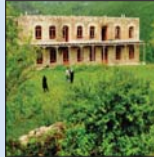




Quarterly non-oil exports from PSEEZ hits \$5.7b **4**



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Iran's long-serving journalist Behmanesh passes away **15**



Iranian, Azerbaijani culture ministers meet in Tehran **16**

Total, CNPC seal \$5b gas deal with Iran



Total Chief Executive Officer Patrick Pouyanne (L) and NIOC Managing Director Ali Kardor exchange documents of the deal in Tehran, July 3, 2017.

Leader urges Judiciary to address intl. affairs

POLITICS TEHRAN — In remarks on Monday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei urged judicial officials to adopt official positions on various international affairs, including human rights violations. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks on Monday in a meeting with Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larjani and other judicial officials on the occasion of Judiciary Week (June 22-28). The Leader said it is important for the Judiciary to pursue various international issues through legal channels. "The Judiciary should intervene from a legal position in such issues as sanctions, U.S. confiscations and terrorism or [come out] in support

of downtrodden personalities in the world such as Sheikh Zakzaky or the Muslims of Myanmar and Kashmir," Press TV quoted the Leader as saying. In such issues, the Leader said, the Judiciary should "decisively declare its supportive position or opposition so it is reflected across the world." Nigeria has placed leading Shia cleric Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky in detention and has come down hard on his supporters, reportedly killing dozens of them in a far-and-wide crackdown. Myanmar has likewise been accused of leading a systematic deadly campaign of suppression against its Muslim community. Kashmir has also been witnessing chronic violence in its India-controlled half.

Rouhani: Environmental issues are transnational

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that environmental issues are "extra-national and extra-regional challenges", noting regional wars have caused environmental problems. "The only way to live peacefully in the West Asia and Middle East region is adopting a win-win policy in the area of environment, helping and standing beside each other," Rouhani said during an opening speech at the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran. "We cannot succeed in overcoming

environmental challenges without cooperating with neighboring countries," the president added. He urged an end to regional wars, because they cause environmental degradations such as dust storms in addition to political crises. He said Daesh and other terrorist groups' destructive actions such as destruction of farms turn agricultural lands into deserts which cause dust storms. The Iranian president also said that the environmental issues are important for the "health of the society" and "development." **→2**



ARTICLE

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

Bullying and humiliating little Qatar

Saudi Arabia, along with the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain, has been leading a blockade of the tiny country of Qatar for a month to force it to give in to their humiliating demands which include curbing ties with Iran, closing the Turkish military base on its soil, shutting the Al-Jazeera news network, and cutting ties with the Muslim Brotherhood among other things. Saudi Arabia initially claimed that the main reason behind closing sea, land and air routes to Qatar is for Doha's support for extremist groups. However, one can hardly believe such argumentation because it is not a secret that Saudi Arabia itself has been the chief ideological and financier of extremism in the region and the larger world. What is quite obvious is that Saudi Arabia is extremely envious of Qatar, a very small and rich state which is emerging highly successful economically, culturally and diplomatically. The demand to close Al-Jazeera shows that Saudi Arabia as an absolute monarchy which does not tolerate press freedom or dissenting voice sees Al-Jazeera as a bone in its throat. Egypt and the UAE, though unhappy with Doha's relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, did a blow to their dignity and international standing by obeying Riyadh in imposing sanctions on Qatar. There will be no guarantee that Saudi Arabia which today sets strict demands to humiliate Qatar to adopt such a behavior toward the UAE, also a small country, another day. Though no sensible person agrees to what Qatar has been doing such as its support for some radical militants in Syria, it has been behaving somehow like Switzerland of the Middle East by mediating between hostile groups such as the Afghan government and the Taliban, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, warring sides in Sudan, etc. These demands show that the Saddam-like mentality which led to the occupation of Kuwait in 1990 still exists in the region and there are still countries in the region which are not shy to bully small countries.

Can Iran lead a global fight against dust storms?

High-level international delegations meet in Tehran to discuss anthropogenic dust bowls as a global environmental threat

By Ali Mirchi and Kaveh Madani



In the last two years, the UN passed four resolutions on sand and dust storms in an attempt to facilitate a global political will to tackle this pressing environmental problem. Now an international conference hosted by Iran and UN has brought together leaders

and experts from 34 countries to discuss ways to combat dust storms and form partnerships to take action. The occasion presents Iran with an opportunity to lead an important global environmental cause in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution on combating sand and dust storms, an outcome of the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech. The conference is expected to reach "a ministerial declaration by leaders of some of the countries ... saying this is a problem [and] we agree to take every step that we can to try to address it," says Gary Lewis, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Iran. Sand and dust storms are emerging as a global environmental problem. Annually, about 2,000

million tons of dust is emitted into the atmosphere with significant consequences for the environment and socio-economic status of population centers in the world's "dust belt." Hotter and drier climatic conditions and, more importantly, anthropogenic changes worsen the situation by turning drying lake beds into new sources of dust in arid and semi-arid regions. Faster and stronger winds carry larger amounts of dust. Human health issues related to airborne dust are ubiquitous and growing, including increased respiratory and infectious diseases leading to premature death. Children and the elderly and those with cardiovascular and respiratory diseases or frequently exposed to dust storms are particularly vulnerable. The phenomenon also takes lives in transportation accidents due to poor visibility. **→13**

Eurozone unemployment rate holds at 9.3% – 2009 low

A pause in the eurozone's recent impressive unemployment falls. Average unemployment in the single currency area held at 9.3 per cent in May – its lowest level since 2009 – as the number of people who registered at jobless fell by 5,000 in the month. It was the weakest monthly performance of the year. Still, the eurozone has been creating jobs at an impressive pace this year, bringing down the unemployment rate from 10.2 per

cent in May last year. Falling unemployment has helped boost consumer spending power, which in turn has driven eurozone GDP growth to a quarterly pace of 0.6 per cent at the start of the year. By comparison, the UK grew just 0.2 per cent while the U.S. economy expanded 0.45 per cent. There are now 15m people out of work in the single currency area, with Germany boasting the best rate of unemployment

at just 3.9 per cent – a post-reunification record. Greece however has stayed on the sidelines of the broader tumble in joblessness, with unemployment stuck around 22 per cent. Despite the uptick in the labour market, the European Central Bank is still looking for signs of higher wage growth before tightening monetary policy as it battles with below-target inflation. (Source: Financial Times)

Israel to look into plans to build 2,000 settler units in Jerusalem al-Quds

Israel is expected to approve a series of plans to build thousands of new settler units in the occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, media reports say. According to Israeli newspaper Haaretz, the plans are to be discussed at the Jerusalem District Planning Commission in the next two weeks. The daily said such diplomatically-sensitive plans were repeatedly delayed by orders from above or removed from the planning committees' agenda with no explanation during the administration of the former United States president, Barack Obama. However, since the inauguration in January of new President Donald Trump, particularly following his May visit to the occupied territories, right-wing politicians began to declare that the freeze on construction in East al-Quds (Jerusalem) was over, added the report. The commission will be presented with four plans for construction in the Palestinian Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, which will lead to the eviction of Palestinian families living there. The plans expected to be approved comprise nearly 2,000 units in large settlements, including Pisgat Zeev and Gilo. Meanwhile, Peace Now, an Israeli anti-settlement group that monitors settlement activity in the West Bank, has slammed the plans. "The construction of two settlements in the heart of a Palestinian neighborhood in Jerusalem, alongside the advancing of plans for nearly 2,000 homes across the Green Line, are more proof of the blatant efforts by the government to destroy any chance of a diplomatic solution," said Lior Amihai, head of the settlement oversight team at Peace Now. The reports come amid diplomatic efforts to revive the stalled talks between Israelis and Palestinians. The last round of the so-called peace negotiations between the two sides collapsed in April 2014. Tel Aviv's settlement activities were among major reasons behind the failure of the talks. Israeli settlements are considered illegal under international law as they are built on occupied territory. (Source: Press TV)



Slalom competition held in Karaj River

Iran's slalom competition was held in Karaj River in Alborz Province west of Tehran. Slalom, ski race that follows a winding course between gates (pairs of poles topped with flags), devised by British sportsman Arnold Lunn (later Sir Arnold Lunn) in the early 1920s.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Army to receive new home-made tank

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian Army is going to receive the state-of-the-art, homegrown tank dubbed "Karrar" soon, according to Army Ground Force Commander Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari.

Speaking to Tansim on Monday, Heidari said the tanks will be delivered by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2018).

"The Karrar tank is a very good, ideal and operational tank that has been tested and used in war games," he said.

Karrar enjoys modern technologies. Its earlier version is already in service, together with other locally-made tanks like Zolfaqar.



IRGC seizes hundreds of spying devices in Tehran

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' intelligence forces managed to capture a big haul of contraband spying devices in northern Tehran, an informed source announced on Monday.

The unnamed source said spying devices include two-way radios and eavesdropping equipment, Fars reported.

The devices were captured from a criminal band that sold them in an organized way, according to the source. The source said four members of the band were identified and arrested as well.



Iraq's Ammar Hakim visits senior Iranian officials

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ammar Hakim, chief of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, traveled to Tehran on Monday and held talks with senior Iranian officials.

In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Hakim discussed the latest developments in Iraq, IRNA reported.

Zarif and Hakim conferred on the most recent political and field developments in Iraq, particularly the fight against Daesh.

Later the day, Hakim met with Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani as well to discuss topics of mutual concern.



France says committed to implementing all Iran deals

POLITICS TEHRAN — The French president has reassured that all agreements with Tehran, including Total's contract the Iranian Oil Ministry for development of a South Pars gas field, will be implemented, the general secretary of the French Foreign Ministry and International Development said on Monday.

Speaking with the Strategic Research Center director Ali Akbar Velayati in Tehran, Christian Masset underlined the progressive trend of Iran-France ties, deeming Foreign Minister Javad Zarif's recent visit to Paris as constructive, Mehr reported.



UN envoy: Zarif building bridge between Iran, Europe

POLITICS TEHRAN — The UN resident coordinator in Iran has appreciated Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif for "building bridges" between the Islamic Republic and Europe to improve bilateral ties.

Gary Lewis made the remarks on the sidelines of the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms underway in Tehran on Monday, ISNA reported.

Pointing to Zarif's recent tour of Europe which included visits to Germany, Italy and France, he said Iran's chief diplomat spares no effort in promoting relations with Europe.



Turkey dispatching 100-strong delegation to Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci will, heading a 100-strong business delegation comprising businessmen and industrialists, will visit Iran on July 8 for a one-day trip, according to the secretary-general of Iran-Turkey Commercial Council.

Speaking on Monday, Jalal Ebrahimi announced that the two countries will hold new negotiations over setting up new preferential tariff for 400 items, ILNA reported.

During his trip, Zeybekci will meet Iranian Industry Minister Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh and the other officials to discuss setting up the new tariffs.

Iran remembers victims of passenger plane downed by U.S. in 1988

U.S. has institutionalized anti-human behaviors, Iranian Foreign Ministry says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Monday saying the killing of innocents throughout the world shows that successive U.S. governments have institutionalized "anti-human behaviors".

The statement was issued on the 29th anniversary of downing of an Iranian passenger plane by a U.S. Navy guided-missile cruiser in the Persian Gulf waters in 1988. All the 290 people on board were killed.

The U.S. claimed that the crew incorrectly identified the Iranian Airbus A300 as a warplane while the airliner was making IFF squawks in Mode III (not Mode II used by Iranian military planes), a signal that identified it as a civilian craft.

"The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns unfair and anti-human action of the U.S. Navy in downing the Iranian passenger plane on 3 July 1988 and commemorates memory of martyrs of this horrible crime," the statement read.

It added, "The Iranian nation considers perpetrators of this catastrophe illogical who commit crime under the name



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of supporting the human rights and defending the nations while they should

answer for their anti-human behaviors." The Iranian people will never forget

this disaster and will not forgive its perpetrators, the statement said.

Iranian delegation in Kazakhstan for Syria peace talks

POLITICS TEHRAN — An Iranian delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Jaber Ansari, left Tehran for Kazakh capital of Astana on Monday to partake in the fifth round of talks in pursuit of peace in Syria.

The delegation had a joint working group session with representatives of the two other guarantors of the Syrian ceasefire – Russia and Turkey – a day before the Astana talks.

The expert talks were also held on Monday and the main round of negotiations between the Syrian government and militant groups are due July 4-5.

The fifth round of the peace initiative was scheduled to be held in June but was later postponed, reportedly due to ongoing consultation between the three countries on "the de-escalations zones."

Russia, Iran and Turkey signed a document during the fourth round of the Syria talks in Astana, Kazakhstan, to form four "de-escalation zones" in Syria.

The agreement is considered as the most significant achievement of a three-pronged diplomatic effort since the beginning of 2017 to reduce bloodshed in a war now in its seventh year.

On June 22, Ibrahim Kalin, President Tayyip Erdogan's spokesman, said Turkish and Russian personnel will be deployed in Syria's northern Idlib region as part of a de-escalation agreement.

"Mostly Russia and Iran around Damascus, and a mechanism involving the Americans and Jordan in the south in the Deraa region is being worked on," the spokesman added.

According to the document, the de-escalation zones include Idlib province and part of the provinces of Latakia, Hama and Aleppo, the area to the north of Homs, Eastern Ghouta, as well as Deraa and Quneitra provinces in southern Syria.

The zones are closed to the U.S.-led coalition's aviation. The coalition's aviation can operate only in areas controlled by Daesh.

Participants are expected to discuss documents regulating the parameters of the de-escalation zones as well as the issue of unfettered humanitarian access and rebuilding of infrastructure.

Also, high on the agenda should be the deployment of Russian, Iranian and Turkish personnel in the de-escalation zones.

Weeks ago, Jaber Ansari said the three guarantor

states had held three sessions – two in Ankara and one in Oslo – to specify technical and geographical details of four safe zones in Syria.

"An important part of the issues raised among the three countries is resolved and general agreements have been reached on them," he said, adding that the three countries have agreed to follow up on the remaining issues through diplomatic channels.

The Astana talks have brought representatives from the Syrian government and opposition groups to the negotiating table in order to find a solution to the Syrian conflict, which broke out in March 2011.

Iran, Turkey and Russia brokered the Astana talks on the Syrian crisis. The first three rounds of the talks were held on January 23-24, February 15-16 and March 14-15.

The fourth round of the talks was held in May during which a document on creating de-escalation zones in Syria was signed.

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, Iran and Russia have been supporting the Damascus government, while Turkey has supported the militant groups which are fighting against the government of Bashar al-Assad.

Rouhani: Environmental issues are 'extra-national, extra-regional'

1 -> Planning, investing and international cooperation are required to settle environmental problems, Rouhani pointed out.

Elsewhere, he said, "Terrorism is a pandemic issue and if any country thinks that it can use terrorism as a tool to apply its policies in the region and the world is totally mistaken."

No country can harm others and be safe, he asserted.

Commenting on his government's policies in the area of environment, he said that the government prioritized environment and called itself "the government of environment".

The first decision in the government was to tackle environmental problems such as reviving Lake Urmia, he explained.

"It does not mean that the



President Rouhani urges an end to regional wars which have caused environmental degradations such as dust storms in addition to political crises.

government's national actions in the sphere of environment were enough; however, valuable steps have been taken in this respect," he noted.

He added that his next government which starts its work in August will take complementary actions to save the Lake Urmia.

The International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms started on July 3 and will last until July 5.

The conference is hosted by the Department of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the cooperation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UN Environment and the UN Development Program, in collaboration with other relevant UN entities.

Iran Navy starts military drills in Caspian Sea

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Navy has launched a massive five-day military exercises in the Caspian Sea in an attempt to show the Armed Forces' preparedness to establish lasting security in the strategic waters.

Codenamed "Lasting Security and Power 96", the drills were launched in an area of more than 88,000 square kilometers across the sea on Sunday.

During the drills, naval forces practice battles with mock enemy forces, perform calculated warfare tactics as well as joint operations enlisting vessels, aircraft, coastal and seaborne operational units and logistical teams, Press TV reported.

Commander of the Navy's Northern Fleet Captain Ahmad-Reza Baqeri said by the war game, the Islamic Republic aims at communicating a message of peace and friendship toward neighboring countries.

Earlier this year, the country's military held several drills in an attempt to send a message to its enemies. During



the final stage of the Velayat 95 naval exercises in March, it tested a brand-new Valfajr torpedo system.

The Valfajr torpedo, which was revealed in 2011, is designed to attack seaborne targets, including large vessels. It is said to carry a 220-kilogram warhead capable of crippling targets at different depths in various weather conditions.

Top Iranian delegation to visit Afghanistan

POLITICS TEHRAN — A member of Afghanistan's Council of Ministers said on Monday that a top Iranian delegation plans to visit Kabul in the near future.

In an interview with IRNA on the sidelines of the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran, he said that the Iranian delegation will visit Afghanistan to pursue implementation of agreements between the two countries.

"Afghanistan seeks to establish and expand relations with the neighboring countries especially the friendly and neighboring Iran," the official said.

The member of the council of minister expressed hope that the delegation's visit would bring positive results in relations.

The international conference on dust storms started on July 3 and will last until July 5.



The conference is hosted by the Department of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the cooperation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UN Environment and the UN Development Program, in collaboration with other relevant UN entities.

Persian Gulf crisis: Qatar FM in Kuwait to respond to demands

Saudi Arabia, allies give Qatar two more days to accept demands

Qatar's foreign minister has arrived in Kuwait to hand over the state's response to the list of 13 demands from the House of Saud regime and three other Arab states.

Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani met Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Monday to discuss the demands. Al Thani was expected to deliver a handwritten letter from Qatar's emir, according to state-run Kuwait News Agency. Kuwait is mediating in the dispute.

Al Thani was immediately flew back to Qatar after the meeting.

Qatar's response will be the focus of a gathering in Cairo on Wednesday of foreign ministers from the House of Saud regime, Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The four countries severed diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed sanctions on it on June 5, accusing it of supporting "terrorism". The allegation has been rejected by Doha as "baseless".

They also imposed a land, sea and air embargo.

After more than two weeks, the four countries gave Doha 10 days, or until Sunday night, to comply with a 13-point demand list in exchange for the end of the anti-Qatar measures.

The demands included that Qatar shut down the Al Jazeera Media Network, close a Turkish military base and scale down ties with Iran.

Late on Sunday, the four countries said it would meet on Wednesday in Cairo to discuss their next steps.

Four Arab states which accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism agreed to extend until late on Tuesday a deadline for Doha to comply with a list of demands, as the United



States President Donald Trump voiced concern to both sides about the dispute.

The House of Saud regime, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE have raised the possibility of further sanctions against Qatar if it does not comply with the 13 demands presented to Doha through Kuwait, which is acting as a mediator.

According to a joint statement on Saudi regime state news agency SPA, the four states agreed to a request by Kuwait to extend by 48 hours Sunday's deadline for

compliance.

They have not specified what further sanctions they could impose on Doha, but commercial bankers in the region believe that Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini banks might receive official guidance to pull deposits and interbank loans from Qatar.

Qatar's foreign minister has already said that Doha would not meet the demands, saying the list "was meant to be rejected".

Speaking on Saturday, the foreign min-

ister said Doha offered instead "a proper condition for a dialogue" to resolve the Persian Gulf crisis.

U.S. President Donald Trump spoke separately with leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi late on Sunday.

He "underscored that unity in the region is critical to accomplishing the Riyadh summit's goals of defeating terrorism and promoting regional stability", the White House said.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Assad appears on Syrian banknote for first time

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has appeared on the Syrian currency for the first time since taking office, with his portrait printed on a new 2,000-pound banknote (\$3.9) that went into circulation on Sunday.

Syria's Central Bank governor Duraid Durgham said the bill was one of several new notes printed years ago but the decision to put it into circulation was delayed "due to the circumstances of the war and exchange rate fluctuations".

Citing wear and tear of the existing notes, Durgham said the time was right to put the new note into circulation.



The bill featuring Assad's portrait was put into circulation "in Damascus and a number of the provinces".

The currency previously only carried images of historic icons or pictures of his father, the late President Hafez al-Assad, who appeared on coins and on an older version of the 1,000-pound note still in circulation.

Syria's currency has plunged in value since the country's conflict began in 2011. Trading at 47 pounds to the dollar in 2011, it is going for 517 pounds to the dollar at present.

Inflation has also soared, reaching an all-time high in 2013, at over 120 percent. Estimates in 2016 put the inflation rate at 50 percent.

(Source: agencies)

18 missing in German bus crash 'probably dead': police

At least 18 people who are unaccounted for after a bus crash in southern Germany are believed to have died as a fire engulfed the vehicle, police said.

The bus burst into flames after colliding with a truck near the Bavarian town of Stammbach on Monday.

"Thirty passengers were taken to hospitals, some with serious injuries. The others are believed to have died in the burning tour bus", which had been carrying 48 people, police said in a statement.

