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Defense projects to be assigned to science-based companies: VP

TEHRAN — Iran's vice president for science and technology has said that defense projects will be assigned to science-based companies for completion.

Sorena Sattari made the announcement during a ceremony where he and Defense Minister Amir Hatami signed an agreement for cooperation between the Presidential Department for Science

and Technology and Ministry of Defense, ISNA reported.

"Through cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, projects that the ministry does not classify as confidential will be assigned to science-based companies. The reason is that innovation occurs at science-based companies, not in government systems," Sattari said during the ceremony. **→2**

Iran ranks 1st globally as a pocket-friendly destination: WEF

TEHRAN — The World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked Iran first in the world as a pocket-friendly destination.

"Iran ranks 1st globally [in the category of Price Competitiveness], thanks to low ticket taxes and airport charges (7th), fuel prices (5th) and high purchasing power (5th)," according to WEF's Travel & Tourism Competitive-

ness Report 2019, which was released earlier this month.

The Forum also categorized the Islamic Republic in "The Middle East and North Africa (MENA)" region, saying "In fact, no MENA country scores above the global average for natural resources and only Egypt and Iran score above for cultural resources." **→10**

Yemeni drones hit Aramco, world's largest refinery in Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN — Yemeni drones have hit two oil facilities of Saudi Arabia's state oil giant Aramco in the country's east, causing huge fires before dawn on Saturday.

A spokesman for Saudi Arabia's interior ministry said in a statement that the attacks targeted two Aramco factories in Abqaiq and Khurais.

The statement did not identify the source of the attacks, but Yemen's Houthi movement later claimed responsibility in

an announcement on Al Masirah TV.

The movement's military spokesman General Yahya Sare'e said 10 drones were deployed against the sites in Abqaiq and Khurais, and pledged to widen the range of attacks on Saudi Arabia. "This was one of the largest operations which our forces have carried out deep inside Saudi Arabia. It came after careful intelligence and cooperation with honorable and free people inside Saudi Arabia," he said without elaboration. **→13**



PERSPECTIVE

M.A. Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Bolton was a wrong choice by the impulsive president

Donald Trump trumped his national security advisor John Bolton on Tuesday via a Twitter, saying he had "strongly disagreed" with many of Bolton's positions.

Naming Bolton as national security advisor was in sharp contrast to Trump's campaign promises including his criticism of "unending wars" that Republican President George W. Bush and his close team, Bolton included, had started in Afghanistan and Iraq.

After firing him, Trump admitted Bolton made a number of "big mistakes", including pushing for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Trump has turned his administration into a trial and error system. Analysts say Trump's decisions are based on his impulses and that he has no strategy.

It was quite clear that Bolton was a wrong choice for the important post of national security advisor. Even moderate Republican politicians did not approve of Bolton's ultra-hawkish tendencies.

He is a hard-hearted person. He has shown no remorse for the disastrous Iraq war.

Not being affected by the tragedy of the Iraq war, he advocated for war against North Korea, Iran, Syria and Venezuela.

Bolton's thirst for war against Iran was so high that he favored Mojahdin Khalq Organization (MKO/MEK) - a cult group that some analysts have likened to Cambodia's Khmer Rouge - as a replacement for the Islamic Republic system.

Trump's administration is fraught with repeated mistakes. Trump knew beforehand that Bolton had pushed for the Iraq war and that he was paid by the MEK, which was on the State Department terrorist list until 2012.

Also, in March 2015, while Iran and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) were busy negotiating a deal over Iran's nuclear program, he wrote an editorial in the New York Times suggesting strikes on Iran's nuclear sites. **→3**

Sunset of America's global leadership with part-time strategists

By Mohammad Ghaderi

TEHRAN — Trump's doctrine "America first" was created to form a new one-polar system with the leadership of the U.S. and it was based on nullifying the interests of multilateralism in regular world relations.

Based on this doctrine, a U.S. defeated in domestic and foreign policies over the past presidential terms, should reconsider and rebuild relations with more profitability in order to revive the old hegemon and regain its lost title as world leader.

In the economic sector, Trump considered establishing ties towards more profit for the U.S. in bilateral relations, trying to build America's foreign policy on bilateral ties and trade.

Trump was seeking profitable and guaranteed deals in foreign relations, to make which come true he resorted to the policy of fear and hope to gauge extraterritorial relations. He defined mid-term U.S. policies by presenting as considerable the international pacts, conventions, and approaches.

This new American leadership spearheaded by Trump, with more media presentation than executive reality, when faced with the international structure, challenged China's economy. When facing Russia, it discarded the INF pact. It also encouraged European countries to leave the EU, left the Paris agreement, and quit Iran's nuclear deal with had four UN Security Council members and Germany as partner. Trump went so far as to call the UN costly and unproductive, calling for its removal from the U.S. **→13**

'With or without Bolton' that is not the question

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

TEHRAN (MNA) — The US National Security Adviser, John Bolton, was forced out from the White House last Tuesday due to, as believed, his different stances from those of Trump on issues such as the US foreign policies towards specific countries including Iran.

Bolton himself said in a tweet that he had offered to resign Monday night while a few hours

later Trump announced that he fired Bolton after a string of disagreements over how the US should handle North Korea, Afghanistan and Iran.

His downfall has been translated in many different ways, so far, regarding its influence on US internal issues and America's worldwide ties.

Some believe, he had been elected by Trump to make his Presidential campaign promises and approaching the second round of elections, Trump,

who is dipping to 39 percent approval in a new CNN/SSRS poll (only 36 percent of those asked said he deserved reelection), is turning his face towards new managerial strategies to feel more confident about his second tenure in office.

Bolton is not the first cabinet member leaving under Trump. He, for sure, was a big voice in Trump's ear but his opposing voice made the US President angry. **→13**

When Tel Aviv crosses the red lines

By Fatemeh Salehi

TEHRAN — A review of Zionist regime's recent actions and its military aggression against the Axis of Resistance in the region shows that these attacks and aggressions have been intensified over the recent days against Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Palestine, indicating that the Zionist regime and its allies such as U.S. have crossed the red lines.

According to a Syrian security source, the Zi-

onist regime recently bombarded a military base in Al Bukamal in eastern Syria through the Jordan airspace and with the assistance of Americans and their military base in Al-Tanf. The source added that the U.S. and the Zionist regime are responsible for these adversarial actions.

The source said, "They have crossed the red lines. This military base belonged to the Syrian army and was under construction when it

was attacked by the Zionist regime. We teach aggressors a lesson that they will never forget."

Previously, some sources had reported about the Israeli air raids on the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) forces near the Iraq borders. These sources declared that the bombings were carried out inside the Al Bukamal, pointing out that these attacks were carried out five times at the intervals less than one minute. **→13**

Armenian Olympics inaugurated in Tehran



© IRNA / Joana Abadian

The 51st edition of the annual Armenian Olympics were inaugurated in Tehran Friday night.

The opening ceremony was held at the Ararat Sports Complex and was attended by Tehran City Council Chairman Mohsen Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The event has brought 700 Armenian athletes from across the country together.

Armenian Olympics is one of the longest-standing sports events in the world's Armenian community.

The athletes compete in nine events in the 10-day competition.



ARTICLE

Masoud Hossein
Head of the Sport Desk of the TehranTimes

Iran U23 football team in danger of not qualifying for Olympics

The war of words between Iran U23 football coach Farhad Majidi and Akbar Mohammadi, head of youth committee of Iran Football Federation, has put Iran U23 football team in real danger of not qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games.

Last week, Iran fell to Uzbekistan twice in two friendly matches and it sounded the alarm that U23 football are at risk of not qualifying for the Olympics after 44 years.

Majidi has hit out at football federation's policy over inviting players to U23 team, blaming it as one of the reasons for the team's failings.

The ex-Esteghal forward says he is resentful of anybody's attempts to interfere in his work.

BUT some experts believe that Majidi is responsible for his team's losses since the U23 team suffer from lack of a defensive midfielder as they are becoming more and more critical for modern football.

Majidi's side lost to Uzbekistan 1-0 in their first match and suffered a heavy 4-1 loss three days later.

He replaced Zlatko Kranjcar in mid-June but the Iran's Ministry of Sports and Youth and National Olympic Committee (NOC) expressed its dissatisfaction with the way of football federation for choosing him as a coach and called it disappointing at that time.

After a few days, the consensus was reached on him and Majidi announced his provisional squad for the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020.

The Persians had previously earned a spot in the AFC U23 Championship 2020 Final in late March under coaching of Kranjcar but the football federation was not satisfied with the Croat's performance in the competition held in Tehran because U23 team qualified for the final round as one of the second-best teams behind Iraq.

The 2020 AFC U23 Championship will be held in Thailand from Jan. 8 to 26 and the top three teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2020 Summer Olympics men's football tournament in Japan as the AFC representatives.

With about three months to go until the Asian championship, Iran, a powerhouse of the Asian football, are in real danger of not qualifying for the Olympics.

Iran have not been in the Olympics since the 1976 games in Munich.

'Netanyahu, aka little Hitler, is sinking Israel to survive'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, says the efforts made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stay in power is helping earlier destruction of Israel, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The "little Hitler" is seeking to ignite a war in the region with the support of the Trump administration and the money of some oil-rich countries, Amir Abdollahian said, referring to Netanyahu.



He strongly denounced Israel's new plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, saying, "In case of this measure's realization, which is a violation of international law, the Palestinian nation and the Resistance will teach a great lesson to the Zionists for playing with fire."

The senior advisor also called on international bodies and all countries to take practical steps to stop the Israeli regime's measures which threaten global peace and security.

"The Zionist regime's prime minister and the Zionists should abandon their dreams and know that the Palestinian and regional fighters cannot wait to teach an unforgettable and historic lesson to Zionists with all their power and experience from 33-day and Gaza wars."

On Tuesday evening, Netanyahu promised to annex the Jordan Valley if he wins the upcoming elections, drawing sharp criticism from the Palestinians as well as countries in the Middle East, including Jordan, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Israel occupied the West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War in a move never recognized by the international community.

The Jordan Valley accounts for around one-third of the West Bank. Israeli right-wing politicians have long viewed the 2,400-square kilometer (926.65-square mile) strategic area as a part of the territory they would never retreat from and stated that the Israeli military would maintain its control there under any peace agreement with the Palestinians.

"There is one place where we can apply Israeli sovereignty immediately after the (September 17) elections," Netanyahu said in a speech broadcast live on Israeli TV channels.

"If I receive from you, citizens of Israel, a clear mandate to do so ... today I announce my intention to apply with the formation of the next government Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea."

What could make a Rouhani-Trump deal possible?

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian

U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the landmark Iran nuclear agreement, and his pursuit of the ill-advised "maximum pressure" policy, have taken U.S.-Iran relations to their most critical point since the 1979 revolution.

The eastern powers that are also parties to the nuclear deal - namely China and Russia, which themselves have been engaged in trade warfare with the U.S. - seem more sincere than their Western counterparts in their will to keep the deal alive.

The Europeans' efforts have been a total failure. While they keep issuing statements in support of the deal, in reality, they have capitulated to U.S.-led sanctions against Iran. French President Emmanuel Macron recently took the lead in trying to find a solution, but these efforts were in vain.

■ A gradual exit

In July 2015, the nuclear deal was agreed between Iran and the P5+1 (the US, UK, Germany, France, China and Russia).

Iran fully implemented the terms and conditions, as confirmed repeatedly by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In return, Western powers either directly violated the terms of the deal, or remained complacent in the face of U.S. bullying.

The removal of the deal's economic dividends because of the U.S. withdrawal led Iranian officials to announce that they would gradually exit the deal, unless other parties were to comply with its terms and conditions. There is no doubt that as Trump fully implements the maximum pressure strategy in the remainder of his term, Iran will entirely exit the deal.

This impasse is the product of three important factors.

Firstly, Trump sought to hold direct talks with Iran while pursuing the policy of pressure and sanctions. By pulling out of the nuclear deal, he left the negotiating table, and by sanctioning Iran's supreme leader and designating the Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization, he killed any chance for negotiations.

Secondly, the main U.S. actors and policymakers, namely former national security adviser John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have actively pursued a regime change policy with respect to Iran.

Thirdly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been trying to push the U.S. towards a military confrontation with Iran. Just this week, he again claimed that Iran was clandestinely developing nuclear weapons.

■ False claims

Netanyahu has apparently forgotten the deadline cited in his 1995 book *Fighting Terrorism*, in which he asserted that Iran would have a nuclear weapon in three to five years.

In the early 2000s, he also presented false claims to the international community about Saddam Hussein allegedly possessing weapons of mass destruction, pushing the U.S. towards the disastrous invasion of Iraq. Netanyahu was also instrumental in pushing the U.S. into the Afghanistan quagmire.

Two things can be forecast from the current circumstances in the region: that the Trump administration will not return to the nuclear deal, and that Iran will not uphold it unilaterally.

The nuclear deal contains the most comprehensive regime of inspection that the non-proliferation world has ever seen. Yet, by implementing these unprecedented commitments, Iran has been rewarded with vicious sanctions.

While the IAEA attests to the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, the Trump administration keeps accusing Iran of attempting to create a nuclear bomb.

With Trump abruptly forcing out Bolton, his warmonger national security adviser, the question remains whether or not there is a way out of the U.S.-Iran impasse. The answer is yes, if the U.S. respects international law on non-proliferation as the basis of any potential agreement.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Central bank given more authority to control foreign currency market

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Heads of the three branches of government attended the 39th session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination on Saturday, agreeing to give more authority to the Central Bank of Iran to control the foreign currency market.

President Hassan Rouhani, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani and Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi also discussed coordination among the branches of government in line with managing the country under the sanctions.

The previous session of the council was held on August 31 during which regulations to implement oil projects were approved.

In a session of the council on August 10, Rouhani said that solving people's problems must be the main objective of policymaking 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 restored old sanctions and ordered new harsh ones.



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 council on July 27, four strategies to compensate for budget deficit were approved.

Gibraltar chief minister says Iran has not breached law

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said on Friday that it is difficult to say whether Iran breached international rules by selling the Grace 1 tanker oil to Syria.

"You can see from the images that the oil has ended up in Syria but that's not to say that there's a breach of the undertaking (by Iran)," The National quoted him as saying.

"If we had the assurance (that it was not), we would then have an obligation under the law to also let it go," he said.

He added, "We did not have an undertaking that the oil would not end up in Syria. We had an undertaking from the Iranian government that they would not sell the oil to any EU sanctioned entity... not just Syria, even entities, some of them in Iran and subject to EU sanctions."

Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad said on Saturday, "When officials of England and Gibraltar decided to release the oil tanker, they pointed to Iran's commitment. Certain opponents who could not believe release of the tanker through Iran's political and diplomatic

power falsely interpreted this commitment as Iran's offering guarantees to the British government."

"However, we are glad that it has become obvious for all that Iran's commitment means Iranian embassy's official remarks and note. It has become clear that Iran has sold its oil to a private company which is not contrary to official remarks in the embassy's note," he stated.

Adrian Darya 1 had been at the center of a dispute between Tehran and certain Western countries. It was photographed by satellite off the Syrian port of Tartus, a U.S. space technology company said on Friday, according to the Guardian.

Maxar Technologies Inc said the image showed the tanker Adrian Darya 1 very close to Tartus on September 6. The ship appeared to have turned off its transponder in the Mediterranean west of Syria, ship-tracking data showed. The tanker, which was loaded with Iranian crude oil, sent its last signal giving its position between Cyprus and Syria sailing north last Monday afternoon.



The vessel, formerly named Grace 1, was detained by British Royal Marine commandos off Gibraltar on July 4 as it was suspected to be en route to Syria in violation of European Union sanctions.

Gibraltar released the Iranian vessel on August 15 despite a last-minute legal bid by the United States to have it detained.

Defense projects to be assigned to science-based companies: VP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's vice president for science and technology has said that defense projects will be assigned to science-based companies for completion.

Sorena Sattari made the announcement during a ceremony where he and Defense Minister Amir Hatami signed an agreement for cooperation between the Presidential Department for Science and Technology and Ministry of Defense, ISNA reported.

"Through cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, projects that the ministry does not classify as confidential will be assigned to science-based companies. The reason is that innovation occurs at science-based companies, not in government systems," Sattari said during the ceremony.

He hoped that the arrangements will enable the Defense Ministry to benefit from advancements that science-based companies have gained in such fields as stem cells and cognitive science.

He pointed out that as the defense sector in Iran is entirely under foreign sanctions, Iran has to rely on its own human resources for development in this field.

■ Hatami says outstanding projects underway

Speaking during the same ceremony, Hatami said that new projects are going to get underway to design "outstanding products" in the fields of aviation, space, biology, and



cognitive science.

These products, Hatami said, will generate superiority for Iran's defense sector, Fars reported.

Elsewhere, Hatami said that Washington is using sanctions and pressures as a weapon to practice economic terrorism against the Iranian nation.

"The enemies of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, headed

by America, are making their utmost attempts to deprive the Iranian nation of its preliminary rights."

"In light of economic terrorism, the enemies have violated the basic rights of the Iranian nation in a move to inflict damage on our people," he said.

The defense chief underlined the Iranian nation's will and capability to turn threats into opportunity, and said, "We produce anything we need inside the country as we did in the past."

Iran has made major achievements in manufacturing different weapons and military equipment over the past decades.

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly urged the Iranian armed forces to further reinvigorate their capabilities and deterrence power.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran does not intend to start a war against anyone but you (armed forces) should increase your capabilities to the extent that not only does the enemy fear attacking Iran but also the shadow of war against the Iranian nation will fade away with the help of the armed forces' solidarity, might and effective deployment," Ayatollah Khamenei said, addressing Navy officials and commanders in Tehran in February on the occasion of the Navy Day in Iran.

He added that the armed forces' preparedness played as a deterrent power against the enemy threats.

Envoy: coercive sanctions obstructing regional, international peace

(FNA) — Iran's first counsellor to the United Nations has said unilateral sanctions, use of force and coercion and disrespect for the international law are seriously threatening regional and global peace.

"In fact, unilaterally imposed measures, the use and threat of use of force, and unilateral coercive sanctions as a means to achieving national policy objectives have a seriously adverse impact on the promotion of peace at the regional and international level," Farhad Mamdouhi said, addressing the United Nations High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace on Friday.

He added that such destructive measures are "fundamental impediments to establishing a peaceful and prosperous world as well as a just and equitable international order, which is a vital prerequisite for sustainable development".

He regretted that "the world's democratic principles and international laws are increasingly and flagrantly ignored".

"The rule of law is being severely and constantly undermined," he voiced concern over unilateral moves, indirectly referring to the policies of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Here comes the full text of his address:

Madam President,

Allow me first to commend you for giving special attention to the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the pertinent Declaration and Programme of

Action through the convening of this high-level Forum. This important meeting on the urgent need to promote, defend and strengthen peace provides us with an opportunity to renew our commitment to further strengthen global movement for the culture of peace.

In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to briefly highlight a number of issues of particular importance.

Madam President,

Today, the world's democratic principles and international laws are increasingly and flagrantly ignored. The rule of law is being severely and constantly undermined. We are witnessing that the current global situation presents great challenges to peace. Existing and emerging threats at the international and regional level continue to impede efforts by States to promote peace and security, which is the cornerstone for the empowerment of humanity based on sustainable development.

One of these major threats is the growing resort to unilateralism.

In fact, unilaterally imposed measures, the use and threat of use of force, and unilateral coercive sanctions as a means to achieving national policy objectives have a seriously adverse impact on the promotion of peace at the regional and international level. They are fundamental impediments to establishing a peaceful and prosperous world as well as a just and equitable international order,



which is a vital prerequisite for sustainable development.

The rising threat of terrorism and violent extremism across the globe, in particular in the Middle East, is a result of one of the symptoms of unilateralism coupled with interventionist, flawed and short-sighted policies.

Withdrawing from international organizations, especially UNESCO and the Human Rights Council as well as international agreements such as the Paris Agreement, are among some examples of a "me first", self-centered and arrogant policy that stems from unilateralism.

Threatening states' sovereignty and independence as well as their freedom of trade and investment while also preventing them from exercising their right to decide, by their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems, are among some of the

significant obstacles to the "development" of targeted States, let alone their "sustainable development".

In this respect, challenges to peace must be directly addressed at their root causes. Sustainable peace cannot be brought on by a "self-centered" and "me first" approach, which is principally in contradiction of culture of peace.

Therefore, in order to secure peace and provide sound foundation for its development, there needs to be a shift towards a new democratic and balanced approach.

Peace and security could be promoted based on the collective contribution and cooperation of states on equal footing. This can be achieved by simply recognizing the need to respect the interests of all States, which by its very nature will lead to stability. Unless there is a collective effort to bring inclusive peace and security to the world, we will be engulfed in turmoil and potentially far worse for generations to come.

We need to resolutely address the phenomenon of "extremist unilateralism" by promoting and reinforcing multilateralism with an inclusive multilateral decision-making process based on high ethical values and cooperation.

We need to play an active part to promote and defend multilateralism as the appropriate framework to provide sustainable methods to resolve existing challenges.

U.S. intended to bring about collapse of Islamic Republic: VP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Saturday that the U.S. intended to bring about the collapse of the Islamic Republic and even Iran with its "maximum pressure" policy.

"Their minimal goal was the collapse of the Iranian economy but today they have reached the conclusion that they should pressure Iran into negotiating table," Jahangiri said during a ceremony to introduce the new Education Minister Mohsen Haji-Mirzaee, IRNA reported.

He also said the U.S. exerted pressure on even Iran's friends in order to reduce Tehran's oil exports.

Jahangiri said that the U.S. was a signatory to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, but it unilaterally pulled out of it.

He added that the U.S. started an unequal war in March 2018, when it restored the sanctions.



Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany signed an agreement in 2015, according to which Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program in exchange for lifting sanctions.

However, since U.S. President Donald Trump assumed office, he did anything in his power to derail other countries' efforts to preserve the JCPOA and finally, on May 8, 2019, he withdrew the U.S. from the accord.

Much of the international community has voiced strong opposition to the U.S. move and warned of its ramifications for the region and the world.

A year after the U.S. pullout from the JCPOA, Iran started to take steps at 60-day intervals to reduce its commitments to the deal. So far, Tehran has taken three steps in that regard.

Tehran says its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral U.S. bans.

Zarif to Trump: You don't need enemies with Bibi around

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the United States does not need enemies as its ally, Israel, is doing the job with its espionage on U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The #B_Team Strikes again," Zarif tweeted on Friday night, referring to an international group of warmongers, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who according to him have surrounded Trump.

@realDonaldTrump: With a BFF in the #B_Team — who empties US coffers and takes US foreign policy hostage — SPYING on the US PRESIDENT, America doesn't need enemies," his tweet read.

Zarif also shared a Politico report on Israel's espionage activities in the U.S.

According to the report which cited three former senior U.S. officials with knowledge of the matter, the U.S. government concluded within the past two years that Israel was most likely behind the placement of cellphone surveillance devices that were found near the White House and other sensitive locations around Washington.

But unlike most other occasions when flagrant incidents of foreign spying have been discovered on American soil, the Trump administration did not rebuke the Israeli government, and there were no consequences for Israel's behavior, one of the former officials said.

The miniature surveillance devices, colloquially known as "StingRays," mimic regular cell towers to fool cellphones into giving them their locations and identity information. Formally called international mobile subscriber identity-catchers or IMSI-catchers, they also can capture the contents of calls and data use. The devices were likely intended to spy on Trump, one of the former officials said, as well as his top aides and closest associates — though it's not clear whether the Israeli efforts were successful.

Responding to report, the U.S. president said he would find it "hard to believe" that the Israelis had placed the devices.

Trump said: "I don't believe that. No, I don't think the Israelis were spying on us. I really would find that hard to believe. My relationship with Israel has been great, you look at Golan Heights, you look at Jerusalem — with moving the



Embassy to Jerusalem, becoming the capital, you look at even the Iran deal — what's happened with Iran. Iran is a much different country right now, then it was two-and-a-half years ago. It's in a much different position. No, I don't believe that. I wouldn't believe that story. But, anything is possible, but I don't believe it."

MPs submit motion to back anti-U.S. institutions

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian lawmakers have proposed a motion that requires the government to provide support for anti-imperialist institutions, universities and research centers which focus on the hegemonic policies of the United States.

The motion has been compiled by more than 180 MPs with the aim of countering Washington's anti-Iran measures, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

"Given the hostile actions of the United States and the economic, social and cultural damage (it inflicts on) the national interests

of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its full support for anti-Iran institutions at a very high cost, the administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran is required to counteract and provide financial and spiritual support for all scientific and research centers, institutions and universities that work in the field of American studies," the motion reads.

