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ICCIMA hosts Iran-Bulgaria business forum

TEHRAN — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted an Iran-Bulgaria business forum on Saturday in which the two sides explored ways of expanding economic cooperation, ICCIMA portal reported.

The event was attended by senior officials and businessmen from both sides including Iranian Ambassador to Sofia Seyed Moham-

mad Javad Rasouli, ICCIMA Vice Chairman Hossein Selahvarzi and Bulgarian counselor in Tehran Radoslav Gergov.

In the forum which was organized by the Iran-Bulgaria joint economic committee, the two sides emphasized transportation as a potent area for mutual cooperation and called for establishing a direct flight between the two countries. **→2**

Macron gets G7 nod over plan to defuse tensions with Iran

TEHRAN — French President Emmanuel Macron said on Sunday that G7 leaders had agreed to a joint action on Iran with the aim of defusing tensions and opening a new negotiation with Tehran.

"We agreed on what we wanted to say jointly on Iran," Reuters quoted Macron as saying. "There is a message from the G7 on our objectives and the fact that we share them is important, which avoids divisions that in the end weaken everybody."

"Everyone wants to avoid a conflict, Donald Trump was extremely clear on that point."

It came after a French official said the French president had shared details of the plan to ease tensions with Iran during his working lunch with President Donald Trump at the G-7 summit.

The official, who was speaking anonymously in accordance with the French presidency's customary practices, said France has been working for several weeks on the plan, the Associated Press reported on Saturday. **→2**

Iranian Navy ready to escort Adrian Darya 1

TEHRAN — Iranian Navy is ready to escort the Adrian Darya 1 oil tanker if necessary, says Habibollah Sayyari, the deputy army chief for coordination affairs.

The Army's naval forces are ready to escort the Adrian Darya 1 if it is required by the country's authorities, Rear Admiral Sayyari said on Sunday, according to Mehr.

On July 4, Britain's naval forces unlawfully seized the vessel, then known as Grace 1, and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil in the Strait of Gibraltar on the pretext that the supertanker had been suspected of carrying crude to Syria in violation of the European Union's unilateral sanctions against the war-torn country. **→3**

Zarif pays surprise visit to France

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday paid a surprise visit to Biarritz, France, where the G7 leaders were meeting.

The visit came only hours after sources said French President Emmanuel Macron had been given mission by his G7 counterparts to engage in talks with Iran.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said the chief Iranian diplomat was going to France to "continue talks over recent initiatives between the presidents of Iran and France" to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

Mousavi told the national TV that Zarif visited

Biarritz for talks on the details of the proposals by France and Iran to save the JCPOA and defuse tension in the Persian Gulf region.

However, there was no talks of the details.

According to Reuters, a French presidency official said Zarif is in talks with his French counterpart on the sidelines of the G7 leaders' summit to discuss what conditions would de-escalate tensions between Washington and Tehran.

"Zarif came to Paris on Friday with Iranian propositions which obviously must be refined," the French official said.

"Yesterday (Saturday) there was a substantial discussion between G7 leaders and it is impor-

tant to now update Zarif in order to keep closing the gap...on the conditions with which we could de-escalate the tensions and create breathing space for negotiations."

No discussions are planned between Iranian and American officials at this stage, the official said, adding that Zarif's visit had been finalized on Saturday evening.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry also confirmed that there would be no meeting between Iranian and American officials.

Macron said on Sunday that G7 leaders had agreed to a joint action on Iran with the aim of defusing tensions and opening a new negotiation with Tehran. **→2**

'Indonesia interested in exchanging information, defense equipment with Iran'

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN (MNA) — Indonesian Ambassador Octavino Alimudin in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency said Indonesia is interested in exchanging information and defense equipment with Iran to fight terrorism.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ How do you evaluate the current level of economic, political, and cultural relations between Iran and Indonesia? And what steps do you think you have taken to develop relations between two countries during your mission in Iran?

A: The two countries are really in good level of cooperation. During the last one year, the vice president of Iran visited Indonesia and also Indonesian Minister of Health and Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection

came to Iran. The two countries have a very steady and developing cooperation in the fields of youth, women's empowerment and health sectors. In general, both countries support each other, and share almost same views regarding to human rights and also multilateral forums since Indonesia currently sits as the non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. We have sent several message to the international community that we are very close to each other for example we showed our solidarity with Iran in UN security council after terrorist attacks in Sistan and Baluchistan province. Similar to Indonesia, Iranian President H.E. Hassan Rouhani sent many congratulatory or sympathy messages on any notable events happened in Indonesia.

So this year, we are very happy because the Islamic Republic of Iran supported and helped

us when we held our election in Iran. Almost 280 or 290 Indonesian people casted their votes in Tehran and Qom successfully because of the support of Iran.

In cultural fields, many Indonesian feel some inheritance of Persian cultures in Indonesia brought by many traders to Indonesia and we have many things in common.

Mayor of our Bengkulu city visited Iran this year and realized that Ashura commemoration is also organized in Bengkulu city. So we plan to invite some Iranian cultural centers to attend the event.

For the first time I landed in Tehran in 2016, we organized some paintings exhibitions. We participated in food festival in Zanjan. We will do cultural events again again this year hopefully by October. We hope we can organize it in a big place. **→7**



ARTICLE

Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the TehranTimes
Economy Desk

Technical, engineering services export, a privilege to boost foreign trade

According to the Association of Iranian Exporters of Technical and Engineering Services, Iran has the potential and capability to export technical and engineering services worth \$25 billion in a year.

Taking this huge potential into consideration, boosting such exports would be an advantage for expanding the country's foreign trade specially with the neighbors.

Some Iranian companies including Mapna Group have already had fruitful presence in completion of infrastructure projects in several countries including Iraq and Oman and if such contribution will be expanded it will be a good source of export revenues while job creation.

Syria is also an important destination for the export of Iranian technical and engineering services as the country needs reconstruction. It is a proper opportunity for the presence of Iranian companies especially private sector contractors.

Hassan Danaeifar, the chairman of the headquarters for expanding economic ties with Iraq and Syria, says: "We can cooperate in all economic, commercial and industrial fields with the Syrians and exports of technical and engineering services to that country is a good area for cooperation. Iranian companies can transfer their experience to Syrians for reconstructing their industries and agriculture sector in a proper ground for activity."

As the electricity sector accounts for the lion's share of Iran's technical and engineering exports, and also given that Iranian companies' presence in water projects of other countries (construction of dams, water and wastewater treatment plants, and water transferring pipelines) is rising, Energy Ministry of Iran is seriously following up the objective of boosting technical and engineering services exports from electricity and water sectors.

Of the water and electricity projects under implementation by an Iranian company in a foreign country it could be referred to the project for building a dam, a water transferring tunnel and a 120-MW power plant in Sri Lanka which is already 94 percent complete. **→4**



ARTICLE

Yuram Abdullah Weiler
Analyst and journalist

In the best interests of Americans: A response to a Congresswoman

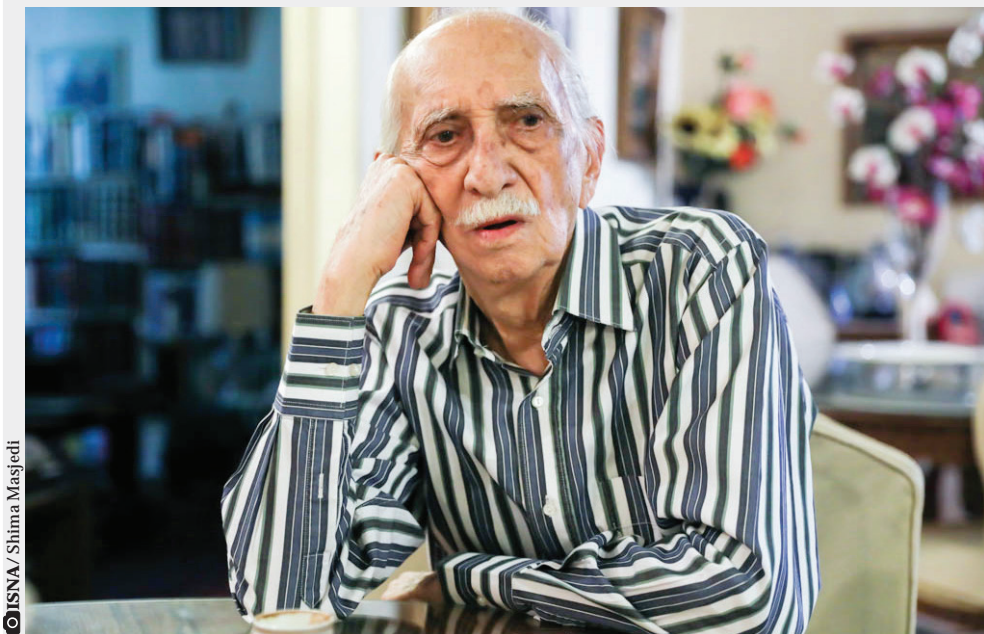
"It's my job to make sure that the United States government acts in the best interests of Americans, and I'll continue working tirelessly to hold our government to the highest standards."

— U.S. Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small (D, NM)

Occasionally, I still write to U.S. Congressional leaders when my outrage over absurd policies becomes unbearable, as was (and is) the case with Washington's 40-year-old vendetta against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since I am regarded as a person of no economic significance, at least as far as U.S. political leaders are concerned, I rarely receive responses and when I do, they are inevitably form letters most likely written by staff members. Such is the case with an email I had written to several U.S. politicians voicing concern over the escalation of tensions with Iran.

The email response from Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small was a lengthy form letter that included a number of aphorisms on the U.S. that begged for a response. Among them was the above epigram, as well as her stating, "The U.S. has many tools-including diplomacy, trade, foreign aid-to pursue our goals of peace and prosperity around the world." It was the assertion of the U.S. pursuing goals of peace and prosperity around the world that really pushed me over the top. The blatant contradiction between this statement and the reality of Washington's state-sponsored terrorism by economic sanctions and destabilization for regime change was so jarring that I was compelled to draft the response that follows.

Hon. Xochitl Torres Small
U.S. Congresswoman
430 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
August 23, 2019
Dear Congresswoman Torres Small,
Thank you for your response concerning U.S. military presence around the world. As you correctly point out, the conduct of the military and governmental officials has a profound effect on the lives of citizens of other countries and their perceptions of America. **→3**



© ISNA / Shima Masjedi

"Green House" actor Dariush Asadzadeh dies at 96

TEHRAN — The veteran stage and screen actor Dariush Asadzadeh, who played roles in the popular TV series "The Green House" and "Samndun" during the 1990s, died at his home in Tehran on Sunday, his family lawyer announced. He was 96.

Asadzadeh was born in Kermanshah and began his acting career when he was 20 and worked for many years as an actor, writer and theater director. **→16**

Shared vision binds Iran-China relations

By Mohmmad Javad Zarif

As foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I have had the honor of both travelling to China and hosting my Chinese counterparts in Tehran on several occasions. On such occasions, it has never been lost on me that I am participating in a millennia's old ritual between two great civilizations. The relationship between Iran and China stretches back 2,000 years when explorers and merchants made contact along the Silk Road. There, the people of our two countries first learned to appreciate the greatness of each other's civilizations. These early contacts set the stage for thousands of years of a special connection between two of the greatest, most advanced and most enduring civilizations in the world.

Today, China has become an indispensable economic partner of Iran and the two countries are strategic partners on many fronts. But in order to overcome the emerging challenges which have impeded the ability of many nations to achieve sustainable development, it is imperative for both China and Iran to strengthen their ties more than the past. China and Iran face challenges and strive to achieve goals in terms of sustainable development, the protection of the environment, the eradication of poverty and suppression of extremism and terrorism that threaten the world every day. We believe that common problems need common solutions thus requiring greater cooperation, coordination and close communication.

I would posit here that while our glorious past inspires us to look to one another and our present relationship sets the framework for our cooperation, it is indeed our futures that bind us. China and Iran share a vision of sovereign states with independent foreign policies across the Asian continent being connected, prospering together and realizing their potential and their true places in the world.

We both favor multilateralism in global affairs but that has come under attack now more than ever. History is littered with exploitative powers but China has sought connection to countries around the world with a focus on mutual respect, dignity and joint interests. China and Iran support fair and balanced commercial ties around the world and we both face overseas hostility by populist unilateralist bigotry.

Iran showed constructive flexibility to reach a compromise with world powers in a nuclear deal that became recognized as a historic diplomatic achievement and an important pillar of a global arms control regime. China was a part of those negotiations and has shown fidelity to its commitments, but certain participants have not. How we respond to this maximalism and this blatant violation of international commitments and law may have a defining impact on our ability to reach for that shared vision of our continent's future.

It is here that the special role of regionally and internationally influential countries in the world - like China and Iran - is critical to save international peace and security for all. The most important and effective response is for us to support one another's sovereignty and expand our economic cooperation. As our forefathers did in ancient times, we must follow the Silk Road to an inclusive cultural and economic enrichment. Iran has already begun its efforts to implement this idea.

Inspired by the Belt and Road Initiative, and to build strategic mutual trust, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China have jointly worked on a guideline for future cooperation, which is a manifestation of the fact that the two countries' cooperation is now entering a new phase.

Any successful strategic partnership demands a strong foundation of economic relations that benefits both parties. As we move forward, it is essential to look toward future trends. The economy of the future will be based on knowledge, technology and innovation. In order to position our economies and commercial ties to benefit from the current outlook, we express our determination to engage and contribute effectively to China's plan to build a world-leading base for science, technology and innovation.

Regarding current developments, Iran strongly supports China's position on the so-called "trade war" and regards the protectionist approach of the U.S. and its abandonment of rules-based trade concepts as being counterproductive, unreasonable and destructive. Moreover, Iran has always strongly supported the "One China Policy", praised the achievements of "one country, two systems" and rejected any interference in the internal affairs of China.

Iran commends China's continued support for Iran's peaceful nuclear program and effective actions in order to overcome illegal and unilateral sanctions that have hindered Iran from realizing the economic benefits promised in the deal.

There is a strong consensus among international relations scholars that the twenty-first century will be an Asian century. As much of the challenges faced by Iran and China, certain quarters of the West have shown, not every actor in the international community is ready to embrace that future. In these circumstances, the steadfast cooperation between China and Iran, as two countries with a deep commitment to a connected and prosperous Asia, is essential and indispensable.

(Source: Global Times)

Canada taking hostage welfare of 400,000 Iranian expatriates for political ends

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry says the Ottawa government has been taking hostage the welfare of 400,000 Iranians living in Canada for political ends.

Speaking to ISNA on Saturday, Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said recent remarks about resumption of consular ties by Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland are "paradoxical, sort of dodging responsibilities, and unacceptable".

He noted that Iran's efforts over the past 7 years to resume consular relations with Canada have failed, with the result that Iranians cannot receive consular services from Canada in their own country.

In 2012, the previous conservative government of Canada abruptly severed diplomatic relations with Iran, shuttering its embassy in Tehran and expelling Iranian diplomats from Canada.

The current Liberal government campaigned in 2015 on re-establishing diplomatic relations with Iran but it has been unable to deliver on that foreign policy promise.

Zarif pays surprise visit to France

1 → “We agreed on what we wanted to say jointly on Iran,” Reuters quoted Macron as saying. “There is a message from the G7 on our objectives and the fact that we share them is important, which avoids divisions that in the end weaken everybody.”

“Everyone wants to avoid a conflict, Donald Trump was extremely clear on that point.”

It came after a French official said the French president had shared details of the plan to ease tensions with Iran during his working lunch with President Donald Trump at the G-7 summit.

Iran will not negotiate with Trump under any circumstances: advisor

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Hossein Dehghan, an advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said that U.S. President Donald Trump reneges on promises and cannot be trusted and Iran will not negotiate with him under any circumstances.

“Negotiation is not good or bad per se. However, it is very important for us who is the other side of the negotiation. We say respectfully that we do not see Trump worthy of negotiation, because we do not see him as a person who make a promise and fulfil it. He is a businessman who just want to empty the people’s pockets and look at everybody with this viewpoint,” Tasnim quoted him as saying on Sunday in an interview with CBS News.

He added, “Trump seeks to gain concessions in negotiations and we do not accept it. Negotiations should be held in equal situation and not with someone like Trump of course.” He noted that Trump seeks “internal exploitation” for the 2020 presidential elections and not settling an issue with Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in interview with France 24 on Friday that Iranians never negotiate under duress.



“It will never work. Iranians never negotiate under duress. Intimidation is not acceptable. We will continue to rely on our own people in order to move forward and I’m sure we will,” Zarif said.

Iranians respond well to respect, but

“He (Trump) is a businessman who just want to empty the people’s pockets and look at everybody with this viewpoint.”

‘Iran’s talks with Europeans proceeding positively’

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Abdolreza Faraji-Rad, Iran's former ambassador to Norway, has said that Iran's talks with the European countries to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, are proceeding positively.

In an interview with ISNA published on Sunday, he pointed to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's Scandinavian tour, saying, “When these countries listen to Iran's words, the remarks and position of Iran can be effective to prevent them from accepting the United States’ demands. However, I am sure that none of these countries are willing to cooperate with the United States.”

In his whirlwind tour of Scandinavian countries started on August 19, Zarif visited Finland, Sweden and Norway.

“The Scandinavian countries have rather more independent policies compared to certain

other European countries. The three Scandinavian countries oppose Trump's policies, because none of Trump's policies on NATO, Climate Accord, JCPOA or other things are being agreed by the European countries,” Faraji-Rad remarked.

He also said that Zarif's talks can also help implementation of INSTEX.

“As you know, implementation of INSTEX is under the U.S. pressure. So, the more the European countries invest on INSTEX, the more difficult for the U.S. to sanction countries,” he said.

INSTEX – the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges - is a European special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between Europe and Iran.

The European Union announced on June 28 that INSTEX has gone into effect.

Secretary General of the European External

Action Service (EEAS) Helga Schmid said on July 11 that countries outside the European Union will join INSTEX.

According to AP, she said that beyond the 10 EU nations that are already part of the system, she could “share with you that more, also non-EU member states, will join.”

Apart from the three EU member nations that are party to the deal - Britain, Germany and France - seven more EU member states have committed to take part.

Zarif said in July that INSTEX should not be a means to carry out U.S. orders.

“INSTEX is a preliminary phase and has not yet been implemented completely, and if it's implemented, it is essential that oil income enter it. It should not be in a way that INSTEX be a means to carry out the U.S. orders and they tell the Europeans that how INSTEX should work,” he told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

never to threats and intimidation, the chief diplomat noted.

He also said in July that Iran will not negotiate under pressure, suggesting that the United States must first stop “economic terrorism” against Iran if it seeks negotiations.

“Negotiation under pressure has never been possible. They must stop pressure and economic terrorism against Iran and after that they can talk about implementing the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal],” Zarif told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

In an interview with NBC News published on Tuesday, Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, 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,” Shamkhani said.

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.

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 to renew Iran's proposal for maritime security and non-aggression pact.

He was also in France on Friday, where he held talks with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Zarif said his talks with Macron on how to implement the JCPOA were productive.

“France presented some suggestions to Iran on how to implement the JCPOA and the steps that both sides need to take. We also presented some suggestions on how to fully implement the JCPOA,” Zarif stated.

In an interview with France 24 aired on Friday, he said, “We are making progress but we still need to move forward and President Macron still needs to talk to his European partners and others.”

Foreign Ministry blacklists U.S.-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has added the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) and its director, Mark Dubowitz, to the sanctions list of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The so-called FDD, a Washington-based policy think tank, focuses on national security and foreign policy, and is widely regarded as a neoconservative institute, with regular forums and briefings in Washington, on Capitol Hill, and roundtables for military officers, diplomats, and the public.

Dubowitz himself heads FDD's Iran team, which regards the Islamic Republic as a threat to America and its allies.

According to its own website, FDD's Iran team covers every angle of the Iran portfolio and includes some of Washington's top experts on sanctions and among many issues, it addresses Iran's military power with its missile capabilities occupying a special focus of attention. The think tank conducts detailed research, develops “actionable and comprehensive policy options”, and appears regularly in media.

The following is the text of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's statement on blacklisting the FDD and its CEO, released last on Saturday:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

1) Considering that the unilateral and illegal economic terrorism (or the so-called economic sanctions) imposed by the ruling regime in the United States of America – which has been plotted and enforced with the objective of bringing about



regime change in the Islamic Republic of Iran or affecting the Iranian government's policies, decisions and measures, or even worse, harming Iran's national and public security and damaging its independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty – have had practical consequences in many cases, such as endangering the lives, health, and freedom of people, including freedom of legitimate domestic and foreign business activities, damaging public property and facilities, causing serious harm to the environment, posing risks to aerial security, and threatening safety of maritime navigation, among others, in an extensive and dire manner, and has reached the brink of a full-fledged economic war and terrorism against people of Iran;

Warship U.S. sent to ‘deter’ Iran ‘steers clear’ of Iran

(Press TV) — A large aircraft carrier strike force that the United States sent to the Middle East in May on an accelerated schedule to “deter” Iran has been “steering clear” of the country since arrival, staying as far away as the Arabian Sea for fear of Iranian military strikes in case of a potential conflict.

The dispatch earlier this year of the USS Abraham Lincoln to the Middle East ahead of schedule was meant by the U.S. “to send a clear and unmistakable message” to Iran. And even as Iranian military officials knew the deployment was not extraordinary — the U.S. Fifth Fleet is headquartered in Bahrain — it ratcheted up tensions significantly at the time.

Tensions first rose between Iran and the U.S. in May 2018, when U.S. President Donald Trump pulled America out of a multi-lateral deal with Iran and started attempting to drive Iran's oil sales presumably to zero.

On May 5, 2019, Trump's National Security Adviser and known Iran hawk John Bolton said in a statement that the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force were being sent to the Middle East “to send a clear and unmistakable message” to Iran. A U.S. official told Reuters at the time that the forces “have been ordered to the region as a deterrence” against Iran.

But the warship has never ventured

anywhere near Iranian waters.

The New York Times said in an article on Friday that, since arriving in the region, the USS Abraham Lincoln naval group has avoided both the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, “the crucial oil-tanker highways it is supposed to protect.”

“The 5,600 men and women aboard this nuclear-powered aircraft carrier do not venture near Iranian waters,” it said.

“[T]he Lincoln remains in the North Arabian Sea, and at times more than 600 nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz. Often, the Lincoln is off the coast of Oman, not far from Muscat,” the article said.

Commanders on board the warship and

interviewed by the Times said they was staying far from Iran to avoid an “escalation.” However, a fear of Iranian reprisal in case of a potential confrontation seemed to be the real preoccupation of the American forces on the USS Abraham Lincoln.

To avoid Iranian military forces, the American warship is even prepared to go through much worse weather and sea conditions.

“Trolling the North Arabian Sea, with its huge waves and fierce undertow, fighter pilots on a recent Saturday battled wind gusts to catch the wire as they landed on the pitching carrier. Unlike the far calmer Persian Gulf, the North Arabian Sea at this time of the year is ferocious.”

Macron gets G7 nod over plan to defuse tensions with Iran

1 → The diplomat said France and the United States share the same interests, which he claimed to be preventing “a nuclear-armed Iran.”

France's plan would allow Iran to export oil for a limited amount of time. In exchange, Iran would need to fully implement the 2015 nuclear deal, reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf and open talks, according to the AP.

In recent days, Macron has taken steps

in trying to save the 2015 nuclear accord, which has been unraveling since Trump pulled the U.S. out of the agreement. Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany have remained in the accord.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday met with Macron in Paris to discuss the implementation of the nuclear deal, which is also known as the JCPOA.

“France presented some suggestions to Iran on how to implement the JCPOA and the steps that both sides need to take. We also presented some suggestions on how to fully implement the JCPOA,” Zarif stated.

“The talks were good and productive,” he said, adding, “Of course, it depends on how the European Union can carry out the commitments within the JCPOA and also the commitments that they made after the

JCPOA and America's exit.”

Zarif reiterated Tehran's long-held position that it is not possible to renegotiate the nuclear deal.

Trump has adopted a maximum pressure policy against Iran since he walked away from the JCPOA. The policy includes sanctions on Iran's economy, especially its oil exports, and bans on top Iranian figures and organizations.

U.S. stance on Iran nuclear deal is a threat to Europe, Zarif says

Iran says the crisis over the nuclear deal raises questions over Europe's independence from the United States which is "imposing its will" on allies.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said he was "happy" that French President Emmanuel Macron was taking the lead in trying to hold the crumbling agreement together following Washington's withdrawal.

In an interview with Euronews published on Saturday, Zarif said he held "a very good discussion" with Macron in Paris ahead of the Group of Seven (G7) summit in Biarritz. "We discussed with Macron how the U.S. could come back, and how Europe and the international community can live up to their commitments, independent of the U.S."

"President Macron has been trying to do his best," he said. "Our partners in Europe have to make a decision, not about Iran but about how they want to deal with the U.S. — whether they want to have independence or whether the U.S. can impose its will."

The deal is "not an optional arrangement" but rather it is backed by a UN Security Council resolution, he added.

