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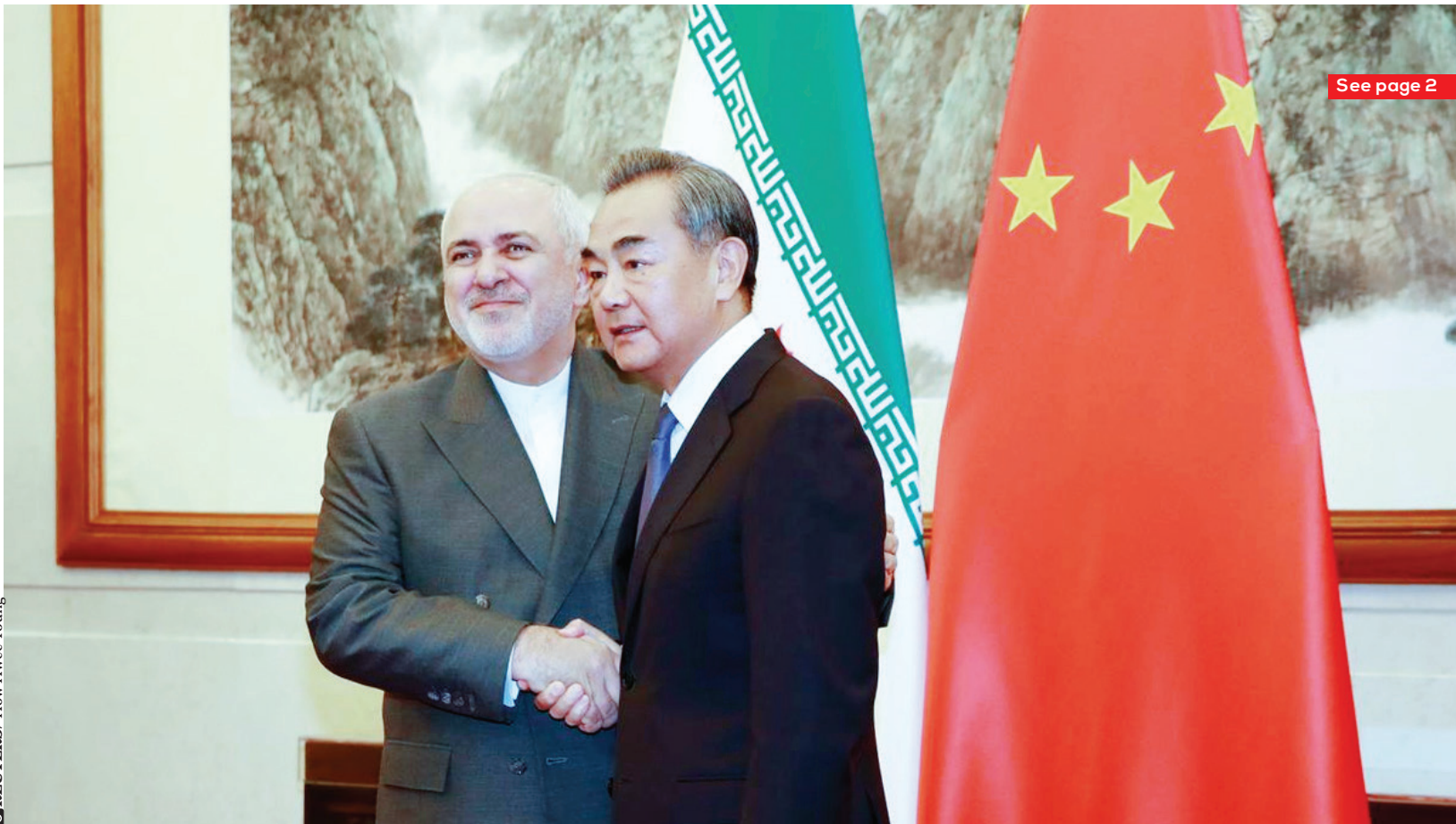


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## Zarif discusses Tehran-Beijing ties with Chinese counterpart



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi shakes hands with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China August 26, 2019.

## Steel products output up 11.6% in 4 months on year

**TEHRAN** — Production of steel products in Iran has risen 11.6 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), from that of the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported citing the data released by the Industry Ministry.

As reported, 7,204 million tons of the

products have been produced in the four-month period of this year, rising from 6,453 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Also as previously announced, the country's crude steel production in the mentioned time span rose by 7.1 percent to exceed 8 million tons. **→4**

## MPs hail Raisi's anti-corruption moves

**TEHRAN** — Iranian lawmakers have released a statement to thank the Judiciary Chief Ebrahimi Raisi for taking measures to root out corruption, MP Abolfazl Aboutorabi said on Monday.

Aboutorabi said the statement, which has been so far signed by more than 100 lawmakers, voices support for the measures adopted by the Judiciary in order to fight corruption, Fars reported.

It came a day after former presidential aide

for civil rights Shahindokht Molaverdi praised the Judiciary and said 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. **→3**

## Yemen drones target Saudi Arabia's capital

**TEHRAN** — Yemeni army and its allied fighters from Popular Committees have for the first time used a squadron of domestically-manufactured Samad-3 (Invincible-3) combat drones to strike an "important military target" in Saudi Arabia's capital city of Riyadh.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said on Monday afternoon that the drones struck the designated target with great

precision, reiterating that the strikes were in response to the continued Saudi-led alliance's crimes and aggression against Yemen, and its blockade of the conflict-ridden Arab country.

The development came only a day after Yemeni army forces and their allies launched a barrage of Badr-1 short-range ballistic missiles at strategic sites inside Jizan Regional Airport, also known as King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Airport.



### EDITORIAL

**Mohammad Ghaderi**  
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## 'Deal of Century': Removing Palestine from world's map

The "Deal of Century" was orchestrated by the United States and Israel in order to remove the Palestine from the geography of the world.

Several resolutions and agreements have been signed between Israel and Palestine since 1967 in the process of Peace Talks, so that solution of two states, one government and even confederation have been included in these agreements. In this regard, each of former presidents of the United States presented a peace plan to solve the problem and this time, it was Trump's turn.

The family of Donald Trump and Jared Kushner formulated and compiled the 'Deal of Century' Plan according to the family agreement since Palestinian and Israeli sides have different imaginations of the Deal. In the process of formation of the 'Deal of Century', they [Trump and Kushner] considered the Palestinian issue as a personal and family issue. By calculating that Jared Kushner is Jewish and his wife is also Jewish and U.S. President Donald Trump is also interested in Israel. So, Palestinian issue can have a family solution. It is not important that the differences between Palestinians and Israelis are a difference in the width of history and in the extent of ideological differences.

In formulation of the 'Deal of Century', both Trump and Kushner did not pay attention to this issue that resolving problem of Israel with the Islamic countries is not the problem that is confined or limited only to the United States or Israel. From the political point of view, the issue is not even comprehensible for them [Trump and Kushner] that, despite all international efforts and political initiatives taken in the recent decades, resolving this crisis has become more complicated every year.

The Trump family should understand this issue that situation in Palestine is tied with the Resolution 242 of the United Nations inked in 1967, stipulating that Israel must withdraw from the Golan Heights, Jordan River, Gaza Strip and the West Bank. On the other hand, the resistance of Palestinian people, which began with the throwing of stone, has now been turned into a resistance with the power of deterrence that owns pinpointing rockets and missiles. **→7**

## Despite differences PG states able to preserve regional dynamics: Turkish expert

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
By Payman Yazdani

**TEHRAN** — Emphasizing significance of the role of regional countries in ensuring the Persian Gulf security, Dr. Bilgehan Alagoz says Despite all the problems between Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, this region has always been able to preserve its own unique dynamics.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. in the Persian Gulf region has resulted in recent logical moves and measures of the Persian Gulf littoral states which are based on their national interests and logic of costs and benefits. If the countries' tendency toward getting closer to Iran is not just a short term tactic, this will pave the way to end disastrous war in Yemen and avoid more

destruction and massacre in the region.

We reached out to Dr. Bilgehan Alagoz, Lecturer at Marmara University Institute for Middle East Studies, Istanbul to shed more light on the issue.

Following is the text of our interview with her:

■ Recently we have seen tensions in the Persian Gulf such as attacks on Japanese ships and etc. Some experts make a relation between the tensions and the U.S. efforts to contain its global economic rivals especially China, Japan and EU. What do you think of this?

A: I agree with the opinion that there is a direct connection between the tension in the Persian Gulf and the U.S. efforts to contain its global rivals. In a speech to the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2018, Trump gave the key points of his foreign policy approach, which he called "Principled Realism". In his address to the

UN, Trump put special emphasis on China and Iran. Thus, Trump's China and Iran policies are interconnected. Trump's main goal is to contain China, which he regards as the greatest rival for the world economy. In this context, China's dependence on the Persian Gulf oil is noteworthy. China meets most of its oil needs from both Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. Therefore, the United States has increased its influence in the Persian Gulf through pressuring Iran in order to implement a policy of containment of China. Iran's threat of closing down the Strait of Hormuz and the rise in oil prices are unfavorable developments for China when Beijing enters into the negotiation process with the United States. For this reason, it is necessary to evaluate Trump's successive decisions on Iran and Persian Gulf within framework of this background. **→7**

## Lebanon's Aoun met with UN official over 'Israeli assault'

**TEHRAN** — Lebanese President Michel Aoun discussed on Monday the "Israeli assault on the southern suburbs of Beirut" with the country's United Nations Special Coordinator, Aoun's office said.

Two Israeli drones crashed early on Sunday in the southern suburbs, which are dominated by Hezbollah, prompting the leader of movement to warn the Israeli army that his group was preparing an imminent response.

Aoun met UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jan Kubis on Monday to discuss "the latest developments", the president's office said on Twitter.

Separately, Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri met Lebanon's interior and defense ministers

and with the army chief on Monday to discuss security issues, his office said, though it gave no further details, Reuters reported.

Hariri, who has said the drones aimed to stir up regional tensions, is also due to meet the ambassadors of the UN Security Council's five permanent members, his office said.

Israeli drone strikes hit a military position belonging to a Palestinian faction in Lebanon's Bekaa valley early on Monday, the group said.

Although Israel has not claimed the Beirut attack, Nasrallah said it was the first Israeli attack inside Lebanon since the two sides fought a deadly month-long war in 2006.

----- Hezbollah will no longer tolerate in-

truding Israeli drones

The secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says fighters from the movement will counter any further violation of the Lebanese airspace by Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles, warning the Tel Aviv regime to immediately cease such breaches.

"Hezbollah will endeavor to down all Israeli drones, which may violate Lebanon's airspace," Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah stated in a televised speech broadcast live from the southern Lebanese capital city of Beirut on Sunday evening.

Nasrallah made the comments a day after two Israeli drones crashed in a southern neighborhood of Beirut. **→13**



© Tehran Times / Hamid Vakili

## Photos of Leader on display at Tehran exhibit

**TEHRAN** — An exhibition displaying a collection of photos of the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei is underway at a gallery of the Art Bureau in Tehran.

This collection contains pictures taken by a number of photographers on various occasions over the past 40 years, the organizers announced on Sunday during the opening ceremony of the showcase titled "This Infinite Story". **→16**



### PERSPECTIVE

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

## It's shameful that Pompeo talks about JCPOA provisions

Speaking at a United Nations Security Council Session on Middle East Peace and Security on August 20, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington is concerned about the approaching end of some of the UN arms embargo and other sanctions against Iran based on the JCPOA.

"We are already tracking very closely the JCPOA provisions expiring in October of 2020, namely the UN arms embargo," Pompeo said in part of his speech.

It is extremely ridiculous that Pompeo is talking about the provisions of the JCPOA, the same landmark international nuclear agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, but revoked by his master Donald Trump.

Pompeo, Trump and other hawks have harshly denounced the JCPOA but the fact of the matter is that they seem to be worried that some of its provisions are coming to an end. Since Trump has blown up the JCPOA, his secretary of state is not in a position to talk about the JCPOA and its provisions. It is pure hypocrisy.

If the JCPOA, according to the Trump is "horrible", "flawed", "decaying" and "defective at its core", then in their view its provisions must also be obsolete.

While the entire world, except Israel's Netanyahu, was urging the U.S. to remain committed to the JCPOA, the Trump administration bullishly abandoned it and illegally imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Iran, a move which has been rightly called "economic terrorism".

In May 2018, when Trump officially abandoned the JCPOA, Pompeo said the U.S. will impose "the strongest sanctions in history" on Iran. Also in November 2018, John Bolton, the White House national security advisor, said, "It's our intention to squeeze them [Iranians] very hard... until the pips squeak."

In view of such bitter facts and remarks, the Trump administration's officials are not morally in a position to talk about the JCPOA provisions.

In the same remarks at the UN on August 20, Pompeo said, "Iran continues to threaten further expansions of its nuclear program in defiance of its international commitments." **→13**



## Iran seeks to revive oil pipeline across Iraq to Syria amid sanctions

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Tehran has discussed with Baghdad the possibility of reopening a pipeline linking Iran and Syria through Iraqi territory to circumvent sanctions.

On July 4, Britain's naval forces seized Iranian tanker 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.

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 last Thursday.



The Iran-Syria pipeline would link Iran with the Syrian port city of Baniyas on the Mediterranean Sea, al-Sumaria television channel reported, citing a source said to be familiar with the proposal.

The trans-Iraq pipeline would allow Iran to also sidestep the Strait of Hormuz for oil transportation and circumvent U.S. sanctions "amid growing fears [the Strait of Hormuz] may be closed in case of direct military confrontation between the United States and its allies with Iran."

According to the source, the pipeline would consist of two parts. First, Iran would construct a new 1,000km pipeline through Iraq into Syria, going through the Nineveh plain in northern Iraq and entering Syrian territory through Deir al-Zour province, leading to the Syrian coast. Secondly, Iran would reopen the Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline, which was shut in 1982 during the Iran-Iraq War. It was revived for three years in 2000 but was severely damaged by airstrikes during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. The proposal provides that both the construction of the pipeline and its maintenance would be carried out by Tehran.

The overall capacity of the pipeline is estimated at about 1.25 million barrels of oil per day, which equates to nearly half of Iran's pre-sanctions crude oil exports, although it is at least 10 times less than the overall volume of crude currently transported through the Strait of Hormuz.

The source pointed out that Baghdad has not yet officially responded to Iran's proposal. In fact, Iran previously proposed the pipeline plan to Iraq, but talks on the project were halted in 2014 when Daesh captured large swathes of land in both Syria and Iraq.

The Strait of Hormuz is a crucial shipping lane for Iran's oil, currently transporting up to 17 million barrels of raw materials and oil derivatives per day, most of which go to the markets of Asia and Europe.

It has recently become a hot spot for international disputes after Washington decided to form a coalition to "police" the waterway following a string of mysterious attacks on oil tankers traveling through it.

Washington blamed these on Iran, although Tehran repeatedly denied responsibility, saying Washington was stoking fears, accusing the U.S. of trying to enforce its unilateral oil sanctions through military pressure.

## Navy commander: Iran to use air defense systems on vessels

**(Fars)** — Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi declared plans to equip the country's warships and destroyers with air defense shields.

"There are good capacities developed in area of shot, mid and long-range missile and air defense systems, and we have enhanced to an acceptable level in on-site defense," Rear Admiral Khanzadi said in Tehran on Monday.



"God willing, we will use these defense systems on vessels in a bid to enhance the deterrence power," he added.

Rear Admiral Khanzadi explained that air defense shields will help Iran's heavy destroyers to intercept flying objects in farther distances.

Iran has made good progress in building different home-made air defense systems.

The country last Thursday unveiled the home-made version of the sophisticated Russian S-300 missile defense system, dubbed as Bavar (Belief) 373

with the capability to target ballistic missiles.

Bavar 373 was unveiled in a ceremony participated by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami.

"Bavar 373 is the most important indigenized missile defense system whose design and manufacturing started a few years ago and can engage multiple targets in high altitudes," General Hatami said, addressing the ceremony.

He added that the Iranian defense industry experts have gone through the reverse engineering phase and designed and manufactured the parts relying on domestic capacities.

The anti-air defense system can detect 60 targets, identify 13 targets and engage 6 targets.

The system is much more powerful than the Russian S-300 and some of its features could be compared with S-400.

# Rouhani says national interests should be safeguarded by power, diplomacy

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that the national interests should be safeguarded by power and diplomacy.

"I believe we should use any tool to protect our country's national interests. If I think that meeting someone helps solve the people's problems, I will not hesitate. The principle is our national interests," he said during a speech at a ceremony for government's achievements in developing rural infrastructure.

He noted, "Hand of power and hand of diplomacy should work together. Those who imagine that one hand is enough to solve problems are mistaken. Both hands should be used. We should use our power and military, security, economic, cultural and political capabilities."

He added, "They may seize our ship in which case we negotiate to correct their wrong behavior and release the ship and we may also seize their ship with legal reasons. We should work with both hands [power and diplomacy]. It is difficult and troublesome to work with just one hand."

On July 4, Britain captured and Iranian oil tanker off Gibraltar, claiming it was carrying oil to Syria. Iran responded in kind by seizing a British tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on July 19.

**■ 'We stand against sanctions'**

Rouhani also said that it has been for



one year that harshest sanctions have been imposed on Iran, however, the people will stand against sanctions and pressure.

"It has been for one year that they have imposed harshest sanctions on us. We reduce our commitments [under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA] and take retaliatory

actions while standing against the sanctions and resisting," he said.

He added, "So far, we have taken two steps in reducing our commitments and we may continue to do so. However, we give two months to have diplomacy, political activities and negotiations."

## Zarif discusses Tehran-Beijing ties with Chinese counterpart

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister, on Monday and discussed relations and international developments.

Zarif called for more cooperation between the two countries.

"Iran and China can cooperate in various areas of science, technology, economy and also security," he said.

Wang attached importance to expansion of relations and cooperation.

He described the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, as important achievement of diplomacy and symbol of multilateralism.

He rejected unilateralism and noted that China is determined to preserve the JCPOA.

Zarif tweeted on Monday that he plans to present a 25-year roadmap to materialize Iran's partnership and contribute to Belt and Road Initiative.

"After stopping in Tehran from Biarritz to change planes, arrived in Beijing. Important days ahead: Here, I will present a 25-year roadmap to materialize our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, & actively contribute to Belt & Road Initiative. Next: Japan and Malaysia," he tweeted.

Zarif made a surprise visit to Biarritz, France, where the G7 leaders were meeting on Monday.

The visit came only hours after sources said French Pres-

ident Emmanuel Macron had been given mission by his G7 counterparts to engage in talks with Iran.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi confirmed Zarif's trip in a tweet, saying the top Iranian diplomat was going to "continue talks over recent initiatives between the presidents of Iran and France" to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

In another tweet on Monday, Zarif said, "Iran's active diplomacy in pursuit of constructive engagement continues."

He added, "Met @EmmanuelMacron on sidelines of #G7Biarritz after extensive talks with @JY\_LeDrian & Finance Min. followed by a joint briefing for UK/Germany. Road ahead is difficult. But worth trying."

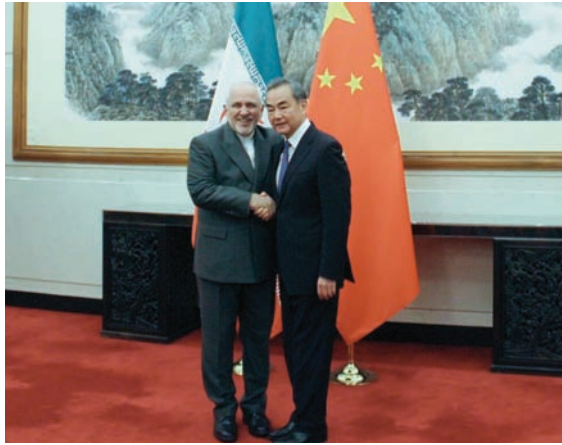
According to Reuters, Zarif held more than three hours of talks, including with French President Emmanuel Macron, before heading back to Tehran.

"The discussions that were held between the president and Zarif were positive and will continue," a French official said after the meeting, declining to take detailed questions, according to Reuters.

Zarif was in France on Friday, where he held talks with Macron.

He said his talks with Macron on how to implement the 2015 nuclear deal, known as 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."

## Iran officials say will not negotiate missile work, want to export more oil

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran wants to export a minimum of 700,000 barrels per day of its oil and ideally up to 1.5 million bpd if the West wants to negotiate with Tehran to save a 2015 nuclear deal, two Iranian officials and one diplomat told Reuters on Sunday.

"As a goodwill gesture and a step toward creating space for negotiations, we have responded to France's proposal. We want to export 700,000 bpd of oil and get paid in cash ... and that is just for a start. It should reach to 1.5 million bpd," said a senior Iranian official, who asked not to be named.

A second official said "Iran's ballistic missile program cannot and will not be negotiated. We have underlined it clearly and openly."

The officials did not elaborate on the reference to a French proposal. French officials were not immediately available for comment.

An Iranian diplomat said Iran had also ruled out any negotiations of its "right to enrich uranium, its home-made nuclear fuel cycle ... and in return we will be fully committed to the 2015 nuclear pact."

Industry sources told Reuters that Iranian oil exports dropped in July to as low as 100,000 bpd due to sanctions imposed on the country by the United States since President Donald Trump exited the 2015 pact last year.

The interviews by Reuters were published on the same day as Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif 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 was 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 important 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."

## Ties with India age-old, small pressures will not affect relationship: Iran

**(India Today)** – Amid U.S. sanctions, Iran on Monday said "small pressures" will not affect its age-old ties with India and that the current phase in the relationship will "pass".

Iran's Ambassador to India Ali Chegeni also said the trade relationship between the two countries were on an upswing.

"Iran and India have very good relations based on centuries-old ties. These small pressures (sanctions) on the two sides (will not affect ties)...This (phase) will pass," he said at a seminar organized by the Institute of Social Sciences.

He also slammed the U.S. for unleashing "economic terrorism" on Iran.

Economic terrorism is worse than the terrorists who killed security forces personnel in Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir or in other such attacks as an economic terrorist's act hits poor people, he said.

Chegeni said that the U.S. was spreading unrest in his region to sell its arms.

He also hit out at U.S. President Donald Trump for withdrawing from the nuclear deal in 2018.

The U.S. signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and then the American president withdrew, he said.

"How can we negotiate like this," he said.

"You (U.S.) should come back, we never

left the negotiating table," the Iranian envoy said, adding that the negotiation has to be based on mutual respect.

On Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's unscheduled visit to the G-7 summit, he praised French President Emmanuel Macron for his efforts to defuse the tensions between Tehran and Washington by finding ways of resuming dialogue.

As six-month-long exemptions from U.S. sanctions to buy oil from Iran ended in May, India had said it will deal with the issue based on three factors -- the country's energy security, commercial consideration and economic interests.

Elsewhere, he said, "Some keep asking what was the result of negotiation with major powers? After the negotiations, we were exporting over 2.8 million barrels of oil, and billions of dollars of our assets came back to the country."

He added, "Some did not say a word about foreign investments made in our country, but when foreign investors leave the country, they start criticizing about their leaving".

U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal in May 2018 and returned the previous sanctions and imposed new ones.

So far, Iran has taken two steps in reducing its nuclear commitments: increasing its stockpile of enriched uranium beyond the 300 kilograms allowed under the JCPOA and enriching nuclear fuel to the purity level of 4.5 percent as the Europeans missed a 60-day deadline to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

Under the agreement, Iran was allowed to enrich uranium to 3.67 percent.

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

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

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



# Israel putting up its 'last struggle', says Gen. Soleimani

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force, has slammed the recent Israeli attacks on a number of positions in regional countries, saying the “insane operations” were Tel Aviv’s last struggles.

“Definitely these insane operations will be the last struggles of the Zionist regime,” Major General Qassem Soleimani said, according to a Twitter account attributed to him.

It came days after Israel said it had launched air raids against Iranian targets near the Syrian capital city of Damascus. The Israeli military claimed its raids had prevented an attack on the Israeli-occupied territories “using killer drones.”

In a statement issued after the Israeli army announced its attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the Israeli military for its “major operational effort.”

Iran, however, dismissed as mere “lies” the claim that Iranian targets have been hit by the Israeli attacks.

