 4.1 percent in 2020 — if global external shocks accelerate.

"We normally revise this depending on global external shocks that could slow down global growth and these issues are increasing by the day," Adesina told Reuters late on Saturday on the sidelines of the Southern African Development Community meeting in Tanzania's commercial capital Dar es Salaam.

"You have Brexit, you also have the recent challenges between Pakistan and India that have flared off there, plus you have the trade war between the United States and China. All these things can combine to slow global growth, with implications for African countries."

The bank chief said African nations need to boost trade with each other and add value to agricultural produce to cushion the impact of external shocks.

"I think the trade war has significantly impacted economic growth prospects in China and therefore import demand from China has fallen significantly and so demand for products and raw materials from Africa will only fall even further," he said.

"It will also have another effect with regard to China's own outward-bound investments on the continent," he added, saying these could also affect official development assistance.

Adesina said a continental free-trade zone launched last month, the African Continental Free Trade Area, could help speed up economic growth and development, but African nations needed to remove non-tariff barriers to boost trade.

The "countries that have always been facing lower volatilities have always been the ones that do a lot more in terms of regional trade and do not rely on exports of raw materials," Adesina said.

The "challenges cannot be solved unless all the barriers come down. Free mobility of labor, free mobility of capital and free mobility of people."

Over €840m allocated to support domestic auto parts manufacturers

ECONOMY TEHRAN - The industry ministry has allocated €844 million to support the country's auto parts manufacturers, director general of the industry ministry's automotive and transportation industries office said.

Seyed Reza Mofidi noted that according to the ministry's plans, domestic manufacturers are set to produce 1.3 million automobiles by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020) of which 310,000 was manufactured up to August 10.

According to the official, the country's total car output reached 950,000 last year.

Mofidi also mentioned establishment of a roundtable for domestic auto parts manufacturers at the ministry's Automotive and Transportation Industries Office, saying that "So far nearly 7.4 trillion rials (about \$177 million) worth of deals have been signed with domestic manufacturers in this office, which have saved the country over €85 million."

According to the industry ministry, given



the number of vehicles that are anticipated to be manufactured in the country during the current calendar year, the part manufacturers will need 150 trillion rials of working capital (about \$3.571 billion) for the purchase of raw materials and other required items.

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

The ministry has also unveiled a 10-section plan on early February for improving the status of car makers, in which the two major car makers of the country have been ordered to support auto part manufacturers.

Following the orders of Industry Ministry, domestic car makers have started a research movement in recent months titled "Domestic Manufacturing of Imported Parts".

The movement is aimed at creating the condition and opportunity for cooperation among domestic manufacturers, knowledge-based companies and startups.

Iran-Bulgaria business forum slated for August 24

ECONOMY TEHRAN - An Iran-Bulgaria business forum is due to be held on August 24 in Tehran, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

As reported, the event will be attended by senior officials and businessmen from both sides including Iranian Ambassador to Sofia, Seyed Mohammad Javad Rasouli.

In the forum which has been organized by the Iran-Bulgaria joint economic committee, the two countries' private sectors will explore avenues of mutual cooperation and discuss expansion of trade ties.

As announced by the Iran-Bulgaria Joint Economic Committee, the Iranian businessmen attending the forum are representatives of companies active in a variety of areas including petrochemicals, plastic, building materials, glass and glass products, lighting industries, minerals, food, industrial cables, nuts and pharmaceuticals.

The Bulgarian companies participating in the event are also active in the fields of dairy products, crane and forklift, renewable energy, food industry, batteries, tobacco, agricultural machinery, industrial robots and switches, industrial washers, hydraulic pumps, PVC profiles and transformers.



630,000 tons of goods exported to Iraq via Mehran border

ECONOMY TEHRAN - Iran exported 630,000 tons of goods to neighboring Iraq through Mehran border in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), Mehr news agency reported, quoting a customs official as saying on Sunday.

According to the Director General of Ilam Customs Office Rouhollah Gholami, Mehran border is considered one of the main gateways for Iran exports to Iraq.

Gholami pointed to the daily commuting



of 1,000 trucks from the mentioned border and added, "About 630,000 tons of goods, valued at \$404 million, were exported to neighboring Iraq in the same period."

"The volume of goods exported to Iraq through Mehran border has registered 26 and 43 percent hike in terms of value and weight respectively as compared to the last year's corresponding period," he reiterated.

The official further pointed to the problems facing Iranian traders and

merchants exporting products to Iraq and said, "With the coordination made in this regard, problems such as paying tolls and duties for exporting goods in the border is seriously being followed up between provincial and Iraqi officials."

Fresh fruits and vegetables, construction materials, auto spare parts, plastic and rubber materials, glass and evaporative coolers are main products exported from Mehran border to neighboring Iraq in the same period, the director general added.

Easy credit poses tough challenge for Russian economy

New machines popping up in Russian shopping centers seem innocuous enough -- users insert their passport and receive a small loan in a matter of minutes.

According to france24.com, the devices, which dispense credit in Saint Petersburg malls at a sky-high annual rate of 365 percent, are another sign of a credit boom that has authorities worried.

Russians, who have seen their purchasing power decline in recent years, are borrowing more and more to buy goods or simply to make ends meet.

The level of loans has grown so much in the last 18 months that the economy minister warned it could contribute to another recession. But it's a sensitive topic. Limiting credit would deprive households of financing that is sometimes vital, and could hobble already stagnant growth.

The Russian economy was badly hit in 2014 by falling oil prices and Western sanctions over Moscow's role in Ukraine, and it has yet to fully recover.

"Tightening lending conditions could immediately damage growth," Natalia Orlova, chief economist at Alfa Bank, told AFP.

"Continuing retail loan growth is currently the main supporting factor," she noted.

But the "situation could blow up in 2021," Economy Minister Maxim Oreshkin warned in a recent interview with the Ekho Moskvy radio station.

He said measures were being prepared to help indebted Russians.

According to Oreshkin, consumer credit's share of household debt increased by 25 percent last year and now represents 1.8 trillion rubles, around \$27.5 billion.

For a third of indebted households, he said, credit re-

imbursement eats up 60 percent of their monthly income, pushing many to take out new loans to repay old ones.

The national output

Alfa Bank's Orlova said other countries in the region, for example in Eastern Europe, had even higher levels of overall consumer debt as a percentage of national output or GDP.

But Russian debt is "not spread equally, it is mainly held by lower income classes," which are less likely to repay, she said. The situation has led to friction between the government and the central bank, with ministers like Oreshkin criticizing it for not doing enough to restrict loans.

Meanwhile, economic growth slowed sharply early this year following recoveries in 2017 and 2018, with an increase of just 0.7 percent in the first half of 2019 from the same period a year earlier.

That was far from the 4.0 percent annual target set by President Vladimir Putin -- a difficult objective while the country is subject to Western sanctions.

With 19 million people living below the poverty line, Russia is in dire need of development.

"The problem is that people don't have money," Andrei Kolesnikov of the Carnegie Centre in Moscow wrote recently.

"This is why we can physically feel the trepidation of the financial and economic authorities," he added.

Kolesnikov described the government's economic policy as something that "essentially boils down to collecting additional cash from the population and spending it on goals indicated by the state."

At the beginning of his fourth presidential term in 2018, Putin unveiled ambitious "national projects."

The cost of those projects -- which fall into 12 categories



that range from health to infrastructure -- is estimated at \$400 billion by 2024, of which \$115 billion is to come from private investment.

A rise in value-added tax on January 1 that was presented as crucial for the projects contributed to Putin's fall in popularity over the last year.

"If the debt bubble suddenly bursts, how will people behave?" Kolesnikov asked.

"They will be left without money" while authorities continue to spend on grand but ultimately unprofitable projects, the analyst warned.

He cited grandiose "patriotic" undertakings such as a bridge connecting Sakhalin island to the mainland in far eastern Russia, and the creation of a "Russian Vatican" in the ancient monastery town of Sergiev Posad outside Moscow.

Malaysia's economy to be driven by ongoing mega projects in 2H 2019

Malaysia's economic growth for the second half of this year is set to be healthy and driven by the ongoing mega projects, despite the current global economic uncertainties, says Maybank Kim Eng Group economist, Lee Ju Ye.

As per nst.com.my, she said among the mega projects are the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) which has been revived and the Klang Valley MRT 2 as well the LRT 3 project that would become the factors underpinning growth over the long term.

"There are of course downside risks going into the second half and I think Malaysia will not be spared the China-U.S. trade tensions. Export is still negative and consumer sentiment has been coming down a bit as well as the business sentiment."

"So, I think we're quite cautious over the second half, because there is so much downside risks. But, having said that, Malaysia in the longer term, will benefit from all the investments and trade diversion coming from China-U.S. trade conflict," she told reporters on the sidelines of the Maybank Investment Bank Market Outlook, Second Half 2019 here, today.

She said the interest shown by international firms in relocating their operations to Malaysia would result in positive export numbers for

the country going forward, contributed by manufacturing products.

She also said Malaysia was the only country in the region to not have slashed the growth forecast which resulted into a better number in the 2Q19.

Domestic product

"Malaysia's second quarter gross domestic product (GDP) was a surprise on the upside at 4.9 percent, higher than consensus estimates at 4.7 percent and I think this is positive news for the country."

"Among the areas driving growth is still private consumption which remains resilient and you have private investments doing better as well. I think Malaysia is seeing all the benefits coming from the China-U.S. trade war to some extent," she added.

According to Lee, Malaysia saw its foreign direct investment (FDI) approval surging strongly at around 100 percent in 2018 as well as in the first quarter of 2019, with more firms interested in relocating to Malaysia.

Meantime, commenting on the possibility of an expected technical recession in 2020, due to the economic uncertainties and the effect of the China-U.S. trade war, she said the situation would not be as bad as it was

in 2008 because it does not involve a global financial crisis.

"(We don't expect to see a recession yet in 2019, but in 2020, it does look possible if the two countries continued to spar on trade as well the technology side.

"So, I think ASEAN will probably go into 2020 in a cautious mood, especially external oriented countries like Singapore and Thailand, and Malaysia to some extent," she added.

Lee said the crisis at present is more inclined towards trade-related issues when compared to the recession environment of 2008, resulting in a bigger spillover effect to the rest of the economy.

The negative growth

"Even for a country like Singapore, we don't think the recession will be as deep as what we saw back in 2008, when there were three consecutive quarters of negative growth. ASEAN will also see some opportunities as investment diversion takes place," she added.

Meanwhile, Maybank Investment Bank Bhd's chief executive officer Fad'l Mohamed said that mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity will be a recurring theme for Malaysian corporates in the second half of the year.

He said that M&As and privatization had

moved at a fast pace with ten attempts during the first half of the year (1H2019) as the broad market weakness had unlocked values.

"Companies in the Property, Steel, Plantation and Technology sectors are among those that may see further M&A activity, as these sectors are in the midst of a down cycle.

"Valuations have come to an optimum level where corporates are actively looking to consolidate and acquire new assets and capacity. In this regard, the current down cycle in some sectors has revealed long term investment opportunities that can weather the current short term volatility," he added.

Maybank IB Research has forecast Malaysian equities to continue showing resilience amid a weak broader market environment, caused by an expected moderation in global GDP growth, as well as the intensifying China-U.S. trade dispute.

The "market remains supported by sizeable holdings of strategic and long term investors, while at the same time, policy risks are dissipating."

Malaysia is also well-placed to benefit from rising manufacturing investments from overseas as a result of China's diversion of its supply chain into ASEAN," it said.

New records marked in Iran's electricity sector: minister

E N E R G Y TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said the country's electricity sector has witnessed new records in production, exports and consumption management during the current calendar year (started on March 20), IRNA reported on Sunday.

"This year we have set new records in this sector by inaugurating 3,250 megawatts (MW) capacity of new power plants, saving 3,874 MW in peak consumption period in summer, and exporting 2.3 billion kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity to neighboring countries in the hot season," Ardakanian said in gathering of energy ministry's public relation offices in Tehran.

According to the official, based on the ministry data and statistics, the country's electricity consumption was expected to reach nearly 61,000 MW in the summer peak period, however so far the highest consumption level has not exceeded 57,000 MW.

"This summer, about 3,874 MW of electricity was managed and this amount of saving prevented the constructing of a new 5,000-MW power plant with \$5 billion of investment," he said.



He added that 15 new power plants have gone operational in 12 provinces across the country with their exploitation which a record 3,250 MW of output growth in a year has been achieved.

also been able to fulfill our energy export commitments to our neighbors due to good rainfalls this year."

"About 2.3 billion kWh of electricity was exported in the June to August period, the highest amount of exports in recent years," he added.

Iranian energy ministry has been following new strategies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid during the hot season.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran has put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

Last year, the volume of water behind the country's dams went so down that electricity output from hydropower plants fell to a decade low.

The situation was worsened by a jump in electricity consumption due to a heat-wave that blanketed the country during summer and consequently led to a huge gap between actual power generation and consumption.

The solar storage energy revolution

By Jason Margolis

In Kenya, the electric grid is notoriously unreliable. It goes out a lot. "At least once a day," says Colin le Duc, a partner at Generation Investment Management, a London-based firm co-founded by former Vice President Al Gore that finances companies pushing towards sustainable solutions.

"If you're watching a Champions League soccer game and the grid goes down in the middle of the game, that's not a good outcome."

Le Duc's firm is trying to avoid that outcome by investing in the Kenyan company M-Kopa, which installs solar panels coupled with lithium-ion batteries. And they're not just targeting customers who lose power during soccer matches.

"There are obviously areas of Kenya where there is no grid at all. And you have the opportunity to leapfrog directly to a distributed model of clean energy and thereby basically negate the need to build centralized grid systems," says Le Duc.



To combat climate change, solutions like this help countries to transition away from dirty fossil fuels and replace them with renewables, like solar and wind.

Both have made tremendous leaps in recent years — think of all the solar panels you now see on people's roofs versus decades ago. But there remains a major hang-up with solar panels: They only work when the sun is shining.

But the field of solar-powered battery storage is booming. Back in Kenya, there remains another big problem: affordability. To overcome this, Le Duc says M-Kopa leases its solar systems for the same cost as a daily supply of kerosene or wood: "So 50 cents a day for the Solar System."

And what typically happens, is (customers) will pay that for about a year, and by that stage they would have paid off the solar system."

Supplying enough energy
Customers without a bank account can pay through their phones. The batteries in Kenya supply enough energy to charge a cellphone and run a radio for a few hours. "These are not massive systems, that's why they're so cheap," De Luc says.

M-Kopa is exploding. It has about a million customers in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

"If you think about solar penetration in the U.S., the U.S. is far behind Kenya relatively, just because of the strength of the existing grid in the U.S.," Le Duc says.

In the U.S., we don't really need big batteries in our garages because we have a reliable electricity grid. That said, more and more U.S. homeowners are giving it a go.

For some Californians, it's for similar reasons as for Kenyans. The California utility Pacific Gas & Electric says it may temporarily shut off some high-voltage lines as part of a new wildfire safety protocol, potentially causing rolling blackouts for up to 5 million California customers.

"We just don't want to deal with that," says Susi Polos, who lives near Berkeley.

During the day, her new rooftop solar panels produce energy. She can then use that energy, stored in batteries in her garage, to help power much of her home during times of peak electricity demand to lower her costs, or for eight to 12 hours during a power outage. Polos was also motivated to install solar-powered batteries for environmental reasons: the "current world, climate change."

Polos recently began leasing a system from the Bay Area Company Sunrun and has seen her monthly electricity bills decrease dramatically.

"Just for electricity, we usually paid about \$150, and we now pay \$10," says Polos. (That \$10 covers the interconnection fee to the grid.)

Now, Polos does also pay Sunrun \$120 a month to lease her system. Still, she's saving \$20 a month and supplying clean energy into California's electricity mix.

Audrey Lee, Sunrun's vice president for energy services, envisions home-storage solar batteries as another iteration of the sharing economy, similar to the Airbnb model. But this time, instead of sharing our homes, we'll be sharing electrons.

Lee says while the cost of generating power is declining, the cost to deliver it is going up.

"By 2030, the (U.S.) electricity utility industry will need to make a total investment of \$1.5 to \$2 trillion in order to maintain this electricity grid," Lee said, speaking recently at the MIT Energy Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"So, to me, it doesn't make sense. Why are we transporting electricity large distances when it costs so much to do so when we can just generate that electricity at the home where it's being used in the first place?"

