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Iran targets \$50b in exports to neighboring countries

TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Industry Minister Hossein Modares Khiabani said his ministry has it on the agenda to increase the value of exports to Iran's 15 neighbors up to \$50 billion, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

"Our goal is to be able to meet five percent of our neighboring countries' needs, which would amount to more than \$50 billion a year, considering the imports of all the 15 countries which is at least \$1

trillion annually," Modares Khiabani said.

"Necessary planning and investigations have been made for achieving this target," he added. The official expressed hope that the mentioned goal would be realized before the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (which starts in March 2021), saying that the Institute for Trade Studies and Research and also Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) are currently developing detailed plans to achieve this goal. ➔ **4**

Hezbollah reject U.S. demand to ignore attack on Israel

TEHRA — Lebanon resistance movement Hezbollah rejected U.S. demand to ignore attack on Israel.

According to Al Jazeera, Israeli troops remain on high alert near the border with Lebanon, after Hezbollah warned of an imminent attack.

Earlier 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. ➔ **13**

We take the necessary measures to defend our country: Iraq defense minister

TEHRAN — Iraqi defense minister Najah al-Shammari said Iraqis take the necessary measures to defend their country.

Meanwhile, An Iraqi parliamentarian says the Baghdad government is preparing a complaint to the United Nations after investigations revealed that the Israeli regime is "certainly" behind several attacks on the bases of pro-government Popular Mobilization Units, better known by the Arabic word Hashd al-Sha'abi.

Ahmad al-Assadi, spokesman of the Fatah Alliance, told journalists on Thursday in his office in central Baghdad that government probes would name Israel.

"Some of the government investigations have reached a conclusion that the perpetrator behind some of the attacks is absolutely, certainly Israel," he said, declining to provide details on the evidence. ➔ **13**



ARTICLE
Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

The dangerous Mideast logjam first requires lubrication by the U.S. for its release

Claims are that some of Iran's leaders think Donald Trump could be reelected next year and therefore some kind of negotiation over a "deal" with the U.S. may be necessary in the next year to obviate six more years of odious sanctions, which have had a marked impact on Iran's economy.

The negative impact of the sanctions exist in part because the other signatories of the JCPOA, which the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from last year, have failed to underwrite and engage in continued trade with Iran to neutralize U.S. sanctions, and also because the supposed key to the maintenance of trade, the "Instex" mechanism set up by Europeans, looks like some kind of bad joke, like the proffer of a feast of fine food which merely masks a plate of offal fit only for a dog. It's no wonder long suffering but proud Iranians don't trust Westerners, and particularly Americans.

From afar, like from the U.S., it has been presumed that Iran would, at a minimum, not engage with the U.S. at all unless the U.S. eradicated the sanctions first as an act of good faith and would not at least be of a mind to start any further negotiations without the concept, if not the immediate fact, of a fully restored JCPOA. This makes sense, of course, because Iran did nothing but abide by the JCPOA as it was, unlike the U.S., which ought never be trusted (without serious guarantees) by any country regarding any deal whatsoever. Maybe a proper guarantee for Iran might be a \$200 or more billion bond? But it was President Rouhani who allegedly indicated that Iran might be willing to meet with American negotiators IF it would somehow clearly benefit Iran. But then President Rouhani fast reversed himself perhaps under pressure from Ayatollah Khamenei.

Nonetheless, it seems apparent that some of Iran's leaders are vaguely warming to fresh ideas, and that if it is true that Trump wants a more comprehensive "deal" than that of the JCPOA, Iran likewise would be able to demand and expect iron-clad guarantees from the U.S. that the sanctions would never again be brandished. ➔ **13**

UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from the Yemen debacle: Askari

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Hossein Askari, an expert on Saudi Arabia who also teaches international business at the George Washington University, believes that "I think the UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from the Yemen debacle and slowly reduce its collaboration with MBS."

"If Saudi Arabia is talking with Iran, I think that it is a Saudi initiative," Hossein Askari, who served as special advisor to Saudi finance minister, tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ There are reports of talks between the UAE and Iran and Saudi Arabia's willingness to talk with Iran on behalf of the US. These reports refer



to the recent agreement between Tehran and Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia's willingness to negotiate with Iran. Is this initiative designed by the US?

A: I think the UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from the Yemen debacle and slowly reduce its collaboration with MBS. But if

Saudi Arabia is talking with Iran, I think that it is a Saudi initiative. They don't want to be seen as talking with Iran so they may be saying it is on behalf of the US. I think it would be very dangerous for the US, and indeed for the region, if Saudi Arabia was so designated by the US. Saudi leadership is out of control and they represent the personal interest of MBS. They could say and do things that brings the region into armed conflict.

■ Following the US embargo on Iran's oil, some have speculated that the market vacuum is being mainly supplied by Aramco. Can Aramco replace Iranian Oil?

A: Yes, I believe Saudi Arabia could conceivably ramp up to make up for Iranian oil. But today, I believe that this is also being done by US shale, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. That is why oil prices have not spiked. ➔ **13**

Persian Gulf security architecture can only be inclusive: Adib-Moghaddam

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, Chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute believes that "UK is entangled in the Brexit imbroglio and does not have a coherent strategy for its policies in the Persian Gulf because of that."

Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies and Chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute, also adds that "The security architecture for the Persian Gulf can only be inclusive."

Here is the full text of the interview:

■ The United States has spoken about new

military coalition in the Persian Gulf. What is the purpose of this coalition?

A: The purpose is to pool the limited resources available and to continue to outsource safeguarding the interests of the US state, to compliant and dependent regional actors. On the other side, Iran has missed the opportunity to be seen as a progressive, reforming country that appreciates and safeguards the civil rights of its citizen, which is why it is that much more easier for the US state and others to contain and blackmail the country.

■ Another plan for Persian Gulf security order in recent days suggested by England. France

announced that will join to this coalition and Germany is not clear until now. Why England suggest this plan without participation of U.S.?

A: There is a lot of speculation about these measures at the moment. The UK is entangled in the Brexit imbroglio and does not have a coherent strategy for its policies in the Persian Gulf because of that.

■ Another Plan for Persian Gulf security order is Russian plan that is close to Iranian plan for Persian Gulf. In Russian plan the trans-regional powers just have the supervisory role in the security of the Persian Gulf instead of interferer role. How much this plan is practical at this time? ➔ **13**



© ISNA / Mona Hoobehfeker

"The Warden" named Iran's best film of the year

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN — Nima Javidi's acclaimed movie "The Warden" was selected as best film during the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration at Tehran's Milad Tower on Friday.

Producer Majid Motalebi received his award from Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami and producer Manuchehr Shahsavari.

The film tells the story of an Iranian prison warden who is assigned to transfer prisoners to a new building during the 1960s.

Navid Mohammadzadeh was crowned best actor for his portrayal of the warden. ➔ **16**



REPORT
Farnak Bakhtiari
Tehran Times journalist

Will the world's fastest Asiatic cheetah outrun extinction?

Although Iran is the only country which can save the precious species from disappearance, conservation projects fall into a single solution of captive-breeding. Cheetah's captive-breeding is not necessarily an inefficient plan, nonetheless concerns come up from recent unsuccessful projects. Will the endangered beauty surpass its unknown fate and escape extinction?

Asiatic cheetahs are globally "Critically Endangered" according to the IUCN Red List. Iran is home to the last population of the Asiatic cheetah in the world. With a presumed population of 50 cheetah individuals at best, challenges associated with the current status of the Asiatic cheetah population include incidental killing of cheetahs by people or livestock guarding dogs, habitat fragmentation and loss of biological corridors and prey base depletion.

Twelve years ago, the Iranian Cheetah Society (ICS) proposed August 31st as the "National Cheetah Day" in Iran to encourage conservation of the last remaining population of Asiatic cheetahs. The National Cheetah Day is now endorsed and celebrated by the Department of the Environment, Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project and several Iranian NGOs every year.

The Iranian cheetah population seems to be in trouble; in spite of ongoing conservation efforts, the species' population has been shrinking during the past years.

Alireza Jourabchian, Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project founder, told Tasnim on Saturday that unfortunately, mismanagement severely affected the Project, which has made significant achievements in protection of Asiatic cheetahs since the Iranian calendar year 1389 (March 2010- March 2011).

During the 1380s (falling on 2001-2011), the Project, environmentalists, and rangers went far to preserve the species; however, in past recent years, the Department of Environment failed to take control over the forces and oblige them to fully employ the protection rules, he explained. ➔ **12**

IRGC wing to construct artificial island

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Base, a business conglomerate and the construction wing of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), plans to build an artificial island in the Persian Gulf, near Kish Island, a free zone.

Based on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by the commander of the construction base, Saeed Mohammad Eslami, and the managing director of the Kish Free Zone Or-



ganization, Gholam Hossein Mozaffari, on Friday, the artificial island will be used for recreational and residential purposes.

“With the implementation of the MoU, the Kish Free Zone Organization will own the artificial island with an area of 500,000 square meters (approximately 123 acres),” Mozaffari announced.

The completion of studies and implementation of dredging operations in the eastern basin of Kish Island and the construction of the artificial island have been included in the MoU, which is an engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning (EPCC) contract, Tasnim news agency reported.

Khatam al-Anbia Construction Base is the IRGC’s economic branch with four subdivisions that are active in different fields, including petroleum, energy, and communication projects.

Zarif: U.S. violent unilateralism abolishes global order

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran’s foreign minister has said the “violent unilateralism” relentlessly pursued by the United States has posed a serious threat to the international system and other countries.

“We believe that the United States is pushing a new sort of violent unilateralism, an extremist unilateralism, which destroys all the foundations of global order,” Mohammad Javad Zarif told China’s state-run Xinhua news agency during an interview in China published on Friday.

He made the comment in response to a question whether he agreed with China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi that the Iran 2015 nuclear deal - officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – is in fact a contest between unilateralism and multilateralism.

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

Under the landmark accord, 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 JCPOA in May last year and launched the “maximum pressure” against the Islamic Republic, re-imposing the sanctions it had lifted under the agreement.

Elaborating on the reasons why the U.S. sticks to unilateralism and the best way to counter it, Iran’s top diplomat noted, “Multilateralism is the best counter-measure against unilateral tendencies by the United States.”

He also said that the U.S. and particularly the administration of Trump “strongly believes in the use of coercive measures”, which “usually threaten the lives of ordinary citizens,” and “that is why Iran and China rightly called these actions by the United States economic terrorism.”

He also insisted that “dialogue and working for the common good and common destiny” were the best ways to deal with the “very negative tendencies” promoted by Washington.

“That’s how we view the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a program and as a process to bring about greater economic connectivity and greater economic growth and development to the countries within the BRI,” the Iranian foreign minister said, adding that this is the reason why Iran has supported the initiative and is a major partner to it.

The BRI is a global development strategy adopted by the Chinese President Xi Jinping and it involves infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries and international organizations across the world.

Zarif also said that the BRI is important for Iran since “we see the Belt and Road Initiative as a possibility to enhance growth and connectivity and also to address some of the regional problems, including drug trafficking, poverty.”

He also said that Iran can willingly offer both its North-South and East-West corridors to promote the BRI.

Commenting on the months-long unrest in Hong Kong, Zarif said that Iran calls for holding talks to reach mutual understanding, insisting that intervention cannot solve problem.

He also lambasted the U.S. for intervening in China-Hong Kong internal affairs.

Since June, Hong Kong has been beset by unrest over an extradition bill that would have allowed the extradition of suspects to mainland courts for trial. Although the government of the semi-autonomous Chinese region has dropped that bill, protests have persisted, with individuals more routinely resorting to violence.

Beijing has repeatedly warned against violence in the region and has accused foreign countries, mainly the United States and Britain, of provoking the riots. The Chinese government has asked the two countries to stop meddling in Hong Kong’s affairs.

Hong Kong has been governed under a “one-country, two-system” model since the city – a former British colony – was returned to China in 1997.

U.S. has shown flexibility over Iran’s oil sale: Araghchi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday that the United States has shown flexibility over Iran’s oil sale and this shows success of the Islamic Republic’s policy of maximum resistance.

“French President Emmanuel Macron met with President of the United States Donald Trump on sidelines of G7 summit and the U.S. has shown flexibility for sale of Iran’s oil. This is failure of the United States’ policy of maximum pressure. This is success of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s policy of maximum resistance,” IRNA quoted him as saying.

He noted that Iran will return to full implementation of its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, if the country’s demands, such as selling its oil and having banking interaction, are met.

“Our demand is totally clear. If the Europeans and other parties to the JCPOA want us to return to full implementation of the JCPOA, they should meet our demand regarding selling oil,” he said.

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 agree-



ment, 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.

In an interview with the Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper published on Tuesday, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad

U.S. blacklists Iran oil tanker in Mediterranean

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The United States on Friday blacklisted the Iranian oil tanker Adrian Darya following repeated warnings over its valuable oil cargo.

Previously known as Grace 1, the ship has been bouncing around the Mediterranean after being held for six weeks by Gibraltar on suspicion its cargo was bound for Syria, a suspicion which Iran had denied.

Despite Washington’s efforts to keep it detained, it was released by the British territory and its every move is being followed with intense speculation.

The U.S. Department of Treasury on Friday said the vessel is “blocked property”, and “anyone providing support to the Adrian Darya 1 risks being sanctioned”.

The ship’s captain, Akhilesh Kumar, was also blacklisted under the order, which generally prohibits dealings with blocked property by U.S. persons.

Lebanon had earlier dismissed Turkish claims that it would receive the ship, which has a cargo of 2.1 million barrels worth around \$140 million.

Maritime traffic monitors had shown that the Adrian Darya’s latest listed destinations, which are not necessarily the next approved port of call, were in Turkey.

After tracking sites showed Mersin as its destination, it then switched to Iskenderun, prompting a reaction from Turkey’s foreign minister Friday.

“This tanker is not heading actually to Iskenderun (in Turkey), this tanker is heading to Lebanon,” Mevlut Cavusoglu said during a visit to Oslo.

Lebanon swiftly dismissed the scenario, stressing that it never buys crude oil because it simply does not have refineries.

“The energy ministry does not buy crude oil from any country and Lebanon does not own a crude oil refinery,” Energy Minister Nada Boustani said in a statement.

She added that Lebanon had not received any docking request from the tanker.

“There is also no request for the Adrian Darya 1 oil tanker to enter Lebanon,” Boustani said.

According to maritime traffic monitoring websites, the huge tanker is currently just west of the island nation of Cyprus, AFP reported on Friday.

Iran said Monday it had “sold the oil” aboard the tanker and that the owner will decide the destination.

It did not identify the buyer or say whether the oil had been sold before or after the tanker’s detention in the Strait of Gibraltar, on Spain’s southern tip.

The ship was seized by Gibraltar police and British special forces on July 4 and held on suspicion of shipping oil to Syria in breach of European Union sanctions.

But Iran denied the charge and said it could not name the actual destination due to United States “economic terrorism” and its sanctions on Iran’s oil sales.

In July, Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps impounded a British-flagged tanker in strategic Gulf waters. Britain called it a tit-for-tat move but Tehran denied any connection.

A court in the British territory ordered the tanker’s release on August 15, despite a last-minute legal bid by the United



States to have it detained.

The Adrian Darya 1 set sail for the eastern Mediterranean three days after it was released.

According to maritime traffic monitoring websites, the huge tanker has changed direction multiple times, following no apparent logic. The specialised TankerTrackers social media account noted Friday after the vessel listed Iskenderun as its destination that little could be read into it.

“Consider this just a record update rather than anything substantial. We believe a transfer is still a few days away. Turkey will not import this oil,” it said. It earlier described it as “aimlessly moseying around the Med”.

Tensions between arch-enemies Iran and the U.S. have soared ever since Washington stepped up its campaign of “maximum pressure” against Tehran and reimposed sanctions after leaving the landmark 2015 nuclear deal last year.

Heads of three branches hold Supreme Council of Economic Coordination’s session

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – President Hassan Rouhani, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani and Judiciary Chief Hojjatoleslam Ebrahim Raeesi held a session of Supreme Council of Economic Coordination on Saturday. Regulations to implement oil projects were approved in the meeting.

First Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri, Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi, Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian, Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Farhad Dajpasand, Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, Head of Iran Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, Iran’s prosecutor general, and a number of MPs attended the session.

The previous session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination was held on August



10 during which Rouhani said that solving people’s problems must be the main objective of policy making and decision making.

With an indirect reference to the reimposition of sanctions on Iran by the Trump administration, the president said, “Both the people and the government have passed difficult times, however, decisions can be taken in

line with economic stability and progress and the people’s prosperity.” Last year, the Trump administration abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal and ordered old and new sanctions on Iran. The move resulted in a great devaluation of national currency and high price rises. However, nearly after a year the economy is stabilizing.

Rouhani said his administration is making efforts to resolve the people’s economic problems.

To counter the effects of sanctions, the government is taking compensatory measures.

During a session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination on July 27, four strategies to compensate for budget deficit were approved.

Transferring government’s assets, using forex reserves, selling Islamic bonds, and withdrawing 450 trillion rials (about \$10.714 billion) from National Development Fund (NDF) were the four strategies approved in that session.

During a session of the council on July 13, the amendments to the national budget plan for the current calendar year (started on March 21) had been approved.

The generalities of a modified budget plan, which has been restructured in line with the country’s “resilience economy”, were approved.

The modifications consist of four major parts, which are “sustainable revenue resources”, “effective expenditure”, “promoting stability, development and justice” as well as “fundamental modifications of budgetary system”.

They are aimed at reducing the country’s dependence on oil money and promoting economic stability under the umbrella term “resistance economy”, ordered by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

It was decided in that session that the council would study the priorities in the amendment plan in its next gathering.

Envoy: Tehran resolute to take 3rd step in reducing nuclear commitments

TEHRAN (FNA) – Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the International Organizations Kazem Qaribabadi reminded the remaining members of the nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), that Tehran is determined to take the 3rd step in reducing its nuclear commitments.

Speaking on Friday while addressing the 16th report released by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on verification of Iran’s compliance with the nuclear deal, Qaribabadi reiterated Tehran’s stance on reducing commitments under the deal, saying complete obligation to the deal entails full compliance by all parties.

“Iran is serious in its decision to take the steps in reducing commitments [under the deal],” Qaribabadi said, adding, “The continuation of the deal is based on full compliance by all parties to the deal.” If they want to preserve Iran nuclear deal, the remaining parties should guarantee Iran’s benefits stipulated in the JCPOA by adopting urgent and suitable acts, he reiterated.

Qaribabadi described the report as indicating Iran’s goodwill for preserving multilateralism in international relations and as verifying its compliance.

Like 15 previous reports, IAEA once again reiterated that since the beginning of the JCPOA implementation, it has continued monitoring Iran’s compliance with its nuclear-related commitments, he added.

The IAEA new report has also explicitly referred to Supreme



National Security Council’s order on stopping some of Iran’s measures under the JCPOA and in the framework of articles 26 and 36, he noted. The Iranian envoy further said that based on the 16th report, Iran’s uranium stockpile has been announced 241.6 kg until August 19, including 25.1 kg 4.5% uranium.

Based on the JCPOA, Iran is permitted to have 202.8 kg enriched uranium. This shows Iran’s strong determination on taking the next steps regarding the deal, he said.

Tehran has rowed back on its nuclear commitments twice in compliance with articles 26 and 36 of the 2015 deal.

Iran says its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon

as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral U.S. sanctions which were imposed last year when President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal. Early in this month, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in a meeting at the Iranian Parliament, reassured that Tehran will undertake the third phase of curbing its commitments under the nuclear deal under the prevailing circumstances.

Touching upon Iran’s expectations from the nuclear deal of 2015, Zarif said, “All member states of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA have unanimously reached the conclusion that the U.S. has been the cause of all tensions while Iran’s demands were clear and transparent from the very beginning and Tehran did not expect anything beyond the JCPOA.”

“We have announced that we will partially abide by the JCPOA if it is not fully observed by the other members of the agreement. However, even these moves of us are also according to the JCPOA,” the top Iranian diplomat reiterated.

Referring to the request of not putting into practice the third phase of scaling down of commitments made by the remaining members of the JCPOA, who are now called 4+1, Zarif underlined that it is now within the remit and jurisdiction of the Islamic Republic to whether operationalize the third step or not, “and assuredly this step will be taken in line with the former ones if the other members of the JCPOA fail to meet their commitments”.

Tehran rejects rumors of Rouhani-Trump meeting in New York

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has rejected speculations that President Hassan Rouhani may meet with his American counterpart Donald Trump in New York next month.

There are no plans for a meeting between Rouhani and Trump in New York, Tasnim quoted Vaezi as saying on Saturday.

On August 26, President Rouhani expressed readiness to negotiate with anyone if that would help resolve Iran's problems.

"If I knew that going to a meeting and visiting a person would help my country's development and resolve the problems of the people, I would not miss it," he had said. "Even if the odds of success are not 90% but are 20% or 10%, we must move ahead with it. We should not miss opportunities."

Vaezi said Rouhani's remarks did not suggest a meeting with Trump at all.

The president was trying to highlight the administration's efforts to settle the problems and promote social welfare without any political intentions, he added.



On August 27, President Rouhani ruled out the possibility of talks with Washington, saying the United States must lift all its cruel sanctions against Iran and begin

respecting the nation's rights as a "first step" towards dialogue.

He stressed that the Islamic Republic will not engage in any negotiations for the mere sake of photo ops.

"We seek to resolve issues and problems in a rational way but we are not after photo ops."

For anyone wanting to take a picture with Hassan Rouhani, this is not possible" unless that party chooses to set aside all the oppressive sanctions and respect the Iranian nation's rights, the president said.

Tensions started to build up between the U.S. and Iran after Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018, and imposed sanctions against Tehran in a bid to put maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic.

The Trump administration has also made empty calls for talks, but the Islamic Republic maintains that as long as the sanctions are in place and the U.S. refuses to return to the JCPOA, it will not negotiate with Washington.

Minister tweets picture of Nahid-1 satellite at Trump

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi has published an image of the Nahid-1 satellite, tweeting at U.S. President Donald Trump that the satellite is safe and sound.

"Me & Nahid I right now. Good Morning Donald Trump!" Azari Jahromi tweeted on Saturday morning.

It came after an alleged rocket explosion at the space center meant to launch Nahid-1.

On Friday, Trump released a photograph of what he called a "catastrophic accident" during final launch preparations in Iran, saying the U.S. was not involved in the incident.

"The United States of America was not involved in the catastrophic accident during final launch preparations for the Safir SLV Launch at Semnan Launch Site One in Iran. I wish Iran best wishes and good luck in determining what happened at Site One," he tweeted.

