



Leader names new head of the Islamic Fiqh Encyclopedia **2**



Europe should pre-purchase Iran's oil through INSTEX first **2**



Iranian sports journalist battling cancer defines family as true love **15**



Isfahan children's film festival kicks off **16**



Sanctions intended to make Iran surrender not to negotiate

See page 2

Aggressors must pay damages for supertanker seizure: Raisi

TEHRAN — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday that the release of the Adrian Darya 1 vessel, which was seized by Britain's naval forces, is not enough and the aggressors must pay damages for the illegal confiscation.

"The length of confiscation would not be compensated with the mere act of releasing, rather, legal proceedings are required to receive damages so as to set an example for

all those who violate international rules," Raisi said, Fars reported.

On July 4, Britain's naval forces unlawfully seized the Adrian Darya 1 vessel, then known as 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. ➔ **3**

U.S. move to create safe zone in north Syria is provocative, Tehran says

TEHRAN — A U.S. agreement to set up a safe zone in northern Syria is a "provocative and worrisome" act, the Iranian Foreign Ministry has said.

The United States and Turkey last week agreed to set up a joint operations center for a proposed zone along Syria's northeast border.

"Such kind of measures, like other actions by the American officials, are destabilizing and will create insecurity, apart from being instances of interference in Syria's internal affairs," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said late on Sunday. ➔ **3**

Rights groups voice solidarity with hunger-striking Bahraini inmates

TEHRAN — Human rights organizations have expressed solidarity with hundreds of political prisoners, who have launched a mass hunger strike in protest against mistreatment as well as poor conditions in Bahraini regime's jails and detention facilities.

On Monday, the European Center for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR) expressed solidarity with the hunger-striking inmates in a post published on its Twitter page, demanding the release of

all imprisoned dissidents.

The Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) also expressed solidarity with the prisoners.

Earlier in the day, Amnesty International said more than 450 inmates from Jau Prison and Dry Dock Detention Center had gone on a mass hunger strike to express their grave resentment over dire prison conditions. ➔ **13**



REPORT

Fatemeh Salehi
Mehr News Agency
journalist

Rising corruption among the Zionist regime's top officials

Corruption has become remarkably widespread among top officials of the Zionist regime. After news about corruption of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, now one of the ministers in his cabinet resigned due to corruption charges.

Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife are charged with financial corruption, but the story doesn't end here. Now, the regime's Department of Justice has accused Welfare Minister Haim Katz of serious charges including fraud and breach of trust. 71-year old Katz is now faced with graft charges and accusations that he has misused important classified information by giving them to some of his business managers in order to gain financial benefits.

Katz is a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and has served in his current post since 2015.

According to reports of Hebrew-language news agencies, Katz is the fifth minister of the regime that has been charged with corruption. The other officials in the list are Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, Deputy Health Minister Yaakov Litzman and Minister of Communications Dudi Amsalem.

Netanyahu himself and his wife Sara are faced with serious financial corruption charges which has caused a big scandal.

Earlier in June, an Israeli court convicted Netanyahu's wife Sara of misusing public funds. She was fined for misusing up to \$100,000 of regime's funds.

The Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is also charged with four different cases of financial corruption and bribery. In case 1000, Netanyahu was investigated for accepting money and expensive gifts from rich businessmen.

In case 2000, he was charged with allegations that he had tried to make a surreptitious deal with a Zionist newspaper so that the newspaper portrays him in an unfairly positive light in 2014.

Case 3000 is about Netanyahu's financial corruption in regard to a deal for purchasing submarines for the regime. ➔ **7**

Russia and China say U.S. missile test could revive arms race

TEHRAN — Russia and China have said a new U.S. missile test has heightened military tensions and risks triggering an arms race, weeks after Washington ended a cold-war-era weapons pact with Moscow.

The U.S. and Russia terminated the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) treaty this month after accusing each other of violating the accord. Washington said the agreement also tied its hands in dealing with other powers such as China.

The U.S. defense department announced on Monday it had tested a type of ground-launched missile that was banned under the 1987 INF agreement, which limited the use of nuclear and conventional medium-range weapons.

"The U.S. has obviously taken a course towards

escalation of military tensions. We won't react to provocations," Russia's deputy foreign minister, Sergei Ryabkov, told the state news agency Tass. "We will not allow ourselves to get drawn into a costly arms race."

Ryabkov said the test showed Washington had been working on such missiles long before its official withdrawal from the deal.

In Beijing, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang, said: "This measure from the U.S. will trigger a new round of an arms race, leading to an escalation of military confrontation."

He said the test would have a "serious negative impact" on the international and regional security situation. The US should "let go of its cold war mentality" and "do more things that are conducive to ... international and regional

peace and tranquility", Geng added.

The missile was launched from the U.S.-Navy-controlled San Nicolas Island off the coast of California.

Speaking in France on Monday, before news of the U.S. test launch broke, Vladimir Putin said Russia would only deploy medium- or short-range missiles in response to similar moves by the U.S.

"If the United States produces such offensive systems, we will also do so," the Russian president said at a press conference before a meeting with the French leader, Emmanuel Macron.

Moscow and Washington have long criticized the treaty but Putin said it was the U.S. that had made the decision to "unilaterally" withdraw. ➔ **13**

Ilhan Omar: Go to Israel, see 'cruel reality of the occupation'

TEHRAN — Democratic U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib sharply criticized Israel on Monday for denying them entry to the country and called on fellow members of Congress to visit while they cannot.

Omar, of Minnesota, suggested President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were suppressing the congresswomen's ability to carry out their oversight role.

"I would encourage my colleagues to visit, meet with the people we were going to meet with, see the things we were going to see, hear the stories we were going to hear," Omar said at a news conference. "We cannot let Trump and Netanyahu succeed in hiding the cruel reality of the occupation from us."

At Trump's urging, Israel denied entry to Congress's first two Muslim women over their support for the Palestinian-led boycott movement. Tlaib and Omar, who had planned to visit Jerusalem and the Israeli-occupied West Bank on a tour organized by a Palestinian group, are outspoken critics of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

Tlaib, of Michigan, and Omar were joined Monday by Minnesota residents who said they had been directly affected by travel restrictions in the past. They included Lana Barkawi, a Palestinian American who's executive and artistic director of Mizna, a cultural group that sponsors the annual Twin Cities Arab Film Fest. The

U.S. government denied visas to several actors and directors who had been invited to participate last year.

White House spokesman Hogan Gidley kept up the administration's criticism of the two politicians.

"Israel has the right to prevent people who want to destroy it from entering the country - and Democrats' pointless Congressional inquiries here in America cannot change the laws Israel has passed to protect itself," Gidley said in a statement.

Before Israel's decision, Trump tweeted it would be a "show of weakness" to allow the two representatives in. Israel controls entry and exit to the occupied West Bank. ➔ **13**



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Eid al-Ghadir celebrated nationwide

People in the city of Mashhad celebrated Eid al-Ghadir, the day on which Imam Ali (AS) was appointed as successor to Prophet Muhammad (S), at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), Monday August 19, 2019.

On this occasion, Iranians across the country held feasts by illumination of thoroughfares, streets and distribution of sweets among people.

Palestinian president sacks all advisors amid financial crisis

TEHRAN — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has fired all of his advisors amid a financial crisis in the occupied West Bank that has led to deep salary cuts.

Palestinian news agency WAFA, citing a statement by the Palestinian leader's office, announced the news on Monday, saying he sacked all of his advisors regardless of their title or ranking.

President Abbas "also decided to abolish the decisions and contracts related to them, and to suspend the rights and privileges they received in their capacity as advisors," the statement added, without providing more details on the number of his advisors, who have been relieved of their duties, or the costs involved.

The decision comes amid a spending crunch created after Israel decided in February to hold back some \$10 million a month in tax transfers.

At the time, Israel's cabinet froze about \$138 million from within the taxes collected for the Palestinian Authority, stating that the Abbas administration paid the same amount in prisoner stipends in 2018.

The Palestinian president has already accused the occupying regime of blackmail and has so far refused to take any of the tax transfers, which account for some 65 percent of the authority's revenues.

The amount, which totaled around \$190 million a month, is collected by the Tel Aviv regime through custom duties imposed on goods and products destined for Palestinian markets that transit through Israeli ports.

The Palestinian Authority has already halved salaries for most of its tens of thousands of employees to keep the government running.

Furthermore, the authority is currently facing steep aid cuts. US President Donald Trump's administration has slashed hundreds of millions of dollars to humanitarian organizations, including \$360 million it used to give to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in a bid to pressure the Palestinians to re-enter so-called peace talks with Israel that collapsed in 2014.

According to Jihad Harb, a Palestinian political analyst, President Abbas appeared to make the decision after reviewing a report he received in June on payments to ministers and officials, Press TV reported.

Leader names new head of the Islamic Fiqh Encyclopedia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has appointed Hojjatoleslam Haj Sheik Hassan Nazari as the new head of the Islamic Fiqh Encyclopedia, the leader.ir said in a report published on Friday.

The appointment comes about a month after the center's former chief, Ayatollah Haj Seyyed Alireza Hayeri, passed away.

In his letter, the Leader expressed sadness over the demise of the late ayatollah and wished Nazari success in making "this great scientific current" progress.

Zarif calls talks with Finnish officials fruitful

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who has launched a tour of Scandinavian nations held talks on Monday with Finland's top officials including President Sauli Niinisto, calling his talks "fruitful".



Finland currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

Iran has said if the EU wants to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to survive the 27-nation must protect Iran from the U.S. sanctions.

Zarif's tour of Scandinavian nations took place after he visited the two Persian Gulf states of Qatar and Kuwait on August 12 and 18 respectively.

The visits also took place after Britain seized and later released an Iran-operated oil tanker off Gibraltar. Iran called the move "maritime piracy".

"Fruitful meetings with current EU presidency, Finnish President, foreign minister and trade minister," Zarif tweeted.

While visiting Qatar and Kuwait, Zarif renewed Iran's proposal for non-aggression pact with the Persian Gulf littoral states.

Iran has proposed non-aggression pact as the U.S. and Israel have been trying to demonize Iran by claiming that Iran wants to revive the Persian Empire.

After Finland, Zarif visited Stockholm, Sweden, on Monday evening. On Tuesday, he held talks with Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom.

Zarif also held a meeting with a number of Swedish businessmen. Norway will be the last leg of Zarif's tour of Scandinavian nations.

Macron says France is interested in de-escalation of crisis over Iran nuclear deal

By staff and agency

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that France is interested in the de-escalation of the crisis over the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"France is interested in the de-escalation of the crisis over the Iran nuclear issue," TASS quoted him as saying ahead of negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Kremlin Aide Yuri Ushakov said on Friday that Russia and France share the common tasks of preserving the nuclear deal.

"Let me note that Russia and France share the common tasks of preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and preventing an escalation of tensions between Iran and the U.S. in the Persian Gulf and in general," he told reporters on Friday, according to TASS.

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

The remaining parties, particularly the European sides, have so far failed to honor their commitments since the U.S. returned sanctions and imposed new ones.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the multi-nation nuclear agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran, Tehran said its "strategic patience" is over and announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions' effects.

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

President Hassan Rouhani said on August 14 that Tehran will start the next step of reducing nuclear obligations after the second 60-day deadline.

The third step can include installation of more centrifuges, especially advanced ones.

Rouhani has described Iran's moves in reducing nuclear commitments step by step as a "wise" decision.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that Iran is mulling plans to take the next step of scaling down its nuclear commitments.

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

Nuclear spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi announced on August 13 that Iran's stockpile of uranium has reached 370 kilograms.

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

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

Larijani praises North Korea's vigilant decision toward U.S. unilateral demands

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Tuesday that North Korea has taken "vigilant decisions" against the U.S. unilateral demands.

"The U.S. does not seek a proper deal with North Korea. They [the U.S.] seek to disarm this country [North Korea] and impose pressure on it," Larijani said in a meeting with Vice Chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly Pak Chol-min in Tehran.

Larijani noted, "North Korean leader [Kim Jong-un] acted well in talks with the United States and did not let them [U.S. officials] reach their objectives."

For his part, Pak said that the U.S. has "illogical" and "unilateral" demands in talks with Pyongyang.

Pak noted that the U.S. obstructs talks by putting forward the issue of sanctions. North Korea seeks to have an independent economy, he added.

U.S. President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader held a meeting in Singapore in June 2018.

They held their second meeting in Hanoi



in February which broke up amid disagreement on sanctions relief.

In their third, brief meeting at the Korean

border in June, Kim and Trump agreed to kick-start working-level talks.

But the talks have effectively stalled

Ayatollah Khamenei pardons over 1,000 inmates

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Monday approved a proposal by Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi to pardon or commute the sentences of 1,070 convicts found guilty by various courts.

The pardon came on the occasion of two Muslim festivals, namely Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Ghadeer,

which marks the appointment of the first Shiite Imam, Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as his successor, Tasnim reported.

The top judge had sent a letter to the Leader proposing a list of convicts deserving clemency.

Article 110 of the Constitution grants the Leader the right to pardon or reduce the sentences of convicts

upon a recommendation from the head of the Judiciary.

The clemency, however, does not apply to several types of convicts, including those who have been sentenced for their role in armed struggle against the country, armed or organized drug trafficking, rape, armed robbery, arms smuggling, abduction, bribery, and embezzlement.

Iran says devising third step to reduce nuclear commitments

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that Iran is devising the third step of reducing its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal in a way proportionate to the issues between Iran and the remaining parties to the deal.

"There are many suggestions and consultations. Mr. Macron [French President Emmanuel Macron] is making efforts in this respect. Other European countries have provided supports in this respect and we will wait to see what result these

diplomatic efforts will yield in the little time left to take the third step," he said in a press conference.

He added, "After these actions, necessary decisions will be taken by the supreme council for monitoring the JCPOA to see if the Islamic Republic of Iran should take the third step or not."

President Hassan Rouhani said on August 14 that Tehran will start the next step of reducing nuclear obligations after the second 60-day deadline.

"We are holding talks with the neigh-

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

The third step can include installation of more centrifuges, especially advanced ones.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the multi-nation nuclear

agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran, Tehran said its "strategic patience" is over and announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions' effects.

In follow-up to that deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a purity level of 4.5% as the Europeans missed the 60-day deadline to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

Shamkhani: Sanctions intended to make Iran surrender not to negotiate

SNSC chief says Iran should never have signed the JCPOA

By staff and agency

TEHRAN— Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, has said that the U.S. sanctions pressure against Iran are not for negotiation but intended to make Tehran surrender.

"The sanctions campaign is not for negotiation, it's for making us surrender," he said in an interview with NBC News published on Tuesday.

He added, "As long as this approach is taken by the United States, Iran will never ever seek negotiations."

"We had a case of successful negotiations with the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal]. How come the United States departed from it?" he said.

He also said that Iran should never have signed the JCPOA.

He said that there were people in Iran who felt that signing the JCPOA was a mistake.

Asked if he was one of those people, Shamkhani said, "Yes. ... I'm just following the viewpoints of my nation, the people of Iran."

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

Shamkhani noted the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran would not bring Iran to heel or bring it back to the nuclear negotiating table.

He warned the U.S. to "act with wisdom".

Shamkhani said the Iranian public has long dealt with international sanctions and proof of the failure of Trump administration policy was obvious in the mood on the street.

"Just walk the streets of Tehran and see how energetic our people are and you will realize that [what the U.S. has] been trying to achieve has not materialized," he said.

He noted that Iran is not basing its decisions on U.S. policy on who is president, or on the possibility that Trump will not serve a second term. But he said that he thinks Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign is failing because the U.S. public and Western allies are "questioning" his leadership.

Elsewhere, he denied claims that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons, saying they are forbidden under Islam and have not provided security to those who have them, like Israel.

■ 'Palestinian people would decide Israel's fate'

Shamkhani also denied that he had a "military wish" for Israel's destruction, saying the Palestinian people would decide Israel's fate.

"I believe that the one that is seeking

the destruction of Israel is the country that does not see the realities on the ground," he said, taking a swipe at the Trump team's Israel policies and Trump adviser Jared Kushner's Middle East peace initiative.

On Trump's recent decision not to attack Iran after the downing of a U.S. drone, said Shamkhani, was driven by a "calculation of cost and benefits."

Both the U.S. and its regional allies would be in "a terrible situation" in the event of war, Shamkhani said.

"There is no doubt that the already tarnished image of the United States will be even further destroyed in the region and the whole world. Why do they basically threaten to launch a war against us?" he said.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down a highly-sophisticated U.S. stealth drone in June after it violated Iran's airspace over the Persian Gulf.

Trump reportedly gave initial approval for the U.S. military to launch strikes on Iran in retaliation, however, he cancelled the strikes.

Shamkhani warns the U.S. and its regional allies would be in "a terrible situation" in the event of war against Iran.

Europe should pre-purchase Iran's oil through INSTEX first: CBI chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has said that the Europeans should show their sincerity about their Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) by ordering Iran's crude.

"If the Westerners are serious and determined about this issue (INSTEX), they should inject money to it equal to the extent that our oil revenues have been harmed or file for Iran's oil futures," Abdolnasser Hemmati said in an interview with the IRIB TV on Tuesday.

He stressed that if the Europeans want to keep the nuclear deal alive, they should implement their undertakings, noting that INSTEX should also include the sanctioned goods too.

Washington withdrew from the internationally-endorsed 2015 nuclear deal with Iran in May 2018, re-imposed the toughest-ever sanctions against the country and started a plan to zero down Tehran's oil sales.

Under the nuclear agreement reached between Iran and six world powers in July 2015, Tehran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of economic and financial sanctions.

Yet, Iran continued compliance with the deal, stressing that the remaining signatories to the agreement, especially the Europeans, had to work to offset the negative impacts of the U.S. pullout from the agreement if they want Tehran to remain in compliance. The Iranian officials



had earlier warned that the European Union's failure in providing the needed ground for Tehran to enjoy the economic benefits of the nuclear deal would exhaust the country's patience.

Almost a year later, however, the EU failed to provide Tehran with its promised merits. Then, the U.S. State Department announced that it had not extended two waivers, one that allowed Iran to store excess heavy water produced in the uranium enrichment process in Oman, and one that allowed Iran to swap enriched uranium for raw yellowcake with Russia.

Until May, Iran was allowed to ship low-enriched uranium produced at Natanz to Russia before it hit the 300-kg limit and the U.S. measure leaves no way for Tehran other than

exceeding the ceiling for storing the enriched uranium in violation of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Also, the United States would no longer waive sanctions that allowed Iran to ship heavy water produced at its Arak facility beyond a 300-ton limit set in the 2015 nuclear deal to Oman for storage which again forces Tehran to store it inside country in violation of the nuclear deal.

In return, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) announced in a statement on May 8 that the country had modified two of its undertakings under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in return for the U.S. abrogation of the deal and other signatories' inability to make up for the losses under the agreement, warning that modifications would continue if the world powers failed to take action in line with their promises.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran declares that at the current stage, it does not anymore see itself committed to respecting the limitations on keeping enriched uranium and heavy water reserves," the statement said.

Then Iran gave Europe 60 days to either normalize economic ties with Iran or accept the modification of Tehran's obligations under the agreement and implement its proposed INSTEX to facilitate trade with Iran.

Iran set up and registered a counterpart to INSTEX called Special Trade and Financing Instrument between Iran and Europe (STFI) to pave the way for bilateral trade.

Iran won't be duped by 'good cop, bad cop' routine: military chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian nation will never be fooled by calls for negotiations and the good cop, bad cop routine, says Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff.

The U.S., under Donald Trump, has occasionally shown its willingness to hold talks with Tehran, while abandoning the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and reimposing sanctions that the agreement had rescinded in order to put enormous new pressure on Iran's economy.

The idea of talks with Trump's America has been firmly rejected by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say in critical issues.

In his Monday remarks, General Baqeri said the Islamic Republic, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei, continues to advance in the path of creating an "Islamic civilization" with all power and deep understanding of the current circumstances, Mehr reported.

He said despite all the conspiracies, including the imposed war (Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s) and all the acts of sabotage and insecurity in Iran by the enemies, the country is at the peak of its power.

He also pointed to the release of the Iranian-operated Adrian Darya 1 supertanker, which was seized by British marines in the Strait of Gibraltar last month, saying it demonstrated the Islamic Republic's power



at the international level.

"The shooting down of an invading U.S. spy drone, the seizure of the violating British oil tanker, and last but not least, the release of our country's tanker in Gibraltar, prove the fact that the Islamic Revolution strongly continues on its path to achieve its noble ideals," the general remarked.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in June shot down an American spy drone over Iran's southern coastal province of Hormozgan.

In a statement then, the IRGC said the Global Hawk spy drone was brought down by its Aerospace Force near the Kouh-e Mobarak region — which sits in the central district of

Jask County — after violating Iranian airspace.

A few weeks later, on July 19, the IRGC also seized the 30,000-tonne UK-flagged Stena Impero tanker, which had collided with an Iranian fishing boat and ignored its recurrent distress calls.

It came after Britain's naval forces unlawfully seized the Adrian Darya 1 vessel, then known as Grace 1, and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil in the Strait of Gibraltar under the pretext that the supertanker was carrying crude to Syria in violation of the European Union's unilateral sanctions against the country, while Tehran strongly rejected the claim.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Baqeri slammed the efforts launched by the U.S. to form a coalition and hatch new plots in the Persian Gulf, saying such efforts have already failed.

The top commander further said the efforts were aimed to lay siege on the Islamic Republic and undermine its power in the region.

Baqeri's comments came after the White House announced plans to create a new security initiative in the Persian Gulf by forming a coalition for escorting commercial ships.

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

Ayatollah Khamenei's official website launches three new languages

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — At a ceremony on Monday, the official website of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched three new languages of Russian, French and Spanish.

Addressing the ceremony which was attended by a number of media and foreign policy activists, Kamal Kharrazi, chairman of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said foreign language versions of the website is highly significant.

He said, "This website belongs to the office for preservation and publication of Ayatollah Khamenei's works and is very important.

The main reason of this importance is the importance of the Islamic Revolution and its influential role in the contemporary world. If we study developments since the past 50 years, we see that not only Iran but many other countries

have reformed greatly by the Islamic Revolution."

"Another reason for importance of this website is the personality of the Leader of the Revolution who guides this ship in the rough ocean of politics and who has guided Iran and protected the country's independence and dignity and has promoted the country's defense power.

So, it is interesting to the world that such personality who has revolutionary characteristics and influential words can guide the country based on principles of the revolution. Do not judge based on superficial things such as sanctions and insults. They all admit that they are facing a power and this is a very important point," he explained.