“This is a lie and is not true,” said Mo-hsen Rezaee, a former chief of the IRGC. “The U.S. 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.”



Israel has also reportedly targeted positions in Syria and Lebanon.

According to the New York Times, Israel has carried out several attacks targeting bases

of Iraq’s popular forces. Two senior American officials told the newspaper that the attacks targeted Iraqi munition storehouses, alleging that the site was being used “to transfer

weapons to Syria.”

Responding to the report, Iraqi Vice President Nouri al-Maliki warned of a “strong response” if it is proven that the Israeli regime was behind the attacks against the positions of pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

Maliki, who is also secretary-general of the Islamic Dawa Party, said on Friday that if Israel continues to target Iraq, the country “will transform into a battle arena that drags in multiple countries, including Iran.”

“The security of the region, which Iraq is a key part of, is a collective issue, and its protection requires the (full) responsibility of all countries,” he added.

Also, after two Israeli drones crashed in a southern neighborhood of Beirut, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah, said fighters from the movement will counter any further violation of the Lebanese airspace by Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles, warning the Tel Aviv regime to immediately cease such breaches.

“Hezbollah will endeavor to shoot down all Israeli drones, which may violate Lebanon’s airspace,” Nasrallah stated in a televised speech on Sunday evening.

The Hezbollah chief made the comments a day after two Israeli drones crashed in a southern neighborhood of Beirut.

## Bolton warns Adrian Darya 1 must not be off-loaded

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – U.S. national security adviser John Bolton has warned that the Adrian Darya 1 supertanker “must not be allowed off-loaded.”

“The illicit oil heading to Turkey on the Adrian Darya 1 must not be allowed off-loaded in port or at sea,” Bolton tweeted on Sunday.

On July 4, Britain’s naval forces unlawfully seized Adrian Darya 1, 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.

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

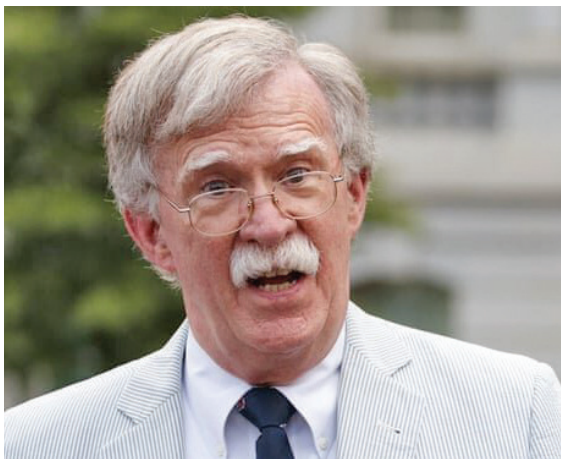
Justice unveiled a warrant for the seizure of the ship. Gibraltar, however, knocked back the request.

Following the release of Adrian Darya 1, the United States threatened to aggressively enforce its sanctions on those potentially assisting the supertanker.

In his Sunday tweet, Bolton also accused Iran of funding terror. “All hands on deck in the campaign to stop Iran from funding terror, destabilizing the globe, and breaking international sanctions,” he said.

This is while the current tensions in the Persian Gulf and other regions were built up in the aftermath of the U.S. government’s withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and its imposition of unilateral sanctions against Tehran.

The U.S. sanctions have been criticized, and in some cases defied, by other countries. Also, Washington’s attempt to impose the “harshest ever sanctions” on Iran has been described by Iranian leaders as an “economic terrorism” against the Iranian people.



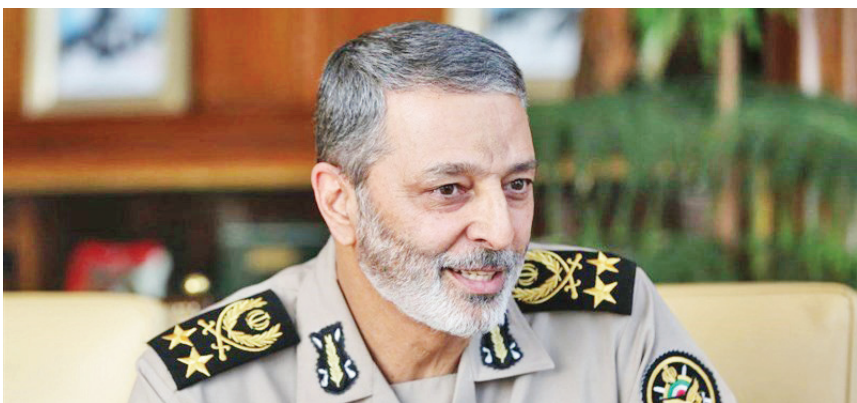
## Army chief lauds military scientists’ capabilities

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Iranian Army Commander Abdolrahim Mousavi said on Monday that the capabilities of Iran’s military scientists are much higher than what is seen.

“I’m not unaware of the capabilities and the progress of the defense industry,” Major General Mousavi said, Mehr reported. “The capabilities and determination of the young scientists in the Defense Ministry is much higher than what we’ve witnessed.”

He also said Iran’s homegrown defense weapons have been designed after thorough examination of the threats facing the country.

On Thursday, Iran unveiled a long-range surface-to-air missile system, dubbed “Ba-



var-373”, saying the missile system is more advanced than the U.S. Patriot system and its Russian counterpart S-300.

“The system has been designed and developed considering the country’s need for a defense system with a high range,” Brigadier General Shahrokh Shahram, a deputy defense minister, told national TV on Thursday night.

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.

## Suspension of human rights in Lelystad Court

Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism Public Relations – The statements of “Legal Opportunity of Lelystad Court for Access of the Victims of Terrorism to Justice” and “Human Rights of the Victims of Terrorism (disaster of Hafte Tir bombing in 1981)” bill were sent to Dutch officials to take necessary measures.

The statements and the enclosed bill are the result of dozens of hours of meetings, consultations with experts, judges, professors, lawyers, criminologists, and domestic and foreign diplomatic officials.

The statement said human rights are a set of rules and duties monitoring the rights of humans in the world community. The legal system of any country, with any general commitment, is obliged to implement human rights’ inherent norms and all governments and their bodies, including administration, constitution and judiciary ensured following them at local, national, regional, and international levels without any exception.

In one part of the statement we can read that every human being, irrespective of nationality, color, race, religion or geography, has fundamental rights in international human rights instruments which are not diminishing by power and cannot be denied under any circumstances. But, any con-

tribution to these principles can, in a civil process, promote economic, social and cultural rights and strengthen peace and stability in the world.

The statement continues that these fundamental criteria of human society that the United Nations and millions of human rights advocates strive to maintain, have been weakened by multiple contradictory interpretations by some holders of power and wealth and the international monitoring for human rights enjoyment of the society has been greatly challenged.

Another part of the statement said the Terrorist Organization, as a destructive tool in the recent decades, has violated these fundamental rights and the rights of millions of people in the most brutal way.

This disgraceful case is always intensified by a horrible crime, and the wickedness behind the political games and deceptive and dual interpretations of immunity against humanity still continue. Such a situation indicates that the foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 to protect human dignity has remained as a neglected necessity since then.

Pointing to the role of the victims of terrorism in the end of the statement, the Association for Defending Victims

of Terrorism stated that victims of terrorism have been a significant symbol of the damage left by this horrific evil all over the world. They experienced the atrocities of the wicked politicians and the horrors of the wickedness remained in their lives as a permanent experience. This wound never heals and the suffering will not be forgotten.

The families of the victims of Hafte Tir bombing of Tehran tolerated the suffering and loss of their loved ones for nearly four decades.

They were waiting for the facts to be revealed about occurrence and aspects of the crime that the Dutch media suddenly reported in the middle of last year that the murdered man, named Ali Motamed, was Mohammad Reza Kolahi, the perpetrator of the explosion of Hafte Tir bombing in Tehran in 28 June 1981.

At the end of the statement it was indicated that in order to have access to justice and shed light on the truth using the opportunity of the court of the murder of Ali Motamed in Lelystad, the “Human Rights of the Victims of Terrorism (Hafte Tir bombing)” bill was codified.

The bill was sent to Iranian and the United Nations officials so that they can ask the Dutch authorities to assist the survivors to achieve their goal.

## Zarif’s trip to France not related to G7: spokesman

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Monday that the Iranian foreign minister’s trip to France was not related to the G7 summit and was carried out due to a request from the French side.

“Mohammad Javad Zarif’s trip was unrelated with the G7,” Rabiei said during a press conference in Tehran. “The French government has taken an initiative and held talks with the U.S. to reduce Iran-U.S. tensions.”

He said Iran welcomes the gesture of goodwill by France, but plays no role in the France-U.S. talks.

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.

“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.”

Later on Sunday, Zarif said in a tweet that he had met with the French president as “Iran’s active diplomacy in pursuit of constructive engagement continues.”

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China – plus Germany signed the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016.

Under the accord, also known as the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions.

However, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the international nuclear deal in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Macron has recently stepped up diplomatic contacts with Tehran in a bid to allegedly ease the Tehran-Washington tensions.

## ‘Beijing committed to win-win cooperation with Tehran’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Chang Hua said on Monday that Beijing is committed to a win-win cooperation with Tehran.

In a meeting with Seyyed Zia Hashemi, the managing director of IRNA, Chang said that China opposes the U.S. unilateralism and condemns sanctions against Iran.

He also expressed China’s support for the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

He noted that there is no alternative for the JCPOA and implementation of the deal guarantees the regional security and stability.



U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington in May 2018 from the JCPOA, which was reached between Iran and six world powers in 2015.

Afterwards, Washington re-imposed sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the deal and ordered new ones.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrew from the multi-nation nuclear agreement, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities.

It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions’ effects.

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

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

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

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a phone conversation with Emmanuel Bonne, diplomatic counselor to French President Emmanuel Macron on August 9, saying Beijing is willing to work with France to prevent further escalation of tensions on the Iran nuclear deal.

According to Xinhua, during the phone talks, Wang expressed China’s support for the mediation efforts France has made to resolve the stalemate on the Iran nuclear agreement, saying that China has also made huge efforts in saving the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Adhering to the deal means safeguarding multilateralism, safeguarding fairness and justice, and safeguarding regional security and stability, said Wang.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, China is willing to join hands with France to safeguard the authority and validity of the international agreement, encourage all parties to show flexibility, and, in particular, prevent further escalation of the tensions, said Wang.

**1 →** 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 the newly appointed Ebrahim Raisi, the Judiciary has launched a fresh attempt to combat corruption, 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.

Raisi also said last week that the Judiciary is dead-set 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. Brigadier General Gholam-Hossein Gheibparvar, the former commander of the Basij, on Monday urged governmental bodies to take a tougher stance in battling corruption.

“The government must always refine itself, because the existence of a corrupt element in an organization impacts the entire atmosphere,” Gheibparvar said.





STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	274871.6
IFX	3648.62
Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir	

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,792 rials
GBP	51,560 rials
AED	11,437 rials
Source: cbi.ir	

COMMODITIES	
Brent	\$59.15/b
WTI	\$54.60/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.50/b
Gold	\$1,530.40/oz
Silver	\$17.62/oz
Platinum	\$866.15/oz
Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com	

## Mnuchin: If China agreed to a fair relationship, we'd sign that deal ‘in a second’

By Amanda Macias

American Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin doubled down on the White House's latest punch in the U.S.-China trade war by calling out Beijing for unfair trade practices.

“We do not have free trade with them,” Mnuchin said Sunday on the sidelines of the G-7 meeting in France.

“It's a one way street: They have free entrance into our markets, our investments, our companies and we do not have the same thing there.

That's the only reason why we are in this situation with China. If China would agree to a fair and balanced relationship, we would sign that deal in a second,” he added.

“Sometimes you've got to take stern measures,” White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow said alongside Mnuchin, adding that American companies should heed the president's call to leave China.



“Come home to America, we've got the best tax system, we've got the best regulatory system, it's an easy place to make money, the best technology in the world. Come home. That's what the president is saying,” Kudlow said.

■ **Tariffs on Chinese goods**

Before leaving for the G-7, U.S. President Donald Trump said he would raise existing duties on \$250 billion in Chinese products to 30% from 25% on Oct. 1. Additionally, he said, tariffs on another \$300 billion of Chinese goods, which start to take effect on Sept. 1, will now be 15% instead of 10%.

At the G-7, Trump said Sunday he could declare the escalating U.S.-China trade war as a national emergency if he wanted to.

“In many ways this is an emergency,” Trump said of the ongoing trade battle. “I could declare a national emergency, I think when they steal and take out and intellectual property theft anywhere from \$300 billion to \$500 billion a year and when we have a total loss of almost a trillion dollars a year for many years,” Trump said, adding that he had no plan right now to call for a national emergency.

The trade war between the world's two largest economies intensified over the weekend sending lower U.S. stock futures and stocks in Asia.

Meanwhile, Trump dismissed concerns that leaders at the G-7 and other U.S. allies would pressure him to end the trade war with China.

“I think they respect the trade war, it has to happen. China has been, well I can only speak for the United States, I can't say what they are doing to the UK and other places, but from the standpoint of the United States what they've done is outrageous that presidents and administrations allowed them to get away with taking hundreds of billions of dollars out every year and putting it into China,” Trump said during a bilateral with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

“Our country is doing really well, we had horrible trade deals and I'm straightening them out. The biggest one by far is China,” he added.

(Source: cnbc.com)

# Steel products output up 11.6% in 4 months on year

➔ Iran's crude steel production stood at 7,518 million tons in the first four months of the past year.

Meanwhile, Iran's major steel producers exported 2.241 million tons of steel during the four-month period of this year.

In a press conference on June 8, Iranian deputy industry, mining and trade minister said the ministry has taken necessary measures to maintain the country's metal exports despite U.S. sanctions.

“We have established a special working group in the ministry which is closely assessing the situation and making necessary arrangements to mitigate the impact of U.S. sanctions,” Jafar Sarqini told the Tehran Times in the press conference.

The official noted that it is expected for the exports from the country's mining sector to, at least, reach the last year's \$8.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020).

Also, during a meeting with the members of Iran Steel Association on Sunday, Iranian



Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the country has achieved a proper self-reliance in steel industry.

Steel industry is one of the industries in which some good investment has been made and today it has become a production

advantage, the minister further underscored.

Iran's annual steel production is planned to reach 45 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), according to Sarqini.

Referring to the sanctions, the official said, “All those who have imposed sanctions against Iran aim to destroy he country's production capabilities; therefore, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade prefers that the steel producers focus first on production and in this due development projects with the physical progress of over 70 percent will also help achieve this target.”

On June 15, the official had announced that the country's annual crude steel production is planned to reach 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year.

He put Iran's crude steel production at 25 million tons in the past year.

Sarqini had also announced that Iran will inaugurate steel projects with the capacity of at least 10 million tons during the current Iranian calendar year.

## Projects worth over \$330m to be inaugurated in free zones

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – On the occasion of the Government Week (August 24-30) 100 development projects worth 14 trillion rials (about \$333.3 million) are due to be inaugurated in Iran's free trade, industrial zones, IRIB reported on Monday citing Iranian Secretariat of Free Zones High Council.

According to Morteza Bank, the secretary of Free Zones High Council, the mentioned projects have been defined in various areas including production, infrastructure, construction, services, education, and tourism.

The official noted that the projects have been mostly funded by the private sector and created job opportunities for over 3000 people in the country's free zones.

Bank also put the amount of foreign investment made in these projects at more than nine million euros.

He noted that currently, some 2600 industrial, service and tourism units are operational in Iran's free trade zones.

According to Akbar Eftekhari, the deputy secretary of

Free Zones High Council for production, exports and technology affairs, there are seven free trade zones and 25 special economic zones in Iran in which nearly 500,000 people are working in 1,700 production units.

Establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote the non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras



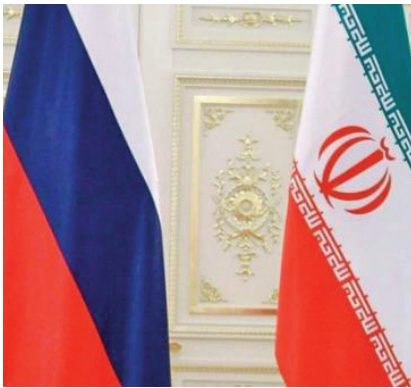
in East-Azarbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

## Russia to link banking system with Iran: envoy

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – Russia's Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzagharyan said on Sunday that Russia and Iran are going to connect their banking systems in near future, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Managing Director of Iran International Exhibitions Company Bahman Hosseinzadeh, noting that monetary transactions will be facilitated accordingly.

Calling for expansion of economic ties between the two countries, he added that the trilateral meeting among the Iranian, Russian and Turkish presidents is to be held in near future, where the three sides



will explore the development of their ties.

Late in June, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati stressed his country's interest in expanding mutual trade cooperation with Russia and selling its oil with the help of the northern neighbor.

“Russia, in parallel with the Europeans, has presented a proposal for trade cooperation with Iran and we are also interested in trade ties with them because Russia can supply many of our needs by purchasing oil from us,” Hemmati said in an interview with the state TV on June 23.

Early in July, Russian Permanent Repre-

sentative to the European Union Vladimir Chizhov stated that Moscow will ignore Washington's sanctions against Iran and continue to trade with the Middle Eastern nation without creating any special mechanisms.

“Our colleagues here [in Brussels] sometimes ask why Russia and China do not create their own INSTEX [Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges].

To that we answer with the question: why do we need it?

We have already traded and will trade without paying any attention to U.S. sanctions,” Chizhov told Sputnik.

## Ready to retreat? Trade wars now hit Germany

The intensifying trade war between the U.S. and China has rescued the euro from falling into the abyss – again – but probably for the wrong reasons.

As per fxstreet.com, August 23rd was never going to be a typical Friday in August. Traders were on the edge of their chairs in anticipation of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech in Jackson Hole. However, the U.S.-Sino trade war stole the show.

Beijing announced its countermeasures to Washington's planned tariffs on September 1st and December 15th. These include new duties on \$75 billion of American goods entering the world's second-largest economy – including on crude oil. U.S. President Donald Trump reacted furiously with a series of tweets – including calling on companies to leave China and announced new tariffs, including planned and existing levies by an additional 5%.

The reaction was swift – stocks tanked and money fled into the safety of U.S. bonds. Falling yields reflect higher chances of the Fed cutting interest rates and weakened the dollar against the euro.

Let us get back to Powell's speech. The Fed Chair said that the bank would “act as appropriate” and dropped the words “mid-cycle adjustment” from the characterization of the previous rate cut in July. Departing from that cautious language implies the Fed – coming under constant attack from Trump – is now ready to reduce rates again. Nevertheless, Powell stressed that the US economy is still doing well and also hinted that monetary policy could not resolve

all the recent developments.

Yet even if the Fed moves forward with monetary policy, it will be partially motivated by global weakness – and that includes Germany. The euro zone's largest economy is on the verge of a recession – and its leaders refuse to prescribe stimulus.

Jens Weidmann, President of the German Central Bank, the Bundesbank, has been the latest to reject injecting new funds.

■ **The locomotive of the euro**

The locomotive of the euro area has been too dependent on exports – especially to China – and seems unwilling to diversify its economy.

IFO – Germany's No. 1 Think tank has sent a reminder of the economy's weakness. The Business Climate survey dropped to 94.3 points, worse than expected. Klaus Wohlrabe, an economist with the institution, said that the industrial sector is already in recession and that the services one is now following. He added that the latest developments in the trade war are not reflected by the survey.

On this background, it is hard to see the euro thriving. Moreover, the European Central Bank is set to announce its own stimulus – ahead of the Fed.

All in all, the euro's “Schadenfreude” – suffering from the misery of others – may reach its limits sooner rather than later.

Apart from this data point, the ongoing U.S.-Sino trade war and worries about the German economy will likely



dominate trading.

Friday's move sent EUR/D above the downtrend channel. The resistance line of that channel now serves as support. Momentum is marginally positive, but the currency pair is trading below the 100 and 200 Simple Moving Averages. All in all, the picture is mixed.

Some resistance awaits at 1.1130, which was a support line two weeks ago. It is followed by 1.1165, that is today's high. Next, we find 1.1190 and 1.1230, which both capped EUR/D in the first half of August.

## Turkish lira slides on trade war unease, hit by ‘flash crash’



The Turkish lira weakened more than 1% against the dollar on Monday, after briefly tumbling to 6.47 overnight in what market watchers described as a “flash crash” as Japanese investors cut risk assets over Sino-U.S. trade war worries.

As per reuters.com, the lira stood at 5.8160 against the dollar at 0628 GMT, weakening from a close of 5.7540 on Friday. After a currency crisis wiped nearly 30% off the lira's value in 2018, it has fallen 9% this year.

The China-U.S. trade war, which intensified in recent days, “means that EM FX will continue to weaken for the foreseeable future. In the absence of a thawing in trade frictions it remains a market to be structurally short EM and buy dollars on any dip,” currency analysts at Societe Generale said in a note.

On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump announced an additional duty on some \$550 billion of targeted Chinese goods, hours after China unveiled retaliatory tariffs on \$75 billion worth of U.S. goods.

The latest friction, which sunk Asian shares Monday, has shaken confidence in the world economy and sent investors steaming to the safe harbors of sovereign bonds and gold,

hitting emerging markets (EMs) like Turkey.

The brief plunge in thin overnight yen/lira trading was reminiscent of another “flash crash” on Jan. 3, when Turkey's currency weakened to a similar level due to a global market sell-off and flight from risk triggered by concerns about slowing economic growth.

“Looks like another flash crash out of Asia,” Timothy Ash, head of emerging market research at Blue Bay Asset Management, wrote on Twitter.

■ **A new weakening trend**

“(It) comes amid a new found weakening trend, driven by fallout from Argentina, concerns about global volatility and nervousness over Turkish monetary policy mix,” he said.

After having gained in recent months, the lira has been newly pressured by concerns over possibly rapid loan growth after a central bank decision to lower required reserves limits and boost returns for lenders

with more than 10% loan growth.

The Turkish government has been looking to boost economic activity after the economy sank into recession last year.

The currency has also been hit after Ankara said last week that an air strike on a Turkish military convoy in northwest Syria killed three civilians, fuelling worries about Turkey's military presence in the region.

The yuan's fall to a historic low level amid the U.S.-China trade war triggered investors' flight from risk, said a treasury desk trader at one bank, adding that this appeared to have led to stop-loss yen/lira trades. The trader added the lira's brief overnight spike had been exaggerated by the low volumes at that hour.

“While the yuan level has removed a large portion of the risk, the Sino-U.S. trade war is a factor which is strengthening every day and could trigger a global flight from risk in the period ahead,” he said.



# 84% of rural areas connected to gas network: Zanganeh

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said 84 percent of the country's rural areas are supplied with gas through national gas network, IRIB reported.

According to the minister, currently some 28,916 villages are connected to the national gas network, which is more than 84 percent of the total number of villages across the country.

“With the exception of Sistan-Baluchestan province, more than 94 percent of the country's urban population is also connected to the national gas network,” Zanganeh said.

Zanganeh said that the target for gas supply in the country has been 95 percent for both urban and rural populations, adding that “Now we have reached 94 percent and soon we will exceed that figure.”

He put the cost of gas supply to the cities and rural areas at 192 trillion rials (about \$4.5 billion), of which 157 trillion rials (about \$3.7 billion) have been spent in villages and the rest was spent to supply gas to urban areas.

The official noted that one of the biggest achievements of connecting the rural areas to the national gas network is to help range-lands and forests, because considering the access to natural gas, cutting down trees and bushes is no longer economically feasible.



Elsewhere in his remarks Zanganeh underlined the increase in the country's total gas output during the past six years, saying “gas production in the South Pars gas field

[in the Persian Gulf] stood at 91 billion cubic meters in [the Iranian calendar year of] 1392 [started in March 2013] while it has reached 228 billion cubic meters in the current year.”

“The country's total gas production was nearly 183 billion cubic meters six years ago and it has increased to 330 billion cubic meters today, that is 850 million cubic meters per day,” he added.

Back in July, National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Gas Distribution Director Saeid Momeni had said that 73.6 percent of the country's rural areas were connected to the national gas network by the end of the current Iranian calendar year's first quarter (June 21).