A day earlier, Azari Jahromi had rejected reports that Iran's third attempt to put satellites in orbit were unsuccessful. "Apparently, there were reports that the third attempt to put the satellite in orbit were unsuccessful."

In fact, Nahid 1 is alright, and is right now in the laboratory. Reporters can come visit the laboratory, too. #transparency," he tweeted.

It comes after months of tensions between Iran and Washington. Trump last year unilaterally withdrew from the landmark 2015 nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

Earlier this year, Azari Jahromi said Iran will not hold off its progress in the field of space technology and cannot wait for other countries to meet its needs.

He said that Iran hadn't had a good experience from international cooperation in the field of space technology, and that no country had cooperated in manufacturing sat-



ellites with Iran so far.

The minister have also said that despite all hardships, "we try to consider sanctions not as a threat but an opportunity for self-improvement."

General: Air defense achievements way ahead of expectations

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard, commander of Iran's Air Defense Force, has hailed the recent achievements of his forces, saying Iran's air defense achievements are way ahead of expectations.

In remarks on Saturday, Sabahifard also pointed the domestically-built missile defense system dubbed "Bavar-373" and said few countries have the capabilities to produce similar missile defense systems, ISNA reported.

On Thursday, Iran unveiled a long-range surface-to-air missile system, dubbed "Bavar-373", saying the missile system is more advanced than the U.S. Patriot system and its Russian counterpart S-300.

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.

The developments came amid escalating tensions between Iran and the United States.

The United States has called on its European and Asian allies to form a maritime force to

supposedly monitor safe shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf.

So far, only Britain, Israel, Australia and Bahrain have agreed to join the coalition.

Sabahifard said on Friday that the security of

the Persian Gulf region can only be established by regional countries and not by foreign forces.

Extra-regional countries' presence and coalitions only destabilize the region, he said during a speech at the Friday prayers.

"So, the West Asian countries' leaders are strongly advised to revise their policies and avoid joining the coalitions of the enemies of the Islamic world and seeking intra-regional security policies," he said.

Elsewhere, he noted that Iran has never sought any war, however, security of the country and the region is a redline for the Islamic Republic.

President Rouhani said on August 14 that there is no need to foreign forces to maintain security in the Persian Gulf region.

"Major powers, especially America, seek nothing except causing division and emptying treasury of the Islamic countries. The Persian Gulf littoral states can maintain security and stability in the region," Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

Iranian diplomat calls on Europe to act more responsibly on nuclear deal

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran's Ambassador to Austria and Slovakia Ebadollah Mowlayee said on Friday that Europe should act more responsibly in implementing the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

During a meeting with Slovakian Deputy Foreign Minister Lukas Parizek, Mowlayee said that the European Union should act more seriously and responsibly to preserve the JCPOA.

Parizek said that Slovakia supports preserving the nuclear deal.

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.

In an interview with the Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper published on Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the country will begin suspending more of its commitments under the nuclear deal between on September 6.

In an interview with France 24 aired on August 23, Zarif said that the nuclear deal was prepared based on mutual mistrust and there are mechanisms in it when one party violates the deal.

"The JCPOA is a comprehensive deal on the nuclear issue which was negotiated with open eyes. We knew that we could not trust each other."

It was basically actually based on mutual mistrust. So, what we did was we put in place mechanisms that we could use if they violate.

If we use those mechanisms, we do not need to leave the agreement we have shown strategic patience.

That strategic patience may have been required in order to give Europeans time to implement their part of the deal after the U.S. withdrawal.

Unfortunately, Europe was not able over the past 15



months to do that so we took certain measures and those measures as I said are reversible.

If Europe begins taking the steps that it is required to take," he maintained.

Iran to hold naval drill in Caspian Sea

TEHRAN (MNA) – Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi announced on Saturday that Iran is to carry out a military exercise in the Caspian Sea in near future.

Khanzadi made the announcement on Saturday, adding that a four-day military maneuver codenamed Power and Sustainable Security in the Caspian Sea exercise is to be held in the Caspian Sea soon.

He maintained that the drill promotes Iran's naval capabilities in the Caspian Sea and is carried out independently.

It is on the agenda to hold military exercise in collaboration with neighboring countries,



he added.

Khanzadi noted that the security of the Caspian Sea should be maintained by its neighbors, and according to the agreements made, no country outside the Caspian Sea should be present in this region at all.

Back in February 2018, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities.

"Without a moment of hesitation, the country must move to acquire whatever is necessary for defense, even if the whole world is opposed to it," Ayatollah Khamenei said at the time.

Bahrain regime grasping to 'sinking Israel' for survival: advisor

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, has slammed the Bahraini regime for supporting the recent Israeli attacks on several Arab countries.

"In a flagrant move, the Arab #Bahrain FM, acting as a #Israel's spokesman, backed TelAviv aggression to 4 Arab states (Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen & Syria)," Amir-Abdollahian said in a tweet on Friday.

"#AIKhalifa has kept aloof from Bahrans [sic] to the extent that it has taken a usurped, broken & sinking Israeli ship for its survival," he added.



The Israeli regime is widely known to be behind a wave of air raids on positions of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) in recent week. Reports say those air raids had the support of the Saudi regime and were launched from the areas controlled by U.S.-backed Kurdish militants in the northern parts of neighboring Syria.

In the latest such attack on the weekend, Israeli drones struck a PMU convoy near the Iraqi town of al-Qa'im close to the Syrian border, killing a commander and severely wounding a fighter, Press TV reported.

This came a day after Israel carried out strikes near the Syrian capital, Damascus, claiming that the air raids were "able to thwart an Iranian attempt ... to conduct an attack on Israeli targets ... using killer drones."

Just hours later in early Sunday, two explosives-laden Israeli drones violated Lebanese airspace on a bombing mission and crashed in the stronghold the Hezbollah resistance movement in the south of the Lebanese capital, Beirut. One of the drones blew up near the ground, causing some damage to Hezbollah's media office.

On Monday, Bahraini Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifah took to Twitter to express his support for the Israeli attacks, labeling them an act of "self-defense."

"Iran is the one who has declared a war on us, with its [Islamic] Revolution Guards Corps, its Lebanese party, its Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, its Houthi arm in Yemen and others," Khalifah claimed. "So one who strikes and destroys the piles of their ammunition is not to blame. That is self-defense."

Iraq on Thursday lashed out at Bahrain for backing recent Israeli attacks on Arab countries.

In a statement, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said it "rejects and condemns" the Bahraini diplomat's comments, stressing that the PMU has stood by Iraqi armed forces "to defend our holy land and made great sacrifices to liberate the cities of Iraq, and to defeat Daesh terrorist gangs."

Iranian lawmakers to visit nuclear sites in coming days: MP

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The head of the Majlis Nuclear Committee says a delegation from the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee is slated to visit nuclear sites to examine the process of reducing commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal.



Speaking to Tasnim, Mohammad Ebrahim Rezaee said according to the schedule, several members of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee will visit the nuclear sites in Arak, Fordow, and Natanz in coming days.

He further pointed to the Islamic Republic's moves to reduce its obligations under the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and said such visits are carried out in line with the moves.

The Nuclear Committee is monitoring the measures of the relevant organizations to reduce the country's obligations and report the process to the parliament, he noted.

In July, Iran declared the second step to reduce its commitments by ramping up the level of uranium enrichment to over 3.67 percent.

Iran maintains that the new measures are not designed to harm the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but to save the accord by creating a balance in the commitments.

Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, U.S., Britain, France, and Germany) on July 14, 2015, reached a conclusion over the text of the JCPOA.

The accord took effect in January 2016 and was expected to terminate all nuclear-related sanctions against Iran all at once, but its implementation was hampered by the U.S. policies and its eventual withdrawal from the deal. On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the nuclear accord.

Following the U.S. withdrawal, Iran and the remaining parties launched talks to save the deal.

However, the EU's failure to ensure Iran's economic interests forced Tehran to stop honoring certain commitments, including an unlimited rise in the stockpile of enriched uranium.

Spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi recently said that the country's enriched uranium stockpile has reached 360 to 370 kilograms.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	284138.8
IFX	3767.05

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,226 rials
GBP	51,067 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$59.25/b
WTI	\$55.10/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.24/b
Gold	\$1,522.25/oz
Silver	\$18.43/oz
Platinum	\$936.50/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Over \$666m worth of commodities traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – During weekdays ending up to August 29, while 680.291 million tons (MT) of commodities worth over \$666 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the trading volume and value experienced a growth of 169 percent and 81 percent, respectively.

According to the report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 223.889 MT of various products worth near \$281 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 219.577 MT of steel, 1.460 MT of copper, 2.720 MT of aluminum, 120 MT of molybdenum concentrates and 14 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.



The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 456.052 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$397 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 209.9 MT of VB feed stock, 119.394 MT of bitumen, 43.319 MT of polymer products, 24.589 MT of chemical products, 280 MT of insulation, 50.500 MT of lube cut oil as well as 5.420 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 350 MT of commodities were traded on the side market of IME. On June 24, during the meeting of IME shareholders, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad said that this exchange has prepared ten macro plans to improve its performance during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

He mentioned development of underlying assets through existing instruments, development of financial instruments for commodity-backed securities, expansion of market size and depth, increasing cooperation with other organizations, and strengthening IME brand as some of the mentioned macro plans.

Soltani-Nejad has previously announced that IME accounted for 39 percent of the value of the total trades in the Iranian capital market during the past Iranian calendar year.

He put the value of IME trades at 1.78 quadrillion rials (about \$42.3 billion) in the past year. The value of trades at IME rose 52 percent in the past calendar year from its previous year. Over 24.84 million tons of commodities valued at 884.3 trillion rials (about \$21.05 billion) were traded at the physical market of IME, showing seven percent fall in the amount and 77 percent rise in the worth of trades year on year.

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was one of the achievements of the country's exchange markets during the past year. In this due, IME launched "option" in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products. Option is a contract which gives the buyer (the owner or holder of the option) the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specified strike price prior to or on a specified date, depending on the form of the option.

More bad news for Germany's economy

The bad news just keeps on coming for Europe's largest economy, Germany.

According to forbes.com, already we know that the German economy contracted in 0.1% in the second quarter. But mounting evidence now suggests that the third quarter will offer a repeat performance of declining output. If that happens the country would officially be in a recession, which is generally defined as two back-to-back quarters of negative growth.

A recent report from London-based research company Capital Economics highlights the new information: The released data reinforced the impression that Germany's economy is losing momentum.

The 2.2% m/m fall in German retail sales in July suggests that household spending, which barely rose in Q2, will not offer much support for the economy in the current quarter either. Or put another way, consumer spending, which accounts for around half the German economy is faltering.

The news comes as trade tensions continue to increase around the world. Although most of the publicity surrounds tit-for-tat retaliations between China and the U.S., the effects are felt by manufacturers across the globe.

IFB base market's amended regulations for more transparency, efficiency

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – The amendments made in the regulations of the base market of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) exchange market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), are aimed to boost transparency and also efficiency in this market, IFB Managing Director Amir Hamooni said in a press conference on Saturday.

As reported, the amendments have been announced last week and will be enforced for trades in the IFB base market as of September 16.

Hamooni said the new regulations will enable the market makers to double the threshold which will lead to higher liquidity of stock.

He also said that these amendments will make it possible for two more types of investment funds to enter the base market.

Preparing the amendments started 18 months ago, some 3-4 years after establishment of the base market in IFB, and they are hoped to create more transparency in the market, better trades and better governance for the listed companies, IFB managing director further highlighted.

Elaborating on the activity of the base market, Hamooni said the companies that



are not accepted in the first and second markets of IFB can trade their shares in this market, adding that the only perqui-

site for them is to be a public joint stock (PJSC) company.

There are already 182 companies active

Over \$6b of loans paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in 4 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade announced that in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), some 260.7 trillion rials (nearly \$6.2 billion) worth of bank loans have been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress.

Over 37,840 projects and production units received bank loans in the mentioned time span, IRNA reported on Saturday.

In late July, the industry ministry released a report which indicated that banks and credit institutions provided both industrial and mining sectors with 300 trillion rials (about \$7.14 billion) worth of loans in the first two months of the current Iranian year (March 21-May 21), registering a 41.5 percent rise year on year.

According to the data released by the ministry, the total amount of loans offered to the country's economic sector stood at 923 trillion rials (about \$21.97 billion) in the mentioned period.

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has defined supporting production as its major plan in the current Iranian calendar year, which is named the Year of Pickup in Production, and in this regard CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has several times stressed that



supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system in current year. In early May, the official outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

Iranian bank to open branch in India

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran's Bank Pasargad is going to open a branch in India in the next couple of months to help boost trade between the two countries by providing a channel to bypass the U.S. sanctions which have blocked international banking channels, Financial Express reported.

According to Iran's Ambassador to India Ali Chegeni, Bank Pasargad has received all necessary approvals including from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to start commercial banking operations.

"It [Bank Pasargad] will start operations in 2-3 months," he said on the sidelines of an industry event in India.

Back in July 2018, Indian Express reported that India approved a proposal from Iran's Bank Pasargad to open a branch in Mumbai.

According to the report, the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) had earlier approached RBI suggesting that they should allow the entry of Iranian banks into India to facilitate bilateral trade.

Meanwhile, sources said two banks from Iran, Bank Pasargad and Parsian Bank, had applied to set up branches in India, while another Iranian lender, Saman Bank, had sent an application to set up a



representative office.

The Indian government cleared only the Tehran Stock Exchange-listed Bank Pasargad's proposal for a branch in Mumbai, while the other Iranian banks' plans are yet to get the green light.

The presence of an Iranian bank in India will open up a significant financial channel that will ensure the smooth flow of funds between the two countries. India imports a large quantity of oil from Iran and has committed an investment of \$500 million for the development of the crucial Chabahar port.

Iran targets \$50b in exports to neighboring countries

1 → Back in July, Modares Khiabani had said that following the government's policies for increasing the country's trade with the neighbors, new commercial attachés are going to be sent to neighboring countries.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that Iranian government is pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21).

Iran shares border with fifteen countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

Based on the data published by TPO, the value of trade with the neighboring countries



stood at over \$36.5 billion in the past Iranian calendar year, that is about 41 percent of the

country's total non-oil trade in the mentioned time span.

CBI mainly focuses on controlling liquidity, supporting domestic production: Hemmati

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said the bank's current programs are mainly focused on controlling liquidity and supporting domestic production, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Speaking in the 30th edition of Islamic Banking Conference in Tehran, Abdolnasser Hemmati mentioned some of CBI's major plans and programs for the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21).

The official underlined the significant impact of the bank's new policies on the country's currency market and economy, noting that "reforming the country's banking system is a long-term process which cannot be achieved over night."

Hemmati stated that CBI has neither overlooked nor postponed

reformation of banking system and the bank has always had modification of banking system on its agenda.

"CBI is taking all necessary measures to control the foreign exchange market in order to maintain market equilibrium in the country," he added.

"The foreign exchange market is stable, and the reinjection of exports revenues into NIMA are getting better which is a sign that the country's businessmen and traders are welcoming CBI's recent foreign exchange policies," he said.

He further mentioned the downward trend of inflation in the country over the past few months, saying that most of the inflation in the market is pertained to the services sector which is being closely monitored and will be controlled in near future.



NIMA supplies over €7.19b for imports of basic goods

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) has supplied €7.197 billion for imports of basic goods since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21) up to August 29, IRNA reported on Friday.

As reported, the trend of offering foreign currency earned from exports in NIMA has been increasing in recent months, following the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s announcement of new policies on re-injection of those earnings into the domestic economy via NIMA.

CBI unveiled a directive package on May 20 which provides the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their



foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the new directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present

at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into NIMA, and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

As for other exporters, at least 50 percent of the total earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and a maximum 20 percent could be distributed in form of hard currency and the rest can be used for imports.

NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned

foreign currency to domestic forex market. It was inaugurated to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

In mid-November last year, CBI issued the instructions on return details of the hard currency earned by exporters back to the domestic financial system.

The instructions, aimed to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through NIMA, mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee bringing back to the country the foreign currency amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

NIOC Goal for indigenizing oil industry equipment over 70% realized

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Many of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s contracts with domestic manufacturers of oil industry equipment have reached over 70 percent of physical progress, IRNA reported on Saturday.

As reported, of the total 88 contracts for indigenizing necessary oil industry equipment, 33 contracts which were signed for manufacturing 10 major equipment have witnessed more than 70 percent progress, and another 50 contracts have also had over 49 percent of physical progress on average.

The mentioned contracts have been signed with capable domestic companies for manufacturing all kinds of oil industry equipment, including down hole tools and equipment, pumps, types of drill bits, all kinds of control and safety valves, and accessory equipment, as well as various pipe types, explosion-proof electro motors, turbines, compressors, alloy steels, drilling measuring tools, and etc.

Following the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions and the problems caused by high volatility and rising exchange rates in the



country's currency market, Iran's oil ministry was faced with some problems regarding the supply of necessary equipment in the oil industry, so it applied new strategies to focus more on domestic production.

In this regard, NIOC and its affiliated companies, like National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC), signed some deals with domestic manufacturers to produce the necessary equipment inside the country.

NIOC plans to award the production of 300 new equipment items to domestic producers by the end of the current calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

Earlier in August, NIDC's managing director announced that the company was collaborating with 230 local manufacturers, especially in Khuzestan Province, to indigenize drilling equipment.

"NIDC's Technology and Engineering Department has indigenized 2,000 pieces of drilling equipment since 1997, most of which are being used in offshore and onshore rigs," Abdollah Mousavi was quoted as saying by the Oil Ministry news portal.

OPEC's Barkindo writes inspiring foreword on NJ Ayuk's African energy Book

As OPEC intensifies its engagement with Africa, Secretary-General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo said there's no better time for the analysis of OPEC membership benefits put forth in the newest book by leading African energy attorney, NJ Ayuk.

As per Vanguardngr.com, Sanusi said "It is most fitting at this time that Mr. Ayuk describes how important it is for Africa's producing nations to be part of the discussion on global strategies that will affect their fortunes," Barkindo, who wrote the book's foreword, said.

"In today's oil and gas industry, coalitions are essential and Mr. Ayuk proves that point by discussing the advantages that our newest members from Africa have gained by joining OPEC." OPEC is the subject of Chapter 3 in Ayuk's book, Billions at Play: The Future of African Energy, which will be published this October.

Half of OPEC's 14 members are on the African continent. Libya joined in 1962, followed by Algeria in 1969. Nigeria came on board in 1971; and Angola followed in 2007.

More recently, the organization welcomed Gabon, which rejoined in 2016, and Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Congo, which became members in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

With 130 billion barrels of proven crude oil reserves,

Africa is a frontier filled with promise, Barkindo said — and Ayuk does a masterful job of showing how both OPEC and the continent benefit from increased African participation in the organization.

■ The oil and gas industry

Nigeria's rig count remains unchanged, as OPEC appreciates by two "Mr. Ayuk's book shows how the oil and gas industry can unleash economic development and prosperity across the continent but cautions that producing nations will achieve more in collaboration than individually," said Barkindo.

Adding that, "In particular, he explains how the Declaration of Cooperation has helped stabilize the market, providing economic opportunities that were previously unavailable." Above all, in his chapter about OPEC, called A Place at the Table: Africa and OPEC, Ayuk presents a balanced investigation of how OPEC needs Africa and vice versa.

He doesn't gloss over the fact that the Middle East's once-prolific energy basins are declining — making the prospect of big discoveries in Africa one way for OPEC to wrest control over more of the world's oil supply.

At the same time, he points out the benefits that African nations can accrue as OPEC members, including access to



information, financial aid, and the chance to have a voice in setting global policy.

Further, the OPEC chapter discusses the possible impact of NOPEC — the pending American legislation that seeks to protect domestic interests from what it perceives as price manipulation.

"There is no stone left unturned in Mr. Ayuk's analysis of Africa and OPEC," Barkindo said. NJ Ayuk is founder and CEO of Pan-African corporate law conglomerate, Centurion Law Group; Founder and Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber; and co-author of Big Barrels: African Oil and Gas and the Quest for Prosperity (2017).

Global energy industry in transition to knowledge-based one: WEC chair

The global energy industry was currently in a transition to a knowledge-based one mixed with the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution era, World Energy Council (WEC) chair said.

As per hellenicshippingnews.com, WEC Chair Younghoon David Kim told a meeting with foreign correspondents in Seoul that the global energy sector had moved from the resource-based one, where oil exporting countries dominated the most, to the capital-intensive one.

Kim said the energy sector was currently

in a transition to the knowledge-based one, where a county with advanced energy technologies can dominate without energy resources such as crude oil and natural gas.

Under the Fourth Industrial Revolution era, energy efficiency could be enhanced exponentially, for example through the convergence between electronic devices and artificial intelligence (AI), which automatically controls temperature at home with a machine-learning solution.

Microbes can be used to create clean

energy and raise prosperity, Kim said, citing the radiation-eating bacteria, an extremophile that can survive cold, dehydration and vacuum while eating nuclear waste.

Kim said a variety of microbes had been found such as the ones creating electron and hydrogen.

However, commercializing the microbes as energy sources may take time as it requires technological breakthroughs.

Kim took office as WEC chair three years ago.

The 24th triennial World Energy Con-

gress will be held in September in Abu Dhabi under the theme of "Energy for Prosperity". It expected to attract about 10,000 delegates from around 150 countries.

The WEC was launched in 1923 in the name of World Power Conference to rebuild the war-torn electricity networks at the post-WWI Europe, led by electricity engineers from 24 countries. It renamed it the current WEC in 1989.

Kim is also the chairman and chief executive of the South Korea-based renewable energy giant Daesung Group.

IRENA takes renewable innovation and climate action to Asia

Today, more than 40 percent of the world's total installed renewable energy capacity is in Asia and the region is responsible for 60 percent of all renewable energy jobs worldwide. As the global energy transformation advances across the world, Asia has become its catalyst.

As stated by ewind.es, in support of these objectives, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) will host and participate in a series of high-level renewable energy events in Bangkok from 2 to 5 September, spanning the ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting, the Agency's second Innovation Day, and the UN's Asia-Pacific Climate Week — the latter taking place only a few weeks ahead of the Climate Action Summit to be convened by the UN Secretary General.

Domestically however, renewables have become essential to the achievement of sustainable development goals and climate ambitions.

The Agency's Director-General Francesco La Camera will engage with Southeast Asia's policy makers and further the Agency's agreement to support their energy transitions on 4 September during the ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM). IRENA will take part in the Joint Opening Ceremony of the 37th AMEM and Associated Meetings and the 2019 ASEAN Energy Business Forum.