He also expressed hope that launching foreign language versions of this website would help freedom-seeking and independence-seeking people around the world.



Biggest drug smuggling band dismantled in southern Iran



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Intelligence Ministry has announced that its forces have dismantled the largest drug smuggling band in the southern province of Hormozgan.

In a statement, the ministry said the drug trafficking band carried drugs from one of neighboring countries by vessels and fishing boats to the coasts of Hormozgan, Mehr reported on Monday.

The band was also in charge of drug distribution in Iran besides transiting drugs to other countries.

Despite high economic and human costs, the Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades.

The country has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

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

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

Iran-Khodro's CEO arrested for increasing car prices



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hashem Yekke-Zare, the CEO of Iran's leading automaker Iran-Khodro Company (IKCO), was dismissed and arrested on Monday in his office upon an order by the Judiciary, Tasnim reported.

Yekke-Zare's "uncoordinated decision" to increase prices was cited as the reason for his dismissal and arrest.

Also, a number of senior managers of IKCO and Saipa had been arrested in the past few days over irregularities in the sale section of the company.

"(Also) in recent days One of the deputy directors of Iran-Khodro and one of the managers of this company have been dismissed from their positions and subsequently arrested,"

according to Fars.

Abbas Ali-Abadi was announced as new IKCO chief on Monday, hours after Yekke-Zareh was removed from the post.

The 57-year-old Ali-Abadi has been heading MAPNA Group, the top Iranian energy engineering and construction company, for the past 10 years and has never served in the car sector. His appointment comes as the government seeks to allay public concerns about affordability and quality of the cars made in Iran amid sanctions imposed by the United States which has affected production at IKCO and other companies. Founded more than 50 years ago, the IKCO leads production in Iran with over 600,000 passenger cars each year.

U.S. move to create safe zone in north Syria is provocative, Tehran says

1 → "The Americans' behavior in the northeast of Syria is a blatant violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and contravenes the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter," Mousavi added.

"It is obvious that the security concerns in Syria's northern border would be addressed under bilateral agreements with the neighbors and through good offices, and there is no need for meddling of foreign powers,"

the spokesperson concluded, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

Northeastern Syria is currently under the control of the U.S.-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), largely comprising of the People's Protection Units (YPG). Turkey has been pressing to establish a 30-40 km deep zone within Syria, seeking the removal of the YPG from the area. But the U.S. has tried to limit the safe zone to 10 km.



Iran not after war, but ready to deter threats: admiral

TEHRAN (MNA) — Deputy Coordinator of the Iranian Army Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari reiterated the Islamic Republic's stance against any war, noting, however, that the country enjoys a great deterrence power to fend off any possible threat.

"We have never been after [any] war and will never seek one," Rear Admiral Sayyari told a gathering of war veterans in Tehran on Tuesday, commemorating the 29th anniversary of the repatriation of Iranian prisoners



of war from Iraq.

The top commander underlined that while Iran does not seek war with any state, the nation will be the ultimate winner of "any potential warfare against the Islamic Republic."

He said the Iranian people proved their resistance and courage against the external threats with their selfless endeavors during the eight-year war with Iraq.

"The Holy Defense [Iraq-Iran War] created a great deterrence power for Iran and

showed that the Iranian nation will never stop supporting their leaders," he added.

He pointed to the Iranian military's defensive developments, saying the military is now more powerful than ever, as the country has boosted the forces' various subcategories and different Army divisions have undergone major structural changes overhauls. He further added the nation's courage and the military's advances have pushed away the enemies who have been seeking to undermine Iran's integrity.

Zarif likens 1953 coup to Trump's 'maximum pressure' on Iranians

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Monday commemorated the anniversary of the 1953 coup in Iran, saying the Americans and the British orchestrated the coup following years of "maximum pressure" on Iranians, hinting at U.S. President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" policy against Iran.

"66 years ago today, a coup instigated by the US and the UK overthrew the democratically-elected Government of Iran. This atrocity followed years of 'maximum pressure' on Iranians," Zarif said in a tweet.



"Our people put an end to such interference in 1979. Time for some to deal with this reality," he added.

On 19 August 1953, a foreign-backed coup — known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup d'état — was staged in Iran which saw the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in favor of strengthening the monarchical rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Named Operation Ajax by the CIA, the coup was carried out after an earlier coup attempt failed to overthrow Mosaddegh and install General Fazlollah Zahedi, the shah's reliable ally, as prime minister.

As a result, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the shah of Iran, had fled to Baghdad.

With the success of the second coup, however, Zahedi was installed as prime minister, and the shah returned to Iran and continued to rule more fiercely as monarch.

Mosaddegh was then arrested, tried and convicted of treason by the shah's military court.

He was sentenced to death, but on the Shah's personal orders, his sentence was commuted to three years in solitary confinement in a military prison, followed by house arrest until his death.

The Shah ruled until 1979, when he was brought down during the Islamic Revolution, which led to the establishment of the Islamic Republic after a referendum.

Forty years on, Iran's struggle to sustain its independence is still alive, but so is the foreign attempts aimed to undermine it.

Aggressors must pay damages for supertanker seizure: Raisi

1 → Tehran maintained that the supertanker was not bound for Syria and its seizure took place at the behest of the U.S.

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



Soon after the announcement, the U.S. Department of Justice unveiled a warrant for the seizure of the ship. Gibraltar, however, knocked back the request.

The tanker left Gibraltar's waters late on Sunday after the territory's Justice Ministry rejected a warrant from the U.S. Justice Department seeking its seizure for alleged violations of American sanctions. Gibraltar officials said the territory follows the European Union's laws, not the U.S.'s.

Government: U.S. economic terrorism must end

TEHRAN (FNA) — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei has strongly dismissed setting up any special channel for talks with the U.S., and stressed the need for Washington to end its economic terrorism and sanctions against Tehran.

"We have officially announced our view that economic terrorism must end," Rabiei said on Monday at a press conference.

Asked if a channel has been opened up for talks with the U.S., he said the only channel is the Swiss embassy, which represents the U.S. interests in Iran.

Rabiei also referred to the U.S. sanctions imposed on Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and said that Zarif is slated to leave for Paris within the next few days and the sanctions are in fact sanctioning the U.S. itself from dialogue.

In relevant remarks in July, Zarif blasted the U.S. for practicing economic terrorism against Tehran, saying that it had targeted the country's ordinary people.

Speaking to reporters before the annual meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York, the chief Iranian diplomat said the U.S. had engaged in an economic war against the Iranian nation.

The economic war Trump takes pride in has targeted the civilians, he said.

The war has targeted ordinary people, as it is a terrorist move to push political plans and this should be halted, Zarif said.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	262941.0
IFX	3534.51

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,584 rials
GBP	51,049 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$59.69/b
WTI	\$56.08/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.13/b
Gold	\$1,505.10/oz
Silver	\$17.06/oz
Platinum	\$853.25/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Tehran, Moscow in talks to set up Caspian Sea ferry line

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Tehran is in talks with Moscow over plans to establish a ferry service across the Caspian Sea that would link Iran with Russia’s Dagestan, RT reported.

The plan was discussed during the Iranian ambassador to Russia, Mehdi Sanaei’s visit to Derbent in which he met with Vladimir Vasilyev , head of Dagestan’s republic.

During the visit, the two sides discussed various issues such as increasing cargo traffic through Makhachkala Commercial Sea Port and launching direct passenger and cargo flights between Makhachkala and Tehran.

In the meeting, Vasilyev welcomed the idea of establishing the ferry line, saying that Derbent attracts many Iranians and the ferry service is expected to help facilitate their commutes. “[Tehran] is ready to establish sea links with us, and we are ready to cooperate – and everything will work,” Vasilyev told journalists at a press briefing on Sunday.

He said that Iran’s business community had started to take an interest in Dagestan, in particular in Derbent, with a number of international projects already being implemented and set to transform the region.

“International projects are being implemented in Derbent, there are some very interesting solutions there. The city used to have a billion-plus [rubles] annual income, but now it is receiving four billion [rubles] more [from investors],” Vasilyev stated.

Earlier reports regarding cooperation between Dagestan and the Islamic Republic referred to plans to increase the sales turnover between the two sides, particularly to boost lamb exports to Iran from the current 4,000 tons to 6,000 tons by the end of the year.

At present, the volume of trade between Iran and the republics of the North Caucasus is in the ballparks of \$54 million.

Iran to open business center in Ghana

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran is set to open a permanent exhibition of its products in Accra, the capital of Ghana in September, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported. “Iran’s commercial center in Ghana is set to open next month,” ICCIMA portal quoted president of Hamedan Chamber of Commerce (HCCIMA) as saying on Monday.



“There’s a big piece of land in the Ghanaian capital Accra that we have leased to showcase Iranian products such as cosmetics, dried fruits, foodstuffs, construction material and etc.,” Ali Asqar Zebar Dast said.

As reported, Iran and Ghana are trying to increase their commercial exchanges as they eye closer bilateral ties.

“In addition to these stuffs, we are going to ship Iranian-made furniture, wood-carved handicraft from Malayer city in a bid to promote the provincial artistic and industrial capacities,” added Zebar Dast, who met with head of Ghana-Iran Parliamentary Friendship Group Aziz Abdul Muniru in Tehran on Sunday.

In the meeting was held at ICCIMA, Muniru also held talks with Ali Reza Ashraf, ICCIMA’s Secretary General, Mohammad Reza Karbasi, ICCIMA’s Deputy for International Affairs and a number of other Iranain economic operators.

Although the Ghanaian market has shown interest in Iranian goods, the major obstacle on way of further developing trade ties with this central African country is the lack of Iranian shipping lines to Ghana. “We have to lease Indian oceangoing vessels,” Zebar Dast stated.

According to the Iranian businessman, the process of exporting Iranian products to Ghana is very lengthy since the African country is part of the World Trade Organization (WOT), “All the goods need to get the necessary licenses and certificates from various governmental and private organization before exports happen”.

Iran, Turkmenistan agree to establish direct shipping route

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran and Turkmenistan have reached an agreement for establishing a direct shipping route between the two countries, ISNA reported on Monday, quoting Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami as saying.

According to the minister, the agreement, along with several others, will be discussed comprehensively in the upcoming weeks and will be officially signed in the end of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr (which ends on October 22) in Ashgabat.

Earlier this month Eslami visited Turkmenistan on top of a 75-member delegation to attend the First Caspian Sea Economic Forum.

During his visit, the official held talks with several senior officials from Turkmenistan’s ministries of railways and Trade and Foreign Economic Relations to discuss expansion of ties in various areas especially in transportation.

Development of maritime communications, creation of a joint shipping line, completion of the north-south corridor and



removal of obstacles in this regard were among the most important issues discussed in the meetings, according to Eslami.

The need for facilitating visa issuance, development of transportation, development of the two sides’ aquatic industries and the

protection of the marine environment were also among the issues discussed by the officials during the meetings.

The officials also underlined the first Caspian Sea Economic Forum as a positive step toward expansion of trade among the Caspian Sea littoral nations, expressing hope that the summit would be the beginning of a new chapter in the economic relations of the five Caspian Sea countries.

The first Caspian Economic Forum which was held in Turkmenistan’s Avaza on August 11-12.

A variety of issues and subjects were covered in the forum, including project implementation and joint plans, exchange of experiences on the development of special economic zones, legislation and standards, digital economy, cooperation between coastal regions and joint ventures.

An exhibition of business and trade capabilities of the Caspian Sea littoral states was also held on the sidelines of this forum in which the exhibitors showcased their latest achievements and products.

Iron ore concentrate output exceeds 15mt in 4 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Production of iron ore concentrate in Iran during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – July 21) reached 15.903 million tons, registering a three percent rise compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

As reported, the data regarding the output of major mineral production companies released in the first four months of the current year indicated that 15,903,165 tons of iron ore concentrate was produced.

Tose’e Melli Mining and Industries Company, a subsidiary of Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC), registered the maximum 92 percent production growth in the same period.

In the same period, 14,403,672 tons of iron ore con-

glomerate was produced, showing one percent decline as compared to the last year’s corresponding period.

Conglomerate produced in Khorasan Steel Company recorded a 70 percent growth in the first four months of the current year (March 21 – July 21).

According to the statistics, 1,662,958 tons of granulated iron ore was produced in the first four months of the current year, showing a 37 percent decline as compared to the last year’s corresponding period.

Iran’s export of iron ore concentrate rose 96.6 percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), compared to the preceding year.

The country exported 5.552 million tons of the product worth \$398 million during the mentioned period.



Shalamcheh-Basra railway project to start soon: RAI head

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Managing Director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) said Shalamcheh-Basra railway project will be commenced in the upcoming months, IRNA reported.

“Shalamcheh-Basra railway route is 32 kilometers long along which a 700-meter bridge is also going to be constructed,” Saead Rasouli said on Monday.

According to the official, the project will be completed within a year and the final destination of the railway is the city of Latakia in Syria.

Earlier in July, during a joint meeting between heads of the railways of Iran, Iraq



and Syria in Tehran, Iranian Deputy Road Minister Kheirollah Khademi had said

Shalamcheh-Basra railway project would be implemented within three months.

Khademi, who is also the head of Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company, said that after signing a cooperation agreement between Iran and Iraq, the contractor and investor of the 32-kilometer railroad were designated.

According to the official, Islamic Republic of Iran’s Mostazafan Foundation was set to fund the project as the Iranian party of the agreement.

“We are ready to implement the project in Iraq, expecting the Iraqi government to allocate the intended land of the project to us,” he stated.

Iran’s 4-month steel ingot production up 4% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – The output of Iran’s 10 major steel ingot producers reached 6.863 million tons in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), indicating a four percent increase compared to last year’s same period.

As reported by IRNA, the production at the mentioned steel producing units has already exceeded 30 percent of the past Iranian calendar year’s total steel production.

Production of steel ingot in Iran during spring, which corresponded to the first quarter of Iranian calendar year, stood at 5.2 million tons, rising 3.7 percent from the same quarter in the past year.

As previously announced by the Iranian Steel Producers Association, Iran exported 4.899 million tons of steel ingot during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019).

As reported, billets and blooms accounted for 67 percent of the steel ingot exports in the past year.

Over 40 percent of crude steel produced in Iran is exported to different markets worldwide, according to Khodadad Gharibpour, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

A report by the World Steel Organization (WSO) has indicated that Iran became the world’s tenth largest steel producer in 2018.

Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017 could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

According to the WSO’s report, Iran produced 25 million tons of crude steel in 2018 which indicates 17.7 percent growth from 21.2 million tons in 2017.

Also, a recent report by the WSO says that production of crude steel in Iran rose 7.1 percent during the first quarter of 2019 compared to the same period of time in 2018.

It is while crude steel production in the world increased 4.5 percent in the first quarter of this year.

The WSO’s report put Iran’s crude steel output at 6.223 million tons and that of the world’s 64 steel producers at 155.9 million tons in the three-month period.

China, India, Japan, the U.S., and South Korea were the top five steel producers in the world during the first quarter of this year.

The country’s crude steel production capacity will increase by 25 million tons within the next four years, according to a deputy director in IMIDRO.

Ardeshir Sa’d Mohammadi said that through such increase in crude steel output, the required feedstock for the plants will be properly supplied.

The official further lamented that of the 35 million tons



of crude steel produced in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), 25 million tons were used in the production process.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors.

Germany likely to head into recession, central bank warns

Germany’s economy is heading into recession after the country’s central bank warned that a slump in exports during the summer was likely to continue into the autumn.

As per theguardian.com, the Bundesbank said a downturn in orders for cars and industrial equipment in the second quarter of the year was likely to continue in the third quarter, leaving the economy on the brink of a technical recession, defined as two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth.

The bank, blaming a drop in exports, said Brexit and the trade war between the U.S. and China were among the factors responsible for a 0.1% drop in GDP in the three months to June and would likely create a similar drop in the three months to September.

It said: The “overall economic performance could decline slightly once again. Central to this is the ongoing downturn in industry.”

Forecasts of growth this year of 0.5% by the Bundesbank and the European commission are likely to be downgraded to nearer 0.2% or 0.3%, though analysts at Deutsche Bank said even these figures

were vulnerable to downward revisions.

“Given the increasingly fragile state of the global economy, the realisation of one or more risks could easily push the economy into a completely different scenario,” the bank’s analysts said.

The dip in economic performance, even if it proves to be short-lived, comes at a bad time for Angela Merkel’s coalition.

The junior coalition partner, the Social Democratic party (SPD), is awaiting the outcome of a leadership election that many observers believe will result in the left of center party, which has slumped in the polls, pulling its support.

Stefan Schneider, Deutsche Bank’s chief economist, said the coalition was also heading for heavy losses in the important state elections in Saxony and Brandenburg, where the Green party and the rightwing Alternative for Germany are expected to make gains.

He said: The “fog over the (coalition’s) future is unlikely to lift before the end of October when the SPD will present the result of the membership ballot on its new leader(s). We think that Merkel’s government

will become even more fragile.”

Germany has the fiscal strength to counter any future economic crisis “with full force”, said the finance minister, Olaf Scholz, suggesting Berlin could provide up to €50b (£45.7b) of extra spending.

His comments came after a report last week said Germany was prepared to ditch its balanced budget rule and take on new debt to counter a possible recession.

Confirmation that the country would use the threat of a recession to boost government spending helped calm markets rocked last week by concerns of a global slowdown led by the U.S., China and Germany.

■ Eurozone sovereign bond yields Eurozone sovereign bond yields, which reflect the borrowing rate paid by governments in the 19-member currency bloc, lifted from record low levels.

Germany’s 10-year bond yield was steady at -0.69%, above record lows hit last week at about -0.73%. German 30-year bond yields were also off record lows, trading at -0.22%.

World stock markets were also cheered by a decision from China’s Central Bank to

alter the way it sets a key interest rate benchmark, a move seen by analysts as reducing borrowing costs for companies.

Peter Chatwell, the head of rates strategy at the Japanese bank Mizuho, said Berlin needed the threat of a recession before it could unleash government spending.

He said: The “point which is being missed is that the German fiscal stimulus is conditional on a recession, and existing law already allows for this.

The “European Central Bank (ECB) would probably restart QE (quantitative easing) before the German fiscal taps were at risk of being nudged open.”

Inflation in the eurozone has more than halved in the last year from 2.2% to 1%, leaving the ECB little option but to cut the cost of borrowing from its already low levels.

Mario Draghi, the ECB’s outgoing president, said last month that the outlook for eurozone growth was worsening and inflation remained well below the bank’s 2% target. He said Europe’s Central Bank would use every weapon at its disposal to mitigate deflationary pressures.

Iran to repair Afghanistan's power plant turbines

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** - Iran is going to repair two turbines at Afghanistan's power plants in the near future, head of Iran Power Plant Repairs Company, Einollah Salehi, said.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of his visit to a steam power plant near Kabul, Afghanistan.

According to the official, based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the two countries, Iran is going to repair damaged electric transformers and turbines of power plants in Afghanistan.

He mentioned that the repair of the second turbine will begin after the renovation of the first one and making sure that it is working properly.

The repairs will be carried out in Afghanistan by Iranian experts, he noted.



Salehi said that the renovation of damaged electric transformers will also start after the repair of two turbines.

Iran and Afghanistan signed an MOU in Kabul on Sunday for developing bilateral cooperation in the field of electricity industry. In the MOU, the two sides emphasized the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of "repairing the worn out power transmission equipment", "construction of armor lines", "synchronization of two countries' grids" and other issues related to the electricity industry.

The MOU was signed by Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri and the Director General of Tavanir Organization Mohammad Hassan Motavalizadeh on the Iranian side and Amanallah Ghaleb, the Director General of Afghanistan Electricity Company on the Afghan side.

'Iran won't wait for India on Farzad-B gas project'

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** - Iran is not going to wait for India on developing Farzad-B gas field and soon the project will know its operator, deputy head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said, ISNA reported on Friday.

Farzad-B, with estimated reserves of 12.8 trillion cubic feet of gas, was opened in 2008 by a consortium of three Indian companies: ONGC, Oil India Limited and Indian Oil Corporation.

The Indians were supposed to develop the field after its exploration, but they stopped their activities after the West intensified sanctions on the Islamic Republic in 2012.

With the lifting of the sanctions, India once again called for the development of Farzad-B by ONGC Videsh which is the overseas investment arm of the country's biggest energy exploration firm.

In February, NIOC head said Iran and India are still discussing development of Farzad-B gas field.

"Development of Farzad-B has been and will be a top priority for NIOC and the negotiations with India are still underway," Masoud Karbasian told Tasnim news agency.

In May, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said India is still the top option for awarding Farzad-B gas field development project.

"Our intention is to hold final talks with them [India]... if they are not ready to do the project, we will continue with an Iranian company, however if Indian companies come forward, they will be the ministry's priority for completing the project," Zanganeh said.

The official noted that Iranian oil ministry has prepared a plan for financing the project and the framework of the contract is also going through final editions.

According to an agreement, the Indians were first to submit a technical plan and then a financial proposal for the development of the field, but Iran did not agree with the other side's financial proposals.



Oil prices rise on stimulus hopes, trade optimism

Crude oil prices edged up on Tuesday on optimism U.S.-China trade tensions will ease and on hopes major economies will take stimulus measures to ward off a potential economic slowdown that could hit oil demand.

According to Reuters.com, Brent crude LCO1 has risen 8 cents to \$59.82 a barrel by 0652 GMT, after climbing 1.88% on Monday.

U.S. crude CL1 was up 9 cents at \$56.30 a barrel, after gaining 2.44% in the previous session.

The United States said it would extend a reprieve that permits China's Huawei Technologies to buy components from U.S. companies, signaling a slight softening of the trade conflict between the world's two largest economies.

The extension sets a very "comforting tone" ahead of next month's U.S.-China trade



talks, Stephen Innes, managing partner of VM Markets, said in a note.

The "U.S.-China trade spat has been at the center of the oil market demise, which has sent the global economy to the brink of recession and negatively impacted oil demand forecasts," he said.

A rally in equity markets around the world on growing expectations that global economies will take action against slowing growth also supported crude prices.

China's new lending reference rate was set slightly lower on Tuesday after the central bank announced interest rate reforms designed to reduce corporate borrowing costs, while Germany's right-left coalition government said it would be prepared to ditch its balanced budget rule and take on new debt to counter a

possible recession.

Meanwhile, a Reuters poll of seven analysts revealed expectations that crude oil inventories in the United States fell by 1.9 million barrels in the week to August 16.

