

TEHRAN TIMES



Zarif: terrorists' weapons not brought down by 'angles' 2

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No nuclear restriction except those specified in Leader's fatwa: Shamkhani

POLITICS TEHRAN — Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani said on Saturday that Iran will accept no restriction on its nuclear pro-

gram except those specified in the fatwa (religious decree) issued by the Supreme Leader. In his decree Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has officially declared the produc-

tion, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons as haram (religiously forbidden). "After ten years of restrictions, according to the

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran will accept no limitation except for the Leader's fatwa," Shamkhani told a group of families who lost their dear ones in Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s. →2

Iran's 8-month crude steel output up 5% yr/yr: WSA

ECONOMY TEHRAN- Iran produced 11.451 million tons of crude steel in the first eight months of 2016, with 5 percent rise from 10.894 million tons in the same period of time in the previous year, the World Steel Association (WSA) reported.

It is while the world's steel production fell 0.9 percent to 1.065 billion tons in the mentioned time compared to the first eight months of 2015.

The WSA's latest report also put Iran's crude steel output at 1.35 million tons in August 2016, showing eight percent growth from 1.249 million tons in August 2015.

The country's steel production stood at 16.110 million tons in 2015, indicating 1.4 percent fall from 2014.

As a major steel producer in the region, Iran boosted its steel mills across the country in recent years, as central Isfahan and southwestern Khuzestan provinces remain the major steel producers.

According to WSA, Iran was the biggest producer of crude steel in the Middle East in 2013. The country's rank was 14th in the world in 2014.

Rouhani: Extremism eats into future security

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Rouhani of Iran has asked questions about the roots of violence in the contemporary world, saying the scourge of extremism ruins the future of the world.

The president made the remarks on Saturday as he attended a ceremony held to mark the start of the new academic year in Iran.

"We should learn how to be moderate and recognize that violence and going to extremes ruin our current and future life," said the president.

Moderation was President Rouhani's presidential campaign slogan.

Annually and prior to the opening of schools in Mehr (Sept.22-Oct.20), Iranian students will answer a question raised by the incumbent president, dubbed "The Mehr Question."

This year's prompt (17th) was on root cause of terrorism, as emphasized by President Rouhani.



Tehran Times/Majid Haghdoost

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Winners and losers of cheap oil ahead of OPEC summit

By Mohammad Hossein Azari

The upcoming meeting of OPEC ministers in Algeria in late September has given rise to a great deal of speculation on possible beneficiaries and losers of a freeze deal.

Numerous factors exert slight or major effects on oil prices ranging all the way from an official handshake between petroleum ministers of two oil-producing states to supply and demand conditions of the market.

Once a luxurious product in world markets, crude oil is now being traded at what many might call an 'unreasonable' price. Falling oil prices, though very much appealing to drivers, has caused serious financial worries amongst countries whose economies are solely based on oil and major crude producers, while seeking to invest in and develop non-oil sectors, are also looking for venues to ease the pressure on oil prices.

Regardless of its roots and causes, the sharp decline in crude prices is the main issue at stake in oil industry and any amendment to the ongoing matter would entail complete and effective coordination among all states at the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a goal which might seem far-fetched at the first glance given the turbulent diplomatic ties and rivalry among certain members.

The forthcoming meeting of OPEC to be held in Algeria on September 26 is believed to offer an excellent opportunity to bring back oil prices to normal levels in order to make production cost-effective.

The mere thought of a production freeze helped an uplift, even though slight in amount, in price of oil over recent weeks to further attest significance of the meeting of OPEC countries.

The need for a robust oil deal can be better felt if current circumstances of the market are observed more meticulously. Market experts have warned that any failure on the part of OPEC member states to reach a deal on freezing oil output could lead to catastrophic outcomes as prices are likely to fall below \$30 per barrel. →10

Iran's 1st online national census begins

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The first web-based general census in Iran began on Saturday and will last until mid-October, IRIB reported.

This is the first phase of the national census over which data would be collected online by referring to www.sarshomari95.ir, said Omid-Ali Parsa, the director of the Statistical Center of Iran, adding, over the second phase which

falls on October 16 to November 15 surveyors will visit the rest of the households to fill out forms for those who did not use the website.

People need to fill out a form which includes 29 questions about their personal information, educational status, marital status, career, etc. which will remain confidential, Parsa said, noting, the users will be given a tracking code which are supposed to keep to give to the



surveyors in the second phase. This is the first time that Iran is using the internet to gather data

for the census and it is projected that some 45 percent of the population would choose to use the web-based services since 45 percent of the people have access to the internet, he added.

The new online data gathering system is both time and cost efficient, Parsa highlighted.

The census is being conducted every five years in Iran. The first nationwide census was held in 1956.

India's Woodpecker festival honors Iranian movies

ART TEHRAN — Two Iranian films were honored in various sections of the 4th Woodpecker International Film Festival (WIFF), which was held in New Delhi from September 15 to 18.

"Junk Girl" co-directed by Mohammad Zare' and Shalaleh Khairi won the best animation award while "The Ground Is Breathing" by Ali Pur-Isa and "Unslient Potato" by Burmese director Sein Lyan Tun shared the award for the best

film in the Gender Category.

"Junk Girl" is an adaptation of a poem from Tim Burton's book "The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy and Other Stories".

The animation is about a lonely girl who is ignored by other people because of her strange appearance.

"The Ground is Breathing" tells the story of a young woman who lives with her mother and takes care of their garden. But there is a secret buried in the garden.



A scene from 'Junk Girl'

Iran-U.S. relationship, a mutual mistrust, former Iranian ambassador says

OKLAHOMA CITY — A second conference was held with former Iranian ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian about the complex Iran-U.S. relationship on Sept. 9, at Oklahoma City University.

Mousavian believes the largest problem between the two countries is a historical mistrust and misperception, saying, "U.S. policy since the Iranian Revolution has always been regime change in Iran."

He said the U.S. supported the coup d'état of the elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953, and also the invasion of Iran by Iraq and Saddam Husain just after the Iranian Revolution.

"It is not something that Iranians can easily forget," Mousavian said.

Mousavian said the nuclear deal was possible not because every member of the deal (five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus

Germany) agreed, but first because the U.S. agreed to discuss, which was not the case from 2003 to 2013.

"Israelis have a very powerful lobby acting in Washington, D.C. against the peace with Iran," Mousavian said, noting Israeli government has publicly shown its opposition to the nuclear deal.

He added the nuclear deal didn't remove all the United States' sanctions concerning Iran's ballistic missiles pro-

gram and support of terrorist groups.

Another issue noted by Mousavian is the Israeli government's 60-year old occupation of Palestine — a situation where Palestinian oppression is made possible by total support of the U.S. toward Israel.

"There is no hope for two states' solution, there is no hope for a peaceful resolution and there is no hope for peace on the Palestinian issue," Mousavian said. →13

Tehran on Mastercard's top ten fastest growing destinations list

TOURISM TEHRAN — Tehran comes ninth among the top ten fastest growing destination cities, according to the annual Mastercard Global Destinations Cities Index report which released on September 22.

The bustling yet historical Iranian capital has witnessed a growth of 12.98 percent in terms of the international overnight visitor arrivals, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Osaka took the title suggesting that the merchant Japanese city has formed the strongest development in attracting worldwide visitors by 24.15 percent over the last seven years.

Other cities that made the forecasted top ten fastest growing cities include by Chengdu 20.14%, Abu Dhabi by 19.81%, Colombo by 19.57%, Tokyo by 18.48%, Riyadh by 16.45%, Taipei by 14.53%, Xi'an by 14.20%, and Xiamen by 12.93%.



An undated file photo showing a general view of Tehran

In another statistic, Bangkok topped the chart for 2016 Mastercard Global Destinations Cities Index. London, Paris, Dubai, New York, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Istanbul, Tokyo, and Seoul are the other rankings from second to tenth, respectively.

The statistics indicate that Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Africa have become increasingly important to the global economic landscape.

"The way people travel and spend across borders indicates just how interconnected and important the world's cities are," said Ann Cairns, President of International Markets for Mastercard.

"As the planning and experience of the trip become increasingly important, Mastercard is bringing all these pieces together seamlessly through innovation and connections," she added.

Mastercard based its judgments on figures compiled from 132 most visited cities around the world. The study roughly shows visitor volume and spend estimates for the 2016 calendar year, yet delivers a profounder insight of how people travel and spend around the world.

ARTICLE
By Yuram Abdullah Weiler
Analyst and journalist

The Sacred Defense: 8 years of U.S.-backed war on Iran

"For many Iranians, these events reminded them how defenseless they were against foreign aggression, a position that forced Iran to build up a powerful military and defense system."
—Seyed Hossein Mousavian

September 22 marks the anniversary of the start of the bloody, 8-year-long war on Iran, initiated by Iraq but supported by the U.S. and the western powers. Known as the Sacred Defense (defa-e moqaddas) in Iran, the war, which was the longest conventional conflict in the 20th century, claimed upwards of one million Iranian lives, according to British scholar Michael Axworthy, and left an entire generation with vivid firsthand familiarity with martyrdom in Shi'a Islam. As a result of the U.S.-supported war, many Iranian youths who survived suffered permanent psychological damage known as mowji in Persian due to waves of explosions on the battlefield.

While some in the west have suggested that Iran engaged in certain "provocations" such as border skirmishes and inflammatory rhetoric denouncing the Baathist regime, Saddam had initiated aggressions against Iran as early as May 1979, only three months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, with the bombing of Mehran and other Iranian villages on the border with Iraq. It must also be kept in mind that Saddam was obsessed with maintaining his popularity and would lash out with grotesque brutality at any hint of disloyalty to himself or his regime. Of course, any suggestion of support for the fledgling Islamic Republic fell into this category.

The degree of this megalomaniac's unconscionably fiendish cruelty can be seen from his treatment of Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, the preeminent Shi'a scholar, philosopher and founder of the Iraqi Da'wa party, whose only crime was to voice support for the Islamic Revolution in Iran and envisioning a democratic future for Iraq. →13

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Italian navy ship docks in Iran

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — An Italian navy ship docked in the southern Iranian port of Bandar Abbas on Saturday in the first official visit by a Western naval vessel to the country in several years.

The Italian navy said the frigate Euro -- named for a wind that blows across the Mediterranean from North Africa -- was part of an EU anti-piracy mission and would remain docked in Iran for three days before returning to Italy, the Associated Press reported.



Belgian parliamentary team to visit Tehran

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — A team of legislators from the Foreign Relations Committee at the Belgian Chamber of Representatives will pay an official visit to Tehran in a few days.

The high-ranking team will arrive in the Iranian capital on October 1 and stays for 5 days to hold talks with their Iranian counterparts and other officials, Tasnim reported.

The visit will come at the official invitation of Chairman of the Iranian Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Alaeddin Boroujerdi.



Iranian sentenced to death for killing small Afghan girl

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — An Iranian boy who had in April raped and brutally killed a 6-year-old Afghan girl in Varamin, south-east of Tehran, has been sentenced to death and payment of blood money, the lawyer of the victim's family announced on Saturday.

Abbas Asgari Aqbash said according to the verdict the boy, 17, has been sentenced to death for committing murder as well as for raping and payment of blood money, Nasim reported.



'S. Arabia should be held accountable for Mina tragedy'

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's deputy ambassador to the United Nations has slammed Riyadh for its performance after the Mina crush in September last year in which 464 Iranian pilgrims were killed, Mehr reported.

Addressing the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) foreign ministers in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Gholam Hossein Dehqani said not only did Riyadh not apologize to or compensate the bereaved families, but also refused to investigate the incident.



Economy minister to brief Majlis on FATF

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's minister of economy is going to address the Majlis over the government's voluntary cooperation with the Financial Action Task Force.

Majlis Presiding Board member Akbar Ranjbarzadeh told the IRIB on Saturday that Ali Tayyebnia has requested to be given a time to speak to the lawmakers about the FATF.

"Majlis will provide the minister with the opportunity, but it is to be decided by the presiding board how the report can be delivered," the MP said.



Zarif invited to visit South Korea

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — South Korea has invited Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif for a visit to the East Asian country.

"South Korea's foreign minister has already visited Tehran and now it is Mr. Zarif's turn to travel to Korea," South Korean Ambassador to Tehran Kim Sung Ho told a press conference on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The Korean ambassador pointed out that Seoul has also sent invitation letters for Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi and Health Minister Mehdi Qazizadeh Hashemi.

Rouhani: Extremism eats into future security

President pose questions to students about root cause of violence as academic year starts in Iran

➔ "Here is this year's Mehr Question: Where does violence originate? How do some learn violence? How can violence be resisted? How can we have a country and society endowed with the Islamic and prophetic mercy? And how can we free the region and world of violence?"

In his recent speech at the UN General Assembly in New York, Rouhani had said to uphold violence in the region, there is

no choice but to focus on promoting democracy, citizenship rights and economic development.

Sympathizing with the students in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen whose schools have been ruined to dust, the president said, "In Iran's neighborhood and in countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, schools have been demolished and students slaughtered, and teachers have lost the chance to teach."



President says, "We should learn how to be moderate and recognize that violence and going to extremes ruin our current and future life."

No nuclear restriction except those specified in Leader's fatwa: Shamkhani

➔ Under the nuclear deal struck in July 2015 between Iran and great powers the Islamic Republic agreed temporary limitations on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of sanctions.

Shamkhani also said that the Western countries' "historic mistakes" for an instrumental use of terrorism, support for "deviant ideologies" and "double standards" in fighting terrorism have resulted in the current volatile situation in the Middle East.

He said that the U.S. government has repeatedly called for negotiations with Iran on the regional developments which shows the failure of its plans.

"Overt" and "covert" supports of the U.S. for the ter-

rorist groups have discouraged Iran from holding talks with the U.S. government, he added.

The top security official said Iran's distrust on the U.S. is because of "repeated violations of promises", "double standards" and "contradictions between its interests and those the Islamic Revolution".

Elsewhere, Shamkhani said that the "Leader's wisdom", the "people's insight and altruism" and "vigilance of various military and security bodies" have empowered Iran and protected the country against foreign plots.

He also highlighted the importance of "convergence" among the Islamic countries to counter threats against

the world of Islam.

"Unfortunately, some reactionary countries' overt and covert relations with the Zionist regime of Israel are betrayal to the Palestine cause and interests of the world of Islam, and the Muslim nations will not tolerate continuation of such behaviors," he explained.

He said, "Instead of adopting law to restrict the countries' pilgrims in attending Hajj rituals or form coalition to kill the Muslims, the Islamic countries' parliaments and leaders should counter threats being posed by the U.S. and the Zionist regime who seek to disintegrate the countries and create division among them."

Ayatollah Jannati discusses regional issues with Ammar al-Hakim

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Chairman of the Assembly of Experts Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati met on Friday in Baghdad with Ammar al-Hakim, the head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI or SIIC), discussing regional issues, Tasnim reported.

The two sides assessed the latest developments in the region and shared views on fighting terrorism.

A week ago, the senior Iranian official travelled to Iraq in an official visit.

Ayatollah Jannati, who is also the secretary of the Guardian Council, is leading a delegation to the neighboring Iraq, Tabnak news website reported on Sunday.

On the day of their arrival in Iraq, Ayatollah Jannati



and his accompanying team went to Kufa to visit the holy shrine of Imam Ali (AS).

Back in July, Hakim visited Iran to meet with top Iranian officials in order to discuss terrorism and regional developments.

Meeting with President Hassan Rouhani, the head of the ISCI elaborated on the latest developments in Iraq, saying the liberation of Fallujah was a result of "unity" and "coordination" among the Iraqi political and military forces.

Iranian president, for his part, reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's support for Iraq, saying that Iran will "stand beside the Iraqi people and government in fighting terrorism and defending the holy shrines."

Zarif: terrorists' weapons not brought down by 'angles'

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said terrorists are not equipped or financed by angels, saying they are fed by "somewhere".

Zarif made the comments during an hour-long interview with Fareed Zakaria at the Council on Foreign Relations who asked about who is funding ISIS.

"I mean, I don't think that angels are bringing them down, I mean, as much as they might want to believe. So they are coming from somewhere. Money is going—coming from somewhere. Weapons

are coming from somewhere," Zarif remarked.

On if Saudi Arabia was funding ISIS and other terrorist groups in Syria, the top Iranian diplomat said the organizations were initially founded by Saudi Arabia.

"I'm saying that a lot of money from Saudi Arabia initially went to the establishment of these organizations. Whether today they are funding Daesh, I do not know. But I know that money is going to al-Nusra. I know that arms are going to al-Nusra."

Not intending to hurl accusations

against Riyadh, Zarif gave a better hint as to where these weapons are coming from.

"And it's not that difficult. These weapons are not guerilla warfare weapons. They have tanks, you know? They have missiles. They have anti-aircraft missiles. They have antitank missiles."

"I'm not making accusations (against Saudi Arabia). I'm asking somebody to go check the serial number and then ask the U.S. government to check its inventory."

The chief diplomat was indirectly, in making these comments, linking the battle in the Middle East to arms deals worth

billions of dollars with Middle Eastern countries.

In early September U.S. President Barack Obama's administration offered Saudi Arabia more than \$115 billion in weapons, other military equipment and training, the most of any U.S. administration in the 71-year U.S.-Saudi alliance, a report seen by Reuters found.

Also, according to a September report by the Independent, Britain was the second biggest arms dealer in the world, with most of the weapons fuelling deadly conflicts in the Middle East.

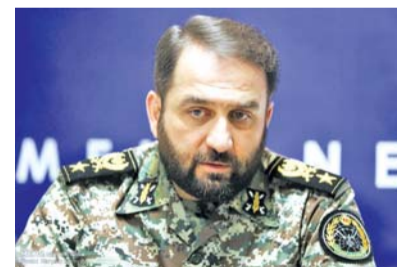
Iran says warded off U.S. U2 spy plane

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Brigadier General Farzad Esmaeili, commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Headquarters, said on Saturday that Iran gave the U.S. U2 spy plane warning in the recent past days as it was entering the Iranian airspace.

