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160 foreign companies to attend Iran Agrofood 2019

TEHRAN — The 26th International Exhibition of Food, Food Technology and Agriculture of Iran (Agrofood 2019), due to be held on June 18-21 at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, will be hosting 160 foreign companies, IRIB reported.

Some 760 domestic exhibitors are also

going to participate in this year's edition of the exhibition.

Foreign exhibitors come from 20 countries including Spain, Slovakia, Austria, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Italy, Germany, Brazil, Bulgaria, Turkey, China, Denmark, Russia, Switzerland, Georgia, the Netherlands, India, and Greece. **→4**

Iran to highlight tourist attractions at Erbil fair

TEHRAN — A number of Iranian travel-associated businesses and tour operators will promote travel destinations, medical tourism, Persian handicrafts and indigenous traditions at Erbil Expo 2019.

The expo, which is exclusive for Iran, runs from June 11 to 15 at the Erbil International Fairground.

Some two million Iraqi nationals visited the country during the first seven months of

the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2018), constituting Iran's largest source of tourists. In return, hundreds of thousands of Iranian pilgrims head for the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala each year.

According to Iran's tourism body, people of Iran's neighboring countries were used to visit Iran for pilgrimage, trade and work but nowadays Iraqi and Azerbaijani nationals are mostly pursue medical services.

Qatar says will back any peace plan approved by Palestinians

TEHRAN — Qatar will accept any Middle East peace plan that is acceptable to the Palestinians, Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said, warning that any U.S.-led solution cannot be imposed on Palestinians.

“As far as we see, right now there is a disconnect between the Palestinians and the U.S.,” he told reporters in London. “Our position remains very firm: We are going

to support any plan that the Palestinians are willing to accept.”

White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, who has been trying to put together a peace plan, said in an interview broadcast last week that the Palestinians deserve “self-determination”, but stopped short of backing Palestinian statehood and expressed uncertainty over their ability to govern themselves. **→13**

Kharazmi University centennial celebration

By Hossein Alsanid

Universities all over the world are surely a reflection of the scientific and cultural progress, they are regarded as indicators of the peaceful civil life that consider teaching and learning as a sacred human message.

The university for any society resembles its own spirit, the secret of its youth and it is a road map of progress and freedom as well. The more crowded the universities are, the longer their life and the wider their scope would be, the stronger a generation will emerge and a better and brighter future will be expected.

Guided by this vision let us look at a university that is one hundred years old, not empty years that pass without being noticed or without constituting any achievements. The years are abundant with scientific and social giving. A university where presidents, poets, scientists, and leaders were graduated from who left prominent marks in their communities.

It is Kharazmi University, which still exudes youth and tenderness, on its centenary birthday. Unlike other institutions that erode, get old and eventually die, Kharazmi institution that is built on the basis of humanity and giving cannot be

abolished in hundred years to come.

As a new student, entering the vicinity of this university for the first time, in a new country, that I had never visited before, I felt great concern, though, it was natural for anyone coming to a new world and a new society to have some fear.

Yet all these fears, which formed a black cloud in my head, disappeared completely once I participated in my first class, and replaced by sun of tenderness and attention instead. It was Kharazmi sun with its professors and students. You immediately feel at home and the people around you are family, they get close soon. **→12**

Abe not to be able to achieve any real breakthrough: Italian expert

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Dr. Pastori Gianluca says that Shinzo Abe will not be able to achieve any real breakthrough in tensions between Iran and the U.S.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to travel to Iran on June 12, the first visit by a Japanese prime minister in the past four decades as Tokyo hopes to mediate between Washington and Tehran. Tensions between the U.S. and Iran have worsened since Washington withdrew last year from Joint Comprehensive plan of Action (JCPOA) between

Iran and several world powers, and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran.

In this regard, some experts believe that Japan did not play much role in the diplomatic arena after World War II, and their political relations with other countries were just limited to bilateral relations. Iran should not take Shinzo Abe's visit to Tehran so seriously on the tensions between Iran and the U.S. because there are doubts about Japan's capability to be able to act independently as a mediator after 74 years of having dependent

foreign policy on the U.S.

To shed more light on the issue we reached out to political science associated professor of Milan Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Dr. Pastori Gianluca.

Here is the full text of our interview with him:

■ While President Trump repeatedly asks for talks with Iran, on Friday again in a hostile and trust killing act his administration slapped new sanctions against Iran's petrochemical section. How do you interpret his contradictory measures? **→7**

Germany must respond to its approach

By Hanif Ghaffari

TEHRAN — The German foreign minister's visit to Iran can be analyzed from a variety of dimensions. Undoubtedly, Berlin as one of the three European countries signing the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran is accused of being passive to the

United States and even accepting the unacceptable demands of the government of Donald Trump in Washington.

Undoubtedly, under such circumstances, Germany can not play the role of an independent actor in the world of diplomacy! Unfortunately,

Germany, along with Britain and France, held talks with the Trump government in 2017 on a nuclear ambitions deal with Iran. Berlin has agreed to change nuclear deal with Iran! The point is that German Chancellor Angela Merkel, like Donald Trump, is an unreliable politician. **→13**



PERSPECTIVE

Mohammad Mehdi Tehrani
President of the Islamic Azad University

Post-JCPOA talks and the Deal of Century: Two sides of the same coin

One year ago, U.S. abandoned its nuclear deal with Iran and imposed a wide range of sanctions on Iran. Furthermore, over the last year, U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Economic War Room, created by Donald Trump's administration, adopted a series of strategies to impede Iran from exporting oil and transferring foreign exchange to other countries.

Amid all these pressures from U.S., Europe could not, or did not want to, find a way to deal with U.S. who had chosen to violate its nuclear deal with Iran and Iran was left alone with a useless deal.

Following our country's strategies that were based on waiting and not taking any immediate action, on the anniversary of America's withdrawal from the deal, U.S. revealed the second part of its scenario: offering Iran to negotiate for signing a new agreement and suggesting the Deal of the Century that would guarantee the safety of the Zionist regime.

We still remember that Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State during the administration of George W. Bush, called for redrawing the Middle East map by “the Greater Middle East Project”. The idea of removing borders in Middle East was put forward again during Obama's presidency; this time by offering a Islamic State for Iraq and Sham (ISIS). This project, eventually, led to the creation of ISIS, in a bid to protect the Zionist Regime.

It seems that both democrat and republican governments have been adopting the same foreign policy and it proves that the main policy of these both American parties are the same.

After ISIS gained the control of more than 80% of Syria and many parts in Iraq, it seemed that U.S. project was going to be successful, but the resistance army rose just in time to thwart their plans.

The next part of this scenario was to destroy the ideology of resistance in the region, and that could not happen unless they could weaken the Islamic Iran, so that the Deal of the Century would be born. **→7**



ARTICLE

Masoud Hossein
Head of the Sport Desk of the TehranTimes

Marc Wilmots's Iran to face acid test against S. Korea

Iran national football team will face a major test of their credentials with the visit of South Korea in a friendly match on Tuesday.

Team Melli defeated Syria 5-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Thursday in Marc Wilmots's first match in charge.

Now the Persians will lock horns with Asian powerhouse South Korea at the Seoul World Cup Stadium on Tuesday.

The Taegeuk Warriors defeated Australia 1-0 in Busan on Friday and now are motivated to take on Iran on Tuesday.

Iran, the Asian first-ranked football team, have started the new era under coaching of the Belgium.

Wilmots has previously showed he is interested in working with the young players.

He had fielded Adnan Januzaj, Divock Origi, Kevin De Bruyne, Thomas Meunier, Yannick Ferreira Carrasco and Thibaut Courtois at the UEFA Euro 2016, where the Red Devils were stunned by Wales in quarterfinals.

As has always tended to be the case, the new coaches are going to make changes in their new teams and Wilmots is going to change the generation in Iran.

The ex-Belgium coach, who replaced Carlos Queiroz in Team Melli in late May, needs more time to know his players.

In the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifications which begins in September, Wilmots will definitely find the best lineup and friendly matches with Syria and South Korea will be helpful for the coaching staff.

Iran will play South Korea without Majid Hosseini, who suffered a hand injury in the match against Syria on Thursday.

Paulo Bento's team will be a good test for Iran because they haven't beaten the Middle East powerhouse since January 2011 and are hungry to get revenge on Team Melli.

South Korea, ranked 37th, have nine wins, eight draws and 13 losses against the 21st-ranked Iran. They suffered four consecutive 1-0 losses before taking a scoreless draw in a World Cup qualifying match in August 2017.

Iran will play South Korea at Seoul World Cup Stadium in the nation's capital at 8 p.m. local time Tuesday.



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HEADLINE: Handicrafts exports up 3%, hit \$289 million

TEHRAN — Iran's handicrafts exports reached \$289 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20), showing three percent growth year on year, Pouya Mahmoudian, the deputy director of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, said on Monday, CHTN reported.

The World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR) has designated seven Iranian cities and villages as world crafts hubs, which are planned to be new destinations for sight-seeing tours, the official said, addressing a press conference held on the occasion of the World Handicrafts Day. **→10**

Tehran says placed no order for Russian S400

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The Foreign Minsitry said on Monday that Iran has not placed any order to buy the S-400 air defense system from Russia.

“Iranian experts have devised one system that is nothing short of the S-400 missile system,” ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi told a press conference.

■ ‘We have lost our hope of INSTEX’

Regarding the European Union’s promises to save the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the spokesman said Tehran has lost any hope of seeing the EU’s long-awaited trade mechanism known as INSTEX to become operational.

“We no longer have any hope to see the INSTEX [Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchanges] in action... If the mechanism was ever going to work, it would have done so by now,” he insisted.

European signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal, including Germany, claim they are trying to keep the accord alive by launching the long-awaited INSTEX to help Iran reap some benefits from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

However, Iran says the Europeans have not done enough to save the nuclear deal, and the U.S. violation of the JCPOA has barred Tehran from benefiting from the economic dividends of the JCPOA.

“We expected the Europeans to fulfill their obligations to the JCPOA after the U.S. withdrawal from the pact,” Mousavi said, adding that “however, they either were not able to, or did not want to do so.”

■ ‘No practical move by Europe to save JCPOA’

“We have not seen any practical move by the Europeans in the past days [since the 60-day ultimatum], and we hope that they will take effective actions in the remaining days otherwise we will take the second step [regarding the JCPOA commitments],” he stressed.

Running out of patience with the EU’s inaction in the face of the growing U.S. pressure, Iran reduced its commitments under the deal on May 8, and warned the EU that it would consider leaving the accord if its demands were not met.

Elsewhere, Mousavi referred to German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas’s trip to Tehran, saying that the visit was focused on the JCPOA.

“The JCPOA is the base of our talks, and we will not discuss anything beyond that.”

“We strongly believe that the important matter here is the commitment of all the parties to the deal.”

Sources have said Maas coordinated his trip with France and Britain, and also discussed it with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, creating the idea that he would seek to use the trip for pressuring Tehran to limit its missile defense program.

Iran stresses that its missile and military capabilities are first and foremost defensive and are non-negotiable.

In Abu Dhabi on Sunday, the German foreign minister said that, in his talks, he would stress his country’s concerns about Iran’s missile program and its influence in Syria and Yemen.

Regarding the normalization of Iran-Europe ties, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said that Tehran expected Europeans to honor their commitments regardless of what they didn’t want to do or those they weren’t able to do.

“It is very sad that in today’s civilized world, one country passes extraterritorial laws not to let other countries have free trade with each other,” Mousavi said.

“It is sad that we see unilateralism in the 21st century.”

Answering a question about Iran’s 60-day deadline to Europe, he said, “We have not seen any special move that could motivate Iran. We hope to see Europe to take a tangible practical measure in the remaining days. If not, Iran will take the other steps with strong determination. And they know it.”

Asked whether the EU hesitation means that they intend to add Iran’s missile program to the JCPOA, he said, “We don’t read minds but have given an answer to what the European Union has declared. The JCPOA is the base and we don’t think about anything beyond that.”

“Iran expects nothing but the JCPOA – not a word more or a word less,” he reiterated.

Japanese analyst calls on Abe to invite Rouhani to G20 summit: Yomiuri Shimbun

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – A Japanese analyst has proposed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe invite Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to the G20 summit, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, according to IRNA.

This action can be taken to reduce “tension” in the Middle East region and creating a calmer atmosphere for “dialogue” between Iran and the U.S., IRNA quoted the newspaper as reporting.

The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union.

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States are members of the group.

The next summit of the G20 is scheduled to be held on June 28, 29 in Osaka, Japan.

Abe will arrive in Tehran on Wednesday on a three-day visit. The visit will be the first by an incumbent Japanese prime minister to Iran since 1978.

Nizar Zakka being delivered to Lebanon: source

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – A Iranian news outlet on Monday reported that Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese-American national who had been imprisoned in Iran since 2015 on charges of



working with the U.S. intelligence service, was to be freed and handed over to Lebanon later the day.

Quoting an unnamed source, the Fars news agency said the “American-Lebanese spy” was expected to be delivered to Lebanon “only based on request and mediation by Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah”.

On the other end of the line, a source familiar with the case had told the Beirut-based Daily Star on Saturday that Zakka would arrive in Beirut within 48 hours.

The Lebanese Foreign Ministry announced earlier last week that Iran had agreed to free Zakka after President Michel Aoun and Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil requested for his release as a good-will gesture in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Zakka was arrested during a trip to Iran in 2015 on charge of having “deep links” to U.S. intelligence services.

Zarif: Initiator of war won’t be able to end it

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that anyone who starts a war against Iran will not be the one who ends it.

During a joint press conference with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in Tehran, Zarif insisted on Tehran’s long-held position that Iran has not initiated and will not initiate a war with a country.

He noted that no one can take a military action against the Iranian people without receiving a “firm response”.

Zarif also said that the “economic war” against Iran should be stopped as the only way to reduce tension in the region.

“The only way to reduce tension is stopping the economic war. One cannot expect that those who have launched economic war and those who support it can be safe when there is an economic war against the Iranian ordinary people,” the chief diplomat remarked.

Zarif added, “This war is very dangerous for the region and the world. The United States’ actions after quitting the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal] have targeted the Iranian people who were supposed to enjoy the benefits of this deal more than anyone else.”

He noted that Iran has remained committed to its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and this has been confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency for 15 times.

He added Iran is committed to its obligations and defends the people’s rights.

Zarif told ABC News in an interview published on June 2 that “there will be consequences” if the U.S. keeps up its economic pressure campaign against Iran’s people.

Zarif labeled the new U.S. sanctions as



“economic terrorism” that “targets ordinary Iranian people” because even though food and medicine are exempted from the sanctions, the financial transactions associated with them are not.

■ ‘Iran’s actions are within JCPOA framework’

Zarif also said that Iran’s action by suspending some aspects of its commitments are within the framework of the JCPOA.

However, Zarif suggested that Iran is ready to the previous stage if the remaining members to the JCPOA take action to shield Iran from the U.S. sanctions.

“We are ready to stop these actions based

on practical actions by the JCPOA partners.”

Zarif added that Iran cooperates with Germany and other parties to salvage the deal.

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to protect it from the sanctions’ effects.

■ ‘Iran wants implementation of JCPOA’

Zarif also said that his country actually wants the JCPOA to remain in effect.

Commenting on offers that Iran sit down

Zarif says: “The only way to reduce tension is stopping the economic war. One cannot expect that those who have launched economic war and those who support it can be safe when there is an economic war against the Iranian ordinary people.”

Ilan Berman: Trump still dreaming of enlivening deal with Russia on Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Ilan Berman, the vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council, says that U.S. President Donald Trump is returning to his past dream of reaching a deal with Moscow over Iran.

The following is a summary of Berman’s recently published opinion:

During its first half-year in office, the Trump administration actively flirted with the idea that it might be possible, under the proper conditions, to “flip” the government of Russian President Vladimir Putin and get it to support American attempts to pressure Tehran. That effort, however, fizzled over time, derailed by the longstanding nature of the strategic ties between Moscow and

Tehran, as well as by their close joint military cooperation in support of Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

Today, however, the idea seems to be resurfacing once more.

The White House appears to believe that – now that the war in Syria is effectively over – Moscow might be more inclined to help Washington curtail Iran’s regional influence and roll back its strategic footprint in Syria and elsewhere. Administration officials are reportedly planning to reopen the conversation during trilateral meetings in Israel later this month, where they will use discussions over Syria to talk about the larger Russo-Iranian relationship.

But getting to “yes” with Putin over Rus-

so-Iranian ties is likely to be exceedingly difficult. Moscow and Tehran, after all, have been strategic partners for decades. Political ties between the two date back to the Soviet era, and have been reinforced in the last quarter-century by a burgeoning defense-industrial relationship, a shared interest in curbing Sunni radicalism in the Middle East and Central Asia, and joint efforts to oppose America’s perceived hegemony on the world stage. These bonds will be exceedingly difficult to break, notwithstanding any tactical disagreements currently on display in Syria.

Even so, it’s apparent that Russia – now more deeply involved in the Middle East than at any time since the height of the Cold War – is making greater efforts to balance its his-



toric strategic partnership with Iran with its expanding political, economic and strategic contacts with other regional states.

First Announcement



Iran Alumina

ONE STAGE TENDER INTERNATIONAL CALL

FOR **PURCHASE OF 1000 MT CRUSHED BATH**

TENDER No: 98/161

DATE.: June/9/2019

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Abe's Tehran visit primarily aimed to boost ties: top MPs

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said the upcoming visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Tehran is primarily aimed at boosting bilateral relations.

"The trip is aimed to boost bilateral relations. However, Japan has brought up the topic of mediation but has not offered any plan for mediating between Iran and the U.S.," Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said on Monday, ISNA reported.

A member of the committee also made similar remarks, saying Abe's trip is not aimed at playing a mediatory role between Iran and the United States.

"The aim of the visit is to expand bilateral relations," Alaeddin Boroujerdi told Mehr news agency on Monday. "In the years that followed the [Islamic] Revolution, Iran and Japan have enjoyed good relations."

There is a speculation that the Japanese premier's visit to Tehran is aimed at playing a mediatory role between Iran and the U.S., Boroujerdi said. "These are merely speculations and are not true."

The senior MP, however, did not rule out that the topic would be brought up in Abe's



Boroujerdi



Falahatpisheh

meetings in Tehran.

He also referred to the telephone conversation between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Japanese PM ahead of Abe's visit to Tehran, saying Japan is an independent country and will not change its policies after a phone conversation with the

Zionist regime.

According to Boroujerdi, Israel is afraid of Japan's cooperation with Iran and therefore is making efforts to undermine this development.

Netanyahu thinks that he can deter the Japanese PM from cooperating with Iran by mentioning out his regime's redlines in the

region, he stated.

Boroujerdi, a veteran lawmaker, said all U.S. pressures against the Islamic Republic are aimed at changing Tehran's regional policies and undermining its missile power, adding some of the measures of the Trump administration have been adopted due to pressures from the Zionists.

Russia, China and India have continued their cooperation with Iran despite U.S. pressures and the Israeli regime is afraid that Japan would join them, said Boroujerdi, who led the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee for many years.

"And more than that, the Zionists are afraid that these tensions would ultimately lead to the normalization of ties between Iran and U.S.; but of course this is not possible because we will not talk and interact with them (Americans) due to their violation of international rules."

Abe will visit Tehran on June 12-14. The visit will be the first by an incumbent Japanese prime minister since 1978.

Abe plans to meet with President Hassan Rouhani on June 12 and Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on June 13.

Europe might give up on saving JCPOA, ex-envoy says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's former ambassador to Norway has warned that Europe might give up on saving the 2015 nuclear pact and the financial mechanism of Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), which was established to do business with Iran.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas was in Tehran on Monday for talks on ways to keep the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA in English or Barjam in Persian, alive.

"It is possible that Europe would no more attach any significance to [saving] Barjam," Mehr on Monday quoted Abdolreza Faraji-Rad as saying.

Faraji-Rad expressed doubt about the future of Iran-Europe

relations, especially due to the growth of far-right groups in European countries manifested in the latest European Parliament elections.

He further said the person who will succeed European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini might not share her insistence on cooperating with Iran and salvaging the JCPOA.

Also the person who will succeed British Prime Minister Theresa May can be more of a hardliner compared to May, which could create a gap within Europe, Faraji-Rad remarked.

"This could mean that Europe might no longer place any importance to Barjam," he said, underlining that such facts

must be taken into careful consideration.

The JCPOA was signed between Iran and six international mediators (the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Russia, the United States, and France) in July 2015. Under the deal, Iran undertook to curb its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of the sanctions imposed previously by the United Nations Security Council, the European Union and the United States over its nuclear program.

On May 8, 2018, the United States unilaterally withdrew from the deal despite worldwide objections and followed the move with a "maximum pressure" policy against the Islamic Republic.

Party chief calls for expulsion of French envoy over Macron remarks



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The secretary-general of the Islamic Coalition Party has asked Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to expel France's ambassador to Tehran over President Macron's "meddlesome remarks".

"France has always played the bad cop and is still playing that role," Asadollah Badamchian said, Mehr reported.

Pointing to a recent meeting between the leaders of the U.S. and France, Badamchian said echoing of Trump's rhetoric by Macron should not be considered acceptable.

In their meeting in France on Thursday, Trump and Macron called for efforts to

keep Tehran from what they called getting nuclear weapons.

"I don't think we have differences over Iran... I don't think that the president wants to see nuclear weapons and neither do I," Trump told reporters ahead of a meeting with Macron in Caen.

Macron also said Paris and Washington shared the same objective on Iran, saying they sought to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, reduce Iran's ballistic activity, contain Iran's regional activity and establish peace in the region.

"All the other debates are about technicalities," the French leader said, calling for fresh talks to extend the terms of the JCPOA and to achieve those goals.

Zarif special aide visits Moscow for regional consultation



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Asghar Khaji, who acts as senior assistant to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif for political affairs, visited Moscow on Monday for talks on regional issues with Russian officials, IRNA reported.

Khaji was slated to hold talks with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin and President Vladimir Putin's special envoy for Middle East affairs Mikhail Bogdanov.

Both sides were supposed to review important regional developments, especially those related to Syria and Yemen.

Recently, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow backs Iran's proposal for a non-aggression pact with

Persian Gulf Arab states.

During his visit to Iraq on May 25-26, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif offered a proposal to leaders of the Persian Gulf states to sign the pact as a prelude to de-escalation of conflicts in the Persian Gulf region.

Lavrov said that the initiative was discussed with the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Israeli regime and the United States have been trying hard to demonize Iran in the eyes of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Iran has amicable relationship with Oman, Qatar and Kuwait, three members of the regional Arab bloc.

Culture of resistance poses challenge to U.S.: general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The United States has been challenged with the power of the Islamic Revolution and the "culture of resistance" in the region, a top military aide to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday.

Speaking in a seminar in Qom, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi said Iran's enemies have been trying to

undermine Islamic and revolutionary values through changing the lifestyle and culture of Iranian people, Mehr reported.

Nevertheless, the Islamic Revolution has turned into a major cultural player in the world, he added.

The U.S. and Europe recognize the "Islamic civilization" as their greatest challenge, Rahim Safavi remarked.

He also said power is shifting from the West to the East as states such as India and Russia are becoming more powerful.

Also a cultural pole with the centrality of the Islamic Revolution led by its leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is being formed in the world, said Rahim Safavi, the former commander of the IRGC.

Foreign officials' trips to Tehran shows Iran's high status, MP says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Majlis says visits by European and non-European officials to Iran shows the dynamic nature of Iran's diplomacy and the high status of the Islamic Republic.

Hossein Naqavi Hosseini made the remarks while making a reference to German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas's arrival in Tehran on Sunday night, ISNA reported.

"We welcome these trips," Naqavi Hosseini said, adding that the committee has advised Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to boost Iran's relations with other countries through such visits.

However, he continued, such trips should not lead to attempts by the other sides to mediate between Tehran and Washington.

"Our strategy is clear. We won't hold talks and we won't accept mediation," the MP added.

Maas, who arrived in Tehran on Sunday night, held talks on Monday with Foreign Minister Zarif and President Hassan Rouhani on ways to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and easing up the tension between Iran and the United States.