The poll was conducted ahead of reports from the American Petroleum Institute (API), an industry group, and the Energy Information Administration (EIA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy.

An "unexpected rise, (could) possibly (take) the wind out of oil's sails, if only temporarily," said Jeffrey Halley, a senior market analyst at OANDA.

Still, prices were weighed down by a report from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that stoked concerns about oil demand growth.

Global renewables investment to hit \$13.3 trillion by 2050

By Tsvetana

Global investments in renewable energy generation capacity will vastly outnumber investment in new fossil fuel-fired plants by 2050, as the share of renewables in the world's generation capacity will grow exponentially, research company BloombergNEF (BNEF) says in its report New Energy Outlook 2019.

Investments in new generation capacity around the world is set to hit \$13.3 trillion over the 32 years to 2050, according to BNEF estimates. Of this \$13.3 trillion, as much as 77 percent will be investment earmarked for new electricity generation from renewable sources.

Wind and solar will lead the renewable investment over the next three decades, BNEF's analysis showed.

Wind power is set to attract \$5.3 trillion in new generation by 2050, solar will see spending at \$4.2 trillion, while investments in batteries will amount to \$843 billion.

To compare, global investment in new fossil plants is set to not exceed \$2 trillion by 2050, which works out to around US\$416 billion a year until then, according to BNEF's estimates.

Global investment in new power generation capacity will help build 15,145 GW of new power plants between now and 2050. Of this capacity, 80 percent will be zero carbon, the report said.

Another 1,666 GW of non-generating capacity such as batteries and flexible capacity for demand response will be built over the next three decades.

In terms of batteries, BNEF expects a lot of new investments by 2040 in another recently published report.

■ Usage of clean energy

Continuously falling battery costs, and rising capacity and usage of clean energy are set to result in booming global stationary energy storage over the next two decades, which will require total investments of as much as \$662 billion, according to the key findings of the latest report on new energies by BNEF.

Energy storage installations across the world are expected to soar to 1,095GW, or 2,850GWh, by 2040, compared to a modest current deployment of just 9GW/17GWh as of 2018, according to BNEF's latest forecasts.

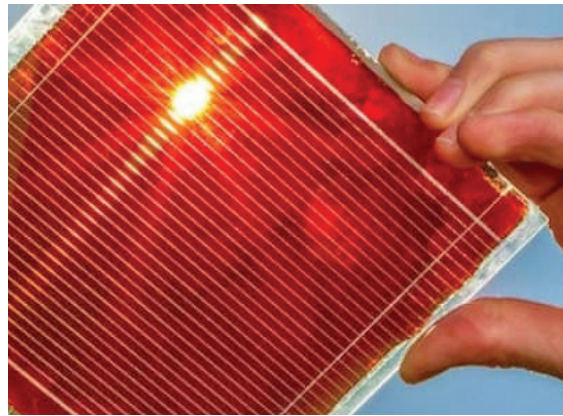
Wind and solar will grow so much that by 2032, the world will have more wind and solar electricity than coal-fired electricity, BNEF's New Energy Outlook 2019 said.

The use of coal will peak globally in 2026, and coal generation will collapse all around the world except for Asia. Yet, even in the biggest markets in Asia — China and India — coal will peak over the next decades, and those two markets will drive the Asian investment in renewable capacity by 2050, according to BNEF.

Globally, by 2050, coal-fired generation in the world will drop by 51 percent, supplying just 12 percent of the world's electricity, compared to 27 percent today.

In terms of the pace of transition to renewables by region, Europe will be the leader, with renewable energy accounting for 90 percent of Europe's electricity mix as early as by 2040, of which wind and solar will make up 80 percent, BNEF has estimated.

Major European economies are already on the road to decarbonization, thanks to policies supporting it and to carbon pricing. The U.S., where low-priced natural gas



fired power plants, and China, with modern coal-fired plants, lag behind Europe at a slower pace of decarbonization, the report says.

"Our power system analysis reinforces a key message from previous New Energy Outlooks — that solar photovoltaic modules, wind turbines and lithium-ion batteries are set to continue on aggressive cost reduction curves, of 28%, 14% and 18% respectively for every doubling in global installed capacity," Matthias Kimmel, NEO 2019 lead analyst, said, commenting on the NEO 2019 findings.

"By 2030, the energy generated or stored and dispatched by these three technologies will undercut electricity generated by existing coal and gas plants almost everywhere."

(Source: oilprice.com)

What caused the recent surge in oil and gas bankruptcies?

According to a new report from law firm Haynes and Boone LLP, bankruptcies in the upstream sector are increasing this year as energy spot prices remain subdued amid a cyclical downshift in the economy.

According to oilprice.com, so far, 26 exploration and production (E&P) firms have filed for bankruptcy through mid-August, with debts totaling \$10.96 billion. The firm noticed a surge in bankruptcies began in May, following a -23% correction in WTI prices from mid-April to mid-June.

In 2018, 28 E&P firms filed for bankruptcy, posting \$13.2 billion in debt, while 24 firms asked for protection in 2017 with \$8.5 billion in debt.

The firm points out that insolvencies in the energy patch are gaining momentum.

"So far this year there has been an uptick in the number of filings," Haynes & Boone said.

Oil and gas prices have remained depressed for 2019.

The law firm said it's hard to tell if a new bankruptcy wave is imminent, but said, "some stakeholders may have given up hope that resurgent commodity prices will bail everyone out," especially operators who have been on the verge of bankruptcy.

"For these producers, the game clock has run out of time to keep playing 'kick the can' with their creditors and other stakeholders," the firm warned.

Buddy Clark, a Haynes & Boone partner, told Reuters that many of 2019's bankrupt-

cies are pre-planned, Chapter 11 restructurings, where creditors agree in advance on restructuring plans.

"I don't think you will see a lot of Chapter 7 (liquidations)," he said.

"When you see Chapter 7s is when there are no assets left. Typically, there are always assets left."

Natural Gas Intelligence believes a bankruptcy wave for the upstream sector could be nearing.

This is because operators across the country have been scaling back since oil crashed -44% in 4Q18.

Producers have been faced with margin compression, high debt loads, and over-supplied markets so far this year.

Haynes and Boone said 22 oilfield

service (OFS) companies have filed for bankruptcy since last year, most notable was the bust of Weatherford International last month.

The midstream sector has so far weathered the slowdown without the same financial stress of the upstream sector.

Haynes and Boone recorded 192 E&P bankruptcies since 2015 totaling \$106.8 billion in debt and recorded 185 OFS bankruptcies involving \$65 billion of debt over the same time.

And with SocGen's Albert Edwards warning about a deflationary bust, it seems that the inflation downturn could force commodity prices much lower, could kick off the tidal wave of energy bankruptcies during the 2020 election year.

Several oil and gas projects to be inaugurated in Government Week

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** - Several development projects in different sectors including oil, gas and energy are to be inaugurated on the occasion of the Government Week (August 24-30), Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Monday.

The official referred to the country's achievements despite the U.S. sanctions, saying Iran's economy and domestic market are out of previous fragile conditions and indices are moving towards stability, Shana reported.



"Stability in forex market, stock exchange market, the growth in foreign trade and domestic production, and exports surplus besides reduction of our reliance on oil revenues are all among the positive signs that Iran is experiencing," he added.

The imposed U.S. pressure in the past recent months on Iran were powerful enough to agitate economic conditions of stable countries with high economic growth but our economy and domestic market are out of its previous fragile conditions now and economic indices are improving, he said.

Every year during the Government Week, numerous development projects go operational across the country to celebrate the occasion.

Equinor, Gazprom lose European gas market share as LNG surges

Europe's two biggest suppliers of pipeline gas, Norway's Equinor and Russia's Gazprom, have lost market share for the first time in at least four years amid a tripling in liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports into the region over the past 10 months.

As stated by Reuters.com, LNG imports into Europe have jumped amid lower than expected spot demand from Asia, which has helped to send European gas prices to 10-year lows and filled European storages to multi-year highs.



Data compiled by Refinitiv showing changes in the market share of gas from Norway, Russia and LNG sources is the latest example of how LNG is transforming Europe's gas market.

The share of LNG in gas supplied to Western and Central Europe increased to 14% between October 2018 and August 2019 from 5% in the same period of 2017-18.

Gazprom's share was around the average of the past three years, edging down by 1% from the previous year to 32%. But it was the first year-on-year drop since 2014-2015, when it was hit by low gas demand in Europe.

LNG from the United States into northwest Europe accounted for 2% of total gas supply into the region, contributing to the strong increase in LNG in Europe.

Despite its market share loss, Gazprom's total gas exports to Europe rose as the region imported 9% more gas from October to August, compared with the same period in 2017-2018.

■ The Russian supply

"Most of the increase which we see in Russian supply this year came to Slovakia and the Czech Republic - countries which do not have direct access to LNG and which need to prepare their storages in case transit via Ukraine stops from January 2020," said Marina Tsygankova, gas market analyst at Refinitiv.

The gas transit agreement between Russia and Ukraine is due to expire at the end of this year.

The lack of progress in talks has spurred Europe to stockpile gas to prevent possible supply disruption in winter.

In countries with LNG terminals, Russian flows have given some ground to LNG volumes, an LNG market source said.

The drop in Norwegian flows, meanwhile, was seller-driven, with Equinor conducting extensive maintenance on its production and also reducing output, probably for commercial reasons.

In contrast, a drop in Russian gas flows to some Western European countries, such as Germany, was buyer-driven.

"If I have a long-term contract and some flexibility left, I would run the contract low now and ramp it up again in September or later," a gas trader in Europe said, pointing to current low spot prices.

A drop in Dutch production has also helped to create room for LNG arrivals.

The analysis was based on gas volumes for Germany, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Britain, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Slovakia from October to August over the past six years.

America's human rights record is waning

TEHRAN (FNA)– The harrowing accounts and chilling examples highlighted in recent reports by the Human Rights Watch and others are a disturbing read for any conscious human being.

And however much the US administration officials would like to be in denial, their one-dimensional human rights policy is still a dead giveaway, a narrative that tells of an abusive system that knows about these things and chooses to do nothing.

Predominantly, these reports put the Land of the Free in negative light for “infringement on citizens’ civil rights, prevalence of money politics, rising income inequality, worsening racial discrimination, and growing threats against children, women and immigrants, as well as human rights violations caused by the unilateral America First policies.”

It’s a sad statement, as well, that the US, which withdrew last year from the United Nations Human Rights Council, methodically continues to grab the top trophy in rampant gun violence and abuse of power by public officers.

Data from the Gun Violence Archive showed the United States reported 57,103 incidents of gun violence in 2018, resulting in 14,717 deaths, 28,172 injuries, including casualties of 3,502 juveniles.

And that’s just to scratch the surface of the explosive subject of federal gun laws.

It reveals that the pattern of systematic abuse at the hands of the American government under the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution has been, and still is, a textbook case of human rights violations designed and implemented at the highest levels of government.



Let’s be utterly clear about what has happened to human rights in American hands: There are genuine reasons why each and every year tens of thousands of black Americans, Latinos, students and activists take to the streets across country, rallying and chanting and refusing to back down and go home. The US - where school shootings are an almost weekly news story and the preeminent fear of American teenagers - has succumbed to the exact patterns of abusive state action that these campaigners want to outlaw forever.

No less important, though hardly commented upon, is this fact, too: The ruling elites are blatant in their intentions of maintaining white supremacy and privilege. The political class in Washington makes a mockery of civil rights as well as domestic and international justice.

Their crocodile tears for slain youths by white police officers and “concern” in both racial discrimination and the abuse of power by public officers is a ruse.

The authorities seek no social justice and equality to the millions of disadvantaged Americans and victims of police homicide. They seek no justice to those men of color and immigrants who get killed every day for imagined fears by bigoted police officers.

And in case you are wondering, it’s not just the Human Rights Watch that says US human rights record is now officially in the dust. The US Senate Intelligence Committee’s periodic report (partly classified) is equally a disturbing read – although it fails to call on Washington to comply with international treaties:

The Committee cites deep concern about heavy-handed and discriminatory policing practices, treatment of juveniles in criminal justice system, serious problems with immigration enforcement policies, sexual assault of inmates, and shackling of pregnant women.

The Committee reveals that the US never investigates cases of unlawful detention, killing, torture, rape and ill treatment. It’s been pouring out in all its variety to remind us that all is not well for the United States.

Many human rights organizations have also delivered withering verdicts on America’s increasingly degraded record on human rights – on both domestic and international levels.

The United Nations Committee Against Torture offers worse news. It catalogues greater violations and raises graver concerns, including torture, racial oppression, systematic human rights violations, police brutality, and failure to close secret immigrant detention centers and military prisons.

The UN Committee fittingly condemns the self-styled “human rights defenders” of the White House for failing to comply with international anti-torture treaties, citing indefinite detention without trial, force-feeding of prisoners, holding asylum seekers, mothers and children in detention facilities, widespread use of solitary confinement, excessive use of force and brutality by police, shootings of unarmed people of color, and cruel and inhumane executions.

Under the circumstances, expect no shock, no horror, no self-reflection whatsoever.

It won’t make the news, much less the headlines on Capitol Hill.

Assumedly, the greatest crew of rights-violation aiders and abettors at the White House will never bother to comply with the International Human Rights Law, or make political sacrifices to promote and protect human rights on domestic, regional and international levels.

It’s rather immature to think that a country that spends 80 billion dollars a year to incarcerate some 2.4 million people will ever give people a sense of engagement and empowerment. It will never go that far to acknowledge its abysmal record on human rights. It will do such things again and again and again.

U.S. sanctions killing cancer patients in Iran: Report



IFP–The U.S. claims that its maximum pressure on Iran 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, an article released by Foreign Policy says.

Last month, the US 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 US 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.

Today’s integrated and interconnected world depends on banking systems and trade networks that are dominated by the United States. Consequently, the US government is able to use economic sanctions to cause harm to economic, political, and even social relations in target countries with relative ease.

Although US sanctions are engineered in a way that may appear not to target humanitarian access to food and medicine, in practice US sanctions function as a tool of economic war.

Officials in Washington continue to insist that they maintain “exemptions” to their sanctions to protect humanitarian trade, even after the International Court of Justice has ruled that these exemptions are insufficient, leaving “little prospect of improvement” in the “serious detrimental impact on the health and lives” of Iranians individuals.

At the end of the day, it is incumbent on the United States to heed this humanitarian warning.

Under US President Donald Trump, the situation has gotten worse. Census Bureau data shows that the United States exported an average of \$26 million of pharmaceutical products to Iran annually during the Barack Obama-era sanctions.

Exports have averaged just \$8.6 million a year in the last two years under the more draconian sanctions policies of Trump.

The Trump administration has also made it more difficult for European countries to export medicine to Iran.

Swiss pharmaceutical exports to Iran fell 30 percent from 235 million Swiss francs (\$240 million) in 2017 to 163 million francs (\$167 million) last year, according to Swiss customs data.

Even though sanctions were only fully re-imposed in November 2018, Swiss exports that year fell below the 173 million francs (\$178 million) annual average observed from 2008 to 2015.

Similarly, French pharmaceutical exports to Iran fell 25 percent from 194 million euros (\$218 million) to 146 million euros (\$164 million) last year, slipping below the 2008 to 2015 average of 150 million euros (\$168 million), according to data from Eurostat.

In response to such pressures, and as part of its post-revolution policies of self-sufficiency, Iran has made important strides in safeguarding its people’s access to medication. Iran is a world leader in the production of

generic drugs, helping significantly lower the cost of health care.

According to Akbar Barandegi, director general of Iran’s Food and Drug Administration, almost 97 percent of the country’s needed pharmaceutical doses are provided by about 100 local pharmaceutical companies, most of which belong to the private sector. Just 3 percent of demand is met with imports, purchased from many of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies.

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

Last year, several of my colleagues who work in the field of paediatric oncology published a note in the Lancet showing that chemotherapy drugs such as asparaginase, the leukaemia treatment mercaptopurine, and even the basic pain killer paracetamol had run out of stock, threatening the treatment of thousands of children.

Access to these medications is being significantly disrupted as a result of US sanctions against Iran.

This disruption takes three primary forms. First, sanctions impact the availability of imports.

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

Just as with raw materials, banking restrictions have made it more difficult for Iranian importers to pay European and Asian suppliers for medicine.

Shortages of imported medicines and skyrocketing costs are putting the most vulnerable patients—those with rare or advanced

diseases—at the greatest risk.

There is particular concern over the risk to paediatric cancer patients.

In this face of these import disruptions, opportunists have begun smuggling counterfeit and low-quality medicines into Iran through routes from Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

Should disruptions grow worse, it could also lead to introduction of counterfeit or impure ingredients to domestically-manufactured medications, leading to not only low-quality drugs, but also new public health risks.

Second, sanctions interrupt domestic production by interrupting supply chains. Iran’s pharmaceutical manufacturers use over 10,000 different compounds in their production processes.

The pressure of US sanctions and the chilling effect on international banks have already made it impossible for many suppliers to reliably receive payment for raw materials sold to Iran.

Some medications require 15 substances from different manufacturers in various countries in order to be produced. The absence of even one substance brings the production of that medicine to a halt.

Finally, the impact of sanctions on Iran’s economy hurts health care providers and consumers alike by reducing purchasing power.

Lower government revenues and reduced access to foreign currency put a strain on health care spending, making imported drugs more difficult to afford for patients even when hospitals have them in stock. According to data released by the Central Bank of Iran, the cost of health care in Iran rose nearly 20 percent between November 2017 and November 2018.

Declining output will also create unemployment.

The Iranian Pharmaceutical Industries Syndicate estimates that pharmaceutical manufacturers employ approximately 25,000

staff, while a further 100,000 workers are employed in distribution companies, pharmacies, and aftersales support.

These workers are some of Iran’s best and brightest, and around 20 percent of those employed are university graduates.

Their futures are at stake. What may seem like sterile banking sanctions are truly much more dangerous.

These sanctions disrupt the access of the Iranian public—especially the poor, the elderly, children, women, and patients suffering from chronic diseases—to the medications they require.

Medicines become more expensive and of worse quality. An unreliable supply chain leads to incomplete treatment of diseases and their becoming chronic.

The crisis deepens when the slowdown in domestic production increases the country’s need to import drugs.

All this is happening against the backdrop of the Iranian government’s strained resources as it is forced to import medicines at a higher price tag in those instances when a banking channel is available.

Responsible leaders in the United States recognize that there is little to gain by smothering humanitarian trade.

European governments have sought clarity on humanitarian trade, only to be rebuffed.

This forced France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to establish a special purpose vehicle, called INSTEX, to try to facilitate humanitarian trade.

Iranians welcome this move, but the United States should not shirk its moral responsibilities.

The Swiss government is negotiating directly with the Trump administration on a banking channel for humanitarian trade, but its efforts have so far been blocked by officials who are seeking the most extreme interpretation of “maximum pressure.”

Iran’s European suppliers understand that this situation is dire, but the Trump administration remains unaccommodating.

During the Iran-Iraq War, the United States turned a blind eye to Saddam Hussein’s use of chemical and biological warfare against Iranian and Kurdish soldiers and civilians.

Most damningly, the United States not only refused to place sanctions on Iraq to deter use of nerve agents, but it also refused to aid Iran’s access to the antidotes required to treat the victims of chemical attacks.

I happen to be one of those victims; Saddam’s chemical weapons burned my lungs and eyes, causing lifelong injuries for which I continue to take medication, and which have gotten progressively worse in my old age.

Seared in my memory are the hundreds of victims I saw in warzone emergency facilities near the Iran-Iraq border who had little or no access to treatment equipment, especially antidotes.

Nearly 40 years on, the US government continues to suffer from the same moral failures, and I continue to witness the results up close.

Though I have survived this unconventional war, many of my countrymen and my patients have not—and their sanctions-induced deaths are not a myth.

Richard Silverstein: Israeli-Ethiopian citizens treated like refugees

TEHRAN (FNA) - Richard Silverstein, American journalist and political commentator, says members of the Ethiopian community are denied access to their rights as Israeli citizens.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, the American journalist explained the reason of the July protests by Israeli-Ethiopians, saying they are racially discriminated against even by the judiciary, “after an Israeli force, who was off duty, shot dead an Ethiopian, the regime got the judiciary to order that the police’s name should be kept withheld.

Hence, no-one knows if justice will be served.”

Richard Silverstein is a Seattle-based journalist who writes extensively on Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He studied Hebrew and comparative literature. He contributes regularly to Middle East papers, publications and TV channels.

Below is the full text of the interview:

Q: Is there a historical root for the discrimination against Israeli-Ethiopians?

A: They came on must in 1990s from Ethiopia. They had a very difficult time getting Israeli rabbis to agree they were Jewish.

Even though they won that battle and they are considered Jewish, they really are the underclass in Israeli society. They are mistreated.

They are treated as badly as the Palestinian-Israeli residents.

This is part of the problem that goes far back in Israeli history all the way back to 1948: Israeli society is based on being a Jewish society in which Jews are privileged and the Jews have higher values than the non-Jews. The case for the Ethiopian Jews is that they are maybe considered Jews minus.

They are not fully integrated into the Israeli society and the regime has done a little to integrate them in terms of language, jobs and education.

There have been cases that public schools have refused to enroll Ethiopian children as early as the first or second grade; because Ashkenazi parents refuse to have

Ethiopians in the school.

Imagine when it is happening at the age of 5, what is happening to the adult Ethiopians. Whatever the Ethiopians had earned, they have earned themselves with the sweat of their own brows.

They take the lower-paying and unskilled jobs. They cannot get specialized or professional education to become doctors or engineers.

So, they are only working class people who are the poorest in the Israeli society.

Q: Is there another underclass community in Israel being treated worse than Ethiopians?

A: The blacks who are homeless in Israel are mostly of the some 60,000 African refugees from countries like Sudan, Eritrea or other countries in which there is war, revolution or famine.

They fled their countries hoping to find a country with more hospitality.

But these refugees are denied asylum or refugees’ status which are supposed to be granted under the UN protocols. Israel as a contract with Rwanda to pay \$3000 for each refugee and dump them to Rwanda where they cannot have a refugees’ status or do anything.

Ethiopians, even though are citizens and supposed to have more rights, are treated almost the same as the African refugees.

The regime denies them their rights, just the same as the case for which the protest by Ethiopians took place: after an Israeli force, who was off duty, shot dead an Ethiopian, the regime got the judiciary to order that the police’s name should be kept withheld. Hence, no-one knows if justice will be served.

There have been many times that Ethiopians were beaten or killed by the forces, and this is the last straw for the Ethiopians.

Q: If the Ashkenazi disapprove of the blacks, why are the Ethiopians allowed into Israel?