Khatam ol-Anbia forces warned the U.S. U2 plane to stay away from Iran's borders when the aircraft intended to violate the country's airspace and it was forced to change its direction, the general said during a ceremony held to commemorate the Sacred Defense week.

He added, "Today, some of the European officials should get permission to pass our country's sky and in some cases, they have waited for hours to enter Iran's airspace."

Khatam ol-Anbia air defense unit



warded off a U.S. radar-evading spy drone after approaching the country's border areas from Afghanistan in August which was intended to pass Iran's airspace for espionage purposes.

According to Fars news agency, the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) had taken off from a U.S. base in Kandahar and had advanced to areas 20 miles off the Iranian borders when it was alarmed.

Iran, Kenya determined to fight terrorism: Larjani

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larjani said on Saturday that Iran and Kenya are determined to fight terrorism and have common views on the issue.

"The two countries have close view and determination in fighting terrorism," Larjani said during a joint press conference in Tehran with Justin Bedan Njoka Muturi, the speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya.

Larjani also said that Iran has always had a "positive view" on having "friendly" and "comprehensive" relations with Kenya.

The Majlis speaker said he discussed expansion of ties in economic, industrial and agricultural areas as well as oil and gas industries with the Kenyan official.

He expressed hope that Muturi's trip



to Iran would be a turning point in bilateral relation.

Muturi called for closer interaction between the two countries' parliamentary friendship groups.

The parliaments play important role in expansion of relations, Muturi said, highlighted the importance of expanding parliamentary ties.

He also invited Larjani to visit Kenya.

Dehghan says hegemony have targeted Iran's religious principles

IT POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan said on Saturday that the hegemonic powers have targeted the country's religious principles to give a "foreign flavor" to Iranian youths' beliefs.

Brigadier General Dehghan made the remarks while addressing the students at Towhid High School, as Iran's new school year began, ISNA reported.

The minister accused the United States of orchestrating plots to reshape the Iranian people's religious beliefs by

fostering a culture of its own within the Islamic Republic.

"But our youths will respond with a 'big no', and we will see that faith, endeavor, and sacrifice will be growing in our country," Dehghan remarked.

The defense chief also pointed to the 36th anniversary of Iran-Iraq war, a war that claimed the lives of more than 36,000 students.

Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, launched a large-scale war against Iran on September 22, 1980 that lasted until 1988. Sadd-



am was supported financially and militarily by most Arab countries and certain

Western countries during the war. Dehghan said, "Spirituality and religiosity were prevalent in the battlefields. The whole world attempted to stand in the way of Iran's goals."

He went on to say, "But our people, with their resistance and tolerance, paid the price for their goals and did not abandon them."

"Our enemies are still malicious towards us and we should strengthen our power foundations against them," the minister added.

Jeremy Corbyn wins Labour leadership contest

Jeremy Corbyn has been re-elected leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party after fending off a challenge from fellow Member of Parliament (MP) Owen Smith.

The veteran left-wing MP was announced the winner of the leadership race at the party's annual conference in the northern English city of Liverpool on Saturday, winning almost 62 percent of the 500,000-plus votes cast by Labour members and supporters.

Corbyn's win, by 313,209 to 193,229 votes, cements his authority over the Labour Party.

Following the announcement of the results, Corbyn said he would now work on uniting the party and pressuring the government on creating a fairer economic order.

"I will do everything I can to repay the trust and support [of voters], to bring our party together and to make it an engine of progress for our people," Corbyn said.

"This is the time for all of us to focus every ounce of energy on exposing the Tories [Conservative Party] and the damage they are doing to our country."

Corbyn was elected last year to lead Labour, which governed Britain between 1997 and 2010 but has lost two successive general elections.

"We have much more in common than that which divides us. As far as I'm



concerned, let's wipe that slate clean from today and get on with the work we've got to do as a party together."

More than 750 Corbyn supporters celebrated his win at an event held by the pro-Corbyn Momentum organization in Liverpool.

Tom Skinner, a Corbyn supporter who joined the Labour Party at the start of the year, said the re-election was a message to those in the party who had spent months trying to oust him.

"After nine months of sabotage by some - but not all - of his MPs, Corbyn's support in the party has increased," Skinner told Al Jazeera, adding he expected the Labour leader to reverse the decline in polls.

"I feel that Corbyn, despite some discouraging polls and doubts in marginal constituencies, is our best hope."

"We were catching up, approaching neck-and-neck with the Tories back in March before the inner-party turmoil intensified. With the kind of movement no

we're building now, we can do it again and pull ahead. [We can be] the biggest party anywhere in Western Europe."

The win comes amid deep divisions within the Labour party over the political direction it is taking and doubts over Corbyn's electability.

While Corbyn has the support of most rank-and-file Labour members, he has struggled to retain support of his MPs.

The latest YouGov poll puts Labour at 30 percent - nine points behind the ruling Conservative party.

Natasha Josette, a Momentum activist, said the result was proof Labour could garner grassroots support.

"He's got four years left until the general election and I think he is definitely electable," Josette said.

"We know decade after decade that Corbyn has been strong in his politics, and he's been steadfast. That's something that he'll take into a general election."

To his detractors, the shortfall is due to a lack of appeal in his Centre-left policies but his supporters argue disunity within the party is pushing the electorate away.

Following June's Brexit vote, Corbyn's opponents within the party launched a leadership challenge where he was accused of not campaigning hard enough to prevent the vote to leave the bloc.

(Source: The Guardian)

U.S.: Five killed in mall shooting in Washington state

A manhunt was under way in the U.S. state of Washington after a gunman opened fire in the makeup department of a Macy's store in a shopping centre north of Seattle, killing five people.

Police in northwest Washington state searched for a gunman on Saturday who opened fire in a shopping mall, killing five people, according to media reports and the state's police force.

A man walked into the Cascade Mall in Burlington, Washington, about 65 miles (105 km) north of Seattle and began shooting at about 7 p.m. local time on Friday, Washington State Patrol spokesman Mark Francis said on Twitter.

Four women were killed in the attack in the mall's Macy's store cosmetics department, Francis told the New

York Times. A man who was taken to a local hospital with serious injuries died overnight, Francis said in a statement early on Saturday morning.

Local and state police officials were not immediately available for comment but were expected to hold a news conference later on Saturday morning.

Francis said on Twitter that police and rescue workers carefully worked their way through the mall, clearing stores and evacuating shoppers, some of whom, according to local media, locked themselves in dressing rooms.

He also said police were searching the area for the shooter, who was described as a "Hispanic male wearing gray" and was last seen walking toward a nearby highway away from the mall.

Local authorities searched throughout the night for the gunman, believed to be armed with a rifle, and warned residents to remain inside.

"Tragedy has struck in Washington tonight. Our hearts are in Burlington," Governor Jay Inslee said on Twitter.

The shooting comes less than a week after a man stabbed nine people at a mall in central Minnesota before being shot dead. The FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) is investigating that attack as a potential act of terrorism.

"At this time, the FBI has no information to suggest additional attacks planned in WA state," the Washington State Patrol said on Twitter.

(Source: AFP)

Kashmir: Protests erupt after man killed by army

A 19-year-old man was killed by Indian government forces after they fired shots at protesters demanding freedom from Indian rule in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

A police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity to the Associated Press news agency, said the man died in the northwestern Sopore area after soldiers opened fire on demonstrators who allegedly attacked an army convoy with stones.

However, residents and family members said the man, Waseem Ahmad, was working in his orchard along with other people when soldiers fired.

Ahmad's cousin, Abdul Rasheed Lone, confirmed there was no protest taking place when troops fired the shots.

"Waseem was going along with a few boys toward his paddy fields to help his uncle when four army vehicles drove up and soldiers opened fire on him," Lone told Al Jazeera.

"There was no protest or stone pelting. Everything was quiet. He was killed without a reason. It was a cold-blooded murder."

A local doctor told the Greater Kashmir newspaper that a round went through Ahmad's back and hit his heart.

"The bullet had damaged his heart and caused instant death," said Dr. Masood of District Hospital Baramulla in north Kashmir.

Protesters took to the streets of the village after news of Ahmad's death, chanting "we want freedom" and clashed with government forces.

Fighting also erupted in at least three other places and at least 30 people were reported injured.

A strict curfew was also imposed on Old Srinagar and south Kashmir.

Government forces also blocked worshippers from Friday prayers at large mosques for the 11th consecutive week. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the two countries gained independence from British rule in 1947. Both claim the territory in its entirety.

Rebel groups have for decades fought Indian soldiers - currently numbering about 500,000 - demanding independence for the region or its merger with Pakistan.

Tens of thousands of people, mostly



civilians, have died in the fighting.

The latest protests were sparked by the killing of a popular rebel commander, Burhan Wani, in July.

The demonstrations, and a sweeping security crackdown, have all but paralyzed life in Indian-administered Kashmir.

More than 80 civilians have been killed and thousands wounded, including hundreds blinded and maimed mostly by government forces firing live rounds and shotgun pellets at rock-throwing protesters.

Two policemen have also been killed and hundreds of government forces hurt in the clashes.

Meanwhile, tensions continue to rise between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue following the Uri attack in the Indian-administered Kashmir that left 17 Indian soldiers dead.

No group claimed responsibility but India has blamed Pakistan and armed groups based in the country for the incident.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif denied his country's involvement and labeled India's handling of the uprising in Kashmir as "barbarism" at the United Nations General Assembly in New York last week.

Sharif also called for an independent inquiry and a UN fact-finding mission into "rights violations" in Kashmir as well as for renewed talks with India.

Human rights violations

Earlier this month, India refused to allow Kashmiri human rights activist Khurram Parvez to travel to Geneva to participate in a session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Parvez was subsequently arrested for "inciting violence", a move that outraged human rights activists worldwide. At least 50 international scholars, including Noam Chomsky and Arundhati Roy, have signed a petition calling for his release.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Trump censures Obama for 9/11 bill veto against Saudis

The United States Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has censured President Barack Obama for vetoing a bill that would allow families of 9/11 victims to sue the House of Saud regime in American courts, saying, if elected, he would allow Americans to sue Saudis.

"President Obama's veto of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act is shameful and will go down as one of the low points of his presidency," he said in a statement.

"This bipartisan legislation was passed unanimously by both houses of Congress and would have allowed the families of the nearly 3,000 people slaughtered by radical Islamic terrorists on September 11, 2001, the opportunity to seek justice in an American court of law," he stated.

The September 11 attacks, also known as the 9/11 attacks, were a series of strikes in the U.S. which killed nearly 3,000 people and caused about \$10 billion worth of property and infrastructure damage.

U.S. officials assert that the attacks were carried out by al-Qaeda terrorists but many experts have raised questions about the official account. They believe that rogue elements within the U.S. government orchestrated the 9/11 attacks in order to accelerate the U.S. war machine and advance the Zionist agenda.

Analysts argue that Saudi Arabia only played a minor role in 9/11, but the operation was essentially carried out by Israeli and American intelligence agencies to destroy the seven countries in five years, that were enemies or threats to the Zionist regime.

In his veto message on Friday, Obama said that the "Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act," or JASTA, which was passed in Congress on September 9, would be "detrimental" to America's national security interests.

The legislation "does not enhance the safety of Americans from terrorist attacks, and undermines core U.S. interests," Obama said.

Hours later, Trump said he would have endorsed the bill if he were the president instead of Obama.

"That President Obama would deny



the parents, spouses, and children of those we lost on that horrific day the chance to close this painful chapter in their lives is a disgrace," he said.

"These are wonderful people, and as a lifelong New Yorker, I am saddened that they will, for now, not have that opportunity. If elected president, I would sign such legislation should it reach my desk," the New York billionaire vowed.

The House of Saud regime has strongly opposed the bill and threatened to sell off \$750 billion in American assets if it becomes law.

The Saudi government denies any links to the 9/11 attacks despite the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens.

According to Dr. Kevin Barrett, an American academic who has been studying the events of 9/11 since late 2003, 15 Saudi nationals linked to 9/11 were actually CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) agents working for the U.S. agency in Saudi Arabia.

"They were brought over to the United States over CIA snitch visas - a particular kind of pseudo work visa that is given to Saudi CIA assets as a reward for their service," he told Press TV on May 2. "They were brought over and set up by the CIA."

Speaking in Bluffton, South Carolina, Trump said earlier this year that if he got elected president, he would expose the people behind the 9/11 atrocity.

"It wasn't the Iraqis that knocked down the World Trade Center, we went after Iraq, we decimated the country," he said. "But it wasn't the Iraqis."

"You will find out who really knocked down the World Trade Center. Because they have papers in there that are very secret, you may find it's the Saudis, okay? But you will find out," he promised.

(Source: Press TV)

Syrian soldiers retake camp north of Aleppo

Lavrov: Russia prevented Syria's disintegration

Syrian soldiers are reported to have seized back the control of a refugee camp north of the beleaguered northwestern city of Aleppo from militants.

Sources belonging to both the Syrian military and the militants confirmed the recapture of the Handarat camp on Saturday.

Syria's al-Ikhbariya television channel and the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) confirmed the capture.

In the operation to retake the refugee camp, the Syrian soldiers were joined by Palestinian fighters, the Associated Press reported.

The Observatory said that the capture of Handarat camp "comes as a result of intensive bombardment" by Russian and Syrian air forces.

It said 25 people had separately been killed in government airstrikes in the east of the city.

A Syrian military source told Reuters that the operation, which had been announced late on Thursday, was continuing according to plan.

Asked about the weapons being used, the military source said the army was using precise weapons "suitable for the nature of the targets being struck, according to the type of fortifications", such as tunnels and bunkers, and "specifically command center." The official also denied that any civilians had been targeted in the government airstrikes.

On Monday, the army announced an end to a week-long ceasefire in Aleppo, which had been brokered by Russia and the United States. It blamed militants for the impossibility to extend the truce.

Russia later criticized the United States for not doing enough to rein in the militants in Syria to protect the truce deal.

Russia prevented Syria's disintegration

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said it is high time to learn the lessons of the previous crises and prevent the ongoing foreign-sponsored militancy in Syria from sliding down to a "catastrophe".

"The arrogance and self-righteousness in pushing through unilateral, adventurous solutions to complex conflicts is visible in the examples of the bleeding regions of the Middle East and North Africa," he said while addressing the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Friday.

The Russian foreign minister warned that such an approach leads to the "destruction of the foundations of global stability".

"Largely due to Russian military assistance, provided to the legitimate Syrian government in response to its request, it was possible to prevent the collapse of statehood and disintegration of Syria," he added.

Lavrov further noted that a collapsed U.S. and Russian-brokered truce aimed at ending hostilities in Syria must be salvaged.

"The main thing now is to prevent the collapse of those arrangements [between Russia and the U.S.], objectively and impartially investigate the undermining incidents in Dayr al-Zawr and Aleppo particularly," he said, adding, there are many who want "to sabotage the agreed approaches" to the Syrian crisis.

Lavrov, who was speaking after holding talks with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on reviving the ceasefire in Syria, also underlined that any Syria truce would be senseless without the separation of Syrian opposition from the Takfiri Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (Front for the Conquest of the Levant) terrorist group, which serves as Syria's al-Qaeda branch and was formerly known as al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra).

"It's essential to fulfill the UN Security Council demand to dissociate the so-called moderate opposition from the terrorists. Here, special responsibility rests with the U.S. and the members of their coalition.

"Their refusal or inability to do this in the present circumstances can't but strengthen the suspicion that it's being attempted to remove Jabhat Fateh al-Sham out of harm's way and that the plans for a regime change are still on the table," the Russian foreign minister pointed out.

Lavrov added that Moscow was looking for any sign proving that the so-called U.S.-led coalition in Syria has influence over militant groups operating inside the country in a bid to give the ceasefire a chance to revive.

On September 9, Russia and the United States agreed on a milestone deal on the Syrian crisis after some 13 hours of marathon talks in the Swiss city of Geneva.

The deal, which began on September 12 and was initially agreed to last seven days, called for increased humanitarian aid for those trapped inside Aleppo.

Lavrov said Syria's humanitarian situation would not improve without eradicating the terrorist groups fighting the Damascus government.

The Syrian army announced an end to the week-long ceasefire on Monday, blaming militants for its failure. It said militant groups "did not commit to a single element" of the truce.

Russia later criticized the United States for not doing enough to rein in militants in Syria to protect the truce deal, saying continued violations of the ceasefire by militants made it "senseless" for Damascus to stick to the agreement.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. Over the past few months, the Takfiri militants active in the country have suffered major setbacks as the Syrian army has managed to liberate several areas.

According to United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, more than 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict in Syria. The UN has stopped its official casualty count in Syria, citing its inability to verify the figures it receives from various sources.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS

Japanese PM says wants to deepen economic ties with Cuba

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Friday that his visit to Communist-ruled Cuba, the first ever by a Japanese leader, had turned a new page in bilateral relations and the two countries would now deepen their economic relationship.



Abe, who met on Thursday with Cuban President Raul Castro and his predecessor and older brother Fidel Castro, said the issue of unpaid debt had long constrained this relationship.

Yet this was no longer an obstacle, he told a news conference in Havana, as the two countries had agreed on a plan to reorganize that debt. Some will become financing for development projects that could involve Japanese companies.

"This visit has turned a new page in 400 years of Japan-Cuba friendship," Abe said. "I met with Raul Castro and agreed to intensify our economic cooperation".