Speaking in a press conference with Zarif on Monday, Maas said Germany supports efforts to preserve the JCPOA and recognizes Iran's right to enjoy benefits of the deal.



Iran to unveil phase II of stable isotopes on June 22



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — An official with Iran's Atomic Energy Origination (IAEO) has said the second phase of the stable isotopes project in the Fordow facility will be unveiled on June 22.

Asghar Zare'an made the remarks on the sideline of an exhibition on Iran's nuclear achievements in Kordestan on Sunday.

Zare'an expressed the hope that the base would be finished and inaugurated in April 2020, Mehr reported.

He added that the first phase of the project has been finalized with the cooperation of Russia.

Iran is the 12th country that possesses this technology which has various medical and agricultural applications, he explained.

Stable isotopes are non-radioactive forms of atoms. Although they do not emit radiation, their unique properties enable them to be used in a broad variety of applications, including water and soil management, environmental studies, nutrition assessment studies, and forensics.

Qatari foreign minister urges de-escalation in U.S.-Iran dispute

(Aljazeera) — Qatar and other countries have been talking to both Iran and the United States about de-escalation, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has said, urging both sides to meet and find a compromise.

"We believe that at one point there should an engagement; it cannot last forever like this," he told reporters in London on Sunday. "Since they are not willing to engage in further escalation, they should come up with ideas that open the doors."

Sheikh Mohammed said several countries including Qatar, Oman, Iraq and Japan had been urging de-escalation with the two sides.

"All these countries are concerned what escalation could lead to," he said. "There were attempts by Qatar and by other countries in the region to de-escalate the situation: we have been speaking to the U.S. and we have been talking to the Iranians as well."

"What we are trying to do is really to bridge the gap and create a conversation between the two parties as escalation is not going to benefit anyone in the region," he said.

Tensions have risen between Iran and the U.S. in recent weeks after Washington intensified its economic sanctions on Iran after pulling out of a big-power nuclear deal, and sending forces to the Middle East in a show of force to counter what U.S. officials called Iranian threats to U.S. troops and interests.

'Reform parliament' will not be formed



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The plans to form a so-called "reform parliament" have been canceled, according to a member of the Central Council of the Servants of Construction Party.

Speaking to Mehr in an interview published on Monday, Yadollah Tahernejad explained that the reform parliament is another name for the high council of reformists whose formation was proposed among the Construction Party members.

"But there were some modifications to the plans in the [party's] political committee. Due to these modifications the reform parliament has been put off schedule for now and it will not be making it to the 11th Majlis elections," Tahernejad said.

Official lauds launch of Tehran-Muscat direct flights

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chairman of Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce has hailed the inauguration of a direct flight between Tehran and Muscat, saying it will pave the way for expansion of economic ties between the two countries.

The inaugural flight between Tehran and Muscat was operated on Sunday evening by the Omani airline Salamair, Mohsen Zarrabi said, Tasnim reported on Monday.

"This flight route is cost effective for tourists and economic activists in both countries," he said, adding that trips between Tehran and Muscat would be cheaper than the past.

He further said the Omani airline would operate three flights a week, adding that the launch of this flight can enhance the economic interactions between Iran and Oman.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	230267.9
IFX	2922.8

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,517 rials
GBP	53,426 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.20/b
WTI	\$54.10/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.88/b
Gold	\$1,328.15/oz
Silver	\$14.77oz
Platinum	\$802.55/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

160 foreign companies to attend Iran Agrofood 2019

1 → The exposition is the largest and the most famous international food fair in the Middle East. So, since its first edition in 1994, many participating countries including Italy, Germany, Brazil, Turkey, China, Russia, and India are holding pavilions at the exhibition.

The exhibition is going to be held in three separate sections namely, Iran Food which covers food products and related industries, Iran Tech which pertains to machinery and technological areas of the food industry and finally Iran Agro which deals with areas related to agricultural industry.



According to the organizers, introducing Iran’s capabilities and advancements in the food industry, promoting foreign trade, presenting the latest scientific and industrial achievements in the fields of agriculture and food industry, exchanging knowledge and information between the participants, and creating a platform for direct communication between producers and consumers are some of the most important goals of the event.

Japan’s buoyant growth figures mask weaknesses in economy

Japan’s faster-than-expected growth in the first quarter offers Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s government a figure that backs its view of an economy holding up well for a tax increase while papering over underlying weaknesses.

As per Aljazeera.com, business investment continued to increase in the first three months of the year despite crackling trade tensions, helping nudge up growth from initial estimates. But outside the growing capital spending the expansion was based almost entirely on the technical factor of falling imports outpacing export declines.

Revised figures showed gross domestic product expanded at an annualized pace of 2.2% in the first three months, a fraction higher than an initial estimate, and an acceleration from a 1.8% gain in the fourth quarter of last year.

The expansion supports Abe’s argument that the economy is showing resilience in the face of external headwinds, including slowing global growth, and can withstand the impact of a sales tax increase scheduled for October.

Weakness in economy

Speculation that weakness in the economy might prompt him to postpone the tax hike for a third time cooled further in recent days, with Finance Minister Taro Aso telling Group of 20 finance leaders at the weekend that the tax hike would go ahead.

Today’s good news could be tomorrow’s bad news, however.

Flattering growth figures for the January-March period raise the hurdle for the current quarter, in which global trade tensions have escalated considerably with expectations for a U.S.-China trade deal dashed and President Donald Trump playing the tariff card to extract concessions from Mexico.

Olympic demand and the need for automation to cope with a labor shortage is driving domestic capital spending, but for Japan’s big manufacturers, it’s a different story. They already started cutting back on spending in the first quarter as they fret over the dark clouds on the horizon.

“If economic data for May is weak, that’s going to raise the possibility of overall GDP turning negative,” said Mari Iwashita, chief market economist at Daiwa Securities, citing the impact of the third round of U.S. tariffs against China. “It’s going to be a struggle with domestic demand trying to support growth amid weakness in external demand.”

The “second reading on Japan’s 1Q GDP sent a reassuring message, as expected -- growth was a tick stronger than the preliminary figure, with an increase in private capital expenditure helping to drive the expansion. This should all but put to rest speculation that the government will delay a sales-tax hike slated for October.”

Iran hosting 18th Caspian Sea littoral states ICBC meeting

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 18th meeting of the International Council of Business Cooperation (ICBC) of the Caspian Sea littoral states kicked off on Monday in the northern city of Sari, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

The two-day event was attended by the head of ICCIMA Gholam Hossein Shafeie, ambassadors of neighboring countries along with representatives and officials from Cas-

pian Sea nations.

Speaking in the meeting, Shafeie expressed Iranian private sector’s readiness for constructive cooperation with all the Caspian Sea littoral nations, saying “We intend to create constructive economic partnerships with all our Caspian Sea neighbors based on the common ground in history and culture”.

The official further underlined the need for developing infrastructure as a prerequisite for expansion of economic cooperation



among the Caspian Sea nations.

Development of transportation including shipping lines and railways, promoting investment, establishment of a joint fund for financing joint projects, protecting the environment and fighting environmental pollution in the Caspian Sea, establishing a legal framework for fishing activities, and etc. were some of the suggestions presented

by the head of Iran’s private sector.

The expansion of tourism, organizing exhibitions, the process of issuing visas, boosting customs and banking cooperation were among other issues raised in the meeting.

The ICBC was established by the chambers of commerce of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Iran in 1996.

Omani airline launches Muscat-Tehran route

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** - Oman’s SalamAir launched a direct flight route between Muscat and Tehran on Sunday, Tasnim reported.

SalamAir has also announced that it is going to launch another route to the southern city of Shiraz.

According to Mohsen Zarrabi, the head of Omani-Iranian Chamber of Commerce, launching this new route which is the second direct flight between the two countries can have a positive impact on the two countries’ tourism industry and can also facilitate economic relations between the two neighbors.

Operating three times a week on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, the flight from Muscat International Airport (MCT) departs at 3:05 pm and arrives at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKA) at 6:10 pm. The return flight will leave Tehran at 6:55 pm and touch down in Muscat

at 9:00 pm.

Iran had initiated direct flight from the Persian Gulf island of Qeshm to Muscat on February 6.

Iran and Oman currently have also four operational direct shipping routes which connect Iranian port cities to the Arab country.

European economy worsens as Germany industrial output plunges

German industrial production plunged the most in almost four years in April and the nation’s central bank gave a gloomy assessment of the outlook, suggesting a persistent slump in Europe’s largest economy.

As per hellenichshippingnews.com, factories are at the heart of the region’s slowdown, as trade tensions, weaker car sales and cooling global demand weigh on exports. That’s worrying European Central Bank policy makers, who fear the weakness will ripple through to other areas of the euro-area economy, where the services sector has so far had to prop up demand.

The “key issue is: how long can the rest of the economy be insulated from a manufacturing sector that keeps on being weak? I think that’s what the Governing Council had in mind when they said they stand ready.”

Europe’s policy makers have had very little good news to cling to recently. While some confidence measures have edged up, surveys point to only modest growth, and a market measure of inflation expectations has plunged to a record low.

Euro area

Expansion in Germany and the euro area came in stronger than expected at the start of the year, but the pace is forecast to drop off this quarter. For the full year, economists see 1.2% growth in the currency bloc, down from 1.9% in 2018 and the weakest performance since 2013.



“As highlighted Thursday by the ECB, external risks have intensified. As a large exporter, the German manufacturing sector is very exposed to the risks from Brexit and from U.S. tariffs on cars in particular — but more generally to the pressure that international trade uncertainty is putting on sentiment.”

As investors continue to see poor prospects for the region, that’s fueled demand for the safety of bonds, pushing yields on German 10-year debt firmly below zero. Many investors

UK and South Korea sign in principle, first a post-Brexit free trade agreement

The UK and South Korea have signed an in principle free trade agreement (FTA) that seeks to maintain existing trade arrangements post-Brexit. International Trade Secretary Liam Fox signed the deal with his South Korean counterpart Yoo Myung-hee in Seoul.

As mercopress.com stated, the preliminary agreement marks the first post-Brexit trade deal the UK has secured in Asia. The agreement is roughly in line with the terms of the existing Korea-EU FTA.

It would cover South Korean exports including cars and auto parts. South Korea exports mostly cars and ships to Britain, while it imports crude oil and cars.

The agreement is designed to provide stability under a no-deal Brexit, with the UK due to leave the EU on 31 October, with or without a deal.

The “deal is significant as it eased uncertainties sparked by Brexit, amid the already challenging environment for exports on the escalating trade row between Washington

and Beijing,” Ms Yoo said.

Both countries aim to ratify the deal by the end of October, and implement it in November.

South Korea - Asia’s fourth largest economy - is a global leader in electronics, steel and auto industry. The country’s exports to the UK hit \$6.36b last year. The UK is South Korea’s second largest trading partner among EU members, and the Asian nation’s 18th largest trading partner.

The UK is pushing to strike agreements with its trading partners as the Brexit dead-

line looms. As a member of the EU, the UK is part of 40 trade deals which the EU has with other countries.

If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, it would fall out of these deals immediately, disrupting about 11% of UK total trade.

A priority for the government has been to get these countries to roll over their trade deals with the UK.

So far the UK has agreed “continuity” deals with 12 countries and regions, including Israel, Norway and Iceland, Switzerland and Chile.

China’s exports rise in May but U.S. trade war will still hurt in the long run

By Frank Tang

Chinese exports rebounded slightly in May as companies front-loaded their shipments to beat last month’s U.S. tariff increase, but analysts warned that the damage from the move by U.S. President Donald Trump could soon pose a severe challenge to the world’s second largest economy.

Goods sold overseas rose 1.1 percent in May from a year earlier, confounding market expectations of 3.9 percent drop and improving from the 2.7 percent fall a month earlier.

Imports, however, fell 8.5 percent following a rise of 4 percent a month earlier due to a plunge in shipments from the United States and also weakening domestic demand.

The “rise (in overall Chinese exports) last month was largely due to front-loading and that’s not sustainable. The downward trend will continue in the coming months,” said Larry Hu, chief China economist of Macquarie Capital. The “government may have to consider larger stimulus in the second half of this year, potentially the fourth quarter, when its impact on the economy will show up.”

The U.S. tariff increase from 10 per cent to 25 per cent on \$200 billion of Chinese imports took effect May 10, meaning exporters had to fill orders early in the month to take advantage of the lower rate.

U.S.-bound shipments dropped to \$37.7 billion in May, 3.7 percent below the level of a year earlier, but well below the 13 percent decline in April, according to a South China Morning Post calculation based on data released by the General Administration of Customs. Imports from the U.S. declined 26.8 percent from a year earlier to \$10.8 billion.

Exports to U.S. plunged

For the first five months of 2019, total exports to the U.S., which was the top destination before the trade war, plunged 8.4 percent to \$160 billion, while imports dropped 29.6 percent to \$49.6 billion.

Exports to other major destinations such as the European Union, Japan and Southeast Asian countries have not yet be able to offset the loss of trade with the U.S. in the first five months of the year. Exports to the European Union rose 8



percent, with exports to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) up by 6.8 percent, although exports to Japan dropped 1.8 percent.

The rise (in overall Chinese exports) last month was largely due to front-loading and that’s not sustainable. The downward trend will continue in the coming months.

The “existing tariffs imposed on the U.S. and China’s imports will not be lifted any time soon,” said Louis Kuijs, chief Asia economist of Oxford Economics. The “chance of further deterioration of bilateral relations has increased, with both sides planning further restrictions targeting each other’s companies.”

British investment bank Barclays slashed China’s growth estimate to 6.0 percent in 2019 and 5.5 percent in 2018 as its new baseline officially moved to the escalation scenario where all the Chinese exports to the U.S. would be subject to a 25 percent tariff.

The “pain of tariffs would likely be more visibly felt entering the third quarter,” said Barclays’ China economist Chang Jian, who forecast an 8 percent fall of exports this year against a 10 percent expansion in 2018.

Imposing additional tariffs

U.S. President Trump threatened to impose a tariff of up to 25 percent on the \$300 billion of Chinese imports that have escaped sanctions so far, with procedures to enact that threat already underway. Trump said he would decide whether to

impose the additional tariffs in early July after his expected meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G20 leaders summit in Japan at the end of June.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday in an interview with CNBC Television while in Japan for the G20 financial policymakers meeting that Trump would be “perfectly happy” to impose the additional tariffs if China did not wish to resume negotiations.

The prospects of U.S. sanctions on a new list of Chinese products, including popular electronics like smartphones, raises the prospect of increased shipments in June, which could again boost the export total.

Since the trade talks broke down in early May, both sides have taken the opportunity to blame the other for the lack of progress. All eyes are now on the potential meeting between Xi and Trump to see if the two leaders can agree on a breakthrough as they did at their previous meeting in December following the G20 leaders summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Speaking at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday, President Xi said he believed disengagement with the U.S. would be dangerous.

“There are some trade frictions between us and the U.S., but China and the U.S. are closely intertwined, and we are each other’s biggest investor and trade partner,” he said.

Domestically, the Chinese government is attempting to boost consumption to offset the fall in exports, which accounted for around one fifth of the economic growth in the first quarter, and so stabilize employment. Moves to date have been modestly successful, but given the prospect of more US tariffs, further easing is likely, analysts said.

“We have plenty of room in interest rates, we have plenty of room in the required reserve ratio rate, as well as in the fiscal and monetary policy toolkit,” said Yi Gang, governor of the People’s Bank of China, in an interview with Bloomberg last week.

Chinese leaders have targeted economic growth of 6.0 to 6.5 percent this year, with growth in the first quarter of 2019 stabilizing at 6.4 percent.

(Source: scmp.com)

Iran ready to establish new petchem hub

E N E R G Y
d e s k

TEHRAN — The National Petrochemical Company (NPC) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) for establishing a new petrochemical complex in Hormozgan Province adjacent to Persian Gulf waters.

According to IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour, by implementing 14 petrochemical projects in this petrochemical complex, 15 million tons will be added to the country's production capacity, IRIB reported on Monday.

The MOU comes only two days after Washington imposed new sanctions on Iran's largest petrochemical holding group, aiming to boost pressure on the country's economy.

"We are planning to integrate other industries such as power plants, aluminum complexes and petro refineries into this new hub," Gharibpour said on the



sidelines of the MOU signing ceremony. The official noted that the new com-

plex is going to be established in a 2,000 hectares area of land in the Parsian

Energy Intensive Industrial Special Economic Zone (PEISEZ).

In December 2018, Behzad Mohammadi, the managing director of the NPC had announced that the company was planning to establish the country's third biggest petrochemical complex following Asalouyeh and Mahshahr.

The new petrochemical hub is planned to be established by the oil ministry in collaboration with the ministry of industry, mining and trade.

Accessing diverse liquid and gas feedstock is one of the main attractions of Iran's petrochemical industry for investors, and it is safe to say that the industry is Iran's most lucrative industry.

Measuring 9,800 hectares in area, PEISEZ is located 15 km west of Parsian City in Hormozgan Province. The site is also located 20 km from the Persian Gulf International Airport and 43 km from Pars Port.

350MW to be added to Iran's power generation capacity

E N E R G Y
d e s k

TEHRAN — With three new power plant units going operational this week, the country's power generation capacity is going to be increased by 350 megawatts (MW), Tasnim reported on Sunday, quoting an energy official as saying.

According to Mohsen Tarzatabal, the head of Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH), the mentioned units are going to be launched in the western province of Kermanshah.

Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity reached 80,509 megawatts (80,509 gigawatts) in early May.

The added capacity was supplied from the newly operational distributed generation power plants, hydroelectric power plants, as well as renewable plants, according to the portal of Iranian Energy Ministry (known as PAVEN).

With the new 350 MW capacity added, the country's electricity generation capacity will rise by 850 MW compared to

the last year (ended on March 20) in which the total power generation capacity stood at 80,000 MW.

Currently, with a total generation capacity of 25,083 MW, combined cycle power plants hold the biggest share (31.2 percent) of the country's total power generation capacity, followed by gas power plants accounting for 29.9 percent.

The share of hydroelectric power plants is 19.87 percent while hydroelectric plants generate 14.8 percent of the country's total electricity, the share of dispersed generation units is 1.5 percent and finally the renewable power plants account only for 0.79 percent of Iran's total power generation capacity.

In May, the Energy Ministry announced that it plans to inaugurate 22 new units with a total capacity of 3,933 MW in the current [Iranian calendar] year along with upgrading and increasing the efficiency of existing power plants to add another 461 MW of new capacity.



Solar cells achieve the highest efficiency rate

Solar panels in the market today are composed mostly of silicon, which is inorganic, often formed into thick, rigid sheets that require fixed installation points. But it appears that this quality of solar panels can be improved with the help of organic solar cells.

As per gineersnow.com, carbon-based organic solar cells can be thin enough to bend and curve around structures or even within clothing. Plus, they can be manufactured to be of any color including transparent, allowing flexibility in aesthetic design.

Amid these advantages, there is one problem with organic solar cells: efficiency. For this, they cannot compete with conventional energy sources. But that is all in the past now. Researchers at University of Michigan made it possible to make organic solar cells that can achieve 15% efficiency. This level of efficiency is enough to make organic solar cells a viable option in photovoltaics systems as it is in the range of many solar panels today.

"For the last couple of years, efficiency for organic photovoltaics was stuck around 11 to 12 percent," said Xiaozhou Che, a doctoral candidate in the Applied Physics Program and a member of the research team.

Stacking organic solar cells

The researchers had to develop a way to solve the



problem on efficiency. That required inventing a process of stacking the organic solar cells, which allows interconnection of layers to prevent damage to the first cell but allows light and electrical charges to pass through.

This new system can absorb light from the visible spectrum starting at 350 nanometers in wavelength as well as near-infrared light up to 950 nanometers in wavelength. Read more 2019 Renewable Energy, Sustainability and Green Forecast Photo by University of Michigan "When

we stack them together, we increase light absorption and efficiency improves to 15 percent with an antireflection coating. That's considered a difficult process because there's a chance the liquid used in processing the top cell will dissolve the layers already deposited underneath," Che said.

Leader of the research, Stephen Forrest, the Peter A. Franken Distinguished University Professor of Engineering and Paul G. Goebel Professor of Engineering, said that organic photovoltaics can potentially cut way down on the total solar energy system cost, making solar a "truly ubiquitous clean energy source."

With a 20-year lifetime and at 15% efficiency, the researchers calculate that the organic cells they developed have the capacity to produce electricity at a much lower cost. When the average cost of electricity in the U.S. was 10.5 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2017, it could be reduced to less than 7 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Despite this recent development, the team still wants to improve the efficiency further. "We can improve the light absorption to increase electric current, and minimize the energy loss to increase voltage," Che said. "Based on calculations, an 18-percent efficiency is expected in the near future for this type of multijunction device."

The bearish threat within OPEC

By Cyril Widdershoven

After a prolonged oil price plunge, pushing price levels down to around \$59 Brent per barrel, signs are showing that the market believes the downward trend has overshot its target. Concerns about global demand and supply have been wreaking havoc, based on assessments that the ongoing China-U.S. trade war will put a major dent in demand. At the same time, U.S.-based oil storage volume reports showed a significant increase, killing off the bullish case for oil.

Despite this, OPEC+ refused to react, simply stating that the oil cartel and its Russian supporter were not willing to take appropriate measures to quell the confidence crisis in the market. Up until now, OPEC+ has seemed to be willing to take the wrath of Washington and others for keeping to its existing production cut agreement.

There are even signs that the oil producers are considering a rollover of the production cut agreement at their upcoming meeting, presumably in June but most probably in July.

A strong pro-roll-over front has been building up, led by Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy Khalid Al Falih, UAE's Minister Al Mazrouei, and, surprisingly, Iraq. The leading Arab oil producers are taking the long-term view that the market has not yet stabilized, crude storage volumes are still too high, and demand is yet to see a tangible drop. There are signs, however, that a conflict is brewing within the oil group — with Russian officials spreading uncertainty.

Full-scale support

In stark contrast to the full-scale support



of a production cut that was given by Russia at the St Petersburg meeting in 2018 to OPEC, Russian president Vladimir Putin is now increasing the pressure on the agreement. By stating that Russia is happy with current price levels of around \$60-65 per barrel, he has broken from the Saudi-UAE angle.

Putin's remarks threaten to push OPEC into a position where it will have to address possible shortages in the market in the coming months. By referring to a lower price level in public, Putin has acknowledged that Moscow is not interested in targeting higher prices, unlike Arab producers that need higher prices to support their own government budgets and diversification packages. Putin's comments could even be interpreted as a willingness to leave the current production cut agreement, further undermining OPEC's strategy.

The main question for oil analysts at present is whether Putin really stands behind his assessments. By reiterating that Russia is happy with lower prices and suggesting that the Russian government budget is based on \$40 per barrel Putin is taking a risk.

When analyzing the current state of the Russian economy, its global power projections and the extremely high costs of its ongoing military operations in Syria and elsewhere, higher oil and gas revenues would be a god-send. Putin's dream of a Pax Russia cannot be built on \$40 per barrel, not even on \$60-65 per barrel.

The Russian chess grandmaster seems to be playing on two boards at the same time. Putin's attitude towards OPEC has always been one of ambiguity, taking the position that the oil cartel's influence should be used to enhance Moscow's geopolitical and economic influence.

By creating a new front, some say against the U.S. and the EU, Moscow and OPEC have set up a marriage of convenience, built on a traditional commercial-strategic basis.

OPEC+ is still very functional, but if Russian oil and gas oligarchs, the main support base of Putin at home, start to complain, the Russian tsar will need to act. It seems that the signs of political infighting have now become clear, with Russia's minister of Energy Novak,

formerly a supporter of the production cut agreement, keeping silent. In staying out of the discussion, Novak is lending credence to the idea that Russian oil companies may be running out of patience.