A: There is a hierarchy of racism in the Israeli society. The original Ashkenazi Jews were from the Eastern Europe. Later the Mizrahi Jews came from the Arab



lands, and they were the blacks of Israel.

They were mistreated as if they are inferior to the Ashkenazi.

There were many scandals in terms of Mizrahi children being kidnapped and given way to the Ashkenazi families and some incidents in which medical experiments were done on Mizrahi children and they died from these experiments.

So, the Mizrahi have always been the underclass in Israel. But now since they are about 50% of Israeli society, they are climbing up the hierarchy very slowly.

But now, Israel needs a new underclass of people to discriminate against.

So, they had Israeli-Palestinians who were minority, and now they have the Ethiopians, who are considered more inferior than the Mizrahi.

The U.S.-China political and economic war continues Trump in economic stalemate

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The President of the USA is not in a good situation! He has practically lost the economic and trade battle with China. In recent days, many American analysts, economists, and politicians have warned of a continuing US-China economic war. They are right in believing that this battle will end at the expense of Washington. Here is some analysis and news about the US-China economic battle:

Trump's trade war with China will be worth the fight

As CNN reported, For years, and through multiple presidential administrations — Clinton, Bush and Obama — the United States has naively looked the other way while China cheated its way to an unfair advantage in the international trade market. It took a long time to get to this point, and it's not going to turn around overnight. But with President Donald Trump's long-term approach to trade policy, the United States is in a good position to make up for the misguided policies of the past, which resulted in millions of lost jobs and thousands of shuttered factories.

A bad day or a bad week on Wall Street is not an indication that Trump's policy is failing. Market volatility is neither a surprise nor a reason to head for the lifeboats. The markets are going to react and fluctuate as the United States and China go back and forth in trade negotiations.

As the US Treasury Department reported in May, there has been, and is, an "exceptionally large and widening" bilateral trade imbalance between China and the United States.

It's not as though China hasn't had a chance to change its ways. It simply chose not to by, among other things, willfully ignoring its G20 commitment to fair trade, dumping products below cost into US markets and stealing intellectual property.

China has also recently been labeled a currency manipulator by the Treasury Department. The Chinese government, not the free market, sets its currency's value against the dollar. When China allows its currency to fall in an attempt to boost its own exporters, American companies and workers pay the price. Only by applying pressure will China be motivated to change its destructive trade habits. The United States will apply an additional tariff of 10% on approximately \$300 billion of Chinese goods — some effective September 1 and some effective December 15. This puts the squeeze right where it needs to be — on China. The delay in tariffs on some Chinese goods from September to December, which the president announced Tuesday, is strategic and not a retreat on tariffs. It was done to avoid impacting the holiday season because tariffs will not apply to goods that have been ordered. Thus, American retailers and consumers will likely not get stuck with the extra cost for those goods tariffed in December.

Something had to be done to end China's unfair practices, and rather than capitulate to the predictions of recession and calamity, we need to stay the course and continue to add tariffs to Chinese goods. We as a nation simply cannot allow China to continue to have its way with our economy.

Of course, trade wars don't come without risk or impact, and American farmers



are bearing the brunt of the fallout. In what was clearly a retaliatory move, China and other countries placed stifling tariffs on American agricultural products. Trump stepped in to assist with \$14.5 billion in subsidies that go directly to farmers to make up for the loss of income, the US Department of Agriculture announced in May.

The good news is that the USDA predicts a 10% increase in farm profit in 2019 to \$69.4 billion after a 16% dip in 2018, according to the USDA Economic Research Service.

It's important to view the current trade war within the context of the Trump administration's broader trade policy.

For example, if we focus only on farming, the president negotiated the US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement which, if Congress does its job, will provide farmers a fairer market to export their goods.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Trump's support among farmers remains strong, despite the trade war's impact on their bottom line. According to a recent survey by the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture, 78% of farmers said they believe the trade war will ultimately benefit US agriculture.

China appears ready for a long fight, but there are indications it is already feeling the strain. Tech companies — at least 50 to date — are in the process of moving significant portions of their manufacturing operations out of China and back to other countries in an effort to get out from under US tariffs.

It seems that our choice is clear: We stay in this for the long haul to ensure that American businesses can compete on a fair playing field, or we panic and continue to allow China to play with a corked bat. The former is sound trade policy. The latter is bad for US business, prosperity and security.

Also CNN reported that Donald Trump is on a "fool's errand" with his ongoing trade war with China. Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg said Sunday.

CNN's Jake Tapper asked the South Bend, Indiana, mayor on "State of the Union" in an exclusive interview why he thinks China would strike a trade deal with him if, as president, he were to ease Trump's pressure and end the President's tariffs imposed on Chinese goods. The US, Buttigieg said, has "a lot of different forms of leverage in the relationship."

"But it's also a fool's errand to think you will be able to get China to change the fundamentals of their economic model by poking them in the eye with some tariffs," he said.

Buttigieg's comments come as fears of a recession in the US grow, with critics of the President's economic policies pointing to Trump's trade war with China as a contributing factor in the potential economic slowdown. Last week, the Trump administration -- in its latest turnaround on trade -- said it would delay new tariffs on Chinese-made consumer goods including cell phones, toys and video game consoles until December 15. Last year, Trump imposed tariffs on about \$250 billion in Chinese-made goods, targeting industrial materials and components. Earlier this month, he said he would add a 10% tariff on an additional \$300 billion of Chinese-made products on September 1, which would effectively put a tax on all Chinese goods coming into the United States.

Trump tweeted Sunday afternoon about negotiating trade deals with China, writing the country is "Poised for big growth after trade deals are completed."

"Import prices down, China eating Tariffs. Helping targeted Farmers from big Tariff money coming in," Trump wrote. Buttigieg, in his interview Sunday, expressed concern for American farmers, who he said were getting "killed" by Trump's trade war. Farmers have been among some of the hardest hit by China's retaliatory tariffs, which were put on a range of commodities including soybeans, corn and wheat.

"I was just in Iowa, in rural parts of the state, talking with a lot of farmers who -- many of whom are Republicans or supported this President and are now asking the question, 'How much longer are we supposed to take one for the team?' The President has said repeatedly that he's on the cusp of getting a deal. The President has failed to deliver a deal and I expect he will continue to do so," Buttigieg said.

U.S. can't influence Beijing's decision on HK

Political and public opinion elites in the US must understand that although they have the ability to instigate Hong Kong's radical protesters and make it harder for Hong Kong to restore order, they absolutely cannot influence Beijing's decisions on Hong Kong's situation.

Pushed by media, high-ranking US

officials recently made ambiguous statements on linking China-US trade negotiations with Hong Kong situation. But such statements, which try to interfere in Beijing's moves, are not based on US national power or political resolve. They're more like a show that the US politics is not short of.

Washington is actually reluctant to link China-US trade negotiations with other thorny problems. China-US trade talks have already been difficult for both sides. Washington has used all leverages, and it is highly possible to use other issues as bargaining chips to strengthen its status in negotiations. It will not use trade negotiations as a bargaining chip to push forward the US demands in other areas. The trade negotiations have already been difficult for Washington. It cannot afford any other burden.

Some Americans lack a clear strategic estimation of their country. They still believe the US is capable of anything, and can even issue orders to a major power like China. But the US is forced to strategically contract. The US is still aggressive in public opinion and values infiltration, but its finance cannot support the superpower to spend lavishly on politics.

The US failed to dictate China's choices on important issues in the past, and it is even more impossible to do so today. To refuse an unfair trade agreement, China has borne the unprecedentedly large tariff sticks and the US suppression on Huawei and other Chinese companies. After all of these, none of the US threats to impose sanctions on China will have any deterrent effect.

Because of the trade war, the US has lost the ability to impose additional pressure on China. China does not need to consider the US attitude when making decisions. What else can Washington do even if it is dissatisfied? Beijing hopes for a soft landing of the Hong Kong problem and Hong Kong's internal forces can restore order with the central government's support. But if Hong Kong cannot restore order by itself, Beijing's strong intervention will be the only choice. It is stipulated in the Basic Law.

Beijing will not use the choice rashly, but it will not avoid using it when necessary. This is the country being responsible for Hongkongers. Chinese people have found that US politics is not always based on truth. The US election needs tricks, and it is not a process in which candidates honestly communicate with people. The US stock markets are also filled with all kinds of exaggerated information. The investors always have to be highly vigilant. Double standards demonstrate US political hypocrisy. The US sophistry has fooled many medium and small countries. Thanks to China's reform and opening-up and its increasing political stability, we are increasingly capable of distinguishing the US' ill intentions.

The US should stop its meaningless threat of linking the China-US trade talks with the Hong Kong problem. Beijing did not expect to quickly reach a trade deal with Washington. More Chinese people are prepared that China and the US may not reach a deal for a long time. If Washington wants to link trade talks with Hong Kong under such circumstances, it so flatters itself.

Rising corruption among the Zionist regime's top officials

1 → Case 4000 is the most serious case against Netanyahu. According to this case, Netanyahu is suspected with having provided the communication conglomerate Bezeq with illegally favorable business deals and financial aids, so that Walla news agency, which is affiliated with Bezeq, will give him more favorable reporting.

Regarding Netanyahu's failure in forming a new cabinet, it is expected that he will have a hard time winning the next elections which will be held in mid-September.

Following the criminal investigations, Netanyahu is now trying to plead for immunity from prosecution especially in his corruption charges; but it seems that the residents of the occupied lands have become aware of his attempts because recently thousands of inhabitants took to the streets to condemn Netanyahu for seeking legal immunity to avoid facing charges.

It must be noted that Ehud Olmert, former Prime Minister of the Zionist regime was also convicted with financial corruption. He was the only Zionist Prime Minister who was found guilty over financial corruption charges and was incarcerated from February 2016 to July 2017. Apparently, the Israeli officials are having a tight competition in getting into financial and moral corruption.

Recently, another Zionist official was involved in a big scandal. Pictures showed Ehud Barak, former Prime Minister and Minister of Defense with covered face going to the house of a former American billionaire who was charged with sex trafficking.

It seems that the residents of occupied lands are starting to seriously doubt the competency of the officials and the policies they adopt. It seems that the regimes is having a very unstable status right now, many officials are involved in widespread financial and moral corruptions, the dissatisfaction is growing among residents, the Palestinian resistant groups are gaining more power and many Israeli inhabitants are now exposed to the missiles of the Palestinian resistant groups.

It is also noteworthy that Israeli diplomats and ambassadors all around the world have now gone on a strike in protest to the financial policies of the government. According to several news agencies, this is the first time in the history of Tel Aviv that ambassadors go on such a serious strike and this can mean that the front line of the Zionist regime is starting to collapse.

Finally, it seems that the widespread financial corruption in the regime and the unstable internal situation can prepare the ground for Palestinian resistant groups to gain more military power against the Zionist enemy and expand their resisting and defensive operations in order to show their superiority over the falling Zionist regime.

Ethiopian Commentator: Ethiopian community in Israel never forgets racial discriminations

TEHRAN (FNA) — Jemal Hassen, political commentator, says the uprising of the Ethiopian community in Israel is to protest the systematic racial discrimination against not only the blacks, but also other ethnic minorities.



In an exclusive interview with FNA, Jemal Hassen shed light on the Ethiopian community's revolt in Israel after the brutal killing of a young member of the community by the regime's forces.

He said, "The killing of a black teenager from the Ethiopian community in Israel has caused a major concern among the members of the community."

Ethiopian commentator slammed regime's silence as its forces mount crackdown on the blacks, saying "People have not heard any reactions from the regime; it has refused to make any official comments on the national TV or radio channels."

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ How is the ambience of Israel after killing of the black teenager by the regime's forces?

A: The killing of a black teenager from the Ethiopian community in Israel has caused a major concern among the members of the community. People have not heard any reactions from the regime; it has refused to make any official comments in the national TV or radio channels; from the regime's side, nothing has changed, and the forces continue to put more pressure on the blacks. This is while the white Israelis are so racist that they even do not accept blood donations of members of the Ethiopian community. Ethiopian community has made several complaints against Israeli forces and the racial discrimination they practice. The community will always remember such discriminations.

■ How does the regime address racism in Israel?

A: The discrimination is not only against the blacks; the Mizrahi and Arab Jews and Muslims are discriminated against, too. Netanyahu is a far-right figure, and he leads the regime in the same way; not surprisingly, every move by the regime is on a racism-basis.

■ Why are more and more Ethiopian migrants in spite the systematic anti-black sentiment in Israel?

A: The Jewish Ethiopians live in the northern parts of Ethiopia. They have made themselves isolated, and separated from the rest of the nation. They live in concentration camps out of the city. They have the belief that they are more Jewish than Ethiopians. Their ultimate goal is to immigrate to Israel; to the so-called holy land. They have the dream that they will live a peaceful life; but, they have no idea they will be treated like slaves there.

■ Is there any room to remain hopeful that the Ethiopian community in Israel will be treated any better in the future?

A: There will be no positive changes in the near future, as the Israeli regime only follows its own political agenda. The regime will continue to take more Jewish Ethiopians into Israel and enslave them. The regime has no plans to stop the discrimination against the black Jews in Israel. There will be no initiations to remove this problem in Israel.

Steven Sahiounie: U.S. keeping Syrian war going

TEHRAN (FNA) — Steven Sahiounie, journalist and political commentator, says Washington desires that the war on Syria continues as an excuse to station its troops in Eastern Syria.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Sahiounie made comments on US Syria policies, saying, "If the Syrian government takes control of Eastern Syria, they will announce victory and that will be a big loss to the American administration and its allies.... The Americans being in the East of Syria are being used as a political card to use in negotiation with [Syria's allies] Russia and Iran."

Steven Sahiounie is an independent Syrian-American political analyst and writer based in Lebanon. He has been covering the Middle East cruises since 2011 and has published several articles in numerous media outlets.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ Obama said no boots on the ground; Trump said it would withdraw the US forces; they both sounded like they want to put an end to the war on Syria. Why are American troops still in Syria?

A: The American administration is doing its best to keep the Syrian war going for many reasons. Firstly, to pressure the Syrian government and to keep in control Eastern Syria and the oil there, supporting the Kurds against the Syrians, and the Turks. Secondly, to pressure Russia; because if the Syrian government takes control of Eastern Syria, they will announce victory and that will be a big loss to the American administration and its allies. The Americans want to be in control of Eastern Syria, so they can stop Syria from recovery from the war, and so Syria and their allies, Iran and

Russia, do not announce victory. The Americans being in the East of Syria are being used as a political card to use in negotiation with Russia and Iran.

■ Trump, during his presidential campaigns, said Hillary Clinton helped Daesh. He accused Obama of being complicit in the war on Syria. But now, he himself calls on Russia and Syria to stop their attacks in the terrorists-held areas, including Idlib. Isn't Trump complicit in the war on Syria, too?

A: The previous American administration, and the current administration have played a big role in the war in Syria, but the American foreign policy is not made in Washington DC, but in Israeli occupation, and by the prime minister of the Israeli occupation. Trump does not want the Syrian Army and the Russians to take over Idlib. They want to keep the situation in Syria in chaos and keep the Syrian Army and the Russians busy in the war against the terrorists in the North-West of Syria. The foreign policy of Trump and Obama is not so different because, as I said they do not make the decision of the American foreign policy. We know that Trump is not a politician but a businessman so he does not have experience in foreign policy and that is why he listens to John Bolton and Mike Pompeo, who act as if they are employees for the Israeli occupation.

■ Saudi Arabia and Qatar paid and nurtured Daesh in Syria. They called Bashar al-Assad illegitimate. However, they recently invited the Syrian government to the Arab League and Arab Union summits. Why is the manner of Saudi Arabia and its allies toward Syria so complicated?

A: The Persian Gulf monarchs take their orders from the United States, when they are ordered to ne-



gotiate with the Syrian government, they have to go and sit with them. In the beginning of the war they were asked and ordered to fund, support and train the terrorists in Syria, and in the training camps in South Turkey and North Jordan, but to keep a door open to negotiation with the Syrians, Russians and Iranians. That is the reason why the monarchies of the [Persian] gulf need to invite Syria back to the Arab League, and to open their embassies in Damascus and as we can see slowly the media is not covering the Syrian war how they covered it in the beginning of the war and also we have seen many sources that report on negotiation between several Persian Gulf countries and Syria, either the Saudis and Damascus, or Oman and Damascus.

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Plans detailed for first U.S. mission to land on moon since Apollo

The first American spacecraft expected to land on the moon in nearly 50 years will be an unmanned robotic lander built by closely held Astrobotic Technology Inc and launched in two years by United Launch Alliance's Vulcan rocket, the companies told Reuters on Monday.

Astrobotic was one of nine companies chosen in November to compete for \$2.6 billion to develop small space vehicles and other technology for 20 missions to explore the lunar surface over the next decade.

Pittsburgh-based Astrobotic picked Vulcan, being developed by a joint venture of Boeing Co and Lockheed Martin Corp, to launch its Peregrine lander from Florida's Cape Canaveral in summer 2021. That launch will be Vulcan's first, and a major test for a rocket that will become the backbone of ULA's defense against rival boosters from billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX and other companies.

Barring schedule slips, Astrobotic said Peregrine would be the first American spacecraft to land on the moon since Apollo astronauts touched down in 1972.

The mission will ferry technology and experiments to the moon under a NASA program that will lay the groundwork for astronaut trips by 2024 under the optimistic schedule laid out by the Trump administration.

"Our first flight on Vulcan is also the first



big step in going back to the moon," United Launch Alliance Chief Executive Tory Bruno told Reuters ahead of the announcement.

Astrobotic said in May that NASA awarded it \$79.5 million for the first mission, which will carry up to 28 payloads from eight different countries, including the United States and Mexico.

While the dollar value of the launch contract was not disclosed, it marks a high-profile victory for ULA's flagship heavy-lift rocket, which Astrobotic said it chose over

a rival bid from SpaceX.

While SpaceX has already slashed the cost of launches with its reusable rocket technology, Amazon.com Inc founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, whose BE-4 engines power the Vulcan, is also working on a heavy-lift booster.

NASA is pushing to outsource the design, development and operations for some space activities to private companies under a strategy championed by Trump-appointed administrator Jim Bridenstine.

He wants NASA to be one customer of many in the low-Earth and lunar marketplaces to pave the way for deeper space exploration.

For ULA, the launch serves as the first of two certification flights for the U.S. Air Force. Vulcan will replace ULA's legacy Delta and Atlas rocket families, synonymous with space missions for the U.S. military for decades.

ULA and Astrobotic acknowledge production problems or other factors could delay the launch schedule.

Other countries are also focused on the moon. A Chinese space probe successfully touched down on the far side of the moon in January, though the unmanned robotic lander Beresheet crashed on its final descent in April. India's Chandrayaan-2 rover, launched in July, was on its way to the moon's south pole, unexplored by any other nation.

"Everything that humans will do on the moon's surface will be enhanced by robotic surface assets," Astrobotic Chief Executive John Thornton told Reuters ahead of the announcement planned for Monday.

The Astrobotic deal marked the second time in a week that ULA beat SpaceX on a high-profile contract. On Wednesday, Sierra Nevada Corp picked Vulcan to launch its Dream Chaser space plane on cargo missions to the International Space Station, which will be the second Vulcan launch.

(Source: Reuters)

Like Mercury, a nearby 'lava world' is probably lacking an atmosphere

Last year, a nearby rocky world was spotted by NASA's planet-hunting telescope TESS. Now, astronomers have been able to observe the planet using the Spitzer Space Telescope, taking a closer look at this intriguing world.

The planet, called LHS 3884b, is 49 light-years away in the Indus constellation, orbiting a cool M-dwarf star that's only about one-fifth the size of our sun. At the time of its initial discovery, astronomers thought it was probably a "lava world" given how close some of the planet's rocky surface is to its star. The planet has a radius 1.3 times that of Earth.

The Spitzer Space Telescope is in NASA's Great Observatories family. Spitzer detects infrared light, Hubble captures visible and UV light, Compton was designed for gamma rays, and Chandra sees X-rays.

Spitzer detected light from the planet's surface as it zipped around its star in a whopping 11-hour orbit. Because the planet has such a short orbit, one side faces the star and is blasted with heat that causes the surface of that side to reach 1,410 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat causes the planet to radiate infrared light, making it perfect for observation by Spitzer.

The side facing away from the star is significantly colder, and little heat is transferred between the two sides of the planet. But if an atmosphere were present, it would allow for the force of wind to carry hot air to the other side of the planet.

Instead, the planet is more like our moon or Mercury, with little or



no atmosphere, according to a study published Monday in the journal Nature.

"We've got lots of theories about how planetary atmospheres fare around M dwarfs, but we haven't been able to study them empirically," said Laura Kreidberg, lead study author and a researcher at the Harvard and Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. "Now, with LHS 3844b, we have a terrestrial planet outside our solar system where for the first time we can determine observationally that an atmosphere is not present."

Although the M-dwarf star that the planet is orbiting is cool in temperature compared with other stars, it unleashes flares of ultraviolet light that can destroy a planetary atmosphere. And in this case, the planet is so close to the star that the stellar wind coming off it would probably do away with the atmosphere.

As expected, Spitzer's data shows that the planet's dark surface is probably covered in volcanic basalt or magma, or cooled volcanic material, likely from ancient volcano activity. The researchers believe that the planet is "a bare rock, unless a thin atmosphere is continually replenished over time."

(Source: CNN)

Lab-based dark energy experiment narrows search options for elusive force

An experiment to test a popular theory of dark energy has found no evidence of new forces, placing strong constraints on related theories.

Dark energy is the name given to an unknown force that is causing the universe to expand at an accelerating rate.

Some physicists propose dark energy is a 'fifth' force that acts on matter, beyond the four already known -- gravitational, electromagnetic, and the strong and weak nuclear forces. However, researchers think this fifth force may be 'screened' or 'hidden' for large objects like planets or weights on Earth, making it difficult to detect.

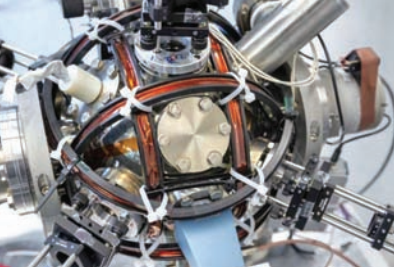
Now, researchers at Imperial College London and the University of Nottingham have tested the possibility that this fifth force is acting on single atoms, and found no evidence for it in their most recent experiment.

This could rule out popular theories of dark energy that modify the theory of gravity, and leaves fewer places to search for the elusive fifth force.