A German minister said that 11 bodies had been retrieved from the crash site so far.

Some 200 emergency workers were deployed to the site, including firefighters, rescue workers and police, while south-bound traffic on the motorway remained blocked.

Earlier in the day, police spokesman Juergen Stadter told local media that there was "only a glimmer of hope" that some of the missing would be found alive outside the charred bus.

"Maybe someone ran away in shock" he said.

Another police spokeswoman, Anne Hoefler, told AFP news agency that the passengers were "old people" and that some may not have made it out of the bus.

■ Great dismay

(Source: agencies)



Meantime, German Chancellor Angela Merkel voiced "great dismay" over the crash, her office said.

"Our thoughts go to the victims and their family members, as well as to the injured. We hope that those who have been rescued will recover from their injuries," Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said.

According to the Bild newspaper, the coach was travelling from the eastern region of Lausitz and heading for Nuremberg.

If those missing are confirmed killed, the accident would be one of the worst to hit Germany.

Among the deadliest in recent years was a collision in June 2007, when 13 people were killed as their tour bus drove off the road and plunged several meters down a slope in eastern Germany's Saxony-Anhalt state.

Philippine's Duterte threatens to jail martial law critics

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to jail critics of his use of martial law in the south, as the Supreme Court is set to rule on its legality on Tuesday.

Duterte declared military rule across the region of Mindanao, home to about 20 million people, in late May to quell what he said was a fast-growing threat from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

The president has insisted he would ignore the findings of the country's highest court, which has constitutional oversight, vowing only to listen to recommendations from the armed forces.

"It's not dependent on the whim of the Supreme Court. Should I believe them? When I see the situation is still chaotic and you ask me to lift it? I will arrest you and put you behind bars," Duterte said in a speech before local officials on Saturday.

"We can talk of anything else and make compromises, maybe, but not when the interest of my country is at stake."

Government forces are continuing to battle ISIL-linked fighters occupying the southern city of Marawi, with aerial bombardment and ferocious street-to-



street combat that has left some 400 people dead and forced nearly 400,000 people in the wider area to flee their homes.

Duterte has faced a backlash from opposition politicians, who last month asked the Supreme Court to reject the declaration of martial law, which they have slammed as unconstitutional.

The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines imposes limits on martial law to prevent a repeat of the abuses under Ferdinand Marcos, who was deposed by a famous "People Power" revolution the previous year.

The charter allows the Supreme Court to review the factual basis for proclaiming martial law, which is limited to an initial period of 60 days. If a president decides to extend martial law, Congress can review and revoke it.

(Source: agencies)

Man charged over plot to assassinate Macron on Bastille Day

A 23-year-old man has been charged with plotting to assassinate Emmanuel Macron at France's Bastille Day parade, a judicial source said.

The self-described nationalist, who was arrested last Wednesday, told investigators he wanted to kill the French president at the 14 July national parade in Paris, a source close to the investigation said.

He said he also wanted to attack "Muslims, Jews, blacks, homosexuals", the source added.

Police arrested the man at his home in the north-west Paris suburb of Argenteuil on Wednesday after being alerted by users of a chat-room linked to a video game where he allegedly said he wanted to buy a firearm.

Three kitchen knives were found in his vehicle and anal-

ysis of his computer found that he had conducted internet searches on potential targets, the source said.

He was charged on Saturday with plotting to commit a terrorist act, the judicial source said.

The man was convicted for condoning terrorism in 2016 and sentenced to three years in prison, of which 18 months were suspended.

He had applauded the neo-Nazi mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people in a bomb and gun rampage in 2011 in Norway.

The 14 July parade commemorates the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789 – the start of the French Revolution and a turning point in world history.

The parade takes place on the Champs-Élysées, which

has been the site of two recent attacks targeting police. Last month a man drove a car laden with weapons and gas canisters into a police van on the avenue. In April, a known extremist shot dead a police officer on the Champs-Élysées days before the first round of the presidential election.

Last 14 July a terrorist killed 86 people in a truck attack in Nice.

On Bastille Day in 2002, the then president, Jacques Chirac, was the target of an assassination attempt on the avenue.

France has been in a state of emergency that has been repeatedly renewed since jihadist attacks in Paris in November 2015, in which 130 people were killed.

(Source: The Guardian)

British govt. not aware of plans for Trump visit in next few weeks

The British government is not aware of any plans for the United States President Donald Trump to visit Britain in the next few weeks, Prime Minister Theresa May's spokesman said on Monday.

British media reported that government sources had been warned Trump could visit his golf resort in Scotland at short notice in the next two weeks, during a scheduled trip to Europe for the G20 summit and Bastille Day celebrations in France.

"I am not aware of any plans for the president to visit the UK in the next few weeks," May's spokesman told reporters. He said an invitation for Trump to come to Britain on a state visit had been accepted and details would be set out in due course.

May extended the invitation to Trump during a trip to Washington in January but the date has never been announced and media have reported that the trip has been postponed over concerns over the risk of protests.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump talks North Korea threat in calls with China, Japan leaders

The threat posed by North Korea was a key topic in phone calls between the United States President Donald Trump and the leaders of China and Japan, along with trade issues, the White House said.

Trump spoke with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe ahead of expected meetings with the leaders of Asia's two biggest economies at a Group of 20 nations summit in Germany later this week.

"Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a denuclearized Korean Peninsula," the White House said of Trump's call with Xi from his resort property in Bridgewater, New Jersey, where he is spending a long weekend.

"President Trump reiterated his determination to seek more balanced trade relations with America's trading partners," it added.

Trump has become increasingly frustrated with China's inability to rein in North Korea, and the reference to trade was an indication the one-time New York businessman may be ready to return to his tougher-talking ways on business with Beijing after holding back in hopes it would put more pressure on Pyongyang.

Trump and Xi discussed the "peace and stability of the Korean peninsula", China's Foreign Ministry said, without elaborating.

Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang later told a daily briefing that the United States was "very clear" about China's position on North Korea. Geng did not elaborate on what Xi told Trump about North Korea.

"Negative factors" have affected Sino-U.S. relations, and China has already expressed its position to the United States, Xi told Trump, according to a read-out of a telephone call between the leaders carried by the ministry.

■ One China policy

The ministry said Trump told Xi the U.S. government would continue to follow a "one China" policy, under which Washington acknowledges the Chinese position that there is only one China and Taiwan is part of it, and that this position had not changed.

China pays great attention to that reiteration and hopes the United States can "appropriately handle" the Taiwan issue, Xi told Trump, according to the ministry.

On Thursday, the United States targeted a Chinese bank and sanctioned Chinese individuals and a firm for dealing with North Korea and approved a \$1.42 billion arms deal with Taiwan – decisions that angered Beijing.

And on Sunday a U.S. warship sailed near a disputed island in the South China Sea claimed by China, drawing a rebuke from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Trump's separate conversations with the two Asian leaders followed White House talks with South Korea's new president, Moon Jae-in, last week in which the U.S. leader called on Asian powers to implement sanctions and demand North Korea "choose a better path and do it quickly".

Trump and Abe, in their call, reiterated their commitment to increase pressure on North Korea.

"They reaffirmed that the United States-Japan Alliance stands ready to defend and respond to any threat or action taken by North Korea," the White House said in a statement.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference the two countries and South Korea will have a trilateral summit at the G20 meeting, but he didn't want to speculate on what might be said there.

Trump, who held talks with Abe earlier this year at the president's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, has forged a united front with the Japanese leader on the need to exert pressure on North Korea to curb its nuclear and missile development.

During and after a Florida summit with Xi in April at Mar-a-Lago, Trump praised his Chinese counterpart for agreeing to work on the North Korea issue and has held back on attacking Chinese trade practices he railed against during the presidential campaign.

But Trump has recently suggested he was running out of patience with China's modest steps to pressure North Korea, which is working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the United States, and has been considering moving ahead on trade actions.

Trump has been weighing new quotas or tariffs on steel imports for national security reasons and plans to discuss his concerns at the G20. Washington sees excess global production capacity, particularly in China, administration officials say.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Italy's Ansaldo ready for co-op in Iran's energy projects

ENERGY TEHRAN — Italy's Ansaldo Energia has expressed readiness for bilateral cooperation with Iran Power and Water Equipment and Services Export Company (known as SUNIR) in the country's energy, oil and gas projects, IRNA reported.

In a meeting between the Italian company's representatives and SUNIR's directors in Tehran, the two sides agreed on cooperation in the form of joint ventures, financing and opening credit line for SUNIR projects inside and outside the country.



45 airport projects underway

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Implementation of 45 airport projects has been started in the country in the current Iranian calendar year and they will be tried to be complete by 80 percent by the yearend (March 20, 2018), according to an Iranian aviation official.

As Gholam-Hossein Baqerian, a board member of Airports and Air Navigation Company of Iran, told IRNA on Monday, construction of passenger terminals, development of runways, and construction of administrative buildings are among the most important airport projects underway.



Copper output to reach 400,000 tons in 2 years

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Annual copper output in Iran will reach 400,000 tons by the next two years, IRNA reported on Monday quoting National Iranian Copper Industries Company Managing Director Ahmad Morad Alizadeh.

As the official further highlighted, reaching the sales value of 71 trillion rials (about \$1.8 billion) and exports value of \$1.2 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) National Iranian Copper Industries Company stood among the five top companies in the Iranian stock exchange market.

Airbus unveils leaner structure, confirms sales shake-up

Airbus on Monday formally kicked off a leaner corporate structure under Chief Executive Tom Enders, following a recent merger between its parent company and its dominant planemaking arm, and confirmed a reorganization of its commercial sales.

Confirming changes first announced last year, the reorganization involves a single corporate headquarters in Toulouse, France, with Fabrice Bregier as group-wide chief operating officer and president of commercial aircraft.

"Airbus will benefit from a simpler structure that enables faster decision-making, less bureaucracy, greater collaboration and increased efficiency," it said in a statement.

Reuters reported last week that the shake-up would now see Airbus's sales team, best known for contesting leadership of the jetliner market with Boeing, report directly to Enders instead of to Bregier.

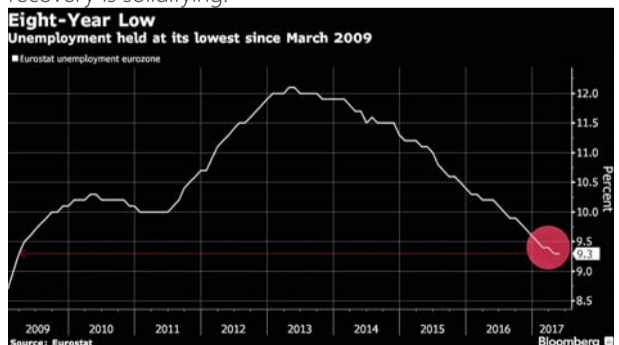
The move is seen as sensitive because it revisits a power-sharing deal between Enders and Bregier that initially gave the Frenchman responsibility over all planemaking activities.

An Airbus spokesman confirmed the new reporting lines, saying this was a routine matter for any normal company.

(Source: Reuters)

Euro-area unemployment holds at 8-Year low as recovery proceeds

The euro-area's unemployment rate held at its lowest since March 2009 last month, adding to evidence that the regional recovery is solidifying.



The rate in the 19-country bloc remained at 9.3 percent in May, unchanged from April, the European Union's statistics office Eurostat said on Monday. The reading is in line with the median forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists.

Signs are mounting that a years of exceptionally weak growth and inflation may be ending, with figures last week showing that economic confidence jumped to the highest level in a decade. The European Central Bank has started to discuss unwinding its 2.3 trillion-euro (\$2.6 trillion) quantitative easing program, and President Mario Draghi has argued there's room to adjust instruments without tightening monetary conditions.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Quarterly non-oil exports from PSEEZ hits \$5.7b

ENERGY TEHRAN — The value of non-oil exports from Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ), an energy hub in Iran's southern province of Bushehr, reached \$5.7 billion in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), Mehdi Yousefi, the managing director of PSEEZ Organization, announced.

The official said 13.623 million tons of non-oil products including gas con-

densate have been exported from the zone to 29 countries during the three-month period, PSEEZ website reported on Monday.

As Yousefi announced exports from the zone stood at \$14.917 billion in the past calendar year. The figure shows 22 percent rise compared to its preceding year.

Gas condensates, urea fertilizers, methanol, and cement were the main



products exported to 29 countries in the past year, the official had said on early April.

In terms of weight, exports from the zone amounted to 34.195 million tons, an increase of 41 percent year on year,

he said.

Yousefi further announced that gas condensate exports from the zone witnessed 43-percent and 59-percent growth, respectively, to stand at \$7.011 billion and 17.515 million tons.

Total, CNPC seal \$5b gas deal with Iran

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran signed a deal with France's Total and China's state-owned National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) for development of phase 11 of its South Pars gas field, Shana reported on Monday.

The \$4.879-billion deal was signed by National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), as the contractor of project, and a consortium of companies comprising Total, CNPC and Iran's Petropars.

Based on the deal, Total has a 50.1 percent interest in the project, alongside CNPC which holds a 30 percent share and Petropars holding 19.9 percent of interest.

As Total wrote on its website, the project will have a production capacity of 2 billion cubic feet (about 56 million cubic meters) per day of gas or 400,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day including condensate. The produced gas will supply the Iranian domestic market starting in 2021.

Phase 11 will be developed in two phases. The first phase, with an estimated cost of around \$2 billion, will consist of 30 wells and 2 wellhead platforms connected to existing onshore treatment facilities by two subsea pipelines. At a later stage, once required by reservoir conditions, a second phase will be launched involving the construction of offshore compression facilities, a first on the South Pars field,

In the signing ceremony of the deal, NIOC Managing Director Ali Kardor noted that based on \$50 oil, phase 11 output will bring the country \$84 billion in revenues, IRNA reported.

By the end of the contract's 20-year period, 335 billion cubic meters (bcm) of sour gas, 290 million barrels of gas condensate and 315 bcm of sweet gas will be extracted from the field, the official announced.

Car output up 15.2% in 3 months yr/yr

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian carmakers manufactured 306,545 vehicles in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), with 15.2 percent rise compared to the same period of time in the previous year, IRIB reported on Monday.

Iran manufactured 1.3 million cars in

the past calendar year (ended on March 20, 2017) and targets to push the figure up to 1.5 million cars by the end of this year, Mehr news agency reported in early April, quoting Deputy Industry Minister Mansour Moazzami.

Producing more than one million of automobiles in 2016, Iran could rank first

among the world countries regarding the growth in its car production, according to the report released by Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles, commonly abbreviated OICA, (translated in English as the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers) in early March 2017.



Asia manufacturing picks up in June but momentum seen slowing into second half

Manufacturing activity in Asia's tech producing economies expanded in June, helped by growing global demand for electronics products, but headwinds in external markets could mean a moderation in growth in the second half of the year.

Private sector surveys of manufacturers in Asia showed the factory sectors of China, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan picked up in June, driven largely by a recovery in exports.

However, continued declines in energy prices, which weighed on manufacturing activity in Indonesia and Malaysia, could hurt these two economies going forward, analysts say. Meanwhile, in India, sluggish domestic demand offset strong foreign demand and led to a manufacturing slowdown in June.

Factory Purchasing Managers' Indexes for South Korea, Japan, Taiwan Vietnam and India all remained above the 50-mark that separates contraction from expansion on a monthly basis. And all of these indexes, except for Japan and India, rose from the previous month, indicating an acceleration in expansion.

"Overall, the cross above the 50 waterline is not in doubt," said Vishnu Varathan, Asia head of economics and strategy at Mizuho Bank's Treasury division.

"But the ability for manufacturers to continue to accelerate, or to maintain sharp surges in production, is in question given underlying demand, apart from some bright spots, doesn't seem to have permeated more widely across the different sectors," he said.

While manufacturing in June expanded at the fastest pace in three months in China, the world's second-larg-



est economy, business confidence slumped to its lowest level this year amid a government crackdown on debt risks and tightening financial conditions.

"We believe cyclical momentum (in China) has likely peaked and will ease further due to tighter financial conditions," Yin Zhang and Helen Qiao, economists at Merrill Lynch in Hong Kong, wrote in a note.

"Looking ahead, since overall growth is still higher than the policy target level at around 6.5 percent for real GDP, we expect policy makers to maintain the tightening bias in (the second half), which is likely to impose downward pressure on growth until early 2018."

In Japan, confidence among big manufacturers hit its highest level in over three years in June, according to a survey from the central bank published on Monday.

But despite the recovery in some parts of Asia, stubbornly low inflation globally and other economic factors

could weigh on the export-dependent region in the second half.

The Citi Economic Surprise Index, which moves in tandem with data beating or underclubbing expectations, has plunged for major industrial nations this year and is at negative levels not seen since 2011.

And with global debt now standing at a record \$217 trillion, "roll over" risks will increase as central banks start raising interest rates, weighing especially on emerging markets that have borrowed in euros and dollars.

In southeast Asia, manufacturing in Vietnam was boosted by ramped up production by South Korea's Samsung Electronics. Vietnam's electronics output fell 1 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier on problems with Samsung's Galaxy Note 7, which the company scrapped last year, but recovered in the second quarter. Samsung is Vietnam's biggest foreign investor.

Despite the encouraging electronics-driven headline numbers for Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, signs of weakness are showing in other parts of these economies.

Household consumption remains sluggish in Japan, job creation in Taiwan was the weakest in 20 months and South Korea's factory output shrank for a 11th straight month and factory employment fell for a 10th.

"The larger story seems to be that a moderate recovery continues to be in place," Mizuho's Varathan said. "But for a virtuous cycle of wider household consumption that leads to a pickup in industries, we still have to wait for few more quarters before that to play out. And that's the optimistic view." (Source: Reuters)

Japan's banking giant Sumitomo Mitsui to open Frankfurt office to avoid Brexit 'disruption'

Japanese giant Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMFG) has become the third Japanese firm in less than a fortnight to unveil plans to open a business in Germany that will act as its EU hub following Brexit.

The company, which has the headquarters for its European operations in London, announced that both its main banking business and its investment banking division would set up subsidiaries in Frankfurt.

SMFG said it was taking the step because it believed it "could face future restrictions in certain services it provides" after Brexit and that establishing subsidiaries in the German city would ensure that it "can continue offering banking services to clients with no disruption once the UK leaves the EU".

It joins Nomura and Daiwa, two other large Japanese securities groups with big EU businesses based in London, in unveiling plans to open subsidiaries in Frankfurt, a process that will require them

to apply for banking licences from the German regulator. Daiwa announced its move on June 22 and Nomura followed just days later.

The growing number of international firms that are pressing ahead with plans for new hubs in EU cities is likely to raise concerns that thousands of jobs will eventually drain out of the City as Brexit looms.

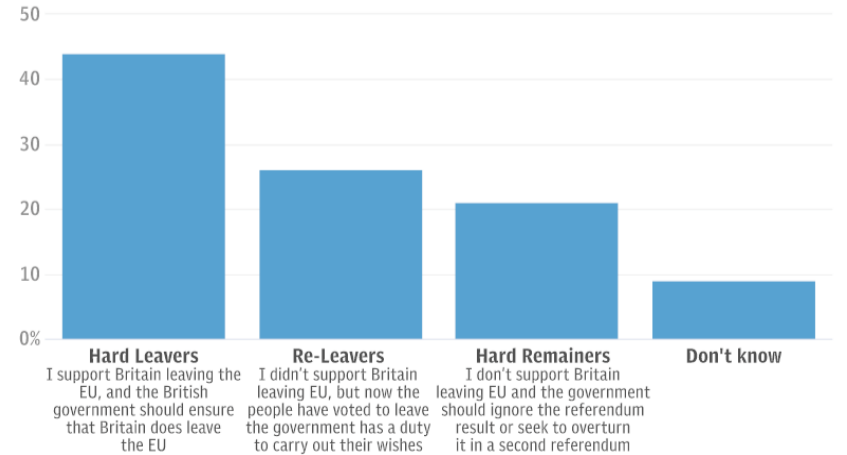
Most international banks have based their European operations in London, turning the City into a powerhouse for global finance. Many firms are planning to shift jobs to the continent to protect their access to the EU's huge single market.

Banks are starting to implement their contingency plans now because there is so much uncertainty about the relationship the UK will have with the EU once Brexit takes place.

The businesses that are likely to move employees include HSBC, which expects to switch 1,000 jobs from London to Par-

Most people have come around to the idea that Brexit means Brexit

Question: Thinking about the EU referendum result, which of the following best reflects your view?



is, and Deutsche Bank, which has warned that as many as 4,000 positions could be moved from the UK.

Barclays has also agreed rental terms for a new, bigger office in Dublin, it

emerged last week. It currently has 120 staff in Ireland but expects to hire an extra 100 to 150 employees as it prepares for Brexit.