Needs a higher oil price

Strategically, lower oil prices would not only increase Russia's market share, at the expense of former allies Venezuela and Iran, but would also help to constrain U.S. shale. Saudi Arabia's position on production is entirely different. Faced by high expenditure patterns due to the Kingdom's economic diversification plans and regional military engagements, Riyadh needs a higher oil price. Change is being brought to the country slowly and with minimum risk to the regime. Higher oil prices will be vital if Saudi is to stand a chance of successfully implementing its visions.

Russia will be of particular importance in the coming weeks. Putin is facing the end of his political reign in the coming years, and growing dissent within the oil and gas sector is now noticeable.

The Russian leader, maybe still hoping for a new political career, needs the support of Rosneft, Gazprom and others in order to survive and keep his legacy in place. Taking all of this into account makes the odds of Russia taking a bearish stance on oil all the more probable.

It is likely that a roll-over of the agreement will not be issued, with heated discussions already happening between the main parties. It seems that it is not Trump who will influence oil markets in the near term, but rather two Arab Crown Princes and a Tsar heading for retirement.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Oil price rises as Saudi sees OPEC, Russia restricting supplies longer

Oil prices rose on Monday after Saudi Arabia said producer club OPEC and Russia were likely to keep withholding supplies, and in relief as the United States withdrew its threat to impose import tariffs on Mexico, removing one cloud over the global economy.

As per reuters.com, front-month Brent crude futures, the international benchmark for oil prices, were at \$63.52 at 0310 GMT, 23 cents, or 0.4%, above Friday's close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$54.29 per barrel, 30 cents, or 0.6%, above their last settlement.

Traders said crude prices were rising because of statements by OPEC's de-facto leader Saudi Arabia on Friday saying that the group was close to agreeing extended supply cuts.

"Brent futures continue rising ... after the Saudi Arabian Energy Minister expressed confidence that OPEC+ producers will prolong their output cuts program through the second half of 2019," said Han Tan, analyst at futures brokerage FXTM.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and some non-members, including Russia, known collectively as "OPEC+", have withheld supplies since the start of the year to prop up prices.

Stephen Innes, managing partner at Vanguard Markets, said stronger stock markets also supported oil futures.

No harmful shockwaves

"With the Mexican stalemate averted and no harmful shockwaves from this weekend G-20 meeting ... oil could trade favorably as WTI and Brent will continue to track the broader risk environment high," Innes said.

Stock markets rose on Monday after a deal between the United States and Mexico to combat illegal migration from Central America late last week removed the threat of U.S. tariffs on goods imported from Mexico.

But analysts said there were still concerns about the health of the global economy, with the United States and China still locked in a trade war.

"Slowing global demand appears to be featuring prominently on the markets' collective mind, as the fallout from heightened trade tensions continues to be felt in the global economy," said FXTM's Tan.

The "sustainability of oil's recent climb could be determined by the outlooks of several key industry bodies scheduled this week, whereby more downcast projections for global demand could prompt traders to continue chipping away at oil," he added.

Urgent action needed to scale up energy access in least developed countries

By Santo D. Banerjee

The world's 47 least developed countries (LDCs) will fail to achieve global sustainable energy targets by 2030 unless urgent and enhanced action is undertaken. This was the backdrop to discussions which took place on May 30-31, 2019 at a United Nations conference on 'Scaling-Up Energy Access and Finance in the Least Developed Countries' in Beijing, China.

UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRILLS) said that while considerable progress has been made by this group of countries to increase the average rate of access to electricity from 33.4 per cent in 2010 to 51 percent in 2017, this is in stark contrast to the global electrification rate of 88.8 percent in 2017.

Besides, the LDCs face major disparities in energy access between urban and rural populations. In 2017, on average, 79 per cent of urban populations had electricity access, compared with only 37.8 percent of rural populations. Regional disparities are also evident, where the Asia-Pacific LDCs are faring better with an electrification rate of 86.2 percent compared to 33.2 percent in African LDCs.

Much to the concern of the UN, 14 African LDCs still have electrification rates lower than 30 percent and the 20 least-electrified countries in the world are all LDCs.

Major progress being made

While overall assessments of progress in energy access illustrate major challenges, conference participants reflected on major progress being made.

Countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Cambodia have all electrified at a rate of about 5 per cent per year since 2010. Many LDCs have already successfully tapped into using hydropower, and the use of solar and wind power is also increasing.

The key message of the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, to conference participants was that Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the Least Developed Countries is "within reach".

She added: "We must step up and we need urgent action. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is about our collective vision to leave no one behind. So, our responsibility is to work together and forge even stronger partnerships, ensuring that the global energy transition to sustainable and modern energy also reaches the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the world."

The conference also witnessed substantive discussions on boosting investment in LDCs where current financing levels are significantly below what is required to achieve SDG7, calling for ensuring "access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy".

Expanding energy access

According to current estimates, in order to achieve SDG7, between 2018 and 2030, annual average investment globally will need to reach approximately \$55 billion to expand energy access, about \$700 billion to increase renewable energy, and \$600 billion to improve energy efficiency. Currently, investments are not spread equally and many LDCs lack the capacity to access existing funding mechanisms.

A draft outcome circulated at the conference laid out concrete deliverables including the call for the launch of a large-scale initiative to bring forward the countries that are furthest behind first as well as establishing a network of energy focal points in LDCs.

The draft outcome also illustrated the need for sustainable energy to be one of the central thematic topics to be featured in the new 10-year program of action for the LDCs to be adopted at the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs in 2021. Furthermore, the outcome of the conference is expected to feature in discussions at the Climate Action Summit at the UN Headquarters on September 23, 2019.

The Conference was jointly organized by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO). It brought together 200 participants representing governments, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations, civil society, private sector, business community and think tanks.

(Source: eurasiareview.com)

Tim Anderson: Trump's golan move part of U.S. inimical role in Palestine



TEHRAN (FNA) — Tim Anderson, Australian academic and activist, says Washington has shown no signs of any currents to play a constructive role in Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as neither Trump nor his predecessors' administrations minded Israeli land grabbing nor "ethnic cleansing" in the West Bank or Gaza.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Dr. Anderson also made comments on Arab League's condemnation of the US Golan move, saying while its members seek to establish ties with Israel, the bloc cannot call for action against Washington's move.

Tim Anderson, Ph.D., is an Australian academic and activist. He was a senior lecturer at the University of Sydney and the author of several books on independent development and anti-imperialism.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ The Arab League, for many years, has failed to take any meaningful move with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How do you view the bloc's condemnation of Washington's move to recognize Israeli "sovereignty" over the Golan Heights?

A: The Arab League disgraced itself some years back by supporting attacks on two members, Libya and Syria. I doubt if they can regain credibility, especially due to the increased role of the [P]GCC in the League. They did formally reject Tel Aviv's attempt to annex the Golan, and called "invalid and illegitimate" Trump's move to recognize that annexation. They also, once again, rejected the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and called for a Palestinian state. Yet in neither case was there any call for action. In diplomatic terms they did no more than the European Union, which also unanimously rejected the Golan annexation. Hezbollah praised the statement of Lebanon President Michel Aoun but said that the Arab League position "failed to match the seriousness" of the situation. The Resistance group also noted the movement of some League and [P]GCC members towards closer relations with Israel.

■ The US claims its "Deal of the Century" brings the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to an end. Does Washington's recent move dispute its own claim?

A: The Palestinian Authority has engaged with the US, but it has failed to show any real leadership or advance on the question of 'negotiations'. That is why there is much disillusionment with the PA within Palestine.

The most recent Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre polls in August and October of 2018 show that 82% of Palestinians saw "widespread corruption in the Palestinian Authority institutions and services", while the percentage of those who trust President Mahmoud Abbas ranged between 10 and 11% in 2018. On the US-led 'negotiations' more than 80% saw no acceptable benefit for Palestinians in President Trump's much hyped 'Deal of the Century'. More broadly, only 12% said the Oslo accords of 1993 had "served Palestinian national interests". So public opinion on both the PA and the US is very dim. Neither the Obama nor the Trump administration has been able to place the slightest constraint on the steady land theft and ethnic cleansing in the West Bank, nor have they stopped the murderous attacks on Gaza. It is principally local Palestinian resistance, in all its forms, which has slowed Zionist expansion. The Israeli entity has been blocked in the north by the Lebanese resistance and in the south by the resistance from Gaza. Now the north east expansion is in play. The West Bank has been flooded with colonies, destroying any possibility of making it the potential core of an Arab state. That in turn has led to an apartheid state — a crime against humanity. While there is a popular international movement in favor of this, there are no signs of any currents in Washington which could play a constructive role. For these reasons, even before President Trump, the US role in Palestine must be viewed as inimical and dangerous.

■ How is the US's global role viewed after Trump's proclamation of Israeli "sovereignty" over the Golan Heights?

A: Washington, under President Trump, has acted in an increasingly unilateral manner and has therefore become more isolated. That is the contribution of the crude 'realism' of the Trump regime. Tearing up the JCPOA agreement with Iran, then penalizing third parties who wished to do business with Iran, has alienated Europe. Combined with the trade war on China and sanctions on Russia, Trump's unilateral aggression has forced former allies to look for more independent financial and trade channels. Trump's regressive role on climate agreements and withdrawal from a strategic arms limitation agreement with Russia further undermines any presence at a leading US role in the world. All this is before we come to the hybrid wars practiced against at least nine Middle Eastern states and peoples (Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain), and several more underway in Latin America (against Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba and Bolivia). The US has its special military forces in all regions, including Europe and Africa. Under the pretext of 'fighting terrorism' they have become the greatest sponsors of terrorism. They pose a great threat to the world.

By Ali Azimi

TEHRAN — Britain's exit from the EU has become a mystery! Since the 2016 referendum, two British prime ministers David Cameron and Theresa May have been victims of the country's withdrawal from the European Union. Who really is going to be this time? The English media have been reviewing the latest political situation in recent days.

UK economy shrinks after Brexit car factory shutdowns

As Guardian reported, The British economy shrank in April amid a dramatic decline in car production ahead of the original Brexit deadline, according to official figures.

According to the Office for National Statistics, gross domestic product (GDP) plunged by 0.4% in April from a month earlier as factories across the country launched a wave of planned shutdowns to avoid any disruption that could have been unleashed by a no-deal Brexit.

Britain's manufacturers planned around leaving the EU on 29 March as Theresa May took the country to the brink of leaving without a deal, before agreeing an extension until 12 April and then delaying the process until the end of October. She then agreed to stand down as prime minister, triggering the Conservative leadership contest. While economic growth had strengthened as factories rushed to stockpile materials ahead of the deadline, the latest snapshot from the economy shows that production slumped after the target date passed.

Rob Kent-Smith, the head of GDP at the government statistics agency, said the decline was caused by falling car production amid the uncertainty over leaving the EU.

"There was also widespread weakness across manufacturing in April, as the boost from the early completion of orders ahead of the UK's original EU departure date has faded," he said.

Manufacturing output across the country dropped by 3.9% on the month, driven by car production plunging by 24%. It comes after stronger growth in manufacturing in February and March, before falling back after the early completion of orders was not replaced and factories were closed to protect against potential Brexit disruption.

While UK car manufacturers have struggled amid faltering demand for exports from China and elsewhere overseas as the world economy slows, and from tighter restrictions on diesel engines, several firms said they would temporarily halt activity due to Brexit, while some said they would ultimately close factories altogether, with thousands of job losses.

Jaguar Land Rover staged a week-long factory shutdown as part of its plans for Brexit in April. BMW and Peugeot also brought forward annual maintenance stoppages that usually take place in the summer. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) said earlier



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this month that car production fell by almost half in April, with an "extraordinary" drop from 127,970 cars rolling off production lines in April 2018 to 70,971 this year, a fall of 44.5%.

Over the three months to April, the rate of growth slowed to 0.3% from 0.5% in the first three months of the year, when stockpiling had helped boost the economy.

could 'PM Boris' withhold the UK's Brexit divorce payment?

Telegraph reported If Boris Johnson becomes the next prime minister Boris Johnson has promised to "retain" the £39 billion Brexit bill unless and until the EU agrees "greater clarity" about the future EU-UK trading relationship.

This is a return to the position advocated previously by other leading Brexiteers, including two former Brexit secretaries, David Davis and Dominic Raab, but it is a position that has never actually held in the negotiation process itself. But — both legally and politically — could the UK really withhold its cash until it gets the deal it wants?

Boris Johnson threatens to withhold Brexit divorce payment

deutsche welle reported that The UK owes tens of billions of euros when it leaves the EU but Boris Johnson — the current front-runner to succeed Theresa May as prime minister — wants to withhold payment. He's looking for "greater clarity" on Brexit. Boris Johnson, the current favorite to become the next British prime minister, has said he would withhold divorce payments to the European Union unless the bloc offered a better Brexit deal. Johnson also implied he would scrap the accepted border arrangement with Ireland.

The former foreign secretary's com-

ments came in an interview with The Sunday Times, his first newspaper interview since announcing his bid for premiership. "Our friends and partners need to understand that the money is going to be retained until such time as we have greater clarity about the way forward," he said. "In getting a good deal, money is a great solvent and a great lubricant," Johnson added.

Johnson is the front-running candidate to replace outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May, who officially resigned as Conservative party leader on Friday. She will retain the premiership until a successor can be found, a process that is expected to be completed by late July. Currently, 11 members of Parliament are vying to replace her.

Britain owes the EU about €44 billion (\$50 billion) when it eventually leaves the bloc. Brexit hard-liners and others have repeatedly blocked a hard-fought Brexit deal, and for the time being it remains in the bloc.

Johnson wants to hold this payment hostage in the hopes of wrangling a better deal than May was able to achieve. US President Donald Trump last week recommended to the UK that it not pay its bill to the EU. He has also backed Johnson as the top choice to replace May. Several cabinet members also joined a growing number of centrist Tory MPs this weekend in declaring they were ready to throw their support behind him.

BBC reported that Boris Johnson has pledged to cut income tax bills for people earning more than £50,000 a year if he wins the race to succeed Theresa May as prime minister.

The former foreign secretary told the Telegraph he would use money currently

set aside for a no-deal Brexit to raise the 40% tax rate threshold to £80,000. Labour's shadow chancellor John McDonnell said the proposal showed "how out of touch the Tories are".

Tory MPs have until 17:00 BST to enter the race to become party leader and PM. Mr Johnson's promise comes as Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd and Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt both announce they are backing Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt for prime minister. Mrs May officially stepped down as the leader of the Conservative Party last week, but will remain as prime minister until her successor is chosen.

Conservative MPs who want to replace her must have the backing of eight other party colleagues to officially enter the contest. But Michael Gove, one of 11 to have said they plan to run, has faced calls to drop out of the race after he admitted using cocaine several times more than 20 years ago.

Former party chairwoman Baroness Warsi said it would be "hypocrisy of the highest order" for Mr Gove to remain in the contest, after an article he wrote in 1999 in which he criticised "middle class professionals" who took drugs was republished.

Apologising on the Andrew Marr Show on Sunday, the environment secretary said he was "fortunate" to have avoided prison.

And at his campaign launch on Monday, Mr Gove is expected to insist he is "undaunted" by criticism, and will say he can both deliver Brexit and "stop Jeremy Corbyn ever getting the keys to Downing Street".

Meanwhile, Mr Johnson told the Telegraph he planned to cut income tax bills for three million people, partly by using money from a pot set aside by the Treasury for a possible no-deal Brexit, and partly by increasing employee National Insurance payments in line with the new income tax threshold.

The paper estimates the move announced by Mr Johnson, who is not doing any media interviews, would cost £9.6bn a year. "We should be raising thresholds of income tax so that we help the huge numbers that have been captured in the higher rate by fiscal drag," said Mr Johnson, who gets paid £79,468 as an MP.

Paul Johnson, from think tank the Institute For Fiscal Studies, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme higher rate taxpayers would receive a "quite significant tax cut" under Mr Johnson's plans — but the biggest beneficiaries would include wealthy pensioners, and people living solely off investments, as neither pay National Insurance.

And shadow chancellor Mr McDonnell said the Tory leadership contest was becoming a "race to the bottom in tax cuts". He said: "With our schools, care for the elderly and our police services at breaking point, Boris Johnson's proposals to give a tax cut to high earners reveals how out of touch the Tories are."

Mexico deal won't solve America's migration crisis

TEHRAN (FNA) — The US-Mexico border continues to be a massive migration headache for President Donald Trump and his neocon team.

So far, their response to the rising tide of migrants and refugee crisis has been anything but inadequate and shameful. The border is closing, pushbacks are increasing, and hostility is rising. This appalling policy, together with more smoke and mirrors than substance, is driven by the same warped logic that lords over the Trump White House: Satisfying the baseless fear of the 'other' and ensuring the reelection of 45th president.

What drives this set-up is not difficult to measure. Throughout Trump's America, far-right politicians shape the whitewashing agenda, preying on their constituents' ignorance and fear. It is condensed into this official song: "They're coming here to rape and kill you, and steal your jobs." And, "They are being infiltrated by terrorists and encouraged by the Democrats."

This, of course, is dirty politics, also stemming from a post-colonial capitalist mindset in which the border is open for trade and capital and not for migrants and refugees that America helped to create in the first place.

The Central American refugee crisis did not come about by accident. This is the result of decades of interventionist policies that have allowed the US to topple Central American governments, steal their natural resources and pilfer their goods. In more recent times, the inequalities and underdevelopments have been reinforced by an unfair trade system and business environment that operates according to the zero-sum game policy — those who run the Wall Street and corporations make the rules.

The Trumpsters must, at the very least, acknowledge how much of this misery the US is responsible for. This is not a question of guilt, but international-moral responsibility, and they are long overdue a reckoning.

A large number of migrants have been displaced by organized crime, civil wars and military coups against democratically-elected governments the US helped to stage. Together with many other factors, they destabilized Central America and subjected its people to violence and poverty to protect American interests.

The top nations from which Central American refugees go to the US are El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Venezuela. The country where they start their journey is Mexico — which was forced to reach a shortsighted and mor-



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ally wrong deal with Trump to stop them on Friday, June 7. The deal passes off responsibility to Mexico and sends its troops to the Guatemalan border to stem migrant flows.

The fact that they now seem more than ever enthusiastic about deploying Mexican troops than adjusting their foreign policy does underscore the colonial nature of this deal. Most Trumpsters will probably never agree, but the fact is that the hellish nature of migrant trade has developed around America's vicious policy of intervention. The US responds with inhumane tactics and outrageous tools like tariffs when cooperation for economic growth and shared prosperity are what's actually needed.

Trump should take note that this is a face-saving migration deal between the US, Mexico and Guatemala. It has nothing to do with what Trump tweets as a trade deal. Trump has a low approval rating and had to back off his unpopular threat of slapping a five percent tariff on Mexican goods.

He didn't want to jeopardize congressional approval of the new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

His deal, however, will not solve the border crisis; nor will it stem the increasing flow of migrants, even if this includes Mexico becoming a third country for asylum seekers. Regardless of political wrangling, leaning on it won't deter others from journeying over land to the US, either.

In many ways, the US has stoked the migrant crisis and it has a moral responsibility to solve it. This stands to reason. A real commitment to saving lives and protecting refugees would not focus on tariffs and troop deployments to prevent departures and contain those fleeing poverty, conflict and persecution. It would start with promoting economic growth and a policy of non-interference. This could begin with presidential pardons and agreeing to fulfill the pleas of the United Nations to resettle vulnerable families already languishing along the US-Mexican border.

Post-JCPOA talks and the Deal of Century: Two sides of the same coin

1 → U.S. officials took advantages some loopholes that were embedded in Iran nuclear deal and unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). On the anniversary of U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Trump, once again is only trying to support the Zionist regime. Contrary to some views that believe violating the JCPOA was solely based on the radical policies of Trump or the like of John Bolton, the truth is that all American administration, whether democrat or republican, are only following one single strategy and that is protecting the Zionist regime.

According to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, for better resisting the oppressors in the world, we should try to develop a complete understanding about the U.S. and its tyrannical policies. So here, we take a look at U.S. specialized and detailed reviews about the JCPOA and relations with Iran.

On the anniversary of U.S. pullout from JCPOA, the Institute for Science and International Security published an article named "Opportunity for a New Iran Nuclear Deal - Stop driving into the sunset looking through the rearview mirror"; it was written by David Albright and Andrea Stricker.

The article is trying to respond to the view of some American politicians and Europeans who think that U.S. should return to Iran nuclear deal without setting any conditions.

David Albright, the article's author, is an American physicist who has close relations with SIA and Mossad who was an inspector of Iraq's nuclear program and who also accused Iran of trying to build nuclear weapons. Iran had long refused such accusations, and in fact agreed to sign a nuclear deal to prove that such accusations were false.

Albright, who is an anti-Iran theoretician, in this article has concluded that U.S. officials should completely abandon the JCPOA and don't return to it without setting new conditions. It says "returning to the JCPOA is not in U.S. national security interests. It would sacrifice key negotiating leverage."

Then, he says, as the two sides are not willing to get into a military conflict, a new round of negotiations would be a good option. According to him, "the United States is demanding that Iran meet a dozen con-



U.S. officials took advantages some loopholes that were embedded in Iran nuclear deal and unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

ditions relating not only to the nuclear and missile issues, but also to its malign regional activities and support for terror."

The authors advise the United States and its allies "to look forward and create a better deal that addresses the current one's well-known weaknesses, such as sunseting nuclear limitations, inadequate inspections of Iran's former and possibly on-going nuclear weapons program, and ineffective ballistic missile constraints."

In the end, the Zionist authors openly reveal that their goal is for Iran to have no defense against its neighbor countries who are armed to the teeth:

"Conventional arms and ballistic missile embargos and regional issues will inevitably need to be part of any negotiation. Although it will be difficult, the United States should seek new nuclear negotiations addressing these issues."

Finally, they refer to Iran's policy that is not negotiating with U.S. until the next

round of elections, hoping that a democrat administration go to the office:

"Re-joining the deal and abandoning new-found U.S. leverage, instead of addressing these problems in a new deal, would play into Tehran's hand and gravely threaten U.S., regional, and international security over the next decade, particularly as the nuclear, missile, and conventional weapons limitations sunset."

The article goes as far as describing "re-joining the deal" as a disaster.

These Zionist politicians openly state that they see no right for Iran to have a "nuclear program". For them, new negotiations must prevent Iran from having "any kind of nuclear enrichment program" forever.

"Advocating for re-entry means supporting and providing international legitimacy to the provision in the JCPOA that allows Iran to start building up its industrial infrastructure to manufacture advanced gas centrifuges that enrich uranium beginning in 2023, or during

the next presidential term. Iran is scheduled to start deploying an ever-increasing number of advanced centrifuges starting in 2025, as envisioned under Iran's long-term enrichment plan developed alongside the JCPOA."

They also reveal that, all these prohibitions are intended to protect and support the Zionist regime. They say "this program continually poses a threat to regional peace and stability." In another part they say "new, negotiated solutions are needed that protect vital U.S. and allied security interests in the Middle East."

If today, Trump administration says that they are not intending to change the regime in Iran, it is because of the strength of the Islamic republic; and they are trying to diminish this power by offering a new deal that would limit and destroy Iran's defensive systems. And they clearly state this intention in this part of the article:

"Advocates of re-joining should understand that doing so also means accepting the end of the United Nations conventional arms embargo on Iran, slated to happen no later than October 2020, as codified in UN Resolution 2231, which implements the JCPOA. Given the consensus in the United States and Europe that Iran's conventional weapons have been used for malign and dangerous activities, this provision is not in the broader interest."

They also reveal that they currently don't seek war with Iran because of Iran's military power, but they intend to diminish this power by closing a new deal with Iran: "By unconditionally re-joining the JCPOA, Iran would also have a blessing to build up its conventional military forces, making U.S. military strikes much riskier in the event of a breakout to nuclear weapons. This is simply too dangerous a future to support."

Finally, it seems that in this critical point in our history we need to try to protect the power and dignity of our country and keep our promise to the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini who established the idea of resistance. And follow the wise words of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said "over the last 40 years, whenever we resisted, we became successful and made progress and whenever we gave in and surrendered to the desires of the our opposing sides, we got hurt."