The experiment, performed at Imperial College London and analyzed by theorists at the University of Nottingham, is reported today in Physical Review Letters.

Professor Ed Copeland, from the Centre for Astronomy & Particle Physics at the University of Nottingham, said: "This experiment, connecting atomic physics and cosmology, has allowed us to rule out a wide class of models that have been proposed to explain the nature of dark energy, and will enable us to constrain many more dark energy models."

The experiment tested theories of dark energy that propose the fifth force is comparatively weaker when there is



more matter around -- the opposite of how gravity behaves.

This would mean it is strong in a vacuum like space, but is weak when there is lots of matter around. Therefore, experiments using two large weights would mean the force becomes too weak to measure.

The researchers instead tested a larger weight with an incredibly small weight -- a single atom -- where the force should have been observed if it exists.

The team used an atom interferometer to test whether there were any extra forces that could be the fifth force acting on an atom. A marble-sized sphere of metal was placed in a vacuum chamber and atoms were allowed to free-fall inside the chamber.

The theory is, if there is a fifth force acting between the sphere and atom, the atom's path will deviate slightly as it passes by the sphere, causing a change in the path of the falling atom. However, no such force was found.

Professor Ed Hinds, from the Department of Physics at Imperial, said: "It is very exciting to be able to discover something about the evolution of the universe using a table-top experiment in a London basement."

(Source: Science Daily)

Best of both worlds: Asteroids and massive mergers

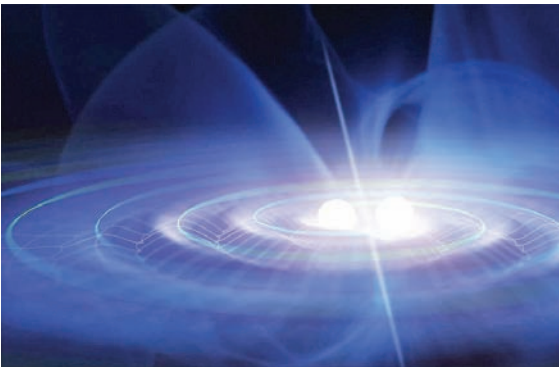
The race is on. Since the construction of technology able to detect the ripples in space and time triggered by collisions from massive objects in the universe, astronomers around the world have been searching for the bursts of light that could accompany such collisions, which are thought to be the sources of rare heavy elements.

The University of Arizona's Steward Observatory has partnered with the Catalina Sky Survey, which searches for near-Earth asteroids from atop Mount Lemmon, in an effort dubbed Searches after Gravitational Waves Using ARizona Observatories, or SAGUARO, to find optical counterparts to massive mergers.

"Catalina Sky Survey has all of this infrastructure for their asteroid survey. So we have deployed additional software to take gravitational wave alerts from LIGO (the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) and the Virgo interferometer then notify the survey to search an area of sky most likely to contain the optical counterpart," said Michael Lundquist, postdoctoral research associate and lead author on the study published today in the Astrophysical Journal Letters.

"Essentially, instead of searching the next section of sky that we would normally, we go off and observe some other area that has a higher probability of containing an optical counterpart of a gravitational wave event," said Eric Christensen, Catalina Sky Survey director and Lunar and Planetary Laboratory senior staff scientist. "The main idea is we can run this system while still maintaining the asteroid search."

The ongoing campaign began in April, and in that month alone, the team was notified of three massive collisions. Because it is difficult to tell the precise location from which the gravitational wave originated, locating optical counterparts can be difficult.



According to Lundquist, two strategies are being employed. In the first, teams with small telescopes target galaxies that are at the right approximate distance, according to the gravitational wave signal. Catalina Sky Survey, on the other hand, utilizes a 60-inch telescope with a wide field of view to scan large swaths of sky in 30 minutes.

Three alerts, on April 9, 25 and 26, triggered the team's software to search nearly 20,000 objects. Machine learning software then trimmed down the total number of potential optical counterparts to five.

The first gravitational wave event was a merger of two black holes, Lundquist said.

"There are some people who think you can get an optical counterpart to those, but it's definitely inconclusive," he said.

The second event was a merger of two neutron stars, the incredibly dense core of a collapsed giant star. The third is thought to be a merger between a neutron star and a black hole, Lundquist said.

While no teams confirmed optical counterparts, the

UA team did find several supernovae. They also used the Large Binocular Telescope Observatory to spectroscopically classify one promising target from another group. It was determined to be a supernova and not associated with the gravitational wave event.

"We also found a near-Earth object in the search field on April 25," Christensen said. "That proves right there we can do both things at the same time."

They were able to do this because Catalina Sky Survey has observations of the same swaths of sky going back many years. Many other groups don't have easy access to past photos for comparison, offering the UA team a leg up.

"We have really nice references," Lundquist said. "We subtract the new image from the old image and use that difference to look for anything new in the sky."

"The process Michael described," Christensen said, "starting with a large number of candidate detections and filtering down to whatever the true detections are, is very familiar. We do that with near-Earth objects, as well."

The team is planning on deploying a second telescope in the hunt for optical counterparts: Catalina Sky Survey's 0.7-meter Schmidt telescope. While the telescope is smaller than the 60-inch telescope, it has an even wider field of view, which allows astronomers to quickly search an even larger chunk of sky. They've also improved their machine learning software to filter out stars that regularly change in brightness.

"Catalina Sky Survey takes hundreds of thousands of images of the sky every year, from multiple telescopes. Our survey telescopes image the entire visible nighttime sky several times per month, then we are looking for one kind of narrow slice of the pie," Christensen said. "So, we've been willing to share the data with whoever wants to use it."

(Source: Science Daily)

Finding a cosmic fog within shattered intergalactic pancakes

To understand the most ordinary matter in the universe -- and the extraordinary things that happen to it -- a Yale-led team of astronomers took a deep dive into the cosmic fog.

They learned intriguing new details about the dynamics of baryons, the collection of subatomic particles (including protons and neutrons) that accounts for much of the visible matter in the universe. Most baryons reside in the intergalactic medium (IGM), which is the space in-between galaxies where matter is neither bound to nor tugged upon by surrounding systems.

In a new study, Yale postdoctoral associate Nir Mandelker and professor Frank C. van den Bosch report on the most detailed simulation ever of a large patch of the IGM. For the first time, they were able to see how cold, dense gas clouds in the IGM organize themselves and react within much larger "sheets" or "pancakes" of matter in the vastness of space.

The findings appear in the Astrophysical Journal Letters.

Researchers have tried for years to piece together the structures and properties of the IGM -- in part to test the standard model of Big Bang cosmology, which predicts that 80%-90% of baryons are in the IGM, but also to investigate the IGM's crucial role as the universe's fuel source.

"The reason galaxies are able to form stars continuously is because fresh gas flows into galaxies from the IGM," said Mandelker, lead author of the study. "It is clear that galaxies would run out of gas in very short order if they didn't accrete fresh gas from the IGM."

Yet detecting the IGM's gas has been supremely difficult. Unlike galaxies, which shine brightly in starlight, gas in the IGM is almost never luminous enough to detect directly. Instead, it has to be studied indirectly, through the absorption of background light. Such absorption studies allow researchers to learn about the density and chemical composition of gas clouds; in particular, they're able to find out if star formation in nearby galaxies has polluted the gas with metals (elements heavier than helium).

With its new simulation, the Yale team learned quite a lot -- including new properties of those aforementioned sheets of baryons.

"These are flattened distributions of matter, known as 'pancakes,' that extend across many millions of light years across," said van den Bosch. "We found that rather than being smoothly distributed, the gas in these pancakes shatters into what resembles a 'cosmic fog' made up of tiny, discrete clouds of relatively cold and dense gas."

Such dense clouds of gas had been thought to form only in areas of space close to galaxies, where the gas is naturally denser. But the new simulation shows that they also can condense out of the low-density IGM. The researchers said the phenomenon occurs naturally, as the result of an instability triggered by the efficient cooling of the gas.

Another aspect of this cosmic fog, based on the Yale simulation, is that it is pristine: it is too far away from any galaxy to be polluted with metals. According to Mandelker, this is significant because it explains recent, puzzling observations of dense, metal-free clouds at large distances from galaxies. Astronomers could not explain this phenomenon, but the new simulation suggests their presence may simply be the outcome of a natural process.

"Our work highlights the importance of properly resolving the properties of gas in the IGM, which is often neglected in favor of better resolving the central galaxies," Mandelker said. "It has been very difficult to understand how the gas in the IGM could possibly become so dense and optically thick, especially when previous generations of cosmological simulations did not reveal any such dense gas in the IGM."

Mandelker is a Tschira Postdoctoral Fellow in a collaborative program in astrophysics operated by Yale and the Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies (HITS). The principal investigators of the program are van den Bosch and Volker Springel of HITS, who is a co-author of the new study. Freeke van de Voort of the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics also is a co-author of the study.

The research was supported by the Klaus Tschira Foundation through the HITS Yale Program in Astrophysics and a grant from NASA.

(Source: Science Daily)

Starwatch: The Moon puts on a show in the hours before dawn

This week, the waning moon cuts a swath through the body of Taurus in the pre-dawn hours.

The show begins on 23 August with the moon at last quarter, when the western hemisphere of our natural satellite is illuminated. On this night, the moon will be between the bull's horns, approaching the head of Taurus.



The chart shows the view a night later at 0300 BST. On this night, the moon will be a slight waning crescent and right next to the stars of the V-shaped Hyades star cluster.

The red star Aldebaran is not part of the star cluster but appears close to it in the sky. In reality, Aldebaran is more than twice as close to us as the Hyades, which lies about 150 light years away.

Also at this time of year, a good eastern horizon will show the mighty constellation of Orion, the hunter, rising. This is your warning that summer is fast departing.

(Source: The Guardian)

Is the cruise industry responsible for overtourism?

You wake up and eat breakfast on your private balcony, admiring majestic views of the ocean.

You dock in port after port, crisscrossing the Mediterranean -- from the canals of Venice to the red roofs of Dubrovnik and back. Or you travel down the German Rhine or beach-hop in the Caribbean.

At each spot, you spend anywhere from a few hours to a day. Sometimes you don't even get off the boat. When you do, you're part of crowds of tourists, battling to see the views, scrambling to admire the sites.



The cruise ship industry is booming. Ships are getting bigger, better, more exciting and more experience-driven.

At the same time, ports are getting busier and more polluted, and residents are getting angrier.

In 2019, 30 million passengers are expected to cruise, up from 17.8 million a decade earlier. So what impact are they having on destinations, and what can be done about it?

Cruising's not a new phenomenon, but over the past decade it's taken a new lease on life.

"The whole tourism market is growing extremely rapidly," says Martin Griffiths of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), an association of cruise companies. "But we're still a very small part of tourism as a whole."

Griffiths is keen to place the cruise ship boom in context, saying that in increasingly crowded cities like Venice, Dubrovnik or Barcelona, ships only account for 5% of visitors. "So even if we were to take cruising away from those destinations, it really wouldn't address a lot of the overtourism problems that we see," he tells CNN Travel.

Certainly it's true that cruise ships are just one part of a multifaceted issue. Recent years have seen a general rise in tourism, much of it concentrated in the same places. According to the World Tourism and Travel Council, of the 1.4 billion international tourist trips in 2018, half a billion of those were to the 300 most popular cities.

Social media's probably playing a role too. Even CLIA cites "Instagrammable cruise travel" as a 2019 travel trend in its latest State of the Industry report. Plus, alongside more cruisers, there's more availability of budget flights.

Still, some parties concerned about the tourism crush point the finger directly at cruise ships because they say they encourage day trips where visitors are less likely to inject money into the destination's economy if they only stay a few hours.

Meanwhile, the scheduled arrival times of cruise ships mean thousands of visitors surge on a city all at once, rather than the flow of travelers being more spread out across the day.

There have also been concerns raised about pollution. A recent report from sustainable travel group Transport & Environment suggested that over the course of 2017, Carnival Corporation, a cruise operator that encompasses 10 cruise line brands including Cunard, Holland America and P&O, emitted nearly 10 times more sulphur oxide around European coastlines than all 260 million European cars.

(Source: CNN)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Baroque Churches of Philippines

The Baroque Churches of the Philippines is a serial inscription consisting of four Roman Catholic churches constructed between the 16th and the 18th centuries in the Spanish period of the Philippines. They are located in separate areas of the Philippine archipelago, two at the northern island of Luzon, one at the heart of Intramuros, Manila, and the other in the central Visayas island of Iloilo.



Registered as a UNESCO World Heritage, this group of churches established a style of building and design that was adapted to the physical conditions in the Philippines and had an important influence on later church architecture in the region.

Named San Agustin Church, Santa Maria Church, Paoay Church, and Miagao Church, the four edifices are outstanding examples of the Philippine interpretation of the Baroque style, and represent the fusion of European church design and construction with local materials and decorative motifs to form a new church-building tradition.

The common and specific attributes of the churches are their squat, monumental and massive appearance, which illustrates a fortress/protective-like character in response to pirates, marauders to the geologic conditions of a country that is prone to seismic activities.

The churches are made either of stone (tuff or coralline limestone), or brick, and consolidated with lime. Baroque churches reflect excellent site planning principles following the Ley de las Indias (Laws of the Indies) enacted by Philip II in 1563 for all newly-discovered settlements within Spanish colonial territories.

(Source: UNESCO)

Medical travelers hold significant share of arrivals in Iran: tourism chief

TOURISM DESK TEHRAN — Iran's tourism chief has said that medical [and health] travelers constitute a significant share of arrivals in the country.

"[Nearly] 7.8 million foreign nationals visited Iran over the past [Iranian calendar] year [ended March 20] that a significant number of whom were medical tourists," Mehr quoted Ali-Asghar Mounesan as saying on Monday.

Mounesan made the remarks on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of a radiotherapy and chemotherapy center in Arak, west-central Iran.

"During the first three months of this year, the number of tourists arriving in the country increased by 40 percent, again [significant] part of whom was health tourism," he added.

"Medical tourism is one of the most important fields of Iran's travel sector and an [average] spending of \$2,400 per tourist indicates its importance."

Mounesan who doubles as vice president added that such figures demonstrate there is a good opportunity in the country in terms of medical and health



tourism, and Arak should take such an advantage too.

Iran hosted a record high of nearly 600,000 medical travelers during the

first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), nearly equal to the figure for the whole past year, according to an Iranian association for

the health tourism promotion.

People from the Persian Gulf littoral states, Iraq and Syria as well as Iranian expatriates residing in Canada and Germany constituted the majority of medical travelers to the Islamic Republic, who received plastic, cosmetic, open-heart and orthopedic surgeries amongst other treatments, Mohammad Panahi, a deputy for the association, said in July.

Medical tourism fetched Iran some \$1.2 billion last year, Panahi said, adding that the figure has increased by 20-30 percent in the first four months of this year.

Many domestic experts say that medical tourism in Iran produces win-win outcomes as the country yields considerable benefits to international health-care seekers, offering affordable yet quality treatment services.

Iranian hospitals admitted nearly 70,000 foreign patients over the last year, according to the medical tourism department at the Ministry of Health.

The Islamic Republic has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in [calendar year] 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Explore Indian architectural marvels at Tehran's Golestan Palace

HERITAGE DESK TEHRAN — A loan exhibit featuring architectural marvels of India is underway at the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran, which has long been a major destination for foreign travelers.

A select of 24 works by Indian painter Kashinath Das are being exhibited under the title "Architectural Wonders of India: Watercolor Representation" in Shamsol-Emareh, a prominent building on the east side of the Golestan Palace complex, Mehr reported on Sunday.

Running from August 19 to September 18, the event is organized under the auspices of Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (Indian Cultural Centre), and Indian Embassy to mark 70th year of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Alongside the exhibit, the World Heritage site showcasing a selection of 40 historical photographs featuring various themes from India including buildings, [cultural] sites, tombs, minarets, social anthropology, and cities of Kolkata, Deccan, Mumbai. It also showcases a selection of wooden furniture donated from India during Qajar era (1789–1925).

Visitors have the opportunity to tour a UNESCO site, which embodies a successful integration of earlier Persian crafts and architecture with Western influences.

Located in the heart and historic core of Tehran, the palace complex is one of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty in the historic



A view of Taj Mahal, India

walled city. Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family.

It was not only used as the governing base of the Qajari Kings but also functioned as a recreational and residential compound and a center of artistic production in the 19th century. Through the latter activity, it became the source and center of Qajari arts and architecture.

At present, Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

Golestan Palace features some 82,000 historical objects -- such as royal utensils, vessels and jewelry pieces, carpets and rugs -- inside its many museums that add up to its own charm, director of the historical site says.

How will we travel the world in 2050?



Coupling low-carbon train travel with flight rationing would limit emissions in the short term, but people are accustomed to travelling half the world in a matter of hours, often at relatively low cost. The demand won't go away, so what could replace carbon-intensive air travel?

Electric aeroplanes

Most electric plane designs are grounded on the drawing board, but there are some flight-ready aircraft. The world's first all-electric commercial airliner was unveiled in Paris in June 2019. The craft is called Alice and it carries nine passengers for up to 650 miles (1,040km) at 10,000ft (3,000 meters) at 276mph (440km/h) on a single charged battery. It's expected to enter service in 2022.

The fossil fuel costs of small aircraft are about US\$400 per 100 miles. For Alice, the costs are projected to be as little as US\$8 for the same distance, and if the electricity is from renewable energy -- perhaps generated by solar panels at the airport -- then the plane could be zero-carbon.

How much energy each battery can store is increasing rapidly. But there are also strategies which can make electric planes more efficient. Capacitors are lightweight batteries that can hold a huge

charge but only for short periods. They could be used for takeoff -- the largest energy requirement of a flight -- then more traditional batteries could power the majority of the flight.

Innovation could deliver mass electric flight in the next few decades, but an alternative to fossil fuelled flight exists right now.

Bring back the zeppelin?

For as long as humans have taken to the skies we've had a low carbon alternative to burning vast amounts of fossil fuels to keep us up there -- balloons. The Hindenburg disaster may have condemned the industry to relative obscurity for almost a century, but it has never really gone away.

The balloons of most modern airships are filled with helium rather than the explosive hydrogen used in the Hindenburg. Concentrated helium is lighter than air and when divided into gas sacks, the vessel can stay aloft if any are breached while propellers powered by flexible solar panels can help navigation.

Extracting enough helium fuel will be energy-intensive and there's a looming global shortage. Luckily, advances made since the Hindenburg now allow airships to fly on cylinders packed with hydrogen

jet fuel, which is cheaper, lighter, and relatively abundant.

Using hydrogen for fuel has become a lot safer since the 1930s -- so much so that it's now being considered for use in the home. Unlike jet aircraft, once airships are aloft they don't need lots of energy to keep them there. At that point, the energy costs become comparable with rail travel.

Airships won't get passengers to their destinations very fast -- the Hindenburg set the current record for a transatlantic crossing at just under 44 hours -- but they do allow time to enjoy stunning vistas. Think of them instead as air cruises. In the romantic era of early commercial flight, airships were expected to become "flying hotels" that could accommodate dining rooms and ballroom dances.

Orbital rings

There's one more option, but you might struggle to believe it's possible within the next thirty years. Still, the materials needed to build it already exist. An orbital ring is a strong steel cable in orbit just above the atmosphere -- 80km above Earth. It rotates, creating forces which try to make the ring fly apart into space, while gravity tries to pull it down to Earth.

If the ring is spun at the correct speed, the two forces balance one another, allowing it to rotate seemingly weightlessly. A "cuff" can be built around the cable which would hold itself in place, unmoving, by magnetic repulsion. The structure would be connected to the ground by cables, with an elevator giving access to the ring in less than an hour.

Two Maglev train tracks -- which use magnets to move trains along without friction -- on the underside of the ring and another on the outside could transport passengers at incredible speeds, reaching the other side of the world in 45 minutes.

If these options sound unrealistic, then remember that our current course of expanding carbon-intensive air travel is unrealistic for avoiding catastrophic climate change. Bold ideas are one thing, we need radical action to revolutionize how we travel the world.

(Source: salon.com)

How an injury led to production of a prosthetic knee suitable for sports

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Hadi Shabani lost his left leg in an accident ten years ago. After using foreign prosthetic knees for a while, he started thinking about producing a prosthetic knee that can be used not only for doing daily chores, such as walking, but can also be used for doing sports, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

After his injury, Shabani first travelled to France and purchased a highly advanced and expensive prosthetic knee, but the prosthetic knee broke after a few months because he used to do cycling.

The high cost of the foreign products and the sanctions that blocked Iranians from having access to it were reasons that motivated Shabani to produce an Iranian version.

Now, he uses this Iran-made prosthetic knee for both running and cycling.

The prosthetic knee which is still in pre-clinical stage was produced by researchers in “Technology Center for People with Different Lifestyles” in Iran University of Medical Science.

The Technology Center for People with Different Lifestyles was established by Shabani in summer 2019 in the Incubation and Innovation Center of Iran University of Medical Science where they integrated five-years of research into a new project for producing prosthetic knees.

The prosthetic knee is the first output of this center.



The high cost of the foreign products and the sanctions that blocked Iranians from having access to them were reasons that motivated Shabani to produce an Iranian prosthetic knee.

In his personal Website, Hadi Shabani says by “people with different lifestyle”, he means people who have to live with what society calls “a disability”. The center aims to produce new tools and equipment to help these people improve their lifestyle and face less limitations in their daily life.

In his interview with IRNA, Shabani said that he hopes with receiving support from authorities, the new product can go into mass production.

According to him, this prosthetic knee is suitable for people whose legs are amputated from above the knee.

“The foreign versions of the prosthetic knee were too delicate, so if you used them for sports, they broke after a few months, but the Iranian version is suitable not only for walking and doing daily chores, but also for doing sports for long hours,” he said.

“Doing sports and exercising is essential to the health of people with disability; moreover, it protects them from many social threats.”

“The most important feature of this product is that it is way cheaper than the foreign versions as they cost about tens thousands of dollars, but we are trying to set the price of the Iranian prosthetic knee at around \$500.”

“If the product is mass produced, it can be exported as well. This way, the people with disability in neighboring countries can also benefit from using this prosthetic knee,” said Shabani.

National Biotech School to open soon

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Iran National Biotechnology School will start its work with the support of Pasteur Institute of Iran and Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, ISNA reported on Monday.

According to Dariush Norouzian, the scientific director of Iran National Biotechnology School, the aim of opening this school was that young researchers gain more knowledge about biotechnology, so that more wealth is produced in the country.