According to the official, NIGC had it on the agenda to supply gas to 10 villages every month.

That meant by the end of the current year 3600 villages would be connected to the gas network.

The number of the cities connected to the national gas network, also increased to 1117, which according to the official was 96.9 percent of the country's total urban areas.

Earlier in January, Iranian parliament (Majlis) approved a bill to allocate 50 trillion rials (about \$1.16 billion) for expanding the country's gas network to new rural areas.

According to the bill, the banks would provide NIGC and provincial gas companies with the mentioned fund under the Oil Ministry's guarantee.

## NIOC plans 10 major oil, gas exploration projects

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has introduced 10 major oil and gas exploration projects in the company's Exploration Directorate which are moving forward based on schedule, IRNA reported on Monday.

According to the NIOC office of public relations, the mentioned projects include Persian Gulf, Abadan Plain, North and South Dezfoul, Kopeh-Dagh, Fars, Central Iran, Moghan and Eastern Iran as well as Makran and Oman Sea.

The most important activities done in the Persian Gulf exploration project, include planning for the completion of exploration drilling operations in the Forouzan area, completing static modeling of the joint Aria oil field which has resulted in a substantial increase in the field's reservoir, as well as planning for launching new drilling operations, signing and executing development project, and processing three-dimensional seismicity of Apadana, Saba, and Nosrat field's by year end.

As reported, operational exploration activities in the oil and gas industry require structural studies and up-to-date technologies in the field of geology and exploration.

In this regard, NIOC's Exploration Directorate has signed several agreements with Iranian universities and knowledge-based companies for research in various fields of geophysics, geochemistry, unconventional hydrocarbon resources and drilling.

The agreements include a project for quantitative interpretation (QI) of Abadan plain's seismic cube, research studies on Lorestan Province's shale oil resources and geochemical study of some hydrocarbon reservoirs in southern Iran as well as a project for producing 10,000 barrels of a High Pressure, High Temperature (HPHT) drilling fluid.

According to the report, considering the challenges of exploring hydrocarbon resources, NIOC's Exploration Directorate has identified various research projects and created a roadmap based on the country's sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021) and in line with its organizational strategies.

Since the reimposition of sanctions, Iran has been encouraging domestic companies' presence in its oil and gas projects, both in exploration and in development sectors. In exploration sector, as there are many blocks waiting



for exploration, NIOC is seriously following up the plans to lay the ground for the private sector's contribution.

## Oil drops as recession risks mount with trade war tariffs

Oil prices fell on Monday, pushing U.S. crude to the lowest in more than two weeks, as an intensifying trade war between the U.S. and China undermined confidence in global economic growth.

According to reuters.com, Brent crude was down 52 cents, or 0.9%, at \$58.82 a barrel by 0645 GMT, having earlier touched \$58.24, the lowest since Aug. 15.

U.S. oil was down 62 cents, or 1.1%, at \$53.55 a barrel, having earlier fallen to \$52.96, the lowest since Aug. 9.

Concerns about an economic slowdown are being fanned by a ratcheting up of trade tensions between the United States and China.

The latest round of tariffs “will bring yet another dent to global growth,” Morgan Stanley said in a note. “We view risks of further escalation as meaningful.”

China's Commerce Ministry said late last week it would impose additional tariffs of 5% or 10% on a total of 5,078 products originating from the United States, including crude oil, agricultural products such as soybeans, and small aircraft.

In retaliation, President Donald Trump said he was ordering U.S. companies to look



at ways to close operations in China and make products in the United States.

The “only thing that will lift the storm

clouds over oil markets this week will be if both China and the U.S. talk and decide to mutually take a step back,” said Jeffrey

Halley, market analyst at Oanda. “I can't see that happening.”

U.S. Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell told an annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming that the U.S. economy is in a “favorable place” and the Federal Reserve will “act as appropriate” to keep the current economic expansion on track.”

But exacerbating concern over the possibility of recession, U.S. manufacturing industries registered their first month of contraction in almost a decade.

The Brent/WTI spread was at minus \$5.26, after widening 60 cents to settle at minus \$5.17 on Friday. The spread blew out after China included U.S. oil for the first time in its tariff moves.

Hedge funds and other money managers raised their bullish wagers on U.S. crude to a three-month high in the latest week, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) said.

U.S. energy companies cut the most oil rigs in about four months last week, with the rig count falling to the lowest since January 2018, as producers cut spending on new drilling and completions.

## NIDC digs 124 oil, gas wells in a year

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has dug 124 oil and gas wells across the country during the past year, Shana reported quoting the managing director of the company as saying on Sunday.



Seyed Abdollah Mousavi said that the drilled wells consisted of one exploration well, 52 appraisal/development wells and 70 workover/completion wells.

He said some 170,270 meters of digging has been conducted for the mentioned onshore and offshore wells.

NIDC, a subsidiary of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), undertakes most drilling operations across the country and drilled 4,489 onshore and offshore oil and gas wells in nearly 40 years.

## Northstar Midstream expanding into LNG bunkering

NorthStar Midstream, a company that is 50% owner of the JAX LNG terminal in Jacksonville, FL, is expanding into the marine bunkering business, targeting operators of cruise and cargo ships that are planning to use natural gas as bunker fuel.

According to freightwaves.com, Northstar, which is owned by investors in funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management LP, has formed a new company, Polaris New Energy, which has ordered an LNG barge that will be built at the Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding yard in Sturgeon Bay, WI. The barge is scheduled for delivery at the end of 2021.

The barge will have capacity of 5,400 cubic meters (cbm) of LNG stored in four 1,350-meter tanks. The barge will be 340 feet in overall length, have a beam of 66 feet and a draft of 32 feet, 10 inches. The cost of the barge was not revealed.

Tim Casey, senior vice president of LNG at Northstar, said the company plans to load fuel on the Polaris barge at the JAX LNG terminal. Two container carriers that call Puerto Rico, TOTE and Crowley, operate LNG-powered ships between San Juan and Jacksonville.



TOTE Maritime Puerto Rico has a smaller, 2,200-cbm barge that it uses to fuel its ships, while Crowley directly bunkers its ships from fuel lines at its terminal.

Casey explained that many companies that operate or plan to operate LNG-powered ships prefer to bunker from barges because using shore lines may restrict loading or discharge of cargo or passengers in certain areas on dock for safety reasons.

He said Polaris is aiming to use the barge to fuel ships in Port Canaveral and the Miami/Port Everglades area.

He said Jacksonville is a good place for an LNG terminal because there are pipelines in the vicinity delivering the quantities of gas needed for a liquefaction facility.

Numerous cruise companies are operating or building LNG-fueled ships including Carnival (its Aida, Costa and Carnival Cruise brands), Disney, Royal Caribbean, MSC Cruises, TUI, Hurtigruten, Norwegian Yacht Voyages and Ponant. Casey said it typically takes 1,500 to 2,000 cbm to fuel a cruise ship.

### ■ Other coastal ranges

Casey said Polaris also plans to fuel cargo ships and would like to build additional barges that would fuel ships in other coastal ranges or inland waterways in the U.S.

Utilizing a suitable tugboat, the barge will operate as an articulated tug and barge unit.

Polaris has not chosen a tug operator or decided whether it will operate a tug itself.

According to Steve Cadden, the chief operating officer of SEA/LNG, an industry group that promotes the use of LNG as marine fuel, there are 168 LNG-fueled ships in operation today and another 177 on order.

In addition, there are 141 “LNG-ready” ships — dual-use vessels that could be converted to run on LNG. (These numbers do not include ships that actually transport LNG, which commonly use “boiled-off” cargo as fuel.)

The number of barges used to bunker LNG ships also has grown dramatically from just one in 2017 to nine at the end of last year.

More than 30 are expected to be in operation within two or three years, said Cadden.

VT Halter Marine is constructing a 4,000 cbm LNG articulated tug and barge unit with Quality Liquefied Natural Gas Transport, LLC (Q-LNG) that is due for delivery in the first quarter of 2020. Last year it reportedly executed a letter of intent to build a second 8,000 cbm LNG barge.

The barges will be chartered to Shell. Shell is supplying LNG to Carnival.

While ferries and cruise ships are the most common type of LNG-powered ships, a wide variety of other sorts of vessels — roll-on, roll-off ships, container ships, product tankers and bulkers — that use LNG as fuel.



A Japanese utility has trialled a blockchain platform for residents to sell excess solar power.

As stated by govinsider.asia, the software allows producers of solar energy to track market prices, and sell at their unused power at competitive rates. Others who don't produce their own renewable energy would be able to buy this at market rates.

The trial was run at a research lab in Osaka, under a partnership between Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO), the second largest utility in Japan, and Australian company Power Ledger. The project is among a host of others that are being run in Asia, with households and businesses able to buy and sell renewable energy at more affordable rates on a digital marketplace.

The project in Japan was run for five months using data

from eight participating electricity meters. If this was expanded to a larger scale, it would have led to savings of \$18.5b this year as a result of lower renewable energy prices, according to Power Ledger.

“Power Ledger's trial with KEPCO demonstrated how communities can be provided with cheaper energy systems to offset existing energy costs and allow energy-generating customers to monetize their renewable energy investments by selling their excess energy via Power Ledger's P2P platform,” Power Ledger's co-founder and chairman Dr. Jemma Green told EnergyInsider.

### ■ The blockchain-based model

The blockchain-based model could serve as an alternative to the current approach used by Japan and others on renewables. At the moment, Japanese utilities must purchase renewables at a fixed price called the “feed-in tariff” and for contract durations set by the government.

But these fees have risen over time as demand has increased and as a result, consumers are paying higher prices for renewable energy. In 2019, Japanese utilities are expected to have paid \$33.2b in renewables fees, the majority of which — about \$22.7b — is being passed on to household and business consumers, according to the Nikkei Asian Review.

The feed-in tariff was set up in 2012 to encourage long-term investment in renewable energy. But as the market has matured, the government will phase out the fixed price in favor of a competitive bidding system for renewable energy in 2020 in a bid to keep costs down.

Power Ledger's blockchain platform would “cut out the middleman”, Green says. “Power Ledger will give users access

to cheaper energy prices, incentivizing more people to install solar panels and other types of renewable energy generators.”

In Japan, “renewable energy is planned to be introduced significantly”, a KEPCO representative said. The country needs to create “stable provisions” to enable this. “Thus, we need to integrate and control decentralized energy resources.”

### ■ Part of a broader trend

Japan's trial is part of a broader trend across Asia, with other utilities testing blockchain-based marketplaces to trade in renewable energy. In South Korea, the government plans to pilot a blockchain project with three major utilities — Korea Electric Power Company, Nambu Electric Power, and Korea Southern Power. This is after it ran trials in Seoul in 2017, where residents could sell electricity to neighbors in exchange for “energy points” that can be redeemed for cash or used to pay electricity bills or charge electric cars.

In Southeast Asia, Thailand is one of the leaders. It launched a trial last year between a shopping center, school, apartment, and hospital in a Bangkok precinct. It used Power Ledger's blockchain platform to allow participants to buy and sell solar energy, and track payments and invoices.

This approach is called peer-to-peer (P2P) energy trading, which Thailand believes could be the future of the industry. A spokesperson for Bangkok's electricity utility, Metropolitan Electricity Authority, has said that it “forecasts P2P energy trading to become mainstream for power generation in the long run.”

Singapore's largest utility, SP Group, has launched a blockchain platform to allow companies to offset their use of non-renewable energy with investment in “renewable energy certificates”.



## Why G7 is no longer relevant

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — G7 leaders are free to meet in Biarritz, France for the 45th G7 Summit, but the grouping is losing relevance by the day.

This is certainly not because almost every single G7 leader attending the summit is in some kind of trouble, whether it's economic, political or simply health-related.

Nor is it because the grouping is becoming economically insignificant.

After all, it still represents 40 percent of the global economic output and incorporate some of the world's most innovative industrial powerhouses.

The lack of legitimacy isn't the culprit as the grouping has never been trying to be globally representative or come up with binding resolutions that have to be implemented multilaterally by countries that do not sit at the table. So, what's the problem with the G7?

It is the value erosion that is causing the seemingly irreversible decline of the G7.

The G7 process was first established in the mid-1970s in the wake of the economic recessions caused by the 1973 oil crisis and the infamous Nixon shock.

Besides coordinating economic policies to assist in each other's economic recovery efforts, the G7 grouping more fundamentally sees itself as a community of like-minded countries that uphold such supposedly universal values as liberal democracy, peace and stability, and economic prosperity and sustainable development. The very "like-mindedness" on those values is the glue that has been holding G7 countries together for the past decades.

But the degree of "like-mindedness" among G7 members is quickly dissipating in recent years.

Under President Trump, the United States is slipping towards an illiberal democracy.

The erratic US president governs with a dictatorial leadership style, advances the alternative fact campaign that suppresses truth and press freedom, and makes repeated, humiliating speeches or running comments deeply hurting ethnic minorities, females, religious groups and foreign leaders in the name of making America great again.

Across the Atlantic in the UK, Boris Johnson with his signature divisive politics and the reckless "do-or-die" attitude towards Brexit on October 31 is making the country a tyranny of (52 percent) majority.

The political rights and economic appeal of the 48 percent of the British population who voted to remain in the European Union are being appallingly trashed.



And the sort of sensible center-ground politics that we normally associate with a liberal democracy is dying in the UK. How about peace and stability?

Indeed, G7 members, notably France, Germany, the UK and the European Union, played an instrumental role in brokering the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), popularly known as the Iran nuclear deal.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the JCPOA for the sake of global security.

But Trump pulled the US out of the deal in May 2018 and unilaterally imposed sanctions on Iran despite the opposition shown by the other signatories, including its close G7 allies.

The withdrawal caused internal cleavage within G7 as the European Union had to announce countermeasures - at least in words - to preserve the integrity of the agreement.

And finally, in relation to economics and trade, the G7 is no longer the go-to forum to handle global economic affairs.

The Group of 20, thanks to the participation of a wider collection of systemically important economies, is replacing G7 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation.

There are enormous trade tensions between G7 members as well.

Without exaggeration, the United States and the European Union are literally on the brink of a full-blown trade war that mirrors the on-going Sino-American trade conflicts.

Trump has earlier slapped national security tariffs on European iron and steel exports and is threatening Europe's auto and aeroplane industries with renewed stiff punitive tariffs.

Trump is also publicly flirting with Johnson about the prospect of striking a post-Brexit bilateral US-UK trade deal at the expense of the interest of the European Union in the Brexit negotiations.

Meanwhile, the bullying Trump administration has inserted into the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement a blatantly shameful anti-China article against the sovereign will of Canada which eyes a separate trade deal with China, and is imposing upon Japan a lopsided Trade Agreement on Goods that would force Tokyo to asymmetrically open up its auto and agricultural industries to American businesses.

The last G7 Summit held in Canada was believed to be the lowest point in the history of G7.

This judgement could soon be a false statement after Biarritz. With heightened tensions plaguing the cohesion of G7 in the absence of unwavering commitments the common values that ideologically brought them together in the first place, there should be deep rethink if the bloc still has its place on the stage of world politics.

# Giving government permanent authority to spy on everyone in America

by Andrew P. Napolitano

**ANTIWAR** — While most of us have been thinking about the end of summer and while the political class frets over the Democratic presidential debates and the aborted visit of two members of Congress to Israel, the Trump administration has quietly moved to extend and make permanent the government's authority to spy on all persons in America.

The president, never at a loss for words, must have been asked by the intelligence community he once reviled not to address these matters in public.

These matters include the very means and the very secret court about which he complained loud and long during the Mueller investigation. Now, he wants to be able to unleash permanently on all of us the evils he claims were visited upon him by the Obama-era FBI and by his own FBI. What's going on?

Here is the backstory.

After the lawlessness of Watergate had been exposed — a president spying on his political adversaries without warrants in the name of national security — Congress enacted in 1978 the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It prescribed a means for surveillance other than that which the Constitution requires.

The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution — written in the aftermath of British soldiers and agents using general warrants obtained from a secret court in London to spy on whomever in the colonies they wished and to seize whatever they found — was ratified as part of the Bill of Rights to limit the government's ability to intrude upon the privacy of all persons, thereby prohibiting those procedures used by the British.

Thus, we have the constitutional requirements that no searches and seizures can occur without a warrant issued by a judge based on a showing, under oath, of probable cause of crime. The courts have uniformly characterized electronic surveillance as a search.

I am not addressing eyesight surveillance on a public street. I am addressing electronic surveillance wherever one is when one sends or receives digital communications. FISA is



an unconstitutional congressional effort to lower the standards required by the Fourth Amendment from probable cause of crime to probable cause of foreign agency.

Can Congress do that? Can it change a provision of the Constitution? Of course not. If it could, we wouldn't have a Constitution. It gets worse.

The court established by FISA — that's the same court that President Donald Trump asserts authorized spying on him in 2015 and 2016 — has morphed the requirement of probable cause of being a foreign agent to probable cause of communicating with a foreign person as the standard for authorizing surveillance.

What was initially aimed at foreign agents physically present in the United States has secretly become a means to spy on innocent Americans.

In Trump's case, the FISA court used the foreign and irrelevant communications of

two part-time campaign workers to justify surveillance on the campaign.

Add to all this the 2002 secret order of President George W. Bush directing the National Security Agency to spy on all in America all the time without warrants — this is what Edward Snowden exposed in 2013 — and one can see what has happened.

What happened?

What happened was the creation of a surveillance state in America that came about by secret court rulings and a once-secret presidential order.

As a result of this, part of the government goes to the secret FISA court and obtains search warrants on flimsy and unconstitutional grounds and part of the government bypasses FISA altogether and spies on everyone in America and denies it and lies about it.

Bill Binney, the genius mathematician who once worked for the NSA and now is its harshest critic, has stated many times that,

## Will Trump's buy offer hurt Greenland?

By Shen Shiwei

**GLOBALTIMES** — "Greenland is not for sale," said Danish and Greenland government officials when real estate-tycoon-turned US President Donald Trump expressed interest in purchasing Greenland for strategic reasons. However, Trump is not the first US president to do so. So, what has inspired this new round of strategic interest?

Increasing US strategic and military supremacy in the Arctic Circle is among the top concerns of Washington's global strategy as a Cold War mentality has taken over the minds of a few policymakers.

"The region has become an arena of global power and competition," said US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during the Arctic Council meeting in Finland in May. Thule Air Base, the US northernmost military post was established in Greenland decades ago. It's a vital pivot for US Arctic strategy and NATO military coordination throughout the region. The base is also used by US Air Force Space Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

It is not only a perfect place to monitor civilian and military aircraft crossing the arctic, but also a strategic location to monitor missile activities including intercontinental ballistic missiles and polar-orbiting satellites. Today, the base still carries a strategic mission in the US-Canada and NATO defense systems.

During the Cold War, Greenland was the frontline of US-Soviet Union confrontation. Owing to its location across the North Pole, Thule plays as a key point in US nuclear retaliation strategy. Now that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) is dead, will the US strengthen its military deployment, including intermediate-range missiles? It's hoped the US will not repeat the tragedies from the previous Cold War.

Location, Location, and location - it is a golden principle for real estate and national strategy. Besides military values, Greenland is also the world's largest island (excluding Australia, which is considered a continent), as 85 percent of it is covered by ice sheets that contain 10 percent of the world's fresh water. Greenland's natural condition is severe, but for the past 140 years, the US has had a desire to incorporate it. In 1868, the US State Department concluded a report assessing the feasibility of annexing the Arctic territory along with Iceland due to the strategic location.

In 1946, then US president Harry S. Truman offered \$100 million in gold to purchase Greenland. The Danish government rejected it. Even though Denmark's 1953 constitution incorporated Greenland, the US has remained interested in investing and tapping hydrocarbons off of its coast.

"Arctic sea lanes could become the 21st century Suez and Panama canals," said Pompeo, at the Arctic Council meeting in May. Climate change and global warming have reshaped Greenland's strategic value. The emerging sea routes have also caused the region to move up on its foreign agenda.

When the Arctic sea ice recedes, Greenland will become the hub connecting Asia, Europe, and North America via new shipping routes. What's more, Greenland, Iceland, and the UK (GIUK) gap will strengthen its strategic frontline between the US and Russia due to its unique military value.

The pro-independence trend in Greenland has attracted attention of major powers in recent years. The region's development has been carefully monitored by Washington.

Although Greenland is largely self-governed, its economy relies on \$700 million in annual subsidies from Denmark. The island's parliament works in conjunction with Denmark which presides over foreign affairs and defense policies, and also supervises exploration of strategic resources including rare earth minerals, an integral part of future high-tech



development. As a result, Greenland has emerged as Denmark's "trump card" to strengthen economic and military presence in the Arctic. Economically speaking, it is too risky for Greenland to seek quick and full independence. But what if external forces became more active in supporting Greenland independence?

Should that happen, an independent Greenland with its weak economy would not only change rivalry patterns over the territory but also ignite a geopolitical race among major powers over the Arctic region.

As more players join the Arctic race, will Trump's Greenland ambition create further instability?

## G7 Summit and Challenges Ahead

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — The 45th Group of Seven (G7) Leaders' Summit is being held in Biarritz, Southwestern France, from August 24 to 26.

Under its G7 Presidency, France has set fighting inequality as the main theme of the summit. To achieve its goal through a multilateral way, France wants to adjust the format of the summit by involving more partners. In addition to the G7 countries, six African countries, four other states with influential ties with the seven industrial states and key representatives of civil society will take part in the Leaders' Summit in Biarritz.

Will France's multilateral endeavor succeed in Biarritz? It depends on the cohesion of the group. According to its literal definition, multilateralism is the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions. Indeed, G7 is a multilateral platform. However, in recent years the group have faced more difficulties to achieve agreement to coordinate their increasingly divergent policies, either on geopolitics or global trade.

Since Donald Trump entered the White House, the division between the US and Europe has become wider as exposed in the 2018 summit in Charlevoix, Canada. The US and other 'G6' members had fraticious negotiations concerning tariffs and Russia's membership.

Donald Trump's opinion on multilateral agreements is a consistent 'withdrawal', which has been testified by several cases in which European countries give strong endorsement, ranging from Iran nuclear deal framework to Paris climate change agreement. While this summit in Biarritz will avoid discussing hard issues like tariffs and NATO, the US is not a core member of France's multilateral coalition.

Discords also exist within European members. Boris Johnson, the new prime minister of UK, will have his diplomatic debut in Biarritz Summit. Similar to Trump, Johnson is an advocate of "UK First" and has less enthusiasm in multilateral cooperation.

Not to mention the summit comes at an uncertain time for the UK as its relationship with the EU is stuck in the Brexit deal. Johnson might stand closer with Trump in

Biarritz, expecting for a UK-US trade deal after Brexit. It also will be the swan song for Giuseppe Conte, who resigned as Italy's prime minister due to the breakdown in populist ruling coalition. Conte will attend the summit in a caretaker role and can hardly make any contribution.

Since its annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia has been excluded from the summit.

Macron met Putin on August 19, days before hosting a G7 summit. The two leaders have discussed a series of regional issues such as Iran, Ukraine, Syria and Libya. Through this meeting, Macron wants to show France's independent diplomacy and his leadership in EU's foreign policy.

It is possible that Paris and Washington will work together to invite Russia to the next summit hosted by the US. However, Macron and Putin disagreed on their domestic issues — and Iran.

When the French president criticized Russian crackdown on opposition protests, Putin answered with a rebuttal of France's Yellow Vest protest. The G7's emphasis on liberal democracy keeps important partners with different political system outside

as unconstitutional as FISA is, it is a pretext to NSA spying on all persons in America all the time.

How pervasive is this unlawful spying? According to Binney, the NSA's 60,000 domestic spies capture the content and the keystrokes of every communication transmitted on fiber optic cables into or out of or wholly within the United States. And they do so 24/7 — without warrants.

Now, back to that quiet late summer proposal by the Trump administration. Some of the statutes that govern who can go to the FISA court and under what circumstances they can go are about to expire.

Inexplicably, the president once victimized by FISA wants to make these statutes permanent.

And he wants to do so knowing that they are essentially a facade for spying. That would institutionalize the now decades-long federal assault on privacy and evasion of constitutional norms.