In April, Iranian lawmakers ratified two clauses of a comprehensive plan to deal with the U.S. hostile policies.

One of the bills entails legal action against the U.S. move of blacklisting the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and requires the

government to act in line with the measures passed by the Supreme National Security Council to "counter the terrorist activities of the American forces who threaten the Islamic Republic of Iran's interests."

The other motion stipulated that "the Islamic Republic of Iran's administration and the armed forces are duty bound to take the necessary and wise measures in due time in such a way that the American forces could not employ any power or equipment against the Islamic Republic of Iran's interests."

Also last month, parliamentarians prepared a bill to impose sanctions on U.S. officials who

had a long record of hostility towards Iran.

According to the bill, former U.S. national security advisor John Bolton, Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin and Senator Ted Cruz as well as their family members would be banned permanently from traveling to Iran.

Days later, the lawmakers signed a statement to denounce and ban any kind of talks with the United States.

According to the statement, holding talks with the U.S., under the current circumstances and given the U.S. pullout from the nuclear deal, would be detrimental to the interests of the Iranian nation.

Europe must shore up assistance to Iran's fight on drugs: presidential chief of staff

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian president's chief of staff has called on Europeans to increase assistance to Iran in fighting drugs to prevent traffic of drugs to their countries, noting in particular that U.S. sanctions have left impacts on Tehran's budget to fight against narcotics.

"The European states cannot sit still and issue statements to appreciate Iran and say that fighting drugs is Iran's responsibility; they must certainly help Iran," Mahmoud Vaezi said, addressing a meeting in Tehran on Saturday.

He said that the Iranian government which could in the past generously help the anti-drugs campaign, has faced a limited budget due to the U.S. sanctions and cannot help the fight against narcotics like the past.

Vaezi warned that if pressure on Iran continues and the Europeans refrain from financial assistance, the country's anti-narcotics fight would weaken and drugs would be trafficked to European countries and they will be forced to pay multi-fold amounts of money to confront drug traffickers.

The Islamic Republic has been actively fighting



drug trades originating from its eastern neighbors in the past four decades, despite its high economic and human costs.

The country has spent largely on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

In relevant remarks earlier this week, Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, in a meeting with Head of the State Service on Drug Control of Kyrgyzstan Colonel Oleg Zapolsky, stated that Iran was leading anti-narcotics campaign in the region.

Rahmani Fazli said that Iran had taken extensive measures in fighting narcotics and had continued its fight despite receiving no international aid.

Referring to drug production in Afghanistan, he said in spite of the fact that the U.S. troops are present in Afghanistan, they do not fight against narcotics in that country.

Despite difficulties regarding the Afghanistan sovereignty, the common borders are approximately controlled by Iran, meaning that Afghanistan has no special monitoring on borders, he said.

Rahmani Fazli reiterated that Western countries including Europeans have also provided no aid to Iran.

Over 800 tons of narcotics are confiscated in Iran annually and the country has valuable experience in fighting illegal drugs, curing addicts, discovering hidden drugs and fighting gangs, he stated.

Cuba strongly rejects activation of IRAT

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Cuba's Foreign Ministry has denounced the "shameful decision" to activate the Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (IRAT) that contemplates the use of military force.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly rejects its invocation under the pretext of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela being a threat to peace and security in the hemisphere, when in reality, the interventionist Monroe Doctrine implemented by the United States, hostility toward Venezuela, and the use of this treaty for such ends, that endanger the region's peace and security, the Cuban Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"Once again, the discredited Organization of American States was the vehicle for this outrage, in which an honorable group of nations openly opposed the decision," the statement read.

"Invoking the IRAT, which the United States used to justify military interventions and aggression in the region, causing so much pain and death to Latin Americans and Caribbeans, is a deliberate attempt to provoke a situation that could lead to the use of force to overthrow the legitimate government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros, in flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace," it added.

"By rejecting this decision, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls upon the governments and peoples of Our America and the world to resolutely oppose this measure that pretends to justify, via an artificial legal framework, intervention in the internal affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which is unacceptable."

Tehran, Bishkek to boost counter-terrorism co-op: minister

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — High-ranking officials from Iran and Kyrgyzstan have signed an agreement to boost mutual cooperation in various security fields, including the fight against terrorism and illicit drugs, said Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli.

Speaking upon his arrival in the Iranian northeastern city of Mashhad on Saturday, Rahmani Fazli pointed to his visit to Kyrgyzstan and said the trip was made to sign the security deal between the two countries after a year of negotiations.

According to the agreement, Iran and Kyrgyzstan will boost cooperation in the fight against illicit drugs, terrorism, extremism, and organized crimes, and exchange information and training in operational fields, the minister stated.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Rahmani Fazli paid a two-day visit to Bishkek to hold talks with senior Kyrgyz officials and sign the security deal.

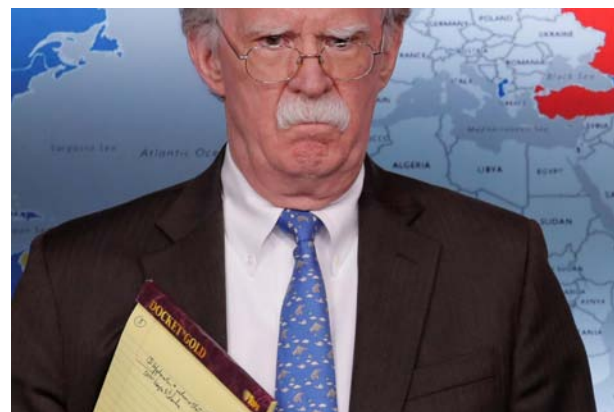
Back in May, high-ranking diplomats from Iran and Kyrgyzstan held the fourth round of political consultations between the two countries in Tehran.

The negotiations were co-chaired by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi and his Kyrgyz counterpart, Nuran Niazaliyev.

In their talks, Araqchi and Niazaliyev emphasized the need to implement the past agreements and documents signed during the reciprocal visits of the Iranian and Kyrgyz presidents.

Bolton was a wrong choice by the impulsive president

1 → Also, in March 2015, while Iran and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) were busy negotiating a deal over Iran's nuclear program, he wrote an editorial in the New York Times suggesting strikes on Iran's nuclear sites.



Trump himself was a fierce critic of the 2015 nuclear deal. But, he ditched the deal in May 2018, just one month after naming Bolton for the senior post.

Though Bolton is not the only culprit for all the chaos haunting the Trump administration, he added new problems to the old ones.

To the detriment of Europe, he triggered a new arms race with Russia by encouraging the Trump administration to abandon the Cold War-era INF Treaty, sabotaged dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang, and disgraced the U.S. for his unsuccessful push for the ouster of the Venezuelan government.

Writing in the National Interest on September 10, Paul Pillar, author of Why America Misunderstands the World, says, "Bolton's wrecking career began as an undersecretary in the George W. Bush administration, when Bolton boasted of his role in killing the earlier Agreed Framework dealing with the North Korean nuclear program."

Pillar also says, "In each of his positions in government, Bolton has made the world a more conflictual place and the United States a more isolated and despised country."

Now, Bolton has been sacked or forced to resign but the U.S. is left with a number of emerging problems: Iran is reducing its commitments under the nuclear deal, or the JCPOA, to an extent that may lead to its demise, Washington's allies in Europe and Asia have largely lost their trust America and now see Washington as a part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Asadollah Asgaroladi, Iranian billionaire, dies at 86

SOCIAL **TEHRAN** — Asadollah Asgaroladi, chief of Iran-China chamber of commerce and leading Iranian businessman, passed away on Friday at the age of 86.

Asgaroladi, who was also a member of the central council of leading conservative Islamic Coalition Party, passed away in Tehran a few days after being admitted to the hospital for brain damage, according to ipnews.

Born in 1934 in downtown Tehran, Asadollah turned into a business mogul by exporting dried fruit, nuts, and cumin, and importing sugar and home appliances, especially from China.

The deceased had close business ties with China, and was believed to be one of the richest men in Iran with an estimated fortune of \$8 billion, according to Fararu news website.

Asgaroladi advocated the promotion of exports and support for the private sector, and was an opponent of the economic policies of

former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

In an interview with the Asr-e Iran news website, Asadollah had said he took pride in being a billionaire without amassing any fortune through illegal activities or collusion.

"I even avoid taking out bank loans, and I said that I'm not engaged in imports either, not because I may deem imports wrong; no, I do not deem it bad, but I have promised myself to deal with the exports. Anyway, I am not the king of Iran's billionaires," he had said in the interview.

Asadollah's younger brother, Habibollah, was a renowned politician and a minister of commerce in the 1980s. Habibollah, who had played a role in the victory of Iran's 1979 Revolution, died in November 2013.

Asadollah Asgaroladi once announced that he had begun his business career as a teenager, when he had to work hard by day and study by night. He used to attend classes in the economy and law faculties, although he

had been admitted to the faculty of literature.

Asgaroladi said he had been distributing groceries with his first car, a Volkswagen, in 1954, but decided to become a merchant in 1955.

"I went to the Chamber of Commerce to get a commercial card, but I was younger than the age limit of 24.

The deputy chairman of the chamber decided to test me... I recall that he asked me 20 questions about the currency of countries, shipment of goods and so on. I answered the questions entirely, and that deputy chairman called my reference and told him, 'He must take my place'," Asadollah said.

He later expanded his business by exporting cumin to Singapore and New York. "I worked hard and began my trips, until a day that I was dictating the price of cumin in the world and Iran."

Asgaroladi said he was deeply impressed by a sentence he had once read below the statue



of Rockefeller at the Empire State Building in his first visit to New York City, quoting the legendary US businessman as saying that he owed his success to three principles: "I was informed earlier than the others, I made decisions before the others, and when I made my mind, I closed my eyes and took action."

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	304460.1
IFX	3918.68

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,513 rials
GBP	52,507 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$60.22/b
WTI	\$54.85/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.51/b
Gold	\$1,490.55/oz
Silver	\$17.52/oz
Platinum	\$951.60/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran to hold pavilion at 46th Baghdad intl. trade expo

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) is planning to open Iranian pavilion at the Iraq’s 46th international trade exhibition which is due to be held during November 1-10 in Baghdad.

As announced by the TPO portal, the Iranian pavilion will aim to bolster the presence of Iranian companies in target markets, establishing mutual relations with the foreign companies participating in the exhibitions, and ultimately promoting a successful and sustainable presence in the regional markets.

Tehran hosting intl. grains, bakery expo

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – The 12th edition of Iran’s International Grain, Flour, and Bakery Industry Exhibition (IBEX2019) kicked off at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Friday, IRNA reported.

During this four-day exhibition, manufacturers of bakery and grain harvesting machinery and equipment along with companies active in the fields of foodstuff, flour, and bakery are showcasing their latest products and achievements.



According to the organizers, the exhibition is pursuing various goals such as attracting investment in the industry and encouraging the contribution of the country’s private sector in this area, as well as creating export platforms and providing new opportunities for domestic companies to interact with foreign counterparts.

Germany to run world’s largest current account surplus in 2019 : Ifo

Germany will run the world’s largest current account surplus in 2019 for the fourth consecutive year, the Ifo institute for economic research said on Friday, likely putting further pressure on Berlin to help reduce global imbalances and stimulate domestic demand.

According to uk.reuters.com, this year’s surplus in the current account — which measures the flow of goods, services and investments — is seen at \$276 billion (£221 billion), Ifo economist Christian Grimme told Reuters.

He added that Japan’s surplus is projected to come in at \$188 billion, followed by China with \$182 billion.

In contrast, the United States is expected to post a current account deficit of \$480 billion, the world’s largest, despite President Donald Trump’s trade war with China and additional tariffs imposed on products imposed on Chinese products.

Germany’s current account surplus can mainly be attributed to the fact that far more German products and services are sold overseas than imported to Europe’s largest economy.

The trade imbalances have stirred the wrath of Trump, who has threatened to impose additional tariffs on German carmakers. The European Union’s executive body and the International Monetary Fund have also criticized Germany’s surplus.

The European Commission considers a current account surplus of 6% as sustainable over the long-term when measured by the size of a country’s economy.

Germany has come closer to that threshold. While the country reached a record high of 8.5% in 2015, Ifo is now projecting 7.1% this year.

Gita Gopinath, chief economist for the International Monetary Fund, said the global lender had long pressed Germany to boost spending and reduce its current account surplus, and there had been some movement of late.

“There has certainly been a shift towards doing more fiscal spending to raise potential output,” Gopinath told an event at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington. The “question is whether that’s enough.”

POGC, Petropars ink \$440m gas deal

ENERGY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing Iran’s giant South Pars gas field, signed a \$440-million deal with an Iranian company called Petropars on Saturday for development of Belal gas field which is located east of South Pars in the Persian Gulf.

As reported by Shana, with the implementation of the offshore project which is scheduled to be carried out over a 34-month period, the field’s output will reach 500 million cubic feet per day (mcf/d) of sour gas.

Under the signed contract, Petropars is required to drill eight wells, construct and install a wellhead jacket, build and



Managing Director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) Mohammad Meshkinfam (L) and Managing Director of Petropars Hamidreza Masoudi (R) signing the deal for development of Belal gas field on Saturday in the presence of Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (C).

Copper concentrate output 5,000 tons more than anticipated

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Production of copper concentrate by Iran’s National Copper Company during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) has been 5,000 tons more than the anticipated figure, IIRB reported citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

IMIDRO data put the copper concentrate output at 119,679 tons during the five-month period.

As previously announced by Ardeshir Sa’d-Mohammadi, the managing director of National Copper Company, projects have been already started for increasing the country’s annual production of copper concentrate by 450,000 tons.

Production of copper concentrate in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), was five percent more than the planned figure, according to the data released by IMIDRO.

IMIDRO data put the country’s copper concentrate output at 1.18 million tons in the past year, which is 1.123 million tons more than the planned amount.

The data also indicate that production of copper cathode and anode in Iran exceeded the planned amount in the past year.

National Copper Company produced 247,300 tons of copper cathode and 313,700 tons of copper anode in the previous year, showing 15 percent and 21 percent rise, respectively, from the projected figures.



‘Turkish companies eager for investment in Iran’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Head of Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce said among all foreign companies the Turkish companies are more willing to invest in Iran, IRNA reported on Saturday.

According to Reza Kami, over the last decade, Turkish companies’ presence in Iranian market has increased significantly and 100 large and medium-sized enterprises have invested in western provinces like in Azarbaijan and in Aras Free Zone.

“Most of the investment were in industry and production fields,” Kami said.

He further mentioned the increase in the presence of Iranian companies in Turkey and expressed support for Iranian firms’



investment, especially knowledge-based ones, in Turkey.

He noted that Iranian companies are

mostly active in Turkey’s service and commercial sectors.

Kami had earlier told IRNA that the Turkish government repeatedly announced that it will not comply with the U.S. sanctions against Iran and won’t replace Iranian oil under U.S. pressures.

Back in April, the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a reception in Ankara that Turkey is not willing to replace Iranian oil with those from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as the U.S. has offered.

Cavusoglu mentioned the price difference between Iranian crude and those of Saudi and UAE, saying “Iranian oil isn’t cheap but there is a big difference.”

Commodities worth \$547m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – During weekdays ending up to September 12, while 429,093 tons of commodities worth over \$547 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the exchange market experienced a growth of 17 percent in its trading value.

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, 150,964 tons of various products worth close to \$265 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 143,252 tons of steel, 5,160 tons of copper, 2,000 tons of aluminum, 140 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 400 tons of coke were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 277,901 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$300 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 120,700 tons of VB feed stock, 33,326 tons of bitumen, 50,634 tons of polymer products, 21,519 tons of chemical products, 2,296 tons of insulation, 64,500 tons of lube cut oil, 500 tons of base oil as well as 300 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 228 tons of commodities was 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.

China’s overseas investment fell 10 percent last year

China’s outbound direct investment fell 9.6 percent to \$143.04 billion in 2018, amid growing curbs on money leaving the country, the Ministry of Commerce has announced.

As stated by scmp.com, this was the second successive drop in China’s outbound direct investment (ODI) after many years of breakneck growth. In 2017, ODI dropped by 19.3 percent, the first decline in record. Indeed, as recently as 2016, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) reported record high ODI, of \$196.15 billion.

However, despite the Belt and Road Initiative, the cornerstone of President Xi Jinping’s foreign policy, encouraging Chinese companies to “go out,” the government has put the brakes on Chinese companies hoovering up real estate, hotels, cinemas, and sports clubs around the world.

Furthermore, with China’s relations with the West, including the United States and European Union, becoming increasingly strained, analysts have noticed “greater foreign hostility toward Chinese investment”.

The statement on the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM)’s website pointed to the fact that despite the decline, China’s “influence in global foreign direct investment continued to expand”. China remained the



world’s second largest overseas investor, second only to Japan, as global foreign direct investment dipped by 29 percent, the statement said.

Chinese investment around the world

The “country’s stock of ODI reached \$1.98 trillion in 2018, ranking third after the United States and the Netherlands,” the statement said, but when looking at China’s declining ODI, international analysts have tended to focus instead on the perceived growing hostility to Chinese investment around the world.

The MOFCOM data do not provide a breakdown of China’s investments in specific

nations, but with Washington tightening restrictions on Chinese acquisitions of U.S. assets, it is likely that a large portion of the decline was U.S.-centric.

A Chinese government report in January said China’s outbound direct investment to the U.S. in 2017 had plunged by 62.2 percent due to the “Trump administration’s protectionism”.

The “country’s state-controlled giants are engaging in fewer transactions, especially large transactions. They are still slowly moving auto and steel capacity outside China, but the eye-catching sums spent by the likes of Ping An in acquiring a stake in HSBC have disappeared,” Derek Scissors, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), wrote in a report published in July.

One explanation is greater foreign hostility toward Chinese investment, starting with but not limited to the U.S.

“One explanation is greater foreign hostility toward Chinese investment, starting with but not limited to the U.S.,” Scissors added.

Due to trade war

Due to the trade war with the United States, Chinese restrictions on outbound investment and new U.S. government scru-

install a platform with a capacity of producing 500 mcf/d, and construct a submarine pipeline of approximately 20 kilometers.

The contractor will also be responsible for conducting future tenders to determine subcontractors to manufacture necessary equipment.

According to Reza Dehghan, the NIOC deputy director for development and engineering affairs, the produced gas in Belal field will be transferred to Platform C of South Pars Phase 12 and, after processing, will be sent to the phase’s onshore refinery via a sea pipeline.

Belal Gas Field is located east of South Pars in the Persian Gulf and 90 km southwest of Lavan Island.

“The U.S. is taking a decision and wants all countries to comply with it. Why should we pay the price?” he added.

Earlier, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani told his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a phone conversation that Iran is fully prepared to develop ties with the friendly and fraternal country, Turkey.

Rouhani also called for fast implementation of joint projects between Iran and Turkey while Erdogan voiced Ankara’s readiness to expand and develop bilateral ties with Tehran.

Iran and Turkey plan to set up a financial mechanism to circumvent U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

tiny of Chinese acquisitions of American assets, Chinese direct investment in U.S. assets dropped sharply in 2018 to just \$4.8 billion in new business acquisitions and investments, the lowest level in seven years, according to a Rhodium Group report published in January.

One high-profile casualty of Beijing’s waning appetite for ODI has been CEFC China Energy, a private conglomerate, and once one of China’s most aggressive overseas investors, armed with cheap funding from China Development Bank.

In 2015, for example, the company offered to buy a 14 percent stake in Russia’s state oil behemoth Rosneft for \$9 billion. However, the deal collapsed when the Shanghai-based company’s chairman, Ye Jianming, was detained and investigated by Chinese authorities in March 2018. Two months later, the Qatari sovereign wealth fund stepped in to snap up the \$9 billion stake.

According to the statement, jointly released by MOFCOM, the National Bureau of Statistics and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, by the end of 2018, more than 27,000 Chinese investors had established 43,000 enterprises in 188 countries. Among them more than 10,000 were connected to the Belt and Road Initiative.

South Pars phase 11 to go on stream by Sept. 2021: Zanganeh

ENERGY **TEHRAN** – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the phase 11 of South Pars gas field's development project will go on stream by the first half of the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (September 22, 2021).

The official made the remarks in a signing ceremony on Saturday in which Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) awarded the development of Belal gas field in the Persian Gulf to a local firm called Petropars.

Speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony, Zanganeh said "This contract and other upcoming contracts show that we are working under the sanctions. The sanctions have not stopped us and we are active."

The official also mentioned Farzad B gas field, saying that the development of Farzad B gas field will be started in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

Zanganeh further mentioned the progress in South Pars and West Karoun regions, saying that in both shared fields Iran is not behind its rivals, Iraq and Qatar, and even in South Pars the country is producing more gas than



the Qatari rival.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)

signed a contract with Total in 2017 for developing the phase 11 of South Pars field with

an initial investment of \$1 billion, marking the French company the first major Western energy investor in the country after sanctions were lifted in 2016.

The company was pressured to leave Iran after the United States threatened to impose sanctions on companies that do business in the country.

Later on, Iran awarded the project to China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) which was part of the consortium which was first supposed to carry out the project.

Although currently 81 percent of the phase 11 of South Pars gas field development project is officially handed over to CNPC, the Chinese haven't still done any work on the project.

Back in April, Zanganeh had said that NIOC was in talks with a Chinese company for completing the South Pars phase 11 project. "Representatives of the Chinese company are already in Tehran," Zanganeh had said.

The offshore South Pars field holds the world's largest natural gas reserves ever found in one place.

OPEC+ cohesion could be eroding

That's what analysts at investment bank Jefferies stated in a new research note sent to Rigzone on Friday.

In the note, the analysts highlighted that a statement from the September 12 OPEC+ joint ministerial monitoring committee (JMMC) meeting "essentially called out the cheaters" and urged all countries to conform with their targets.

The "JMMC indicated that total conformity was high at 136 percent in August, but data from OPEC secondary sources and the IEA indicates that conformity had fallen to 109 percent," the analysts stated in the note.

"Among the largest producers, Iraq and Nigeria are each not only well out of compliance but producing above their pre-cut reference levels. Russia only delivered about half its cut in August as well," the analysts added.



The "cordial statement assured that the non-conforming producers would achieve conformity for the remainder of the year, but we question if the Saudis are running out of patience with the free riders," the analysts continued.

In the JMMC statement, which was posted on OPEC's website on Thursday, the committee urged all participating countries to "intensify their efforts in pursuit of full and timely conformity with their voluntary production adjustments".

The committee also emphasized that cooperation and commitment were "more essential than ever" in the statement.

Earlier this week, Rystad Energy noted that a balanced oil market in 2020 is contingent on an extension of OPEC cuts through 2020. Back in July, a research note from Jefferies expressed that OPEC+ cuts will need to be extended through 2020 to keep the market in balance.

The next meeting of the JMMC is currently scheduled to take place on December 4 in Vienna, Austria. An OPEC conference is scheduled for December 5 and an OPEC and non-OPEC ministerial meeting is scheduled for December 6.

(Source: rigzone.com)

Iran's refining capacity reaches 2.3m bpd

ENERGY **TEHRAN** – Daily processing capacity of Iranian refineries has reached 2.3 million barrels, according to Alireza Sadeq-Abadi, the managing director of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC).

The country's refineries process 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and 500,000 barrels of gas condensate per day, IRIB quoted the official as saying on Saturday.

"There are currently 10 refineries operating in the country, nine of which are processing crude oil and one is especially designed for refining gas condensate," Sadeq-Abadi said.

The official noted that so far the country's refineries have been mostly focused on supplying fuel need including gasoline, gasoil and etc., however future planning would be more focused on developing petro-refineries.

He added that there is the capacity to set up a petrochemical complex along with each refinery in the country so that instead of producing more fuels feedstock for the petrochemical complexes will be produced to create other products like plastic and detergents.

Back in June, Sadeq-Abadi put the country's refining capacity at 2.15 million bpd, saying "The country's total refining capacity which was 1.55 million bpd at the begin-

ning of the Iranian calendar year of 1396 (March 21, 2017), currently stands at 2.15 million bpd."

"The upward trend will continue in the current year and we expect the [refining] capacity to reach 2.4 million bps by the end of the year," he said.

He further noted that 850,000 barrels of crude oil and gas condensate, which were prevented from entering the global market by the unjust U.S. sanctions, are currently being refined inside the country into products with higher value added.

According to the official, most of the increase in the capacity is expected to come from the fourth phase of Iran's Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGSR) which is located in the southern province of Hormozgan.

In early June, Iranian parliament passed a bill for increasing the capacity of the country's oil and gas condensate refineries.