(Source: The Telegraph)

India gives Iran \$11 billion 'best offer' on Farzad-B gas field

An Indian consortium is willing to spend as much as \$11 billion to develop a giant Iranian natural gas field and build the infrastructure to export the fuel as long as the Persian Gulf nation guarantees a "reasonable return" on the project, according to the company leading the group.

ONGC Videsh Ltd. has offered to invest as much as \$6 billion on the Farzad-B field and spend the remaining amount to build a liquefied natural gas export facility, according to Narendra Kumar Verma, managing director of the overseas investment unit of India's largest explorer, Oil & Natural Gas Corp. The group is seeking a return of about 18 percent, and Indian companies are willing to buy all the gas exported from the project, Verma said.

"We have given our best offer to them. Now, it is up to them to agree or not agree," Verma said in a phone interview. "We have told the Iranian authorities very clearly that some basic returns are necessary."

As India, the world's fourth-largest LNG buyer, seeks to lock up gas resources to meet growing demand and spur the use of cleaner-burning fuels, Iran is emerging from sanctions that stifled investment in its energy sector.

Officials from Iran's Ministry of Petroleum and the National Iranian Oil Co. were unable to comment.

Iranian Deputy Oil Minister Amir Hossein Zamaninia said last month discussions with the Indian side on Farzad-B were continuing and have "very much advanced." Iran was also in discussions with Russia's Gazprom PJSC on the Farzad fields, he said.

The two countries had aimed to conclude a deal by February on developing the field, which India has said holds reserves of almost 19 trillion cubic feet. The consortium, which includes Indian Oil Corp. and Oil India Ltd., has been trying to secure development rights to the Farzad-B gas field since at least 2009.



Delay damage

The delay over a final outcome has started hurting oil trade between the two countries. India, which bought Iranian crude even during the years of U.S.-led sanctions against Tehran, has recently reduced purchases, leading to the withdrawal by Iran of some benefits on sales in retaliation, Bloomberg reported in April.

"We are ready to invest," Verma said. "Ultimately, that's positive for them."

The South Asian nation is promoting the cleaner-burning fuel to curb the use of more polluting alternatives such as coal and petroleum coke, an oil-refining byproduct, to meet its pledge of slashing emissions by a third by 2030.

ONGC Videsh and Indian Oil each own 40 percent interest in the Farsi block that holds Farzad-B field, while Oil India has 20 percent.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil stages longest rally since 2012, OPEC output may cap gains

Oil prices rose for an eighth day on Monday, their longest rally in over five years after data pointed to moderating U.S. output, but analysts said news of rising OPEC production could temper gains.

Brent crude futures were up 19 cents at \$48.96 a barrel by 0842 GMT, having gained 5.2 percent last week in their first weekly gain in six weeks. The eight-day climb is the longest unbroken rally since February 2012.

U.S. crude futures rose 23 cents to \$46.27

per barrel, following last week's 7-percent gain.

Drilling activity for new oil production in the United States fell for the first time since January, dropping by two rigs, while U.S. government data showed crude output fell in April for the first time this year.

"Sentiment has turned and I think we should be going up (in price). I don't think it's going to last, but the momentum at the moment is with the bulls," PVM Oil Associates

strategist Tamas Varga said.

The drop in U.S. rig count and U.S. Energy Information Administration figures showing output fell by 24,000 barrels per day (bpd) on a monthly basis "sent out a short-term bullish message," he said.

The oil price is still down 14 percent so far this year, as strong global demand has not been enough to absorb rising output from the United States, Nigeria, Libya and other locations, such as the Brazil and the North Sea.

Despite the dip in U.S. drilling, the total rig count was still more than double the 341 rigs in the same week a year ago, according to energy services firm Baker Hughes Inc.

Oil markets remain oversupplied as output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries hit a 2017 high.

June OPEC production was up by 280,000 bpd at 32.72 million bpd, according to a Reuters survey, despite the group's pledge to hold back output.

(Source: Reuters)

Norway to ban the use of oil for heating buildings by 2020

Norway is set to become the first country in the entire world to ban the use of gas to heat buildings.

The Scandinavian country, which is the world's largest producer of oil and natural gas outside the Middle East, will wholly stop the use of both oil and paraffin to warm buildings from 2020 onwards.

The country, which hopes to ban the sale of all fossil fuel-based cars by 2025, has made a concerted effort to introduce policies which shrink domestic emission of greenhouse gases.

Vidar Helgesenlaid, the nation's Environment Minister, laid out the plans in a statement, saying: "Those using fossil oil for heating must find other options by 2020."

The country advises its citizens to research alternatives to oil such as heat pumps, hydroelectricity, and even special stoves that burn wood chips. By some stage, the legislation could be widened to include restrictions on using natural gas to heat buildings.

The Ministry of Climate and Environment said the ban would apply to both new and old buildings and cover both private homes and the public space of businesses and state-owned facilities.

The ministry says the plans are expected to lessen Norway's emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases by an estimated 340,000 tons per year, compared to overall national emissions of 53.9 million tons in 2015.

(Source: The Independent)

Germany reaches 35% renewable power supply in H1 2017

Germany raised the proportion of its power produced by renewable energy to 35 percent in the first half of 2017 from 33 percent the previous year, according to the BEE renewable energy association.

Germany is aiming to phase out its nuclear power plants by 2022. Its renewable energy has been rising steadily over the last two decades thanks in part to the Renewable Energy Act (EEG) which was reformed this year to cut renewable energy costs for consumers.

Germany has been getting up to 85 percent of its electricity from renewable sources on certain sunny, windy days this year.

The BEE reported on Sunday the overall share of wind, hydro and solar power in the country's electricity mix climbed to a record 35 percent in the first half.

The government has pledged to move to a decarbonized economy by the middle of the century and has set a target of 80 percent renewables for gross power consumption by 2050.

It aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent in 2020 from 1990 levels and 95 percent by 2050.

(Source: Reuters)

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Time to say goodbye to Afghanistan

By Amitai Etzioni

The window during which President Donald Trump can extricate U.S. forces from the mess in Afghanistan and blame his predecessors for the calamity is rapidly closing. A few more weeks, another surge, and he will be the third president to be saddled with this war; it will become his. The move to allow the military to determine how many more troops to send to Afghanistan would have been a wise one — let the professionals make such tactical decisions — if it reflected the president's decision to stay the course. Such a decision would follow a review of the war involving not just the Pentagon, but also the intelligence community, the State Department and the staff of the National Security Council, among others. However, that is not the way this president makes decisions. He just left it to the Pentagon to sort out.



■ Winning the war

The Pentagon has its own agenda. It does not want to admit to having lost another war. It cannot wash its hands of what is happening in Afghanistan and blame its predecessors the way Trump can. At the same time, the Pentagon knows damn well that even when there were twenty times as many troops in Afghanistan as there are now, we did not win the war. The Pentagon seems set on just limping along, which seems better than admitting defeat. No wonder none of the generals refers to winning the war in Afghanistan; they use phrases such as, "creating stability" (Gen. Allen) and a V-Day for the War in Afghanistan "may never be marked on a calendar." Retired Gen. David Petraeus expects us to fight in Afghanistan — for generations, adding "we have been in Korea for 65-plus years..."

Whatever drives the Pentagon to hold the course in Afghanistan, the reasons given for the surge do not pass the smile test. To argue that the Afghan forces need more training and advice after sixteen years raises the obvious question: why would one more year make a difference? Gen. Petraeus argues that the United States should continue its mission in Afghanistan "to ensure that [it] is not once again a sanctuary for al-Qaida or other transnational extremists, the way it was when the 9/11 attacks were planned there." The argument that if we do not fight them there, we will have to fight them here is so threadbare it hardly conceals the hollowness of the argument.

■ Local insurgency

First of all, the Taliban (which we organized and armed to fight the USSR) are not a transnational terrorist but a local insurgency. The terrorists who attacked the U.S. homeland in 2001 were not Taliban but Al Qaeda. True, the Taliban hosted them, but they were, for the most part, Saudis whom the Afghans considered foreigners. They did treat them as guests, in line with the very high value the Afghans put on hospitality. The Taliban paid a very heavy price for this mistake. There is no reason in the world to expect that they would seek to repeat it. They are fighting the United States because they want to run their country, not ours.

The notion that U.S. disengagement would turn Afghanistan back into a training base for terrorists also disregards the fact that most recent terrorist attacks in the West have been carried out by locals using makeshift weapons, like cars and knives, trained (if at all) on the Internet. The suggested surge will do nothing to stop them. Also, now that ISIS has bases in at least half a dozen countries, if we are to deal with terrorists by occupying countries in which they may be trained — the United States shall need to occupy and stay in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, parts of Nigeria and Mali, among other places. And the Taliban's main training takes place in Pakistan, which we have not found a way to compel to help us stop the insurgency.

Last but not least, to repeat an often cited but still wise line, we need to be sure we do not create more terrorists than we kill. The civilian casualties that the war against terrorism causes is a major recruitment tool for those who seek to harm the United States.

In Afghanistan, we can safely let the Afghan people sort out their own fate. There and in other nations, the United States needs to work with moderate Muslims to counter the violent ones. Most of the job to protect us from terrorists will have to fall to the Department of Homeland Security, local police, vigilant citizens, and to mental health professionals and those who promote civility instead of hate. The Pentagon may find some consolation in the observation that the military is not losing the war in Afghanistan — merely the nation-building drive that followed a solid win in 2003 and the elimination of most Al Qaeda in the years that followed.

(Source: *The National Interest*)

In a few weeks, Trump may be the third president to attach his name to the war.

An edgy welcome awaits

A united European front, not pandering, is the right response to the U.S. president's visit

Donald Trump is coming back to Europe this week. The U.S. president will first go to Warsaw for a major speech before arriving in Hamburg for the G20 summit. There will be headlines, most notably around the meeting between Trump and Vladimir Putin as investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election continue to rock the administration. Later in the month, Trump will attend the Bastille Day ceremonies in Paris as a guest of France's Emmanuel Macron. He will not make a stopover in Britain: plans for a state visit were put on hold after Trump reportedly told Theresa May he did not want to be exposed to large-scale protests. Last time Trump came to the continent, a NATO meeting and a G7 summit ended in full-on acrimony, with European allies appalled by his contempt for transatlantic principles of governance. Will this time be any better? Just as he is almost everywhere else, Trump is unpopular across Europe, where less than a fifth of citizens have confidence in his leadership.

Yet there are revealing contrasts in how European governments are dealing with him. Trump's unpredictability is matched by European discomfort in how to approach him. The EU is on the upswing, with better economic prospects hovering into view. Despite the rallying factor of Brexit, political nuances among EU member states will not have entirely disappeared. That Angela Merkel, Europe's most powerful leader, has worked hard to forge a common EU stance on trade and multilateralism ahead of the G20 is no surprise. Host of the summit (held in the city where she was born), the chancellor has long made clear her hostility to Trump's worldview, as well as her intention to leverage Europe as a bloc in opposing him, especially on climate change.

■ Disrupter of the global order

Trump has often castigated Germany



Trump is unpopular across Europe, where less than a fifth of citizens have confidence in his leadership.

and its chancellor, most recently over trade surpluses. Merkel for her part sees the U.S. president as a disrupter of the global order, and a threat to Europe's interests. "If you think you can solve the problems of this world by isolationism and protectionism, you are very, very wrong," she has warned, ahead of the Hamburg gathering.

In Poland Trump can expect warmer words. A populist government whose democratic backsliding has been ringing alarm bells in Europe will embrace a U.S. president who shares its illiberal views

and hostility to migrants. They differ most sharply over Russia, but that could well be smoothed over, perhaps with a focus on NATO deployments and budgets. (Poland is one of the few NATO nations to spend 2% of its GDP on defense, the agreed members' target.)

France's invitation to Trump, on the occasion of a national holiday celebrating a revolution and democratic values, carries its own share of controversy. Macron had earlier cast himself as Trump-resistant. French insistence on cooperating with the U.S. points to shared anti-terrorism

goals rather than ideological closeness. It is awkward all the same.

A German warning, a Polish embrace, and an ambiguous French show of friendship come at a time of U.S. strategic confusion and signs of disregard for old allies. Britain's government should not make the mistake of thinking it will benefit. Britain's interest, as much as everyone else's in Europe, lies in making sure the toxic effects of Trump can be mitigated. That requires a united resolve — not pathetic pandering.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

Why won't Macron talk to the media?

The president of France is not lacking in confidence. Just 39 years old, Emmanuel Macron seduced France this spring into electing him as the country's youngest president — even though he did not have the backing of major political groups and had never competed in an election before. So assured was he of his victory that he allowed a documentary crew to follow him during his campaign.

This confidence, however, does not seem to extend to post-election interviews with French journalists.

Since Macron entered the Elysee Palace on May 7, the French leader has granted only one major interview to a French newspaper (and even in that case, *Le Figaro* was forced to share the interview with other, foreign news outlets). Now, according to a report in the newspaper *Le Monde*, Macron plans to cancel a traditional question-and-answer session with French journalists held on Bastille Day.

■ Complex thought process

Explaining why he would not be speaking to reporters, an Elysee source told *Le Monde* that while the French president does not "balk" at the thought of talking to journalists, his "complex thought process" didn't lend itself to interviews with journalists. Instead, the newspaper reported, Macron would seek to speak to the public directly through speeches — including one set for July 3 that his team hopes will be like an American president's State of the Union address.



According to a report in the newspaper *Le Monde*, Macron plans to cancel a traditional question-and-answer session with French journalists held on Bastille Day.

Le Monde's report left many journalists seething. "I do not understand," Olivier Faye, a journalist for the newspaper, commented sarcastically as he tweeted the story. Vivien Vergnaud, a journalist with *Le Journal du Dimanche*,

suggested it was the "best excuse of the year."

The French edition of BuzzFeed publishing an article titled "10 sentences from Macron that are too complex for you, sorry losers." The article highlighted some of Macron's more inelegant phrases during interviews with the media over the years, such as in 2015 when he described his former life as a banker to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The president has pledged to use his background in business to help find a new path in French politics — what he has dubbed "radical centrism," unburdened by party allegiances. It seemed to serve him well, leading him to not only take the presidency but also win a huge majority in Parliament in June. Macron has set himself ambitious targets, like tackling a controversial labor reform and "moralizing public life" — but the president has also said he wants to strike a lofty, "Jupiterian" tone for his presidency above the issues of day-to-day politics.

Held on July 14 each year, Bastille Day commemorates the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789 at the start of the French Revolution. A news conference has traditionally been held on the day since the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in the 1970s. However, the French public doesn't seem too upset: A poll conducted for *Le Figaro* and released Friday found that almost three-quarters favored Macron's current communications policy.

(Source: *The Washington Post*)

Europe's deadly paralysis on migration

With summer's warmer weather and calmer seas, tens of thousands of desperate migrants are setting out for Europe from Libya, once again overwhelming the capacity of rescue efforts on the Mediterranean and straining the ability of Italy to cope. Between Jan. 1 and June 21, some 72,000 migrants arrived in Italy from Libya. More than 2,000 other people died while on the way.

The conditions in Africa — deadly conflicts, despotic rulers and extreme poverty — that send people across the Sahara and into the chaos of Libya are only getting worse. In Libya, human traffickers await to enslave, beat, torture and rape the migrants before sending them out to sea. It would be unconscionable for the United States to cut humanitarian aid to Africa now, as the Trump administration is threatening.

Meanwhile, Italy has effectively been turned into a holding pen for migrants by the European Union's Dublin Regulation, which requires asylum seekers to file their claims and await the outcome in the European country where they first arrive. Fewer than 21,000 of the 160,000 people already in Italy and Greece whom other

European Union nations agreed to take in 2015 have been relocated. Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are flatly refusing to participate, despite a threat of fines.

People who try to push on from Italy into France face police officers wielding tear gas at the border. Those who do make it across find a country unprepared for their arrival: Nearly 1,200 are now sleeping on bare ground in the neighborhood of La Chapelle on the northern edge of Paris, where temporary shelters for migrants are full. Hundreds of others, intent on reaching Britain, live in squalor in Calais, where the infamous migrant camp known as "the Jungle" was razed last year.

Last Monday, a French court ruled that local officials must provide drinking water for migrants, though it declined to order that they provide shelter. The government of President Emmanuel Macron promises a comprehensive plan on migrants in the next two weeks. It cannot come soon enough.

After at least 11,000 and possibly many more people reached Italy's shores in the past week, the government said it



was considering blocking the country's ports to foreign-flagged ships carrying migrants. Europe's migration commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, responded that it was time for member countries to step up to this human crisis: "Now is the moment to deliver, and we will hold them to this."

The fact is, Europe has no other option. As Federico Soda, an official of the International Organization for Migration, observed: "Africa and Europe are always going to be neighbors. Movement of people between the two is just a reality of the coming decade."

(Source: *The NYT*)

Return to Imperialism American-Style, Trump's futile push for regime change in Iran.

By Abbas Torabi

Besides William McKinley, William Howard Taft, John Foster Dulles, Richard Millhouse Nixon, George Herbert Walker Bush, and George Walker Bush as the main historical protagonists of American political sphere, Donald John Trump, James Norman Matie, Michael Richard Pompeo, and Ezra Cohen-Watnick's names must be added as America's newest and most ill-advised, unenlightened, and incautious interventionist policy makers, which wrongly believe that the U.S. has the right to wage war in all the quarters and whenever it deems war necessary. Briefly told, time and again Trump's predecessors have overthrown foreign independent governments in order to put in power puppets for obeying the Oval Office. At this particular moment in time, these newcomers want to repeat same mistakes in the worst way possible. Literally, these guys are the most obvious examples of George Santayana's quote: "Those who fail to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors are destined to repeat them," over and over again.

History has shown us that numerous independent national and democratically supported movements in countries such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Nicaragua horribly thwarted by the United States. We have learned from history that in countries like Iran, Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Chile Washington has committed a covert actions and Coup D'états against democratically elected leaders like Mohammad Mossadegh of Iran, Guatemalan President Jacobo Árbenz Guzman, Chile's President Salvador Guillermo Allende Gossens whom were main antagonists and victims of American conspiracies. Above all, history has teach us that how illegally and instantaneously Granada, Panama, Afghanistan, Iraq, and most recently Libya overtly invaded by Washington.

Reasons behind regime change

Thirty-eight years of open hostility and sanctions against Iran shows us that regime change policy towards Tehran, by any way possible such as Coup D'état and military intervention are the perfect examples of how deep American foreign policy divorced from geopolitical reality of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf in particular.

and its incompatibility with Non-intervention principle

Since the last decade of 19th century up to the present time, the United States frequently, for imposing its ideology, leveraging its power to influence foreign governments, and obtaining control of resource-rich countries, has been breaking international law and order to depose foreign governments that refused to protect American interests. While in contemporary International Law and many Resolutions and Accords, specifically, Chapter I of the United Nations Charter "The principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States", The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625, "The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States," which was adopted by the General Assembly on 24 October 1970, and Algeris Accords of 1981 between Iran-US, the norm of Non-Interference in internal affairs has always been one of the cornerstone principles of international relations, which restricts the ability of all nation's to meddle with the domestic affairs of each other.

Chapter I of the United Nations Charter lays out the "Purposes and Principles" of the UN organization. Article II of this

chapter, clauses 1-5 essentially in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article I, says:

"1. The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

2. All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.

3. All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

5. All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action."

According to the Algeris Accords on January 19, 1981, in which the Government of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria had an intermediary role in the talks between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America, "in seeking a mutually acceptable resolution of the crisis in their relations arising out of the detention of the 52 United States nationals in Iran," in the section of General Principles, Point I, in the role of "Non-Intervention in Iranian Affairs," reads: "The United States pledges that it is and from now on will be the policy of the United States not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs."

Consequently, pursuing Foreign-Imposed Regime Change (FIRC) as a foreign

policy tool and exercising Coercive Diplomacy by forcing the target state to change its behavior, is in blatant violation of international law and order in all four corners of the world.

Story of a more than a century long intervention policy

Stephen Kinzer, in his detailed and invaluable work "Overthrow," narrates history of the fourteen successful Coup D'états and military interventions, which has always been a tradition at the White House foreign policy agenda in order to overthrow those governments that for the sake of their own national interests refused to abide Washington. Actually, "Foreign-Imposed Regime Change" has been a tactic of American foreign policy since ousting of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 up until deposing Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in October 2011. The United States as an interventionist and a coercive political actor in anarchic environment of international politics, has shown the world that it will not hesitate to topple governments whom want to stand against its political and economic ambitions.

Chalmers Ashby Johnson, author of urgently needed book "Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic," and professor of political science once said: "A na-



Even though theoretically, Americans has always been divided over this big question: Whether it's a good option to depose foreign leaders?

tion can be one or the other, a 'Democracy' or an 'Imperialist,' but it can't be both. If it sticks to imperialism, it will, like the old Roman Republic, on which so much of our system was modeled, lose its democracy to a domestic dictatorship." Johnson adds that "regime change story is a tale of Imperialism American-Style." Moreover, Steffen Kinzer, famous author in Iran for penning his well-known book "All the Shah's Men," implies that "no nation in modern history has done this [regime change] so often, in so many places so far from its own shores."