Solar panels

Since 2010, the cost to install solar panels has decreased by nearly two-thirds, and batteries have fallen in price by 84 percent, according to the energy research firm Wood Mackenzie.

Impressive. But the solar storage revolution may just be getting started.

"Today, it's considered to be sort of the sexy thing in the world of energy, but it's still a fairly new technology, if you step back and think about the overall grid," says Ravi Manghani, Wood MacKenzie's head of energy storage.

Manghani says the U.S. is a leader when it comes to solar-powered batteries.

Still, he says we need better state policies to encourage more homes and businesses to install them.

"There are some other countries that have done extensive work on energy storage, and we've seen deployments in those countries, namely South Korea, the United Kingdom and now increasingly China as well," says Manghani.

Australia, Germany, Japan, Canada, and India round out the list of global leaders.

Manghani says in the past five years, the "world began to experiment with storage." In the next five, he says it will become a key asset for the electricity grid, and he projects that energy storage deployments will increase 13-fold.

(Source: theweek.com)

Sinopec still negotiating to develop Iran's Yadavaran oilfield

E N E R G Y TEHRAN – Managing director of Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) has said the company is still negotiating the second phase of Yadavaran oilfield's development project with China's Petroleum and Chemical Corporation, known as Sinopec.

"Talks are still ongoing, but the process is going on at a slow pace," Touraj Dehqani told ISNA on Sunday.

According to the official, the second phase of the field's development project entails boosting output from the current 110,000 barrels per day to 180,000 bpd and eventually to 270,000 bpd.

A total of 105 wells need to be drilled in the second developmental phase of Yadavaran oilfield in order to realize the aim of producing the mentioned 180,000 barrels.

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) started negotiations with Sinopec on development of the field in 2016, however due to some disagreements between the parties the project hasn't yet begun. In early May, Reza Dehqan, deputy director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) had said that the contract for development of the second phase of Yadavaran

field has stopped, however, negotiations will continue.

Yadavaran is a joint hydrocarbon deposit with Iraq located 70 kilometers west of the city of Ahvaz in Khuzestan Province. The field is located within the West Karoun oil block that holds an estimated 67 billion barrels of oil in place.

Earlier this month, PEDEC announced that the company plans to connect Yadavaran Oilfield to West Karoun Power plant, a measure that will ensure continuous and uninterrupted production of oil in this joint field.

"The Yadavaran Oilfield development project is the first project which will be powered through the West Karoun Power Plant," Hojat Norouzi, director of Yadavaran Oilfield development project at PEDEC, said. The official said connecting the field to West Karoun Power Plant was one of the prerequisites of the Yadavaran Oilfield development plan.

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

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

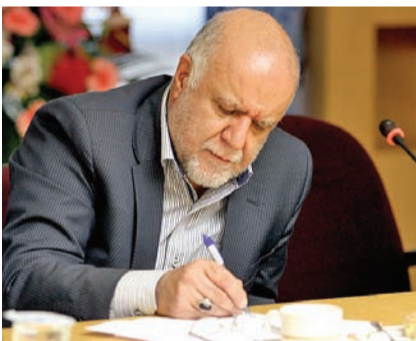


Development of upstream oil sector atop agenda: Zanganeh

E N E R G Y TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said that the development of the upstream oil sector in collaboration with universities and research institutions is the ministry's top priority in the current Iranian calendar year, 1398 (March 2019-March 2020).

"The first phase of developing the upstream sector includes boosting production and rising recovery rates in 20 oil and gas fields comprising 52 reservoirs in cooperation with universities and research centers," the minister said.

In an order, Zanganeh appointed his deputy for research and technology, Saeed Mohammadzadeh, as the executive manager of the project underlining that it is the ministry's priority within the framework



of resistance economy in 1398.

Mohammadzadeh is accordingly required to submit regular reports on implementation of the project to research and technology department of the oil

ministry.

Earlier this month, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Exploration Directorate signed four agreements with universities and knowledge-based companies to conduct research in a variety of oil-related areas including geophysics, geochemistry, unconventional hydrocarbon resources as well as drilling.

The Exploration Directorate is tasked by the oil ministry to sign seven research agreements, four of which have been signed.

NIOC Research and Technology Directorate also announced that it is going to conduct 25 major research projects worth nearly 700 billion rials (about \$16 million) in two years.

Following a well-established plan, we will

try to implement the projects in a parallel approach, during the current year and the next calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), Ebrahim Taleqani told Shana.

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

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

Currently about 300 knowledge-based companies are active in the field of oil industry in Iran.

China's Shenzhen Gas to launch new LNG terminal with cargo from ENI

Chinese city-gas distributor Shenzhen Gas (601139.SS) will launch next week in southern China its first fully-owned terminal to import liquefied natural gas (LNG), reports Trend referring to Reuters.

According to azernews.az, this will make Shenzhen Gas the second city gas distributor backed by a local government that owns an LNG import facility. The first was Shenergy Group, which opened an LNG import terminal in Shanghai in 2008.

Most of China's import terminals are owned by the dominant state-run oil and gas companies like China National Offshore Oil Corp (CNOOC) and PetroChina (0857.HK).

China is the world's third-largest natural gas

consumer and second-largest LNG importer after Japan.

Qiu Lihua, general manager of Sino-Benny, a unit of Shenzhen Gas that will operate the terminal, said the new facility at Yantian port in the city of Shenzhen has an annual capacity of 800,000 tons of the super-chilled fuel. "This will be our own facility that will be connected to the existing municipal grid that takes in piped gas from CNOOC and PetroChina," Qiu told Reuters over the phone.

The new LNG berth

The new LNG berth and an 80,000 cubic meter storage tank have been built next to an import facility for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), a business that Sino-Benny has been

in for years, said Qiu.

The first cargo of 65,000 cubic meters of LNG is to arrive at Yantian on Sunday, supplied by Italy's ENI (ENI.MI) at a time when Asian spot LNG prices LNG-AS are near their lowest in nearly three years due to ample supplies and weak demand.

Qiu declined to comment on the price of the cargo but said his company is exploring taking regular supplies under a term contract of three to five years.

"As our berth is not of a standard size, we can't really rely on random spot supplies as the cargoes available may not fit our berth," he said.

The terminal is located about 10 km (6 miles) from the larger CNOOC-operated Da-

ping LNG terminal, in which Shenzhen Gas has a minority stake.

Qiu expects natural gas demand in Shenzhen, a bustling city bordering Hong Kong, to maintain double-digit growth in the coming few years, led by residential use and power generation.

The number of households using piped natural gas will double by the end of 2020, from 2.1 million now, under a government-led switch from LPG canisters, said Qiu.

Following a gas supply crunch in the winter of 2017/2018, Beijing urged local governments and city-gas distributors to build storage facilities under a broad nation-wide campaign to boost the use of natural gas to cut pollution from coal.

Will further output 'cuts' help stem oil price drop?

By Kamel Al-Harami

Oil prices are indeed falling but will further cuts in production help as we struggle to reach the magic number of \$60 per barrel which is currently within reach? Did the settling of the trade war between the U.S. and China push the demand for oil? Or is it the basic structure of the oil market which is awash with surplus from almost every corner of the world? It is hard to see the oil prices reaching \$60 per barrel and even harder for the same level next year.

The production cuts agreed by OPEC+ two years ago are still effective, and the compliance rate is above 150 percent. However, this has not been effective in translating it into a solid number for the oil price, which is hovering within the range of \$56 and \$57.

This is despite the fact that the agreed level of reduction will be maintained until the end of the first quarter of next year. Now it seems OPEC might be looking for further production cuts or voluntary reductions in the hope of bringing the oil price to at least the magical price level of \$60, which is more reasonable and acceptable now to all oil exporting countries. It is now their desired price level.

However, the worry is that further reduction may not help when considering the ongoing increase in shale oil production by the U.S. and non-OPEC countries.

Also, there is surplus crude oil available in the market as well as in Iran and Venezuela that are not produced or exported to the world.

The unproduced available capacity

This hidden or unproduced available capacity is preventing further improvements in the barrel price. Once they return to the market, they as well as the current excess will push the oil price down to \$40 level.

This is the concern for now and the future. It seems difficult for any improvements in the oil price. This was illustrated in the last flare-up in the Persian Gulf during the standoff between Iran and U.S.

Nevertheless, oil prices remained weak and hit the \$55 level. The question remains whether the strategy of production cuts will work again with the surplus and readily available capacity.

There has been further warnings from the IEA that next year will witness more surplus oils in the market. This again is in the absence of Iranian and Venezuelan oils, which one day will return to the market to heap more pressure on the oil prices.

The future oil market's outlook certainly does not look positive, with current reduction or with future additional cuts. Is it the end of the era of \$60 per barrel?

(Source: arabtimesonline.com)



Leading the state of New Hampshire

Hopeful signs for Sanders

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN – Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders is still hopeful about winning the Democratic primary. Polls show Sanders in the race could also challenge former US Vice President Joe Biden. Sanders, however, has a tough game to win in the Democratic intra-party election race. Here's a review of news and analysis about Bernie Sanders and other Democratic candidates:

Sanders overtakes Biden in New Hampshire poll

As The Hill reported, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) leads the Democratic presidential field in New Hampshire with 21 percent in a Gravis Marketing poll released Tuesday. Sanders is followed by former Vice President Joe Biden with 15 percent and by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) at 12 percent. The poll stands in contrast from the most recent polls in New Hampshire compiled by RealClearPolitics, which have showed Biden leading in the critical primary state, followed by Sanders.

Gravis Marketing polled 250 Democratic primary voters on Aug. 2-6 using interactive voice responses and an online panel of cell phone users. The primary question had a margin of error of 6.2 percentage points.

"It is important to note that Sen. Sanders won the New Hampshire Democratic Primary in 2016," Doug Kaplan, president of Gravis Marketing, said in a statement.

"However, it is unlikely that Sen. Sanders will have a repeat of his 2016 performance in the state due to the number of candidates in the race this time."

The Gravis poll found South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) rounding out the top five, with 8 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

The poll also found President Trump losing to every candidate in the top five in the Granite State in a hypothetical match-up among registered voters, with Biden beating him 53 percent to 40 percent and Sanders beating him 51 percent to 41 percent. Warren, meanwhile, leads Trump 49 percent to 44 percent, while Buttigieg beats him 49 percent to 42 percent and Harris leads him 47 percent to 44 percent.

Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton beat Trump by fewer than 0.5 points in the 2016 presidential election. The poll for the general questions on Trump was conducted through a random survey of 505 individuals in New Hampshire and has a margin of error of 4.4 percentage points.

Bernie Sanders Leads 2020 Democratic Field Among College Students: Poll

A Chegg-College Pulse poll released Thursday showed Sen. Bernie Sanders leading the 2020 Democratic presidential field among college students, a voting bloc that could play a major role in the upcoming election.

The survey found that 29 percent of likely Democratic voters attending college or university chose Sanders as their top pick for the presidential nomination.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) took second place with 22 percent support. The rest of the 2020 Democratic presidential pack trailed far behind Sanders and Warren, with former Vice President Joe Biden, who leads most national polls, placed a distant third at 10 percent.

In response to the survey, Sanders tweeted that "young people are the most progressive generation in American history."

"We are going to build a nationwide movement of young people," said the Vermont senator, "to create a government and an economy that works for all of us."

Terren Klein, CEO of College Pulse, told HillTV that where candidates stand on major issues such as the environment, school affordability, and income inequality is more important to college students than perceived "electability."

Sanders is the only 2020 Democratic presidential candidate to put forth a plan that would erase all \$1.6 trillion of student loan debt in the United States. "In a generation hard hit by the Wall Street crash of 2008," Sanders said in June after introducing his plan, "it forgives all student debt and ends the absurdity of sentencing an entire generation to a lifetime of debt for the 'crime' of getting a college education."

Volatile presidential polls spark new round of anxieties

Also The Hill reported that Trying to figure out the state of the Democratic presidential race? Get in line. Public opinion surveys have varied by the day, particularly in the early voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire, where some candidates can point to individual polls to argue they are building momentum. Former Vice President Joe Biden has held a relatively steady lead in national polls, though an Economist-YouGov poll this week found him holding just a 1 point lead over Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

A poll from The Hill-HarrisX found Biden with a healthier 15 point lead over Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who stood in third place in the Economist poll.

Warren was further behind, winning 10 percent support compared to 31 percent for Biden and 16 for Sanders. Most polls have found Biden with a lead in New Hampshire, though a Gravis poll this week put Sanders in first place. A Monmouth poll found Sanders trailing badly in Iowa, behind not only Biden



and Warren but also Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.). The different signals in the polls has even experts questioning who is up, who is down and whether the horse race surveys can be trusted. Anxiety is also growing among the campaigns, as candidates and aides rush to highlight their incremental gains or question surveys that show them losing support.

Some say the political amateurs and professionals should just give it a rest when it comes to polls. "It's August of 2019, the horse race polls are absolutely worthless," said Chris Kofinis, a Democratic pollster.

Pollsters interviewed by The Hill defended their findings and methods, even as they warned against reading too much into their results.

An Iowa Starting Line-Change Research survey of Iowa drove red-siren headlines this week, finding Warren jumping out to a double-digit lead with 28 percent support, followed by Biden at 17 and Sanders at 17. The same poll from May found South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg with a small lead in Iowa, the only survey of the cycle to find him leading anywhere.

The Change Research online survey recruited respondents through ads on social media, which some experts say is prone to manipulation, particularly around the Iowa State Fair, when enthusiastic supporters are

third place overall, a much more dismal result than several other recent surveys.

Pollsters attribute the different findings in various polls to the generally soft support for candidates at this early stage in the race. They say it is causing a "sloshing" effect that results in support shifting back and forth between the candidates. Some also point the finger at the media, saying voters are quick to change their minds based on the latest news cycle. "This particular election has been nationalized in the media unlike any before, from the logistics of getting into debates to the national media environment in the age of Trump," said Monmouth University pollster Patrick Murray.

"Talking to voters in Iowa, they will rattle off six or seven names sometimes, very few people are fully committed," he continued. "They say it's difficult to focus on just one candidate, so I don't see the polls right now as predictive at all of what will happen here in February. Things will shift right up until the last minute.

Many of these voters will change their minds from their first choice and have no idea who their second choice will be."

The Sanders campaign has flat-out rejected polls that find him losing ground, saying the surveys don't reach his young supporters or capture the activist energy around



eager to pump up their preferred candidates.

A Pew Research study from 2018 warned that "even the most effective adjustment procedures were unable to remove most of the bias" from internet polls and that "very large sample sizes do not fix the shortcomings of online opt-in samples."

Pat Reilly, the co-founder of Change Research, told The Hill they have a "unique patent-pending" bias correction mechanism that "enables us to quickly and dynamically build a sample that reflects the population."

The weekly Economist-YouGov poll found Warren in a statistical tie with Biden for first place nationally.

That survey put Biden at 21 percent and Warren at 20 percent.

It was a striking finding since only a handful of national surveys conducted this cycle have registered Biden with less than 30 percent support nationally, and none have found a second-place candidate that close to the front-runner. Representatives for the Economist-YouGov poll were not available to comment. That survey, which has consistently found Biden in the low 20s, is not a traditional likely voter model, but rather is pulled from a recruited panel of more than 10,000 respondents who are surveyed regularly.

The Hill-HarrisX survey found Warren with 10 percent support nationally and in

and respond to survey questions, which oftentimes results in smaller sample sizes or polls of adults who are unlikely to vote in the primary.

The massive field of contenders is also a challenge for pollsters, particularly when the 2 percent threshold to qualify for the fall debates might require a pollster to randomly stumble upon six individual supporters for a candidate.

The Gravis Marketing survey of New Hampshire found eight low-polling candidates combining for 22 percent, a large chunk of support that most believe will ultimately go elsewhere and fundamentally reshape the race.

"Voters are overwhelmed," said Kofinis. "The size of the field is having a freezing effect on a lot of people, so contrary to the way these polls are sometimes used and abused by the media, these current surveys are not meant to predict who is going to win where in 2020. These are snapshots of a race at a very early stage."