The approval of the bill came after earlier that month the Research Center of Iran's parliament announced that petro-refineries were two times more profitable than refineries and suggested that National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s new refinery projects be defined as petro-refineries. Since the U.S.'s withdrew from Iran's nuclear pact in



May 2018, vowing to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter the U.S. actions and alleviate the impacts of the unjust sanctions on its economy and increasing the country's refining capacity has become a major goal for NIOC.

Private Sector, Powerful Arm for Booming Production and Export in Free Zones

Morteza Bank, President's Adviser and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade and Special Economic Zones says that private sector is the powerful arm for booming production and exports in Free Zones.

Economic development requires laying suitable bedrocks, compatible with the general situation of the country for attracting both domestic and foreign capitals.

Fortunately, all decision-making pillars of the country are of the opinion that economy should be guided towards privatization, facilitation of business environment and also attaining pre-determined objectives.

The prerequisite for realization of those objectives lies to create a suitable way for entrepreneurs and especially creation of proper incentives for the attraction of foreign investors.

Presently, Free Zones are known as one of the important axes of development in the country. Vehement interest of people, especially investors to development of these Zones, as well as the due attention of the government to evermore development of Free Zones and presence of foreign investors in some of the Zones indicate that calculated supportive behavior has been performed in Free Zones.

On the other hand, fortunately, Paragraph 11 of the general policies of the "Resistance Economy" focuses on the development of Free Zones. This means that one may hope that in the years ahead and in line with the country's basic need for creation of employment, the government will also provide better facilities and opportunities for further growth in the Zones.

The government's approach towards Free Zones is based on realization of a number of objectives, the most important of which are the national orientation of land preparation, development and prosperity of peripheral and border areas and orientation of national investments including public and private, toward those Zones, increase of investment and productivity with extroversion strategies and interaction and cooperation with the world economy and the economy of the region, development of private sector and improvement of regional imbalances.

Free Zones in Iran enjoy specific strategic situation, since, neighboring 15 countries can create incomparable competitive advantage for Free Zones of the country as compared with other countries.

Access to 8,500 kilometers of joint border with neighboring countries, 2,600 km of sea borders and 1900 kilometers of river border are considered



as strategic blessings for the country.

Undoubtedly, if all those facilities are utilized properly in an object-oriented manner, shall provide the country with suitable opportunity for development and growth.

This issue is of paramount importance for the Secretariat of Free Zones and for the policymakers of the country, because, development of Free Zones, at the current juncture, is synonymous with the increase of the level of welfare for border areas and vulnerable people, which is considered as one of the most important objectives of the government in the field of development of public welfare.

Concurrently, Free Zones have been considerably profitable for foreign investors due to their access to a regional market of 400 million people

as well as access to cheap and skilled workforce. Presently, those potentials are presently at the service of development of the country. Reference to a number of important indexes is indicative of the positive approaches of the 11th and 12th governments toward the Free Zones. The volume of development and cost credits in Free Zones stands at 70 to 30, i.e. 70 percent is capital and development credit while the remaining 30 percent is related to the cost credit which is of paramount importance.

For instance, 5,064 billion Tomans has been spent from 2013 to 2018 on the construction and development of infrastructures including water, power, gas, telecommunications, transport infrastructures (airport, seaport and road),

health, education, development as well as rural development and empowerment of 189 villages, in the seven Free Zones.

Also, since the beginning of the 11th government (from August 2013 to August 2019), a total of \$4 billion worth of products was exported from Free Zones and \$115 billion worth of products from the Special Economic Zones. Meanwhile, around \$5.4 billion worth of domestically-produced products has been exported from the Zones to the main land. In the same period, the Free Zones accounted for \$21 billion share of domestic productions. In this regard, Free Zones and Special Economic Zones imported \$9 and \$32 billion worth of equipment, machinery and raw materials, parts and trade commodities respectively with the aim of supply in the Free Zones.

These figures further prove that the industries dependent on the capital of the private sector have shown high interest for having strong presence in the Free Zones. In case of further development and introduction of the advantages of the Free zones to foreign investors, their potential could also be further exploited for the benefit of the national economy.

Private sector-based investment statistics since the beginning of the eleventh government (2013 to 2016) is an evidence that the balanced development of investment in these areas has already passed the early stages of growth and is presently blooming. For example, licensing 662 billion riyals of domestic investment and \$10 billion in foreign investment and realizing 310 trillion riyals of domestic investment and \$1.5 billion of foreign investment in the Free Trade-Industrial Zones, as well as domestic investment of about 415 thousand billion Rials and \$20 billion realized in the Special Economic Zones illustrates the success of the 11th and 12th governments in the quality development

of Free and Special Economic Zones.

Another important indicator in study of the role of Free Zones in the economic development could be the considerable growth of establishment of knowledge-based companies and the 200% realization of predefined objectives for those Zones.

Of total 1,120 active industrial and trade units in the Free Zones, about 209 are engaged in the field of health. In this period, also, 141 technological production units have been attracted to the Free Zones. 345 innovative startups are also active, benefiting from the Free Zones' support baskets, indicating updating trend of business environment and the willingness and welcome by industries of being active in the Free and Special Economic Zones.

With regard to the employment generated in the Zones, it should be acknowledged that 305,000 employments have been generated in privately-funded industrial units in Free Zones, at the end of August, 2019. In addition, generation of about 200,000 employments in the Special Economic Zones is a solid evidence for the influential and key role of Free Zones in the development of employment in the country, especially generating of jobs in underprivileged and disadvantaged areas of the country. All these statistics show that there is a considerable potential in the Free and Specific Zones of the country, and with careful consideration, and introduction of the Zones to domestic and foreign investors, as well as creating suitable cultural contexts in the Zones, important opportunities may be introduced into the Zone of the country. We should not forget that, today, development, employment, and utilization of the country's internal advantages and potentials are Iran's top priorities. The Free and special Zones are also at the service of this idea.

By A.Saedi



The media's betrayal of American soldiers

Bipartisan critique of Trump's plan to roll out an Afghan peace plan during the 9/11 anniversary from Camp David misses the point: negotiation was the only hope to avoid more needless American deaths.

It is a rare thing, indeed, when both establishment and media "liberals" and "conservatives" agree on anything. Nevertheless, lightning has proverbially struck this week as both sides attack President Trump with equal vehemence. Thus, here we are, and here I am – in the disturbing position of defending Trump's (until Sunday) peace policy for Afghanistan. Nonetheless, though I don't particularly like the way this position befits me, I'll take it as a sign that I just might be on to something when the clowns at Fox News and MSNBC alike vociferously disagree with my position on an American forever war.

Few in the political or press mainstream ever much liked Trump's regularly touted plans to extract U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Even "liberal" Rachel Maddow – who once wrote a book critical of US military interventions – turned on a dime and became a born-again cheerleader for continuing the war. After all, in tribal America, if Trump proposes it, the reflexive "left" assumes it must be wrong, anathema even. That's come to be expected.

But this time, even his own party attacked the president after he let slip that he'd planned a secret peace conference with the Taliban at Camp David and might even have announced a deal to gradually end the US role in the war during the anniversary week of the 9/11 attacks. Gasp! How dare he? End a failing war, save the lives of perhaps hundreds or thousands of US troops, and do so near the 9/11 anniversary? This amounts to heresy in imperial Washington D.C. But it shouldn't be unexpected: Trump's own policy advisers have opposed any meaningful steps to end the Afghan War from the get go.

Ever since he took office, Trump's anti-interventionist "instincts" – though publicly popular – have been stifled by his advisers in what his base calls the "deep state" and I prefer to simply label the "national security warfare state." Whether it was, first, the ostensible, media-canonical "adults in the room" – really a troika of generals with tired, discredited ideas – or, recently, the neoconservative retreads, John Bolton and Mike Pompeo, nearly every Trump national security adviser has worked tirelessly to keep America at war everywhere.

Lost in all the bipartisan hysteria regarding the 9/11 anniversary and Camp David location choice, is one salient, if uncomfortable, truth: the only way these sorts of wars end, historically, is through negotiations with implacable enemies and nefarious actors. That's real life, and ending stalemated wars is no time for dreamy delusions. Besides, what better option exists than peace talks and a phased US withdrawal? With the Taliban contesting more of the country than ever before, the Kabul regime broke and corrupt, and a record opium crop fueling Taliban finances, the war has reached – for years now – a tenuous stasis between quagmire and stalemate.

That'd all be wild enough, but CNN pundits predictably went all in with the anti-Trump rhetoric. In a bit of hysteria truly worthy of the times, on Monday CNN's talking heads went so far as to call for Trump's impeachment for even considering peace talks with the Taliban at supposedly sacred Camp David. That's extremely scary, but also silly: for decades now – and this is admittedly unfortunate – presidents have waged war and negotiated peace all but unilaterally. Trump's not breaking any new ground here, even if it would be preferable to have a (cowardly and uninterested in the job at all) Congress involved.

What's so bad about having Taliban representatives at Camp David? The PLO's avowed "terrorist," leader, Yasser Arafat has been there. What's more, presidents and their representatives have negotiated with adversaries responsible for far more American deaths than the Taliban: Eisenhower with the North Koreans and Chinese; Nixon with the North Vietnamese and Vietcong; Reagan with the leader of the Soviet "evil empire." In fact, diplomacy is actually more presidential than waging endless, reflexive warfare.

Not that Trump is innocent. The vast majority of his policies and beliefs are abhorrent. He is lazy, uninformed, and wildly inconsistent, flip-flopping often enough to make John Kerry seem ideologically reliable by contrast. Because as commander-in-chief he made the decisions, responsibility for his regular propensity to fold and sign on to the inertia of endless war ultimately rests with him. In the latest case, Trump's public justification for spiking the seemingly promising peace talks is particularly illogical. From a veteran's perspective, I find it frankly insulting. He claims he canceled the talks and Taliban trip to Camp David in response to a rather commonplace and ubiquitous bombing that left yet another American soldier dead. Well, by foolishly ditching the only near-term hope for peace and military withdrawal, The Donald just guaranteed that who-knows-how-many more troops will needlessly die in a failing war in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, the pundits at the helm of corporate media programs, and party-line Democrats and Republicans, only pretend to care about the lives and well-being of America's servicemen and women. Behind their self-conscious, over-adulation of military members lies an unspeakable dirty secret: these people are pawns of the military-industrial-complex, for whom the troops are pawns in their partisan political games. When mixed with widespread public apathy regarding foreign affairs, the result is an utter abandonment of the soldiers that all purport to love. Which is exactly what the mainstream media's (even Republican!) vacuous critique of Trump's planned but canceled 9/11 week peace announcement is: a betrayal of the troops and a death sentence for more American soldiers.

Now, let me be clear: as a New Yorker from a blue collar Staten Island neighborhood chock full of cops and firemen, I don't take the 9/11 attacks lightly. In fact, I took the whole tragedy personally and long seethed with anger against bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the likely complicit Saudi kingdom, for that matter. September 11, 2001 left two of my FDNY uncles forever emotionally scarred, took the life of a dear family friend, sent my father fleeing for his life from an office across the street from the Twin Towers, and renamed countless streets in my borough to honor dead firemen. That said, call me provocative or unpatriotic, but I thought that Trump's original reported plan to announce a peace deal with the Taliban – and impending end to the US war in Afghanistan – to be quite fitting. Consider it a sad, yet appropriate, final bookend to the still prevalent and absurd notion that America's longest war still carries any connection to 9/11. The ill-advised, unwinnable, foolish attempt at nation-building in Afghanistan and ongoing stalemate combating Taliban farm boys, has long since lost any 9/11-based justification. To pretend otherwise is an exercise in self-delusion. No matter, Trump's "instincts" have again been stifled by the unelected proconsuls of the behemoth national security state, and the president has broken his promises to end "dumb" wars yet again. And so it seems the show, in this case war, must go on...

China's economy continues to grow

GLOBALTIMES — China's total foreign trade in the first eight months rose by 3.6 percent, according to data released by the General Administration of Customs on Sunday. Calculated in yuan, in August, its exports increased by 2.6 percent while imports dropped by 2.6 percent. Many Western media regard the data as a sign of a weakening Chinese economy. Clearly, they don't understand China. Although economic data declined, China's economy is, in fact, resilient. The US-launched trade war has not prevented China from advancing. As the global economy and trade face a downturn and China is in the frontline of a trade war, it's not surprising for China to have unsteady foreign trade. But this doesn't reflect the fundamentals of the Chinese economy.

China's economy is undergoing great structural adjustments, transiting from being investment-driven to innovation-driven and from being foreign trade-led to consumption-led. Although the trade war has led to short-term chaos in the Chinese and world market chains, China's foreign trade has increased in many ways, particularly in countries along the routes of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative. Besides, the trade war has further stimulated China's structural adjustment.

China is continuing infrastructure development and accelerating innovations. Policy support for domestic consumption and willingness to consume are growing stronger. All these provide an impetus to the Chinese economy, which has not been negatively affected by the trade war.

Improving people's lives has become an increasingly apparent axis for all of China's economic activities. The country is quite busy on education, medical care, environmental protection, tourism and transport routes. The trade war can never disrupt Chinese people's increasing demand for a better living and the stronger internal impetus to develop. In contrast, the US economy is much more monotonous. Its most prominent driving force is technology innovation, which cannot always grow and has limited influence on its economy.



When innovation is stagnant, the US economy comes to a halt and grows only by forging bubbles. Finance is the US economy's pillar, with the stock market at the core. Americans are sensitive to slight changes in data, because the bubbles could burst at any time.

Regardless of how the trade war goes, the Chinese economy reflects how the country solves its problems, and the economic growth corresponds to the improving living standards in China. The Chinese economy is growing like a young man who shows huge potential for a clear goal. Some US elites comforted themselves by claiming that the Chinese economic data was an

outcome of the trade war. This is a short-sighted and self-deceiving mentality. Structural adjustments to China's economy is like bone development to a young man. But we cannot see real adjustments in the US. The trade war reflects the country's anxiety and gaffes.

Some American media have even linked a temporary rise in pork prices in China to its macro economy. Fine; just let Americans hallucinate. Having the world's fastest-developing productivity, China also focuses on high-quality economy with a reliable timetable and road map supported by the Chinese people's demand for a better life rather than the US market.

Ajamu Baraka: Israeli apartheid system directed for Palestinian-Arabs now eating its own

TEHRAN (FNA) — Ajamu Baraka, political and human rights activist, says the systematic discrimination against Palestinian-Arabs is now used against the Israeli-Ethiopians, who are viewed as inferior to the ruling Ashkenazi class.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, the American activist said Zionism functions the same as apartheid, developing a socio-psychological base to justify discrimination against minorities.

He further added the violence in Israel is the consequence of the Zionist movement which has not dealt with its own internal contradictions, which is "the fact that it is a colonial movement".

Ajamu Baraka is an American political activist and former Green Party nominee for Vice President of the United States in the 2016 election. He has been involved in numerous anti-segregation activities. Baraka has served on the boards of several human rights organizations, including Amnesty

International, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and Africa Action. He runs Black Alliance for Peace, a US-based think tank defending the rights of black people.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ Are you optimistic the protests after the killing of Israeli-Ethiopian young man will result in more respect for the Ethiopian community inside Israel?

A: Apparently there are on-going investigations into the circumstances of the killing; but, it is quite obvious that is not going to be satisfactory to the Ethiopian community. They have lost confidence in the ability of the willingness of the Israeli regime to address the on-going discrimination and in fact violence that they suffer at the hands of the Israeli authorities. So, while the regime is in the process of investigation, it is quite clear that nothing is really going to emerge; they will not address the issues that have been raised by the Ethiopian community.

■ Zionism is based on the notorious idea

that there is a zone, and whoever gets inside the zone will survive. Why is Israel practicing discrimination against its own people, who are well inside the Israeli zone?!

A: What has emerged as the national character of that regime is a kind of systematic discrimination that the Ethiopian Jews are subjected to. It is only one internal manifestation of systematic institutional discrimination and oppression that have been directed for the Palestinian community. When there are society and culture which are able to justify the unequal treatment of a whole population, namely Palestinians, it is quite easy for them to justify the systematic discrimination and oppression of a population that theoretically is a part of their community, but they are seen as an inferior to themselves. There is not going to be any real change in the Israeli society. So, as long as they have this kind of mindset in the Israeli populations and among the authorities, it cannot be expected to see any real change in that society.

■ How do you view the future of the oppressed Ethiopian community in Israel?

A: This move is made by the Zionist movement in Israel, one that has been integrated into the establishment of the Jewish nation state law which is a copy of apartheid; you see there is a system which has developed a social-psychological foundation that justifies the discrimination. It is quite natural that kind of discrimination, based on a racial hierarchy, be directed for Ethiopian Jews that many in Israel see as inferior to the ruling class Jewish populations. So, the apartheid system directed for Palestinian-Arabs is now the system that is eating its own. The violence in Israel is the consequence of that, until the Zionist movement deals with its own internal contradictions (deals with the fact that it is a colonial movement.) Then we are going to see a situation of this kind of resistance. There is possibility that Ethiopian Jews find a common cause with Palestinians. Then, you will have a more serious situation in Israel.

‘Balance of power’ a strategic trap for India

By Ding Gang

TEHRAN — While scholars in the US and India generally believe that a full alliance between the two sides is unlikely, the two countries can still reach a general consensus on balancing the rise of China, since it is in their common interest.

In an article titled "The India Dividend: New Delhi Remains Washington's Best Hope in Asia," which was published in the September/October edition of Foreign Affairs magazine, authors Robert D. Blackwill, a Henry A. Kissinger senior fellow for US foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Ashley J. Tellis, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted that for the US-Indian partnership to bear fruit, both sides must recognize that their primary shared interest is to balance a rising China - and not expect a close alliance or alignment on all major policy issues.

The Indian government hasn't explicitly announced it was adopting such a strategy to balance the rise of China, but there are indications that India and the US are moving forward on this path. The balance of power theory in international relations suggests that if a country wants to prevent itself from being dominated by others, it must have the power or a reliable system to counterbalance others. The theory emphasizes vigilance and containment between different countries.

In reality, balance of power is usually utilized by a certain

powerful country to make coalitions or military alliances to counter its rivals - the balance of power during the Cold War is a classical example. Additionally, such a balance is likely to develop into hostility. Amid the rise of China in recent years, some Americans have brought up again the balance of power theory. Washington's strategic choice on China has also turned from balancing to containing China. The US Indo-Pacific Strategy is sure to continue this mentality.

There is something in common between the Indo-Pacific Strategy and India's concerns about China's rise. China and India have had disputes in the past and still have border issues to settle. Additionally, China has maintained a close relationship with Pakistan, India's traditional rival. New Delhi wishes to safeguard its interests in a relatively balanced regional situation through a balance of power with Beijing. This is understandable. However, the balance of power which India hopes for is different from that upheld by the US. The US' so-called balance of power is aimed at keeping its dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and containing China.

After World War II, some Asia-Pacific countries have indeed enjoyed relative stability under the US-dominated order. But the structure of the region is changing. The rise of China is only a part of the changes. India and Southeast Asian countries are also rising, and they are accelerating the process.

Another major change is constantly upgrading regional cooperation. New Delhi is strengthening its cooperation with

its neighbors, and it has thus developed the Look East policy. China's cooperation with neighboring countries, including India, has also seen unprecedented strengthening. Amid such changes, there is no foundation for the outdated balance of power theory. No force is able to stop the Chinese economy from developing. China's rising strength will certainly change the structure of the Asia-Pacific region, and cannot be balanced by either outside forces or military powers. Regional countries need to build a new order.

Balancing China will jeopardize India's own interests. Since China's development is unstoppable and is in line with the general development of the region, carrying out containment against China is highly likely to lead to the loss of opportunities for cooperation with China.

India should think this through. It is impossible for regional countries to jointly contain China's rise with the US while strengthening cooperation with China at the same time. Such a strategy might work at the very beginning, but at critical moments, relevant parties will have to make a choice.

The strategy of the balance of power is generated from the diplomacy of Western countries. It reflects Western countries' understanding of foreign relations in the process of their expansion in the past. In today's globalized world, Asian countries are supposed to have better choices. This is a test for not only for India, but also China. Both need work together to walk out of this strategic trap.

Does the U.S. realize trade wars are not easy to win?

GLOBALTIMES —Is the US-launched trade war against China a quick battle or a protracted war? From the beginning, Washington believed it could score a quick victory and bring Beijing to its knees by pressuring the latter and spilling their trade conflict onto the political and technological fields. But the US has finally realized that its theory had failed.

The trade war has become a protracted war. This is also what Beijing concluded based on US strategies and China's strength when their conflict first emerged. That's what China believes because the US has been domineering and self-centered. As Washington acts more hegemonic, it is impossible for China to accept US demands at face value. The

trade problems between China and the US have been accumulated over a long period of time. To resolve them, time and strenuous efforts are needed. If Washington insists on charging exorbitant amounts without taking mutual benefit into account, all China can do is to fight back. Beijing's countermeasures remain resolute.

Furthermore, China has a sober awareness of its own comprehensive strength and is turning pressure from the US into a driving force of its economic restructuring, which has yielded remarkable results. The US, however, has been getting above itself. Believing it can reach any goal it wants, since it is the world's top power. US President Donald Trump has been tweeting that "trade wars are good, and easy to win."

Washington has clearly underestimated China's capabilities and will to fight back, as well as its national strength. It took about one and a half years for the US to realize this.

Since July, pessimism has been rising in the US over its previous fantasy that Washington could quickly win the trade war. On July 16, Trump mentioned there's still a long way to go to reach a deal with China. Last Friday, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said, "If that (trade negotiation with China) takes a decade, so be it." The US has finally acknowledged that its tension with China could only be sorted out through long-term negotiations rather than quick solutions for temporary US political needs.

The tests China is about to face, after the

trade war turns into a protracted battle, will not be easier. But one thing is certain: The US must have a more profound understanding of China's resilience and endurance under pressure, be it economic or systematic. The world is also getting to know China better.

Which country is more desperate to see the trade war end? US media tends to raise the question with a sense of superiority and confidence. Yet today, they need to think twice. It is not a matter of showing which country is stronger. The point is Beijing and Washington should have a correct understanding of each other, while avoiding misjudgments. China and the US have been deeply integrated, and misjudging each other would mean disaster for not only themselves but the world.

Biden's fear of the Sanders and Warren alliance

The equation in the Democratic Party is changing!

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Famous Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren is raising her vote among the party's supporters. This is the worst possible news for Joe Biden. On the other hand, another Democratic senator, Bernie Sanders, who is one of Biden's main rivals, has also been in the polls. This makes the Biden triumph over Sanders and Warren in the coalition. Here's a look at the latest news and analysis:

Elizabeth Warren leads Joe Biden in ranked-choice poll

As the Vox reported, former Vice President Joe Biden continues to lead the crowded Democratic field — but under a “ranked-choice” system designed to suss out the majority's ultimate preference, Sen. Elizabeth Warren would top Biden, 53 percent to 47 percent, according to a new poll exclusively provided in advance to Vox.

The online national poll of likely Democratic voters was conducted by YouGov, and sponsored by FairVote, a nonpartisan advocacy group supporting electoral reform. Unlike an ordinary poll, it asked respondents to rank several candidates in order of preference — so as to simulate ranked-choice voting, a system currently used in Maine and other localities. (FairVote advocates in favor of the system and hopes it will be adopted elsewhere in the US as well.)

The way ranked-choice voting works is that candidates with fewer votes are eliminated, and then their votes are redistributed to whomever each voter designated as their next-ranked preference. For instance, a voter could rank Sen. Bernie Sanders as their first choice and Warren as their second choice — meaning that, if Sanders was eliminated, this vote would be transferred to Warren.

YouGov tested the ranked choice methodology offering all 20 remaining Democratic candidates as options (with the ability to rank 10 of them) — and also by just offering the current top five candidates (Biden, Warren, Sanders, Sen. Kamala Harris, and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg) as options. The end results were quite similar for both versions, so this article will focus on the five-candidate version for simplicity's sake. (The more extensive results for both versions are available at FairVote's website.)

In an initial tally counting only voters' top-ranked choices, Biden leads the Democratic field with 33 percent, and is followed by Warren with 29 percent, Sanders with 20 percent, Harris with 10 percent, and Buttigieg with 8 percent, per the poll. But it turns out that respondents who initially favored Sanders and Harris prefer Warren over Biden, by about a two-to-one ratio. So once the field is narrowed to a head-to-head matchup of just Biden and Warren, and votes for the eliminated candidates are to whomever each voter ranked higher, Warren would lead Biden by 6 points. The results are an interesting indication of how an outcome can change due to a different tallying system. But they could also be indicative of something bigger.