"If the U.S. were to impose its will on Europe to abide by international law it would be bad but it would be justifiable. Now the U.S. is imposing will on the rest of the world to violate international law. That's totally unacceptable, and for Europe, whose future is based on multilateralism



and the rule of law, this is a threat against the future of Europe."

He said the nuclear deal was imperfect but was still the "best possible" solution.

"It wasn't done overnight almost every word of it has gone through difficult nego-

tiation so I know it's not the best deal," he said. "It's not what I wanted, not what the U.S. wanted, not what France wanted ... we all have our complaints but that's what a multilateral agreement is all about, you can't get everything you want."

He said Iran's recent escalations, such as the work on its uranium enrichment program, were reversible.

"If Europe — alone or with the U.S. — decided to fulfil their part of the obligation then we can easily within hours return to full implementation of the deal," he said.

While Iran's economy was hit hard by the reintroduction of U.S. sanctions, it has partially recovered, Zarif said.

"Our economy is stabilizing, we have gone through the worst period, our currency has recovered on third of its value, we are back in green territory with our growth," he said.

"We suffered tremendously last year and the U.S. is responsible for huge damages on Iran — hundreds of billions of dollars which one day they will have to pay."

At a time of heightened friction between Tehran and Washington, Iran on Thursday displayed a domestically-built, long-range, surface-to-air missile air defense system.

In a bid to de-escalate tensions, Macron on Wednesday proposed softening sanctions on Iran or providing a compensation mechanism in return for full compliance with the pact.

Zarif said on Thursday that Iran was prepared to work on French proposals to salvage the nuclear deal, but added that Tehran would not tolerate U.S. interference in the Persian Gulf.

Ex-presidential aide hails Judiciary's anti-corruption campaign

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Former presidential aide for civil rights Shahindokht Molaverdi has hailed the anti-corruption measures adopted by the Judiciary, saying the recent measures have given people a glimmer of hope.

"It seems that the quick, precise and decisive fight against corruption, which has been done without leniency, discrimination and double-standards..., has given people a lot of hope about the existence of a serious determination to fight [corruption]," ISNA on Sunday quoted Molaverdi as saying.



She emphasized that fair and transparent enforcement of convictions and penalties can restore public trust.

"People expect decisiveness and seriousness from the Judiciary in combating the roots [of corruption] and confronting the main instigators and corrupt individuals," she added.

Under its new head Ebrahim Raisi, the Judiciary has launched an anti-corruption crackdown which has so far seen the arrest of many individuals, including those working in the Judiciary.

"Officials of the Judiciary will not allow corruption to nest in any location within the system, and on the agenda must be finding the best way to recognize these [corrupt] individuals," Raisi said earlier this month.

"Anywhere within the administrative, judicial, economic, cultural or political system that becomes infected with corruption, we will confront it," he stated.

Last month, Judiciary spokesman Gholam Hossein Esmaili confirmed the arrest of Akbar Tabari, a deputy to former Judiciary chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larjani.

Speaking at a press conference, Esmaili said Tabari has been arrested for exerting influence on some legal cases and having unlawful and unethical relationships with regard to the cases.

Last week, Raisi said the Judiciary is determined to confront even those "white collars" who deem themselves as the red lines which the system cannot cross.

"In confronting corruption, we do not know any red lines except for [not] implementing the law," he said.

Hajj pilgrims to be home before Ashura

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — An official in charge of pilgrims' affairs has said all Iranian pilgrims who had traveled to Saudi Arabia for the annual Hajj rituals will return home before the Day of Ashura, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Hojjatolislam Abdolfattah Navvab, representative of the Leader in Hajj and pilgrimage affairs, made the remarks while speaking with an IRNA correspondent.

About 88,500 Iranians have traveled to Saudi Arabia since July 8 to perform this year's Hajj rituals.

The annual Hajj is a major religious duty for Muslims and must be performed at least once during the lifetime of a Muslim.

The Day of Ashura, which falls on September 9 this year, is the day of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the third Imam of Shia Muslims.

Iranian Navy ready to escort Adrian Darya 1, says admiral

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

On August 16, 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 United States has also threatened to aggressively enforce its sanctions on those potentially assisting the supertanker.

"The shipping sector is on notice that we will aggressively enforce U.S. sanctions," a State Department official told Reuters on Thursday.

In his Sunday remarks, Sayyari said Iran has many options to choose from in order to deal with the enemy's threats.



"The enemies should know that if they conduct any aggression against the Army and the armed forces, they will definitely face a crushing response," he said. He also pointed to the unveiling of a long-range surface-to-air missile system, dubbed "Bavar-373", saying, "No one believed that the children of the Islamic Revolution would be able to reach this technology."

On Thursday, Iran unveiled the missile system, saying it was developed as Iran needed a missile system stronger than the Russian S-300, given the increasing threats against the country.

President Hassan Rouhani, who attended the ceremony, hailed the production of the advanced missile system, reiterating that Bavar-373 is more powerful than S-300 missile system and is more like S-400.

Bavar-373 is a mobile missile defense system designed to intercept and destroy incoming hostile targets. The system employs missiles that have a maximum range of 300 kilometers. The system is capable of simultaneously detecting up to 300 targets, tracking 60 targets at once and engaging six targets at a time.

In the best interests of Americans: A response to a Congresswoman

1 → Likewise you assert that the U.S. has diplomacy, trade and foreign aid among tools available for pursuing its geopolitical objectives. Given the U.S. State Department's budget of around \$50 billion pales when compared to that of the Pentagon with almost \$700 billion, one is tempted to conclude that Washington does not place a high value on diplomacy.

I must, however, question your statement that the goals of the U.S. are "peace and prosperity around the world." From the coup engineered by the U.S. to topple the government of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran in 1953 to the more recent invasions of Iraq (2003), Libya (2011) and Syria (2011-present), it seems clear that, rather than "peace and prosperity," the U.S. has imposed pain, pestilence and poverty, and appears hell bent on causing more of the same with its obsession with regime change in Iran.

After seeing the chaos they created in the aftermath of their ill-conceived, illegal U.S. invasion of Iraq, which resulted in the formation and expansion of ISIS, how can U.S. leaders think that destabilizing the Islamic Republic of Iran would bring greater stability to the Middle East?

If peace and prosperity were truly U.S. goals, then a golden opportunity was missed when former Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami offered peace in a "grand bargain" with Washington in 2003, asking only for reasonable security and non-interference assurances. Incidentally, this noble offer came after George W. Bush had included Iran as a member of the "axis of evil" in his January 2002 State of the Union address.

Ending the U.S. support for Mohammad bin Salman's sanguinary war on the people of Yemen with your support of Senate Joint Resolution 7, had it not been vetoed, would have been a small step in the right direction, but one must look at the recent history of the country to understand the origins of the Ansar Allah movement (the so-called Houthis rebels), which is a popular uprising that began in 2011 in opposition to the U.S. and Saudi-imposed ruler, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Much to the consternation of the citizens of Yemen, the previous ruler, Ali Abdullah Saleh, had given carte blanche to U.S. drone attacks, allegedly against Al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula, but was a backer of the Ansar Allah movement after his resignation in 2012.

Over 56,000 have been killed and some 7 million affected by starvation and cholera as a result of this U.S.-backed Saudi-led war.

Is this peace and prosperity? No, it is in support of "ally" Saudi Arabia and is to the benefit of U.S. weapons manufacturers who profit from the arms sales.

Likewise, the record of U.S. involvement in Latin America is heavy in the suppression of popular liberation movements, the installation of right-wing dictators, and the funding and training of death squads. Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), Costa

Rica (1917), El Salvador (1979), Guatemala (1954), Nicaragua (1932), Paraguay (1954), Uruguay (1973) and the list goes on. U.S. support of the military junta associated death squads in El Salvador led to the slaughter of over 75,000 people alone.

Is this peace and prosperity?

No, it is supporting the interests of the United Fruit Company and other associated corporate interests.

Cuba has been a victim of U.S. economic terrorism since 1959, when Fidel Castro successfully ousted the U.S.-supported dictator, Fulgencio Batista.

U.S. intervention in Cuba dates back to at least 1823 when secretary of state John Quincy Adams threatened Spain with retaliation should it attempt to transfer Cuba to another colonial power.

The main concern of the U.S. at that time was fear that Cuban independence might incite another successful slave rebellion, as had been the case in Haiti in 1804.

As documented by George Washington University's treasure trove of documents, the U.S. attempted to assassinate Fidel Castro over 600 times, even hiring known Mafia leaders in its attempts.

Of course, there was the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 that led to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and the precipice of nuclear war, something which "impacts the wellbeing of people around the world."

The same holds for Venezuela, which continues to be victimized by Washington's warmongers after failed coups in 2002 and again this year.

Venezuela and its officials have been targeted by U.S. sanctions, which have devastated the economy yet the current U.S. administration blames this on the Venezuelan government.

The United Nations estimates that 90 percent of Venezuelans live in poverty and close to 4 million have fled to other Latin American countries and Caribbean nations. The U.S. government has budgeted \$500 million in aid for the economic woes it has created.

Is this within the scope of the alleged U.S. goal of peace and prosperity?

Ever since the newly independent country of Mexico had the audacity to abolish slavery in 1829, the U.S. has intervened in its southern neighbor's internal affairs both covertly and overtly.

By the blatant annexation of Texas in 1845, the U.S. provoked a war with Mexico, and went on to seize Mexican territory comprising the present day states of New Mexico, Arizona and California.

In all, Mexico has lost half of its territory to its northern neighbor.

Now, with the current occupant of the Oval Office, the venom and vitriol directed towards Mexico has reached unprecedented and unconscionable levels.

Where in these acts has the U.S. demonstrated any concern over peace and prosperity for the people of Mexico?



I believe that a casual reading of U.S. history should be enough to convince anyone that worldwide peace and prosperity are not within the goal of America's foreign policy.

Rather, as is as stated in the Pentagon's Joint Vision 2020, the true goal of the U.S. is having worldwide "full spectrum dominance," which is claimed to be necessary due to "the global interests of the United States and the continuing existence of a wide range of potential threats to those interests."

I think it would be naive for one to claim that those nebulous interests referred to are congruent with the best interests of Americans.

Regarding your pledge of "working tirelessly to hold our government to the highest standards," might I suggest that returning the U.S. to the observance of international law should be one of them? Specifically, by its unilateral pullout from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is not the U.S. government in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231?

At a minimum, the U.S. stands accusable of nonperformance of its commitments under the JCPOA.

I would be happy to discuss these issues with you further and look forward to your response.

Regards,
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Las Cruces, NM 88007

No Iranian positions hit by Israeli strikes in Syria: Former IRGC commander

(Press TV) — A senior Iranian official has dismissed as mere "lies" the Israeli regime's claims that its overnight air raids hit Iranian targets near the Syrian capital city of Damascus.

Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of Iran's Expediency Council, was reacting on Sunday to a statement by the Israeli military, which claimed the regime had launched attacks against Iranian sites on Syrian soil.

"This is a lie and is not true," Rezaei, a former chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), told Iranian Labor News Agency (ILNA), emphasizing, "America and Israel do not have the power to attack Iran's centers and positions and the Zionist regime's claims about targeting Iranian positions are lies."

The Israeli military claimed its strikes had prevented an attack on the Israeli-occupied territories "using killer drones."

In a statement issued just minutes after the Israeli army announced its attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the military's "major operational effort."



Syria's official SANA news agency, however, reported that the Arab country's air defenses had intercepted Israeli missiles flying above Damascus before they could inflict damage on targets in the capital.

It added that the hostile targets were dealt with efficiently before they could reach their destinations south of Damascus.

Rezaei further reaffirmed that Iran's advisory centers in Syria have not been harmed.

"Measures taken jointly by Israel and America in Syria and Iraq are against international regulations and defense forces of Syria and Iraq will soon respond to them," he pointed out.

The official was apparently referring to

the recent wave of air raids on positions of pro-government Iraqi forces, which are said to be linked to the Israeli regime and the U.S.

Iran has frequently announced that it has no forces operating on the ground in Syria and has been only offering military advisory support to Syria at the request of the Damascus government to enable its army to speed up its gains on various fronts against terror outfits.

Israel has launched recurrent attacks on Syria in defiance of all international laws and regulations.

The regime claims the attacks are targeted at certain forces linked to Iran, but such raids are widely viewed as a means of support for the foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists, which have been taking stinging blows from the Syrian army in recent years.

The latest such attacks come as Syrian military forces are taking back control of more territories from terrorists.

Syria has condemned the Israeli attacks while rejecting the regime's claims about the presence of any Iranian forces in the country.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	269225.3
IFX	3561.56

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,868 rials
GBP	51,578 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$58.80/b
WTI	\$54.17/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.50/b
Gold	\$1,528.50/oz
Silver	\$17.48/oz
Platinum	\$860.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Zadboom appointed new acting head of TPO

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Iranian Industry Minister Reza Rahmani appointed Hamid Zadboom as the new acting head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), TPO announced on Sunday.



Zadboom which was previously a deputy at TPO, has also worked as Iran's ambassador in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Mohammadreza Modoudi was appointed as the acting head of TPO in November 2018 after the ex-TPO head Mojtaba Khosrotaj announced his resignation following the implementation of a new law banning employment of the retired officials.

BOK likely to freeze base interest rate amid Japan factor, uncertainties

With growing economic uncertainties and ongoing trade tensions with Japan, the South Korean central bank is highly likely to freeze the base interest rate at an upcoming meeting of its Monetary Policy Board, market analysts said on August 25.

According to theinvestor.co.kr, the Bank of Korea is slated to hold its rate-setting Monetary Policy Board meeting on August 30.

On July 18 the central bank cut the country's policy rate to 1.5 percent, citing mounting external uncertainties. It has also lowered its growth outlook for this year by 0.3 percentage point, to 2.2 percent from 2.5 percent.



In a report handed to the parliament last week, BOK said “although the impact of Japan’s export restrictions on our economy are still limited, if the situation deteriorates and issues occur in securing materials and equipment for Korean businesses, the impact will grow larger, more than just regulating the price, including raising tariffs.”

BOK Gov. Lee Ju-yeol has said earlier that the central bank will respond to worsening macroeconomics with monetary policy measures when necessary, hinting at additional policy rate cuts to stimulate the economy.

According to Korea Customs Service data, the country's exports declined 13.3 percent in the first 20 days of August from a year earlier to \$24.9 billion, while consumer prices stayed below the 1 percent threshold in July for the seventh consecutive month.

Market analysts said the central bank may carry out an additional base interest rate cut within this year, reflecting escalating concerns over the impact of Japan's latest export curbs and the Korean government's recent decision to terminate an intelligence-sharing pact with the neighboring country.

The fact that half of the world's 30 major countries, including the U.S., have lowered their policy rates since July also lends weight to the likelihood of a further rate cut, experts said.

“In response to a sluggish economy, we expect that more countries will join the move to lower the base interest rate,” said researchers from the Korea Center for International Finance.

Market analysts said the central bank would probably cut the base rate further at Monetary Policy Board meetings slated for October 17 and November 29, considering that the U.S. Federal Reserve is expected to lower its base rate later in the year.

Industry ministry takes major steps for promoting domestic production, exports

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has implemented several programs for promoting domestic production and increasing exports in the current Iranian calendar year.

Coming under seven major axes, the ministry's programs mainly focus on developing and supporting domestic production as well as expanding exports to the neighboring countries.

Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), supporting the country's exporters and creating specialized working groups in order to promote exports to the neighboring countries, reviving the country's idle production units and small and medium sized mines, supporting domestic auto part manufacturers, holding exhibitions for encouraging domestic production, signing co-operation agreements with knowledge-based companies and universities are among the major steps taken by the industry ministry in order to promote domestic production and boost exports.

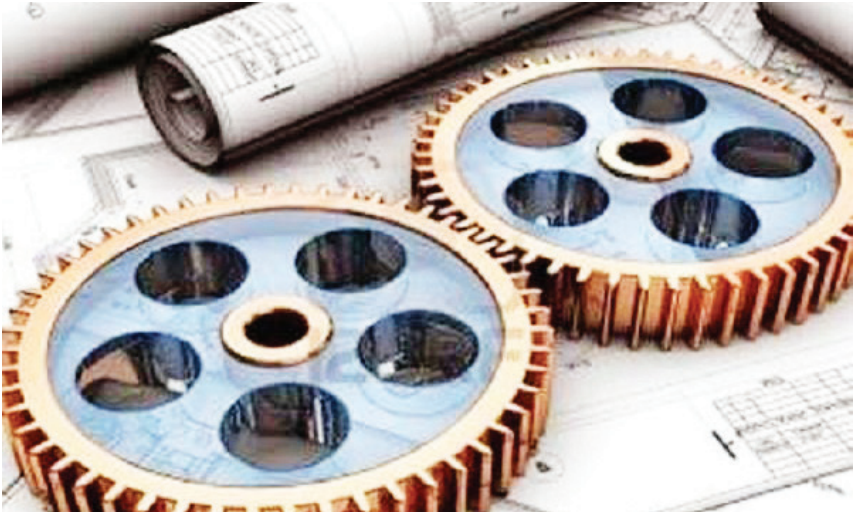
What follows is a summary of some of the steps that have been taken by Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

■ **Tavaniran system**

Launching a system (known as Tavaniran) for registering the country's production units' information in order to create a database for future references has been one of the major steps took by the industry ministry in order to promote domestic production.

■ **1st exhibition of domestic production opportunities**

Holding the country's first exhibition of domestic production opportunities and manufacturing boom was another major



program followed through by the ministry.

The exhibition hosted over 220 companies active in various fields like automotive and spare parts, household appliances, mineral industries, oil, gas and petrochemical industries, telecommunications and marine industries.

In the exhibition industry parties active in various fields like automotive and spare parts, household appliances, mineral industries, oil, gas and petrochemical industries, telecommunications and marine industries presented their technological or financial needs and requirements and signed several cooperation agreements with knowledge supply partners such as universities, research centers, knowledge-based companies, investors, entrepreneurs as well as fundraising and supportive organizations which would provide them with their technological, technical or even financial requirements.

■ **Adding new items to imports blacklist**

Another major step that the industry ministry took in order to support domestic production was to ban the imports of commodities which their similar products were being produced inside the country.

In mid-July Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said that the imports of 148 new commodities has been banned by the ministry to rise the number of such items to 1487.

■ **Supporting production units in flood-hit regions**

Supporting production units to resume operation in the country's flood-hit regions was yet another important program followed and done by the industry ministry.

Over 321 production units resumed operation with the support of the ministry after hit by devastating flood in early March

and April.

■ **Introducing a plan for expanding exports to neighboring countries**

Introducing a plan for expanding exports to the country's 15 neighbors was another important step taken by the ministry in the current Iranian year.

Signing 22 industrial and trade agreements with Iraq and establishing 141 specialized tables for improving exports to various target countries were among the outcomes of this major plan.

■ **Reviving small mines**

Reviving the country's small mines has been among the industry ministry's top priorities in the current year.

Previously, due to lack of liquidity and infrastructure, exploration projects were not seen economically viable for these mines, but now with ministry focused on encouraging domestic production they have once again come under the spotlight.

In this regard, seven provinces were surveyed for activation of small and medium-sized mines and 150 mines were put on agenda to be revived for which so far 79 executive packages have been prepared and introduced.

■ **Supporting auto part manufacturers**

Allocating 40 trillion rials (about \$953 million) for supporting domestic auto parts manufacturers has been another major program executed by the ministry.

According to Seyed Reza Mofidi, the director general of the industry ministry's automotive and transportation industries office, so far nearly 7.4 trillion rials (about \$177 million) worth of deals have been signed with domestic auto part manufacturers in this office, which have saved the country over €85 million.

ICCIMA hosts Iran-Bulgaria business forum

1 → Speaking in the event Mohammad Javad Rasouli put the two countries' trade turnover at about \$100 million, saying that considering the two sides' good political relations the level of trade should be increased in the near future.

Bulgarian counselor in Tehran for his part noted that the Iran-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Bulgaria route through Black Sea should be revived in order for Iran to access the European market and in return for Bulgaria to reach the Chinese and

Far East markets.

Gregov expressed hope that by the end of the year negotiations between the two sides in the form of the two countries' joint economic committee would yield good results and lead to a comprehensive mechanism for expanding economic relations. As reported, numerous businessmen from the two sides attended the forum, among which the Iranians were representatives of companies active in a variety of areas

including petrochemicals, plastic, building materials, glass and glass products, lighting industries, minerals, food, industrial cables, nuts and pharmaceuticals.

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

TPO to dispatch trade delegation to Belarus

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) is going to dispatch a trade delegation to Belarus capital city of Minsk during the Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 23-October 22), TPO portal reported.

Comprising of representatives of government and private sector entities, the

delegation is aimed to discuss avenues of cooperation between the two countries ahead of the Iran-Belarus joint economic committee meeting which is due to be held in the same month.

The Iranian delegation is planned to discuss mutual cooperation with the Belarusian side in the form of four working groups, namely

industry, agriculture and oil as well as medicine and health.

As reported, Iran's exports to Belarus mainly include pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, auto parts, carpets, agricultural products, petrochemicals and glass products.

According to the former acting head of TPO, Mohammadreza Modoudi, the two countries

have targeted to boost their trade turnover to €1 billion in the near future.

So far, Iran and Belarus have signed and exchanged 13 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in various areas including banking cooperation, educational and cultural cooperation, aviation, parliamentary, visa, customs and standards.

TEDPIX up 13,070 points in a month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has risen 13,070 points, or 5.17 percent, to 266,127 at the end of the fifth Iranian calendar month of Mordad (August 22), Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday.

As reported, some 64,126 billion securities worth 215.639 trillion rials (about \$5.134 billion) were traded through 6,444 million deals at TSE during the past month, indicating 8 percent and 21 percent drop in terms of the number and value of securities, respectively, while 16 percent fall in the number of trades compared to its previous month.

Based on the already released reports and data, Iran's exchange markets witnessed fruitful performances and results in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019).

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was another achievements of the exchange markets during the past year, as TSE officially launched “futures” in mid-December 2018 for more risk management and IME launched

“option” in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products. This progressive trend is also continuing in the current year, as TSE Head Ali Sahraei has recently announced that TSE plans to launch a new market named “prime market” in which the price range for the shares increase.

He said that only companies with a minimum transparency score of 70 (out of 100) and floating stock of at least 25 percent would be accepted in the prime market. Sahraei also said that there is no difference regarding rules governing market makers in this and other markets, adding that participation of market makers is mandatory in the prime market.

TEDPIX has increased 56,220 points or 20.4 percent to 234,879 during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21). As reported, some 258,055 billion securities worth 723.503 trillion rials (about \$17.226 billion) were traded through 17,999 million deals at TSE during the three-month period.



Technical, engineering services export, a privilege to boost foreign trade

1 → Another project, which worth \$12 million, is building high-voltage substations in Nigeria.

Iran is also planning to become an exporter of technical and engineering services in gas sector and negotiations are underway with some neighboring countries to export such services to them.

While export of technical and engineering services is an economic advantage for the country, it faces some serious barriers.

Farzin Mahdyar, a member of Association of Iranian Exporters of Technical



and Engineering Services, says that Iran is conducting technical and engineering projects in different regions including CIS countries and Iraq, but due to some barriers mainly related to the international limitations which make issuance of guarantees impossible for the both sides, the Iranian operators of those projects will have no choice rather than leaving those countries.

While removing barriers in the way of exporting such services is necessary,

some facilities and incentives should be also offered to related projects outside the country.

Highlighting that Iran has the potential of exporting \$25 billion of technical and engineering services per year, Bahman Salehi, the secretary general of Association of Iranian Exporters of Technical and Engineering Services, is emphasizing that all hurdles should be removed, given that such exports can be an important source of income for the country.

Donald Trump signals some regret for escalating trade war with China

President Donald Trump signaled regret Sunday for an escalating trade war with China, as he faces a tense reception from world leaders meeting amid mounting anxiety of a global economic slowdown at the Group of Seven summit in France. As per financialexpress.com, Trump is trying to use the conference to rally global leaders to do more to stimulate their economies, as fears rise of a potential slowdown in the U.S. ahead of his reelection. But Trump's counterparts, including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson are trying to convince him to back off his trade wars with China and other countries, which they see as contributing to the economic weakening.

The meetings come days after President Donald Trump escalated his trade war with China, following China's announcement Friday that it would slap new tariffs on \$75 billion in American goods. Trump responded with more tariffs of his own and issued

an extraordinary threat to declare a national emergency in an attempt to force U.S. businesses to cut ties with China.

But Sunday, during a breakfast meeting with Johnson, Trump suggested he has qualms about the spiraling conflict. “Yeah. For sure,” Trump told reporters when asked if he has second thoughts about escalating the trade dispute, adding he has “second thoughts about everything.” But he insisted that “we're getting along well right now with China.”

■ **Trump chided on hardened policy**

Johnson praised Trump for America's economic performance during the jovial breakfast, their first since his elevation to the prime minister post in July. But he chided Trump on his hardened China policy. “Just to register a faint sheep-like note of our view on the trade war,” he told the American leader. “We're in favor of trade peace.”