It would also place Trump in the same category as his two immediate predecessors, who regularly ordered government agents to violate the Fourth Amendment and then denied they had done so.

Some of my Fox colleagues joke with me that I am shoveling against the tide when it comes to defending the right to privacy. They claim that there is no more privacy. I disagree with them. As long as we still have a Constitution, it must be taken seriously and must mean what it says.

And its intentionally stringent requirements for enabling the government to invade privacy remain the law of the land. The president has sworn to uphold the Constitution, not the NSA.

The late Supreme Court Justice George Sutherland once wrote that we cannot pick and choose which parts of the Constitution to follow and which to ignore. If we could, the Constitution would be meaningless.

Did he foresee our present woes when he wrote, "If the provisions of the Constitution be not upheld when they pinch as well as when they comfort, they may as well be abandoned"? Is that where we are headed?



# Despite differences PG states able to preserve regional dynamics: Turkish expert

**1 →** In addition, there is also rivalry between the United States and other actors, namely Japan and the EU regarding Persian Gulf. Trump is critical of the EU's failure to comply with its harsh policy against Iran. Particularly critical of France and Germany on the issue. Finally, French President Macron invited Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif to the G7 meeting, which is being held in France. Considering the fact that, the United States has recently added Zarif in the sanction list, this move of France means a clear difference between France and the U.S. regarding Iran. Japan has a similar attitude with the EU, too. Japan maintains positive ties with Iran but also appease the U.S. Therefore, I can say that global actors, China, Japan and the EU, have not yet met the U.S. policy on Iran.

■ Accusing Iran of being behind recent tensions in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. has asked for formation of a coalition to maintain security of shipping lines in Hurmuz Strait which even many of its close allies have rejected. How successful the U.S. initiation can be? What can be the consequences of such an act while Iran believes the security of the region should be provided by the regional countries without presence of foreigners?

A: Despite all the problems between Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, this region has always been able to preserve its own unique dynamics. Iran and the Arab countries have mostly succeeded in keeping diplomacy active in the Persian Gulf. During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the 2003 Iraqi War, or during the period of the highest tension that occurred in 2006-2007, diplomacy has always been the main instrument in the region. Therefore, I do not believe that the military coalition that the U.S. is trying to form will be accepted by the regional dynamics.

■ How successful the U.S. policy of maximum pressure on Iran have been? How diplomatic is the U.S. approach that asks for talks while is sanctioning Iran and even Iran's foreign minister?

A: I think at this point we should examine Trump's Principled Realism doctrine in details. The starting point of this approach is based on the refusal of globalization. The idea of institutionalism that emerged with the concept of globalization is what Trump opposes most. According to Trump, multilateral agreements involving the U.S. through regional and global organizations operate against the interests of his country. Therefore, on the axis of Principled Realism, the era of bilateral agreements to which the United States is a party must begin and the U.S. should be a superpower that focuses on protecting its national security and economy, rather than being the country that establishes the security of other states. This



is the core point of his approach towards Iran. Trump believes that the JCPOA, which is a multilateral agreement, is contrary to the interests of the United States. Thus he aims to make a bilateral agreement with Iran through maximum pressure strategy.

I believe that Iran and the United States will start bilateral negotiations. Trump has repeatedly stated that he does not seek a regime change in Iran, and he mentioned that the only issue he wants to talk about is Iran's nuclear program. I think this will finally create an opportunity for the two countries to run diplomatic channels. Next year there will be parliamentary election in Iran and presidential elections in the United States. So I don't know if the two countries start talking before or after the elections. However, I believe that the talks between the two countries will not be a long way away.

■ What could be the message of downing of the U.S. drone and seizure of the UK's oil tanker by Iran for some Arab kingdoms of Persian Gulf?

A: We witness a demonstration of power policy between Iran and the USA. It is clear that both actors act as rational as possible. However, the use of hard power instruments creates a risk to regional stability. Oil sales constitute the most important income of the countries in the region. It is clear that a serious problem in the Persian Gulf will prevent this. Therefore, it is possible to say that the countries of the region are worried about any conflict between Iran and the USA. I believe that the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf do not welcome

tension between Iran and the USA. As a matter of fact, the recent increasing diplomacy between Iran and the regional actors confirms that regional actors are open for dialogue rather than conflict.

■ How do you evaluate the Russia's plan for security of the Persian Gulf while Iran insists on providing the security by the regional states?

A: Russia has shown a very active foreign policy in recent years. The annexation of the Crimea, its military presence in Syria and the Caspian Agreement signed last year show that Russia has an increasing role in the region. In this context, relations between Russia and Iran are noteworthy. Throughout the history, Iran has been Russia's gateway to the Persian Gulf. For this reason, the fact that Russia has security plans for the Persian Gulf directly concerns Iran. Although the two countries are cooperating on many issues, I believe that it would not be appropriate for Iran to see Russia showing more military presence in the region. Despite the fact that Russia's involvement appears to be a factor balancing the U.S. military presence, Iran is aware that Russia's security plans for the Persian Gulf will create instability in the region. For this reason, it would be a more appropriate strategy for Iran to increase contact with the regional actors and to emphasize that the security of the region should be provided by the countries of the region.

Despite differences PG states able to preserve regional dynamics: Turkish expert

## New Study: China would beat U.S. military in Pacific

By Dave DeCamp

**ANTIWAR**—The United States Studies Centre (USSC), a research center based at the University of Sydney in Australia, released a study titled, "Averting Crisis: American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective Defence in the Indo-Pacific." The study makes the argument that the US would not be able to defeat China in a military confrontation in the Indo-Pacific.

The USSC is funded by the Australian government, over the past five years one percent of their budget came from the US government and eight percent came from "US-based foundations, companies or individuals."

The three researchers whose names are on the study are part of the USSC's Foreign Policy and Defence program. The program lists its partners as the Australian government, The US defense company Northrop Grumman, the French defense company Thales and the US State Department.

The study says the US is disadvantaged in the region because of, "ongoing wars in the Middle East, budget austerity, underinvestment in advanced military capabilities and the scale of America's liberal order-building agenda."

The researchers often cite the 2018 Department of Defense's National Defense Strategy (NDS). The NDS share the researcher's concerns with respect to the Indo-Pacific region and shows a desire to prioritize the threats of China and Russia. The NDS says, "China is leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage."

The researchers spend a lot of time on the US defense budget. The study says, "Repeated failures by Congress to pass regular and sustained budgets has hindered the Pentagon's ability to effectively allocate resources and plan over the long term."

Both the House and the Senate just passed a \$2.78 trillion two-year spending budget. \$1.48 trillion of that is for military spending, which is more than half. The US spends more on military than any other nation, spending more than the next seven countries combined. China comes in second but still spend less than half of what the US does. It is not hard to pass increases in military spending through Congress.

The study blames an outdated "superpower mindset" for the US not prioritizing China as its main threat and continuing costly and wasteful wars in the Middle East. The researchers recognize how the wars in the Middle East have put a strain on the US military. But the idea of building a stronger military presence in the Indo-Pacific region to confront China is also a "superpower mindset." Countries like Australia have relied on the US to protect their interests in that region since World War II.



The ANZUS treaty was signed in 1951 between the US, New Zealand and Australia to ensure collective security between the three nations. The treaty ensures a collective response to an attack on the nations interests in the region. It was signed out of fear for a resurgent imperial Japan. Australia and New Zealand lost faith in protection from the British after they surrendered Singapore to the Japanese during World War II. New Zealand was effectively frozen out of the deal after they banned nuclear-powered and armed ships from entering their waters in the 1980's.

After explaining the decline in the US military's technology and defenses in the region, part four of the study says, "The state of the US military and its questionable ability to execute a strategy of conventional deterrence in the Indo-Pacific should be of grave concern to policymakers in Australia and other like-minded countries." They argue for a NATO like coalition in the region, "Contributing to a regional balancing coalition designed to prevent this eventuality by deterring conflict in the first place is, for Canberra, the next best strategic policy option in the wake of America's now defunct uncontested military primacy."

The study says that Australia should also limit their involvement in the Middle East and refocus on the Indo-Pacific. The study reads, "Military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq continue to consume a disproportionate share of the Australian Department of Defence's operating budget." The study also recommends Australia and its allies should, "Establish new, and expand existing, high-end military exercises."

Hypersonic weapons are the new threat the Pentagon has been hyping. "I think it's clear that in the realm of hypersonics we are playing catch up, especially relative to the Chinese. We need to be able to not only match but to

overmatch, especially the Chinese," a Pentagon engineer told CNBC. The USSC study mentions China's hypersonic capabilities, a weapon their partner Northrop Grumman has announced development of.

When looking at a lengthy study like this one, it is important to keep in mind where it is coming from. The Australian government and the defense companies partnered with the USSC no doubt have interest in increasing and maintaining a large US military presence in the Indo-Pacific.

The Washington Times reported on the study, without mentioning the USSC's affiliation with the Australian government and Northrop Grumman. The Times article hyped up the Chinese threat. The opening paragraph reads, "The US no longer enjoys military supremacy in the Pacific, a shocking new report claims, and China is now fully capable of launching a surprise attack that would easily overwhelm American forces."

This study raises the question, why does the US have such a strong military presence in the region? China has no presence around the US mainland and only has one official foreign military base in Djibouti. Although the US is in the midst of a trade war with China, they are still each other's top trading partners.

The US just made a deal with Taiwan to sell them 66 fighter jets. China's foreign ministry spokesman said the arms sale "constitute severe interference in China's internal affairs." Beijing still considers Taiwan to be a part of China, the US being the only

thing standing in the way of reunification (or annexation depending on your view). In July, the US sailed a warship through the Taiwan strait, increasing tensions with China.

Recent protests in Hong Kong have the US government's fingerprints all over them. China accused the US of being involved, although officials in Washington deny it and President Trump tweeted that he "can't imagine why" the US would be blamed. The tax payer funded nonprofit National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has had a strong presence in Hong Kong. The NED has long been an instrument for US regime change operations.

In 2018 the NED ran programs in Hong Kong titled, "Expanding Worker Rights and Democracy," "Promoting Engagement of Fundamental Rights," and "Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Protection."

The US aggression towards China has not provoked a response from them, demonstrating they might not be the big threat the USSC study makes them out to be. The "superpower mindset" that plagues the foreign policy establishment in Washington needs to be dismantled. US military hegemony in the Indo-Pacific only benefits the defense contractors and foreign governments who sponsored this study.

## 'Deal of Century': Removing Palestine from world's map

**1 →** Even if the Palestinians relinquish their inalienable rights [that will not ignore it definitely], the future of Bait Al Muqaddas (Jerusalem), as the first Qibla of Muslims and the Ascendant of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) as well as Palestinian citizenship within a 'geographical area under Israeli mandate' will turn the Palestinian problem from a territorial problem into an ideological and trans-regional problem. Such a situation would add to the desire Palestinians for more resistance and also would confront Israel with new trans-regional political and armed groups as well.

Jared Kushner unveiled the plan of 'Deal of Century' for representatives of Arab and European countries in Manama, capital of Bahrain, on June 25, 2019. In this initiative plan, Kushner considered economic solution as 'alternative' of political solution for ending the conflict between the two parties [Palestine and Israel]. In the opening remarks of the 'Deal of Century', he clearly put the value of land and territory of Palestine and its identity at \$52 billion. By insulting the Palestinians and their struggles, he [Kushner] called Palestinians as people who have lived without understanding what the peace means.

In the plan of 'Deal of Century', Kushner defines Palestine as a land and territory which is confined to a geographical area without a nation, government, army and also conceptual boundaries. Moreover, in his defined project, Kushner said that Palestine is an area in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that are connected with each other through railway. This area is supposed to be managed and administered by multinational companies whose staff are from the people of Palestine under the strict supervision of the United States and Israel.

In Kushner's plan, people of Palestine have been supposed as 'unable, unhealthy' people and emphasized, "We need a healthy economy and healthy people for empowering them [Palestinian people]."

The 'government and accountability of the government towards people' have been highlighted in formulation of the 'Deal of Century', while Palestinian land and territory and also Palestinian government have not been taken into consideration. In this Plan, it has only been emphasized that Palestine was established through foreign investment. In formulation of 'Deal of Century', Kushner has considered Palestinian land as a free trade zone than a state with clear-cut government, nation and identity. The 'Deal of Century' is about turning the Palestinian nation and people into an Israeli-led development project.

In Kushner's plan of 'Deal of Century', share of Palestinian people in empowerment and reconstruction of Palestine has been considered 'negligible and insignificant'. In this plan, share of Palestinian people to create equality and justice in the newly-established companies and lending facilities has been considered just \$100 million out of \$52 billion that is supposed to be put available to U.S. companies.

Now, the "Deal of Century" was unveiled in Bahrain Conference with \$52 billion investment of Trump's family to resolve Palestinian problem. However, it should be considered that what achievements this plan would bring about for Palestine, Israel and other countries if the plan is succeeded. The "Deal of Century" will resolve the problem of Resolution 242 for Israel, allowing Tel Aviv, capital of Israel, to legalize its settlements with the geographical privileges it receives.

Under the Plan, Israel can maintain its border security more than before. In addition, risk of outbreak of a civil war, from withdrawing the areas that are home to hundreds of thousands of Jews, will also be removed.

From the United States point of view, recognizing Al Quds as capital of Israel and relocation of embassies of other countries to Jerusalem (Al Quds) is raised and it is not supposed that a state named 'Palestine' will be recognized as the capital of Al Quds.

The United States believes that "Deal of Century" should create a strong barrier against Iran's expansionism and must secure interests of U.S. and Israel in the region.

Arab countries should pay \$50 billion to U.S. and Israeli companies with regard to Kushner's plans and prosperity of Palestine.

In Manama Conference, Kushner emphasized, "After ceding their land and territory, Palestinians can export their traditional foods, which have unique tastes and flavors, along with their handicrafts to the world markets."

After the plan of 'Deal of Century' was unveiled it was even criticized by the U.S. President Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In media circles and public opinion of the United States, this plan has also been nicknamed as "Waste of Time".

Although "Deal of Century" succeeded to convene representatives of Arab and Israeli countries in Warsaw and Manama conferences, these meetings have not so far produced positive results.

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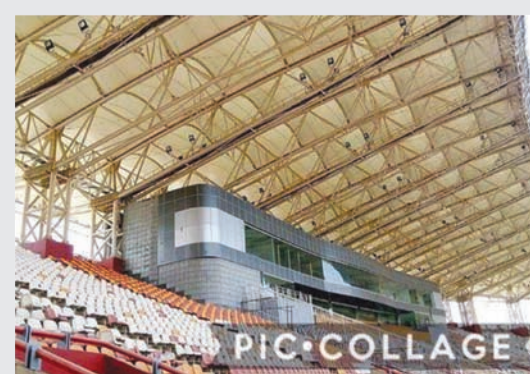
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# Russian spacecraft carrying robot fails to dock with space station

A Russian Soyuz spacecraft carrying a humanoid robot failed to dock with the International Space Station (ISS) on Saturday, Russian news agencies reported, citing a live broadcast.

The FEDOR (Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research) robot on its way to the ISS on a planned two-week mission to support the crew and test its skills.

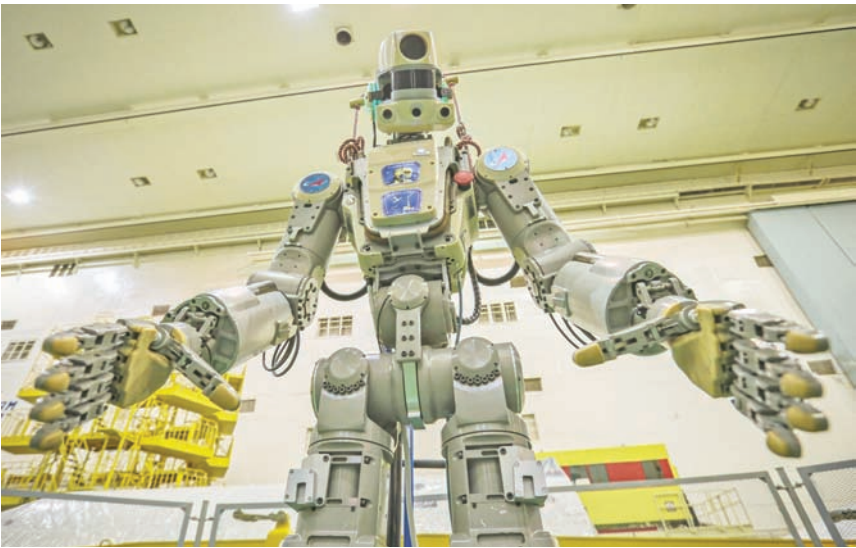
The docking process, originally planned for 0530 GMT, failed due to issues related to the automatic docking system, news agency,

Interfax added, cited NASA TV as saying.

The spacecraft is currently 96 meters away from the station and officials plan to attempt docking again on Monday morning, RIA reported, citing Russia's flight control center.

The Skybot F-850 is the first humanoid robot sent to space by Russia. NASA sent humanoid robot Robonaut 2 to space in 2011 to work in hazardous environments.

FEDOR is the size of a human adult and can emulate movements of the human body.



The ISS is a joint project of the space agencies of the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada. (Source: Reuters)

## NASA names tumbling Mars rock after Rolling Stones



In perhaps one of the most unexpected crossover events in NASA history, the U.S. space agency named a tumbling Mars rock after British rock 'n' roll band the Rolling Stones.

Astronomers spotted the mobile rock — about the size of a golf ball — when NASA's InSight robotic lander touched down on Mars in November. The force of the lander's thrusters caused the rock to roll about 3 feet away.

Actor Robert Downey Jr. announced the honor last week before a Rolling Stones concert at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif.

"NASA has given us something we have always dreamed of, our very own rock on Mars," Jagger told the crowd. "I can't believe it. I want to bring it back and put it on our mantelpiece."

InSight is short for Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport. The entirety of the craft's mission will take place on Elysium Planitia, the broad equatorial plain where the lander touched down.

The InSight Mars Lander is designed to drill into Mars' interior. It traveled 300 million miles over six months to reach the planet.

This isn't the lander's only link to rock music. A phrase referencing the band Green Day -- "Green Day Since 1986" -- was etched onto a chip on InSight.

The "Green Day Since 1986" phrase refers to the year when the group was formed by singer Billie Joe Armstrong and bassist Mike Dirnt who were then known as Sweet Children. (Source: UPI)

## Dive team creates first 4K images of Titanic wreckage



A manned submersible explored the Titanic for the first time in 14 years and took the first 4K images of the wreckage, a production company behind a forthcoming documentary said Wednesday.

The exploration team discovered that sea currents, salt corrosion and metal-eating bacteria have caused deterioration to the ship, which lies about 12,500 under the North Atlantic Ocean. The RMS Titanic sank about 370 miles south of Newfoundland, Canada, after striking an iceberg in 1912.

"The most shocking area of deterioration was the starboard side of the officer's quarters, where the captain's quarters were," said Titanic historian

Parks Stephenson, who took part in the dives. "Captain's bath tub is a favorite image among the Titanic enthusiasts, and that's now gone. That whole deck hole on that side is collapsing taking with it the staterooms, and the deterioration is going to continue advancing."

The team made the discoveries during five dives over the course of eight days.

In addition to making videos of the wreckage, the crew created 3D models of the ship using photogrammetry. Atlantic Productions, which is behind the planned documentary, said the 3D visualizations could make it possible to view the wreck using augmented reality and virtual reality.

(Source: UPI)

# Scientists mull the astrobiological implications of an airless alien planet

By Adam Mann

Astronomer Laura Kreidberg admits she was initially a bit worried about her latest results. Examinations of a planet orbiting the red dwarf star LHS 3844 seemed to indicate that the rocky super-Earth, 30 percent larger than our world, possessed little or no atmosphere.

Kreidberg's concern stemmed from the fact that researchers are in the midst of a heated debate about the habitability of planets around red dwarfs, which make up 70 percent of the stars in our galaxy. A universe teeming with life is more likely if the worlds orbiting these diminutive entities, which are smaller and cooler than our sun, could be a good abode for biology.

But red dwarfs are harsh hosts, emitting frequent flares containing x-rays and ultraviolet radiation that could sterilize a planet, as well as energetic stellar winds that can strip it of its protective atmosphere. Kreidberg and her colleagues' findings, appearing today in Nature, could be seen as a mark against the idea that planets around small red stars could provide a nurturing environment.

In recent years, astronomers have announced numerous exciting discoveries regarding red dwarfs, such as Proxima Centauri b, a potentially habitable planet orbiting our sun's nearest star, and the TRAPPIST-1 system, which contains a whopping seven Earth-sized worlds. Red dwarfs are not only abundant but are also the longest-living stars, with a lifetime that can span 10 trillion years—1,000-fold longer than that of our sun. Should a biosphere arise on a red dwarf world, it might stick around for an exceptionally long time.

Astronomers are therefore interested to know whether or not red dwarfs' planets are good places to go looking for living creatures. "To have life as we know it, you need to have liquid water," says Abraham Loeb, a co-author of the Nature study and an astrophysicist at the Center for Astrophysics at Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institution (CfA). "In order to have liquid water, you need an atmosphere."

Kreidberg, who is also at the CfA, has been in the daily habit of checking for new results from NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS), a space-based observatory hunting for nearby planets that "transit" their host stars—flitting across the faces of those stellar hosts and casting shadows toward our solar system. Among TESS's first discoveries was the rocky world LHS 3844 b, located just under 49 light-years away, and Kreidberg quickly recognized that it was in an ideal position to test the atmospheric-retention capabilities of red dwarf exoplanets.

LHS 3844 b orbits incredibly close to its parent star, zipping around in a mere 11 hours. This orbit more or less guarantees that the star's gravitational pull has tidally locked the planet, meaning one side of the world always faces the star. The exoplanet's dayside is scorching, while its space-facing hemisphere sits out in the cold. But while the exoplanet experiences 70 times more radiation than Earth, Kreidberg says it would not



necessarily lose its atmosphere at this distance. For instance, an envelope of thick carbon dioxide could be heavy enough to endure the bombardment from the nearby star. Or the world might have once contained a vast ocean that was boiled off by the intense starlight, which also would have split the water into its constituent molecules. The lighter hydrogen could have drifted away, leaving an atmosphere of pure oxygen.

Although the researchers could not directly see the planet, using NASA's infrared Spitzer Space Telescope, they were able effectively take its temperature, detecting a periodic variation in the thermal emissions from its host star that was caused by the planet's orbital movements. Much like the moon in our sky, LHS 3844 b shows different faces to observers on Earth as it sweeps through its orbit: at turns, it displays its hotter dayside or its colder nightside, which subtly alters the amount of infrared radiation astronomers see emanating from the star. The planet also passes completely behind its star for a portion of its orbit, as seen from Earth, entirely removing its heat from view and allowing scientists to determine its total contribution to the star's thermal emissions. Based on these measurements, Kreidberg's team estimated the temperature of the planet's nightside as a freezing −273 degrees Celsius and that of its days as a fiery 767 degrees C.

The presence of a regulating atmosphere should allow heat to transfer between hemispheres, reducing such extremes. But computer models suggested that LHS 3844 b's temperature differences could only arise and persist if the planet had an extremely thin atmosphere, with, at most, a 10th of the pressure of Earth's and likely none at all.

A great deal of theoretical work has already implied

that worlds orbiting red dwarfs would have a hard time forming or retaining significant atmospheres because of the extreme environment, says Colin Johnstone, an astrophysicist at the University of Vienna, who was not involved in the new study. But what the characteristics of a close-in planet such as LHS 3844 b means for places such as TRAPPIST-1's worlds or Proxima Centauri b, which orbit farther from their parent star, is not entirely clear.

"It's one more piece of evidence suggesting that these stars aren't going to have habitable planets," Johnstone says, though he cautions against making sweeping judgments based on a single example.

Because LHS 3844 b is far inside the traditional habitable zone—a region around a star where a planet is sufficiently warmed by starlight to have liquid water on its surface—the null result does not much phase Tiffany Jansen, an astronomy Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University, who also was not involved in the recent work.

"The discovery of a lack of an atmosphere on this planet doesn't make it any less likely that planets in the habitable zone would have an atmosphere," she says.