Though voters theoretically can choose among many of candidates, we are still months away from a day when primary voters will cast votes. So how voters rank their options in a smaller field could tell us a lot about what the race might look like in the future, and what might happen were the field to winnow further. These results, at least, suggest that Warren would benefit more than Biden would. To the uninitiated, ranked-choice voting (sometimes called “instant runoff voting,” or IRV) might seem like a confusing and convoluted system. Our respondents were asked to rank Biden, Buttigieg, Harris, Sanders, and Warren by preference — from first choice, to second, to third, to fourth, to fifth. (If they wouldn't vote for some of these candidates at all, they could notate that as well.) The graphic below walks through the tally.

If the topline results of this poll were the results in a typical American election, Biden would just win outright — he got the most first-choice votes in that first tally. But he only has slightly more than a third of the vote among five candidates. Now, if it was a typical Democratic presidential primary election, it wouldn't be so simple. That's because rather than declaring one winner, Democrats allot delegates proportionally to all candidates who get 15 percent of the vote in each primary or caucus. Those delegates go on to cast ballots at the convention. Ranked-choice can inform a system like that, too. You could cut off the tally once there are only candidates who have 15 percent of the vote or more — to ensure that no votes are “wasted” on candidates who didn't meet the threshold. In our example above, things would wrap up at the third tally (showing Biden with 39 percent, Warren with 38 percent, and Sanders with 23 percent).

However, at DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee meetings this summer, several members expressed skepticism about whether ranked-choice voting could or should be incorporated into the primary contest given the party's current rules. And Maine, the state that has most embraced the system, will only use it in the general election next year rather than the



presidential primary. The goal with ranked-choice in general is to ensure the winner is at least in some sense the choice of a majority of the electorate — and that voters who cast ballots for candidates other than the top contenders won't just see their votes thrown away. Imagine an election with just three candidates. Candidate A gets 35 percent of the vote, Candidate B gets 33 percent, and Candidate C gets 32 percent. In the most common American voting system (“first-past-the-post”), that Candidate A would just win. But 65 percent of the voters didn't vote for him — in fact, they might utterly despise him, and have badly wanted him to lose, but been divided between the other two options.

Ranked-choice would avert that outcome: Candidate C would be eliminated, and their supporters would be redistributed to their next-ranked pick. Another benefit is that, under ranked-choice, voters are free to pick an unconventional or underdog candidate as their first choice, without worrying about their vote being “thrown away.”

Of course, there are critiques of ranked-choice voting as well. Simon Waxman has argued that, in practice, the system can be confusing or exhausting — and that the promised majority support doesn't always materialize, because voters don't rank enough candidates. (In this YouGov poll, 85 percent of respondents ranked all five candidates — but of course, that also means 15 percent did not.)

Others argue for alternative systems designed to find a “Condorcet winner” — that is, whoever would win a head-to-head race against every other candidate. (It's at least possible that such a candidate would have little first-choice support and be eliminated quickly under ranked-choice.) Whatever you think about which voting system is best, for a deeper dive into this poll data, you can head over to FairVote's website — they have interactive graphics for both the five-candidate result this article discusses, and a separate result in which all 20 candidates were offered as options.

Poll Shows Biden and Warren Tied ahead of Third Debate

As Nationalreview reported, The latest Democratic primary poll from The Economist/YouGov, released yesterday, shows former vice president Joe Biden tied with Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren as ten of the candidates prepare to debate tonight in Houston.

The survey shows Biden and Warren tied at 26 percent among registered Democratic voters and tied at 24 percent among respondents who said they will vote in a Democratic presidential primary or caucus this cycle. In a distant third is Senator Bernie Sanders (I., Vt.), at 16 percent among registered voters and 17 percent among likely primary voters.

The poll seems to reflect a general consensus that the Democratic primary has narrowed to a three-person race, and more recently even to a two-person race, pitting frontrunner Biden against Warren, who has managed largely to consolidate support from primary voters looking for a more-progressive option than the former vice president.

Despite struggling in the first debate and delivering an unexciting performance in the second — and in spite of a series of gaffes and inaccurate statements on the campaign trail over the last two months — Biden has held a solid advantage over the rest of the field since entering the race in April. The new Economist/YouGov data are the first national data since an August 26 Monmouth poll to show anything other than Biden in the lead.

The Monmouth poll from late August suggested a three-way race, with Sanders and Warren at 20 percent and Biden just behind at 19, but when a series of subsequent surveys showed Biden back on top, it was generally considered an outlier. Biden, Warren, and Sanders will face off tonight in a debate hosted by ABC and featuring seven other Democratic candidates: Senators Kamala Harris (Calif.), Cory Booker (N.J.), and Amy Klobuchar (Minn.); South Bend, Ind., mayor Pete Buttigieg; former Texas representative Beto O'Rourke; former Housing and Urban Development secretary Julian Castro; and entrepreneur Andrew Yang.

Trump slams 'phony' poll showing him trailing several 2020 Democrats

As politico reported, Donald Trump on Wednesday dismissed a new survey showing

him trailing several of his top 2020 Democratic rivals in head-to-head match-ups, and blamed “never ending Fake News” for his dismal performance in public polling ahead of next year's election.

The broadsides appeared on the president's Twitter feed roughly a half-hour before he and first lady Melania Trump walked out of the White House to participate in a moment of silence on the South Lawn commemorating the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He is scheduled to attend an observance ceremony at the Pentagon later in the morning. “In a hypothetical poll, done by one of the worst pollsters of them all, the Amazon Washington Post/ABC, which predicted I would lose to Crooked Hillary by 15 points (how did that work out?), Sleepy Joe, Pocahontas and virtually all others would beat me in the General Election,” Trump wrote online.

An ABC News/Washington Post survey released Wednesday showed Trump lagging behind former Vice President Joe Biden, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, California Sen. Kamala Harris and South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg in potential general election contests.

Biden enjoyed the most significant advantage over Trump among all adults polled, 16 percentage points ahead of the president, while Sanders led by 12 points, Warren by 11 points, Harris by 10 points and Buttigieg by 6 points. Among registered voters, Biden is out in front of Trump by 15 points, Sanders by 9 points, Warren and Harris by 7 points, and Buttigieg by 4 points — though Buttigieg's advantage is within the survey's range of sampling error.

“This is a phony suppression poll, meant to build up their Democrat partners. I haven't even started campaigning yet, and am constantly fighting Fake News like Russia, Russia, Russia,” Trump tweeted.

Although the president claimed he has not begun campaigning for reelection, he has held regular campaign-style rallies across the country dating back to the transition period before his inauguration, and his 2020 campaign manager has been in place since February 2018. “Look at North Carolina last night. Dan Bishop, down big in the Polls, WINS. Easier than 2016!” Trump continued, pointing toward the Republican state senator's victory Tuesday in the closely watched special election for North Carolina's 9th Congressional District.

“If it weren't for the never ending Fake News about me, and with all that I have done (more than any other President in the first 2 1/2 years!), I would be leading the ‘Partners’ of the LameStream Media by 20 points,” he concluded. “Sorry, but true!”

Trump most recently railed against polls by news outlets on Tuesday, after an ABC News/Washington Post survey reported his job approval rating dropping to 38 percent — a decrease of 6 percentage points from a peak of 44 percent approval in July. “One of the greatest and most powerful weapons used by the Fake and Corrupt News Media is the phony Polling Information they put out,” he charged in a tweet. “Many of these polls are fixed, or worked in such a way that a certain candidate will look good or bad. Internal polling looks great, the best ever!”

The ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted Sept. 2-5, surveying a random national sample of 1,003 adults. The overall margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points, and the margin of error among the sample of 877 registered voters is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Biden leads as Warren and Sanders battle for second on eve of debate

As CNN reported, Joe Biden leads the Democratic presidential primary but a tight race for second place has formed behind him as Sen. Elizabeth Warren leads Sen. Bernie Sanders by one point, according to a new CNN poll conducted by SSRS.

The former vice president is at 24%, Warren at 18% and Sanders at 17% are once again the only candidates to reach double-digit support. Three other candidates have 5% or support or more in the poll: Sen. Kamala Harris (8%), South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg (6%) and former Rep. Beto

O'Rourke (5%). The remaining candidates all score 2% or less in the poll.

RELATED: Full poll results

Biden's lead rests on his support among black voters, among whom he leads by a wide margin with 42% backing him and his nearest competitor -- Sanders -- earning just 12% support. Warren (23%) and Biden (21%) are about even among white potential Democratic voters, with Sanders not far behind at 15%. Among Hispanics who are Democrats or Democratic-leaning independents, Sanders stands at 24%, with four other candidates in double-digits: Biden at 18%, O'Rourke at 14%, and Warren and Harris each at 10%.

Biden's backing among black voters comes primarily among those over age 50 (53% in that group support him vs. 30% among those under age 50) and from those who are moderate or conservative (47% in that group support him). That mirrors the pattern among Democrats more generally, but holds to a greater degree among black voters. Sanders' strong showing among Latinos comes more from younger Hispanic voters than from older ones.

Warren's support notably spikes among college educated voters -- 26% in that group back her vs. just 11% of those without degrees. Sanders, whose ideological views are similar to Warren's, doesn't have as much of an education gap in his support (19% among those without degrees, 13% among those with), largely due to his stronger support among whites without college degrees (21% vs. 10% among those who do hold degrees).

As they have in past polls, Democrats are more apt to say they want the party to nominate a candidate with a strong chance of beating Trump (55%) over one who shares their position on major issues (39%). But Biden's advantage among those who want a candidate who can defeat the President has shrunk some since August. In that poll, 35% of those who favored someone who can beat Trump backed Biden, 15% Warren and 14% Sanders. Now, that group splits almost evenly between Biden (26%) and Warren (21%), with Sanders at 11%.

Democratic voters are narrowly more concerned that the party will nominate a candidate who is too liberal (49%) vs. one who is not liberal enough (41%). Biden fares better among those worried the party will lean too far left (27% in that group back him, 15% Sanders, 13% Warren) than among those who are worried the nominee won't be liberal enough (27% in that group favor Warren, 22% Sanders and 20% Biden).

On the Republican side, the poll suggests Trump won't face much of a challenge from his announced Republican opponents, even as their ranks have grown. Overall, 77% say the GOP ought to re-nominate Trump for president in 2020, about the same as it's been since CNN first asked about this in March of 2018, and just 20% would like to see a different candidate nominated.

Overall, deep enthusiasm about voting in 2020 continues to outpace the level measured in previous presidential cycles at about this stage of the contest. Overall, 45% of registered voters report feeling “extremely enthusiastic” about voting, compared with 30% who said so in early September 2015, 28% who felt that way in October of 2011, 26% in June 2007 and just 19% in October 2003. Democrats and Republicans are about equally likely to express deep enthusiasm for voting: 51% of Republicans are extremely enthusiastic and 47% of Democrats say the same.

Enthusiasm is more fervent at the ideological edges of each party, with 54% of liberal Democrats and 56% of conservative Republicans deeply enthusiastic vs. about 4 in 10 in the ideological middle.

Asked to rate the importance of seven top issues, voters overall place health care at the top of the list (51% call it extremely important to their vote for president, the only issue to top 50%), followed by the economy (48% extremely important) and gun policy (47% extremely important).

But the partisan divide on which issues matter is stark. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, 59% call health care extremely important vs. 40% of Republicans and Republican-leaning. A majority on the GOP side consider the economy critical (53%), while fewer Democrats agree (45%). The sharpest gap comes over climate change. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning, 56% call it extremely important vs. just 11% of Republicans and Republican-leaning.

The CNN Poll was conducted by SSRS September 5 through 9 among a random national sample of 1,639 adults reached on landlines or cellphones by a live interviewer, including 908 Democratic or Democratic-leaning registered voters. Results for the full sample have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points, it is 4.3 for the subset of potential Democratic voters. The survey's sample included oversamples of African American and Latino registered voters. Those subsets have been weighted to represent the appropriate share of the overall population, and are not over-represented in the overall results of the poll.

Canadian Analyst: Iran's 3rd nuclear step a perfectly appropriate response

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A Canadian political expert described Iran's third step to suspend more of its nuclear commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers as a “perfectly appropriate” response to the breaches of the deal by all other parties.

“Such a response (Iran's third nuclear step) seems perfectly appropriate, especially when considered in the light of Iran's undisputed commitment to not developing nuclear weapons,” Barry Grossman, who is based on the Indonesian island of Bali, told Tasnim in an interview. Barry Grossman is a political analyst specializing in Public International Law, who has resided in Indonesia for more than 20 years, frequently commenting on current affairs and geopolitics. He graduated from the University of Calgary with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1984 and from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto in 1987, after which he worked as a commercial litigator with a large Toronto law firm before moving to Australia to take up an academic position with the University of Melbourne Law School and, after that a lectureship at Monash University Law School. In addition, he worked for a number of years as a senior litigation consultant to a large, national law firm in Australia and is widely published by refereed Academic journals and as a writer of reference works for the legal profession.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ A year after the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and the European Union's continued failure to ensure Iran's economic rights under the deal, Tehran stopped honoring certain commitments in accordance with the text of the international accord. This week, the Islamic Republic plans to take “the third step” in reducing its obligations under the JCPOA. It seems that these steps have had some good results as the European side is endeavoring to save the deal. What is your assessment of the outcomes of Iran's nuclear steps?

A: Well as I understand it, the “3rd step” now being foreshadowed involves the suspension of Iran's commitments under the JCPOA, which means that instead of retracting its commitments as the US has done, Iran will only suspend them as a result of comprehension breaches of the JCPOA by all other signatories. Such a response seems perfectly appropriate, especially when considered in the light of Iran's undisputed commitment to not developing nuclear weapons.

That said, it should be clear to anyone who is paying attention, that the US obsession with forcing Iran to accept the JCPOA was in fact never motivated by any genuine concerns about nuclear proliferation. Indeed, even as the JCPOA was being negotiated, all 17 agencies comprising the US intelligence apparatus had, for roughly a decade, consistently been unanimous in advising Congress that throughout that period Iran had no nuclear weapons program or any plans to develop such a program.

It follows that whatever measure of commitment the EU may have to engaging Iran on fair terms, Hawks in the US and its closest allies will settle for nothing less than fully achieving their primary aims in Iran. Those aims, it should be clear, involve compelling Iran to:

1. recognize the legitimacy of Israel and abandon all support for Hamas, Hezbollah and any other groups committed to supporting Palestine;
2. suspend the development of missile technology and wind back its current arsenal of defensive missiles; and
3. fully submit to the US dominated, Eurocentric international system which, of course, the US and its key allies do not consider themselves bound by.

Clearly, those aims are not going to be achieved so it remains to be seen just how much of what the EU and its key member nations' public position on the JCPOA is in reality just rhetoric. Personally, I am anything but optimistic that the EU will resist US pressure and take real steps to facilitate trade with Iran until such time as a new administration changes the US policy position on Iran that has come to dominate with the election of Trump. The fact that Democrat contenders for the 2020 nomination, like the Democrat Party establishment itself, have been largely silent on the issue does not, in my opinion, bode well for a return of the already oppressive and unjust status quo that led to the JCPOA itself.

■ As you know, Iran's policy of “active resistance” against US bullying and unilateralism has borne good results. In the latest instance, Iran's supertanker Adrian Darya, formerly known as Grace-1, was recently released by the government of Gibraltar despite a US request to continue its detention. In another development, the US recently announced plans to create a new security initiative in the Persian Gulf by forming a coalition against what it calls an Iranian threat. The US has asked its allies, including Germany, Japan, and France, to join the coalition but the call has not been warmly welcomed by them. What do you think about Iran's policy and the concept of resistance?

A: In a nutshell, the US policy is absurd. The very same ‘international system’ which the US-led Atlantic World wants to force on Iran makes it very clear that the US position is itself a violation of what passes as International Law. Moreover, the US itself has long rejected the territorial claims made by the two nations separated by the Strait of Hormuz - that is Iran and Oman - preferring instead to unilaterally impose a self-serving policy which is a clear violation of long standing laws, conventions and treaties governing national boundaries and international shipping.

Indeed, nothing could be more absurd than the current US notion that, together with a few allies, it can somehow deny Iran's right to shipping, not only in international waters around the globe, but also within its own territorial waters, while at once compelling Iran to extend unimpeded passage to any and all foreign vessels in its own waters, including ships of war, all while the US claims that it wants to avoid a military confrontation. Needless to say, if the US and UK continue to ramp up this policy of provocation, it will not end well for anyone.

■ Despite Washington's policy of “maximum pressure” and its most severe sanctions against Tehran, the Islamic Republic has been able to control prices and inflation in the country through adopting certain financial strategies which are in line with the policy of “resistance economy”. What is your take on that? Do you think that the resistance will work in the future?

A: Under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei, the Islamic Republic of Iran fully embraced the imperative of striving for full self-sufficiency. Recent events and the oppressive, extra-legal policies being promoted by the USA make it clear this decision was far-sighted and, as recently noted by President Rouhani along with several other key ministers in Iran's government, have only served to motivate Iranians to pull out stops in pursuit of that noble aim.

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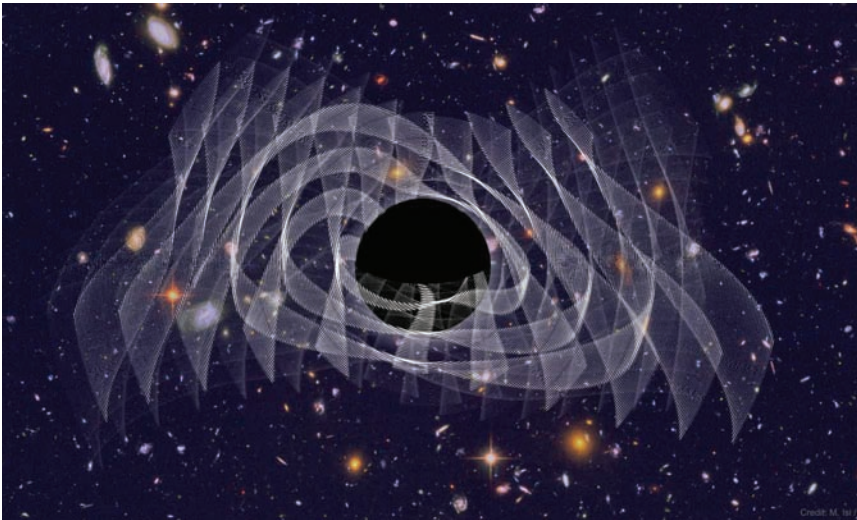


‘Ringing’ black hole validates Einstein’s general relativity 10 years ahead of schedule

For the first time, astrophysicists have heard a black hole ringing like a bell. By reanalyzing the first black hole merger ever detected, the astrophysicists measured the gravitational wave ‘tones’ emitted following the event. The breakthrough comes 10 years earlier than expected and confirms that the properties of black holes are just as Einstein predicted in his theory of general relativity in 1915.

“Previously it was believed these tones were too faint to be detected, yet now we are able to,” says study co-author Will Farr. “Just like the measurement of atomic spectra in the late 1800s opened the era of stellar astrophysics and classifying and understanding stars, this is the opening of the era of black hole spectra and understanding black holes and the general relativity that sits behind them.”

Farr is an associate professor at Stony Brook University in New York and group leader for gravitational wave astronomy at the Flatiron Institute’s Center for Computational Astrophysics in New York City. He and his colleagues present their findings September 12 in Physical Review Letters.



When two black holes merge into one, the resulting supersized black hole wobbles like a struck bell. The reverberations emit gravitational waves at characteristic tones that fade away as the black hole settles. The so-called ‘no-hair theory’ states that these tones - and all other external properties

of a black hole - depend only on the black hole’s mass and rotation, just as Einstein’s general relativity predicts. Some scientists, however, propose that reality is hairier and that effects like quantum mechanics play a role as well.

Scientists knew that detecting a black

hole’s tones could settle the debate. But the tones were thought to be too quiet to be detected by the current-generation gravitational wave detectors LIGO and Virgo.

In the new study, the astrophysicists combined simulations of black hole mergers with a reanalysis of the first gravitational waves ever detected. Those waves came from the merger of two black holes. The analysis led to the identification of two independent tones emitted by the newly combined black hole. The pitch and decay rates of these tones lined up with Einstein’s general relativity. The no-hair theory stood triumphant.

Farr says that with new data analysis and with LIGO and Virgo continuing to observe black hole mergers, tests from the observatories will become more precise. The added precision will likely lead to additional detections of black hole tones and an improved understanding of the exotic objects.

Farr collaborated on the study with Maximiliano Isi of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the astrophysicists Matt Giesler, Mark Scheel and Saul Teukolsky of the California Institute of Technology.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Satellite data helps scientists measure fire susceptibility of Asian peatlands

Researchers have developed a new method for analyzing satellite data to gauge the fire susceptibility of peatlands.

Peatlands offer extremely efficient carbon sequestration services. When they burn, high concentrations of CO2 are released into the atmosphere. Over the last 30 years, peatland fires in Asia have been increasing in size, severity and frequency.

“Although they only cover 3 percent of the world’s land area, peatlands are estimated to contain 21 percent of the world’s soil carbon,” Nathan Dadap, doctoral candidate at Stanford University, said in a news release.

Dadap and his colleagues developed a new method for identifying regions of peatland most likely to burn. Their breakthrough was only possible as a result of the degradation of peatland forests in the region.

The conversion of so many tropical forests into palm oil plantations, allowed scientists to measure varying soil moisture levels across the region. Ironically, the region’s environmental degradation could end up helping officials protect and prevent fire among the most vulnerable patches of peatland.

Using satellite data and a new algorithm, scientists developed a way to gauge soil moisture across Asian peatlands. Currently, officials use precipitation to monitor fire risk, but authors of the new study -- published Monday in the journal Environmental Research Letters -- claim soil moisture is a more accurate predictor of fire susceptibility.

“The problem with using precipitation as an indicator is that it doesn’t take into account the local conditions,” Dadap said. “If one area has drainage canals and another does not, but you still have the same amount of precipitation, the one with canals still is going to have a much



higher risk of fires. That’s why we think that inclusion of soil moisture can be an important metric for capturing conditions on the ground.”

Researchers were able to test the accuracy of their algorithm by comparing their findings with the results of a laboratory-based peat ignition study.

Peatland fires burn fast and spread quickly. They are extremely difficult to control. In 2015, drought and degraded soil combined to fuel hundreds of peatland fires across the island of Borneo. The massive fires caused extreme air pollution, which was blamed for 100,000 premature deaths in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

In studying the relationship between moisture levels and 2015 fires -- using data from NASA’s Soil Moisture Active Passive mission -- researchers identified a key threshold. Below a certain level of moisture, ignited peatland fires tend to get especially big.

“That was probably the most shocking finding, since we were measuring soil moisture from the satellite -- it was a totally different method than this laboratory ignition study,” Dadap said. “It was a pleasant surprise to have an independent comparison that seems to match up really well.”

(Source: UPI)

Role of earthquake motions in triggering a ‘surprise’ tsunami

In newly published research, an international team of geologists, geophysicists, and mathematicians show how coupled computer models can accurately recreate the conditions leading to the world’s deadliest natural disasters of 2018, the Palu earthquake and tsunami, which struck western Sulawesi, Indonesia in September last year. The team’s work was published in Pure and Applied Geophysics.

The tsunami was as surprising to scientists as it was devastating to communities in Sulawesi. It occurred near an active plate boundary, where earthquakes are common. Surprisingly, the earthquake caused a major tsunami, although it primarily offset the ground horizontally -- normally, large-scale tsunamis are typically caused by vertical motions.

Researchers were at a loss -- what happened? How was the water displaced to create this tsunami: by landslides, faulting, or both? Satellite data of the surface rupture suggests relatively straight, smooth faults, but do not cover areas offshore, such as the critical Palu Bay. Researchers wondered -- what is the shape of the faults beneath Palu Bay and is this important for generating the tsunami? This earthquake was extremely fast. Could rupture speed have amplified the tsunami?

Using a supercomputer operated by the Leibniz Supercomputing Centre, a member of the Gauss Centre for Supercomputing, the team showed that the earthquake-induced movement of the seafloor beneath Palu Bay itself could have generated the tsunami, meaning the contribution of landslides is not required to explain the tsunami’s main features. The team suggests an extremely fast rupture on a straight, tilted fault within the bay. In their model, slip is mostly lateral, but also downward along the fault, resulting in anywhere from 0.8 meters to 2.8 meters vertical seafloor change that averaged 1.5 meters across the area studied. Critical

to generating this tsunami source are the tilted fault geometry and the combination of lateral and extensional strains exerted on the region by complex tectonics.