Trump told reporters he has “no plans right now” to follow

through on his emergency declaration threat, but insisted he would be within his rights to use a 1977 law used to target rogue regimes, terrorists and drug traffickers as the newest weapon in the clash between the world's largest economies.

“If I want, I could declare a national emergency,” Trump said. He cited China's theft of intellectual property and the large U.S. trade deficit with China, saying “in many ways that's an emergency.” Trump then entered the first official summit meeting, initially set to be a discussion of foreign policy and security issues. But White House aides claimed he engineered a late change to the summit schedule, adding economic issues to the agenda. Trump planned to press leaders about what can be done to spur growth in the U.S. and abroad, as well as to open European, Japanese and Canadian markets to American manufacturers and producers. Trump has imposed or threatened to impose tariffs on all three markets in his pursuit of free, fair and reciprocal trade.

10 major dams to go operational by yearend

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian desk Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said 10 major dams are going to be inaugurated in nine provinces across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020).

As reported by Tasnim news agency on Sunday, Ardakanian noted that with these dams starting operation, over 26,000 hectares of land will be supplied with water using modern irrigation systems.

According to the official, construction of new dams will also lead to boosting the country's hydro power generation capacity.

As reported by the portal of Iran's Energy Ministry (known as Paven), currently 17 hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of 3,800 MW are under construction across the country, which, once completed, will generate an average of 7,700 gigawatt hour (GWh) electricity on an annual basis.

There are currently 178 major dams operating across the country behind which nearly 41 billion cubic meters of water is stored.



Iran's current power generation capacity stands at about 85 GW of which the share of hydroelectric power plants stands at nearly 20 percent.

Currently, 54 hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of over 12000 megawatts are operating in Iran, with an average annual output of about 6,000 GWh.

The increase in the country's hydroelectric output comes as heavy rainfalls in spring almost filled all the dams across the country.

According to the data provided by Iran Water Resources Management Company (WRMC), during the 11-month period in Iran's current hydrological year (Sep. 2018-July 2019), 69 percent of the country's dams were filled.

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

The current water year, however, kicked off with great amount of rainfalls across the country which even caused some floods in northern and eastern provinces.

Pakistan eager for energy cooperation with Iran

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Pakistan's Power Minister Omar Ayub Khan has said that his country is looking forward to enhance energy cooperation with Iran, Pakistan Today reported.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Mehdi Honardoost in Islamabad on Friday.

Ayub Khan voiced his country's willingness for further promoting the existing brotherly relations with Iran.

The Iranian ambassador emphasized the need of further boosting the existing relations between the two countries.

He said that there is a lot of potential to explore in the field of energy and the two countries can undertake many useful projects for the benefit of people of both the nations. He assured Iran's full cooperation in this regards.

Back in May, Honardoost and Special Assistance to Pakistani Prime Minister on Petroleum Nadeem Babar held talks on the expansion of mutual energy ties.

During the meeting held in Islamabad, the two sides explored ways of boosting cooperation between the two countries in all energy spheres, especially the oil and gas sectors.

Mentioning the two countries' great potentials for mutual trade, Honardoost called for conducting comprehensive studies on the ways to tap those potentials to achieve the goal of \$5-billion trade turnover in the upcoming years.

According to the official, enhancing oil and gas cooperation could help fulfill the envisaged plans to increase the trade volume between Tehran and Islamabad.

He also urged the need for joint efforts to complete the gas pipeline project from Iran to Pakistan.

Babar, for his part, welcomed the continuation of energy talks between the two sides, saying that building strong cooperation with Iran would definitely benefit Pakistan's energy sector.

Iran is the largest exporter of electricity in the Middle East and exports power to Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan.



Energy storage systems market to hit \$500 billion by 2025

Germany energy storage systems market is anticipated to witness growth over 3% by 2025. Increasing dependency on renewable energy sources in line with the introduction of RE targets will drive the business growth. For instance, government of Germany has set the goal to meet 65% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030.

As per globenewswire.com, Japan energy storage systems market is set to exceed D 65 billion by 2025.

Widespread implementation of smart grid technologies along with the decentralization of the grid at local and regional level will drive the business growth.

Surging demand for integration of solar PV plants with ESS to reduce the electricity bills and minimize the carbon emission will further enhance the business landscape.

ESS market from renewable capacity firming application will grow over 10% by 2025.

Control of the ramp rate, maintenance of the variable intermittent power output of renewable technologies and output smoothening are some of the key features which will positively influencing the demand for energy storage systems over the forecast timeframe.

Global Energy Storage Systems Market is set to register D 500 billion by 2025, as reported in the latest study by Global Market Insights, Inc.

Rising consumer awareness toward energy efficiency coupled with shifting trends



toward renewable energy utilization will drive the energy storage systems market size.

For instance, as per the International Energy Agency, share of renewables in electricity generation is anticipated to reach 40% by 2040.

In addition, increasing demand for continuous power supply and effective load management will positively influence the product demand.

ESS market will witness growth on account of declining storage costs along with growing consumer awareness toward

adoption of clean energy technologies.

Policymakers across the globe have introduced financial incentives to promote the utilization of renewable energy which has positively influenced the price of storage systems.

For instance, in 2017, the Government of Italy announced 50% tax deduction for the installation of residential energy storage systems.

■ **Enhancing the product penetration**

Ongoing research and development to improve the energy density and cycle

life of storage technologies will further enhance the product penetration.

Electro-chemical energy storage systems market is set to witness strong growth on account of their ability to offer high energy density and temperature stability during operation.

Lithium Ion, Lead Acid, Flow batteries and Sodium Sulphur are some of the most prominent electro-chemical technologies deployed for stationary storage.

Cost effectiveness, high power conversion and safe operation are some of the eminent features favoring the product deployment.

In addition, technological advancement in system design to enhance the battery performance will further boost the product demand over the forecast timeline.

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These exhaustive reports are designed via a proprietary research methodology and are available for key industries such as chemicals, advanced materials, technology, renewable energy and biotechnology.

Will Europe ever shake its dependence on Russian energy?

By Wen yuan Wu

Much of the current discourse over Europe's economic "independence" has revolved around its increasingly-tense relationship with the Trump administration over foreign policy issues such as trade and Iran. This focus has sidelined another important development, however: portions of the European energy industry — a major pillar of the single market — are increasingly coming into Russian and Chinese hands.

In spite of impending American sanctions and widespread opposition including from within the European bloc, Nord Stream 2 — Gazprom's \$11 billion natural gas pipeline running underneath the Baltic Sea between Russia and Germany — is nearing completion. Meanwhile, China has gone after energy prizes all over the union. As just one noteworthy example, state-owned utility China Three Gorges — already the largest shareholder in Energias de Portugal — mounted a colossal \$10.8 billion bid to take over the entire Portuguese grid.

The uptick in Moscow and Beijing's investments in nearly every aspect of Europe's energy industry from fossil fuels to renewables and power generation to energy infrastructure — have drawn criticism from both within the EU and abroad. Particular concerns have been raised over European unity and unfair competition. If unaddressed, these geopolitical and commercial implications could drive a wedge between the U.S. and Europe while sowing serious divisions within the single European market.

Longstanding geopolitical conflicts and Cold War-era rhetoric have fueled the uneasiness around Russian energy investment in Europe. In May, U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry proposed a sanctions bill which would target companies, including a number of European firms, involved in the Nord Stream 2 project in an effort to stall construction on the controversial pipeline.

Although Gazprom has obtained authorization from Russia, Finland, Sweden and Germany, it has encountered resistance from Denmark, which has yet to grant permission for the pipeline to pass through its territory. The project is also vehemently protested by most Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland and the Baltic states — to say nothing of Ukraine's steadfast opposition.

■ **The region's energy dependence**

The European Commission has sounded the alarm as well, wary of increasing the region's energy dependence, both on gas and on Russia — a politically unfriendly state which remains under EU sanctions for its aggression in Ukraine. In an effort to mitigate the risks of this dependence, the Commission has made policy changes to subject Nord Stream 2 to the EU's regulatory umbrella.

The reforms are currently being challenged by Gazprom at the European Court of Justice. Notably, internal discord around the project effectively contravenes the Commission's energy policy which calls for a more integrated internal market and an external framework with "one voice". The project's intentions to bypass Ukraine, Poland and Slovakia — each of which Russia has had political fallout with, raising their fears that the new pipeline could lead to further aggression — would also lead to dwindling windfalls in these countries.

In contrast to Russia's targeted approach, Chinese energy investment in Europe is more expansive and diversified, with both fossil fuel and renewable projects throughout the continent. Central and Eastern European countries have been popular destinations under the "16+1" Format encompassing a group of 11 EU members and 5 Balkan countries as an outgrowth of the strategic Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).

EU leaders have become increasingly alarmed by the 16+1 platform, which allows China to strike bilateral financing deals with participating states. Brussels fears that this erodes EU's cohesiveness in anchoring member economies by circumventing EU regulations and laws. Even some in the "16+1" network are displeased with the Chinese way of doing business, citing issues such as crowding out local input. Collectively, some political circles in Brussels view China as an illiberal partner that can undermine Europe's liberal foundations.

Outside the 16+1 format, China also supplies Europe with raw materials such as tellurium, gallium, indium and the rare earth elements neodymium and dysprosium, which are critical to the solar and wind industries. With experts predicting that solar and wind will make up 80% of the power mix in Europe by 2040, China's role providing these raw materials has both immediate and far-reaching repercussions. First, the European renewable energy sector will be shaped by Beijing's industrial policies, creating external shocks including supply bottlenecks and price volatility — on top of unfair competition to home-grown solar and wind businesses. In the long run, Europe's energy security could be compromised by increasing dependence on China and waning global competitiveness.

■ **Gazprom has financial backing**

Certainly, both Russian and Chinese stakeholders deny these criticisms and insist that their investments will prompt win-win outcomes. Nord Stream 2's sole shareholder, Gazprom, has financial backing from five Western European companies — Austria's OMV, Anglo-Dutch Shell, France's Engie, and Germany's Uniper and Wintershall, and has contracted out pipelaying to Italy's Saipem and Swiss-based Allseas. Beijing, meanwhile, continues to proclaim its unwavering support for the EU's integration and unity: during the 21st EU-China Summit in April 2019, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang reiterated the need for a comprehensive strategic partnership between Beijing and the bloc.

Such one-way reassurances don't suffice to tame the EU's fears, rooted in both historical pains and fundamental cultural and political differences. While Chinese energy investments in Europe have been increasingly spearheaded by private companies, this financial backing nevertheless reflects a clear political strategy of balancing China's domestic energy security and global environmental stewardship as well as enhancing Chinese enterprises' international profile.

Russia's state-owned Gazprom, meanwhile, has initiated countless disputes with the Ukrainian government over its natural gas supplies, including cutting off gas flows to all of Europe in order to prevent Ukraine from reversing flows through the pipelines crisscrossing its territory and cutting flows to Poland, Hungary and Slovakia through Nord Stream 1 to stop them from supplying Ukraine. Ultimately, for countries like Russia and China, with economies grounded in state-led capitalism, it is impossible to divorce economic and political rationale and to claim their financial investments do not also have geopolitical motivations.

The challenge ahead for the EU depends on its member states' ability to build on regional unity and cohesion to mitigate the aggressive influences of Russia and Chinese entanglements and build a meaningful debate that goes beyond simplistic bifurcations.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Scandinavia's largest offshore wind farm inaugurated

Denmark's, Scandinavia's and Vattenfall's largest offshore wind farm, Horns Rev 3, was officially opened on August 22.

As stated by maritime-executive.com, the 49 wind turbines located 25-40 kilometers off Denmark's west coast in the North Sea will increase Danish power production from wind by 407MW, around 12 percent - enough to power the yearly consumption in 425,000 Danish households.

The total height of the 8.3MW MHI Vestas turbines is 187 meters and each weigh close to 1,500 tons including foundation. The steel foundations together required more than 40,000 tons of steel.

The first foundation for Horns Rev 3 was placed in the seabed in October 2017, and the first turbines began delivering electricity to consumers in December 2018.

During the construction phase, the turbines were shipped from the Port of Esbjerg, but from 2024 they will be serviced from the Port of Hvide Sande, where Vattenfall will establish a new service hub.

An eight-kilometer cable between Horns Rev 2 and Horns Rev 3 allows the two offshore wind farms to supply each other with electricity if the export connection to land is disconnected.

The cable was used for the first time recently when the Danish system operator, Energinet, disconnected the export cable to Horns Rev 2 for four days of scheduled



maintenance work.

Ørsted and Vattenfall, invested in the 33 kV cable that creates additional security for the two energy companies' billion-kroner investments in the North Sea. If there is a problem with the export connection to land, this is not only critical for the supply of electricity to customers on the mainland; it is also critical for the wind turbines.

Offshore wind turbines must always be supplied with electricity; otherwise there is a risk of significant

damage from, for instance, humidity. The cable also enables a quick and easy start-up of the offshore wind farm once the export connection is back in service. In addition, it saves diesel fuel and operating hours for the emergency generators for both the wind turbines and the service boats.

In addition to Horns Rev 3 Vattenfall is constructing the offshore wind farms Vesterhav Syd & Nord and Kriegers Flak adding a total of more than 1.4GW wind energy capacity to the Danish energy system.

What is the U.S. role in the Hong Kong protests?

By Reese Erlich

ANTIWAR — I first met Jason Lee when he was promoting jazz concerts in his hometown of Hong Kong. More recently, he has been sending me Facebook messages about the Hong Kong protests. You would think that a relatively prosperous, 43-year-old Hong Konger would support the demonstrations that have rocked that city since June. Well, you may be surprised by his views.

Lee, who spends time in both Hong Kong and mainland China, says protesters' attacks on police and government buildings "are going too far." Referring to how they recently closed the Hong Kong airport, he asks, "Would the USA let JFK airport be occupied for one day?"

Protesters carrying British flags and spray painting anti-communist slogans on legislative offices don't understand the region's colonial history when British troops brutally occupied Hong Kong, Lee tells me in a phone interview.

"I'm Chinese from Hong Kong," says Lee. "I love my country, China."

The protest movement began in opposition to a proposed extradition law, which demonstrators claimed would allow political dissidents to be extradited to China. Hong Kong officials said the law wouldn't be used for political repression but later withdrew it.

Some Hong Kongers, Lee included, think the protesters' calls for "democracy" are really demands for independence from China, even a return to British colonial rule.

"They want the movement to go on and on by raising new demands," Lee says. "And then they claim the government isn't responding."

One major factor driving the protests is economic inequality. For many years, Hong Kong was a key financial and commercial outpost for the People's Republic of China (PRC). But, as the PRC's economy expanded, it didn't need Hong Kong as a middle man and the territory's economy declined relative to China's.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong billionaires made huge profits leading to one of the world's highest rates of income inequality. Housing is now in short supply and Hong Kong rents are the highest in the world. Many young adults still live with their parents or crowd into small, subdivided apartments.

"My apartment is 350 square feet," Sean Starrs, a Hong Kong professor, told the Real News Network. "My students say, well what do you do with all that space?"

And, as always, Washington is happy to take advantage of those complaints for its own odious purposes. In the old days, the CIA would slip wads of cash to dissidents in order to promote anti-government riots and install pro-U.S. regimes.



Nowadays, the United States uses the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to spread propaganda to accomplish the same goals. The NED is supposed to build democracy but in reality promotes dissidents who favor U.S. style capitalism, and it funds aspiring autocrats.

I don't think the CIA initiated the demonstrations, but the events bear a strong resemblance to other U.S.-manipulated "color" revolutions.

Color revolutions vs. genuine uprisings

With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, several former Soviet republics faced a series of elections, mass demonstrations and coups. In Georgia the uprising was called a "rose revolution." In Ukraine, it was orange. During the 2013 Maidan revolt in Ukraine, the US role in manipulating the mass movement and selecting the country's new president was revealed publicly.

On the other hand, popular, mass uprisings in 2011 overthrew dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt. So how do you tell the difference between genuine uprisings and the color revolts?

The key questions are who is leading the protests and what would happen if they took power? Would the country go in a progressive direction or join the reactionary camp led by the United States? While no one party or recognized coalition leads the Hong Kong protests, there are identifiable political trends.

Political trends in Hong Kong

The pan-democratic forces call for universal suffrage and direct elections of Hong Kong officials. Critics say those calls for democracy cover up their close alliance with US policy and their rejection of eventual unity with China. The pan-democrats suffered surprising losses in last year's legislative council elections.

The umbrella protests of 2014 accelerated the rise of another trend, the localists, a xenophobic rightwing movement that calls for "self determination" (independence) from Beijing.

"They think Hong Kongers are better than Chinese," says Elvin Ho, a retired business consultant living in Hong Kong. Native Hong Kongers mostly speak Cantonese, he explains in a phone interview. "Localists will pick a fight with random targets during the riot, who speak Mandarin, and bully them."

Imagine for a moment that the PRC ceased to exist. Would Hong Kong transform itself into a democratic society? I think some combination of localists and pan-democratic forces would come to power and then violently repress those who supported the PRC and the previous Hong Kong government.

Sound farfetched? That's what has happened when the pro-western forces came back to power in Ukraine and Hungary.

But the PRC does exist, and it's not about to allow Hong Kong independence. China has massed paramilitary police along the Hong Kong border as a clear threat against the protesters. Many Hong Kongers are getting tired of the constant disruptions and violence on both sides.

So far the Hong Kong government has bided its time, hoping the public will tire of the constant turmoil. We can only hope the current crisis ends without further violence.

By Doug Bandow

THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVES—Our nation's problems are caused not by a lack of territory but increasingly disjointed cultural identities. There's only one solution.

Greenland in (when else?) May. Credit: Jonas Tufvesson/Shutterstock

President Donald Trump wants to purchase Greenland, a self-governing territory of Denmark. "Strategically, it's interesting," he observed, though "it is not number one on the burner."

Alas, the Danes aren't impressed. "Greenland is not for sale. Greenland is not Danish. Greenland belongs to Greenland," said Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

Greenlanders were a bit blunter. Inuit Maya Sialuk told the Wall Street Journal: "We are still trying to recover from a colonization period of almost 300 years. Then there is this white dude in the States who's talking about purchasing us."

Trump, always in character, called the Prime Minister's response "nasty" on Wednesday and abruptly canceled a bi-lateral meeting with her government planned for next month.

In 1867, Secretary of State William Seward, who orchestrated the acquisition of Alaska, proposed buying Greenland. In 1946, the Truman administration did likewise. Both times, the Danes said no.

Greenland is not just a place; it is a territory of 56,000 people who largely govern themselves—with a parliament and prime minister—other than in international affairs, which Copenhagen manages, though in consultation with the locals. In fact, internationally Greenlanders are viewed as an independent people. The original residents were Inuits. Vikings showed up in the 10th century, and the territory eventually became part of Norway, and then Denmark.

Greenland is obviously strategic—it is close to America and hosts Thule Air Base. However, one should not oversell its value to American interests. The Washington Examiner grandly declared that Thule "gives the U.S. military the means to deter and defeat prospective aggression." Aggression by whom? A sneak attack by the Russians or Chinese launched from the Arctic seems, well, unlikely.

Anyway, no one expects NATO member Denmark to hand over the island to a hostile power. Last year, Washington opposed Chinese financing of three airports, and Denmark's government found other funders. Canada and Mexico are even more strategic and the U.S. isn't trying to buy them. (Although Americans once unsuccessfully attempted to conquer Canada and considered annexing all of Mexico, instead of the half that Washington seized after winning the Mexican-American War.)

Secession is Not a Principle of Liberty America's Other Original Sin

Most everyone is making the issue about America; at least the Examiner remembered that the U.S. would be, er, buying people. But, it explained, don't worry, "this isn't just about American interests. Greenland's small



population also has everything to gain from a massive influx of American investment. The surge in tourism alone would surely offer a vast untapped potential."

It's not clear why U.S. firms would suddenly invest in a largely icebound territory that lies mostly north of the Arctic Circle. And what is stopping tourists from going today? Maybe Greenlanders don't want to be overwhelmed by their much larger neighbors.

While talking about the potential financial benefits for Denmark, columnist Quin Hillyer pronounced, "The wishes of Greenland's current population should be considered." Only "considered"? They rule themselves. Would the U.S. seriously contemplate taking control if they didn't want to join the American colossus? Surely thousands of people should not be bartered as if they're an oil field or coal mine.

While the Examiner lauds the possibility of Greenland's "inhabitants joining our national family," they might not have the same desire to be ruled by the imperial city of Washington, D.C. Can't say I blame them. America remains exceptional in many ways, but it's ruled by an abusive, hypocritical, irresponsible, sanctimonious, and incompetent elite—at best legal guardians, not parents—living far distant and with only minimal concern for the "family's" welfare.

Power is increasingly concentrated in Washington. The federal government exercises ever more authority over ever more aspects of Americans' lives. Interest group politics has grown more feverish and vicious. In recent years the U.S. has even been moving in the wrong direction on economic liberty. Although it remains ahead of Denmark on the Economic Freedom of the World ratings, on the similar Index of Economic Freedom, Denmark is just one position and a fraction of a point behind America. Most of the Scan-

dinavian countries are redistributionist rather than socialist, and employ less intrusive regulation than the U.S.

People have long been concocting new schemes to expand the American Empire. In the early days, Washington conquered nearby territories; then it acquired more distant possessions. These days, outright aggression is frowned upon, so expansionists must be more nuanced. For instance, before the possibility of Canada dissolving was mooted, even Patrick Buchanan, who had long argued against America's warfare state, listed the seceding pieces Washington should snag.

However, the U.S. already is too big. With nearly 330 million people, there is no "national family." California is a fabulous place, but a majority of its citizens want to base policy on dirigiste economics and identity politics. Why not let them go their own way, rather than whine when the Electoral College prevents them from imposing their self-absorbed fantasies on everyone else?

Equally caustic judgments could be made against other sections of America, such as the South, Rust Belt, and New England. Books have been written about breaking the U.S. into pieces. In this case, secession, or "separation," would have nothing to do with race and slavery. Rather it would be about community, commitment, family, communication, unity, compassion, responsibility, humanity, and scale. Americans from everywhere should live in peace. But there is no reason why everyone needs to be forced into the same massive political aggregation, with one faction or another constantly attempting to seize control of the whole.

Thinking creatively could yield additional benefits. Why not sell off California to the highest bidder? That could raise a good chunk of money to pay down the national debt. Put

Hawaii on the market. Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, or perhaps some Russian or Middle Eastern billionaire might make it worth Americans' while to yield the Pacific paradise. If not Hawaii, then perhaps American Samoa and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

The Midwest, with its big agricultural production, would be in high demand. China might pay a hefty price—after all, it has a lot of people to feed! There might even be a market for progressive enclaves: San Francisco, Austin, Madison, New York City, Atlanta, and more. Bundle them together and see what the market will bear. Maybe a British government under Prime Minister Jeremy Corbyn would make an offer. It would be a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire America's commanding heights of left-progressivism.

Another alternative would be to have U.S. communities go the way of Greenland—that is, become autonomous territories under Danish control. For example, Springfield, Virginia, where I live, could offer to sell to Denmark. No more being forced to support the American imperium.

What is not to like about Greenland's situation? Once an active, militaristic, and colonial power, Denmark has left those days behind. Now it is a small, inoffensive, constitutional monarchy. It survived World War II and protected its Jewish population. It's a small, human-sized country, with fewer than six million people; it's wealthy, democratic, and, according to a UN survey, for what that's worth, the world's happiest place.

Perhaps most important, the Danish military has only about 27,000 people in uniform. New York City alone has 36,000 police officers. That means Denmark really can't wander the globe bombing, invading, and occupying other nations, unlike Washington, which seems to believe Americans cannot be happy unless they're at war.

Denmark exercised exceptionally good judgment by remaining neutral in World War I, perhaps the stupidest modern war with the greatest long-term consequences. In contrast, America, led by the sanctimonious megalomaniac Woodrow Wilson, voluntarily, even enthusiastically, entered that conflict. World War I brought forth communism, fascism, Nazism, and World War II. Had Washington stayed out, a compromise peace was most likely; the result would have been unsatisfying, but far better for humankind. Denmark's perspective was the right one, and American policymakers were wrong.

President Trump should leave Greenland alone.

It isn't Denmark's to sell and it isn't in America's interest to buy. This nation's problems have resulted not from a lack of territory, but from its transformation from a democratic republic to a global imperium.

No wonder Mute Bourup Egede, who heads a Greenland independence party, observed: "America will always have an interest in Greenland. Our country will always be ours." As it should be

An American Nightmare

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Republic of Korea (ROK), or South Korea, has announced that it would not renew an intelligence-sharing agreement it held with Japan, marking the latest escalation in a dispute that has embroiled the two countries over the past month, with both nations taking trade action against each other and Koreans engaging in a popular boycott of Japanese made products.

The termination of the agreement poses significant implications for coordination on the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It poses a security matter for the countries which were linked despite their differences, and in turn, weakens the overall strength and coordination of the US alliance system in Asia.