■ The emerging innovations

The regional event will connect experts and policy makers and showcase emerging innovations that support a broader and faster uptake of innovative renewable energy. IRENA's Director-General will attend the opening, and with Permanent Secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Energy Kulit Sombatsiri, deliver a keynote welcoming addresses.

Innovation Day Thailand: Solutions for Renewable-powered Future will welcome a keynote address from International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director, Dr. Fatih Birol, followed by a number of sessions covering solutions to decarbonise road transport, digital solutions for renewable power, and solutions for energy storage.

On 2 September, IRENA will participate in Asia-Pacific Climate Week — a UN organized event designed to advance regional climate action and support the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement on climate change in Asia-Pacific countries.

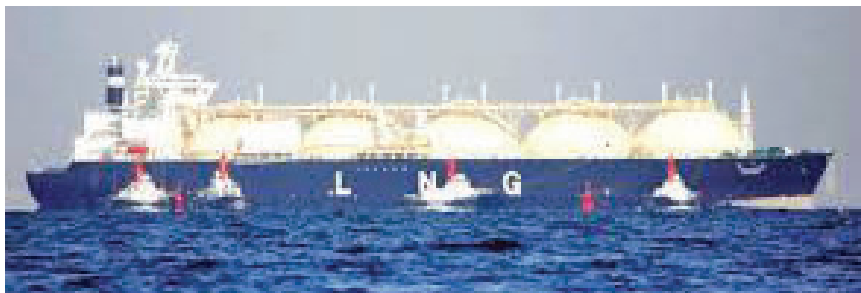
The Agency's focus will be on the NDC Dialogue, a platform that will allow countries to exchange lessons learnt and best practices in the implementation of NDCs and debate issues such as financing strategies and solutions to the pollical and technical challenges associated with NDCs.



At the Action Hub, IRENA will present the socio-economic benefits of the energy transition and facilitate the energy transition breakout session on energy efficiency in Asia.

On 3 September IRENA will facilitate the energy transition session on addressing energy challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region, and an IRENA organized side event on innovative solutions for a renewable-powered future will discuss innovations the various benefits of leveraging synergies among them and other innovations in market design, business models and system operation.

Japan imports first LNG cargo from China as utilities try to cut costs



Japan imported its first cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from China in July as utilities from the world's biggest buyer of the fuel seek out new suppliers and try to lower costs amid tough competition at home.

According to af.reuters.com, the shipment illustrates the increasing flexibility of the Asian LNG market. China has become the world's second-largest LNG buyer amid a

surge in domestic gas usage. However, the country has started to re-export shipments amid a lull in summer gas consumption and Japanese buyers are scooping up the cargoes to reduce their fuel expenses.

The cargo of 70,560 tons of LNG was shipped from the Hainan LNG Terminal, which is operated by state-owned CNOOC Ltd, to Chita near Nagoya, where Toho Gas

jointly operates an LNG terminal with JERA, according to a source familiar with the matter.

It was delivered at \$5.68 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), below Japan's average import cost of \$9.50 per mmBtu for LNG during July, according to Ministry of Finance data released on Thursday.

Toho Gas declined to comment when contacted by Reuters. CNOOC did not immediately reply for a request for comment.

A search through Japan's official trade statistics show it is the first LNG cargo from China since 1988, when the Japanese government started publishing import and export figures.

Prices for spot LNG in Asia LNG-AS have sunk to near record lows in recent weeks as a wave of new supply from the United States and Australia comes onto the market.

The decline in spot market prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) is pushing Japanese

utilities in Japan to be more aggressive in price reviews built into traditional long-term contracts linked to oil prices.

They are also buying more LNG on the spot market as part of this shift in approach. Japanese utilities have previously favored stability of supply over price, partly because they could pass on the costs to consumers.

The liberalization of Japan's energy markets means the old guard gas and electric utilities are losing customers to new entrants and they are trying to cut costs.

With summer temperatures peaking, Japanese electric utilities have also been rushing to replenish stocks of the fuel to use to generate power for air conditioning.

Hokuriku Electric has bought a spot LNG cargo for delivery in November, while Hokkaido Electric is seeking a cargo for delivery the same month, industry sources told Reuters this week.

A dramatic U-turn in Mexican oil and gas

By Nick Cunningham

Mexico may do a U-turn, and call on the private sector once again to boost oil and gas production.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has tried to put the brakes on the country's historic shift towards privatization that began under his predecessor. Former President Enrique Peña Nieto pushed through a privatization plan that ended seven decades of state control over the oil sector.

Pemex remained in state hands, but oil and gas exploration and production was opened up to international companies. Pemex partnered with many of them, but private companies were also allowed to take the lead.

After his election last year, AMLO tried to change course. He signaled an indefinite end to oil auctions, citing disappointing results from them private companies. He also shifted back and forth on the integrity of prior auctions, at times suggesting that they were done in a corrupt fashion.



At the same time, AMLO tried to resuscitate Pemex, proposing massive billion-dollar capital injections into the state-owned company and pushing for Pemex to return to its historic place as the dominant entity in the energy sector.

The problem for Pemex is that it has become the most indebted oil company in the world, sitting on over \$100 billion in debt. It presides over aging oil fields that have been in production for decades, with output suffering from a steep decline that began in the mid-2000s.

■ Mexico produced 1.67 million barrels

Mexico produced 1.67 million barrels per day (mb/d) in July, roughly half the total from a peak in 2004. Falling production and rising debt are a toxic mix, especially since reviving output will require ratcheting up spending. Lower oil prices over the last few years have only accelerated

and magnified the financial problems at the company.

Pemex has seen its credit rating cut by multiple credit agencies over the past year. For instance, in June, Fitch Rating slashed Pemex's credit rating to BBB from BBB+.

Adding to the complexity is the fact that Pemex's predicament creates problems for the Mexican government. Pemex is a huge source of revenue for the budget, but because of its declining position, the government is trying to step in and help. But any effort from the government is a drag on public finances.

Tax cuts and capital injections, for instance, pose sovereign credit risks. But any decision to cut spending, which in theory would be better for the state budget, could hollow out Pemex. This is the conundrum that AMLO has been unable to find a way out of.

For instance, an expensive and questionable decision to spend more than \$7 billion on a new oil refinery could simply create another white elephant. Pemex's refineries are already loss-making, and operate below capacity. Spending billions of dollars on a new one raises red flags.

Finally, the economy is slowing as global headwinds have not spared Mexico. "Lower growth, together with changes to energy policy and the role of Pemex, introduce risks to Mexico's medium-term fiscal outlook," Moody's stated in June when it cut its credit outlook for Mexico to negative. "Unpredictable policy-making is undermining investor confidence and medium-term economic prospects." The economy did not grow in the second quarter.

■ The private companies

Against this backdrop, AMLO is considering an about-face. The FT reports that the Mexican President is poised to allow Pemex to resume joint ventures with private companies next year, and could allow for private sector exploration offshore as well.

The FT said that AMLO met with Claudio Descalzi, the CEO of ENI. The Italian oil company has had some success in oil exploration in offshore Mexico since the energy privatization law earlier this decade. The meeting highlights AMLO's newfound interest in the role of international companies.

The FT reports that AMLO is trying to head off another credit downgrade for Pemex. Were that to occur, the rating could fall into junk territory, which could force billions of dollars of capital from institutional investors to sell off Pemex's debt. If Pemex is subsequently dragged down further, that in turn would create more sovereign risks.

Instead, pushing more of the burden on the private sector, the argument goes, would relieve pressure on both the Mexican state and Pemex.

"We are working with the president so farm-outs (joint-ventures) can start up in 2020," one Mexican official told the FT. "For deep-water, it would all be for the private sector."

Analysts believe that the decision, should it occur, would send a positive signal to international investors, especially since it follows the recent agreement to end pricing dispute over natural gas imports.

AMLO wanted to return Pemex to its 20th Century glory. But he now seems poised to turn the playbook of his predecessor.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Enel Green Power awarded 190 MW of wind power in Indian green energy tender

Enel Green Power ("EGP"), through its Indian renewable subsidiary EGP India(1), has been awarded the right to sign a 25-year energy supply contract for a 190 MW wind farm in India. The project was awarded under the 1.8 GW Eighth Tranche of the national wind tender issued by the government company Solar Energy Corporation of India ("SECI").

As per ewind.es, "We are continuing to grow our presence in India through this significant tender award," said Antonio Cammisecra, Head of Enel Green Power. "India has already become a giant in the global renewable arena, backed by its highly competitive and sophisticated tender system.

We are contributing to this vibrant renewable market through our wealth of technological expertise and our sustainability-driven approach. This success in our second wind tender award in India is a strong demonstration of our commitment, capabilities and competitiveness in the Indian renewable energy market."

Under the energy supply contract to be assigned to EGP pursuant to today's tender, the wind farm will supply specified volumes of energy over a 25-year period to SECI.

Happy birthday, nuclear arms race

By Joe Cirincione

Defenseone – If the nuclear arms race has a birthday, it has to be August 29. Seventy years ago, in 1949, the Soviet Union became the second nation to explode an atomic bomb, obliterating America's monopoly on fission weapons. The world would never be the same.

Some might argue that the arms race actually began a decade earlier, in August 1939, when Albert Einstein sent President Franklin D.

Roosevelt his famous letter. As urged by his fellow scientists, Einstein warned that new scientific discoveries suggest that "it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium" and so create "extremely powerful bombs of a new type."

"They believed Hitler was already working on such a bomb. But Hitler was not.

Nor Japan. We were racing with ourselves. Einstein later called the letter "the one great mistake in my life." Without the letter and with better intelligence, it is possible that the Manhattan Project would have never advanced beyond basic research.

There would never have been an atomic bomb. We did not need it to defeat Germany or Japan. The atomic bomb was an historic accident.



Some might say that the arms race began 74 years ago, with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"Hiroshima has shaken the whole world," Stalin told his scientists, "The balance has been broken. Build the Bomb — it will remove the great danger from us."

At the time, U.S. officials believed that it would take years for the Soviet Union to duplicate the American Bomb.

Air Force leaders calculated that they would only ever need 60 atomic weapons, because there simply weren't all that many targets.

Still, after the 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin crisis that same year, President Truman ordered an increase in weapons production. By late 1949, the United States had more than 200 atomic bombs.

The Soviet test on August 29 shattered assumptions. The 20-kiloton test of a plutonium-based bomb dubbed "Joe-1" by U.S. intelligence was similar in yield and design to the weapons tested at Trinity and exploded over Nagasaki. U.S. officials panicked.

Truman, more fearful of the political consequences than the military ones, raised the stakes, accelerating the program to build the "Super," or hydrogen bomb. David Lilienthal, chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, wrote in his diary, "More and better bombs."

Where will this lead...is difficult to see. We keep saying, "We have no other course"; what we should say is "We are not bright enough to see any other course."

Many of the scientists responsible for the first atomic weapons, including Robert Oppenheimer and James Conant, strongly opposed the "Super." The AEC asked for the advice of its General Advisory Committee on the entire nuclear weapons program.

Oppenheimer and Conant joined the unanimous opinion of the eight-member group against the hydrogen bomb.

They believed it to be a weapon of genocide: "The use of this weapon would bring about the destruction of innumerable human lives; it is not a weapon which can be used exclusively for the destruction of material installations of military or semi-military purposes."

Its use therefore carries much further than the atomic bomb itself the policy of extermination of civilian populations.

"Even if the Soviets developed the H-bomb, they argued, the United States could deter its use with atomic weapons."

These scientists' views did not prevail. Truman asked if the Soviets could build an H-bomb.

When told that they could, Truman believed that politically he had no choice. While publicly calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and agreeing with then-Senate Majority Leader Scott Lucas, D-Illinois, that "the future of civilization depends on atomic control," Truman secretly ordered the building of the H-bomb.

"The idea of achieving security through national armaments is, at the present state of military technique, a disastrous illusion," Albert Einstein wrote in March 1950, "The armament race between the USA and the USSR, originally supposed to be a preventive measure, assumes hysterical character."

Within a few years of the Soviet test, the United States detonated the first hydrogen device in the southern Pacific Ocean on Nov. 1, 1952. It was over 500 times more powerful than the Joe-1 or Nagasaki bombs, exploding with a force of 10.4 million tons of dynamite — 10.4 megatons.

The Soviet Union tested its first fusion device a year later, on August 12, 1953. Weapons that scientists thought genocidal were soon deployed by the thousands.

This nuclear heritage is now our responsibility. Foolish suggestions, such as President Donald Trump's fantasy that H-bombs could stop hurricanes or President Vladimir Putin's fantasy of nuclear cruise missiles powered by mini-Chernobyls, trivialize the immense power of these weapons.

They cannot destroy tropical storms but they certainly can incinerate cities.

Simple steps such as renewing the soon-to-expire New START treaty and pledging never to be the nation that starts a nuclear war could get us back onto the track of nuclear threat reduction.

Our birthday wish? That we will be bright enough to find a new course!

It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments: Falk

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Richard Anderson Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, says "Both Iran and the United States have rather firm positions."

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights says "It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments, much less strengthen them, under JCPOA, unless the U.S. agrees to roll back present sanctions on Iran in a convincing manner."

He says "In contrast, it is difficult to imagine Trump reducing sanctions unless he can point to some sort of victory that places new restrictions on the international regulatory regime governing."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The US President Donald Trump has driven up the pressure against Iran while at the same time suggested he might be willing to talk to Iranian leaders.

How serious he is in this offer? Does he really want to engage Iran diplomatically?

A: Trump is impulsive, acts inconsistently, and is almost impossible to interpret accurately in advance of his actions. He seems to view foreign policy choices as transactions with a gain/loss transactional connection as measured by his sense of impacts on domestic American politics.

On balance, it would seem sensible for Iranian leaders to test whether Trump is sincere about a willingness to negotiate a way out of present confrontational diplomacy, but without investing their own credibility or political composure by doing so.

A show of receptivity, perhaps with a condition asserted that hostile actions be suspended with respect to Gulf tanker navigation, might be an appropriate way to see whether there exists a potential opening for restorative diplomacy aimed at crisis resolution.



■ As 2020 election gesture, it is important to Trump to talk on the phone or in person with Iranian officials. In this regard, some experts believe that he should give special concessions such as oil waivers to Iran so that they come to negotiation table. Do you think that Trump is ready to make any kind of concessions?

A: As I have indicated, it is difficult to assess what Trump might be prepared to do if he believes there would be a positive payoff in his 2020 electoral prospects by talking peace directly with Iranian leaders. On the one side, is Trump's pledge back in 2016 to avoid further American involvement in Middle East wars, and presenting himself as someone who has avoided costly and failed international adventures.

On the other side is the appointment of war-mongering and Islamophobic in-

dividuals as his principal foreign policy advisors, Bolton and Pompeo.

Also, Trump's belligerent political personality always seeks to project a tough guy, bullying image in dealing with foreign governments with which there are active conflictual relations.

■ It seems as if Trump administration wants Iran to withdraw from JCPOA.

Will be the US-Israeli interests better provided in case of Iran's withdrawal?

A: It seems that the Trump objective is to reach a new agreement on Iran's nuclear agreement that he can claim gives Israel and Saudi Arabia more assurance that Iran will not have the means to cross the nuclear threshold covertly or in a short period of time.

These supposed concerns were his main argument relied upon in repudiating and withdrawing the U.S. from the

JCPOA, and reimposing and extending harsh sanctions. These concerns hide to some extent the real motivations that were to please Israel and repudiate a major achievement of the Obama presidency.

Of course, it seems unlikely that Iran would give Trump such a victory in the context of either revalidating JCPOA or reaching a new agreement.

In that event, the further unraveling of JCPOA confronts Trump with a dilemma, either acknowledging the failure of his approach or escalating the tensions by further escalating tensions with Iran, and risking the outbreak of war.

■ We are witnessing French President Emmanuel Macron efforts to convince Trump to rejoin JCPOA.

How serious should we take these efforts? Shall we think of them as a US coordinated plan?

A: There is no firm evidence to support the view that U.S. diplomacy with respect to Iran would cooperate with France in overcoming the present impasse. As my prior responses suggest, Trump would have to be willing to back down if there is a renewal of the U.S. commitment to JCPOA, or deepen the already dangerous crisis.

I suspect that it is possible that the Macron role might give the parties more time to figure out whether they can find a mutually acceptable face-saving compromise.

Both Iran and the United States have rather firm positions.

It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments, much less strengthen them, under JCPOA, unless the U.S. agrees to roll back present sanctions on Iran in a convincing manner.

In contrast, it is difficult to imagine Trump reducing sanctions unless he can point to some sort of victory that places new restrictions on the international regulatory regime governing Iran's nuclear program as a result of the earlier agreement.

The South Korea-Japan intel pact and America's destructive role in east Asia

By Stu Smallwood

ANTIWAR – The South Korean government's decision to back out of an intelligence sharing pact with Japan last week inspired great distress and irrational concern from US politicians, pundits and the US-Korean think tank community. Some even declared it the beginning of the end of the US-South Korean alliance.

This overreaction says much about the true role of the US in East Asia and where South Korea stands within the American sphere of influence.

The axing of the intelligence pact – signed in 2016 by disgraced former president Park Geun-hye – is the ultimate conclusion of an unjust trade war started by Japan. It marks a significant turning point in the post-World War II Japanese-South Korean relationship established by the 1965 Normalization Treaty.

Tim Shorrock detailed in his most recent piece at The Nation that US pressure played a major role in the South Korean government agreeing to the 1965 treaty in the first place.

Though the financial package provided through this agreement was a boon to industrial development, no compensation was given to individual South Korean victims of Japanese colonialism and Japan was never forced to sincerely come to terms with the underlying crimes of their imperial era.

The US role in overlooking questions of historical wrongdoing and justice leading up to both the 1965 treaty and ultimately the 2016 intelligence pact must not be ignored.

Nor should we fail to acknowledge the reason America was so keen on ensuring firm ties between the two countries to begin with, for it says much about South Korea's status in the alliance today.

Empire of Injustice
Of course, it makes perfect sense that the US has never had any interest in reconciliation or reparation for victims of Japanese imperialism. Justice is the last thing on the US wish list.

The US made extensive use of Nazi scientist in the nascent stages of its space program and for general development of rocket technology through Operation Paperclip. The US collaborated with Japanese biological weapons researchers and used the fruits of their studies against North Koreans during the Korean War.

The US has been "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world" for decades on end and – to stay in East Asia – completely obliterated Japan and North Korea as a policy in World War II and the Korean War while supporting a South Korean government that made frequent use of death squads to consolidate power post-Japanese occupation, backing massacres in the name of maintaining political stability.

No sane person would turn to the US as an arbiter of justice, especially when the criminals in question can be used to further US imperial aims.

Intelligence Pact Signified a United Front for US Dominance, not Peace in East Asia

As Shorrock discusses in his piece, the US pressured Seoul to come to terms with Japan in 1965 to create a coalition, now commonly referred to as the "trilateral alliance," against the communist bloc in East Asia.

This treaty was essentially an element of the US effort to co-opt the Japanese empire into its imperial

structure and make South Korea a frontline outpost.

Predictably, the alliance has carried on to the present day despite the fall of the Soviet Union.

A major cog in the Pacific front of the US Empire, it is now pointed directly at China, though policymakers often use North Korea as the convenient excuse for deploying weapons systems like THAAD that create unneeded tension in Sino-South Korean relations.

This remobilization of the remnants of Japan's empire contradicts what is considered conventional wisdom in America-centric foreign policy analysis: that the US is needed to maintain peace in the region.

The widening rift between Japan and South Korea is proof that this couldn't be further from the case.

Indeed, the ongoing US military presence in East Asia has prevented true reconciliation by forcing South Korea and Japan into this unnatural alliance. The resulting tension has created a vicious cycle of discontent and distrust.

This tension prolonged by the US has been turned around and used by US imperialists as proof they must "Take up the White Man's Burden" and keep the East Asians – supposedly ever so prone to conflict if left to their own devices – from each other's throats.

A central element of this mythology of the US as peacekeeper of East Asia is the notion that America somehow prevents Japan from remilitarizing.

Yet, as a junior partner in the empire, it was inevitable Japan would eventually redevelop its military. It does so now with American encouragement.

Though many South Koreans are concerned about this development, South Korea remains inextricably tied to the Japanese military through the US and will be required to work with it in the event of a future war in the region.

The unraveling of the intelligence pact is just the beginning of coming to terms with the inherent contradictions of the "trilateral alliance."

Where South Korea Stands in the US-Japanese Cabal

The overwhelming pro-Japanese reaction to canceling the intelligence pact also reveals in very clear terms which country the US truly values in the supposed alliance. When it is a question of Japanese or South Korean interests, the US will side with Japan every time, mainly because Japan's imperial aims (not the interests of the Japanese people) clearly align with America's imperial aims (not the interests of the American people): to contain China and keep Korea divided.

The unanimous and revealing paternalistic displeasure expressed by US officials after the Moon administration's expression of sovereignty indicates exactly where South Korea stands in the ladder of relevance in this unsavory anti-China display: firmly on the bottom rung. Indeed, situated on the frontline between the US bloc and the "other side" in East Asia (China-Russia-North Korea), South Korea will be the first target – the cannon fodder in the event of a war. Perhaps, then, it is time for South Korean leadership to seriously reconsider their relationship with the US, not just Japan.

US Reaction Suggests Fear and Loathing of Korean Peace

If this is indeed how the US reacts to a minor disturbance in its East Asian armada, it should be unambiguous how threatening the prospect of Korean peace and inter-Korean economic cooperation



would be to American imperial aims.

Peace could reconnect South Korea with the rest of the Eurasian continent and represent a massive economic boon.

It would also eliminate the pretext for requiring American military protection, allowing Seoul to seriously consider a position of neutrality in the context of a possible US conflict with China.

On the other hand, as a divided half, South Korea remains isolated in East Asia and is likely to choose American "security" in spite of potential economic consequences with regards to China down the road.

Given the overreaction to Seoul's rare display of independence this time, one can only imagine the American response to South Korea actually pursuing unilateral peace with the North.

Cutting intelligence ties with Japan already has pundits declaring another win for the DPRK (whenever South Korea acts against US interests, it is commonly presented as such – just another form of red-baiting).

The South Korean government is now firmly on the US's "Naughty List" and President Moon Jae-in shouldn't expect much support from Washington in terms of the peace process moving forward, regardless of which party wins the next presidential election.

At the same time, as South Korea focuses on Japan, peace with North Korea has become a backburner issue and the overarching role of the US in promoting the problematic Japanese-South Korean relationship and obstructing North-South diplomacy remains largely ignored.