Younger Democratic black voters aren't as interested in Biden. Here's why

CNN reported that A new national Fox News poll finds that among black Democratic primary voters, former Vice President Joe Biden is their first choice for the party's presidential nomination at 37%. He is followed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders at 18%, California Sen. Kamala Harris at 10% and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren at 8%.

The Fox News poll is the latest to show that Biden holds a large lead among black voters in the Democratic primary.

What's the point: This polling might give you the sense that Biden will be a heavy favorite among those attending the predominantly black Young Leaders Conference this weekend. After all, just look at his lead among black Democrats nationally. Yet, our last three CNN polls (April, May and June) aggregated together reveals that younger black voters aren't as enthusiastic about Biden's candidacy as older black voters are.

Overall, our last three CNN polls have Biden at 44% among black voters.

No one else is anywhere close; Harris is in second at 14%. Biden's big league advantage in these polls is similar to the Fox News poll.

However, Biden's standing drops to 36% among black voters under the age of 50. This is lower than the 51% he has among black voters aged 50 and older.

We don't have a large enough sample size to break it down further than that, but we can model it out using age and race as predictors.

Our model suggests that Biden's support probably drops to below 30% among voters under the age of 30. It also suggests that the former vice president's support is likely closer to 60% among black voters age 70 and older.

That is, his support probably doubles between the youngest and oldest Democrats.

Such a split within the black community shouldn't be surprising. Back in the 2016 Democratic primary, the age gap was huge. Hillary Clinton won the black vote with somewhere around 75% in 2016. This large vote share came primarily from black primary voters older than 30.

She took 70% among black voters ages 30 to 44, 85% from those ages 45 to 59 and 89% from those 60 years and older. Blacks under the age of 30 actually went for Sanders by a 52%-to-47% margin. This year, Sanders isn't benefiting from quite the same age gap, though an age gap still exists. He stood at 9% with all black Democratic primary voters in our CNN polls from April to June. Breaking it down by age, he does do better with black Democrats under 50 (12%) than those 50 years and older (6%). Using the modeling technique that we did with Biden, we can estimate that Sanders likely has somewhere between 15% and 20% support with black voters under the age of 30. Our model indicates it's probably well under 5% with black voters over 70 years old.

No other candidates generate the same sort generational split within the black community.

Harris is at 14% among those age 50 and over as well as those under 50. Warren is at 12% among those age 50 and over and at 9% among those under 50.

This age gap is partially a reflection of party identification. Biden does better among Democratic black primary voters who self-identify as Democrats than he does among those who call themselves independents. For Sanders, it's the reverse -- just as it was in the 2016 primary.

Younger black Democratic primary voters are much more likely to call themselves independents than older ones, according to an aggregate of the last three CNN polls. Among black Democratic primary voters under 50 in our aggregated dataset, 68% say they are Democrats. About a third (32%) say they are independents.

For those older than 50, 86% call themselves Democrats. Only 14% call themselves independents.

The fact that older and younger black Democrats are more likely to call themselves Democrats than independents works to Biden's benefit. Biden's hoping that this loyalty to the Democratic brand helps propel him among black Democrats of all ages.

So far, it has, though more so with older black Democrats.

China wins another round in the Pacific

ASIA TIMES—Pacific summit ends in furor as Australia folds on climate change commitment and China antes up more regional aid

China has moved swiftly to capitalize on divisions in the Pacific over climate change at an acrimonious summit in Tuvalu, offering a regional "step up" initiative to counter cash handouts by Australia and New Zealand. Beijing's Pacific ambassador Wang Xuefeng told delegates to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) gathering that their demands for stronger action on carbon emissions to halt rising seas were "legitimate" and his country would be "a good friend, partner and brother of Pacific Island countries."

"China will also step up its efforts in South-South co-operation and do its best to make a positive contribution to the sustainable and green development of Pacific island countries and jointly rekindle confidence in global cooperation against climate change," Wang said in his speech.

He did not give any details of what this might entail, but officials of some island nations said they have been offered Chinese aid to build up defenses against encroaching seas and to promote environmentally sustainable policies.

Australia made the same offer in a US\$338 million package of assistance announced on the eve of the summit, but it got a cold shoulder from 17 Pacific countries because there was no offer to cut carbon emissions that some low-lying island nations blame for climate change impacts.

Hopes that the 18 participating countries might heal their widening rift on the issue quickly faded in a heated 12-hour debate by national leaders on August 16 that even reduced Tonga Prime Minister Samuela Akilisi Pohiva to tears.



"China will also step up its efforts in South-South co-operation and do its best to make a positive contribution to the sustainable and green development of Pacific island countries."

Despite an impassioned plea by Tuvalu leader Enele Sopoaga, the summit's host, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison vetoed several sections of a joint communique, as did New Zealand's leader Jacinda Ardern.

These included all references to coal and efforts to set specific emission targets.

Morrison also refused to back a separate statement issued by small island nations who belong to a sub-section within the PIF that demanded all nations commit to phasing out the use of coal in their power sectors.

"It's not incumbent on any member state to endorse that statement, it's a statement of the small Pacific states," Morrison argued. The communique will be presented to next month's United Nations Climate Action Forum.

China has the highest carbon emissions of any country in absolute terms, along with the United States, but was oddly not singled out for any criticism in Tuvalu.

Australia and the US have the biggest emissions per population. American and Australian officials privately described Beijing's stance as "hypocritical", while denying there was competition for influence in the region. Morrison said he was committed to the "Pacific family of nations."

"We will keep doing this because it is in Australia's national interest to support a secure and stable Pacific region," he declared on Twitter today (August 17). "That is what the last few days in Tuvalu have been all about."

However, other Pacific nations signaled that it would not be business as usual in their relations with Australia, confirming Canberra suffered a substantial diplomatic setback at the summit as it tries to counter China's aid offensive in a region it has long considered its sphere of influence.

The Pacific Western bloc, led by Australia and the US, has tried to counter China's ascendancy by drawing island nations into security partnerships, partly to prevent China from opening naval bases of its own.

But they have failed to realize that island nations see climate change as their key security threat.

Pacific nations also did not support the geopolitical arguments espoused by Australia and the US in Tuvalu.

Samoan leader Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, whose nation is considering switching its allegiance from Taiwan to China, said he would not take sides, as "their enemies are not our enemies."

Beijing is viewed as a desirable partner because it is less judgmental than the Western powers, which often package aid with stipulations on the treatment of human rights, labor standards and other democratic requirements.

Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, whose country was ostracized by Australia and New Zealand in 2009 for refusing to call elections after a 2006 coup, accused Morrison of being heavy-handed in the summit debate and trying to impose Australia's political will on the region. He said Canberra's approach would push Pacific nations closer to China.

"After what we went through with Morrison, nothing can be worse than him. China never insults the Pacific," he told The Guardian.

"They [Australians] keep saying the Chinese are going to take over. Guess why? You don't have to be a high-school graduate to know that," he said.

The continuing tragedy of Yemen must not be overlooked

TEHRAN (FNA) — The United Nations Human Rights Council continues to remind us that airstrikes in which civilians are killed, including children, are an example of the “disregard” for civilians’ safety shown by the Saudi-led coalition in the war.

These daily “incidents” are an example of the “brutality” of the conflict. The Saudis and their allies continue to show a disregard for the protection of civilians and the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants in the conduct of hostilities.

The same brutality is still happening in Afghanistan and Syria as well, where the United States and its allies target civilians in their indiscriminate airstrikes. The casualties are always overwhelmingly civilians. The Syrian government has complained many times to the UN Security Council about the US airstrikes, saying they are excessively targeting civilians and basic infrastructure, but to no avail.

Tragically, the only thing the UN has done thus far is condemning these repeated killings — even though the world body is fully in the know that the unprovoked aggression against Yemen is for all the wrong reasons. The unprovoked conflict is in fact a smokescreen. The alliance between Saudi, American and Israeli interests gives the false story about the alleged Iranian takeover of Yemen additional legs, passed on to “fakestream” media from Tel Aviv. Fanning a bogus Shiite-Sunni conflict seems to be a great idea for Riyadh, enthusiastically seconded by its protector and close ally, Israel.

With these in mind, the blitz boys of so many Arab and Western states are attacking and destroying Yemen’s lifelines for all the



criminal reasons. This unqualified alliance stems from motives for regional domination and more. They now want to split Yemen, with no intention to comply with International Humanitarian Law, let alone take feasible measures to minimize harm to civilians and end the conflict.

Little wonder the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross say they condemn these atrocities and they are extremely worried about the severe damage caused by the Saudi-led attacks on civilian infrastructure. The destruction of key logistic infrastructure, including airports, seaports, bridges and roads is having alarming consequences on the civilian population. The

humanitarian situation has now become catastrophic.

The current conflict and prospects of division have already caused extreme hardship for the population across the country. The destruction of logistic infrastructure means countless lives are now more at risk, and the UN can no longer afford to stand and watch as people suffer and die of preventable causes. The world body has a duty to demand that robust and unobstructed channels for the provision of humanitarian assistance are opened and respected by the warmongers in this increasingly desperate situation.

The UN should also realize that condem-

nation per se is not enough. There is an urgent need to a halt in the war. The UN should call for an end to the criminal strikes against civilians. It’s the only way to ensure no more lives are lost in the blockaded country.

So far the Saudi-led, US-backed airstrikes have failed to force Yemen into submission. The country is facing a humanitarian disaster. Aid agencies say the air and sea blockade is preventing the country from importing food on which it is wholly reliant. Hospitals are closing because they have no medicine and no fuel for generators. But the nation and the resistance group of Ansarullah are still standing.

The continuing national tragedy of Yemen must not be overlooked. Women and children have borne the brunt of the increase in civilian casualties, with UN blaming the use of improvised explosive devices and aerial operations in populated areas for the jump. The Saudi coalition has hit markets, hospitals, clinics, schools, factories, wedding parties and hundreds of private residences in villages, towns and cities. And it continues to do so “with unacceptable regularity,” according to the UN.

For all the Saudi diplomatic posturing, the massacre of defenseless civilians is state-sanctioned murder in its most perfect form. The International Law is clear: Saudi Arabia and its allies have no right to drop bombs over civilians and divide their country. The airstrikes are lawless and unaccountable to the United Nations. The war and the division benefits terrorist groups like ISIL and Al-Qaeda. In fact, it is compounding rather than diminishing the threat of international terrorism.

Mnar Muhawesh: Trump making racism norm in America

TEHRAN (FNA) — Mnar Muhawesh, American journalist, says the president of the United States, who is literally the role model of Americans, is promoting racism in the US.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, she said Trump has a racist character, which attracts other racists and extremists, “...and give them a weapon to use to exert their anger at the lack of jobs and failing economy. This also emboldens groups like the KKK”.

“[Racial divide] is an unfortunate technique used by the two party systems (both Democrats and Republicans) to keep the nation divided and distracted while the 1% exploit we the people”, she added.

Trump made several postings on his Twitter page, urging four non-white female Democratic members of Congress to “go back to the countries they came from”, which in all but one case was the US. The firestorm tweets are banded as racist by many political analysts.

Mnar Muhawesh is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of MintPress News, and is also a regular speaker on responsible journalism, sexism, neo-conservatism within the media and journalism start-ups. Also, she produces and hosts TV programs covering Midwest and national politics while focusing on civil liberties and social justice issues.

Below is the full text of the interview:

Q: Why has Trump initiated such a racist tirade against

four Congresswomen who are elected officials?

A: It’s a type of character assassination against these Congresswomen to dismiss the real social justice concerns they are bringing to the forefront of the political conversation, which are root issues that have historically not made it to mainstream American politics including: income inequality, racial injustice, the right to boycott Israeli apartheid, and the influence of foreign nations on our elected officials like Israel and Saudi Arabia, getting money out of politics and ending war. These were once considered fringe issues by the establishment, but are in fact issues that have destroyed our democracy and turned our nation into an oligarchy.

Q: Do you think Trump’s rhetoric gives a green light to racism and racist acts by others?

A: The role of the president is to lead the nation whether through action or character. If the commander in chief is normalizing racism, then it will only empower others to act in that way. Unfortunately, his racist character will attract those whom are frustrated in society and give them a weapon to use to exert their anger at the lack of jobs and failing economy. This also emboldens groups like the KKK.

Q: Is it Trump, or is it “divide” which is dominating today’s United States politics?

A: The racial divide in the United States has exacer-



bated in recent years; but, it did not start with Trump. Trump is just the wolf without the sheep’s clothing. Racism and division is not unique to the Republican party. It is an unfortunate technique used by the two party systems (both Democrats and Republicans) to keep the nation divided and distracted while the 1% exploit ‘we the people’.

President Moon loses the trust of North Korea as prospects for peace look grim

By Stu Smallwood

ANTIWAR — “His shameless talk of dialogue between the North and South [at a time like this] raises questions about his mental faculties... We have nothing to say to South Korean authorities and have no intention of sitting down with them again.”

These are just some of the highlights of a North Korean spokesperson’s ruthless response to Moon Jae-in’s August 15 Liberation Day speech in which the South Korean president called for unification of Korea by 2045 and the establishment of a North-South peace economy.

The “time like this” mentioned by the spokesperson for the North Korean Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country is a reference to the insulting training drills ongoing between South Korean and US forces — specifically a simulated counterinsurgency campaign in North Korea after successfully conquering Pyongyang in 90 days.

Laughable as this simulated scenario is (China and Russia would never sit back and let North Korea be conquered so swiftly), the comments embody the all-too-predictable outcome of these offensive drills: the North Korean government is upset and has lost complete trust in the South Korean president who once led the peace process.

North Korean Missile Tests a Response, not the Cause of Tension

As arms-control wonks and North Korea analysts breathlessly report each and every short-range ballistic missile test carried out by North Korea since June 25, the context often goes unmentioned — perhaps intentionally. Justifying the testing of these missiles, North Korea criticized the upcoming drills, calling them a violation of the understanding made between Donald Trump and Kim

Jong-un at the Singapore summit (no more provocative training exercises for a suspension of North Korean intercontinental ballistic missile tests).

South Korean and American officials insisted North Korea had no reason to be affronted by the exercises; that they had been scaled back to accommodate the peace process, were defensive in nature, and — most importantly — were critical to testing the South Korean military’s readiness to be transferred operational control in wartime. But North Korea has been vindicated now that details have emerged of the exact nature of the drills. No honest observer can argue practicing counterinsurgency has anything to do with testing South Korean military readiness.

This raises serious questions about what President Moon knew about them — and when. It seems impossible someone who has staked his presidency on the peace process would approve of these extremely provocative exercises. Still, even if Moon was unaware of their nature or unable to stop them, it suggests he has no control over the military of his country — and that perhaps an act of sabotage has occurred.

North Korea Rightly Views Talk of Peace with a Jaundiced Eye

Though President Moon’s domestic approval is holding strong, buoyed by the trade war initiated cynically by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, his standing in the peace process has never been lower. It is becoming painfully clear that his cautious approach as liaison between the US and North Korea is no longer constructive.

“He often calls for peace, but is he then going to say the purchase of drones and fighter jets [F-35s] from the US is for spreading agrochemicals and air shows?”*

The North Korean spokesperson here refers to an obvious trend: While appealing for peace and glorifying the potential boon North-South economic cooperation will bring, up to this point President Moon has been very careful not to directly challenge the US position on maximum pressure or interfere with US-South Korean military affairs — both which have proven toxic to the diplomatic process.

This makes allusions to peace seem like nothing more than rhetoric. Moon once called for a peace treaty by the end of 2018 — almost eight months ago. In his Liberation Day speech he pledged “...to solidify [a] denuclearization and peace regime on the Korean Peninsula during [his] term in office.” These declarations must appear insane and insulting to North Koreans with the occupation drills ongoing. Cue the North Korean spokesperson:

“How dare he speak of establishing an atmosphere for dialogue, a peace economy, a mechanism for maintaining peace when the joint military drills that we oppose are at the height of implementation in South Korea as we speak?”

To Achieve Peace, Moon Must Take a Bolder Approach

Words are only meaningful for so long; at some point, intentions must be measured by actions and results. The latest North Korean diatribe makes it painfully obvious that South Korea needs to take a different approach or forget about peace in the near term. The Moon administration must make a decision, and the stakes are high.