Abe not to be able to achieve any real breakthrough: Italian expert

1 → A: President Trump has often used a 'stick-and-carrot' approach to his international intercourses. The 'stick' element theoretically aims at 'softening' the counterpart and making it more amenable to the U.S. requests. In this perspective, I see no real contradiction between the ask for talks and the adoption of new sanctions; it is 'simply' a product of President Trump's vision of negotiation as power struggle. President Trump repeatedly said that his aim is not disrupting the JCPOA but revising it, according to the U.S. interests and visions of security and sanction are only one of the tools that his administration uses to 'pressurize' Iran and try to reach this goal.

■ What reasons have motivated Japan to try to mediate between Iran and USA?

A: Japan is heavily dependent on Persian Gulf energy supplies. In FY 2018, it imported approx. 67.7 million kiloliters of crude oil from Saudi Arabia, 44.9 from UAE, 14.2 from Qatar, 13.5 from Kuwait, 6.66 from Iran, and lesser amounts from Bahrain, Oman and Iraq. Currently, energy security is of increasing concern for the Japanese government. In this perspective, the country has a keen interest in keeping the Persian Gulf stable and in avoiding any possible escalation. A diplomatic success could also boost the country's standing and strengthen Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the domestic field, especially in view of the upcoming elections for the Japanese Upper House.

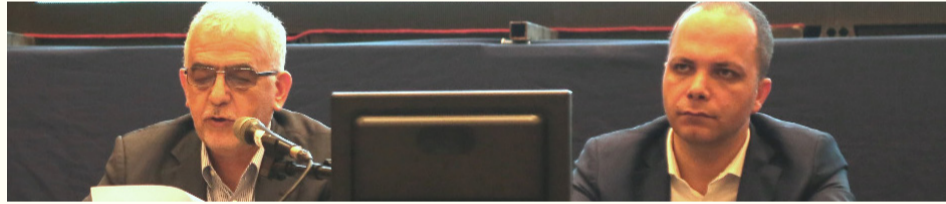
■ How successful can Abe's visit to Tehran be under such situation and the Trump's contradictory acts?

A: It is hard to say how successful Abe's mediation can be. Japan-Iran relations are traditionally good, and Prime Minister Abe can play the part of the honest broker. Japan is a loyal U.S. ally and Mr. Abe is said to be in good personal relations with President Trump. The Arab monarchies also see Japan as 'not menacing' (i.e.: not too much pro-Iranian). Finally, Mr. Abe has nothing to lose in case of a failure. All these elements can positively impact on the outcome. However, Iranian attitude and willingness to show some flexibility are equally important. I don't think Abe will be able to achieve any real breakthrough, but now breaking the ice is important as well.

■ Despite its powerful economy Japan has been following the U.S. foreign policy. How will Japan be able to affect the U.S. decisions as an independent mediator between Iran and U.S.?

A: As already said, the credibility of Japan's mediation is linked to a large extent to the fact that the country is a loyal U.S. ally. Abe's loyalty to the U.S. strengthens his position. Moreover, Japan's initiative seems fitting well into the U.S. 'stick-and-carrot' strategy. Some days ago, State Secretary Mike Pompeo expressed the U.S. willingness to start a dialogue with Iran 'with no pre-condition'. Now, Abe's task is not affecting the U.S. decisions but facilitating the U.S.-Iran dialogue. Once again, the problem is: are the parties ready to support this dialogue by showing some flexibility? I think this is the most important question to understand the future of the JCPOA.

Chadormalu Co. Pays 700 Rials DPS in Annual Ordinary General Assembly Meeting



Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company paid 700 rials Dividend per Share (DPS) in the Annual Ordinary General Assembly Meeting of Shareholders.

Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company paid 700 rials Dividend per Share (DPS) for shareholders of the company.

Income of each share of the company in the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2019 has increased as much as 456 rials, equal to 121 percent increase. The Annual Ordinary General Assembly Meeting of shareholders of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company was held at the venue of Talash Amphitheater on Wednesday Khordad 8 (May 29) in the presence of majority of its shareholders.

In this meeting, after the selection of Dr. Ghanbari Managing Director of OMD Investment Company as the chairman of the Assembly and observers Messrs. Morteza Ali Akbari representative of Mines and Metal Development Company and Davood Hasanizadeh Representative of Justice Shares as well as Mahmoudi Representative of Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) and Bahramian Representative of RAYMAND and Et Al. Auditing Institute, Eng. Mahmoud Nourian (Managing Director of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company) delivered a comprehensive report on the executive programs and performance of the company including extraction and production operations, production and sales volume of products, future plans and programs of the company in the current year (started March 21, 2019).

In continuation of the session, report of legal inspector of the company was read with regard to the performance of Board of Directors, financial statements including balance sheet, profit and loss and its annexed notes for the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2019. After the hearing of remarks of the Board of Directors and legal inspector, the General Assembly, while approving the performance of the Board of Directors, approved the financial statements and its attached notes for the fiscal

year closing on March 20, 2019. Given the above issue, the Assembly approved the following decisions:

1- With relation to the division of profit in the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2019, it was stipulated that the amount of 23,450,000,000 rials should be distributed among shareholders of the company out of total profit of company in last year (ended March 20, 2019), amounting to 27,868,000,000 rials. (700 rials DPS).

2- Members of the Board of Directors of the company were selected similar to the previous term.

3- RAYMAND, et al. Auditing Institute was selected as the legal main inspector while DASH and et al. Auditing Institute was selected as alternate inspector for the next year's fiscal year in 1398 (started March 20, 2019).

4- Transactions subject to Article 129 of amended by-law of Commercial Law were approved.

5- Fee for right of participation and also bonus of the Board of Directors was determined.

6- "DONYA-E-EQTESAD" Persian Daily was determined for publishing upcoming advertisements of the company.

7- The Ordinary Annual General Assembly meeting seized its opportunity to express its special thanks to the unsparing and unflinching efforts of the Board of Directors and all staff and personnel of the company for materializing most objectives of the company.

Accordingly, Eng. Nourian Managing Director of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company (P.J.S) in report of performance of the Board of Directors said that the company owes its success to the unsparing and unflinching efforts of all its personnel, shareholders as well as policies adopted by the Board of Directors.

Attaining production objectives beyond the scheduled program, operating mega module factory of Direct Reduction (DR) as well as many others successes are the result of efforts of staff, personnel and collaboration of respected shareholders of the company, Nourian added.

After the report on the performance of production, sales and revenue of the company, Eng. Nourian expounded on the plans and activities of the company and added, "considering the license of exploration issued by the Industry, Mine and Trade Organization of Yazd province on Feb. 17 for D19 Mine, executive operations of initial and detailed explorations of this mine has started.

Elsewhere in his remarks, managing director of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company announced other projects of this company as follows:

1- Project for Construction of Solar Power Plant:

The company intends to embark on constructing a 10-megawatt solar power plant in the vicinity of its 500-megawatt combined cycle power plant at the industrial complex, so that construction operations of this giant project have started.

The cost of investment in the aforementioned project is estimated at €7 million.

2- Participating in Increasing Capital of Investee Companies:

Pursuant to the approval of bylaw of the Board of Directors of the company, subject of participation in the capital increase of investee companies has always been paid due attention by the management.

Investee companies are mainly active in the fields of affiliated mining and mineral industries, supplying and transferring water as well as financing.

It should be noted that the amount of 5,318 billion rials was paid in the past Iranian calendar year in 1397 (ended March 20, 2019) with regard to the increase of capital of investee companies.

3- Participating in operation of Australian iron ore mines and constructing concentrate production factories as much as 12.5 million tons

Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company along with Gol-e-Gohar Mining and Industrial Company and Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company (EMSCO) (through Hormozgan Steel Company) and also Fakour Sanat Company, each with 25 percent of investment in using iron ore reserves in Australia, followed up production of 12.5 million tons of concentrate, so that share of partnership of the concerned parties has been paid according to the scheduled program.

Investment of parties in the operation of mine has been predicted as much as \$88 million, so that 5-million tons of concentrate production factory will be put into operation in Phase 1.

For the construction of Phase 1 and also phases 2 and 3, \$960 million worth of investment has been made which is equal to 85 percent of total investment volume, the amount of which will be used from financing scheme of Australian government.

He also pointed to the future investment activities and projects of the company as follows:

1- Project for Constructing New Pelletizing Factory with Production Capacity of 4 m³ annually

Feasibility studies are underway for the construction of new pelletizing factory, costing \$20,974 billion rials (equal to €80 million).

2- Plan for Constructing Roll Mill with 1.1 m³/t Capacity Annually:

Feasibilities studies of the plan for the construction of roll mill, costing \$11,673 billion rials (equal to €52 million) are underway.

Turning to the financing this project, Nourian said, "the company followed up the possibility of receiving foreign finance from Japan in the past for the construction of new pelletizing factory with the production capacity of four million tons/year and also the possibility of using

facilities of Iran and Europe Bank as well as for the provision of liquidity required for purchasing relevant equipment and machinery for the foreign division.

3- Participating in Construction of Pelletizing, Sponge Iron, Steel and Infrastructural Installations in MOKRAN Free Trade Zone

The issue of participating in the construction of pelletizing, sponge iron, steel factories in MOKRAN Free Trade Zone, located in Chabahar, is of the long-term plans of the company.

■ Participating in Projects of Other Companies:

1- Participating in supply and transfer of water of Persian Gulf.

Transfer of desalinated water by three water transfer lines from the Persian Gulf to the southeastern industries of the country, meeting a part of requirements of produc-

tion complexes and their development plans including Sarcheshmeh Copper Mine, Gole-Gohar Iro Ore and Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company in the provinces of Hormozgan, Kerman and Yazd is of the main aim behind launching this plan.

2- Participating with Private Sector for Implementation of Steel Production Projects;

Eng. Nourian added, "in line with approvals of the Board of Directors and for participating with the private sectors, this company embarked on participating in the capital of Ghadir Iranian Iron and Steel Company as much as 30 percent (30%), Arfa' Iron and Steel Company as much as 43 percent, SARMAD Abarkouh Iron and Steel Company as much as 65 percent, Shahrood Steel Company as much as 35 percent and also KAVAND NAHAN ZAMIN Company as much as 29 percent.

Profit and Loss Account Turnover (Figures in million rials)

Description	Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2019	Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2019	Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2019	Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2018	Profit and Loss Account for Fiscal Year Closing on Mar. 20, 2018
	Granulated iron ore and concentrate	Steel ingot and conglomerate	Total	Granulated iron ore and concentrate	Conglomerate
Domestic sales	23,502,022	45,387,590	68,889,612	13,503,922	20,396,908
Exports sale	332,672	1,182,107	1,514,779	653,259	0
Total sales	23,834,694	46,569,697	70,404,391	14,157,181	20,396,908
Cost price of sold goods	(12,824,497)	(31,217,777)	(44,042,274)	(9,358,194)	(14,745,346)
Gross profit	11,512,197	15,351,920	26,864,117	4,798,987	5,651,562
Administrative, general and sales costs	(343,389)	(46,570)	(389,959)	(246,264)	(20,397)
Other incomes and operational costs	340,020	0	340,020	(322,114)	0
Operational profit	11,508,828	15,305,350	26,814,178	4,230,609	5,631,165
Financial costs	0	0	0	0	0
Other (costs) and non-operational incomes	1,053,758	0	1,053,758	2,722,494	0
Net profit before taxation	12,562,586	15,305,350	27,867,936	6,953,103	5,631,165
Taxation	0	0	0	0	0
Net profit	12,562,586	15,305,350	27,867,936	6,953,103	5,631,165
Dividend per share (DPS) - rials	375	457	832	208	168

Net profit:

Considering the table of contents mentioned in above, operating and financial costs, other incomes, operating and nonoperational costs, changes in sales prices and sales volumes and also changes of cost price for the sold goods caused net profit of the company increases from 12,548 billion rials in 2017 to the amount of 27,868 billion rials in 2018, showing a considerable 121 percent hike.

By: A.Saeedi



Description	Comparing statistics on production volume in 2018 as compared to 2017	Comparing statistics on production volume in 2018 as compared to 2017	Comparing statistics on production volume in 2018 as compared to 2017	Comparing statistics on production volume in 2018 as compared to 2017
	Mar. 21, 2018 to Mar. 20, 2019	Mar. 21, 2017 to Mar. 20, 2018	Fluctuation	Percent of fluctuation
Extraction:				
Waste rock	76,120,020	72,659,790	3,460,230	5
Iron ore	16,342,810	15,195,290	1,147,520	8
Total extraction	92,462,830	87,855,080	4,607,750	5
Production:				
Iron ore concentrate	9,770,996	9,388,930	382,066	4
Apatite concentrate	31,411	75,523	(44,112)	(58)
Granulated stone	519,200	515,300	3,900	1
Conglomerate	3,557,079	3,517,127	39,952	1
Sponge iron	238,309	0	238,309	100
Steel ingot	880,980	329,501	551,479	167
Total production of products	14,997,975	13,826,381	1,171,594	8
Total extraction and production of products	107,460,805	101,681,461	5,779,344	6
Sales:				
Iron ore concentrate	6,021,728	5,797,497	224,231	4
Apatite Concentrate	27,916	72,276	(44,360)	(61)
Granulated stone	535,226	1,306,117	(770,891)	(59)
Conglomerate	3,089,744	3,460,827	(371,083)	(11)
Steel ingot	867,340	393,971	473,369	120
Total sales	10,541,954	11,030,688	(488,734)	(4)

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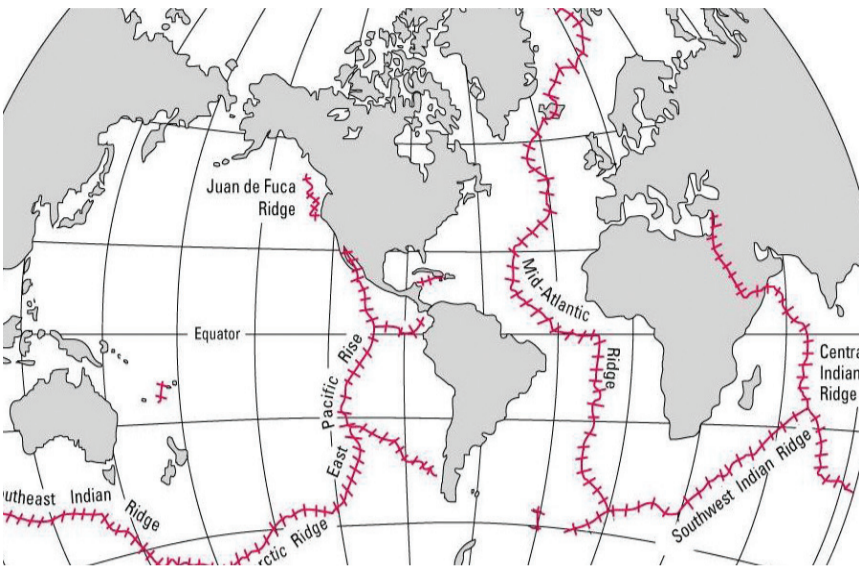
Scientists figured out how tides cause earthquakes

Scientists have figured out why earthquakes along mid-ocean ridges occur during low tides. For 20 years, scientists have known about the link between earthquakes and tides. But because most mid-ocean ridges feature vertical faults, or faults featuring steeply inclined planes, researchers assumed earthquake-generating slips would be more likely to occur at high tide. The seismic data showed the opposite was happening.

“Low tides would reduce the vertical force, which should inhibit sliding and hence earthquakes,” Christopher Scholz, a seismologist at Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, told UPI.

Researchers were stumped by the paradox, but Scholz and his colleagues discovered an explanation. The earthquakes along mid-ocean ridges are triggered by the expansion and contraction of the magma chambers below.

The discovery -- described this week in the journal *Nature Communications* -- was made possible by a network of seafloor instruments along the Pacific’s Juan de Fuca ridge, which helped scientists measure the fault’s movements and model potential explanations for the seismic activity.



“We were able to solve this paradox by including the response of the magma chamber to the tides,” Scholz said. Scholz and his colleagues realized that during low tide, less water mass is pressing down on the soft pocket of molten rock below the volcanic ridge. As a result, the magma chamber expands. When it does, the bot-

tom fault block is pushed upwards, sliding along the top block. The movement triggers earthquakes.

According to the new analysis, it doesn’t take much to trigger an earthquake along the mid-ocean ridges.

“The main reason these faults are so sensitive to stress is that they are very shallow,” Scholz told UPI. “Their average depth is about 1 kilometer as opposed to typical earthquake depths of continental earthquakes of about 10 kilometers. This makes the faults much weaker, and the sensitivity is given by the ratio of the triggering stress divided by the fault strength.”

Researchers estimate small quakes on the mid-ocean ridge could be triggered by other mechanisms, too, and the team of scientists plan to investigate other possible seismic patterns.

“Our next project related to this problem is to study the relationship of the earthquakes with the fortnightly tides,” Scholz said. “That may reveal some new behavior related to the flow of water in and out of the faults which might occur at the longer time periods.”

(Source: UPI)

Decoding Beethoven’s music style using data science

EPFL researchers are investigating Beethoven’s composition style and they are using statistical techniques to quantify and explore the patterns that characterize musical structures in the Western classical tradition. They confirm what is expected against the backdrop of music theory for the classical music era, but go beyond a music theoretical approach by statistically characterizing the musical language of Beethoven for the very first time. Their study is based on the set of compositions known as the Beethoven String Quartets and the results are published in *PLOS ONE* on June 6th, 2019.

“New state-of-the-art methods in statistics and data science make it possible for us to analyze music in ways that were out of reach for traditional musicology. The young field of Digital Musicology is currently advancing a whole new range of methods and perspectives,” says Martin Rohrmeier who leads EPFL’s Digital and Cognitive Musicology Lab (DCML) in the College of Humanities’ Digital Humanities Institute. “The aim of our lab is to understand how music works.”

The Beethoven String Quartets refer to 16 quartets encompassing 70 single movements that Beethoven composed throughout his lifetime. He completed his first String Quartet composition at the turn of the 19th century when he was almost 30 years old, and the last in 1826 shortly before his death. A string quartet is a musical ensemble of four musicians playing string instruments: two violins, the viola, and the cello.

For the study Rohrmeier and colleagues plowed through the scores of all 16 of Beethoven’s String Quartets in digital and annotated form. The most time-consuming part of the work has been to generate the dataset based on ten thousands of annotations by music theoretical experts.

“We essentially generated a large digital resource from Beethoven’s music scores to look for patterns,” says Fabian C. Moss, first author of the *PLOS ONE* study.

When played, the String Quartets represent over 8 hours of music. The scores themselves contain almost 30,000 chord annotations. A chord is a set of notes that sound at the same time, and a note corresponds to a pitch.

In music analysis, chords can be classified according to the role they play in the musical piece. Two well-known types of chords are called the dominant and the tonic, which have central roles for the build-up of tension and release and for establishing musical phrases. But there is a large number of types of chords, including many variants of the dominant and tonic chords. The Beethoven String Quartets contain over 1000 different types of these chords.

“Our approach exemplifies the growing research field of digital humanities, in which data science methods and digital technologies are used to advance our understanding of real-world sources, such as literary texts, music or paintings, under new digital perspectives,” explains co-author Markus Neuwirth.

Beethoven’s creative choices are now apparent through the filter of statistical analysis, thanks to this new data set generated by the researchers.

The study finds that very few chords govern most of the music, a phenomenon that is also known in linguistics, where very few words dominate language corpora. As expected from music theory on music from the classical period, the study shows that the compositions are particularly dominated by the dominant and tonic chords and their many variants. Also, the most frequent transition from one chord



to the next happens from the dominant to the tonic. The researchers also found that chords strongly select for their order and, thus, define the direction of musical time. But the statistical methodology reveals more. It characterizes Beethoven’s specific composition style for the String Quartets, through a distribution of all the chords he used, how often they occur, and how they commonly transition from one to the other. In other words, it captures Beethoven’s composition style with a statistical signature.

“This is just the beginning,” explains Moss. “We are continuing our work by extending the datasets to cover a broad range of composers and historical periods, and invite other researchers to join our search for the statistical basis of the inner workings of music.”

(Source: Science Daily)

Building blocks of the Earth

Chemical analyses of meteorites allow for a better estimation of the chemical composition of the Earth and its potential building blocks. That is the result of a study conducted by a research team from the Institutes of Geology and Mineralogy at the Universities of Cologne and Bonn. The results have appeared in the current issue of *Nature Geoscience*.

The study focuses on the distribution and origin of so-called volatile elements such as zinc, lead and sulphur, which have low boiling temperatures in space. The newly determined distribution of these volatile elements in the Earth shows that some of these building blocks have a chemical composition similar to carbonaceous chondrites, an aqueous group of primitive meteorites. These meteorites come closest to the composition of the original solar nebula from which our solar system formed. Thus, the study also indirectly provides another valuable indication of the source of vital components such as water, carbon and nitrogen on Earth.

The chemical composition of the Earth is not easy to determine. Geological processes such as the formation of the metallic core and the outer crust led to a redistribution of the elements composing our planet. For



example, elements attracted to iron have migrated into the Earth’s core, while elements attracted to silicate composed the rocks of the Earth’s mantle and crust. Today, we only have access to samples from the silicate part of the Earth, which is why we can only estimate the chemical composition of the entire Earth through the additional analysis of primitive meteorites -- the potential building blocks of

the Earth,” said Professor Carsten Münker from the University of Cologne. The recent publication makes an important contribution to understanding the chemical composition of the deeper layers of the Earth.

The research team focused on the distribution of volatile trace elements such as the rare metals indium, cadmium and tellurium. This is a particular challenge since a propor-

tion of these metals was lost already at the beginning of the solar system due to their volatility. Today, they are extremely rare both in meteorites and in the Earth -- less than one gram per ton of rock. ‘So far, we have always assumed that the distribution of these elements decreases linearly the more volatile they are,’ said the geochemist Dr Frank Wombacher, one of the initiators of the study.

By using high-precision methods, however, the scientists arrived at a surprising result. ‘While the frequencies initially decrease linearly, contrary to expectations the most volatile elements are all equally depleted,’ explains Ninja Braukmüller, a doctoral researcher who carried out the study in Cologne. Indium and zinc, the volatile elements attracted to silicate in the Earth’s mantle, also show this pattern. ‘This seems to be unique among the potential building blocks of the Earth,’ says Dr Claudia Funk, a co-author of the study. The results allow the scientists to conclude that the building blocks that have brought volatile elements to Earth are similar in their chemical composition to that of primitive carbonaceous chondrites.

(Source: Science Daily)

Earth’s mantle is magnetic, researchers find

Scientists assumed Earth’s mantle, the layer stretching from the crust to a depth of 255 miles, was magnetically dead. New research suggests they were mistaken.

Most scientists thought Earth’s magnetism was powered by materials in the crust and core, but according to a new study published this week in the journal *Nature*, hematite, a common iron oxide, retains its magnetic qualities at high temperatures.

“This new knowledge about the Earth’s mantle and the strongly magnetic region in the western Pacific could throw new light on any observations of the Earth’s magnetic field,” Ilya Kupenko, mineral physicist and researcher from the University of Munster in Germany, said in a news release.

Earlier this year, scientists had to complete an early update of the World Magnetic Model, a map of Earth’s magnetic fields that powers a variety of global navigational systems, after Magnetic North began shifting and behaving erratically. The ordeal offered a reminder of how little scientists

understand the movement of magnetic materials inside Earth’s interior.

The latest research, however, could help scientists begin to explain some of the planet’s electromagnetic anomalies.

Most of Earth’s magnetism comes from the flow of liquid iron alloys inside the planet’s core. Rocks in the crust also give off magnetic signals. But until now, researchers thought minerals lost their magnetism inside the mantle as a result of the extreme heat and high pressures.

But when, in a series of lab tests, scientists subjected iron oxides to temperatures and pressures comparable to the conditions deep inside the mantle, they found hematite remained magnetic up to a temperature of 925 degrees Celsius.

“As a result, we are able to demonstrate that the Earth’s mantle is not nearly as magnetically ‘dead’ as has so far been assumed,” said Carmen Sanchez-Valle, professor at the Institute of Mineralogy at Munster University. “These findings might justify other conclusions relating to the Earth’s

entire magnetic field.”