Indeed, while it would be nice to think the annulment of the intelligence pact suggests an extended independence streak from South Korea, a presidential aide of Moon was quick to reassure panicky right-wingers at home and paternalistic overseers abroad that it would seek more military cooperation with the US as result of this development.

This should destroy any notion of the Moon administration striking out on its own to push the Korean peace process forward.

Sadly, it would seem that unless South Korean public sentiment forces President Moon to do something dramatic in the years ahead, the smart money is on the peace process having already maxed itself out.

Death of Democracy in UK

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's suspension has led to deep divisions among citizens. Some British citizens express their support for Johnson, while others are furious. Undoubtedly Britain's challenges to exit the EU will continue, even if it does. Many analysts believe that London will be at war with the effects of this phenomenon for at least ten years.

Here's a look at the latest news and analysis on the political and social conditions in England:

Brexit: MPs trying to block no deal make it more likely, says Boris Johnson

As BBC reported, The PM has warned MPs they are damaging his chances of getting a deal with the EU by trying to block a no-deal Brexit. Boris Johnson said the UK would leave the bloc "do or die" on 31 October - prompting some MPs to act to stop the UK leaving without an agreement. But he said the more MPs try to block a no-deal Brexit, "the more likely it is that we'll end up in that situation".

It comes after the PM announced he would be suspending Parliament for five weeks over September and October. Mr Johnson said it was to allow the government to hold a Queen's Speech and outline its "very exciting agenda" for the future. But critics claim his intention is to prevent any moves in the Commons to stop a no deal. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn called the PM's comments "complete nonsense".

He said he was working with all the opposition parties to "challenge the government" to stop a no-deal Brexit next week and he was "hopeful" of securing the backing of the Commons.

Senior Tory Sir Oliver Letwin said MPs still had time to act next week when they return from recess and before the suspension - which is expected to begin between 9 and 12 September and last until 14 October.

Former Prime Minister Sir John Major also confirmed he would be seeking a judicial review through the courts to oppose the suspension - known as prorogation - joining forces with campaigner Gina Miller.

Liberal Democrat leader Jo Swinson and Labour deputy leader Tom Watson have also offered their backing.

But a separate legal bid in Scotland to order a temporary halt to prorogation has been dismissed by a judge. However, a full hearing will now be heard next Tuesday, rather than Friday.

Mr Johnson has promised to "step up the tempo" on securing a deal with the EU before the Brexit deadline, with UK's negotiators set to meet their EU counterparts twice a week in the run-up to a crucial EU summit on 17 October.

Speaking to the BBC, he said: "In the last couple of weeks, there has been a great deal of movement from the EU side. They do think the UK is serious, as indeed we are, about doing a deal.

"We are working together now on serious ways that we can change the current agreement, get out of that mistake and do a deal."

A European Commission spokesperson said its "doors remain open" and insisted it had "demonstrated our willingness to work 24/7 throughout this long process".

But Ireland's Foreign Affairs Minister, Simon Coveney, said it was up to the UK to "propose alternatives that can solve those problems".

Media caption Simon Coveney says proposals have to be "credible"

As things stand, the UK is due to leave the EU on 31 October with or without a "divorce" agreement. The previous government, under Theresa May, agreed a deal with the EU but it was rejected by MPs three times. Mr Johnson said that deal would leave the UK being "bossed around by Brussels with no come back".

And while he would prefer to reach a new deal, he said he was willing to leave without one - and maintained the UK would leave by the October deadline "no ifs, no buts".

He said: "The best way to [leave with a deal] is if our friends and partners over the Channel don't think that Brexit can be somehow blocked by Parliament.

"As long as they think in the EU that Parliament might try to block Brexit or might even succeed in blocking Brexit, the less likely they are to give us the deal we want."

He added: "The weird thing is that the more the parliamentarians try to block the no-deal Brexit, the more likely it is that we'll end up in that situation.

"So the best thing now is for us to get on and make our points to our European friends with clarity and with vigour, and that's what we are doing."

After Backlash, Boris Johnson Promises to Speed Up Brexit Talks With Brussels

As New York Times reported, Faced with a growing backlash over his decision to suspend Parliament next month, Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Thursday sought to calm the furious reaction by promising to accelerate efforts to reach a new Brexit agreement with Brussels.

His statement came after another day of Brexit turbulence, two resignations from within his own party, and claims from critics that the government was trampling the conventions of the country's unwritten Constitution, undermining its democracy.

Mr. Johnson's move to suspend Parliament in Sep-



tember makes it significantly harder for lawmakers to pass legislation preventing Britain from leaving the European Union without an agreement — a step his critics were planning.

But in his latest swerve, Mr. Johnson promised that Britain's Brexit negotiators would sit down with their European counterparts twice a week through September, with the possibility of additional technical meetings, to try to reach a deal that would avert the risk of a cliff-edge departure.

"I have said right from my first day in office that we are ready to work in an energetic and determined way to get a deal done," Mr. Johnson said in comments released by his office. "While I have been encouraged with my discussions with E.U. leaders over recent weeks that there is a willingness to talk about alternatives to the anti-democratic backstop, it is now time for both sides to step up the tempo."

The two sides remain some distance apart on critical issues but are willing to work hard to find a way through, Downing Street said. But Mr. Johnson's latest intervention seemed to acknowledge the mounting concern about his suspension of Parliament, a decision that provoked spontaneous protests in London and other cities on Wednesday and prompted almost 1.5 million people to sign an online protest petition.

ImageMr. Johnson's stance suggests he may be preparing for an election in which he would run as a champion of the people against a Parliament opposed to the result of the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Mr. Johnson's stance suggests he may be preparing for an election in which he would run as a champion of the people against a Parliament opposed to the result of the 2016 Brexit referendum.

The most prominent figure to resign Thursday was the Conservative Party leader in Scotland, Ruth Davidson. Though she carefully avoided criticizing Mr. Johnson in a resignation letter and at a news conference, she nonetheless acknowledged her differences with him over Brexit. Ms. Davidson opposes a "no-deal" Brexit, but said she trusted Mr. Johnson's assurances that he does intend to reach an agreement with the European Union by Oct. 31 and appealed to lawmakers to support a new deal if one can be reached.

Lord Young of Cookham, a former cabinet minister, resigned as a Conservative whip in the House of Lords on Thursday, saying in a letter that Mr. Johnson's action "risks undermining the fundamental role of Parliament at a critical time in our history, and reinforces the view that the government may not have the confidence of the House for its Brexit policy."

Numerous reports, including ones by the Bank of England and the International Monetary Fund, have said a no-deal Brexit would be chaotic and would seriously damage Britain's economy. Leaks from the government itself have warned of the possibility of jammed ports and shortages of some medicines and fuel.

A majority of lawmakers are on record as opposing such an outcome. But Mr. Johnson, who became prime minister last month, has promised to leave the European Union on the scheduled date, Oct. 31, preferably with an agreement but without one if necessary.

In an overnight poll, far more Britons opposed than supported his suspension of Parliament, and angry comments calling it undemocratic peppered social media, many with the hashtag #StopTheCoup.

The speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, and a former Conservative chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, each called it a "constitutional outrage". Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the opposition Labour Party, labeled it "a sort of smash and grab our democracy."

Ruth Davidson announced in Edinburgh, Scotland, on

Thursday that she was resigning as leader of the Scottish Conservatives.

But Jacob Rees-Mogg, a hard-line Brexit supporter and the Conservative leader of the House of Commons, on Thursday defended the government's decision, arguing that there would still be adequate time to debate Brexit. The real threat to Britain's unwritten Constitution, he wrote in The Daily Telegraph, came from those who opposed Brexit and wanted to overturn the 2016 referendum decision to leave the bloc.

"The candyfloss of outrage that we've had over the past 24 hours — which is almost entirely confected — is from people who never wanted to leave the European Union," Mr. Rees-Mogg said in an interview with BBC radio.

The suspension procedure was normal, Mr. Rees-Mogg argued, because Mr. Johnson wanted to start a new session of Parliament.

While that is technically correct, the timing of the decision, the length of the suspension and its practical impact make the move look like a politically motivated tactic to stifle opposition in Parliament — an institution that Brexit was supposed to strengthen.

Mr. Johnson's stance also suggests that he is preparing for a general election campaign, in which he could present himself as the champion of the people against a Parliament intent on thwarting the outcome of the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Lawmakers are scheduled to return from summer vacation next week, but Mr. Johnson's move means that Parliament will be suspended some time the following week. That heads off any attempt by his opponents to tack on a few more days, a tactic they were considering.

Mr. Johnson had the option of continuing the current session of Parliament into October, but instead he is starting a new one, meaning that any pending legislation intended to bind his hands will not carry over. If lawmakers who want to prevent a no-deal Brexit cannot draft, introduce and pass legislation in the next two weeks, they will have to start again from scratch in mid-October.

In effect, Mr. Johnson has cut short the already dwindling time for parliamentary action, and packed it with new obstacles for opponents of a no-deal Brexit. Even so, they will try to legislate to prevent a no-deal Brexit when they resume work next week.

Another strand of opposition will come through the courts. One challenge is underway in the Scottish courts, and in London, the anti-Brexit campaigner Gina Miller has made an application for judicial review of Mr. Johnson's decision.

Legal experts are skeptical about her chances, and Jonathan Sumption, a former justice of the country's Supreme Court, told the BBC's Newsnight program that Ms. Miller's case was a "very, very long shot."

Ms. Miller has, however, previously upset such predictions. In 2017, she won a case preventing the previous prime minister, Theresa May, from bypassing Parliament on the decision to formally trigger Britain's departure from the European Union and start a two-year countdown.

Mr. Johnson's move involves some considerable risks, as the backlash has illustrated. Yet it has also underscored the ruthless focus of the prime minister and his team to succeed where Mrs. May failed, after the Brexit deal she negotiated with Brussels was rejected three times by Parliament.

His tactics also seem designed to reunite the political right and Brexit supporters behind the Conservatives, ahead of a looming general election that most analysts expected soon. Under Mrs. May, many of those voters had drifted away from the Conservatives, gravitating to smaller, pro-Brexit parties.

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

By Reese Erlich

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Sharp class divisions

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

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

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

And, as always, Washington is happy to take advantage of those complaints for its own odious purposes. In the old days, the CIA would slip wads of cash to dissidents in order to promote anti-government riots and install pro-U.S. regimes. That method worked for Iran in 1953 and Chile in 1973.

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

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

Color revolutions vs. genuine uprisings

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

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

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

Political trends in Hong Kong

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Workers in Korea vulnerable to dangerous conditions

By DA-SOLGOH

ASIATIMES — At an amusement park in Daegu, South Korea, a part-time worker recently lost his leg after falling off a roller coaster. While the worker was checking passengers' seatbelts, his leg got stuck under the roller coaster, and it started to move. Some argued that the park's poor safety guidelines were to blame for the accident. The guidelines state that a single worker can operate up to six rides.

Many have bemoaned the accident, while fiercely criticizing the amusement park for neglecting the safety of part-time workers. Alas, this is not the first time Koreans have been frustrated by employers'

failure to ensure safe working conditions, particularly for casual workers.

In 2016, a 19-year-old trainee lost his life after being hit by a subway train while fixing a screen door at a station in Seoul. The trainee had been dispatched from a subcontractor to Seoul Metro. An investigation into the accident found that Seoul Metro did not provide proper safety education to dispatched workers. The investigation also found that Seoul Metro had made the safety of workers a low priority to cut costs.

Since that tragedy, Korean society has been calling for a tightened Industrial Workers' Safety Law, and have started to view the safety of workers as an

important issue. But despite citizens' concerns, another tragic death caused by dangerous working conditions was reported this year.

A contract worker at a plant owned by Hyundai Steel died after being sucked into a conveyor belt. People were outraged at the accident, with some pointing out that as many as 30 workers, mostly dispatched from subcontractors, had died in Hyundai Steel plants over the past decade.

After the most recent accident at a Hyundai Steel plant, Changhyeon Shin, a lawmaker of the ruling United Democratic Party, stated that an audit had found 2,401 violations of safety rules in plants owned by Hyundai Steel. In response, Hyundai

Steel has belatedly set up a commission on workers' safety.

Article 5 of the Industrial Workers' Safety Law obliges employers to take preventive actions by ensuring safety at the workplace, by maintaining a safe environment. Employers have to provide information about safety and relevant guidelines to workers. As stated in the law, employers have to check how safe the conditions are for their workers, whether they are permanent or casual staff.

Korean employers must take this law seriously and prioritize the prevention of accidents, rather than shutting the stable door after the horses have bolted.

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Busy older stars outpace stellar youngsters

The oldest stars in our Galaxy are also the busiest, moving more rapidly than their younger counterparts in and out of the disk of the Milky Way, according to new analysis carried out at the University of Birmingham.

The findings provide fresh insights into the history of our Galaxy and increase our understanding of how stars form and evolve.

Researchers calculate that the old stars are moving more quickly in and out of the disc -- the pancake-shaped mass at the heart of the Galaxy where most stars are located.

A number of theories could explain this movement -- it all depends where the star is in the disc. Stars towards the outskirts could be knocked by gravitational interactions with smaller galaxies passing by. Towards the inner parts of the disc, the stars could be disturbed by massive gas clouds which move along with the stars inside the disc. They could also be thrown out of the disc by the movement of its spiral structure.

Dr. Ted Mackereth, a galactic archaeologist at the University of Birmingham, is lead author on the paper. He explains: "The specific way that the stars move tells us which of these processes has been dominant in forming the disc we see today. We think older



stars are more active because they have been around the longest, and because they were formed during a period when the Galaxy was a bit more violent, with lots of star formation happening and lots of disturbance from gasses and smaller satellite galaxies. There are lots of different processes at work, and untangling all these helps us to build up a picture of the history of our Galaxy."

The study uses data from the Gaia

satellite, currently working to chart the movements of around 1 billion stars in the Milky Way. It also takes information from APOGEE, an experiment run by the Sloan Digital Sky Survey that uses spectroscopy to measure the distribution of elements in stars, as well as images from the recently-retired Kepler space telescope.

Measurements provided by Kepler show how the brightness of stars

varies over time, which gives insights into how they vibrate. In turn, that yields information about their interior structure, which enables scientists to calculate their age.

The Birmingham team, working with colleagues at the University of Toronto and teams involved with the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, were able to take these different data strands and calculate the differences in velocity between different sets of stars grouped by age.

They found that the older stars were moving in many different directions with some moving very quickly out from the galactic disk. Younger stars move closely together at much slower speeds out from the disc, although they are faster than the older stars as they rotate around the Galaxy within the disc.

The eventual goal of the research is to link what is known about the Milky Way with information about how other galaxies in the universe formed, ultimately being able to place our Galaxy within the very earliest signatures of the universe.

The research is published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society and funded by the Science and Technology Facilities Council, the Royal Astronomical Society and the European Research Council.

(Source: Science Daily)

This mind blowing picture shows a galaxy, but those dots aren't glittering stars

There's more than one way to look at a galaxy. Once you strip out all the lowest-energy electromagnetic radiation, you're left with the most powerful processes the Universe can muster.

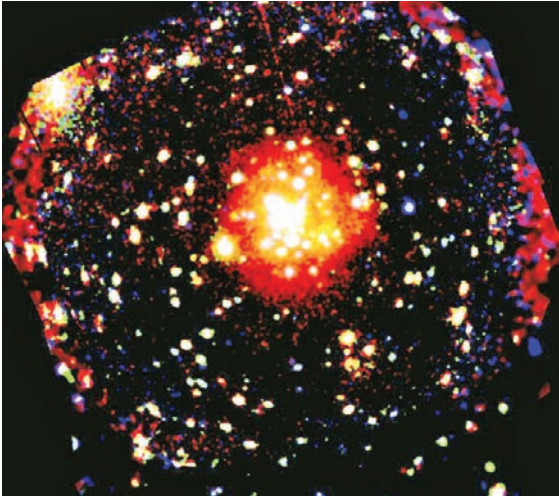
This is the Southern Pinwheel Galaxy, or Messier 83, located around 15 million light-years away in the Southern constellation Hydra. And you are looking at the X-ray radiation emanating from the galaxy's most energetic events - stars being born, stars dying, and black holes gobbling up matter.

Although it's only about half the size, M83 is a lot like the Milky Way, with a similar barred spiral structure. It's also one of the closest spiral galaxies; with its flat side facing us, we have a really good view. So astronomers study it to try and understand our own galaxy.

Like the Milky Way, M83 is forming new stars. In our own galaxy, three to four solar masses' worth of material goes into star formation every year, producing up to an estimated seven or so baby stars. M83 is also producing a handful of stars every year.

Star formation is an intense process that generates a lot of radiation, but it can be hard for us to see, especially 15 million light-years away. That's where the European Space Agency's XMM-Newton X-ray space telescope comes in, as it's optimized for picking out high-energy X-rays.

When turned to the galaxy, it sees star formation



as bright spots speckled across the galaxy. But that's not all it sees. Other cosmic processes also produce a high amount of radiation.

In fact, most of the bright dots you see in this image are processes that occur towards the end of a star's lifespan.

The supernova explosions that mark the end of the

life of massive stars as they collapse into neutron stars and black holes are extremely powerful, for instance. Binary systems where one object is a black hole or neutron star can also produce powerful X-rays, when they're actively accreting matter off their companion.

This region was imaged by XMM-Newton on a number of occasions over several years - in January 2003, January and August 2014, February and August 2015, and finally in January 2016.

The red region at the center of the image corresponds with the center of the galaxy, and the X-ray sources therein are associated with the extreme environment around a galactic nucleus, powered by a supermassive black hole.

At approximately 8 o'clock just outside the red region is a very bright spot indeed - barely changing over the years. That's what is known as an ultra-luminous X-ray source (ULX).

Astronomers believe this particular ULX is a binary with either a neutron star or black hole that is accreting matter from its companion at an exceptionally high rate.

These images are a truly rare glimpse into the workings of a galaxy, one we wouldn't see with our own eyes. But there's one more cool thing about M83 - it's so bright, it can be possible to view it in our night sky with the help of binoculars.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Compasses to point true north for first time in 360 years



At some point over the next two weeks, compasses at Greenwich will point true north for the first time in about 360 years.

And for some parts of the UK, this may not happen for another 20 years. Either way, it is a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The angle a compass needle makes between true north and magnetic north is called declination. As the magnetic field changes all the time, so does declination at any given location.

Over the past few hundred years in the UK, declination has been negative, meaning that all compass needles have pointed west of true north.

The line of zero declination, called the agonic, is moving westward at a rate of around 12 miles (20km) a year, experts say.

By next month, the compass needle will point directly to true north at Greenwich in London, before slowly turning eastwards.

The Royal Observatory Greenwich was established in 1676 and, from 1839, hosted the specialized magnetic observatory that made continuous measurements from 1840 onwards. In 1926, the instruments were moved to Abinger in Surrey, as electrified

railway lines had made it impossible to measure the magnetic field.

Dr. Ciaran Beggan, a geomagnetism scientist at the British Geological Survey's Lyell Centre in Edinburgh, said: "At some point in September, the agonic will meet zero longitude at Greenwich. This marks the first time since the observatory's creation that the geographic and geomagnetic coordinate systems have coincided at this location.

"The agonic will continue to pass across the UK over the next 15 to 20 years. By 2040, all compasses will probably point eastwards of true north.

"It is, at present, impossible to predict how the magnetic field will change over decades to centuries, so the compass may well point east of true north for another 360 years in the UK."

However, the experts have stressed that zero declination will have no impact on daily life.

Beggan added: "Compasses and GPS will work as usual -- there's no need for anyone to worry about any disturbance to daily life."

(Source: The Guardian)

Humans were altering the planet as early as 2000 BC



According to a new study, the Anthropocene began some 4,000 years earlier than previously thought. Archaeological data suggests humans were responsible for significant land-cover changes as early as 2000 B.C.

The Anthropocene is the current geological age. It is described as the period in which human activity has been the dominant influence on Earth's climate and the environment.

Some scientists contend the Anthropocene began during the late 19th or early 20th century, as the industrial revolution transformed the global economy. Others have argued the epoch began when nuclear weapons testing began altering the atmosphere. But the latest research contends the geological age began much earlier.

"The activities of farmers, pastoralists and hunter-gatherers had significantly changed the planet four millennia ago," Andrea Kay, an environmental scientist at the University of Queensland in Australia, said in a news release.

For the so-called ArchaeoGLOBE project, Kay and her colleagues compiled regional archaeological data and surveyed archaeologists with regional expertise about

land-cover changes across the globe over the last 10,000 years.

The responses for experts helped Kay and her research partners recreate a detailed timeline of humans' influence on global land cover.

"The modern rate and scale of anthropogenic global change is far greater than those of the deep past, but the long-term cumulative changes that early food producers wrought on Earth are greater than many people realize," Kay said. "Even small-scale, shifting agriculture can cause significant change when considered at large scales and over long time-periods."

Previous studies have shown humans have been altering tropical forests for 45,000 years.

Researchers hope that their latest work -- published this week in the journal Science -- will inspire other scientists to utilize the knowledge of archaeologists when tracing the history of human impacts on the earth's environment and atmosphere.

"Archaeologists possess critical data sets for assessing long-term human impacts to the natural world, but these remain largely untapped in terms of global-scale assessments," researcher Nicole Boivin said.

(Source: UPI)

Earth's fingerprint hints at finding habitable planets beyond the solar system

Two McGill University astronomers have assembled a "fingerprint" for Earth, which could be used to identify a planet beyond our Solar System capable of supporting life.

McGill Physics student Evelyn Macdonald and her supervisor Prof. Nicolas Cowan used over a decade of observations of Earth's atmosphere taken by the SCISAT satellite to construct a transit spectrum of Earth, a sort of fingerprint for Earth's atmosphere in infrared light, which shows the presence of key molecules in the search for habitable worlds. This includes the simultaneous presence of ozone and methane, which scientists expect to see only when there is an organic source of these compounds on the planet. Such a detection is called a "biosignature."

"A handful of researchers have tried to simulate Earth's transit spectrum, but this is the first empirical infrared transit spectrum of Earth," says Prof. Cowan. "This is what alien astronomers would see if they observed a transit of Earth."

The findings, published Aug. 28 in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, could help scientists determine what kind of signal to look for in their quest to find Earth-like exoplanets (planets orbiting a star other than our Sun). Developed by the Canadian Space Agency, SCISAT was created to help scientists understand the depletion of Earth's ozone layer by studying particles in the atmosphere as sunlight passes through it. In general, astronomers can tell what molecules are found in a planet's atmosphere by looking at how starlight changes as it shines through the atmosphere. Instruments must wait for a planet to pass -- or transit -- over the star to make this observation. With sensitive enough telescopes, astronomers could potentially identify molecules such as carbon dioxide, oxygen or water vapor that might indicate if a planet is habitable or even inhabited.