The school can make an important difference as there is an increasing need to produce national and innovative products in the country; on the other hand, the medical science and biology graduates have great potential and many innovative ideas, he added.

According to Dr. Majid Mesgar Tehrani, the executive director of the school, the academic program of the school

includes both basic and advanced levels and run in both summer and winter semesters. The summer semester is an online course and starts in September sixth. The winter semester is in-class; it starts in February fourth and entails some extra workshops.

The online course will reduce the accommodation and commute expenses of students. Moreover, the lessons will be available to the students all over the country, even the ones in remote areas, said Tehrani.

“The problem with many universities is that they don’t teach students how to turn their ideas into products and use them with joining start-ups or knowledge-based companies but the new school aims to address this need,” he added.

According to Tehrani, six main programs of the school are “vaccine and protein engineering”, “environmental biotechnology”, “genetic reserves and bio banks”, “industrial



biotechnology”, “Biocomputing” and “bio economy”.

Students and graduates of bachelor, masters and PHD programs in medical since studies and biology can enroll in the school.

Why PRT is the most effective way to help kids with autism speak

Pivotal response treatment (PRT) may be the most effective way to help young children with autism improve language and communication skills.

- New research finds pivotal response treatment (PRT) may be the most effective way to help young children with autism improve language and communication skills.

- PRT is a behavioral treatment for autism. This therapy is play-based and initiated by the child.

- Using a child’s interests in therapy helps ensure the child remains motivated while learning and increases the likelihood they’ll spontaneously use these same communication skills outside of treatment.

- Experts say early intervention can also help improve treatment effectiveness.

Raising a child with autism can come with a lot of joys and wins, but there are also a lot of challenges. For many parents, one of the biggest of those challenges is learning how to communicate with their child.

“Between 25 and 40 percent of children with autism are nonverbal, depending on whose stats you listen to,” speech-language pathologist Susan Berkowitz told Healthline.

Beyond that, she explains, autism is largely a language disorder, always presenting with at least some communication struggles.

“Many children have some verbal skills, but not always enough to meet their communication needs. That can be difficult, discouraging, and demoralizing for parents, particularly mothers, if they are the primary caregiver,” she said.

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) spokesperson and neurodevelopmental pediatrician Dr. Lisa Shulman told Healthline that a “lack of reciprocal exchanges between the parent and a child with ASD can have a significant impact on bonding, especially in situations with extreme communication limitations on the child.”

She gives the example of the feeling parents describe upon witnessing their baby’s first smiles, or hearing their first words.

“Parents often say that finally, after many sleepless nights, they have tangible evidence that their baby is truly a social being, responding to them as an individual. That recognition often seems to cement the relationship, bringing it to a new, reciprocal level,” Shulman said.

When that reciprocity isn’t there, it can cause strains on the bond and stress for the parent. So, seeking out the best treatment options becomes crucial for both the parent



and child.

■ Which therapy is the most effective?

New research points to a therapy that could be best for helping children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) improve their language abilities.

The study, led by Grace Gengoux, PhD, the clinical associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University, looked at 48 children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old, all of whom had an autism diagnosis and were experiencing serious language delays.

These children were split into two groups. Half received pivotal response treatment (PRT). The other half continued with whatever treatments they had been receiving before the start of the study.

By the end of the study, the children in the PRT group were speaking more than the other study participants. The words they were using were better recognized by others as well.

■ What is PRT?

PRT involves relying on a child’s own motivations to get them to speak.

For example, if a child seems to be expressing interest in a toy on the ground, the therapist would pick up that toy and use the name of it to encourage the child to repeat the name. When the child does so, they’re rewarded by then being given the object.

For the purposes of this study, participants underwent 10 hours of weekly therapy for the first 12 weeks. Parents received one hour of training every week on how to utilize the therapy at home as well.

During the second 12 weeks, children received five hours of weekly therapy. The parents continued with monthly instruction sessions.

(Source: healthline)

Can maternal fluoride consumption during pregnancy lower children’s intelligence?

A study conducted in six Canadian cities found a link between maternal consumption of fluoride during pregnancy and intelligence of their offspring.

A study published Monday suggests that fluoride consumed by pregnant women can decrease the IQ of their children. No single study provides definitive answers, but the latest research on this controversial topic will no doubt stir debate.

Fluoride protects teeth from decay, so public health officials celebrate what has been accomplished by putting it in many water supplies. But Christine Till, an associate professor of psychology at York University in Toronto, also wondered about potential downsides.

“It’s important that decisions about safety need to be based on evidence,” she says, and she notes that evidence is thin when it comes to pregnant women and their babies. So Till and her colleagues tapped into a study of more than 500 Canadian women and their babies, focused on six cities.

“It turned out that about half of the sample were cities, like Toronto, where they add fluoride to drinking water,” she says, “and the other half, like Montreal and Vancouver, were cities where they do not add fluoride to drinking water.”

That mix gave her a sample of more than 500 women with a whole spectrum of fluoride exposure.

The scientists assessed fluoride exposure two ways. They measured fluoride in women’s urine samples during pregnancy. They also calculated fluoride consumption based on how much is in a city’s water supply and how much women recalled drinking.

As the team reports in the journal JAMA Pediatrics, it appears that higher levels of fluoride lead to lower IQs in the children.

“Only boys were affected when we looked at urinary fluoride,” she says, “but both boys and girls were affected when we looked at maternal fluoride intake or water fluoride concentration.”

The difference was typically a couple of IQ points, though the spread was wider when comparing those with highest exposure and those with the least. In general, there was a small difference for any individual child.

“We would feel an impact of this magnitude at a population level,” Till says, “because you would have millions of more children falling in the range of intellectual disability, or an IQ of under



70, and that many fewer kids in the gifted range.”

The study was funded by the Canadian government and the U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Science.

“It’s actually very similar to the effect size that’s seen with childhood exposure to lead,” says David Bellinger, a professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children’s Hospital. He reviewed the paper before it was published and wrote a commentary about it.

He says it’s important not to read too much into a single study, but this one certainly raises important issues.

Though it will no doubt play into the decades-long controversy over whether to add fluoride to public water supplies, he says that is misleading. The study found even in cities that had fluoridated water, women got most of their fluoride from other sources, such as food, tea and toothpaste, “so I think it’s a mistake to focus too much on the water fluoridation piece here.”

People have such strong feelings about fluoride one way or the other, he says, that “in truth, I don’t think this paper is going to move the needle tremendously for a lot of people.”

Scientists who advocate for fluoride will point to the weaknesses inherent in a population study like this, “and the people on the other side who think that fluoride is quite toxic are going to say ‘see, we told you so.’”

The “decision to publish this article was not easy,” JAMA Pediatrics editor Dr. Dimitri Christakis wrote in an accompanying note. Given the sensitivity of the findings, he wrote, “we subjected it to additional scrutiny for its methods and the presentation of its findings.”

(Source: NPR)

Can the moon really influence your health?

The moon has held the human mind in its thrall since the dawn of time. Throughout the ages, peoples across the world have worshipped it as an important deity, believing it held real power to influence their lives — and their health. But is this really true? In this Spotlight feature, we investigate.

“The moon had been observing the earth close-up longer than anyone. It must have witnessed all of the phenomena occurring — and all of the acts carried out — on this earth,” writes Haruki Murakami in 1Q84.



The earth’s natural satellite has always fascinated human minds. Throughout the ages, humans have worshipped the moon, studied it, and referred to it to predict the direction of their lives... and their state of health.

This fascination with the moon is ongoing. This year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11’s moon landing, and NASA are making plans to send another human crew to the moon in 2024.

The moon influences life on Earth and natural mechanisms in a way that must have seemed natural hundreds and thousands of years ago. At full moon, corals release eggs and gametes in a reproductive frenzy.

And the gravitational attraction between the moon and the Earth causes sea tides — the rising and falling of the sea.

Since the moon influences such mechanisms of life on Earth, people have also believed that it can affect various aspects of physical and mental health.

But is this true, and to what extent? In this Spotlight feature, we aim to find out.

■ The moon and menstrual cycles

Some people still refer to menstrual cycles as “moon cycles,” and many remain convinced that there is a form of synchronicity between the phases of the moon and female menses.

A myriad of webpages and smartphone apps purport to help you track your moon cycle or to achieve full synchronization between your menses and the phases of the moon.

Some even advise readers on how to maximize their chances of becoming pregnant by taking moon phases into account.

But is it true that the phase of the moon can influence fertility windows? This question is far from settled.

The notion that the menstrual cycle and the phases of the moon are somehow linked derives from the concept that, on average, a menstrual cycle lasts 28 days, which is about as long as a moon cycle. The moon takes 27 days, 7 hours, and 43 minutes to complete one revolution around the Earth, and 29.5 days for a moon phase cycle.

In the ‘70s, ‘80s, and ‘90s, various small-scale studies suggested that females’ periods and ovulation phases coincided with the “light” phase (in the leading to full moon), and the “dark” phase (in the leading to new moon) of the moon cycle, respectively.

Some of these studies also found correlations between moon phases, changes in the levels of melatonin — a hormone that helps regulate sleep-wake cycles — and the phase of the menstrual cycle.

As recently as 2005, one study working with a small cohort from Nepal, indicated that women whose ovulation phase coincided with the full moon, and who got pregnant during the full moon, were more likely to give birth to male babies. Those who conceived before the full moon were more likely to give birth to female babies.

However, most periods are unlikely to “synch” with particular moon phases, except by coincidence. Menstrual cycles can last anywhere between 21–35 days, and their length can also change with age and due to hormonal factors.

A more recent 1-year-long retrospective study of 74 females of reproductive age contradicted the idea that the moon had a say in menstrual cycles. The study found no correlation whatsoever between menses, fertility, and the phases of the moon.

■ The moon and sleep

Research seems to suggest that a full moon can disrupt sleep, though the evidence is still limited.

Popular belief has it that the full moon disrupts sleep, making people more prone to insomnia. There is something attractive about the notion that the moon could influence such intimate aspects of our lives.

Someone who claimed that the full moon did indeed disrupt her sleep told Medical News Today that “there’s something romantic about being woken up by moonlight, as often as I vow to buy thicker curtains.”

But is there anything to this notion, or has it become a self-fulfilling prophecy for those people who have specific ideas on the influence of the full moon?

Once more, the evidence is not abundant and is primarily based on small-scale studies, but it does seem to suggest that the full moon can affect a person’s quality of sleep.

A study published in Sleep Medicine in 2014 assessed the sleep quality of 319 participants during different moon phases. This study found that during a full moon, participants had lower sleep efficiency. This means that they remained awake or in a state of light sleep for most of the time they spent in bed overnight.

It may be intuitive to blame sleeplessness — as our reader did — on the bright moonlight and the lack of heavy drapes, but that is not the conclusion reached by Christian Cajochen — from the University of Basel in Switzerland — and colleagues.

In 2013, Cajochen and team conducted an a posteriori analysis of data they had collected some years prior as part of an experiment conducted in laboratory conditions.

This experiment involved 17 healthy volunteers aged 20–31 and 16 healthy volunteers aged 57–74. The volunteers agreed to sleep in windowless, dark rooms over a study period of 3.5 days.

During this time, the researchers measured changes in sleep structure, brain activity during sleep, as well as in melatonin and cortisol levels.

The team got the idea to look at any correlations with moon phases only later. “We just thought of it after a drink in a local bar one evening at full moon, years after the study was completed,” they write in their paper.

The analysis the investigators then conducted suggested that immediately before and after a full moon, participants took about 5 minutes longer, on average, to fall asleep, and their sleep duration fell by about 20 minutes.

(Source: medical news today)

Charity foundation launches 30,000 job plans in rural areas

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated to Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, has generated some 30,000 job plans for the people residing in rural areas during the current Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), Saeed Ja'fari, director of Barekat Charity Foundation has said.

Job plans have resulted in 84,000 job opportunities in 6,000 villages across the country, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday. “Given that Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam focuses on empowering the deprived, we coordinate with the manufacturers, exporters and economic activists and connect them with the entrepreneurs under the Foundation coverage in order to promote their businesses,” he explained.



“When convinced of the existence of a sale market, we begin the process of creating jobs for the financially struggling people.” “We tend to increase financial empowerment of these vulnerable group and help them achieve a sustainable source of income,” he added.

“In the past years, we have taken steps in civil engineering, including school building, road and bridge construction in rural areas; we are currently pursuing community-based employment projects,” he also stated.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, also known as Setad-e Ejraiye Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam, was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat charity foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

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

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Beijing gets 2008 Olympics

(July 16, 2001)
There were celebrations in Beijing as the Chinese capital was awarded the 2008 Olympic Games. Duncan Hewitt reported. Fireworks lit up the Beijing sky and there was **joy** among the crowds who'd gathered to watch the announcement from Moscow on huge public video screens. After Beijing's **narrow defeat** by Sydney eight years ago, the authorities had **appealed for calm** before the announcement was made, but a massive media campaign has **stirred popular enthusiasm** for a victory which Beijing's bid committee described as the century-old dream of the Chinese nation.

The press is portraying Beijing's success as a sign that China has **come of age** as a member of the international community. For many of the citizens of the Chinese capital, what may be more important is the massive **infrastructure** spending program promised by the city government, which some hope will bring **long-overdue improvements** to Beijing's **sewers**, roads and public transport network.

Some locals, though, have questioned the vast expense. Others are worried that their homes will be knocked down as part of the city's **reconstruction**. And **human-rights groups** have warned that the decision will only give further **legitimacy** to what they see as a **repressive government** -- yet the Chinese authorities insist that the Games will lead to improvements in the country's human-rights situation.

And in a nation which takes its **international prestige** very seriously, there's no doubting the enthusiasm among many members of the public, particularly China's sports-obsessed young generation. Others, however, will be watching closely to see whether Beijing can live up to its promises both of creating a better **urban** environment and of allowing what its bid committee said would be **unfettered** foreign media access to China both before and during the 2008 Olympics.

Words

Joy: a feeling of great happiness
narrow defeat: if you defeat someone, you win a victory over them. Narrow defeat means to lose by a small number of votes
appealed for calm: suggested that people don't get too excited
stirred popular enthusiasm: created a great eagerness to be involved amongst the people
come of age: matured and been accepted as a member of the international community
infrastructure: essential facilities such as roads, energy resources and administrative systems
long-overdue **improvements**: improvements which should have been made a long time ago
sewers: underground channel that carries away waste
reconstruction: rebuilding
human-rights groups: a group that fights for human freedom
legitimacy: if something has legitimacy it is seen as being acceptable
a repressive government: a government which uses force and unjust laws to restrict and control its people
international prestige: to be respected by people around the world
urban: belonging or relating to a town or city
unfettered: unrestricted, not controlled

(Source: BBC)



Over 11,000 ha of forests, rangelands burnt in summer

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – Raging wild-fire burnt 11,254 hectares of forests and rangelands across the country, since the beginning of summer, the commander of the forest protection unit of Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization, has said.

Humans are responsible for over 90 percent of the wildfires, ISNA quoted Ali Abbasnejad as saying on Sunday.

Negligently discarded cigarettes were the leading cause of human-caused ignition, he lamented.

He went on to say that 673 fire occurrences have been reported in the country's forests and rangelands during the first month of summer, through which, 7,492 hectares of rangelands and forests have been damaged.

However, this month, wildfires have declined compared to the last month, he noted, stating, 377 fires have occurred during the second month of summer, affecting 3,762 hectares of the natural resources.

Referring to human share of 90-95 percent in wildfires, he explained that two human errors are the most important causes of wildfires, one is throwing glass bottles on



the side of the roads or inside the forests which magnifies a ray of sunlight, igniting grass around it, and the other one is leaving a fire unextinguished; some of the people camping in the nature do not ensure that the fire is completely put out.

Thunderstorms, electricity and even regional disputes are some of the causes of

unintentional wildfires in forests, he added.

Abbasnejad regretted that in some cases, we used to put out the fire with aerial fire-fighting, while this year the lack of budget made this option unavailable.

According to the law, anyone who deliberately causes fires in the forests is sentenced to imprisonment of two to five years,

Firefighting vehicles equipped with smart tracking system

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Firefighting trucks and fire engines in Tehran were equipped with automatic vehicle locating (AVL) for the first time in the country, spokesman for Tehran Fire Department affiliated to the Municipality has announced.

AVL is a means for automatically determining and transmitting the geographic location of a vehicle; the vehicle location data, from one or more vehicles, may then be collected by a vehicle tracking system to manage an overview of vehicle travel.

Vehicle tracking system was piloted last year, and finally launched on the capital's firefighting vehicles a month ago, ISNA quoted Seyed Jalal Maleki as saying on Sunday.

The system has so far been installed on 120 vehicles, he highlighted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that it is planned to increase the number of fire stations in Tehran to reach

136 by the next year, therefore, seven stations will be set up in the capital.

Through which, two fire stations will be inaugurated by the end of this year (March 20, 2020), he noted, concluding, some five others will also be inaugurated by the next year.

Fire stations to install caller location tracker

Mohammad Farjoud, head of Tehran Municipality ICT Organization told ISNA on Sunday that the fire stations in Tehran will be equipped with caller location tracking system by the next month.

“It is an important service which identifies the caller location whether by cellphones or telephones, which will be reported to the fire stations to better reach the destination,” he explained.

The system first will be piloted in the fire stations but then will install on other relief and rescue organizations, he concluded.



Unprecedented heatwave ‘kills thousands of fish’ in Alaska

Climate change and warming rivers may have caused the mass death of salmon in parts of Alaska, scientists say.

Large numbers of salmon died prematurely in some Alaskan rivers in July according to local reports, and scientists believe the cause could be the unprecedented heatwave that gripped the state last month.

“Climate change is here in Alaska. We are seeing it. We are feeling it. And our salmon are dying because of it,” said Stephanie Quinn-Davidson, a biologist specializing in salmon and the director of the Yukon Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, in a Facebook post.

The post documented field research that Ms Quinn-Davidson and other scientists undertook in late July to investigate local reports of salmon die-offs. They travelled to Alaska's Koyonuk River, a major tributary of the Yukon River, and counted at least 850 dead chum salmon along a 200-mile river stretch. But she said that the figures could be four to ten times bigger just in that stretch of the river, which is 500 miles long.

“We also know that dead salmon were observed on the Andreafsky River that flows in the Yukon River,” she said. “So it's very likely the numbers are in the thousands, and quite

possibly in the tens of thousands.

“And this is just the Yukon River. Salmon die-offs have been reported on the Kuskokwim River and Bristol Bay.”

In a video documenting the trip that shows flies swarming over the decaying fish, she described how “dead salmon washed up, just piles of them”.

Holly Carroll of the Alaska department for fish and game told The Independent: “We don't know the exact extent of mortality that this warm water event had on the salmon, but we know that the escapements to the Koyukuk river were almost 100,000 chum salmon less than we expected.”

It is normal for salmon to die en-mass after they spawn. But scientists studying the salmon saw that most still carried eggs, so their death could not have been linked to spawning.

“We ruled out any likely influences of pollution and disease or infection,” Ms Quinn-Davidson wrote. “We are fairly confident these salmon – after surviving years in the ocean and migrating 700 miles upriver to finally spawn – died of heat stress before reaching their spawning grounds.”

She said the deaths coincided with a record-breaking heatwave in July.

“Communities on the Koyukuk reached 90 degrees [32C] on July 7-11... 25 degrees [14C] above average!” Ms Quinn-Davidson wrote. “12 July is when locals started seeing dead chum salmon floating downriver.”

She added: “As soon as the temperatures cooled back down, we stopped seeing dead salmon.”

An unprecedented heatwave cooked places across Alaska in July, causing temperatures to remain above average for 95 consecutive days ending on 30 July, according to climatologist Brian Brettschneider.

Record-breaking temperatures were observed across the state. In Anchorage, the largest city, the mercury rose to 32C on 4 July – the highest temperature since records began.

Climate scientists said that the week ending on Sunday 7 July was the warmest on record in the state. However, the statewide record of 37.8C (100F), was set at Fort Yukon in the state's north east region over a century ago.

Rick Thoman, a climate specialist at the University of Alaska said at the time that the exceptionally warm weather events would only become more frequent because of the loss of sea ice and warming in the Arctic Ocean.

In the Deshka River, an important salmon

stream in southern Alaska, stream temperatures reached 27.6C (81.7F) on 7 July, according to the no-profit Cook Inletkeeper.

“We've been tracking stream temperatures in non-glacial systems across the Cook Inlet watershed since 2002, but this is a first – we've never seen stream temperatures above 76F [24.4C],” said Sue Mauger, Cook Inletkeeper's Science Director.

“We're seeing not just stressful temperatures for salmon, but lethal temperatures,” she said.

Cook Inletkeeper said in a press release that scientific research spanning 20 years provided evidence that climate change is warming Alaskan fish streams, threatening salmon.

“That's because as streams warm, fish become stressed, and more vulnerable to pollution, predation and disease. So, when temperatures reach upper thresholds, salmon can either die or simply avoid entering these hotspots,” reads the press release, which also notes that salmon die-offs could affect bear populations.

Ms Carroll of the Alaska department for fish and game said: “The cause of death is speculative because we did not collect water samples and because once a fish has been dead a long time, it's hard to determine the exact cause of death.”

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ج

Iran urges Afghanistan to resume talks on Hamoun wetlands

Iran and Afghanistan should resume negotiations on the water rights of Hamoun wetlands, YJC quoted Masoud Tajrishi, deputy chief of the Department of Environment, as saying on Friday. Commenting on Afghanistan's injudicious dam construction on its tributaries Tajrishi also noted that low precipitation levels in the region has added insult to the injury.

“Iran and Afghanistan should reopen talks over the remaining water in Helmand River and discuss the water rights of the wetlands in Iran.”

He further underscored the importance of reaching a formal agreement with Afghanistan as the exposed lake bed is the main hotspot for debilitating sand and dust storms which cause great discomfort both for Iranians and Afghans as well.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“galacto-, gala-, galact-”

■ **Meaning:** milk
■ **For example:** The Milky Way is the **galaxy** which is the home of our solar system.

PHRASAL VERB

Grasp at something

■ **Meaning:** to try to hold on to something
■ **For example:** His foot slipped and he grasped at the top of the wall.

IDIOM

Bring nothing to the table

■ **Explanation:** to have nothing of interest to offer the other side in a negotiation
■ **For example:** We'll never reach an agreement if we don't all bring something to the table.

افغانستان برای دادن حقابہ هامون باید به میز مذاکرہ بازگردد

به گزارش روز جمعہ باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان مسعود تجریشی معاون محیط زیست انسانی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: ایران و افغانستان برای دادن حقابہ هامون باید به میز مذاکرہ بازگردند.