South Korea can choose to remain tied to the sinking American ship and give up the dream of Korean integration. This will require South Korea’s continued membership in the unnatural “trilateral alliance” with the US and Japan that is on course for an eventual clash with China. This also guarantees long-term isolation

South Korea should not bow to Trump’s demands

By Mac Zhi Hong

ASIATIMES — I am writing in response to the Nikkel Asian Review article “If Trump wins in 2020, he will pull US troops out of South Korea.” The author has suggested that if US President Donald Trump wins re-election in 2020, he will withdraw American troops from South Korea. He also suggested that South Korea should pay the \$5 billion dollars requested by the Trump administration for keeping US troops in the country. The author’s reasoning is that by paying the \$5 billion dollars, the South Korean government would be able to call the Trump administration’s bluff as it tries to wriggle its way out of South Korea.



For a start, the idea that Trump will withdraw US troops from South Korea is a non-starter as the John S McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, which was enacted in 2018, explicitly states no authorized funds may be used to reduce the number of US troops in South Korea below 22,000 unless the secretary of defense certifies to the congressional defense committees that:

(1) a reduction is in the US national security interest and “will not significantly undermine the security of United States allies in the region”; and (2) the secretary of defense has consulted with US allies, including South Korea and Japan, regarding such a reduction in the troop level. Section 1265 of the act also directs the defense secretary, in coordination with the Director of National Intelligence, to report to Congressional defense committees regular reports and updates on the scale and operational status of North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration would require additional justification for a US troop withdrawal below 22,000.

Contrary to Trump’s repeated public remarks that North Korea no longer poses a threat to the US, the American intelligence community has consistently gathered intelligence concluding that North Korea has not taken any substantial steps toward dismantling its nuclear program. Without explicit backing from the US intelligence community, Trump would find it very hard to gather the justification he needs to order the drawing down of US forces in South Korea.

And the bill has effectively stymied any potential US troop withdrawal by barring the use of US funds for withdrawal purposes, and troop withdrawal is a very expensive endeavor. The barring of usage of funds for the withdrawal of US troops creates a major obstacle for Trump.

The recently passed 2020 National Defense Authorization Act further tied the president by specifically barring the drawing down of US troops from the current level of 28,500, and the bill passed in Congress with a veto-proof majority. The massive support for the law will deter the president from exercising his right to veto the bill. It is one thing to want to be friends with North Korea, it is another matter to withdraw US troops from South Korea. Any withdrawal of US troops is bound to face strong resistance from Congress and the US foreign policy establishment, and the fear that Trump may withdraw troops from South Korea has led to Congressional provisions to stymie his move.

With the US currently in a tussle with China for influence after naming China as a strategic competitor, any withdrawal of US troops from South Korea would be a strategic gift to China and be the death knell for US influence in South Korea and Japan. The present arrangement allows the US to make its presence felt in the region and the presence of US troops is a physical embodiment of that influence. With North Korea failing to take meaningful steps toward fulfilling the stated irreversible denuclearization as set by the Trump administration, it is politically and legally impossible for Trump to draw down troops in South Korea.

Lastly, South Korea would be foolish to agree to pay \$5 billion yearly to the US. Total yearly costs for the presence of US troops in South Korea is around US\$2 billion, and South Korea has contributed substantially to alleviate the costs borne by the US. Paying \$5 billion will mean paying the US a surplus of \$3 billion and it is virtually impossible for South Korea to agree to this one-sided deal. The idea of a fresh cost-sharing review has always been disliked by South Korea as at each fresh review, it has to pay more to the US to keep its troops in the country. Successive South Korean governments have tried to limit increases in contributions to the US government through hardnosed negotiations and cajoling.

Hence no South Korean leader will agree to pay upfront \$5 billion yearly to the US as it will lock South Korea into a precedent that will be virtually impossible for the country to deviate from. For political reasons, at every fresh cost review negotiation session, the US government must secure an increase from South Korea.

Every US government, regardless of political affiliations, will not allow the South Korean government to decrease its costs contribution toward keeping US forces in South Korea. No US political leader can afford to be seen as weak in standing up for US interests. Hence at every review, there was always tension as the US has pushed for more increases and South Korea has pushed for the smallest possible increase.

However, past US administrations have been aware of the political sensitivity of this issue in South Korea and have not pushed their luck too far with their counterparts. Past American administrations have understood that having US troops in South Korea is a great plus for American power projection in the region. There was always a give and take spirit. However, that is not the case with the current US administration. Any South Korean leader who signs this deal will be committing political suicide. Acceding to Trump’s request will expose South Korea to more extortion by the Trump administration and set a bad precedent for Japan whose cost-sharing agreement is up for review in 2021.

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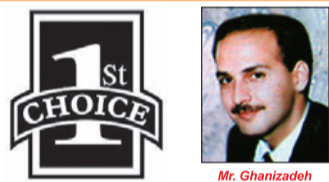
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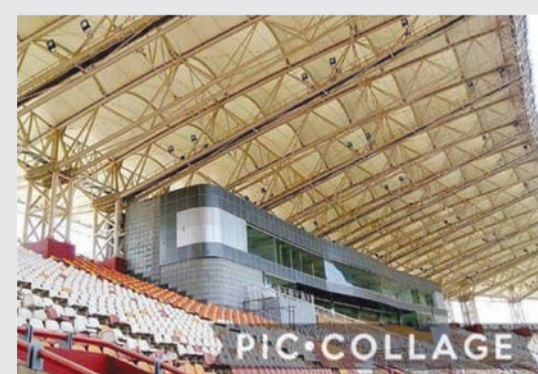
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Tehran exhibit showcasing handmade jewelry

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Sets of handmade jewelry, made by a group of female Iranian jewelers, are currently on show at the headquarters of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization in Tehran.

The exhibit, running from August 17 to 21, presents seventy works produced by the Kouben art group and it aims to introduce authentic Iranian poems in the form of silver jewelry, CHTN reported.



The group has developed typographic designs of authentic (classical) Iranian poetry pieces using a combination of silver and warm enamel, which is the first of its kind in Iran, the report added.

The group, which is composed of five artisans who have graduate degrees in handicrafts, is named after an ancient tool being used to create jewelry.

Iran earned some \$99 million from exporting handicrafts via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) during the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20), CHHTO deputy director Pouya Mahmoudian said earlier in July.

In addition, the country's handicrafts exports through customs reached \$289 million in 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, Mahmoudian said.

'Mystery' volcano that cooled the ancient world traced to El Salvador

The sixth century was a rough time to be alive: Lower-than-average temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere triggered crop failure, famine, and maybe even the onset of bubonic plague. The ultimate culprit, scientists say, were two back-to-back volcanic eruptions—one in 536 CE and another around 540 CE.

The first likely happened in Iceland or North America. But the location of the second one has remained a mystery—until now. Researchers studying ancient deposits from El Salvador's Il-opango volcano knew that a massive eruption had taken place there sometime between the third and sixth centuries. That event, dubbed Tierra Blanca Joven (TBJ), or "white young earth," sent a volcanic plume towering nearly 50 kilometers into the atmosphere.

To better pin down the date of this eruption, the scientists collected slices from three tree trunks embedded in TBJ volcanic ash 25 to 30 kilometers from the present-day lake that covers the caldera (above). The tropical hardwood trees likely died after being engulfed by the searing hot, gale-force winds containing the volcanic gases, ash, and pumice that would have swept outward after the eruption.

Back in the lab, the researchers estimated the ages of different parts of the slices by counting their rings and using carbon-14 dating. The multiple measurements yielded much more precise dates than could have been gotten from single measurements.

(Source: sciencemag.org)

ROUND THE GLOBE

Agave landscape and ancient industrial facilities of Tequila

The Agave Region, in the Valles Region of the Jalisco State, is one of the most important cultural landscapes in Mexico, not only for the importance of the natural landscape that offers, but for the cultural tradition that has kept for several centuries and from which has arisen one of the main icons that identify this country: the tequila.



The 35,019 ha site, between the foothills of the Tequila Volcano and the deep valley of the Rio Grande River, is part of an expansive landscape of blue agave, shaped by the culture of the plant used since the 16th century to produce tequila spirit and for at least 2,000 years to make fermented drinks and cloth.

Within the landscape are working distilleries reflecting the growth in the international consumption of tequila in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Today, the agave culture is seen as part of national identity. The area encloses a living, working landscape of blue agave fields and the urban settlements of Tequila, Arenal, and Amatitlan with large distilleries where the agave 'pine-apple' is fermented and distilled.

A World Heritage, Agave landscape and ancient industrial facilities of Tequila is also a testimony to the Teuchitlan cultures which shaped the Tequila area from 200-900 CE, notably through the creation of terraces for agriculture, housing, temples, ceremonial mounds and ball courts.

(Source: UNESCO)

Major exhibits of tourism, handicrafts underway in Urmia

TOURISM TEHRAN — Urmia, the capital of West Azarbaijan province, is playing host to major exhibits of tourism and handicrafts from August 17 to 20, CHTN reported.

The Urmia Permanent International Fairground hosts the 6th National Handicrafts Exhibition concurrently with the 2nd Tourism Exhibition, provincial tourism chief Jalil Jabbari said.

Exhibitors, travel marketers and tour operators from 18 provinces along with craft-people from 30 provinces have taken part in the event, which also features everyday life of Iranian nomads, Jabbari explained.

A total of 160 stalls and 13 nomadic black tents have been set up for the event, the official added.

Referring to various exhibitors, folk and art groups performing their rituals, Jabbari said, "The layout of stalls follow a kind of content order so that visitors can have complete and proper visits to the exhibitions."

"As top artisans from across the country are presenting their latest products at the event, it is a great opportunity for the people to visit and buy [handicrafts] at fair prices."



Local officials cut ribbon on concurrent exhibits of tourism and handicrafts at the Urmia Permanent International Fairground, in the capital of Iran's West Azarbaijan province, August 17, 2019.

With its rich culture and unique natural landscapes, West Azarbaijan province is becoming an increasingly popular destination for domestic and foreign travelers, a provincial tourism official said earlier in August.

"The province has seen a nearly 100 percent rise in the number of visitors to its museums during the Iranian calendar month of Tir (June 22-July 22) in comparison to the same month last year."

Two UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), the archaeological site of Tepe Hasanlu and the ruined Bastam Citadel are among the top travel destinations in the northwestern province.

A center for some ancient civilizations, Azarbaijan is bounded on the north by the Aras River, which separates it from Azerbaijan and Armenia, and on the west by Iraq and Turkey. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

European bikers on way to Isfahan, Shiraz

TOURISM TEHRAN — A group of European bikers arrived in Iran late on Saturday to follow their rally itinerary that includes Isfahan and Shiraz in heartland of the ancient country.

"A Paris-Isfahan motorcycle rally tour entered the country from Bazargan border terminal on Saturday for the purpose of visiting nature charms and historical sites," IRNA quoted Sadeq Namdar, the head of Bazargan customs office, as saying.

"The group is composed of 40 people who are from France, Switzerland and England. And Isfahan and Shiraz are their major destinations [in Iran]," the official said.



They are riding on 25 motorcycles and four cars for an 11-day tour in the Iranian soil, Namdar explained.

Foreign arrivals from Bazargan border, shared with Turkey in northwestern Iran, surged 57 percent in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) from a year earlier, director of the border terminal has said.

Nearly 7.8 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20) that shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year. The Islamic Republic hosted 5.1 million travelers in 1396.

Explore "Everest of all caves" in western Iran



TOURISM TEHRAN — Photos show rock climbers rappelling through Iran's Parau Cave, locally renowned as "Everest of all caves".

Looking for adventure? This limestone vertical cave, which is one of natural attractions of Kermanshah province in the Zagros Mountains, offers a wild and challenging expedition for experienced rock climbers!

At 751 meters deep, Parau is the deepest cave in the country. Joujar Cave, at 568 m deep, has been reported as the second deepest.

Stretched at about 3050 meters height in Parau Mountain, it was the greatest vertical cave in the world at the time of its discovery, more than 40 years ago (1971), Tasnim reported on Friday.

"That was why it is called Everest of all the caves in the world. This cave is registered as the second natural and national monument in Kermanshah [the Iranian calendar year] 1388 (March 2009-March 2010) by Environmental Protection Agency in Iran."

Today, many deep caves are discovered throughout the world which are even deeper than Parau Cave and have sent this cave down to rank 221 in the list of deepest world caves, the report said.

One of the exquisite features of Parau Cave is its three thousand meters height from sea level which is the highest level from sea among all the caves in the world.

The western province welcomed 5,664 foreign travelers during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), according to data compiled by provincial tourism department.

It embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites including Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan, both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.



Why you probably shouldn't book a flight through a third-party travel site

Last month, scammers posing as Expedia stole thousands of dollars from travelers hoping to confirm or change their bookings over the phone. But booking flights with the real Expedia—and any other third-party site like Travelocity—comes with certain (legal) risks, too.

If your plans change, you might not be entitled to a refund, as one Reddit user recently discovered (and almost lost \$5,000 in the process). If you're planning to book a flight through Expedia or Kayak (a search engine that takes you to other booking sites), here's our warning: Always comparison shop first and carefully read the fine print before you hit the confirm button. You might save yourself from hefty fees and a few lengthy phone calls with customer service.

■ **Changing or canceling your plans won't be easy or cheap**

To change your plans booked via a third party, it will require you to contact that booking site's customer support line; these lines often handle travelers' requested changes on a case-by-case basis. (If you booked a low-cost carrier like Frontier or Spirit, however, a third-party site may require that you contact them directly.)

At the very least, you should expect to pay change fees for both the website and the airline. Vayama, for example, charges \$100 for a change. Meanwhile, airlines like American and Delta charge change fees that start at \$200. In other words, changing your flight via third-party sites will almost always be more expensive than if you had booked directly through an airline and changed plans.

There are exceptions, however. If you're making changes within 24 hours of booking your reservation, you can likely cancel or change your itinerary for free, depending on the site's policy (a rule that also exists if you had booked through a U.S. airline directly); Expedia allows for free changes/cancellations within one day of booking. If you bought additional insurance while checking out on the site, you also may be covered, but that depends on the terms and conditions of your particular insurance type.

As for canceling nonrefundable tickets purchased through third-parties, well, there's no easy answer. Over on Reddit, u/lexp purchased five tickets costing \$5,000 via Travelocity, only to discover he'd booked the wrong dates; in short, after a conversation with the airline and another with Travelocity, he didn't see a dollar back until his bank finally stepped in (and miraculously negated all charges for unclear, legal reasons).

And what happens if an airline cancels your trip? Well, as Christopher Elliott writes for Mercury News, an airline should refund the fare and your third-party site should step in to provide you with a refund. Of course, it will be a pain in the ass and you may not immediately see the refund until you contact the website yourself and likely follow up again and again.

■ **You might miss out on sale pricing or other options for flights**

Airlines would much rather you book directly to avoid referral fees given to booking websites. For this reason, airlines might incentivize you to book directly

by providing additional points or miles. (You might also receive more points for a direct booking while using an airline co-branded credit card as well.)

There are other basic benefits, too. As Travel and Leisure writes, third-party sites may not account for flight sales or promotional offers in their results. And when you book, you're not given the option to reserve seats; you'll have to contact your airline instead, making the overall booking process more annoying than you'd like if you just want to reserve an aisle seat and be done with it.

Before you book, always compare an itinerary on an airline website with one you've found on a third-party site to see what you might be missing out on, particularly points or miles. Some third-party sites like Orbitz and Expedia also have their own rewards programs, but they're only really worth it if you're a frequent buyer from the site.

■ **You may not be notified of changes or updates**

Here's another factor: You might not even be notified of any status updates on your itinerary. As the Points Guy writes, one traveler wasn't notified that his flight from Paris to Newark, New Jersey on a business-seat-only plane had been switched out for an all-economy flight with little legroom and no TVs (gasp). According to the passenger, he had booked via a third-party site but his contact information was not passed onto the airline, so he was never informed of the change.

Obviously, booking directly through

an airline comes with one major perk: They have your email or phone number and will reach out with changes to your itinerary. If you're booking a flight through a third-party website, download your airline's app and pay attention to any news regarding your flight.

■ **Booking through third-party sites does have a few benefits**

Given all that we've said to convince you that booking through third-party sites isn't a good idea, it's not always a terrible decision. For one, if you've found a cheap itinerary combining flights from different airlines and have no intention of changing your plans, then by all means, book the flights! It's easier and might save you the time and effort it would take to book on different airline websites.