Therefore, even though theoretically, Americans has always been divided over this big question: Whether it's a good option to depose foreign leaders? On the contrary, practically both sides of aisles in Washington political sphere has tried this tactic so often. In this sense, ousting of those foreign leaders whom might to take a stand against the White House, has been a bipartisan tactic of American foreign policy for more than 120 years.

Tillerson's vain promise for regime change in Iran

On Wednesday, June 13, 2017, for the first time, the Trump administration frankly and openly grappled the possibility of returning to Imperialism phase of American foreign policy strategy towards Iran. Actually, the current Republican administration's foreign policy team—which is filled with Hawks on Iran—showed up that is perfectly capable of changing Obama's policy of cautious engagement with Tehran. In other words, it does seem that Washington wouldn't want to see Obama's balance of power strategy between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf region once more.

When the quiet man of the Trump administration, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, in a hearing on the 2018 State Department budget before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was asked about whether or not the United States supports regime change inside Iran, he replied emphatically in the affirmative, adding that "Our policy towards Iran is to push back on this hegemony, contain their ability to develop obviously nuclear weapons, and to work toward support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of that government. Those elements are there, certainly as we know."

If truth be told, Rex Tillerson, one of the wealthiest cabinet members of Trump administration—the one who has spent 41 years in the business world working for oil giant Exxon—is trying to show imperial version of his predecessor, then Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the one who after spending decades working for the world's most powerful oil corporations, during his first two years of service as Secretary of State in 1953-54 orchestrated successively two Coup D'états in Iran and Guatemala, countries at which two nationalist governments had been challenged the United States' both 'commercial' and 'strategic' interests. In case of Iran, Dulles' main reason behind the scenes was being assured that the Middle East will safe for American oil companies. At the present time, Tillerson's vain threat of regime change in Iran seeks a safe and secure environment for Israel.

Thirty eight years of open hostility and sanctions against Iran shows us that re-

gime change policy towards Tehran, by any way possible such as Coup D'état and military intervention are the perfect examples of how deep American foreign policy divorced from geopolitical reality of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf in particular. It can be said that, Washington's policy instead of seeking more rational, pragmatic, and realistic approach towards Tehran, has been remained essentially unchanged, and gradually has been reduced to habit.

The end of Obama-era balance of power in the Persian Gulf

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's remarks before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when he said "Our Iranian policy is under development," has been proved that—unlike Obama's cautiously engagement approach—the strategic equation around Iran and the Persian Gulf is changing under the Trump administration. In Frank language, Trump, explicitly wants to dismantle Obama-era balance of power in this region in favor of Saudi Arabia and eagerly revitalize President George W. Bush administration's hawkish and derogatory policies against Tehran.

In light of this argument, Nile Gardiner, director of The Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, in his article "Trump must abandon Obama-era leading from behind," published on May 19, 2017, ahead of Trump's first abroad travel to the Middle East and Europe, has noted that "On his first foreign tour, Trump must lead from the front, stand with America's allies, and project strength and resolve in the face of America's enemies. As we witnessed in the last eight years, a world without robust U.S. leadership is an increasingly dangerous place. It is time for the new occupant of the Oval Office to reverse the failed approach of the Obama era emphatically."

In this sense, supporting regime change in Iran, could be simply considered as an announcing to the world that the White House is abandoning Obama's "lead-

ing from behind" policy of the past eight years and adopting direct confrontation stance with Iran. But, the question arises here is whether this new strategy could be regarded as "leading from front" or declining from the position of "rule-maker" to the position of "rule-taker?" In short, it does seem that Trump administration by adopting the role of rule-taker, and taking side of Saudis against Iran is preparing itself for a dramatic and adventurous crisis with Tehran on behalf of Saudi Arabia in which this country gradually will lose its influence over the rules that affect the Persian Gulf region.

The U.S. Hawks must understand that regime change is a failed strategy

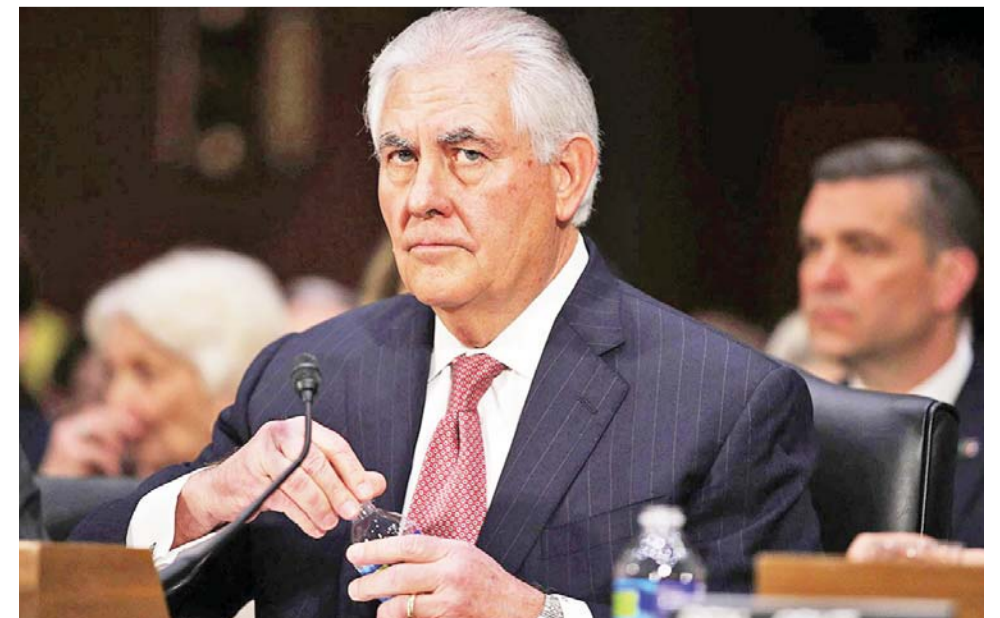
The problem with Foreign-Imposed Regime Change policy in case of Iran, is a much more dilemmatic problem. As a matter of fact, the issue is both tactically and strategically problematic. Tactically, there are two questions: Whether the United States can use military intervention (overt overthrow) to topple Islamic Republic of Iran? The other question is much more problematic than other; To what extent, Washington can rely on "those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition" to implement a "covert program" to undermine and overthrow the government in Iran? Strategically, the question is whether the United States can replace Islamic Republic with a new government crafted in liberal image?

Notwithstanding the future is just one big question mark, let's sit down and see if we can come up with some answers. At the tactical level and designing "overt regime change" operations, it should be noted that, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's remarks on "peaceful transition" revealed that Washington is not capable of doing such a hard operation to topple Islamic Republic via military intervention. In "covert regime change" tactics, in the absence of a strong opposition inside Iran, Washington will get nothing done. Because, Iranians never ever trust "those elements inside" of their country who collaborate with their arch-enemy to bring down their legitimate government, just like what happened to the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 Coup D'état orchestrated by the United Kingdom and the United States.

At the strategical level, it's worth to remember that ISIS is a product of pursuing regime change policy, since 2001 as of now. Therefore, regime change is necessarily harmful for both the United States and the target country. Because, history of regime change and the U.S. policy makers' myopic attitudes to international law and order without understanding the countries involved; has teach us that the U.S. meddling and intervention in other countries has always been accompanied by destabilization of world politics and often leaves countries worse off than they were before. Owing to the fact that, creation of a power vacuum usually paves the way for rising terrorist groups like ISIS and other radicalized Wahhabi sectarian ideology in the Middle East.

Abbas Torabi has done his MA in North American Studies in Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran.

Pursuing Foreign-Imposed Regime Change (FIRC) as a foreign policy tool and exercising Coercive Diplomacy by forcing the target state to change its behavior, is in blatant violation of international law and order in all four corners of the world.



Why it's better to capture than kill ISIS terrorists

By Marc A. Thiessen

The Obama policy of killing high-value terrorists with airstrikes has continued unabated in the early months of the Trump administration.

Every couple of weeks, the United States Central Command, which oversees combat operations in the Middle East, announces the death of an Islamic State leader who

has been killed in airstrikes.

On Tuesday, it was Turki al-Bin'ali, whom the American-led coalition called the "self-proclaimed grand mufti or chief cleric" of the Islamic State, killed in a May 31 airstrike in Mayadin, Syria. Two weeks before that, it was Samir Idris, whom the Defense Department said was a "key" Islamic State financier of attacks around the world, also killed near Mayadin.

On Friday, it was (Fawaz Muhammad Jubayr) Rawi, a Syr-

ian labeled by the Pentagon an "experienced terrorist financial facilitator," who moved millions of dollars for the Islamic State's attack and logistics network.

Mr. Rawi owned a currency exchange that he used, along with a network of global financial contacts, to move money into and out of ISIS-controlled territory and across borders," a Defense Department statement said, using an acronym for the Islamic State. The Treasury Department had im-

posed sanctions on Mr. Rawi and his company in December.

Lost intelligence

The world is better with a man like Rawi off the battlefield, but the intelligence lost in such strikes is immense. Every time we vaporize a terrorist leader, we vaporize all the intelligence in their brains. We need that intelligence to keep the country safe. Dead terrorists cannot tell us their plans for new attacks. **-13**

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Things your body can tell you about yourself

By Natalie Bogdanski

1. What do your odors tell you about your body? Let's start with sweat. If it smells like acetone, you might be having blood sugar level problems. If it smells like ammonia, it could mean kidney and liver problems. So if you find that your sweat is smelling very peculiar, go visit a doctor to eliminate any possible health risks.

2. There are also other health risks you may have that may be contributing to the smell of your sweat. If your sweat smells like hydrogen sulfide, you could have gastrointestinal problems. If it smells like honey, it could mean a case of cystitis. If it smells like vinegar, it could mean a vitamin B and D deficiency.

3. Let's move on to your breath. Non-stop bad breath could be a sign of kidney problems, throat infections, lung problems, gum disease, or even problems with your digestive tract. So if you find that no matter how much you rinse your mouth with mouthwash your breath still smells, take a trip to the doctor's office.

4. When it comes to urine, things start to get more serious. If it smells like fish, it could mean a venereal disease. If it smells sour, it could mean gastritis. If you're urine is unusually dark, it probably means that you're dehydrated and that you should drink some more water.

5. When it comes to urine, things start to get more serious. If it smells like fish, it could mean a venereal disease. If it smells sour, it could mean gastritis. If you're urine is unusually dark, it probably means that you're dehydrated and that you should drink some more water.

6. What does the shape of your nose say about your personality? Surprisingly, it actually says a lot about who you are! Let's start with the Greek nose. If you have it, chances are you don't like attention, you're family-oriented and practical. Good attributes to have in a person, if I do say so myself!

7. A Roman nose says that you're an unusual thinker. You like to take risks both personal and professional. You also have very strong principles, morals and politics that you strongly believe in. This particular type of nose usually has a small bump in the middle of the ridge and also indicates a strong and bold personality.

8. The Aquiline nose. If you have this nose you're probably very neat. You don't believe in things being too difficult so you're always up for a challenge. You're also very sincere. If you have an aquiline nose, it's probably curved a little bit downwards, sort of like the shape of an eagle's beak.

9. If you have a straight nose, you're a bit of a right-brained thinker. You believe in following your gut and acting based on how you feel. You act on your feelings first, then you think about your decisions. You tend to lead with your emotions first when you make a decision, which can sometimes work against you.

10. Uprturned nose. This particular type of nose reveals that you are probably pretty sassy. You can often be searingly honest, unpredictable and hilarious. You always find the solutions to your problems. If you have an upturned nose, your nose is probably tilted upwards, with nostrils that point upwards as well.

11. A nose with a small bump. People with this type of nose can be considered "flower children." They are sensitive, and they also stand up against injustice. People with a small bump on their nose also tend to be generous towards those who need it. They are kind, caring and giving.

12. A nose with a large bump. If you have a nose with a large bump on it, you are probably very attentive and detail-oriented. You're known for being a good listener, and a good friend overall. Because you are so attentive you pay attention to small details and never skip a beat.

13. Nubian nose. If you have this type of nose, it is probably a sign that you know how to get out of tricky and sticky situations. You're always the first one to help others when they need it. You're also very positive and optimistic, which makes people love



If you're prone to acne and spotting on your chin and neck, this could mean that your adrenal glands are overactive.

being around you.

14. Your body comes equipped with lots of different defense mechanisms, like stretching. A good stretch prepares your body for any physical activity ahead of you. If you work out, stretching after your workout can also help alleviate delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), and can help reduce joint pain.

15. Yawning is another type of defense mechanism. Scientists are still not sure why humans and animals alike yawn, but the closest theory is that it can help regulate our temperature. According to Andrew C. Gallup, PhD and postdoctoral research associate at Princeton University, the process your body goes through when yawning acts like a radiator.

16. We've all experienced the odd changes to the skin on our hands and feet after taking a long bath, shower or after a swim in a pool. Wrinkled fingers are another mystery with one plausible explanation. Scientists believe that we evolved to have pruned fingers when they get wet in order to have a better grip on wet things.

17. Sneezing is another peculiar thing that we all do. Well, there's a reason we all sneeze. Sneezing actually gets rid of unwanted intruders that make their way into our noses. A study done at the University of Pennsylvania also found that sneezes "reset" the environment in our nasal passage. The more you know!

18. Another surprising defense mechanism our bodies have are goosebumps. The hair on our bodies stands up when we're cold in order to create an extra layer of warmth. Muscles around our hair follicles actually contract when we're cold. This is a reflex that has been left over from our ancestors, who had much longer body hair.

19. Memory wipe. In psychology, there's a theory that humans can sometimes get rid of painful or traumatic memories in order to avoid the anxiety and depression that comes with them. Memory wipe, or memory erasure, typically occurs among people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorder, and more.

20. Hiccups are another defense mechanism. Yes, they are extremely annoying, but there is actually a reason our bodies do it. When something irritates your diaphragm, such as when you eat too quickly or when you get nervous, hiccups occur in order to regulate what is going into your stomach.

21. Cringing at high-pitched noises. Do you shudder at the thought of hearing nails on a chalkboard, or when you hear someone scrape a plate with a fork? Research has shown that the reason why we cringe when we hear nails on chalkboard is because of a primal instinct that reminds us of the cries of our primate ancestors.

22. Certain spots on your body can say a lot about your health. Dark or red spots on your backside can mean that your hygiene is poor or your underwear is made of irritating fabric. If you notice dark spots on your backside, make sure your hygiene is in check, and that the underwear you are wearing does not irritate your skin.

23. If you're prone to acne and spotting on your chin and neck, this could mean that your adrenal glands are overactive. It could also mean that you absent-mindedly touch your face throughout the day without realizing it. Our hands carry a lot of germs, which in turn go on our faces when we touch them.

24. Spotting on your shoulders, upper and/or lower back can mean a number of things about your body and your health. Most commonly, this could be a sign that there's something going on with your digestion. These spots are not to be confused with pimples or acne, and can be dark or light in color.

25. Did you know that the shape of your feet can say a lot about your personality? Type A means you're private, and that your mood changes quickly. Type B means that you are practical and reliable. Type C means you're sporty and creative. And finally, type D means you're sociable and outgoing.

26. There's more to your eyes than you think. Scientists say that the same genes that make up our frontal lobes affect the color of our eyes. "The eye is so closely linked neurologically to the brain that you might call it the only part of our brain you can see from the outside," says Dr. Anthony Fallone from Edinburgh University.

27. If you find that you are unusually tired all the time, experience extreme fatigue and are easily irritable, you might be Vitamin B-12 deficient. Vitamin B-12 helps regulate your nervous system and also plays a huge role in the formation of your red blood cells. Foods rich in vitamin B12 include meat, dairy products, eggs, poultry and seafood.

(Source: providr.com)

5 steps to a pain-free back

Low back pain has many different causes, including the normal wear and tear that comes with aging. While you can't turn back the clock or prevent every type of painful back disorder, in most cases there are things you can do to help keep your back healthy.

1. Stay fit

Weak back and abdominal muscles — due to deconditioning or age — cause or exacerbate many cases of low back pain. That's why stretching and strengthening both your back and abdominal muscles is important not only for treating low back pain, but also for helping to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

Exercise strengthens and lengthens the muscles that support the spine. A good exercise regimen should target the back, abdominal, and buttock muscles. Strong abdominal or hip flexor muscles, for example, help people maintain an upright posture, as do strong extensor muscles, which run the full length of the back and maintain alignment of the vertebrae.

Stretching is a valuable component of any treatment plan, too. Supple, well-stretched muscles are less prone to injury. And shorter, less flexible muscle and connective tissues restrict joint mobility, which increases the likelihood of sprains and strains.

Certain aerobic activities are safer for your back than others. For instance, bicycling (either stationary or regular), swimming, and walking lead the list of low-risk, high-benefit activities for most people's backs.

All are low- or minimal-impact exercises that strengthen muscles which support the back. None involve awkward or stressful actions that are detrimental to back muscles.

However, sports and activities such as football, tennis, gymnastics, wrestling, weight lifting, rowing (crew), running, aerobic dance, and ballet involve a relatively high risk for back injury because of the extension, lifting, or impacts involved.

2. Maintain a healthy weight

Although carrying too much weight per se has not been proven to be a primary cause of back pain disorders, being overweight or obese can slow your recovery. Those extra pounds also increase the risk that back pain will return.

The heavier you are, the greater the load your spine must carry. To make matters worse, if the bulk of your weight comes in the form of abdominal fat, rather than muscle, your center of gravity can shift forward — a condition that puts added pressure on your back. By maintaining a healthy weight, you can ease the burden on your spine. To see if you are at a healthy (normal) weight, calculate your body mass index (BMI), which takes both your height and weight into consideration. Not only will you help your back if you maintain a normal BMI (in the range of 19–25), but you'll also lower your risk for many diseases, including heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and high blood pressure. You can find a BMI calculator here.

3. Kick the habit

You've undoubtedly heard this message before: smoking harms your health. Not only does this habit raise your risk for lung cancer, heart disease, hypertension, and a plethora of other health problems, it also jeopardizes your back.

Research shows that smokers have more frequent episodes of back pain than nonsmokers, and the more a person smokes, the higher the risk that he or she will experience such an episode, according to one study.

Scientists believe that the nicotine in cigarettes contributes to low back pain in two ways. First, nicotine hampers the flow of blood to the vertebrae and discs. This impairs their function and may trigger a bout of back pain. Second, smokers tend to lose bone faster than nonsmokers, putting them at greater risk for osteoporosis, another common cause of back pain.

4. Lighten your load

Backpacks have become ubiquitous — at school, at work, at play. But an overstuffed backpack can be a harbinger of back pain.

If you use a backpack, you can take steps to protect yourself. For starters, use both of the pack's straps instead of slinging one strap over a shoulder. Try to carry only the essentials, and lighten your load whenever possible. Opt for backpacks that have different-sized compartments to help distribute weight evenly. And look for wide, padded straps and a padded back. When carrying a heavy load, put the heaviest items as close as possible to the center of the back, and use the hip strap for support. For very heavy loads, use a backpack with wheels. Above all, remember to bend from your knees when picking up your pack.

5. Develop back-healthy habits

Everyday activities, from vacuuming your house to sitting in front of the computer for hours, can take a toll on your back, particularly if you aren't schooled in proper body mechanics. But you can take some of the pressure off your back by following these simple tips:

- While standing to perform ordinary tasks like ironing or folding laundry, keep one foot on a small step stool.
- Don't remain sitting or standing in the same position for too long. Stretch, shift your position, or take a short walk when you can.
- When bending from the waist, always use your hands to support yourself.
- When sitting, keep your knees a bit higher than your hips and bend them at a 90-degree angle. Sit with your feet comfortably on the floor. If your feet don't reach the floor, put a book or a small stool under them.
- Because vacuuming can take a toll on your back, tackle rooms in chunks, spending no more than five to 10 minutes at a time doing this task.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Ebola outbreak in DRC is over, WHO says

By Radina Gigova

The World Health Organization declared an end to the most recent outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Sunday, marking the latest key milestone in the fight against the deadly disease.

The announcement comes 42 days, or the equivalent of two 21-day incubation cycles of the virus, after the last confirmed patient in the affected Bas-Uele province tested negative for Ebola.

"With the end of this epidemic, DRC has once again proved to the world that we can control the very deadly Ebola virus if we respond early in a coordinated and efficient way," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the newly appointed WHO director-general, who is a native of Ethiopia and the first African to head the agency.

Four people died in the outbreak and four others survived the disease, WHO said. Nearly 600 people who had close

contacts with affected individuals were registered and monitored closely for the duration of the outbreak, according to WHO.