Cowan was explaining transit spectroscopy of exoplanets at a group lunch meeting at the McGill Space Institute (MSI) when Prof. Yi Huang, an atmospheric scientist and fellow member of the MSI, noted that the technique was similar to solar occultation studies of Earth's atmosphere, as done by SCISAT.

Since the first discovery of an exoplanet in the 1990s, astronomers have confirmed the existence of 4,000 exoplanets. The holy grail in this relatively new field of astronomy is to find planets that could potentially host life -- an Earth 2.0.

A very promising system that might hold such planets, called TRAPPIST-1, will be a target for the upcoming James Webb Space Telescope, set to launch in 2021. Macdonald and Cowan built a simulated signal of what an Earth-like planet's atmosphere would look like through the eyes of this future telescope which is a collaboration between NASA, the Canadian Space Agency and the European Space Agency.

The TRAPPIST-1 system located 40 light years away contains seven planets, three or four of which are in the so-called "habitable zone" where liquid water could exist. The McGill astronomers say this system might be a promising place to search for a signal similar to their Earth fingerprint since the planets are orbiting an M-dwarf star, a type of star which is smaller and colder than our Sun.

"TRAPPIST-1 is a nearby red dwarf star, which makes its planets excellent targets for transit spectroscopy. This is because the star is much smaller than the Sun, so its planets are relatively easy to observe," explains Macdonald. "Also, these planets orbit close to the star, so they transit every few days. Of course, even if one of the planets harbors life, we don't expect its atmosphere to be identical to Earth's since the star is so different from the Sun."

According to their analysis, Macdonald and Cowan affirm that the Webb Telescope will be sensitive enough to detect carbon dioxide and water vapor using its instruments. It may even be able to detect the biosignature of methane and ozone if enough time is spent observing the target planet.

(Source: Science Daily)

Astronomers discover giant planet with bizarre orbit

Astronomers have found a faraway giant planet with a strange slingshot orbit.

The massive exoplanet, three times bigger than Jupiter, boasts a highly elliptical orbit. If the planet's orbit was placed around our own sun, the giant would swing from beyond Neptune, inside the asteroid belt and back out.

Most planets with oblong orbits are found in the inner portions for their solar system, but the newly discovered exoplanet exists on the outskirts of its distant solar system.

Astronomers described the unusual world this week in the Astronomical Journal. "This planet is unlike the planets in our solar system, but more than that, it is unlike any other exoplanets we have discovered so far," Sarah Blunt, first author of the new study and a graduate student at the California Institute of Technology, said in a news release. "Other planets detected far away from their stars tend to have very low eccentricities, meaning that their orbits are more circular. The fact that this planet has such a high eccentricity speaks to some difference in the way that it either formed or evolved relative to the other planets."

Scientists used the radial velocity method to identify the giant planet, HR 5183 b, and its unusual orbit. The method entails measuring the wobble of a star's light as it is pulled by the gravity of the passing exoplanet. Because planets that orbit their stars at a considerable distance can take a long time to complete an orbit -- hundreds of years, even -- using the radial velocity method to study outer exoplanets requires several years of observations.

"The key was persistence," said Andrew W. Howard, a professor of astronomy at Caltech. "Our team followed this star with Keck Observatory for more than two decades and only saw evidence for the planet in the past couple years! Without that long-term effort, we never would have found this planet."

Astronomers have been monitoring the planets surrounding HR 5183 since the 1990s, but have yet to observe a full orbit of HR 5183 b. The planet takes between 45 and 100 years to complete a single orbit. However, scientists were able to measure the slingshot portion of the planet's trip around its sun.

"This planet spends most of its time loitering in the outer part of its star's planetary system in this highly eccentric orbit, then it starts to accelerate in and does a slingshot around its star," said Howard. "We detected this slingshot motion. We saw the planet come in and now it's on its way out. That creates such a distinctive signature that we can be sure that this is a real planet, even though we haven't seen a complete orbit."

As to how the planet ended up with such an extreme orbit, scientists estimate another planet was involved. Most likely, a neighborhood rivalry, with dueling gravitational forces, left one planet expelled and the survivor with an egg-shaped orbit.

(Source: UPI)

Vietnam’s tourism faces over-tourism risks

Trend spotters view Vietnam as the tourism destination to watch closely as the country strides forward to become a top tourism player in the Mekong Region.

All the tell-tale signs of a runaway success are evident even the early warnings from critics, who point an accusing finger at beach pollution and overcrowding.

Is Vietnam heading for a roller coaster ride similar to one that continues to blight its neighbor Thailand, or can it apply checks and balances to secure steady, sustainable growth?

If you ask tourism officials in Vietnam, they repeat what all Thailand’s neighbors say, “we are learning from their mistakes.”

But do they, and in the long-run, will the architects that steer Vietnam’s economic boom have the courage to apply the brakes to save sensitive coastal or cultural heritage?

Sustainability is trending, and so is ‘over-tourism’, but the tough reality is we often talk about sustainability rather than applying it to our commercial ventures.

It becomes a word in the toolkit to fine-tune a sales pitch just as the travel industry embraced greenwashing as a response to climate change.

While “sustainability” is a cool word in tourism circles, Vietnam, like its neighbors, talks up tourist arrivals trends. In 2018, the country welcomed 15.5 million. This year it is heading for 18mn and 20mn in 2020. Within a decade, at the present growth rates, it will be neck-and-neck in a race with Thailand.

So no surprises if the rush to build more hotel rooms dominates the conversation. If you check the latest updates on where new hotels are under construction in the Asia-Pacific, Vietnam is right up there with leader China.

In the most recent STR report on nations delivering the biggest pipeline of hotels under construction, Vietnam takes third place, and that is for the entire Asia-Pacific region.

According to STR, there are 29,625 rooms under construction in Vietnam an increase of 29.4% year-on-year. It’s the runner up to China and Japan and ahead of Indonesia and India, all nations that have much larger populations and economies.

Vietnam’s ranking in the STR report says a good deal about investor confidence in the country’s tourism industry. On the inbound side, its popularity grows with international tourists and long-stay or retirees as authorities ease stay rules. But a thriving tourism industry also depends on outbound travel and Vietnam is progressing by leaps and bounds, a trend that encourages more airlines to serve its gateway cities.

This two-way traffic will encourage more flights to the three gateway cities Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Danang while beach destinations are also benefiting from new services notably to Phu Quoc Island, Nha Trang and Halong Bay.

Phu Quoc, one of the up-and-coming islands at the southern tip of Vietnam, opened its international airport only seven years ago and already faces tourist overcrowding.

Ha Long Bay located in the north of the country, east of Hanoi, recently opened a new airport cutting hours off the travel time to the World Heritage destination, but it accelerates over-tourism, too.

Last June, the country’s deputy prime minister Trinh Dinh Dung warned the real estate sector to be wary. The market bubble might burst. Warnings also surface that over-tourism could irreparably damage cultural destinations that have UNESCO World Heritage status.

Commenting on combating the negative impacts a high ranking Vietnam National Administration of Tourism official said: “Over-tourism must be considered as an urgent threat. We have to work with domestic agencies to ensure that we do not develop too fast. We need to be responsible.”

But being responsible doesn’t come naturally to an industry that has exploited natural assets for commercial gain for decades. Old habits die hard. It takes a change of mindset at every level. That includes the travel media so often turning a blind eye to plain realities for the sake of a few advertising dollars or just a pat on the back from powerful old pals.

(Source: The Phuket News)

Eye-opening experience: As many Americans as possible should visit Iran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Judith Bello, a long-time American peace activist, who has visited Iran for two times, believes such a journey “will be an eye-opening experience”.

“In these difficult times, we need as many people as possible from the U.S. to go to Iran and see that Iranians are people not so different from ourselves, and they are the keepers of an ancient history that is not only theirs, but all of ours,” she said in an opinion article released by USA Today in August.

Bello has assessed her Iran’s adventures as “very rewarding”, finding its people “friendly and generous”.

“I have traveled to Iran twice with similar delegations and had experiences that were very rewarding. The people there are friendly, down to earth and generous, and seeing Iran for yourself puts a whole new perspective on any prior information you might have. Many people there speak English and the food is excellent.”

She says that there are antiquities in Iran that are inconceivable for those who have not left the western hemisphere.

“There is a modern art museum in Iran and another museum with a mind boggling collection of gemstones along with medieval jeweled swords and gowns and whatnot. Iran is a mid-sized country, but they have a long and well preserved history that is just astounding.”

For several thousand years, Iran was at the epicenter of the civilized world. From Cyrus to Darius to the Mogul emperors in India, Iran was the center of the universe. They met and matched the Greeks and Romans, she noted.

“Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Iran, was the first religion with many of the characteristics of the three sisters, Judaism, Christianity and Islam: One God, a world of Good and Evil, and human choices. Poetry is popular in Iran and poets are revered especially mystics. They have a powerful and sophisticated film industry, and a complex political

system with many democratic elements.”

Visiting Tehran Peace Museum, Bello comments “The Tehran Peace Museum is part of an international network of peace museums that are affiliated with the Hiroshima Peace Museum. It is run primarily by disabled veterans from the Iran-Iraq war, who like many veterans who joined the peace movement here, saw that war is not the way. They have a mission to find better ways to treat victims of toxic gas attacks, a weapon Saddam Hussein used against them again and again.”

“We all have something to learn about what is outside our own world. In these difficult times, we need as many people as possible from the U.S. to go to Iran and see that Iranians are people not so different from ourselves, and they are the keepers of an ancient history that is not only theirs, but all of ours.”

Regarding to recent tensions between the Islamic Republic and the U.S., Bello hopes that it could ultimately be cooled by the means on dialogue not a war.

“I sincerely hope our government will use diplomacy rather than force to resolve their issues with the Iranians.”

Many travelers to Iran find their new perception of the country as totally different from that they previously thought based on mainstream Western media outlets.

For an example, Jenny Gray, the global product and operations manager of the Australia-based Intrepid Travel, said earlier this year that “It is a country that is often portrayed as unwelcoming, but the reality is quite the opposite... Iranians are warm, friendly and eager to show off their country to foreigners. The feedback from our travelers is a testament to this.”

As we know, the media play a pivotal role in informing the public about what happens in the world, including Iran as a lesser-known country for a majority of Western people. Media’s portrayals could be more effective in areas in which audiences do not possess



Foreign travelers and their Iranian friend take a selfie in Tehran with the famous Azadi Tower in the background.

I have traveled to Iran twice with similar delegations and had experiences that were very rewarding. The people there are friendly, down to earth and generous, and seeing Iran for yourself puts a whole new perspective on any prior information you might have.

direct knowledge or experience to construct public belief and attitudes.

The 2019 Travel Risk Map, which shows the risk level around the world, puts Iran among countries with “insignificant risk”, a category where the UK, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Finland are placed in.

Decades of unresolved tensions between Iran and the U.S., ran high once again last year, when the Trump administration pulled

the United States out of an international deal to give Iran access to world trade in return for curbs to its nuclear program, reinstated sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Since then Washington’s major European allies Britain, France and Germany have been at odds with the U.S., believing that pulling out of the nuclear agreement was a mistake. The Europeans have warned that heightened confrontation could lead to an accidental war in the Persian Gulf.

Haarlem to tackle over-tourism, aim for quality visitors



Haarlem is taking action to stop the city becoming a victim of its own success as a tourist destination, by focusing on ‘quality visitors’ and making sure the wishes of residents remain paramount.

Nearly half a million people visited the city, just 20 kilometers from Amsterdam, last year, a rise of 17% on 2017 and that growth is set to continue.

While recognizing the importance of tourism to the economy, ‘we will prevent the negative effects by distributing hotels and events around the city and opting for high value tourism,’ city officials said in a policy document published this week.

The city has already introduced a 30 day limit on holiday rentals on websites like Airbnb, in line with the nearby capital and ‘quality’ will be key in assessing new hotel licenses.

Guided tours for groups using segways and beer bikes have also been banned. City officials also warn that over-tourism could pit locals against visitors, as has happened in Amsterdam.

‘Haarlem has to learn from Amsterdam and other tourist destinations,’ the policy document said. ‘We don’t want to repair the damage after the fact, but act in advance.’ National policy In May, the Dutch tourist board said it is to stop actively promoting the Netherlands as a holiday destination because its main attractions – the canals, tulips and windmills – are becoming both overcrowded.

In future the NBTC will focus on trying to spread visitors to other parts of the country ‘by putting the spotlight on unknown areas’ and on limiting the problems caused in the busiest periods.

(Source: Dutch News)

Ancient civilizations were already messing up the planet



As issues like climate change, global warming, and renewable energy dominate the national conversation, it’s easy to assume these topics are exclusive to the modern world. But a huge collaborative study in Science reveals that early humans across the entire globe were changing and impacting their environments as far back as 10,000 years ago.

“Through this crowdsourced data, we can see that there was global environmental impact by land use at least 3,000 years ago,” says Gary Feinman, MacArthur Curator of Anthropology at the Field Museum and one of the study’s 250 authors. “And that means that the idea of seeing human impact on the environment as a newer phenomenon is too focused on the recent past.”

Feinman says that to understand our current climate crisis, we need to understand the history of humans altering their environments.

The study, led by Lucas Stephens of the University of Pennsylvania, is a part of a larger project called ArchaeoGLOBE, where online surveys are used to gather information from regional experts on how land use has changed over time in 146 different areas around the world. Land use can be anything from hunting and gathering to farming to grazing animals. And as it turns out, many of the ways ancient people used the land weren’t as “leave-no-trace” as many have imagined.

“About 12,000 years ago, humans were mainly foraging, meaning they didn’t interact

with their environments as intensively as farmers generally do,” says Feinman. “And now we see that 3,000 years ago, we have people doing really invasive farming in many parts of the globe.”

Humans in these time periods began clearing out forests to plant food and domesticating plants and animals to make them dependent on human interaction. Early herders also changed their surroundings through land clearance and selective breeding. While these changes were at varying paces, the examples are now known to be widespread and can provide insight on how we came to degrade our relationship with the Earth and its natural resources.

“We saw an accelerated trajectory of environmental impact,” says Ryan Williams, associate curator and head of anthropology at the Field Museum and co-author of the study. “While the rate at which the environment is currently changing is much more drastic, we see

the effects that human impacts had on the Earth thousands of years ago.”

The results, however, are more optimistic than they seem. Now that researchers know the beginnings of environmental impact, they can use this data to study what solutions ancient civilizations used to mitigate the negative effects of deforestation, water scarcity, and more.

In addition to pointing out the history behind what most assume is a recent phenomenon, the study is one of the first of its kind to operate on such a large scale. Use of online resources and professional connections helped the project span across the world. The emphasis now, however, is on the parts we often miss.

“We need to invest in these regions that haven’t been as intensively studied,” says Williams. “If we incentivize and create opportunities for researchers there then you can just imagine what the results of the next study like this could be.”

For a long time, war, environment,

transportation and colonization prevented researchers from being able to work together and share their findings about certain parts of the world. As a result, today’s archaeologists are still adding to and growing the network of expertise in these regions.

“What really got me here was not so much the results, although I think that the results provide a foundation to support what many archeologists suspected,” says Feinman. “But I think the most innovative aspect of this was the whole research design. To gather information from 250 scholars and to make sure that the whole world was covered, that’s really something.”

While today’s climate change and environmental destruction are happening more quickly and on a far larger scale than the world has ever seen, Feinman notes that this study helps provide a historical context to today’s problems.

“There’s such a focus on how the present is different from the past in contemporary science. I think this study provides a check, a counter-weight to that, by showing that yes, there have been more accelerated changes in land use recently, but humans have been doing this for a long time. And the patterns start 3,000 years ago,” says Feinman. “It shows that the problems we face today are very deep-rooted, and they are going to take more than simple solutions to solve. They cannot be ignored.”

(Source: Science Daily)

American Airlines to add 400 jobs in Tulsa

The hiring sign has been put up at the American facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The carrier said it’s adding 400 jobs at its maintenance facility in Tulsa, marking what an airline official calls the largest workforce addition to that base in over a decade.

About 330 of the new positions will be filled by mechanics who have the potential to earn six figures as they accrue seniority, airline officials told The Associated

Press on Thursday.

The remaining positions will be offered at a lower salary. The new mechanics will focus their time on aircraft overhaul, landing gear overhaul for some Boeing aircraft, especially the 787 “Dreamliner” fleet.

Recruiting will primarily target mechanics who are licensed through the Federal Aviation Administration.

Hiring is expected to continue over the next four months. The base, also known as Tech Ops-Tulsa, now employs

5,200 people.

This week’s airline announcement comes three months after American Airlines filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Fort Worth, Texas, against the Transport Workers Union and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which together represent American’s roughly 10,000 aircraft mechanics.

(Source: foxbusiness.com)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison

As one of the earliest established towns with a fortified port in the Caribbean network of military and maritime-mercantile outposts of the British Atlantic, Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison was the focus of trade-based English expansion in the Americas.

Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison is now registered in the UNESCO World Heritage list.



By the 17th century, the fortified port town was able to establish its importance in the British Atlantic trade and became an entrepot for goods, especially sugar, and enslaved persons destined for Barbados and the rest of the Americas.

Historic Bridgetown’s irregular settlement patterns and 17th Century street layout of an English medieval type, in particular the organic serpentine streets, supported the development and transformation of creolized forms of architecture, including Caribbean Georgian.

Historic Bridgetown’s fortified port spaces were linked along the Bay Street corridor from the historic town’s center to St. Ann’s Garrison. The property’s natural harbor, Carlisle Bay, was the first port of call on the trans-Atlantic crossing and was perfectly positioned as the launching point for the projection of British imperial power, to defend and expand Britain’s trade interests in the region and the Atlantic World.

Used as a base for amphibious command and control, the garrison housed the Eastern Caribbean headquarters of the British Army and Navy.

Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison participated not only in the international trade of goods and enslaved persons but also in the transmission of ideas and cultures that characterized the developing colonial enterprise in the Atlantic World.

(Source: UNESCO)

Tips for managing technology at home

Over the last decade, technology has continued to be transformative in our lives, particularly in education.

Students have access to current information for research, digital tools to support their learning needs, and access to devices for learning anywhere they might be.

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District has a very successful 1:1 program and beginning in fifth grade, each student is able to have a device checked out to them. Our students use technology to create multimedia content and demonstrate their learning through projects that include video and music. In addition, computer science applications, coding, and programming lessons are offered to our students from elementary through high school.

Since technology is prevalent at TTUSD, we host a number of parent technology workshops to support and inform parents. There are a number of questions on the minds of parents, including myself, such as how much “screen time” is too much, at what age should my child have a smartphone, and how a child’s digital footprint can affect them well into their future and working lives.

While many of these tech questions have no definitive answers, the start of school is a great time to evaluate our digital wellness habits and make sure that we, as parents, can ensure our children are balanced and safe in their use of digital tools.



My son will be starting the eighth grade and we took the “Wait Until 8th” pledge at the start of fifth grade. By waiting until eighth grade to provide a “smartphone” for him, we were able to have conversations about what having a phone would look like, write a screentime contract together, and set and manage expectations. While the introduction of a smartphone this summer has created some challenges, our son is aware of what the use of the phone should look like and it

sets the foundation for many conversations we have.

Conversation with your child is an essential component in creating healthy digital habits for your children. As soon as they begin using online email accounts, social media, computers, and smartphones, parents should have continued conversations about what their children are doing online, who they are talking to and how much time is appropriate to spend using digital tools. Begin by asking

your child what they think and continue the conversation around any differences of opinion. One place to get a conversation starter is Common Sense Media. CSM offers short video clips and questions that can spark talk over dinner, though remember to put your digital devices away when you are eating!

In addition to regular conversations about digital wellness with your child, here are some strategies for digital management at home:

Consider having a designated central charging area for all family devices (no devices in bedrooms, or in bed at night)

Use the “night light” function built into devices to minimize blue light a few hours before bed.

Evaluate the apps on your devices and the notifications they send. Turn off notifications for apps that are not priorities to minimize distraction throughout the day.

Set specific times for checking social media or apps on your phone, turn off the notifications.

Consider using parental controls on your child’s device(s) that monitor the apps downloaded and time spent within them.

Protect meal times by putting devices away and “power down!”

Use “Digital Wellbeing” on Android or “Screentime” on iOS

Be a model for your children by practicing digital wellness for yourself!

(Source: [sierrasun.com](#))

5G technology goes underground

Automation and digitalization are increasingly used in almost every major industry to improve efficiency. Thanks to rapid advances in artificial intelligence and robotics, and innovations like X-ray diffraction and electric vehicles, the mining sector is also catching up with the technological revolution.

According to a White Paper by the World Economic Forum and Accenture, digitalization could bring about over USD \$425 billion of value for the mining industry, customers, society and environment by 2025. It could also lead to a reduction of 610 million t of CO2 emissions, as well as a significant improvement in safety, saving lives and preventing injuries.

With the vision to create a sustainable and smart mining system, a team of experts have developed a 5G radio network under the EU-funded SIMS project. A news release on the project website states that project partners Boliden and Ericsson, together with Telia, have installed the 5G network using New Radio (NR) in Sweden’s Boliden Kankberg mine. Peter Burman, program manager at Boliden, says: “We work actively with robotization to improve productivity and safety in the mine which requires future proof communication solutions. 5G is an important component enabling advanced automation and by that, a safer and more sustainable mine.”

■ Mine of the future

The same news release highlights the advantages of 5G technology over other communications solutions for connectivity in difficult environments like mining. “With characteristics like very low response times and the option for local data handling, 5G is the best suited technology to meet the safety and efficiency requirements of the mine.”

Magnus Leonhardt, head of strategy and innovation at Telia, adds: “To guarantee safety in the mine, for example, the network must function even if communications to the outside world is disrupted.

Reliable communications can now be secured with the network we have built.”

5G NR is the global standard for a unified, more capable 5G wireless air interface that will deliver significantly faster and more responsive mobile broadband experiences, and extend mobile technology to connect a range of new industries. Air interface refers to the radio frequency portion of the circuit between the mobile device and the active base station.

The ongoing SIMS (Sustainable Intelligent Mining Systems) project was launched to develop, test and demonstrate new technologies for the mining industry. One example is



the use of drones to explore tunnels with no risk to humans. Project partners believe such a technology could be beneficial for inspections after blasting and rockfalls, and for shaft inspections. They say autonomous drones equipped with multiple sensors and thermal camera could help increase productivity, requiring less time for inspection.