Many of Cuba's long-term trading partners are using debt forgiveness, swaps and new financing to try to win investment opportunities on the island ahead of their U.S. competitors in the wake of the detente between Havana and Washington.

"Cuba is an extremely attractive investment destination for Japan," Abe said. "As the U.S. has eased sanctions, Cuba has made efforts to improve its investment environment."

"I believe that this will prompt both trade and investment by Japanese firms," he added.

Cuba boasts a highly educated workforce, security and a strategic geographic position, he said. There was also a "huge demand for infrastructure" on the Caribbean island that could become a hub between Asia, the Americas and Europe. (Source: Reuters)

U.S. presidential contest takes center stage for investors

Who becomes the next U.S. president will be a primary focus for Wall Street next week and beyond, starting on Monday with the first debate between candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

While the White House race has so far had little discernible effect on the market, that may soon change as polls show a tightening race. Clinton's once-comfortable lead in opinion polls has evaporated, and with just over six weeks until Election Day, some investors see a toss-up contest creating volatility in certain sectors, including health insurers, drug-makers and industrials.

Also, many on Wall Street worry about the uncertainty of what Trump would do as president, as well as his sometimes contradictory proposals at odds with mainstream Republicans, such as his protectionist stance on international trade.

Some investors believe U.S. equities are likely to edge higher next week after the Federal Reserve on Wednesday left interest rates unchanged. The S&P 500 has gained 6 percent in 2016 and is about 1 percent short of its record high set in August.

"We're probably looking at a modestly positive week pushing the high end of the S&P 500, unless something comes out of the debate that spells real success for Trump," said Phil Blacato, chief executive of Ladenburg Thalmann Asset Management in New York. "The market seems to favoring the 'known' of Hilary rather than the 'unknown' of Trump."

In a recent report, Wells Fargo said a Clinton presidency with a divided U.S. Congress would have a "neutral" impact on financial markets. A Trump victory and a divided Congress would have a "slightly negative" market impact, Wells Fargo said.

So far, the election has been too close to call and too far away to trade specific stocks, some investors said.

Still, many view a Clinton presidency as broadly negative for pharmaceutical companies because of criticisms she has made about high drug prices. Clinton frequently said during the primary that she would fight pharmaceutical companies, part of an attempt to counter criticism that she was too closely tied to the insurance industry.

Trump's disapproval of free trade agreements suggests that industrial companies and other major exporters might suffer should he become president, said David Schieggoleit, managing director at the Private Client Reserve at U.S. Bank.

With Trump vowing to repeal the Affordable Care Act and Clinton promising to build on it, health insurance stocks could swing if the debate produces a clear winner, Convergex market strategist Nicholas Colas wrote in a note on Friday.

Health insurers have been big winners since President Barack Obama signed his healthcare overhaul in 2010. UnitedHealth Group (UNH.N) has jumped 325 percent, Aetna (AET.N) is 234 percent higher and Cigna (CI.N) has risen 257 percent. During the same time, the S&P 500 rose 85 percent. (Source: Reuters)

TPO, KOTRA to facilitate Iran-S. Korea trade ties

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The director of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, Mojtaba Khosrotaj, and the CEO of Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), Jaehong Kim, agreed on bilateral cooperation between their organizations for facilitation of Iran-South Korea trade ties.

In this regard, the two officials came to an agreement on establishment of specialized units both in TPO and KOTRA to ac-

quaint the traders and businessmen with the potentials and also requirements of the other country's market, the official website of TPO announced on Saturday.

In the meeting, Khosrotaj, who visited South Korea on the head of a trade delegation, referred to Iran's high manufacturing potentials and emphasized joint venture specially in manufacturing of home appliances a proper area for cooperation between the two countries.



The director of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, Mojtaba Khosrotaj (R) and the CEO of Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), Jaehong Kim met in South Korea.

Hungarian Exim Bank ready to cooperate with Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Hungarian Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank) has recently announced readiness for signing a cooperation memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Export Development Bank of Iran, IRIB news reported on

Saturday quoting the Iranian bank's managing director, Ali Salehabadi.

Salehabadi announced that the MOU is due to be signed between the two banks in the near future.

"For the time being, we are cooperating with the Exim Banks of different countries," he said, adding the MOU with the Hungarian Exim Bank would make production and industrial ties between Iran and Hungary closer and more efficient.

Argentina prepares return to euro market

Argentina is poised to issue its first euro-denominated bonds in 15 years as the sovereign continues its rehabilitation in the capital markets.

The country is expected to come with a relatively small dual-tranche trade that could reach around 1.5 billion.

It will be Argentina's third cross-border offering this year as it tackles hefty funding needs, having already raised \$19.25 billion from its first year in the international debt market since 2001.

Investors like the government's turnaround story. But with substantial requirements ahead, the administration of President Mauricio Macri needs to find alternative funding sources if it wants to ease supply pressures in its core U.S. dollar market.

"It has become clearer that the pace of fiscal adjustment is going to be more gradual than originally expected and they will continue to need funding next year," said Alejo Czerwonko, an emerging markets economist at UBS Wealth Management.

Finance Minister Alfonso Prat-Gay was quoted this week as saying that the country would not issue more than \$10 billion-\$15 billion in international debt next year.

"If they are going to come back next year for another \$10 billion-\$15 billion, they'll want to start funding in different places," said a New York-based syndicate manager.

While accounts have been receptive buyers of Argentine dollar debt amid a global hunt for yield, patience in the dollar market may wear thin should the government abuse its welcome there.

New investors
The euro bond market, however, seems like the most natural choice for a sovereign in search of new investors.

Not only is it one of the few markets that provides sufficient scale for the size Argentina needs, but the country should also receive a warm welcome in a market where even EM credits are trading at razor-thin yields.

The swap back to dollars would be ex-

tremely costly for a country that is still rated just B3/B-/B, but Argentina is expected to keep the proceeds in euros.

Dual-tranche
The sovereign is seeking a dual-tranche issue with one tranche likely to have a short to intermediate tenor and the other longer-dated. But pricing the bonds will not be straightforward in view of Argentina's long absence from the euro market and the limited comps at hand.

"It's a bit of an unknown with pricing," admitted a banker close to the deal. "We've had lots of conversations with investors who look at it in different ways."

The most obvious place to start is with some of the country's legacy debt denominated in euros, namely the discounts due 2033 and pars due 2038. Those have been trading at around 6.7 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Investors, however, are expected to provide a premium for bonds with no association to previous defaults, much like they did with its re-entry into the dollar market in April.

"The market is willing to pay a premium for a cleaner Argentina bond," said Czerwonko.

There is still quite some distance between where the pars and discounts are trading and levels on euro-denominated bonds issued by investment-grade sovereigns from other Latin American countries.

Colombia, the most recent Latin American sovereign to have tapped the euro market, has 2026s being quoted at a yield of just 2.26 percent.

That spread differential between the two sovereigns in the dollar market - where Colombia 4.5 percent 2026s are trading at 3.28 percent versus 5.62 percent on Argentina's 7.5 percent 2026s - could provide a good measuring stick in euros, say bankers.

Other market participants, however, feel that the divergent monetary policies in those markets weakens such arguments.

Syndicate bankers will have to tread carefully, especially as the sovereign plans to make regular returns to the euro market. (Source: Reuters)

PICTURE OF THE DAY © Tasnim/Mahmoud Hosseini



The 4th edition of the International Maritime Exhibition of Iran, known as Iran Sea Expo 2016, got underway in Tehran on Saturday.

Turkey cut to junk as Moody's concludes its post-coup review

Turkey's sovereign credit rating was cut to junk by Moody's Investors Service, which concluded a review initiated after an unsuccessful coup attempt on July 15.

Moody's cited rising risks related to Turkey's external financing needs and a weakening in its credit fundamentals as economic growth slows. The rating was cut to Ba1 from Baa3, leaving Fitch Ratings as the only major ratings company to keep Turkey at investment grade.

"The risk of a sudden, disruptive reversal in foreign capital flows, a more rapid fall in reserves and, in a worst-case scenario, a balance of payments crisis has increased," Moody's said in an e-mailed statement announcing the decision late Friday. "This slow deterioration in Turkey's credit profile will continue over the next two to three years and the balance of risks are better captured at a Ba1 rating level."

With the rating cut, the difficulties Turkey faces in attracting the foreign capital needed to cover its current-account deficit, the fourth largest in the G-20 group of major economies, are likely to be compounded. The downgrade could drive forced selling of as much as \$8.7 billion in Turkish bonds, JPMorgan Chase & Co said in August.

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF



GM to add more diesel-powered cars

General Motors Company plans to expand the U.S. availability of diesel engines in its Chevrolet cars and light trucks despite a diminished outlook for diesel vehicles overall in the wake of Volkswagen AG's emissions-cheating scandal.

GM said it would offer a diesel option with the 2018 model Chevrolet Equinox, its best-selling small sport-utility vehicle that is being overhauled amid booming demand for SUVs. The new Equinox will compete with Ford Motor Company's Escape and Honda Motor Company's CRV, and will be available at dealers early next year.



U.S. business borrowing for equipment up 12% in Aug.: ELFA

Borrowings by U.S. companies for capital investment rose 12 percent in August compared with a year earlier, the Equipment Leasing and Finance Association (ELFA) said.

Companies signed up for \$7.7 billion in new loans, leases and lines of credit last month, the Washington-based trade group said on Friday.

Still, total new borrowings in the first eight months of 2016 were down 6 percent compared with the same period a year earlier, said ELFA, which reports economic activity for the \$1 trillion U.S. equipment finance industry.



Goldman Sachs said to plan 25% cut to Asia investment bank jobs

Goldman Sachs Group Incorporation plans to cut about a quarter of its investment-banking jobs in Asia, excluding Japan, because of a slump in deal-making in the region, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

The New York-based bank plans to make the cutback of about 75 jobs in the region later this year, the person said, asking not to be identified because the matter is confidential. The job reduction comes as the bank faces its worst Asia ranking in equity issuance since 2008, according to data compiled by Bloomberg data. A Goldman Sachs spokesman said he was unable to comment.

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FEATURE

Ted Cruz sells his soul to Trump, and that's sad!

Never underestimate the politician's agony at not being talked about for five minutes. That's one explanation for Ted Cruz's decision to endorse Donald Trump -- he may be yearning for a return to the national scene.

It's certainly a surprising move given the two men's personal history. Donald Trump called Cruz a liar, a Canadian, implied that his wife was unattractive and hinted that his father might have been linked to the assassination of Jack Kennedy. Saint Cruz took revenge in his convention speech by withholding an endorsement. It was the highest point in his career. He should've stayed up there.

Instead, he has prostrated himself before Trump on Facebook. Why? Objectively, it makes some sense. If Trump was 10 points behind Clinton, Cruz would be wise to sit out the election and say "I told you so." The party would owe him some respect. But if Trump narrowly loses to Clinton, then Cruz could be blamed for the defeat -- with repercussions for his own re-election effort in Texas. Worse, if Trump actually wins -- Cruz will be frozen out of GOP politics for four, maybe even eight years. That's a big gamble to take.

But this is Cruz's problem: he's all tactics, no strategy. It seems smart to play the odds and come out for Trump just before the first debate -- it gets him attention and gets him into the big guy's good books. But when the historians come to tell the story of this election the endorsement is going to look like an odd mix of craven and vain. One does not assert statesmanship by selling one's soul in public.

Clinton is unacceptable to conservatives. But that doesn't mean that the Republican ticket is automatically preferable. Cruz implied that it is possible -- which conservatives read as preferable -- to remain loyal to the GOP precisely by repudiating Trump. If Trump is not a true Republican, then saying so is probably the best thing a conservative can do for the future of his/her party -- to say: "Because I love the Republican Party so much, I cannot support this current nominee."

Its power derived from his intellect and his association with ideological conservatism.

By endorsing Trump, he has now tarnished the memory of the best thing he ever did in politics. There is no point to him after this. And that, in the words of Trump, is "sad."

Not for Trump, of course. He continues to tempt Republicans over to the dark side and then wear their souls like a crown. Chris Christie was one of the first -- and now looks principled by comparison because he sold out so early. The Bushes and Mitt Romney continue to resist. If Hillary Clinton endorses Trump, we'll know he really is a political genius.

(Source: CNN)

After Corbyn wins, he'll need to end the Labour tradition of ignoring immigration - and oppose post-Brexit freedom of movement

By Andrew Grice

A few hours after becoming Labour leader a year ago, Jeremy Corbyn addressed a rally about rights for refugees. In his position, most other politicians would have had more pressing things to do. His attendance was the first sign of how things could only get different under his leadership.

His commitment to refugees as "victims of war and oppression" was laudable. Last week Corbyn claimed he had "changed the debate" on immigration. Well, that's one way of putting it.

A growing number of Labour MPs believe their party is in now in the wrong place on this highly sensitive issue. They claim that Corbyn's "liberal, metropolitan, middle class leadership" is dangerously out of touch with many of Labour's traditional working class supporters.

Immigration has been in Labour's "too difficult" box for too long. For good reasons, the party did not want to give succor to Ukip or right-wing Tories by joining their clamor for a harsher line. The issue barely featured in the Labour leadership contest.

■ Electoral damage

The challenger Owen Smith could have questioned Corbyn's stance but in an interview with The Independent, Smith said Labour should be strongly pro-immigration even if that caused "electoral damage." It seems he was more worried about damaging his own electoral prospects than getting the right policy.

As three months of navel-gazing comes to an end with Corbyn's expected re-election on Saturday, Labour needs to look outwards to the voters. If Corbyn is serious about winning power in the country -- a big if -- and building bridges to his semi-detached MPs, then he should launch a full and frank debate about the party's policy on immigration.



If Corbyn is serious about winning power in the country -- a big if -- and building bridges to his semi-detached MPs, then he should launch a full and frank debate about the party's policy on immigration.

Labour must acknowledge that the game moved on in June, when the public decided that curbing EU migration was more important than having the closest possible economic links with the bloc. Labour cannot wish the referendum verdict away, or pretend it had nothing to do with immigration. Of course there were other factors. But, thanks to a crude Leave campaign, immigration became the lens through which the EU debate was seen. In an era when the politics of identity trumps traditional left-right loyalties, Labour would be mad to remain in denial about what many of its natural supporters feel. Their concerns might be based on emotion rather than the facts about the undoubted

benefits of immigration, but they are real.

A YouGov survey suggests that only 48 per cent of people who voted Labour at last year's general election and then backed Leave in the referendum support the party now. Some 49 per cent of this group want a stricter immigration system. About 3.3 million of the 9.3 million Labour voters last year backed Leave, a very big group for Corbyn to alienate.

Labour's ostrich-like approach is not tenable because immigration will remain at the top of the agenda. Theresa May has got the referendum message and is targeting struggling white working class families. Curbing free movement will be a red line in the Brexit negotiations, even

though it will mean losing some access to the European single market. May has rejected the Vote Leave and Ukip demand for an Australian-style points system, but only because she wants an even tougher approach -- probably work permits for EU nationals who already have a job, with a cap set by the Government.

Labour MPs such as Chuka Umunna, Stephen Kinnock, Rachel Reeves, Emma Reynolds and Jonathan Reynolds have started a debate on immigration that Corbyn cannot afford to stifle. The logic of their position is that the party should support an end to EU free movement, even if that means losing full single market access. It is a more realistic approach than to "have your cake and eat it," which other EU leaders would never allow because it would encourage other countries to call in/out referendums. Labour could get brownie points by accepting the end of single market membership before May does.

If Labour continues to dodge the issue, it would breathe new life into Ukip just when the party is struggling to find a new role after the Brexit vote. Ukip is in second place behind Labour in 44 seats, and those Labour Leavers would be a realistic target unless Labour changes its stance.

A policy of managed migration would not be racist. It would be consistent with Labour's values, and would give the party room to make the positive case for immigration and champion a non-racist society. If Corbyn leaves the field clear for May and Ukip (which they would love), the danger is that many in Labour's traditional heartlands will not listen to the party at all.

To regain power, Labour needs to rebuild a coalition of middle and working class voters. It has not won a general election since the rise in immigration in the mid-2000s and will not win again until it regains public trust on this critical issue.

(Source: Independent)



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OPEC deal still elusive even after Saudis offer oil cuts to Iran

OPEC members aren't likely to reach a supply deal in Algiers next week, but an agreement to boost prices could be drawing closer after Saudi Arabia signaled for the first time in two years that it's willing to cut production.

Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose rivalry thwarted a deal with other major producers in April, didn't reach agreement after two days of preparatory talks in Vienna, including the Saudi offer to pump less if Iran caps output at current levels, according to two people familiar with the negotiations. While the kingdom doesn't now anticipate any formal decision on supply will be taken in the Algerian capital, talks will continue and OPEC meets again in two months, said a delegate familiar with its policy.

The impasse between the Middle East neighbors dims the prospects that OPEC and Russia will cooperate to curb a global supply glut next week -- already seen as unlikely by market watchers. The delegation from Moscow only intends to join discussions after OPEC members reach a supply agreement between themselves and they could leave before the informal talks scheduled for Sept. 28, three people familiar with the matter said.

"It's difficult to come to the conclusion that a freeze would be credible or doable," said Ed Morse, head of commodities research at Citigroup Inc. in New York.

Further talks

Saudi Arabia said it would be willing to reduce its output if Iran were to cap production at the current level of about 3.6 million, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The kingdom often does curb production at this time of year, as the surge



Saudi Arabia said it would be willing to reduce its output if Iran were to cap production at the current level of about 3.6 million.

in demand for air conditioning in the hot summer months begins to fade. The kingdom pumped a record 10.7 million barrels a day last month, an increase of 490,000 barrels a day from January, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The Saudis offer to Iran does signal that the kingdom is seeking some kind of deal to reduce the global oil glut after two years of leading OPEC's strategy of unfettered production to squeeze out high-cost rivals. Oil prices remain below \$50 a barrel -- less than half the level

of 2014 -- and the International Energy Agency is predicting the surplus could persist for a fourth year into late 2017.