Every few hundred thousand years, Earth’s magnetic poles flip. Scientists studying Earth’s electromagnetic history have previously estimated Earth’s magnetic poles migrate across the Pacific. The hypothesis is based on the analysis of ancient rock records and electromagnetic anomalies measured in the ocean floor. The latest research, however, suggests those anomalies could be explained by the movement of hematite-containing rocks in the Earth’s mantle beneath the West Pacific.

“What we now know -- that there are magnetically ordered materials down there in the Earth’s mantle -- should be taken into account in any future analysis of the Earth’s magnetic field and of the movement of the poles,” said Leonid Dubrovinsky, professor at the Bavarian Research Institute of Experimental Geochemistry and Geophysics at Bayreuth University.

(Source: UPI)

Feathers evolved millions of years before birds, and maybe even before dinosaurs

Feathers are not simply the domain of birds, nor did they arise solely for flight. New research on China’s rich fossil record suggests instead that these structures arose 100 million years before birds, and maybe even before dinosaurs themselves.

The breakthrough came late last year, when researchers were studying two new fossilized pterosaurs in China. Once considered scaly and reptilian, these prehistoric flying reptiles (closely related to dinosaurs), were covered in four kinds of tuft and down.

Pterosaurs, it would seem, had feathers remarkably similar to their dinosaur relatives. They must have had a common ancestor.

“This drives the origin of feathers back to 250 million years ago at least. The point of origin of pterosaurs, dinosaurs and their relatives,” says lead author Mike Benton, a paleontologist from the University of Bristol.

“The Early Triassic world then was recovering from the most devastating mass extinction ever, and life on land had come back from near-total wipe-out.”

As this places the origin of feathers way back in the Early Triassic, it means feathers appeared long before the first birds, such as *Archaeopteryx*, came on the scene. This was a time of evolutionary turmoil, when the ancestors of dinosaurs, known as archosaurs, were in a fierce arms-race with the ancestors of mammals.

Feathers probably arose to help in the contest, providing insulation in the warm-blooded precursors of dinosaurs and pterosaurs. Only afterwards would these structures have been used for display or flight.

“[T]hus,” they authors write, “the small dinosaurian ancestors of birds were pre-adapted for a life as active flyers.”

Ever since 1994, when thousands of dinosaur specimens from China were found with feathers, paleontologists have been grappling with the revolutionary idea.

“At first, the dinosaurs with feathers were close to the origin of birds in the evolutionary tree,” explains co-author Baoyu Jiang from the University of Nanjing.

“This was not so hard to believe. So, the origin of feathers was pushed back at least to the origin of those bird-like dinosaurs, maybe 200 million years ago.”

Then, a dinosaur from Russia named *Kulindadromeus* broke the main rule that glued this theory together.

“This dinosaur showed amazingly well-preserved skin covered with scales on the legs and tail, and strange whiskery feathers all over its body,” recalls co-author Maria McNamara from University College Cork.

“What surprised people was that this was a dinosaur that was as far from birds in the evolutionary tree as could be imagined. Perhaps feathers were present in the very first dinosaurs.”

Not all paleontologists agree that feathers come from a single origin. Some think they arose independently in both birds and dinosaurs. But the new analysis suggests otherwise.

Apart from recent paleontology research, the findings are also bolstered by genetics. In 2017, a study found that the same genome regulatory network drove the development of reptile scales, bird feathers, and mammal hairs.

In other words, the root of all three structures may have been present in a common ancestor that existed up to 420 million years ago.

How exactly all three fit together in the evolutionary tree is still unclear. Scientists have shown that the scales on modern birds, such as the legs and necks of chickens, are feathers that have reversed to scales.

This suggests that feathers might have been a default condition for dinosaurs, which was only later suppressed in large, armored members of the group.

“This does not diminish the importance of feathers as key to the success of birds,” Benton and his co-authors write, “but shows that birds did not emerge rapidly from reptiles, but that their set of 30 or more adaptations accumulated stepwise over some 100 [million years].”

(Source: Science Alert)

The mystery of the galaxy with no dark matter

Galaxies with no dark matter are impossible to understand in the framework of the current theory of galaxy formation, because the role of dark matter is fundamental in causing the collapse of the gas to form stars. In 2018, a study published in *Nature* magazine announced the discovery of a galaxy that lacked dark matter, which made a strong impact, and occupied the covers of popular scientific magazines.

Now, according to an article published in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (MNRAS)* a group of researchers at the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC) has solved this mystery via a very complete set of observations of KKS2000J04 (NGC1052-DF2), previously nicknamed “the galaxy without dark matter.”

In this study the researchers, perplexed because all the parameters that depended on the distance of the galaxy were anomalous; have revised the available distance indicators. Using five independent methods to estimate the distance of the object they found that all of them coincided in one conclusion: the galaxy is much nearer than the value presented in the previous research.

The original article published in *Nature* stated that the galaxy is at a distance of some 64 million light years from Earth. However, this new research has revealed that the real distance is much less, around 42 million light years.

Thanks to these new results, the parameters of the galaxy inferred from its distance have become “normal” and fit the observed trends traced by galaxies with similar characteristics.

The most relevant datum that has been found via the new distance analysis is that the total mass of this galaxy is around a half of the mass estimated previously, but the mass of its stars is only about quarter of the previously estimated mass.

This implies that a significant part of the total mass must be made up of dark matter. The results of this work show the fundamental importance of the correct measurement of extragalactic distances. It has always been one of the most challenging tasks in astrophysics: how to measure the distances to objects which are very far away and which we cannot touch.

(Source: Science Daily)

A hidden chamber has been found in NERO’s pleasure palace buried under the Colosseum

If you stroll through the neighborhood of the Colosseum in Rome today, you could easily think that that the Colosseum dates to the origins of the Roman republic or that it is the most impressive structure to occupy itself. But you might be wrong, as beneath the Colosseum and surrounding area lie the ruins of one of the most spectacular and unusual palaces in human history. This luxurious 2000 year old structure, which can only be described as the Emperor Nero’s pleasure palace, lay hidden for centuries before its rediscovery in the 15th century when a young man fell through a hole in the ground and found himself in a richly decorated cave. And now, archaeologists excavating in the environs of the Colosseum announced that they have discovered another hidden chamber, full of ancient artwork.



According to the statement, the chamber, nicknamed the “sphinx room” was accidentally discovered as archaeologists were mounting scaffolding to complete renovations on a near-by room. Alfonsina Russo, director of the archaeological park of the Colosseum, noted in the press release that this chamber had “remained in darkness for almost twenty centuries” before it was unearthed.

Nero’s palace was known as the Domus Aurea or “Golden House,” and was named because of the use of gold leaf throughout the structure and the jewels that adorned the ceilings inside. The palace was a vast, sprawling, 300-room complex that was carefully and intricately landscaped and covered in white marble. It was built in the location of a number of aristocratic villas, which had been destroyed in the Great Fire of Rome. The Roman biographer Suetonius tells us that the palace was “ruinously prodigal” and included pastures, flocks of animals, vineyards, trees, and even an artificial lake, all of which were in the center of the city. According to another historian, Tacitus, Nero oversaw the engineering of the palace himself. Remarkably, the entire thing was constructed in only five years.

There are numerous innovations in the design of the building, but perhaps the most extraordinary was a mechanism, operated by slaves, that caused a domed ceiling to revolve and drop perfume and rose petals onto assembled party guests as they ate. If it sounds like this would obscure the smell of the food then that was the point. As Mark Bradley has written in Smell and the Ancient Senses, aristocratic Romans like to keep their guests in suspense about the contents of their meals. It was considered especially low-brow to be drawn to the smell of a meal cooking in the kitchen. The device wasn’t a resounding success according to one story, likely influenced by the propaganda of his opponents, one dinner guest was asphyxiated.

(Source: MSN)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Kathmandu Valley

A World Heritage, the Kathmandu Valley is illustrated by seven groups of monuments and buildings which display the full range of historic and artistic achievements for which the Kathmandu Valley is world famous.

Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, these monument zones are the Durbar squares or urban centers with their palaces, temples and public spaces of the three cities



of Kathmandu (Hanuman Dhoka), Patan and Bhaktapur, and the religious ensembles of Swayambhu, Baudhdhanath, Pashupati and Changu Narayan.

The religious ensemble of Swayambhu includes the oldest Buddhist monument (a stupa) in the Valley; that of Baudhdhanath includes the largest stupa in Nepal; Pashupati has an extensive Hindu temple precinct, and Changu Narayan comprises traditional Newari settlement, and a Hindu temple complex with one of the earliest inscriptions in the Valley from the fifth century CE.

The unique tiered temples are mostly made of fired brick with mud mortar and timber structures. The roofs are covered with small overlapping terracotta tiles, with gilded brass ornamentation.

The windows, doorways and roof struts have rich decorative carvings. The stupas have simple but powerful forms with massive, whitewashed hemispheres supporting gilded cubes with the all-seeing eternal Buddha eyes.

These monuments were defined by the outstanding cultural traditions of the Newars, manifested in their unique urban settlements, buildings and structures with intricate ornamentation displaying outstanding craftsmanship in brick, stone, timber and bronze that are some of the most highly developed in the world.

(Source: UNESCO)

IKIA new terminal’s operational readiness tested

TOURISM
d e s k

TEHRAN — On Saturday, Imam Khomeini Intl. Airport (IKIA) officially concluded Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) in its newly-constructed Salam Terminal ahead of its inauguration in the near future.

Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami and several local aviation authorities attended by the trial process of the terminal, which is aimed to offer entirely electronic smart services, according to IKAC’s public relations office.

Salam Terminal, with an annual capacity of five million passengers, has been mostly designed and constructed by Iranian engineers.

“Employing local workforce, technology and material helped us save at least \$3 million in the construction process,” says Ali Rostami, the CEO of IKAC, financialtribune.com reported.

Currently, IKIA only carries out international flights. But plans are underway to transfer a portion of domestic flights to Imam Khomeini International Airport after the inauguration of Salam Terminal.

The measure is aimed at attracting more foreign tourists to Iranian cities. “Shiraz, Isfahan and Tabriz airports officials are keen to operate direct flights to IKIA,” Siavash Amirmokri, the head of Iran Airport Company told IRNA.



Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami (C) attends Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) test for the newly-constructed Salam Terminal at Imam Khomeini International Airport, June 8, 2019.

However, “the final decision should be made by airline companies after studying the profitability of operating the flights.”

Imam Khomeini International Airport is expected to handle domestic flights between 12 am and 5 am, when Mehrabad Airport is barred from operating flights.

Pointing to IKAC’s 30-km distance from Tehran, Amirmokri said, “We first need to make sure that transferring domestic flights to IKAC will not have a negative impact on the demand for domestic flights.”

Back in May, Kjell Kloosterziel, the head of steering committee at the Netherlands Airport Consultants (NACO), paid a visit to the passenger terminal, saying that he felt it has been a success.

The Salaam International Terminal is a successful project for the country’s airport industry and “I think you can be only proud of your country,” Kloosterziel said.

Imam Khomeini International Airport registered 47,446 takeoffs and landings in the last Iranian fiscal year that ended March 20, 2019 to register a 19% decline. Over 7.27 million passengers and around 141,704 tons of cargos were transported from the airport during the period to be ranked third on the list of Iran’s busiest airports. The figures show a 19% and 14% decline year on year.

Handicrafts exports up 3%, hit \$289 million

Tours to Iran’s world craft hubs in the pipeline

1 →

In the past year, we managed to succeed in creating 58,357 jobs in handicrafts arena. And significant measures were taken to grant [low-interest] loans in order to create job opportunities in rural areas, she explained.

“The World Handicrafts Day will be commemorated this evening [June 10] in a ceremony to be held in Tehran’s Nejatollahi St. [where is a hub for Iranian handicrafts] and it will be attended by Ghada Hijavi, the head of World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region.”

Last October, Abadeh in southern Fars province and Meybod in central Yazd province were respectively named world crafts cities for “Woodcarving” and “Zilou” (traditional hand-woven floor-covering), while the village of Khorashad in eastern South Khorasan province received the same priv-

ilege for the craft “Toebafi” (traditional hand-woven fabrics).

Over the past couple of years, the WCC presented the same tags to the cities of Mashhad, Lalejin, Isfahan, and Tabriz and the village of Kalpourgan.

Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are among Iranian exports to Iraq, Afghanistan and Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Dozens of Iranian handicrafts have gained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence during the past couple of years. Some 75 percent of Iranian handicrafts are produced by females, Masoumeh Ebtekar, vice president for women’s and family affairs, said in April, 2018.

Construction workers come across prehistorical cultural evidence in western Iran

TOURISM
d e s k

TEHRAN — Scraps of cultural evidence dating from 5th and 4th millennium BC have accidentally been discovered during a construction project in the western city of Azna, Lorestan province.

The cultural evidence comprises stone tools, earthen figurines, bone remnants and clay fragments, which are estimated to date back to the 5th and 4th millennium BC, provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Sunday, Mehr reported.

“The construction project was stopped immediately as the historical relics were brought to light in Keyvan neighborhood of Azna,” the official said

In order to prevent from further destruction and to determine the eras [of human settlements], a 45-day archaeological survey is being conducted, the official said.



Authorized by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, the survey

started on May 26 and it also follows operations of demarcation and stratigraphy

(the analysis of the order and position of layers of archaeological remains) in the troglodytic structure, he explained.

The province was once a cultural crossroad for Paleolithic and Neanderthal residents. In May, an official unveiling ceremony showcased stone tools and a fragment of a fossilized skull, attributed to Homo sapiens, excavated from the Kaldar Cave in Lorestan. The cave has also yielded weapon fragments crafted by Neanderthals.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. Under Cyrus the Great, Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BCE and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

Ancient asteroid crater located off coast of Scotland

The location of an ancient impact crater made by the biggest asteroid ever to hit Britain has been traced to a spot under the sea between mainland Scotland and the Outer Hebrides.

Researchers at Oxford and Aberdeen universities found signs of the violent collision in Scotland on a field trip in 2008, but have only now pinpointed where the asteroid came down.

Tests on rocks near Ullapool in north-west Scotland revealed that an object about a mile wide had crashed into a spot in the Minch, a strait that separates the mainland and northern Inner Hebrides from Lewis and Harris, six miles west of the village of Lochinver.

The 38,000 mph collision, which thumped a 12-mile-wide crater into the ground, happened 1.2bn years ago, when most life on Earth was still in the oceans and plants had yet to take root on land. At the time, what is now Scotland was a semi-arid land that lay close to the equator.

“The impact would have sent huge roiling clouds of dust and gas at several hundred degrees in all directions from the impact site,” said Ken Amor, an Oxford researcher who led the latest study. What is left of the crater is submerged in 200-metre-deep water and covered in sediment.

The first hints of the impact came more than a decade ago when Amor was helping undergraduates on a geology field trip in the Scottish Highlands. On the last day, the scientists stopped in Stoer, a small village, to inspect an unusual rock formation known as the Stac Fada member (SFM).

Previous researchers speculated that the distinctive red sandstone had come from a volcano, but Amor realised that “strange green blobs” in the rock resembled features of an impact crater that underlies the town of Nordlingen near the Danube in western Bavaria. Amor took samples of the SFM back to Oxford and found strong evidence of an asteroid strike: quartz crystals that had been deformed by the shock of an impact.

He also found high levels of platinum and palladium, metals that are enriched in meteorites, the name given to space rocks that survive their fiery passage through the atmosphere to reach Earth’s surface.

Having confirmed that an asteroid had come down near Stoer, Amor’s team set about finding the impact crater. Using three independent techniques that drew on the scatter of dust and rocks thrown up by the impact, and the orientation of tiny magnetic grains blasted into the sky, the researchers traced backwards to the point of impact. Details of the work appear in the Journal of the Geological Society.

Assuming the crater has not been eroded away, it should be possible to detect with a seismic reflection survey of the kind used by prospecting oil companies, Amor said. Further studies of the rock might enable scientists to trace the meteorite back to a family of asteroids still orbiting the sun.

It is unclear how common such impacts are because craters are wiped from Earth’s surface by erosion, burial and plate tectonics. However, asteroids of the size of the one that hit



A field photo taken at Stoer showing the laminar beds of sandstone, in the middle of which is the impact deposit left by the asteroid.

the Minch are thought to strike between once every 100,000 years and once every 1m years. While the impact would have been dramatic, sending a mushroom cloud and fireball high into the sky, it was minor compared with the spectacular strike in Mexico’s Yucatán peninsula 66m years ago, when a space rock estimated at six to 50 miles wide put an end to the reign of the dinosaurs.

(Source: The Guardian)

Europe’s hotel construction pipeline is accelerating

Analysts at Lodging Econometrics (LE) report that Europe’s hotel construction pipeline continues its robust up-swing in 2019 with 1,670 projects/254,600 rooms, a remarkable 22% increase in projects and 19% increase in rooms year-over-year (YOY).

There has been an optimistic, upward trend in the European service and construc-

tion sectors, which is off-setting the weak outlook for exports and the on-going shortfalls in manufacturing. New construction is being positively impacted by accommodative lending policies. Unemployment is at a 19-year low, yet an economic slowdown is still predicted for 2019.

There are 844 projects/133,620 rooms currently under construction and 480

projects/72,588 rooms planning to start construction in the next 12 months, both at record highs. The early planning stage stands at 346 projects/48,392 rooms, slightly off its record high at 2018 year-end.

New project announcements with 360 projects/50,337 rooms and construction starts with 223 projects/33,973 rooms have both reached all-time highs, both quar-

terly-over-quarter and on a rolling-four quarter basis. As a result of these positive pipeline trends, the LE forecast for new hotel openings will continue to soar with 390 new hotels/53,241 rooms anticipated to open in 2019 and a further 426 new hotels/61,490 rooms in 2020, a new record high.

(Source: Travel Daily News)

Driverless cars working together can speed up traffic by 35%

A fleet of driverless cars working together to keep traffic moving smoothly can improve overall traffic flow by at least 35 percent, researchers have shown.

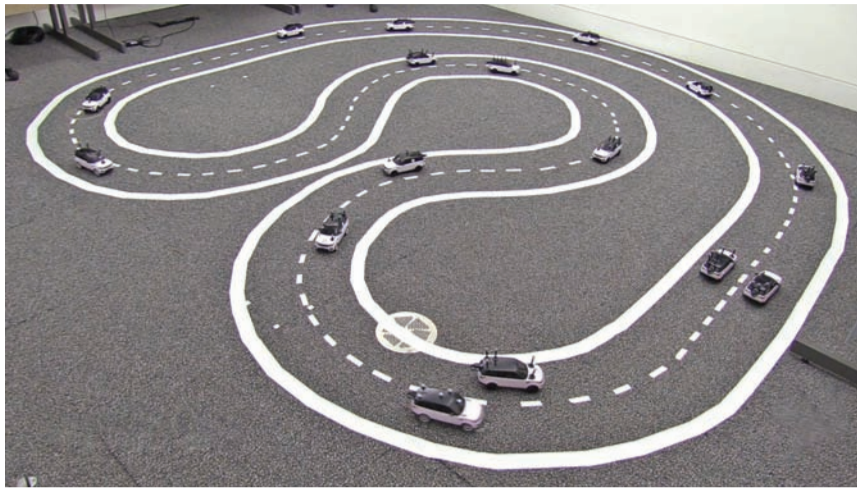
The researchers, from the University of Cambridge, programmed a small fleet of miniature robotic cars to drive on a multi-lane track and observed how the traffic flow changed when one of the cars stopped.

When the cars were not driving cooperatively, any cars behind the stopped car had to stop or slow down and wait for a gap in the traffic, as would typically happen on a real road. A queue quickly formed behind the stopped car and overall traffic flow was slowed.

However, when the cars were communicating with each other and driving cooperatively, as soon as one car stopped in the inner lane, it sent a signal to all the other cars. Cars in the outer lane that were in immediate proximity of the stopped car slowed down slightly so that cars in the inner lane were able to quickly pass the stopped car without having to stop or slow down significantly.

Additionally, when a human-controlled driver was put on the 'road' with the autonomous cars and moved around the track in an aggressive manner, the other cars were able to give way to avoid the aggressive driver, improving safety.

The results, to be presented today at the International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) in Montréal, will be useful for studying how autonomous



cars can communicate with each other, and with cars controlled by human drivers, on real roads in the future.

"Autonomous cars could fix a lot of different problems associated with driving in cities, but there needs to be a way for them to work together," said co-author Michael He, an undergraduate student at St John's College, who designed the algorithms for the experiment.

"If different automotive manufacturers are all developing their own autonomous cars with their own software, those cars all need to communicate with each other effectively," said co-author Nicholas Hyldmar, an undergraduate student at Downing College, who designed much of

the hardware for the experiment.

The two students completed the work as part of an undergraduate research project in summer 2018, in the lab of Dr. Amanda Prorok from Cambridge's Department of Computer Science and Technology.

Many existing tests for multiple autonomous driverless cars are done digitally, or with scale models that are either too large or too expensive to carry out indoor experiments with fleets of cars.

Starting with inexpensive scale models of commercially-available vehicles with realistic steering systems, the Cambridge researchers adapted the cars with motion capture sensors and a Raspberry Pi, so that the cars could communicate via wifi.

They then adapted a lane-changing algorithm for autonomous cars to work with a fleet of cars. The original algorithm decides when a car should change lanes, based on whether it is safe to do so and whether changing lanes would help the car move through traffic more quickly. The adapted algorithm allows for cars to be packed more closely when changing lanes and adds a safety constraint to prevent crashes when speeds are low. A second algorithm allowed the cars to detect a projected car in front of it and make space.

They then tested the fleet in 'egocentric' and 'cooperative' driving modes, using both normal and aggressive driving behaviours, and observed how the fleet reacted to a stopped car. In the normal mode, cooperative driving improved traffic flow by 35% over egocentric driving, while for aggressive driving, the improvement was 45%. The researchers then tested how the fleet reacted to a single car controlled by a human via a joystick.

"Our design allows for a wide range of practical, low-cost experiments to be carried out on autonomous cars," said Prorok. "For autonomous cars to be safely used on real roads, we need to know how they will interact with each other to improve safety and traffic flow."

In future work, the researchers plan to use the fleet to test multi-car systems in more complex scenarios including roads with more lanes, intersections and a wider range of vehicle types.

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

New tool helps airline travelers avoid airlines that use facial recognition technology



A new tool launched by privacy activists offers to help travelers avoid increasingly invasive facial recognition technologies in airports.

Activist groups Fight for the Future, Demand Progress and Credo on Wednesday unveiled a new website called AirlinePrivacy.com, which shows users what airlines use facial recognition to verify the identity of passengers before boarding. The site also helps customers to directly book flights with airlines that don't use facial recognition technologies.

Airlines' use of facial recognition technology is raising fresh questions about privacy and data security, advocates have argued.

Instead of verifying passengers' details by scanning a boarding pass, the technology — which is provided by government agencies — scans passengers' faces and sends that information to border control to verify identity and flight details.

JetBlue began using the technology in 2017 in partnership with federal agencies, after Donald Trump issued an executive order pushing for the use of facial recognition technology in US airports.

Since then, more airlines have begun incorporating the technology, including Delta, American Airlines, British Airways and Lufthansa.

Airlines that do not use facial recognition technology include Alaska, United, Southwest, Allegiant and Air Canada.

Although airlines say they do not store passengers' data, it is shared with federal agencies that are able to store it. A spokesperson for U.S. Customs and Border Protection said it retains biographic exit records for US citizens for 15 years and for non-citizens for 75 years. Photos are only kept for 12 hours.

"CBP is committed to protecting the privacy of all travelers and has issued several privacy impact assessments related to entry/exit, employed strong technical security safeguards and has limited the amount of personally identifiable information used in the transaction," the spokesperson said.

Though biometric boarding programs are not a security requirement for flights in the U.S., many passengers may not know they can decline its use. In most cases, the technology is implemented on an opt-out basis, meaning passengers are automatically enrolled unless they instruct otherwise.