The scientists come to this conclusion using a cutting-edge, physics-based earthquake-tsunami model. The earthquake model, based on earthquake physics, differs from conventional data-driven earthquake models, which fit observations with high accuracy at the cost of potential incompatibility with real-world physics. It instead incorporates models of the complex physical processes occurring at and off of the fault, allowing researchers to produce a realistic scenario compatible both with earthquake physics and regional tectonics.

The researchers evaluated the earthquake-tsunami scenario against multiple available datasets. Sustained supershear rupture velocity, or when the earthquake front moves faster than the seismic waves near the slipping faults, is required to match simulation to observations. The modeled tsunami wave amplitudes match the available wave measurements and the modeled inundation elevation (defined as the sum of the ground elevation and the maximum water height) qualitatively match field observations. This approach offers a rapid, physics-based evaluation of the earthquake-tsunami interactions during this puzzling sequence of events.

“Finding that earthquake displacements probably played a critical role generating the Palu tsunami is as surprising as the very fast movements during the earthquake itself,” said Thomas Ulrich, PhD student at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and lead author of the paper. “We hope that our study will launch a much closer look on the tectonic settings and earthquake physics potentially favoring localized tsunamis in similar fault systems worldwide.”

(Source: Science Daily)

Black hole at center of galaxy is getting hungrier, say scientists

Unseeable and inescapable, black holes already rank among the more sinister phenomena out in the cosmos. So it may come as disconcerting news that the supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way appears to be growing hungrier.

Astronomers monitoring the colossal object, called Sagittarius A*, found that in the past year it appears to have consumed nearby matter at an unprecedented rate.

“We have never seen anything like this in the 24 years we have studied the supermassive black hole,” said Andrea Ghez, a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a senior author of the research. “It’s usually a pretty quiet, wimpy black hole on a diet. We don’t know what is driving this big feast.”

In the latest study, the team analyzed more than 13,000 observations of the black hole from 133 nights since 2003, gathered by the Keck Observatory in Hawaii and the European Southern Observatory’s Very Large Telescope in Chile. The black hole itself cannot be seen because it acts as a one-way trapdoor even for light. But it is possible to detect radiation blazing from gas and dust just outside the “event horizon” as they are accelerated towards their final fate.



The team found that on 13 May the area just outside the black hole’s point of no return was twice as bright as the next brightest observation. They also observed large changes on two other nights this year, with all three of those changes being unprecedented, according to Ghez.

The team also used a technique called speckle holography to reanalyze older, fainter observations dating back 24 years, from which they concluded that the level of brightness seen this year was unprecedented in the last quarter of a century.

“The big question is whether the black hole is entering a new phase ... and the rate of gas falling down the black hole drain has increased for an extended period, or whether we have just seen the fireworks from a few unusual blobs of gas falling in,” said Mark Morris, a professor of physics and astronomy at UCLA and the paper’s co-senior author.

One hypothesis is that the feeding frenzy is linked to the closest approach to the black hole of a star called S0-2 during the summer of 2018, and that a large quantity of gas from the star could have reached Sagittarius A* this year.

Another possibility involves a bizarre object known as G2, which is most likely a pair of binary stars, which made its closest approach to the black hole in 2014. It is possible the black hole could have stripped off the outer layer of G2, Ghez said, which could help explain the increased brightness just outside the black hole. A third suggestion is that several large asteroids have been drawn into the cosmic sinkhole.

The black hole is about 26,000 light years from Earth and poses no danger to our planet. The findings appear in Astrophysical Journal Letters.

(Source: The Guardian)

VISTA unveils a new image of the Large Magellanic Cloud

The Large Magellanic Cloud, or LMC, is one of our nearest galactic neighbors, at only 163 000 light years from Earth. With its sibling the Small Magellanic Cloud, these are among the nearest dwarf satellite galaxies to the Milky Way. The LMC is also the home of various stellar conglomerates and is an ideal laboratory for astronomers to study the processes that shape galaxies.

ESO’s VISTA telescope, has been observing these two galaxies for the last decade. The image presented today is the result of one of the many surveys that astronomers have performed with this telescope. The main goal of the VISTA Magellanic Clouds (VMC) Survey has been to map the star formation history of the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds, as well as their three-dimensional structures.

VISTA was key to this image because it observes the sky in near-infrared wavelengths of light. This allows it to see through clouds of dust that obscure parts of the galaxy. These clouds block a large portion of visible light but are transparent at the longer wavelengths VISTA was built to observe. As a result, many more of the individual stars populating the center of the galaxy are clearly visible. Astronomers analyzed about 10 million individual stars in the Large Magellanic Cloud in detail and determined their ages using cutting-edge stellar models. They found that younger stars trace multiple spiral arms in this galaxy.

For millennia, the Magellanic Clouds have fascinated people in the Southern Hemisphere, but they were largely unknown to Europeans until the Age of Discovery. The name we use today harkens back to the explorer Ferdinand Magellan, who 500 years ago began the first circumnavigation of the Earth. The records the expedition brought back to Europe revealed many places and things to Europeans for the first time. The spirit of exploration and discovery is ever more live today in the work of astronomers around the world, including the VMC Survey team whose observations led to this stunning image of the LMC.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Training surgeons like dogs, icky money win 2019 Ig Nobels

By Mark Pratt

Training surgeons is as easy as training dolphins or dogs. At least according to a study that Thursday earned a 2019 Ig Nobel, the annual Nobel Prize spoof that rewards weird, odd and sometimes head-scratching scientific discoveries.

This year’s winners included: Dutch and Turkish researchers who figured out which nation has the yuckiest money, an Italian scientist who urges consumption of pizza for its health benefits, and an Iranian engineer who obtained a U.S patent for a diaper-changing machine.

Karen Pryor, Theresa McKeon and Dr. I. Martin Levy figured out that a common technique used for training animals called operant learning—or clicker training—can be used to make better surgeons.

In short, a mechanical device that emits an audible click is used to reinforce positive behavior.

It’s not quite the same as giving a doctor a treat and a pat on the head, but it still works, said Pryor, a scientist, writer and animal trainer who has been using the technique for decades.

“Traditionally, experienced surgeons will train the younger surgeons and they make it quite hard,” which leads to tension and fear of failure, she said.

“With our method, they learned to use the tools with great confidence and calmness and turned them into calm, pleasant, serene people,” she said.

The study published in 2015 by the journal Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research found that surgeons trained using the clicker method performed surgical procedures with better precision.

The awards at the 29th annual ceremony at Harvard University were handed out by real Nobel laureates, and as has become the tradition, featured the world premiere



From left, Nobel Laureates Rich Roberts (Medicine, 1993), Eric Maskin (Economics, 2007), and Jerome Friedman (Physics, 1990) laugh during the 29th annual Ig Nobel awards ceremony at Harvard University, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola)

of a mini opera titled “Creatures of Habit.”

The winners received \$10 trillion Zimbabwean dollars, which is virtually worthless, and each was given one minute to deliver an acceptance speech enforced by an 8-year-old girl whining “Please stop. I’m bored.”

This year’s shenanigans also included a tribute to Nobel Prize-winning physicist Roy Glauber, known for his humbleness and sense of humor, who for years attended the Ig Nobel ceremony and always helped sweep up afterward. He died in December at age 93.

Andreas Voss and his colleagues found that germophobes might want to avoid Romanian bank notes.

Their study concluded that three types of drug-resistant bacteria clung the longest to Romanian money when compared to several other international currencies, including the euro, U.S. and Canadian dollars and Indian rupees.

Romanians shouldn’t take offense at having the dirtiest money though.

The researchers said Romanian bank notes include a polymer fiber to discourage counterfeiting and improve durability, which allows the growth and transmission of drug resistant pathogens.

Voss, a professor at Radboud University Center for Infectious Diseases, Canisius-Wilhelmina Hospital, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, has a simple solution for people squeamish about handling paper money crawling with bacteria.

“Use plastic and electronic payment,” he said via email. “Actually, I hardly ever use cash anymore.”

Silvano Gallus won an Ig Nobel for his research that found yes, pizza is good for you. Well, maybe just pizza that’s made and consumed in Italy.

“We found that pizza consumption in Italy was protective for many chronic diseases that are known to be influenced by diet: digestive tract cancers and infarction,” Gallus, head of the Laboratory of Lifestyle Epidemiology at the Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri in Milan, Italy said in an email.

He noted that many pizza ingredients are associated with the Mediterranean diet, which has known health benefits.

Like many of the winners, Gallus, a renowned scientist, was thrilled to win an Ig Nobel.

“I am honored to have obtained this achievement for a bizarre but important award,” he said.

The event was produced by the science humor magazine Annals of Improbable Research and co-sponsored by the Harvard-Radcliffe Science Fiction Association and the Harvard-Radcliffe Society of Physics Students.

Dominican Republic announces new safety measures after deaths of 11 American tourists

Officials from the Dominican Republic gathered in New York City, along with the U.S. Ambassador, on Thursday to announce new safety measures months after 11 American tourists died in several resorts there last spring.

Javier Garcia, the Dominican Republic's Minister of Tourism, told reporters at the Four Seasons Hotel in Manhattan that these new safety measures were put in place to specifically address safety at resorts that were at the center of the coverage.



The measures introduced include reinforcing mandates that require emergency information and the availability of 911 in every guest room, and a new emergency tourist center in B?varo in Punta Cana, where multi-lingual specialists can communicate with tourists and their families.

The Ministry of Tourism also announced that it partnered with Ecolab, a United States-based water, hygiene and energy technology lab to provide training and certification to all Department of Tourism Services and Companies inspectors.

Garcia also announced that an additional 4,000 agents have been hired for both the tourist security agency and the national police, and that 3,000 more public security cameras have been installed.

U.S Ambassador to the Dominican Republican Robin Bernstein said that an "unfounded negative campaign" contributed to a "tourism crisis" on the island, and pointedly noted that the U.S. State Department has maintained a level-two advisory to the Dominican Republic — similar to that of countries including Spain, Denmark, and Belgium.

"American tourists should feel safe and secure," she said. "I am totally comfortable with safety level, it is one of the safest tourist destinations I have ever visited. In fact, it has now become an even safer place to come because of the initiatives."

Earlier this year there were multiple high-profile cases involving American tourists who died while staying in the Dominican Republic. Seven deaths have been attributed to tourists becoming ill and dying of health-related issues.

The FBI is still conducting toxicology tests in three specific cases and has not yet released the results.

According to the State Department, there has been no evidence of foul play and no sign that the deaths are connected.

Before the measures were announced, Garcia took the time to lambast the news media, saying the coverage of the deaths of the American tourists was overblown and aimed to damage the Dominican Republic's stellar reputation as a "model" tourist country.

The State Dept. confirmed that in 2018, 13 U.S. citizens died while traveling to the Dominican Republic; the number was 17 in 2017.

More than 2.7 million U.S. tourists visited the island in 2017, making the island the fourth-most popular travel destination for Americans.

Garcia later said "the damage is done" from the slew of reports that focused on the island, but that Dominican Republic officials are still committed to fixing their image, with their main focus now being on the truth.

According to InSight Crime's 2018 Homicide Round-Up, statistics show that the Dominican Republic recorded 10.4 homicides per 100,000 people — compared to 81.4 in Venezuela, 25 in Mexico and 11.7 in Costa Rica.

(Source: TIME)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its fortifications

Guarding the key border crossing between Portugal's capital Lisbon and Spain's capital Madrid, in an undulating, riverine landscape, the Garrison Town of Elvas was fortified



extensively from the 17th to the 19th centuries to become the largest bulwarked dry ditch system in the world, with outlying forts built on surrounding hills to accommodate the changing needs of defensive warfare. The historic center with its castle, remnant walls and civil and religious buildings demonstrate the development of Elvas as three successive walled towns from the 10th to the 14th century and its subsequent incorporation into the major fortification works of the Portuguese War of the Restoration period (1641-68), when a wide range of military buildings were built for its role as a garrison town. These surviving fortifications were begun in 1643 and comprise twelve forts inserted in an irregular polygon, roughly centered on the castle and making use of a landscape of hills. In the 18th century the Fort of Graca was constructed in response to the development of longer-range artillery, as well as four fortlets to the west. As the remains of an enormous war fortress, Elvas is exceptional as a military landscape with visual and functional relationships between its fortifications, representing developments in military architecture and technology drawn from Dutch, Italian, French and English military theory and practice. Elvas is an outstanding demonstration of Portugal's desire for land and autonomy, and the universal aspirations of European nation States in the 16th-17th centuries.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran ranks 1st globally as a pocket-friendly destination: WEF

➔ 1 "The MENA region improved its T&T [travel and tourism] competitiveness since the last edition of the TTCI [Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index]. With 12 of the 15 MENA economies covered by this year's index increasing their score compared to 2017, the region was able to slightly outpace the global average in competitiveness growth. This is particularly important given that, in the aggregate, T&T accounts for a greater share of regional GDP than in any of the other four regions."

Regarding tourism expenditure, the report says "MENA is also the only region where international visitor spending is greater than domestic visitor spending. Yet despite improved competitiveness and a strong reliance on T&T for overall economic growth, MENA continues to underperform the global TTCI score average."

Spain, France, Germany, Japan and the United States are considered as the world's most travel-ready nations, according to the latest travel and tourism ranking of the World Economic Forum.

"There's little change since the last edition was released two years ago, with only one country altering its position: the United Kingdom has slid to sixth place, behind the United States."

Tourism on the rise

The travel and tourism industry contributes 5% towards Spain's overall GDP, a figure that looks set to rise over the next decade as the global middle class — particularly in regions such as Asia — continues to grow, weforum.org wrote.

In fact, travel and tourism as a global industry has flourished since the last report in 2017, and its contribution to global GDP (currently at 10%) is expected to rise by as much as 50% over the next decade. At the same time, one of the big findings of this year's report was that growth in tourism-friendly infrastructure — roads,



Foreign travelers visit Naqsh-e Rostam, an Achaemenid necropolis, which comprises massive rock-hewn tombs and scenic Sassanid-era bas-relief carvings. Naqsh-e Rostam is situated in southern Iran, nearing Persepolis, a bustling UNESCO World Heritage site northward Shiraz.

ports, airports and hotel accommodation, for example — has languished at only 1.4%.

"As international connectedness continues to rise, we see travel and tourism competitiveness continue to grow," says Christoph Wolff, World Economic Forum's Head of Mobility. "Increased tourism is bringing great benefits to many economies but must be managed properly by both policymakers and businesses for a sustainable future."

For over a decade the World Economic Forum engaged leaders in travel and tourism to carry out an in-depth analysis

of the travel and tourism (T&T) competitiveness. Published biennially, Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report and Index benchmarks the T&T competitiveness of 140 economies and measures the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the Travel & Tourism (T&T) sector, which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country.

Tourism in Iran

Last November, the Trump administration reinstated sanctions on Iran, mainly the ones that had been lifted under the

2015 nuclear deal, in order to batter Iran's economy, however, according to official data, they have so far failed to lessen foreign arrivals to the Islamic Republic.

Although the sanctions together with anti-Iran propaganda campaigns have decreased Western tourists but the country has managed to compensate and even improve by doing its best to attract more from neighboring states.

"Nearly 7.8 million foreign nationals visited Iran over the past year that shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year. The country hosted 5.1 million travelers in 1396 (March 2017-18)," deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri said in April.

Iran also eyes to have a bigger share of Chinese tourism, as it, in a unilateral measure, recently approved to waive the visa requirement for the Chinese passport holders. To encourage and reassure sight-seers, the Iranian government has decided not to stamp the passports of foreign tourists to help them skip the U.S. travel ban.

Iran hosted a record high of nearly 600,000 medical travelers during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), nearly equal to the figure for the whole past year, according to an Iranian association for the health tourism promotion. It has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in [calendar year] 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

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.

The Islamic Republic boasts hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Irish travel agencies on fam tour across Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A delegation comprising representatives of renowned Irish travel agencies and media outlets have commenced a ten-day familiarization tour across Iran with the aim of getting acquainted with its potential in terms of medical tourism, tourist destinations, natural landscapes, local people and their traditions.

"A five-member delegation comprising the head of the Irish union of travel agencies, senior executives and correspondents arrived in Iran on Shahrivar 22 [Sept. 13] in a 10-day tour set to familiarize them with the country's tourism potential," Mohammad-Ebrahim Larijani, the director of advertising and marketing office of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Ministry, was quoted by ISNA as saying on Saturday. Organized by the private sector, the tour is scheduled to visit Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd as its

main destinations, Larijani added.

The Irish delegation is also aimed to become familiar with medical tourism of the country, so they will pay visits to an infertility center in Yazd, an orthopedics center in Shiraz and an ophthalmology hub in Tehran.

The Islamic Republic hosted a record high of nearly 600,000 medical travelers during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), nearly equal to the figure for the whole past year (March 2018-19), according to an Iranian association for the health tourism promotion.

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

Iran's 'biggest' eco-lodge inaugurated



TOURISM **TEHRAN** — An eco-lodge complex, covering 2,500 square meters in area, has recently been inaugurated in the village of Baqerabad, Bafq county, central Yazd province.

The 45-room eco-lodge, which is said to be the biggest ever in the country, has a capacity for hosting 150 people, Bafq tourism chief Leyli Ranjbar said, IRIB reported on Saturday.

The private sector has allocated 45 billion rials (about \$1.1 million) for the project, the official said, adding that 35 billion rials has been invested so far.

A Zand-era (1751-1794) fortress has been fully restored and repurposed to

become the eco-lodge to make the best use of such historical sites under contracts for restoration, maintenance and operation.

Upon an initiative scheme, the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places (known by its Persian acronym Saabta) provides opportunity for privately-owned businesses to run certain old structures in order to be maintained and repurposed into hotels, traditional restaurants or lodging places.

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization said in 2018 that 2,000 eco-lodges will be constructed across the country until 2021.

Ancient Australia was home to 'strange' marsupial giants, scientists find

The "strange" anatomy of a family of giant marsupials that roamed eastern Australia and Tasmania for much of the past 25m years has been revealed in a new study.

Scientists had already figured out that palorchestids had tapir-like skulls and large "scimitar-like claws", but little was known about the limbs of one of the "strangest marsupial lineages to have existed", according to the paper published by a group of Australian researchers.

By examining 60 fossil specimens of palorchestids of varying geologic ages, the scientists were able to get an idea of how their legs and arms would have looked, functioned and evolved over time.

They found that the palorchestid had "muscular bent forelimbs" with fixed elbows that were "unlike any of their marsupial kin, living or extinct", the study published in journal PLOS ONE this week said.

"We are beginning to build a picture of the palorchestids as they were in life," it said.

Palorchestids were a sister family to the better-known Diprotodontidae and became extinct some time during the Late Pleistocene, probably as a result of human activity and climatic change.

But mystery has surrounded the exact make-up of palorchestids because very few fossils have been found. What is known is that they died out before other mega-fauna, said the Monash university researcher Hazel Richards.

"The fact that there just aren't that many of these guys in the fossil record probably tells us something about the way they were distributed," Richards told

Guardian Australia.

"We find them all over Australia but the population size was probably quite small. And they were quite sparsely arranged.

It's not like these guys were travelling in herds or in large numbers as has been kind of hypothesised for some of the other megafauna."

The study found that as they evolved, palorchestids grew larger and stranger.

While they varied in size, the researchers said they were "bigger than previously thought, with the largest species likely weighing over 1000 kg".

"We used a method where you take the circumference of the bone and that tells you something about how much weight is being borne through each of the four legs," Richards said.

"We came up with a number that was substantially larger than what has been estimated before and puts them some way up there among some of the largest marsupials that we ever had in Australia."

The fossils were obtained from museums in Australia and London's Natural History Museum.

"What makes them so weird is the kind of combination of features that they have," Richards said.

"They've got an extremely long pointed face, really tiny little eyes, protrusible tongue, something maybe something a bit like a giraffe, and extremely muscular four quarters ... and huge claws.

"Some of the other large megafauna ... like diprotodon they're not as muscular proportionately as ... and also



Experts say each eco-lodge unit generates jobs for seven to eight people on the average so that the scheme could create 160,000 jobs.

Having a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers varied excursions to nature lovers.

Sightseers may live with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stay.

The country is home to abundant historical mansions, caravanserais, bathhouses, madrasas, and other massive monuments, which can buttress its budding tourism and hospitality sectors if managed appropriately and refurbished properly.



their claws are much smaller. So these guys were clearly specialised for doing something with their four limbs."

Their claws would have been made digging difficult, "like trying to dig with a chef's knife", while their elbows, which could not "bend or straighten, are "totally unheard of in any other mammal, living or extinct".

Richards said future research would aim to determine why palorchestids came to be how they were.

"The plan now is to zero in and conduct some functional, biomechanical analyses to try and understand exactly what they were adapted for," she said.

"What foods are they targeting, why would they have become so different from everything else?"

(Source: The Guardian)

A way forward for Iran

By John L. Chapman

WASHINGTON D.C. — In a recent series of interviews from Tehran that included a detailed conversation with Iran's world-beating Foreign Minister and JCPOA architect Javad Zarif, NBC Nightly News anchor Lester Holt had his most telling moment with Mohamad-Javad Azari Jahromi, the Rouhani government's 37-year old Minister of Information and Communications Technology (Minister Jahromi is the first Iranian government executive born after the 1979 Revolution). While discussing his belief in the power of social media and his own prolific use of Twitter, the millennial Mr. Jahromi admitted to Holt that the Tehran government was not as effective with modern communications or messaging as it needed to be in the interconnected 24/7 world, due to needless restrictions on the new-era social apps.

For example, in 2017-18 Tehran's judiciary banned the popular Telegram messaging service [at one time perhaps 60% of the entire population of Iran were using the Telegram app], something President Rouhani himself labeled as "the direct opposite of democracy." Mr. Jahromi concurs with this, asserting that such restrictions are counterproductive, and undermine Iran's political and economic interests.

"We have to admit the fact that we have weakness in this field," Jahromi said. And then, when asked by Holt if Iran was losing the "propaganda war," the young communications czar said: "Yes, we have lost it."

In other words, while the United States and Israeli governments are relentlessly blasting Iran via vacuous and deeply mendacious throw-away lines such as "Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terror," Iran, says the astute Mr. Jahromi, has not effectively countered this false thesis with an effective rebuttal campaign that could indeed be propelled by social media.

The good news for Iran is, in spite of whatever shortcomings in Tehran's messaging, the American people are broadly opposed to any conflict with Iran and do not support any Trump-led efforts toward war. According to a recent Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll survey, 57 percent of voters opposed "military confrontation with Iran" unless Iran first attacked the United States. Only five percent of respondents wanted the United States to "declare war on Iran," and indeed, 78 percent of voters approved of Trump's decision to call off any retaliatory strike after Iran downed an unmanned U.S. Air Force RQ-4A Global Hawk surveillance drone earlier this summer.

The bad news for Iran is, the American people seem not to understand the effect or rationale for sanctions on Tehran, and certainly not even 2 Americans in every 100 know much of anything about the history of American meddling there, let alone that it dates at least to 1953. Most Americans are utterly oblivious of any part, let alone the entirety, of a long record of cruel American actions against Iranian citizens across time. But this record is long and despicable, alas, and includes, among other things, support of a repressive regime; an asset freeze and economic blockade; aid for an unprovoked Iraqi invasion against Iran in a horrific war that included Saddam Hussein's deployment of American-supplied chemical weapons against Iranian troops and civilians; the shoot-down of Iran Air Flight #655; and ultimately, more sanctions, cyber-warfare attacks such as the Stuxnet virus, and assis-



tance with Israeli moves against Iran that have included assassinations of innocent scientists.

This 7-decade history of U.S. meddling preceded Mr. Trump's unprecedented and completely unwarranted abrogation of the Iran Nuclear Deal, or JCPOA, which featured the most comprehensive and intrusive inspections regime in the history of arms control, and was enshrined, as a matter of international law, in U.N. Security Council Resolution #2231. All the details of this, and the illegal American breach of #2231, would be new news to the vast majority of the American people, a fact which alone confirms that Iran has lost the "public relations war" vis-à-vis the false propaganda promulgated by the American and Israeli governments and biased media organs.

■ How Iran can turn the tide of American public opinion

Righteous morality and truth are on the side of the Iranians vis-à-vis the American and Israeli position here, but time may not be: coming out of recession in 2015 as the Nuclear Deal was signed, the Iranian economy exploded with 13.4% real GDP growth in 2016, according to the World Bank, followed by nearly 4% growth in 2017, as nervousness over what President Trump might do began to crimp inbound foreign investment and trade. And indeed, economic contraction has returned to Iran in 2018-19 as the deal collapsed and the Americans effectively quarantined the Iranian economy.