The months leading up to the official OPEC ministerial meeting in Vienna on Nov. 30, will allow more time for discussions with other countries, said the person familiar with Saudi policy. The kingdom, the world's largest crude exporter, wants to see higher prices to encourage essential investment in the energy industry, the person said. The IEA warned this month that oil and gas companies

could be on track to cut spending for a third straight year.

Failed attempt

The last attempt at a deal between OPEC and Russia collapsed in Doha on April 17 when Saudi Arabia's influential Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman insisted at the last minute that Iran had to participate in a freeze. Iran refused as it was just starting to revive exports following the end of international sanctions.

Now that Iran has returned to pre-sanctions production capacity, "the odds are in favor" of some basic agreement, said Helima Croft, chief commodities strategist at RBC Capital Markets LLC in New York.

Iran produced 3.62 million barrels a day on average in August, an increase of 820,000 since sanctions were lifted at the start of the year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The Persian Gulf nation has repeatedly said it's entitled to recover its previous output level of about 4 million barrels a day.

Other OPEC members may also be reluctant to freeze at current levels. Iraq will seek to defend a production level of 4.75 million to 5 million barrels a day, Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Luabi said by e-mail Thursday. That's as much as 500,000 barrels a day above its output last month, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

"I don't think they have a consensus yet," said Chakib Khelil, the former Algerian energy minister and OPEC president, who guided the group to a record output cut in 2008. Still, he's optimistic the group can agree to at least freeze production. "They're already feeling pain. Why add to the pain when they can avoid it?" (Source: Bloomberg)

Russia's July oil production exceeds Saudi Arabia's: state statistics service

In July, Saudi Arabia produced 10,477,000 barrels of oil per day, according to the report. In June, Saudi Arabia was exceeding Russia in oil production, with 10,447,000 barrels per day compared to 10,136,000 barrels produced by Russia daily.

In total, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) states extracted 33,106,000 barrels per day in July, according to the report. The share of oil exports in the total volume of Russian exports amounted to 25.8 percent in January-July, as compared to 26.9 percent in the same period in 2015, the report said. According to the report, the average export price for Russian oil stood at \$311.3 per ton in July 2016.

In a comment on September 22, BP Russia Vice-President Vladimir Drebentsov that Russia's oil production can be increased by up to 3 percent next year.

Russia has a good reliable basis to maintain oil production at the current levels, or provide for slightly higher rates, as there were oil fields with relatively low production costs, he said.

By the end of 2015, the oil production in Russia amounted to 533 million tons. On Wednesday, Russian Deputy Energy Minister Kirill Molodtsov said that the ministry anticipated that the volume of oil production in 2016 would amount to 540-545 million tons.

(Source: Sputnik)

BP's Azerbaijan gas project will cost \$18 billion

BP has revealed the cost of its contracts in the second phase of its development of the offshore Shah Deniz gas and condensate field in Azerbaijan, and the expansion of the South Caucasus pipeline. A message from the company stated that the contracts are worth approximately \$18 billion. The project is on schedule and is about 82 percent complete.

The Shah Deniz field is thought to be home to 1.2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and an estimated 240 million tons of condensate.

The second phase of the Shah Deniz development will entail delivering gas to markets in Turkey and Europe via the expanded South Caucasus pipeline, and the construction of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline and the

Trans-Adriatic Pipeline. Once the second phase of the project is implemented, gas output from the region should be boosted from 9 billion cubic meters per year to 16 billion cubic meters.

According to BP, the pipe-lay barge Isafil Huseynov has completed the installation of the first flowline from the Shah Deniz field from the North Flank cluster to the platform location, and is in the process of installing a second flowline before it moves to the West Flank where it will install two more flowlines. The subsea construction ship Khankendi will be deployed to the Shah Deniz 2 area to build the necessary infrastructure. The Khankendi is being prepared for commissioning and certification.

(Source: oilprice.com)

UK forecast to miss renewable heating target

A report published by the UK Energy and Climate Change Committee (ECCC) forecasts that "on its current course, the UK will fail to achieve its 2020 renewable energy targets."

The targets in question are those set through the European Union's 2009 Renewable Energy Directive, stipulating that by 2020 the UK achieves an overarching 15 percent renewable energy (RE) in total energy consumption via RE providing 30 percent of electricity, 12 percent of heat, and 10 percent of transport fuels.

The report concluded that by the end of 2015 the UK had reached only 5.64 percent of its 12 percent heat sub-target; and had experienced regression on its transport sub-target, with the share of renewables used in the sector falling from 4.93 percent in 2014 to 4.23 percent last year.

In contrast to these shortcomings, RE provided 22 percent of UK power last year -- securing a forecast for meeting the electricity sub-target.

Although the expectation is for the electricity sub-target to be surpassed, this alone won't be enough to pull total energy consumption up to 15 percent by 2020. Altogether, RE made up 8.31 percent of all UK energy consumption through 2015.

Lack of progress in RE heating and transport sectors are highlighted as contributing to the forecast. It's worth noting that heat represents close to half of the UK's energy consumption.

The report has prompted industry and political calls for renewable heating support to be restructured and efforts reformed.

Angus MacNeil MP, ECCC Chair, stated: "The experts we spoke to were clear: the UK will miss its 2020 renewable energy targets without major policy improvements...The government must take urgent action on heat and transport to renew its efforts on decarbonisation."



Shortcomings in renewable heating

Frank Aaskov, policy analyst at the UK-based Renewable Energy Association (REA) told Renewable Energy World: "REA are pleased to see an increase in the proportion of heat from renewable sources from less than one percent, at the time the targets were set in 2009, to over five percent today. Despite this being a good achievement, we're still remarkably dependent on fossil heating in the UK."

Aaskov highlighted the case of heat pumps being ineffectively prioritized over biomass alternatives: "As the report states, RHI over-emphasized deployment of heat pumps -- the government has clearly favored them and increased their tariffs, despite their deploying fairly well at the moment."

Aaskov also expressed concern over a control mechanism in RHI that automatically reduces the tariff for a particular technology if its deployment level exceeds expectation.

As a result of reductions in support for biomass at small commercial and domestic scales to the extent that it's infeasible to deploy, Aaskov said, "in part that's why we're seeing deployment below 10 percent of 18 months ago in that same sector."

A call for reform

The ECCC has set forth several recommendations geared towards ensuring RE targets are met; they echo REA's suggestions submitted to government consultations on RHI reform earlier this year.

According to Aaskov, REA has recommended that the tariff be reset to a previous tariff level to create incentive in the market.

"Due to the low oil price, the reduced tariff isn't attractive enough to stimulate a market," he said. "We have furthermore recommended more consumer information should be made available from the government."

More broadly, Aaskov attributes slow progress to something larger than mechanisms or regulation of RHI: "We think that there's been an over-emphasis on electrification of heating by the government, i.e., through heat pumps. That's been a political decision rather than letting the market decide."

In mainland Europe, he added, about 89 percent of all renewable heating is bioenergy-based; but the UK government expects 80 percent of heating through electricity. This requirement would place considerable new demands on the electricity grid, and incur huge costs in terms of transitioning to appropriate technologies and systems, he said.

"What we want to see is a more diversified energy model, with a combination of technologies in play," Aaskov said. "There should be electrification of certain households, but alongside district heating, biomass boilers, decarbonization of the gas grid through biomethane and biogas and geothermal where it's possible."

While the government is still conducting its evaluation of RHI, outcomes are slated for implementation next year. Underlining the urgency of the matter, Aaskov said REA hopes that ECCC's report encourages publication as soon as possible.

(Source: renewableenergyworld.com)

NEWS

Watex 2016 to host 140 foreign companies

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The 12th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition (Watex 2016) will host 140 companies from different countries around the world, Iranian Energy Ministry announced on Saturday.



The event, which will be inaugurated on Sunday in the presence of Iranian Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian, will be also attended by 259 Iranian companies.

The four-day exhibit will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Some specialized sessions will be also held on the sidelines of the exhibition.

Meshkinfam appointed as new managing director of Pars Oil & Gas Company

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Mohammad Meshkinfam has been appointed as the new managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company replacing Ali-Akbar Sha'banpour, Shana reported on Saturday.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Managing Director Ali Kardor appointed Meshkinfam to the post.

Pars Oil and Gas Company is in charge of implementing development phases of Iran's South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf.



Pakistan's ECC approves more electricity import from Iran

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Pakistan's Cabinet on Friday approved the import of 74 megawatts (MW) electricity from Iran by reducing its tariff.

The ECC, which met under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, scaled down the tariff for import of electricity from Iran. Earlier, the tariff was proposed at 7.5 to 10 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) but now the ECC has scaled down the tariff to 6.1 to 9.5 cents per kWh.

Pakistan was already importing electricity through the Taffan area by linking it with Balochistan and now 74MW will be added to the system. Both the countries had been negotiating this deal for the last several years but it could not be materialized due to economic sanctions on Iran.

The committee approved a summary moved by the Ministry of Water and Power for allowing the NTDC (National Transmission and Dispatch Company Limited) to approach the Nepra for approval of extension of tariff from 1st January 2016 to 31st December, 2016 for a contract with TAVANIR, Iran, for the purchase of 74MW.

The ECC approved a summary of the Ministry of Water and Power for issuance of a policy directive to Nepra to allow 1pc of the capital cost net of aforementioned \$150,000 amount on account of security to be distributed annually starting from the construction period till the term of the Power Purchase Agreement.

(Source: The News)

Russia said to plan joining oil talks should OPEC reach deal

Russia plans to join discussions on limiting oil production only after OPEC members reach an agreement between themselves, meaning talks aimed at stabilizing the market could extend beyond Algiers next week.

The Russian delegation, set to include Energy Minister Alexander Novak, will participate in the International Energy Forum in the Algerian capital and hold bilateral meetings with other producers, but may leave before members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries hold informal talks on Sept. 28, said three people with knowledge of the matter, asking not to be identified because the information isn't public.

The decision by OPEC to hold informal talks in Algiers has fanned speculation that the group might be about to deviate from a two-year-old policy of pumping without limits and instead move to curb output to boost prices. A previous attempt to agree on an output cap, which included Russia, collapsed in Doha in April when Saudi Arabia walked away because Iran refused to participate.

The delegation from Moscow may leave the Algerian venue before Sept. 28 and wait for an invitation to continue talks, the people said. It would join comprehensive output-freeze discussions only after OPEC members decide on the issue at their own meeting, they said.

Russia's Energy Ministry declined to comment.

(Source: Bloomberg)

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Winners and losers of cheap oil ahead of OPEC summit

On the other hand, any effort to raise oil prices to over 60 dollars could encourage North American shale producers, who have now managed to cut down production costs, to boost production causing a significant glut in the market. America's plan to boost production can be implied by return of drilling rigs which had been left abandoned for several years.

Moreover, members of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as an intergovernmental economic organization with 35 member countries, are constructing a growing number of storage tanks which foreshadows a rise in oil demands for the year 2017. Also, the amount of oil on water all around the world has hit a record high as well as that Mexico has increased its crude production significantly following the cessation of seasonal tsunamis.

Accordingly, and as it was mentioned earlier, OPEC members would be better able to control the oil market by reaching a consensus over oil freeze plan. Nevertheless, some states, with Saudi Arabia on top of the list, seem to ignore realities of the market by putting rivals, Iran in particular, under pressure at any cost. Saudis, while possessing all geopolitical potentials to cooperate with Iran to rule over oil market, has been haplessly making efforts to prevent Iran from regaining its legal share in world markets.

Despite a recent claim made by the Saudi Arabian Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid al-Falih who said "freezing production is one of the preferred possibilities but it doesn't have to happen specifically today", several pieces of evidence exist to reveal that Saudis are in dire need of an oil freeze deal which would, in turn, ramp up prices.

First and foremost, 25 per cent of Saudi Arabia's Gross Domestic Production (GDP) relies on oil revenues while the figure for oil giant Iran stands at only five per cent.

In other words, any decline in oil market will undoubtedly bring about the greatest loss to Saudis than it would do to Iran's economy. Getting entangled in a proxy war against Yemen has proved to be far more exorbitant for Saudis than their initial speculations causing a significant reduction in its natural resources.

Additionally, economy of Saudi Arabia is faced with a greater turmoil as a result of weak GDP growth and the current trend has led Saudi government officials to raise taxes in view of their inability to meet obligations towards workers.

Meanwhile, the future of thousands of workers from South Asian countries, like Pakistan and India, is up in the air since reports reveal that the Saudi government has been incapable even of providing food for the labor forces indicating the very dire financial condition of the Arab country. Compounded with the decline in oil prices, these factors have forced the government to implement austerity measures and Saudi contractors, in turn, are facing numerous problems as a result of delayed payments.

More specifically, firing of a rocket by Yemen to a power-relay facility in southern Saudi Arabia in early September led some analysts to warn that the military war against Yemen by Saudi Arabia poses a high risk for the country's oil production.

Helima Croft, the head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets said "the recent cross-border rocket attacks originating from Yemen are an ominous reminder of the dangers posed by Saudi Arabia's 18-month military intervention in Yemen."

Amid the drop in oil prices, Saudi Arabia's campaign in Yemen comes with certain overlooked risks to its oil sector, including the vulnerability of its oil infrastructure and pressures on its finances.

The rocket strike certified vulnerability of critical Saudi oil facilities and infrastructures including ARAMCO as the Saudi Arabian Oil Company, underlined the official at RBC Capital Markets, as the corporate and investment banking segment of Royal Bank of Canada.

Notably, the Saudi war in Yemen can cause grave pressures on its finances in regard with security spending. Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which tracks global arms expenditures, indicated that Saudis reached their highest level of military expenditure in 2015 comprising 13.7% of GDP share. Moreover, SIPRI noted that there were reports that 17% of total government overspending in 2015 was attributed to a \$5.3 billion increase in military and security spending due to the campaign in Yemen.

Also in the current year, Saudi Arabia hosted the least number of pilgrims while Hajj occasion has always been counted a major source of revenue for



Several factors exist to reveal that Iran's rivals, Saudi Arabia in particular, would suffer more from failure to reach a freeze deal which would otherwise ramp up prices since Iran has already stood the test of time in dealing with low crude prices.

the Arab state.

A recent report by the General Authority for Statistics (GaStat) revealed that the quantity of remote and local travelers has descended to a minimal number over the past ten years. GoStat reported that this year 1,325,372 remote and 537,537 residential travelers are expected to perform Hajj rituals giving an aggregate total of only 1,862,909 pilgrims while the figure for 2007 and 2012 amounted to 2.4 and 3 million explorers.

All in all, the downward trend in the number of Hajj travelers would make Saudi Arabia even more dependent on oil income.

More importantly, unlike Iran, Saudi Arabia only produces crude oil lacking diversity in its energy basket. Only relying on crude oil has been the main cause for a 23 percent decline in SABIC shares this year.

In January, Saudi Basic Industries Corp, SABIC, observed its shares falling after the company reported a drop in its annual profit. SABIC's shares were traded almost five percent lower after the company released a report revealing a reduction of 19.57 percent in its full-year net profit.



As a result, the Saudi Tadawul All Shares Index (TASI) closed down 5.44 percent to hit a five-year low since SABIC reported a net annual profit of 18.78 billion riyals (USD 5.01 billion) for 2015, as compared to 23.35 billion riyals for the preceding year.

Taking advantage of international sanctions against Iran and in a bid to overcome US shale producers, Saudi Arabia dominated the market.

In other words, instead of lowering its production levels to maintain the balance in market, Saudis flooded the market with oil hoping to win the lion's share though, much to their chagrin, oil prices dropped from \$155.71 per barrel in June 2015 to a minimum of \$43.16 per barrel in the current month.

With present low crude price figures in mind, Saudi Arabia is obliged to find a way out since only last year their expenditures exceeded their revenues by \$100 billion and the budget deficit for the ongoing year is expected to be no less than \$87 billion. On top of that, the volume of foreign reserves for Saudi Arabia has dropped to \$555 billion while the figure once stood at \$737 billion hence their plan to raise \$10 billion through an international bond sale.

Oil Market Report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that Saudi Arabia has left behind the US and become the world's largest oil producer after adding about 400,000 barrels per day of low-cost production since May this year. Amid low oil prices, enjoying the largest share at the market would be a bitter pill to swallow, indeed.

On the other side of the spectrum

relies Iran who, having been freed from sanction, is legally growing production and regaining its lost share of the market. Iranian oil officials, in comments backed by the Russian president, have repeatedly underscored that any deal on freezing output should allow room for some growth in Iran's production until it reached pre-sanction levels.

Iran's precondition for a freeze deal does not seem to be a lofty expectation as the country has spared no effort in restoring production to a level that is similar to that of before sanctions were imposed and now produces roughly 3.85 million barrels per day being only 150,000 barrels per day shy of pre-sanction levels.

A consensus also exists among all OPEC members, except Saudi Arabia, that Iran owns the right to be excluded from the possible production freeze since current production levels could limit Iran's GDP growth.

Having taken an optimistic view, Iran has sent positive signals to a deal at the OPEC meeting realizing that upon approaching pre-sanction output levels, adding every barrel to production would require help of international companies.

Relatedly, affecting the market psychology has been outlined by oil experts as a more important outcome of a possible freeze deal than its effect on supply levels.

Astute and shrewd, Iran has taken several other measures, in addition to boosting output figures, to gain profit from a myriad of opportunities present at oil, gas and petrochemical industries. One instance has been to benefit from the anticipated uplift in China's crude demand due to an increase in transportation fuel consumption and its petrochemical industries in the second half of the year.