Inevitably, US-centric commentators and analysts were dismayed at the move, hitting out at ROK President Moon Jae-in as a "leftist" who loves Pyongyang more than Tokyo and the proposed greater good of the American order. Such figures dreamed wholeheartedly of a "trilateral alliance system" whereby Tokyo and Seoul were utilized at Washington's will for the broader strategic goal of "containing China" in Northeast Asia.

But that rhetoric ultimately tells us a lot about their mindset in the midst of this crisis; they have never been open to understanding or giving Seoul space on its own terms. In US analysis, what is best for America is always best for Korea. For many, what deviates from Washington's position is depicted as dangerous, morally wrong and self-defeating.

The country is thus assumed to be a "tool" that should automatically follow suit and align itself with American interests. Thus, disinterested and patronizing toward the broader history, the broader ambition that Seoul and Tokyo could be used in tandem was not only clueless, but always a non-starter. Today's events thus all but ensure the trilateral dream is dead, but don't expect the Blue House to be treated any differently.

We hear so much in American discourse about this so-called "Ironclad" alliance with Seoul, but it is not a partnership that is rooted in equality, mutual respect or pragmatism, but rather a lopsided belief that the US has a responsibility to determine what is in the best interests of Seoul and act as a "guardian" or "savior" to the country and "show it the correct way." As a result, Americans idealize Seoul as a simple extension of their own interests and believe that Seoul's view of the world ought to be



harmonious with the US version.

For example, many commentators have bemoaned the growing tensions with Tokyo not because the fallout might hurt the two countries' economies, but because it is assumed as US allies their real duty is "to be against China." Yet Washington's projection ignores Seoul's decisions on its own perceptions that China is its neighbor and as its largest trading partner, economic stability is very important. On every foreign policy issue, Seoul's own interests are effectively being "designated" from the US perspective.

Given this, when Seoul strives to act on its own terms, which has included engagement with the DPRK and also dissatisfaction against Japan, this is viewed contemptuously.

A whole load more commentators have criticized Moon for befriending the "enemy" and regularly accuse him of being susceptible of a communist-led conspiracy whereby Pyongyang will "subvert" the South. Rhetoric, such as Korean unification, the concept of one nation, and other dreams to reconcile with North Korea are also treated with extreme contempt because America has already "decided" what Seoul's true interest and perspective is, which

apparently involves "saving Seoul from itself".

Given this somewhat condescending attitude, Americans have never tried to understand Seoul's grievances against Tokyo and the legacy of occupation or take it seriously. Few analysts have expressed empathy or researched ways to help Japan address Korea's historical grievances. Instead, they have simply viewed the whole saga as a mere nuisance and an unwanted distraction to "what really matters" and as noted above expected the country to get in line to the bigger picture of a "trilateral alliance" and work to contain China – as if nothing else ever mattered.

However, the recent events have finally hammered the nail into the coffin of that vision.

The trilateral American dream is over, Seoul and Tokyo will never be allies. If the US is to somehow formulate a vision of regional leadership, it must completely re-evaluate its view of South Korea and stop treating the country in unequal, parental terms. Then again, don't expect the current administration in Washington to treat Seoul any differently. In Trump's eyes, they are all there to make America "great again".

Washington's economic defeat against Beijing

Trump fears the presidential election

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The China-US trade war has reached a critical stage. Many US analysts believe that in the near future, Beijing could defeat Washington in the trade war. This is undoubtedly the case in the upcoming presidential election. Exactly the same thing that Trump is terribly afraid of! Here's a look at the latest US-China trade battle:

Trump threatens to raise tariffs on Chinese goods to 30% amid escalating trade war

As CNN reported, President Donald Trump on Friday counterpunched against retaliatory tariffs announced by Beijing earlier in the day, pledging to hike the rates importers must pay on Chinese-made goods even higher. Trump said the US will raise tariffs from 25% to 30% on \$250 billion in goods that are already being taxed starting October 1.

He also threatened to ratchet up promised tariffs on the remaining \$300 billion in Chinese imports from 10% to 15%. Those tariffs, which would hit mostly consumer items, are set to begin taking effect September 1, though most goods will be duty-free until December 15 -- a move Trump made to avoid putting a damper on holiday retail sales. The President's announcement came after Beijing unveiled a new round of retaliatory tariffs on about \$75 billion worth of US goods. China will place additional tariffs of 5% or 10% on US imports starting on September 1, according to a statement posted by China's Finance Ministry. "We're having a little spat with China and we'll win it," Trump told reporters Friday night before departing for the annual G7 summit in Biarritz, France. "We put a lot of tariffs on China today, as you know. They put some on us, we put a lot on them."

"We're up to about \$550 billion -- they've been hitting us for many, many years for over \$500 billion a year, taking out of our country much more than \$500 billion a year," he added. "So we want that stopped."

It was the latest escalation in an ongoing trade war that has triggered a worldwide economic slowdown and which, for the moment, shows no sign of quick resolution. "China should not have put new Tariffs on 75 BILLION DOLLARS of United States product (politically motivated!)," Trump said on Twitter. The intensifying fight unnerved investors, sending the Dow dropping more than 700 points at its worst, closing down 2.4%, or 623 points. The US Trade Representative Office, which acts as the country's top trade negotiator, said it would "begin the process of increasing the tariff rate to 30% effective October 1 following a notice and comment period."

Earlier Friday, Trump ordered US companies doing business in China to find an "alternative" and had promised to deliver further action after he met with his economic team at the White House. "We don't need China and, frankly, would be far better off without them," Trump tweeted. "Our great companies are ordered to immediately start looking for an alternative to China, including bringing your companies HOME."

China trade experts said the moves will only deepen the impasse between Washington and Beijing. "Everyone knew this was coming," said Craig Allen, president of the US-China Business Council. "There was no doubt this was coming. The response to it is surprising and disappointing."

Stocks finished a volatile trading day sharply in the red Friday, after a selloff driven by the new retaliatory tariffs from China and the President's criticism of Federal Reserve policy. Trump again attacked Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell over interest rates, which Trump insists are too high even after a rate cut last month.

"My only question is, who is our bigger enemy, Jay Powell or Chairman Xi?" the president tweeted referring to Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Late Friday night, Trump told reporters he wouldn't stop Powell if the chairman wanted to resign.

Trump's China trade war spirals as 2020 looms

The dangerous new twist in the tariff war between the United States and China will heap ominous pressure on the global economy at a moment when it is already struggling in the undertow of their trade superpower showdown. China's announcement of new tariffs on \$75 billion in US goods, and an incandescent reaction from President Donald Trump and his swift increase in existing tariffs on Chinese products, underscored that the dispute is escalating with no obvious way to calm hostilities. A long disagreement over China's trade and economic practices has now also become a personal duel and a matter of face between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping -- and a perilous pivot point for a volatile world order that is being reshaped by China's rise.

A day of trade war Friday dramatically increased the political stakes of the confrontation for Trump -- at the same time the new tariffs threaten to further damage the US economy. "This has become a process without a clear objective and without a clear strategy and without a clear endpoint," said Craig Allen, president of the US-China Business Council. "And it's being played out in much worsening global economic circumstances. It is more uncertainty heaped upon already existing uncertainty."

The President's remark that trade wars are "good and easy to win" in 2018 is now looking even more ill-advised and leaves Trump looking as though he engineered a showdown with a rising economic superpower in which it will be difficult for him to prevail. If China's retaliation on Friday was calculated to further panic Trump about the state of the US economy -- amid growing fears of a slowdown that would complicate his reelection hopes next year -- it has already succeeded.

The new tariffs came at the end of the week when the White House's messaging on the economy has been incoherent. Assurances by the President's top advisers that growth is robust and there is no concern about the economy have been undermined by Trump's contradictory statements -- at various times he has said he's thinking about tax cuts to stimulate growth and then insisted he is not because there is no need for them.

The confusion has multiplied concerns that Trump's administration is ill prepared to mitigate a recession if one



does come and lacks the stability and calmness needed to tackle any financial crisis.

Trump's increasingly furious attacks on Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell amount to some of the most incendiary rhetoric by a President about the economy and the US central bank's policy-making in living memory. His insistence on an interest rate cut of 100 basis points would mean the Fed adopting policies that are usually put into practice only during a serious economic downturn. It also raises questions about Trump's understanding of the infrastructure of the US economy and the independence of the central bank, which is supposed to shield it from interference by presidents worried about their political prospects.

The latest tariff tit-for-tat also seems to trap Trump into an escalation with China that it will be difficult to control. If he goes ahead and responds with more tariffs, the President risks further rattling investors and damaging US consumers. He has already delayed a set of new tariffs worth \$160 billion on Chinese imports until December to avoid harming the holiday shopping season. That decision was seen by many as an admission by Trump that Americans are hurt by paying higher prices for Chinese products despite his frequent and misleading assurances that only China was being harmed by the tariffs. "The bottom is collapsing and this relationship is getting worse and worse," said Allen.

Since last year before Trump and Xi met over a steak dinner in Buenos Aires, experts have worried about the possibility of a new cold war between the world's two largest economies if they are unable to resolve their differences. The risk of so-called "decoupling" is likely to be more disruptive than the President's "America First" agenda, according to policy analysts who have carefully watched the on-again, off-again trade war that began last summer with the first tranche of tariffs. Hawks within the administration -- like Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro -- have strongly argued that a parting of ways with China is necessary to secure US dominance, while others in the wing have expressed concerns about China's military power or tensions with North Korea.

"I think really American-China policy is only unified with a single person in the White House," said Scott Kennedy, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank. "It's unpredictable. It can flip-flop. I don't think American policy has finally settled in one place where we have decided to treat China as an enemy across the board."

Former Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson warned of the risks of the world's two largest economies divorcing in a speech in Singapore last November. "I fear that big parts of the global economy will ultimately be closed off to the free flow of investment and trade. And that is why I now see the prospect of an economic iron curtain -- one that throws up new walls on each side and unmakes the global economy, as we have known it," said Paulson, who served under President George W. Bush.

Trump has questioned why he must attend G7

China's recent action was unlikely to improve Trump's mood as he flew to France on Friday night for the G7 summit. He's been complaining about European trade policy as well, and has a record of breaking china at international summits -- including last year's G7 in Canada, which saw him leave early. The next time Xi and Trump would be expected to meet would be at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Chile in November. But with the trade war still worsening, hopes for a resolution then look farfetched. While Xi is often portrayed as a strongman authoritarian and China's most dominant leader for the last 30 years, he is not immune from domestic political pressures.

The wave of protests in Hong Kong is putting him under even greater scrutiny months before celebrations marking 70 years of Communist China -- a fact that gives Xi even less room for political maneuver. Two years after being hailed as a historic figure and removing term limits in a move that was seen as potentially letting him rule for life, Xi is enduring the worst year of his presidency so far. But the longer the trade war goes on, the more politically dicey it also gets for Trump -- a factor that might be helping to shape Chinese thinking. The show-down becomes a question of which side can endure the most pain. Trump has confidently predicted that Xi will have to give in because China won't be able to take the damage to its economy. It is true that the tariff war is having an effect -- it has helped push Chinese industrial

output growth to its lowest rate in 17 years. But Xi is sitting atop an authoritarian system that can muzzle the public and mitigate the political damage of a trade war. He has no need to worry about reelection in 2020. Trump, by contrast, has been fuming at the media in recent days, accusing it of alarming consumers about the state of the economy and talking it into a recession. Beijing may be calculating that Trump will not be able to stand the political heat of the trade war as his reelection race ratchets up -- a position his increasingly angry outbursts tend to support -- and might be interested in stepping back from the brink. In a sign of political sophistication, Beijing has deliberately targeted farming -- an industry that is endemic to the Midwestern swing states that Trump needs to win reelection.

So the President faces a dilemma. Does he cool the rhetoric and seek a deal with Beijing -- and thereby turn his back on one of the central pillars of his entire political project? Or does he carry on the fight -- even if it has a serious impact on the US and world economy and creates a political backlash that could put his hopes of a second term in doubt?

Trump Asserts He Can Force U.S. Companies to Leave China

As New York Times reported, President Trump asserted on Saturday that he has the authority to make good on his threat to force all American businesses to leave China, citing a national security law that has been used mainly to target terrorists, drug traffickers and pariah states like Iran, Syria and North Korea. As he arrived in France for the annual meeting of the Group of 7 powers, Mr. Trump posted a message on Twitter citing the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977, a law originally meant to enable a president to isolate criminal regimes not sever economic ties with a major trading partner over a tariff dispute.

"For all of the Fake News Reporters that don't have a clue as to what the law is relative to Presidential powers, China, etc., try looking at the Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977," Mr. Trump wrote. "Case closed!"

The president's threat to all but cut off one of America's most important trading relationships could disrupt a global economy already on the edge of recession amid his trade war while further unsettling giant companies in the United States that rely on China in their production and sale of everything from clothing to smart telephones. Mr. Trump has often made drastic threats as a negotiating ploy to force a partner to offer concessions, as when he vowed to close the border with Mexico or impose tariffs on its goods to force action to halt illegal immigration. But if he were to follow through, it would be the most significant break with China since President Richard M. Nixon's diplomatic opening to Beijing in the early 1970s.

Mr. Trump's claim that he has the power to order American companies to pull out of China also represents the latest assertion of authority by a president who has repeatedly crossed lines that his predecessors have not. While he came to office criticizing President Barack Obama for exceeding the power of his office, Mr. Trump has gone even further in creative ways to take action on his priorities. "Any invocation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act in these circumstances and for these purposes would be an abuse," said Daniel M. Price, a former international economic adviser to President George W. Bush. "The act is intended to address extraordinary national security threats and true national emergencies, not fits of presidential pique."

Under the weight of Mr. Trump's tariff war, China has already fallen from America's largest trading partner last year to the third largest this year. The United States remains China's largest trading partner. China said Friday that it would raise tariffs on American goods in retaliation for Mr. Trump's latest levies and the president vowed hours later to increase tariffs even further.

China's commerce ministry issued a strongly worded statement on Saturday warning the United States to turn back from ever-escalating confrontation, but it did not threaten any new trade measures. "This unilateral and bullying trade protectionism and extreme pressure violate the consensus of the heads of state of China and the United States, violate the principle of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, seriously undermine the multilateral trading system and the normal international trade order," the Chinese statement said.

'Indonesia interested in exchanging information, defense equipment with Iran'

1 → On the other hand Iran is very good in promoting its movie industry in Indonesia. It organized film festival and cultural exhibition in Jakarta. Iranian embassy in Jakarta is very active in promoting Iranian culture in Indonesia.



With same efforts by both embassies, we could expect more Iranians and Indonesians know each other about their countries.

We are happy to have participated in Quran Exhibition and Quran reciters competitions this year. It's very difficult to compete with Iran but finally we could win.

We learnt more from Iran and hope in turns you also learn from us and how we deal with some issues for example mitigations of some calamities and natural disasters. We also came to Kish Island and participated in many events in dealing with the catastrophe or mitigation. So we hope we can share our knowledge and experience in many aspects of cooperation.

■ How do you see the impact of the US unilateral withdrawal from JCPOA and imposition of new sanctions on Iran and its efforts to halt Iranian oil sales on the trade relations between Tehran and Jakarta?

A: When the US withdrew from JCPOA, we didn't get the impact directly. We just get the impact recently. During the first quarter of the 2019, our trade volume could not reach the same level as last year. Right now because of tightening of the unilateral sanctions against Iran, it started to make our entrepreneurs and business community to use third countries.

So when we talk about our products, basically the markets are still here. But the way we send or deliver commodities made so longer paths. It is so inconvenience. So we expect the two countries have direct connections in terms of shipment. We will try to find some ways to connect. But at this time, we still use third countries to bring our goods.

■ Indonesia is the largest economy in Southeast Asia and among the top 20 economies in the world that supplying 38% of its energy consumption from oil and 15% from gas, what is the role of the Persian Gulf energy resources and its importance for the Indonesian economy?

A: Basically Indonesia relies on Persian Gulf energy, for example in terms of LPG or crude oil which fit with our requirements. So we need to make sure the Persian Gulf is safe and good for maritime transport and also secure because our fishermen also are hired by some Iranian vessels. So we need to make sure that the security and safe passage of the Persian Gulf to bring our imported goods or also exported goods. Because we bring our exported good to some countries for example, Oman and Dubai. If we have some conflicts in the region, of course it will affect our distributions.

■ Following recent tensions between Iran and the US in the Persian Gulf, US Secretary of State Pompeo said that China, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea are heavily dependent on Persian Gulf energy and must defend their own interests in the region. Have the US and Britain invited Indonesia to join the US-led coalition in the Strait of Hormuz? What is Indonesia's position in this regard?

A: When we talk about the security of the region, basically we prefer that the littoral states of the Persian Gulf to be the main important countries/parties to ensure security in the region. So we expect that the Persian Gulf states sit together and discuss the issues, including the possibility of foreign countries or organizations to be present and help the littoral states to ensure security in the region.

That is our position and I don't think that we got the invitations to join the coalitions because it is still on the early stage needs discussions. But in the Security Council we also discussed about this issues. But again we bring the attentions of all member countries of the Security Council to make sure that region should be safe. That is the most important things.

■ Recently a high ranking Indonesian parliamentarian visited Iran and he expressed that Indonesia and Iran are ready to boost the cooperation in the fields of combating terrorism and extremism. What can two countries do to this end?

A: We share the same values when we talk about the terrorism. Right now the most important thing is how we defeat the ISIL. It's good that you could combat most of them. So we need to talk about how to avoid the elements, the operatives who are now maybe becoming passive to return to our countries. So we need to share information. On the other hand, we can also see in Indonesia that terrorists are not only from ISIL, we also have some local disturbances, particularly those who are interpreting the Islamic values and Islam in radical ways. We can also disseminate the information and the moderate way of Islam. We have to cooperate to promote Islamic values and peaceful Islam to this end we can arrange some events and seminars together. We have already done some of these activities through our universities.

And we have also talked about the ways to exchange our technology in defense equipment. We are very much interested in remote sensing aeronautical industries in Iran and we also see good opportunities to collaborate in Iran's radar and electronic industries.

■ How do you see the future of the US "Deal of Century" for Palestine? Do you think it will be successful or not?

A: We did not participate at Bahrain Summit and we think for the Deal of the Century we have to differentiate firstly the political solutions and secondly the economic solutions. Indonesia thinks similar to Iran in this regards. When we talk about the economic cooperation and assistants we render to our brothers in Palestine, you don't need the Deal of the Century. We contribute to our brothers without showing to everybody that we sent how many million dollars to Palestine. The most important thing is about the political solution. This is the first and foremost target or objective that we need to show. We hope the political solution would be prior to all. We need to make sure that the issue of occupations, illegal occupation should be resolved. The recognition of Jerusalem, capital city of Palestine should be admitted.

I think these issues are more important than the Deal of the Century.

We do our part and if some other countries want to contribute more, it's OK but political issue should be prior to all.

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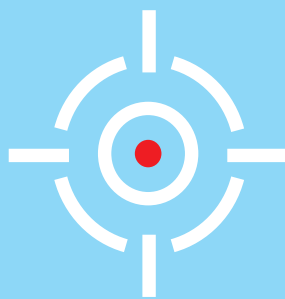
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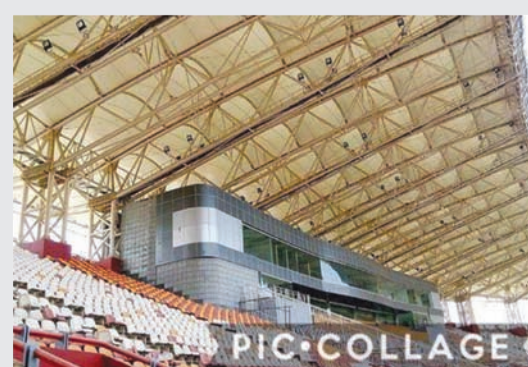
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Asteroid near-miss: 177-foot rock narrowly skims Earth after being spotted just days ago

Scientists at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) announced that the asteroid 2019 QQ swooped by Earth at 9:30 EST (3:30 BST) on Friday night, according to Inquisitr. The huge asteroid was only discovered earlier this week after being picked up by NASA on August 21 – just two days before it skimmed by Earth. The near-miss was its closest-ever approach to Earth, according to the JPL.

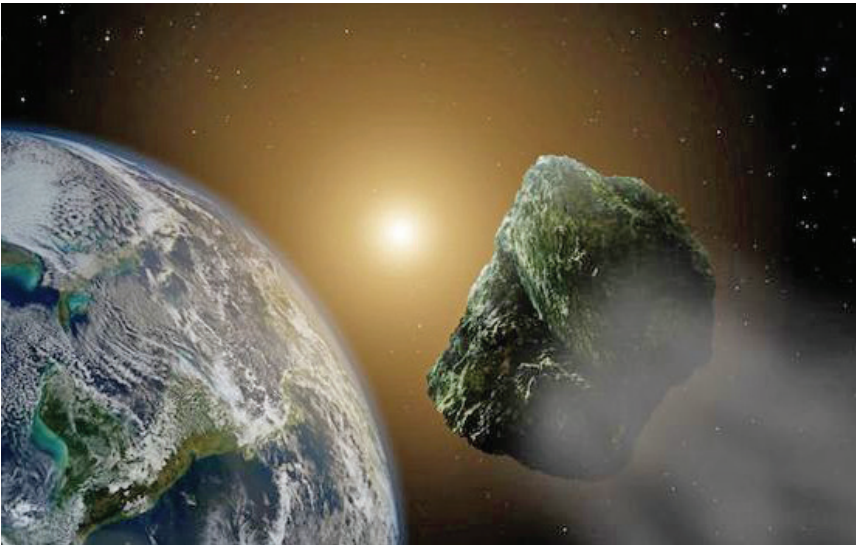
JPL also classified the asteroid as a near-Earth object (NEO), specifically an Apollo-type asteroid.

NEOs are celestial objects such as comets or asteroid that orbit between 91 million and 121 million miles from the sun.

When NEOs orbit around the sun they can comes as close as a few times the distance to the moon to Earth.

However, the asteroid was also branded as potentially “Earth-crossing”.

NASA said space rocks like the asteroid 2019 QQ move around the solar system on an orbital path that occasionally allows them



to cross Earth’s orbit. Although the asteroid was only just

discovered, it is reportedly a frequent visitor through our part of the solar system.

JPL scientists were able to compile a list of upcoming encounters with Earth, stretching seven decades into the future.

In the last 40 years, the asteroid 2019 QQ has flown by Earth seven times.

Over the next 70 years, the asteroid could flyby Earth as many as twenty-eight times.

Back in July, Earth narrowly avoided a cataclysmic “tragedy” in July when Asteroid 2019 OK shot past the planet.

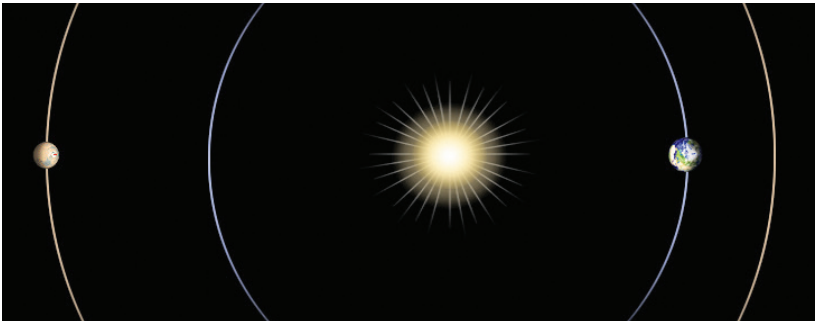
Like the asteroid 2019 QQ, the flyby took the world by surprise as it only appeared on our radars the day before.

Measuring between 190ft and 426ft across, the space rock packed the potential power to wipe out an entire city, killing thousands in the process.

Dr. Anna ?osiak from the Polish Academy of Sciences told the Polish Press Agency (PAP): “If the asteroid had hit Earth, a crater measuring 2km to 4km (1.2 to 2.5 miles) in diameter and 100m (328ft) deep would have appeared.”

(Source: The Express)

What’s Mars solar conjunction, and why does it matter?



The daily chatter between antennas here on Earth and those on NASA spacecraft at Mars is about to get much quieter for a few weeks.

That’s because Mars and Earth will be on opposite sides of the Sun, a period known as Mars solar conjunction. The Sun expels hot, ionized gas from its corona, which extends far into space. During solar conjunction, this gas can interfere with radio signals when engineers try to communicate with spacecraft at Mars, corrupting commands and resulting in unexpected behavior from our deep space explorers.

To be safe, engineers hold off on sending commands when Mars disappears far enough behind the Sun’s corona that there’s increased risk of radio interference.

“It’s that time again,” said Roy Gladden, manager of the Mars Relay Network at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. “Our engineers have been preparing our spacecraft for conjunction for months. They’ll still be collecting science data at Mars, and some will attempt to send that data home. But we won’t be commanding the spacecraft out of concern that they could act on a corrupted command.”

When is this taking place?

Solar conjunction occurs every two years. This time, the hold on issuing commands—called a “command moratorium”—will run from Aug. 28 to Sept. 7, 2019. Some missions will have stopped commanding their spacecraft earlier in preparation for the moratorium.