It is therefore a propitious moment to recapture the high ground in the campaign to change American opinion about Iran, utilizing the very best weapons possible in such an effort: the truth, and the moral superiority of Iran's position. Changing public opinion in America will all by itself end the insanity of the Trump Administration's morally obtuse policy set on Iran, and begin the path toward normalized relations. Here's how this can happen, perhaps more quickly than many would believe:

Invite a comprehensive list of American policymakers and opinion influencers to Iran for a 7 to 10 day visit, to detail before them a retrospective history of U.S./Iran relations and in particular, the recent years of economic deprivation and the harm they have caused to Iranian living standards, as well as meet with Iranian government officials and business leaders, up to and including President Rouhani himself.

The list of attendees could include the following, or people like them:

- Politicians: Senator Rand Paul and his father, former Congressman Ron Paul; U.S. Army Major Tulsi Gabbard and U.S. Navy Admiral Joe Sestak, sitting and former U.S. Congressmen, respectively, and both current Democratic presidential candidates; former U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta; former President of the United States

Barack Obama [Obama's stature may require he come to Iran separately, but there is high likelihood he would accept an invitation to go to Tehran, especially if meeting the Supreme Leader and/or President];

- Armed Forces Veterans: U.S. Army 4-star General Barry McCaffrey [now an NBC News analyst]; U.S. Army Colonels Andrew Bacevich [Quincy Institute], Douglas Macgregor [Fox News], and Lawrence Wilkerson [William and Mary, MSNBC];

- Major Media: Tucker Carlson [Fox News]; Anderson Cooper [CNN]; Rachel Maddow [MSNBC], and others;

- Commentators: Philip Giraldi [ex-CIA, Council for the National Interest], Daniel Larison [The American Conservative]; Gideon Levy [Haaretz]; Elijah Magnier [Al Rai Media Group]; John Pilger/Gareth Porter, well-known independent journalists; Trita Parsi [Quincy Institute];

- Business community: Former Chairman of Exxon Mobil and former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

This list is hardly exhaustive, and could include dozens more names of influential media commentators, economists, and American business professionals especially; certainly, all major worldwide media outlets' general news reporting functions, similar to Lester Holt's capacity [and as opposed to media opinion/commentary people, per above] would be invited and likely cover the event.

The goal of such a conference in Tehran would be simple: tell Iran's "side of the story" in excruciating detail to a wide expanse of American public opinion-makers, who will in turn return to the United States and relay Iran's history, perspective, and the facts which are uniformly favorable to Tehran. Further, the very convening of such a meeting with high-profile American attendees would draw major media coverage on a global basis.

Iran's message to the Americans, conveyed in person by Foreign Minister Zarif and others including, say, the gifted English-speaking analyst at the University of Tehran, Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi, is a simple one:

- Here's the history of Iran's foreign policy, that includes no invasion of foreign soil since the Persian leader Nader Shah attacked India's Mughal Empire in 1738;
- Actual history of U.S./Iran relations, dating to 1953;
- Record of American cruelties, in detail;
- List of instances where Iran has helped, or tried to help, the Americans [e.g., after 9/11, cooperation vis-à-vis the Taliban, or al Qaeda];
- Recitation of Iran's national defense strategy, the security challenges facing Iran, and Iran's legitimate right of

self-defense [also detail how American arms exports into the region and the American presence have destabilized the region].

● Snapshot of the Islamic Republic of Iran today [e.g., democratic system of governance; role and opportunities for women in society, from business ownership to automobile driving to academic pursuit to political process participation; respect for minority religions including Christianity and Judaism which is highly unique in the Muslim world; and, entrepreneurial-driven market economy and institutions of banking/finance/insurance and private property ownership], and why and how Iran is different from so many of its neighbors.

The U.S. government well might, once word spread of such a convened meeting in Tehran, seek to stop it. But the high profile of invitees would prevent this, and the very momentum this alone would give the meeting would only further ensure intense global media coverage. Iran's demand is a simple one: the threat of an insane war in the region is very real, beyond insane and needless, but very easy to prevent. For this to happen, the Islamic Republic deserves the respect and morally proper treatment accorded all legitimate governments of the world, especially one as democratic as is the regime in Tehran, and this should entail immediate cessation of all economic sanctions, and a return to normalization and full trade and diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. A regional multi-lateral dialogue of the kind currently being pursued by Foreign Minister Zarif could then ensue, with the region's inhabitants deciding how to solve regional challenges.

Where there are American allegations of human rights abuses, government corruption, or malfeasance within the Iranian government or economy, these should be addressed head-on, rather than avoided; this would only earn the admiration of the audience.

Such a conference [as well as, perhaps, a few ancillary smaller meetings such as one especially for President Obama], held in Iran, with many high profile participants and thus covered widely by global media outlets, would be, as Americans say, a "home run" for Iran. Coupled with a newly-sustained effort at global media outreach by Tehran, it would lead to a viral spreading of the truth and about American policies toward Iran which have been nothing short of a disgrace over time. It would be a dagger in the plans of any kinetic conflict currently housed in the fevered brains of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his friends, and would be an accelerant to an end to the American-led economic blockade of Iran, something history will, in the fullness of time, rightly regard as a corrupt outrage.

For Corporate Media, Space Belongs to Washington

By Joshua Cho

The Wall Street Journal (5/10/19) published an excerpt from an upcoming book by CNN's chief national security correspondent, Jim Sciutto, which claims that despite a "Star Wars-like space service" being an "easy comic target," "US commanders" are "deadly serious" about confronting "new threats in space." These "commanders" were mostly anonymous—but such sources are often involved in a profitable revolving door relationship with military contractors.

CNN (2/11/19) warned us of Russia and China's "new" anti-satellite laser capacities, with breathless statements by government officials claiming that the two countries are "surpassing us" in space capabilities. NBC (2/11/19) claimed that both countries were "preparing to use space as a battlefield." The Daily Beast (4/10/19) cautioned that although the US currently operates around 850 public and private satellites, compared with China's 280 and Russia's 150, Washington's plans to launch 1,300 additional satellites to help the US "survive a sneak attack by China and Russia" might still be insufficient.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

IDEAS | ESSAY

A Vulnerable U.S. Really Does Need a Space Force

China and Russia are developing new weapons that can attack crucial American satellites, and the U.S. has been slow to respond to the danger



Jim Sciutto (Wall Street Journal, 5/10/19) fear-mongered the vulnerabilities of US space presence, warning that Russia and China "are developing new weapons that can attack crucial American satellites."

While these alarmist reports about an endangered and inadequate military lagging behind its ambitious and innovative "adversaries" are nothing new (FAIR.org, 12/20/18), Sciutto's excerpt is exceptional in its credulity towards official sources, and in how badly it misleads readers regarding the militarization of space and the "threats" posed by Russia and China.

Going over several apocalyptic scenarios—"the internet would stop altogether," financial markets would be "paralyzed" and the US might lose its indispensable capacity to "target anyplace on the planet, anytime, anywhere, any weather"—Sciutto warned that one thing is clear: "War is coming to space, and the US must prepare for it."

Sciutto relied on mostly anonymous government and military official sources for his claims of the US "losing ground" and potentially suffering an "outright military defeat at the hands of our foes"—unless, of course, the US commits to a "more robust Space Force."

The Journal's previous reporting (6/18/18) featured official sources claiming that the US must maintain its "competitive advantage," since space is now a "warfighting domain," and statements by President Donald Trump on the US's commitment to space hegemony:

When it comes to defending America, it is not enough to merely have an American presence in space. We must have American dominance in space.

This is not just Trumpian bluster, but US military doctrine going back decades—as outlined by the US Space Command's 1997 Vision for 2020, which outlines the pursuit of "full spectrum dominance" to maintain overwhelming military superiority in land, air, sea and space.

Although Sciutto included the question of whether space-faring countries will negotiate a "peace treaty for space" in his list of "pressing policy questions about how to fight in space," he doesn't mention that the two countries he's fearmongering about, Russia and China, have been at the forefront of proposing arms control treaties in outer space for years (Newsweek, 3/20/19).

One of the peace agreements the US refuses to negotiate, due to its missile defense advantages and edge in potential space weaponry, is the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) treaty, which has had near unanimous support from the international community—including Russia and China—for over 30 years. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (12/11/18) reported that the US rejected all four resolutions of the UN General Assembly's First Committee meeting in 2018 dealing with disarmament and prevention of the weaponization of space.

Sciutto also never explains why Russia and China might want to develop the "kidnapper" and "kamikaze" satellites he terrifies his readers with. Despite the misnomer, it's common knowledge among nuclear strategists that "missile defense systems" are actually offensive weapons, designed to secure a nuclear first-strike advantage by neutralizing retaliatory strikes, and serve as a "Trojan Horse" for the weaponization of space, because they depend on satellites to track missiles (Roll Call, 11/21/16). That might explain why Russia and China are seeking to upgrade their military space capabilities as the US deploys missile defense systems near their borders (Slate, 5/13/16; Washington Post, 3/7/17).

Noam Chomsky once explained that American news coverage operates on the premise that the US "owns the world," but it's clear that outer space belongs to the US as well, since corporate media frame any nation failing to treat space as Washington's private property as enemy trespassers (RT, 2/13/19). It's not enough to be No. 1 in the space race, because every other nation could "gain ground" on the US, driving a vicious circle of never-ending military buildups. As the global space economy is expected to multiply several times over the next few decades—with lucrative deals for military contractors—we can expect more alarmist reports from corporate media about the "threats" posed by countries seeking a peace treaty with the US in outer space.

(Source: FAIR.org)

The Mail scrapes the very bottom of the barrel trying to smear Corbyn

The Daily Mail's latest efforts to smear Jeremy Corbyn are a new low. With this 'shocking scoop', its latest claim against the Labor leader shows just how desperate the right-wing UK press is getting.

On 9 September, a Mail "exclusive" claimed that "never-before-seen photographs" link Corbyn and John McDonnell to an IRA 'terrorist'.

It ran pictures of Corbyn and McDonnell "smiling for the camera" at Paul Hill's wedding in 1988. It claimed that Hill was "a convicted IRA bomber at the time".

But this desperate effort to smear Corbyn got short shrift. Because despite trying to link Corbyn and McDonnell to the IRA, even the Mail had to acknowledge that — a year later — the Guildford Four (which included Hill) had their convictions quashed. They were freed immediately.

So as many Twitter users pointed out in the comments section of the tweet, the Mail 'scoop' simply showed Corbyn at an innocent man's wedding:

- Jeremy Corbyn goes to wedding of Paul Hill, an innocent man. Ground breaking



investigative journalism!

- So you at the @DailyMailUK believe that those who have been falsely accused and found innocent should be ostracized from society. Tells you everything you need to know about the fascism that lies at the heart of the tax-avoiding Viscount Rothermere's newspaper.

- So he was at the wedding of a man he

thought was innocent and was subsequently proven right. As far as smear campaigns go, this is a piss poor effort.

■ Wrongfully convicted

In 1975, Hill, Gerry Conlon, Paddy Armstrong, and Carole Richardson were wrongfully convicted of carrying out two bomb attacks in Surrey.

All four later retracted statements that

led to conviction. It emerged that authorities had obtained these "using violence, threats to their family and intimidation". Hill also gave further details about their 'brutal' treatment, saying:

"I was stripped naked and threatened with firearms and mock executions. I was told I would be thrown from a window."

In 1989, police evidence against the Guildford Four was shown to have been entirely "fabricated" and based on "lies".

As some people pointed out, Corbyn and McDonnell actually stood by the four. Both backed the campaign to prove their innocence:

■ The danger of right-wing smears

The Mail's latest effort to smear Corbyn was desperate and empty. Yet it prompted outrage from readers desperate to fuel anti-Corbyn hatred:

In fact, the Mail later appeared to close the comments section on this story.

This is just the latest smear against the Labor leader. Yet it has serious consequences.

(Source: thecanary.co)

14 million students to start new school year

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Some 14 million students will attend schools in the new school year starting on September 23, Minster of Education Mohsen Haji Mirzaei has announced.

Commenting on the lack of sufficient educational forces, he noted that the ministry has taken measures to increase the number of teachers and education forces.



“We try to provide students with a happy educational environment,” ISNA quoted the minister as saying on Wednesday. He called on parents to join hands and support the education system in order to achieve better outcomes. Last year, some 14.7 million students attended the schools nationwide.

Five killed and thousands evacuated as flash floods hit Spain

At least five people have been killed and thousands evacuated after two days of record rainfall and gales caused severe flash flooding and tornadoes in southeastern Spain.

Highway tunnels were submerged and cars swept from motorways, as torrents of water led to the closure of roads, railways and airports in the Valencia, Murcia and Andalucia regions.



Hundreds of soldiers, boats and helicopters were deployed to assist the emergency services, as some 3,500 people were evacuated from their homes.

More than 689,000 pupils were affected in Valencia alone as nearly 300 municipalities decided to close schools, AFP reported.

A man who had been missing since leaving his home on foot earlier on Friday was found dead in the village of Redovan in Valencia, and another was found in Granada province after his car was swept off a motorway by a torrent of mud and water.

A third man died in Almeria after trying to drive through a flooded tunnel, unaware that it had been cordoned off. Emergency services were unable to save him but were able to help several others who became trapped in flooded tunnels.

It came after two siblings died on Thursday when their car was swept away by torrential rain.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

European Commission Counter-Terrorism Measures

(September 19, 2001)

The European Commission will today propose a package of counter-terrorism measures designed to increase security in Europe following last week's attacks in the United States.

In the wake of last week's terrorist attacks in the United States, the European Commission is **rushing through** proposals already **in the pipeline** for legislation to **boost** the **anti-terrorist** effort in the EU. The proposed legislation sets out to define what crimes may be classified as terrorism. It establishes **common penalties** for these crimes. Most importantly, there's a proposal to replace current **extradition procedures** with a new European arrest **warrant** which would mean a warrant issued in one Member State would automatically apply in all others. At the moment, nine of the fifteen Member States don't have any legislation on terrorism so the proposals are seen as a **major advance**. They' ll be presented to EU justice and home affairs ministers when they meet here on Thursday and will form part of the response to the crisis to be discussed at an emergency summit of EU leaders in Brussels on Friday.

■ **Words**
in the wake of: if something is in the wake of something else, then it happens after that thing
rushing through: if you rush something through then you make it happen more quickly
in the pipeline: if something is in the pipeline, then it is going to happen at some time in the future
boost: if you give something a boost then you help it
anti-terrorist: if something is anti-something then it is against it and tries to stop it
common penalties: punishments that are the same regardless of who commits the crime or where they commit the crime
extradition procedures: the methods used by one country to get another country to hand over a person who has committed a crime in the first country
warrant: a legal document that gives police special powers to do something like arrest a person, or search their property
major advance: a major advance is a significant move forward
(Source: BBC)

85% of Iran's population affected by prolonged drought: official

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Over 85 percent of the country's total population is affected by prolonged drought over the past decade, Sadeq Ziaiean, director of the national center for drought and crisis management affiliated to the Meteorological Organization, told ISNA on Friday.

According to the Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI), 11 percent of the Iranians are affected by mild drought, 21.5 percent of whom also are under pressure of moderate drought; while severe drought is exerting pressure on 32.5 percent of the people, he explained.

He went on to lament that extremely severe drought also set a new record high in the country causing difficulties for almost 20.7 percent of the population.

Some 0.3 percent of the country's population are residing in areas with extreme wet spells, another 0.3 percent are also experiencing wet spells, 0.2 percent moderately affected by wet spells and 0.7 percent of the population affected by mild wet spells, he noted.

While only 12.7 percent of the population are experiencing normal precipitation averages, he added.



Referring to the effects of drought on the people over the past year, he said that 21.4 percent of the population is affected by mild drought, 4.8 percent by moderate drought, 2.8 percent by severe drought, and 0.1 percent by extremely severe droughts.

However, 1.4 percent of the Iranians are experiencing extreme precipitation, 2.9 per-

cent severe wet spells, 6.3 percent moderate wet spells, and 10.4 percent of the population are experiencing mild wet spells, he said, adding, some 50.5 percent of the population are affected by normal conditions.

Pointing to the country's land area suffering prolonged drought during the past decade, he explained that 9.2 percent of the country's

land area is suffering mild drought, while 18.2 and 28.7 percent are facing moderate drought and severe drought, respectively.

Extremely severe drought impacts became widespread on 29.8 percent of the lands, he stressed.

Pointing to the temporal variability in precipitation over the past 10 years, he noted that extremely severe wet spells recorded in 0.4 percent of the country, and some 0.4 percent of Iran's area is facing severe wet spells and 0.6 percent also experiencing moderate wet spells.

Also, in the same period, 1.3 percent of the country was mildly wet, he added.

Speaking of Iran's land area being haunted by drought since last year, he said that last year due to increased rainfall which doused the country, drought-stricken land areas also reduced, as only 1.4 percent of which have suffered extremely severe drought.

However, 3 percent of the country recorded extremely severe wet spells, 6.5 percent of which recorded moderate moisture durations and 8.8 percent reported to receive mild wet spells, he highlighted.

Some 48 percent of the country received normal levels of rainfall, he concluded.

Environmental education to be included in pre-primary schools

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Environmental education will be included in the country's pre-primary schools' curriculum in the new school year (beginning September 23) to prepare children for environment protection.

In Iran, pre-primary school is a 1-year education process for children aged 5 to 6 years to be prepared before entering elementary schools. It has been made compulsory over the past few years.

Environmental education aiming to make the students committed and informed of the environmental values in early ages has become a great challenge for the Iranian schools' curriculum, so that educational materials on environment protection have been included in 11th grade curriculum since 2017, which turned out mostly inefficient.

Early childhood is a time when skills are well acquired, not the age of 16 when all the cognitive and behavioral characteristic of the child is already formed; making changes to what has been formed before is not easy at all.

While these educational materials on environment protection are entering the pre-primary schools to be acquired at earlier childhood ages to make favorable cognitive and behavioral changes in the students, ISNA quoted Reza Shayesteh, an official with Tehran department of environment, as saying on Wednesday.

“The first step we have taken in this regard was preparing an educational package for the teachers and trainers, through which they will be able to teach environmental education to children in a comprehensible way,” he explained.

The book, which is entitled “human and environment” and

comprises 7 lessons focusing on the importance of water, soil, air, energy, waste, biodiversity and environment, will also be taught in pre-primary school, he noted.

He went on to say that environmental experts attend schools on important environmental occasions such as World Environment Day, adding, these experts familiarize the students with environmental concepts by holding competitions and offering various prizes.

The students are trained to protect environment and natural resources and employ them in their very life; so only textbooks cannot contribute much to this end, he lamented, adding, therefore, educational materials must be taught in different methods in universities as well as all school grades.

He further called on the citizens to participate defending the environment and cooperate to preserve the natural resources.

One of the main concerns for every nation is the environment and the interaction between the people and their surrounding environment; for the life of human as well as all other animals depends on the environment. Yet, in the past two centuries with the apparent great advances, human beings have caused damages to the environment consciously or unconsciously, and Iran is no exception.

In spite of the fact that Iran is dealing with 4 major environmental issues, including water scarcity, soil erosion, air pollution and endangered biodiversity, neither of the responsible officials, nor the public have the necessary knowledge to find proper solutions for containing the issues, thus their poor natural resource management along with not being committed has exacerbated the country's environmental issues.



So, one way to contain environmental issues in the country is training the people not to hurt the environment and wildlife while making them aware of the values, but this will be achieved through education processes from early childhood.

But, for environment to be an all-encompassing concern for the public, it should be based on the educational materials and school curriculum at different grades of education which in turn requires proper programming, fine materials and curriculum, providing textbooks in line with its objectives, and well-trained and informed teachers capable of perceiving the concepts and making them comprehensible for the students to consider environment safeguarding not only as a material, but a human responsibility.

Climate change takes hold in fastest-warming town on the planet

Icebergs float like doomed islands past the small boat as it makes its way through a fjord filled with the slush of a melting glacier. Occasionally, as the warming waters dissolve the bottom of one of the icebergs, it becomes top-heavy and does a somersault, as if it were playing instead of dying.

The Wahlenberg glacier above the fjord naturally calves, sheering off the icebergs into the water. But here it is happening at an increasing rate because of the warming ocean waters, says Kim Holmen, the international director of the Norwegian Polar Institute.

Holmen, has lived in the northern Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard for three decades. He

describes the changes he's seen as “profound, large and rapid”.

“We are losing the Svalbard we know. We are losing the Arctic as we know it because of climate change,” he says amid the constant crackle and trickle of the ice dissolving. “This is a forewarning of all the hardship and problems that will spread around the planet.”

Since 1970, average annual temperatures have risen by 4C in Svalbard, with winter temperatures rising more than 7 degrees, according to a report released by the Norwegian Centre for Climate Services in February. The Climate in Svalbard 2100 report also warns that the annual mean air temperature in Svalbard is projected to increase

by 7-10C by the end of this century.

That's not good news for Svalbard's main town, Longyearbyen. With a population of slightly more than 2,000 people, it is the northernmost town on the planet. It is also the fastest-warming.

Erosion also threatens homes here. Three years ago, as winter approached, 13 meters of coastline fell away overnight.

The spectre of climate change looms large over Audun Salte's dog farm. The Norwegian owns Svalbard Husky with his wife, Mia. Salte worries that as temperatures warm, climate change could lead to the extinction of all life on Earth. A man who likes kissing and dancing with his dogs — he has 110 of them — he's concerned

most about the non-humans on the planet.

“If climate change should be the end of humanity, I really don't care, but if climate change is the end of any animal species who hasn't contributed anything towards the speeding up of this process, that's why I am reacting,” he says.

He compares climate change to an accident that we can't help staring at, feeling lucky we weren't the victim: “On the highway, when people slow down to look at a car crash, climate change is like that because everyone is slowing down to look at the accident but not realizing that we are actually the car crash.”

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Clean air days double for Tehraners this year

Tehrani citizens have experienced a 2-fold rise in the number of clean air days since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2018) compared to the same period last year, an official with Department of Environment has said.

Since the aforementioned period, clean air stayed in the capital for 27 days, while last year, during the same period, Tehraners breathed clean air for only 14 days, IRNA quoted Shina Ansari as saying on Sunday. Also, the air quality of the capital was healthy for 262 days, while being unhealthy for sensitive groups for 59 days, she said, adding that compared to the same period last year, Tehran's air quality reached healthy levels for 229 days and 97 days of unhealthy for sensitive groups has hit the capital.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-plast, -plasty, -plastic”

■ **Meaning:** living cell or particle

■ **For example:** The next approach is **angioplasty**, in which a catheter is used to balloon open the arrowed part of the artery.

PHRASAL VERB

Head something off

■ **Meaning:** to prevent something from happening, especially something bad

■ **For example:** The President intervened to head off the conflict.

IDIOM

Nip something in the bud

■ **Explanation:** to prevent something from becoming a problem by stopping it as soon as it starts

■ **For example:** Try to nip this kind of bad behavior in the bud.

تهرانی‌ها امسال دو برابر بیشتر روزهای پاک داشتند

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: تهرانی‌ها از ابتدای امسال تا امروز (۱۲ اسفند ۹۷) نسبت به مدت مشابه سال گذشته، دو برابر هوای پاک تنفس کردند.

شینا انصاری روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با ایرنا افزود: تهران از ابتدای امسال تا امروز، ۲۷ روز هوای پاک داشته در حالیکه سال گذشته در مدت مشابه، تعداد روزهای پاک ۱۴ روز بوده است.

وی اظهار داشت: همچنین از ابتدای امسال تاکنون، کیفیت هوای پایتخت برای ۲۶۲ روز قابل قبول و ۵۹ روز ناسالم برای گروه‌های حساس بوده که در مدت مشابه سال گذشته به ترتیب ۲۲۹ و ۹۷ روز بوده که هشت روز نیز ناسالم برای تمام گروه‌ها بوده است.

Yemeni drones hit Aramco, world's largest refinery in Saudi Arabia

➔ Abqaiq, about 60 km (37 miles) southwest of Dhahran in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, contains the world's largest oil processing plant. Most Saudi oil exported from the Persian Gulf is processed there. Khurais, 250 km Dhahran, hosts a major Aramco oil field.

Home to much of Saudi Arabia's oil production, Eastern Province has seen bouts of unrest since 2011 when protesters emboldened by the Arab Spring uprisings took to the streets.

Houthi fighters and their allies in Yemen's army have carried out similar attacks in recent months in retaliation for the kingdom's airstrikes in the impoverished nation and its crippling economic siege on the country.