This was the eighth outbreak of Ebola the Central African nation has experienced since 1976. The last one started in 2014 and killed nearly 50 people, but it was unrelated to the worst outbreak of the virus in West Africa in 2014. Over 113,000 people died from the disease during that massive wave, most of them in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

First case

A 45-year-old man was reported in April as the first case in the most recent outbreak. The taxi driver who took the man to the hospital and a person who cared for the man both became sick.

All three later died in the Likati health district of the northern Bas-Uele province, bordering the Central African Republic.

Teams of epidemiologists, biologists and sanitation specialists were

mobilized to travel to the affected areas as part of the international response to halt the highly infectious virus, which spreads through contact with bodily fluids, WHO said.

Quick response is key

The effective response to this outbreak was achieved through the quick alert by local authorities of suspected cases, immediate blood testing, the early announcement of the outbreak by the government, and rapid response by local and national health authorities, said WHO.

"Together with partners, we are committed to continuing support to the government of DRC to strengthen the health system and improve health care delivery and preparedness at all levels," said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa, who visited DRC in May to discuss the steps to control the outbreak.

"I urge that we now focus all our efforts on strengthening the health system in Bas-Uele province, which

has been stressed by the outbreak, said DRC Health Minister Dr. Oly Ilunga Kalenga, as he announced the end of the outbreak. "Without strengthening the health system, effective surveillance is not possible."

WHO said specialists will be working with local authorities to ensure survivors have access to proper medical and psychological care, counseling and education to help them reintegrate into family and community life.

In 2014, WHO was strongly criticized for mishandling the response to the Ebola outbreak in East Africa.

In a report published the next year, a panel convened by Harvard Global Health Institute and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine concluded that lack of reliable and rapid response led to "immense human suffering, fear and chaos."

While clinical trials of experimental vaccines are underway in West Africa, there is no approved vaccine, treatment or cure from Ebola. (Source: CNN)

Iran attends UNESCO annual assembly on creative cities

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Deputy Director Bahman Namvar-Motlaq participated in the 12th annual meeting of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), which was held in Enghien-les-Bains, a commune in the northern suburbs of Paris, from June 29 to July 2.



A traditional marketplace in Rasht, northern Iran

Iranian cities of Isfahan and Rasht were accepted to the UCCN on December 11, 2015. Isfahan is registered because of its creative 'Crafts and Folk Art' and Rasht because of its unique 'Gastronomy'.

"Creativity towards sustainable cities: designing inclusive public spaces in the digital era," was the central theme for the event during which attendees exchanged views on local and international objectives and indigenous projects, while scrutinized a platform of dialogue between the creative cities and UNESCO.

"This gathering offers a unique occasion to strengthen the ties among cities from around the world and serves as a platform to define the strategic objectives of an expanded and well-balanced Network," UNESCO announced days prior to the assembly.

Launched in 2004, the network revolves around seven creative fields namely crafts and folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, media arts, and music.

It aims to foster international cooperation with and between cities committed to investing in creativity as a driver for sustainable urban development, social inclusion and cultural vibrancy.

Indonesia's May foreign tourist arrivals rise 11.5 pct y/y

A total of 938,623 foreign tourists visited Indonesia in May, up 11.5 percent from a year earlier, the statistics bureau said on Monday.

That was a slower pace than April's 19.2 percent annual rise.

May's total number of foreign visitors, including those passing through Indonesia's borders from neighbouring countries and foreign workers with permits for less than one year, was 1.16 million, up 26.7 percent from the same month of 2016.

(Source: Reuters)



ROUND THE GLOBE

New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands

The New Zealand Sub-antarctic Islands (NZSAI) encompasses five island groups that lie between latitudes 47° and 53° south; Snares Islands/Tini Heke, Bounty Islands, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands/Motu Maha and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku and the islands surrounding it.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the property lies between the Antarctic and Subtropical Convergences and the seas have a high level of productivity, biodiversity, wildlife population densities and endemism.



The World Heritage status also applies to the marine environment out to 12 nautical miles from each group. Including a total land area of 76,458ha, the marine area takes in 1,400,000 ha and constitutes one of New Zealand's remotest protected natural areas, including some of the world's least-modified islands.

Particularly notable is the abundance and diversity of pelagic seabirds and penguins that utilize the islands for breeding. The property supports the most diverse community of breeding seabirds in the Southern Ocean. There are 126 species of birds, including 40 seabirds, eight of which breed nowhere else in the world. The islands support major populations of 10 of the world's 22 species of albatross and almost 2 million sooty shearwaters nest on Snares Island alone.

Land birds also display a surprising diversity, considering the limited land area available, with a large number of threatened endemics including one of the world's rarest ducks. (Source: UNESCO)

Iran takes step closer to register new World Heritage sites

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran is further moving towards possible inscription of two new sites on the UNESCO World Heritage list as it has recently submitted associated dossiers to the famed international organization.

"Two dossiers on 'The Ensemble of Historical Sasanian Cities' and 'Arasbaran Protected Area' have been submitted to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [respectively]," Mehr quoted a senior heritage official on Sunday.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Deputy Director Mohammad-Hassan Talebian added that the ICOMOS and the IUCN will dispatch delegations of experts to assess the sites and hold specific meetings with their Iranian counterparts during this summer.

The ancient ensemble comprises several Sassanid-era (224-651) sites, namely Bishapur, Firouzabad and Sarvestan in Fars Province. According to its dossier the property embodies the political, historical, cultural and artistic developments of the Sasanian Empire, which was recognized as one of the leading world powers alongside its neighboring arch-rival the Roman-Byzantine Empire.

Arasbaran Protected Area in the north-western West Azarbaijan Province embraces one of the oldest brick domes in the world, a relatively exact circular urban terrain and some vestiges of other historical monuments.

Measuring 78,560 hectares, Arasbaran



An undated photo depicts travelers visiting Arasbaran Protected Area in northwest Iran. It embraces rich vestiges of historical monuments as well.

is of high importance due to its rich flora and fauna in particular presence of rare species. There can be found some endem-

ic plant species including long-leaved trees such as *Juniperus foetidissima* and endangered species such as *Taxus baccata*.

The two sites are candidates for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list for 2018.

Record number of big-spending tourists expected in UK this summer

Despite recent terror attacks, Britain can expect a huge influx of foreign visitors, especially from the U.S. and China

By Jamie Doward and Rosie McCrum

Britain is becoming an ever more attractive place for overseas shoppers and holidaymakers – and a summer influx of visitors is set to take advantage of the weak pound and prepare to spend big, according to new figures.

Data collected by travel consultancy ForwardKeys shows that long-haul flight bookings to the UK from the start of this month to August are up 10% on the same period last year. Visitors from two countries in particular are driving the boom. Bookings from the U.S. are up 19% for June to August year on year, while those from China are up 29%.

"We've seen sustained growth for a number of years but this year there has been really strong growth," said Patricia Yates, director of VisitBritain.

The return of American visitors is particularly welcome – U.S. tourist numbers declined after 9/11 in 2001 but are now finally starting to recover.

"We've seen the American market coming back," Yates said. "They are high spenders so we like them. Even smaller hotels in Wales are saying they are seeing American visitors. Not only do they go to London, they travel around and explore the regions. They are great visitors to have."

By contrast, the Chinese tend to favor shopping in London. It is reported that 70% of shoppers visiting Burberry's flagship store in Regent Street are tourists from China. Har-

vey Nichols in Knightsbridge has Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking staff. This year Chinese tourists are expected to spend more than £1bn in the UK compared with around half that four years ago.

"Chinese people are motivated by value," Yates said. "Britain is looking cheaper. Chinese visitors tend to spend a lot so retailers are keen to see them. They love our history and culture but there has to be good shopping, too."

The anticipated increase in tourists is a welcome relief for an industry that feared recent terror attacks might diminish the UK's attractiveness to visitors, particularly as, after attacks in Paris and Nice, France saw a dip in tourist numbers.

"We're not seeing cancellations," Yates said. "There's a confidence that people are continuing to come."

The fall in the value of the pound is thought to be the chief attraction to overseas visitors. Today a pound buys only €1.13 compared with €1.29 two years ago. Its value against the U.S. dollar has fallen from almost \$1.60 two years ago to \$1.29 today. And it has also seen its value slide against the Saudi Arabian riyal and China's renminbi.

"On average the UK is 9% cheaper for visitors this summer than last," said David Tarsh of ForwardKeys, who suggested many tourists had booked their flights before the recent terror attacks.

A bumper summer for the UK's hotel and shopkeepers would build on a strong spring. The latest figures available



Shoppers and tourists visiting Oxford Circus. (Photograph: Alamy)

from VisitBritain show that 3.7 million visits were made to the UK in April, up 19% compared to the same month in 2016, and the highest April since records began. Foreign tourists spent a record £2bn in April, 20% up on the same month last year.

Last year was a record for foreign holidaymakers in the UK: 37.6 million visits were made, up 4% on the previous year, with overseas visitors spending £22.5bn, a rise of 2%.

It was the sixth continuous year of growth for inbound tourism. There were 7.8 million more overseas visits to the UK in 2016 than in 2010 – up 26%. (Source: The Guardian)

British businesses lobby for fewer visa restrictions post-Brexit

British businesses are lobbying for a visa system that allows unrestricted entry for talented overseas entrepreneurs and tech experts post-Brexit.

Proposals from London First, the business group, acknowledge that employers must do more to help train local workers to meet skills gaps. But the group is calling for a long "transition phase" of up to six years after the UK leaves the EU to allow a sufficient number of overseas workers to fill

jobs in industries with skills shortages, such as engineering.

London First's immigration manifesto comes ahead of the UK government's promised immigration bill, which will set out the new visa regime for EU migrants after the UK has left the bloc. Once the white paper has been presented to MPs, the government's Migration Advisory Committee will be asked to provide expert guidance on the future immigration regime.

London First has suggested that the minimum salary for incoming migrant workers should initially be lower than the current threshold for employees from outside the EU, which is set at £30,000.

The group has asked for control over the volume and duration of visas for each sector to be handed from the Home Office to the independent Migration Advisory Committee, and that exceptionally talented entrepreneurs backed by investors

should be given unrestricted access to the UK.

The proposals reflect a growing anxiety among chief executives about the supply of workers in the UK post-Brexit. EU nationals make up 12 per cent of London's total workforce, and represent 15 per cent of employees in financial services, a third of construction workers and more than one in ten NHS doctors. (Source: Financial Times)

A peek into life in Laft, southern Iran

TOURISM A photo collection depicts the vibrant landscape and daily life at the historical village of Laft on Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, southern Iran.

Perched on a rocky slope, the fishing village offers its visitors a patchwork of delightfully photogenic scenes of badgirs (wind towers) and minarets.

A few hundred meters north of Laft is located one of Qeshm's many traditional vessel-building workshops. These indigenous cargo boats are still used to carry goods back and forth across the Persian Gulf.

Qeshm Island embraces wide range of ecotourism attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island has an abundance of wildlife, including birds, reptiles, dolphins and turtles as well.



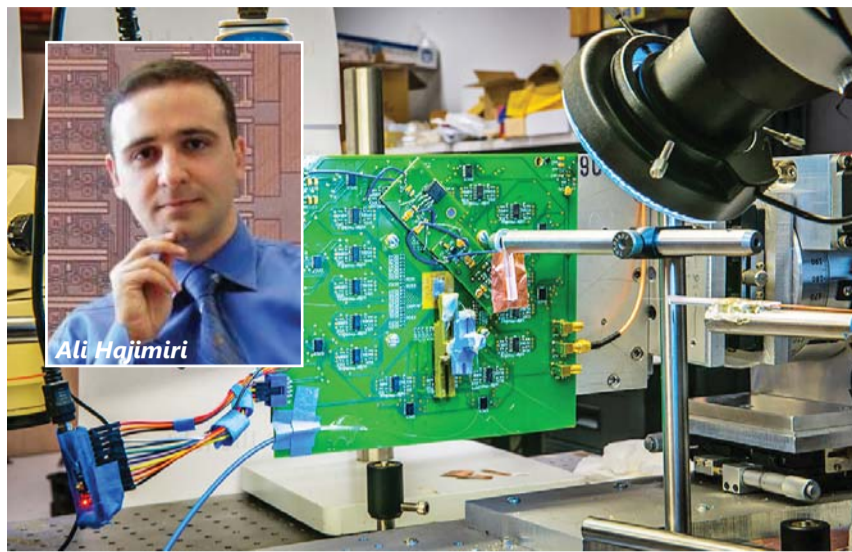
Ultra-thin camera design doesn't need a lens

Traditional cameras — even those on the thinnest of cell phones — cannot be truly flat due to their optics: lenses that require a certain shape and size in order to function.

A new camera design replaces the lenses with an ultra-thin optical phased array (OPA) that does computationally what lenses do using large pieces of glass: it manipulates incoming light to capture an image.

Lenses have a curve that bends the path of incoming light and focuses it onto a piece of film or, in the case of digital cameras, an image sensor. The OPA has a large array of light receivers, each of which can individually add a tightly controlled time delay (or phase shift) to the light it receives, enabling the camera to selectively look in different directions and focus on different things.

"Here, like most other things in life, timing is everything. With our new system, you can selectively look in a desired direction and at a very small part of the picture in front of you at any given time, by controlling the timing with femto-second — quadrillionth of a second—precision," says Ali Hajimiri, professor of electrical engineering and medical engineering at California Institute of Technology and principal investigator of a paper in OSA Technical Digest.



■ Silicon photonics

"We've created a single thin layer of integrated silicon photonics that emulates the lens and sensor of a digital camera, reducing the thickness and cost

of digital cameras. It can mimic a regular lens, but can switch from a fish-eye to a telephoto lens instantaneously — with just a simple adjustment in the way the array receives light."

Last year, professor Hajimiri's team rolled out a one-dimensional version of the camera that was capable of detecting images in a line, such that it acted like a lensless barcode reader but with no mechanically moving parts.

A similar principle is used in reverse in an optical phased array receiver, which is the basis for the new camera. Light waves that are received by each element across the array cancel each other from all directions, except for one. In that direction, the waves amplify each other to create a focused "gaze" that can be electronically controlled.

"What the camera does is similar to looking through a thin straw and scanning it across the field of view. We can form an image at an incredibly fast speed by manipulating the light instead of moving a mechanical object," says graduate student Reza Fatemi, the paper's lead author.

Last year, Hajimiri's team rolled out a one-dimensional version of the camera that was capable of detecting images in a line, such that it acted like a lensless barcode reader but with no mechanically moving parts.

This year's advance was to build the first two-dimensional array capable of creating a full image. This first 2D lensless camera has an array composed of just 64 light receivers in an 8 by 8 grid. The resulting image has low resolution — but the system represents a proof of concept for a fundamental rethinking of camera technology, researchers say.

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

Brain training games boost memory, may reduce the risk of dementia

Brain training games boost the memory and may reduce the risk of dementia, new research suggests.

A study by Cambridge University found that video games improved the brain function of those with early memory problems which can be a precursor to Alzheimer's disease.

Participants were given a game to play on an iPad, in which they tried to win gold coins by putting different patterns in their correct places.

Brain training games have soared in popularity but many people get bored with their repetitive nature.

The new app - called Game Show - becomes increasingly challenging as players succeed, in order to keep them stimulated.

■ Cognitive impairment

The trials tested the game on 42 patients over-45 with amnesic mild cognitive impairment — which can be a precursor or warning sign of dementia.

For a month, half played Game Show for two hours a week and the rest played no video games at all.

The results, in the International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology, showed players improved their "episodic" memory by about 40 per cent.

This helps in day to day activities such as remembering where keys were left, or where we parked our car in a multi-storey car park.

Professor Barbara Sahakian, one of the inventors, said: "Brain training can be beneficial.

"But it needs to be based on sound research. Our game allowed us to individualize a patient's training program and make it fun."

Dr. Carol Routledge from Alzheimer's Research UK said: "Game Show could hold some benefit for people with mild memory problems.

"But without more research we can't tell if the same benefits could be achieved with any other electronic game.

"The fear of a dementia diagnosis is at an all-time high so there is a lot of interest in cognitive brain training."

Around 850,000 Brits have dementia, but the figure is expected to hit one million by 2025.

There is currently no cure but some drugs can control the symptoms.

■ Promising findings

Dr. Tara Spires-Jones, Interim Director at Center for Cognitive and Neural Systems at Edinburgh University, said the findings were "promising".

She said: "While this type of brain training will not ultimately be able to prevent or cure memory diseases like dementia, they are a promising way to improve early memory symptoms of the disease.



"The results reinforce previous work that cognitive [brain] training improves memory in people with mild cognitive impairment."

But Professor Robert Howard, Professor of Old Age Psychiatry, UCL, said there is little evidence brain training can protect against dementia.

He said: "This was an uncontrolled and open study, and so it is difficult to know how much significance we should place on the small improvements in neuropsychological test scores observed."

(Source: [The Telegraph](#))

Increased air pollution cuts victims' lifespan by a decade: study

One of the benefits to cutting fossil fuel consumption is lowering air pollution. A new study in the August issue of Ecological Indicators shows that, on average, an increase in pollution particles in the air of 10 micrograms per cubic meter cuts victims' life expectancy by 9-11 years - more than previously thought. But the estimated economic cost of this differs wildly between the U.S. and the EU because of the calculations used.

The author of the study, Prof. Mikael Skou Andersen of Aarhus University in Denmark, says we need a robust and

consistent way of determining the economic benefit of reducing air pollution to produce compelling data that encourages countries to reduce their use of fossil fuels.

When we burn fossil fuels, tiny particles are released, causing air pollution. This is known to cause premature death, and policies that aim to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels often cite the potential health benefits - and related cost savings - linked to reducing air pollution.

■ Premature death

But calculating the costs associated

with premature death caused by air pollution is complex and has resulted in very different estimates: because of the different methodologies used, the cost of air pollution related to fossil fuel consumption is estimated to be three times higher in the U.S. than the EU.

The "existing literature is ambiguous and there are differences in the approaches adopted in EU and USA for how to account for such costs," commented Prof. Andersen. "People are willing to pay a price to reduce risks for dying prematurely, provided we have an understand-

ing of the implications and magnitudes of such risks."

In the U.S., the cost-benefit analysis of reducing air pollution is calculated based on the number of lives saved, with each life currently estimated to be worth \$7.4 million. But in Europe, the focus is on the change in life expectancy: most of the victims of air pollution-related deaths are in their 70s and 80s, so the number of life years lost is thought to be only one or two. This leads to a much lower cost estimate.

(Source: [EurekAlert](#))

Official Lauds Salient Achievements Taken by 11th Government in Oil and Gas Sectors

The workbook 11th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" has been reported very successful in oil and gas sectors.

Chief Executive of Abadan Oil Refinery Eng. Esfandiar Da'em al-Zekr announced the above statement and said: "At the unsparing and unflinching efforts of the 11th government, giant steps have been taken in the oil and gas sector."

As the first and leading refinery in the Middle East region, Abadan Oil Refinery has taken giant strides in line with materializing most objectives of the Oil Ministry, he maintained.

He put the number of manpower working in Abadan Oil Refinery at over 8,000 who are offering quality services in relevant fields.

The country is home to 10 equipped refineries, he said, adding: "Presently, Abadan Oil Refinery has the



highest oil production capacity as compared with other refineries."

He also put the refinery's feedstock at 380,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

"Fuel Oil" is the main export product of the refinery,

he said, adding: "Gasoline, kerosene, liquefied gas, and gas oil, special products such as propylene, butylene, pentane, light naphtha, heavy naphtha, crude oil, and bitumen are delivered to Pasargad Company."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior official of Abadan Oil and Gas Refinery said: "The refinery produces approx. 25 percent of Iranian fuel products, so that main feedstock of Bandar Imam, Rejal, Tabriz and Arak petrochemical companies and also IRAQI Oil Company are provided by Abadan Oil and Gas Refinery."

In the end, Chief Executive of Abadan Oil Refinery Eng. Esfandiar Da'em al-Zekr once again pointed to "fuel oil" or "Mazut" as the main export product of the refinery and said: "Mazut has certain features which can be used as fuel, so that some part of Mazut can be turned into the light gasoline products and quality substances."

Sarmayeh Bank's Volleyball Team Clinches Victory over China's BAIC Motors

In the first round of second stage of AFC Men's Volleyball Championship, volleyball team of Sarmayeh Bank clinched valuable victory against China's BAIC Motors Corp., Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

As defender of championship title, volleyball team of Sarmayeh Bank faced

Chinese representative in this round of competition and gained a brilliant victory of 3-1 against its rival.

As coached by Mostafa Karkhaneh, Iran's Sarmayeh Bank Volleyball Team gained victory in 1st, 3rd and 4th sets with 25-14, 25-18 and 25-15 points respectively.