What happens to the spacecraft? Although some instruments aboard

spacecraft—especially cameras that generate large amounts of data—will be inactive, all of NASA’s Mars spacecraft will continue their science; they’ll just have much simpler “to-do” lists than they normally would carry out.

On the surface of Mars, the Curiosity rover will stop driving, while the InSight lander won’t move its robotic arm. Above Mars, both the Odyssey orbiter and the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter will continue collecting data from Curiosity and InSight for return to Earth. However, only Odyssey will attempt to relay that data to Earth before conjunction ends. Meantime, another orbiter, MAVEN, will continue to collect its own science data but won’t support any relay operations during this time.

All of this means that there will be a temporary pause in the stream of raw images available from Curiosity, InSight and the other Mars missions. Mars solar conjunction impacts operations of all spacecraft currently at Mars, not just NASA’s.

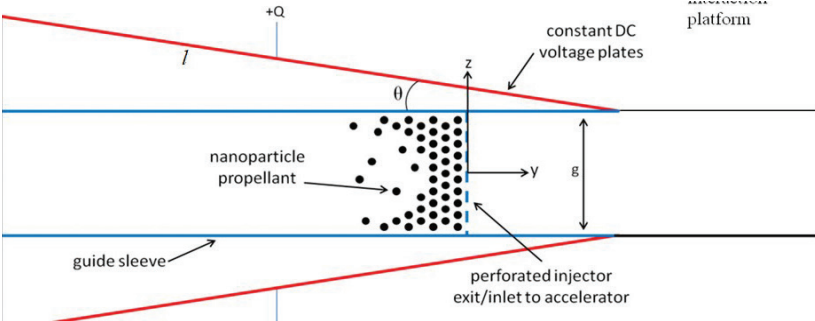
What happens when solar conjunction ends?

Once conjunction is over, the spacecraft will beam the data they’ve collected to NASA’s Deep Space Network, a system of massive Earth-based radio antennas managed by JPL. Engineers will spend about a week downloading the information before normal spacecraft operations resume.

If the teams monitoring these missions determine any of the collected science data are corrupted, they can usually have that data retransmitted after the moratorium ends on Sept. 7.

(Source: phys.org)

Study models new method to accelerate nanoparticles



In a new study, researchers at the University of Illinois and the Missouri University of Science and Technology modeled a method to manipulate nanoparticles as an alternative mode of propulsion for tiny spacecraft that require very small levels of thrust.

The team simulated a system that uses light to generate an electromagnetic field. Neutral nanoparticles made from glass or some other material that insulates rather than conducts electric charges are used. The nanoparticles become polarized. All of the positive charges are displaced in the direction of the field and negative charges shift in the opposite direction. It creates an internal electric field that produces a force to move the particles from a reservoir, funneled through an injector, then shot out of an accelerator to produce thrust.

The study, that has been about eight years in the making, analytically showed that the technique can work, and suggested parameters for success.

“The challenge is in selecting the right permittivity of the medium, the right amount of charge, in which all of this happens,” said Joshua Rovey, associate professor in the Department of Aerospace Engineering in The Grainger College of Engineering at the U of I. “You have to choose the right materials for the nanoparticles themselves as well as the material surrounding the nanoparticles as they move through the structure.”

The technique is based on a field of physics called plasmonics that studies how optical light or optical electromagnetic

waves, interact with nanoscale structures, such as a bar or prism.

Rovey explained when the light hits the nanoscale structure, a resonant interaction occurs. It creates strong electromagnetic fields right next to that structure. And those electromagnetic fields can manipulate particles by applying forces to nanoscale particles that are near those structures. The study focused on how to feed the nanoparticles into the accelerator structure, or injector and how the angles of the plates in the injector affect the forces on these nanoparticles.

“One of the main motivating factors for the concept was the absence of or lack of a power supply in space,” Rovey said. “If we can just harness the sun directly, have the sun shine directly on the nanostructures themselves, there’s no need for an electrical power supply or solar panel to provide power.”

Rovey said this study was a numerical simulation. The next step will be to create nanoscale structures in a lab, load them into the system, apply a light source, and observe how the nanoparticles move.

The study, “Nanoparticle injector for photonic manipulators using dielectrophoresis,” was written by Jaykob Maser and Joshua L. Rovey. It appears in AIP Advances.

This project was supported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, a grant from the NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts program, and Missouri University of Science and Technology through the Chancellor’s Fellowship.

(Source: Science Daily)

Other planets could have even more life than Earth does, scientists say

Other worlds could be filled with even more flourishing life than we have on Earth, scientists have said.

The new study could have significant implications for the way we search for alien life. It also suggests that search could be more likely to find life on exoplanets than we had thought.

“This is a surprising conclusion”, said lead researcher Dr. Stephanie Olson. “It shows us that conditions on some exoplanets with favorable ocean circulation patterns could be better suited to support life that is more abundant or more active than life on Earth.”

In recent years, scientists have found huge numbers of exoplanets, or worlds orbiting around stars that are not our own. But they are all very far away – impossible to reach even with the fastest space probes, and difficult even to see in any detail.

Researchers are working on a variety of ways to learn about those worlds, including telescopes that will be able to “sniff” their atmospheres and learn more about what the planets could be made of. But to understand the information that comes back, scientists need to build detailed and complicated models of how planets form and their climates work.

By combining those observations with those models, scientists aim to understand which of those distant planets could be home to alien life.

Now Dr. Olson and her team have combined that work to understand the conditions on those exoplanets, which will help inform that search. The work was presented at the Goldschmidt Geochemistry Congress in Barcelona.

“NASA’s search for life in the Universe is focused on so-called Habitable Zone planets, which are worlds that have the potential for liquid water oceans,” she said. “But not all oceans are equally hospitable – and some oceans will be better places to live than others due to their global circulation patterns”.



To conduct the study, the team made models of those planets using NASA software, which allows them to simulate the conditions on those exoplanets. Using that NASA technology, they were able to create models of the possible climates and oceans that could be on those exoplanets.

They found that many of them seemed like more hospitable and flourishing places for life than even Earth is. They looked at the process in Earth’s oceans that allows life to take root down here – and considered whether that same process could be happening elsewhere in the universe.

“Our work has been aimed at identifying the exoplanet oceans which have the greatest capacity to host globally abundant and active life,” said Dr. Olson in a statement.

“Life in Earth’s oceans depends on upwelling (upward flow) which returns nutrients from the dark depths of the ocean to the sunlit portions of the ocean where photosynthetic life lives. More upwelling means more nutrient resupply, which means more biological activity.

New species of stegosaurus uncovered in Moroccan dig

A new species of one of the most recognizable types of dinosaur is also the oldest of its kind ever discovered, British scientists believe.

Remains of a stegosaurus, an armored dinosaur instantly recognizable by the plate-like bones protruding from its spine and spikes on its tails, were studied by a team from the Natural History Museum and belong to a new genus that walked the earth around 168m years ago.

Despite the specimen including only a few vertebrae and an upper-arm bone, scientists concluded it was a new species and genus which dates to the middle Jurassic period – much earlier than most known stegosaurs.

The team, led by Dr. Susannah Maidment, named it Adratiklit boughafa, meaning “mountain lizard” in the Berber language. Boughafa is a reference to the area in the Middle Atlas mountains of Morocco where the specimen was found.

“The discovery of Adratiklit boughafa is particularly exciting as we have dated it to the middle Jurassic,” said Maidment.

“Most known stegosaurs date from far later in the Jurassic period, making this the oldest definite stegosaurus described and helping to increase our understanding of the evolution of this group of dinosaurs.”



The specimen is the first stegosaurus, a thyreophoran dinosaur, to be found in North Africa. Thyreophoran dinosaurs are found across much of the globe and have been mainly attributed to Laurasian rock formations, the team explained.

This has suggested that when the Earth was divided into two supercontinents, Laurasia and Gondwana, thyreophorans were more common and diverse in Laurasia. But the recent discovery could dispute that.

Maidment added: “Most stegosaurs we know of, including the Natural History Museum’s Sophie, the most complete stegosaurus discovered, have been found in Laurasian rock formations.

“This, however, may not mean that stegosaurs were not so common in Gondwana and in fact may be due to the fact that Gondwana rock formations have been subject to far fewer excavations and detailed studies.”

The team said the discovery adds to the theory the Gondwanan fossil record of armored dinosaurs is significantly biased by geological factors and collection efforts.

Maidment said: “What is exciting about this is that there could be many more thyreophoran dinosaurs to find in places that until now have not been excavated.”

Further discoveries in the region will provide an improved view of the distribution of this group of dinosaurs and could result in a more complete specimen of Adratiklit boughafa, the team said.

(Source: The Guardian)

In a quantum future, which starship destroys the other?

Quantum mechanics boasts all sorts of strange features, one being quantum superposition -- the peculiar circumstance in which particles seem to be in two or more places or states at once. Now, an international group of physicists led by Stevens Institute of Technology, University of Vienna and University of Queensland flip that description on its head, showing that particles are not the only objects that can exist in a state of superposition — so can time itself.

“The sequence of events can become quantum mechanical,” said co-author Igor Pikovski, a physicist at the Center for Quantum Science and Engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology. “We looked at quantum temporal order where there is no distinction between one event causing the other or vice versa.”

The work, reported in the August 22 issue of Nature Communications, is among the first to reveal the quantum properties of time, whereby the flow of time doesn’t observe a straight arrow forward, but one where cause and effect can co-exist both in the forward and backward direction. In the upcoming era of quantum computers, the work holds particular promise: quantum computers that exploit the quantum order of performing operations might beat devices that operate using only fixed sequences.

To show this scenario, Pikovski and colleagues merged two seemingly conflicting theories -- quantum mechanics and general relativity -- to conduct a Gedanken experiment, a way of using the imagination to investigate the nature of things. The team, consisting of Pikovski, Magdalena Zych, Fabio Costa and Caslav Brukner, started by asking the question, “what would a clock measure if it was influenced by a massive object in a quantum superposition state, i.e. both near and far at the same time?”

According to general relativity, the presence of a massive object slows down the flow of time, such that a clock placed close to a massive object will run slower compared to an identical one that is farther away.

To illustrate what happens, imagine a pair of starships training for a mission. They are asked to fire at each other at a specified time and dodge the fire at another time, whereby each ship knows the exact time when to fire and when to dodge. If either ship fires too early, it will destroy the other, and this establishes an unmistakable time order between the firing events.

However, if a powerful agent could place a sufficiently massive object, say a planet, closer to one ship it would slow down its flow of time. As a result, the ship would dodge the fire too late and would be destroyed.

Quantum mechanics complicates the matter. When placing the planet in a state of superposition near one ship or the other, both can be destroyed or survive at the same time. The sequence of events exists in a state of superposition, such that each starship simultaneously destroys the other.

The authors illustrate for the first time how this quantum scenario can occur and how it can be verified. “Moving planets around is hard,” said Pikovski. “But imagining it helped us examine a quantum aspect of time that was previously unknown.”

(Source: Science Daily)

‘Red lights’ as over-tourism threatens Corsican nature reserve

GIROLATA (France) — “It’s nature’s magical design,” says a tourist guide, waxing poetic as he comments on the impressive red cliffs plunging into a turquoise sea at the Scandola nature reserve on France’s Corsica island.

“Amazing!” exclaims Irena Snyderova, a Czech tourist visiting the UNESCO World Heritage site with her family, along with groups from Italy, Spain and France.

Their boat sidles up to the Steps of Paradise, rocks shaped into a stairway some 15 metres (50 feet) long, then glides on to Bad Luck Pass, a former pirates’ redoubt.

The ages have shaped the volcanic cliffs into myriad shapes that beguile the visitor.

The park, created in 1975, is an ecological dream, being a nature reserve and a protected marine zone that is listed by France’s coastal protection agency and Natura 2000, in addition to its recognition by UNESCO.

It is a prime destination for the some three million people who visit Corsica each year, 75 percent of them in the summer.

The paradox is that growing numbers of tourists are drawn to Scandola’s pristine waters and stunning geological vistas, endangering its fragile ecosystem.

The park, reached only by boat some 40 minutes from the tiny port of Porto, stretches over 10 square kilometres (nearly four square miles) of sea, and a somewhat smaller area of land.

“The reserve is a jewel for Corsica and the Mediterranean, but several red lights are flashing,” says marine biologist Charles-Francois Boudouresque, listing flora and fauna at risk, including ospreys, seagrass and fish species such as the brown meagre.

The tourist season coincides with the ospreys’ mating season, notes Boudouresque, an emeritus professor at the Mediterranean Institute of Oceanography.

Because of over-tourism, ospreys’ “reproductive success is zero or near zero, with either no chicks or just one chick” per year, he says.

Boudouresque, who also heads Scandola’s scientific advisory council, says the osprey could become extinct in 50 years.

■ **‘Golden egg’**
Since last month, at the urging of the scientific council, boats must keep a distance of at least 250 metres from ospreys’ nests during the breeding season.

“It’s a good start,” Boudouresque says.

As for the marine park’s fish species, Boudouresque says he thinks the thrumming of the tourist boats is scaring them away.

But a crew member, who gave his name only as Diego, blamed groupers for the declining population of corb. “They eat everything,” he told AFP.

Tensions have arisen pitting tour boat operators and fishermen against the reserve’s conservationist Jean-Marie Dominici.

Boudouresque says the seagrass “is not in the best shape,” blaming the anchors dropped by the many boats -- some of them private vessels without authorised guides.

“It’s bizarre for a nature reserve to see all these boats,” said Pierre Gilibert, a 65-year-old doctor, who is a regular visitor. “It might be wise to allow access only to professional boats.”

Many share the opinion that private boats are not sufficiently monitored or informed of ecological concerns.

“This morning we saw people climbing on the rocks and berthing their boats in narrow passageways, which is not allowed,” said Gabriel Pelcot, chief mechanic on a cruise ship of the Corsican company Nave Va. Nave Va, as well as rival Via Mare, uses hybrid vessels: they are powered by diesel up to the edge of the marine park, then switch to electric for a quieter and less polluting presence.

Pelcot notes that this green option is 30 percent more expensive, but he expects it to catch on.

“We must find a compromise between the need for tourists to enjoy this natural treasure and that of not killing the goose that laid the golden egg,” Boudouresque says.

The marine biologist is optimistic that general awareness of the problems is growing.

He envisions ways to marry tourism with preservation. One example, he says, would be to focus cameras on ospreys’ nests so that they can be observed without being disturbed.

(Source: AFP)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Archaeological Site of Ani

This site is located on a secluded plateau of northeast Turkey overlooking a ravine that forms a natural border with Armenia. This medieval city combines residential, religious and military structures, characteristic of a medieval urbanism built up over the centuries by Christian and then Muslim dynasties.



The city flourished in the 10th and 11th centuries CE when it became the capital of the medieval Armenian kingdom of the Bagratides and profited from control of one branch of the Silk Road. Later, under Byzantine, Seljuk and Georgian sovereignty, it maintained its status as an important crossroads for merchant caravans.

The Mongol invasion and a devastating earthquake in 1319 marked the beginning of the city’s decline. The site presents a comprehensive overview of the evolution of medieval architecture through examples of almost all the different architectural innovations of the region between the 7th and 13th centuries CE.

■ **Integrity**
All the elements that constitute the basic values of Ani are located within the boundaries of the property. Although the majority of structures having monumental characteristics are still standing on site, there is not a single monument that is not facing serious structural problems of stability, either missing parts of the fabric, due to seismic action or human destruction, or problems of unsuccessful interventions.

The visual integrity of the landscape is affected by the quarrying activities on the east side of Arpaçay Creek and the inappropriate use of pasture areas of the rock-cut caves in Bostanlar Creek and Arpaçay Creek.

Report reveals world’s most lucrative airline routes



in the top 10, namely its London-Singapore (\$735 million) and Singapore-Sydney (\$549 million) flights.

According to AOG analyst John Grant, every airline has lucrative routes that they

“protect at all costs” to help them maintain their revenue.

Interestingly, the most lucrative route in the world is not the busiest. The British Airways’ London Heathrow-New York JFK

flight, for instance, didn’t even make the top 10, with Seoul Gimpo-Jeju International the world’s most popular route.

Below are the top 10 most lucrative routes in 2018-2019:

1. New York JFK to London Heathrow (British Airways, \$1,159 million)
2. Melbourne to Sydney (Qantas, \$861 million)
3. Dubai to London Heathrow (Emirates, \$796 million)
4. London Heathrow to Singapore (Singapore Airlines, \$735 million)
5. San Francisco to Newark (United Airlines, \$689 million)
6. Los Angeles to New York JFK (American Airlines, \$661 million)
7. London Heathrow to Doha (Qatar Airways, \$639 million)
8. Hong Kong to London Heathrow (Cathay Pacific, \$604 million)
9. Sydney to Singapore (Singapore Airlines, \$549 million)
10. Toronto to Vancouver (Air Canada, \$541 million)

(Source: The Jakarta Post)

The UNESCO World Heritage Sites you can see by train

Whether you’re looking for a railway journey in Europe or on a long-haul holiday, our pick of the best train holidays that take in UNESCO World Heritage Sites will provide you with all the best views.

From the Banff National Park in Canada which you can experience on the Rocky Mountaineer, to the breathtaking red train the Bernina Express passing through Switzerland’s most epic Alpine scenes, these unforgettable rail escapes should be on your dream holiday list.

■ **Bernina Express train to St Moritz**
The famous Bernina Express railway journey is itself a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The feat of engineering that brought this route to life coupled with its outstanding Alpine landscapes make it Europe’s most iconic train holiday. Crossing grand viaducts and passing crystal lakes and quiet towns, you’ll arrive at St Moritz - the home of Alpine tourism and a favourite among celebrities and royals.

■ **Split from Zagreb by ICN**
Split’s historic centre is a UNESCO-listed Croatian city on the Adriatic Sea, home to the impressive Diocletian’s Palace, a marble castle dating back to Roman times.

You can now visit this holiday destination and all of its gorgeous boutiques via a quicker, more modern rail service from the Croatian capital, Zagreb. It only takes five and a half hours and refreshments are served on board. The ICN (inter-city) train is a comfortable and scenic route through

Croatia’s little-visited countryside and the perfect way to travel over land.

■ **Himalayan Railway to Darjeeling**
Passing rolling hills, lush meadows and tea gardens, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is a beautiful way to see the hills and mountains of western India.

This small-gauge railway is known as one of the country’s ‘toy trains’ thanks to its small size. It was introduced all the way back in 1881 and still covers 78km of lush landscape today. It’s quite a ride, with hairpin turns, snaking tracks and impressive bridges.

A prime example of a hill passenger railway, this feat of engineering is UNESCO-listed for providing access to the plains and plateaus of the mountainous terrain.

■ **Orient Express train to Venice**
Perhaps the most classic railway in Europe, the Belmond-Simplon Orient Express takes passengers back to the Golden Age of travel with high-class service, three-course sit-down meals and timeless romantic interiors.

Arriving in Venice from the Orient Express is a magical moment. This UNESCO-protected city of ancient trade and architectural splendour has been a key link between East and West for centuries, and its influence on the world is immeasurable.

Sadly the irreversible effects of climate change are causing sea levels to rise rapidly, so its UNESCO status is vital to its protection.

Ivory Coast’s ‘Floating Island’ points to greener tourism



ABIDJAN (AFP) — The seaside resort offers visitors a cool drink or tasty meal, a dip in a pool, a karaoke session or an overnight stay, all with a view.

Nothing much new there, you may say -- creature comforts like this are pretty much standard in tropical hotels.

The big difference, though, is that this mini resort is also a moveable island that floats on plastic bottles.

Riding on the lagoon in Abidjan, Ivory Coast’s economic hub, the unusual complex floats on a platform made from 700,000 discarded bottles and other buoyant debris.

Its inventor, Frenchman Eric Becker, says his creation can help greener, more mobile tourism -- something less harmful to seas and coastlines than traditional fixed, concrete resorts.

His ‘Ile Flottante’ -- French for ‘Floating Island’ -- comprises two thatched bungalows and a restaurant, two small pools, trees and shrubs and a circular walkway, spread out over 1,000 square metres (10,700 square feet).

Visitors are brought to the moored

island by a boat. Water is provided by a pipe from the shore. Electricity is supplied by solar panels, backed by a generator.

The island is bigger than a moored boat and handier than a jetty as it can also be taken to other locations, Becker told AFP.

“It really is an artificial island that floats -- you can move it.”

Becker, a former computer entrepreneur, first toyed with the idea of building a catamaran.

But it was when he came to Abidjan and saw the lagoon that the vision of a floating, moveable island came into his mind -- and he sold everything he owned to achieve it.

The first step was to forage for everything floatable -- “plastic bottles, bits of polystyrene, even beach sandals.”

Bemused locals gave him the nickname of “Eric Bidon” -- a word that has a subtle dual meaning of jerrycan and phoney.

“We bought disused bottles off people, we foraged for them in the lagoon. After a while, we learned to follow the wind and find the places where floating rubbish accumulates,” he said.

Ancient ram-headed tombstone discovered in northwestern Turkey

A Turkish historian in northwestern Bursa province has discovered a hundreds of years old tombstone bearing a ram-head figure, which is an important symbolic figure in the Turkic world.

Associate Professor Celil Bozkurt discovered the historic tombstone in a derelict graveyard located in the Alutça neighborhood, which he believes will shed light on the Turkic tribes who once lived in the area, as well as the migratory routes of those tribes.

Saying that the gravestones bearing ram-head figures are seen in different regions of the Turkic-speaking world, Bozkurt noted that the rams were very important for the nomadic lifestyle of the ancient Turks.

“The ram, which had entered the social and religious life



of the Turks, became the subject of legends, and was used as a permanent symbol in Turkish handicrafts due to its

Scandinavian Mountains Airport to boost ski tourism in Sweden and Norway



Sweden’s first new airport in twenty years has been given a boost with the confirmation from Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) that they will operate direct flights from Denmark and the United Kingdom. Set to open in December 2019, Scandinavian Mountains Airport sits close to the Norwegian border between some of the region’s best alpine ski resorts.

Privately built by a consortium of 33 companies on the site of a former recreational airfield, the airport is set to generate significant interest in skiing breaks from outside the two countries. The closest slopes at Hundfjället are just 10 minutes away by bus, while shuttles will also operate to slopes at Tandådalen, Höggfjället, Lindvallen, Trysil, Stöten and Kläppen.

Sälen and Trysil, Sweden and Norway’s biggest alpine resorts, lend their names to the airport’s alternative name: Sälen Trysil Airport. The airport has been designated its official International Air Transport Association (IATA) Airport code SCR. The three letter combination is now visible within IATA and allows scheduling.

■ **London to the Scandinavian mountains**

Approximately 70% of winter visitors to Trysil already come from outside Norway, but bosses at Trysil are expecting a boost when the airport opens. “We’ve been waiting for this for a long time and finally the first flights are ready. The new airport will make it easier for guests to come to Trysil. Now our guests can visit us more often in a faster and more efficient way,” said Gudrun Sanaker Lohne from Destination Trysil.

Braathens Regional Airlines (BRA) had previously announced five direct routes within Sweden to/from Stockholm Bromma, Göteborg, Malmö, Ängelholm, Växjö. Now, SAS has announced a total of four new return flights a week to and from the new airport. The most frequent route will be the twice-weekly service to/from Copenhagen on Thursdays and Sundays. Weekly flights will operate on Saturdays to/from London Heathrow and on Sundays to/from Aalborg in Denmark.

(Source: forbes.com)

power, strength, and courage,” Bozkurt said, adding that the symbol has thus survived through its manifestation on carpets, rugs or tombstones.

Bozkurt underscored that the symbol was also particularly common among Kipchak and Oghuz Turks which supports the claim that the local community living in the neighborhood today would be descendants of the Kipchak Turks.

“Interdisciplinary researches in the region will provide new information about Kipchaks, known as the missing Turks,” Bozkurt noted.

Oghuz and Kipchak tribes arrived in Anatolia early in the ninth century; a migration that was crowned by the conquest of Anatolia by the great Seljuk Empire in the 11th century.

(Source: Daily Sabah)

75 early cancer detection centers operating nationwide

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — A total of 75 centers for early cancer detection were established across the country during the past Iranian calendar year (March 2018-March 2019), Ali Qanbari-Motlaq, head of the Health Ministry's cancer control department said on Saturday.

The Health Ministry plans to increase the operating early cancer detection centers to 137 as soon as possible, he added, ISNA reported.

"Our most important goal is to identify people who are suspicious for cancer or have any family record of this disease."

People who are suffering from cancer should receive medical treatment in a short time, which is possible through electronic health services, he said.

■ Cancer, the third cause of death in Iran

After road accidents and cardiovascular diseases, cancer has been the third leading cause of death among Iranians during recent years.

However, the rate of cancer in Iran is less than developed countries or neighboring



countries like Turkey, he noted.

The rate of cancer in Iran is 149.74 per 100,000 population (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) which is less than the global rate of 182 in 100,000 population.