Always comparison shop, understand the risks, and read the fine print of any site's contract before you book. (You should review change and cancellation policies, in particular.) And never book flights with a debit card—if you request a refund, it might take weeks or even months to see it reflected in your checking account. And while browsing through third-party sites, use websites like Skyscanner to browse through flight options, too. It's a search engine, rather than a booking site, so it'll help you make the best possible decision.

And don't forget: Some low-cost carriers like Southwest don't appear on most major third-party booking sites, so always do your own research, too.

(Source: lifehacker.com)

IRCS: Sanctions hindering pharma raw materials import

HEALTH TEHRAN — Problems in transferring money from foreign banks and using foreign exchange has been hindering the import of pharmaceutical raw materials into the country for a long time, announced the director of medical supply department at the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS). “With not having the required raw materials, we have many problems producing some medicines, and the production of some medicines has stopped all together,” Mehr news agency quoted Ali Faraji as saying on Sunday.

“We hope that the problem will be solved with the help of the Central Bank and the Food and Drug Administration,” said Faraji.

“As an international agency, we have offered the Health Ministry to help them in importing raw materials. They are still reviewing our offer and has not responded yet.”

“The main problem now is not having access to some foreign raw materials that are critical in producing medicine,” he added.

Last week, the deputy health minister said that the American claim that medicine,



food and humanitarian aid are not subject to sanctions is “ridiculous”.

According to Alireza Raeesi, It is true that medicines and humanitarian goods are exempt from sanctions but the sanctions have restricted transfer of money which

affects importation of food and medicine.

■ Sanctions are killing Iranian patients

Last week, Foreign Policy released a report about how sanctions are “killing cancer patients in Iran.”

The report was written by Abbas Kebriaeezadeh, a professor of pharmacology at the Tehran University of Medical Sciences and the vice chairman of the Iranian Pharmaceutical Industries Syndicate.

According to the report, Washington claims that maximum pressure won't stop the supply of medicine and other humanitarian necessities, but banking sanctions are driving up import prices, blocking supply chains, and creating deadly drug shortages.

According to Kebriaeezadeh, “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. For more than a decade, my fellow Iranian medical professionals and I have been struggling to protect patients from the fallout of U.S. sanctions. We have studied sanctions impacts on Iran’s health care sector and advocated for better responses from our own government. Our findings make clear that the harms being inflicted on Iranian patients are not mythology.”

How you can ‘reprogram’ your taste buds to like vegetables



Don't say no to that asparagus just yet. New research suggests people may find the taste of bitter green vegetables more enjoyable if they eat them more often.

Don't like the taste of bitter green vegetables? Good news! The way they taste can improve the more frequently you eat them. Getty Images

Christopher Gardner's son was the typical picky eater. He knew what he liked and knew what he didn't like.

That suddenly changed right around the time he became a teenager. He began liking “adult” foods and became more adventurous.

Gardner was surprised at how abruptly the change came about, but, as a nutrition science PhD-holding researcher and professor at Stanford University's Prevention Research Center, he was glad to see his son embrace new and different flavors.

“Gen Z is really great at exploring food,” Gardner told Healthline. “They want to blow their taste buds away.”

But that doesn't mean they all come out of the womb as adventurous eaters. Some take longer, and new research suggests our dietary likes and dislikes aren't ingrained in our DNA.

Because even when we think we don't like the taste of something, our tongues haven't quite made up their minds yet.

Bitter, for example, is a complicated taste. It typically serves as a warning sign; as in, if something tastes bitter, then it might be poisonous.

Unfortunately, that includes cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, radishes, and arugula.

Otherwise known as the short list of foods lots of kids often don't like. At least at first.

Recent research out of the University at Buffalo (UB) conducted on rats suggests that trying more bitter foods — particularly those found in a healthy plant-based diet — changes proteins in saliva that affect how we perceive the taste of food.

The researchers filled two water bottles with different tasting solutions and trained rats, some genetically modified with activated salivary proteins akin to those who had been raised on a diet of bitter foods, to choose from the two bottles to indicate whether it tasted bitter or sweet.

But Ann-Marie Torregrossa, PhD, an assistant professor in UB's department of psychology and the associate director of the university's Center for Ingestive Behavior Research, says those rats with the bitter-induced salivary proteins turned out couldn't taste the bitterness at higher concentrations when compared to others that didn't have the same protein activated. “Once these proteins are on board,

the bitter tastes like water. It's gone,” Torregrossa told UB's news service.

The research, published in the journal *Chemical Senses*, suggests that repeated exposure to bitter foods can change the proteins in saliva, essentially calming the initial distaste for bitter and other flavors.

“If we can convince people to try broccoli, greens, and bitter foods, they should know that with repeated exposure, they'll taste better once they regulate these proteins,” Torregrossa said.

While rats and humans are drastically different in many ways, the research does offer insight into how our palates can adapt to the foods we're given with repeated exposure.

Experts say repetition and engaging picky eaters into the cooking process are surefire ways to help change the minds — or at least the saliva — of stubborn eaters.

■ Our taste buds aren't made of stone

Catherine Brennan, a registered dietitian nutritionist who writes for FeedingFullNutrition.com, says while several factors like genetics, culture, environment, and upbringing all play a role in developing our palates, the earliest influence Trusted Source could be our mother's milk.

Into childhood, developing brains prefer foods with energy return and replenishment, like sugars and salts Trusted Source.

While those same children may be rejecting new foods, Brennan recommends people follow the advice of most pediatric dietitians: Try a new food 10 or more times before finally throwing in the towel.

“Think about it: How many of us took a sip of our parent's coffee or beer as a child and spit it out, wondering how anyone could ever like the bitter taste?” she told Healthline.

Brennan, like so many of us, did. Now she has a hard time imagining her life without coffee or beer.

That's because we experience the world of five key factors: sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. We experience them best through complex foods, where taste is broken down even further into five more categories: sweet, sour, bitter, salt, and umami.

Dr. Clifford Segil, a neurologist at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California, says different flavors affect different parts of our brains. He believes the “taste” part plays a less important role than sight or touch.

That makes it harder to teach such a small part of the brain to inherently like healthier foods lacking the sugar, caffeine, and salt the larger parts of our brains prefer.

(Source: Healthline)

New insights into how exercise can lift mood in depression



There is growing evidence that exercise can help to treat symptoms of depression and lift mood, although the reasons have been unclear. Now, a new study finds that the body's endocannabinoid system may play a role.

The researchers propose that a better appreciation of the relationship between exercise, mood, and the endocannabinoid system could result in better treatments for depression.

The study investigated changes in mood and endocannabinoid levels in people with major depression who exercised at different intensities on a stationary bike.

The investigators found a significant increase in endocannabinoid levels and improvement in mood after a session of prescribed exercise of moderate intensity.

The endocannabinoid system is a cell signaling system comprising the body's own cannabinoids, or endocannabinoids, and receptors. It extends throughout the body and influences the function of the immune, cardiovascular, and nervous systems.

When a particular endocannabinoid binds to a matching cell receptor, it sends a signal into the cell that alters its behavior and functioning.

■ Need to find new treatments for depression

In a recent paper about the research, which features in the *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* journal, the authors conclude that the mood-enhancing effects of exercise likely involve several biological mechanisms, of which the endocannabinoid system is just one.

“Finding alternatives to medication is important for the treatment of depression,” says first study author Jacob D. Meyer, Ph.D., an assistant professor of kinesiology at Iowa State University, in Ames.

“If we can figure out how exercise works with the endocannabinoid system,” he adds, “we could then design optimal exercise interventions.”

Feeling sad or lonely can be a part of the everyday ups and downs of life, especially when times are hard due to loss or stress. Depression, however, is a condition in which these and other symptoms persist.

According to information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), depression affected 8.1% of adults aged 20 and older in the United States during 2013–2016.

Major depression is a treatable, common condition in which changes in mood and other mental and physical symptoms last for at least 2 weeks.

The illness poses a considerable bur-

den on society and can damage people's functioning more severely than other lasting conditions, such as arthritis and diabetes.

■ Prescribed versus preferred exercise

For the new study, the team investigated 17 adult females aged between 20 and 60 years with a current diagnosis of major depression.

Each participant completed two 30-minute exercise sessions on a stationary bike. In one session, the participant cycled at a prescribed moderate intensity, and in the other session, they could cycle freely at any intensity that they preferred.

All the participants completed both types of session, with a gap of at least 1 week between them.

The researchers took blood samples before and immediately after the sessions. In addition, the participants filled in questionnaires before and at 10 minutes and 30 minutes after the sessions.

The results showed that mood improved after both sessions, but that a rise in endocannabinoid levels only occurred after the prescribed moderate-intensity exercise session. There was no such rise following the preferred-intensity session.

Meyer says that he and his colleagues found the results of the preferred-intensity session surprising.

One explanation could be the small number of participants and the variation in intensity levels in the preferred-intensity session. Some participants completed the preferred session at a constant, light intensity, while others varied the intensity.

Another explanation for the difference in results between the preferred and prescribed exercise sessions could be that exercising at a level that someone else prescribes has a psychological as well as a biological effect.

■ Lasting effect of moderate-intensity exercise

Another significant result of the study was the long lasting effect of moderate-intensity exercise.

The increase in endocannabinoid levels appeared to correlate to mood improvements up to 30 minutes after the session.

This would suggest, says Meyer that the endocannabinoid system was contributing to the mood-lifting effects of the prescribed exercise.

“These results show us that the effect of prescribed moderate-intensity exercise on mood is generally pretty quick and lasts for a while at a relatively sustained rate,” he concludes.

(Source: medical news today)

Venomous animals kill 10 since March

HEALTH TEHRAN — Ten people have died of bites from venomous animals since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21), said Mohammad Mahdi Guya, the director of Communicable Diseases Department at the Ministry of Health.

According to Guya, out of these ten deaths, nine were caused by the sting of scorpion and one was due to the snake bite, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Guya made the announcement over a scientific seminar on “Stings and Bites from Venomous Animals.”



He further noted that people must receive more information about the precautions against venomous stings and the consequences of such stings. Also, the disease registration system must be revised so that it includes cases of venomous stings and the number of deaths.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), animal bites are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide.

Worldwide, up to five million people are bitten by snakes every year; the majority in Africa and South-East Asia.

Prompt medical treatment with appropriate antivenom is required for poisonous snake bites.

Why are kids in Waycross getting cancer?

Fourteen-year-old Lexi Crawford was attacked by lower back pain so sharp that she couldn't even sit up to eat. Her mother had to bring her food while she was lying flat on her back. Doctors in Waycross, GA, the small town where she lives, thought it was a kidney infection. But after months of antibiotics didn't clear it up, a visiting doctor in the local ER suggested an X-ray.

What he saw on the scan was terrifying. Black spots covered Lexi's spine. “That's cancer,” he told her mother, Cristy Rice. “I don't know what kind it is, or where else it is, but that's cancer.”

As Lexi first started feeling sick, in a house across town, 2-year-old Harris Lott began complaining that his stomach hurt. He suddenly lost the ability to urinate, and his parents, who are both doctors, rushed him to an emergency room. He was diagnosed with an infection. After treatment, he was fine for a while, but a few weeks later, the problem returned, and a urologist said it was time for more tests. They found a tumor the size of a grapefruit in his abdomen.

A few days later, doctors told the grandparents of 5-year-old Gage Walker, who lives 14 miles east in nearby Hoboken, GA, that the unrelenting stomach pain he'd had for weeks was probably constipation. For 2 months, doctors sent him home with laxatives. “He would just cry and cry and cry. I thought something was really wrong,” says his grandmother, Ellen Walker. It, too, turned out to be cancer.

All three kids were facing a common enemy: a soft-tissue cancer called rhabdomyosarcoma.

It's rare. Only about 350 cases of rhabdomyosarcoma are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. Even more puzzling, at about the same time, another child in the area, 5-year-old Raylee Metts, was diagnosed with a related but even rarer cancer, Ewing's sarcoma. There are about 250 cases of Ewing's in the U.S. annually.

All told, within 60 days in 2015, four children with rare sarcoma cancers were being treated with intensive chemotherapy, fighting for their lives, family members said.

In the southeast Georgia community where the children live in and around, some suspected it was more than just a coincidence. But in trying to prove that, worried residents didn't know they would be facing obstacles nearly as formidable as the cancer itself.

■ A history of pollution

Lexi's house sits on the corner of Hamilton and Brunel streets in Waycross, a town of about 15,000 people. Drive east on Hamilton, and within a block, you'll see rusty pipes sticking up out of the ground like straws. These are monitoring wells, and they are planted in empty fields that border Hamilton Street behind a chain-link fence.

Railroad Company CSX Transportation owns the fields — part of the sprawling Rice Yard complex in the center of town — and the 755 acres beyond them.

The wells have been there since the early 1990s to monitor an enormous spill, or plume, of toxic chemicals that has been moving underground for decades.

tate environmental inspectors first ordered the site to be cleaned up in 1985, when they found a stew of hazardous chemicals that were being handled carelessly. Paint strippers were poured into shallow pits. Solvents were poured down floor drains.

The state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) ordered the railroad to find out exactly how much hazardous waste it was generating and where it was going. They fined Seaboard System Railroad, then the owner, \$30,500.

When the state returned for a follow-up inspection a few months later, they caught workers dumping toxic waste onto the ground in an area of the property that sits near Lexi's neighborhood.

A few months later, the company received a second fine of \$50,000 when inspectors found workers dumping toxic waste onto the ground near Lexi's neighborhood. Inspectors who tested the waste found high levels of volatile organic compounds including cancer causing trichloroethylene (TCE), and methylene chloride, a paint stripper that is thought to cause cancer.

The state issued a second fine to the railroad for \$50,000, and required it to establish plans to monitor the pollution and clean it up.

(Source: WebMD)

British hunters 'paying to kill endangered giraffes in Africa', campaigners say

A growing number of British trophy hunters are paying to kill giraffes in Africa despite fears of extinction, campaigners say. British-run companies are also selling package trips where hunters can shoot threatened animals. It comes as 180 countries meet to consider proposals to protect giraffes and other threatened animals under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites).



There are currently no international trade rules that protect giraffes, meaning that trophies and body parts can be exported and imported without any checks or records. But if a proposal from six African countries is approved, countries that export body parts from giraffes would have to keep records of the exports and trophy hunting would be regulated. In what has been described as a "silent extinction", giraffe numbers have fallen by up to 40 per cent over the last 30 years due to threats including trade in their parts, as well as habitat loss, illegal hunting and civil war, conservationists said. Despite these concerns, hunters can pay less than £2,000 to kill a giraffe.

Eduardo Goncalves, of the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, told *The Independent*: "There is a greater number of British trophy hunters than there were a decade ago."

"There are also now British safari companies that organize hunting expeditions where you pay to shoot these things." He added: "The other thing is there is more and different species that trophy hunters are now going after. Traditionally people thought it was things like leopards, elephants, lions or zebra. Now you are looking at some really bizarre creatures that are on the menu - like giraffes and monkeys. There are actually quite a number of British trophy hunters out there."

Hunters say that income generated by people paying to shoot animals helps protect the remainder, and that culling is an important part of conservation.

Matt Collis, director of international policy at the International Fund for Animal Welfare (Ifaw), said: "It is important that giraffes are listed by Cites because currently we can't say for certain how much of their huge population decline is due to trade."

"We do know it is a significant factor though as the only country that currently collects data on trade in giraffes, the US, has reported almost 40,000 giraffe items traded in a decade, from 2006 to 2015."

(Source: *The Independent*)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Goran Ivanisevic wins Wimbledon

(July 11, 2001) Tennis player Goran Ivanisevic's victory at Wimbledon this week was a surprise to everybody as he hadn't even qualified for the tournament through the normal processes. Nicholas Woods reports on the massive reaction to the win in his home country of Croatia. Like tennis critics across the world most Croats had **written off** Goran Ivanisevic. It was with some surprise then that people greeted his entry into the Wimbledon finals. The news was big enough **to merit** a picture on the front pages of several newspapers. This has been all the more surprising at a time when most headlines have been **dominated** by a political crisis **prompted by** a government decision to **hand over** war crime suspects to the UN tribunal in The Hague. For several hours though most Croats forgot about politics. They've been **glued to their television sets**. Cafes and bars have been filled with **enthusiasts** who've never shown much interest in tennis and finally when the **outsider** **clinched** his final set the reaction could be heard across the city. Cars have been **tooting** their horns and people have been setting off fire crackers.