The incident comes nearly a month after Saudi Aramco's oil facilities in Shaybah, the kingdom's largest strategic oil reserve near the UAE border, were targeted by Yemeni forces in a major drone attack.

Yemeni forces also launched a successful raid on a major pipeline spanning the kingdom in May.

Sare'e on Saturday pledged to widen the range of retaliatory attacks on Saudi Arabia.



"As long as the invasion and siege continues, we promise the Saudi establishment that our future operations will expand further and become more painful," he said. "There is no solution before the Saudi establishment other than halting attacks and

putting an end to the siege," Sare'e added.

The latest attacks also come as Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, accelerates preparations for a much-anticipated initial public offering of Aramco.

The IPO forms the cornerstone of a pro-

gram envisaged by de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a son of King Salman, to replenish the kingdom once buoyant reserves which have dwindled in stride with falling oil prices and the protracted Yemen war.

The war has turned into a quagmire for Riyadh, with Yemeni forces increasingly using sophisticated weaponry in retaliatory attacks.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia's most notable partner in the conflict, recently announced the gradual withdrawal of its troops from Yemen, largely because it believes the war has become "unwinnable", according to US reports.

According to Press TV, Yemeni forces regularly target positions inside Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Saudi war, which began in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall the country's Riyadh-allied former regime and crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The Western-backed military aggression, coupled with a naval blockade, has killed tens of thousands of Yemenis, destroyed the country's infrastructure and led to a massive humanitarian crisis.

Iraq to respond to Israeli attacks on Hashd: MP



TEHRAN — All options are on the table in response to Israel's recent drone strikes targeting Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as the Hashd al-Sha'abi, according to a leading Iraqi parliamentarian.

Speaking to the Lebanese al-Mayadeen television channel on Saturday, Ahmed al-Asadi, Iraqi Lawmaker and spokesman of the Iraqi Fatah alliance said that Israel's attacks were certainly "a declaration of war".

The lawmaker said that Iraq viewed Israel as an occupying entity and as its enemy, adding that no treaty could halt what Iraq saw as its war against the illegitimate state.

According to Press TV, Al-Asadi added

that the pro-government PMU was part of Iraq's security establishment and that it would surely have a role in any response to Israel.

He added that the PMU forces were on high alert against drone strikes, adding that the organization is currently negotiating with Russia, China and Iran on obtaining air defense systems in order to defend Iraq's airspace.

The comments come as the PMU has been the target of a number of aerial strikes attributed to Israel.

Israeli authorities have openly suggested that the Tel Aviv regime may be conducting operations in Iraq, an issue which has been confirmed by American and European officials.

Taliban delegation visits Russia after Trump says talks 'dead'



TEHRAN — Taliban representatives have held discussions with Russian officials in Moscow, just days after U.S. President Donald Trump declared months-long peace talks between Washington and the group "dead".

Taliban's Qatar-based spokesman Suhail Shaheen confirmed the meeting in the Russian capital on Friday, saying the group's delegation held consultations with Zamir Kabulov, Russia's special envoy for Afghanistan.

At the meeting, Russia stressed the necessity of the resumption of talks between the U.S. and the Taliban, while the group's delegation reiterated their readiness to renewing dialogue with Washington, an unidentified Russian foreign ministry

spokesman was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency.

Peace talks between the United States and the Taliban began last October in Qatar, with the aim of ending the 18-year-old war in Afghanistan. After nine rounds of negotiations in Doha, US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said earlier this month a peace agreement was finalised "in principle".

But on Sunday, Trump said he had cancelled secret meetings at the Camp David presidential retreat with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Taliban leaders, following a car bomb attack in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, Al Jazeera reported.

Sunset of America's global leadership with part-time strategists

➔ In the war of tariffs with china, the EU, and Japan, as well as his expansion of arms trade with Arab states of the Persian Gulf, Trump girdled his loins to place America's political ties and economic relations on a basis which considered only "America first" as its approach and its defining rule.

In the process, disregard for international relations and considerations should have the least impact on earning more profits. In other words, if there were no more profitable trade in "one-way or multilateral" interactions, for Trump, such relationships would be meaningless.

With the start of Trump, countries with a global economy and trade had to part with Trump to maintain their global position and achievements. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Trump initiated unilateral policies based on specific relations with several major countries of the world, including Russia, China, India, Japan, Britain, and EU member states. But in the process of implementing this policy and excessive demands, he questioned all the arrangements and achievements of post-World War II agreements.

Trump and his assistants did not know that much could change in the world and were unaware of the profound impact of the intertwined interests and structures of world trade; they were more narcissistic than looking for accom-

plishments. For this reason, countries have challenged the Trump doctrine by emphasizing the continuity of the World Trade System and regional and transnational international agreements.

China, Germany, France and Canada responded to U.S. tariff threats by brandishing their teeth and talking about countermeasures and braking the U.S. economy, which in the first two years of the Trump presidency flourished by creating economic challenges for the world's major countries.

With the EU and China standing against Trump's ambiguous economic policies, the U.S. has no choice but to withdraw or declare an economic war against China and the European Union. It is clear that continuing tariff strikes on the Chinese or EU economies could ruin the global economy led by the United States. For the United States, this is a fear of suicide.

Trump's other feat was to ignore the powerful locked-in structure of the world system - to enter the world arena with a hollow fist - and to transform the monopoly world of today into a non-polar world. At present, America has no place in any political, economic, or military dimension after World War II.

By challenging the liberal order of the world economy and the uncertainties in world trade, Trump has equally affected U.S. foreign policy. Mistaken by repeated miscal-

culations and the use of "part-time strategists", Trump was forced to engage in "short-term" U.S. foreign policy with the constant change in administration and government.

Engaging in "short-term strategies" has led to the elimination of strategic plans and goals, making the global view of the U.S. short-term, complicated, and questionable.

If Trump wins the 2020 presidential election. Given the resistance of China and the European Union, the U.S. economy will be in a recession, forcing Trump to return to the WTO and its special regulations to exit a stagnant or even stagnant, costly recession, and make a choice, a reverse Brexit.

But if the United States is determined to return to world leadership, it must be able to prevent the division of the world into a bipolar or multipolar world. This would require serious trade confrontation with Europe and a cold war which would lead to a military confrontation with China and even Russia.

But countries around the world are well aware that the United States has always acted against multilateralism and at all costs is seeking to maintain American leadership. China, Russia and the European Union have shown by their actions that they are ready to face future U.S. tensions that will continue even after Trump.

(Source: eurasiareview.com)

When Tel Aviv crosses the red lines

➔ Popular Mobilization Units' military positions have also been targeted by suspicious fires that have caused extensive damages. While government officials said that these fires caused by unidentified air raids, Israel and the U.S. are in charge for this aggressive action.

The Hezbollah base in Syria was recently targeted by the Zionist regime, in which two Hezbollah resistance forces were martyred, and in a quick response, Hezbollah targeted the Zionist regime's armored vehicle at the border.

Occasional attacks of the Israeli fighter jets against the Palestinian resistance forces' positions, including Hamas, have intensified in various parts of Gaza in recent days.

These attacks are being carried out while Resistance forces are not indifferent, and they show their readiness to respond to the Zionist regime's aggression.

In this regard, Palestinian resistance forces managed to shoot down an Israeli drone in eastern Rafah, south of Gaza. The Zionist regime's army confirmed in a statement that drone was shot down in the

south of the Gaza Strip. Hezbollah forces also succeeded to shoot down an Israeli spy drone over the past few days. Israeli forces affirmed the downing of the drone by Lebanese resistance fighters.

Today, political groups in Iraq want to seriously react to occasional attacks of the Israeli forces against PMU positions in the country, as the Fatah Alliance responded to the Zionist regime's attacks and emphasized that it should react to the attacks.

The intensification of the aggressive attacks against the positions of Resistance forces in the region, as the Israeli regime's parliamentary election approaches, indicates that the regime's officials, and above all, Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, are trying to show that they can deal with Resistance groups in the region and carry out their threats against them through propaganda campaigns. Therefore, the residents of the occupied territories should not worry about attacks by these groups and ensure their security with a vote for Netanyahu and his party.

The Israeli attacks against Resistance

forces in the region are carried out after the terrible defeat of the Zionist regime in the face of Hezbollah missile strikes, so Netanyahu seeks to attack other positions of the Resistance forces to underplay this terrible defeat in the minds of the Zionists. Of course, the attack on an empty base which was under construction in Syria indicates that the Zionist regime intended to carry out a propaganda show at home.

The significant point in reviewing the Zionist regime's attacks on Resistance groups' positions is that these groups are not indifferent about these attacks anymore, and given the recent remarks by Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah secretary general, "the rules of the game in the region have changed and we will react properly to any attack."

Netanyahu appears to be in the midst of many crises that have forced him to try hard to gain a reputation for himself and the Likud party. Netanyahu's inability in forming a new cabinet due to internal disputes with his opponents, Yisrael Beiteinu party leader Avigdor Lieberman and Blue-White coalition leader Benny

Gantz, along with extensive accusation of corruption against him and his wife Sarah Netanyahu for bribery and use of government facilities coupled with the Resistance groups' solid response to the Israeli aggressions that has spread to the occupied territories, as well as increasing dissatisfaction of settlers due to lack of security altogether led to an escalation of Tel Aviv's military attacks against the Resistance positions in the region.

The Zionist regime should know that the Resistance groups from Syria to Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq can launch thousands of missiles and rockets at any moment at the occupied territories and Tel Aviv, and the Zionist leaders, given that they are under siege, have to reconsider their calculation and plan for military attacks against the position of these groups, especially when Hassan Nasrallah said that the rules of the game have changed in the region and they will respond properly to any aggression. So, Tel Aviv should not make the Resistance groups to do so, because it will not end well for the Zionists.

'With or without Bolton' that is not the question

➔ When it comes to foreign policy issues, absence of Bolton, a man of hawkish impulses and a fan of military intervention, in the White House, as some expect, could be Trump's green light for a holding talks with old adversaries to release global tensions besides taking a less tough stance towards them.



About Iran, Bolton, is said to have different opinions from Trump and Pompeo. 'He believed in 'Regime Change' and military attack to the Islamic country and the US without him would be a more flexible one towards Iran,' some expected naively.

Iranian officials have announced that there is no room for talks between Tehran and Washington with or without Bolton. Calling ouster of Bolton US' 'internal issue', they rejected any idea of a meeting between Trump and Rouhani underscoring that as long as the US's unjust sanctions and economic terrorism are being imposed on Iranian people, there is no possibility of talks and negotiations. 'The procedural changes in the US ruling body are not going to affect Iran's perception of the US anti-Iran actions and policies,' Iranian officials reiterate.

Any optimism about Washington on possible changes in its policy toward Iran after Bolton was killed off when the US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Thursday that the US is still pursuing its campaign of "maximum pressure" against Iran, even after Trump parted ways with his hard-line national security adviser because the White House believes in it as a practical tool against the Islamic Republic.

Sanctions against Iran have been effective and could help pressure Iran and its leaders to negotiate with Trump, Mnuchin added.

Another proof for the US' continuing tough stance towards Iran was provided when Trump admitted on Thursday that Bolton was not of very difference from him. "Frankly, he wanted to do things not necessarily tougher than me," later adding that Bolton "wasn't in line with what we were doing, and actually, in some cases, he thought it was too tough what we were doing."

In an interview with Mehr news agency, Mohammad Marandi, a professor at University of Tehran, shed light on the issue.

■ How can Trump's decision about Bolton be translated? regarding US foreign policies in general and about Iran in particular.

A: Obviously, trump does not like rivals that is why that is so far, Pompeo, who is extremely obedient has had a better fate than that of Bolton. But I do not think that is going to have any impact on the policy of the US towards Iran. The only way for a major change to take place for the US is to recognize its obligations and abide by them within the framework of the JCPOA.

■ Is it a green light for holding talks with Iran?

A: Definitely, not! The mere way for the US is to end its maximum pressure campaign, its economic terrorism and warfare against Iranian women and children and to compensate for the damages done. Only after the sanctions are fully lifted and the nuclear deal is fully implemented for a period of time can be contemplated such a situation.

■ The US is continuing its maximum pressure, while Trump is open for negotiations. What is your idea about that?

A: Well, that is exactly the problem. The US wants to be able to violate its commitments and then get something in return and that would be the most foolish thing for Iran to accept. The US should not be benefitting from hurting people and that would be both appeasement and it would only make things worse because it will encourage the regime in Washington to use the same tactics every time, they do not get what they want at the negotiating table with Iran. And the very fact that we have seen these constant changes in the language of the White House and its different voices and all this confusion in Washington especially the White House is itself a reason why we should not engage with such a regime that is not reliable, is inconsistent, and would use suffering to gain leverage.

■ What will be Iran's stance towards US? Is resistance the only option for the Islamic Republic? The US may take the upper hand persuading Europeans that it has taken a step forward for releasing tensions with Iran but it is Iran who escapes the negotiation table.

A: No, it is not Iran who has left the negotiation table. It is the US who has left the table. The US was at the negotiation table and was a part of P5+1, even under Trump his First Secretary State was negotiating with Iranians so they tore the agreement and left the table, tries to impose their will on other people so that they would not deal with Iran, such as the Europeans. The US is responsible for this situation. Simply removing one person from power like Bolton does not mean anything. It is not a concession. It is nothing. Iran does not even want concessions. Iran wants the US to abide by its commitments and obligations and until it does not so, the US will remain an unreliable regime for Iran. So, nothing has changed. The only thing that has changed is that the world sees more clearly how the US maximum pressure campaign has failed but Iranian resistance will continue until the US backs down and begins to behave reasonably and lawfully and as a normal country.

■ Can we say Iran has had a role in Trump's decision?

A: It is possible to say that Afghanistan, Iran, Venezuela, Yemen and also regarding some other issues, North Korea besides China and Russia had to do with Bolton's downfall but at the end of the day I think Trump wants to be seen as the person in charge and Bolton does not make that easy for Trump.

Also, Bolton is not a person who is obedient to Trump and that has more to do than anything else, he concluded.

In practice, nothing has changed between Iran and the US after Bolton. The US persists in its maximum pressure policy against the Islamic Republic while Iran insists on practicality of 'resistance'. JCPOA, hammered to open gateways of cooperation between Iran and P5+1 after years of hard negotiations, may start to crumble in case its sides withdrew from fulfilling their commitments to it.

‘Big Three’ plus Murray confirmed for inaugural ATP Cup

The ‘Big Three’ of Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic have confirmed they will play in the inaugural ATP Cup in a boost for the nation-based event in the leadup to the Australian Open.

The ATP, governing body of the men’s tour, said every member of the top 10 and 27 of the top 30 had committed to play the \$15 million tournament to be hosted in Brisbane, Perth and Sydney from Jan. 3-12, 2020.

“Having the top players competing in this new global event is critical, and the ATP Cup looks set to kick off the ATP Tour season in a big way in 2020,” ATP boss Chris Kermode said in a statement.

Former world number one Andy Murray, on the comeback trail after having hip surgery, is also confirmed to play for Great Britain with compatriot Kyle Edmund.

Eighteen countries qualified for the tournament after the first round deadline on Friday, with hosts Australia given a wildcard spot.

Another five national teams will be added after the Nov. 13 second entry deadline.

The 24 countries will play in six groups of four for group stage, round-robin play, with the group winners and the two best second-placed finishers across the groups reaching the ATP Cup Finals in Sydney.

Each tie comprises two singles and one doubles match.

Each nation is allowed up to five players, with their qualification to be determined by their world ranking after the November deadline.

(Source: Reuters)

Bulgarian FA slams England boss Southgate over racism concerns

The president of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) Borislav Mihaylov has expressed his indignation and disappointment over comments by England manager Gareth Southgate about the prospect of racism at next month’s Euro 2020 qualifier in Sofia.

Southgate, who plans to consult his players before the Oct. 14 game, said he feared they could face racial abuse in Bulgaria after an away fan allegedly targeted winger Raheem Sterling when the teams met at Wembley last Saturday.

The FA said an individual was ejected from the stadium for “discriminatory abuse” during England’s 4-0 win.

But in a statement on its website on Friday, the BFU said such concerns were “groundless, inappropriate and unnecessary”.

In a letter sent to European soccer’s governing body UEFA and the FA, former Bulgaria goalkeeper Mihaylov said: “We have not received any official information regarding discriminatory language used by a Bulgarian supporter at Wembley Stadium.

“Even if this were the case, however, we believe that generalizations and the creation of needless tension by official members of the English team is absolutely unacceptable and in contradiction with the spirit of mutual respect and fair play, the core values of both UEFA and the BFU.”

England top Group A with a maximum 12 points from four games, while Bulgaria are bottom with two from five matches.

UEFA has ordered the BFU to partially close the Vasil Levski national stadium for England’s visit after supporters were found guilty of racist behavior in matches earlier this year.

Bulgarian supporters made monkey chants at the visiting black players when England last travelled to Sofia in 2011, prompting UEFA to fine the BFU 40,000 euros (£35,468).

(Source: Reuters)

Mane stars as Liverpool come from behind to win

Sadio Mane scored twice and Mohamed Salah also got in on the act as Liverpool recovered from conceding the first goal to beat Newcastle United 3-1 at Anfield.



Newcastle took a shock lead after only seven minutes when Jetro Willems scored a superb goal from just inside the area, firing a rocket into the top corner.

All the pressure then came from Liverpool, and they found an equaliser just before the half hour when Mane scored what was a virtual carbon copy of the Willems goal.

And Mane was at it again five minutes before the break, this time running onto through-ball which goalkeeper Martin Dubravka failed to claim, leaving the Senegal international with the simple task of sidefooting into the empty net.

Any hopes Newcastle had of getting back into the game evaporated in the 72nd minute as Roberto Firmino fed Salah, who walked through the defender before slotting past Dubravka.

(Source: Soccernet)

Milan and Inter reject San Siro sale

Despite the Mayor offering to sell the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza for €70m, it’s reported Inter and Milan still want to build a new arena.

The debate over the next step in the city of Milan continues, as the iconic structure either needs a great deal of refurbishment or will be torn down and replaced by a new stadium.

Mayor of Milan Beppe Sala announced the local authorities were prepared to sell the Stadio Meazza to the two clubs for just €70m – approximately the cost of bringing Romelu Lukaku to Inter from Manchester United.

However, the Corriere della Sera newspaper insists Inter and Milan are determined to keep going with their project to build a completely new venue right next to the old one.

This is largely because it would be impossible to allow the building work if both teams were playing in Serie A and European competition throughout the season.

The vastly reduced capacity if they were to go ahead with rebuilding work would also cost the clubs €100m in revenue over three years.

Instead, the plan remains to construct a new stadium with 60,000 capacity and modern elements, including cladding to reduce the sound pollution to nearby houses by up to 40 per cent.

(Source: Football Italia)

USA coach: Team USA critics are ‘immature, arrogant’



After finishing seventh in the FIBA World Cup with a victory over Poland on Saturday, Team USA coach Gregg Popovich issued a rebuke for those criticizing his team for its worst-ever showing in a major event.

“Some people want to play the blame game. There’s no blame to be placed anywhere,” Popovich said. “They want to play the shame game, like we should be ashamed because we didn’t win a gold medal? That’s a ridiculous attitude. It’s immature, it’s arrogant, and it shows that whoever thinks that doesn’t respect all the other teams in the world and doesn’t respect that these guys did the best they could.”

Team USA played with just nine players in the 87-74 win after Kemba Walker missed the game with a neck injury. Walker said he thinks he will be ready for Boston Celtics training camp at the end of the month. His Celtics teammates Jayson Tatum (ankle) and Marcus Smart (leg injuries) also did not play. Tatum missed six of the eight games in the tournament, Smart missed three.

Much has been made about 31 of the 35 players who started last summer on Team USA’s roster pulling out of playing for the team. Another handful pulled out after being added to the roster. From 2018, when the group was announced as Popovich took over as coach, only Walker, Khris Middleton, Har-

rison Barnes and Myles Turner were in China.

“Their effort was fantastic. They allowed us to coach them,” Popovich said. “You give people credit for what they did, and that’s it. But it’s not a blame and shame game. That’s ridiculous.”

After the team flies home Sunday, the play-

ers and coaches will return to focus on their NBA teams. But the clock is already ticking on USA Basketball. The Tokyo Olympics are in July, and significant changes to the roster are likely.

“This isn’t really the time to even think about that,” Popovich said of the Olympics.

“It’s 10 months away.”

■ **Worst ever World Cup finish for USA**

Defending champions the United States finished seventh in the Basketball World Cup in China, their worst finish in the tournament’s history.

Gregg Popovich’s team beat Poland 87-74 in their final match on Saturday to avoid a third defeat in a row.

Utah Jazz shooting guard Donovan Mitchell managed a double-double of 16 points and 10 assists.

Team USA have failed to win a medal at the World Cup for the first time since 2002.

The back-to-back World Cup holders had not lost in 58 international games - a run stretching back to 2006 - prior to their shock quarter-final defeat by France.

They then lost their subsequent qualification match to Serbia 94-89 to set up Saturday’s classification game in Beijing to take seventh overall, their lowest position since the competition began in 1950.

They have still qualified to defend their Olympic title in Tokyo next year.

Sunday’s final will see Spain, winners in 2006, face Argentina, who last reached the final in 2002 and won the inaugural competition in 1950.

(Source: Staff & Agency)

Real Madrid hang on for win after Benzema brilliance



Karim Benzema scored twice on Saturday in an outstanding performance for Real Madrid against Levante, although his side were left hanging on for a 3-2 win on the day Eden Hazard made his La Liga debut.

The French striker’s goals came just six minutes apart in the first half on a wet afternoon at the Santiago Bernabeu, before Casemiro put Real 3-0 up.

However Levante, who had won their previous two outings, made a fight of it in the second half as they pulled goals back through Borja Mayoral and Gonzalo Melero.

While the manner of their victory was not as convincing as coach Zinedine Zidane might have wished, it was a welcome return to winning ways for Real after they had drawn their previous two games.

Hazard also came off the bench for the final half-hour to make his first appearance in La Liga after a thigh injury had interrupted the start of his Real career following his 100 million-euro (\$110 million) move from Chelsea.

The Belgian could now start for Real when they go to Paris Saint-Germain for their opening Champions League game on Wednesday.

Gareth Bale will also be available for that match after suspension kept him out here, but Sergio Ramos will be unable to play against PSG because of a European ban.

Zidane was also without the injured Luka Modric here. However, as well as Hazard,

fellow summer signing Eder Militao came off the bench in the second half and the former Porto defender could start in Paris in place of Ramos.

Real would have won by a greater margin here had it not been for some inspired goalkeeping from Aitor Fernandez, who produced a stunning one-handed stop to keep out a Benzema shot from the edge of the area midway through the first half.

However, the hosts went ahead shortly after that when Dani Carvajal held up a cross from the right for Benzema to bullet home a header from the edge of the six-yard area.

The Frenchman struck again in the 31st minute, with James Rodriguez pouncing when Sergio Postigo headed the ball down into his path, and teeing up Benzema to score his fourth of the campaign.

Benzema was also involved in the build-up to the third goal five minutes before the interval, which concluded with Vinicius Junior squaring for Casemiro to apply the finish.

Levante pulled one back in the 49th minute as Carlos Clerc crossed from the left to the near post where Mayoral -- on loan from Real -- converted.

Benzema then curled a shot against the post, while Vinicius had a goal disallowed for offside and Hazard tested Fernandez, but it was Levante who scored again.

(Source: Mirror)

Correa still in ICU, has ‘improved slightly’ - family statement



The family of American driver Juan Manuel Correa, who was seriously injured in the F2 crash which claimed the life of Anthoine Hubert, say he is showing small signs of improvement but remains in intensive care.

Correa collided head-on with Hubert during an F2 race at Spa-Francorchamps on August 31. Hubert was pronounced dead several hours later, while Correa was sent to a Liege hospital for surgery on leg fractures and a minor spinal injury.

He was transferred to London last week, where he was placed in an induced coma. The family’s last statement stated that complications had arisen and that Correa had fallen into a state of Acute Respiratory Failure, a injury considered common in high-impact incidents.

The family has released a further update on Correa’s condition.

The statement said: “Our son, Juan Manuel, remains in the Intensive Care Unit at a hospital in London, England with my wife and I at his side. We have good days and bad days as well as long nights and short nights but with the support of the motorsports community, our friends, family, country and fans, we continue to pray for Juan Manuel.

“Juan Manuel remains in a state of induced coma with paralysis in order for his lungs to get as much rest as possible. Continuing to be assisted by an ECMO machine many of the key vital indicators

have improved slightly while others have deteriorated very little. We have been reminded by the doctors that as long as Juan Manuel continues in an upward trend of improvement, even if very little, it is all that we can ask for at the moment. Infections are under control and respiratory indicators remain stable and all vital signs continue to remain consistent and stable.