As per the data collected by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), an independent population health research center at UW Medicine, part of the University of Washington, some 54,000 Iranians died

of cancer in 2016 constituting 14.9 percent of all deaths (360,000).

The IHME data also indicates that age-standardized rate of death caused by cancer per 100,000 people per year in Iran was 104 in 1990 which has decreased to 97 in 2015.

According to the latest data released by the Health Ministry in early June, a total of 108,798 new cases of cancer were diagnosed during the calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) in Iran, of which 58,092 ones (53.4 percent) were men and 50,706 (46.6 percent) were women.

There were 112,000 cancer patients in the year 1393, including 60,432 (53.9 percent) men and 51,628 (46.1 percent) women. According to the statistics, 149.74 per 100,000 population suffer from cancer, including 156.95 men and 134.43 women per 100,000 population.

Breast cancer (32.9 percent), prostate cancer (16.93 percent), nonmelanoma skin cancer (14.6 percent), gastric cancer (13.70 percent) and colorectal cancer (13.31 percent) are the most common cancers in the country.

One pill for all your heart health is on the way

Imagine a single pill loaded with a battery of heart medications that you take once a day to cut your chances of heart attack, stroke and heart failure.

A new clinical trial has turned that idea into reality.

The "polypill" reduced the risk of life-threatening heart health problems by more than one-third during a five-year period in a group of more than 3,400 people aged 50 to 75.

What's more, the risk decreased by more than half when researchers narrowed their focus to just participants who faithfully took the pill as directed.

The polypill in the study contained two common blood pressure drugs, a cholesterol-lowering statin and aspirin, the researchers said.

"The results of our study suggest that the polypill is effective in preventing cardiovascular disease," said researcher Tom Marshall, a professor of public health and primary care with the University of Birmingham, in England. "This suggests that it should be considered as part of a strategy to prevent cardiovascular disease."

However, this one-size-fits-all approach to heart disease prevention likely would work better in less-developed countries than the United States, said Dr. Ron Blankstein. He's an associate physician of preventive cardiology with Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

U.S. patients often are reluctant to take cholesterol or blood pressure drugs, even

after risk assessments are used to dial in the specific medications that would best protect their health, Blankstein noted. A single pill loaded with meds might be even less appealing.

"It's something I could see as a combination that's offered and available in the U.S., but whether that would change adherence or if the patients would find it that much more attractive to be on such a combination is still uncertain," Blankstein said. "I think this is an approach that is going to work well in a low- to middle-income country, in a rural population."

Heart patients aren't very good at sticking with the medications they've been prescribed, the study authors said in background notes. About one-third of patients stop taking their meds as early as 90 days after having a heart attack.

The polypill is a concept that has knocked around for two decades now, offering a simpler cost-saving approach that would make it easier for people to take their heart medications.

However, evidence supporting the use of polypills to prevent heart disease in people who haven't suffered a heart attack or stroke is lacking, the researchers noted.

To provide more evidence, the investigators recruited more than 6,800 participants from Golestan, a province in Iran.

Half of the people were randomly chosen to take the polypill, and the rest were provided lifestyle advice for lowering their risk of heart disease.

Overall, participants showed high adherence to their prescription. About 63% took the polypill as recommended, at least 70% of the time.

Polypill patients experienced an overall 34% decrease in their risk of major heart events over five years, compared with those who just received lifestyle advice. These heart events included acute coronary syndrome, heart attack, sudden heart death, heart failure, stroke, and procedures to reopen clogged arteries.

Benefit increased to a 40% reduction in risk among people with no history of heart disease, and up to 57% in people who stuck with the polypill as recommended.

The researchers estimated that 35 people would need to be treated with the polypill to prevent one person from having a life-threatening event. In patients with high adherence, the number needed to treat was 21.

"This clinical trial shows that the concept of a polypill, when applied to a large rural population in a low- to middle-income country, actually works," said Blankstein, a member of the American College of Cardiology's Prevention Section and Leadership Council.

Instead of carefully assessing individual risk, the researchers assigned people to the polypill solely based on age -- a move that greatly simplifies distribution of heart meds, Blankstein noted.

Because of that, Marshall said, the intervention can be very low-cost, as little as a few cents a day in Iran.



It's not clear whether an American polypill would be as affordable, Blankstein said.

"In the U.S., if someone creates this and they try to market it under a trade name, it would be a scenario where this could cost more, and that's not the purpose," Blankstein said. "The purpose is for it to cost less, especially if the whole point is to reduce cost and lower risk."

The formulation of an American polypill would require a bit of discussion, as well. For example, it's not clear that aspirin would be included in the pill, given recent clinical trial data and changes to U.S. prevention guidelines, Blankstein said.

"The perfect combination of what to put in a polypill I think is something that is very much up for debate," Blankstein said. "If you made a simple polypill that was just one agent to lower cholesterol and one agent to lower blood pressure, I think there would be many populations that would benefit from that approach."

(Source: webmd.com)

Even in countries with the healthiest packaged foods, obesity is still a problem

A new study looks at packaged foods and how healthy they are.

The United Kingdom is often on the receiving end of a lot of grief about their food (rightly or wrongly, you decide).

But a new analysis of packaged foods finds that the convenience snacks, ready-made meals, and drinks sold in the four countries of the United Kingdom are the healthiest in the world.

The United States and Australia take silver and bronze, respectively, according to the report, which was published in Obesity Reviews.

Indeed, investigators from Australia's George Institute for Global Health in Sydney looked at more than 400,000 food and drink products from 12 countries and territories around the world.

Each food was ranked using Australia's Health Star Rating system. It measures levels of nutrients like calories, salt, sugar, saturated fat, protein, calcium, and fiber. Each food is then assigned a ranking from half a star (least healthy) to five stars (the most healthy).

Collectively, the United Kingdom's food and drink products received 2.83 stars. The United States scored 2.82, and Australia came in at 2.81 stars.

At the other end, India took the worst spot, with a food and drink rating of 2.27 stars. China, with a score of 2.43 stars, was second to the bottom. Chile finished out the final three positions with a score of 2.44 stars.

Other unique finds include the fact that Canada has the unhealthiest salt levels of all foods and drinks. But Canadians were second best on sugar rankings, falling just short of the United Kingdom.

China actually had the highest score for healthfulness in their drinks with 2.9 stars. But their packaged foods received 2.37 stars, which accounts for their lowered ranking.

India's packaged foods were the most energy dense, or had the most calories. South Africa, on the other hand, had the least calorie-rich foods.

"Globally we're all eating more and more processed foods and that's a concern because our supermarkets shelves are full of products that are high in bad fats, sugar and salt and are potentially making us sick," Elizabeth Dunford, PhD, lead author and a research fellow in the food policy division of The George Institute for Global Health, said in a statement.

"Our results show that some countries are doing a much better job than others," she added. "Unfortunately it's the poorer nations that are least able to address the adverse health consequences that have the unhealthiest foods."



But these results stand in stark contrast to another reality: In the United Kingdom, Canada, United States, and Australia, the obesity rates are climbing.

In the United States alone, more than two-thirds of adults are overweight or have obesity.

■ Healthy foods, unhealthy consumer

The access to "healthy" packaged foods, it seems, ultimately may have little to do with the health of the average consumer.

"It is not surprising that the wealthiest and most industrialized nations like USA and Canada have packaged food with higher overall nutrient profiles compared to India and China," Nicole Magryta, RDN, author of "Nourish Your Tribe: Empowering Parents to Grow Strong, Smart, Successful Kids," told Healthline.

"I don't think we needed a study to discover this fact. What's more important to recognize is the quantity of processed packaged foods that have exploded into the market and the rate and volume of which they are consumed."

"Wealthy industrialized nations like the United States have much larger selections of packaged food items that are considered 'boutique' or 'functional foods,' such as a collagen protein bar with lion's mane mushrooms and bee pollen or matcha green tea with added spirulina and vitamin D," she explained. "These foods are definitely better options than a Snickers bar and a soda, which are often what's available in poorer nations."

But Nicole Avena, PhD, an assistant professor at Mount Sinai Medical School and author of "Why Diets Fail," told Healthline she hopes this doesn't send the message that packaged foods in the United States are actually better options over whole foods.

"The results are interesting, but I fear they mislead some to think that U.S. packaged foods are healthy. While they might be healthier than the packaged foods in other countries, they certainly aren't healthy compared to a diet of vegetables, fruits, fish, and lean meats," she said.

■ Can packaged foods be healthy?

This ranking isn't license to drink and eat these foods as you wish.

Jodi Greebel, MS, RDN, says it's great that the study highlights that the United States has some of the world's healthiest packaged foods. But, she adds, even healthier snacks "can lead to overconsumption of calories, fat, and salt."

"For example, if your diet included one to two packaged snacks a day, you could still consume a diet that adheres to dietary guidelines," Greebel said.

"The problem in the U.S. is that for many children and adults, packaged snacks make up a large part of their calorie consumption for the day. So, even with a higher rating of packaged snacks, it is still possible to be consuming too many calories, fat, and salt," she said.

And that's the rub for most of the experts Healthline talked to. At their best, many of these foods are an unnecessarily high source of nutrients we don't need in abundance.

"We rely on processed prepackaged foods for convenience, but many of them contain high levels of sugar, salt, preservatives, and other chemicals to enhance their texture, smell, and aroma," Avena said.

"It may be best to avoid them and opt for fresh foods when you can. Obviously, there are times that you can't, so try to look for foods, packaged foods with low or no sugar or other sweeteners, few ingredients, and higher protein content to help make you feel fuller longer," she said.

■ The bottom line

Emily Tills, MS, RDN, points out that packaged foods, even the kind you find in the refrigerated section and not the boxes in the aisles, are processed in such a way they can sit and wait — and sit and wait a little more — for a consumer to purchase them without losing their flavors and textures.

That equals salt, sugar, and preservatives that, in a healthy diet, should be consumed sparingly.

"If you're looking to buy healthier options from prepackaged foods, we have to start looking at the ingredients panel more. The ingredients list should read more like a recipe and less like a chemical equation," Tills said.

"The simpler ingredients, the better. And if you can just make it yourself for the same price or cheaper, do it!"

(Source: healthline.com)

Controversial study links pollution with bipolar, depression

A recent study has concluded that exposure to air pollution, particularly during the first 10 years of life, could play a significant role in the development of psychiatric disorders. However, not everyone is convinced by the data.



High levels of pollution may considerably raise the risk of mental health conditions.

The study, which appears in PLOS Biology, used data from the United States and Denmark to uncover the possible link between environmental pollution and psychiatric disorders.

The new research found that rates of both bipolar disorder and depression were higher among those living in areas of poor air quality.

The researchers also concluded that Danish people who lived in polluted areas during their first decade of life were more than twice as likely to have personality disorders and schizophrenia.

With mental health in the spotlight, researchers are keen to understand the factors that influence whether or not someone develops psychiatric illness.

There are a multitude of potential causes, including genetics as well as life experiences, so it is not possible to exclude environmental factors.

In this new study, the team looked more closely at how a specific environmental factor — air pollution — affects the brain and the likelihood of psychiatric disorders.

■ Air pollution research

To reach their conclusion, the researchers drew from two large datasets. The pollution information for the U.S. came from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) air quality measurements, while for Denmark, the researchers looked at the national pollution register.

The EPA track 87 different air quality measurements. Although the Danish pollution register monitors fewer measurements, they have a higher spatial resolution.

The team then looked at healthcare data. For the U.S., they accessed a health insurance database that included claims that more than 151 million individuals made between 2003 and 2013.

For Denmark, they used data for all of the residents who were born in the country between 1979 and 2002 and were living in Denmark on their 10th birthday.

A meta-review provides strong evidence that physical exercise can help relieve depression.

Denmark assigns each person a unique identifying number that links information from national registries. This information enabled the researchers to estimate air pollution exposure during the first decade of life. However, the researchers were not able to be quite so specific with the U.S. dataset, as they were limited to the county level.

According to the authors, the findings showed that air pollution did have links to various psychiatric disorders. Using Denmark's more specific records, the researchers were able to pinpoint that the developing brain during a person's first 10 years of life might be a bit more prone to the effects of air pollution.

"We hypothesized that pollutants might affect our brains through neuroinflammatory pathways that have also been shown to cause depression-like signs in animal studies," says Andrey Rzhetsky, of the University of Chicago, IL, who led the study.

Computational biologist Atif Khan, who is the first author of this study, comments on the findings. He says, "The physical environment — in particular air quality — warrants more research to better understand how our environment is contributing to neurological and psychiatric disorders."

"Our study shows that living in polluted areas, especially early on in life, is predictive of mental disorders in both the U.S. and Denmark."

■ A dose of skepticism

Although the results are interesting, the study does have significant limitations and has caused much debate, as Rzhetsky himself explains. He says, "This study on psychiatric disorders is counterintuitive and generated considerable resistance from reviewers."

In fact, there was so much division that the journal decided to publish a companion article alongside the research paper. Prof. John Ioannidis, a scientist who assisted in the journal's editorial process but who is not connected with the original study, is the author.

In the article, he picks apart the data. Among other criticisms, he explains how "results from the U.S. data offer mostly coarse, exploratory hints. Associations may be entirely spurious or, conversely, important associations may be missed because of these deficiencies."

Prof. Ioannidis eventually concludes that a "causal association of air pollution with mental [conditions] is an intriguing possibility."

"Despite analyses involving large datasets," he adds, "the available evidence has substantial shortcomings and a long series of potential biases may invalidate the observed associations. More analyses by multiple investigators, including contrarians, are necessary."

(Source: Medical News Today)

New, healthier 'butter' spread almost entirely water

Cornell University food scientists have created a new low-calorie 'butter' spread that consists mostly of water. A tablespoon of this low-calorie spread has 2.8 grams of fat and 25.2 calories. Butter, on the other hand, which is 84% fat and about 16% water, has about 11 grams of fat and nearly 100 calories.

They figured out a new process to emulsify a large amount of water with minuscule drops of vegetable oil and milk fat to mimic butter, at approximately one-fourth the calories of real butter and without artificial stabilizers.

"Imagine 80% water in 20% oil and we create something with the consistency of butter, with the mouth feel of butter and creaminess of butter," said food science professor and senior author Alireza Abbaspourrad.

Emulsifying water and oil is nothing new, said Abbaspourrad, but by using high-internal phase emulsions (HIPE), "we keep adding water to that oil until the final composition is 80% water and 20% oil."

The demand for low-fat, high-protein products has rapidly increased due to consumers' growing health awareness, said lead author Michelle C. Lee, a doctoral candidate in Abbaspourrad's research group.

(Source: Science Daily)

Environment

Tropical fish spotted thousands of miles away in northern Canada as climate crisis escalates

Colorful tropical fish like butterfly fish and scrawled filefish are being spotted in northern Canadian waters as the climate crisis escalates.

Scuba diver and photographer Lloyd Bond – who has scuba dived in Nova Scotia for 23 years – has told The Independent he has seen a dramatic increase in fish whose normal habitat is thousands of miles away.



“Up until eight years ago tropical fish seemed to be extremely rare,” Mr Bond said.

“The last couple years I’ve been spotting them on almost every dive from the end of August to mid to late October. Butterfly fish, greater amberjacks, rudder fish, yellow tail snapper seem to be in larger numbers.”

“I’ve photographed at least a dozen species, and have seen that many more recorded by other divers. Some species seem to arrive as juveniles like the butterfly fish and band tail puffer [about the size of a penny] while others seem to be fully mature.”

Mr Bond said he also noticed changes in local species such as the wolf eel, which was reasonably common but now he spots it just once a year at most.

According to data collected by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, ocean temperatures started to sharply climb in 2010.

Dr Bryce Stewart from the University of York said marine species do occasionally end up well outside their normal ranges, especially if they get caught up in currents or storms, but this is happening more and more.

“That is partly because more people are out there in and on the oceans these days, and social media makes sharing unusual sightings much easier than in the past,” he said.

“But overall there is no doubt that many marine species are changing their ranges, moving away from equator towards the poles as the water warms.”

Monitoring programmes around the UK show that we are increasingly seeing Mediterranean species in UK waters.

climate change. But overall biodiversity is expected to decline. There is also the threat of invasive species and diseases causing damage to existing species and habitats when they move to new areas,” said Dr Stewart.

Last month the planet’s most northerly human settlement – Alert, in Nunavut – experienced an “unprecedented” heatwave. Canada’s weather agency confirmed that temperatures peaked at 21C – far exceeding the July average for the area of around 5C.

If serious action is not taken by world governments to cut global greenhouse gas emissions, ocean temperatures are likely to rise by up to 3.2C by the end of the century.

This damage will be compounded by ocean acidification, another impact of higher CO2 levels in the atmosphere, as well as changes in the water’s oxygen content.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Original music charity event

(August 1, 2001)

Thirty years ago on Wednesday, the former Beatle George Harrison held the first of two benefit concerts to raise money for the refugees of East Pakistan later Bangladesh. This concert was to become a model for future rock charity events.

The Concert for Bangladesh has been described as George Harrison’s **finest hour**. It was arranged at **short notice** following a call from the Indian sitar player, Ravi Shankar -- a friend of George Harrison’s, Ravi Shankar asked him to help with a **benefit concert to raise funds** for refugees pouring into India from the newly created state of Bangladesh. The money raised for Bangladesh far **exceeded all expectations**.

When the British and American governments insisted on taxing sales of the accompanying record, Harrison himself paid the 1.5-million-dollar tax bill. Today the benefit **gig** is an established part of the musical calendar with organizations like Amnesty calling on bands and singers to help **raise funds** and **awareness** of important issues. Some though, remain suspicious of the record industry’s involvement - arguing the publicity surrounding a benefit concert is often used as a means of **reviving** a musicians **flagging** career. But the fact remains that managed correctly it is one of the most powerful ways of **getting a message across**.

Words

finest hour: the high point of his career when he did something good which people will remember

at short notice: if you have to do something at short notice, you must do it soon, without very much warning.

a benefit concert: a concert held to make money which will be used to help people.

to raise funds: to make money

exceeded all expectations: if something exceeds all expectations then it is much more successful than people expected

gig: a live music concert

raise awareness: if you raise people’s awareness about a topic then you make them notice it and think more about it.

reviving: if you revive something then you make it active again after it has been inactive for a period of time.

flagging: if something is flagging then it is not succeeding, it is doing badly.

getting a message across: telling people something that you want them to know

(Source: BBC)



Safeguarding our vanishing treasure; National Park of Lake Urmia

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — The National Park of Lake Urmia, home to several precious species and amongst 59 biosphere reserve areas, is severely threatened by many years of drought so that it needs to be restored urgently to avoid the extinction of highly adapted species.

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East. It was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets and ducks and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

The lake hosted diverse bacterial communities, hyperhalophilous phytoplanktons, and notably the macrozooplankton crustacean, the brine shrimp Artemia urmiana.

Thus, with regard to its ecological significance, unique biodiversity and the presence of indigenous communities, Lake Urmia has been recognized as a protected area since 1967 and was designated as a National Park in 1976 as one of 59 biosphere reserves by UNESCO.

The National Park of Lake Urmia consists of approximately 102 islands; Shahi island was historically the lake’s largest. However, it became a peninsula connected to the eastern shore when the lake level dropped. Some of the islands have a rich ecosystem due to being out of reach.



The sharp rise in precipitations rates in the area has raised hopes for total restoration of the once glorious Lake Urmia.

Based on the latest data published by the National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center, since the current crop year (September 23, 2018), precipitation in the country considerably increased to 314.5 millimeters from 159.3 millimeters in the previous water year, demonstrating a 95.9 percent rise.

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

Therefore, the lake’s islands will face the threat of losing precious species, mas well.

Two islands of Ashk and Kaboodan burdened the direct consequences of drying Lake Urmia, loosing many of their wildlife species, Hamid Zohrabi, deputy chief of the

Department of Environment (DOE), told Tasnim on Wednesday.

The islands once were the main habitats for two herbivorous species of Persian fallow deer and Armenian mouflon, which have been endangered due to the lake’s improper conditions in recent years, he lamented.

“There are four projects aimed at revitalizing the islands’ ecosystems and preserving the wildlife, namely, managing the population of Persian fallow deer in Ashk island and managing the population of Armenian mouflon in the islands of Lake Urmia,” he explained.

He went on to say that expanding vegetation cover in the islands and the National Park of Lake Urmia and ecological conservation of the southeast side of the Lake are among the plans.

The plans will be implemented in a collab-

National biodiversity monitoring plan prepared

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — A national plan on monitoring biodiversity has been prepared to manage natural resources and react to changes accordingly in order to maintain protection for the valuable nature, Department of Environment (DOE) deputy chief for natural environment and biodiversity, announced.

Biodiversity occurs within and amongst dynamic environmental stressors and a rapidly changing society, ISNA quoted Hamid Zohrabi as saying on Sunday.

Greater biodiversity implies greater health and robustness, he noted, adding, monitoring biodiversity is essential in several ways.

It guides management action by providing data on threats and impacts from human interactions or changing environmental conditions, he said, adding, it is vital to investigate and determine the indices of sustainability and planning for improvement of natural resources condition.

Moreover, it is essential to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation management and interventions, he also noted.

He further highlighted that it also reports on the status



of particular species and ecosystems to responsible bodies as well as in fulfillment of regional and international biodiversity conservation agreements.

And it manages the exploitation of renewable natural resources based on environmental standards and sustainable development, he added.

It helps developing criteria for utilization of wildlife,

natural resources and biodiversity, he also stated.

Monitoring of rangelands and forest ecosystems including, Hyrcanian, Zagros, Avicennia marina, monitoring of soil erosion and sand and dust storms, and investigating strengths and weaknesses, capabilities and limitations for managing the biodiversity efficiently, are among the other goals of the plan, he explained.

A total budget of 1.2 trillion rials (nearly \$29 million) has been proposed to implement the plan over the next five years, he said, adding, “We hope that the government and Majlis (parliament) allocate the required fund.”

A strategic monitoring initiative as well as obligations and commitments of the government has led to the development of a regional biodiversity monitoring plan which can play a significant role in economic and social aspects of the country, he said.

“During flood events, wetlands highly reduced the damages and devastations, so, where there was a mismanagement of natural resources, flood damage was multiplied.”

Spending on biodiversity conservation is actually an investment for sustainability and economic growth, he concluded.

‘Rhinos of the ocean’ will go extinct without urgent protection, conservationists warn

Wedge fish and guitarfish known as “rhinos of the ocean” will go extinct without drastic efforts to stop illegal fishing, conservationists have warned.

Known as rhino rays because of their long snouts, they are the most endangered marine group left in the ocean and are relentlessly targeted for their sought-after fins – one kilo of which sells for around £1,000.

Conservationists have warned these ani-

mals are now perilously close to extinction as world leaders meet in Geneva for The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites).

They are looking to add 18 sharks and rays to the proposed Cites Appendix II – a list of creatures threatened with extinction.

This would mean all six species of giant guitarfishes, all 10 species of wedge fishes as well as two species of mako sharks were

much better protected from illegal fishing.

“This meeting likely marks our last chance to initiate the global momentum needed to save these sharks and rays before they are lost forever,” said Luke Warwick, Director of Shark and Ray Conservation at Wildlife Conservation Society representing the co-alition of partners.

“We are excited by the unprecedented support for these measures that, if adopted, can

drive efforts to bring the unsustainable global trade in shark fins and meat under control.”

There is cautious optimism among the shark conservation community with more than 60 governments already pledging formal support for these proposals.

However, two-thirds of government leaders in attendance must vote in favour for the proposed policies to take effect.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

Bill on children’s rights to be brought before Majlis: MP

After months of discussions the bill on rights of children will be brought before Majlis [Iranian parliament], MP Mohammad Reza Badamchi has said.

“Finally after days of putting in considerable effort in legislative group of Majlis we have managed to bring the bill on children’s right before the parliament,” Badamchi wrote in Persian on his twitter account on Thursday.

“We keep on following up on the subject to stop violation against children’s rights and child abuse, most importantly sexual abuse,” the MP added.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-logy, -ology”

■ **Meaning**: knowledge or collection

■ **For example**: Our **biology** requires us to breathe air.

PHRASAL VERB

Hold something against somebody

■ **Meaning**: to continue to dislike someone or not forgive them because of something bad they have done in the past

■ **For example**: You can’t still hold no grudge against him, surely?

IDIOM

Business as usual

■ **Explanation**: after an unpleasant or unexpected event, everything is continuing in a normal way, in spite of the difficulties

■ **For example**: It was business as usual at the supermarket the day after the hold-up.

لایحه حمایت از حقوق کودک در مجلس از کمیسیون قضایی به صحن آمد

محمدرضا بادامچی نماینده مردم تهران، ری و شمیرانات در مجلس شورای اسلامی گفت: پس از ماه ها تلاش ، در روزهای گذشته، لایحه حمایت از حقوق کودکان از کمیسیون قضایی به صحن آمد.

به گزارش خبرنگاران، بادامچی روز پنجشنبه در صفحه شخصی توئیتر خود در خصوص لایحه حمایت از حقوق کودکان نوشت: بالاخره با پیگیری ها و تلاش های بسیار، در روزهای گذشته، لایحه حمایت از حقوق کودکان، از کمیسیون قضایی به صحن آمد.