But Loeb counters that what happens in the immediate vicinity of a red dwarf star is relevant to more remote planets. He has previously done theoretical calculations suggesting that red dwarfs are prone to blow away the atmospheres of exoplanets in their habitable zone. Even though LHS 3844 b is a single example and is much closer to its star than a habitable planet could be, it provides important evidence that atmospheric stripping takes place. And extrapolations imply similar outcomes can be expected farther out, Loeb says.

The discussion will probably rage on until astronomers can examine more cases. The upcoming James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), an infrared observatory whose mirror will have 6.25 times the light-collecting power of the Hubble Space Telescope, will be revolutionary in its ability to measure heat from distant exoplanets, Kreidberg says.

Other teams have already committed to using time during JWST's first year to examine the temperature of the planets TRAPPIST-1 b—found in the TRAPPIST-1 system—and Gliese 1132 b—which also orbits a red dwarf. The telescope is currently scheduled to launch in 2021, and it will be joined by powerful 30-meter-class ground-based observatories, expected to come online early next decade, that can conduct similar research.

Kreidberg's preliminary disappointment about LHS 3844 b eventually dissipated. "If you were an alien looking at our solar system and saw Mercury, you'd be a little discouraged," she says, but our cosmic backyard contains a wide diversity of atmospheres.

Researchers are still coming to understand just how planetary atmospheres arise, and a great deal remains unknown. "For every idea for how to get rid of an atmosphere on a planet, there's another for how to keep it or make a new one," Kreidberg says. "I don't think this counts as a victory point for the naysayers just yet."

## Why Pluto is no longer a planet (or is it?)

Pluto was long considered our solar system's ninth planet. Although small, it orbits the sun and has the spherical shape required to be considered a planet.

But August 24 marks 13 years since Pluto received a harsh drop in status -- officially dubbed Pluto Demotion Day.

Pluto was relegated in 2006 when the International Astronomical Union (IAU) created a new definition for planets and decided Pluto did not fit the bill.

But that has not settled the matter for fans of the faraway Pluto. Pluto planetary days are remembered fondly -- for decades it was notable for being our solar system's smallest and farthest planet. It's only about half the width of the United States and lies in a far out region of the solar system called the Kuiper Belt, which requires a telescope to see.

The dwarf planet was also famous for being the only planet to be discovered in the United States.

It was spotted in 1930 by astronomer Clyde Tombaugh at Arizona's Lowell Observatory (named after the otherwise respected American astronomer Percival Lowell who believed that Martians dug the canals found on that planet's surface).

The story behind Pluto's name is also famous.

It was suggested by an 11-year-old girl in England, who was interested in Roman legends and thought naming the icy planet after the god of the underworld was intriguing. Her grandfather relayed the idea to a member of the UK's Royal Astronomical Society, which then suggested it to their American counterparts at Lowell Observatory. They ended up agreeing on the name Pluto -- possibly because the PL gave homage to Percival Lowell.

The newly discovered planet, orbiting more than 3 billion miles from the sun, would go on to be known as the "King of the Kuiper Belt."

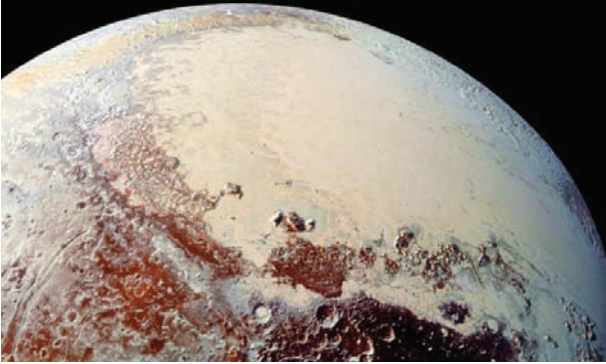
But how the mighty have fallen.

Things went downhill for Pluto in 2006, when the IAU redefined what it means to be a planet, declaring that a planet must be a celestial body that orbits the sun, is round or nearly round, and "clears the neighborhood" around its orbit. Pluto failed on the third account because its orbit overlaps with Neptune.

The IAU reclassified it as a dwarf planet, also calling it a "Trans-Neptunian Object," which prompted outrage from school-children, small planet enthusiasts, and the internet in general.

For many space lovers, Pluto's demotion felt sudden. But in the academic world of astronomy, it was a process that began just decades after the dwarf planet's discovery.

In 1992, astronomers at the University of Hawaii observatory in Mauna Kea discovered a small, icy celestial body a bit farther away than the orbit of Neptune. Named Kuiper Belt Object 1992 QB1, the object prompted speculation that Pluto was just one of many planet-like objects in the Kuiper Belt.



The final blow came in 2003 when California Institute of Technology professor Mike Brown discovered Eris, a dwarf planet that actually has a bit more mass than Pluto. Astronomers began to suspect that more of these could-be planets were floating around.

Now Brown is dubbed "The Man Who Killed Pluto" because rather than give planet status to Eris and every celestial body larger than Pluto, the IAU decided to knock Pluto down a peg.

But the debate about Pluto's status rages on.

In 2015, NASA's New Horizons Program flew past Pluto to take close-up photos and measurements of the dwarf planet, ultimately revealing that Pluto is bigger than scientists originally thought.

According to NASA, the data gathered by the New Horizons flyby "clearly indicated that Pluto and its satellites were far more complex than imagined," prompting space enthusiasts to wonder if it would regain planet status.

Even the principal investigator for the New Horizons spacecraft, planetary scientist Alan Stern, didn't agree with the IAU and claimed Pluto was demoted simply because of its distance from the sun.

"In fact, if you put Earth where Pluto is, it would be excluded!" Stern told CNN in 2015.

The year before that, the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics also entered the debate. Following an expert panel discussion on the definition of a planet, they let the audience vote and, of course, the crowd backed planet Pluto.

And new research emerged last year from the University of Central Florida's Space Institute, which argued the IAU's demotion of Pluto was "not valid."

"The IAU definition would say that the fundamental object of planetary science, the planet, is supposed to be defined on the basis of a concept that nobody uses in their research," said UNC planetary scientist Philip Metzger in a statement.

Metzger and his team looked at more than 200 years' worth of research and found just one study that employed the orbit-clearing standard the IAU used to downgrade Pluto.

"It's a sloppy definition," Metzger added. "They didn't say what they meant by clearing their orbit. If you take that literally, then there are no planets, because no planet clears its orbit."

When Pluto was demoted, it prompted a wave of science textbook reprints to ensure that students of the new millennium would be taught Pluto is a dwarf planet.

But it's still arguably the coolest (non) planet to learn about -- literally speaking.

Pluto has an icy shell, dunes made of solid methane ice, and mountain peaks covered in methane snow (but the snow is red instead of a fluffy white). It's also home to the largest known glacier in the solar system.

In fact, Pluto is so cool that its temperature is around 400 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, and it gets even colder as it orbits farther away from the sun. Typically, Pluto is so far from the sun that sunlight is only as bright as a full moon on Earth. From Pluto's surface, the sun merely looks like a bright star.

Perhaps Pluto's undeniable coolness is why people are still intrigued by its categorization 13 years later.

"The complexity of the Pluto system -- from its geology to its satellite system to its atmosphere -- has been beyond our wildest imagination," said Stern in a NASA statement. "Everywhere we turn are new mysteries."

(Source: CNN)



## Tabriz hosting intl. forum on urban development, conservation of historical texture

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — The 10th international forum **d e s k** on urban development with an approach toward conservation of historical texture is being held in the city of Tabriz, East Azarbaijan province, IRNA reported on Monday.



A view of Elgoli Park in Tabriz. Its fairground surrounds an artificial lake, in the middle of which stands tall a photogenic palace dating from the Qajar era (1785-1925).

More than 70 researchers and academics from Iran, Japan, China, Finland, Georgia, France, Italy, and Belgium are taking part in the forum which opened on August 19 and will come to an end on August 30.

The event is organized by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Department General of East Azarbaijan, the Municipality of Tabriz, national executive bodies, universities, and international institutions.

In December 2017, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) picked Tabriz to have a round of cultural heritage and tourism studies on the ancient Silk Road. Tabriz has long been a gateway to Europe and East Asia since antiquity, said Akira Uhara, JICA senior expert for national heritage and tourism.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz hosts abundant historical, natural and religious sites, including Jameh Mosque of Tabriz, the Arg of Tabriz and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex.

Tabriz was named the capital of Islamic tourism for 2018 by the vote of the inter-governmental Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2015.

## Airport projects to be inaugurated at IKAC

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — Four major infrastructure projects **d e s k** will be inaugurated at Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) on the occasion of the Government Week (August 24-30), IKAC News reported on Monday.

The projects are dealing with smart airside vehicles, easy access to parking lots, a fueling road and an AOCC center, according to Ali Rostami, the managing director of IKAC.

A free trade zone at Imam Khomeini International Airport was inaugurated a few days ago, he added.

“Fortunately, we received customs code and this area is ready to create some business now,” he said, adding “Imam Khomeini Airport City has a great investment potential so we invited domestic and foreign investors in order to use the opportunity in the airport city.”

Earlier in June, President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated a new passenger terminal at Imam Khomeini International Airport. The domestically-constructed “Salam Terminal” reportedly has a capacity to transport five million passengers per year and it is intended to serve both domestic and international flights.



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Rock Art of Alta

The Rock Art of Alta is situated in the northernmost part of Norway, far north of the Arctic Circle at the head of the Alta Fjord.

The property, which is a World Heritage, contains thousands of rock carvings and paintings located at 45 sites in five different areas at the head of the Alta Fjord.



More rock art made by hunter-gatherers is found in Alta than anywhere else in northern Europe. The development of carvings in Alta through thousands of years can be related to the post-glacial land upheaval.

The oldest carvings are found at the highest points of the landscape. In Alta the changing landscape of prehistoric times is evident, and the position of the carvings also provides a key to understanding the chronology of rock art in the circumpolar region.

The Rock Art shows communication between the world of the living and the worlds of the spirits, and gives insight into the cosmology of prehistoric hunters and gatherers.

There is an exceptionally high number of human figures and compelling portrayals of prehistoric social life, dancing, processions, and rituals.

Moreover, the property provides a unique testimony to the interaction of hunter-gatherers with the landscape. The panels show hunting, fishing and boat journeys, and are thought to represent micro-landscapes.

A wide range of circumpolar fauna is depicted (reindeer, elks, bears, fish, whales, seabirds, etc.). Studies of material culture are enriched by the many different artefacts shown on the Alta panels.

(Source: UNESCO)

# A glance at essential elements of traditional architecture in Iran

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Persian **d e s k** architecture has a long and complex history. The Elamite, Achaemenian, Hellenistic, and other pre-Islamic dynasties left striking stone testaments to their greatness, such as Chogha Zanbil and Persepolis—both designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1979.

Three monastic ensembles central to the Armenian Christian faith were collectively recognized as a World Heritage site in 2008. Their architecture represents a confluence of Byzantine, Persian, and Armenian cultures.

From the Islamic period the architectural achievements of the Seljuq, Il-Khanid, and Safavid dynasties are particularly noteworthy. During that time Iranian cities such as Neyshabur, Isfahan, and Shiraz came to be among the great cities of the Islamic world, and their many mosques, madrasahs, shrines, and palaces formed an architectural tradition that was distinctly Iranian within the larger Islamic milieu, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

There are some elements that are common among most of the monuments constructed upon Persian architecture.

#### ■ The usage of iwans (porticos)

An iwan is a vaulted space that opens on one side to a courtyard. The idea of iwan developed in pre-Islamic Iran where it was used in monumental and imperial architecture.

#### ■ Extensive use of arches

The two famous monuments, the Taj Mahal for the Mughal architecture and the Great Mosque of Isfahan for the Persian architecture displays the example of this fact. It is built for aesthetic reasons, as well as to place windows and to lessen the extent of sunlight to pour into the building.



A view of Goharshad Mosque next to Imam Reza (AS) shrine in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad.

#### ■ Gardens, fountains, and pools

Water plays a particularly central role in Iranian design: millennia before the invention of the first water pump, Persian agricultural experts created the qanat (subterranean aqueduct) based on their hydraulic laws.

Spacious gardens and pools with fountains have always been a main feature of Persian architecture over time. In a traditional mosque, madrasa, house, it is used for ablutions, aesthetics or both.

#### ■ Domes

The Persian tradition of dome-building dates back to the earliest Mesopotamian architecture when domes became an integral part of buildings due to the scarcity of wood

in many areas of the Iranian plateau.

In Ancient Persia, domes were associated with the divine side of life, as their circular shape represented perfection, eternity and the heavens, according to Press TV.

Domes moved to the forefront of Persian architecture during the Sasanian period (224 to 651 CE) and they evolved through different eras until the Safavid dynasty (1501–1732) when the last generation of Persian domes were characterized by a distinctive bulbous profile and astonishing tileworks.

In the Persian urban designing, domes in places of worship and public places, including traditional bazaars, caravansaries, schools and baths, are designed in such a way that can be

seen from different parts of urban or rural area.

The domes are normally double-shelled. While the interior shell is designed to carry the weight of the structure, the exterior shell serves as both a decorative element and as insulation against the elements. The aerodynamic shape of the domes also makes the structures more sustainable.

#### ■ Symmetry

Iranian architecture makes use of abundant symbolic geometry, using pure forms such as the circle and square, and plans are based on often symmetrical layouts featuring rectangular courtyards and halls.

Sassanid architecture is decorated with carved stone or stucco reliefs and makes use of colorful stone mosaics. Beautiful gold and silver dishes, bowls, and ewers, often decorated with hunting scenes or animals in high relief, and textiles with symmetrical heraldic designs also remain.

#### ■ Usage of Muqarnas

Muqarnas is typically applied to the undersides of domes, pendentives, cornices, squinches, arches, and vaults and is often seen in the mihrab of a mosque. They can be entirely ornamental, or serve as load-bearing structures. The earliest forms of muqarnas domes, found in the Mesopotamian region, were primarily structural.

#### ■ Calligraphy

– Iranians’ passion for using the script as an artistic impression goes back to pre-Islamic times but it is the work of Islamic era calligraphers and illuminators that elevated its use into the high art we appreciate today. Encouraged by the Islamic preference for the art of calligraphy over representational arts, it developed from epoch to epoch and from style to style.

## Antalya welcomes record 10 million foreign tourists

Antalya, one of Turkey’s most popular holiday destinations on the Mediterranean coast, welcomed a record number of 10 million foreign tourists between Jan. 1 and Aug. 22.

Data from the provincial directorate of culture and tourism showed that the number of foreign holidaymakers visiting the province increased by a strong 17.6 percent from 8.6 million visitors in the same period of last year. The number of foreign tourists visiting Antalya was 6.7 million in January-August of 2017.

Tourists from some 200 countries spent their holiday in the province, with Russians topping the list, followed by German nationals and Ukrainians.

Ulkat Atmaca, the head of the Professional Hotel Managers’ Association of Turkey, welcomed the latest figures saying, “Our target is to host 16 million tourists.”

“We are working hard to meet this target and if foreign visits continue at the current pace, this target is within reach. Everything goes as we planned up to date,” Atmaca added.

He noted that some 14 million foreign tourists visited

the city in the whole of 2018.

“Foreign tourists’ interest in the city was strong in August, we expect to see the same momentum in September,” Atmaca said, adding that revenues from international visitors are also on the rise.

“At the beginning of the year we also targeted a 10 percent increase in tourism revenues for 2019. Revenues have already increased around 8 percent to 10 percent.”

The latest figures are in line with expectations, according to Erkan Yagci, the chairman of the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers Association (AKTOB).

“We hope to keep this momentum during winter when tourism activity is traditionally weaker,” he said.

Yagci is also confident that the target of hosting 16 million tourists this year will be met.

Osman Ayik, the head of the Turkish Hoteliers’ Association (TUOFED), said in July that facilities which accommodate tourists in the Antalya region have some 600,000-bed capacity.

The latest data from the Tourism and Culture Ministry



showed that in the first half of this year more than 18 million foreign tourists visited Turkey, marking a strong 13.2 percent increase from the same period of 2018.

In June alone, the number of foreign tourist arrivals jumped 18.1 percent on an annual basis to 5.3 million.

The government targets to draw 50 million tourists and some \$35 billion in revenue from tourism activities this year. (Source: Hurriyet Daily News)

## How to plan in case things go wrong

By Geoffrey Morrison

Ten days into what would have been two months in South America, I broke my leg in two places. I was deep in Chile, a country whose language I didn’t speak, and I’d just booked flights to Brazil and Easter Island. I could have panicked. Instead, I was just disappointed. After years of extended traveling, I had a system in place to handle emergencies. I was in a staggering amount of pain, in an embarrassed heap far from home and hostel, but I wasn’t too worried.

You don’t need to go overboard to be prepared for travel emergencies. My advice is to plan for the obviously probable, and don’t sweat the unlikely and improbable. Here’s some precautionary steps I’ve found to be invaluable during my trips over the years.

#### ● Before you go

##### ■ Do a bit of research

How tolerant a country’s residents are toward foreigners varies significantly from region to region, and of course, person to person. Some understanding of local cultural norms will go a long way in bridging any etiquette differences and assessing risks. Are shorts O.K.? Do you need to wear a head cov-

ering? Should you tip? A few minutes online before you leave will give you a much better idea of dos and don’ts. A good place to start is Travel.state.gov’s Country Information.

##### ■ Take a working phone

A prepared traveler has a mobile phone provider like Google Fi, Sprint or T-Mobile that works in other countries, or has obtained a local SIM card. The value in having a working phone overseas can’t be overstated. The last thing you should be concerned about in a crisis is how much your phone bill is going to be. Or worse, figuring out how to get your phone working in an emergency. Regardless, download the local area to your Maps app, and download the local language pack on Google Translate. That will cover you for most of it, even if you don’t have a signal.

##### ■ Protect yourself online

Back up your photos and documents to the cloud, either Google Photos, iPhoto or any number of free and paid services available. (Wirecutter, a New York Times company that reviews products has a guide.) A V.P.N., password manager and two-factor authorization on websites and apps that have this security will all make it harder to break into your accounts.

##### ■ Buy travel insurance

Travel insurance has paid me back far more than I’ve paid into it. And it’s cheap enough that I never travel without it. Just make sure you get receipts for everything. Those flights I booked before breaking my leg? I got all that money back thanks to travel insurance. However, when I got my camera gear stolen on a train in Italy I barely got anything thanks to high deductibles and low coverage costs. Oh, well. Your homeowners and health insurance might cover you for some things, but probably not.

Wirecutter also looks at travel insurance and recommends which ones worth buying.

##### ● During your journey

##### ■ Find out the local emergency info

In some countries, 911 works outside the United States. In Europe and Central Asia it’s usually 112. Britain and many former British Territories use 999. Google the country you’re visiting plus “emergency number.” Alternately, Wikipedia has a list, and the State Department has a PDF. There might not be an English-speaking person at the other end of the line, but it’s a start.

##### ■ Take a card

At the check-in desk, there’s almost always

a business card for the establishment. Take it and put it in your wallet or with your passport. Or both. Now you have a way to explain — with or without speaking the local language — to every cabbie in the area how to get back to where your stuff is. Worst case? Take a picture of the front of the hotel or hostel with the name.

##### ■ Minimize risk

This one is easy: Don’t put your wallet or passport in your back pocket. Secure a purse or backpack with a small lock. If you can get at your items easily, so can someone else.

##### ■ When things go wrong

There are infinite possibilities of what could happen, but statistically they won’t. Could you get hit by a meteorite in Luxembourg? Sure. Will you? No. For the most part, the same risks you take every day are the same ones that you will have abroad: Cars are dangerous, pickpockets like crowded areas and the like.

The most important thing to realize is that whatever has happened, it has happened there before and probably to locals as well. Unless you’re in the middle of the desert or over an ice cap, hospitals, clinics and police are there to help.

(Source: The New York Times)

## Australia’s ‘broken’ visa system being used for human trafficking, experts say

Criminal syndicates are using Australia’s “broken” visa system for human trafficking that is leading to the exploitation of foreign workers who are being paid as little as \$4 an hour, an immigration roundtable in Canberra has heard.

Labor has called the meeting of migration and border security experts as it seeks to turn up the heat on the Coalition over its management of the visa system, pointing to the 80,000 people who have arrived by plane to claim asylum since 2014.

Only about 10% are found to be refugees, but the surge in claims means a backlog in processing that has left more than 200,000 people in the community on bridging visas who are vulnerable to exploitation.

The roundtable, convened by Labor’s home affairs shadow minister, Kristina Keneally, heard from John Coyne, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s head of border security, who warned the visa system was being exploited.

“Organised crime are indeed facilitating unlawful migration on a fee-for-service basis, using methodologies from fake identity documents, to gaming Australia’s visa system,” Coyne said

“Australia’s border security arrangements are being exploited, and individuals who have not been appropriately identified are at times entering the country.

“The Australian black economy is indeed being supported by organised crime, who along with businesses involved, are using these methods to exploit workers, and those involved are not paying taxes and are often remitting their salaries out of the country.”

Emma Germano, the horticulture president of the Victorian farmers federation, said that the Australian agriculture sector was at the “coalface” of the problem given the industry’s reliance on labour hire firms.

This meant growers feared being implicated in scams involving foreign workers, but were powerless to change the system. She said as many as 60% to 70% of workers on farms in some regions did not have proper work documents and were paid as little as \$4 an hour.

“These poor workers who don’t have the law behind them will never come and work for us directly as growers. So as much as we might like to employ them directly, they’ve got

a huge fear of retribution from these criminal syndicates who have often tricked them into coming into Australia, make them believe that they’ve got the right to work here when they get here, potentially taken their passports from them when they arrive,” Germano said.

“We’ve got growers who are paying upwards of \$31 an hour for staff, and workers who are being paid as little as \$4 or \$8 an hour. That money is going somewhere in between. As a grower, I can assure you we would like for that money to be going into workers.”

Former deputy secretary of the department of immigration and border protection Abul Rizvi said the “eye watering” blowout in bridging visa numbers indicated a “sick system”.

He said that visitor visas now accounted for about 25% of the country’s total net overseas migration intake, in what was an “indication of a sick system”.

“In the past, 5%, perhaps 10%, may have been regarded as acceptable (but) 25 percent is a problem. It’s flashing red,” Rizvi said.

(Source: The Guardian)



# ‘EISA creates synergy in science and technology ecosystem of Islamic world’

By Setareh Behrooz

The Exposure of Industries to Scientists' Achievements (EISA) creates synergy amongst scientists of the Islamic world and expands market for cutting-edge technologies, said Mehdi Safari, the secretary of the 4th EISA meeting.

He made the remarks during a press conference held by the Mustafa (PBUH) Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF) on Sunday.

The EISA was initiated after the first edition of Mustafa (PBUH) Prize in 2015 in order to boost market and expand innovation and patents provided by scientists of the Islamic world, he said.

"The event aims to expand market for patents and products in the Islamic world and other countries and about 40 agreements have been signed between scientists and companies and investors over the past editions."

Of the signed agreements, 15 have taken effect up to now, he explained.

The second and third editions were held in Oman and Pakistan and this edition of EISA will be held on November 9 and 10 at Azadi innovation factory of Pardis science and technology park, he said.

EISA is turned into a platform for scientists to develop their products in the Islamic world and to present them to companies, he added.

He said that up to now there were no facilitators presented at the event to develop marketing and in this edition, the facilitators including export corridors attended the event.

The EISA provides opportunity to connect scientists and companies in the Islamic world, which may not be supported by other



From right to left: The executive director of Mustafa (PBUH) Science and Technology Foundation, Seyyed Ali Omrani, EISA Secretary, Mehdi Safari, and the executive secretary of the event, Saem Sattarzadeh.

countries and companies, he explained.

About ten facilitators are selected for the event and about 50 scientists and researchers submitted their products, made using cutting edge technologies, to the secretariat up to now, he explained.

He announced eight countries from Asia, Europe and Latin America including Germany, Turkey, Switzerland and Malaysia

have applied for participation in the event.

The event is supported by Pardis science and technology park, Iran National Technomart, Inter-Islamic Network on Science and Technology Parks, D-8 secretariat and Sharif University of Technology, he concluded.

■ **Hi-tech products top priority**  
The priority is given to hi-tech prod-

ucts and services for attending EISA, the executive secretary of the event Saem Sattarzadeh said.