(Source: [techxplore.com](#))

Technology brings dementia detection to the home



The past decade has seen increasing use of technology in dementia research. Computer games that provide cognitive training have become part of prevention studies, and trialists are working to move cognitive testing out of the clinic and into everyday life, replacing pen and paper with tablets and smartphones.

A plethora of new tools are being tried out. Alas, adherence is a problem and researchers grapple with how to get people to check in and complete tests day after day. At the

Technology and Dementia Preconference, held in advance of the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference on July 14-18 in Los Angeles, scientists discussed roadblocks and efforts to boost engagement.

They are transforming cognitive tests into fun games, and dangling bonuses to encourage participation. As an alternative, passive monitoring equips seniors and their homes with sensors to track activity around the clock, and to flag changes that signal dementia.

Cognitive training by way of computer games is increasingly accepted as part of a dementia-prevention lifestyle. At AAIC, Alina Solomon, University of Eastern Finland, reported on the experience to date from the use of computerized cognitive training in the Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability. FINGER enrolled 1,260 healthy people aged 60–77, who were at risk for dementia, and offered them a multifaceted, two-year

intervention of exercise classes, diet plans, computer work, and social activity, plus management of metabolic and vascular risk factors.

The control group got standard health advice. This intervention boosted cognitive scores and is now expanding to other countries as Worldwide FINGERS.

This summer, the researchers published data on adherence to FINGER’s at-home cognitive training regimen aimed at boosting mental speed, memory, and executive function. The results were discouraging. Of the 631 participants—a self-selected, presumably motivated group of elders—37 percent did no training at all. Only 20 percent of participants completed at least half of the possible 144 sessions; 12 percent completed all.

A dose-response analysis suggested that the benefit of cognitive training increased with the number of sessions, then leveled off after 40–50 sessions, Solomon said. A

minority of participants hit this mark.

The primary factor associated with starting cognitive training, and with completing more sessions, was familiarity with a computer. People who did not use a computer before were unlikely to start the training as part of FINGER.

Fortunately, the problem of poor computer literacy appears to be solving itself. Compared with when recruitment for FINGER began in 2009, the researchers now see more familiarity and use of technology in elders joining the study. “Age 60-plus 10 years ago is not the same as 60-plus now,” Solomon said. Her impression is borne out by statistics. In Finland today, 60 percent of people between 64 and 75 own a smartphone, whereas in 2011 only 10 percent did. More than a quarter of people over 75 have a smartphone. Solomon said her group is currently surveying tech use in people older than 85.

(Source: [alzforum.org](#))

United Airlines’ new technology aims to cut down on missed connections

The takeoff of a United Airlines flight from Chicago to Vancouver was delayed for a few minutes at the end of July not because of a mechanical problem or a staffing mishap but to ensure that passengers arriving late from another flight didn’t miss the connection to Vancouver.

Michael Jacobson, an executive for a hotel industry trade group, was on the flight that was briefly held on the tarmac, but he didn’t mind.

“Even though I was delayed as a result, it gave me comfort that waiting about 10 minutes for my fellow passengers helped prevent them from staying an extra night in Chicago,” he said.

United Airlines hopes plenty of passengers are as accommodating as Jacobson. The Chicago-based carrier is expanding use of a new computer program that can automatically delay the takeoff of some flights — if only briefly — to ensure that passengers on connecting flights don’t get stranded. The program will be deployed at all of United’s major airports by October.

United’s new software program, dubbed ConnectionSaver, looks at data from airline schedules, passenger itineraries, staff work schedules and other sources to automatically decide if a flight can be delayed and for precisely how long to reduce as many missed connections as possible without creating more headaches for other fliers.

“Where this tool makes a difference is in tight connections,” said David Kensick, managing director of United’s Network Operation Center.

Other airlines also have access to the data and software needed to identify if passengers trying to make connecting flights are running late. But most other carriers leave it up to gate agents or staff in airport operations control centers to decide whether to delay a flight to help fliers make their



connections.

The United Airlines program gives that power to a computer, allowing only supervisors from United operation centers the authority to override the decision.

At Delta Air Lines, “it’s a human decision whether to delay that flight, but it’s a mix of software and [artificial intelligence] to back that up,” said Michael Thomas, a spokesman for the Atlanta-based carrier.

At Southwest Airlines, “our super computers are our people,” Brad Hawkins, a spokesman for Southwest Airlines, said about how the Dallas-based carrier decides to hold a flight to help reduce missed connections.

Most airlines don’t like to delay takeoffs to accommodate late-arriving passengers because they fear the delay could throw off the schedule of subsequent flights, causing chaos to a tightly run nationwide flight schedule, aviation industry analyst Seth Kaplan said.

“That has been the approach airlines have been taking

for years, but with the data we have access to, it’s possible to say, ‘Wait a minute, maybe we can refine that policy some more,’” he said.

The program was launched in February at Denver International Airport and has been expanded to seven domestic airports since then, with ConnectionSaver added at Los Angeles International Airport on June 25.

So far, United estimates that the program has delayed enough flights to ensure that as many as 36,000 passengers — including about 2,000 at LAX — could make their connections.

The advantage of the ConnectionSaver program, Kensick said, is that it can even take into consideration tail winds, weather patterns and staff work schedules to ensure that the recommendation to delay a takeoff doesn’t ruin the travel plans of passengers on connecting flights or force employees to work beyond their federally mandated maximum hours. In most cases, the plane that is delayed still arrives at its final destination on time, he said.

United flies about 500,000 passengers a day, with about 140,000 of those needing to connect from one flight to another. Carriers that primarily fly direct “point to point” routes, such as Southwest Airlines, have fewer connecting passengers while carriers such as United and Delta offer more indirect routes that connect at “hub” airports.

All carriers are motivated to eliminate missed connections to avoid the staff time and cost it takes to rebook stranded passengers to other flights. Plus, when passengers miss a connection, either through the fault of the airline or unforeseen factors such as bad weather or mechanical problems, the airline usually takes the hit on social media.

(Source: [latimes.com](#))

Got remote workers? 8 telecommuting technology risks you must know

Allowing your employees to work from home, trains, airports, coffee shops, or anywhere there is an Internet connection can increase worker productivity and cut your business overhead. However, telecommuting also comes with substantial risks. Many companies don’t mitigate against these telecommuting technology risks enough — if at all. Yet, you cannot control the risks of remote working if you don’t acknowledge their existence in the first place. We take a look at the key telecommuting technology risks organizations face.



1. Reckless use of WiFi

Not all WiFi is created equal. Telecommuting employees could connect to a neighbor’s WiFi, a condo complex’s WiFi, or restaurant WiFi. Some remote workers will even go as far as indiscriminately connecting to the first unsecured wireless network they come across when they pop open their laptop. This is dangerous behavior for several reasons.

First, communication can be intercepted on unsecured WiFi networks. Second, hackers may set up a hotspot with a misleading name that unsuspecting persons nearby would connect to thinking they are working with the real thing. Third, using an unsecured connection could potentially be illegal for organizations in certain industries or jurisdictions.

2. Family and friends using the work device

It’s a relatively common occurrence. An employee takes his or her work-issued laptop home for the evening or over the weekend to complete an urgent task. At some point, their partner, child, or roommate, asks to use the laptop to browse the web. What the friend or relative do on the laptop isn’t always something that will happen with the employee’s knowledge or approval.

That person could very well be plugging in a compromised USB drive, visiting websites infected with malware, or downloading applications that compromise the laptop’s security. Everything from games and instant messaging applications to photo-editing software and Microsoft Office macros may seem harmless, but they could provide a doorway for an attacker to gain access to not just to the affected computer but infiltrate the company network.

3. Software licensing violation

Software piracy has bedeviled technology companies for years. And while tech giants like Microsoft seemed to turn a blind eye to such piracy in the past, they are now more aggressive in enforcing their intellectual property rights. The use of pirated, outdated, or improperly licensed software can, therefore, result in costly litigation and penalties for the offending organization.

Telecommuting employees, away from their supervisor’s and IT department’s line of sight, may choose to install illegal software on their device. Often, the worker does this for well-meaning reasons such as acquiring a tool that will make their work easier. Unfortunately, even if the employee installed the illegal application without management’s approval, the software developer could hold the device owner — in this case, the employer — liable.

4. Leaving the device in an unsecured location

The average laptop has storage in the hundreds of gigabytes. Think about the enormous amount of data that you could save to such memory. If a criminal stole a business laptop, they could gain access to plenty of sensitive business information. In fact, several recent data breaches can be traced to lost or stolen laptops. As an IT pro, if training your employees in laptop security and laptop encryption is not high on your bucket list, it should be.

5. Missed patches

Employees who travel a lot may sometimes go for days without connecting to the company’s network. This may cause their devices to miss out on patches needed to keep them secure from the latest vulnerabilities. If they are off the company’s network but still use the laptop to browse the web, there’s a risk of their computer being infiltrated by malware.

These telecommuting technology risks are present for work-issued devices but are much greater in bring your own device (BYOD) configurations. Remember that security is only as effective as the weakest link. If one infected device finds its way onto the network, it could render the defensive effort of updating all other devices futile.

6. Using unauthorized devices to connect to the network

A BYOD policy allows employees to connect to the company’s network with a personal device. However, this policy cannot be no-holds-barred. The IT team would usually clear the device for compliance with security policies. If an employee connects to the company’s network via an unauthorized gadget, they are exposing their employer’s technology assets to the malware and vulnerabilities that are present on their device.

7. Failure to log out

The people you live with or who regularly visit you are likely some of your closest relatives and friends. These are individuals who you probably trust more than anyone else. So it’s not unusual for employees working from home to let down their guard when adhering to essential security procedures.

Something as simple as locking or logging out of their laptop or business applications when they step away could inadvertently give access to an ill-intentioned person in the vicinity. The individual could initiate a transaction, extract sensitive information, or delete data.

8. Safety telecommuting technology risks

One often neglected aspect of working from home is safety. An office complex has elaborate safety procedures that ensure employee, customer, and equipment safety. Likewise, businesses must put in place appropriate measures in the physical environment the employee uses the most for telecommuting. Remember that as long as the person is working from home with their employer’s approval, an injury they experience during their work could qualify for compensation.

It’s therefore in the employer’s best interest to make a reasonable effort in ensuring the worker understands and applies safety best practices. Ideally, have them run a home safety survey that checks for smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, proper ventilation, adequate lighting, well-insulated power cords, and a sufficient insurance cover.

(Source: [techgenix.com](#))

Human-started fire extinguished in Anzali wetland

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — A fire that had been reportedly started by humans in northern Anzali wetland on Friday was successfully put out, ISNA news agency reported. Covering more than 19,000 hectares, Anzali wetland is located near the northern port city of Bandar Anzali, neighboring the Caspian Sea.



Due to the low water level and being impassable firefighters could not approach the area burning in fire with firefighting vehicles or boats, however, the fire eventually restrained by the firefighters' efforts, the report added.

All rangers and the Department of Environment forces have been conducting firefighting operations in the area all night, the provincial DOE chief, Qorban-Ali Mohammadpour, said.

Finally, with the efforts of the city's responsible bodies, the fire was extinguished in the shortest time possible, he noted.

He went on to say that the person who caused the fire for occupation of the land has been identified and introduced to the judiciaries.

The wetland was designated as a Ramsar site on June 23, 1975. It is home to submerged and floating vegetation and also extensive reed beds. It bears international importance in terms of breeding, staging and wintering water birds.

Endangered bats given ‘manicures’ so numbers can be counted

The only known colony of some of the world's rarest bats are being given "manicures" by scientists using nail varnish in an effort to determine how many still exist.

Cuban greater funnel-eared bats are confined to a single cave in western Cuba, where they were rediscovered in 1992 after being declared extinct.

Fewer than 750 bats remain in the cave on the peninsula of Guanahacabibes, preliminary results of the population count by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) showed.

Researchers used four different colors to paint the bats' "nails", allowing them to create thousands of unique combinations to identify each one. Marking bats is typically done with necklaces, arm rings or wing punches, which scientists say can alter behavior.

So scientists working on ZSL's Edge of Existence programme settled on using nail varnish as a low-tech and harmless way to gauge their endangered population, which once flourished.

Fossils have been discovered nearly all over Cuba, as well as on Grand Cayman and various islands in the Bahamas.

Though the cause of the mass population decline is unknown, funnel-eared bats have a naturally high vulnerability to extinction due to their specific habitat of hot caves.

The Cueva la Barca population is now threatened by human intrusion and the collapse of its cave roof due to thermal instability.

And climate change poses a significant risk, further exacerbating the issue. "The story of the Cuban funnel-eared bat really resonated with me as it reiterates the absolute need to ensure underappreciated species like bats don't become lost to scientific history, simply because we forget to look," said Jose Manuel de la Cruz Mora, a ZSL fellow based at Pinar del Rio's Natural History Museum.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Concorde: return to the skies?

(August 22, 2001)

After a meeting of the Anglo-French Concorde group on Monday, it was announced that Concorde will probably be allowed to make commercial flights again from next month. Flights have been suspended since last year's crash near Paris. This report from Valerie Jones:

The official statement from the meeting in Paris was optimistic. It said that procedures are **on track** to get the **flight suspension** lifted jointly by the French and the British, and probably before the end of the month. There are still **processes to go through** before commercial flights can recommence.

Approval will have to be given to the **safety modifications** that have been made to the planes. Then each aircraft will have to get its **airworthiness certificate** back and the flight crews will have to retrain. But British Airways are hoping their seven Concorde will be **back in service** next month.

The French are a little behind. They have yet to carry out their first test flight on the modified plane. It was an Air France Concorde that crashed just after take-off from Paris in July last year. A piece of metal on the runway had **shattered** a tire and the flying **debris punctured** a fuel tank which burst into flame. Now Concorde is to have **reinforced** fuel tanks, tougher tires and better protection for the landing gear.

■ Words

on track: happening in a way that is likely to result in success
flight suspension: during the suspension of flights, Concorde has not been allowed to fly
processes to go through: official things to do
safety modifications: changes in design that will improve safety
airworthiness certificate: official document required by all aircraft to show they are safe and have permission to fly
back in service: in use again
shattered: destroyed, broken into several pieces
debris: the remains of something that has broken. Here, the pieces of shattered tire
punctured: made a hole in
reinforced: strengthened

(Source: BBC)

Will the world's fastest Asiatic cheetah outrun extinction?

1 → Referring to the claims saying that the DOE prepared a plan on capturing two remaining Asiatic cheetahs alive for conservation and reproduction purposes in central province of Yazd, he noted that it is not reliable that there are only two cheetahs left in Yazd province.

The claim must be provided with evidence and documentation which has not yet been presented, Yazd province has been always the main habitat of Asiatic cheetahs, he lamented, implying that how can we ensure that only two of the shy animal are remaining in the area?

Criticizing the DOE's plan on live capture and captive breeding of cheetahs, he said that instead of devising a plan to breed the species in their natural habitats, related bodies insist on spending money to implement a plan which is, through an optimistic view is the birth of cubs who must live in captivity for the rest of their lives and have no effect on preventing the species from extinction of in the nature.

Pointing to the artificial insemination failed on cheetah in captivity at Tehran's Pardisan Park, he highlighted that after spending a considerable amount of budget and sacrificing two valuable cheetahs, a plan of reproduction finally failed.

Asiatic cheetah born in captivity will never learn the skills to survive in nature and will not be able to reproduce in nature, thus a captive breeding plan cannot be considered as a measure to prevent the extinction of the cheetahs, he lamented.

"Cheetahs are not protected by dramatic acts and slogans; real protection happens when we restore their natural habitat, increase the number of rangers and environmental defenders in their habitats, improve protection measures and constantly supervise the



protected areas," he explained.

However, preventing the cheetahs from diminishing is not a top concern for the responsible bodies, who prefer to spend on fencing, removing the cheetahs from nature and breed the species in captivity, he regretted.

"I believe that the cheetah population is not so small; there is not only the knowledge, motivation and tools needed to monitor and estimate the cheetah's population in the coun-

try, adding, no cheetah is observed, should not be taken that cheetah does not exist."

Cheetahs are shy animals and, if they feel danger immediately migrate to safe and pristine habitats, he said, concluding, "I assume cheetahs will be able to survive as they have managed to preserve for years, provided that we do not destroy their habitat."

This is while, Hamid Zohrabi, deputy chief of the DOE, told YJC that "We have

Bear cubs shot dead in southwestern Iran

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Two bear cubs were found dead at a landfill site in Dena county, southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, the provincial department of environment (DOE) chief has announced.

"We dispatched rangers to the area as soon as the report was received," Mehr news agency quoted Mohsen Bastaminejad as saying on Wednesday.

Lack of wildlife protection culture among people as well as awareness, and a lack of conservation forces are among the issues led to such tragic events, he lamented.

Both cubs were female aged 1 to 2, which have been shot by hunting weapons in their head and chest, Tasnim news agency reported.

■ Wounded bear cub lost life in Golestan

A bear cub also found severely wounded being shot in the northern province of Golestan, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The bear has been shot harshly and lost a leg; a bullet was found in its leg and another one elsewhere in its body, Mahmoud Shakiba, deputy chief of the provincial DOE has stated.

The DOE forces soon referred to the area and transferred the animal to the medical center, he said.



"The animal underwent different tests and we found out that it is not able to move again," he further noted, regretting, the bear suffered for days and finally lost his life.

More recently, two men killed a bear cub in Savadkuh, northern province of Mazandaran, by throwing stones at it.

■ Threats to brown bear population in Iran

Conflict with human is the main reason behind the

reduction in brown bear population in Iran.

Local people sometimes kill the bears for a false traditional belief which claims that bear meat has lots of medical uses.

However, food scarcity makes bears get attracted to areas where livestock live, and some rural residents use guns and poisonous lures to kill them in order to defend their crops and livestock.

Also, bear poaching is another reason behind the brown bears population shrinking; illegal hunters kill the animals for their skins.

Unfortunately, not many studies have been conducted on the bears in Iran, and therefore little is known on their ecology, current distribution, population size, and trend. This has resulted in a lack of state-run monitoring of the bears in the Iranian protected areas.

All these events can affect the decision-making process by the relevant wildlife authorities. Therefore, it is crucial to launch projects on the bears to count and determine their current population structure in Iran for prioritizing conservation going forward if their extinction is to be avoided. The Department of Environment is fully responsible for planning, funding, and conducting the projects.

World's fastest shark added to list of vulnerable species to regulate trade

A record number of countries have voted to protect the world's fastest shark from extinction in a move welcomed by conservationists as a "wake up call" for fishing nations who have ignored the endangered species' decline.

In Geneva this week, governments voted under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to regulate the international trade in both species of mako shark – long and short fin – in addition to 16 vulnerable species of sharks and rays.

Mako sharks, the "cheetahs of the ocean", can reach speeds of up to 43mph. They are

overfished worldwide, but the shortfin mako is considered especially vulnerable in the North Atlantic. EU vessels, mainly Spanish and Portuguese, were responsible for 65% of all reported catches of shortfin makos in the North Atlantic from January to June in 2018, according to the Shark Trust, and have not been subject to any limit on catch.

Scientists and conservationists have been sounding the alarm over the important species. This year, the shortfin and longfin mako were classified as endangered and put on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's red list. In

June, scientists issued grim warnings that the species was declining faster than previously believed and recommended annual landings of mako in the North Atlantic be reduced from 3000 tonnes to 300, to allow the population to recover.

A demand for shark fin soup is one of the driving factors in the shrinking number of sharks in the ocean. The majority of the global trade in sharks, rays and their products, especially fins and meat, is unregulated.

Conservation groups said the adoption of the proposal, presented by Mexico and co-sponsored by the EU at the 18th CITES

conference, was the first step towards proper management of depleted populations.

Luke Warwick, associate director for sharks and rays at the Wildlife Conservation Society, said: "The CITES party governments clearly sought to strengthen efforts to prevent the extinction of mako, guitarfish and wedge fish sharks and rays. Sharks and rays are among the most threatened species on our planet and momentum is clearly building to ensure that these species – which have been around for 400 million years – continue to be around for future generations."

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

500,000 Afghan nationals studying in Iranian schools

Currently, about 500,000 Afghan students are studying in Iranian schools free of charge, secretary general of the national commission on children's rights has announced.

Mahmood Abbasi made the remarks during a meeting with member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, juvenile judge Rinat Winter, on Monday. Over the past four decades, Iran has hosted over 4 million foreign nationals, especially Afghans, he noted, IRNA reported.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ment”

- **Meaning:** a word ending that indicates action or process
- **For example:** I've made a few very minor **adjustments** to the decor, but in general it was excellent.

PHRASAL VERB

Hit somebody with something

- **Meaning:** to tell someone something interesting, exciting, or shocking
- **For example:** The next morning, Steve hit me with the truth.

IDIOM

The burning question

- **Explanation:** what everyone is asking, and what we all want to know about, is called the burning question
- **For example:** Who leaked the information? That's the burning question!

۵۰۰ هزار کودک افغانستانی در ایران تحصیل می کنند

دبیر مرجع ملی کنوانسیون حقوق کودک گفت: هم اکنون نیز حدود ۵۰۰ هزار نفر از کودکان افغان به طور رایگان در ایران تحصیل می کنند. به گزارش روز دوشنبه خبرگزاری ایرنا محمود عباسی در دیدار با ریناٹ ویبتر، رئیس کمیته حقوق کودک سازمان ملل متحد در ژنو گفت: در چهار دهه گذشته ایران همواره میزبان چهار میلیون خارجی به ویژه افغانستانی ها بوده است.

UAE calls Saudi-backed militants terrorist, reveals deep rift in anti-Yemen coalition

TEHRAN — The United Arab Emirates has termed Saudi-backed elements operating in southern Yemen “terrorist militias,” exposing a deep rift between the two camps leading a coalition in a bloody war on Yemen.

In a statement, the UAE’s Foreign Ministry said it had carried out air raids against “terrorist militias” threatening the Riyadh-led coalition “based on confirmed field intelligence.”

The “preemptive operation” was an act of “self-defense” against “armed groups affiliated with terrorist organizations,” added the statement carried by the UAE’s official WAM news agency.

It came hours after Emirati-backed southern separatists regained control of Aden, forcing Saudi-sponsored militants loyal to ex-Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who had entered the port city a day earlier, to withdraw.

The self-proclaimed Hadi administration said the UAE’s airstrikes had killed and wounded more than 300 people.

On Friday, the administration denounced



what it called “false justifications given by the UAE to cover up its blatant targeting of” the Saudi-backed elements.

It further accused the UAE of attempting “to attach terrorism” to the Saudi-sponsored forces.

Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi, a member of Yemen’s Supreme Political Council, tweeted on Friday that the UAE statement was another proof that the war on his country is illegal.