It should be noted that Iran's Sarmayeh Bank Volleyball Team was defeated by Chinese volleyball team in second set with 19-25 points, the bank reported.

According to the scheduled program, Iran's Sarmayeh Bank Volleyball Team will face Japanese TOYODA Volleyball

Team at the second round of AFC Men's Volleyball Championship.

It is worth mentioning that Sarmayeh Bank Volleyball Team managed to defeat Chinese Taipei at the preliminary stage and soothed its way as table topper at the second seed of this competition stage.

Researchers create temperature sensor that runs on almost no power

Researchers at UC San Diego have developed a temperature sensor that runs on tiny amounts of power -- just 113 picowatts, around 10 billion times less power than a watt. The sensor was described in a study recently published in Scientific Reports. "We're building systems that have such low power requirements that they could potentially run for years on just a tiny battery," Hui Wang, an author of the study, said in a statement.

The team created the device by reducing power in two areas. The first was the current source. To do that, they made use of a phenomenon that many researchers in their field are actually trying to get rid of.

Transistors often have a gate with which they can stop the flow of electrons in a circuit, but transistors keep getting tinier and tinier. The smaller they get, the thinner the gate material becomes and electrons start to leak through it -- a problem called "gate leakage." Here, the leaked electrons are what's powering the sensor.

"Many researchers are trying to get rid of leakage current, but we are exploiting it to build an ultra-low power current source," said Hui.

The researchers also reduced power in the way the sensor converts temperature to a digital readout. The result is a temperature sensor that uses 628 times less power than the current state-of-the-art sensors.

The near-zero-power sensor has a temperature range of -4 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit and could potentially be used in wearables and both environmental and home monitoring systems. One power tradeoff is that it gives readouts slightly slower than currently used sensors, at around one temperature read per second.

(Source: [Engadget](#))

NASA's Juno probe set to fly over Jupiter's Great Red Spot

NASA's Juno spacecraft is set to fly directly over Jupiter's Great Red Spot -- the gas giant's iconic 16,000-kilometer-wide storm. This will be humanity's first up-close and personal view of the gigantic feature -- a storm monitored since 1830 and possibly existing for more than 350 years.

"Jupiter's mysterious Great Red Spot is probably the best-known feature of Jupiter. This monumental storm has raged on the solar system's biggest planet for centuries," said Scott Bolton, principal investigator of Juno from the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio.

"Now, Juno and her cloud-penetrating science instruments will dive in to see how deep the roots of this storm go, and help us understand how this giant storm works and what makes it so special," said Bolton.

The data collection of the Great Red Spot is part of Juno's sixth science flyby over Jupiter's mysterious cloud tops. Perijove -- the point at which an orbit comes closest to Jupiter's center -- will be on July 10. At the time of perijove, Juno will be about 3,500 kilometers above the planet's cloud tops.

Eleven minutes and 33 seconds later, Juno will have covered another 39,771 kilometers and will be directly above the coiling crimson cloud tops of Jupiter's Great Red Spot. The spacecraft will pass about 9,000 kilometers above the Giant Red Spot clouds. On July 4, Juno will have logged exactly one year in Jupiter orbit. At the time, the spacecraft will have chugged up about 114.5 million kilometers in orbit around the giant planet.

The "success of science collection at Jupiter is a testament to the dedication, creativity and technical abilities of the NASA-Juno team," said Rick Nybakken, project manager for Juno from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the U.S.

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

Boosting interstellar communication to a laser pushed sail probe to multiple megabits per second

Michael Hippke has calculated how to have multi-megabyte communication speeds between a laser pushed sail probe and a telescope at our solar systems gravitational lensing point. Previously Hippke had determined how to use stellar photon pressures of the stellar triple? Cen A, B, and C (Proxima) together with gravity assists to decelerate incoming solar sails from Earth.

Hippke works out the problems of interstellar communication and communication using the gravitational lensing points in more detail.

There have been past work on interstellar communication using gravitational lens for improved performance as reported here at Nextbigfuture.

There was a 238 page paper in 2013 (David G. Messerschmitt at Berkeley), Project Icarus and work by Benford.

Recent technological advances could make interstellar travel possible, using ultra-lightweight sails pushed by lasers or solar photon pressure, at speeds of a few percent the speed of light. Obtaining remote observational data from such probes is not trivial because of their minimal instrumentation (gram scale) and large distances (pc). Michael Hippke derive the optimal communication scheme to maximize the data rate between a remote probe and home-base. The framework includes models for the loss of photons from diffraction, technological limitations, interstellar extinction, and atmospheric transmission. Major noise sources are atmospheric, zodiacal, stellar and instrumental. He examines the maximum capacity using the "Holevo bound" which gives an upper limit to the amount of information (bits) that can be encoded through a quantum state (photons), which is a few bits per photon for optimistic signal and noise levels.

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

Man jailed for hate attack on Muslim women in London

A man who launched an Islamophobic attack on two Muslim women while being filmed by his friend has been jailed.

Alex Chivers, 36, struck one of his victims with an open packet of bacon and shouted "You deserve this" during the assault on the mother and daughter in Enfield, north London, at about 4.40pm on 8 June.

He also made reference to Islamic State when he shouted "Isil scum" at one of the women.

Chivers, of Waltham Cross, two miles north of the attack, was handed a six-month jail term after pleading guilty to one count of racially or religiously aggravated common assault, and one count of causing racially or religiously aggravated alarm or distress, the Metropolitan police said.

The incident was filmed on camera by one of Chivers' associates, who police said remained at large. Chivers was sentenced at Highbury Corner magistrate's court on 29 June.

DC James Payne, from Enfield community safety unit, said: "This was a truly shocking incident. The victim was out with her mother and getting on with her day when Chivers abused her and then set upon her with something he knew would both upset and offend her.

"We know other people were present during this attack, including an associate of Chivers who filmed the incident. Inquiries are ongoing to trace these people, and if you have any information that may assist in identifying them, please contact the community safety unit at Enfield via 101.

"The community safety unit here in Enfield would encourage all victims of hate crime to contact police so that the culprits can be identified and brought to justice."

Chivers was given a 26-week jail term for the assault and 12 weeks' imprisonment for a public order offence, to run concurrently.

He was also ordered to pay a £115 victim surcharge and must complete a 12-month supervision order after his release from jail.

Muslims are forbidden from eating pork products and previous incidents in other parts of the UK have seen extremists prosecuted for similar attempts to cause upset to members of the Muslim community. (Source: theguardian)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Afghan Okra

"A tasty Afghan dish with okra. My mom always makes this dish for us. You can also use fresh tomatoes rather than the tomato paste."

Ingredients:



- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 pound okra, sliced in 1/4 inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 cups water

Directions:

Heat the vegetable oil in a skillet over medium-low heat. Stir in the onions, and cook until softened and dark brown, about 15 minutes.

Stir in the tomato paste until no lumps remain. Add the okra, and sprinkle with turmeric, salt, and pepper. Pour in the water and bring to a boil over high heat.

Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until the okra is very tender and the sauce has thickened slightly, 15 to 20 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper again before serving.

LEARN ENGLISH

Kitchen Appliances

A: I have been looking at this online catalog for over an hour and I still haven't finished getting all the kitchen appliances that we need!

B: What are you getting?

A: Well, the first thing on my list is a new **blender**. I decided to also get a **juicer** and a new coffee maker.

B: Don't forget to also get a new **mixer**. I lent the old one to my brother and he **broke** it.

A: Yeah I know. I also decided to **throw away** the old **toaster** and get a new one. I am also getting a rice cooker and steamer to make some nice steamed fish or **veggies**.

B: I'm actually thinking of completely **refurnishing** the kitchen and getting a new stove, oven, dishwasher and **trash compactor**.

A: That's a good idea! The kitchen will look amazing!

Key vocabulary

appliance: a piece of equipment, especially electrical equipment, such as a cooker or washing machine, used in people's homes

blender: a machine used for cutting food and ice and mixing

juicer: a machine used for making juice

mixer: a machine used for mixing things

break: to damage a machine so that it does not work properly

throw away: to get rid of something that you do not want or need

toaster: a machine used for toasting bread

veggie: vegetable

refurnish: furnish (a room or building) again or differently

trash compactor: a device that crushes waste so that it fits into less space

Supplementary vocabulary

microwave oven: an oven that uses waves to heat food

sandwich maker: small appliance used to press and heat bread to make sandwiches

fryer: machine that can heat up cooking oil to fry food

slow cooker: a pot that uses low continuous heat to cook food (Source: irlanguage.com)



Shahindokht Molaverdi

WOMEN TEHRAN — The **d e s k** vice-president for women and family affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi, congratulated 19-year-old taekwondoka Kimia Alizadeh for winning a silver medal at the world championships in South Korea.

Despite severe injuries, Alizadeh proved capability and determination of an Iranian girl and brought great honor to the nation, the VP stated.

Alizadeh won a gold medal at the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games and won two bronze medals at the 2015

VP hails female taekwondoka Kimia Alizadeh's achievement

World Taekwondo Championships in Chelyabinsk, Russia and 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro respectively.

After the Olympics, she underwent left ankle and knee surgery that forced her to sit out for eight months.

Alizadeh's silver medal is the first medal won by Iranian female taekwondo practitioners in the world championships.

The 23rd edition of the world taekwondo championships opened in Muju, South Korea, on June 24 and ran through June 30. A total of 973 athletes from 183 countries took part in the international tournament.

The Iranian women's team finished 11th.



Kimia Alizadeh

"Women in Science" award to honor leading researchers

WOMEN TEHRAN — The first **d e s k** "Women in Science" award is to be granted to prominent female researchers in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2018).

The event aims at introducing, encouraging and supporting women who have achieved notable progress

in scientific fields, Mehr news agency reported.

It also lays the ground for participants to become acquainted with women's share in scientific products and improvement of science in the country.

The award is to be granted to women who are active in improvement of science and those who make efforts

to promote social values in direction with sustainable development goals, the report added.

The women and family affairs department of the ministry of science, in cooperation with some other national and international organizations will hold the ceremony.

Muslim girls 'racially abused' on Polish Holocaust trip

Several German pupils say they were racially abused in Poland while on a trip to study the Holocaust, German broadcaster Deutschlandfunk reports.

The group, led by their teacher Sabeth Schmidhals, counted 20 high school students, the majority of them Muslims, the broadcaster said.

"These are very active students," Schmidhals told Deutschlandfunk. "They go against the popular belief that youngsters or Muslim students are not interested in this topic."

"I was spat on by a man in the street who then ran away", Sheida Nur, one of the girls in the group, told Deutschlandfunk.

She and three other girls wearing hijab were the main targets of racial slurs and threats.

Nur also said that police officers were idly standing by and did not offer protection during the abuse.

"We saw the policemen grinning. Then a Polish man explained that the police would not want to help us," one of the boys in the group said.

Another girl was expelled from a shopping mall, allegedly for speaking Farsi in a phone call to her brother.

"They came up to me and asked me to leave. They said I was disturbing the



Girls wearing a hijab were the main target of racial slurs and violence

people. I asked why. Just because I was talking in Farsi and I was a foreigner? They said 'yes'."

Another girl had an encounter with a woman who "came at us yelling 'go away'". She then poured her drink on me and my camera," she told Deutschlandfunk.

In a market in the city of Lublin, the girls wearing hijab (the hijab is a headscarf worn by many Muslim women who feel it is part of their religion) were

turned away from a stall where they tried to buy water, allegedly because they were not Polish.

In another incident, one of the girls was reportedly threatened by a man with a knife. "I thought he wanted to ask me something, but then I ran straight back to the hotel."

Polish police, responding to a request from the BBC, said that there was no complaint filed in connection with these

incidents and that review of security footage showed "no incidents involving foreigners".

No Muslim refugees

The organizers of the school trip, Haus der Wannseekonferenz, have expressed concern in the wake of the allegations and promised to take the matter up with their Polish partners.

A letter will also be sent to the Polish ambassador to Germany, according to Haus der Wannseekonferenz director Hans-Christian Jasch.

The group had visited the sites of World War II concentration camps in Treblinka and Maidanek in order to learn more about the suffering of Polish civilians under Nazi occupation.

The Polish prosecutor's office told the BBC that the number of hate crimes against Muslims had doubled from 2015 to 2016.

Poland's conservative government refuses to take in Muslim refugees claiming they would not fit in a majority Christian Catholic society.

During the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015, Education Secretary Jaroslav Gowin said, "every (...) people has the right to protect itself from extinction".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Shenzhen rolls out new 'women-only' subway carriages

Guangzhou and Shenzhen, two mega-cities in south China's Guangdong Province, are making an effort to create a safer environment for female commuters, implementing plans to create "women-only" subway carriages aimed at protecting pregnant women and young children from the daily chaos which is rush hour, as well as lessening the threat of sexual assault.

On Monday, Shenzhen launched the trial initiative on several different subway lines in the city. Clearly marked with signs on both the train itself and the station platforms, these cars are only meant to be reserved for women during peak hours in the mornings and evenings. Guangzhou is expected to follow suit shortly.

June is the start of the hot summer months in China, and with the warmer weather comes lighter clothing. According to some officials, this in itself increases the potential for unwanted attention to be directed at female passengers. Su Zhongyang, a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Guangdong Provincial Committee, proposed the idea of the segregated cars in the hope that it would help "to curb groping, protect pregnant women and babies, and make the facility more friendly to female passengers," Life of Guangzhou reports.

In 2012, China Daily conducted a survey which suggested that more than 80% of people believe that sexual harassment is an issue on subways. 13.6% of the people polled claimed to have been the victim of such harassment themselves. These statistics are not all that shocking considering the number of cases in recent years, across China, involving sexual assault on the subway.

Indian woman in fifth acid attack despite police protection

A woman who survived an alleged gang rape and four separate acid attacks has again had corrosive liquid poured over her, Indian police said on Sunday.

The 35-year-old mother was at a women's hostel in Uttar Pradesh state capital Lucknow when a man scaled the walls and poured the chemical on to her. "She was filling water at the hand pump when the attack took place. The attacker fled from the spot," said Vivek Tripathi, a local police chief.

Due to the previous string of attacks the woman was under round-the-clock police protection, but the armed policeman was barred from entering the women's hostel.

Police have launched a manhunt to identify the assailant, the officer said.



The president of La Republique En Marche party, Macron's party, Catherine Barbaroux, delivers her speech at the party headquarters, in Paris, France, Sunday, June 18, 2017.

However, despite such evidence, there are many people that believe these new "women-only" cars are a bad idea. According to Women of China, some think that the plan does not allow for the most efficient allocation of resources, making an already stressful period of the day even more chaotic. Wang Xue, a member of Shenzhen's Political Consultative Conference believes that such an initiative will, overall, reduce the effectiveness of the metro system.

"Public transportation resources are relatively scarce in Shenzhen," says Wang. "Setting up female-only cars may intensify this problem. Segregating people by gender

The woman was allegedly gang-raped and attacked with acid by two men in 2008 over a property dispute, and subsequently attacked twice more by the same men, in 2012 and 2013, who wanted to force her to withdraw the criminal cases against them.

Most recently, she was allegedly forced her to drink acid while she was travelling on a train with one of her daughters in March.

The two men are facing trials over the attacks, but they were released on bail in April.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, sustained burn injuries to her face and shoulder and is now being treated in hospital.

might lead to more congestion in other carriages since male passengers can't enter them during peak hours."

Not only are there concerns about the efficiency of the metro with these new cars, but some scholars believe that such a move sends the wrong message to both the perpetrators and the victims of sexual assault. The very same survey conducted by China Daily which suggested there was a problem also found that the people polled believed that women who dressed "scantily" were just as much to blame as the men who assaulted them. Some citizens have criticized the initiative to segregate train cars because they believe it will only further a false narrative about sexual harassment, which encourages people to place the blame on the victim rather than holding the culprits accountable for their actions.

In contrast to the idea that these new carriages are an improper solution to a very real problem, others think that they are not only impractical, but also entirely unnecessary. A spokesperson from the Guangzhou Metro noted that instances of sexual harassment are "occasional incidents," and that "the city metro has been rated as having the lowest incident rate of offenses for years in a row by the international Community of Metros (CoMET)."

Guangzhou and Shenzhen are the first cities in China to try out priority carriages for women on the subway. Only time will tell whether these "women-first" initiatives will be effective. But, hopefully, in the meantime, more local citizens will continue to step up to help make the world a more welcoming place for women and mothers in need -- like these "pregnant" guys in Chengdu.

(Source: Shanghaiist)

In India about 300 acid attacks were reported in the country during 2015, according to official figures. Experts said, however, that this represented the tip of the iceberg.

In 2013 India brought in stringent laws to deal with acid attacks, following public outcry over the plight of hundreds of survivors coping with lifelong scars and even social stigma. The country's top court banned the sale of acid to the public in that year to curb attacks. But assaults have largely continued unabated.

Most attacks are carried out by men taking revenge for spurned marriage proposals, or are linked to property disputes.

(Source: theguardian)

Poll: 70% of Americans think civility has gotten worse since Trump took office

Americans broadly believe their country's political tone has become less civil since Donald Trump was elected president and that fundamental rights are weakening, according to a new PBS NewsHour/NPR/Marist poll.

Seventy percent of Americans think political civility has worsened since Trump was elected president, according to the poll. That holds true regardless of party, and it marks a substantial increase since a July 2009 Gallup poll showed that just a third of United States adults said the nation's political tone and civility were worse since former President Barack Obama took office.

Trust in Congress and the media is low, while trust in the intelligence community and the courts is high, according to the poll. Americans — 60 percent — said they trust the intelligence community and courts the most and Congress and the media the least.

Trust in Congress and the media is low, while trust in the intelligence community and courts is high, according to the poll.

Two months out from President Trump's firing of former FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) director James Comey, the nation's regard for the intelligence community remains largely



unchanged in recent months. In March, six out of 10 Americans said they trusted the nation's intelligence community, including the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and FBI, at least a good amount while one out of 10 said they trust these agencies "not at all."

Overall, 61 percent of Americans said they do not place much trust in the Trump administration. Seventy percent of people who identify as political

independents said they do not trust the Trump administration, along with 90 percent of Democrats. Among Republicans, 84 percent of respondents said they trust the president and his administration. And despite the controversies surrounding the White House, the overall numbers remain virtually unchanged since March, according to Marist polling data.

Meanwhile, as Republicans in both the

House and the Senate struggle to pass a bill on health care, only six percent of Americans say they have a great deal of trust in Congress, and another 23 percent said they hold a "good amount" of trust in the legislative branch. That response held regardless of political party and remains largely unchanged since March when a quarter of Americans — 27 percent — said they placed at least a good amount of trust in Congress.

When asked if they trust the media, less than a third of U.S. adults — 30 percent — said they do at least a good amount. And the differences along party lines show sharp divisions with only nine percent of Republicans saying trust the media, a stark contrast to 56 percent of Democrats and 28 percent of Independents who said the same. And on the media's right to freedom of the press, four out of 10 Republicans said the nation had "gone too far in expanding the right," while two out of 10 Independents and one out of 10 Democrats agreed with that statement. Overall, a quarter of U.S. adults said the press had too many rights, while nearly half of Americans — said "things are okay the way they are."

(Source: PBS NewsHour)

U.S. missile strike on Syria lacked political, practical justification

A high-ranking Syrian official has strongly denounced a recent United States missile attack against a military airfield in Syria's central province of Homs, stressing that the assault targeted those fighting terrorism in the region.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital city of Damascus on Monday, Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Miqdad stated that Damascus government called upon experts from the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate a suspected chemical incident in the town of Khan Shaykhun in Idlib Province on April 4, but received no response.

Miqdad went on to say that the April 7 launch of 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles from two U.S. warships in the Mediterranean Sea at Shayrat airfield lacked any political, moral, or practical justification, and that the act of aggression negatively affected the anti-terror campaign.

U.S. officials claimed that the suspected chemical incident in Khan Shaykhun, which reportedly killed over 80 people, had been launched from the military site. Syria has vehemently dismissed the allegations of being behind the attack.

Syria's official news agency, SANA, reported that at least nine people had been killed in the early-morning U.S. strike on the Syrian airfield.

Miqdad underlined that the Syrian government had already surrendered its stockpiles of chemical weapons to a joint mission led by the United Nations and the OPCW, which oversaw the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons.

The United States is creating problems for Syrian government forces, who are making advances in battles against foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants across the war-ravaged country, the top Syrian official said.

He added that enemies of the Damascus government had no excuses for military intervention in Syria other than "cheap propaganda" concerning alleged use of chemical weapons.

"West is creating conditions for terrorists to use chemical warfare, and then surprisingly accuses the Syr-

ian government for the misdeed. Why should the Syrian government launch a chemical attack when its forces are making gains against terrorists," Miqdad commented.

He stated that Syrian government forces did not even make use of chemical munitions when Takfiri terrorists had overrun military sites and sensitive facilities.