Investors can be venture capitals, funds and other big companies, he added.

He said that all B2B meetings are arranged before the event and in a section the industries talk about demands in order to meet by the companies.

In innovation lab section of the event presents the products which can be tested by the participants, he added.

Companies can apply until September 21 for participating in the event, he said.

Innovation and their applicability, commercialization, their market size and business life cycle are the factors which are considered by the secretariat, he explained.

Health, water and energy are the topics for the panels which are held by eight scholars during the event, he noted.

EISA provides an opportunity for companies to become acquainted with export corridors and matching, he added.

■ **EISA provides network for scientists of Islamic world**

Speaking at the conference, the executive director of Mustafa (PBUH) Science and Technology Foundation, Seyyed Ali Omrani, said that giving credit, creating network, developing capacity and making discourse are the main principals of MSTF.

EISA develops technology and marketing of MSTF by creating network, he said.

It provides an opportunity for scientists and companies of the Islamic world to find market in other Islamic countries and learn about their technology potentialities, he explained.

## Reverse pitch event to be held on carpet industry

**TEHRAN** – INOCARPET, a reverse pitch event on carpet industry, will be held concurrent with the 28th edition of Iran Handmade Carpet Exhibition, at Tehran's Permanent International Fairground on August 28, the portal of Pardis science and technology park reported.

As a part of a series of reverse pitch projects held by the Pardis science and technology park, the event will be held with the focus on reverse pitch on wool and silk production

process using technological methods for national and international marketing of handmade carpet.

The reverse pitch event aims to expand market of knowledge-based companies and meet the needs by using domestic expertise.

The Iran Handmade Carpet Exhibition attracts as many as 4,000 visitors each year. The previous edition of the exhibition hosted over 670 producers, companies and manufacturing units from across the country.



## This is one more big reason to put your smartphone down when trying to get work done

We know that our smartphones are expertly-designed distraction devices that undermine our efforts to resist. But, we also know that resistance is crucial if we're ever going to find a workable middle ground with our phones – and a new study just served up another reason to strengthen our resolve.

Here it is: when you pick up your phone while doing anything mentally challenging, you may handicap your brain's ability to recharge and performance decreases.

That's the conclusion of a study that put 414 college students to task solving challenging word puzzles. When they were about halfway through, the researchers allowed most of the students to take a break either using their phones, using a computer or reading a print circular. Other students were told to just keep on working without any sort of break.

The results showed that the students who took a break with their phones were the most mentally drained of all the groups. They took 19% longer to finish the tasks and they solved 22% fewer word-problems than all the other groups combined. In fact, the cell-phone group's efficiency and processing speed was about the same as the group that took no break.

The reason offered by the researchers isn't merely because digital devices are inherently engaging (some of the students used computers during their break, also digital devices), but because our smartphones are attention portals into so many other attention-grabbing areas, each pulling our mental energy in different directions.

"Cellphones may have this affect because even just seeing your phone activates thoughts of checking messages, connecting with people, access to ever-refilling information and more, in ways that are different than how we use other screens like computers, and laptops," said Terri Kurtzberg, study co-author and associate professor of



management and global business at Rutgers Business School.

This research underscores our chronic underestimation of the energy drain from using our smartphones, and our overestimation of what our brains can handle. We tend to think that one distraction is just like another, but the science is showing that's simply not true – not all distractions are the same. They don't exert the same draw on attention, the same drain on energy, and consequently the same effects on performance.

We're also underestimating the emotional connection we've developed with our phones. It's no longer just a device, it's a companion. More specifically, it's a proxy companion giving us access to a deluge of things with emotion-eliciting components. Quoting from the study: "This finding supports the developing theory that people are more cognitively and emotionally attached to their phones than they are to other devices, including other electronic tools such as computers."

"It is important to know the costs associated with reaching for this device during every spare minute," Kurtzberg added in a press statement. "We assume it's no different from any other break – but the phone may carry increasing levels of distraction that make it difficult to return focused attention to work tasks."

(Source: forbes.com)

## Facebook is hiring journalists to curate its news tab

Facebook emphasized that the news tab is not a reincarnation of the company's now-defunct trending topics news section, which ranked news topics and links based on popularity.

Facebook on Tuesday confirmed it's hiring a team of veteran journalists to help curate news stories in its soon-to-launch news tab.

The company confirmed the plans after The New York Times on Tuesday reported that Facebook is bringing human curators on board, instead of just relying on algorithms to determine what news stories its users see.

A small team of editors will be charged with selecting the most relevant, national news stories of the day. The content will appear in the top news section of the news tab, a new feature that's pegged to launch this fall.

The team will curate breaking news and top stories, but won't be responsible for other editorial duties, such as editing headlines, stories, or writing content, the company said.

Other content in the news tab will primarily appear via algorithmic selection. Facebook said it will look to user controls, what pages users follow, publishers they subscribe to and the news they interact with as signals for what kinds of personalized news will populate the news tab.

"Our goal with the News Tab is to provide a personalized, highly relevant experience for people," Campbell Brown, Facebook's head of news partnerships, said in a statement. "The majority of stories people will see will appear in the tab via algorithmic selection."

"To start, for the Top News section of the tab we're pulling together a small team of journalists to ensure we're highlighting the right stories," she said.



The social media giant has approached several news outlets, including The Washington Post and Bloomberg, to discuss paying them as much as \$3 million per year to license content, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Facebook emphasized that the news tab is not a reincarnation of the company's now-defunct trending topics news section, which ranked news topics and links based on popularity.

The feature attracted scrutiny after controversial links and false headlines made their way onto the section. In 2016, a Gizmodo article alleged some independent contractors hired to moderate the section frequently suppressed conservative stories and stories about Facebook itself.

The news tab marks Facebook's latest effort to tackle news curation and combat the spread of misinformation on its site. The company has been under pressure to curb false news on the platform since the 2016 presidential election, during which foreign actors used the site to sow division around social issues.

Facebook isn't the only tech company that is increasingly relying on professionals to curate what news its users see. Apple assembled a team of former journalists to help select some of the stories that appear in Apple News, while LinkedIn has also hired editors to curate content on the site.

(Source: nbcnews.com)

## How to get verified on Instagram

Many people want to be verified on Instagram. They like that blue check next to their name.

Many of your friends are not verified, so the Instagram verification will prove you are better than them.

Instagram explains about How to get that blue badge.

Now you can request verification.

For social media marketers and brand recognition is all about verification.

Companies like the blue checks icon that appear on any platforms from YouTube to

Facebook and Twitter.

This verification icon on Instagram shows your followers that you're the king.

In this post, you will learn how to do it and why getting verified on Instagram is important.

■ **What is Instagram verification?**

This icon means that your Instagram account is legal.

When you verified on Instagram, this badge tells the world that you are who you say you are.

This gives your account instant credibility. Instagram verification allows people to know that they were following the right people or brand.

For instance, when you see the check you know you're actually following your favorite celebrity.

■ **Do you need to have lots of following to be verified on Instagram?**

It can be the biggest issue with Instagram verification.

If you have check icon on your Instagram

account, therefore gaining followers is easy.

This verification improves credibility and places you at the top of the search results.

However, many articles about verification on Instagram say that you need to gain a huge amount of followers for a chance of verification.

But that's not true.

You need to know that the count of your Instagram follower isn't as important as you thought.

(Source: startupik.com)

## Iran aims to develop high resolution satellite by 2025

**TEHRAN** – Iran plans to design and develop a high resolution satellite with an accuracy of round one meter by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026), said Morteza Barari, the head of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA).

ISA aims to industrialize the space technology in the country with the participation of the private sector in the space industry chain, he said, Mehr reported on Sunday.

He said that ISA has held a tender in order to design and manufacture optic remote sensing satellites and radars.

Previously, the satellites had been used in research centers and universities, however, with the new approach ISA has decided to transfer this stage to the private sector, he said.

"With industrialization of the space technology we hope that the infrastructure will be provided for the development of the space technology in Iran."

The country is reliant on knowledge of its experts and each experience in this field boosts knowledge for further projects, he added.

He announced that Nahid-1, Zafar and Pars-1 satellites will be launched into orbit by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 20, 2020).

Iran launched its first locally-built satellite, Omid (Hope), in 2009. The country also sent its first bio-capsule containing living creatures into space in February 2010, using a Kavoshgar-3 (Explorer-3) carrier.

In February 2015, the Islamic Republic placed its domestically-made Fajr (Dawn) satellite into orbit, which was capable of taking and transmitting high-quality photos to stations on Earth.



## Why it's becoming harder to innovate

Here's an industry secret: At its very core, when we strip away all the smoke and mirrors, the buzzwords and superlatives, innovation is really about belief and disbelief.

For example, if you believe the only way to hail a taxi is by standing on the curb and stretching your hand into the street, you will continue standing there hoping for a taxi to stop. However, the moment you start disbelieving that what everyone around you is doing is the only way to do it—this is the moment true innovation begins.

For you, the innovator, to move from belief to disbelief three things must happen:

Access to the problem space: You and the problem need to cross paths. If you and the problem never meet, you will never know it exists.

Access to technology: You need to have access to the technology, and talent, which can enable a solution.

Disbelief: You need to be willing to think that the way things are currently done may not be the best or only way to do them. This is the start of innovation.

Over the last decade, the above three stars have aligned beautifully for startups and corporations alike. The combination of mobile phones, sensors, GPS, touchscreen and cloud accessibility has enabled everyday entrepreneurs to build micro solutions for macro problems. These innovators, or "disbelievers," took their access to daily problems, such as booking a flight, communicating with a friend or hailing a taxi and leveraged the ecosystems of mobile to build, deliver and scale solutions. In short, innovators had access to the problem domains and access to the enabling tech to create the desired solutions.

Today, the stars do not seem to be aligning so well anymore, what has changed?

The enabling technology has shifted from mobile and web technologies to Deep Tech: IoT, AI, AR/VR, the blockchain and soon, quantum computing. The result of this shift is that innovators do not have the same easy access to the problem domains as they did before. Mobile and web solutions solved accessibility and communication problems. Common frictions to solve were things like: "How do I better connect with X?" ; "How do I have better access to Y?" ; "How can I complete tasks on my own?" ; "How do we remove the middle man for Z?"

Just by being a citizen in the world, innovators had the first-hand experience with these problems, and could thus disbelieve and innovate. For example, just by waiting in line at the bank, it was easy to experience the friction, and to be motivated to come up with a solution (App) to solve this friction.

Deep Tech, on the other hand, solves problems of a completely different nature in spaces most people don't have access to, such as Industry 4.0, Smart Cities or Autonomous Vehicles. More specifically, Deep Tech solves "intelligent automation" type of problems where the question is no longer how to provide better access or communication, but how to make things like your car or bank account intelligent and operate autonomously without needing a person involved in the process.

Problems and solutions are now buried deeper underground. Since these types of problems are domain-specific, fewer people have easy access to them—nor do they to the enabling Deep Tech. This lack of access knocks out the first requirement of crossing paths with the problem and the final requirement of disbelieving. It also knocks out the requirement of access to (or experience building products with) the needed tech. This includes having access to the data needed to drive Deep Tech solutions or the necessary human talent that can use the required technologies to build a solution.

So, without having access to the problem space, how can innovators disbelieve? And without having access to the needed tech, how can they build solutions?

■ **Access to the Problem**

This new world requires new skills and knowledge. To connect the dots, you first need to make the dots. Every industry has problems. The first step is to find the people who are aware of what these problems are. To do this, leverage domain experts and spend time understanding what works and what doesn't. As you do, you will be able to think more critically about what you see and whether or not you believe it. Can "X" be done in a better way? Can leveraging Deep Tech help solve a problem in a better way?

(Source: forbes.com)



## Charity event to be held to support underprivileged students

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — A charity event, aimed to solicit public support for the underprivileged students, is scheduled to open on Thursday nationwide, prior to the upcoming school year (starting September 23), Fars news agency reported on Monday.



Known as Jashn-e Atefeh (literally meaning the festival of kindnesses), the event which solicits contributions in-kind or cash by referring to schools, mosques or online banking, has been held for 23 years by Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

The event is held across the capital city of Tehran on Thursday and in mosques on Friday, Hamidreza Shiran, head of Tehran's office of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has said.

The second phase of the event will be held at schools on October 2, where students can grant their donations to those students in need.

The event spreads altruistic culture and promotes the Islamic tradition for helping others, through which many financially-struggling students are provided the opportunity to continue education, he explained.

Bags, shoes, clothing, stationery, school books and education expenses are among the most important needs of students, which are prepared and distributed among them in the form of packages, each worth of 4 million rials (nearly \$100), he stated.

Last year (March 2018-March 2019), benefactors in Tehran donated some 18 billion rials (nearly \$400,000) through the charity event.

## Prehistoric plants reproduce in UK for first time in 60m years because of climate change

A prehistoric palm living on the Isle of Wight has produced male and female cones for the first time in 60 million years, botanists say.

The exotic palm – which dominated the planet 280 million years ago – is believed to be thriving on the cliffs of Ventnor Botanic Gardens because of climate change.

The garden is on average five degrees warmer than the rest of the mainland, making it the second warmest part of the UK after the Isles of Scilly.

“This presents us with an exciting opportunity to transfer pollen and generate seeds for the first time in the UK for 60 million years,” said Liz Walker from Ventnor Botanic Garden.

“This can be seen as further evidence from the plant kingdom of climate change in action. Certainly this sort of plant could formerly not be considered hardy in the UK; the recent heatwave has contributed to the individual cone growth,” said Ms Walker.

The cycad (*Cycas revoluta*), also known as Japanese sago palm, lived during the Jurassic period along steep limestone cliffs in what is now the UK.

At the time the Earth had significantly higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Botanists say the rise in emissions may have triggered its growth in the past few years.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### India Asylum Blaze

(August 6, 2001)

Police in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu say twenty-five patients at an institution for the mentally ill have died after a fire broke out there early on Monday morning. Many of the patients were chained up.

Police are still trying to find the cause of the fire, which **broke out** at about five o'clock in the morning local time. One police officer told the BBC that fifty-three mentally ill patients were **resident** in the **institution**. The twenty-five dead included fourteen men and eleven women.

Many of the patients were kept chained, which meant they couldn't escape when the **blaze** spread through the building. Police say the institution hadn't been **licensed** by the local authorities. It's one of a group of small buildings which have grown up around a Muslim **shrine** in the small town of Ervadi. Many of these small institutions are run on an **ad-hoc basis** as charities.

Many of the patients, often violent or extreme cases of mental illness, are brought to the town by relatives, who hope the curative powers of the shrine will help. Some patients are **detained** there for many years and come from poor families who can't afford better medical care. Police say many of the patients killed in the blaze were Muslims from the neighboring state of Kerala. In recent years, many larger institutions in India dealing with mental health have **implemented reforms** in their treatment and care of the mentally ill. But there is still little understanding of mental illness amongst the general public, and little **sympathy** towards patients.

■ **Words broke out:** If something dangerous or unpleasant breaks out, it suddenly starts  
**resident:** a person who lives somewhere permanently or on a long-term basis  
**institution:** a large organization like a hospital, a university, or a bank. Here institution means ‘a hospital for people with mental problems’  
**blaze:** a very large or fiercely burning fire  
**licensed:** given official permission to exist or to work  
**shrine:** a place that people visit because it is connected with a holy event or person  
**ad hoc basis:** only when necessary; without planning  
**detain:** keep someone from proceeding by holding them back or making claims on their attention  
**implemented reforms:** taken official action to make changes for the better  
**sympathy:** feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune

(Source: BBC)

# Temperature decline cuts ozone pollution over a month

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Temperature dropped by 1.1 degrees Celsius in Tehran over the Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22- August 23) compared to a month earlier, so that ozone pollution is dissipating dramatically, Hossein Shahidzadeh, the caretaker for Air Quality Control Company has said.

Ozone in the lower atmosphere is formed by the reaction of sunlight on air containing hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides (NOX) that react to form ozone directly at the source of the pollution namely, cars, industry, gas vapors, chemical solvents, fuel combustion.

Ozone is best known as the layer of gas in the earth's atmosphere that protects humans from harmful ultraviolet rays, exposure to which can cause cancer and other health issues.

Too much ozone at the ground level can damage cells in the lungs and other organs.

Ground-level ozone polluted the capital's air for 13 days during the first month of summer (June 22-July 21), while over the second month of summer the concentration of the pollutant decreased relatively, leaving the capital's air quality polluted for sensitive groups for 4 days.

The highest concentration of ozone at ground level occurs in the afternoon and during the hot seasons, Shahidzadeh said, adding, this year, temperature increased over the month of Khordad (May 22-June 21) and led to the accumulation of ozone which haunted Tehran for 25 days.

He stated that the concentration of ozone is directly related to the increase and decrease



**Ground-level ozone polluted the capital's air for 13 days during the first month of summer (June 22-July 21), while over the second month of summer the concentration of the pollutant decreased relatively, leaving the capital's air quality polluted for sensitive groups for 4 days.**

## Brazilian warplanes dump water on Amazon fires as outcry mounts

Brazilian warplanes have begun dumping water on burning forest in the Amazon state of Rondonia, responding to an outcry over the destruction of the world's largest tropical rain forest.

President Jair Bolsonaro authorised military operations in seven states on Sunday to combat raging fires in the Amazon, responding to requests for assistance from their local governments, a spokeswoman for his office said.

A video posted by the defence ministry on Saturday evening showed a military plane pumping thousands of litres (thousands of gallons) of water out of two large spouts as it passed through clouds of smoke close to the forest canopy.

The response comes as leaders of countries in the G7 nations meeting in France expressed grave concerns over the fires.

French president Emmanuel Macron said on Sunday that the G7 was nearing a deal to provide “technical and financial help” to countries affected by the Amazon fires.

Nearly 80,000 fires have been registered across Brazil this year, the highest since at least 2013, according to space research agency INPE.

Bolsonaro announced the military would move in on Friday after several days of criticism from the public and world leaders that Brazil's government was not doing anything to fight the fires.

He also said on Twitter that he had accepted Israeli prime



minister Benjamin Netanyahu's offer of a plane and specialised support for the firefighting operations, following a call between the two leaders.

But outside Rondonia, the government had yet to provide any operational details for other states. The defence ministry said in a briefing on Saturday that 44,000 troops were available in Brazil's northern Amazon region but did not say how many would be used where and what they would do.

Military personnel around Porto Velho appeared to be largely coordinating firefighting efforts, according to a Reuters witness.

Asked for additional details, the ministry said that in

all seven states that have asked for help, the military is planning operations to support firefighting initiatives already underway.

The justice minister, Sergio Moro, had also authorized a force of military police to assist in fighting the fires, with 30 set to be sent from Brasilia to Porto Velho. The president's office posted to Twitter a photo of police officers on a plane bound for Rondonia set to arrive at noon.

Environment minister, Ricardo Salles, posted a video showing a caravan of yellow fire prevention trucks and other government vehicles, saying they were on the ground responding in Rondonia.

Colombian president Ivan Duque said on Sunday he would seek a conservation pact with other Amazonian countries - first in bi-lateral meetings in Peru this week and then at the United Nations general assembly.

“Colombia wants to lead a pact, a conservation pact, between the countries that have Amazon territory,” Duque said after meeting with an indigenous community in the Amazonian city of Leticia in southern Colombia. “We must understand the protection of our Mother Earth and our Amazon is a duty, a moral duty.”

The Amazon is the world's largest tropical rainforest and is seen as vital to the fight against climate change because of the vast amounts of carbon dioxide that it absorbs.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Attempts to reopen global elephant ivory trade fail

Attempts by four African countries to resume international ivory sales have failed.

Experts had feared a repeat of a 2008 trial, when ivory stockpiles were sold, prompting a surge in elephant poaching.

But after heated debate, delegates at the world's largest conference on wildlife trade, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites), rejected a proposal by Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to sell stockpiled ivory on their home soil as well as ivory from South Africa.

Zambia also abandoned a bid to sell its ivory stockpiles as part of a proposal to downlist its elephants to Appendix II, which would have loosened protection for the animals.

Matt Collis, head of delegation at Cites for the International Fund for Animal Wel-

fare (Ifaw), said: “Any legal market in ivory presents opportunities for the laundering of illegal ivory.

“Parties need to focus on the closure of domestic markets and markedly increase their law-enforcement efforts to prevent illegal trade. Poaching skyrocketed across Africa after the last ivory stockpile sales back in 2008. Ifaw is delighted governments have chosen to reject repeating that failed experiment.”

Ivory smuggling out of Africa rose by 71 per cent following the 2008 stockpile sales, Ifaw says.

At least 20,000 elephants are illegally killed each year for their ivory – with an average of 55 elephants poached every day in Africa - the equivalent of one every 26 minutes.

However, countries rejected a motion that

would have put all southern African elephants on Appendix I, offering the highest protection level that would have banned all trade.

The European Union was among those saying the move did not meet “biological criteria”.

All African elephants were given the highest listing in 1989 but the protection was weakened in 1997 and 2000 when populations in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe were downlisted to Appendix II – a less endangered status – to allow sales of ivory stockpiles to Japan and China.

The latest decision “mean it's status quo for elephants. No international commercial ivory trade is permitted and that is what needs to happen,” said Susan Lieberman of the Wildlife Conservation Society.



Separately, delegates voted to protect giraffes for the first time, drawing praise from conservationists and scowls from some sub-Saharan African nations.

(Source: The Independent)

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

### Helicopter emergency medical service in Iran to transport, transfuse blood

Helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) provider in Iran plans to transport and transfuse blood on the scene, Emergency Medical Services director Pir Hossein Kulivand has said.

Since some 8 percent of the deaths in road crashes often result from major internal hemorrhage or severe blood loss it is necessary for helicopter emergency medical services maintain an independent supply of blood for use during transport, Tasnim news agency quoted Kulivand as saying on Friday.

By purchasing new helicopters the number of helicopter emergency medical service providers have reached 40 in the country, he said.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “down-“

- **Meaning:** reduce or lower
- **For example:** When no replies came, I began to feel **downhearted**.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Cut in on

- **Meaning:** to interrupt someone who is speaking by saying something
- **For example:** Sorry to cut in on you, but there are one or two things I don't understand.

### IDIOM

#### When pigs fly

- **Explanation:** something that will never happen
- **For example:** When pigs fly she'll tidy up her room.

### بالگردهای مجهز به سیستم ذخیره خون در ایران به پرواز در می آیند

سرپرست سازمان اورژانس کشور پیرحسین کولیوند گفت: بالگردهای اورژانس در کشور به ذخایر خونی تجهیز می‌شوند.

به گزارش روز جمعه خبرگزاری تسنیم کولیوند ادامه داد با توجه به اینکه به اینکه ۸۰ درصد از فوتی‌ها در تصادف‌ها به دلیل خونریزی داخلی و یا از دست دادن قابل توجه خون می باشد لازم است تا بالگردهای اورژانس به ذخایر خونی تجهیز شوند.

وی گفت: با خرید بالگردهای جدید تعداد بالگردهای اورژانس هوایی کشور به ۴۰ فروند رسید.



# Yemen drones target Saudi Arabia's capital

➔ The Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported that the projectiles targeted the hangars of Saudi warplanes and Apache attack helicopters besides some military sites at the airport.

The Saudi coalition fighting in Yemen dismissed the report as "fake and deceptive." There was no immediate reaction from authorities in Saudi Arabia.

The retaliatory attack came after Yemeni forces launched an offensive against the positions of Saudi troopers and Saudi-sponsored militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in the kingdom's southwestern region of Najran.

Saree said Yemeni soldiers and allied fighters launched a newly-developed Nakal (Retribution) missile at the strongholds of Saudi soldiers and their mercenaries in al-Sadis area of the region, located 844 kilometers (524 miles) south of Riyadh, on Sunday afternoon, leaving dozens of them dead or injured, al-Masirah reported.

On Sunday, Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah fighters said they had targeted an airport



and an airbase in southwestern 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.

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

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed over 70,000 lives since January 2016.

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

## U.S., Taliban deal will not stop attacks on Afghan forces, some Taliban say

**TEHRAN** — As U.S. and Taliban negotiators push to wrap up talks aimed at securing the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, disagreement remains about whether a pact will mean an end to the insurgents' fight with the U.S.-backed Afghan government.