Furthermore, Iran has set to improve its bargaining power for crude sales as well as to support exports of Iranian crude in the Persian Gulf by increasing the country's crude storage capacity in the Persian Gulf by 10 million barrels.

Managing Director of Iran Oil Terminals Company (IOTC) Seyed Pirouz Mousavi said given implementation of four new tanks in Kharg Terminal later in September, the total volume of storage capacity in the Iranian oil terminal has now reached 28 million barrels.

In another attempt to compensate for the fall in crude prices, Iran has kept an eye on producing various types of crude oil to meet specific demands of different world refineries.

Blending petroleum products as a common method to both attract more customers as well as to increase their satisfaction holds momentous in strengthening the marketing strategy of Iran whose crude oil is now being consumed by two score of world refinery complexes, said Executive Director for International Affairs at National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Seyed Mohsen Ghamsari.

Additionally, Iran stands head and shoulders above oil rivals for it enjoys one of the heaviest crude types on earth which opens a new window of opportunity to produce custom crude oil, tailored to meet its clients' requirements. Even heavier than those of Saudi Ara-

bia, Kuwait, UAE and Russia, the Iranian crude, with an API gravity less than 20°, marks a gateway to enter markets that can only process this kind of oil. Simply put, as an unshakable competitor in the global oil market, Iran possesses all necessary assets to attract new customers since dozens of its offshore oil wells are producing various types of light, heavy, sour and sweet crude oil.

Almost unaffected by fluctuation in oil prices, petrochemical industries have offered Iran one more advantage over rivals like SABIC who lacks diversity in its petrochemical basket.

Relevantly, Fariborz Karimaei, Deputy Head of the Association of Petrochemical Industry Corporation, pointed to the leap in exports of Iranian petrochemicals to African countries saying "Iran's share in deploying petrochemical and polymeric products to African states has climbed from 1 to 8.5 by the end of the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20) while resumption of petrochemical sales to European Union (EU) member states has also been put on the agenda."

Indeed, regaining the lost share of Iran's petrochemical sale to Europe would prove to be a tough task since Iran's share of the strategic market decreased from 12.5 percent in pre-sanction era to half a percent by the end of last year. Yet, Iran's ability to locally produce a wide range of catalysts and polymer grits has been tantalizing enough for companies from Italy, Germany and Austria who have made requests to import Iranian petrochemical products.

Astute and shrewd, Iran has taken several other measures, in addition to boosting output figures, to gain profit from a myriad of opportunities present at oil, gas and petrochemical industries.



While reports of prestigious international institutions reveal that Saudi Arabia is faced with the crisis of acute shortage of natural gas and that even the launch of a development project at Karan gas field cannot meet the needs of OPEC's largest oil producer, Iran is now delivering the world's cheapest gas to complexes to be consumed as feed or fuel.

Also, Iran has put expansion of South Pars gas field on the agenda and if financial channels are regulated, daily production at the joint field can rise by 700 million cubic meters.

In fact, mathematically speaking, a daily average of about 40 to 45 million liters of several Iranian oil products have been exported to various world countries since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year and the capacity for export of Iranian petroleum products has reached a total of 400 thousand barrels per day while the figure is expected to hit 500 thousand barrels per day upon implementation of new harbors at Mahshahr Terminal.

To recapitulate, the market has observed OPEC's crude production at a

record high figure of 33.47 million barrels per day as Iran, freed from sanctions, reached a threshold of about 3.85 million bpd in August and shipments from Saudi Arabia also increased to 10.2 million bpd.

Still, Saudi Arabia considers Iran as a major competitor and Saudi Oil Minister Khalid al-Falih previously said that Iran's production was already high enough, a comment which indicates a fear held by Saudis that output freeze would mean a reduction in their market share.

Nevertheless, several factors exist to reveal that Iran's rivals, Saudi Arabia in particular, would suffer more from failure to reach a freeze deal which would otherwise ramp up prices since Iran has already stood the test of time in dealing with low crude prices.

For one thing, Iran has seen and survived worse days than other producers since international sanctions were imposed in 2011, much earlier than the sharp decline in crude prices in 2014, and cut Iran's production to the shockingly low volume of 1.3 million bpd. Also, unlike the past, majority of Iran's oil and gas production are now consumed domestically thanks to an emerging diversified economy.

Iran's inclination towards industrialization in energy sectors such as petrochemicals, cement and steel have led to substantial upswing in the country's real growth domestic product as compared with the time imposed war against Iraq taking domestic production of oil and natural gas from 10% then to 76% now.

Expansion of non-oil exports as well as recent release of blocked assets have brought Iran more decisive advantages over its rivals. Statistics indicated a reduction in Iran's non-oil trade deficit from 33.8 billion dollars in 2010 to only 2.7 billion dollars in 2015. Despite the fact that still 29 per cent of the Iranian government's income is accounted for by oil revenues, the figure resides way lower than the levels for other oil giants.

In conclusion, a leading rival of Iran inside the region Saudi Arabia seems to experience much further hardship if prices continue to remain at low levels since Iran enjoys the upper hand when it comes to withstanding low crude oil prices regardless of the outcomes of forthcoming Algiers meeting.

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Polar bears not the only animals affected by disappearing ice

This year saw yet another dramatic loss of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean, with levels at the second lowest in recorded history.

The iconic image of a polar bear stranded on a small ice floe has come to symbolize this change in the North, but many other animals and even plants are feeling the changes as well.

Ice is a transportation corridor used by animals, plants, and, of course, ice road truckers to get around vast polar regions that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Polar bears walk many kilometers out on the ice to hunt seals, and caribou use ice to travel between the thousands of islands that make up the Arctic Archipelago.

■ Ocean currents

Plants also take advantage of the fact that ice moves from place to place, driven by ocean currents and winds to spread their seeds and pollen across the region.

The loss of these ice roads has forced animals to find longer, alternative routes or swim instead of walk, which consumes more energy, and that can affect their long-term survival.

Some subspecies of caribou use sea ice to travel between islands in the Arctic that they use as breeding grounds and foraging areas.

The loss of ice means they have to take longer, alternative routes to get to the islands or swim, both of which make the journey more difficult.



Polar bears have already been recorded spending more time on land, scrounging for berries and small mammals, which do not provide the same nutrition as seals, causing some bear populations to appear thinner and more emaciated.

Polar bears have already been recorded spending more time on land, scrounging for berries and small mammals, which do not provide the same nutrition as seals, causing some bear populations to appear thinner and more emaciated.

boreal forest all the way around circumpolar regions.

But many populations are in serious decline because climate change is exacerbating other challenges they face, including deteriorating habitats and predation.

A recent study looked at the endangered Peary caribou, a subspecies that lives among the High Arctic islands in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

■ Breeding grounds

The animals use sea ice to travel between islands that are used as breeding grounds and foraging areas.

The report states that travel between these islands has become 15 per cent more difficult since 1979 because of the loss of ice.

If this trend continues, the animals might chose to just remain on individual islands, which would produce isolated populations, which would in turn reduce genetic diversity and, over time, could make the groups different from each other.

Islands have different environments, even when they are relatively close to each other, and animals, adapting to their new home, can change their form or behavior.

Darwin saw this among the different shaped beaks of finches on the Galapagos Islands, which provided much of the evidence he needed to develop his theory of natural selection.

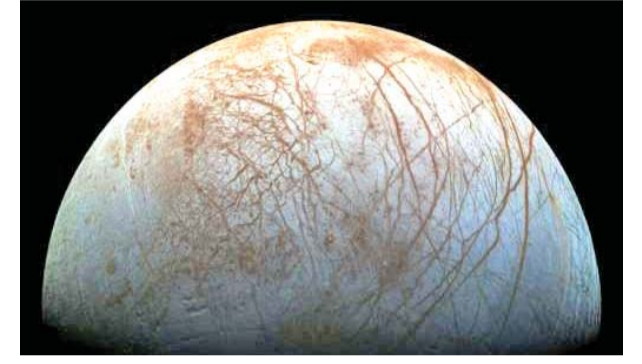
(Source: CBCnews)

NEWS

NASA to reveal 'surprising' activity on Jupiter's moon Europa

There's something going on beneath the surface of Jupiter's icy moon Europa. But what?

NASA teased a "surprising" announcement for Monday, based on Hubble Space Telescope images of the celestial body, which many experts believe could contain a subsurface ocean, even possibly some form of life.



The U.S. space agency has already proclaimed that Europa has "strong evidence for an ocean of liquid water beneath its crust and which could host conditions favorable for life."

At Monday's announcement, "astronomers will present results from a unique Europa observing campaign that resulted in surprising evidence of activity that may be related to the presence of a subsurface ocean," it said in a statement.

NASA announced last year that it intends to send a robotic spacecraft, equipped with a suite of scientific instruments, to circle Europa in the 2020s. In 2012, NASA's Hubble Space Telescope "observed water vapor above the south polar region of Europa," suggesting water plumes may be erupting from the moon, the space agency said.

If those plumes are confirmed, and if they are found to originate from a subsurface ocean, scientists hope the spacecraft could study their chemical makeup, revealing characteristics of the water without having to drill through ice.

Jupiter, nicknamed the king of the Solar System, is surrounded by more than 50 moons.

(Source: phys.org)

Out of Africa just once? DNA offers fresh look at humanity's family roots

Three human genome studies in Nature provide new clues as to when Homo sapiens, our earliest anatomically modern human ancestors, first left Africa.

After analyzing the DNA of 800 people from more than 270 populations, including a large number of aboriginal people in Australia and Papua New Guinea, the researchers found genetic evidence for a migration of humans out of Africa about 100,000 years ago – long before the migration that most modern Europeans, Asians, and Australians are descended from, which came about 60,000 years ago.

But that earlier migration largely failed.

The populations died out within a few generations, ultimately contributing no more than a few percent of the genome to anyone alive today, the researchers say.

The three studies differ in most details, but "all three papers all reach the same conclusions: that in Eurasians and also (Papua New Guineans), the majority of their genomes come from the same major migration," said Luca Paganini, a biologist at the University of Cambridge and first author on one of the studies, reported BBC News.

■ Human genomes

Dr. Paganini and his colleagues at the Estonian Biocen-



tre looked at 483 human genomes from 148 populations worldwide and concluded that large population groups exited Africa at several different times, and that the majority of Eurasians migrated more recently than the indigenous people from Australian and Papua New Guinea.

"All the other Eurasians we had were very homogeneous in their split times from Africans," Paganini told BBC News. "This suggests most Eurasians diverged from Af-

ricans in a single event ... about 75,000 years ago, while the (Papua New Guinea) split was more ancient – about 90,000 years ago. So we thought there must be something going on."

Another study, led by Anna-Sapfo Malaspinas from the Centre for GeoGenetics, partially contradicts Paganini's findings. Dr. Malaspinas and her colleagues looked at 83 Aboriginal Australian and 25 Papuan genomes and found evidence for a single migration between 51,000 and 72,000 years ago.

After leaving Africa in a mass migration, they argue, anatomically modern humans reproduced with Neanderthals already living in Europe and Asia until 58,000 years ago, when ancestors of the aboriginal group made their way to Australia via a land bridge that then connected the Papua New Guinea with Australia.

The last study, led by Swapnil Mallick from the Department of Genetics at Harvard Medical School, also found evidence for a significant mass migration by 100,000 years ago, but said that those early humans were not the ancestors of any particular modern group.

(Source: The CSM)

BSI Named Top & Exemplary Iranian Bank in 2016

Prestigious international "BANKER" Magazine introduced Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) as top Iranian bank among world's exemplary 1,000 banks.

Public Relations Department of BSI announced the above statement and wrote: "Due to its high capability and potential in banking industry in both national and international arenas, the bank managed to win top rank among 1,000 banks in world."

Given the above issue, BSI was introduced as top Iranian bank and

264th bank among 264 banks in world, the report added.

Stable and sustainable structure, financial strength and stability of the most important and influential indices have been cited as the main reasons behind selection of the bank in domestic and foreign arenas.

It is worth mentioning that "BANKER" Magazine ranks and introduces world's top banks every year, based on which, BSI managed to safeguard its title as first Iranian bank for several consecutive years.



AYANDEH Bank, Pioneer in Launching New Credit Card Scheme

Considering the recent plan launched by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CBI) on the issuance of new credit card, which started officially on Sept. 22, AYANDEH Bank managed to issue and deliver 12,412 new credit cards to the applicants.

It should be noted that these credit cards have been provided available to

applicants in 100 (bronze), 300 (silver) and 500 (golden) million rials.

The official start of new credit card scheme was held at the venue of Central Building of AYANDEH Bank in the presence of a number of customers, representatives of group and collective customers and also senior managers of

the bank, based on which, a number of 12,412 credit cards were delivered to the applicants of these cards.

The management of AYANDEH Bank will take giant strides in the second half of current Iranian calendar year (started Sept. 22) in line with materializing objectives of resistance economy in the

year named after "Resistance Economy, Action and Implementation".

Improving financial capability in society for all walks of life and spurring demand for various economic sectors have been cited as the main objective of management of the bank in current year, the report ended.

Calling for \$2b Foreign Investment in Maku Free Zone: Official

Foreign investment, valued at over \$2 billion, was requested in recent years for Maku Free Zone.

Chief Executive of Maku Free Zone Organization Hossein Forouzan announced the above statement in the inaugural ceremony of some development projects in this zone and said: "Despite its high potentials and capabilities, Maku Free Zone was deprived of the minimum, necessary infrastructures but with the efforts taken at the 11th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence", this zone is presently has been put on the right track of development."

He put the revenues obtained in Maku Free Zone Organization since second half of 2013 up to the last Iranian calendar year in 1394 (ended March 19, 2016) at 1,660 billion rials and said: "Of total 1,660 billion rials, 1,150 billion rials of which was spent for development and infrastructural projects, accounting for 70 percent share of total project."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he put the budget rate approved for the Organization in current year (started March 20, 2016) at 1,800 billion rials, and said: "A number of 49 development projects have been defined in

the Zone, costing over 1,400 billion rials, so that feasibility studies have been conducted on 12 projects of this organization, costing 50 billion rials."

He pointed to the infrastructures of Maku Free Zone and said: "Construction operation of second lane of Makenlar-Maku Road, second lane of Bazargan-Sarisu Rd., Maku-Keshmesh Tepee Rd., upgrading Bazargan Customs Office and also construction operation of international exhibition are underway in the Zone."

Turning to the construction of 500-MW combined cycle power plant by the private sector in the Zone, he said: "70% of this giant project has been funded privately by foreign investor from China as joint venture in a way that construction operation of Ferro-alloy Industrial Complex has completely been funded by Indian investor."

In the end, managing director of the Organization called on responsible officials to support the organization in line with materializing most of its objectives.

Head of Iran Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) Chief Masoud Soltani-far was the next speaker who said: "Iran has ancient



history which dates back 10,000 years ago in a way that archeologists are of the opinion that the country owns 800,000-1,000,000 historical monuments across the country."

He pointed to the salient performance of private sector in renovating and reconstructing historical monuments across the country every year and said: "We have thus far managed to renovate most historical and cultural monuments in the country in cooperation with the private sector."

SpaceX blast investigation suggests breach in oxygen tank's helium system

A SpaceX rocket that burst into flames on its launch pad at the beginning of this month likely suffered a large breach in its upper-stage helium system, the company said on Friday.

SpaceX, owned and operated by technology entrepreneur Elon Musk, was fueling a Falcon 9 rocket on the launch pad in Florida on Sept. 1 in preparation for a routine test-firing when a bright fireball suddenly emerged around the rocket's upper stage.

"At this stage of the investigation, preliminary review of the data and debris suggests that a large breach in the cryogenic helium system of the second stage liquid oxygen tank took place," SpaceX said in a statement posted on its website.

SpaceX spokesman Dex Torricke-Barton declined to speculate on what triggered the breach of the helium system, saying the company was still investigating a range of possible causes.

No one was hurt in the explosion, which could be heard 30 miles (48 km) away from SpaceX's launch pad 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

(Source: Reuters)

OConnect inaugurates Foshan Household Essentials' brand experience center in Iran, seeking opportunities of Furniture Industry in Middle East Market

Global OConnect, an unprecedented cross-border e-commerce platform committed to connecting global businesses with China, is launching the Foshan Household Essentials (FHE) brand experience center in Tehran, Iran from September 25 through December 25, taking a major step to introduce Chinese companies to Iran to explore further business opportunities.

With a total area of 5200 square meters, the center is hosted at Behnoush Building, 9km Jade Makhsos Karaj, Kheyabane Shahid Mohammad Pur in Tehran (تهران، کیلومتر نه جاده مخصوص کرج، خیابان شهید محمد پور، ساختمان بهنوش) to display a wide array of household essentials from Foshan.

The endeavor is part of Global OConnect's grand plan to bring new business opportunities and partnerships for Chinese brands in Iran as well as in the Middle East, with an aim to change how Iranians think of "made-in-China" products in the past as cheap and low quality by introducing the new, best quality products and brands from China.

The FHE is preliminary divided into two parts. The first one contains products of household electrical appliances, building and sanitary materials and home furniture. The second one boasts the general Foshan furniture industry's brand presentation in a 600 square meters area, and aims to introduce the theme of Foshan Household Essentials into Iranian market during the span of one year.

And also the FHE will facilitate both online and offline events to highlight China's furniture manufacturing base Foshan's booming household essentials businesses. The three-month exhibition will feature more than 19 top Foshan furniture companies including Foshan Qixin, Dongmin and Qi He Furniture Company, 12 leading ceramic companies such as Monalisa Group, Foshan Dongpeng Ceramic Company and Foshan Nanhai Sannora Sanitary Ware Company as well as 32 major household appliances companies including Midea, Galanz and Foshan EPDA Electronic Technology Company, all internationally acclaimed brands that can represent the high-quality



"New Made-in-China" products.