Miqdad said certain Arab regimes and Western countries are arming, harboring, and supporting terrorist networks under orders from the US and Israel, adding that any wise man could simply understand that Washington was working to prolong the crisis in Syria in order to serve the interests of the Tel Aviv regime.

Turning to the ongoing rounds of Astana peace talks aimed at bringing an end to the deadly Syrian conflict, Miqdad stated that consultations are going on among all involved parties.

The Syrian deputy foreign minister emphasized that representatives from the Damascus government were talking with delegates from armed opposition groups only because Syrian government authorities were seeking to establish lasting peace and stability in the country.

Miqdad also leveled strident criticism at neighboring Turkey, stating that Ankara government was a part of the Syrian crisis, because it has been supporting Takfiri militant groups inside Syria ever since the conflict broke out in March 2011.

■ U.S. airstrikes kill 11 civilians in Syria

Meanwhile, a monitoring group says 11 civilians have lost their lives in aerial bombing by a U.S.-led coalition in Syria's northern city of Raqqah.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said on Monday that a woman and three children had been among the fatalities.

The group said the attacks had also left an unspecified number of people injured and infrastructure destroyed.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what it says are the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus



government or a United Nations mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying ISIL.

The Britain-based group also said the airstrikes had been accompanied by shelling by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a U.S.-backed alliance of mostly Kurdish and Arab militants.

The group also said that clashes continued between the SDF and the Takfiri ISIL terrorist group in areas in the southern part of Raqqah and on the northern bank of the Euphrates River.

Backed by the U.S.-led coalition, the SDF militants first entered Raqqah on June 6. The fighters have engaged in fierce fighting with ISIL as they push closer on the city center.

ISIL seized Raqqah in 2014, the same year it started its campaign of terror in Syria. It then proceeded to capture large parts of Syrian territory.

But the terrorists have suffered major blows by the Syrian army and its allies in recent months.

The observatory further said that a Syrian man was killed in the northern countryside of Raqqah as Turkish border guards opened fire at him while he was trying to cross into Turkey.

(Source: agencies)

Can Iran lead a global fight against dust storms?

➔ The Sahara in Africa is the major source of dust particles that travel thousands of kilometers around the world. The Sahara's eastward dust plumes plague the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and reach as far as the Himalayas and China. Europe receives about 80 to 120 million tons of Sahara dust per year while between 30-50% of the lifted dust moves westward, some reaching all the way to the Caribbean.

Although about 75% of sand and dust storms are due to natural biogeochemical cycles of the Earth, poor water and land management exacerbate the phenomenon significantly. About 85% of anthropogenic dust emissions are related to mismanagement of bodies of water.

Iran seems to have good incentives to spearhead a global move to combat dust storms. The nation has been grappling with choking storms of dust that cripple everyday activities. Scorching heat waves frequently hit the country's southwest with temperatures rising to a record 54 °C in the city of Ahvaz, close to hottest temperature ever measured in the world. Once mostly concentrated in the southwest and southeast of Iran, sand and dust storms are hitting vast areas in north central parts of the country-- including the capital, Tehran.

Iran is increasingly recognizing environmental problems as issues of national security. Like many other developing countries, the nation is following the footsteps of the developed world by pursuing rapid infrastructural development with widespread detrimental effects to natural resources and ecosystems.

There are historical evidences of successful mitigation of anthropogenic dust storms. In the 1930s, massive dust storms driven by strip farming on prairie grasslands in the U.S. high-plains forced hundreds of thousands of people to migrate out of affected areas. American legis-

lation addressed the problem by enacting Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936.

Complex political affairs in the Middle East pose a formidable challenge to solve transboundary environmental issues. Years of war, political misalignments, and terrorism have worsened environmental problems in this volatile region. Abandoned farmlands in Syria and Iraq as well as marshes that were drained and burned during Saddam Hussein's era are examples of contemporary man-made dust sources in the region. Despite the burgeoning sense of urgency, recent political tensions after Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt cut ties with Qatar leave dim hope for concerted regional efforts to fight dust storms.

Sustainable water and land management and fighting desertification are key to reducing human-induced sand and dust storms. Many short- to long-term measures exist, including sand dune stabilization by reestablishing and expanding vegetative cover, reducing soil erosion by dampening the erosive effect of wind, water and soil conservation in agricultural areas, ensuring environmental water supply to increase soil moisture in areas of concern, and prevent-

The Tehran conference is an important international platform to raise awareness about sand and dust storms, facilitate knowledge and expertise transfer, and encourage international collaborations to implement solutions.

ing negative hydrological disturbance of dust sources by short-sighted water resources management plans. It is also important to plan to adapt to more frequent and intense dust storms in the region. Adaptation efforts can target building codes, investment in health care, and warning and monitoring systems, among others.

If not mitigated, the consequences of large-scale dust storms can be catastrophic and the world is bound to pay a high price for this transboundary, transgenerational problem. The Tehran conference is an important international platform to raise awareness about sand and dust storms, facilitate knowledge and expertise transfer, and encourage international collaborations to implement solutions.

Daunting environmental threats can unite countries to think seriously about the problems as was the case in the Paris climate summit. While lack of legal binding and enforcement mechanisms weakens tangible outcomes from global environmental agreements, recognizing the dust storm phenomenon as one of the world's most significant environmental threats in the 21st century is critical for international cooperation to respond to this challenge.

Ali Mirchi is a research assistant professor of water resources engineering and management at the Department of Civil Engineering and the Center for Environmental Resource Management at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Kaveh Madani, recipient of the Arne Richter award for outstanding young scientists in 2016 and the Walter Huber research prize in 2017, is an environmental management expert and a reader of systems analysis and policy at the Centre for Environmental Policy of Imperial College, London.

Xi: China, Russia ties at 'best time in history'

Xi to Trump: 'Negative factors' straining U.S., China relations

Beijing and Moscow are enjoying the best bilateral relations they have ever seen, Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Monday, according to state news agency Xinhua.



His remarks came ahead of his two-day official visit to Moscow on Monday and Tuesday, where Xi will meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Saying that Beijing and Moscow are each other's "most trustworthy strategic partner," Xi added: "Chinese-Russian relations are at their best time in history."

Xi said he hoped his visit would bring impetus to developing ties between the two countries.

Energy, trade, high technology, and finance are among the fields where Xi says Beijing wants more cooperation.

According to a Kremlin statement, the two leaders will ink a number of bilateral agreements following the talks.

■ China, Russia 'steadfastly' against THAAD

Elsewhere, Xi warned that the deployment of a United States anti-missile system -- Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) -- in South Korea would "gravely" harm the security interests of China, Russia, and regional countries.

China has repeatedly stated its opposition to the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system and has called for its deployment to stopped, and the missiles already installed to be removed.

China says the system's powerful radar can probe deep into its territory, undermining its security and a regional balance while doing nothing to stop North Korea in its relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

"The U.S. deployment of an advanced anti-missile system in South Korea gravely harms the strategic security interests of China, Russia and other countries in the region," China's state Xinhua news agency cited Xi as saying.

The United States and South Korea say the THAAD is solely aimed at defending the South from North Korea.

China and Russia have maintained close communication and coordination on the issue and held very similar views on it, Xi said in an interview with Russian media.

"Beijing and Moscow are steadfastly opposed to the THAAD deployment and seriously suggest that relevant countries stop and cancel the installation," Xinhua cited xi as saying.

(Source: agencies)

Why it's better to capture than kill ISIS terrorists

➔ One late afternoon in April, helicopter-borne American commandos intercepted a vehicle in southeastern Syria carrying a close associate of the Islamic State's supreme leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The associate, Abdurakhmon Uzbeki, was a rare prize whom United States Special Operations forces had been tracking for months: a midlevel but highly trusted operative skilled in raising money; spiriting insurgent leaders out of Raqqah, the Islamic State's besieged capital in Syria; and plotting attacks against the West. Captured alive, Mr. Uzbeki could be an intelligence bonanza. Federal prosecutors had already begun preparing criminal charges against him for possible prosecution in the United States.

As the commandos swooped in, however, a firefight broke out. Mr. Uzbeki, a combat-hardened veteran of shadow wars in Syria and Pakistan, died in the gun battle, thwarting the military's hopes of extracting from him any information about Islamic State operations, leaders and strategy.

New details about the operation, and a similar episode in January that sought to seize another mid-level Islamic State operative, offer a rare glimpse into the handful of secret and increasingly risky commando raids of the secretive, nearly three-year American ground war against the Islamic State.

■ Inner circle

Cellphones and other material swept up by Special Operations forces proved valuable for future raids, though the missions fell short of their goal to capture, not kill, terrorist leaders in order to obtain fresh, firsthand information about the inner circle and war council of the group, also known as ISIL.

This is good news. Shifting from air strikes to special operations raids carries risk, to be sure, but the rewards can be extraordinary — even if the target is killed in a firefight, as Uzbeki was.

There is enormous value in the "pocket litter" terrorists leave behind — cell phones, computers, thumb drives, diaries, and other documents — which can provide insight into ISIS plans and operations.

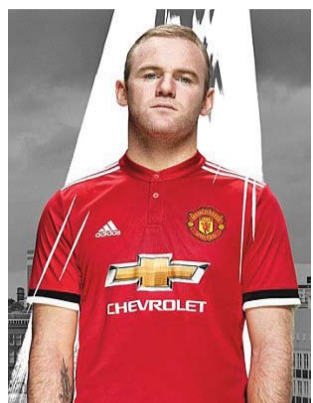
When the U.S. sends a drone to take out an ISIS leader, this vital intelligence is vaporized with the dead terrorist. When we send JSOC teams, it is preserved — even if the terrorist is not.

Eventually, we'll capture one alive — and, if the target is right, that will indeed be an intelligence bonanza.

(Source: Newsweek)

Rooney models Manchester United's new home kit

Speculation around the future of Manchester United captain Wayne Rooney is likely to increase after he was used for the release of the club's new home shirt for 2016-17.



Rooney fell down the pecking order at Old Trafford during Jose Mourinho's first season in charge, in which he only made 15 starts in the Premier League.

The 31-year-old rejected the chance to leave the club in January but he has been heavily linked with a move before the start of next season, with former club Everton and teams from the Chinese Super League reportedly interested.

Those rumors increased when Rooney was removed from United's Facebook cover when their away strip for upcoming season was launched last month.

However, the club's record goal scorer was used as a central figure for the release of United's new home shirt, featuring in images on their official website and Twitter account alongside Paul Pogba, Henrikh Mkhitaryan and new signing Victor Lindelof.

The pictures are likely to encourage speculation that Rooney will be given a chance to stake his claim for a place in Mourinho's side next season.

Recent reports in England have suggested that England's leading goal scorer is not pushing for a move away and would be happy to stay and fight for his future.

(Source: Soccerway)

Lionel Messi wants four Barcelona players sold - report

LIONEL MESSI is edging closer to signing a new deal with Barcelona.

But he reportedly wants up to four players sold this summer as he hopes to take the Catalan giants back to the top of Spanish and European football.

Barca had to watch on as rivals Real Madrid recorded a La Liga and Champions League double last term but Messi wants the club to challenge across all fronts in the upcoming campaign.



The Argentine superstar got married at the weekend and things are about to get better at the Nou Camp before he jets off on his honeymoon.

According to Spanish publication Don Balon, Messi will finalize the details of his new deal with Barca before going away with his new wife Antonella Rocuzzo.

Messi's current contract expires at the end of next season but he is ready to commit his future to the club.

However, Don Balon claim Messi is requesting four players be shown the door if the club want to improve next season.

The four names mentioned are: Munir El Haddadi, Thomas Vermaelen, Arda Turan and Andre Gomes.

Munir and Vermaelen have both struggled for game time at the Nou Camp, while Turan and Gomes failed to impress when given opportunities under Luis Enrique.

Messi reportedly doesn't feel the quartet are of the level expected at Barca and they should be offloaded to raise funds for new arrivals.

Paris Saint-Germain star Marco Verrati remains at the top of Ernesto Valverde's wish list.

(Source: Express)

Kyrgios retires injured in Wimbledon first round

Australian 20th seed Nick Kyrgios retired injured in his first round Wimbledon match on Monday after losing the first two sets to French doubles specialist Pierre-Hugues Herbert.



Kyrgios, clearly still struggling from the left hip injury that forced him to drop out in his first round match at the Queen's Club tournament in London this month, was 6-3 6-4 down to the world number 70 when he asked for a physio to come on court.

Apart from in very rare flashes, the 22-year-old rarely ran to pick up the peppering of drop shots and lobs coming from Herbert, and sat with his head in his hands at the changeover after having his serve broken for 4-3 in the second set.

Kyrgios, who has never lost in the first round at Wimbledon, reached the last 16 last year before being beaten by eventual champion Andy Murray.

(Source: Reuters)

FIFA Confederations Cup : Six things that will stay with the world champions

The FIFA Confederations Cup 2017 is now history – and while the same can be said of the Germany line-up assembled specifically for this tournament and unlikely ever to appear together again, the past three weeks in Russia have certainly left their mark.

These are the things that will stay with the world champions.

1) An invigorated coach

After winning the 2014 FIFA World Cup, Joachim Low was practically untouchable. Yet when his squad was announced ahead of the FIFA Confederations Cup 2017, it was criticized by many, despite ample evidence that the 57-year-old can mold a team and clearly enjoys the process of doing so. In the end, he lifted a trophy no other Germany manager has clinched before. When asked what the cup meant to him, Low responded: "Winning this means that Germany are still the best team in the world right now."

2) Alternatives sought – and found

Germany lacked a cutting edge in front of goal in their UEFA EURO 2016 semi-final defeat – and in Timo Werner and Lars Stindl they have discovered two players who provide this threat in spades. While the team's central midfield has generally consisted of Mesut Ozil, Toni Kroos and Sami Khedira in the biggest matches of the past few years, the convincing performances delivered by 22-year-old Leon Goretzka and 27-year-old Sebastian Rudy will intensify competition for places in this area. "We have created alternatives," said Low. "That was one of the main aims of this tournament – to give young players experience in games and situations like these."

3) A leader for the next generation

Julian Draxler became Germany's youngest captain back in May 2014, but in Russia he took on this role over several weeks at the age of just 23 – a big difference. "He has grown as skipper here," said his delighted coach. "He was a very, very good captain both on and off the pitch. He's still young and will have to keep developing in this role, but there's no doubt that he has a winner's



mentality." While many were already aware of Draxler's ability to play in the centre of attacking midfield, his assured performances in this position for the national team – where he has generally been deployed on the wing until now – represent further progress.

4) A tried-and-tested second system

Joachim Low's previous system was based on dominance, aggressively pressing, gegenpressing and keeping a high line. Throughout the tournament in Russia he maintained a 3-4-2-1 formation that could be geared towards attack while simultaneously enabling the team to defend more deeply and patiently than Germany have been known for in recent years. At times, their attacking play was more dynamic and flexible than it was at EURO 2016 in France – and this was one of the

coach's key objectives ahead of the tournament.

5) Laying a solid foundation

The fact that Germany's U-21 side became European champions at almost exactly the same time as a young experimental side triumphed in Russia illustrates the potential at Joachim Low's disposal. Yet the Germany coach is the first to sound a note of caution. "For these young players, the work is only just beginning," he explained. "They have to strive for and play at a world-class level all the time. Although the foundations are certainly strong, winning the Confederations Cup and the U-21 European Championship offers no guarantees that we can become world champions again next year."

6) The cup!

(Source: FIFA)

Djokovic winning Wimbledon should not surprise anyone: Agassi



Novak Djokovic has lost his aura of invincibility but coach Andre Agassi says nobody should be surprised if the Serb goes on to claim his fourth Wimbledon title this month.

Djokovic has dropped to fourth in singles rankings after an inconsistent season and the 30-year-old's Aegon International triumph on Saturday was only his second title of the year.

"Don't be surprised," eight-time grand slam winner Agassi, who joined Djokovic's team prior to French Open in May, was quoted as saying by the Guardian newspaper.

"Can a guy like this objectively find his way back to the trophy? Heck, yeah he could...That's the plan, that's always the plan – to get better – and the belief in winning has to be yours and yours alone."

"I think there's enough momentum that could build to give that particular dream, hope or objective a real shot."

The American said his growing familiarity with Djokovic has led to a better understanding of the game-plan, which could guide the 12-time grand slam champion back to his best.

"I know him so much better now than I did coming in and that's so important. I can effectively say there is belief in what the plan is and how we're going to go about it," Agassi said.

"It will get more nuanced and layered as we go – it's problem solving and I am enjoying learning, I'm enjoying giving some tools and I have the utmost belief that it's going to make him once again the best of who he is."

Djokovic also has added Mario Ancic, who reached the semi-finals at Wimbledon in 2004, to his coaching team for his SW19 campaign, which starts with a match against Slovakia's Martin Klizan in the first round on Tuesday.

(Source: Reuters)

Gareth Bale represents star-studded Wales team in charity golf tournament



Real Madrid superstar Gareth Bale may well be considering a change of career if this weekend's activities are anything to go by.

The 27-year-old winger, who is currently enjoying some well-earned rest ahead of the new season, took to the picturesque surroundings of Celtic Manor on Sunday to compete in the Celebrity Cup charity golf tournament.

The unusual competition pits stars from the world of sport and showbiz against each other as they compete for the trophy in four separate teams representing England, Scotland, Wales and an all-Ireland side.

Wales international Bale was joined by the likes of Craig Bellamy and Jonathan Davies, under the leadership of Welsh captain Rob Brydon.

Rugby World Cup winner Mike Tindall skippered the English team in Newport, while Boyzone's Keith Duffy and former

Scotland rugby international Rory Lawson led the Irish and Scottish teams respectively.

Bale accompanied Davies around the course but could not prevent rivals England claiming the trophy thanks to a composed putt on the final hole by Strictly Come Dancing star Anton du Beke.

The former Southampton and Tottenham winger is set to return to pre-season training with Real Madrid in the coming weeks as he looks to work his way back into Zinedine Zidane's immediate plans.

Bale struggled for form and fitness throughout last season as Madrid claimed both the Champions League and La Liga trophies under the Frenchman.

The reigning European champions kick-off their pre-season schedule against Manchester United in Santa Clara, California on July 23 before playing Manchester City, Barcelona and an MLS All-Stars side in their remaining warm-up matches.

(Source: Daily Mail)

John Terry signs for Aston Villa on one-year deal and admits move feels: 'Strange and very emotional'

Aston Villa have confirmed the signing of John Terry on a one-year contract after the Chelsea legend chose to drop to the Championship to continue his playing career.

Terry, 36, could earn up to £80,000 per week if he helps Villa back to the Premier League after agreeing to join Steve Bruce's promotion push having linked up with his new manager on an Algarve golf course this summer.

Villa unveiled Terry using a bizarre spoof WhatsApp thread featuring his new team-mates and owner Tony Xia, after the club's chairman had initially teased the signing on Twitter earlier on Monday.

Terry had been in search of a new challenge since agreeing with Chelsea that his 22 years at the club had come to a natural end late last season.

The former England captain played a reduced role under new manager Antonio Conte, starting just six matches of Chelsea's charge to the Premier League title.

While considering his options, Terry has been training back at Chelsea's Cobham base and on his regular trips to Portugal during the summer.

Villa manager Steve Bruce confessed his interest in Terry at the end of last season and the pair met up to play golf



while on holiday this summer.

He has agreed a one-year contract, understood to be worth around £80,000 per week – if he hits bonus targets.

Swansea City manager Paul Clement has revealed how Terry chose to drop down to the Championship because he couldn't face playing against Chelsea in the Premier League.

The former Chelsea captain was in demand, with Swan-

sea and Bournemouth among the top-flight clubs to have courted his services this summer, but chose to move down a division.

"My understanding of the situation is that, with John and his relationship with Chelsea, he was going to find it difficult to be a direct competitor of them in the Premier League," Clement told talkSPORT.

"John is someone I know very well and have a lot respect for and have a good relationship with. Having known him since he was 16 years old and worked with him as well in the later years when I was an assistant at Chelsea, I understand very well his situation."

"He has made a sensible choice. Aston Villa are a very good club, they have got a good manager, they have got a nice infrastructure there."

"I think he is getting that balance between wanting to continue to play at a good level but at the same time not wanting to pull at his heartstrings really because it was difficult for him leaving Chelsea."

Villa finished 13th in the Championship last season, a year on from their relegation from the Premier League.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Iran move seven places up at FIFA World Ranking

S P O R T S Germany will return to the summit desk of the FIFA World Ranking after their Confederations Cup victory over Chile.

Brazil had held the No. 1 position since April, but the world champions just accrued enough ranking points to reclaim top spot for the first time in two years. Germany climb two places from third to usurp both Brazil and Argentina.

European champions Portugal, who finished third at the Confederations Cup, climb four places to fourth with Chile falling three places to seventh after winning just one match in Russia even though they reached the final.