The opt-out basis of the programs puts the onus of maintaining privacy on the consumer, who may not know they are being tracked to begin with, said Tihi Hayslett, a senior campaigner at Demand Progress, another activist group.

"If you are opting in, you are giving explicit

consent for whatever is happening, but the fact that it is opt-out means the assumption is that everyone who is flying JetBlue wants to be in the facial recognition system, and that is just not true," said Jelani Drew, a campaigner at Fight for the Future, a privacy activist group. According to Drew, airlines' use of the technology marks a new frontier in privacy invasions.

American Airlines told the Guardian it is only using biometric technology in a pilot program at LAX airport in Los Angeles and users can opt out in favor of using boarding passes. Lufthansa said its program is also only in use at LAX and users are able to opt out of facial recognition. Delta said its biometric program is limited to Atlanta international airport and that users can opt out and use a boarding pass. A spokesman from British Airways said after publication of this story that more than 250,000 travelers have used its biometric boarding process since it launched, allowing the company to board aircraft in half the time it took with traditional tickets.

"While it is optional for customers to engage with the technology, we assure them that we would never compromise their security and don't hold or retain any biometric data," he said.

Wednesday's launch of the website comes as scrutiny of facial recognition technologies has heightened. In May, San Francisco became the first city in the United States to ban the use of facial recognition technology. Shareholders of Amazon have been pushing the company to stop selling facial recognition technology to law enforcement. A 2016 Georgetown University study found roughly 117 million people's identities are already in facial recognition databases and there is minimal legal instruction on how that data can be used.

In a hearing of the US House oversight committee on the use of facial recognition technologies, the congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez questioned Austin Gould, an official at the Transportation Security Administration, about the ethics of the deployment of these features at airports and made him clarify on the record that users cannot opt in to the program, only opt out.

"Requiring facial scanning before boarding a flight isn't just an inconvenience, it's a creepy and alarming invasion of our privacy," said Hayslett, the Demand Progress campaigner. "This is an appalling attack on privacy and basic rights by JetBlue and we need to stop it now before it becomes the new normal."

This story was updated on 6 June 2019 with a statement from a spokesman for British Airways.

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

Technology tips every flexible workplace should follow



Companies around the world are embracing flexible work to make employees happier and more productive. According to stats from Owl Labs, 52 percent of global employees work from home at least once per week. What's more, 16 percent of companies are fully remote. A major driver of the work-from-anywhere trend is the accessibility of workplace apps, which help teams connect without missing a beat.

A decade ago, buying business software as a non-technical employee wasn't exactly easy. Usually, an IT manager would purchase all of the software that was used on company machines, which largely remained in the office. The few remote workers logged into these systems using cumbersome and often slow corporate virtual private networks (or VPNs). The Software as a Service (SaaS) used today, to contrast, is based in the cloud and enables remote employees to get the same experience as those in the office.

Even with all of the convenience of SaaS, I think it's still important for companies to know the secrets to supporting remote workers' technology needs. So here's a list of six things I believe any smart company that wants to encourage flexible work culture needs to do.

■ Let employees work on their own circadian rhythms

Research suggests that eight-hour-a-day office employees are actually only productive for two hours and 53 minutes on any given day! Rather than enforcing a butts-in-seats policy, allow workers to access tools and log into systems on a timeline that works for them.

On the flip side, it's easy to constantly demand remote workers' attention with instant communication platforms like Slack or Zoom. Be sure to respect people's time and productivity by allowing them space to complete their assigned tasks.

■ Onboard remote workers quickly

Onboarding employees onto the right apps can be a challenge, especially for companies with large remote workforces. However, it could not be more important to master the technology onboarding process and provide proper training.

According to my team's research, employees use an average of 15 different SaaS tools. To speed onboarding, design a checklist for managers and other stakeholders that assigns clear ownership of who does what on a remote employee's first day. A good first impression will solidify that they're an important part of the team, even if they're not in the office.

■ Be more diverse...geographically and otherwise

Why limit yourself to a localized talent pool when qualified employees are everywhere? Companies like InVision have a 700-person workforce that is fully remote, with employees located all around the globe. As an added benefit, remote work can help support employees who have complicated caregiving situations, have disabilities, or need flexible hours in order to work.

Opening up your workforce to remote employees can give you access to a diverse talent pool your competition is leaving on the table. Put SaaS in their hands, and it really doesn't matter whether they are in the office or not.

■ Know that SaaS apps typically don't last long, but that's ok

Our team recently learned that the majority of mid-sized companies turnover 30 percent of their application stack year-over-year. While some might see this turnover as a liability, if your company builds flexible IT policies that allow changes to happen quickly, you'll actually help employees remain productive (and help your business stay ahead of the competition).

Keep your policies overly restrictive, and you run the risk of employees going rogue with out-of-budget and potentially insecure apps.

■ Understand the unique security challenges of SaaS

With IT management being largely decentralized, security will be difficult for teams to wrangle. Add to that challenge remote workers, and basic account security measures can be tough to enforce. Strong passwords and multi-factor authentication often fall through the cracks in favor of convenience.

Remote teams should use tools that make security dead simple, such as password managers or identity and access management (IAM) tools. Rather than leave security up to individuals to remember, the most effective tools feel invisible to the user while still providing a high level of protection.

■ Think of the internet as the cultural center

Even with its challenges, flexible work is becoming the way of the future for organizations worldwide. Without the boundaries of place, companies have access to a wider talent pool and can provide more opportunities to people who otherwise wouldn't be able to regularly commute to an office.

As founder of Automattic (which also has a fully distributed workforce) Matt Mullenweg put it, "You have to be really committed to keep the creative center and soul of the organization on the internet, and not in an office."

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

How to go from product idea to mass production when starting a business

Have you ever had an idea that burned brightly in your mind, but you had no idea how to get it started? Most entrepreneurs have. This frustration can be especially prevalent for startup OEMs -- Original Equipment Manufacturers who have developed some invention, gadget or machine idea and are seeking the best route to go from idea stage to mass production.

Another burden that many startups have to bear is seeing someone else develop, mass-produce and market an idea that they have had for a while, because they were dragging their feet for too long. I know from experience that the later pain is heavier, so it is best to execute fast. These steps will help you.

■ 1. Identify the selling point of your product idea before starting your business.



You must ask yourself the big "why question" about your product and formulate a theory or concept from your answer. Why do you want to implement this idea? What does it add to your target customers?

In other words, what is your selling point? You cannot answer either one of these questions without a reasonable study of your target market and what problems they have that you can solve. Identifying your differentiation value to the market is a great start to implementation, because it will play into the way you manufacture and mass produce your product.

■ 2. Craft a 3D CAD (computer-aided design) model.

For most OEMs, finalizing the creation of a useful 3D CAD model of your product is half the battle. There are a plethora of amazing software tools you can use to design the model, so the choice you make will depend on the product you are creating.

If you do not have a professional on staff to handle this, you can contract one to make sure your idea is well represented. Whatever errors or misrepresentations exist in your model will show up in your prototype, so you have to be thorough.

■ 3. Create a prototype.

There have been a few businesses that went straight to production without prototyping, because they were dead sure their design was a hit. Most of them crashed. Prototyping is a necessary burden you will have to carry if you are intent on making sure that your product is leak-proof by the time it enters the market.

According to Ford, the company saves up to \$439k and months of lead-time through rapid prototyping. Whether you are prototyping for functionality, form and fit, to check design aesthetics or all of the above, the actual physical prototype is far more valuable to your journey to production than a design on paper.

■ 4. Radically test your product.

To follow this step, you need to make sure that you have followed step 3 to the letter and built a Minimum Viable Product (MVP). In the words of Eric Ries, a Silicon Valley-based entrepreneur and the author of The Lean Startup, "A minimum viable product is the simplest form of your idea that you can actually sell as a product."

Next you need to run your product by critics. Survey potential customers about the problem you're trying to solve, and see if your solution resonates with them. It's a good idea to tailor this survey to the portion of the market that's likely to be skeptical, including friends who are naturally pessimistic or previously unsatisfied customers.

■ 5. Tweak your product.

This is the point where some people give up on their products altogether, but if your idea survived the testing phase, there are probably a few things you need to tweak based on the feedback. This is the time to apply such changes to your model and prototype.

■ 6. Create a test website.

The idea is to get further feedback and to prep the market for your product. Once the word is out about your product, you can create a simple website where people can get information about your product. Link your website to relevant social media platforms to monitor progress. You can usually tell if a product will get traction by the number of click-throughs on ads.

■ 7. Time to mass produce.

You have a lot of decisions to make at this point. First, you need to decide if you can handle manufacturing by yourself. If your startup has been reasonably funded to the point where you can develop your own production line, then that is amazing. However, if you do not have the financial wherewithal, there are a few other routes you can take.

You can decide to sell your invention or product idea to a manufacturer who is interested enough to take over the responsibilities of production and marketing. You can also strike mutually beneficial deals with manufacturers to produce, market and sell the product while you still own your idea and receive a percentage of profits.

You also need to decide what kind of manufacturing best suits your product. Many businesses now go with the relatively cheaper option of 3D printing as opposed to machining. However, while machining projects is relatively more expensive, it may be best for your business if your product requires metal components and if you intend to order a very large number at once.

According to Ronan Ye, CEO of 3ERP, "It's easy to be tempted by the low startup costs of desktop 3D printers: cheap machines, cheap plastic filament, cheap operating costs. But it's worth remembering that 3D printing at its cheapest is only capable of processing polymers."

To make the best decision in regards to manufacturing, you need to consider cost and your ability to bear it, as well as efficiency. That being said, you are well on your way to hitting the market with that amazing idea.

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

Kharazmi University centennial celebration

1 → While you proceed in your studies, you will feel the difficulty and burden of responsibility. However, windows of light and prospects of ambition will be opened to you. This is what we call the beautiful hardship and the comfortable fatigue.

Human experience demonstrated that; whenever the voice of reason reinforces, the cries of war, conflicts and racism belittle. The peaceful warm sun radiates to secure us in the shades with harmony. Kharazmi University is the repository of minds, hearts and consciences, so it is natural that we meet with our linguistic, societal and sectarian differences, to integrate under Kharazmi and to preserve the spirit of the peaceful, thoughtful human being in us.

Life is full of experiences and adventures, rise and fall, joy and sadness, and if I wanted to asses my existence in this university, I can just be proud to become one of the students of this ancient edifice, that will remain influential at all levels and anytime.

Congratulation to Kharazmi University on her 100th birthday, hoping another hundred years of giving to come.

Germany helps support vulnerable Afghan and Iraqi refugees in Iran

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has contributed €2 million (US\$2.2 million) to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in support of 30,000 of the most vulnerable Afghan and Iraqi refugees, most of them women and girls living in settlements in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This latest contribution from the German Federal Foreign Office will allow WFP to continue meeting the basic food and nutrition needs of refugees living in 20 settlements across 13 provinces of Iran this year.

“We’re grateful to the Government and people of Germany for their generous support to our operations in Iran,” said WFP Representative and Country Director in Iran, Negar Gerami. “Stable funding is essential if we’re to continue assisting the most vulnerable refugees who rely almost entirely on WFP for their basic food needs.”

WFP will use the funds to provide both cash and wheat flour to refugee families. The combination of cash and food assistance ensures that refugees have a balanced, nutritious diet and can buy the food of their choice. Cash benefits the wider community by sustaining demand in local shops and bakeries which are sometimes run by refugees themselves.

“Germany has contributed nearly €8 million to WFP over the past six years to support vulnerable refugee families in Iran,” said German Ambassador to Tehran, Micheael Klor Berchtold. “We share with WFP the goal of wanting to improve refugees’ lives and at the same time help them build a better future. While WFP assistance to refugee families secures their food needs, it is coupled with incentives for education, thus following a holistic approach to overcome the protracted refugee crisis in this country. We see the big needs and we want to continue our close partnership with WFP.”

Over more than three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been hosting around one million refugees — the fifth largest refugee population in the world.

WFP has been providing assistance to refugees in Iran since the arrival of the first asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Iraq in the late 1980s.

(Source: WFP)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Death of President Hafez al Assad

(June 15, 2000)

The death of the Syrian President Hafez al- Assad has been marked by open displays of grief in the streets of Damascus.

Until late into the night, thousands of **mourners** in trucks and cars **draped** in black had driven through the streets, chanting **slogans lamenting** the departure of their leader and hailing his son, Bashar, as the man who will take on his legacy and carry it forward.

The **funeral cortege** bearing the body of the **late** President Hafez al-Assad has made its final journey through the streets of Damascus. Thousands gathered in the city’s central square to **bid farewell** to the man who has ruled their country for thirty years. From there, the coffin was taken to the presidential palace, where Arab leaders and senior world figures took turns to **pay their respects**.

The **anticipation** here is steadily building. The crowd has seen the plane in the distance that is carrying the president’s body, which has already landed nearby. People are **straining** eagerly to catch their first **glimpse** of the coffin; they’ve been waiting all day in the **baking hot sun**; standing in orderly groups and chanting slogans nonstop near the village’s main mosque. One young man marched around the area with a **bloodied** chest, apparently cut in a show of **excessive emotion**.

■ WORDS

mourners: a person who attends a funeral

draped: if something is draped with a piece of cloth it is covered by it; in this case draped in black - the color associated with death

slogans: short, easily remembered phrases often used by crowds of shouting people

lamenting: if you lament something, you express your sadness or regret about it

funeral cortege: a cortege is a procession of people who are walking or riding in cars to a funeral

late: you use late when you are talking about someone who is dead

bid farewell: an old-fashioned phrase meaning, «to say goodbye»

pay their respects: spending a quiet moment in the presence of the deceased person to honor their memory

anticipation: if you anticipate an event, you realize in advance that it will happen and you are prepared for it

straining: if you strain to do something you make a great effort to do it

glimpse: if you glimpse something, you see it very briefly and not very well

baking hot sun: very hot (you bake food in an oven)

bloodied: covered in blood

excessive emotion: too much feeling

(Source: BBC)

Urban planning challenges: rehabilitation of rundown areas

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

TEHRAN — Rundown areas in the Iranian capital, Tehran, are in a poor condition and rehabilitation of the neighborhoods, which are in a neglected state, is painfully slow.

The metropolis of Tehran is facing various challenges namely air pollution, traffic congestion, unplanned and unsustainable growth of urban sprawl, and possibly worst of all rundown areas.

According to a report published by Fars news agency on Saturday, rundown areas in Tehran are converging some 3,268 hectares. Sadly, only 13 percent of the areas are rehabilitated over the past three years.

While according to a national plan drafted in the year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018) rundown areas were supposed to be renovated within 5 years no practical measure has been taken so far, and the conditions are even worsening in some neighborhoods.

Some 5 percent of Tehran land area is located in rundown areas. Most rundown areas are situated in districts 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 17 of Tehran and the district 22, in northwestern Tehran, has the smallest number of dilapidated buildings.

Population of the capital stands at about 9 million and some 15 percent of the fairly large population are residing the rundown areas.

Structurally unsound buildings would be worst hit in the event of an earthquake or flooding, hence the number of casualties will most definitely increase compared to other neighborhoods. As a building ages, the structure can become weaker. Unstable buildings are dangerous and could collapse during stormy or severe weather conditions.

While the municipality seems to be in charge of rehabilitation of rundown buildings the government should gain the



Structurally unsound buildings would be worst hit in the event of an earthquake or flooding, hence the number of casualties will most definitely increase compared to other neighborhoods. As a building ages, the structure can become weaker. Unstable buildings are dangerous and could collapse during stormy or severe weather conditions.

upper hand and make serious attempts to rebuild the ramshackle houses and buildings with allotting generous budget.

■ Urban decay

Urban decay (also known as urban rot and urban blight) is the sociological process by which a previously functioning city, or part of a city, falls into disrepair and decrepitude. It may feature deindustrialization, depopulation or deurbanization, economic restructuring, abandoned buildings and infrastructure,

high local unemployment, fragmented families, political disenfranchisement, crime, and a desolate cityscape, known as greyfield or urban prairie.

■ Government’s initiatives to tackle urban decay

One of the main reasons for urban decay and increase in the number of rundown buildings and hence rundown areas is house price inflation. The population is growing and economic conditions are worsening, land and house

FAO warns of another desert locust breakout in Iran

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — In mid-May, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warned of another desert locust breakout in mid-June in Iran if the current situation is not controlled.

As a result of unusually good ecological conditions, a second generation of breeding is expected to cause a further increase of locusts in the spring breeding areas of Saudi Arabia and Iran, the report explained.

Desert locusts are short-horned grasshoppers that can form large swarms and pose a major threat to agricultural production, livelihoods, food security, and the environment and economic development.

In Iran, hopper and adult groups and a few hopper bands are present along parts of the coast from west of Bandar Lengeh to the Pakistan border and in the Jaz Murian Basin of the interior. A second generation of spring breeding started in late April with substantial hatching this past week that will cause more hopper groups and bands to form, which could give rise to new adult groups and swarms starting about mid-June if not controlled. Intensive control operations treated more than 18,000 ha so far in May. There is a risk that a few adult groups or small swarms could appear from Arabia at times.

In a more recent report updated on June 5 FAO noted that intensive ground and aerial control operations continued during May against widespread infestations of hopper and adult groups, bands and swarms in Saudi Arabia and Iran that developed from two generations of unprecedented spring breeding.

Swarms moved from eastern Yemen into the central



highlands and a few continued into southern Saudi Arabia. A few swarms moved to southern Jordan during a brief period of unusual southerly winds while hopper bands and immature adult groups were present along the Kuwait / Saudi Arabia border. Winter-bred immature adult groups persisted on the northern Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia and the coast in southeast Egypt. At the end of May, adult groups appeared in the interior along both sides of the Egypt/Sudan border.

While the control operations have reduced locust infestations in the spring breeding areas, populations that are not detected or cannot be treated will form groups and small swarms that will move to summer breeding areas in the interior of Sudan and Yemen, and along the Indo-Pakistan border during June. As rains have occurred some six weeks earlier than normal

in these areas, breeding could commence by the end of this month. Depending on the summer rains, two generations of breeding may be possible this year, causing a further increase in locust numbers by October.

Very little breeding occurred in Northwest Africa this spring so locust numbers are currently very low and will remain so. Summer breeding may start earlier than normal this year in Niger and Chad because of the May rains.

All efforts should be undertaken to control the current situation and be prepared for the summer, the report suggested.

Earlier this week Esmaeil Najjar, head of Iran’s Crisis Management Organization, announced that some 153 swarms of desert locusts from Saudi Arabia which penetrated into the southeastern provinces have been controlled.

FAO explains that adult locust swarms can fly up to 150 km a day with the wind. Female locusts can lay 300 eggs within their lifetime while an adult insect can consume roughly its own weight in fresh food per day - about two grams every day. A very small swarm eats the same amount of food in one day as about 35,000 people and the devastating impact locusts can have on crops poses a major threat to food security, especially in already vulnerable areas.

During quiet periods (known as recessions) desert locusts are usually form groups in deserts of Africa, the Near East and South-West Asia that receive less than 200 mm of rain annually. This is an area of about 16 million square kilometers, consisting of about 30 countries.

Second Announcement



1398.1429

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY

TENDER NO. : 08-21-9640003

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	TUBING, API GRADE C-95, SEAMLESS NEW "VAM" THREAD, R-3 (MAX. LENGTH:40.5 FT) H2S TRIM (HIGH COLIAPSE, SOUR SERVICE) API 5C T/ISO 11960, PSL:3 MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5CT SIZE (OD), WEIGHT (PPF), AS SPECIFIED 4-1/2 IN. 13.5 LB.	9000

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 78,991 EURO or 3,794,766,144 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender Conditions material technical thorough specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: 061 341 23523 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>

تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۸/۳/۲۱ نویت دوم ۹۸/۳/۱۸

Qatar says it will support any Mideast peace plan approved by Palestinians

➔ Meanwhile, Qatar's foreign minister has alleged that Saudi Arabia is a force for disruption across the Middle East and Africa and often uses blackmail and economic pressure to enforce its brand of authoritarian rule.

In recent weeks the Saudis and Emiratis have been accused of interfering to stifle popular movements in Sudan, Libya and Somalia.

In a briefing in London, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani appeared to accept that an unresolved two-year quarrel between Qatar and Saudi Arabia was starting to fuel other disputes across the region, making those disputes more difficult to resolve. Saudi Arabia, along with the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt, launched an economic and political boycott of the gas-rich Qatar two years ago, partly in objection to the Qataris' foreign policy, including alleged support for the Muslim Brotherhood.

At the briefing, the foreign minister acknowledged the dispute was spilling over across the region, citing Libya and Somalia as two countries in which the Saudis have been determined to install regimes sympathetic to Riyadh.

"Qatar has been subject to a lot of efforts mainly led by Saudi and the UAE to demonise us," Thani said. "Some of the countries, especially in the need for support of the Saudis and the UAE, have even been blackmailed to follow the same policy against Qatar. It creates a lot of instability in the Horn of Africa and the sub-Saharan area. Mainly the focus has been Africa, but there have been attempts elsewhere. Africa has been the focus because many of the countries are in need of help and support."

He added: "They try with everybody – in some places they succeed to a certain level, some succeed 100% and some have failed."



Brazil's Lula convicted to keep him from 2018 election

TEHRAN — Brazil's justice minister and prosecutors collaborated to convict left-wing icon Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on corruption charges to prevent him from contesting the 2018 election, an investigative news outlet has reported.

The Intercept said on Sunday an anonymous source provided material, including private chats, audio recordings, videos and photos, that show "serious wrongdoing, unethical behaviour, and systematic deceit".

"Secret documents reveal that Brazil's most powerful prosecutors ... plotted to prevent the Workers' Party [PT] from winning the 2018 presidential election by blocking or weakening a pre-election interview with former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva," said the news report.

Among the explosive claims, The Intercept said prosecutors in a massive, years-long anti-corruption probe known as "Car Wash" had expressed "serious doubts whether there was sufficient evidence to establish Lula's guilt".

Justice Minister Sergio Moro was the

anti-corruption judge who handed Lula his first conviction in 2017, which prevented him from running in a presidential election he was widely expected to win.

President Jair Bolsonaro, who said during his campaign that he hoped Lula would "rot in prison", later made Moro part of his cabinet.

Glenn Greenwald, a cofounder of The Intercept and member of the team that first interviewed Edward Snowden in 2013, said on Twitter the leak was "one of the largest & most important in years".

This is "just the very beginning of what we intend to reveal from this massive archive about him [Moro] & the prosecutors with whom he unethically worked", said Greenwald.

The claims come at a bad time for Bolsonaro, who is already facing mounting opposition less than six months into his term, as Latin America's biggest economy teeters on the edge of recession and his signature pension reform remains stuck in a hostile Congress, Al Jazeera reported.

Google earned \$4.7bn from news organizations in 2018, says study

TEHRAN — An explosive new report details how Google earned a whopping \$4.7 billion in ad revenue from news organizations online in 2018, while the entire U.S. news industry made a combined \$5.1 billion from digital advertising.

The study, by the News Media Alliance, reveals the extent to which the tech giant profits from the work of web journalists and digital news organizations by monetizing Google search and Google News. According to the study, some 40 percent of clicks on Google's trending queries are news-related, all of which are monetized, RT reported.

"They make money off this arrangement," said President and CEO of the News Media Alliance David Chavern who argues that journalists and content creators deserve a cut of that money, "and there needs to be a better outcome for news publishers."

Google does not pay for the content but generates web traffic clicks, and thus revenue, by sharing headlines and news

summaries from various outlets verbatim.

Furthermore, the \$4.7 billion figure is a conservative estimate as the analysis didn't factor in the personal user data collected by Alphabet, Google's parent company, which can be further monetized.

Details from the report generated a very mixed reception among journalists and media workers who particularly drew attention to the revenues built up by Google while news outlets increasingly lay off staff.

What also seemed unjust is that the snippet Google shows "is all anyone cares about," and readers don't bother actually clicking into the full story. "Google should license/pay for this," one commenter suggested.

People do realize though that the relationship between the tech company and news media is more complicated, saying that when Google "makes money on news it's by serving ads ON publishers' sites."