تجریشی با اشاره به سیاست های مسئولان افغانستان برای سد سازی در بالادست تالاب اظهار کرد: متأسفانہ وضعیت بارش ها در منطقہ در شرایط مطلوبی نبود و به همین علت شرایط وخیم تر شدہ است.

ایران و افغانستان برای حل مشکل آب باید به میز مذاکرہ بازگردند تا برای آب باقی ماندہ در رود ہیرمند مذاکرہ کنند.

وی ادامہ داد: ما باید پیگیر این آب باشیم و به یک تفاہمی برسیم چرا کہ این گرد و غباری کہ در سیستان و بلوچستان وجود دارد، حتی مردم افغانستان را نیز تحت تأثیر قرار می دہد.

Syria rebels withdraw from strategic town

TEHRAN— Foreign-backed militants have reportedly withdrawn from a key town in Syria's embattled Idlib Province as well as their last bastion in the nearby province of Hama, as government forces make more gains in the northwest.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) and local sources reported Tuesday that the militants had pulled out of the town of Khan Shaykhun in the southern part of Idlib and a nearby area in neighboring Hama Province.

The withdrawal came after Syrian army troops and their allied fighters managed to enter Khan Shaykhun, which had been occupied by foreign-backed terrorists since 2014.

Syria's advances near Khan Shaykhun threatened to encircle the militants in their last remaining Hama bastion, including the towns of Latamneh and Kafr Zeita.

Local sources confirmed the militant withdrawal from the two Hama towns.

The SOHR also said anti-Damascus militants, who had stayed behind, gathered at a Turkish military position in the Hama town



of Morek.

SOHR Head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP that the pullout means that a Turkish observation point in Morek is effectively

surrounded by Syrian government forces.

However, the so-called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorist group claimed in a statement that its elements had redeployed

in Khan Shaykhun and still controlled adjoining Hama towns.

The Damascus government has not yet reacted to the reports.

On Monday, a Turkish military convoy carrying ammunition crossed the border into Idlib, sparking condemnation from Damascus.

The Khan-Shaykhun-bound convoy, however, was stuck just north of the town amid Syrian government airstrikes on militant positions and advances on the battlefield.

"The Syrian army in its own way sent a clear message to the Turkish regime by forcing convoys sent by Ankara to help the terrorists in Khan Shaykhun to come to a halt," Syria's al-Watan newspaper reported.

It was a "clear warning against any Turkish attempt to resuscitate the terrorists," it added.

According to Press TV, Idlib Province and parts of adjacent Hama Province constitute the last major militant stronghold in Syria.

Syrian government forces have recently been trying to liberate the region in their push towards final victory over terrorists.

China warns on Daesh revival in Syria



TEHRAN — China's Syria envoy said Tuesday that "terrorist organizations" including Daesh (ISIL) are being revived in the war-ravaged country, urging the international community not to ignore the "early warning" signs.

Xie Xiaoyan, Beijing's point man for the Syrian conflict, made the comments after meeting in Geneva with the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen.

"There is now a danger of terrorist organizations like [Daesh] being revived," Xie told reporters.

"The international community should pay attention."

Daesh overran large parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014, proclaiming a "caliphate" there, but offensives in both countries reclaimed the territory.

Xie's Geneva visit came as concern mounts over a possible major offensive by President Bashar Assad's forces on Idlib, a militant-run area in the northwest which is the last major

opposition stronghold in Syria.

The U.N. has warned that an assault on Idlib could trigger a humanitarian catastrophe.

Idlib has for several years served as a reception zone for those escaping government advances elsewhere in the country, who now number in their hundreds of thousands. Today they have nowhere to run in case of a full assault on Idlib.

Asked about Beijing's position on a prospective of such an assault and the humanitarian fallout, Xie described the issue as "very complicated."

"We all know that this is the last stronghold of some of the terrorist organizations ... so this is an issue that needs to be dealt with," he said. "The fight against terrorism is not finished yet."

According to AFP, since January, Idlib has been administered by the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham alliance, which is led by militants from Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate.

Jordan MPs urge government to expel Israeli envoy



TEHRAN — Jordanian lawmakers have called on the government to expel Israel's ambassador and review a 1994 peace treaty with Tel Aviv in protest at the regime's recent provocations and violation of international law at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

During an emergency parliamentary session attended by Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Amman on Monday, members of the House of Representatives discussed 17 non-binding recommendations on Amman's relations with Tel Aviv, Jordan's Al-Mamlaka TV reported.

The recommendations included "expelling the ambassador of the Zionist entity in Amman," closing the Israeli embassy, recalling Jordan's ambassador to Tel Aviv, halting "all forms of normalization," reviewing the 1994 peace treaty, affirming the size of the 144-dunam Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, backing Jordan's

continued custodianship of the holy site, and rejecting an Israeli plot to divide the sacred area into Muslim-only and Jewish-only sections.

Jordan and Egypt are the only Arab countries that have formal relations with the regime in Israel.

According to Press TV, on August 11, which marked the Muslim occasion of Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice), Israeli forces attacked Palestinian worshipers at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, prompting violent clashes at the site.

The violence erupted after Israeli policemen fired stun grenades and tear gas at the Palestinians who had finished their Eid prayers at the compound, allowing, in a rare move, Israeli settlers to enter the holy site to mark the fasting and mourning day of Tisha B'Av.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, the clashes had left 61 Palestinians wounded.

Ghani promises to crush ISIL after Kabul wedding attack

TEHRAN — Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani has promised to eliminate all safe havens of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) as the country marks a subdued centennial Independence Day following a horrific wedding attack in the capital on Saturday.

Ghani's comments on Monday came as Afghanistan mourns the death of at least 63 people in the suicide bombing at a wedding reception for a young couple from the minority Shia Hazara community in western Kabul.

At least 182 others were wounded in the attack, with women and children among the casualties.

"We will take revenge for every civilian drop of blood," Ghani declared.

"Our struggle will continue against [ISIL], we will take revenge and will root them out."

He urged the international community to join those efforts.

The latest attack came as the Taliban and the United States are trying 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.

The Taliban denied involvement in the attack and condemned the blast. However, President Ghani said the group "cannot absolve themselves of blame, for they provide [a] platform for terrorists".

The suicide bomber detonated his explosives in the middle of a dancing crowd inside the wedding hall. The bride and groom survived the attack and in an emotional interview with local broadcaster TOLONews, the distraught groom, Mirwais Alani, said their lives were devastated within seconds.

Of the seven band members — all brothers and cousins — only the lead singer survived the attack.

"Why should we be killed? It's for nothing. What is our sin? What have we done wrong? We feed our children and ISIL is killing us without committing a crime," Mohammad Wahid, the drummer's brother said.

"We ask the government why they aren't stopping them?" he told Al Jazeera.

As families buried their relatives, celebrations for Mon-



day's 100th anniversary of Afghanistan's independence from Britain were postponed out of respect for the blast victims, the president's office said.

Rights groups voice solidarity with hunger-striking Bahraini inmates

➔1 including ill-treatment, the glass barrier separating them from their families during visits, arbitrary searches and confiscation of their belongings.

The action came after fifteen political prisoners started on August 15 an open hunger strike following two full years of systematic isolation in Jau Prison.

The dissidents are imprisoned along with other inmates, who don't share their language, religion, traditions or culture. They are also charged with different crimes.

According to Press TV, thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established. Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini monarch King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3, 2017.

Russia and China say U.S. missile test could revive arms race

➔1 The weapon tested on Sunday was a version of the nuclear-capable Tomahawk cruise missile. The ground-launched version of the Tomahawk was removed from service after the INF was ratified.

According to Guardian, this month the defense secretary, Mark Esper, said the U.S. had begun work to develop mobile, conventional, ground-launched cruise and ballistic missile systems.

"Now that we have withdrawn, the Department of Defense will fully pursue the development of these ground-launched conventional missiles as a prudent response to Russia's actions," he said.

Esper confirmed the U.S. was not embarking on a new arms race. "The traditional sense of an arms race has been in a nuclear context," he said. "Right now, we don't have plans to build nuclear-tipped INF-range weapons. It's the Russians who have developed non-compliant likely, possibly, nuclear-tipped weapons."

The U.S. launch came weeks after a deadly explosion at a Russian testing site, which western experts linked to Moscow's attempts to develop a nuclear-powered missile.

The blast killed five scientists and caused a spike in radiation levels, although Russian authorities have remained tightlipped on the nature of the explosion. U.S. experts have said it could be linked to testing of the Burevestnik cruise missile, touted by Putin this year.

The INF banned all land-based missiles that could travel between 310 and 3,400 miles (500 and 5,500km) in an effort to abolish the class of nuclear arms that then most threatened Europe.

Ilhan Omar: Go to Israel, see 'cruel reality of the occupation'

➔1 Trump's request to a foreign country to bar the entry of elected U.S. officials - and Israel's decision to do so - were unprecedented and drew widespread criticism, including from many Israelis as well as staunch supporters of Israel in Congress. Critics said Netanyahu's decision was a reckless gamble that risked turning Israel into a partisan issue and threatened to undermine ties between the close allies.

Tlaib and Omar support "boycott, divestment and sanctions", or BDS, a Palestinian-led global movement. Supporters say the movement is a nonviolent way of protesting Israel's military rule over the occupied territories, but Israel says it aims to delegitimize the state and eventually wipe it off the map.

■ #MyPalestinianSitty

Last week, Israeli Interior Minister Aryeh Deri said Tlaib had requested and been granted permission to enter the occupied West Bank to see her ageing grandmother. Deri's office released a letter that it said was from Tlaib, which promised to respect travel restrictions during her visit. But after the announcement, Tlaib tweeted she would not allow Israel to use her love for her grandmother to force her to "bow down to their oppressive & racist policies".

The announcement prompted #MyPalestinianSitty to trend online, with Palestinians and others sharing stories of their grandmothers' resilience.

"This was my other #MyPalestinianSitty who no one could mess with. She was proud of being from #BeitHanina and was a fierce woman," Tlaib tweeted with a photo of her grandmother.

The two congresswomen are part of the "squad" of liberal newcomers - all women of colour - whom Trump has labelled as the face of the Democratic Party as he runs for re-election.

The Republican president subjected them to a series of racist tweets last month in which he called on them to "go back" to their "broken" countries. They are U.S. citizens - Tlaib was born in the U.S. and Omar became a citizen after moving to the U.S. as a refugee from war-torn Somalia. The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives voted to condemn Trump's racist rhetoric against the congresswomen last month.

Hong Kong leader says dialogue and 'mutual respect' offer way out of chaos

TEHRAN — Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Tuesday she hoped a peaceful weekend anti-government protest was the start of efforts to restore calm and that talks with non-violent protesters would provide "a way out" for the Chinese-ruled city.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied peacefully in torrential rain on Sunday in the eleventh week of what have been often violent demonstrations.

"I sincerely hope that this was the beginning of society returning to peace and staying away from violence," Lam said.

"We will immediately start the work to establish a platform for dialogue. This dialogue, I hope, will be based on a mutual understanding and respect and find a way out for today's Hong Kong."

Anger erupted in June over a now-suspended bill that would allow criminal suspects in the former British colony to be extradited to mainland China for trial.

The unrest has been fueled by broader worries about the erosion of freedoms guaranteed under the "one country, two systems" formula put in place after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, including an independent judiciary and the right to protest.

Three people were wounded, one critically, in a knife attack by an unknown assailant near a "Lennon Wall" of colorful pro-protest messages in the city's Tseung Kwan O district in the New Territories overnight, police said. One man was arrested.



The protests have prompted sharp reactions from Beijing, which has accused foreign countries, including the United States, of fomenting unrest in the terri-

tory. China has also sent clear warning that forceful intervention is possible, with paramilitary forces holding drills in neighboring Shenzhen.

Britain's Foreign Office said it was extremely concerned about reports that a Hong Kong staff member had been detained in mainland China, but there was no immediate suggestion that there was any link to the protests.

Staff member Simon Cheng did not return to work on Aug. 9 after visiting the neighboring mainland city of Shenzhen the previous day, Hong Kong news website HK01 reported. China's Foreign Ministry declined to comment. Hong Kong police did not respond immediately to requests for comment, Reuters reported.

Lee becomes first deaf player to win an ATP main draw match

Lee Duck-hee became the first deaf player to win an ATP Tour main draw match on Monday when the South Korean defeated Henri Laaksonen 7-6(4) 6-1 in the first round of the Winston-Salem Open.

The 21-year-old fired nine aces on the way to claiming the win after a lengthy rain delay on the hardcourts in North Carolina.

Diagnosed as deaf at the age of two, Lee cannot hear calls from the line judges or the umpire and relies on signals and gestures for the information.

“People made fun of me for my disability. They told me I shouldn’t be playing,” Lee said after the match.

“It was definitely difficult, but my friends and family helped me get through. I wanted to show everyone that I could do this.

“My message for people who are hearing impaired is to not be discouraged. If you try hard, you can do anything.”

Next up for Lee is a second-round meeting with third seed Hubert Hurkacz of Poland on Tuesday.

Former world number one Andy Murray, continuing his comeback from hip surgery, fell 7-6(8) 7-5 to Tennys Sandgren in a first round match that was delayed by rain for several hours.

Murray battled hard to save three set points in the tiebreak before Sandgren converted the fourth to end the 74-minute first set when the Briton’s volley found the net.

Murray was broken in the opening game of the second set and fell 3-0 behind before breaking back to leave the set poised at 5-5.

But the 28-year-old American broke back and then served out the match to set up a second round clash with Canadian second seed Denis Shapovalov.

(Source: Reuters)

Barca’s Dembele out for five weeks with hamstring strain

Barcelona’s France forward Ousmane Dembele will be sidelined for about five weeks with a hamstring injury suffered in their defeat at Athletic Bilbao in the La Liga opener, the Spanish champions said on Monday.

“A medical examination on Ousmane Dembele has diagnosed a strain of his left hamstring and the Frenchman is set to be out for approximately five weeks as a result, the club said on their website.

Dembele’s injury layoff is another blow for Barca coach Ernesto Valverde after forward Luis Suarez limped off in the first half of the 1-0 loss away to Bilbao on Friday.

Lionel Messi sat out the match as he recovers from the long-term calf strain that saw him miss the club’s pre-season U.S. tour. Barca host Real Betis in their next Liga game on Sunday.

(Source: Marca)

Maurizio Sarri diagnosed with pneumonia, in doubt for season opener

Newly appointed Juventus boss Maurizio Sarri has been diagnosed with pneumonia and is likely to miss the Serie A champion’s opening game of the season.

The 60-year-old Italian was suffering from the flu last week but Juventus confirmed that his condition was more serious.

Sarri was at Juventus’ training center on Monday but his condition meant he took no part in the day’s operations.

“Unfortunately he could not conduct the training on the field due to the persistent flu, which struck him over the course of last week,” a club statement said on Monday. “In the late afternoon, he underwent further tests that confirmed he has pneumonia, for which specific therapy has been prescribed.”

Sarri reportedly received treatment before the traditional preseason tune-up against the club’s youth team last Wednesday. His condition did not improve and he was unable to attend the 1-0 friendly win over Serie C outfit Triestina on Saturday.

In June, Sarri confessed to smoking 60 cigarettes a day. “I don’t particularly feel the need to smoke during games,” he told Football Italia. “But straight afterwards it really is necessary.”

Juventus, chasing a ninth consecutive domestic league title, kicks off its campaign at Parma on Saturday but might be without its new manager who replaced fellow Italian Max Allegri over the summer.

Sarri returned to Italy after a single season in England where he steered Chelsea to third in the Premier League and lifted the Europa League after beating Arsenal 4-1 in Baku.

Despite the seemingly impressive debut season in England, Sarri was lured back to his homeland where he last managed in 2018 having taken his native Napoli to second in the league. He was replaced at Stamford Bridge by former Blues midfielder Frank Lampard.

(Source: CNN)

‘Shocked’ Nigeria FA want to help banned coach Siasia clear his name

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) said on Monday that they were “shocked” by a life ban on former national coach Samson Siasia by FIFA for bribery, vowing to overturn it.

On Friday, the governing body of world football banned Siasia, 52, from football, following a long-running investigation into convicted match-fixer, Wilson Raj Perumal.

After his arrest, Perumal collaborated with investigators.

FIFA’s Ethics Committee found Siasia “guilty of having accepted that he would receive bribes in relation to the manipulation of matches in violation of the FIFA Code of Ethics.”

Siasia, a striker, played 51 times for Nigeria and had two short spells as national coach.

Acting NFF president Seyi Akinwunmi said in a statement that the FIFA report had been give to the body’s lawyers “to study and provide legal advice to the federation,” he said, adding that Siasia “gave his all for Nigeria.”

“The NFF was shocked to learn of the investigation and subsequent decision by the FIFA Ethics Committee (Adjudicatory Chamber) placing a life ban on Mr. Samson Siasia,” said the statement.

“Siasia is a football legend but most importantly he is a Nigerian,” he said.

“We respect the FIFA processes”, said Akinwunmi but added, “the least we as a Federation can do is empathize with him at this time make ourselves available to him and hope that in some way he is able to clear his name.”

(Source: Goal)

Gamers risk health in bid to be eSports millionaires



A doctor recommended simple eye exercises -- moving them up and down, left and right -- but he admits that he does not do them.

“Actually he also told me not to play the computer for six months to get back my vision, but I didn’t listen.”

■ My body is so sore'

According to several players in Shanghai, the most common health complaint for pro gamers is Carpal Tunnel syndrome.

Not unique to gamers, it happens through

repetitive hand and wrist motions and is characterized by numbness, burning and tingling of the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers.

In severe cases surgery is required.

Some gamers talked about wrist injuries so severe they had to quit and lower back problems related to sitting for too long, day after day.

“I used to play and I had some arm and wrist problems so now I coach instead of playing because I can’t take the strain,” said

Kurtis “Aui_2000” Ling, of the Newbee team.

Another hazard of eSports, a fast-growing but little-understood sport, is the mental toll, particularly with life-changing sums of money on the table.

With many players so young -- most are in their 20s but there is a 17 year old at The International -- some struggle in the hyper-competitive environment.

“I just sometimes feel that my body is so sore,” said Ryan “Raging Potato” Jay Qui of the Mineski team, who nevertheless says that his vision is still “20/20”.

“Most of the obstacles in this kind of environment is the mentality,” said the Filipino, adding that Mineski has a “psych adviser” who helps prop up the players.

■ Changing habits

While the money at the top of eSports is soaring, in other respects gaming remains well behind many other professional sports.

Newbee coach Ling said that eSports is only now starting to appreciate the need for physiotherapists and other staff specialising in physical and mental well-being, though most teams have no such back-up. Cost is the major reason.

Roman Dvoryankin, general manager of Virtus.pro, said many gamers have scant appreciation of how important it is to eat well, exercise and sit properly when playing.

“All the pro teams are trying to educate the players to take breaks, do some exercise, stretch properly,” he said.

(Source: AFP)

NBA star Curry finances college golf team for six years



Three-time NBA champion Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors said Monday he will support the creation of Howard University’s first top-level golf program for the next six years.

Curry, a six-time NBA All-Star guard and avid golfer, was inspired to make the contribution by Otis Ferguson IV, a senior at the Washington DC university who Curry met during a campus visit earlier this year.

Ferguson had been campaigning to establish a golf team at Howard. He found a backer in Curry, who decided establish men’s and women’s golf at the historically black college.

Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Curry also persuaded golf equipment manufacturer Callaway to promise equipment and sport apparel giant Under Armour, who are one of his sponsors, to provide uniforms.

Curry, who often plays in celebrity golf events, played on his high school golf team. He hosts and produces the golf-themed reality game show “Holey Moley” and has twice played in PGA developmental tour events.

“Golf is a sport that has changed my life in ways that are less tangible, but just as impactful,” Curry said.

“It’s a discipline that challenges your mental wherewithal from patience to focus, and is impossible to truly master, so when you hear about these passionate student athletes who have the talent but don’t have a fair shot at the game, it’s tough.

“I feel really honored to play a small role in the rich history of Howard University and look forward to building their first men’s and women’s golf teams with them.”

The Bison plan to a debut for the men’s and women’s golf teams in the 2020-21 academic year.

Golf will join 19 other top-level Division 1 sports programs at the university after having previously been at a secondary, club level, sport.

“Howard University is honored to partner with NBA champion Stephen Curry to launch what is sure to become one of the best golf programs in the country,” Howard University president Wayne A. I. Frederick said.

(Source: AFP)

US women footballers’ equal pay lawsuit to go to trial in 2020



The equal pay lawsuit filed by US women footballers against the US Soccer Federation has been scheduled to go to trial on May 5, 2020, the players’ spokesperson said Monday.

The gender discrimination lawsuit regarding unequal pay and working conditions was filed on March 8 by 28 players, and Monday’s trial date, set by US District Judge R. Gary Klausner in Los Angeles, comes a week after the players and the federation reached an impasse in mediation.

“We are pleased with the expeditious schedule that has been set by the Court and we are eager to move forward with this case,” Molly Levinson, a spokesperson for the US women players, said in a statement. “We very much look forward to the trial in May 2020 when the players will have their day in court.

“We have every confidence that these world champion athletes will get what they legally deserve -- nothing less than equal pay and working conditions.”

The May date will put the jury trial amid the team’s build up to the 2020

Tokyo Olympics, although it remains possible a settlement could be reached before then.

The issue was center stage as the United States triumphed in the Women’s World Cup in France in July, chants of “equal Pay” raining down on the champions after they defeated the Netherlands in the final.

US lawmakers have proposed legislation that would block federal funding for the 2026 Men’s World Cup -- to be hosted jointly by the United States, Mexico and Canada -- until the federation pays its women’s national team “fair and equitable wages”.

A US Soccer spokesman said the federation was “continuing to work to find a resolution” to the dispute.

Federation president Carlos Cordeiro issued figures last month that he said showed US Soccer had compensated women more than men over the past decade, but the women players said the figures were misleading, noting they included salaries for National Women’s Soccer League play.

(Source: Eurosport)

Manchester United ‘disgusted’ by racist abuse of Pogba



initiative.

“We will work to identify the few involved in these incidents and take the strongest course of action available to us. We also encourage social media companies to take action in these cases.”

Rashford tweeted his support for Pogba. “Manchester United is a family. Pogba

is a huge part of that family. You attack him you attack us all...” the England international said.

Chelsea’s Tammy Abraham and Championship side Reading’s Yakou Meite have suffered similar abuse in the past week.