So **distracted** was one driver listening to his radio he crashed his car at a **Zagreb** traffic junction. Now Goran Ivanisevic is guaranteed to be remembered as a national hero.

- Words written off:** decided that he was likely to fail
- to merit:** to deserve
- dominated:** heavily influenced
- prompted by:** caused by
- hand over:** give
- glued to their television sets:** giving their televisions their full attention
- enthusiasts:** people who are very interested
- outsider:** person who is not considered as having a good chance of winning
- clinched:** succeeded in winning
- tooting:** sounding
- distracted:** unable to concentrate
- Zagreb:** capital of Croatia

(Source: *BBC*)



Without water, everything withers

Father of nature: a lifetime dedicated to environmental protection

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Gholam-Ali Beski, physician and environmentalist who dedicated a lifetime protecting the environment and promoting public awareness on climate change, passed away on Wednesday, leaving the nature to the people hoping for tougher measures to preserve the remaining natural resources.

Born in 1931 in the northeastern city of Sabzevar, Beski was known as the "father of nature", for his courageous efforts on preventing deforestation and conserving the nature. Quite unlike many, Beski spent his life perfectly delightful of living in the middle of a forest, away from most luxuries, in some cases even necessities.

A physician, environmentalist and benefactor; what truly sets Beski apart was his love for the environment, natural resources, and forests. So committed was he to raise awareness on climate change and environmental protection, he also has made curing illnesses his life's mission.

For over 40 years, he worked to promote healthy living among people being a raw vegetarian, after dealing with his multiple illnesses.

Beski also spent years to study herbal medicines believing that the illnesses are not cured with medicines but with healthy lifestyle.

"Illnesses are a sign of disrespectful behavior towards nature," he once noted.

He spearheaded a movement when he established a hospital, a high school, a school for gifted students who are financially struggling, and a mathematic center in Gonbad-e Kavus in Golestan province.

He also founded the Dr. Beski's world foundation for preservation of life with the aim of safeguarding the environment.

He completed his education in Tehran University of Medical Sciences in 1966; receiving his PhDs in medicine, obstetrics and gynecology. In 1952, he married and had four children when he passed away at the age of 88.

In 1970, he left the city to Golestan forest, where his several chronic diseases, such as cataract and purulent bronchitis, back pain and skin problems were treated.

Voicing concerns about deforestation in the country, and urging responsible bodies to take action in this regard was an inseparable part of his life even until the last moments of his life.

Beski spent a part of his wealth in research of environment and lectures on environmental issues, climate change, chemical wastes and the benefits of healthy diet in order to raise public awareness.

The body of father of nature was buried in the village of Tangra, in Golestan province.



Voicing concerns about deforestation in the country, and urging responsible bodies to take action in this regard was an inseparable part of his life even until the last moments of his life.

World's nations gather to tackle wildlife extinction crisis

From giraffes to sharks, the world's endangered species could gain better protection at an international wildlife conference.

The triennial summit of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites), that began on Saturday, will tackle disputes over the conservation of great beasts such as elephants and rhinos, as well as cracking down on the exploitation of unheralded but vital species such as sea cucumbers, which clean ocean floors.

Extraordinary creatures being driven to extinction by the exotic pet trade, from glass frogs to star tortoises, may win extra protection from the 183-country conference. It may even see an extinct animal, the woolly mammoth, get safeguards, on the grounds that illegal elephant ivory is sometimes laundered by being labelled as antique mammoth tusks.

Ivonne Higuero, the secretary general of Cites, said: "Cites is a powerful tool for ensuring sustainability and responding to the rapid loss of biodiversity - often called the sixth mass extinction - by preventing and reversing declines in wildlife populations."

The destruction of nature has reduced wildlife populations by 60% since 1970 and plant extinctions are running at a "frightening" rate, according to scientists. In May, the world's leading researchers warned that humanity was in jeopardy from the accelerating decline of the planet's natural life-support systems, which provide the food, clean air and water on which society ultimately depends.

"We do depend on biodiversity," Higuero said. "It is not just an environmental issue. There are so many species that, if they went extinct, would be sorely missed and we just don't realise it."

Matt Collis, the head of the NGO IFAW's delegation at Cites, said: "Illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade, coupled with habitat loss and other human-made threats, has decimated many species so that they are now at a tipping point for future survival. It is vital that countries come together to do all they can."

The Cites agreement regulates the international trade in wildlife, from live animals to skins and timber, and unlike other international conventions can punish countries that flout bans by barring them from lucrative markets.



In the run-up to the meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, conservationists have called for sanctions against Mexico, home to the vaquita, a porpoise on the edge of extinction with only about 19 left alive. The vaquita's demise also illustrates the deadly role of criminals in the destruction of wildlife. The illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be worth \$7bn to \$23bn a year, ranking only behind drugs, human trafficking and weapons.

"The vaquita is really a poster child for what is happening in terms of international criminal networks and wildlife," said Higuero. "They use wildlife like drugs, prostitution and arms, because the financial rewards are high."

The vaquita is killed as bycatch when fishers target the totoaba, a large fish whose swim bladder can sell illegally for \$20,000 a kilogram in China because of its supposed medicinal properties.

"People have been killed," Higuero said. "The [drug] cartels are involved, they are heavily armed and it seems the navy and police can't control it, so you have a governance crisis."

She said the area of sea involved was just a quarter of the size of Los Angeles: "If we can't protect this, what hope is there for anything else?"

Clare Perry, a senior campaigner at the Environmental Investigation Agency, said: "This is the last chance for

Cites to spur real action to save the vaquita. [Otherwise] that will be on us, a major extinction on our watch at the hands of criminals."

Vietnam will also come under pressure, after independent analyses found it was the largest destination for illegal elephant ivory and rhino horn. Margaret Kinnaird, head of global wildlife at the WWF, said: "Vietnam has been of great concern for many years now - much more has to be done."

Another flashpoint will be opposing proposals on elephants, of which about 20,000 are poached every year for the illegal ivory trade. Southern African countries, home to large populations, want to loosen restrictions to raise funds for conservation. But others on the continent want to make the ivory ban even broader.

Higuero hoped progress might be made by focusing on a goal all the countries share - to improve their citizens' lives. "[Local communities] want to put food on their tables, education for their children, hospitals and healthcare," she said. "It is very easy for people from outside to say 'don't do this, don't do that' but what are the options we can give them so they feel they are gaining something from taking care of nature?"

The most unusual proposal at the summit is to put an extinct species - the woolly mammoth - on the list of species for which trade is restricted. "It would absolutely be the first time," Higuero said. "The fear is that elephant ivory is being traded as if it were mammoth ivory."

The summit may also bring good news, with some species being taken off danger lists because their populations are recovering. One, the vicuña, is a relative of the llama and provides extremely valuable wool. Higuero said the prospects of the animal had been improved by getting local communities involved in their conservation. "This is definitely a demonstration of how successful you can be when there are issues of humans and wildlife living side by side," she added.

A quartet of Australian rodents may also be struck off the list of species in which all trade is banned, for the simple reason that no one wants to buy the greater stick nest rat, the false swamp rat, the central rock rat and the Shark Bay mouse.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

'Pharmaceutical industry unfazed by U.S. withdrawal of nuclear deal'

Given Iran's low volume of imports in pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry, the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal won't affect the industry, the Ministry of Health spokesman said on Wednesday.

"Due to the technical know-how we possess we do not depend on import and we are capable of manufacturing many pharmaceutical products domestically," ISNA quoted Harirchi as saying. Harirchi further highlighted that the country has enough foreign exchange reserves and ensured the public that the current conditions won't raise any problems for the pharmaceutical industry.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"fore-"

- Meaning:** before or in front
- For example:** Can dreams foretell the future?

PHRASAL VERB

Go about something

- Meaning:** to start to do something;
- For example:** I want to learn German but I don't know the best way to go about it.

IDIOM

Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed

- Explanation:** a person who is very enthusiastic and full of energy
- For example:** Gary was fantastic. He arrived bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at 7am and worked with us all day.

سخنگوی وزارت بهداشت: خروج آمریکا از برجام تاثیری در برجام تأثیری در دارو ندارد

سخنگوی وزارت بهداشت تأکید کرد: خروج آمریکا از برجام تأثیری بر بازار دارو و تجهیزات پزشکی نخواهد گذاشت؛ چراکه وابستگی مان به دارو و تجهیزات وارداتی بسیار اندک است.

دکتر ایرج حریرچی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: با تکیه بر توان دانشمندان خودمان و تولیدات مان، وابستگی دارویی مان به محصولات خارجی بسیار اندک است و میزان قابل توجهی از داروها را خودمان تولید می‌کنیم.

وی تأکید کرد: با توجه به توانی که دولت در حوزه ارز و منابعی که برای این حوزه دارد، مردم مطمئن باشند که مشکلی در این زمینه نخواهیم داشت.

Yemeni drone attack on Saudi oil field biggest ever against kingdom: Houthi

TEHRAN — The leader of Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement has lauded a drone attack by Yemeni army forces and fighters from allied Popular Committees against the Shaybah oil field in eastern Saudi Arabia, saying the assault was the biggest of its kind in retaliation for the Riyadh regime's deadly military campaign against its southern neighbor.

Addressing his supporters via a televised speech broadcast live from the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, on Saturday afternoon, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi said no matter how appalling the crimes being perpetrated by the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen could be, such acts will fail to destroy the Yemeni nations' morale.

"Today's drone strike was the biggest of its kind ever since retaliatory attacks against the coalition of aggression have started. This major operation, dubbed Operation Deterrent Balance 1, proved that the aggressors have failed to bring the Yemeni nation to its knees. The aerial assault was launched using a squadron of ten combat drones and targeted Saudi Arabia's biggest oil refinery near the border with the United Arab Emirates," Houthi said.

"The main goal of the [Saudi-led] coalition was to occupy Yemen and plunder its [natural] resources. Crimes, acts of aggression and violation of Yemen's sovereignty will not



satisfy the alliance's demands. Aggressors and culprits liable for Yemen's destruction have no legitimacy at all," Ansarullah chief said. Oil facilities at Shaybah, which has the largest strategic oil reserve in Saudi Arabia, were targeted by 10 Yemeni drones, the Yemeni broadcaster said Saturday.

The facilities attacked included a refinery and oil storage, al-Masirah TV said, citing Yemen's armed forces spokesman

Brigadier General Yahya Sare'e.

Houthi further noted that the United States and its regional allies are exploiting the Saudi-led military campaign against Yemen to their own advantage, emphasizing that the aggression has failed to shatter the Yemeni nation's unity.

The Ansarullah leader also censured the involvement of militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi

in the massacre of Yemeni people, saying that long-standing feuds and attempts to settle old scores with other factions have led them to play in the hands of the aggressors and provide a cover for them. "Hadi has no legitimacy and no popular support in Yemen. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are caught in the Yemen quagmire with no end in sight. Hadi loyalists have become pawns in their sponsors' hands, and are providing enemies with pretexts to occupy Yemen," Houthi pointed out.

"Hadi can enter [the southern Yemeni port city of] Aden only after having obtained permission from the UAE. What is described as the legitimate Yemeni government is simply a sham administration, whose head only makes short trips to the country. Socotra Island together with the province of al-Mahrah and Hadhramaut were under Hadi control. Aggressors, nevertheless, crossed into the regions and wrested control over them. The invaders well know that the situation in Yemen is volatile, and they cannot control the entire Yemen from there," the Ansarullah head stressed.

Houthi then advised Hadi loyalists to end deception and return to the Yemeni nation's side, Press TV reported.

He said the Ansarullah movement wishes to forge strong relations with Iran, emphasizing that his group is seeking to cooperate with all Muslim states.

Trump to quit 2020 race within months: Former top aide

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump will drop out of the race for the 2020 presidential election and will not seek re-election, a former top aide says.

Former White House Communications Director Anthony Scaramucci made the remarks in an interview with Vanity Fair, saying, obviously, Trump would not be able to win the election.

"He's gonna drop out of the race because it's gonna become very clear. Okay, it'll be March of 2020. He'll likely drop out by March of 2020. It's gonna become very clear that it's impossible for him to win."

"He's got the self-worth in terms of his self-esteem of a small pigeon. It's a very small pigeon. And so you think this guy's gonna look at those poll numbers and say — he's not gonna be able to handle that humiliation," added Scaramucci, who worked under Trump for 11 days only.

The battle of words between Scaramucci and Trump has escalated in recent weeks.

Last week, Trump took to Twitter, charging that Scaramucci was "totally incapable of handling" the role of White House communications chief.

A day later, Scaramucci said on CNN that Trump had "gone off the rails," adding, the president was "sounding more and more nonsensical."

Scaramucci compared the U.S. president to a "demagogue" and insisted the Trump administration's conservative policy agenda is not worth the damage the Republican has inflicted upon America's democratic institutions.

According to Press TV, a new poll showed on Wednesday that Trump's disapproval rating had risen to 56 percent.

The Fox News poll found a 5 percentage point boost in Trump's disapproval rating from last month when 51 respondents disapproved the president's performance.

In October 2017, Trump's disapproval rating reached a record high of 57 percent, according to Fox News.

Only 43 people contacted for the latest survey said they



approve of Trump's job performance, down from 46 percent last month.

India reimposes movement curbs on parts of Kashmir's main city after clashes

TEHRAN — Indian authorities reimposed restrictions on movement in major parts of Kashmir's biggest city, Srinagar, on Sunday after violent overnight clashes between residents and police in which dozens were injured, two senior officials and eyewitnesses said.

In the past 24 hours, there has been a series of protests against New Delhi's Aug.

5 revocation of the region's autonomy. This followed an easing in curbs on movement on Saturday morning.

The state government has said that it has not imposed a curfew over the past two weeks, but on Sunday people were being turned back at multiple roadblocks set up in the city in the past few hours. Security forces at some roadblocks have told residents

there is a curfew.

Two senior government officials told Reuters that at least two dozen people were admitted to hospitals with pellet injuries after violent clashes broke out in the old city on Saturday night.

Representatives in the Jammu and Kashmir government in Srinagar and the federal government in New Delhi did not

immediately return calls asking about the latest clampdown or seeking an assessment of the number of injuries and clashes.

One of the official sources said that people pelted security forces with stones in around two dozen places across Srinagar. He said that the intensity of the stone pelting protests has increased over past few days.

Maduro accuses Trump of doing to Venezuela what Hitler did to Jewish people

TEHRAN (FNA) — Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, an outspoken critic of the current US administration, has reportedly made somewhat unflattering parallels between President Donald Trump and the Nazi leader following the introduction of new crippling sanctions against Caracas.

Maduro has compared Trump's actions against the Latin American country to Adolf Hitler's persecution of Jews, El Periódico reported.

"They are doing to us, more or less, what the Nazis did to the peoples of Europe in the 1940s, what the Nazis did to the Jewish people, and I condemn it. Donald Trump is doing to Venezuela what Hitler did to the Jewish people — persecuting it, attacking it, blocking it," he said in a Caracas speech.

He has, however, added that he has a plan to fight the blockade imposed by the Trump administration, even though his Minister of Industries and National Protection Tareck El Aissami, who is being accused of drug trafficking in the US, is "the most persecuted by imperialism official" in his government.

Maduro continued by claiming that the US went after El



Aissami because he had dealt a severe blow to international drug trafficking during his tenure as Venezuela's interior minister (2008-2012).

Last month, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) added El Aissami to its list of 10 most wanted fugitives over drug trafficking allegations. He has described his blacklisting as "infamous aggression of imperialism."

This is not the first time that Maduro has compared the US president to the Nazi Führer. Last November, he stated, "Just like Hitler persecuted the Jewish people, Donald Trump persecutes the people of Venezuela."

Last week, the Venezuelan president called on his compatriots to join protests against the "hostile policies" of the Trump administration, and announced that he would submit a letter, signed by millions of Venezuelans, condemning U.S. sanctions on Caracas, to the UN. Washington, which has been seeking to depose Maduro and install opposition leader Juan Guaido, whom it has endorsed, has introduced multiple rounds of economic and diplomatic sanctions against Venezuela.

Particularly, Trump issued an executive order to freeze assets held by the government of Venezuela in the United States. Moreover, Trump has promised to impose an economic blockade on Venezuela.