New U.S. ambassador in Iraq after mysterious pullout

TEHRAN— The new U.S. ambassador to Baghdad has submitted his credentials to the Iraqi foreign minister, just weeks after Washington pulled out some of its diplomatic staff, citing unspecified threats.

Matthew Tueller presented his credentials to Mohammed al-Hakim on Sunday, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Tueller, an Arabic speaker and a former ambassador to Yemen and Kuwait, was a diplomat in Iraq between 2007 and 2008.

Last month, the U.S. State Department ordered "non-emergency U.S. government employees" to leave its embassy in Baghdad and its consulate in Erbil, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

Senior State Department officials said the move was because of an "imminent threat" based on what they claimed increased intelligence reporting from unspecified sources.

Exxon Mobil evacuated all its foreign staff members out of Iraq's West Qurna 1 oilfield and flew them to Dubai, angering Iraqi authorities who denounced claims

of an imminent threat as delusional.

Iran also denounced the pullout as part of a "propaganda war" after some US officials claimed that the decision had been prompted by a perceived Iranian threat.

In an interview with the NBC news last month, Iran's Ambassador to the UN Majid Takht-Ravanchi rejected the U.S. claims that Tehran posed a heightened danger to American interests in the region.

"These are all allegations which are being produced by the same people who, in the run-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, did the same," Takht-Ravanchi said.

Washington's claims were also dismissed by many Iraqi political groups and personalities.

Nasr al-Shomari, a commander for the Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, told AFP that the claim was "a pretext" by Washington to create "an uproar" in Iraq.

Citing those "threats," Washington sent military reinforcements to the region, including an aircraft carrier strike group, a squadron of B-52 bombers, and a battery of patriot missiles.



The US has provided no evidence to support its claims, which have also been disputed both by senators at home and its allies in Europe.

American banker and Putin ally dealt in access and assets, emails reveal

TEHRAN — A senior American banker once secretly awarded a shareholding in powerful Moscow investment bank Renaissance Capital to one of Vladimir Putin's closest friends and brokered meetings for the friend with top U.S. foreign policy officials a decade ago, emails show.

The American banker, Robert Foresman, currently vice chairman at UBS investment bank in New York, held a series of prominent roles in Moscow's financial world. He headed Dresdner Bank's investment banking operations in Russia in the early 2000s, served as Renaissance Capital's vice chairman from 2006 to 2009, and then led Barclays Capital's Russia operation until 2016. Putin's

friend, Matthias Warnig, sits on the boards of several Russian state-controlled firms, Reuters reported.

A deeply religious conservative, the blue-eyed, curly-haired U.S. banker, has said it has always been his calling to be a peacemaker between the two nuclear superpowers.

Now, a cache of Renaissance Capital emails from 2007 to 2011 reveal new details about the close relationship Foresman cultivated within Putin's circle over the years and how he leveraged these ties to win deals. The emails, which were reviewed by Reuters, also shine a light on the part played by Western bankers in the heady days of Moscow's 2007 economic boom, when the Kremlin was

moving to take over ever greater swathes of the Russian economy.

The emails were exchanged among Renaissance Capital's top executives and between the bank and its clients and business associates before ownership of the bank changed hands in 2012. They have figured in a long-running legal battle over the controversial takeover by the Russian state of Mikhail Khodorkovsky's Yukos oil firm in the mid 2000s, and are reported here for the first time.

Foresman's relationship with the Kremlin was more complicated – and more mercantile – than that of peacemaker, these emails show. They offer insight into how

Foresman and his colleagues sought to help the Kremlin pull off, and profit from, its dismantlement of Yukos at a time when analysts say Moscow was seeking international legitimacy for the politically-charged process. They also show how the American banker guided Warnig around Washington foreign policy circles during the Bush and Obama administrations.

In a statement to Reuters, Foresman said he considered it inappropriate to comment on matters that may relate to proceedings before the English court – a reference to a civil lawsuit in the UK – but he refuted any suggestion of wrongdoing. Renaissance Capital's new management declined to comment.

ISIL expands its reach in Afghanistan

TEHRAN — The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) terrorist group is expanding its footprint in Afghanistan "with thousands and thousands" of fighters after losing its so-called caliphate in Syria and Iraq.

The armed group is recruiting new soldiers and plotting attacks on the United States and other Western countries, U.S. and Afghan security officials say.

ISIL is seen as an even greater threat than the Taliban because of its increasingly sophisticated military capabilities and its strategy of targeting civilians, both in Afghanistan and abroad. Concerns run so deep that some officials have come to see the Taliban, which has also clashed with ISIL, as a potential partner in containing it.

A U.S. intelligence official based in Afghanistan told The Associated Press that a recent wave of attacks in the capital, Kabul, were "practice runs" for even bigger assaults in Europe and the U.S.

"This group is the most near-term threat to our home-

lands from Afghanistan," the official said on condition of anonymity, adding that ISIL's "core mandate" was to conduct "external attacks".

"That is their goal. It's just a matter of time," he said. "It is very scary."

■ Expanded presence

ISIL appeared in Afghanistan shortly after the group's core fighters swept across Syria and Iraq in the summer of 2014, carving out a base in about one-third of both countries.

The Afghanistan affiliate refers to itself as "Khorasan Province", a name applied to parts of Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia in the Middle Ages.

The group's presence initially numbered just a few dozen fighters, mainly Pakistan Taliban driven from their bases across the border and disgruntled Afghan Taliban attracted to ISIL's ideology.

While the Taliban have confined their struggle to Afghanistan, ISIL members there have pledged allegiance

to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the reclusive leader of the group in the Middle East, and embraced his call for a worldwide battle against non-Muslims.

Today, ISIL in Afghanistan numbers thousands of fighters, many from Central Asia but also from Arab countries, Chechnya, India and Bangladesh, as well as ethnic Uighurs from China.

The group has long been based in the eastern Nangarhar province, a rugged region along the border with Pakistan, but has a strong presence in northern Afghanistan. Lately, it has expanded into neighboring Kunar province, where it could prove even harder to dislodge.

The mountainous province provided shelter to Osama bin Laden for nearly a year after the Taliban was removed from power during a US-led invasion in 2001. US forces struggled for years to capture and hold high-altitude outposts there, eventually all but surrendering the region to the Taliban.

Germany must respond to its approach

➔ German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas is now trying to play a mediating role for Iran and the United States! This is while Berlin must only respond to the non-compliant behavior of itself and of Europe in relation to a nuclear deal with Iran.

Over the last year, the European troika has not only done anything to revive the nuclear deal or bring any kind of benefit to the Iranian nation, but they have actually backed up US by developing new plans to undermine Iran's "missile work", and diminish its "power in the region" as well as its "nuclear technology".

As stated in clauses 26 and 36 of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), if the other side fails to meet its obligations, Iran is entitled to partially or completely end its commitments as well. So, Iran's recent decision could be analyzed both on legal and strategic terms.

However, it seems that the strategic aspects of Iran's decision are even more important than its legal aspects. This decision is strategically important because it stops Washington and European troika to carry out their anti-Iran scheme, a dangerous scheme that they actually started devising when Trump took the office in 2017.

Undoubtedly, the three countries of Germany, Britain and France must respond to their unacceptable behavior towards Iran and their unwillingness to agree to a nuclear deal. Meanwhile, Berlin has to make a choice between "Independence in the world of diplomacy" and "affiliation with the Trump government"!

Enemies' airports will be targeted until Sana'a siege ends: Ansarullah

TEHRAN — The spokesman for Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement says the airports of countries involved in the devastating military aggression and blockade against his impoverished homeland will be targeted as long as the embargo imposed by the Saudi-led coalition on Sana'a International Airport remains in place.

"We had repeatedly informed the United Nations about the health condition of [the Secretary-General of the Union of Popular Forces] Mohamed Abdel Rahman al-Rubai, who required treatment abroad. Unfortunately, the world body gave in to Saudi Arabia's demands, and could not do anything to lift the siege on Sana'a Airport," Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network cited Mohammed Abdul-Salam as writing on his official Twitter page on Sunday.

The Houthi spokesman added, "This is something that cannot be tolerated at all."

"Given the criminal siege on Sana'a International Airport and the failure of the UN to take proper measures [aimed at resolution of the issue]..., the countries of the (Saudi-led) aggression must know that their airports are within our firing range as the attacks would be the most efficient way to end the blockade," Abdul-Salam pointed out.

Earlier in the day, Yemeni forces, backed by Popular Committees fighters, launched multiple airstrikes against Jizan airport in Saudi Arabia near the border with Yemen, using domestically-designed and -manufactured Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones.

Yemeni forces and their allies launched a drone strike against an MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile system stationed at an airport in Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Najran on May 23, Press TV reported.

A Yemeni military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said at the time that the aerial attack had been carried out following close surveillance by Yemeni forces.

The development came a day after Yemeni soldiers and fighters from Popular Committees launched a drone into the same Saudi region, targeting military aircraft hangars at the airport.

Turkey says U.S. has not taken step to create S-400 working group

TEHRAN — The United States has not moved to create a joint working group to assess its concerns regarding Turkey's purchase of the Russian S-400 missile defense systems, the head of the Turkish Defense Industries Directorate said on Monday.

Speaking to reporters after an event in Ankara, Ismail Demir said Turkish officials were preparing a response to a letter by acting U.S. Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan, which outlined how Turkey would be pulled out the F-35 fighter jet program if it pressed on with the S-400 deal, Reuters reported.

The two NATO allies have sparred publicly for months over Turkey's order for the S-400s, which Washington says poses a threat to the Lockheed Martin Corp F-35 fighters, which Turkey also plans to buy. Turkey proposed the joint working group.

U.S. senators seeking to block Trump's Saudi arms sales

TEHRAN — U.S. senators are pushing hard against a raft of planned arms sales to Saudi Arabia after President Donald Trump said he was circumventing Congress to push them through.

The White House said last month it was making an emergency provision within the country's arms control law to enable the sale of \$8.1 billion worth of arms to the kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, the U.S.'s strongest allies in the Persian Gulf. The recourse helps the president spare congressional review for the exports.

On Sunday, The Hill, which reports on congressional affairs, said the Trump administration had cited "alleged threats from Iran" to justify resorting to the provision. The paper, however, added that senators had introduced 22 resolutions -- one for each sale -- over the previous week to block the deals.

The sales include warplane engines, maintenance equipment, Paveway precision guided munitions and mortar rounds. The arms deals also foresee the setting up of facilities in the kingdom that would manufacture the precision munitions. The UAE would also be receiving Paveway smart bombs and laser-guided rockets as well as helicopter equipment among other things.

The paper said the senators had cited "frustration" with Trump's actions that had even prompted Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), a staunch ally of the president, to support action at the chamber against the arms sales.

Sharapova to return to action in Mallorca



Former world number one Maria Sharapova is set to return to the tour after accepting a wildcard entry at the Mallorca Open, four months after undergoing surgery on her right shoulder.

The Russian has not competed since she withdrew from a second-round match at the WTA St Petersburg Ladies Trophy in January and she skipped the entire claycourt season, including the French Open.

“I’m very happy... to announce that I’m going to accept the wild card to play the Mallorca Open,” the 32-year-old said in a statement. “I want to thank the tournament for the opportunity it gives me and all my incredible fans who have been supporting me in recent months.”

The Mallorca Open, a warm-up grasscourt tournament for players before Wimbledon, begins on June 17 and the draw will also feature other former world number ones such as defending Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber and Victoria Azarenka. *(Source: Reuters)*

Neymar’s value falls by almost 100 million euros

Neymar has been in the news more for his off-field antics and injuries than what he does on the pitch in the last few seasons.

The Brazilian has had arguments with teammates, continuous fitness problems and has recently been accused of rape.

His latest injury has ruled him out for this summer’s Copa America and some of his sponsors are considering their position.

Mastercard have already dropped Neymar from their advertising campaign while the likes of Nike and Red Bull are also expected to make statements.

In a footballing sense, Paris Saint-Germain are worried that the value of Neymar as a player is falling from the 222 million euros they paid Barcelona for him in 2017.

According to L’Equipe, Neymar has played just 51.8 percent of matches since joining PSG, which is extremely low when you compare it to the involvement of Lionel Messi (87 percent) and Cristiano Ronaldo (77 percent) in that time.

CIES Football Observatory have lowered his value from 213 million euros at the start of the 2019 to between 120 and 150 million euros now in June.

His latest absence from the Copa America could mean that he drops out of the top 50 nominees for the Ballon d’Or this year.

However, Transfermarkt still maintain Neymar’s value to be at 180 million euros - the highest during his career. *(Source: Marca)*

TV record: Six million people in UK tune in for Women’s World Cup game

The match between England and Scotland on Sunday at France 2019 broke UK television viewing figure records for a women’s football game, says the BBC.

At its peak, 6.1 million people tuned in to watch England beat Scotland 2-1 in the Women’s World Cup as both sides played their first match at the tournament, with the game attracting a 37.8% share of the available audience.

In comparison, 18.3 million tuned in for the England men’s team opener in the 2018 World Cup against Tunisia in Russia, attracting 69.2% of the UK’s total TV audience.

According to a FIFA spokesperson, as of Friday June 7, approximately “965,000 tickets have been allocated so far to fans around the world.” Twenty of the 52 matches in the competition have sold out, but it looks unlikely the attendance will surpass the total attendance at the 2015 Women’s World Cup in Canada of 1,353,506.

Of the tickets allocated, hosts France were assigned the most -- 460,748 -- with 45,261 in attendance to watch Les Bleus’ opening game victory against South Korea, including French President Emmanuel Macron. Fans in the US have been allocated 130,905 tickets, while 29,307 England fans have bought tickets to make the short journey over the English Channel to watch the Lionesses play.

After that, Netherlands fans were assigned 27,767 tickets, Sweden had 10,227 and Germany had 9,914.

(Source: CNN)

Jose Antonio Reyes’ cousin tells police: We were flying

Juan Manuel Calderon, the cousin of Jose Antonio Reyes, survived the car crash that killed the former Sevilla player and has revealed that the car carrying them flew during the accident.

Reyes and his cousin Jonathan were both killed as a result of the incident outside Seville on 1 June.

Calderon told police that he remembered “looking through the window” and seeing that the car was travelling “very fast.”

“I don’t know what Jose did... I don’t remember,” he said.

The car collided with some concrete blocks and bounced for more than 90 metres according to marks on the road.

“We were in the air... we were flying,” Calderon told police, according to Cronica. Police have confirmed that Reyes was going more than 220 kilometres per hour at the moment of the crash.

Calderon suffered burns trying to return to the vehicle after the crash and continues to fight for his life in hospital. *(Source: Football Espana)*

Nadal racks up 12th French crown as Thiem runs out of steam at Roland Garros

Defying the years and one of the most fierce onslaughts he has ever faced at Roland Garros, Rafa Nadal won his 12th French Open crown on Sunday, leaving Dominic Thiem crushed and a packed Parisian stadium shaking their heads in wonder.

The first set had been one for the ages, the second ran it close, but after three hours and one minute all that mattered was that Nadal was once again in familiar pose, flat on his back on the clay, a 6-3 5-7 6-1 6-1 winner to clinch his 18th Grand Slam triumph in total.

Of them all, this was one of his most satisfying.

“Lots of issues with my knee recently... with my foot... too many issues the last few months which makes this last few weeks very, very special,” Nadal smiled to reporters, the large silver trophy at his side. “Physically and mentally I had been down.”

Rarely, if ever, has any opponent played so well against Nadal on the Philippe Chatrier centre court as Thiem did on Sunday.

Rarely, if ever, has Thiem, the best of the young guns, struck the ball so firmly, or played with such purpose and aggression.

But it was not enough. Not nearly enough. Not even before Thiem ultimately ran out of steam. The 33-year-old Nadal, who becomes the first player to win the same Grand Slam title 12 times, going past Margaret Court’s 11 Australian Opens, now sits two major titles behind his great foe and men’s Grand Slam title record holder, 37-year-old Roger Federer.



“It’s incredible,” Nadal told the crowd. “For me it was a dream to play here in 2005 and I could not imagine I would be back here in 2019. It’s a very special moment for me.”

■ Mental toll

Physically, Thiem had looked strong and resolute but who can say what mental toll his rain-delayed semi-final victory over world number one Novak Djokovic had taken?

The Austrian had had to play on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and now Sunday while Nadal had enjoyed Saturday off, having dispatched

Federer on Friday before the rain set in.

Certainly it would have taken a monumental effort to remain mentally positive after playing an opening set as he did, and coming out of it empty handed.

Thiem slammed backhands for all they were worth, cleaned the lines with his forehand, and the sonic boom from his serve resonated around the court.

He grabbed the first break of the match to lead the opener 3-2 but four games later it was all over, 6-3 to Nadal, the Spaniard

seemingly another inexorable step towards the crown.

■ Crowd erupted

It speaks volumes for the world number four Austrian that Thiem came out for the second set in the same fashion — throwing absolutely everything imaginable at his opponent.

Games passed with no break points in sight, and the tension ratcheted ever higher until the 12th game of the set when it snapped. Nadal rifled a two-fisted backhand just long to hand the levelling set to Thiem.

The French crowd erupted. Thiem clenched his fist. Nadal strode to the sidelines.

But within a flash Nadal had the upper hand again, winning 16 of the next 17 points to lead 4-0 before Thiem could even register any objection. A blink later the set was over, 6-1.

If Thiem had muttered ‘plus ca change’, he would have been forgiven. So much effort to claw his way back, so little to show for it now.

“I had a little drop and he was coming out in the third set like a rocket... full power,” Thiem later said, as he processed the result.

Few people on the planet can hit a backhand like Thiem, even once. To do it time after time after time is boggling, but that is what it would take to unseat Nadal.

Still the Spaniard rolled on, soaking up Thiem’s best shots, and the cliché beloved of numerous science fiction films and television series seemed appropriate: “Resistance is futile”. *(Source : Reuters)*

Nations League thrills and spills win over skeptics



Portugal’s victory in the inaugural Nations League sparked celebrations long into the night in Porto on Sunday, but the hosts were far from the only ones happy at the end of UEFA’s attempt to add more competition to the international calendar.

A complex format that saw UEFA’s 55 nations split into four tiers with promotion and relegation on offer, as well as the chance of a playoff to qualify for next year’s European Championships, took some time to get used to.

England’s Harry Maguire even admitted before the Three Lions opening game of the competition against Spain that he did not fully understand the format.

Yet, that skepticism was washed away once the games got under way with competitive football between nations of a similar level replacing meaningless friendlies and often one-sided qualifiers.

“I think it is a great tournament,” said Ronald Koeman, whose Netherlands side was beaten 1-0 by Portugal in Sunday’s final.

“The intensity in the groups was really high and the idea to organise the Nations League was a perfect one. We are looking forward to the next one.”

For all four sides who made the semi-finals in Portugal, the past week may well also prove to be the perfect launching pad to next summer’s European Championships.

Portugal look a better side than when they won Euro 2016 with a host of young talent led by Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes and Ruben Dias to ease the burden on a 34-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo.

After missing out on the last two major tournaments, the Netherlands gained some vital experience, even if they did fall at the final hurdle after beating world champions France, Germany and England to make the final.

England built on the success of reaching the semi-finals at last year’s World Cup by

beating Spain and Croatia in the group stages, while Switzerland could easily have upset Portugal in the semi-finals with better finishing.

“I am sure this tournament will become a classic because it is a tournament for the entire European family,” said Portugal coach Fernando Santos. “To be the first winner will go down in history.”

More than 20,000 travelling fans came to northern Portugal from England, The Netherlands and Switzerland in the past week to show that supporters had also been won over.

Yet, the success of the Nations League is likely to stir up more conflict in the continuous battle between club and country.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has been the most outspoken critic of adding a new competition at a time when top players are already being burned out by the demands of long, intense seasons at club level.

“If we don’t learn to deal with our players in a better way, competition-wise, then it’s the only chance to kill this wonderful game,” said Klopp last month. “Because without the players, it’s not a good one.”

England’s preparation for the past week was seriously affected with seven players in Gareth Southgate’s 23-man squad involved in the Champions League final and all were left out from the start in defeat against the Dutch.

Yet, had England not reached the Nations League finals, they would have had two more qualifiers for the European Championships this week in a six-team group rather than five.

And having scored 10 goals in winning their opening two qualifiers, Southgate believes the Nations League is far more appealing to players, coaches and fans alike.

(Source: France 24)

‘This is the wrong world’: Vettel fumes at costly penalty



Sebastian Vettel blasted race stewards who imposed a five-second penalty on the Ferrari driver that cost him victory in Sunday’s Canadian Grand Prix, accusing them of “stealing the race” from his team.

Championship leader Lewis Hamilton was declared the race winner after Vettel was penalised for squeezing his rival off track as he rejoined during a high-speed incident on lap 50.

The stewards judged that the Ferrari driver had made an unsafe re-entry and forced Hamilton off the circuit when he rejoined after running off across a strip of grass at the first chicane.

“Where could I go?” said an angry Vettel on team radio. “I had nowhere to go... They are stealing the race from us... This is the wrong world. This is not fair.”

After initially avoiding the post-race ceremonies, the crestfallen Vettel rejoined to appear on the podium where Hamilton pulled him up to join him on the top step.

Their mutual respect was clear in front of a capacity crowd at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

“Well, first of all, I really enjoyed the race and the crowd on every lap,” said Vettel, without a win since last year’s Belgian Grand Prix and under pressure to repeat his 2018 success when he won from pole position.

“Seeing them cheer me on... It was very intense. I think you should ask the pit wall what they think, but we had a great show -- and Lewis showed some good respect.”

When Hamilton was asked to speak, the crowd began to boo.

“All I can say is that I didn’t make the decision,” he explained. “So I don’t know what they’re booing at.”

Vettel intervened. “People shouldn’t boo at Lewis,” he said. “It wasn’t his intention to be in harm’s way. So, people shouldn’t

boo at him. They should boo at those who make the decisions.”

This unity of respect followed their earlier comments when Hamilton thanked his team.

“Firstly I want to say a big thank-you to my team. It’s been a big effort for everyone, with my crash on Friday, to get the car sorted and I wouldn’t have been able to race.

“But that’s not the way I wanted to win. I forced him into an error and he went wide and we nearly collided. It’s unfortunate, but this is racing.”

Told that Vettel felt the stewards’ verdict was unfair, Hamilton responded: “That’s his opinion, of course!

“I took the corner normally and, when you come back on the track, you’re not supposed to go on to the racing line.”

Hamilton added: “That’s not the way I wanted to win, but I would have been past. Physically, I am destroyed. It was such a tough race.”

Asked if the stewards’ decision would be critical in the title race, Vettel said it was a question of principle above all else.

“It is not about the title now, we deserved to win now and that is our opinion,” he said. “It was a great race and the crowd cheered me on all the race. It’s a bit weird now, I don’t know what else to say.

“It is not making our sport popular. People want to see us race and it was racing. It is just a shame when we have these funny decisions.”

Later, speaking to reporters, he added that he regretted racing in the modern era of officious decision-making and corporate language — stirring fresh speculation that he may be considering his future in the sport.

Extended Mercedes’ record sequence of season-opening wins to seven races, five for Hamilton and two for Bottas.

(Source: AFP)

Turkey accuses Iceland of disrespect to soccer team

Turkey accused Icelandic officials on Monday of showing disrespect to its visiting soccer team, after players said they were kept waiting at passport control for three hours and had their bags searched.

Turkish social media users joined in the criticism and demanded Iceland identify a man who, apparently as a joke, approached the players at arrivals and thrust a dish-scouring brush in their faces, mimicking the TV microphones around him.

Turkey’s team, fresh from its defeat of World Cup Champions France on Saturday, flew into Keflavik airport near Reykjavik overnight ahead of a Euro 2020 qualifying match against Iceland on Tuesday.

The players described their treatment to Turkish TV crews waiting outside. “The disrespect shown to our national team

in Iceland is unacceptable and what is necessary will be done,” President Tayyip Erdogan’s spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, wrote on Twitter.

“Our national team will give the best response on the field,” he added.