پیگیری ها را ادامه می دهیم تا این لایحه، هر چه زودتر در دستور کار جلسه علنی قرار گیرد. امیدوارم با تصویب آن، از تضییع حقوق کودکان و آزار آنان و مهم تر از همه آزار جنسی کم شود.

Lebanon warns Israel against aggression

TEHRAN — Lebanon's President Michel Aoun blasted Israel on Sunday after two drones, one being armed, crashed in the Lebanese capital of Beirut early Sunday morning.

Aoun slammed Israel's drone attack, quoted by the National News Agency (NNA) as saying that the recent attack was the "latest in a string of repeated Israeli breaches of UN resolution 1701 and a clear indication of Israeli aggressive acts aimed at undermining peace and stability in Lebanon and the region."

Aoun added, "Lebanon, which strongly condemns this aggression, will take the appropriate measures after consulting with the relevant authorities."

Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri said on Sunday the fall of two Israeli drones in Beirut was a threat to regional stability that heightened tensions, describing it as an open attack on the country's sovereignty.



Hariri said he was in consultations with President Michel Aoun on what next steps would be undertaken over what he called the "new aggression". He

said there was also a heavy presence of planes in the sky over the capital and its suburbs, his office said in a statement, Reuters reported.

Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif also said that the first drone had fallen on a building housing Hezbollah's media office in the Moawwad neighborhood of Beirut's Dahieh suburb.

The second drone, which appeared to have been sent by Israel to search for the first one, had crashed in an empty plot nearby after being detonated in the air, he added.

"The first drone fell without causing damage while the second one was laden with explosives and exploded causing huge damage to the media center," Afif told the National News Agency.

He said Hezbollah "did not shoot down or explode any of the drones," adding that the first drone is now in possession of the resistance group.

The spokesman also pointed out that Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah will give an "appropriate" response in a televised appearance later on Sunday.

N. Korea tests new 'super-large' multiple rocket launcher

TEHRAN — North Korea said Sunday leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-firing of a "newly developed super-large multiple rocket launcher," another demonstration of its expanding weapons arsenal apparently aimed at increasing its leverage ahead of a possible resumption of nuclear talks with the U.S.

The North's Korean Central News Agency said Saturday's weapons test was successful and cited Kim as saying the rocket launcher is "indeed a great weapon."

Kim underscored the need to "continue to step up the development of Korean-style strategic and tactical weapons for resolutely frustrating the ever-mounting military threats and pressure offensive of the hostile forces," according to the KCNA.

The "hostile forces" likely referred to the United States and South Korea, whose recently ended regular military drills infuriated North Korea. The North has called the drills an invasion rehearsal and conducted a slew of missile and rocket tests in response.

Some experts said North Korea aims to show off its weapons to try to get an upper hand ahead of a possible restart of nuclear negotiations, which remain largely

stalemated since the second summit between President Donald Trump and Kim in Vietnam in February fell apart due to squabbling over U.S.-led sanctions on North Korea. The two leaders met again at the Korean border in late June and agreed to resume talks.

Trump downplayed the latest launch, saying "Kim Jong Un has been, you know, pretty straight with me. ... He likes testing missiles but we never restricted short-range missiles. We'll see what happens."

South Korea's military said North Korea fired two suspected short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Saturday morning and that they flew about 380 kilometers at the maximum altitude of 97 kilometers. It was the seventh known weapons test by North Korea in about a month.

North Korea has been pushing to develop powerful multiple rocket launch systems, whose projectiles resemble short-range missiles, some experts said. On Aug. 1, North Korea said it tested a large-caliber multiple rocket guided system, a day after South Korea said the North fired two short-range ballistic missiles, AP reported.

Kashmiri leader calls for peaceful protests, blasts information blockade

TEHRAN — A prominent pro-independence leader in the Indian-controlled Kashmir has called on people in the disputed region to continue holding "peaceful protests" despite attempts by New Delhi to stifle their voices.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani said in a statement published on Sunday that Kashmiri locals should continue their demonstrations in a peaceful manner and resist India's decision to end the region's special constitutional status.

The chairman of Kashmir's moderate faction of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) also blasted New Delhi's strong-arm tactics in the disputed region and stressed that despite attempts to muzzle the voice of Kashmiris, the "blank pages would speak loudly."

"Not only have they blocked the entire communication systems used by common people since about the beginning of the month, but they have also gagged local reportage and news media without any formal declaration," Geelani said.

"No news about the brutalities and repression of the Indian armed forces, killings, and arrests of thousands of youth are being published. Common people are unable to know about their kith and kin," he added.

Geelani went on to say that, "the oppressors might try to hide reality, but history will not spare anyone. The blank pages will speak loudly."

In his statement, Geelani underscored that Kashmir's autonomy had been stripped to "change Kashmir's demography and make it one of India's colonies."

The APHC chairman said it was unfortunate that "instead of mourning this murder of democracy, the people of India have celebrated the decisions of their government."

"The rulers from Delhi are drunk in power and arrogance of majoritarianism and they have snatched away all precepts of humanity, ethics, and democracy," he said.

According to Press TV, Geelani urged in his statement that all Kashmiris as well as people in Pakistan and Muslims around the world take decisive action against India's moves and "machinations." Geelani has been under house arrest since India stripped Indian-controlled Kashmir of its autonomous status earlier in the month.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since their partition from Britain in 1947. Both countries claim all of Kashmir and have fought three wars over the territory.

Trump dangles 'very big' trade deal in front of Brexit Britain

TEHRAN — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday said he and President Donald Trump were "gung-ho" about a post-Brexit trade deal but cautioned the United States would be tough negotiators and that he would not rush talks.

Trump promised a big trade deal for Britain after it leaves the European Union, which he said had been a drag on Britain's ability to cut a good deal.

Facing a delicate task of assuaging European allies while not angering Trump at a G7 summit in France, Johnson said there were huge opportunities for British businesses in the U.S. market, but hinted at differences between the

two sides on the scope of a deal.

Moreover, he added, Washington would have to relax some "protectionist" policies.

"They want to do it within a year, I'd love to do it within a year, but that's a very fast timetable," he told Sky News.

According to Reuters, earlier, before the two leaders began a trade-focused bilateral meeting, Trump said he was looking forward to discussing big numbers with Johnson.

"We're going to do a very big trade deal - bigger than we've ever had with the UK," Trump said. "At some point, they won't have the obstacle of - they won't have the anchor around their ankle, because that's what they had."



79 suicides occurred in U.S. Air Force from January to July 2019

TEHRAN — Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina is planning a tactical stand-down over three days in August and September to help those at the base "recharge" following the suicides of three airmen in the past year and the alarming uptick in Air Force suicides throughout the U.S.

Second Lt. Christopher Rhoton, 35, Justin Strickland, 26, and Jose Llanes, 28, all committed suicide at the base this year,

according to Sumter County Coroner Robert Baker, while 79 suicides have occurred in the Air Force from January to July 2019.

Those 79 deaths were nearly twice as many compared to this time last year and officials fear 2019 could be the deadliest in history, according to the Post and Courier. The military branch also recorded about 100 suicides per year over the past 5 years.

According to Fox News, Air Force Col.

Derek O'Malley of Shaw Air Force Base posted a video on Facebook Wednesday detailing their plans to allow Air Force personnel time to recharge their batteries during a Resilience Tactical Pause (RTP) at the base.

"I've directed our commanders to take a hard look at our schedules," O'Malley said. "No doubt there are times where our country needs us to really push it forward, demands a lot of us and our mission, but

there are times also where we can really pull it back. And we need to proactively identify those times so that we can rest up and be ready for when our nation really needs us."

The RTP schedule includes days off on Aug. 30 and Sept. 20, as well as a guest speaker on Sept. 13, before they break into small groups later in the day to help promote dialogue about mental health.

'Genocide Day': Thousands of Rohingya rally in Bangladesh camps

TEHRAN — Thousands of Rohingya refugees have marked the second anniversary of their exodus into Bangladesh by rallying and praying as they demand Myanmar grant them citizenship and other rights before they agree to return.

Almost 200,000 Rohingya participated in a peaceful gathering, which was attended by UN officials, at the Kutupalong camp in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar on Sunday, police officer Zakir Hassan told AFP news agency.

Children, hijab-wearing women, and men wearing long lungis shouted: "God is great, long live Rohingya" as they

marched in the heart of the world's largest refugee camp to commemorate what they described as "Genocide Day".

Some carried placards and banners, reading "Never again! Rohingya genocide remembrance day" and "Restore our citizenship".

On August 25, 2017, nearly 740,000 Muslim-majority Rohingya fled Rakhine State for Bangladesh - joining 200,000 already there - after Myanmar's armed forces launched a brutal crackdown following attacks on security posts.

According to al Jazeera, Sunday's rally came days after a second failed attempt to repatriate the refugees, which saw

not a single Rohingya turn up to return across the border.

"We want to tell the world that we want our rights back, we want citizenship, we want our homes and land back," Mohib Ullah, one of the organisers of Sunday's protest, told the Associated Press news agency. "Myanmar is our country. We are Rohingya."

"I have come here to seek justice for the murder of my two sons. I will continue to seek justice till my last breath," 50-year-old Tayaba Khatun told AFP as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Turkey-U.S. ops center on Syria safe zone 'fully operational'

TEHRAN — A Turkey-U.S. operations center aimed at establishing and managing a safe zone in northeastern Syria is fully operational, according to the Turkish defense minister.

Hulusi Akar announced the move in an interview with the state-run Anadolu news agency on Saturday.

Ankara and Washington agreed to set up the joint facility earlier this month after difficult negotiations.

The centre will help coordinate the es-

tablishment of a buffer between the Turkish border and Syrian areas controlled by the U.S.-backed Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

"The joint operation center has started working at full capacity. The command of the center is by one U.S. general and one Turkish general," Akar was quoted as saying.

He added that the first joint helicopter flight was due to take place on Saturday.

Turkey and the U.S. have been at odds

over plans for northeastern Syria, where the YPG formed the main part of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) group.

Ankara considers the YPG a "terrorist" group aligned with the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and has repeatedly threatened to launch a new military offensive to clear the Kurdish forces from along its border with Syria. The joint operations centre was initially

suggested by Washington to dissuade Turkey from carrying out another cross-border attack, after previous offensives in 2016 and 2018.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government has called the safe zone agreement a serious escalation that violates its sovereignty. It said it was part of Ankara's "expansionist ambitions" in Syria.

Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith, reporting from Antakya in Turkey, said details of the safe zone were unclear.

Yemen conducts strikes on Saudi Arabian airport, airbase

TEHRAN — Yemen's popular defense movement Houthi Ansarullah says it has targeted an airport and an airbase in south-western Saudi Arabia with drone attacks.

The movement announced the retaliatory strikes on Sunday through a spokesman, Yemen's al-Masirah television network reported.

The spokesman said the drone attacks targeted the Abha Airport and the King Khalid Airbase in Saudi Arabia's Asir region.

The strike against the airport hit its control tower, said the spokesman, who added that the operation against the airbase used the movement's indigenously-made Qasef-2K drones.

The group said the strikes came "as a response to US-Saudi aggression and siege" of Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and more than a dozen of its allies have been pounding Yemen, the Arab world's poorest nation, since March 2015.

The invasion, which uses heavy American arms and logistical support, has unsuccessfully been seeking to return Yemen's former Riyadh-allied officials to power and eliminate the Houthi movement.

The coalition strikes, including those targeting civilians, have been found to use U.S.-provided guided bombs, among other ammunition. Experts say the deployment of such precision armaments against civilians shows that the invading coalition has been intentionally choosing the non-combatants as its targets.

According to Press TV, tens of thousands have died and the entire Yemen been pushed close to the brink of famine since the onset of the invasion, which has also been accompanied by an embargo of the country.

Johnson says £39 billion divorce bill not due in no-deal Brexit

TEHRAN — Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday that if Britain leaves the European Union without a deal, it will no longer legally owe the 39 billion pound (\$47.88 billion) divorce bill agreed by his predecessor Theresa May.

Earlier British media reported Johnson would use a meeting with European Council President Donald Tusk on the sidelines of the G7 Summit to set out that Britain would pay less than 10 billion pounds of the settlement if it leaves without a deal.

Sky News said the figure was 9 billion pounds, while the Sunday Times reported British government lawyers had concluded the amount Britain was legally obliged to pay could be as low as 7 billion pounds.

"I think what the entire European Union understands is that if we come out without a deal then...the 39 billion is no longer legally pledged," Johnson told Sky News, when asked if he had told EU leaders this week he planned to withhold the money.

"As I've said many, many times we will therefore on November 1 have very substantial sums available from that 39 billion to spend on supporting our farmers...and indeed for investment in all sorts of areas."

In June, a source close to French President Emmanuel Macron said that failing to pay the Brexit bill would amount to a sovereign debt default and on Wednesday an official in his office said that leaving without a deal would not remove Britain's obligation to pay.

"There is no magic world in which the bill no longer exists," the French official said on Wednesday.

The EU has repeatedly said it will not start negotiating a new trade deal with Britain before the issues of money, the Irish border and citizens rights are settled, so it is likely to return to the fore as a precondition for the EU to start trade talks after Brexit if Britain refuses to pay.

Ahead of their meeting on Sunday, Johnson and Tusk traded barbs over who would be to blame should Britain leave without a deal at the end of October.

Israel is certain of defeat in any war on Lebanon: Nasrallah

TEHRAN — Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah on Sunday condemned Israel drone attack and said resistance path has prospered thanks to his eminence.

Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah delivered a speech during the ceremony titled "The Nation's Safeguard".

"The great public attendance at this ceremony is the first response to the Israeli air raids on Syria last night", Nasrallah said.

The Lebanese army said on Sunday that two Israeli drones had crashed in a stronghold of the Hezbollah resistance movement in the south of the capital, Beirut.

"Two drones belonging to the Israeli enemy violated Lebanese airspace (at dawn)... over the southern suburbs of Beirut. The first fell while the second exploded in the air causing material damage," it said in a statement.

The Lebanese army also said that it had sealed off the area and that military police had opened an investigation into the incident.

Nasrallah also congratulates the Bekaa locals and the rest of the Lebanese on the Second Liberation Day which marks defeating the terrorist groups on the northeastern border with Syria.

"I also felicitate the Syrians on the Second Liberation Day because Syria benefited greatly from the victory", he added.

Meanwhile, Lebanese President Michel Aoun said Sunday that an Israeli drone that exploded over Beirut's southern suburbs overnight was "blatant aggression against Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri also said on Sunday the fall of two Israeli drones in Beirut was a threat to regional stability that heightened tensions, describing it as an open attack on the country's sovereignty.

Hariri said he was in consultations with President Michel Aoun on what next steps would be undertaken over what he called the "new aggression". He said there was also a heavy presence of planes in the sky over the capital and its suburbs, his office said in a statement, Reuters reported.

Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif also said that the first drone had fallen on a building housing Hezbollah's media office in the Moawwad neighborhood of Beirut's Dahieh suburb.

Athletics - Edoburun criticizes Coleman after U.S. doping agency charges

British sprinter Ojie Edoburun has criticized the conduct of American 100 meters champion Christian Coleman, who has been charged with a potential anti-doping rule violation by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) for failing to properly file his whereabouts information.

Coleman, who holds the year's fastest time of 9.81 seconds, faces an arbitration hearing next month ahead of the world championships, which begins in Doha on Sept. 28.

While Coleman said he was confident of being cleared in time for the Doha event, Edoburun reminded the American of his responsibility to adhere to anti-doping rules.

"I just feel like missing three tests in a year is easily avoidable," said Edoburun, who won the men's 100m at the British Championships on Saturday.

"Just handle your responsibilities because at the end of the day the athletes are liable. I know that --- so he should, too, if he is the fastest man in the world."

Under the whereabouts system, athletes must inform officials about where they will be for one hour every day as well as providing details of overnight accommodation and training.

Three whereabouts failures within a 12-month period could lead to a one-year ban, according to the World Anti-Doping Code.

If found guilty, Coleman would miss not only the world championships but also the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Edoburun showed little sympathy for his American rival.

"It's not good in the sense that athletics gets the most attention when it comes to doping because there is so much other positive stuff to talk about," Edoburun said.

"It really bugs me that it is in the limelight when there are so many good stories coming through. But, if he is not there, it makes it a bit easier for me."

(Source: Reuters)

Racism can only make me stronger - Pogba

Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba says racist abuse "can only make me stronger and motivate me to fight for the next generation".

The France World Cup winner was racially abused on social media after his penalty miss at Wolves on Monday.

Several of Pogba's team-mates criticized the abuse, while England women's manager Phil Neville called for footballers to "boycott" social media.

"Racist insults are ignorance," said 26-year-old Pogba.

In a message on Twitter, accompanied by a photograph showing him holding his baby alongside portraits of his late father Fassou Antoine and civil rights activist Martin Luther King, he added: "My ancestors and my parents suffered for my generation to be free today, to work, to take the bus, to play football."

It was the first time Pogba had tweeted since July.

On Saturday, United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said people who post racist abuse on social media "hide behind fake identities".

Pogba's team-mate Marcus Rashford was targeted online after missing a penalty in United's shock home Premier League defeat by Crystal Palace on Saturday.

It's the fourth racism incident in two weeks - Chelsea striker Tammy Abraham and Reading's Yakou Meite both received racist messages online after missing penalties in their teams' most recent matches.

Twitter said it will meet any stakeholders to show the "proactive work" being done to tackle abuse.

(Source: BBC)

Winning team pockets \$15 mn in final of eSports spectacular

More than 600,000 people watched captivated online and thousands packed a downtown Shanghai arena to see team OG take home a life-changing chunk of an eSports-record \$34.3 million prize pool on Sunday.

The holders defeated fellow European side Team Liquid 3-1 in the grand final of The International, a world championship in the multiplayer battle game Dota 2, to roars of "OG! OG!" from an energized crowd at Mercedes-Benz Arena.

The victorious OG team will pocket at least \$15.6 million and the freshly minted multimillionaires frantically embraced on stage after getting the final kills of the tournament.

Eighteen teams from all over the world, each with five players, took part in the annual competition of professional players specializing in the hugely popular online game.

They may have lost, but there will be the consolation of a cheque of \$4.5 million for Team Liquid for taking second place.

Liquid defeated PSG.LGD -- the China-based team affiliated to French football giants Paris Saint-Germain -- to reach the decider. PSG.LGD won just over \$3 million.

The vast viewership and financial sums are proof of the growing interest in eSports, which has launched itself from the bedrooms of teenagers to worldwide prominence in the past decade.

The biggest stars in eSports -- most of whom are in their 20s -- are already multimillionaires, but professional gaming can be cut-throat with most players ushered into retirement by the age of 30.

(Source: France 24)

Barcelona: 'Operation Neymar' depends on Dembélé

The unresolved situation surrounding Neymar's present and future rumbles on towards the end of the transfer window and it remains to be seen whether the parties involved can come to an arrangement in time.

The Brazilian is reportedly waiting for Barcelona to emerge with an improved offer and on Sunday French daily Le Parisien reported that Barcelona will throw Dembélé into the mix in their next meeting and will put two options down on the table. The first, a straight swap, Neymar for Dembélé in addition to 40 million euros with an option to buy which will not be legally binding. The second, a payment of 170 million euros made automatically at the end of next season.

The snag, however, does not reside with the Ligue 1 club but with Dembélé, who is not keen on a move away from Barcelona this year after the arrival of compatriot Griezmann, despite the possibility of teaming up again with Tuchel, his previous manager at Dortmund.

(Source: AS)

'Changing Japanese society': Tokyo marks year until Paralympics

With hands-on exhibitions for children and a world-record attempt, Tokyo Sunday marked one year until the 2020 Paralympic Games that organizers hope can change outdated attitudes towards disabled people in Japan.

The Tokyo Paralympics, which run from August 25 to September 6, will be the first time a city has twice hosted the Games after the previous edition in 1964.

But the 2020 version will be a far cry from the event 55 years ago. Then, a mere 378 part-time athletes from 21 countries competed in nine sports squeezed into less than five days of action.

Next year's event is expected to be 10 times bigger, with around 4,400 professional athletes showcasing their skills in 21 disciplines and competing for more than 500 medals.

In a bid to raise awareness, most of the sport will be televised live in Japan with "the largest coverage ever in the history of the Paralympics," according to the head of the Japanese Paralympic Committee Yasusushi Yamawaki.

Like the Olympics, Tokyo has generally won praise for its Paralympics preparations but concerns remain about holding a top-class sports event during the blisteringly hot summer in the Japanese capital.

"I couldn't be happier with the preparations so far. With one year to go, we're totally on schedule, on track," International Paralympic Committee chief Andrew Parsons told AFP in an interview to mark the one-year milestone.



But test events have highlighted difficulties with heat and water quality, with the swimming leg of the paratriathlon scrapped after double the permitted levels of bacteria were discovered in the Tokyo Bay area venue.

An additional Paralympic-specific issue has also arisen with only around half of the required accessible hotel rooms available for disabled coaches, media and support staff.

Parsons said this was his "biggest concern" and admitted that the hotel problem "may affect the Games and it may affect the Games experience of some of our clients."

■ 'Blade jumper'

Tokyo mayor Yuriko Koike has repeatedly stressed that she will not consider Tokyo 2020 a success unless the Paralympics passes off smoothly.

One leap at a time: the 'Blade Jumper' with Olympic dreams



Triple Paralympic champion Markus Rehm, known as the "Blade Jumper", regularly outperforms able-bodied athletes in the long jump but dreams of beating them on the same stage.

The charismatic German's world-record leap of 8.48m last year would have comfortably won him gold at the last three Olympics, and he said he measures himself against the top athletes -- Olympic or Paralympic.

"I compare myself to the world's best long jumpers so of course I look at the Olympic athletes," he told AFP at a training session in Tokyo.

"I see what they do and I will attempt to jump better than them" next year, when the Olympics and Paralympics are held in the Japanese capital.

Rehm lost his right leg in a wakeboarding accident when he was 14 and turned his sporting energies to athletics -- to stunning effect.

The 31-year-old had hoped to emulate now-shamed Oscar Pistorius by competing at the Rio Olympics, but he was denied because of concerns that his prosthetic leg gave him an advantage over the other athletes.

"I would even compete without having the chance to win a medal. I would see it as an advertisement (for Paralympians)," said Rehm.

While he has not given up on his Olympic dream, Rehm is now directing his efforts

to bringing the Olympics and Paralympics closer together.

He is fizzing with ideas about how to showcase Paralympic athletes alongside their able-bodied counterparts.

"We have to start somewhere. A Diamond League event would be interesting and I think a lot of people in the audience would love to see para sports," he said.

"We can jump the same distances... we can run almost as fast as them."

He suggested a 400-metre race pitting wheelchair athletes against Olympians. "They run almost the same time," he noted.

"It has to be more like a show event because we are seeing that not so many people are coming to the stadium to watch athletics. We have to make an event out of it."

Rehm also has a vision of running the Olympics and Paralympics consecutively, scrapping the nearly three-week gap between them.

After the Olympic flame is extinguished, there could be a symbolic mixed relay competition with two Paralympians and two Olympians competing in each team, before the Paralympic flame is lit, he said.

"I think we should still be separate events, because we have different values and messages we spread to the world... But I would like to come closer."

(Source: Eurosport)

Rins pips Marquez on line for British MotoGP victory



Alex Rins won the British MotoGP in dramatic fashion catching world champion Marc Marquez to the finish line by 0.013 seconds of a dramatic race at Silverstone on Sunday.

Rins' sensational finish earned the Suzuki rider a second victory of the season, but Honda's Marquez extended his lead atop the standings to 78 points after closest rival Andrea Dovizioso of Ducati was stretched off the track following a first-lap crash with Yamaha rider Fabio Quartararo.

Yamaha's Maverick Vinales finished third after coming from the back of the pack.

"Unbelievable. I don't have words to explain. VAMOS!" Rins said of his incredible pass coming off the final corner.

"I was keeping calm. The last corner for me was unbelievable, I was much faster than him, and finally we get it."

Marquez admitted it was frustrating to lose out after Rins nipped past him at the end, but he was happy to leave with his title hopes enhanced.

"Happy of course about the championship - about the race, no. Losing on the last straight is not the best feeling," he said.

Marquez moved onto 250 points with seven races left. Dovizioso stayed on 172. Rins climbed to third on 149, four points ahead of Danilo Petrucci of Ducati who was seventh on Sunday. Vinales rose to fifth and has 118 points.

Vinales finished just 0.6 seconds adrift

of the lead pair in third for Yamaha, while Valentino Rossi was a distant fourth, 10 seconds behind Rins.

Marquez reckoned he was at a disadvantage having set off from pole.

"I knew that Rins had a good chance, because I did all the race in front. And here when you are in front, you just push more the tyres."

"I say, okay, I keep pushing, because my target was not the race, it was the championship. In the last turn, I missed the front, I closed gas and he had better grip, he overtook me."

"But okay, happy, he's very far in the championship, we arrive here 58 in front and we leave 78 in front."