Switzerland climb four places into fifth, while Poland shoot to their highest-ever ranking of sixth -- up from their previous best of 10th in June. Before last year, Poland had never even been inside the top 15, and a 3-1 World Cup qualifying win over Romania has increased their placing further.

Colombia, France and Belgium also drop three places, to eighth, ninth and 10th respectively.

Peru (14th, up one), Iceland (19th, up three), Northern Ireland (22nd, up six) and Congo DR (28th, up 13) all register their best-ever ranking. Sweden rocket 16 places from 34th into 18th, helped by their World Cup qualifying win over France, while Haiti are up 15 into 49th.

But there's not such good news for Netherlands (32nd, down one) who drop to their equal-worst ranking. United States (35th, down 12) are now just one position below their worst placing while, 12 months on from their appearance at Euro 2016, Hungary slump 24 places into 57th -- their lowest position for seven years.

Mexico are the top ranked nation in CONCACAF, and remain in 16th, with Costa Rica down sixth to 26th. However, all CONCACAF nations will have the chance to climb back up with the Gold Cup taking place this month.

Egypt remain the No. 1 team in Africa, though drop four places to 24th. Senegal are up three in 27th, followed by Congo DR.

In Asia, Iran are still way out in front and moved up another seven places into 23rd in the process of qualifying for the World Cup. Their nearest challengers are Australia (44th, up four) and Japan (45th, non-mover).



The new FIFA Ranking will be officially published on Thursday.

■ JULY FIFA RANKING TOP 20

- 1. Germany
- 2. Brazil
- 3. Argentina
- 4. Portugal
- 5. Switzerland
- 6. Poland
- 7. Chile
- 8. Colombia
- 9. France
- 10. Belgium
- 11. Spain
- 12. Italy
- 13. England
- 14. Peru
- 15. Croatia
- 16. Mexico
- 17. Uruguay
- 18. Sweden
- 19. Iceland
- 20. Wales

(Source: Soccer.net)

Long-serving journalist Behmanesh passes away



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran's long-serving journalist Ataollah Behmanesh passed away at the age of 94 in Tehran's Bank Mell Hospital on Sunday.

His death happened to coincide with the World Sports Journalists Day on July 2. Behmanesh was in hospital for a month after suffering a stroke.

He started his career in 1950 in an

Iranian sports weekly and also worked in Keyhan Varzeshi weekly, Ettela'at and Iran Varzeshi newspapers.

Behmanesh was radio commentator for many years.

The Tehran Times staff offer heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

Behmanesh will be laid to rest in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery on Wednesday.

Kimia Alizadeh to undergo knee injury



S P O R T S Iranian taekwondo practitioner Kimia Alizadeh is set to undergo surgery on her knee.

She won a silver medal at the 2017 World Taekwondo Championships on Friday after losing to Ruth Gbagbi from Ivory Coast in the women's -62 kg final match.

According to her doctor, Kimia

is suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament in her knee and needs surgery as soon as possible.

Alizadeh, who is now the first Iranian woman who managed to win silver medal in the world championships, will be out of action for at least one year.

She had already become the first Iranian woman to win an Olympic medal.

Sarmayeh Bank stun Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza at Asian Club Volleyball Championship

Formidable Sarmayeh Bank still proved a tough nut to crack at the SMM 2017 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship at the Ninh Binh Gymnasium when the title-holders on Monday stunned Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza of Japan in straight sets 25-14 25-22 25-22 in their last playoff Pool F match at the round of the last eight teams.

Sarmayeh Bank fielded a strong line-up led by hard-hitting Milad Ebadipour Gharah and Mohammad Mousavi Eraghi Seyed and highly-experienced Shahram Mahmoudi, while Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza rested some key players including Croatian Igor Omrcen in this match.

Sarmayeh Bank built to an early 11-4 lead in the first set until the Toyoda's Finnish head coach Tommi Tiilikainen Tommi called a timeout to improve their tactics.

However, the Iranians continued their dominant performance throughout the remainder of the set to win effortlessly 25-14.

Going down one set, Toyoda, bronze medalists at the previous edition in Myanmar last year, tried hard to mount a strong challenge against the crack rivals in the



second set. The Japanese side's determined efforts paid off impressively when they captured a commanding 16-12 lead at the second technical timeout.

However, the Japanese dominance did not last long as Sarmayeh Bank regained their composure to level at 19-19. The Iranians went on their superb form, taking advantage of their opponents' errors to snatch the hard-fought set 25-22.

The third set was more thrilling when both teams gave it all out and traded points from the very beginning

of the set. Milad Ebadipour Gharah and Mohamad Mousavi Eraghi Seyed became scoring machines of Samayeh Bank to help the team lead 8-5 in the first technical timeout, while Ryosuke Tsubakiyama handed Toyoda may vital points through his spectacular attacks.

The Iranian side cruised to take the match point 24-21, allowing the Japanese one more point before Shahram attacked powerfully to help Sarmayeh Bank end the Toyoda's challenge 25-22 and match.

Milad Ebadipour Gharah topscored for Sarmayeh Bank with 13 points while Mohammad Mousavi Eraghi Seyed added another 13 points. Ryosuke Tsubakiyama led Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza with 17 points.

"The Japanese team rested some key players for this match. I don't know if that was their strategy or for any reason. In each match, we have some improvement and good coordination. I hope we can advance to the final round," Sarmayeh Bank's head coach Mostafa Karkhaneh said after the match.

"In the quarter-finals we will play Al-Bahri Sport Club from Iraq. We will play our level and we will do our best," he added.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

Murray begins Wimbledon 2017 title defense with straight-sets victory over Bublik

Andy Murray limped into the second round in style.

The champion had been a serious injury doubt ahead of his Wimbledon defense and often looked in considerable discomfort during his opening match against Alexander Bublik.

But the pain only struck between points. During points, the two-time winner and world No.1 was often at his imperious best, brushing aside 20-year-old Bublik in straight sets.

Murray sent out more than one distress signal, grabbing at the troublesome hip and grimacing as he hobbled around the back of the court.

At every changeover, he walked gingerly to his chair.

Yet the complaint, which meant Murray came into the tournament with just one grass court contest under his belt this season, did not seem to hamper him against the unpredictable Kazakh.

While there were clear signs of rusti-

ness, Murray never really looked in any danger and only a couple of rain breaks delayed the inevitable.

After an early scare in the first game, he cruised to a 6-1 first set and closed out the second 6-4 by saving three break points.

In between showers, Murray wrapped up the match 6-2.

In normal circumstances, this would be seen as the ideal pipe-opener for a top seed but there is bound to be continuing concern over Murray's fitness.

Whatever his physical state, Murray would have been pleased with a solid workout.

Although he offered Bublik a handful of break points, the world No.134 never looked capable of causing an upset and Murray can now get further treatment on his sore hip as he prepares for his second round match against Dustin Brown.

Murray could well face a much sterner test against the dreadlocked German who caused a stir here in 2015 when he beat Rafael Nadal.

(Source: Mirror)

Iran to Face India at FIBA Asia Cup opener

Iran will open their campaign in the 2017 FIBA Asia Cup with a match against India.

The match has been scheduled for August 9.

Iran have been pitted against India, Jordan and Syria in Pool A.



Iraq, China, the Philippines and Qatar are in Pool B.

Pool C consists of Kazakhstan, Lebanon, South Korea and New Zealand. Japan has been grouped with Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei and Australia in Pool D.

The FIBA Asia Cup 2017 will take place at the Nouhad Nawfal Arena in Beirut, Lebanon from August 8 to 20, and it will be the first ever Asia-Oceania joint continental Championship.

The Group Stage of the tournament will be played in a round robin format, with the sixteen teams divided into four groups of four teams. Every team will take on its three opponents in its respective group.

The top three teams from each group will then advance to the Second Phase where they will be divided into two groups (E & F).

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran suffer second defeat at FIBA U19 World Cup 2017

Iran lost to Italy 64-45 in the FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup 2017 Sunday night

Italy's David Albright Okeke top scored with a game-high 15 points and 6 rebounds and Amirhossein Azari from Iran had 13 points and 4 rebounds.

Iran will play Angola on Tuesday in its third match.

Iran have lost their first match to the U.S. 108-48 in Pool D.

The 16 teams in the nine-day event are broken up into four groups of four. Iran is in Pool D with Angola, USA and Italy.

The 2017 FIBA U-19 Basketball World Cup is being held in Cairo, Egypt from 1 to 9 July.

Wrestlers receive three medals in Ljubomir Ivanovic-Gedza

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers have exhibited satisfactory displays of physical might and grappling techniques at the 31st edition of the International Tournament "Ljubomir Ivanovic - Gedza" in Serbia, and collected three medals, including one gold.

On Sunday and the final day of the sporting event at the Kragujevac Sports Hall in the central Serbian city of Kragujevac, Iranian wrestler Keramat Abdevali overcame his Hungarian opponent 4-1 in the final bout of the 66-kilogram weight category, and collected the gold medal.

Mohammad Shorbiniazhi lost to a representative from the host nation in the final contest, and was awarded the silver medal.

Earlier in the tournament, Amin Mirzazadeh had picked up a bronze medal in the 130-kilogram weight class.

The 31st edition of the International Tournament "Ljubomir Ivanovic - Gedza" opened in Kragujevac, Serbia, on June 30 and finished on July 2, 2017.

(Source: Press TV)

Iran remain top-ranked Asian futsal team in AMF rankings

Iran men's national futsal team have maintained their position as Asia's best in the latest Asociación Mundial de Futsal (AMF) rankings, and upheld their place in the world's overall standings to stay put in the sixth slot.

According to the latest classification published by the AMF, which is the governing body of futsal, the Iranian squad tallied 1,593 points.

Kazakhstan kept the ninth slot in the latest AMF rankings with 1,462 points. The Central Asians are followed by Thais and the Japanese, who have claimed the 14th and 16th places respectively with 1,360 and 1,354 points.

The Brazil national futsal team, nicknamed Canarinho (Little Canary), are the top-ranked futsal team in the world with 1,929 points.

Spaniards accumulated 1,872 points to sit in the second position, while third-placed Russians notched up 1,765 points. Argentina earned 1,700 points to stand fourth.

(Source: Press TV)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



“Release from Heaven” honored at Lisbon Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Ali Nuri-d e s k Oskui’s “Release from Heaven” won the award for best animation in the summer edition of the Lisbon Film Festival, an online event that was held from June 26 to July 1.

The film is about a female writer and teacher, who accompanies two of her students on an inner spiritual journey in a war-torn country.

“Run” by Frank Blau from Germany received the best film award, while “Omar and Gloria” by Jimmy Cohen from Mexico was named the best documentary.



Shorts by Japanese filmmakers to be reviewed in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — A lineup of movies by Japanese directors will be reviewed during program named “The Japan Short Film Night” at the Embassy of Japan in Tehran on July 13.

Among the films are “Home” by Yosep Anggi Noen, “Winter’s Butterfly” by Shoji Toyama, “Land” by Masanobu Hiraoka, “Pieces of the Future” by Seiki Watanabe and “A Warm Spell” by Toshimichi Saito.

Some Iranian film critics will attend the program that will be organized in collaboration with the Iranian Youth Cinema Society.



Spanish festival to screen “Fashion Nazi”

A R T TEHRAN — “Fashion Nazi” by Iranian director Ahmad Khoshniat will go on screen at the Preview International Short Film Festival, which will run in Barcelona, Spain on July 6, 13, 20 and 27.

The animated film shows different models presenting creations in an odd way during a fashion event.

Iran’s “Lunch Time” named best at Mexican filmfest

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Alireza Qasemi’s d e s k “Lunch Time” won the Tenango Award for best film at the 6th Pachuca Film Fest, which was held in the Mexican city from June 26 to July 1.



Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Taqi Hosseini (L) receives the best film award for “Lunch Time” on behalf of the film’s director Alireza Qasemi at the Pachuca Film Fest in Mexico on July 1, 2017.

“Lunch Time” tells the story of a 16-year-old girl, who deals with the harsh bureaucracy to fulfill her responsibility of having to identify the body of her mother.

Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Taqi Hosseini received the award on behalf of the film’s director at the closing ceremony of the festival.

Battling brain tumor, Russian baritone cancels Austrian gigs

VIENNA (AP) — The Vienna State Opera says Russian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky has canceled all performances for the coming season due to «severe illness.»

Hvorostovsky was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2015. He has continued performing since then but has occasionally been forced to pull out of scheduled roles.

He was due to play leading roles in three Verdi operas in Vienna this year and next. An opera statement Thursday says replacements will be announced later.

Iranian, Azerbaijani culture ministers meet in Tehran

CULTURE TEHRAN

d e s k Azerbaijani Minister of Culture and Tourism Abulfaz Garayev met Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri in Tehran on Monday.

Minister Garayev said that his country has arranged a colorful program during the Azerbaijani cultural festival, which is due to open in Tehran on Tuesday.

He added that the cultural festival in Iran will create a bridge between libraries, museums and cultural organizations.

For his part, Salehi-Amiri pointed to the joint commonalities between the two countries.

“Primary agreements have been made for joint collaborations in art, cinema and publications as well as manuscripts exchange,” the minister said.

“Iran’s cinema can have close cooperation with the cinema of Azerbaijan, while joint exhibitions and book fairs have also been discussed,” Salehi-Amiri said.

He next explained that the Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) Director Mohammad-Mehdi Heidarian is scheduled to meet his Azerbaijani counterpart to pave the ground for screening Iranian films in Azerbaijan and films from Azerbaijan in Iran.

The Azerbaijani minister at the head of a delegation arrived in Tehran on Sunday.

The Azerbaijani cultural festival will open at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall with a performance by an Azerbaijani



Azerbaijani Minister of Culture and Tourism Abulfaz Garayev (L) and Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri meet in Tehran on July 2, 2017.

orchestra. A number of other programs have also been arranged during the program.

The Iranian Academy of Arts will be hosting an exhibition of photos under the title “Azerbaijan of Today” opening

on July 4 and running for one week.

Several movies by Azerbaijani directors are scheduled to go on screen at the Arasbaran Cultural Center including “Nabat” by Elchin Musaoglu, “Interrupted Memories” by Elkhan

Jafarov and “Lesson” by Rafiq Aliyev and Cavid Tavakkul.

Additionally on July 7 and 8, the Honar Hall of Tehran will host “Husband and Wife”, a musical comedy written by Uzeyir Hajibeyov in 1909.

“Immortality” crowned best at Italian film festival

A R T TEHRAN

d e s k “Immortality” by Mehdi Fard-Qaderi won the award for best feature movie at the 15th Ischia Film Festival on the Italian island on Saturday, the organizers announced.

The film was competing in the official section of the festival, which began on June 24.

A jury composed of Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Zanussi, Portuguese screenwriter Miguel Barros and German producer Dagmar Jacobsen picked “Immortality” for the courageous use of a single location in a single shot.

“Beyond his mastery, we recognize that it is a well-written and recited movie whose purpose is to provide a unique fresco in modern Iran. What a success,” the jury said in



Director Mehdi Fard-Qaderi holds an award for his movie “Immortality” at the 15th Ischia Film Festival in Italy on July 1, 2017.

a statement. “Immortality”, which is a one-shot feature film, tells the story of some strangers who have to spend a rainy night together on a train.

Director says satisfied with outcome of Sadi Foundation’s actions

CULTURE TEHRAN

d e s k The director of the Sadi Foundation, a Tehran-based organization that provides Persian language educational services abroad, has said that he is satisfied with the outcome of the foundation’s activities.

Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, who is also the director of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, attended a press conference on Sunday to brief the media about the activities of the foundation four years after its establishment.

“Within the economic constraints, the foundation has been successful in its activities,” he said.

“The various publications released by the foundation are good indications of its successful activities... However, there is still a long way to go to reach the ideal situation,” he added.



Sadi Foundation director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel (Rasa)

Haddad-Adel said that the foundation faces a cash shortage, which rivals similar organizations in the world.

He added that the Iranian government dedicated 70 billion rials to the foundation last year.

“However, only 82 percent of the amount, which equals about €1.5 million, was paid to the foundation,” he lamented.

“Fantastic Beasts” sequel starts shoot in UK

LONDON (Screen Daily) — Principal photography for the “Fantastic Beasts And Where to Find Them” sequel began July 3.

The as-yet-untitled film, directed by David Yates, is the second of a planned five film series.

Returning cast includes Eddie Redmayne as Newt Scamander, Katherine Waterston as Tina Goldstein, Alison Sudol as her sister Queenie Goldstein, Dan Fogler as Jacob Kowalski, and Ezra Miller as Credence.

Johnny Depp, who was revealed as Gellert Grindelwald at the end of the first film, will reprise his role in the sequel. He will be joined by Jude Law, who takes on the role of Albus Dumbledore, and Zoe Kravitz as Leta Lestrange.

J.K. Rowling wrote the screenplay for the film, which is set in Paris and opens in 1927, a few months after Newt helped to unveil and capture the Dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald.

David Heyman, J.K. Rowling, Steve Kloves and Lionel Wigram are producing with Tim Lewis, Neil Blair, Rick Senat and Danny Cohen serving as executive producers.

The sequel is being filmed at Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, which has been the cinematic home of all the Harry Potter films.

Slated for release on November 16, 2018, the film will be distributed worldwide by Warner Bros. Pictures, a Warner Bros. Entertainment Company.



A scene from “Fantastic Beasts”

“Despicable Me 3” rules, “Baby Driver” shows strong, Will Ferrell’s “House” collapses

LOS ANGELES (Variety) — The tiny, yellow, animated blobs have done it again.

Illumination and Universal’s “Despicable Me 3” is cruising to an easy box office win during a busy holiday weekend. The latest in the franchise is opening to \$75.4 million from 4,529 locations -- the widest domestic release ever. That total is lower than earlier estimates, which pegged the film above \$80 million (earlier tracking suggested it could land even higher), but nevertheless it remains the weekend’s big winner.

Steve Carell plays double duty in “Despicable Me 3” as the series’ protagonist Gru, and now also his twin brother, Dru. The plot centers on the brothers, as they team up for a criminal heist. “South Park” co-creator Trey Parker joins the franchise to voice the villain. Critics are generally on the movie’s side, earning it a 62% on Rotten Tomatoes. The movie earned an A- CinemaScore from audiences, which is lower than the A earned by the first two installments and “Minions.”

“With these characters that have reached a level of ubiquity in our culture,

these movies continue to create this want to see,” said Nick Carpou, Universal’s domestic distribution chief, who added, “I think we have the best marketing group in the business.”

Despite “Despicable’s” rule, perhaps the more interesting stories for the industry reside further down the box office chart.

Starting with “Baby Driver”, from Sony’s TriStar Pictures, MRC, and Working Title. Edgar Wright’s latest also appears to be his biggest box office hit, as it’s cruising to \$30 million from 3,226 locations -- that’s including the \$5.7 million head start the movie got by opening early in previews on Tuesday.

The movie centers around a character named Baby (Ansel Elgort), who becomes the getaway driver for a kingpin named Doc (Kevin Spacey). Music plays an integral role in the film since Baby suffered a traumatic experience as a child that left him with tinnitus, which he blocks out with music. The rest of the cast includes Lily James, Jon Bernthal, Eiza Gonzalez, Jon Hamm, and Jamie Foxx.

Heathcote Williams, radical poet, playwright and actor, dies aged 75

LONDON (The Guardian) — Heathcote Williams, the radical poet, playwright, actor and polymathic English genius, has died at the age of 75. He had been ill for some time and died on Saturday in Oxford.

He was the author of many polemical poems, written over four decades in a unique documentary style. They included works about the devastation being wrought on the natural environment – Sacred Elephant, Whale Nation and Falling For a Dolphin – and Autogeddon, a grim and majestic attack on the car.

Williams also wrote several successful stage plays including “AC/DC”, which premiered at the Royal Court in 1969, and “The Local Stigmatic”, commissioned by Harold Pinter and revived in 2014 at the Old Red Lion Theatre in London on its 50th anniversary. His most recent play, “Killing Kit”, was about the life and death of Christopher Marlowe.

Scruffy on screen and off, Williams appeared in several films, often in cameo roles. He was a notable Prospero in Derek Jarman’s 1979 production of “The Tempest”. Other credits were Sally Potter’s arthouse “Orlando”, based on Virginia Woolf’s novel, and Hollywood’s “Basic Instinct 2”.

Williams was a very talented figure. He was an accomplished painter – his vivid works hung at the Oxford home. He was an impressive conjuror and a member of the Magic Circle. One of his TV plays, “What the Dickens!”, featured Dickens performing magic shows for children.

His literary output was prolific. It included a book on Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park, published when he was 23, and in later life he wrote several poems a month, driven by news and current affairs. As mainstream publishers dried up, these appeared online as YouTube video montages, often narrated by the actors Alan Cox and Roy Hutchins.