Abraham missed the crucial penalty in the shootout loss to Liverpool in the Super

Cup last Wednesday. The posts aimed at him were described as “abhorrent” by Chelsea and manager Frank Lampard said he was “disgusted”.

Lampard also called for social media sites to do more to prevent players being abused while Abraham has said he wants to “silence the haters” with his performances on the pitch.

Chelsea banned a supporter for life in July for racially abusing Manchester City’s Raheem Sterling.

Five others were excluded for periods of between one and two years for abusive language.

Ivory Coast international Meite missed a penalty in time added on for Reading on Sunday against Cardiff but his side had the match already wrapped up at 3-0.

Some of the tweets aimed at Pogba were later deleted while several accounts appeared to have been taken down.

Twitter’s terms and conditions say it “takes action against behavior that targets individuals with hateful conduct”.

(Source: Mirror)

Iranian sports journalist battling cancer defines family as true love

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN — Cancer seems to be the end of the road for many but not for the Iranian sports journalist Mehdi Shadmani, who says the disease has helped him discover the true love for his family, especially his wife.

Shadmani -meaning happiness in Persian- has been suffering from sarcoma, a rare bone cancer for five years; however, his wife Pantea and his children have stood by his side through the trying times.

On his disease, Mrs. Shadmani explained, "It started in 2014. His feet started to swell. It was diagnosed as deep vein thrombosis by doctors. After three years, Mehdi started chemotherapy and doctors said he would die after six months. But he is still alive and will be around much longer."

"I have been growing up with Mehdi in the last five years. Mehdi believes his sickness helped him grow mentally as it did with us. I think stress caused his cancer. Mehdi was under pressure at his work and was suffering from sleep deprivation. I think journalism is one of the most difficult jobs in the world," his beloved wife added.

Mehdi was forced to have his leg cut off, but he didn't consent to it. He has numbness in his hands and hasn't been able to go to work since last year. And today, Mehdi is on wheelchair because of his spinal cord injuries. With all that said, he has not given up hopes, because the new condition has opened new doors for him: to find 'the true meaning [of life].'

Commenting on his own health condition, Shadmani said, "My job was the bread and butter of the household, but at the moment I knew that money couldn't save my life. I wanted to have a nice house and a nice car ever since I was a kid. I wanted my children to lead a good life, to reach my goals, but when I was diagnosed with the disease, I questioned myself about the source of happiness in my life, and I also asked myself whether I have made others happy?"

Back then, he knew nothing about sarcoma - a fast-growing cancer. He was doggedly determined to fight like a warrior and conquer the disease, but the disease has progressed in the recent years.



"I was working overtime to earn extra dough, and I honestly enjoyed my work, because I love journalism, but my body could not take it anymore. I worked in three newspapers, because I didn't want to put all my eggs in one basket."

"My daughter Ava was growing up fast, but I could not see her, because we needed the money and I had to work. Then, I asked myself at what price? I decided to reduce my working hours to spend more time with my family. When I was diagnosed with the disease, my son Arad was born. I cuddled him and watched cartoons with him. I talked to my little son and taught

him the color wheel. It was so enjoyable for me and I told myself I was being deprived of a greatest wealth in life [family]. Afterward, I enjoyed the smell of rain and the heat of the Sun. I discovered everything around me were unbelievably beautiful," Shadmani said.

"I am most thankful and full of praises to Almighty God for granting me this rare opportunity. I wanted to help people [through my job, journalism]. How can I say it? I enjoy my life, because God has taken notice of me. God takes care for me and fixes broken things in life. God has granted me this nice woman," pointing to his wife with a soft smile.

Persepolis complete signing of Brazilian Brandão



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Persepolis have completed the signing of Brazilian forward José Brandão Gonçalves Júnior.

The Brazilian striker has joined Persepolis on loan from Bulgarian team Ludogorets II.

Brandão, 24, has penned a one-year contract with Persepolis.

He began his career in Brazil with Juventus-SC in 2015 with a few stints

in various clubs in the Serie C and D, before signing with Bulgaria's Ludogorets II in 2018.

He returned to Brazil on loan to Goiás the following year, but will now look to play a vital role for the Iran Pro League defending champions, who open their 2019/2020 season against Pars Jonoubi Jam on August 22.

Persepolis have signed Brandão as a replacement for Mario Budimir.

Ex- Fiorentina defender Milic joins Iranian club Esteghlal



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian football club Esteghlal have completed the signing of former Napoli left-back Hrvoje Milic on Monday.

The 30-year-old player has penned a two-year contract with Esteghlal for an undisclosed fee.

Milic was a member of Croatian national football team in 2013 and played six matches for the Chequered Ones.

He started his career at the youth sides

of NK Osijek before moving to HNK Hajduk Split in 2008 where he first started in their under-19 side.

Milic joined Serie A club Fiorentina in 2016 and left the team for Olympiacos after one year.

The Croat returned to Italy in 2018 and joined Napoli.

Milic had also spells at Swedish club Djurgårdens IF Fotboll, Russian team Rostov and Croatian side Istra 1961.

Iran ease past Hong Kong at Asian Women's Volleyball Championship

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran overpowered Hong Kong in straight sets (25-20, 25-15, 25-15) in Pool A of the 20th Asian Senior Women's Volleyball Championship on Tuesday.

Team Melli suffered a 3-0 defeat to South Korea in their opening match.

Iran booked a place in Pool E of the competition underway in Seoul, South Korea.

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, asian-volleyball.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.

Barad Yeganegi wins gold at World Cadets Rapid & Blitz Championships

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Barad Yeganegi from Iran won the gold medal at the 3rd FIDE World Cadets Rapid & Blitz Championships.

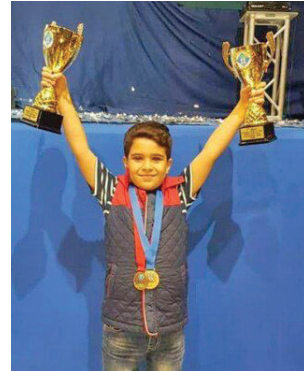
Yeganegi showed perfect score in the tournament 9/9.

The Iranian chess player followed by Russian Savva Terechenko with 8/9 and Maxim Tsoy from Kazakhstan with 7.5/9 in the Open U8 division.

The four-day FIDE World Cadets Rapid & Blitz Championships took place in Minsk, Belarus among boys and girls under 8, 10 and 12 years old.

A total of 635 young chess players from 35 federations took part in the Championships.

Two players Aleksandr E. Usov from Russia (Open U-10) and Barad Yeganegi showed perfect score in the tournament 9/9.



Iran Greco-Roman team runners-up at World Junior Wrestling Championships

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran Greco-Roman team finished in second place at the United World Wrestling World Junior Wrestling Championships on Sunday.

The Iranian team won two gold and three bronze medals in the competitions held in Tallinn, Estonia.

Mohammad Aziz Naghousi beat Russian Damir Rakhimov 2-1 in a tight match in the 77kg final.

Aliakbar Hossein Yousofi also claimed a gold medal, beating American Cohlton Michael Schultz 2-1 in the 130kg final.

Pooya Soulat Dad Marz in 55kg, Shahin Eidi Badaghi Mofrad in 63kg and Mohammadreza Mahmoud Rostami in 72kg won three bronze medals.

Russia won the title with 157 points, followed by Iran (121) and Turkey (117).

Ehsan Hadadi wins gold at Finland event

TASNIM — Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi claimed a gold medal in Espoo Grand Prix 2019 in Helsinki, Finland.

Hadadi won the gold with a throw of 63.72 meters Sunday night.

Chinese athletes Nuermaimaiti Tulake and Abuduaini Tuergong won silver and bronze medals with 58.12m and 58.08m, respectively.

Hadadi competed and won a silver medal at the 2012 Summer Olympics with a 68.18 m throw, becoming the first Iranian discus thrower to win a medal at Olympics.

Iran starts Asian Junior Wushu C'ships with one bronze

MNA — In the first day of 2019 Asian Wushu Championships underway in Brunei on Monday, a team of Iranian girls won a bronze medal.

The Iranian girls' team, comprised of Fatemeh Jazini and Monireh Panahi, won bronze medal of the female's duel event with 9.23 points. A team from the host country grabbed the gold medal with 9.33 points while Hong Kong earned the silver with 9.30.

Iranian boys' dual team didn't find a better place than the 6th with 9.25 points.

The 2019 edition of Asian Junior Wushu Championships kicked off today and will go through August 23 in Taolu and Sanda categories. 265 athletes from 16 countries are participating in the event which is being held in Brunei.

Karim Moghaddam chosen to run Federation of Corporate Football

IRNA — Iranian beach football professional Karim Moghaddam has been chosen as the International Federation of Corporate Football (FIFCO)'s Director of Tournament Development for Corporate Beach Football.

Moghaddam, an Iranian National and the founder of Beach Football in Iran, has accepted an appointment with FIFCO to put in place Corporate Beach Football on the map. As a former Head Coach of the Iranian National Team — Moghaddam brings over 15 years of experience in Beach Football to the organisation.

"This is a great addition," said Albert Zbily, president of FIFCO during a recent visit to Tehran. "I believe Karim will bring a new dimension to corporate football in Asia and in particular on the global scene. This is still a relatively new sport, why not let it flourish amongst our members," he continued.

"I am delighted to join forces with FIFCO," said Karim Moghaddam, "FIFCO presents itself above all other amateur organizations and delivers quality programming throughout its membership base."

Karim holds a beach football coaching license from the AFC and FIFA and is an instructor at the international level. He is the former head coach of the national teams of Iran, Lebanon, Philippines, Kuwait and lately Iraq.

"This is a great game, one that challenges every muscle in our bodies, I believe the corporate level can benefit from beach football," Karim said after accepting the FIFCO appointment.

FIFCO is the world governing body of corporate football since 2009 with its international head quarters in Montreal, Canada. FIFCO promotes its core values through its premier event the World Corporate Champions Cup series of tournaments.

Iranian weightlifter Sohrab Moradi undergoes surgery

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian weightlifter Sohrab Moradi underwent shoulder surgery in Germany on Tuesday.

He suffered a dislocated shoulder in training in July.

Moradi missed the 2019 Weightlifting World Championships, which will be held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 16 to 25.

Moradi broke weightlifting's longest standing world record on his way to gold in the men's 94kg class at the 2018 Asian Games.

He lifted 189kg in the opening discipline to better the snatch record set at 188kg in 1999 by Greece's Akakios Kakiasvilis.

He had suffered a spinal cord injury in February.

The new system of Olympic Qualification requires weightlifters to compete on six occasions in the 18-month qualification period, which kicked off on Nov. 1, 2018 and runs through April 30, 2020.

This limits Moradi's time to compete in order to qualify for the 2020 Olympic Games.



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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

You are given insight, if you open your eyes, and
you are shown the right path, if you turn to it,
and you are given hearing, if you are able to hear.

Imam Ali (AS)

Film Museum of Iran to screen
Iran’s submission to 2020 Oscars
“Finding Farideh”

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Film Museum of Iran will be screening Iran’s submission to the 2020 Oscars, “Finding Farideh”, this evening.

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.



A scene from the documentary “Finding Farideh” co-directed by Azadeh Musavi and Kurosh Atai.

The Art and Experience Cinema halls in Tehran will also be screening the documentary beginning today.

“Finding Farideh” was selected as Iran’s submission to the 92nd Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category on Saturday.

A committee of nine cineastes picked the film from a shortlist of 10 films including “Qasre Shirin” directed by Reza Mirkarimi, “Just 6.5” by Saeid Rustai, “Sheeple” by Hooman Seyyedi, “Lovely Trash” by Mohsen Amirusefi, “The Warden” by Nima Javidi and “When the Moon Was Full” by Narges Abyar.

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.

“An Abundance of Katherine’s”
at Iranian bookstores

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** — American writer John Green’s novel “An Abundance of Katherine’s” has recently been published in Persian by Amut Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Arman Ayatollahi, the 2006 book is about a teenage boy, Colin Singleton, who has dated and has been dumped by 19 girls named Katherine.

Thinking about how he is getting too old to be a child prodigy, he decides to start a summer road trip with his friend Hassan, so he can get over Katherine.

With 10,000 dollars in his pocket, he intends to prove one of his theories during the trip, which is that he can predict the future of any relationship.

The book was one of the nominees for the Michael L. Printz Award and a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 2007.

British conservationists
work to restore acclaimed
slavery painting

LONDON (Reuters) — Ahead of the annual remembrance day for the abolition of the slave trade, art conservationists are working to restore a rare painting of a kneeling African slave to go on display in the British port city of Liverpool.

Acquired by the International Slavery Museum in 2018, the “Am Not I A Man And A Brother” painting depicts an enslaved African, kneeling, bound in chains and looking to the sky.

It is based on a design commissioned by the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787 and was used by the potter Josiah Wedgwood to campaign against slavery, making it one of the first instances of a logo used for a political cause.

“We’ve done quite significant conservation on the painting,” Laura Pye, director of National Museums Liverpool, told Reuters. “(The) conservation team has done an incredible job of cleaning it up. So I don’t think there’s anyone that’s seen the painting as it currently looks.”

August 23 is the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. The painting is still being restored and is due to go on display later this year.

In the biggest deportation in known history, weapons and gunpowder from Europe were swapped for millions of African slaves who were then shipped across the Atlantic to the Americas.

Isfahan children’s film festival kicks off

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth opened at Ghadir Park in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on Monday evening.

The ceremony opened with a message from Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi, which was read to the participants.

“The speedy progress of the world of today has changed the life of man in different areas including culture. However, it promises a gradual, evolutionary change in children, and the Isfahan festival has taken new steps to achieve this path, promising new developments,” read part of the message.

“The screening of a selection of participating films in the flood-hit regions of the country is also a great happening and needs to be praised,” the message added.

Director of the festival Alireza Tabesh in his brief words also expressed thanks to the all participants and the Iranian and foreign guests, and especially the art and cultural officials of Isfahan for their great help in organizing the festival.

A great number of Iranian and international films will go on screen during the gala, which will be running in Isfahan until August 26.

Eleven animated movies and nine short films have been selected from different countries to be screened at the festival.

The animation lineup includes Russian filmmaker Sergei Ryabov’s 2018 movie “6:1” that portrays an inseparable girl and cat who are playing checkers, and the cat loses again and again.

Latvian director Edmunds Jansons’ 2017 animation “Pigtail and Mr. Sleeplessness” will also be screened.

It is about a six-year-old girl known as Pigtail, who together with her shaggy friend from her closet, Mr. Sleeplessness, come up with a “brilliant” plan to return her baby brother Leo to the amusement park where they believe he was bought.

Also included is “Plankton” by Gustaf Lindstrom from Britain. The 2018 animation gives the viewers a glimpse of the ideas and aspirations that float around at the bottom of the food chain.

“The Kite” by Martin Smatana from Germany is a 2019 animation which depicts a little boy who visits his grandfather in the countryside and they fly a kite together.

“Kinkaku-ji” by Viktor Azeev from Russia narrates the story of a camper, Greg, who wants to learn how to write poetry, and follows his friends’ advice and makes his way to Japan where a majestic golden temple belonging to Kinkaku-dzi lies.



A troupe of young musicians performs at the opening ceremony of the 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth (IFFCY) in Ghadir Park in the central Iranian city of Isfahan. (IFFCY)

The organizers also announced earlier that a selection of movies honored at different editions of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France will go on screen during the festival.

In addition, eight features and animations by Danish filmmakers will be reviewed during a special program.

A selection of 12 Iranian animations will also be competing in the national section of the festival, in addition to 10 Iranian short films, which are also competing in the national section.

Eight features and animations by Danish filmmakers will be reviewed during a special program.

The festival also plans to review films and animated movies from Georgia and Tatarstan.

The United Nations International Children’s Emergency

Fund (UNICEF) office in Tehran has dedicated a special award to a movie that provides a profound insight into children’s issues at the festival this year.

All the features, mid-length and short films competing in the Iranian national section will be reviewed for the UNICEF award.

The films will be reviewed by a special committee under the supervision of Iranian actress Mahtab Keramati, who is also a UNICEF goodwill ambassador.

Three Iranian cineastes will also be honored this year for their lifetime achievements in children’s cinema.

Screen and stage actress Maryam Saadat, filmmaker Mahin Javaherian and former director of the Fajr Film Festival Alireza Rezadad are the three honorees.

Composer Hushang Kamkar receives
lifetime achievement award



Iranian composer Hushang Kamkar (R) accepts his lifetime achievement award from maestro Farhad Fakhreddini at Tehran’s Eyvan Shams Hall on August 18, 2019. (Nava.ir/Sam Sharafzadeh)

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Celebrated Iranian composer Hushang Kamkar, who is the leader of the Kamkars ensemble, was honored with a lifetime achievement award during a ceremony at Tehran’s Eyvan Shams Hall on Sunday.

Organized by Zemestan Literary Center, the ceremony was attended by a number of prominent Iranian musicians including Mohammadreza Darvishi, Kambiz Roshanravan, maestros Farhad Fakhreddini and Loris Tjeknavorian, tambur virtuoso Keikhosro Purnazeri, vocalist Shahram Nazeri and Iran House of Music managing director Hamidreza Nurbakhsh.

In his brief speech, Fakhreddini said that there are a few real masters in Iranian music and Hushang Kamkar is one of them.

“We owe that to Master Hassan Kamkar, his father, who brought up such artistic children,” he added.

Tjeknavorian said that he is honored that he had the opportunity to work with the prominent Kurdish musicians,

Kamkar and Nazeri.

Purnazeri expressed his hope that the Kamkars continue their hard work and release more albums in the near future.

Accepting the award, Kamkar noted that this is the first time he has been honored during his 50 years of work.

“This award is even more valuable and important to me than the Grammy Award,” he mentioned. He also asked the officials to support and honor the artists while they are still alive, not at the time they are long gone.

The Kamkars, led by Hushang Kamkar, is a Kurdish family of seven brothers and a sister, who have performed numerous concerts in the country and around the world and have released a number of music albums including “In Memory of Hafez”, “Darya”, “In Memory of Saba”, “Living Fire”, “Nightingale with a Broken Wing”, “Chant of Drums” and “Music From Kurdistan”.

Hushang, who has studied music in Italy and the U.S., was a university professor for over ten years. He is one of the members of the Iran House of Music.

Tjeknavorian, Sadrenoori collaborating on
“A Dialogue between Two Brothers”



Maestro Loris Tjeknavorian (R) and pianist Bardia Sadrenoori (L) acknowledge the audience after a performance at the honoring ceremony of the Iranian-Armenian set and costume designer Edna Zeinalian at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on August 14, 2019.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The renowned Iranian-Armenian maestro Loris Tjeknavorian and celebrated pianist Bardia Sadrenoori are collaborating on a new project named “A Dialogue between Two Brothers”.

“The extensive musical project is a special dialogue between the music of the East and West,” Tjeknavorian has already said.

Tjeknavorian has also said that he is really hopeful that the project can succeed and expand if everything goes well.

A string orchestra by Tjeknavorian performed part of the project in a concert held in honor of the Iranian-Armenian set and costume designer, Edna Zeinalian, at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on August 14.

“I proposed the idea of the project to maestro Tjeknavorian who warmly welcomed it, and the result was the concert performed at Vahdat Hall, which included part of the project,” Sadrenoori told Tehran Times.

He said that maestro Tjeknavorian called the project “A Dialogue between Two Brothers”,

and hoped that the project can introduce the culture of Iran, and also help familiarize people with different cultures in the world.

Edna Zeinalian received an award for her long brilliant career in theater. She began studying costume design at Tehran’s Alzahra University in 1972 and started working as a stage and costume designer at the Rudaki Foundation in 1978.

She has worked in over 100 theaters during her career spanning over 40 years.

The Stage and Costume Designers Society of Iran has dedicated a prize named after Zeinalian, which was also unveiled during the ceremony. The prize will be presented to a top stage and costume designer every year.

Zeinalian deems herself deeply indebted to her parents. “I was really lucky to have good teachers, the best of them was my mother,” she once said in an interview published in 2016.

“I also learned from my father to accept my failures and to try a new beginning in good spirits,” she added.

Korea’s EBS festival hosting
Iran’s “Beloved”

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Yasser Talebi’s acclaimed documentary “Beloved” is on screen at the main section of the EBS International Documentary Festival, which is currently underway in the Korean capital of Seoul.

The film is competing with 11 other documentaries including “Where We Belong” by Jacqueline Zund from Switzerland, “A Dog Called Money” by Seamus Murphy from Ireland, “A Step Forward” by Atsushi Kasezawa from Japan and “Honeyland” by Ljubomir Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska from Macedonia.

“Beloved” is about an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder’s existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people.

The documentary has received many awards at several international festivals.

The most recent honors were bestowed on July 13 during the Sole Luna Doc Film Festival in Palermo, Italy. The film received the best photography award and the High School Students Award in the Journey Section



A scene from Iranian director Yasser Talebi’s documentary “Beloved”.

It was also honored at the 67th Trento Film Festival in May in Italy. The film received the jury special mention and a UNESCO honorable mention.

In addition, “Beloved” has taken first place among the top five mid-length films selected by audience votes at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto, Canada in May.

EBS International Documentary Festival, which aims at promoting the world’s best documentaries, will come to an end on August 25.

Film scores by Victor Young
to be reviewed in Tehran

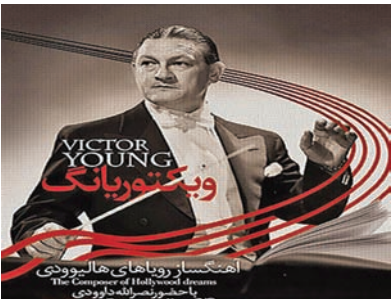
A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center will be hosting a session on Thursday to review film scores by prominent American composer Victor Young.

Iranian musician and scholar Nasrollah Davudi is scheduled to discuss a number of Young’s works during the session.

Young received 22 Academy Award nominations for his work in film, twice being nominated four times in a single year, but he did not win during his lifetime. He received his only Oscar posthumously for his score for “Around the World in Eighty Days” in 1956.

Despite not winning the award in his lifetime, Victor Young holds the record for most Oscar nominations prior to winning the first award.

Among his credits are “Anything Goes”, “The Gladiator, Golden Boy”,



A poster for a review session for Victor Young’s film scores at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center.

“For Whom the Bell Tolls”, “The Uninvited”, “Samson and Delilah”, “My Favorite Spy”, “Payment on Demand”, “The Quiet Man” and “Something to Live For”.

His last scores were for the 1957 films “Omar Khayyam”, “Run of the Arrow” and “China Gate”, which were released after his death in 1956.