UK faces food, fuel and drugs shortages in no-deal Brexit

TEHRAN — Britain will face shortages of fuel, food and medicine if it leaves the European Union without a transition deal, jamming ports and requiring a hard border in Ireland, official government documents leaked to the Sunday Times show.

The Times said the forecasts compiled by the Cabinet Office set out the most likely aftershocks of a no-deal Brexit rather than the worst case scenarios. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office said it did not comment on leaked documents.

The newspaper said up to 85% of trucks using the main channel crossings "may not be ready" for French customs, meaning disruption at ports would potentially last up to three months before the flow of traffic improves.

The government also believes a hard border between the British province of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member, will be likely as current plans to avoid widespread checks will prove unsustainable, the Times said.

"Compiled this month by the Cabinet Office under the codename Operation Yellowhammer, the dossier offers a rare glimpse into the covert planning being carried out by the government to avert a catastrophic collapse in the nation's infrastructure," the Times reported.

"The file, marked "official-sensitive" — requiring security clearance on a "need to know" basis — is remarkable because it gives the most comprehensive assessment of the UK's readiness for a no-deal Brexit."

Asked about the Yellowhammer documents, energy minister Kwasi Kwarteng told Sky News: "I think there's a lot of scare-mongering around, and a lot of people are playing into 'Project Fear' ... We've got to prepare for no deal."

"We will be fully prepared to leave without a deal on the 31st of October."

The United Kingdom is heading toward a constitutional crisis at home and a showdown with the EU as Johnson has repeatedly vowed to leave the bloc on Oct. 31 without

a deal unless it agrees to renegotiate the Brexit divorce.

After more than three years of Brexit dominating EU affairs, the bloc has repeatedly refused to reopen the Withdrawal Agreement which includes an Irish border insurance policy that Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, agreed in November.

Brexit minister Stephen Barclay said on Twitter he had signed a piece of legislation which set in stone the repeal of the 1972 European Communities act — the laws which made Britain a member of the organization now known as the EU.

Though his move was largely procedural, in line with previously approved laws, Barclay said in a statement: "This is a clear signal to the people of this country that there is no turning back (from Brexit)."

■ **Recall parliament**

A group of more than 100 lawmakers wrote to Johnson calling for an emergency recall of parliament to discuss the situation. "We face a national emergency, and

parliament must now be recalled in August and sit permanently until October 31 so that the voices of the people can be heard, and that there can be proper scrutiny of your government," the letter said.

Johnson will this week tell French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel that the Westminster parliament cannot stop Brexit and a new deal must be agreed if Britain is to avoid leaving the EU without one.

The prime minister is coming under pressure from politicians across the political spectrum to prevent a disorderly departure, with opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn vowing this week to bring down Johnson's government in early September to delay Brexit.

It is, however, unclear if lawmakers have the unity or power to use the British parliament to prevent a no-deal departure — likely to be the United Kingdom's most significant move since World War Two.

Tel Aviv's new plot against Iraq's Hashd al-Shaabi

➔ The truth is that none of the Iraqi parties and political movements who criticize the government wants to cause turmoil or division in the country as they fully understand that Iraq can only make progress if the country is in peace and stability.

This is exactly the reason that Americans are so furious, as they know that this kind of attitude will not result in the failure of Iraq's current government that is indeed the goal of Washington and Tel Aviv, not the Iraqi political parties.

Anyway, it seems that the U.S. and the Zionist regime are adamant to create crises in Iraq and bring back instability and insecurity to Iraq. Americans are well aware that if Iraq becomes a powerful and independent country, the power of the Zionist regime in the region will decrease, so they do everything to ensure that it will not happen.

Crises everywhere and Trump and supporters are completely vapid

➔ And worse, in Iran's case, the existence of resources has often created political nightmares where Westerners, in particular, have tried to get their hands on or a controlling interest in another country's natural abundance for their own selfish ends. Just look at what the U.S. has tried to do to Iran since Mossadegh's deposition decades ago, and what the U.S. has been trying to do of late: destroy Iran's sovereignty and current political system. (One has to wonder that curtailing Iran's petroleum output at least for now will in some ways push Iran to figure additional ways to grow or just maintain its economy even while any depletion of its resources may be delayed somewhat.) And just look at what the U.S. has been trying to do to Venezuela, or Syria, and what it has done to Iraq and Afghanistan and even Yemen this century.

Perhaps there is no grand solution to the looming crises involving energy extraction and the environment, unless across the world countries are literally forced to adopt solar energy solutions and unless, by some scientific breakthrough, nuclear fusion energy can be developed to replace fossil fuels. But this will require a degree of political and social and scientific cooperation and sharing across the planet that seems a complete chimera for now.

And the greatest obstacle (this seems undeniable) is and has been the United States insofar as dominance and hegemony remain the primary aims, and this thrust has gone berserk with Trump and the current leadership in Washington. It may be said that if things literally fall apart worldwide, and there is yet another "world war", the primary culprit will be the U.S. And if there is another vast war, humanity may not survive. Such considerations, as self-evident as they seem, are no secret and many leading thinkers have expressed the same, and as simplistically as they are expressed here they are still worth expressing again and again to alert all to the current and expanding dangers ahead.

Trump (and his administration), in any case, seems to be the worst possible leader of an alleged "superpower" who could ever have been elected. He (and his gang including people like Mike Pompeo and John Bolton) have a mania for the destruction of extant accords and any possible constructive accord with many other countries. Just this past week, for example, on what may appear to be a minor issue (it's not minor) Trump trashed protections for endangered species in the U.S. in the same way that Bolsonaro in Brazil seems to be aiming to destroy Amazonia, the "lungs" of the planet. It's a kind of willful immorality that has gripped not just Trump and minions, but whoever supports him — his ignorant political "base" in the U.S. The sole candidates for the 2020 election with any serious merit to displace Trump seem to be Bernie Sanders and Tulsi Gabbard and perhaps Elizabeth Warren, whom the corporate, mainstream media in the U.S. despise.

It was Sanders, a Jew, who came out strongly against Trump's demand that compliant Netanyahu disallow Congressional Reps. Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar to visit Israel and also take a studied look at the horrors long inflicted on the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Trump and Netanyahu are both, quite simply, racists, and little more. If anything of late could alert U.S. voters to the crimes of U.S. and Zionist actions in the Middle East, Trump's and Netanyahu's strike against these two Muslim ladies of clear mind and courage is it. Justice for Palestinians and for those who have long been concerned about their plight is the sine qua non action that indisputably can lead to other changes of all kinds that will guarantee a better future. Nothing else has such potential for good.

And Iran's Islamic Republic, whatever its shortcomings and to its everlasting credit, has known this for decades.

ISIL claims Afghan wedding suicide blast that killed 63

➔ The group, in a statement on the messaging website Telegram, claimed responsibility for the attack at a west Kabul wedding hall, in a minority Shi'ite neighborhood, saying its bomber had been able to infiltrate the reception and detonate his explosives in the crowd of "infidels".

ISIL has claimed some of the most bloody attacks in Afghan cities over the past couple of years, with some aimed at the Shi'ite minority.

The Taliban had earlier denied responsibility for the Kabul attack and condemned it.

More than 180 people were wounded with many women and children among the casualties, interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said on Sunday, as families thronged to Kabul's crowded cemeteries.

"We want peace, not such brutal suicide attacks," said Ahmad Khan, who was burying a relative.

■ **Ghani says Taliban can't escape blame for deadly bombing**

Meanwhile, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said on Sunday the Taliban could not escape blame for a "barbaric" suicide bomb attack on a wedding hall in the capital, Kabul, that killed 63 people.

"The Taliban cannot absolve themselves of blame for they provide platform for terrorists," Ghani said in a post on Twitter.

The blast late on Saturday wounded more than 180 people, with many women and children among the casualties, officials said, Reuters reported.

S. Korea too strong for Iran at Asian Women's Volleyball Championship

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran started the 20th Asian Senior Women's Volleyball Championship with a 3-0 defeat to hosts South Korea on Sunday.

Team Melli were defeated by Korean team in straight sets (25-17, 25-9, 25-14) at the 13,500-seater Jamsil Indoor Stadium, the main competition venue in Pool A.

Iran will meet Hong Kong on Tuesday.

The 13 participating teams in the eight-day event comprise hosts Korea, Iran, Hong Kong China in Pool A, defending champions Japan, Kazakhstan, Australia and India in Pool B, Thailand, Chinese Taipei and New Zealand in Pool C and China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka in Pool D.

After the three-day pool plays, top two teams from each pool will advance to the round of the top 8 teams, split into Pool E and Pool F. Top two teams from Pool A and C will compete in Pool E, with teams from Pool B and D playing in Pool F. Teams finishing third and fourth places at the pool round-robin preliminaries will be relegated to classification round for 9th-13th places.

Advancing to Pool E and Pool F, teams will again play a round-robin format and will be ranked 1-2-3-4 respectively up to their performances at the end of this round. Only top two teams from Pool E and Pool F will enter the cross semi-finals, while teams finishing 3rd and 4th places of both pools will contest the 5th-8th playoff encounters, asianvolleyball.net reported.

Semi-finals, 5th-8th playoffs and 9th-12th playoffs will be held on Saturday, August 24, while the finals, the awards presentation and closing ceremony will take place the day after.

More importantly, the Championship also serves as the



Continental Olympic Qualification Tournament, which will see top eight teams, except the Tokyo 2020 hosts Japan and qualified China, make the cut for the January 6-12

event. Only the eventual winning team in the Continental Olympic Qualification Tournament will join the other 11 teams in the Tokyo 2020.

Tractor complete signing of Peruvian forward Mimbela



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian football club Tractor have completed the signing of Peruvian forward Willyan Mimbela on Sunday.

The 27-year-old striker has joined the Tabriz based football team on a three-year contract.

The details of the Mimbela's contract have not been disclosed.

Mimbela is Tractor's third foreign player after Japanese midfielder Yukiya Sugita and Brazilian forward Marcelino Junior Lopes Arruda.

Mimbela has most recently played at his homeland team Unión Comercio and scored 13 goals in 28 matches.

He will replace Irish striker Anthony Stokes who left Tractor at the end of the last season.

Mimbela is the third Peruvian player in Iran's football after Diego Chavarri and Rinaldo Cruzado who played for Gostaresh Foolad and Esteghlal respectively.

Tractor will begin Iran Professional League new season with an away trip to Masjed Soleyman on Aug. 22.

Abel Issa Camará signs for Iran's Machine Sazi



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Bissau-Guinean forward Abel Issa Camará joined Iranian football club Machine Sazi on Sunday.

The 29-year-old player has joined Machine Sazi on a two-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Camará started his football in Belenenses in 2009 and has also played for the Portuguese teams Estrela Amadora and Beira-Mar.

He has played for Saudi Arabian football team Al-Faisaly, Cypriot club Pafos, Italian

team Cremonese, Irtysh from Kazakhstan and Turkish club Elazigspor.

He was a member of Portugal U21 and has also five matches under his belt for Guinea-Bissau national football team.

On 16 November 2010, Camará played for Guinea-Bissau at the Estádio do Restelo, in a friendly with Cape Verde.

Additionally, he appeared in several games for Portugal during the 2013 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification campaign.

Vietnam, Myanmar book semi-final places

Group B powerhouses Vietnam and Myanmar sealed their passage to the 2019 AFF Women's Championship knockout stage with a match to spare after both registered emphatic wins at Chonburi IPE Stadium on Sunday.

Vietnam made it 17 goals in two matches with a 7-0 win over Indonesia, while Myanmar continued their perfect start to the competition with a 10-1 victory against Cambodia.

The results set up a battle to top the group when the two sides meet on Tuesday, while both Cambodia and Indonesia can no longer advance to the semi-finals.

INDONESIA 0-7 VIETNAM

Hunyh Nhu bagged a hat-trick as Vietnam sealed a trouble-free path to the semi-finals, outclassing Indonesia to register a 7-0 win.

As in Friday's 10-0 win over Cambodia, Vietnam once again flew out of the blocks in the first-half, racking up five goals before the interval in another comprehensive display.

Mai Duc Chung's side were ahead within the opening minute, as Nguyen Thi Buch Thuy took just 46 seconds to add to the four goals she scored in Vietnam's opener with a close-range finish.

A succession of Vietnamese chances followed before Hunyh Nhu fired home the second in the 19th minute, with Pham Hai Yen - Vietnam's other hat-trick scorer on Friday - extended the lead three minutes later.

With Indonesia overwhelmed by Vietnam's organization and quality, Hunyh Nhu slammed home another one from close range in the 40th minute, before completing her treble with a lovely flick three minutes later to become her side's third hat-trick scorer in as many days.

It was plain sailing for Vietnam, but Indonesia did improve



after half-time, with Nguyen Thi Tuyett Dung's rapid-fire brace, in the 63rd and 66th minutes, the only further damage incurred by Rudolf Nere's side.

With a place in the knockout stage now mathematically beyond them, Indonesia will fancy their chances of a first AFF Women's Championship win since 2011 when they meet Cambodia on Tuesday, while Vietnam will vie for top spot in the group against Myanmar.

CAMBODIA 1-10 MYANMAR

In the later match, Myanmar eased into the last four, and set up a mouth-watering Matchday Three clash against Vietnam, with a comprehensive 10-1 win over Cambodia.

Yee Yee Oo followed up Thursday's hat-trick with a four-goal haul, as Win Thu Moe's side thoroughly outclassed a Cambodian outfit who have now conceded double-figure score lines in successive matches.

Hoping to avoid the type of onslaught which saw them concede eight goals in the opening 24 minutes against Vietnam, Cambodia were more organized and made fewer mistakes in the early stages, keeping the heavy favorites

temporarily at bay.

But Myanmar's opening goal finally arrived in the 30th minute, when a scramble after a corner kick ended with a May Thu Kyaw tap-in, and they had a second when Khin Marlar Thun thumped in a sensational long-range effort just over a minute later.

Yee Oo lobbed goalkeeper Chen Soveat to pounce on a dreadful Cambodian turnover following a short goal-kick just before half-time, before the prolific Win Theingi Tun scooped in her customary goal on the hour-mark to put Myanmar four goals clear.

Another failed Cambodian attempt at playing out from a goal-kick was punished, with substitute Khin Moe Wai the beneficiary this time, before history repeated itself once more when a similar sequence of events led to Yee Oo's second of the day.

After spending most of the match in their defensive half, Cambodia's moment to savour arrived in the 77th minute, when captain Somrit Nimol opened their account with a successfully converted penalty kick.

But normal service resumed with a seventh Myanmar goal from Thin Thin Yu two minutes later, and Yee Oo made it two hat-tricks in as many matches, before Theingi Tun and Yee Oo rounded out the win with further goals in stoppage time.

Despite Myanmar's late surge, they remain behind Vietnam on goal difference, meaning they will need to beat Mai Duc Chung's side in Tuesday's top-of-the-table clash to advance as Group B winners.

Monday's matches (all times local): Thailand v Timor-Leste (15:00), Malaysia v Singapore (18:00).

(Source: the-afc)

Iran U19 volleyball beat Brazil in friendly

MNA — Iranian boys volleyball team gained a 3-1 victory over Brazil in a friendly match in Tunisia.

The team are preparing to defend their title at 2019 FIVB Boy's World Championship which is going to start in the African country on August 21.



Iranian boys came from one set behind to defeat the powerful Brazil 3-1 on Saturday (20-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-20). Iran had earlier defeated Cuba and Egypt in two other friendly games.

"This friendly game was very useful for Iran. We will also face the winner of Tunisia and Italy which will be the final match of the tournament and our last preparing game before the world event," the team's coach Mohammad Vakili said after the game against Brazil.

The 2019 edition of FIVB Boy's World Championship will be held from August 21 to 30 in Tunis, Tunisia. According to FIVB, the 20 participating teams will be divided into four pools of five teams each and will play a round-robin tournament. The bottom-ranked team of each pool will play classification matches for 17th-20th place in a round-robin system.

Iran are seeded in Pool B of competition along with Czech Republic, Italy, Colombia, and Bulgaria. Vakili's boys will face Bulgaria on August 22, the Czech Republic on August 23, Colombia on August 24 and Italy on August 25.