U.S. and Taliban officials have been negotiating in Qatar since last year on an agreement centered on the withdrawal of U.S. forces, and an end to their longest-ever war, in exchange for a Taliban guarantee that international militant groups will not plot from Afghan soil.

U.S. negotiators have been pressing the Taliban to agree to peace talks with the Kabul government and to a ceasefire, but a senior Taliban official said that would not happen.

"We will continue our fight against the Afghan government and seize power by force," said the Taliban commander on condition of anonymity.

U.S. President Donald Trump is impatient to get U.S. forces out of Afghanistan and end the 18-year war that was launched after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But there are fears among Afghan officials and U.S. national security aides that a U.S. troop withdrawal could see Afghanistan plunged into a new round of civil war that could herald a return of Taliban rule and international militants, including ISIL, finding a refuge.

Another Taliban commander, who also declined to be

identified, said a deal was expected to be signed this week under which U.S. forces, which provide all-important air support to Afghan troops, will stop attacking the Taliban and the militants would end their fight against the U.S. troops.

Under the pact, the United States would also cease supporting the Afghan government, the Taliban officials said.

"The Americans will not come to the assistance of the Afghan government and its forces in their fight against us," the first Taliban official said.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the veteran Afghan-American diplomat who has been leading negotiations on the U.S. side, however rejected the suggestion that U.S. forces would no longer support the Kabul government, saying "no one should be intimidated or fooled by propaganda".

"Let me be clear: We will defend Afghan forces now and after any agreement with the Talibs," he wrote on Twitter in reaction to the Reuters report. He added that

"All sides agree Afghanistan's future will be determined in intra-Afghan negotiations," he said.

The disagreement highlights one of the most sensitive issues surrounding the U.S.-Taliban talks - a resentment among many in the Afghan government that they have been sidelined from talks that will decide the future of their country.

It also raises a question over whether the Taliban lead-



ership will be able to impose any peace agreement on field commanders who may be reluctant to give up fighting when they feel on the brink of victory.

The Taliban, fighting to expel foreign forces and re-establish a theocratic ISIL since their ouster in October 2001, have refused to talk to the government, denouncing it as a U.S. puppet although they have raised the possibility of negotiations after the deal on the U.S. withdrawal is struck, Reuters reported.

## Trump says China trade deal coming, Beijing calls for resolution

**TEHRAN** — The United States and China sought to ease trade war tensions on Monday, with Beijing calling for calm and U.S. President Donald Trump predicting a deal after markets fell in response to new tariffs from both countries.

Trump, speaking on the sidelines of the G7 summit of world leaders in France, said Chinese officials had contacted U.S. trade counterparts overnight and offered to return to the negotiating table.

Vice Premier Liu He, who has been leading the talks with Washington, said on Monday China was willing to resolve the trade dispute through "calm" negotiations and resolutely opposed the escalation of the conflict.

Trump welcomed that language and, days after referring to President Xi Jinping as an enemy, heaped praise on his Chinese counterpart.

"They want calm, and that's a great thing, frankly. And one of the reasons that he's a great leader, President Xi, and one of the reasons that China's a great country is they understand how life works," Trump said.

"China called last night our top trade people and said 'Let's get back to the table', so we'll be getting back to the table, and I think they want to do something," he said.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said he had not heard that a phone call between the two sides had taken place. However, China's Commerce Ministry typically releases statements on trade calls. It did not respond to a request for comment.

When pressed on whether a call had taken place, Trump emphasized Liu's comments. U.S. Treasury Secretary

Steven Mnuchin said there had been contact between the two sides but declined to say with whom.

Hu Xijin, editor of the state-controlled Global Times newspaper, tweeted: "Based on what I know, Chinese and U.S. top negotiators didn't hold phone talks in recent days. The two sides have been keeping contact at technical level, it doesn't have significance that President Trump suggested. China didn't change its position. China won't cave to U.S. pressure."

### ■ Tariffs

The increasingly bitter trade war between the world's two largest economies escalated on Friday, with both sides leveling more tariffs on each other's exports.

Trump announced an additional duty on some \$550 billion of targeted Chinese goods, hours after China unveiled

retaliatory tariffs on \$75 billion worth of U.S. goods.

On Sunday, the White House said Trump regretted not raising the tariffs even more. But the president also appeared to back off of his threat to order U.S. companies out of China.

Liu, Xi's top economic adviser, speaking at a conference in southwest China's Chongqing, said: "We are willing to resolve the issue through consultations and cooperation in a calm attitude and resolutely oppose the escalation of the trade war."

"We believe the escalation of the trade war is not beneficial for China, the United States, nor to the interests of the people of the world."

The trade war has damaged global growth and raised market fears the world economy will tip into recession, Reuters reported.

## Erdogan says Turkish troops will enter planned Syria safe zone 'soon'

**TEHRAN** — Turkish ground troops will enter a planned safe zone in northern Syria "very soon," President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday, after a joint operation center with the United States opened at the weekend.

Turkey and the United States agreed earlier this month to set up the joint center for the planned safe zone along Syria's northeastern border, but gave few details on the size of the zone or the command structure of the forces to operate there.

"We are slowly making progress in our efforts to establish a safe zone," Erdogan said. "Just like many other issues some saw as untouchable, we are putting the east of the Euphrates issue on track," Erdogan said.

Turkey has repeatedly said that it would not tolerate

any delays to the agreement by U.S. officials, warning that it will mount a cross-border offensive on its own to clear its borders from the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia if necessary.

On Monday, Erdogan said progress was being made on plans to establish the safe zone, but added that Turkey had made all preparations to carry out its own plans if its expectations are not met.

"Our priority is dialogue and cooperation. If we are pushed to a road that we don't want or face stalling, our preparations are ready and we will implement our own plans," he said. "Our UAVs and helicopters have entered the region. Very soon, our ground troops will also enter the region."

The comments come two days after Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said the joint U.S.-Turkey center became fully operational. Akar also said some YPG positions in the region had been destroyed by U.S. troops as part of the deal.

Speaking on Monday, Akar said that talks were underway for Turkish and U.S. soldiers to begin joint patrols in the planned safe zone area "soon."

Ankara and Washington have been at loggerheads over a host of issues including conflicting policies in Syria. U.S. support for the YPG has enraged Turkey, which views the militia as a terrorist organization linked to Kurdish insurgents inside the country, Reuters reported.

## Indonesia unveils site of new capital on Borneo island

**TEHRAN** — Indonesia on Monday revealed the long-awaited site for its new \$33-billion capital on the forested island of Borneo to replace the crowded, polluted megacity of Jakarta, which is slowly sinking into the sea.

The capital of the world's fourth most populous country, on the island of Java, is now home to 10 million people and is prone to floods, traffic gridlock and faces the risk of earthquakes.

The as-yet unnamed new capital will

straddle the regions of North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kartanegara in Indonesia's province of East Kalimantan on Borneo, President Joko Widodo told a news conference.

"It is a strategic location at the center of Indonesia, close to growing urban areas," Widodo said at the presidential palace in Jakarta, adding that planning must start immediately if relocation is to begin in 2024.

The site of the new capital, 2,000 km

(1,250 miles) northeast of Jakarta, is one of the regions least prone to the natural disasters that regularly hit the archipelago of 17,000 islands.

There are also economic and political reasons for moving the capital from Java, which Widodo said was home to 54% of Indonesia's 260 million people and generated 58% of its gross domestic product.

But environmentalists fear the move will hasten the destruction of forests that

are home to orangutans, sun bears and long-nosed monkeys, as well as increasing pollution already on the rise from coal mining and palm oil industries, Reuters reported.

"The move will have an environmental impact," said Greenpeace senior forest campaigner Jasmine Puteri. "Jakarta has suffered so many failures from pollution, water crisis, and flooding. We don't want these problems in the new capital."

## It's shameful that Pompeo talks about JCPOA provisions

➔ It is comical that Pompeo uses the term "international commitments" with regard to the JCPOA.

It is true that Iran made commitments to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions. But did the U.S. stick to its obligation? The U.S. has even threatened to punish any country or company that enters economic dealings with Tehran. It has also introduced a total ban on Iran's oil exports. It is trying to strangle Iran.

Iran has taken steps to reduce its commitments, not abandoning it, after waiting for a year. It has also unequivocally announced that it will reverse its decision immediately after the remaining members to the JCPOA protect it from the impacts of sanctions.

In the viewpoint of Pompeo, Iran must remain committed to its obligations but the United States is an exemption.

Pompeo is making himself a laughing stock by talking about the provisions of the JCPOA and commitments that Iran needs to observe. Moreover, he is showing contempt to the wisdom of the world by such ridiculous and shameful remarks.

## Lebanon's Aoun met with UN official over 'Israeli assault'

➔ Hezbollah said the first drone had fallen on a building housing Hezbollah's media office in 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, it added.

Nasrallah said the Israeli drone incursion into Lebanon amounted to an open attack on the Arab country's sovereignty.

"What happened last night was a suicide drone attack on Beirut's southern suburb of Dahieh. This was the first Israeli attack on Lebanon since the (summer) 2006 war. The first drone was a surveillance aircraft designed to collect and transfer data to the second one," Nasrallah said, stressing that the drone strike was meant to inflict heavy casualties on the local population.

"Hezbollah will do everything possible to prevent the repetition of such attacks. If we do not respond to the Zionist attack on Dahieh, Israel will follow suit and target us just as it has hit the positions of Hashd al-Sha'abi (Popular Mobilization Units) forces in Iraq. Hezbollah will by no means allow the Israeli aggression pattern to be repeated in Lebanon," the Hezbollah chief pointed out.

## Britain must settle EU bill even after no-deal Brexit: EU executive

**TEHRAN** — The European Union expects Britain to honor all financial obligations made during its membership of the bloc even after a no-deal Brexit, a spokeswoman for the European Commission said on Monday.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday if Britain leaves without a divorce deal, it will no longer legally owe the 39 billion pounds (\$47.88 billion) agreed by his predecessor.

"All commitments that were taken by the 28 member states should be honored. This is also and especially true in a no-deal scenario where the United Kingdom would be expected to continue to honor all commitments made during EU membership," spokeswoman Mina Andreeva said.

"Rather than going now into a judicial action threat, I think that it is important to make clear that settling accounts is essential to starting of a new relationship on the right foot, based on mutual trust," she said, adding London had not formally raised the issue with the EU so far.

Johnson has vowed to take Britain out of the EU on Oct. 31 with or without an agreement to manage the unprecedented divorce and the expected economic fallout, Reuters reported.

## Trump says India, Pakistan can handle Kashmir dispute on their own

**TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that India and Pakistan should handle their dispute over Kashmir on their own, but he was there should they need him.

Trump has previously offered to mediate between India and Pakistan on the contested Himalayan region of Kashmir.

He discussed the issue on the sidelines of a G7 summit in France with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who withdrew autonomy for the state of Jammu and Kashmir on Aug. 5.

Trump said Modi told him that he had Kashmir under control.

Modi, speaking alongside Trump, said the Kashmir issue was a bilateral one between India and Pakistan, Reuters reported.

## Kremlin says 'impossible' to return to G7/G8 on invitation of one country

**TEHRAN** — Russia said on Monday it would be "impossible" for Moscow to return to the group of G7/G8 nations on an invitation of "just one country", as all decisions in the group are made based on consensus, the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"For Russia, membership in G7 or return to the G7 is not a goal in itself," Peskov told reporters on a conference call.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that it would be advantageous to have Russia back to the G7/G8 group, Reuters reported.



## Coach Klopp plans one-year break after Liverpool stint

Liverpool coach Juergen Klopp said on Monday he expected to take a break from coaching to recharge his batteries once his term at reigning European champions comes to an end.

Klopp, who joined Liverpool in 2015 and has a contract till 2022, led the club to the Champions League title last season while finishing a close second to Manchester City in the Premier League.

"I have absolute energy. But I have one problem. I can't to 'a little bit'. I can only do 'all or nothing'," he told Germany's Kicker magazine. "When I decide that I cannot do it any longer then I will take a break for a year."

Klopp joined Liverpool after a successful time at Borussia Dortmund where he won two league titles and a German Cup while also reaching the Champions League final in 2013.

Liverpool, who have not won their domestic league since 1990, are currently top of the table with maximum points from three games, two ahead of title rivals City.

Victory in the Premier League combined with last season's Champions League crown would instantly turn Klopp into the most successful Liverpool coach in decades.

"After that year (break) a decision must then be taken," Klopp said. "But chances are very high that my energy level will then be there once more and that I can then do the job the way I want to."

Klopp is known for his passion and energy on the sidelines while his excitement has landed him in trouble with match officials in the past.

The 52-year-old has also been repeatedly linked with the German national team and Bayern Munich in the past.

(Source: Mirror)

## Bolton face EFL expulsion after sale collapses

Bolton Wanderers face being expelled from the English Football League (EFL) after a proposed takeover of the troubled League One (third-tier) club collapsed, administrators said on Monday.

Bolton, who have been in administration since May, started the season with a 12-point deduction and manager Phil Parkinson and his assistant Steve Parkin resigned last week.

The club have been given until 5:00 p.m. BST (1600 GMT) on Tuesday to find a buyer or "give compelling reasons for an extension" after a takeover deal that would have rescued them from liquidation fell through on Saturday.

"In just over 24 hours, the club will have its membership of the EFL revoked," joint administrator Paul Appleton said in a statement on Bolton's website.

"Over and above that, the club is currently not in a position to carry on trading and, as such, the process of closing down the company will commence on Wednesday.

"This will ultimately lead to its liquidation, the expulsion of the club from the EFL and the inevitable loss of over 150 jobs. More than that, it will devastate a community for whom the football club is a beacon of hope and expectation."

Founder members of the Football League in 1888, Bolton won the FA Cup three times, in the 1920s and in 1958, but have struggled since being relegated from the Premier League in 2012.

(Source: Reuters)

## Referee threatens to stop Ligue 1 game over offensive language in stands

A French Ligue 1 referee threatened to halt a game on Sunday due to Nimes fans insulting the league organisers with offensive language during their visit to Monaco.

The French league has mooted the idea of introducing a list of banned words in football stadiums in an attempt to combat homophobia and bad language, but Nimes supporters hit back by telling them to "go f... yourselves".

A message over the PA system was read out to fans warning them to stop the chants or the game could be stopped, before the match continued with the Monaco supporters joining in with their Nimes counterparts.

Later on Sunday, Paris Saint-Germain's 'ultra' fans also vented their fury towards the league during their game against Toulouse, displaying a banner which read: "Stop ultraphobia."

Instructions were sent to referees before the start of the season to stop matches if homophobic songs could be heard, and the Ligue 2 game on August 16 between Nancy and Le Mans was halted for a few minutes -- a first in France.

That match only resumed after Nancy players pleaded with their fans to stop.

Like Sunday's game, those chants were directed at league authorities. French Equalities Minister Marlene Schiappa later tweeted her congratulations to the referee who stopped the Le Mans-Nancy match, Mehdi Mokhtari.

On Saturday, a banner was briefly brandished during Angers' match against Metz, which was refereed by high-profile female official Stephanie Frappart, saying: "Fuck the referee. Is it homophobic for a woman?"

Frappart became the first woman to referee a men's European final earlier this month in Liverpool's UEFA Super Cup win over Chelsea in Istanbul.

(Source: France 24)

## Pogba vows to fight racism for sake of next generation

Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba said the racist abuse he has suffered will only make him stronger and the Frenchman vowed to fight the problem for the sake of the next generation.

Pogba was the target of online abuse after missing a penalty in their 1-1 Premier League draw at Wolverhampton Wanderers last week, prompting Manchester to issue a strong statement condemning the views.

"Racist insults are ignorance and can only make me stronger and motivate me to fight for the next generation," Pogba wrote in a tweet accompanied by a picture of him holding his baby alongside a portrait of Martin Luther King.

"My ancestors and my parents suffered for my generation to be free today, to work, to take the bus, to play football."

British media reported Pogba's team mate Marcus Rashford had also been targeted after missing a penalty in Saturday's 2-1 Premier League defeat by Crystal Palace.

United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who said before the match that players needed more protection from social media companies, was "lost for words" after the latest incident.

"It's unheard of and we need it to stop," Solskjaer said. "I'm just lost for words if it keeps going.

(Source: Reuters)

# ‘Exceptional courage’: Cancer-stricken Mihajlovic on bench but Bologna held by Verona

A cap on his head and wearing a Bologna shirt, coach Sinisa Mihajlovic courageously joined his players for their Serie A opener in Verona on Sunday despite undergoing treatment for leukaemia.

It was a personal victory for the Serb, but the match ended 1-1 with Bologna settling for a point despite promoted Verona finishing the match with ten men.

Mihajlovic was diagnosed with "acute leukaemia" six weeks ago but the 50-year-old has continued working as Bologna coach.

His presence at the game in Verona has come as a surprise as he has been hospitalised in Bologna for the past month undergoing treatment.

It had initially been reported he was set to follow the match from a special box in the stands in Verona.

But when all the players took the pitch, Mihajlovic came in, without the mask covering his mouth he had been wearing in the afternoon when he left the hospital.

His face was gaunt and thinner following weeks of treatment.

"We were shocked, we didn't expect it, even though he had promised us," midfielder Andrea Poli told sports broadcaster DAZN.

"We were impressed, but we are happy that he is here with us, he shows an exceptional courage. We were excited when he arrived at the hotel."

"Warriors recognise each other from afar. My love," his wife Arianna Rapaccioni wrote on social media.



Nicola Sansone converted a penalty for Bologna after 15 minutes just after Verona defender Pawel Dawidowicz was sent off.

But a Miguel Veloso free kick put 10-man Verona, returning to Serie A after a one-year absence, back level after 37 minutes.

AC Milan stumbled at the first hurdle with a 1-0 loss at Udinese with fellow European hopefuls Roma held 3-3 at Genoa.

Both teams have changed coaches during the summer with Marco Giampaolo replacing Gennaro Gattuso on the Milan

bench and Roma coached by Paulo Fonseca.

The seven-time European champions were lacking inspiration in Udine, against a home side who finished 12th last term after fighting to avoid relegation.

Milan's forward line of Krzysztof Piatek -- third top scorer in Serie A last season -- Brazilian Suso and Spaniard Samu Castillejo, failed to muster a single shot on target.

The breakthrough came on 72 minutes when new Brazilian signing Rodrigo Becao connected with a Rodrigo De Paul corner

## Barcelona appear to be looking to sell Rakitic



Since Rakitic arrived at Barcelona he's been a fundamental player, both for Luis Enrique and, up to now at least, Ernesto Valverde.

The current coach said a year ago that "the best players have to be out on the pitch" when he heard that the Camp Nou bosses were considering selling Rakitic to cash in on his jump in value after the World Cup in Russia. Different times. The situation has now changed completely with Rakitic looking frozen out, and no matter whether he's used in a deal to bring in Neymar or not, the fact is it's clear Barcelona would like to move Rakitic on.

The Croatian has started both Barcelona's league games so far this season on the bench. In Bilbao, in the defeat to Athletic, he came on after 45 minutes for Aleña, while against Betis he didn't play a single minute. Something unthinkable last season, when, just like in previous seasons, he was one of the players who racked up the most playing time.

His position has been taken on both occasions by Sergi Roberto, who seems to have definitively moved to the midfield, leaving behind being a full-back, the position

in which he came into the side under Luis Enrique.

The executives at Barcelona see Rakitic as a saleable asset. At 31 he has two years left on his contract and has been waiting on a renewal for months, or at least a salary bump. Upon his return from the World Cup in Russia, Bartomeu promised him a new, improved deal, but eventually said Barcelona couldn't afford it.

Furthermore, there are no end of offers for the player and the Barça bosses consider that his sale could bring in some much needed cash, without seriously affecting the sporting side of things. Barcelona have a surfeit of midfielders, meaning the departure of Rakitic should not cause too many problems.

Meanwhile Valverde's direct opposition to the sale of Rakitic appears to have disappeared, and the coach's team decisions only appear to support the plan to move Rakitic on.

The player himself however intends to stay at the club, and has stated on every occasion he gets how happy he is in Barcelona.

(Source: AS)

## Court backs tax evasion case against German FA ex-bosses



Four former top football officials face trial in Germany after a Frankfurt court ruled Monday they must answer tax evasion charges linked to the 2006 World Cup vote-buying scandal.

The court ruled that ex-German Football Association (DFB) presidents Wolfgang Niersbach and Theo Zwanziger, as well as former general secretary Horst R. Schmidt, are accused of tax evasion, or aiding and abetting it, over a 6.7 million euros (\$7.5 million) slush fund.

The Swiss Urs Linsi, former general-secretary of world football's governing body FIFA, will also stand trial alongside the Germans with all four under "sufficient suspicion" of tax fraud, according to a court statement.

A shadow has been thrown over Germany's successful hosting of the 2006 World Cup, often referred to as "Das Sommermärchen" or Summer Fairytale, which became a nightmare for organizers after accusations emerged in 2015 of a vote-buying fund to secure the finals.

On Monday, the court validated an indictment against the quartet, who deny the charges. This paves the way for a trial, overturning a regional court's decision last October to reject a tax evasion case.

Three weeks ago, Swiss prosecutors also

to head past Gianluigi Donnarumma in the Milan goal.

In Rome, Genoa fought back despite Cengiz Under scoring after just six minutes for the hosts with Edin Dzeko and a superb Aleksandar Kolarov free-kick also giving Roma the advantage.

Striker Andrea Pinamonti pulled Genoa level with a Domenico Criscito penalty and a Christian Kouame goal on 70 minutes giving the visitors a point.

City rivals Lazio came away 3-0 winners from Sampdoria thanks to a Ciro Immobile double in either half, bringing his tally to 101 goals in Serie A.

Atalanta -- in the Champions League after finishing third last season -- won 3-2 at SPAL with Luis Muriel scoring a second-half brace.

Simone Zaza also bagged a brace for Torino in a 2-1 win over Torino, who bounced back from their Europa League defeat at home to Wolves.

Promoted Brescia, playing without new signing Mario Balotelli who is sitting out a ban, earned a 1-0 win at Cagliari thanks to an Alfredo Donnarumma penalty on 54 minutes.

Champions Juventus and second-placed Napoli both got off to winning starts on Saturday.

Juventus beat Parma 1-0 without coach Maurizio Sarri who is recovering from pneumonia, with Napoli edging a seven-goal thriller at Fiorentina 4-3.

(Source: AFP)

## Hachimura, Japan's mixed-race basketball star who once 'hid from the world'

Rui Hachimura says he gets his height from his Beninese father and his work ethic from his Japanese mother -- a combination that has propelled him to basketball stardom.

The 21-year-old made history in June when he became the first Japanese to be selected in the first round of the NBA draft, picked up by the Washington Wizards.

And like tennis superstar Naomi Osaka, Hachimura's fast-growing fame is raising the profile of biracial sportspeople in a homogeneous country where mixed-race children still face prejudice.

Hachimura, who is six feet, eight inches tall (203 cm), will lead Japan's challenge at the basketball World Cup in China, which begins on Saturday.

He is also poised to be a poster boy the hosts at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Big pressure for one so young.

As a child Hachimura stood out in Japan -- and not just because of his height.

"I inherited my body from my father and my diligence from my mother," he said in a recent interview with the Mainichi Shimbun daily.

He now feels a sense of pride at being biracial but admits to feeling self-conscious about it when he was a child.

"Even tried to hide from the rest of the world," he told the newspaper, highlighting the problems often experienced by so-called 'haafus' -- mixed-race people in Japan -- although attitudes are changing among younger generations.

Like millions of young boys in baseball-mad Japan, the



young Hachimura first tried his hand as a pitcher but he switched to basketball at junior high school after one of his friends insisted he should try.

"I was like, no, I'm not gonna play basketball," he told reporters in June in New York.

"But for two weeks every morning, (my friend) came up to me, 'Let's go play basketball.' Then I was like, ok."

It was an auspicious switch and Hachimura proved a rare talent, leading his high school to three straight All-Japan tournament wins and representing Japan at junior level.

■ **'Black, but totally Japanese'**

Hachimura's talents were recognised by Gonzaga

University in the western United States, where he enjoyed an award-winning college basketball career.