“The UAE’s admission by its statement of bombing of Saudi-backed terrorists confirms that the aggression against Yemen is illegal,” he said. “Terrorism is according to press TV, America, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and their allies, they are their supporters and founders to destroy Yemen.”

The UAE statement further confirmed Yemen’s assertion that Saudi Arabia is actually supporting terrorists rather than fighting them, Houthi said, describing the US as “the mother of terrorism.”

In a statement, Hadi called on Saudi Arabia to intervene in order to stop what he called the UAE interference and support for the separatists.

He also noted that his forces had “withdrawn” from Aden to spare Aden” and prevent its “destruction” following the UAE air raids.

N. Korea berates Pompeo, warns hopes for U.S. talks ‘disappearing’

TEHRAN — A senior North Korean diplomat has berated US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for describing Pyongyang’s behaviour as “rogue” and warned its expectations for talks with Washington are fading.

In a statement carried on Saturday by the official Korean Central News Agency, North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said Pompeo’s “thoughtless” comments increased animosity towards the United States and made it harder for working-level nuclear negotiations between the countries to resume.

“Our expectations of dialogue with the US are gradually disappearing and we are being pushed to re-examine all the measures we have taken so far,” Choe said.

“The US had better not put any longer our patience to the test with such remarks

irritating us if it doesn’t want to have bitter regrets afterward,” she added.

Pyeongyang’s angry words come as working-level talks with Washington over denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula remain gridlocked, despite an agreement in June between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump to kickstart the process.

Instead no progress has been made in recent weeks as the reclusive state launched a series of weapons tests in protest at joint military exercises between the US and South Korea.

On Tuesday, Pompeo said Trump’s administration recognised North Korea’s “rogue behaviour could not be ignored”, adding Washington was “telling the truth about the challenges we face”, Al Jazeera reported.

Israel bears full responsibility for drone attack on Lebanon, Hariri tells UN chief

TEHRAN — Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri says the Israeli regime bears full responsibility for the last weekend’s drone attack on the southern part of the country’s capital Beirut.

“This unacceptable act threatens the stability and peace that has prevailed on the international border for 13 years,” Hariri told UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a telephone call on Friday afternoon.

Such acts of aggression, the Lebanese prime minister said according to a statement from his office, “threaten to drag the region into an unaccounted for conflict.”

Hariri further noted that such an attack is unprecedented since the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon.

He then called on the international community to put pressure on Israel to

comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which brokered a ceasefire in the war of aggression Israel launched against Lebanon.

According to Press TV, Hariri finally told Guterres that he would continue regular communications with him in a bid to “deter any escalation.”

On Tuesday, Lebanon’s Higher Defense Council stated that the Lebanese nation reserves the right to defend the country “by any means necessary” in the wake of the drone strike.

“This is a right that is enshrined in the UN Charter,” the Council, a government body in charge of defense policy, said in a statement on Tuesday, emphasizing that “national unity remains the best weapon in the face of any aggression.”

India excludes nearly 2 million people from Assam citizen list

TEHRAN — Nearly two million people have been excluded from a list of citizens in India’s northeastern Assam state, raising fears they could be rendered stateless.

The list, known as the National Register of Citizens (NRC), was published on Saturday after a years-long exercise aimed at identifying legal residents in the impoverished border state.

A total of 31.1 million people were included in the final list, leaving out 1.9 million people, according to a statement from the Assam government.

“The entire process of NRC update has been meticulously carried out in an objective and transparent manner. Adequate opportunity of being heard has been given to all persons at every stage of the process. The entire process is conducted as per statutory provisions and due procedure followed at every stage,” it said.

The government said it carried out the mammoth exercise to detect and deport undocumented immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, but critics viewed the exercise as an attempt to deport millions of Muslims, who make up a third of the state’s population.

Resentment against immigrants has simmered for years in Assam, with residents accusing outsiders of taking their jobs and land.

Millions of Bangladeshi refugees, both Muslim and



Hindu, arrived in India following the country’s 1971 war for independence. The mass influx of refugees into Assam has sparked violent anti-immigrant campaigns in the past.

The NRC is unique to Assam and was first prepared in 1951. Work on the latest list began in 2015 and was overseen by India’s Supreme Court. Only those who can demonstrate that they or their forebears were in India before 1971 could

be included in the list.

■ **‘Really worried’**

Officials checked documents submitted by roughly 33 million people for a draft released last July. That list left out more than four million people.

On Saturday, a steady trickle of people lined up to check their names on the final citizenship list in Buraburi village outside one of the many offices that have been set up across Assam for residents to verify the status of their citizenship applications.

Mijanur Rahman, a 47-year-old farmer, found himself, his 21-year-old son, and two of his daughters aged 16 and 14 included in the list. However, his wife and his other three daughters - all under the age of 10 - were excluded.

“I am really worried. We will see what the government does now. Maybe they will offer some help,” a teary-eyed Rahman told The Associated Press news agency.

According to Al Jazeera, those excluded have 120 days to prove their citizenship at hundreds of regional quasi-judicial bodies known as foreigner’s tribunals. Up to 200 more tribunals are expected to be set up on top of the existing 100.

The tribunals must decide on the cases within six months.

The dangerous Mideast logjam first requires lubrication by the U.S. for its release

➔ At any rate, the Trump Administration must by now be aware that the sanctions and other moves by the U.S. and its Middle East allies, primarily the Saudis, the Zionists and the UAE, have not at all destroyed Iran’s government, nor have they fomented a popular uprising. One could almost argue that the U.S. has lost, or is fast losing its capacity to foment regime change, since all the world now knows that “regime change” actions are not premised on some idealistic notion of spreading goodwill or “democracy” in foreign lands, but rather at bottom they are all about the destruction of political and military competition anywhere with the imposition or the ignition of plunder and chaos.

Trump in fact may actually imagine he wants a better “deal” than the JCPOA was, and he further may imagine that if he gets a better deal, he will be lauded and thus have a far better chance of winning reelection late next year. Even if Trump is far more intellectually challenged than his advisors and other Neocons, he is not without a relative degree of innocence and warmth, which the Neocons are completely bereft of. (Currently, U.S. voter polls suggest Trump will lose to the top four Democrats fighting for the nomination.)

But let’s not kid ourselves. Even Trump’s former appointees like General James Mattis (and others) have more or less stated that Trump himself knows very little and has a mind more chaotic and unmoored than any that has ever previously presided at the White House.

Here’s the problem in a nutshell:

Forget talk about new “deals” and potential agreements between the U.S. and its competitors or its alleged enemies. It seems (upon fair examination) that the U.S. government as constituted in recent decades is not sophisticated enough nor imbued with the wisdom necessary to have a plan or plans that distinguish between different countries and also therefore crafts ideas and mutually beneficial proposals tailored to those countries for negotiation. And would the U.S., for example, get off Iran’s back finally if, for example, Iran agreed to limit the development of its ballistic missile program, or returned to the limits the JCPOA imposed on its enrichment of uranium (or even set deeper limits to enrichment) and to other facets of its nuclear program? Would the U.S. get off Iran’s back if Iran marginally unfriended its Syrian and Iraqi and Lebanese neighbors in some nominal way, say simply by

declaring that Iran is henceforth strictly adopting a comprehensive political or military “neutrality” in the Middle East, just as Switzerland, say, has long done in Europe? In other words, Iran saying, in effect, “We won’t mess with anyone anywhere, nor try to influence anyone anywhere, as long as no one messes with us or threatens us specifically.”

The correct answer here to these questions is probably “NO”. And the reasons for this answer are inherent in continued carte blanche U.S. support for the Zionists and anything they want. (They have been in a panic over the mere whiff of future negotiations between the Trump and the Islamic Republic – they only appear to want the destruction of Iran. Moreover, one can easily presume John Bolton and Mike Pompeo and V.P. Pence among corrupted others think exactly like the Zionists.) The reason for “NO” is also inherent in what the U.S. did to Ukraine in 2014, even though Trump is now threatening to cancel \$250 million in further military aide to Kiev, and it is also inherent in what the U.S. has stirred up in Hong Kong this summer, where the unrest looks at lot like the cheer-led support the U.S. gave to the Ukrainian color revolutionaries, which never has resulted in any sort of

real gains for Ukraine.

No. The real U.S. government game with Trump and minions may simply be the attempt to preserve U.S. hegemony and diktat militarily and economically worldwide with no care at all what this might mean, internally, for other countries. There is no benevolence evident yet in the Deep State of the U.S. The U.S. wants China to implode. It wants Russia to lose its grip in the Mideast and its friendship with China. It wants the peaceful Chinese-led Belt and Road initiative across Asia to fail. It wants, in a word, yet more chaos benefitting the so-called Empire of Chaos and its fascist makeup.

Still, fresh negotiations between the U.S. and Iran could be a positive development, but posited on a clear willingness of the U.S. to dampen the fervor of its long established kissing of Israel’s hindmost parts and some determination to balance its diplomacy towards fairness in the Middle East. Any tangible evidence of such a shift, which might include initially Trump’s dismissal of Pompeo and Bolton, could well be the oil that lubricates welcome change, along with the flow of the sale of Iranian resources worldwide once again with the lifting of sanctions.

UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from the Yemen debacle: Askari

➔

How do you assess the future of the Saudi economy, given that the Saudi economy is heavily dependent on oil?

A: Well, you are right. Saudi Arabia is still an oil economy—crude oil, some refined products and petrochemicals. They need to diversify. MBS thinks his 2030 plan will do it but it will not be easy. The Saudi work force has to readjust to no handouts or subsidies but instead education and hard work. But how can you ask the average Saudi to adjust so when the Al-Sauds and their cronies take what they want and live in obscene luxury?

■ What are the structural weaknesses in the Saudi economy that could threaten its economic outlook?

A: It is an oil economy with a population that has been raised on subsidies. You can only change things and ask people to change if the Al-Sauds and the Saudi elite are willing to change and give up their preferred access to government or public resources.

Persian Gulf security architecture can only be inclusive: Adib-Moghaddam

➔

A: It’s impractical because the US and it’s allies will counteract it. The security architecture for the Persian Gulf can only be inclusive as I have set out in my research about the region. The blueprints are out there, but the politicians have proven to be inept in implementing them.

■ The Iranian plan for the Persian Gulf is based on making security by intra states. How much this plan is feasible now?

A: Iranian foreign policies will only be marginally successful as long as the country does not polish its image and in particular its human rights record. There needs to be a process of national reconciliation, a new dialogue between Iranians at home and abroad in order to signal to the world that Iran is a responsible state that respects the value of human life; that the message of the revolution is not tantamount to hypocrisy and populist propaganda.

■ After 16 years, American troops returned to Saudi Arabia. What does this issue effect on the security situation in the region?

A: First, this is an admission of the incapacity of the Saudi state to safeguard both its own security and independence, even after the multibillion investments into the national army. It is also a sign of US scepticism that Saudi Arabia can sustain itself in terms of security.

Hezbollah reject U.S. demand to ignore attack on Israel

➔

“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.

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.

“The era of the Israeli military’s undeterred attacks on Lebanon has come to an end. Hezbollah will tolerate no more Israeli drones penetrating Lebanese airspace,” Nasrallah said.

We take the necessary measures to defend our country: Iraq defense minister

➔

“The government is preparing sufficient evidence and documents to complain to the (UN) Security Council. It won’t submit a complaint against an unknown entity,” Assadi said.

The former official spokesman for Popular Mobilization Forces further noted that the U.S. involvement in the airstrikes remained unclear. “Israeli planes supported by the U.S.? We can’t make that accusation. Did America give a green light? We can’t make that accusation,” he said.

He added that Hashd al-Sha’abi forces had been expecting an attack amid rising tensions between Washington and Tehran since President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018 and introduced harsh sanctions against Iran.

“Are the attacks that happened surprising for the Iraqi government, the Hashd al-Sha’abi, or other factions? Of course not. It’s clear. The Hashd al-Sha’abi is being specifically targeted,” Assadi said.

On Wednesday, Mansour al-Bajji, a member of the State of Law political coalition in the Iraqi parliament, called on the Baghdad government to forge an alliance with the countries that have protracted disputes with the United States in order to strike Israel in the wake of recent airstrikes on Hashd al-Sha’abi forces.

“The persistence of the Israeli regime and its targeting of military sites within our territory have not occurred unexpectedly, but rather under the auspices of the United States. They (Americans) opened the Iraqi airspace for them, and orchestrated all of this scenario. They are partners to the targeting of our territory,” the Arabic service of Russia’s Sputnik news agency quoted him as saying in a statement.

Kimi in altercation with drunken fan in Belgium

Kimi Raikkonen had an altercation with a drunken fan in the paddock of the Spa-Francorchamps circuit, which hosts this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix.

The incident occurred in the central area between all of the F1 teams' hospitality units. Raikkonen was approached by the fan, who was wearing an orange Max Verstappen cap, when a short argument broke out.

Onlookers say the fan was waving his arms around in the direction of the 2007 world champion and shouting with a raised voice, prompting Raikkonen to lightly push him away.

Raikkonen quickly walked away from the incident before it escalated further.

"He was a bit drunk," Raikkonen told Ziggo Sport shortly afterwards. "He started waving his hands in front of me and started hitting my glasses. I thought 'what the f--- is he doing'... He was a bit tipsy toe. I have no idea what he was doing."

Raikkonen's participation in this weekend's race was in doubt ahead of Friday's practice.

The Finn pulled a muscle in his leg, forcing Alfa Romeo to call on reserve driver Marcus Ericsson to be on standby for the weekend -- the Swedish driver had to miss this weekend's IndyCar race in Portland as a result.

(Source: ESPN)

Monreal and Elneny leave Arsenal

Nacho Monreal has left Arsenal to sign a two-year deal with La Liga side Real Sociedad while Mohamed Elneny has joined Besiktas on a season-long loan.

Monreal, 33, started Arsenal's first three games of the season and captained the team against Burnley.

The Spain international played 250 Arsenal games, scoring 10 goals, after joining from Malaga in January 2013.

Egyptian midfielder Elneny, 27, made 89 appearances after arriving from Basel in January 2016.

Manager Unai Emery said on Thursday that Monreal could leave the Gunners before the European transfer windows shut.

The left-back won three FA Cups during his time with Arsenal and helped them reach last season's Europa League final.

He made his international debut in 2009, has won 22 caps and was a member of Spain's 2018 World Cup squad.

Arsenal signed Kieran Tierney, 22, as his long-term replacement this month.

The former Celtic left-back is yet to make his Gunners debut and is not fit enough to be considered for Sunday's north London derby against Tottenham.

(Source: BBC)

Real Madrid still have 155 million euros to spend

With just three days of the summer transfer window left, Real Madrid still have plenty of money to spend.

Such is the club's excellent economic structure, Los Blancos have 155 million euros available to make one final move in the market.

Paul Pogba, who is Zinedine Zidane's number one target, and Neymar are still on the radar of the 13-time European champions.

They've done major late business before too, as Ronaldo Nazario, Luka Modric and Gareth Bale were all brought in as the deadline approached.

Real Madrid's representatives are currently finalising the deal which will see Keylor Navas move to Paris Saint-Germain for 15 million euros plus the season-long loan of Alphonse Areola, who will become Thibaut Courtois' backup at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu.

The Spanish giants' solvency means that there is an extra 155 million euros available and, after last weekend's disappointing draw against Real Valladolid, the Real Madrid fans are expecting new signings.

There has been a breakdown in talks between Los Blancos and Manchester United regarding Pogba, however, after the English side put a 200 million euro price tag on the Frenchman's head.

Any move for Neymar looks unlikely now, too. The Brazilian could end up costing his new club a total of 500 million euros in transfer fees and wages.

The likes of Christian Eriksen and Donny van de Beek are still on the table and matters could accelerate once the game at Villarreal is over on Sunday.

(Source: Marca)

Leonardo: PSG's requests haven't been met over Neymar

Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona are no nearer to finding an agreement for the transfer of Neymar, with Leonardo, the sporting director at PSG, confirming that their requests have yet to be met.

There is still time for a deal to be closed before the window shuts on Monday, yet it appears as though this game of brinkmanship will go right down to the wire as PSG look to get the best possible deal.

"The negotiations aren't dead but there is no agreement because our requests haven't been accepted," Leonardo explained in the aftermath of PSG's victory over Metz on Friday.

"We are open to talk about players, but there is no agreement.

"The position of PSG and Neymar has always been clear, if a satisfactory offer arrived then he could leave, but that is not the case."

When pressed on the likelihood of a deal coming before the deadline, the former AC Milan coach was non-committal.

"The deadline is Monday at midnight, we haven't set any time limit other than the natural one."

(Source: Football Espana)



Roger Federer said he is sick and tired of complaints that he receives a favorable playing schedule after his latest U.S. Open victim suggested on Friday the five-times champion gets preferential treatment.

Federer began day session on Arthur Ashe Stadium against Briton Dan Evans, who because of rain earlier in the week did not finish his second-round match until Thursday afternoon.

Evans looked tired from the outset of his third-round loss to Federer, who completed his previous match under a closed roof on Wednesday, but the Swiss great said his team did not demand an early start time but were asked if they had a preference.

"That doesn't mean like, 'Roger asks, Roger gets.' Just remember that, because I have heard this shit too often now," said Federer. "I'm sick and tired of it, that apparently I call the shots.

The tournament and the TV stations do.

Serbia make emphatic start to Basketball World Cup



Strongly fancied Serbia made a ruthless start to their Basketball World Cup title bid, thrashing Angola 105-59 in the opening match of the tournament in China on Saturday.

The United States are the two-time defending champions but are missing their biggest stars and some believe Serbia can snatch the Americans' long-held crown.

Serbia were strong favourites against Angola in the southern city of Foshan and wasted no time stamping their mark on the 32-team World Cup.

The United States, who have named a young side, open their defence on Sunday in Shanghai against the Czech Republic.

The Americans are without the likes of LeBron James, but Serbian coach Sasha Djordjevic said that Gregg Popovich's team -- who are still packed with NBA talent -- remain the side to beat in China.

"I am not thinking about the USA team," Djordjevic said. "I do respect them, I think they are the biggest favourites."

"They don't have some of the players but they still have a great, great team with great players, great coach."

Guard Bogdan Bogdanovic, of the NBA team Sacramento Kings, led the way for Olympic and world silver medalists Serbia, scoring 24 points against the wilting Angolans. Nikola Jokic, the lumbering Denver Nug-

gets All-Star who is key to Serbia's chances, brought up 100 points with a free throw on the way to him racking up 14 points.

Serbia were comfortably ahead 50-32 at half-time and rammed home their handsome advantage in the second period against the outclassed Africans.

"Serious game, serious approach, serious preparation," said the stern Djordjevic.

"It's our trademark all these years -- playing together, we like to share the ball, we like to pass, we have a lot of guys who are not selfish.

"This is really great for a coach, I'm proud when I see that, it's the trademark of Serbian basketball."

In other early matches, Russia edged Nigeria -- touted as a possible surprise-package -- in a thriller in Group B.

Russia led at half-time, only for Nigeria to surge level at the end of the third quarter.

The Africans were in the ascendancy and led early in the fourth, but the Russians stormed back and they were tied 75-75 with less than a minute left.

But it was the Russians who held their nerve, grabbing victory 82-77 after a tense final few seconds.

Hosts China were to start their title bid later Saturday against Ivory Coast in the capital Beijing.

(Source: Mirror)

Lukaku hits back at critics of his weight



Hopes were high that Lukaku could spearhead a new era for United when he joined from Everton for £75 million (\$91 million) in 2017, but he left Manchester having failed to win a trophy.

"For me, the Manchester United experience is one I am grateful for - not a good one because we didn't win and I wanted to win with the club - but they gave me a chance," added Lukaku.

"I got to play for one of the biggest clubs in the world, so I will always be respectful to them. At the end, I thought it was better for me to move on and try different things."

Lukaku was particularly complimentary on the way

Federer sick and tired of preferential treatment talk

"We can give our opinion. That's what we do. But I'm still going to walk out even if they schedule me at 4:00 in the morning."

Federer, who is seeking a record-extending 21st Grand Slam title, also pointed out that whatever time Evans finished his second-round match he was always going to be at a disadvantage.

Still, the 38-year-old Swiss said he understood Evans' frustration at the quick turnaround but was not about to apologize for something that was out of his control.

"That's tennis. It's entertainment, and the show must go on," Federer said after his 6-2 6-2 6-1 win. "Luck was on my side. There you have it. So, yeah, I understand if Danny is, like, a little bit frustrated."

While Evans admitted that Federer was simply too good, he also pointed out that he was trying to beat the Swiss while tired a day after a four-set match was "near on impossible."

Evans also suggested that there are about three players who have a say in when they play their matches and when asked if his team requested a later timeslot, he shot back and asked if a player ranked 58th would actually have a say in the matter.

When told there was a suggestion that Federer requested that match time, Evans did not seem all that surprised.

"That wouldn't be the first time the higher-ranked player has had pull," said Evans. "But also, the tournament... would rather Roger be going through that match than me, so it's understandable."

Evans is not the first to moan about the subject.

Last year Frenchman Julien Benneteau caused a stir when he accused tournament referees of being kinder to Federer when it came to scheduling matches.

He felt the Swiss's status meant organizers at events such as the Australian Open would regularly schedule Federer's matches during the night session so that he would avoid the scorching temperatures.

But there were plenty of players, including world number one Novak Djokovic, who leapt to Federer's defense.

"He deserves the special treatment because... (he's) arguably the best player ever," Djokovic said last November.

"If he doesn't have it, who is going to have it? People want to see him play on the center court, and they want to see him play in showtime, the best hours, which is 7:30 at night.

"Sometimes it does seem that maybe certain players get more favored... On the other side, you have to understand that Federer is a driving force of tennis in terms of revenue, in terms of attention."

American John Isner said the likes of Federer, Djokovic and Rafael Nadal should get even more privileges.

"If anything, maybe they should get more special treatment because those guys... have made other players below them a lot of money.

(Source: Reuters)

Zidane: "Until Monday anything is possible, one big signing, even two"



Zinedine Zidane spoke to the media ahead of Real Madrid's game away to Villarreal at the Estadio de La Cerámica (Sunday September 1st at 21:00 CEST). The French coach analysed his squad with the current transfer window closing on Monday.

Before getting into the business of fielding questions from the assembled members of the press, Zidane was keen to send a message of support to Luis Enrique: "I'd like to say a few words before we start. I'd like to send all my support and that of the team to Luis Enrique and his family after the terrible news about his daughter".

What's the latest situation with Keylor? "The situation is that he will be with us tomorrow and until Monday as always. Anything can happen in the market but he'll be with us and is focused on the game, that's it".

