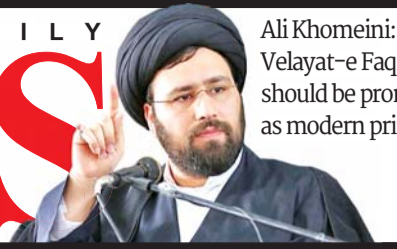


TEHRAN TIMES

Ali Khomeini: Velayat-e Faqih should be promoted as modern principle



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Leader outlines election guidelines, calls for transparency

POLITICS TEHRAN — Having consulted with the Expediency Council, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei has outlined elections guidelines months before the Iranians will take to the ballot box to have their say.

The announcement, carried on the official website of the Supreme Leader on Saturday, is in line with Article 110 of Iran's Constitution. →2

Iran targeting a diverse market for exports: TPO head

By Ebrahim Fallahi

Mojtaba Khosrotaj, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and the country's deputy industry, mining, and trade minister, said that Iran does not plan to focus on a specific region or country as export destination and it aims for a diverse market.

Addressing a press conference held on Saturday on the occasion of Iran's National Exports Day (October 20), the official noted that the key point in choosing trade partners and target markets is analyzing the country's needs.

He stressed that the country should not limit the exports to certain markets and countries, saying "Being dependent only on a single economic or political block is not a good idea and will make the country vulnerable and weak."

Khosrotaj also noted that the industry, mining, and trade ministry's policy is to maintain balance between the target markets chosen as the destination for Iranian goods.

Iran's exports level not satisfactory

Further in the conference the deputy minister touched upon the current situation of the country's exports and imports and said although the trade relations with Asia and the neighboring countries are improving but "Considering the country's potentials we are way behind the level our exports should stand at this point." →4

Major players gather for Syria crisis talks amid low hopes

Diplomats from various countries, including Iran, the United States, and Britain, gathered in Switzerland for new talks to find a solution to the Syria conflict.

The negotiations started in Lausanne on Saturday with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry meeting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as well as top diplomats from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the House of Saud regime.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif of Iran departed Tehran for the Swiss city on Saturday morning to attend the talks. Hossein Jaber Ansari, Zarif's deputy for Arab and African Affairs, will be accompanying him. →13



Tehran says UNESCO anti-Israeli resolution commendable

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has praised UNESCO for defending the Palestinian people's rights and denounced the Israeli regime for its reactionary move.



UNESCO on Thursday adopted a draft resolution that strongly condemned the escalating Israeli aggression and illegal measures against the freedom of worship and Muslims' access to al-Aqsa Mosque in the occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

A day after the resolution, which twenty-four countries voted in favor of, the Israeli regime suspended cooperation with UNESCO.

Pointing to the UNESCO draft resolution, Qassemi encouraged the international body for taking actions in favor of Muslims' right to access their holy site.

Qassemi further condemned Israel for its illegal activities in the Palestinian territories.

He also said "the regime's reactionary move shows its frustration and reveals its deceptive activities."

Araqchi says financial, banking issues resolved

POLITICS TEHRAN — Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi has said financial and banking issues related to doing business transaction with Iran have been resolved.

"The JCPOA is being implemented as planned, but it will leave its effects on Iran's economy over time," Araqchi said, speaking to

members of the parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Saturday.

"We are in good shape in the oil industry. Issues regarding economic transactions, finance, insurance and banking have also been resolved and there is no hurdle to implementation of the nuclear deal," Araqchi said.

He also pointed out that the Western part should keep its side of the bargain and takes

necessary steps to accelerate implementation of the nuclear deal.

However, still the U.S. primary sanctions are getting in the way, the top nuclear negotiator added, making it difficult for Iran to enjoy economic gains of the deal fully.

The deputy foreign minister further criticized Washington for new anti-Iran sanctions, describing it as "unconstructive."

Narges Kalbasi Ashtari story: An outcry for help

The girl who left the comfort of the West to help the most unprivileged children in India is accused of uncommitted crime

By Marjan Golpira

TEHRAN — She is called the Mother Teresa of India and all for good reason. At 29, Narges is a mother to many orphans, abandoned and visually impaired children in India.

However, today, she has become the victim of a very complex and unjust system in India and is being punished by the very same people she once left her life behind for.

As she puts it for change.org website, "I am going through the most horrific forms of abuse by a group of people with immense power, influ-

ence, and protection in Odisha."

Born in Isfahan, central Iran, Narges's parents moved to the UK when she was four years old.

Though, early on Narges was exposed to the ugly side of life. Losing both parents to incurable diseases, Narges decided to dedicate her life to serving orphans, who had suffered the very same fate as hers.

At mere 21, Narges took a year off to do some volunteer work for orphanages in Sri Lanka and India.

It was during the eye opening journey that an idea flashed into her



Narges Kalbasi Ashtari

mind: opening a children's home herself in India through foreign funds.

According to a report on charge.org, with much difficulty, Narges was granted an employment visa through a local NGO called ASSIST (Asia Society for So-

cial Improvement and Sustainable Transformation).

In 2011, Narges established the Prishan Foundation in Rayagada, an orphanage home for girls in the Rayagada district in Odisha, which then led to the launch of another home for blind children in Mukundapur, all through the generosity of foreign donors.

Based on her personal account on Telegram, a messaging app, Narges named her organization in the honor of an orphaned blind girl she met in Sri Lanka. →13

S. Korean, Russian university officials to come to Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — South Korean and Russian university officials are set to come to Iran in the near future, IRNA news agency reported.

University chancellors from top 14 South Korean universities will pay a four-day visit to Iran on Wednesday, the Iranian deputy science minister has said.