Foshan neighbors two Chinese strategic ports: Guangdong City and Hong Kong, and is historically famous for high-quality yarn and pottery. Its Longjiang Town is best known as the Most Trustworthy Producer of Oriental-styled Furniture in China. Taking advantage of such popularity, Foshan has managed to increase export volumes so far this year under the backdrop of general declines in most Chinese industries. It is also committed to exploit China's "the Belt and Road" trade policy to encourage Chinese companies investing overseas.

"Foshan has gained its strategic advantages that is supported by a whole industry chain, rich resources and innovative thinking. Through introducing products of quality from Foshan, we want to reverse the stereotype of China

products that are cost effective and to present a new image of Chinese brands to Iranian market through our groundbreaking e-commerce platforms that combine online business with showroom displays," said Kevin Fenn, founder and Chairman of Global OConnect.

This win-win China-Iran partnership in furniture industry paves the way for leading Chinese industries to research the Iranian market and develop more business opportunities. It is also a milestone in China-Iran cooperation in trade and economy, a mutually beneficial collaboration that introduces high standard industries from China and encourage Chinese manufacturers to seek opportunities globally.

As Governor of Guangdong Province Zhu Xiaodan later signed the memorandum of understanding to promote partnerships between free

trade zones of the Province and Qeshm Island, an important Persian Gulf coastal city. The provincial government also sponsored to set up experience halls in Iran, in order to further marketing the competitive advantages of home furnishing industry in Foshan City.

Global OConnect's innovative foreign trade platforms will further develop individualized plans for Foshan and more of China's competitive industries to enter the emerging markets in Iran and Middle East by integrating all resources of logistics, custom clearance, payments, localized legal, branding, market survey and other services to provide comprehensive solutions for Chinese companies to promote their businesses and to develop future investment plans.

The second largest economic power in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia, Iran is fully recovering from the international economy sanctions with great market potential. The trade and business between China and Iran also welcomes an unprecedented opportunity. Global OConnect will not only bring investments and create more job opportunities in Iran and the Middle East in this context, but also establish new trade and investment landmark in the dynamic and promising regions.

About Global OConnect

Established in 2015 and partly funded by the state, Global OConnect has set up experience halls in Russia, Poland, Vietnam and Canada successfully. It has also made the first appearance in the Middle East this year when a showroom (sample experience pavilion) was opened on April 28 in Dubai. As an essential and organic component of China's national economic strategy of going abroad. The company's mission is to introduce the high-quality "New Made-in-China" products globally in a more interactive and efficient way. By establishing both domestic and overseas online and offline channels, Global OConnect hopes to create a cross-border business complex with localized service and integrated global resources and to represent Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises worldwide.



Three terrorist explosions have struck the north-central Iraq city of Tikrit, killing as many as 12 people.

A security source said the blasts rocked the northern entrance of Tikrit, which is the capital of Salahuddin Province (Saladin Governorate), on Saturday.

The source said explosive devices loaded onto a vehicle were first set off at the Aqwas security check post before two bombers blew their explosive belts there.

The fatalities included nine police officers and three members of the Iraqi volunteer fighters known as al-Hashad al-Sha'bi or Popular Mobilization Units, the Alforat news agency said.

The blasts also injured 23 others, including civilians, while the province's police chief and a member of the city council escaped unscathed.

A curfew was imposed over the city afterwards.

Tikrit had been seized by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group in June 2014, when the Takfiri group unleashed its campaign of death and destruction in the country. It was, however, liberated a year later.

The Iraqi war media, meanwhile, reported the launch of operations to liberate Salahuddin's northern districts.

On Thursday, Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi addressed the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, saying that his coun-

Triple blasts kill at least 12 in Iraq's Tikrit



try was mostly liberated from ISIL.

He reiterated the pledge for the liberation by year-end of the northern city of Mosul, which fell to ISIL in 2014 and has been called the group's so-called headquarters in Iraq.

■ Jazirah al-Baghdadi liberated

Meanwhile, Iraqi government forces, backed by fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units, have fully recaptured a district in the conflict-ridden western province of Anbar from the ISIL terrorists.

The Iraqi Joint Forces Command announced in a statement that the Iraqi Ar-

my's Seventh Division, the 27th and 28th Brigades, Al Jazeera Commando Brigade and tribal fighters from the city of Hadithah, situated about 240 kilometers northwest of the capital Baghdad, had managed to establish complete control over Jazirah al-Baghdadi district.

Also on Friday, Iraqi security personnel repelled a ISIL offensive against Bravo Camp northwest of Albu Dhiyab district, which lies north of the Anbar provincial capital Ramadi.

The Anbar Operations Command announced that a group of 12 ISIL extremists were involved in the attack.

Gruesome violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since ISIL terrorists mounted an offensive there more than two years ago, and took control of portions of Iraqi territory.

The militants have been committing heinous crimes against all ethnic and religious communities in Iraq, including Shi'as, Sunnis, Kurds and Christians.

Iraqi army soldiers and fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units are seeking to win back militant-held regions in joint operations.

The development came a day after Iraqi forces took control of the town of al-Sharqat in the country's northern province of Salahuddin, and raised the national Iraqi flag over government buildings there.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. drone strike kills five in central Yemen

At least five people have lost their lives in an airstrike by a United States unmanned aerial vehicle in Yemen.

Local officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Saturday that the drone hit a vehicle carrying the five, who were claimed to be suspected al-Qaeda militants, in the central Yemeni province of Ma'rib the previous day.

It came a day after a drone strike in the neighboring al-Bayda Province killed three suspected al-Qaeda members, one of them a commander.

Also on Saturday, Yemeni army soldiers, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, launched a ballistic missile at the al-Jarba military base in Saudi Arabia's southern border region of Dhahran Janoub, on

Saturday, though no reports about possible casualties and damage were available.

Yemeni soldiers and allied fighters also fired several Katyusha rockets at a military camp in al-Rabu'ah town of the southwestern Saudi border region of Asir, killing an unspecified number of soldiers and inflicting heavy losses on Saudi forces.

The attacks were in retaliation for the Saudi war on Yemen.

The House of Saud regime's military aircraft bombed Kamanar district in Yemen's western and coastal province of Hudaydah, with no immediate reports of casualties and damage available.

Saudi fighter jets also bombed the Political Secu-

lity Office in the northwestern province of Sa'ada as well as the Central Security Headquarters and an Air Force Base in the Red Sea port city of Hudaydah.

The House of Saud regime has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015, with the United Nations putting the death toll from the military aggression at about 10,000. The offensive was launched to reinstate Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a Saudi ally who has resigned as Yemen's president.

UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen Jamie McGoldrick said last month that the death toll from the Saudi military aggression could rise even further as some areas had no medical facilities, and that people were often buried without any official record being made.

(Source: Press TV)

Egypt, Saudi stances on Syria crisis different: Cairo

The Egyptian foreign minister says his country's attitude toward the ongoing deadly conflict in Syria differs from that of Saudi Arabia, which has been supporting militant groups fighting to unseat the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Sameh Shoukry said that terrorist groups cannot remain in Syria if peace is to be achieved in the country.

The Riyadh regime and its allies in the Persian Gulf region, particularly Qatar, have been seeking to topple the Damascus government. On the contrary, Cairo believes that the Syria crisis can only be resolved through political means.

Earlier this week, Shoukry participated at the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) meeting that was held on the sidelines of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

During the event, Shoukry underlined the importance of the resumption of Syria talks and the need to accelerate a comprehensive ceasefire in the violence-wracked state, according to Egypt's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid.

Shoukry also stressed that major powers should do more to target terrorist elements and organizations in Syria without discrimination.

Back in February, the House of Saud re-



gime confirmed for the first time that it was planning to deploy ground troops to Syria to allegedly fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Saudi military spokesman Brigadier General Ahmed al-Asiri made the announcement

in an interview with al-Arabiya TV news.

This is while Takfirim, which is the terrorist group's trademark, is largely influenced by Wahhabism, the radical ideology dominating Saudi Arabia and freely preached by Saudi clerics.

The remarks were followed by similar announcements from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain, along with hints that Qatar may also contribute to the incursion symbolically.

Reacting to the Saudi announcement, the top Egyptian diplomat emphasized at that time that it was a solo decision.

(Source: Press TV)

The Sacred Defense: 8 years of U.S.-backed war on Iran

After placing him under house arrest in June 1979, Saddam eventually executed the respected Shi'a cleric but only after forcing him to witness the rape and murder of his sister, Amina Sadr bint al-Huda. Saddam also placed the revered Ayatollah Abu al-Qasim al-Kho'i under house arrest in Najaf.

The more vicious Saddam became in his repression to assure his own security and the longevity of his regime, the more suspicious he became of everyone, including his closest advisers such as deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz, industry minister Adnan Abd al-Majid Jasim and vice chairman 'Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri. Unchallenged loyalty and obedience to Saddam was the ultimate goal, as he sought to unify Iraq in "a personality cult of awesome proportions," and towards achieving this, he began massive deportations of those Shi'as suspected of being Iranians, or to have connections with Iran, and hence seen as "threats" to the regime. Many other Shi'a were either imprisoned or fled to Iran as Saddam tried in vain to establish alternative leaders dependent on the regime.

However, failing to establish an obedient patronage network among the remaining Iraqi Shi'a leaders, Saddam, with his mentally warped perspective, felt he was left with no alternative but to launch an offensive against the source of these "threats," namely Iran, which he did at precisely noon on September 22, 1980. By ordering his technically superior armies to invade the Islamic Republic, whose own military forces were already feeling the impact of western sanctions and the resulting scarcity of spare parts and supplies, Saddam became a modern embodiment of the tyrannical Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, who ordered the execution of Imam Hussein (AS).

Iranian suspicions that Saddam received a "green light" from Washington were confirmed when investigative journalist Robert Perry revealed a confidential memo written by former U.S. secretary of state Alexander Haig referring to an April 1981 meeting with Saudi Prince Fahd. The memo indicated that Haig had learned from Fahd that U.S. president Jimmy Carter had given Saddam permission for the invasion of Iran. Of course, official sources claim Haig's account is a fabrication and for his part, Carter denies ever having given such an order.

Despite Saddam's record of bloodthirsty brutality, even against his own supporters, the U.S. took the Iraqi regime off its list of state sponsors of terrorism in February 1982

enabling the regime to legally purchase U.S. weaponry. The move by Washington removed the veil of neutrality and marked the start of open U.S. support for the Iraqi dictator. Nevertheless, three months later and with extreme sacrifice on the part of Iranians, Saddam's troops had been forced out of those parts of Iran where they had made small territorial gains in the early years of the war. Khorramshahr was liberated on May 24, 1982 and some 19,000 demoralized Iraqi troops were captured.

At this point, the leaders of Iran's Islamic government decided it was time to put an end to Saddam's regime and liberate the oppressed people of Iraq from this ruthless tyrant. As a direct result and strangely enough in consideration of events that have occurred since, the U.S. came out openly and decisively on the side of Iraq. Reasons for this are unclear, but most likely it was a combination of factors, which included Washington's fear of Iranian control of Iraqi oil fields and retaliation for Washington's perceived humiliation during the hostage crisis. In any event, the decision to aid Iraq was made in June 1982 by U.S. president Reagan, who tasked CIA director William Casey with ensuring that "Iraq had sufficient military weapons, ammunition and vehicles to avoid losing the Iran-Iraq war."

By the end of 1983, the U.S. was sharing satellite imagery of Iranian troop movements with Saddam. In December of that year, then U.S. president Ronald Reagan even sent Donald Rumsfeld, later secretary of defense under Bush II, to assure the Iraqi regime of support by Washington, which "would regard any major reversal of Iraq's fortune as a strategic defeat for the west." While the U.S. continued to insist it was neutral, former secretary of state George Shultz wrote that "our support for Iraq increased in rough proportion to Iran's military success, plain and simple."

Shultz, incidentally, was president of Bechtel Corporation, the main contractor of one of Iraq's petrochemical plants capable of producing Saddam's chemical weapons. Shultz also lobbied for the delivery of Bell helicopters to Iraq for "crop spraying." These were likely used by Saddam in the 1988 chemical attack on the Kurdish village of Halabja, in which 5,000 people were killed.

With his forces routed from Khuzestan, Saddam began the so-called tanker war by mounting an attack on Iranian tankers and the strategic Kharg Island oil terminal. A series of Iraqi assaults and Iranian respons-

es escalated to the point that in 1987, Kuwait, a major supporter of Saddam's regime, requested protection for its tankers. Washington offered Kuwait the use of the American flag on its tankers, and in so doing, made a commitment to protecting Kuwaiti oil shipments, which led to direct clashes between U.S. warships and the Iranian Navy in the Persian Gulf.

These clashes, which were tantamount to an undeclared U.S. war against Iran, resulted in tragedy when on July 3, 1988, the hothead U.S. naval commander of the Aegis missile cruiser USS Vincennes fired two heat-seeking missiles at Iran Air Flight 655, blasting the civilian aircraft out of the sky and killing all 290 passengers and crew on board, including 66 children. Concerning this brazen attack, Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (President of Iran from 1989 to 1997) later wrote, "I was certain Iran could not prevail in a war against both Iraq and the United States, while they have no shame to use chemical weapons and attack civilian airplanes."

Ayatollah Rafsanjani was correct. In a marginal note to his secretary of defense, Reagan wrote, "An Iranian victory is unacceptable." To that end, the U.S. not only supplied Iraq with intelligence, weaponry and strategic technical advice, but also 14 separate biological warfare agents and cyanide, as well as sarin and tabun nerve agents, whose use, according to senior defense intelligence officer Colonel W. Patrick Lang, "was not a matter of deep strategic concern" to Reagan and his staff.

Apparently, Lang was correct. For on the very day that Rumsfeld again met with Tariq Aziz on March 24, 1984, UN investigators had concluded that Iraq had used mustard gas and tabun nerve gas against Iranians. Nevertheless, U.S. officials were pleased with Washington-Baghdad relations and recommended the resumption of full diplomatic relations, which occurred that November. The Pentagon did not appear to care, either, since gas "was just another way of killing people."

Saddam's Iraqi regime emerged from the 8-year-long war decimated militarily and financially with some \$40 billion in debt. In less than three years, Saddam's forces would be driven out of Kuwait by his former U.S. benefactor; in fifteen years, Saddam would be toppled by an American invasion. The Islamic Republic of Iran, on the other hand, emerged a strong, united and independent country with demonstrated defense capabilities, and today is stronger than ever.

INTERVIEW

Egypt court sentences 7 to hang for shooting officer

An Egyptian court on Saturday sentenced seven men to hang for killing a police general in the unrest following the 2013 military overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi.

It was the defendants' second trial, after having won an appeal against an initial sentencing. They can appeal one last time.

General Nabil Farag was shot dead in September 2013 when police raided the village of Kerdassa near Cairo where Morsi's supporters had holed up more than two months after his overthrow.

Farag died from a single 9mm bullet to the chest.

The Cairo court sentenced five other defendants to 10 years in prison and acquitted another one.

Morsi's ouster, after a year in power, unleashed a crackdown on his supporters that saw hundreds killed and thousands detained.

On August 14, 2013, police killed hundreds of extremists while dispersing two protest camps in Cairo.

Mobs retaliated by attacking policemen and Christian properties. More than 10 policemen were killed in Kerdassa.

Courts have since sentenced hundreds to death over the violence, but many, including the now-detained Morsi, have won retrials.

Seven death sentences have been carried out, including for six men convicted of carrying out attacks for an al-Qaeda-inspired militant organization that later pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

(Source: AP)

Pakistani air force jet crashes, killing pilot

A Pakistan Air Force jet crashed on Saturday while on a training mission in the country's northwest, killing the pilot, the military said.



The F-7 aircraft went down near the town of Jamrud, near the entrance to the Khyber Pass, and Flight Lieutenant Amer Shazad was killed, the air force said in a statement.

The military has set up an investigation into the cause of the crash, which it said caused no civilian injuries on the ground.

Pakistan's armed forces have had several air accidents in the past 18 months, including a crash that killed female jet pilot in another training exercise in November.

In May 2015, a military helicopter carrying diplomats to inspect a tourism project crashed, killing seven people, including the ambassadors of Norway and Philippines.

Another military helicopter being used as an air ambulance crashed in August 2015 near the northern district of Mansehra, killing 12 people.

(Source: Daily Star)

Iran-U.S. relationship, a mutual mistrust, former Iranian ambassador says

Mousavian believes the third issue between Iran and the U.S. is the question of human rights questioning, "If Americans worry about human rights, why are they supporting dictators such as the Shah before the Iranian Revolution and Mubarak before Arab Springs?"

Mousavian added Iran is one of the rare countries where citizens can vote to elect their president and legislators in the Middle East. At the contrary, almost all American allies in the region are not democratic.

"Even the supreme leader is elected indirectly by the people," Mousavian said.

Mousavian does not understand why America approached Iran to try to produce weapons of mass destruction, especially when Iran has signed many years ago the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention.

"If the U.S. wants to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, why have they established a strategic relation with countries like Pakistan, India, and Israel that are not members of the NPT and have nuclear bombs?" Mousavian asked.

Furthermore, Mousavian also said Iran is accused of supporting terrorism but all the main terrorist groups that the U.S. and Europe are fighting such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS are following the very conservative view of Islam Sunni: the Wahhabism, coming directly from Saudi Arabia, which was never sanctioned.

"The U.S. publicly recognized the problem, but in practice they do nothing," Mousavian said, citing several statements of American officials such as current presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Former ambassador Mousavian added Saudi Arabia as the third military budget in the world after the U.S. and China but before Russia and other European countries.