“We believe in our son’s strength and determination, we see the minor improvement as an indication of him starting to turn the tide in his favor, we just need him to do it a little quicker. Doctors continue to monitor and change the bandages when necessary and confirm that the fractures are multiple and severe. Additional surgeries will be required once Juan Manuel’s lungs improve to a state that it is safe for doctors to proceed.

“We would like to thank each and every person that has called, text, sent emails and reached out on social media. We have received and read or continue to read and show all the messages to Juan Manuel. Your messages help him to fight and never give up. This will be the biggest single motivator for Juan Manuel when he regains consciousness. We invite fans and friends to continue to send supportive messages via social media. Again, thank you for your support.”

(Source: ESPN)

Michael Owen says father was driving force and reveals son’s blindness

Former European player of the year Michael Owen says he owes his success to his father, who insisted he was given steak for dinner as a child while his four siblings made do with baked beans on toast.

The 39-year-old former Liverpool and England striker told The Times he even climbed into the boxing ring because his father Terry said he needed to “toughen up”.

Despite this Owen, who won both his bouts, tweeted on Wednesday on his father’s 70th birthday he was “the kindest man I ever met”.

“I was the only one allowed a steak on a Tuesday,” said Owen.

“My dad said, ‘You’re all having beans on toast, Michael’s got to have steak because we need to build him up for when he’s going to be a footballer.’

“I did feel special, definitely. He was planting the seed constantly.”

Owen says Terry, who was also a professional footballer with lower league clubs including Chester with whom he reached the League Cup semi-finals -- struggled to adjust to life after football so devoted as much of his time as possible to his son.

“He got jobs that would be perfect so he could come and watch me, even in a PE session, a poxy cross-country



training run, or playing rugby,” said Owen.

“My dad would be on the other side of the bush watching me. Unbelievable.

“If he wasn’t there I’d still push through the pain barrier, because of my inner will to win, but, Jeez, my dad being there, I can’t have him see me coming second.

“I’d prefer to die than my dad to think I’m second best.”

■ **‘Clinically he’s blind’**

Owen, who won the Ballon D’Or after Liverpool won the UEFA Cup, FA Cup and League Cup in the 2000/01 campaign, admitted he hated boxing but he did not want

to deny his father.

“When my dad said, ‘You’re going boxing, because you need to toughen up’ do you think I liked getting punched in the face?,” said Owen, who is now a successful thoroughbred racehorse breeder.

“I went to boxing for three years. I bloody hated it. I fought in front of 2,000 people in Anglesey and 2,000 people in Deeside.

“It was the most scary thing in the world, knowing I was going to fight. But I knew I was making dad proud.”

Owen, who burst onto the international scene when he scored a solo goal in the 1998 World Cup finals against Argentina, said his son James will never grace a football pitch.

“My son’s got an eye condition,” says Owen, whose eldest daughter Gemma represents Britain at equestrianism.

“I’ve never said this. I don’t want a big headline.

“Clinically, he’s blind. He’s got Stargardt disease, a degeneration of his retina.

“I used to go and watch him and bollock him about his positioning.

“He can’t see the ball until it’s five yards away.

“As much as every father wants their son to play, it is almost a relief to me.”

(Source: AFP)

Iran win two more medals at World Taekwondo Grand Prix

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian taekwondo athletes claimed two more medals at the 2019 World Taekwondo Grand Prix on Saturday.

In the men's -58kg, Armin Hadipour took a silver medal after being defeated by his South Korean rival Jang Jun 22-14 in the final match.

Italian Vito Dell'Aquila and Adrián Vicente from Spain took home bronze medals.

Also, Sajad Mardani claimed a bronze medal at the men's +80kg along with Radik Isaev from Azerbaijan.

Kyo-don from South Korea defeated Russian Vladislav Larin 6-5 in the final match.

Iranian competitor Mirhashem Hosseini had won a gold medal at the men's -68kg in Day 1.

Iran wrapped up the competition with one gold, one silver and one bronze medal. Top competitors are awarded ranking points towards the World Taekwondo world ranking which could help them qualify for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Winners earn 40 points towards the rankings.

The prestigious competition is being held at the Chiba Port Arena, in Chiba, Japan from September 13 to 15.

The WTF World Taekwondo Grand Prix is a taekwondo competition introduced by the World Taekwondo Federation in 2013 to provide a homogeneous system for qualification to the Olympic taekwondo tournament.



Iran too strong for Qatar at Asian Volleyball C'ship

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran swept aside Qatar in straight sets (25-18, 25-15, 25-17) at the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship at the 12,000-seater Azadi Sports Complex here on Saturday.

Iran, who had defeated Sri Lanka 3-0 in their first match, will face Australia on Sunday in Pool A.

The event is a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian volleyball governing body, the Asian Volleyball Federation (AVC).

The tournament is being held from Sept. 13 to 21.



Top eight teams of this tournament will qualify for the 2020 Asian Olympic Qualification Tournament, which will be held in Jiangmen, China from 7 to 12 January 2020, where the winners will qualify to the 2020 men's Olympic volleyball tournament.

Iran are pooled against Australia, Qatar and Sri Lanka in Pool A.

Pool B consists of Japan, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Thailand.

Kazakhstan, China, Oman and India are in Pool C.

South Korea, Indonesia, Kuwait and Pakistan are drawn in Pool D.

Japan set for blockbuster opener



Japan will begin their campaign against host nation Paraguay, while UAE and Oman landed in challenging groups as the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Paraguay 2019 draw was staged on Friday.

The Asian contenders, who qualified after finishing as the top three sides in March's AFC Beach Soccer Championship Thailand 2019, will look to follow in the footsteps of Islamic Republic of Iran, who reached the semi-finals in the previous edition in the Bahamas two years ago.

Having lifted the Asian title six months ago, all eyes will once again be on Japan – and star player Ozu Moreira – when they meet tournament hosts Paraguay on the opening night on November 21, before further Group A matches against USA and Switzerland.

AFC Beach Soccer Championship run-

ners-up UAE's biggest competition in Group C will come in the shape of World Number Three-ranked Russia, but neither Belarus nor Senegal are likely to be easy-beats in a demanding opening challenge for the West Asians.

Oman's draw appears the most difficult of the Asian trio, landing alongside both of the two highest ranked sides in the world, in World Number One and defending champions Brazil and second-ranked Portugal.

Talib Hilal's side, who will be appearing at the Finals for the third time, will also meet Nigeria in Group D.

The FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup group stage concludes on November 26, with the top eight sides to advance to the knockout stage ahead of the final on December 1.

(Source: the-afc)

A Tribute to Ali Daei: Cristiano Ronaldo's Final International Rival

149 games. 109 goals. One gargantuan record, with just one gargantuan rival.

On Tuesday evening, the world, as it is wont to do every couple of weeks, was abuzz with Cristiano Ronaldo GOAT bleating, after the Portuguese forward bagged four goals against Lithuania, taking his international tally to 93.

But this time though, it wasn't just GOATs that were profiting from Ronaldo's achievements with outrageous online proliferation. There was another entity, altogether more human, that was plastered across the tweets and headlines. That entity was Ali Daei.

And, like his namesake Muhammed, he remains the international GOAT for now.

Like most GOATs, both born (you know, a straight-up goat) and anointed (GOAT), Daei came from humble beginnings. Growing up in Ardabil, Iran, which is close to the Caspian sea and closer still to Azerbaijan, from a young age he was discouraged from playing football by his father during the academic year, forcing his mother into surreptitiously smuggling his kit to him every time he left for school.

This was seemingly not uncommon in the region, considering no one from Ardabil had ever played for the national team.

In spite of these rules and regs, his footballing education stayed very much in the family, with his first club side made up mostly of a variety of brothers, cousins and uncles. A place in the Adabil's All-Stars was earned, before a degree in – wait for it – Metallurgy at Tehran's University of Industrial Studies (since renamed the Sharif University of Technology) curtailed his progress.

However, it wasn't long before the wielding gave way to more wizardry on the pitch, and a flurry of goals for Second Division side Taxirini – 14 in 20, to be exact, at least according to Wikipedia... – announced his name to the Iranian football stage.

A move to rivals Bank Tejarat was

earned, where he notched 49 in 75 across four years, in the third of which his fateful call up to the national side occurred. And this is where the story really begins.

Sure, we could go on talking about his journey from the depths of Iranian football to the heights (Bayern Munich) and the mediocrities (Hertha Berlin) of the Bundesliga, but those somewhat inauspicious stints aren't why we remember Daei, and they certainly aren't why he's constantly compared to Cristiano Ronaldo.

Yes, he became the first Asian player to play in the Champions League at Bayern, but it's his goaltastic stint with the Team Melli (which means national team in Iranian, making it the greatest international nickname of all time) that cements his legacy in the culture writ large.

13 years. 149 games. 109 goals.

Such a record is, frankly, staggering, and it certainly came at a cost to his club career, with domestic seasons frequently interrupted by international fare.

But that was a price that, clearly, Daei was more than willing to pay, and one that now seems like a veritable bargain. Because, at the risk of instantly saying 'clearly' again, Ali was not a better footballer than Cristiano Ronaldo. According to Ottmar Hitzfeld, he was not even a better player than Alexander Zickler.

He was a bit ungainly, a bit awkward, stuck in a purgatory somewhere between a target man and a poacher. Indeed, it is rare to see an Ali Daei goal that you could honestly label a 'banger'. Sure, he was solid – as his metallic studies would suggest – and sometimes he hit the ball quite hard, but more often than not they stayed on the ground, and there was usually a trickling quality to their journeys to the net.

In fact, when there wasn't, it was probably because it was a header.

This is not to decry the great man. This is to contextualize his achievements. To say, once again with hopeful clarity, that



he was not a generational footballer. Yet he remains the benchmark for the greatest footballers in the world, and comfortably at that.

And, while it's probably unfair to condense that international output into three moments – three crowning achievements – we're going to do it anyway, because your time is valuable, and there's only so much Daei content to go off.

Okay, maybe four.

The first came at the 1998 World Cup – Iran's first since 1978, and only the second in their entire history – when, after Daei's nine goals in 17 qualifiers had earned them their spot in the group stages, they were drawn alongside the USA.

It has since become known as the most politically charged game in World Cup history. This was not hyperbolic, and neither is it to say that Iran's ultimate 2-1 victory – their first ever in the competition – is the greatest result in the country's history.

Bani Yaseen moves to Foolad FC

Foolad FC of the Islamic Republic of confirmed the signing of Jordan international Anas Bani Yaseen from Al Faisaly on Saturday.

The 30-year-old, who has over 100 caps for the Chilvarous, will become the first Jordanian to feature in the Iran Pro League.



Bani Yaseen has spent his career playing for clubs in Jordan, Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the most recent being Al Faisaly, who achieved a domestic double last season after claiming the Jordan Premier League and FA Cup titles.

The centre-back played a crucial role in Jordan's 2-1 win over Chinese Taipei in their opening Asian Qualifiers Group B tie for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Jordan resume their qualifying action against Kuwait on October 10.

Iranian canoeing president meets ACC officials in Tokyo

MNA – President of Iran's Canoe Federation met President and Secretary General of Asian Canoe Confederation (ACC) in Tokyo, Japan.

President of Iranian Canoe Federation Alireza Sohrabian met and held talks with President of Asian Canoe Confederation Shoken Narita on development of cooperation and expansion of canoe in Iran and Asia on the sidelines of Tokyo 2020 Test Events.

During the meeting, Sohrabian talked about the development plans of the Iran's Canoe Federation, as well as the plan to establish a research academy in Iran.

He also emphasized the readiness of Iranian federation to set up a scientific canoe research institute in cooperation with the world federation.

President of Iranian Canoe Federation also met Secretary General of Asian Canoe Confederation Luk Wai-Hung in Tokyo.

Wai-Hung praised the development and growth of Iran's canoeing and emphasized that Asian Canoe Confederation supports all canoeing development programs in Iran.

Tokyo 2020 Test Events have begun in Tokyo and Iran's national team is also set to take part at these events. Overall, 56 test events will be held until May 2020.

The 2020 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and commonly known as Tokyo 2020, is an upcoming international multi-sport event is scheduled to take place from 24 July to 9 August 2020 in Tokyo, Japan, with preliminary events in some sports beginning on 22 July.

Iran beach soccer to meet Ukraine at ANOC opener

Tasnim – Iran beach soccer team will start the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) World Beach Games with a match against Ukraine.

Iran have been drawn in Group C along with Ukraine, Senegal and Paraguay.

Team Melli will face Ukraine on October 11 and play Senegal and Paraguay on October 13 and 14, respectively.

The international beach multi-sport event is being organized by the ANOC and hosted by the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC).

More than 1,300 athletes from around 90 countries are expected to participate in the event.

Men's Beach Soccer

Group A: Brazil Switzerland, UAE and Morocco

Group B: Italy, Spain, Mexico and Solomon Islands

Group C: Iran, Paraguay, Senegal and Ukraine

Group D: Russia, Japan, Uruguay and El Salvador

Iran edge Kyrgyzstan at CAFA U15 Girls Championship

Tasnim – Iran U15 Girls football team edged past Kyrgyzstan 1-0 at the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) championship on Saturday.

Mohaddeseh Zolfi scored the only goal of the match.

Iran, who had defeated Tajikistan 4-0 in its first match, will play host Uzbekistan on Monday in the round-robin tournament.

The competition is being held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from September 13 to 16.

The CAFA Youth Championship is an international football competition in Central Asia for the member nations of the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA).

Hamed Haddadi to rejoin Sichuan Blue Whales

Former NBA center Hamed Haddadi has reached an agreement to return to the Sichuan Blue Whales of the Chinese Basketball Association.

The 7-foot-2, 34-year-old Haddadi averaged a double-double 14.6 points and 10.8 rebounds per game for Iran at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in China.

He has most recently played for Lebanese club Champville.

Haddadi started his playing career in Iranian club Shahin Ahvaz in 1999 and joined Memphis Grizzlies in 2008 and played in the NBA team for five years.

(Source: Sportando)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
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 Tel: 88911433
 » Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
 » Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737

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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A true word is often an excuse for a wrong conclusion.

Imam Ali (AS)

“When the Doves Disappeared”, “The Cenci” on stage in Tehran

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – Finnish writer Sofi Oksanen’s “When the Doves Disappeared” is on stage at the Tehran Independent Theater while another troupe plans to perform French dramatist Antonin Artaud’s “The Cenci” at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater tonight.

Hasti Hosseini is the director of “When the Doves Disappeared”, which is about Roland, a freedom fighter, and his slippery cousin, Edgar, who are fleeing from the Red Army in Communist-ruled, war-ravaged Estonia in 1941.

When the Germans arrive, Roland goes into hiding, but Edgar takes on a new identity as a loyal supporter of the Nazi regime. Roya Mirelmi, Sara Zeinali, Amir-Reza Delavari, Elaheh Afshari, Majid Noruzi and Shahrzad Delafkar are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until October 11.

Amin Sadi is the director of “The Cenci”, which tells the story of the actual late-sixteenth-century Roman nobleman, Francesco Cenci, and his daughter Beatrice.

The play dramatizes the torture that the cruel Count Cenci invoked upon his family, the family’s plot to have him murdered, and the family’s torture and execution by Catholic authorities.

Ali Keshvari, Meisam Jahangiri, Aram Nikbin, Nasim Imani, Mohammad Mohammadzadeh, Nima Mansuri and Ramak Noruzi are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be on stage until October 15.

Fereidun Jeirani’s “Agitation” to screen in Europe

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – “The Agitation” by director Fereidun Jeirani will be screened in Europe during October.

The film will go on screen in several cities in Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and England, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Saturday.

Jeirani along with several actors are scheduled to travel to the counties to promote the romance-thriller film.

Starring Bahram Radan, Mahnaz Afshar and Mehran Ahmadi, the film is about Bardia and Barbod, twin brothers who have always been in competition with each other since childhood.

WHAT’S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ An exhibition of paintings by Mehdi Dashti is underway at Seyhun Gallery.

The exhibit named “Pink Moon” will run until September 25 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



■ Golestan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Maryam Eyvazi.

The exhibit will run until September 18 at the gallery located at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.



■ Paintings by Zohreh Aqebati are currently on display in an exhibition at Sherveh Gallery.

The exhibit titled “The Nature of Kerman” will run until September 18 at the gallery, which can be found at 9 Khojasteh Alley, Daemi St. off Fatemi St.



■ A collection of paintings by Narges Aqai is on display in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery.

The exhibit titled “The season of Water and Color” will be running until September 18 at the gallery located at Shirzad Alley, near Dane-shju Park.



■ Bahareh Zargarani, Maryam Sheikhi, Nafiseh Kazemi, Ghazaleh Jasemi, Ahmad Sharbaati and six other artists are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Shams Gallery.

The exhibition will run until September 19 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Daniali St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

Nine foreign movies to screen at Iran’s Farda festival

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – The 5th Farda Technology and Industry Film and Photography Festival will review a lineup of nine films from overseas filmmakers. Switzerland’s Oscar-nominated director Christian Frei’s documentary “Genesis 2.0” co-directed by Maxim Arbugaev in 2018 will be screened at the festival, which will take place in Tehran from October 7 to 9.

The film is about hunters that are searching for tusks of extinct mammoths on the remote New Siberian Islands in the Arctic Ocean.

The tusk hunters find a surprisingly well-preserved mammoth carcass. Such finds are magnets for high-tech genetic scientists, who want to bring the extinct woolly mammoth back to life à la “Jurassic Park”. Resurrecting the mammoth is the first manifestation of the next great technological revolution in which Man becomes Creator.

Swiss filmmaker Marcel Barelli’s seven-minute animated film “Lucens” about the story of Switzerland’s first and also the last nuclear power plant is among the movies.

“At the Other Side of Technology”, a co-production between Spain and Ghana directed by José Prieto and Leonardo Llamas in 2016, will also be reviewed.

The documentary explores the daily lives of Ahmed, Halid and Ismael, immigrants from the Northern Region in Ghana belonging to the Dagombe minority tribe, who live and work in Agbogbloshie, the final destination of useless electronic devices from developed countries and one of the most polluted places on Earth.

Australian filmmaker Radheya Jegatheva’s short animated movie “Irony” about the relationship between man and technology has also been selected to be screened.

The selection also includes “The Earth Is Humming”, American director Garrett Bradley’s 2018 short documentary that shows Japan’s earthquake preparedness as a way of life and a full-blown industry.

The festival will also screen films from Bosnia, Ukraine and Germany.



“Genesis 2.0”, a documentary from Switzerland co-directed by Christian Frei and Maxim Arbugaev will be reviewed at the 5th Farda Technology and Industry Film and Photography Festival in Tehran during October.

Composer Kayhan Kalhor to collaborate in Dormishian’s new film “We Are Forced”



Kayhan Kalhor performs in the concert “The Silent City” at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on April 15, 2019. (Meh/ Majid Haqdoost)

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – Composer and kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor will be collaborating with filmmaker Reza Dormishian by composing music for his new movie “We Are Forced”.

This is Kalhor’s second cooperation with Dormishian after his acclaimed movie “Lanturi”, a public relations team for the movie announced on Saturday.

A cast of Iran’s A-list actors including Fatemeh Motamed-Arya, Jaleh Olov, Negar Javaherian, Babak Karimi and Homayun Ershadi stars in the film, whose shooting has recently been completed.

No details of the film’s plot have been published so far.

Four-time Grammy Award nominee Kalhor won the Artist Award at the WOMEX Awards in Finland this year.

WOMEX – the World Music Expo – is the most extensive international music meeting in the world and the biggest conference of the global music scene, featuring a trade fair, talks, films and a showcase festival.

He was also one of the two winners of the Isaac Stern Human Spirit Award at the Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition in 2018.

Kalhor is a founding member of the Silk Road Ensemble, a multinational collective of renowned performers and composers from more than 20 countries.

Books from Iran nominated for IBBY Honor List



This combination photo shows the front covers of the Iranian books nominated for the IBBY Honor List.

CULTURE d e s k TEHRAN – Three Iranian books have been nominated in three sections of the Honor List of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), the Children’s Book Council of Iran announced on Saturday.

“The Monster’s Shadow” written by Abbas Jahangirani has been selected for the writing section and “An Umbrella with White Butterflies” written by Farhad Hassanzadeh and illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelu was picked for the illustration section.

A Persian translation of American author Brendan Wenzel’s “They All Saw a Cat” by Keyvan Abidi Ashtiani was nominated in

the translation section.

The selected books will be inscribed on the IBBY Honor List, which is a biennial selection of outstanding, recently published books, and the authors, translators and illustrators of the books will receive honorary diplomas during the 37th IBBY World Congress.

The IBBY World Congress 2020 will be held in Moscow, Russia from September 5 to 7 on the theme “The Great Big World through Children’s Books: National and Foreign”.

The IBBY Honor List is one of the most widespread and effective ways of furthering IBBY’s objective of encouraging international understanding through children’s literature.

Iran’s “Beloved” wins NETPAC Award at Ulju Mountain Film Festival

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – Iranian acclaimed documentary director Yasser Talebi’s “Beloved” has won the NETPAC Award at the 2019 Ulju Mountain Film Festival, the organizers have announced.

The film received the award for “the compelling resonance of time and space, the balanced interplay between nature and humans, the resistant yet warm protagonist and making the camera absent,” the jury wrote in a statement published by the festival.

“Beloved” is about an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder’s existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people.

The documentary has received many awards at several international festivals.

The most recent honor was a special jury award that was bestowed in August to producer Elaheh Nobakht at the 4th Kranjska Gora International Film Festival in Slovenia.

Also in July during the Sole Luna Doc Film Festival in Palermo, Italy, the film received the best photography award and the High School Students Award in the Journey Section.

It was also honored at the 67th Trento Film Festival in May in Italy. The film received a special mention and a UNESCO honorable mention.

In addition, “Beloved” has taken first place among the top five mid-length films selected



A scene from Iranian director Yasser Talebi’s documentary “Beloved”.

by audience votes at the Hot Docs festival in Canada, Toronto in May.

Under the slogan of “The Road Together” the fourth edition of the mountain-themed film festival ran from September 6 to 10 in Ulsan, South Korea.

As the only mountain film festival in Korea, the Ulju Mountain Film Festival started the NETPAC Award in 2018, and this year eleven films from different countries, including South Korea, China, India and Turkey were competing for the award.

The Grand Prize was given to “The River and the Wall” by Ben Masters from the U.S. “Manaslu-Mountain of the Spirit” by Gerald Salmina from Germany received the award for Best Alpinism Film, and “Breath” by Ulises Fierro from Mexico was presented with the award for Best Climbing Film.

Iranian shorts line up for Linz film festival

A R T d e s k TEHRAN – A lineup of 14 Iranian films will go on screen in various sections of the 2nd Linz International Short Film Festival, which will be held in the Austrian city from November 7 to 10.

“The Role” by Farnush Samadi about a woman who accompanies her husband for an audition, “Delay” by Ali Asgari about a man and his two children who are late for their flight, and “Fault Line” by Soheil Amirsharifi about a schoolgirl who tries to hide a mistake she’s made, are among the films.

The lineup also includes “Elephant’s Shadow” by Arman Khansarian, “Reverence” by Sogol Rezvani, “That Night Raining” by Mohammad-Mehdi Baqeri and “The Day of Duty” by Ali Farahani.

“Elephant’s Shadow” tells the story of Leila whose father has only a few days left to live according to his doctors. His only concern is for his daughter’s welfare as he knows how difficult life can be for a divorcee in Tehran. Leila decides to plan a scenario for her dad so that he can die peacefully.

“Reverence” is about Rana who is in love with her co-actor Bahram, and decides to run away from reality on the last night of their play.

“That Night Raining” is about a man whose wife wakes him up at midnight and states that someone is in their home.



A scene from “The Role” by Farnush Samadi.

The festival will also screen “In Between” by Aliyar Rasti about a woman who is under investigation for a crime, “Funfair” by Kaveh Mazaheri about members of a family who risk their lives to earn more money, and “The Woman I Was” by Azadeh Salimian about a pregnant woman who is spending a sleepless night.

“Aorta” by Saeid Zarei and “The Crossing” by Sara Ghafurian will also be screened in the official competition of the festival, while “Beyond the Fence” by Arman Qolipour and “Finish Line” by Saeid Mayahi will go on screen in the documentary section.

The Linz International Short Film Festival aims at supporting young, talented and independent filmmakers and giving them the opportunity to present their creations in a professional setting.