The complaint was echoed by foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, the spokesman of Erdogan’s ruling AK party and other officials. Turkey’s embassy in Oslo sent a diplomatic note to Iceland’s government protesting at the “disrespect” shown to the team.

There was no immediate comment from Iceland’s government or foreign ministry.

Omar Smarason, head of media and marketing at the Football Association of Iceland, said all passengers from “non-certified” airports received similar checks. Iceland’s

players went through the same procedure when they arrived home from Turkey’s Konya airport five years ago, he added.

The man with the brush was shown on Turkish TV filming himself with a mobile device as his approached the players with his mock microphone.

Turkish social media users responded with indignation, and graphics showing the Icelandic flag with a brush taking the place of the vertical bar of its red cross.

The hashtag #TurksAreComingForIceland trended on Twitter in Turkey.

Turkey upset France with a 2-0 win in Konya on Saturday. It is currently leading Group H, followed by France then Iceland, which beat Albania 1-0 at home on Saturday.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran determined to beat South Korea: Marc Wilmots

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran football coach Marc Wilmots says that Team Melli will have a tough match against South Korea but they are going to emerge victorious against the Taegeuk Warriors. Iran will play South Korea at Seoul World Cup Stadium in the nation’s capital on Tuesday. It will be a good test for Iran since South Korea haven’t beaten the Middle East powerhouse since January 2011 and are hungry to get revenge on Team Melli. South Korea, ranked 37th, have nine wins, eight draws and 13 losses against the 21st-ranked Iran. They suffered four consecutive 1-0 losses before taking a scoreless draw in a World Cup qualifying match in August 2017. “We are ready for the match against South Korea and we want to beat them at their home, however, they are a difficult team to beat in front of their fans” Wilmots said. “I hate to lose and will do my best not to lose in this match because I know that the critics will put me under pressure,” the ex-Ivory Coast coach added. “It’s a friendly match but South Korea and Iran want to win the match and we are going to earn a victory like we did against Syria,” Wilmots said. “South Korea takes advantage of Son Heung-min who has grown a lot with experience from big tournaments like the UEFA Champions League,” he said about Tottenham Hotspur star. Wilmots, 50, said he wants to maintain Iran’s undefeated streak against South Korea. “Iran and South Korea are rivals that motivate each other,” he said. “But what I hate the most is losing. Many fans will root for South Korea tomorrow, but we’ll try our best.”



S. Korea gearing up for final test before World Cup qualifiers

PAJU, South Korea, June 10 (Yonhap) — South Korea will host Iran on Tuesday in a men’s football friendly match that will also serve as the team’s final test before the regional World Cup qualifying campaign. The kickoff between the Asian rivals is 8 p.m. at Seoul World Cup Stadium. South Korea, ranked 37th, have nine wins, eight draws and 13 losses against the 21st-ranked Iran. They haven’t beaten the Middle East powerhouse since January 2011. They suffered four consecutive 1-0 losses before taking a scoreless draw in a World Cup qualifying match in August 2017. South Korea are coming off a 1-0 win over Australia last Friday, with substitute Hwang Ui-jo coming to the rescue with a late winner. Head coach Paulo Bento experimented with a back-three formation, the first time he’d used that scheme in nearly six months. Though his players looked out of sorts in the unfamiliar formation, Bento defended his decision by saying it was one of the last few opportunities to try out different tactics before the Asian qualification for the 2022 FIFA World Cup begins in September. Whatever the formation, South Korea must improve their touch in the attacking third. Too often, they’ve had to rely on heroics by their offensive stars like Hwang and



Tottenham Hotspur attacker Son Heung-min. When Son is held in check like he was against Australia, others have to step up as the safety valve. Their offensive buildup lacked flow, and the transition game was nonexistent. Bento has faced some backlash for not giving young faces a chance to play. Fans have been clamoring for midfielders Lee Seung-woo and Paik Seung-ho to get some action in these friendlies. They believe Lee and Paik, two FC Barcelona youth products, should be given

an opportunity to prove themselves now because Bento likely won’t rely on untested players during World Cup qualifiers with far more at stake. Lee has 10 caps, but just four under Bento, while Paik has yet to make an appearance for the senior team. Bento said Monday his lineup choices will be made “within the framework of our team,” stressing once again that he’s trying to prepare his team for the World Cup qualifiers. “When deploying players, I take into account both technical and mental aspects. I will send out players that fit our playing style,” Bento said. “When you have 25 players, there are bound to be ones who don’t get to take the field. I haven’t called them up just so I could distribute playing time evenly and give guys a chance to make their debut.” Bento may switch goalkeepers for Tuesday, much as he did for back-to-back friendlies in March. He started Kim Seung-gyu in net against Australia but the veteran wasn’t seriously tested. Jo Hyeon-woo, who emerged as an unlikely star at last year’s World Cup before losing his grip on the job to Kim at the Asian Cup in January, is waiting in the wings. In March, Bento started Kim against Bolivia and Jo versus Colombia. Both delivered victories though Jo made more spectacular saves.

Qatar, champions of Asia, ready for Copa America challenge

First-timers Qatar go into the Copa America with the young team riding high following their triumph in the Asian Cup but humbled by “higher caliber” competition than they encountered in the Emirates. Head coach Felix Sanchez also said that the tournament would be a “significant step in our journey towards the World Cup” which Qatar will host in 2022. “We’ll play against experienced teams that are certainly of a higher caliber than what we saw at the Asian tournament,” he said in an interview with FIFA ahead of the Brazil tournament. “Our group includes Argentina, whose abilities are well known, and Colombia, who are exceptionally good performers, whether at World Cups or the Copa America. Paraguay also boast a pedigreed history.” The South American continental championship gets underway on June 14 with the hosts Brazil looking for their first title since 2007. “So, I believe these matches will serve as an important staging post for me and the players. They’ll tell us where we currently stand and what we need to do in the next

phase,” added Sanchez. Qatar got off to a cautious start in a friendly against Brazil who won 2-0. “It was a great game for us. (But) we should learn from our mistakes,” said a Qatar team official. “In the second half we played better.” The side, which with Japan was invited to make up the required 12 teams, has struck a cautious tone ahead of their highest profile outing since the Asian Cup. Qatar’s inclusion in the Copa America initially raised eyebrows but both they and Japan reached the Asian Cup final in Abu Dhabi. Qatar triumphed in that tournament going from zero points at the last Asian Cup to their first continental title in record-breaking style, beating Japan 3-1. Forward Almoez Ali’s bicycle kick helped bring home the trophy and broke Ali Daei’s 23-year-old mark for goals at a single Asian Cup. Ali said the Copa was all about learning for Qatar, continuing the methodical approach which has already paid dividends. ■ **‘It won’t be easy’** “We’re not expecting to win, but just to

learn because after the World Cup, the Copa America is the biggest competition in the world,” Ali said following the Asian Cup win. “The weakest teams are in Asia, Asia is the weakest continent for football so in the Copa America we will learn more.” The team source acknowledged to AFP that “it won’t be easy”. Qatar also has one eye clearly fixed on the 2022 World Cup. “You have to always focus on your over-riding goal. The state of Qatar is heading towards a historic event: hosting the 2022 World Cup,” said Sanchez who was given a mandate last month to lead Qatar into the global soccer spectacle when his contract was extended to 2022. “We need to make sure the squad are in top form and up to the nation’s expectations. This means that we’ll not be participating just for its own sake, but that we’re determined to leave our mark on World Cup history, especially since this will be Qatar’s first World Cup. “Our participation in the 2019 Copa America can be seen as a significant step in our journey towards the World Cup, a

journey that we started some time ago.” Sanchez said that above all the tournament would be a proving ground for his side’s young stars. After spending many millions of petro-dollars on their world-class Aspire Academy, and scouring the world for top coaches, Qatar are beginning to recoup their investment. “Since our squad has many young players, we look forward to gaining as much experience as possible in this high-profile tournament,” said Sanchez. “Specifically, that means experiencing the Latin American style of play and taking part in a major tournament in front of many fans. It will also allow us to address important details on and off the pitch. “I want the team to perform in a proper and honorable way and demonstrate that they’ve progressed. That’s not just measured in accumulating points and progressing to the next round, but if that happens, it would of course be great.” Qatar’s Copa America campaign will begin on June 16 against Paraguay. (Source: FIFA)

Three world records round off Grosseto Grand Prix

Three new world records fell on the final day (9 June) of competition at the Grosseto Grand Prix in Italy, rounding off an impressive three days of track and field competition which saw a total of 11 world records set at the city’s Carlo Zecchini stadium. Japan’s world bronze medalist Toru Suzuki set a new T64 world record in the men’s high jump competition, clearing 1.91m on his second attempt at the height. “My season’s best was 1.89m, but the atmosphere here in Italy was good and I was able to concentrate well to set a world record. Next, I will compete in Japan where I will target another new world record,” said the 39-year-old, who won silver at last year’s Asian Para Games. Great Britain’s Harrison Walsh and Italy’s Moreno Marchetti meanwhile re-wrote the record books in the men’s shot put F42-46/61-64 competition. Walsh, 23, threw 15.73m in the first round – a new world record for the F44 class, while Marchetti saved his best until last, his sixth and final throw of 8.74m a new shot put F62 world record. USA’s Joshua Cinnamon (15.84m), who competes in



the F46 class, finished in first place – his best throw 14 centimeters off the world record he set two years ago. Russia’s Sofia Oksem won the women’s discus F11-13 – although the former world and European champion’s best effort of 41.22m fell well short of her record-breaking throw of 47.40m at the Grosseto 2016 European Championships. Italy’s reigning Paralympic and world champion, F11

thrower Assunta Legnante (32.90m), finished in second place with three throws over 32 meters on her season debut. The men’s event was won by Spain’s Kim Lopez (44.95m). Out on the track, US sprinters David Brown (23.75) completed a hat trick of wins in Grosseto, adding a win over 200m to his earlier successes in the 100m and 400m T11. Fellow American Deja Young (25.19) claimed her second sprint win, finishing first in the women’s 200m T46/47. Hungary’s Luca Ekler (27.26) also continued to impress a day after leaping to a new long jump T38 world record - the 20-year-old’s time placing her at the top of the women’s 200m T38 world rankings. Turkey’s Oguz Akbulut (23.06) and Hakan Cira (23.26) took the top two spots in the men’s 200m T12; Briton Thomas Young (23.87) notched up his sprint double with a win in the men’s 200m T38; South Africa’s Mpumelelo Mhlongo (23.30) beat local favorite Emanuele di Marino (25.36) in the men’s 200m T44 and Russia’s former European champion Aleksei Kotlov (22.91) won the men’s 200m T46/47. (Source: Paralympic)

Persepolis, Esteghlal to be privatized: top official

IRNA — Deputy Sports Minister Mohammad Reza Davarzani says that two Iranian most popular football clubs Persepolis and Esteghlal will be privatized. Privatization of Esteghlal and Persepolis should be carried out soon. These clubs will have to increase their revenues through broadcasting rights and selling their productions. “Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO) has been tasked with conducting the privatization process, including evaluation, pricing and setting conditions for the deals,” Davarzani said. “The Parliament has offered an assignment method, enacting the law for privatizing of the clubs and sports ministry and IPO have also their own points of views. The private organizations can own up to 100 percent of shares of these clubs. The government should not own even one percent of their shares, otherwise, they have to respond to sports ministry,” he added.

Arsalan Motahari on verge of joining Esteghlal

TASNIM — Zob Ahan striker Arsalan Motahari is on the verge of joining Esteghlal football team. Motahari was a key member of Zob Ahan football team in the AFC Champions League group stage, helping the Iranian team book a place in the knockout stage. Iranian media reports suggest that Motahari has reached an agreement with the popular football team. Esteghlal have yet to confirm the transfer because the team have not named their new head coach so far. The 26-year-old forward started his playing career at Naft Tehran in 2014 and has also played in Iranian top-flight football teams Pars Jonoubi and Tractor Sazi.

Russia’s Olympic chief regrets IAAF extension of doping ban: TASS

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russian Olympic Committee chief Stanislav Pozdnyakov said on Monday he regretted the decision by global athletics governing body IAAF to extend a ban against Russia’s athletics federation over doping, TASS news agency reported. The IAAF extended the ban on Sunday and also said it was investigating after Reuters reported that banned Russian coaches were still working with athletes. Russia’s athletics federation was suspended in November 2015 after a report commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) found evidence of widespread doping in the sport.

Venus Williams to make Birmingham debut

PARIS (Reuters) — Five-times Wimbledon champion Venus Williams will play in the Birmingham grasscourt event later this month after accepting a wildcard. The American, 38, has never played in the competition before but will join French Open champion Ashleigh Barty and world number one Naomi Osaka in the draw as the build-up to Wimbledon continues. “I’m really excited to be playing in Birmingham for the first time. I always love playing on grass in front of British crowds and have heard wonderful things about the tournament,” the seven-times Grand Slam singles champion said. Czech Petra Kvitova, a double Wimbledon champion, is also playing. Spain’s former Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza has withdrawn because of a left leg injury. The tournament runs from June 15-22.

Sources: Wan-Bissaka could cost Utd £60m

Manchester United will have to double their record transfer outlay for a defender in order to sign Aaron Wan-Bissaka from Crystal Palace after their opening bid was rejected, sources have told ESPN FC. United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is targeting right-back Wan-Bissaka as part of his summer overhaul, but United have had an initial offer of £35 million plus £5m in add-ons turned down. Palace believe they are in a strong position after securing Wan-Bissaka on a contract until 2022, and the 21-year-old has said he is happy to stay at Selhurst Park next season. The Eagles have not ruled out letting the England under-21 international leave but are planning to hold out for a guaranteed £50m with a series of add-ons that could take the deal past the £60m mark. That would almost double the £31m United paid Benfica for Victor Lindelof in 2017 and would make Wan-Bissaka -- who has had only one full season in the Premier League -- the third most expensive player in their history.

Paris Saint-Germain right-back Thomas Meunier is among the options if a fee for Wan-Bissaka cannot be agreed, but Arsenal are also interested in the Belgian international. Solskjaer is continuing his squad rebuild after agreeing a £15m deal with Swansea for Daniel James. The Wales winger is expected to be officially announced as a United player once the international transfer window opens on Tuesday. The manager is still hopeful of completing the bulk of his summer business before the start of pre-season training on July 1. Players and staff fly to Perth for the start of the pre-season tour on July 7. Meanwhile, United remain in talks with Juan Mata about extending his stay at Old Trafford. It was confirmed on Friday that Mata, who will become a free agent on June 30, has a contract offer on the table, but sources have told ESPN FC that negotiations are ongoing. United, who have released Ander Herrera and Antonio Valencia, are hopeful that the 31-year-old midfielder will stay, but he has a host of other offers from the Premier League, Italy and Spain. (Source: ESPN)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

No town is better to live in than another town.
The best town is one which tolerates your
goodness and badness.

Imam Ali (AS)

Cartoon exhibit to mark U.K crimes against Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — An exhibition of cartoons highlighting the crimes of the United Kingdom against Iran through history and its troubled relationship with Iran, will open in Tehran's Art Bureau today.

Entitled "Keep Calm, I Am the Queen", the exhibit will showcase 40 works by Iranian cartoonist, director of the Visual Center of the bureau Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai announced in a press release published on Monday.

The exhibit will be running until June 26 at the bureau located on Somayyaeh St., off Hafez Ave.

Berlin to host European Conference of Iranian Studies

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Freie Universität Berlin (Free University of Berlin) will be playing host to the Ninth European Conference of Iranian Studies taking place from September 9 to 13.



On the sidelines of the event, the Societas Iranologica Europaea (SIE) will grant the "European Award of Iranian Studies" to an outstanding Ph.D. (or equivalent) dissertation in Iranian studies, completed and successfully defended at any European academic institution.

The SIE and the Institute of Iranian studies are the organizers of the conference.

No limitations: Ali Stroker makes history with Tony win

NEW YORK (AP) — When she sings, Ali Stroker says, she has "no limitations."

That was clear on Sunday as Stroker performed and made history as the first actor in a wheelchair to capture a Tony Award. She earned the trophy for her portrayal of Ado Annie in Daniel Fish's dark revisionist revival of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic "Oklahoma!"

"This award is for every kid who is watching tonight who has a disability, who has a limitation or a challenge, who has been waiting to see themselves represented in this arena," Stroker, who won for best featured actress in a musical, said on stage. "You are."

Dressed in a neon yellow off-shoulder gown designed by her friend, Rachel Antonoff, Stroker told The Associated Press on the red carpet before the ceremony that her "Oklahoma!" part is "just a dream come true," adding: "I've been singing since I was 7 years old and for me singing is where I have no limitations. It is where I feel most powerful, and my voice and the ability to create music has, I think, really brought me out of all of the hardship that I've been through, and it's brought me here today into my most powerful self."

She noted one in five Americans lives with a disability. The 31-year-old Stroker, who was the first person in a wheelchair to appear on Broadway back in 2015 in "Spring Awakening," was paralyzed from the chest down due to a car crash when she was 2. The "Oklahoma!" producer Eva Price told the AP on Sunday that Stroker is the perfect Ado Annie.

"It was clear from his humor, her heart, who she is, the way she spoke these lyrics and those lines about what it means to be a strong woman who knows what she wants and can't say no," Price said.

Musician Fereidun Shahbazian honored in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Fereidun Shahbazian, the former conductor and artistic director of Iran's National Orchestra, was honored during a ceremony held at the Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Sunday.

A number of veteran musicians and literary figures including tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh, vocalist Mohammad Esfahani and poet Mohammad Shams Langerudi took part in the ceremony, which was also held to celebrate the 77th birthd anniversary of the musician.

In his opening speech, Alizadeh talked of his old friendship with Shahbazian and that he regards Shahbazian as his great master.

"Shahbazian deserves plenty of praise and encouragement. We are proud to have him beside us," he told the participants.

Songwriter and poet Akbar Azad said that Shahbazian is a musician who first introduced the poetry of Khayyam in a precious album with his composition, along with the voice of Mohammadreza Shajarian and the recitation of poet Ahmad Shamlu.

"His compositions are surely some of the best in Iranian music," he added.

Esfahani called Shahbazian a great man who supported him as a young singer, adding, "I own my artistic life to Shahbazian, as well as (musicians) Homayun Khorram and Babak Bayat).

Director of the center Abbas Sajjadi said that Shahbazian is like blood giving life to Iran's music.

The musician for his part expressed his thanks to the organizers and his friends and said, "Listening to good songs repeatedly is the best way to upgrade the taste of music. Music is a technique that requires repetition and practice and turns into a great art beside creativity, motivation and encouragement."

The program ended with Shahbazian blowing out the candle on his 77th birthday cake.



Fereidun Shahbazian (seated), surrounded by friends, smiles before he blows out the candle on his 77th birthday cake during a ceremony held at the Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran on June 9, 2019.

Russian festival picks films from Iran



A scene from "The Snail" by Mohammad Torivarian.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Four Iranian films will go on screen in various sections of the Unknown Film Festival (UFF), an international short film festival for amateur filmmakers, which will be held in Yekaterinburg, Russia on June 28.

"The Snail" by Mohammad Torivarian and "The City of Honey" by Moein Ruholamini will be screened at the main

section of the festival.

"The Incomplete" by Erfan Parsapur will compete in the animation section while "Fireworks" by Shahab Ghaffari will go on screen at the mobile video section of the festival.

Films from several countries including the U.K., France, Germany, Canada, Austria, Poland and Russia will be screened at the festival that aims at discovering new talent in filmmaking industry.

English translation of "The Stories of Majid" to come out in London next month

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — An English translation of Iranian children's book author Hushang Moradi Kermani's popular book "The Stories of Majid" will be introduced in London next month, The London-based Iranian-British company Candle and Fog Publishing has announced.

The American scholar Caroline Croskery is the translator of the book who is expected to attend the unveiling ceremony along with author Moradi Kermani, Candle & Fog director Afshin Shahnetabar told the Persian service of Tasnim on Monday.

"The book will be jointly published by Candle & Fog and the Comma Press, a publishing house based in Manchester," Shahnetabar added.

Croskery had earlier said that all 25 stories in the collection will be translated and published in a single volume, and that

she believes "The Stories of Majid" enjoys an exceptional storyline, which narrates a portion of Iranian culture in a most attractive way.

Author Michael McIrvin is collaborating in this project as an editor.

"The Stories of Majid" tells the story of an ambitious teenage boy, Majid, who lives with his grandma Bibi in the central Iranian city of Isfahan.

Iranian filmmaker Kiumars Purahmad directed a TV-series of the same title based on the book during the 1990s. The serial gained popularity among the audience and film critics.

Croskery has previously rendered Moradi Kermani's "A Sweet Jam", "Believe It or Not" and "The Water Urn" into English.

Croskery has also translated a number of works from contemporary Persian literature including "Democracy or

"Haiku for Creative Kids" comes to Iranian bookstores



Front cover of the Persian version of "Haiku: Asian Arts and Crafts for Creative Kids" by Patricia Donegan.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** —

American poet and writer Patricia Donegan's book "Haiku: Asian Arts and Crafts for Creative Kids" has recently been published in Persian by Ettefaq Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Einollah Pashai, the 2003 children's book tries to teach the readers aged 7 to 12 how to create haiku, elegant

and simple Japanese poems.

The activities in the book show the children the seven keys to create their own haiku, think up memorable words and images and write the three short lines that make up a great haiku.

With clear expressions and many examples, the book tries to make it fun for children while they explore this fascinating aspect of Japanese culture.



A scene from the TV series "The Stories of Majid" by Iranian filmmaker Kiumars Purahmad.

DemoCrazy?" by Seyyed Mehdi Shojai, "Wandering in a Strange Land" by Ahmad Dehqan and "Year of the Tree" by Zoha Kazemi.

Brian Wilson postpones summer tour, says he feels 'mentally insecure'

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Beach Boys co-founder Brian Wilson has indefinitely postponed a U.S. summer tour that was due to open on Friday, saying he felt "mentally insecure" in the aftermath of recent back surgery but hoped to return to performing later in the year.

In a message posted on his Facebook page and official website, Wilson, 76, acknowledged he has struggled with mental illness "for many decades," and had been "excited to get back to performing" before he "started feeling strange" again.

"We're not sure what is causing it but I do know that it's not good for me to be on the road right now, so I'm heading back to Los Angeles," he wrote.

Wilson's latest tour, featuring selections from the landmark 1966 Beach Boys album "Pet Sounds" and other hits, with fellow Beach Boys co-founder Al Jardine, was scheduled to kick off on Friday at the Lynn Auditorium in Massachusetts, outside Boston.

According to Wilson's website, the Massachusetts show and 11 more concert dates running through June 23 have been postponed.

The singer-songwriter, who created such enduring rock hits as "Good Vibrations," "Surfin' U.S.A." and "God Only Knows," said he had undergone three back surgeries in



Recording artist Brian Wilson arrives at the premiere of the movie "Love & Mercy" at the Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills, California June 2, 2015. (Reuters/Patrick T. Fallon)

roughly the last year that left him "physically stronger than I've been in a long time."

Wilson said he had been back in the studio recording and rehearsing with his band and was feeling better, before

suffering a mental relapse of sorts.

"Mentally insecure is how I'd describe it," he said, adding he was "struggling with stuff in my head and saying things I don't mean, and I don't know why."

"I'm going to rest, recover and work with my doctors on this," he wrote. "I'm looking forward to my recovery and seeing everyone later in the year." He closed by saying, "I know this is something I can AGAIN overcome," followed by the signoff "Love & Mercy," the title song of his 1988 solo album.

Wilson has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years, with his touring band performing music from the Beach Boys' 1964 Christmas album during a holiday season tour last year.

More recently, he appeared prominently in the newly released documentary "Echo in the Canyon," about the birth of the Southern California sound in 1960s Los Angeles.

Although Wilson's repertoire consists mostly of Beach Boys music, his cousin and fellow Beach Boys co-founder Mike Love is the only one of the three surviving original members of the group who has legal rights to tour under the band's name.

Wilson, Jardine and Love reunited in 2012 on the stage of the Grammy Awards to play "Good Vibrations," marking their first performance together in more than two decades.