Then, Mousavian said the best way to improve the Iran-U.S. relationship is first to totally implement the nuclear deal approved by the United Nations. The U.S. should stop supporting dictatorships (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc.) that spread terrorism. Then there is still for a discussion for removing other Iranian sanctions.

"Cooperation with the U.S. will have a great impact on other issues such as with Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan," Mousavian said.

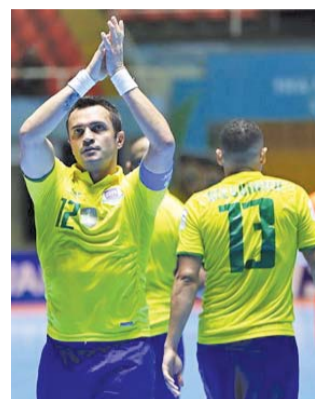
(Source: khabaronline.ir)

FOOTBALL

The Week in Quotes

«I'm very surprised to see him with Conte as a manager. I think of Conte centre-backs, the last few years in Italy with Juventus, very solid, know how to play in a zonal system, dependable, and I think David Luiz is obviously a big talent. But I would have never put those two together. There's something bizarre about it. It's a bit strange. I'm trying to think of an analogy to describe it. It's a bit like me with a Miss World.»

Former Manchester United defender Gary Neville explains his confusion to Sky Sports at Chelsea's decision to re-sign defender David Luiz
"Without Leo we all lose. Football loses."



Barcelona coach Luis Enrique on Lionel Messi's groin injury in a post-match news conference following Barça's 1-1 draw with Atlético Madrid at the Camp Nou in La Liga

"I couldn't hold them back," he explained afterwards, having regained his composure. "It just got too much for me. I've never scored before and I realised

there and then that we'd won the match.»

Azerbaijan goalkeeper Rovshan Huseynli speaks with FIFA.com moments after his historic 13-8 extra-time win over Thailand in the Round of 16 at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016

"What Deeney did against West Ham was a great goal. Only a few players can do it and one of them was Maradona."

Watford manager Walter Mazzarri compares Hornets striker Troy Deeney's superb goal against West Ham to the skills of Diego Maradona

«This position is so difficult to play. You need leadership. It's about working with your [midfield] partner, understanding each other. I do like N'Golo Kanté, but whether he'll be better than me at it I don't know. He needs time to learn the position, to learn more about the game. He's a young player I like, but I hope he doesn't get to be better than I was!»

Former Chelsea midfielder Claude Makelele speaks with UEFA.com about comparisons made between himself and new Blues signing N'Golo Kanté

«Yes, it's true that my mother has a go at me when I don't track back. We are very, very close and she demands a lot from me, which is great. She only praises me if I have done something worthy of praise. I am really happy to have a mum like that, who really cares. She always tells me the truth and her sincerity helps me a lot.»

Manchester City and Brazil forward Gabriel Jesus tells the Guardian about his close relationship with his mother.

"He talks a lot on the pitch, but he talks a bit like a robot, kind of like Terminator. It's sort of in slow motion. You can see his influence on their team. He'll tell a few of the players that are rushing past him to just calm down and relax on the ball. «You can see straight away that he has the respect of everyone at the club.»

Northampton defender Gabriel Zakuani gives a unique insight into playing against Manchester United striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic to the BBC World Service following his side's 3-1 defeat to United in the EFL Cup

"I pictured my career going in a different way, but it didn't. So I'm going to make the best out of the rest of my career and do the best I can. There are many goals I have set myself over the years. Many things I have said and been killed for. I actually don't regret saying I want to be the best striker in the world, because that's what everyone wants. It's just that no one wants to say it. It has haunted me. I was very young and I might have said it too early, before I'd proved I was in that category – or could get in that category. But I'm here now and I want to reboot, and get back to just playing. I am not saying I have never done anything wrong, because I have. But I know football makes me happy whatever level I play and I think I'll play football all my life.»

Denmark international and Nottingham Forest forward Nicklas Bendtner speaks with The Mirror ahead of his meeting with former club Arsenal in the EFL Cup, which the Gunners went on to win 4-0 at the City Ground in the EFL Cup

«These goals are of no real value; they are just helping me to improve my record. If I was able to change everything I did in this tournament, including the goals, and be able to trade it to become world champion, I would in an instant.»

Brazil futsal legend Falcao tells FIFA.com he would trade all his goals for another world title, following his nation's shock exit from the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 after defeat on penalties to Iran

«I consider myself half Spanish. I miss not just the club [Atlético] but Madrid and the country. Since the first minute, I fell in love with Spain -- the people, the way of life, the food. I have kept up the late dinners, the siesta, and most of the television I watch is Spanish. When I left Spain I had it very clear in my mind that I would return one day. I have a contract with Chelsea for three more seasons. In 2018, when I begin my last season, I will have to evaluate if it's better to renew or to leave.»

Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois speaks with Marca about his love for the country

«Neymar is an extraordinary player. He won the Olympic Games after being criticised in Brazil after the two first games. He has found in Barcelona the right place to express his talent. Everyone has their own style and their own way of playing. He has been criticised, even in his personal life. He enjoys himself, sings, dances... and destroys teams. They can keep criticising him, the kid responds where he must respond.»

(Source: FIFA)

Football tricks on the largest screen in the world

Imagine a screen measuring 40,000m² in total on one of Moscow's most recognisable buildings. This is exactly what the crowd gathered on Sparrow Hills in the Russian capital were treated to, as they first caught a glimpse of the Official Mascot candidates for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™.

On Friday at exactly 20:18, spectators who had come for the Circle of Light Moscow International Festival, held at Moscow State University (MSU), laid eyes on the three characters competing to be the fun face of the tournament in two years' time.

The images were shown on the front of the main building of MSU, one of the largest structures in the whole of the city. Built in 1953, this university is the alma mater of some of Russia's brightest talents, but it also has a direct link to the upcoming football tournament. Moscow's FIFA Fan Fest for the 2018 World Cup will be held here and the view from MSU above the city opens out onto a stunning panorama that includes the Luzhniki Stadium, where the Opening Match and Final will take place.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the audience at this impressive multimedia show was made up of students at the university.

"Honestly speaking I thought the rainy weather would spoil the celebration. But I forgot about it when the show began", 19-year-old Inna Kosheleva said. "I'm surprised how cool it looked. I about froze, but got the brightest pleasure."

Using projectors and lasers, the figures of a tiger, a wolf and a cat appeared on what collectively was the biggest screen anywhere in the world. In just 45 seconds, they revealed themselves to the amazed audience and nimbly skipped between the three projections, even performing a few tricks with a football.

"A tiger, a cat or a wolf? All looked so impressive that I can't choose. I'll go back home, study all the candidates profiles and look at the videos once more and then I'll decide", 20-year old Grigory Rudnev said.

A massive football celebration will en-



gulf Russia in just under two years, but one of the most important steps for the World Cup host nation is already underway. Over the next four weeks, Russia will get a delightful taste of what is to come as the country chooses which character is best suited to represent the tournament and the nation as a whole.

■ Dreams coming true for Mascot creators

Millions of fans are still only dreaming about the 2018 World Cup, but the dreams of three art students, whose designs formed the basis of the prospective mascots, have already come true.

"The campaign to design the mascot taught me to believe in myself," revealed

Ekaterina Bocharova, from the Siberian town of Strezhevoy in Tomsk Oblast, to FIFA.com. "It also taught me to believe that I can make things that people actually like. However, the main thing it taught me was to do what I love and then everything will work out.

"My wolf also has his own dreams and desires, but he's also driven and responsible. I created him to be an example for young fans and to inspire them to achieve things they never thought they could do."

"Of course, my little tiger is simply mad about football," said Valeriya Taburenko, from Obninsk near Moscow, about her creation. "The dynamic qualities of the sport really enthralled him, but aside from football

he wants to reach the stars and be an astronaut as well! He believes that soon the World Cup will go beyond Earth and might even unite people from different planets."

"My character is agile, energetic and never misses a single ball, but at the same time he never loses his feline tendencies, so sometimes he might stop to play with it for a bit," revealed the cat's creator Sofia Podlesnykh, from Staraya Russa in Novgorod Oblast. "When I drew him, I hadn't thought of his life story, but now he has a family, brothers and even a birthday. Taking part in this project taught me a lot of new things, like developing a mascot from the initial sketches to the moment it comes to life."

(Source: Reuters)

Manchester United's Paul Pogba: I never look at the newspapers



Paul Pogba said he had not been distracted by negative media coverage surrounding Manchester United as he expressed his delight at scoring his first goal for the club.

United have endured a difficult spell after successive defeats to Manchester City, Feyenoord and Watford prior to a hard-fought 3-1 EFL Cup win over Northampton Town, but they put in an impressive showing on Saturday as they dispatched champions Leicester City 4-1.

Asked if the players had been affected by the criticism, he told Sky Sports: «Me, I never look at the newspapers. I always say one thing: It's at the end we will see. So at the end you will see.»

Pogba, who returned to United from Juventus in a world-record transfer this summer, headed home United's fourth from a corner before the break to open his account for the club.

He said: «I'm very happy for the result and for this goal. I hope it's not going to be the last one so just carry on. Keep doing what we did today.»

He added: «We were very focused. We knew it was going to be difficult. The first four games we were good then after we knew it was going to be difficult.

«Today we showed on the pitch a very big performance for the team. We are happy. We want to carry on like this.»

(Source: ESPN)

Yaya Touré's father tells Man City boss Pep Guardiola: 'Come down to Earth'



The father of Manchester City midfielder Yaya Touré urged City manager Pep Guardiola to "come back down to Earth" and give his son another chance, The Sun has reported.

Guardiola this week said he would not pick midfielder Touré again unless he received an apology from Seluk for comments he made in the media.

The Sun quoted the 33-year-old's father Mory as saying: "I'm worried about him. It's a problem. We ask Guardiola to come down to Earth. He's the boss. I ask him for forgiveness, to let my son do his work."

Guardiola has said Touré will not play for City again until Seluk apologises for remarks he made when the player was

not included in City's squad for the Champions League. But the agent has stepped up his war of words with the former Barcelona manager and on Friday accused him of treating players "like dogs."

"He won many titles with Barcelona but Yaya also won the same titles with Barcelona. Pep thinks now he has won everything and he can do what he wants.

"For me, very strange things [have happened] in Manchester City because Yaya played with them many years, [Vincent] Kompany played many years, and [in] comes a new coach and says: 'OK, these players [are] out like dogs.'" (Source: Soccernet)

'The Big Ticket' Garnett bids adieu after 21 seasons

Minnesota Timberwolves forward Kevin Garnett announced his retirement after 21 NBA seasons on Friday, leaving behind a legacy of ultimate intensity and defensive prowess.

Garnett brought down the curtain on his career via a farewell video on Instagram.

"I'm just thankful man, I can't ever put that into words," the 40-year-old said. "I'm just thankful to everybody and the love. I never would've thought that people would love me like this. For it to be a reality is just something else."

Garnett's departure is the latest in a year which also saw future Hall of Fame players Kobe Bryant and Tim Duncan bid adieu to the NBA.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that Garnett, who was signed for \$8 million this season, had reached a contract settlement with the Timberwolves earlier on Friday.

"It has been a real joy to watch KG come into the league as a young man and watch him develop his skills to become one of the very best in the NBA," Timberwolves owner Glen Taylor said in a statement.

"I have treasured the opportunity to see him grow as a leader. I wish him continued success in the next chapter of



his life. His Minnesota fans will always cherish the memories he has provided."

Garnett, easily the most productive player in franchise history, spent 13 1/2 of his 21 NBA seasons with Minnesota.

He was drafted out of high school in 1995 and his success helped usher in an era of players foregoing college to leap into the NBA – LeBron James and Bryant chief among them.

Garnett earned more than \$330 million in his career, the

most by any player in league history, but it was his intensity as well as his pay and production that earned him the nickname "The Big Ticket".

He was one of basketball's indelible personalities, known for his constant trash-talking and emotion. His pre-game ritual involved bumping his head on the basket support while muttering to himself.

After the tip-off, he was one of the most versatile power forwards in NBA history, showcasing his ability to dribble, shoot, pass and guard every position on the court despite being nearly seven-foot.

A 15-time All-Star, Garnett ranked 17th with 26,071 career points, ninth in career rebounds with 14,662 and 17th in blocked shots with 2,037.

Garnett spent his first 12 seasons in Minnesota, capturing the league's MVP in 2004, before joining the Boston Celtics where he cemented his status by winning an NBA championship in 2008.

He spent a short stint with the Brooklyn Nets before returning to Minnesota in 2015 to finish his stellar career back where it all started.

(Source: Reuters)

AFC U-16 Championship QF: IR Iran v Vietnam

Coach Abbas Chamanian is sweating over the fitness of captain Aref Alipour ahead of Islamic Republic of Iran's AFC U-16 Championship India 2016 quarter-final clash with Vietnam at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Sunday.

Defender Alipour (pictured, left) starred in Iran's 3-2 opening-day win over Saudi Arabia and the subsequent 1-1 draw with United Arab Emirates, before sitting out of the 3-0 victory against India that guaranteed Chamanian's team top spot in Group A.

The 2008 champions were grateful for stand-in captain Mohammad Sharifi, who scored two penalties in the final 10 minutes, one in stoppage time, to see off the hosts and advance to the last eight on top of the standings by virtue of goal difference.

"After the India game we analysed Vietnam and have seen they are a strong team with good tactics," said Chamanian.

"We don't have an easy game, we must prepare for a very, very hard game as they have a good defence and can counter-attack well. We will need to play very well to win this match."

Whoever advances to the semi-finals will also book their ticket to the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup in India as one of the tournament's four highest-placed teams.

"We are happy to be in the quarter-finals but we have the aim of making it to the World Cup next year," added Chamanian. "After that we want to make sure we reach the final."

Opponents Vietnam are competing in only their second ever knockout stage at the continental tournament having also appeared in the last eight as hosts and debutants on route to reaching the semi-finals back in 2000.

"It was a very big effort from our play-



ers to get to this stage," said assistant coach Luu Danh Minh, who has fitness concerns over defender Nguyen Huynh Sang. "It took a lot of determination and teamwork."

"We know they are a strong team with quality players and have been successful in Asia with both their senior and youth teams. We respect them and it will be an interesting game."

The Southeast Asians recovered well from a 7-0 drubbing by Japan on Matchday One by coming from 2-0 down to defeat Australia 3-2 three days later.

And Dinh The Nam's side again came from behind to overhaul Kyrgyzstan 3-1 in their final group game to advance as Group B runners-up.

"One of our strong points is our spirit,"

added Luu. "We came back very strongly against both Australia and Kyrgyzstan after the coach told the players to keep calm."

"The target for us was to gain experience, and we didn't set such a high target like the World Cup. We go into the match with the players feeling fresh and under almost no pressure."

(Source: AFC)

The world's strongest Paralympian gets stronger



Iran's Siamand Rahman who wrote his name into the history books after doing what no man had ever done before and got even stronger.

With the eyes of the world on him in the men's over 107kg, Iran's Siamand Rahman had a lot to prove as he looked to reach the mystical 300kg.

Dubbed the 'world's strongest Paralympian' for his amazing feats in the years leading up to Rio 2016, Rahman delivered a stunning performance.

He lifted 300kg, 305kg and 310kg to claim gold and add a total of 14kg onto his previous world record.

With his mark standing at 296kg before the Paralympics, Rahman came determined to reach 300kg.

But he surprised everyone by reaching and then surpassing it with 305kg followed by a final 310kg lift. That is the equivalent of two baby elephants or a Siberian tiger.

(Source: Paralympic)

Yahya Golmohammadi quits as Iran's Zobahan coach



Yahya Golmohammadi quit as Zobahan of Isfahan coach on Saturday after three defeats in the Iran Professional League (IPL).

The former Iran defender has parted company with the Isfahan-based club by mutual consent.

Golmohammadi's assistant, Mojtaba Hosseini, took charge of the team as interim coach.

The 45-year-old coach, who was appointed as Zobahan coach in May 2014, inspired the team to win Iran's

Hazfi Cup twice.

"I had good memories with the Zobahan but I decided to leave the team since it's time to go," Golmohammadi told the Tasnim News Agency.

"I love Zobahan and I wish them all the best. I would thank the fans, staff and the team's players as well," he added.

Golmohammadi has also coached Saba and Persepolis in the Iranian Professional League.

(Source: Tasnim)

Anthony Joshua could face Wladimir Klitschko if Tyson Fury loses belts

Anthony Joshua is ready and willing to take on Wladimir Klitschko later this year if Tyson Fury is stripped of his title belts, promoter Eddie Hearn has said.

The heavyweight title rematch between Fury and Klitschko was cancelled for a second time on Friday night after the Briton was declared "medically unfit to fight".

That clash had been due to take place in Manchester on 29 October but Fury, whose previous attempt at a rematch with Klitschko in July was abandoned after the WBA and WBO champion sustained an ankle injury, will now undergo treatment on his condition.

It is not known how long Fury will be out for, but undefeated IBF champion Joshua - who is in line to make the second defence of his title in Manchester on 26 November - has thrown his hat in the ring to fight Ukrainian Klitschko.

However, Joshua's promoter Hearn insists their primary goal is still an all-British showdown against Fury, and hopes the 28-year-old Mancunian does not end up having his crowns taken away by the governing bodies.

Hearn told Sky Sports News: "From our side, if Wladimir Klitschko against Anthony Joshua can be made for the WBA and the IBF belts, for November 26, we are taking that fight, no question."

"But, as always in boxing, it's a very complicated process, there's so much that needs to happen and I don't



feel like they'll strip Tyson Fury just yet. I hope they don't, because we want the winner of that fight, Fury against Klitschko.

"We want to fight Tyson Fury really, that's a unification fight between two Brits in the heavyweight division, that's never happened before and it'll never again."