Marquez converted pole into an early lead ahead of Rossi, but there was drama when Quartararo and Dovizioso were involved in a frightening incident.

Quartararo lost control and Dovizioso was powerless to avoid the Frenchman's Yamaha, which acted as a launch ramp for the Ducati.

Both riders were initially cleared of serious injury, but Dovizioso was taken hospital after briefly losing consciousness in the accident.

The crash helped Rins, who had started fifth, move up to third on the track.

On the second lap the Spaniard cleared Rossi for second place, setting him up to stalk Marquez for the rest of the race before the astonishing finale.

(Source: AFP)

Liverpool keep perfect record, more penalty woe for United

Mohamed Salah-inspired Liverpool laid down an emphatic early-season marker as they outplayed Arsenal on Saturday to win 3-1 and ensure they are the only team left in the Premier League with a 100 percent record.

The European champions were in full cry at their Anfield fortress with two second-half goals from Salah ensuring they have a maximum nine points from three matches while they also ended Arsenal's own perfect league record.

On another eventful afternoon in England's top-flight, Manchester United suffered more woe from the penalty spot as they went down to a shock home defeat to Crystal Palace and Frank Lampard celebrated his first win as Chelsea manager at Norwich City.

Attention, though, centered on the day's late match between the two heavyweights who had won their first two games but it turned into a demonstration of Liverpool's strength as they equaled a 29-year-old club record with a 12th straight league win.

Liverpool dominated once Joel Matip headed home from a corner four minutes before halftime, with Salah, seeking to be the Premier League's top scorer for the third successive year, then taking over after the break with a 10-minute double.

After David Luiz desperately pulled his shirt in the area, the Egyptian converted from the spot before later producing a solo tour de force to spin and speed away from the hapless Brazilian and slot home a wonderful left-foot finish.

Arsenal earned a late consolation through substitute



Lucas Torreira but Juergen Klopp's men opened up a three-point lead over the Gunners, who are second on six points.

Champions Manchester City, who play at Bournemouth, and Tottenham Hotspur, who host Newcastle United, have the chance to move on to seven points if they win their matches on Sunday.

Earlier, Manchester United's hopes of continuing a promising unbeaten start to the campaign were undone by Palace's 93rd-minute strike from Patrick van Aanholt in a 2-1 victory for Roy Hodgson's strugglers.

Daniel James thought he had earned United a point by cancelling out Jordan Ayew's first-half goal in the 89th minute but toothless United were left to rue their second

missed penalty of the week.

After Paul Pogba had missed on Monday against Wolverhampton Wanderers, this time it was Marcus Rashford who spurned the opportunity, hitting the inside of the post and raising fresh questions about United's policy not to have one designated penalty taker.

■ First victory

Lampard finally landed his first managerial victory for the Blues at the fourth attempt as Tammy Abraham's double inspired a thrilling 3-2 win at Norwich City for his youthful side.

Lampard, back at the club he graced for 13 years as a player, fielded the youngest Chelsea side in a league match for 25 years, with an average age of 24.

Abraham struck in just the third minute, and after Norwich had twice fought back from a goal down, he also proved the match-winner at Carrow Road with another superb strike in the 68th minute.

Another of Lampard's starlets, Mason Mount, also scored while Teemu Pukki continued his dazzling start to the season for Norwich with a league-leading fifth goal.

"Our performances haven't given us what we deserved so far -- but today it did," said Lampard.

Abraham, who became the youngest player to score twice in a Premier League match for Chelsea for 21 years, added: "It's something I have always dreamed about, to score for my childhood club."

(Source: Reuters)

Iran eye top 10 at Tokyo Paralympics: Khosravi Vafa

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) Mahmoud Khosravi Vafa vowed to better their performance and results at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

Iran came 15th at the previous edition in Rio, winning eight gold, nine silver and seven bronze medals.

The Iranian delegation had finished in 11th place at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London.

Khosravi Vafa once again emphasized that they are going to finish among top 10 in Tokyo.

"We've earned 32 quota places so far. We will participate at the Tokyo 2020 with fewer athletes but we send the athletes who have chance to win medal," Khosravi Vafa said.

"Some athletes will also take part at the Paralympic Games to gain experience for the 2022 Asian para Games in Hangzhou, China. We know that Tokyo 2020 will be one of the hardest Paralympics ever," he added.

"We are aiming to finish the event among top 10 countries. I am sure it's not out of reach because we will send our very well prepared athletes to the Games," Khosravi Vafa concluded.

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games will be the biggest and most exciting to-date. Over just 12 days, from the day following the Opening Ceremony on 25 August until 6 September, 22 sports and 540 events will be contested by a record 4,400 athletes.



Persepolis goalkeeper Beiranvand named IPL Player of the Year



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team goalkeeper was named as the best player of the Iran Professional League (IPL) 2018-19.

In a ceremony held in Tehran's Espinas Palace Hotel, Beiranvand was also honored as the best goalkeeper in the last season.

IPL champions Persepolis won the best team award and the team's captain Jalal Hosseini was named the best defender.

Branko Ivankovic, who helped Persepolis

win IPL title for the third time in a row, won the best coach prize.

Sepahan goalkeeper Payam Niazmand and Paykan club were awarded Fair Play awards.

Sepahan midfielder Mehdi Kiani was honored as the best midfielder and Sepahan forward Kiros Stanley and Foolad striker Luciano Pereira won top scorer prize.

Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, who joined Fenerbahçe from Esteghlal in May, won the IPL's rising star award.

Iran seventh at Asian Women's Volleyball Championship



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran managed a tough 3-2 (27-25, 25-18, 20-25, 13-25, 13-15) win over Indonesia at the 20th Asian Women's Volleyball Championship, hosted by South Korea since August 18th.

Japan won the title after beating Thailand 3-1 (25-22, 18-25, 25-18, 25-23) in the final match.

Hosts South Korea also overpowered China 3-0 in the bronze medal match.

The Championship served as the Conti-

ental Olympic Qualification Tournament and the eight top teams, except the Tokyo 2020 hosts Japan will participate in the competition from January 6-12.

Only the eventual winning team in the Continental Olympic Qualification Tournament will join the other 11 teams in the Tokyo 2020.

The 2019 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship, a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Korea Volleyball Association (KVA).

Tokyo 2020 reveal Paralympic medals to mark one-year-to-go celebrations

The medals for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics have been revealed as celebrations were held on Sunday marking one-year-to-go.

Organizers unveiled a design based around a traditional Japanese fan and also showed off the medal ribbons and cases.

Festivities at the NHK Hall further included the display of the Paralympic Torchbearer uniform as the countdown to the Opening Ceremony on August 25 next year enters another phase.

Each medal features the words "Tokyo 2020" in braille while there are a series of circular indentations on the sides — one for gold, two for silver and three for bronze.

"The design is centered around the motif of a traditional Japanese fan, depicting the Paralympic Games as the source of a fresh new wind refreshing the world as



well as a shared experience connecting diverse hearts and minds," Tokyo 2020 said.

"The kaname, or pivot point, holds all parts of the fan

together; here it represents Para-athletes bringing people together regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

"Motifs on the leaves of the fan depict the vitality of people's hearts and symbolise Japan's captivating and life-giving natural environment in the form of rocks, flowers, wood, leaves, and water.

"These are applied with a variety of techniques, producing a textured surface that makes the medals compelling to touch."

All Tokyo 2020 medals at the Olympic and Paralympics are being made with recycled metal after the public were urged to donate old mobile phones and other devices.

The Paralympic ribbons are in the Games colors of crimson and cherry blossom while the wooden cases have been individually hand-crafted from Japanese ash.

(Source: *Insidethegames*)

AFC strengthening women's game in Asia

The future of Asian women's football is brighter than ever and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) remains committed to continue laying the foundations for the sport to grow at all levels — on and off the pitch.

Through the introduction of various initiatives for its 47 Member Associations, the growth of women's football has witnessed impressive results. Since 2007, the participation of Member Associations in the qualifiers of the AFC U-16 and AFC U-19 Women's Championships have increased by 70 per cent and 63 per cent respectively.

The AFC Women's Asian Cup, the pinnacle of women's competition on the Continent, also saw 21 nations, the most teams to participate in the qualifiers to the 2018 showpiece which was staged in Jordan for the first time in its history.

AFC General Secretary Dato' Windsor John said: "The AFC has put in place many initiatives that benefit both the men and women in the sport. The women's game has been on the rise in Asia and the AFC is committed to help our MAS unlock this potential.

"Asian women's football has excelled on the world stage and this is evident as five Asian teams occupy the top 20 in



the FIFA World Rankings while Japan emerged as champions in the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup.

"Other Asian teams like DPR Korea and Korea Republic have also won in FIFA age group competitions. It is our hope that more Asian teams will find success on the international stage."

In efforts to further boost the women's game, the AFC has also started planning with FIFA to introduce Club women's football in Asia by staging the AFC Women's Champions League, which is a pilot project scheduled to begin in December.

The AFC's initiatives extend outside the pitch, as women form part of the strong workforce in the Confederation. Most recently, the first Saudi Arabian woman Adwa Abdulrahman Al Arifi was appointed on the AFC's Women Committee.

Meanwhile, Kim Se-in of Korea Republic, Nguyen Thanh Ha of Vietnam, Lau Cheuk Chi of Hong Kong and AFC Executive Committee member Kanya Keomany of Laos made Asian football history following their appointment as the first female match commissioners to take charge of Round 2 of the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World

Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

In May, the trio of Japanese referee Yoshi-mi Yamashita and assistant referees Makoto Bozono and Naomi Teshirogi became the first all-female cast to officiate an AFC Cup match between Myanmar's Yangon United FC and Naga World of Cambodia.

The AFC also broke new ground by being the first Confederation to introduce the AFC Women's Futsal Championship which was staged in 2015 and 2018 — both editions won by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The AFC aims to strike the perfect balance to ensure that Asian women remain a force in football while supporting females who have - and continue - to play pivotal roles in the success and development of the sport.

And the AFC has celebrated the role of women in the sport through the 'It's My Game' campaign featuring females from the vast majority of its Member Associations — including the five female representatives on the AFC Executive Committee from 2015-2019.

The AFC is committed to empowering women in key roles and again has five places on its Executive Committee — more than any other Confederation — for the term 2019 — 2023.

(Source: *the-afc*)

Six Iranian wrestlers among top in world

IRNA — The United World Wrestling (UWW) has placed the name of six Iranian wrestlers among top four in the world.

Based on the UWW new regulations, the top four wrestlers have been selected after international competitions and will not face each other until the semi-final match.

Accordingly, five freestylers and one Greco-Roman athlete were listed among top four in the world.

From Iran Behnam Ehsan Pour (61 kg), Yunes Emami (70 kg), Bahman Teymouri (79kg), Hassan Yazdani (86kg) and Ali Reza Karimi (92kg) were among top four free-style wrestlers.

In Greco-Roman category, Saeed Abdevali in the weight category of 82 kg was selected.

The World Championships preparation for 2020 Tokyo Olympics is scheduled to be held in September 14-22 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

The 2020 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and commonly known as Tokyo 2020, is an upcoming international multi-sport event that is scheduled to take place from July 24 to August 9 2020 in Tokyo, Japan, with preliminary events in some sports beginning on July 22.

Real Zaragoza eye Iran's Roozbeh Cheshmi

Spanish football team Real Zaragoza are interested in signing Iranian international defender Roozbeh Cheshmi.

Cheshmi has also caught the eye of Huesca.

The 26-year-old player has represented Iran in the 2018 World Cup and 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Real Zaragoza, commonly referred to as Zaragoza, are a Spanish football team based in Zaragoza, in the autonomous community of Aragon. Founded on 18 March 1932 it currently play in Segunda División, holding home games at La Romareda, which seats 34,596 spectators.

The club have spent the majority of its history in La Liga, winning the Copa del Rey six times and the 1994–95 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup, amongst other trophies.

(Source: *Futbolistas.es*)

Taftian secures Olympic 2020 quota spot

TASNIM — Iranian sprinter Hassan Taftian secured his place at Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Taftian won the gold medal at the men's 100 meter event at IAAF Diamond League in Paris, clocking 10.03.

Turkish Emre Zafer Barnes finished in second place with a time of 10.19, and Gavin Smellie from Canada crossed the line with 10.25.

Taftian also represented Iran at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

Iran win intl. karate tournament in Kermanshah province

MNA — Both Iranian male and female karate teams won an international shotokan karate competition which was held in the western Iranian province of Kermanshah.

More than 800 karate fighters in both men and women divisions were taking part in the international competition hosted by Kermanshah.

As many as 470 female and 400 male karate practitioners from Iran, Nigeria, Iraq, Thailand, Oman and Azerbaijan competed in the tournament, 70 of whom were from the foreign countries.

The Iraqi and Nigerian teams finished second and third, respectively after Iranian teams.

In the men's division, the Iraqi and Azerbaijani teams took second and third places.

World Transplant Games Federation hails Iran presence in UK event

IRNA — World Transplant Games Federation presented plaque of honor to the Iranian team due to its significant and successful presence in the recent UK transplant games.

Iranian team won 95 medals at the 2019 World Transplant Games in Newcastle, the UK, from August 17 to 24 and stood at the third place.



About 2,500 athletes from 56 world countries competed in archery, badminton, table tennis, swimming, petanque, etc. in the 2019 World Transplant Games.

Iran's 60-member team of transplant and specific patients could receive 26 gold medals, 36 silver and 33 bronze at the competitions.

The UK clinched the championship title and the US was the second.

Iran had ranked 11th at the previous edition of the competitions.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

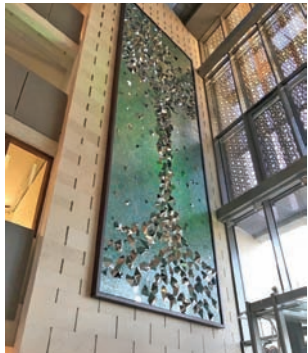
A tree with a green and fresh trunk has many branches, and a man of good temper gains many friends.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iranian artists’ “Tree of Life” embellishes French Institute of Muslim Civilization

A R T TEHRAN — “Tree of Life”, a conceptual tableau created by two Iranian artists, has been set up at the entrance of the French Institute of Muslim Civilization (IFCM) in Lyon.

The artwork is a joint creation of designer Kamran Afshar-Naderi and ceramist and calligrapher Leila Farzaneh, the Farzaneh Art Studio, a Tehran-based handmade pottery business belonging to the artist, has announced.



“Tree of Life” measures 9.2 x 3.3 meters and has been created with about 3500 hand-painted ceramic flat tiles of different geometric shapes, 360 irregular pyramids composed of stainless-steel mirrors and thousands of hand-painted ceramic pieces bearing Persian calligraphic motifs.

A team of architects, artisans and engineers has also contributed voluntarily to the art project.

The artwork was donated to the institute in February. However, the institute is scheduled to be officially inaugurated in September with French high officials in attendance.

“Tree of Life” is the symbol of a new beginning in life, positive energy, good health, growth and a bright future. The tree ages, but through its seeds containing its very essence becomes immortal,” the Farzaneh Art Studio said in a statement for the artwork.

“Our ‘Tree of Life’ represents the entire cycle of life: birth, growth and death. It is based on the concept of the sacred tree manifested in many symbolic formats in most ancient territories, cultures and religious beliefs including Persia, Mesopotamia, China and North America,” it added.

Adaptation of Shakespeare’s “Othello” to go on stage in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — The Titowak Theater Group led by Iranian director Ebrahim Poshtkuhi plans to stage a loose adaptation of prominent English playwright William Shakespeare’s “Othello” at Tehran’s City Theater Complex in late September.

Poshtkuhi has renamed the play “Hey Othello, Only Pet Crabs Nest in Bed Sheets” for performance in Iran, he said in a press release on Sunday.

“Othello” is about a Moorish general in the Venetian army, Othello and his treacherous ensign, Iago.

Iago is furious about being overlooked for promotion and plots to take revenge against Othello. He manipulates Othello into believing his wife Desdemona is unfaithful, stirring Othello’s jealousy. Othello allows jealousy to consume him, murders Desdemona and then kills himself.

The story of “Hey Othello, Only Pet Crabs Nest in Bed Sheets” is set in magic realism style in the southern Iranian city of Bandar Abbas.

Poshtkuhi’s previous adaptation of Shakespeare’s works “Hey Macbeth, Only the First Dog Knows Why It Is Barking”, which went on stage in 2009, was acclaimed in Iranian and international events.

“Green House” actor Dariush Asadzadeh dies at 96

1 → He was the manager of the Tehran Theater, which was later renamed the Nasr Theater. He was honored with a lifetime achievement award at the 7th Shahr International Film Festival in July.

The actor has compiled a book on the history of Iranian theater under the title “A Journey in History of Iranian Theater before the Advent of Islam until 1979”.

Published in 2011, the book reviews the history of Iranian theater from the Achaemenid era to 1979 when the Shah’s regime was overthrown by the Islamic revolution.

“I have been acting on the stage in Iran since the 1940s and I have witnessed many incidents in the course of Iranian theater. Hence, I am the best one to comment on this subject,” Asadzadeh once said.

Asadzadeh has played in over 100 movies and TV series, including “The Green House” co-directed by Bijan Birang and Masud Rassam, “The Spouse” by Mehdi Fakhimzadeh and “Samandun” by Nasser Hashemi.

Iranian, Korean, Russian children’s film festivals sign MOU

A R T TEHRAN — A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed among the children’s film festivals being organized in Russia, Iran and South Korea on Saturday.

Nikolai Dann, director of Russia’s Zero Plus International Film Festival, Su-Dung, a representative of the Seoul Guro International Kids Film Festival and Alireza Tabesh, director of Iran’s International Film Festival for Children and Youth, inked the MOU in a meeting on the film festivals in Eurasia held during the 32nd edition of the Iranian festival in Isfahan.

Speaking at the meeting, Tabesh said that the MOU’s focus will be on Eurasia and added, “Based on this agreement, we will try to ponder on joint film projects, technical and expert exchanges, and inter-festival cooperation.”

On her part, Su-Dung said, “This triangular agreement is very significant and this meeting was a good beginning for the countries in Eurasia to prepare the ground for the expansion of relations on cinema.”

Dann said, “Children are the sole reason to bring us together to talk on the films that will be produced for them, and I hope we will be successful in this way.”

The 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth opened in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on August 19 and will come to an end on Monday.



Seoul Guro festival representative Su-Dung (L), Isfahan festival director Alireza Tabesh (C) and Zero Plus festival director Nikolai Dann sign an MOU in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on August 24, 2019.

Iranian critic Hamed Soleimanzadeh is a member of the jury for the international competition of educational, documentary and popular science films at the Zero Plus festival, which will be held in Tyumen from September 30 to October 6.

Art exhibits set to honor Iranian music icon Mohammadreza Shajarian

A R T TEHRAN — Negar and Persian Idea, two major galleries in Tehran, will organize two exhibitions during September to celebrate the 79th birthday of the legendary vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian under the title “Sing, the King of Iranian Song”.

Abbas Mashhuri and Farzad Tajari are the curators of the exhibits that will open on September 20, just few days before the birthday of the music icon which falls on September 23.

A selection of calligraphy works and calligraphic-paintings by a group of artists,

including Morad Fattahi, Ali Mokhtari, Behnam Moradi, Morteza Alipur and Soheila Ahmadi, will be put on view until September 25.

Negar Gallery is located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood and the Persian Idea Gallery can be found at 28 Azar Alley, Kolahduz St., Shariati Ave.

Shajarian was honored with Patron’s Award at the Aga Khan Music Awards in Lisbon, Portugal in March.

The honor was conferred on Shajarian “in recognition of his enduring contribution to the musical heritage of humanity, his peerless

musical mastery, and his sustained social impact as a performer and teacher, both within Iran and beyond its borders,” the organizers had said.

Shajarian is currently battling kidney cancer.

His “Rabbana”, the recitation of the supplication, which is composed of several verses of the Holy Quran that are read before iftar, the evening meal for breaking the fast during Ramadan, has been registered on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The recitation was recorded at Iran’s national radio at a singing class Shajarian held for two of his students in 1980.

“The Wolves” coming to Tehran theater

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Danial Khojasteh will stage American playwright Sarah DeLappe’s debut play “The Wolves” at Tehran’s Hafez Hall tonight.

Written in 2016, the play centers on the experiences of high school girls who make up the Wolves, a soccer team, warming up before their game each week.

The girls discuss everything from genocide and drugs to boys and literature among themselves. At first, the girls seem indistinguishable, as each one is referred to only by her number and all wear identical jerseys with each bearing her unique number, but they quickly become identifiable and different.

In the course of six short weeks, the girls deal with love, loss and identity in ways that real teenagers do.

The play, which depicts a portrait of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, was a finalist for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

Samaneh Nurollahi, Niusha Naderi, Tina Pirveisian, Pegah Ebrahimi, Kimia Shahrieh and Golar Moqaddasi are the members of the all-female cast for the play that will remain on stage until September 22.

“The Wolves” will be staged in English on Sundays and Mondays and the rest of the days it will be on stage in Persian.



Posters for Sarah DeLappe’s play “The Wolves”, which will be staged by Iranian director Danial Khojasteh.

“America’s Got Talent” continues summer dominance for NBC



Aug. 14, 2019 photo provided by NBC shows host Terry Crews, left, and singer Kodi Lee on the NBC television show, “America’s Got Talent,” in Los Angeles. (Justin Lubin/NBC via AP)

NEW YORK (AP) — “America’s Got Talent” wasn’t content with just the top spot in the Nielsen company’s rankings of the most popular television programs last week. This time it took the top two.

First place is familiar territory for NBC’s talent competition. It has been the most-watched summer series for six straight years and the No. 1 alternative summer series for all 14 years that it has been on the air.

The dominance continues even though the show is slipping in popularity, which is typical of most TV series these days. “AGT” averages 11.4 million viewers live and within a week of an episode’s premiere, down 18% from last year, Nielsen said.

Still, that’s almost 4 million viewers more than the second-ranked show of the summer, ABC’s “Bachelorette,” which had 7.5 million viewers within a week of its premiere this summer.

“America’s Got Talent” still has the capacity to create big moments online, too. A clip of contestant Kodi Lee singing a version of “A Song For You” has been viewed nearly 432 million times online, NBC said.

The summer’s ratings illustrate how scripted series are fading as a factor, after a couple of years where networks tried to attract viewers with a handful of new shows. Last summer the second-ranked show was the CBS drama “Code Black,” with 8.8 million viewers. The most-watched scripted series this summer has been reruns of CBS’ “NCIS,” at 5.6 million, Nielsen said.

NBC won the week in prime time, averaging 3.6 million viewers. CBS had 3.4 million, ABC had 2.9 million, Fox had 2.4 million, ION Television had 1.4 million, Univision had 980,000, Univision had 950,000 and the CW had 580,000.

Fox News Channel was the week’s most popular cable network, averaging 2.36 million viewers in prime time. MSNBC had 1.54 million, HGTV had 1.2 million, USA had 1.13 million and Hallmark had 1.11 million.

ABC’s “World News Tonight” topped the evening newscasts with an average of 8 million viewers. NBC’s “Nightly News” was second with 7.2 million and the “CBS Evening News” had 5 million viewers.

Ewan McGregor to return as Obi-Wan in new “Star Wars” streaming TV series



Actor Ewan McGregor poses at the world premiere of Disney’s “Christopher Robin,” in Burbank, California, U.S., July 30, 2018. (Reuters/Danny Moloshok)

ANAHEIM, Calif. (Reuters) — Ewan McGregor will reprise his “Star Wars” role as Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi in a series for the upcoming Disney+ streaming service, the actor announced to fans of the beloved movie franchise on Friday.

McGregor surprised the crowd at Walt Disney Co’s D23 Expo fan convention, walking on stage to loud cheers and applause. The Scottish actor said he was relieved that he could finally reveal he would return to the role.

“It’s been four years of saying ‘well, I don’t know,’” in response to fan questions, McGregor told the crowd. “Now I can say ‘yes, we’re going to do it.’”

McGregor played the younger version of the Jedi master in the three “Star Wars” prequel movies starting with 1999’s “The Phantom Menace.”

Filming of the series is expected to start next year, Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy said.

Disney also released the first footage from “The Mandalorian,” a live-action “Star Wars” series made for Disney+, about a

group of people from the planet Mandalore. The most famous is the helmeted Boba Fett from George Lucas’ original “Star Wars” trilogy.

Pedro Pascal, an actor known for roles on “Game of Thrones” and “Narcos,” will star in the new series.

“Bounty hunting is a complicated profession,” a voice said in a trailer for the series.

“The Mandalorian” will debut on Nov. 12 when Disney launches Disney+, a family-oriented subscription streaming service that represents the company’s biggest push into the online video market dominated by Netflix Inc.

Disney’s star-studded presentation was meant to stoke excitement for Disney+ and show the broad range of programming it will carry, from a “Muppets” short-form series to a Christmas film starring Anna Kendrick, nature programming from National Geographic, and superhero fare from Marvel Studios.

The event started with a marching band to promote a new “High School Musical” series.