With two gold, two silver, and two bronze medals, Iran are the third most decorated team in the event after Brazil and Russia. Iranians won their first title in 2007 where they defeated China in the final. Iran have taken part in 11 out of 15 editions of the games so far managing to advance to the semifinal in eight ones.

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers win four medals at World Junior C'ships

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers claimed two gold and two bronze medals at the United World Wrestling World Junior Wrestling Championships in Tallinn, Estonia.

Mohammad Aziz Naghousi of Iran defeated Russian Damir Rakhimov 2-1 in a tight match in the 77kg final. Iran's Aliakbar Hossein Yousofi also won 2-1 against American Cohlton Michael Schultz to claim the 130kg gold.

Iranian representatives Pooya Soulat Dad Marz and Shahin Eidi Badaghi Mofrad won two bronze medals in 55kg and 63kg respectively.

The Russian Federation (97 points) has a seven-point lead over second-place Iran (90 points).

(Source: unitedworldwrestling)

Iran, Qatar futsal teams to play friendly match

IRNA — Iranian and Qatari national futsal teams are to play friendly matches in Iran during September 3-4.

The two teams are set to play in presence of Iran's best futsal player Vahid Shamsaee on two consecutive days.

Qatari national futsal team are scheduled to visit Iran on September 1.

Avramovic steps down as Home United head coach

Raddy Avramovic has stepped down as head coach of Home United "due to health reasons," the Singapore Premier League club announced on Sunday.

Avramovic, who helped Singapore win the AFF Cup in 2004, 2007 and 2012, had only returned to working in Southeast Asia last July when he was confirmed as the head coach of the Protectors.

However, the 69-year-old has called it quits with the team sitting fifth in the nine-team SPL having collected 27 points from 20 matches.

In eight matches since Avramovic took charge, the Singapore Premier League recorded four wins, one draw and three defeats. His last match in charge of the side was a 3-1 win over Warriors FC at the Jurong East Stadium on Saturday.

"Radojko Avramovic will be stepping down as head coach of Home United FC with immediate effect due to health reasons. He will be returning to Serbia to seek medical treatment," the club said in a statement.

"We are shocked by this unexpected news and everyone at the club wishes him a speedy recovery. We are honored that someone of his stature has led the club, despite the short tenure. He has definitely made a positive impact on everyone at HUF during his time with us," Home United general manager Badri Ghent said.

Former Singapore international defender Noh Rahman will be the interim head coach while the 2018 AFC Cup ASEAN Zonal winners search for a long-term replacement.

(Source: Home United)

Inter Milan and Manchester United hold talks over Chile forward

Alexis Sanchez's agent is in the UK to hold talks with Manchester United on behalf of Inter Milan regarding a potential loan deal for the forward, according to Sky in Italy.

Sanchez, the Chile international forward, is keen on a move to the Serie A side, who are interested in striking a loan deal with an option to buy for the 30-year-old.

Inter head coach Antonio Conte wants to add another forward to his squad alongside Romelu Lukaku and Lautaro Martinez.

Edin Dzeko was one of their primary targets, but the former Manchester City

striker has opted to extend his stay at Roma, meaning Inter have to look elsewhere.

Besides Sanchez, Inter are also considering free agent and former Tottenham striker Fernando Llorente, Ante Rebic from Eintracht Frankfurt, RB Leipzig's Timo Werner, and Arkadiusz Milik at Napoli.

Since moving to Old Trafford from Arsenal in January 2018, Sanchez has struggled for consistency, scoring five goals in 45 games.

However, United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Friday Sanchez wants

to stay at the club - despite reports to the contrary - and backed him to "end up playing a lot more games than you expect".

If United did sanction the sale of Sanchez, it would leave them with Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood as the only strikers in their squad.

They have already sold Lukaku, the Belgium striker, to Inter this summer, agreeing a £73m fee after a summer of protracted negotiations.

(Source: Sky Sports)



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING
The people dislike what they do not know.
Imam Ali (AS)

Bust of actor Ezzatollah Entezami set up in Tehran

TEHRAN — The Tehran Municipality has set up a bust of veteran actor Ezzatollah Entezami near his house in the Aqdasieh neighborhood.

The bust was unveiled on Saturday concurrent with the first anniversary of the passing of the veteran actor of stage and screen during an event attended by Entezami's family, Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi and several art and cultural figures.



The actor's son Majid, who is a famous composer and conductor, in his brief words at the ceremony said that his father lived as he liked and the future will judge him.
'He lived with glory and died in glory, and it is me who is unable to cope with his death and the pain of his demise,' he said.

The bust has been made by sculptor Iraj Mohammadi who says the bust was made while the actor was alive. 'I am happy that Mr. Enezami had seen the bust and was satisfied with it.'

Sepand Street in the Aqdasieh neighborhood where the actor's house had been located was named Ezzatollah Entezami Street after the late legendary actor also on Saturday.

A decision was made in April whereby the Tehran City Council approved the renaming of several streets after contemporary Iranian artists.

In addition, the restoration project which was underway in the house of the actor was completed and the museum house was also reopened on Saturday.

Ezzatollah Entezami, the veteran actor of stage and screen who was named 'master actor' in his memoirs written by Hushang Golmakani, died in August 2018. He was 94.

He was one of Iran's golden generation of actors such as Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Ali Nasirian and Jamshid Mashyekhi, who began his career in acting with traditional Iranian performances at theaters located on Tehran's Lalezar Street, which was considered as Iran's Broadway during 1950s and 1960s.

Entezami made his acting debut in 'The Spring Variety' directed by Parviz Khatibi in 1949. He rose to fame in 1969 by his portrayal of Mash Hassan in director Dariush Mehrjui's acclaimed drama 'The Cow', which was among the forerunners of the Iranian New Wave cinema.

Appearances in over 50 movies and dozens of theatrical performance brought him numerous honors. He won four Crystal Simorgh awards at the Fajr International Film Festival, Iran's most prestigious film event, for his roles in 'Grand Cinema', 'The Day of the Angel', 'A House on Water' and 'The Marsh'.

In September 2006, UNESCO honored Entezami for his lifetime achievements at its headquarters in Paris, where Golmakani delivered a speech.

'23 Individuals' to come to Iranian theaters in November

TEHRAN — Mehdi Jafari's acclaimed movie '23 Individuals', about 23 young Iranian volunteers who were captives during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, is scheduled to go on screen at Iranian theaters during November.

The film is based on 'Those 23 Individuals', the memoirs of Ahmad Yusefzadeh, one of the 23 volunteers who were held captive for a long period of time in Iraq.

The book tells of the early months of the volunteers' captivity and the events they confronted, and later their visit with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. At that time, Iraq tried to manipulate the volunteers in its propaganda campaign against Iran. However, all their attempts failed miserably, thwarted by magical tricks done by the volunteers. '23 Individuals', which premiered at the 37th Fajr Film Festival in February, has received several awards.

It won the Golden Simorgh for best film from the national point of view at the Fajr festival as well as the best film award at the 8th edition of the Qoqnuq Screen Awards.

Iranian documentary 'Finding Farideh' to represent Iran at Oscars

TEHRAN — Iranian documentary 'Finding Farideh' has been selected as Iran's submission to the 92nd Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category.

A committee of nine cineastes picked the film on Saturday from a shortlist of 10 films including 'Qasre Shirin' directed by Reza Mirkarimi, 'Just 6.5' by Saied Rustai, 'Sheeple' by Hooman Seyyedi, 'Lovely Trash' by Mohsen Amirusefi, 'The Warden' by Nima Javidi and 'When the Moon Was Full' by Narges Abyar.

Co-directed by Azadeh Musavi and Kurosh Atai, 'Finding Farideh' is about a Netherland-based Iranian woman who was adopted by a Dutch couple forty years ago, and returns to Iran to search for her family.

The documentary has been acclaimed in several Iranian events. It was selected as best documentary at the 20th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran in September 2013.

Last year, Iran submitted the acclaimed drama 'No Date, No Signature' to the 91st Academy Awards in the best foreign language film category.

Directed and written by Vahid Jalilvand, the movie is about Dr. Nariman, a forensic pathologist who has a car accident with a motorcyclist and injures his 8-year-old son. He offers to take the child to a clinic nearby, but the father refuses his help and money. The next morning, in the hospital where he works, Dr. Nariman finds out that the little boy has been brought for an autopsy after a suspicious death.

The anti-war drama 'Breath' by director Narges Abyar represented Iran at the 90th Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category in 2017.

'Breath' is about four children whose mother had died a few years earlier and their father decides to join the Iranian volunteers on the warfront following Iraq's attack in September 1980.

Asghar Farhadi's acclaimed movie 'The Salesman'



A scene from the documentary 'Finding Farideh' co-directed by Azadeh Musavi and Kurosh Atai.

was selected as Iran's submission to the 89th Academy Awards in the best foreign language film category and the film won the Oscar for best foreign-language film at the 89th Academy Awards.

A Memento production, 'The Salesman' is about Emad and Rana who move into a new flat in the center of Tehran. An incident linked to the previous tenant dramatically changes the young couple's life.

Power and social identity under spotlight in Tehran exhibit

TEHRAN — A group of Iranian and foreign artists is showcasing their latest works in Tehran in an exhibition that aims to put a spotlight on power and social identity.

Asieh Salimian from Tehran is the curator of the exhibition 'Probable Truth', which is being organized in collaboration with the Factory TT Berlin/Teheran.

The exhibition will open in the Vista Gallery in Tehran on August 23 and will be running until September 6. Factory TT has announced on its website.

Negar Alemzadeh Gorji, Ali Babaizad, Shahram Entekhabi, Behnam Kamrani, Ali Soltani Tehrani and Zartosht Rahimi are the Iranian members of the group.

The exhibition also showcases works by Andrew Gilbert from Scotland, Niklas Goldbach and Bjorn Melhus from Germany.

Vista Gallery is located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Salimian also in collaboration with Katharina Maria Raab from Berlin



A poster for 'Probable Truth' in Vista Gallery.

curated the exhibition 'Power Struggle' in the Mah-e Mehr Gallery in Tehran in January.

'The Silent Patient' comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN — English-Cypriot writer Alex Michaelides' debut novel 'The Silent Patient' has recently been published in Persian by Sang Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Maryam Hossein-Nejad, the 2019 book is about a young woman, Alicia Berenson, whose life is seemingly perfect. A famous painter married to a fashion photographer, she lives in a grand house in one of London's most desirable areas. One evening her husband Gabriel returns home late from a fashion shoot, and Alicia shoots him five times in the face, and then never speaks another word.

Alicia's refusal to talk, or give any kind of explanation, turns a domestic tragedy into something far grander, a mystery that captures the public imagination and casts Alicia into notoriety. The price of her art skyrockets, and she, the silent patient, is hidden away from the tabloids and spotlight at the Grove, a secure forensic unit in North London.

Theo Faber is a criminal psychotherapist who has waited a long time for the



Front cover of Persian version of 'The Silent Patient' by English-Cypriot writer Alex Michaelides.

opportunity to work with Alicia. He intends to get her to talk and unravel the mystery of why she shot her husband, but he has his own motivations.

Traditional and Ritual Theater Festival honors four veterans

The ceremony was attended by a number of cultural officials, theater experts and artists including Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, veteran actor Ali Nasirian and Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini.

In his brief speech, Salehi noted that these types of festivals can familiarize people with old traditions, as the ritual performances are rooted in Iranian traditions and beliefs.

'Theater is the art of dialogue, and traditional theater can lead to communication among the ordinary people,' he added.

Pointing to Iranian performances such as kheimch

shab-bazi, ru-hozi and naqqali, Nasirian said, 'We have adapted cinema and theater from the west, while we have our own performances.'

'I ask the Tehran Municipality to prepare suitable halls for these Iranian performances, so the troupes could use them in winters and summers,' he concluded.

Other honorees at the ceremony were Shahnaz Rustai, the writer of 'The Basis of Playwriting', Mehdi Dariari, the writer of 'Homaye Rahmat', Hushang Javid, the writer of 'The History of Storytelling and Music in Iran' and Mohammad-Hossein Nasserbakht, the writer of 'A Research on Fun Traditional Performances'.



Veteran traditional and ritual theater artist Parviz Sang-Soheil (C) acknowledges the audience during the closing ceremony of the 19th Traditional and Ritual Theater Festival at Tehran's Sangelaj Hall on August 17, 2019.

'Easy Rider' actor Peter Fonda dead at age 79

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Oscar nominated actor Peter Fonda, who played a cool and introspective motorcyclist in the 1969 film 'Easy Rider' that captured the spirit of the era's counterculture movement, died on Friday at age 79, his family said in a statement.

Fonda, the son of Hollywood leading man Henry Fonda and the brother of Jane Fonda, died at his home in Los Angeles on Friday morning of respiratory failure from lung cancer, the statement said.

'It is with deep sorrow that we share the news that Peter Fonda has passed away,' it said, adding: 'In honor of Peter, please raise a glass to freedom.'

'While we mourn the loss of this sweet and gracious man, we also wish for all to celebrate his indomitable spirit and love of life,' the family said.

Fonda played the wanderer Wyatt in 'Easy Rider,' opposite the late Dennis Hopper who co-starred as fellow biker Billy and directed the film.

In the movie, Wyatt and Billy set out on their motorbikes to discover America and have a number of misadventures, befriending an attorney played by Jack Nicholson, before meeting violent deaths.

'Easy Rider,' with a script co-written by

Fonda, helped usher in a period known as the 'New Hollywood' era of filmmaking, which often avoided happy endings and other conventions of the Hollywood studio system.

Fonda was nominated for an Academy Award for his work on the script of 'Easy Rider' and went on to act in movies and television shows at a steady pace in the decades after, achieving a second career highlight when he was nominated for a best actor Oscar for his role as a beekeeper in the 1997 drama 'Ulee's Gold.'

His other notable film appearances included supporting roles in the remake of the western '3:10 to Yuma' and the action-fantasy 'Ghost Rider', which both came out in 2007.

Jane Fonda, who is known for her role in the 1968 film 'Barbarella' and in the ongoing Netflix series 'Grace and Frankie', expressed sadness at her brother's death.

'He was my sweet-hearted baby brother. The talker of the family,' she said in a statement. 'I have had beautiful alone time with him these last days. He went out laughing.'

Peter Fonda, born in 1940 in New York City, lost his mother, the socialite Frances Ford Seymour, as a child when she took her own life.

'Who Framed Roger Rabbit' animator Richard Williams has died

LONDON (AP) — Richard Williams, a Canadian-British animator whose work on the bouncing cartoon bunny in 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit' helped blur the boundaries between the animated world and our own, has died. He was 86 years old.

The Oscar-winning artist died from cancer at his home in Bristol, England, on Friday, his daughter Natasha Sutton Williams said Saturday.

Williams' career straddled the 'Golden Age of Animation,' which petered out between the 1950s and 1960s, and the rise of computer-assisted animation in the 1990s and beyond.

His best-known work may be as director of animation for 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit,' a 1988 film that married live action cinema and cartoons from all eras, a process involved the laborious insertion of animated characters into each individual frame and complex lighting effects. The result — a madcap and slightly dark comedy where 'toons' and humans interact seamlessly against a live action film noir background — was commercial and critical hit and helped revitalize Disney's flailing animation department.

Famed film critic Roger Ebert declared the movie 'a breakthrough in craftsmanship,' but Williams gave a more self-deprecating account, joking to an

audience in 2013 that all it took was for the director, Robert Zemeckis, to leave enough room in each shot for the cartoon characters and for the animators to whack them into each frame very, very quickly.

'I used to stand at my door every once in a while and yell, 'DRAW FASTER!' he said. Williams was born in Toronto in 1933 to a pair of commercial artists, and his stepfather worked on the business side of the commercial art world, his daughter, Sutton Williams, said in a telephone interview.

She said her father's interest in animation was piqued when he saw Disney's 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' as a 5-year-old. He won critical acclaim with his first film, a no-dialogue short called 'The Little Island' in 1958 and he won his first Oscar for an animated version of 'A Christmas Carol' in 1971. Two more Oscars would follow for 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit.' Williams was part of a team that took home the Oscar for visual effects for the film, and he also won a special achievement award for animation direction at the 1989 Academy Awards.

Sutton Williams said her father's best-selling book, 'The Animator's Survival Kit,' was a distillation of decades' worth of experience and is still 'essentially the bible that every single animator has around the world.'