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Hearn said the 26-year-old 2012 Olympic champion is not the only boxer who will be looking to push their case in Fury's absence, though.

"So we hope he gets better soon but all these other contenders now are going to be like piranhas, biting at

the governing body saying, 'We want to have our shot, 'We've been waiting too long'. Klitschko will turn around and say, 'Hang about, for 12 months I've been waiting for my rematch and now it hasn't happened,' he said.

Hearn expects to know more in the coming week, and said the next few days could be "really interesting".

He said: "I think there's going to be a statement on Tuesday from team Fury to see how long he's going to be out for, and that's going to be one of the defining factors in terms of the governing body making their decision on whether Fury keeps the belts."

"So hopefully he can get back in the ring soon, fight Klitschko, but if not I spoke to AJ (Joshua) last night and said 'You know, you could jump in and fight Klitschko', and he said 'Let's do it'."

"I think he believes that Klitschko is certainly there for the taking, it's a great fight. We've got Joseph Parker, who is Anthony's mandatory, that's a great fight, which could be made for November as well."

"These next three or four days are going to be really interesting, breaking down the jigsaw, planning Anthony Joshua's next move, but the heavyweight division is non-stop action, non-stop news and non-stop drama, and to be honest that's boxing all over."

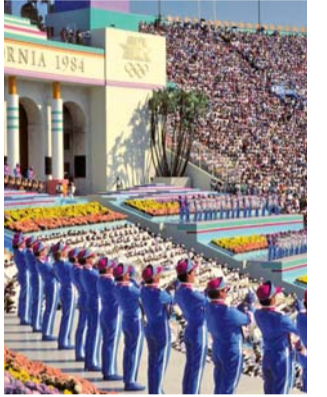
(Source: Guardian)

FOOTBALL

LA finds itself a contender in an Olympic lottery most cities want to lose

So now that another city has all but dropped out of the running for the 2024 Olympics it is becoming more likely the Games will come back to Los Angeles (Paris still remains the favorite with the bookmakers). Maybe that's just as well. LA may be one of the few places in the world capable of hosting an Olympics anymore.

Earlier this week, Rome became the latest major municipality burdened with debt and failing infrastructure to distance itself from the 2024 competition. Its mayor Virginia Raggi called a press conference and declared: "Our city is unlivable, we need to focus on that." Rome now joins Hamburg, Boston and Oslo as cities that have decided that hosting an Olympics is a waste of money and resources. Who can afford to build stadiums that become irrelevant after the party has moved on? Rio built a whole Olympic park that has a dubious future and a train that connects a tourist enclave with a well-to-do suburb where residents live behind gates and travel in SUVs. It's not surprising that most cities see little value in being hijacked in return for a few months of being a hashtag.



Los Angeles' only competition for 2024 is Paris and Budapest, although the latter is the longest of long shots. For a city that didn't even win its own country's bidding process and is only in the running because Boston renounced its winning bid, LA's rise is remarkable. But the city's survival in this contest shows how ill-equipped the rest of the world is to host a modern Games. LA hasn't won its way into the final two for the 2024 Games, it has outlasted the places who can't manage an Olympics.

The LA organizers are promising a profit from the 2024 Olympics, something the city produced the last time it hosted the Games in 1984. This is also a feat most host cities have been unable to replicate, taking on enormous debt for everything from facilities to dormitories to extra security. But LA offers one critical element that most contending cities do not: stadiums.

The greatest asset LA has in its bid is that it doesn't have to build anything. The Coliseum, erected in advance of the 1932 Games, will be the Olympic Stadium, benefiting from an already-planned renovation. Scattered throughout the rest of the city are enough basketball arenas, soccer stadiums, tennis facilities and recreation centers to host everything an Olympics needs. Subways constructed over the last three decades will connect most venues even in the sprawl of a city where drivers can linger in traffic for hours.

Advertisement

LA is not the prettiest or most exotic Olympic destination. On many days it lingers under a blanket of smog. Its message probably won't be as compelling as a healing Paris or still-developing Budapest but it also won't go broke getting ready for an Olympics.

Some cities are built this way. An explosion of professional sports teams and provincial concerns have allowed more high-end sports facilities to be built in LA than almost any other city. A dedication to history and architecture have kept buildings like the Rose Bowl and Coliseum from being torn down as they would have elsewhere. On Thursday, the LA organizing committee announced its plans to use several more existing facilities in the nearby city of Long Beach. The bid's leaders boast of a "fiscally-responsible" Olympics. For reasons like this, LA becomes a contender in a lottery the rest of the world wants to lose. It's one of the few places that can make an Olympics work.

In the future the International Olympic Committee will find fewer and fewer bidding cities. More mayors like Raggi will say things like she did this week when she declared: "These Olympics are not sustainable they will bring only debt. We don't want sports to be a pretext for more cement foundations in the city. We won't allow it."

Los Angeles has a wealth of concrete foundations erected for sports. They may well bring the city an Olympics that may or may not be a good civic idea. But at least the Games would go to a place that can handle them.

(Source: Guardian)

Wozniacki ends Radwanska reign to reach Tokyo final

Caroline Wozniacki outlasted Agnieszka Radwanska 4-6 7-5 6-4 in a dog fight of a semi-final at the Pan Pacific Open on Saturday to end the Pole's reign at the Ariake Coliseum.

The former world number one prevailed in two hours and 50 minutes of hard-fought tennis and will meet local wildcard Naomi Osaka or Ukraine's Elina Svitolina in Sunday's final.

World number four Radwanska served for the match in the second set but then lost five straight games as Wozniacki levelled up the contest and took an early break in the decider.

There were 13 breaks of serve in the topsy-turvy encounter, however, and it was not until a fourth match point, which Radwanska slapped into the net for her 43rd unforced error, that the Dane was certain of her place in the final.

"I think every time I play her we play really tough matches," Wozniacki said in a courtside interview.

"She played really well today and I was lucky to win that second set and then we just fought really hard, both of us, in the third."

Reduced to 28th in the world rankings after a string of injuries, Wozniacki reached the semi-final of the U.S. Open earlier this month and should be confident of clinching her second title in her third Pan Pacific Open final on Sunday.

Japanese teenager Osaka takes on Svitolina in her first tour semi-final later on Saturday.

(Source: Reuters)



Poem of the day

Come, come, whoever you are.
Wonderer, worshipper, lover of leaving.
It doesn't matter.

Rumi

Prayer Times

Noon: 11:56 Evening: 6:15 Dawn: 4:32 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:55 (tomorrow)

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NEWS

Libraries of Iran and Russia ink MOU

TEHRAN — The National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) and the Russian State Library have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance bilateral cultural cooperation.



The MOU was inked on Thursday by NLAI director Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri and Vladimir I. Gnezdilov, the acting Director General of the Russian State Library in Moscow.

Based on the MOU, the two sides agreed to hold conferences, workshops and educational courses as well as exhibits.

In addition, they agreed to reinforce friendly relations and boost cooperation in the preservation of historical documents and the maintenance of the archives in the two libraries.

Salehi Amiri also pointed to his organization as an up-to-date library with modern equipment.

Gnezdilov said that Iran and Russia have preserved a great treasure of their history in the two libraries.

In addition, Iranian ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanai attended the program.

Salehi Amiri went to Russia to attend a two-day seminar held on Iranian studies in Eurasia on Thursday and Friday.

“Good Friends” crew honors actor Jamshid Mashayekhi

TEHRAN — The cast and crew of “Good Friends” came together during a special screening of the director Majid Qarizadeh’s drama at Tehran’s Tamasha Cinema on Friday to honor veteran actor Jamshid Mashayekhi for his lifetime achievements.

“Good Friends” starring Mashayekhi had its premiere in Iran last week.

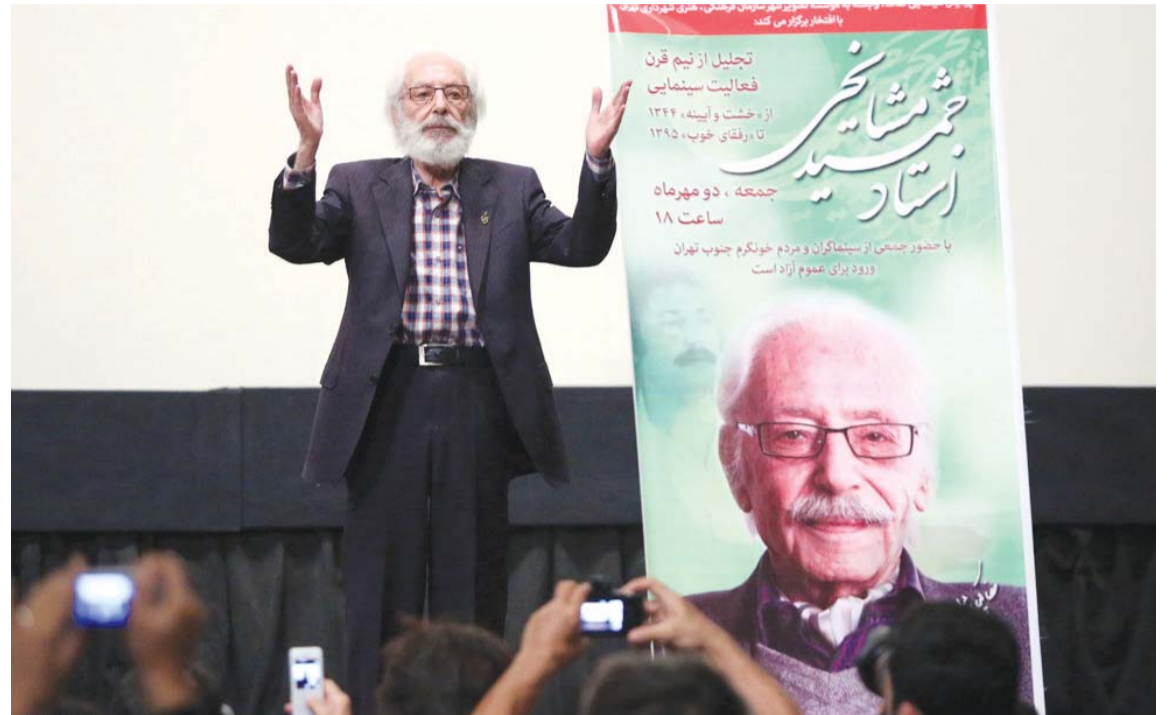
“I thank everybody. I never care about separation of the city’s districts into poor and affluent areas; everywhere in Iran is my home,” Mashayekhi said at the theater, which is located in a poor Tehran neighborhood.

Qarizadeh who was in attendance at the meeting made a short speech.

“Both old and new directors of Iranian cinema are keen to work with master Mashayekhi,” said Qarizadeh who had previously collaborated with the 82-year-old actor in his “Grandfather” and “The Restless”.

“I had the honor of working with him for the first time over thirty years ago when I began to make ‘Grandfather’. The master gave me the opportunity as a young filmmaker to have him in my film,” he added.

“Good Friends” tells the story of a veteran actor who has been forgotten due to his rare appearances in film projects. Year after year, his colleagues plan to honor him with a special ceremony, but they don’t know where they can find him.



Jamshid Mashayekhi acknowledges the audiences during a ceremony organized by the cast and crew of “Good Friends” at Tehran’s Tamasha Cinema on September 23, 2016 to honor the veteran actor for his lifetime achievements. (Mehr/Masud Saki)

Lian musician Mohsen Sharifian joins Getak for Vienna concert

TEHRAN — Mohsen Sharifian, the vocalist and bagpipe player of Lian, a band that performs the rhythmical Bushehri music of southern Iran, has joined Getak, another band from Bushehr, to perform a concert in the Austrian capital Vienna.

The concert will be performed at Sargfabrik on September 26, Sharifian announced in a post on Facebook.

Getak also features Habib Meftah Bushehri on percussion and vocal, Mohammad Khodadadi on key



Lian bandleader Mohsen Sharifian performs in an undated photo.

and vocal, and Mahan Mirarab on guitar and oud.

“It is difficult to get a visa for the Lian members so I cannot take the band to overseas concerts,” he said and added, “However, the band will continue to work strongly.”

Getak takes its name from a specific type of bush that grows in salt marshes despite all environmental limitations.

Bushehr is home to various tribes and nations that migrated to the city for different reasons. Music in the region was strongly influenced by the African slaves who were brought to southern Iranian cities centuries ago.

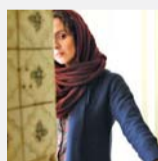
NEWS IN BRIEF



Indian festival screening Iranian movies

TEHRAN — A lineup of Iranian movies are currently on screen at the 2nd All Lights India International Film Festival (ALLIFF), which opened in Cochin, India on Saturday. “Road to Perdition” directed by Yaser Talebi, “Rice Cake” by Mahdi Hosseinvand and “Hura” by Gholamreza Sagharchian are among the films selected for the official section. In addition “Burglar Alarm” by Mani Masumi will be screened in the short film competition.

“A Report about Mina” by Kaveh Mazaheri and “Anaa” by Asal Gharib will be shown in the documentary section. Farzad Motamen’s drama “The Long Farewell” is scheduled to be screened in the non-competitive section of the event, which runs until September 27.



Iranian films competing in Canadian festival

TEHRAN — Three Iranian films are competing in the Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF), which is currently underway in the Canadian city.

Asghar Farhadi’s acclaimed drama “The Salesman” is the highlight of the three. The movie won awards for best screenplay by Farhadi and best actor by Shahab Hosseini at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in May.

Majid Barzegar’s “A Very Ordinary Citizen” and Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami’s acclaimed documentary “Sonita” are scheduled to be screened.

Over 200 movies by filmmakers from around the world have been selected for various sections of the festival, which comes to an end on October 2.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

Mehr/Mahmud Rahimi



Shahab Hosseini gestures after accepting the best actor award for his portrayal of Abbas Babai in “Desire to Fly”, Yadollah Samadi’s docudrama about the fighter pilot who was martyred in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, at the opening ceremony of the 14th International Resistance Film Festival at Tehran’s Andisheh Hall on September 23, 2016.

“Scent of Lemon at Dawn” to go on screen at Australian festival

TEHRAN — Iranian director Azadeh Bizargiti’s documentary “The Scent of Lemon at Dawn” will go on screen at the Women’s Media Arts and Film Festival, which will be held in Sydney, Australia on October 1 and 2.

The documentary is about the lives of five women who became chemically injured after Iraqi aircraft dropped mustard gas bombs on the Iranian city of Sardasht in 1987 during the Iran-Iraq war.

In addition, the film will be showcased at Iran’s Institute for Women’s Studies and Research today on the occasion of the Sacred Defense Week, the anniversary of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The screening of the film will be



followed by a review session by former MP Elaheh Kulai.

Reagan auction items sell for 10 times estimate in New York

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A chunk of the Berlin Wall and a pair of cowboy boots that belonged to late U.S. President Ronald Reagan sold for 10 times their estimated value at a New York auction that brought in more than \$5.7 million dollars.

Christie’s auctioneers said on Friday that more than 1,200 bidders from all over the world registered for the two-day sale of items from the private collection of Ronald and Nancy Reagan.

The 25 inch (63 cm) long, graffiti-covered fragment of the Berlin Wall, signed by Reagan, sold for \$277,500 to an undisclosed buyer. It had been expected to fetch up to \$20,000.

The wall fragment was considered to have particular significance because of Reagan’s 1987 speech in West Berlin, in which he famously urged then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall”

Nancy Reagan died in March of congestive heart failure at the age of 94, 12 years after Ronald Reagan, one of the most popular U.S. presidents, succumbed to Alzheimer’s disease.

Their personal items were sold by the family trust to benefit the Ronald Reagan Presidential foundation and library in California.

Reagan’s cowboy boots, a gift from Western movie actor Rex Allen, sold for \$199,500 compared to a pre-sale estimate of \$20,000, while at \$319,500, the top lot was a Bulgari diamond, sapphire and ruby ring inspired by the Stars and Stripes national flag that Nancy Reagan wore on July 4, 1986.

“The market’s response to this landmark collection sale has been remarkable, with the overall results far exceeding pre-sale expectations,” said Brook Hazelton, president of Christie’s America.

Daniel Radcliffe not interested in revisiting Harry Potter role

LONDON (Reuters) — Pottermania may be alive and well thanks to upcoming Harry Potter spinoff film “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” and a hit London play, but actor Daniel Radcliffe says he has no interest in revisiting his role as the boy wizard.

Asked about speculation that there could be a movie version of the London play “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child”, Radcliffe, 27, said no-one had contacted him about a new film.

“Nobody has said anything to me about ... revitalizing the films, so I don’t know,” Radcliffe told Reuters in London on Friday.

“Monty Python”actor-director Terry Jones diagnosed with dementia

LONDON (Reuters) — Actor and director Terry Jones, a founding member of Britain’s zany Monty Python comedy team, has been diagnosed with a form of dementia that restricts his capacity to speak, his representative said.

Jones, 74, is a member of “Monty Python’s Flying Circus,” formed in the late 1960s with John Cleese, Eric Idle, Graham Chapman, Michael Palin and Terry Gilliam.

A spokesperson for Jones said the comedian had been

diagnosed with primary progressive aphasia, which is a variant of frontotemporal dementia.

“This illness affects his ability to communicate and he is no longer able to give interviews,” the representative said in a statement on Thursday.

The National Aphasia Association describes primary progressive aphasia as a neurological disorder of language that commonly progresses to a near total inability to speak.

It is not a form of Alzheimer’s disease.

“Most people with PPA maintain ability to take care of themselves, pursue hobbies, and, in some instances, remain employed,” the association says on its website.

The Monty Python television shows, with sketches about dead parrots and the Ministry of Silly Walks, were revered for their originality and are now ranked among the best TV shows of all time.