Do you have the squad you wanted? "At the end of the day, this is the squad I have and I'm proud of the players at my disposition. The most important factor for a coach to be content and that's how I am. With the market currently open, however anything can happen but I'm not going to complain about the squad I have. If that was the case then I'd need to look for a new job. This is a

squad that many other coaches would love to oversee and I'm extremely proud of this group".

What would you think if Keylor leaves Madrid? "That could happen but as things stand, he's here with us and will be tomorrow".

Has your relationship with Florentino Pérez improved? Have you more authority when it comes to making decisions? "I make decisions about what happens on the pitch. My relationship with Florentino has always been very good and he's the person who brought me here and that's something I'll never forget. Everyone is free to interpret things as they see fit but I've nothing to clear up".

Do you understand why people don't see Madrid as favorites this season? "I really don't care about that as it's time to concentrate on working. We believe in ourselves and what we can achieve in this competition".

Are you concerned about the latest spate of injuries? "Of course I am and sadly these things happen as they do with all teams. All I can say that is we're doing all in our powers to get these players fit as soon as possible".

(Source: AS)

Solskjaer handled his exit.

"Me and Ole tried to work together but at one point I had to be honest with him. He was also honest with me. We found an agreement. I wanted to go. He understood why I wanted to go.

"It is something I will always be grateful to him for. We had a conversation man to man. I told him how I felt and he understood. He will always get massive respect from me and massive protection."

Alexis Sanchez followed Lukaku's path by also leaving United to join Inter on a season-long loan deal this week.

United will still pay a large chunk of the Chilean's reported £400,000 a week wages so keen were they to cut their losses on a disastrous signing.

Sanchez has scored just five times in 45 appearances since joining from Arsenal in 2018, but Lukaku believes the two can form a potent partnership in Serie A.

"He has had a difficult time at Manchester United. Coming here was the right move, in a good dressing room, where the manager wants winners who can really help the team. He is going to be part of that," said Lukaku.

"He is going to add a lot of competition to the squad we already have. Now it is up to him to show it. I really believe he is going to do well for us."

(Source: AFP)

Puerto Rico stun Iran at 2019 FIBA World Cup opener

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran lost to Puerto Rico 83-81 in their opening match in the 2019 FIBA World Cup in Guangzhou, China on Saturday.

David Huertas had 32 points for Puerto Rico and Hamed Haddadi scored 22 points for Iran.

Iran had a 70-53 lead with eight minutes left, and Puerto Rico ended up scoring 32 points in the last quarter and winning the game.

"I want to give credit to Iran, they played really well, and I am so proud of my teammates but the way we kept fighting," said Huertas. "There's no way to describe how I am feeling."

As Haddadi explained, speaking about the way the game ended: "We were not tired, Puerto Rico just played fast and pushed the ball. Sometimes things don't get your way, you make turnovers, and that's happened. There was not a conditioning issue. The only issue we lost the game was turnovers".

Both Iran and Puerto Rico are hoping for a place in the Second Round, with Spain being the obvious favorites, and Tunisia also in the mix.

Iran will play Tunisia and Spain on Sept. 2 and 4 respectively in Group C.

The tournament takes place in China and features 32 teams from around the globe.

After playing the other three teams in the group, the top two teams from each group will advance to the second round of the group phase. Teams will play two games each in the second group-phase round, and the top two teams from the four groups will advance to an eight-team, single-elimination tournament.



WCQ: Iran squad named for Hong Kong match

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran coach Marc Wilmots has named a 23-man squad for the match against Hong Kong at the 2022 FIFA World Cup and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Team Melli will start the campaign with a match against Hong Kong on Sept. 10.

Iran iconic attacking midfielder Saman Ghoddos, who currently plays in French club Amiens, is a big absent after he was suspended for four months by FIFA for failing to honor an agreement to join Huesca.

Iran have been drawn in Group C alongside Iraq, Bahrain, Cambodia and Hong Kong.

The eight group winners and four best runners-up will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the second round of the joint qualifiers will compete in a separate competition for the

remaining 12 slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Iran Squad

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis), Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal), Rashid Mazaheri (Tractor)

Defenders: Ramin Rezaeian (Al-Shahania SC), Majid Hosseini (Trabzonspor), Milad Mohammadi (Gent), Vouria Ghafouri (Esteghlal), Mohammadhossein Kananizadegan (Persepolis), Siavash Yazdani (Esteghlal), Morteza Pouraliganji (Al-Arabi), Mohammad Naderi (Persepolis)

Midfielders: Omid Ebrahimi (Al Ahli, Qatar), Masoud Shojaei (Tractor), Ahmad Nourollahi (Persepolis), Ali Karimi (Esteghlal), Vahid Amiri (Persepolis), Ehsan Hai Safi (Tractor)

Strikers: Mehdi Taremi (Rio Ave), Sardar Azmoun (Zenit), Karim Ansarifard (Al-Sailiya), Mehdi Torabi (Persepolis), Allahyar Sayyadmanesh (Fenerbahce), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (Brighton)

Heroes, comebacks and last-gasp winners: Four Classic Asian Qualifiers

As fans around the Continent eagerly await the kick-off of Round 2 of the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023, the-AFC.com recalls some of the most memorable qualifying duels from the past.

While all footballers dream of making an impact on the big stage, sometimes the qualification journey can just be as memorable as the destination.

Stunning fightbacks, last minute winners and superhuman performances from some of Asia's all-time footballing greats feature in this qualification quartet, which features clashes from both the AFC Asian Cup and FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

■ **UZBEKISTAN v TAJIKISTAN, 1996**
Many of Uzbekistan's players would probably prefer not to remember their first ever AFC Asian Cup qualifying match, but their second was a night they will surely not forget.

Having been crowned 1994 Asian Games gold medalists just three years into life as an independent nation, few would have predicted the White Wolves would be emphatically beaten by fellow AFC newcomers Tajikistan in the opening leg of a virtual UAE 1996 qualifying play-off, but that's precisely what happened as the Tajiks (pictured below) stormed to a 4-0 win in Dushanbe.

Six weeks later, Uzbekistan welcomed back their overseas-based trio of Mirdjalal



Kasimov, Igor Shkvirin and Azamat Abduraimov – all stars in their Asian Games triumph, but absent from the first leg – and treated 15,000 fans to a stunning five-goal comeback in Tashkent.

Kasimov scored twice and Shkrivin once as Uzbekistan won 4-0 in 90 minutes to force extra time, before Zafar Musabaev netted the extra-time to seal their place in the Continental Finals.

■ **JAPAN v IR IRAN, 1997**
A true Asian football classic, this FIFA World Cup France 98 play-off featured some of the greats of a golden era going toe-to-toe in a match of career-defining stakes.

Asian icons like Daei, Nakata, Azizi and Miura were the chief protagonists in nearly two hours of unparalleled drama in neutral Johor Bahru, Malaysia, as two of the Continent's heavyweights looked for the win they needed to reach the promised land of the World Cup Finals.

After the lead changed hands twice in a gripping 2-2 draw at the end of 90 minutes, it was Masayuki Okano who sent Japan to their first ever global Finals with a 118th-minute golden goal – his second and final goal in international football.

Beaten on the night, Iran's finest hour came 13 days later in a similarly dramatic Inter-Confederation play-off victory against Australia.

■ **SAUDI ARABIA v SAUDI ARABIA, 2009**
The final Asian qualifying tie for FIFA World Cup South Africa 2010 featured 180 minutes of football, but it's what happened in the final 180 seconds that made it unforgettable.

After a 0-0 draw in Riffa, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain met in Riyadh to decide who would face Oceania champions New Zealand for the final place in South Africa, and the teams produced a footballing rollercoaster to rival the World Cup itself.

Saudi Arabia took the lead through Nasser Al Shamrani inside 13 minutes, but Jaycee John's equaliser had Bahrain on the verge of going through on away goals until Hamad Al Montashari scored what looked like an injury-time winner for the Saudis.

But, with the King Fahd Stadium still rocking in celebration, Bahrain remarkably turned it around, with Ismaeel Abdulatif rising to score a 93rd-minute header with one of the last touches of the game, keeping

Bahrain's World Cup dream alive with a 2-2 draw.

■ **AUSTRALIA v SYRIA, 2017**

After more than two years on the Road to Russia 2018, Australia and Syria's World Cup destiny came down to a battle between one of the hottest strikers in Asia and a Socceros: icon looking to win the match of his own boot, or head, one last time.

Australia, Asian champions and World Cup regulars, met a Syrian team which had never appeared on the global stage and hadn't played on home soil for nearly seven years, but it was only the width of a goalpost that ultimately separated the sides.

With a final, Inter-Confederation play-off against Honduras awaiting the winners, the sides played a 1-1 first leg in neutral Malaysia, with prolific striker Omar Al Soma netting his Syria's late equalizer.

Al Soma scored again six minutes into the second leg in Sydney, before 37-year-old Tim Cahill scored his 49th international goal to level the tie, then brought up half-century with a header that put Australia 2-1 up 19 minutes into extra-time.

Australia's talisman had seemingly bailed them out for the umpteenth time, but Syria would have advanced on away goals had Al Soma's 119th minute free-kick had been just a few inches to the left, and not clattered into the upright.

(Source: the-arc)

Iranian sports journalist Mehdi Shadmani dies at 37

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian sports journalist Mehdi Shadmani died early Saturday after years of fighting cancer.



He died from Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of cancer in Tehran's Baqiyatallah Hospital.

Shadmani will be laid to rest on Sunday in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra cemetery.

"I am most thankful and full of praises to Almighty God for granting me this rare opportunity. I wanted to help people [through my job, journalism].

"How can I say it? I enjoy my life, because God has taken notice of me. God takes care for me and fixes broken things in life. God has granted me this nice woman," Shadmani said a month ago.

Shadmani is survived by his wife and two children.

Tehran Times staff wish to express deepest sympathy and condolences to his bereaved family.

Iran learn rivals at World Martial Arts event

MNA — Iran's national taekwondo team have been drawn against South Korea and Taiwan teams in the World Martial Arts.

The international martial arts competition has announced the draw for pumsae and Kuorugi competitions and Iran has been seeded alongside the teams of South Korea and Taiwan.

The competitions will kick off in South Korea's Chungju tomorrow.

Two teams from each group will advance from the group stage.

Iranian team, comprised of Amir Mohammad Bakhshi, Erfan Nazemi, Kimia Hemmati and Kimia Alizadeh departed for South Korea on Thursday night.

The event has brought together about 4,000 martial arts masters and officials from 100 countries worldwide, according to Yonhap News Agency.

A-League appoints first female referee

Australia's Kate Jacewicz created history on Saturday as the first female referee appointed to the A-League Referees Panel.

An eight-time referee-of-the-year in the women's W-League, she was one of 11 officials named on the A-League's referees panel.

"Kate is without doubt one of the leading referees in the world at any level and we congratulate her on the appointment to the A-League referees panel," said Football Federation Australia President Mr. Chris Nikou.



"Kate is one of the most successful referees in Australian Football who has been named the W-League Referee of the Year a record breaking eight times and most recently refereed two matches at the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup as well as being appointed as the fourth official for the third place play-off match between England and Sweden," added Mr Nikou.

(Source: AFP)

Renard: Qualification is a must for Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia will respect their opponents but their target, head coach Herve Renard has stressed, is qualification for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar.

That is the target the Frenchman has been set by the Saudi Arabian Football Federation and it is one that he is relishing.

Renard, who was appointed head coach in July, spoke exclusively to the-AFC.com ahead of Saudi Arabia's Asian Qualifiers Group D campaign for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

The three-time AFC Asian Cup winners have Uzbekistan, Palestine, Yemen and Singapore for company and are favourites to seal one of the two spots from the group into the third round of the Qualifiers.

Advancing will mean sealing early qualification for the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 and moving closer to a second successive appearance in the FIFA World Cup, and sixth overall.

In Renard, Saudi Arabia have a highly experienced and successful coach, with the Frenchman having won the African Cup of Nations with Zambia in 2012 and Ivory Coast three years later.

(Source: the-afc)

Jordan edge Malaysia in final friendly

Captain Saeed Murjan's strike proved to be the difference as Jordan edged Malaysia 1-0 in an international friendly on Friday.

Murjan struck in the seventh minute, capitalising on the Malaysian defence's failure to deal with a long ball into the box. Both sides had several chances after that with Malaysia pressing hard for the equaliser but Jordan held firm for the win.

The match was the final friendly for both teams ahead of the second round of the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 which kicks off on September 5.

Jordan are in Group B with Australia, Chinese Taipei, Kuwait and Nepal. They open their campaign against Chinese Taipei on September 5.



Malaysia open their Group G campaign against Southeast Asian rivals Indonesia in Jakarta on September 5. Also in the group are the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam and Thailand.

Meanwhile, China PR defeated Myanmar 4-1 in a training match as both teams put in their final touches for the Asian Qualifiers.

Wu Xi scored a brace with Yang Xu and Feng Jing getting one each in the match which was played behind closed doors. China, who are in Group A, will play their first match against Maldives on September 10 with Syria, Philippines and Guam completing the group.

Myanmar open their Group F campaign against Mongolia on September 5. Also in the group are Japan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

(Source: the-afc)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When people abandon some of their religious injunctions to improve their worldly conditions, God makes them face situations which bring them a greater loss.

Imam Ali (AS)

Cinema Verite to honor docs on entrepreneurship in Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival of documentary films, plans to dedicate a special section to films that provide a profound insight into entrepreneurship in Iran this year, the organizers announced on Saturday.

Documentaries on entrepreneurship, innovative business, startups, online markets, promotion of national products and



A poster for the Cinema Verite festival.

development of the national economy will be judged in this section. The section will be set up in collaboration with the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

The top three documentaries will be awarded during the 13th edition of the festival, which will be running in Tehran from December 9 to 16.

Interested applicants are asked to submit their films to the Documentary and Experimental Film Center before September 22.

“Copper Notes of a Dream” to compete in Asia Pacific Screen Awards

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Reza Farahmand's documentary “Copper Notes of a Dream” will be competing in the 13th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), a public relations team announced on Saturday.

The film is about a ten-year-old Palestinian refugee, Malook, who lives in Jarmuk, a suburb of Damascus in Syria, which is ruined during the war with ISIS.



A scene from Iranian director Reza Farahmand's documentary “Copper Notes of a Dream”.

Malook dreams of becoming a singer. Together with his older sister Ghofran, he is planning to organize a concert with professional musicians.

To earn money for the concert, Malook and some friends pull the copper wires out of the walls of vacant buildings that are riddled with bullets and rockets, and write apologies on the walls for their theft, in hope that the people who have fled would understand, if they ever return.

Iranian filmmaker Yasser Talebi's acclaimed short documentary “Beloved” has also received a nomination at the APSA.

The film is about an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder's existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people.

Indonesia's renowned art house director Garin Nugroho will chair an APSA jury. Nugroho will be joined by two additional jury members who together will determine the Best Youth Feature Film, Best Animated Feature Film and Best Documentary Feature Film.

The 13th edition of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards ceremony will take place in Brisbane, Australia on November 21.

In 2017, Iranian actor Navid Mohammadzadeh was honored with a special mention for his performance in “No Date, No Signature” at the 11th Asia Pacific Screen Awards.

“The Warden” named Iran's best film of the year

I → In his speech, Mohammadzadeh said that watching Iranian director Feridun Goleh's 1975 drama “Beehive” motivated him to pursue an acting career.

The film also won Hooman Behmanesh the award for best cinematographer, and Javad Motavvari received the award for best visual effects engineer for his collaboration in this project.

The Iranian House of Cinema organizes the celebration every year to commemorate Iran's National Day of Cinema, which would fall on September 12 this year. However, the celebration was held earlier due to the mourning season of Muharram in the country.

The award for best director went to Saeid Rustai for his drama “Just 6.5” about the horrible image of narcotics.

Director and writer Mohsen Amirusefi's movie “Lovely Trash” on Iran's 2009 post-election unrest, which was banned for six years, won the award for best screenplay.

Sara Bahrami was picked as best actress for playing the role of a drug addict in Behruz Shoeibi's “Axing”.

This year's celebration was held on the theme of the wishes the winners and presenters have. Bahrami received her award from veteran actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya who said, “I wish that the Iranian people reach a position in which there are no sanctions and we can do our jobs without any problem. I also wish all people of the world peace. We are the world's beloved ones who have strayed off the right path.”

The award for best supporting actor was presented to Farhad Aslani for his role in director Hooman Seyyedi's acclaimed drama “Sheepie”.

Fereshteh Sadr-Orafari won the award for supporting actress for her role in director Narges Abyar's political love story “When the Moon Was Full”, which also brought Iman Omidvari the award for best makeup artist.

Bahram Dehqani was named best editor for his collaboration in “Just 6.5”.



Producer Majid Motallebi speaks after receiving the award for best film for “The Warden” during the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration at Tehran's Milad Tower on August 30, 2019.

“Dissect” by Siavash Shahabi about a police investigation into the sudden death of a schoolchild won the award for best short film.

The award for best animated film went to Bahram Azimi's “The Sixth String”, which is based on a true story about Darvish Khan, a Persian classical musician and tar player, who was killed 90 years ago in a car accident. He is considered as the first victim of a car accident in Iran.

“It Is Winter” directed by Mehrdad Zahedian

about Tehran's Lalezar Street, which was regarded as Iran's Broadway and cradle of modernism during the 1950s and 1960s, won the award for best feature documentary.

As the producer of the documentary, Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi received the award.

Director Yasser Talebi's “Beloved” won the award for best short documentary. The acclaimed film tells the story of an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder's existence with her cows to a more comfortable

life among people.

Producer Elaheh Nobakht received the award from veteran documentarians Morteza Razzaq-Karimi and Ramin Faruqi.

The celebration was wrapped up by a tribute to the legendary vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian who is currently battling kidney cancer.

The 22nd edition of the Iran Cinema Celebration is scheduled to be organized by the Iran Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Technics.

Director Behruz Gharibpur to restage Ashura opera puppet show in Tehran



The Aran Theater Troupe performs the Ashura opera puppet show at Tehran's Ferdowsi Hall on October 3, 2018. (Tiwall/Sara Saqafi)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Behruz Gharibpur will restage the Ashura opera puppet show with his Aran Theater Troupe at Tehran's Ferdowsi Hall on Wednesday.

The opera is about the battle of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions against the Umayyad dynasty during Ashura, the tenth day of the month of Muharram on the lunar calendar, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) was martyred in Karbala in 680 CE.

The Ashura opera puppet show is a blend of music, puppetry, poetry and tazieh (Iranian passion play).

The opera puppet show will be staged with music by Iranian composer Behzad Abdi, which has been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine under the baton of Vladimir Sirenko.

Vocalist Mohammad Motamedi along with a choir of 12 singers and the Ghafer nohay group will collaborate with Aran in the opera puppet show, which will remain on stage until September 13.

The Ashura puppet show premiered in Tehran in 2008. It has been staged in France, Italy, Poland and several other countries.

“Stories for Kids Who Dare to Be Different” published in Persian



Front cover of the Persian version of English author Ben Brooks' book “Stories for Kids Who Dare to Be Different: True Tales of Amazing People Who Stood Up and Stood Out”.

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — English author Ben Brooks' book “Stories for Kids Who Dare to Be Different: True Tales of Amazing People Who Stood Up and Stood Out” has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Omid Sohrabinik and Arezu Gudarzi are the co-translators of the book, which has been released by Now Publications.

Published in 2018, the book is a follow-up to Brooks' New York Times bestselling “Stories for Boys Who Dare to Be Different”.

The book offers extraordinary true

stories of 76 famous and not-so-famous influencers who changed the world for the better.

Each of these people, from the past to the present day, is a rule-breaker and stereotype-smasher in his or her own way.

Entries include Emma Gonzalez, Andy Warhol, Bjork, Hans Christian Andersen, Sally Ride, and so many more heroes from all walks of life and from all over the world.

The author tries to teach teenagers to be themselves and their dreams might come true.

Iranian films line up for DYTATKO children's festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — A lineup of five Iranian films will be competing in various sections of the DYTATKO International Children's Media Festival in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

“Doch” by Amir Mashhadiabbas will go on screen in the Feature Film for Children section, while “The Dolls Breathe” by Iman Soltani will compete in the Short Film for Children category.

“Doch” is about Gholamreza, a teenage boy who wants to have a new bicycle but he cannot afford to buy it. Therefore, he attends a contest organized by the Literacy Movement Organization to teach the last illiterate person in a village to raise the funds for the bicycle. But the last illiterate is a 90-year-old woman with bad hearing and poor eyesight.

“The Dolls Breathe” is about a girl, Arezu, whose father gave her a doll with just one leg. Other children mock Arezu,



This combination photo shows posters for the Iranian films selected to be screened at the DYTATKO International Children's Media Festival in Kharkiv, Ukraine from September 4 to 7.

so her father makes a wooden leg for the doll.

“Didi and Boodi” by Ehsan Tavassolizadeh, Mona Shahi and Sajjad Qolizadeh will be screened in the Television Program for Children section.

The animated series is about Didi, who has just gone bankrupt, and wants to start a new business in a warehouse he has bought. But Boodi, the former owner's robot, is still living in the warehouse and doesn't want to leave.

“The Incomplete” by Erfan Parsapur about an otter who is obsessed with perfection will be screened in the Animation Film for Children section.

“Beyond the Black” co-directed by Saeid Sodagar and Sepideh Eidi about a black crow that loves golden things and steals them will be competing in this section.

The DYTATKO International Children's Media Festival will be held from September 4 to 7.

Almodovar gets lifetime achievement award at Venice Film Festival

VENICE, Italy (Reuters) — Spanish director Pedro Almodovar added a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement to his list of accolades on Thursday, when the Venice Film Festival presented him with the prize for a long and illustrious career.

The 69-year old Oscar winner, known for acclaimed films such as “Talk to Her”, “Volver” and most recently his loosely

autobiographical portrait “Pain and Glory”, made his debut at the festival in 1983 with the comic drama “Dark Habits”.

He was nominated for the festival's top Golden Lion prize in 1988 for “Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown”, a movie that brought him international recognition.

“Venice... is the place where I was

born (made) as a director. For me this is something very special,” Almodovar told reporters.

On “Dark Habits”, in which a singer hides out in a convent of quirky and eccentric nuns, a movie Almodovar claimed did not sit well with everyone on the jury, he said: “The simple fact that I was participating in an international film festival seemed

like a miracle.”

Almodovar, who has regularly worked with actors Antonio Banderas and Penelope Cruz, has won several awards for his movies, including a best original screenplay Oscar for drama “Talk to Her”.

“All About My Mother”, which he also wrote and directed, won the best foreign language film Academy Award in 2000.