He admitted that the transition from Japan to the college in Washington state, not far from the Canadian border, was not easy.

"My first year in college was very hard," he has said, adding that he spoke little English before he moved to the US.

"The culture is different. I'm black, but I'm totally Japanese. It was hard to adjust," he said.

He told the Mainichi he realised "the time to feel embarrassed about being different is over" and that he wanted to inspire fellow 'haafus'.

"I think there are many athletes of mixed heritage now playing basketball after watching me play. I want them to take on a bunch of different challenges," he said. Like Osaka, the country's first tennis number one, Hachimura attracts huge media attention in Japan.

If Japan are to make an impact at the upcoming World Cup, where they are in the same group as the mighty USA, Hachimura will need to justify the hype.

With the media attention has come the endorsements.

Like Osaka, Hachimura has landed a lucrative tie-up with Japanese noodle-maker Nissin. He also endorses mobile company SoftBank Corp and Mitsui Sumitomo Bank, and was on the cover of the May edition of GQ Japan.

(Source: ESPN)



# Iran’s Mes beaten by Magnus Futsal at Intercontinental Cup

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mes Sungun Varzeqan from Iran were defeated by Magnus Futsal of Brazil in the 19th edition of Intercontinental Futsal Cup underway in Bangkok, Thailand on Monday.

Mes lost to their Brazilian team 3-1 at Bangkok Arena. “We didn’t deserve defeat in this match and we should have won. Two or three of our shots hit the post and their keeper also saved many of our good opportunities. We had worked on our shots but we didn’t find the net. Although we lost the match, we thank God for being able to show our quality and be a worthy representative for Iran and Asia,” Farhad Fakhim, the Iranian team’s captain, said after the match against Magnus.

Mes will face Spanish team ElPozo Murcia in a must-win game on Tuesday.

Group A consists of PTT Bluewave Chonburi from Thailand, Argentina’s Club Atletico Boca Juniors and Moroccan team Fath Sportif De Settat.

Spain’s Barca Lassa, SC Corinthians Paulista from Brazil and Chinese club Shenzhen Nanling Tielang are in Group B.

The FIFA Intercontinental Futsal Cup is the international club championships for futsal. The tournament is similar to FIFA Club World Cup.

Featuring nine of the planet’s best futsal clubs from five continents, the tournament is the world’s biggest futsal club competition, similar to the FIFA Club World Cup for football.

The World Intercontinental Futsal Cup Thailand 2019 is the 19th showing of the competition, which launched in 1997. The annual tournament is organized under the auspices of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and returns to Thailand after it was first held in the Asian country in 2018.

Futsal is a variant of five-a-side football with an emphasis is on improvisation, creativity and technique.



## Iran fall short against Italy at Volleyball FIVB U19 World Championship



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran suffered their second loss in Pool B of the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Boys’ U19 World Championship Sunday night.

The defending champions, who were defeated against Czech Republic, lost to Italy 3-1 (25-16, 25-18, 24-26, 25-11).

Both teams were already assured of a spot in the knockout stage.

It took Iran three set balls in the third

to take it and stay alive, but Italy came back in full force to close the match in four.

Tommaso Stefani with 23 points led Italy, though it was the European side’s blocking with 16 aces, including six each from Nicola Cianciotta and Paolo Porro that made the difference.

Amirreza Sarlak was Iran’s top scorer with 13 points.

Iran will play Cuba in the tournament’s last-16 on Tuesday.

## Iranian media angered at football chief’s comments over journalists’ limitation



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Sports media showed dissatisfaction over the president of Iran Football Federation (FFIRI) Mehdi Taj’s claims about restriction on journalists’ activity.

Taj said the football federation will impose a four-year ban on the journalists who ask irrelevant questions from the coaches at the press conference.

Many sports journalists have hit out at Taj’s claims and said that he has no right

to restrict freedom of press.

“Iranian sports journalists must respect the law at their work but Taj, as football federation’s president, cannot impose ban on the reporters. He has no legal right to ban them,” Iranian Legal Counsel Gholamreza Rafiei told IRNA.

Shortly after, the Iran football federation announced that it was a ‘misunderstanding’ and there will be no ban or restriction on journalists’ activity.

## Ansu, 16, Barca’s youngest debutant in 78 years

Ansu Fati became the second-youngest player to feature for Barcelona in La Liga after being handed his debut in Sunday’s 5-2 win over Real Betis.

With Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele all missing through injury, Ansu -- aged 16 years and 298 days-- was called up to the 18-man squad along with B team winger Carles Perez.

Ernesto Valverde named him as a substitute, with Perez starting in attack alongside Antoine Griezmann and Rafinha, before bringing him on in the second half when Barca were 5-1 up.

The Spanish champions went on to win the game with Griezmann scoring twice. Perez, Jordi Alba and Arturo Vidal were also on target.

«Ansu has a lot of qualities, he’s quick and he uses the space well,» Valverde said in a news conference after the game.

«I know he’s really young. He’s the youngest player I have ever given a debut to. But if we don’t look at how old the other players in the squad are, we’re not going to look at his age either. We look at what he can add and he’s surprised us all.»

After the game, Ansu, who flashed a shot narrowly wide during his cameo, remained on the pitch longer than his

teammates as he took everything in.

«I was looking at my parents and my family [in the stands], all those people that have accompanied me to this point in my career,» he explained to reporters.

«I stayed there on the pitch because I couldn’t believe it. I wanted to enjoy that moment. The truth is that I was really nervous before, but I only have words of gratitude for everyone: the club, the manager, the supporters, who gave me a great reception.»

Ansu -- who played for the U19s last season -- is younger than players like Messi and Bojan Krkic were when they made their top-flight debuts for the club, but is not the youngest player to ever turn out in the league for the Catalans.

Vicenc Martinez was 16 years and 278 days old when he made his first La Liga appearance for Barca in the 1941-42 season -- just 20 days younger than Ansu.

Following lengthy negotiations, Barcelona finally tied Ansu down to a new deal earlier this summer. The forward signed fresh terms to keep him at the club until 2022 with an option to extend the contract by an additional two years.

A €100 million buyout clause was included in the contract. Talks took longer than the club had initially expected,

though, after an email made its way into the wrong hands when they were negotiating a new deal for another of the club’s young stars, Ilaix Moriba.

The email, which detailed Ilaix’s new deal, was sent to an employee at Espanyol instead of his agent. A source at Espanyol told ESPN FC the club were «gobsmacked» at the money on offer.

That, in turn, saw Ansu’s representatives push for a better deal with Barca, especially given the interest in the youngster from some of Europe’s biggest clubs.

Barcelona had always planned to give Ansu a new deal and a bumper pay rise. Along with Ilaix, he’s one of the most highly-rated players currently in the academy.

The club have recently acknowledged a need to improve the terms being offered to their best young players having seen a number opt to leave for clubs like Borussia Dortmund, Manchester City and Monaco.

Ansu was born in Guinea-Bissau but moved to Catalonia at a young age and has been at the club since he was 10. He’s progressed through the academy and is expected to spend this season with the B team in the Spanish third division.

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Rudisha unhurt after car crash in Kenya

David Rudisha escaped unhurt after his car collided with a bus on a highway near Keroka in his native Kenya on Saturday, the Olympic 800 meters champion said on Monday.

The collision took place when the 30-year-old Rudisha was traveling home to Kilgoris in western Kenya, after he lost control of his SUV when a tire burst, the BBC reported.

“Thanking the Almighty God for the gift of life,” 800 meters world record holder Rudisha said in a Tweet accompanied by a picture of his mangled car.

“Saturday night around 1030hrs I survived a tragic road accident at Keroka on my way home to Kilgoris after a head-on collision with a bus plying Kisi Nairobi Route.

“I am fine with no injuries! Thank you for your prayers.”

Rudisha was taken to Keroka Sub County



Hospital after the accident.

“The doctors revealed that the athlete had not suffered any fractures, and he has been allowed to go home and rest,” the BBC quoted Keroka police chief Walter Abondo as saying.

Rudisha, Olympic champion in 2012 and 2016 and twice world champion, has a wildcard to participate in next month’s world championships in Doha.

(Source: Reuters)

## Milos Raonic withdraws from U.S. Open with glute Injury

Canada’s Milos Raonic has pulled out of the U.S. Open because of an injured glute muscle.

The U.S. Tennis Association announced Raonic’s withdrawal on Sunday and said that he will be replaced in the field by Kamil Majchrzak of Poland, who lost in qualifying.

Raonic was expected to take the court on Monday for a first-round match against Chile’s Nicolas Jarry at the Grand Slam in New York.

The 28-year-old from Thornhill, Ont., retired early with a back injury on Aug. 7 at the Rogers Cup in Montreal and hasn’t played since, hoping to return healthy at Flushing Meadows.

The injury that forced him to withdraw at Rogers Cup started in his glute and crept down his leg, Raonic said after retiring from an all-Canadian second-round matchup against Felix Auger-Aliassime.



Raonic has yet to finish a tournament healthy in 2019.

Montreal’s Auger-Aliassime will take on 20-year-old Denis Shapovalov of Richmond Hill, Ont., in the U.S. Open first round for the second year in a row on Tuesday.

Vancouver’s Vasek Pospisil and Brayden Schnur of Pickering, Ont., are also entered into the main draw based on their world ranking.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iran canoeist ranks 6th in World Champs

**IRNA** — Iranian canoeist Adel Mojallali stood on the 6th place in 200-meter canoe sprint in 2019 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships which is underway in Szeged, Hungary.

The Iranian athlete had previously bagged bronze medal at 2017 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championship.



The 2019 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships is being held in Szeged, Hungary from 21 to 25 August.

Mohammad Nabi Rezaee and Ali Aghamirzaee are competing in single canoe and kayak races at the event this evening.

The ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships are an international event in canoeing, one of two Summer Olympic sport events organized by the International Canoe Federation.

## Brighton boss makes statement on record signing Jahanbakhsh

Brighton boss Graham Potter has confirmed that Alireza Jahanbakhsh is still in his plans.

The club’s record signing from last season had an indifferent start to life in the Premier League last season.

He has not featured in either game this season, not even making the match-day squad. But the club’s manager said he still has a part to play.

Speaking about the winger, Potter said to reporters: “Yeah, I do. He’s a bit unfortunate not to be in the 18.

“He’s a player that can be close to the 11 but out of the 18, if that makes sense, because I think he can play in any one of those front positions but also as a wing-back, on the right side, he’s been working with that as well.

“But how he’s worked every day has been perfect. He does his best and is ready to help the team.”

(Source: Tribal Football)

## Four Iranian athletes to participate at National Inter State Seniors C’ships

**TASNIM** — Four male athletes will take part at the 59th National Inter State Seniors Championships 2019 in Lucknow, India.

Behnam Shiri (discus throw), Mehdi Pirjahan (400m hurdle), Hamid Reza Kia (triple jump) and Amir Zamanpour (1500m) will represent Iran in the tournament.

The competition organized by Athletics Federation of India (AFI) will be held in Lucknow from August 27 to 30.

The four-day championships will feature over 600 athletes from India besides other entries from countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, Iran, Kazakhstan and Bhutan.

The competition will be held in 22 events in both groups for men and women.

## Attack is the best form of defense, insists Oloya

Moses Oloya believes that Hanoi FC cannot sit back on their one-goal lead against Altyn Asyr as the sides get set to meet for the second leg of their 2019 AFC Cup Inter-Zone semi-final at Kopetdag Stadium on Tuesday.

The Vietnamese team ran out 3-2 winners in last week’s first leg and will advance to the Inter-Zone Final if they avoid defeat in Turkmenistan, but should the hosts score in Ashgabat then Hanoi will also need to find the back of the net in a tie that remains firmly in the balance.

While victory at Hang Day Stadium ensured Hanoi start the second leg with the advantage, a tally of 33 shots on goal to seven across the 90 minutes is evidence that they could have taken a much healthier lead to Central Asia.

“We were disappointed to only win by one goal, it was not the best result as we could have won 3-0,» admitted Ugandan international Oloya.

“That’s the game, we can’t do anything about it now. We need to go there, work hard and play hard so we can get the win or draw that we need.

“The two goals we conceded will affect us but we need to make sure we don’t concede. However, we have to attack because you can’t defend for 90 minutes. We need to defend and attack well.”

An early Altyn Asyr goal in Hanoi set the tone for a dramatic contest, with the hosts going 2-1 up through Nguyen Quang Hai’s brace before the Turkmen team levelled proceedings once more.

Shots rained in on the Altyn Asyr goal throughout with Oloya denied his first goal of the campaign when Mekan Saparov made a last-ditch clearance off the line.

The victory finally came through Nguyen Van Quyet’s late penalty but Hanoi will likely face a more attacking outfit in Ashgabat, where Altyn Asyr’s last AFC Cup defeat came in May 2016.

“They play really good football so we need to be fully focused against them because they are so strong,» said Oloya.

“They are together – they defend well and attack with a lot of speed so we know we need to work very hard when we play against them.”

(Source: the-afc)



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What you can be content with, is enough.  
Imam Ali (AS)

## Photos of Leader on display at Tehran exhibit

➔ The exhibit is showcasing photos by some anonymous and 12 renowned photographers, as well as photos from the archives of the Iranian Photographers Center (IPC), IPC director Ehsan Baqeri said.



Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi visits “This Infinite Story”, an exhibition of photos of Ayatollah Khamenei, at the Art Bureau in Tehran on August 25, 2019. (Mehrf/Hamid Vakili)

In addition, “Pains and Gains”, a book containing photos of important political and social events that occurred in Iran over the past 40 years, was unveiled during the ceremony. The book has recently been published by Sureh-Mehr Publications in Tehran.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by artists and a number of officials, including Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi and Art Bureau director Mohsen Momeni-Sharif.

## Winners of Visual Arts Festival for Youth honored

ART TEHRAN — Winners of the 26th edition of the Visual Arts Festival for Youth were honored during the closing ceremony of the event in the western Iranian city of Ilam on Sunday.

The festival is organized every year in the categories of drawing, painting, calligraphy, miniature, sculpture, cartoon, photography and illustration for artists aged from 16 to 25.

Zahra Ansari from Bandar Abbas received first prize in the poster section, and the award for best illustration went to Zeinab Qanei from Yazd.



Photo: The organizers and winners of the 26th edition of the Visual Arts Festival for Youth pose for a photo at the closing ceremony at the University of Ilam on August 25, 2019. (Honaronline)

The award for best drawing was given to Elham Soltanmohammadi from Tehran and Bahram Bayat from Zanjan received the award for best photography.

Zahra Diyarian from Tehran was named best sculptor and Aref Niazi from Kermanshah was picked as best cartoonist.

The award for best painter was presented to Samin Quchi from Tehran and the award for best miniature went to Fatemeh Murasiani from Khorasan Razavi.

A number of 127 young artists competed in this year’s festival, which ran from August 21 to 25.

Speaking at the closing ceremony held at the University of Ilam, the director of the festival, Rezvan Sadeqzadeh, said that the festival’s policy to move from one city to the other every year has created some problems for participants and organizers and added, “However, the event has also yielded numerous positive results that can help us overlook the problems.”

The ceremony was followed by paying tribute to the veteran calligrapher of the city, Ali-Ashraf Sandoqabadi.

# Association of Islamic Revolution Publishers launches Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards

CULTURE TEHRAN — The Association of Islamic Revolution Publishers has launched the Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards to honor books on the 1979 Islamic revolution.

“Literary Struggle against the Distortion of Contemporary History” and “Depiction of Realities and Enlightenment on the Pahlavi Regime” were the main topics of the first edition of the awards named after Seyyed Ali Andarzgu, a revolutionary who was killed by the SAVAK intelligence services on August 24, 1978.

The organizers of the awards had previously said that they intend to struggle against a current trend of attempts to sanctify the Pahlavi regime.

Winners of the first edition were awarded during a special ceremony at the Sureh Hall of the Art Bureau in Tehran on Sunday.

“Romance in a Van Gogh Style” by Mohammadreza Sharafi-Khabushan and “The Story of Goharshad” by Saeid Tashakkori shared the award in the Novel for Adults category.

In the Oral History section, “Dairies of a Journalist” by Musa Haqqani was honored.

“The Andarzgu literary awards is valuable and will be helpful, because the blood and name of a martyr are against distortion,” Haqqani said in his short speech.

“Persimmon Garden” by Hadi Hakimian and “Two Captions for One Picture” by Ebrahim Hassanbeigi shared the award in the Novel for Young Adults section.

In his acceptance speech, Hassanbeigi said that these awards were born late. “If



“Two Captions for One Picture” writer Ebrahim Hassanbeigi speaks after being honored for the novel during the 1st Seyyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards at Sureh Hall in Tehran on August 25, 2019.

the noxious smell of the sanctification of the Pahlavi regime had not been detected, this award would never organized,” he added.

The jury did not find any of the short stories “satisfactory” therefore no winner

was announced for this section.

A large number of literati and cultural officials, including Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, the director of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, attended the awards ceremony.

“The enemies are telling our people lies disguised as criticism and historical facts,” Qomi said during the ceremony.

“This is no longer a diversity of opinions, but is a distortion of the reality by them,” he added.

## Composer Hossein Alizadeh donates “Neynava” score to Music Museum of Iran

ART TEHRAN — Iranian composer and tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh donated the handwritten score of his 1983 concerto for ney and string orchestra, “Neynava”, to the Music Museum of Iran on Saturday.

The donation was made during a ceremony the Niavaran Cultural Center organized to celebrate his 68th birthday, the center announced on Sunday.

Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi and several musicians including maestro Farhad Fakhreddini, managing director of the museum, Ali Moradkhani and Niavaran Cultural Center director Abbas Sajjadi attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, Alizadeh said that he is happy to be living in a country where people still have mercy on him despite all the problems they are dealing with these days.

“We have been able to preserve music with the help and support of people, and I hope all the officials including the mayor make more efforts to promote art and culture, especially music,” Alizadeh said.

The mayor also presented a birthday congratulations



Composer Hossein Alizadeh (L) gives the score of his 1983 hit “Neynava” to Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi at the Niavaran Cultural Center on August 24, 2019. (Honaronline/Hassan Motahhari)

letter to Alizadeh.

“As the mayor of Tehran, I am so happy and pleased you are still living in the city of Tehran on your 68th birthday. I hereby present this letter to you and I hope we will enjoy your kind presence in this city and that you will perform with love and kindness for years to come,” Hanachi wrote in the letter.

Alizadeh presented the score to the mayor to be later displayed at the museum.

The mayor also presented Alizadeh with two copies of valuable books on the architecture of Tehran.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra under the baton of maestro Ali Rahbari performed “Neynava” several times. “Neynava” opened the 31st Fajr International Music Festival in February 2016. It was also performed at the closing ceremony of the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival in April 2016.

Also in 2006, Iran’s Rudaki Orchestra performed “Neynava” at the Saint Germain Auditorium in Paris.

## Iranian director to stage “Mary Poppins” musical in Tehran

ART TEHRAN — Iranian director Ahmad Soleimani will stage a musical adaptation of Australian-English writer Pamela Lyndon Travers’ series “Mary Poppins” in Tehran’s Vahdat Hall in November.

The musical will be based on the Persian translation of the eight-volume series of children’s books by Ahmad Kolivandi, a team from the public relations office for the play announced on Monday.

Ahmad Kolivandi is the Persian translator of the book and dramaturge Mohammadreza Kuhestani will collaborate in the project.

The book tells the story of Mary Poppins who is charged with the responsibility of taking care of the five Banks children. She is portrayed as a no nonsense and tough nanny who uses extraordinary measures to instill discipline in the kids.

She is constantly scolding the children if they point out her magical powers but is always at ease when around her friends. The story portrays Mary as someone with lots of exaggerated self-confidence and is always admiring herself in the mirror or



Iranian director Ahmad Soleimani in an undated photo.

any other reflection.

Walt Disney produced “Mary Poppins” musical fantasy film based on the series in 1964. The film was directed by Robert Stevenson and the music and lyrics for the project were composed by the Sherman Brothers.

## “Angel Has Fallen” tops box office with \$21.3 million debut

NEW YORK (AP) — “Angel Has Fallen” easily topped the box office with a \$21.3 million debut, according to studio estimates Sunday, as the action sequel became the latest mid-budget release to find modest success in the often quiet late summer.

The Lionsgate film beat expectations going into the weekend, opening similarly to the previous 2016 installment “London Has Fallen.” The film series stars Gerard Butler as a Secret Service agent protecting the U.S. president played by Morgan Freeman. In “Angel Has Fallen,” Butler’s agent is wrongly accused of trying to assassinate the president.

Going back to 2013’s “Olympus Has Fallen”, the franchise has been a quietly consistent performer, taking in roughly \$200 million worldwide each time. “Angel Has Fallen”, produced for about \$40 million by Millennium Films, is poised for a similar course, opening just shy of the \$21.6 million “London Has Fallen” debut.

David Spitz, president of domestic distribution for Lionsgate, pointed to the film’s A-minus CinemaScore and 94% audience score on Rotten Tomatoes (far better than the 39% critic score) as good word-of-mouth harbingers for the continued playability of “Angel Has Fallen” through the last weeks of summer.

“That’s a great sign that the movie is going to be theaters for a long time,” Spitz said. “Over-performing this weekend and exit polls suggesting we’re going to



This image released by Lionsgate shows Gerard Butler, left and Morgan Freeman in “Angel Has Fallen,” directed by Ric Roman Waugh. (Jack English/Lionsgate via AP)

have a nice long runway is terrific.”

Late August is known as a sleepy period at the box office, but it’s also one of the few parts of the calendar relatively light on big-budget tentpole releases.

That’s given some room for recent successes such as Universal’s comedy hit “Good Boys,” which slid to second with \$11.8 million. Last week, it became the first R-rated comedy in more than three years to land

## Doc on Iranian POW Hojjatoleslam Abutorabi to premiere in Tehran

ART TEHRAN — Iranian director Reza Asgarpur’s documentary “Beyond Peace and War” about former Iranian MP and prisoner of war (POW) Hojjatoleslam Ali-Akbar Abutorabifard will premiere today at Tehran’s Resaneh Cultural Center.

The film, which has been shot in Switzerland and France, narrates the memories of people who met Abutorabifard and those people who were with him during captivity in Iraq.

Among them is the Deputy Director of Operations of the International Committee of the Red Crescent, Andreas Wigger, who had visited Abutorabifard in Camp Mosul in Iraq.

The screening will be followed by a review session, which will be attended by members of the film crew and critics.

Abutorabifard, who accompanied Iranian politician and commander, Mostafa Chamran during the Iran-Iraq war, was captured by Iraqi forces in 1980.

He was held captive for ten years in several Iraqi camps, including Mosul, Romadie and Tikrit. He was popular



A poster for Iranian director Reza Asgarpur’s documentary “Beyond Peace and War”. among Iranian prisoners of war and even Iraqi soldiers, and was known as seyede azadegan, which means leader of POWs. After getting back to Iran, he became a member of Iran’s parliament (Majlis). He died in a car crash on his way to Mashhad in 2000.

at No.1. And the Lionsgate-distributed “Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark” has also flourished in August, taking in \$50.5 million in three weeks including \$6 million this weekend.

Some of the bigger films are still expanding around the globe, though. The “Fast & Furious” spinoff “Hobbs & Shaw” opened this weekend in China — where the high-octane franchise has regularly thrived — grossing \$102 million and pushing the film to a worldwide total of \$588.9 million.

Disney’s “The Lion King”, after seven weeks of release, still ranks among the top four films domestically and has now passed \$1.5 billion worldwide. That ranks ninth all time, not accounting for inflation.

However, the acclaimed Fox Searchlight horror release “Ready or Not,” about a bride forced into a deadly game of hide-and-seek with her new in-laws, got off to a lackluster start. It took in \$7.6 million in ticket sales and \$10.6 million since opening Wednesday.

Faring better was the Christian film “Overcomer,” from Sony’s Affirm Films, which landed in third with an \$8 million opening weekend. It also scored an A-plus CinemaScore from audiences.

Among specialty releases, Amazon’s “Brittany Runs a Marathon,” about a young woman (Jillian Bell) who devotes herself to running to lose weight, scored the weekend’s most packed theaters. It debuted with a per-theater average of \$35,194 in five locations.