The chancellors will hold talks with their Iranian counterparts to boost bilateral cooperation and interaction, Hossein Salar-Amoli added.

During their stay, the Korean officials will take a two-day trip to the central province of Isfahan to visit academics as well, he highlighted.

The visit can pave the way for more in-



depth cooperation as the Science Ministry is determined to promote Iran's Islamic culture and Persian language actively, Salar-Amoli said.

Mentioning the memorandum of understanding signed between Iran and Korea upon Korean president Park Geun-hye visit to Iran in May, he explained that faculty and student

exchange programs, holding conferences, and executing joint research projects are of the fields Iran is willing cooperate with South Korea.

Additionally in a meeting with Lee Joon-sik, Korean Education Minister, Iranian Science Minister Mohammad Farhadi discussed possibility of setting up a center for Korean studies in Iran which was welcomed by the Korean side.

Moreover, 23 Russian delegations with 20 chancellors are also scheduled to travel to Iran on Wednesday.

The Russian delegation is going to take part in the second summit of the Islamic Republic of Iran top universities' chancellors on Thursday, the summit secretary Ahmadreza Khazravi has said.

Doc puts spotlight on Iran's traditional blacksmithing

ART TEHRAN — A documentary recently produced by the Documentary and Experimental Film Center focuses on traditional blacksmithing in Iran, which is gradually passing into oblivion.

"To study this subject I decided to visit some veteran blacksmiths

in Amol who, with great effort, craft some implements used in farming," said Saeid Habibi, the director of "Sigh of Iron", in a press release on Saturday.

"The documentary also examines why the younger generation does not show interest in working in that field despite their unem-



ployment," he added.

"In addition, this film shows how blacksmithing influences the individual characters of those people working in this field," he mentioned.

The differences among the blacksmiths are also scrutinized in a comparative study over the documentary.

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ARTICLE

Harun Yahya political analyst

War is never justified

The 20th century witnessed the world's two biggest wars, as well as hundreds of bloody regional wars, military operations, conflicts, riots and civil wars. In the 55 years following WWII, some 200 wars took place.

According to official figures, the death toll of these wars and conflicts reached 150 million, and 80% were civilians, not to mention the injured, disabled people or those who lost their families, who are not even included in the statistics.

We have left the 20th century behind but regrettably the same cannot be said for war. On the contrary, wars continue at full speed, threatening to turn into disasters of even bigger scales. For the past 15 years, millions of elderly, women and children have lost their lives in the wars that target particularly the Middle East and Islamic countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Palestine.

Even worse is the fact that the global powers behind them have been portraying them as 'wars of necessity'.

For instance, the Iraq war started in March 20, 2003 under the leadership of the USA and Britain with the pretense of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and the subsequent military occupation that lasted until 2011. More than 1 million Iraqis, a majority of whom civilians, lost their life due to this invasion.

There was no need at all for such a tragedy. Since 2009, a UK Commission, headed by Sir John Chilcot, has been working on the legality of Tony Blair's administration's involvement in the Iraq War in 2003 and the conclusion of their inquiry was as follows:

- Iraq didn't pose a threat. The judgment about the severity of the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was presented with a certainty that wasn't justified. →13

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani offers condolences to Thai PM over king's death

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday expressed condolences over the death of Thailand's king Bhumibol Adulyadej, who ruled the Southeast Asian country for 70 years.

The Iranian president offered his condolences in a message sent to the country's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, Press TV reported.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always regarded the Kingdom of Thailand as an old friend and partner," Rouhani wrote in his letter.



Iranian, Syrian deputy FMs talk over telephone

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs and Syria's deputy foreign minister discussed the Syrian crisis over the telephone on Saturday.

According to IRNA, Hossein Jaber Ansari and Faisal Mekdad talked about on-ground developments in the war-torn country and also reviewed the prospect of the ongoing talks on Syria that are being held with influential countries in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Ansari made the call as he was accompanying Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Lausanne.



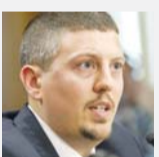
Deputy interior minister for political affairs to be named soon

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's deputy interior minister for political affairs will be appointed in a number of days, according to Interior Ministry spokesman Salman Samani, ILNA reported on Saturday.

The appointment will come after a brief reshuffle in the ministry, where Hossein-Ali Amiri left his position as deputy minister and spokesman to start work as the president's deputy for parliamentary affairs.

Following Amiri's relocation, Mohammad Hossein Moqimi was promoted from the post of deputy interior minister for political affairs to the second-ranking person in the ministry.

Red Crescent chief Ali Asghar Ahmadi is the likeliest candidate.



'U.S. non-compliance to undermine possible use of sanctions in future'

POLITICS TEHRAN — A former U.S. official who has been named architect of sanctions on Iran believes if the U.S. does not abide by its commitments under the nuclear deal, its ability to use such coercive measures as a tool in the future will be undermined.

Richard Nephew told Tasnim on Friday, "We have European banks and companies saying that they don't believe they can do business in the Islamic Republic without triggering U.S. sanctions."



Ali Khomeini: Velayat-e Faqih should be promoted as modern principle

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Khomeini has said Velayat-e Faqih (guardianship of the Islamic jurist) should be promoted as a modern principle.

Speaking before Qom Friday prayers, he said doing so will counter enemies in their efforts to convey that the late Imam Khomeini did not suggest the jurist's guardianship, the Ressalat newspaper reported.

The guardianship of the jurist was among the maxims of the Ashura event, he underlined, adding that Imam Khomeini structured the backbone of the Islamic revolution in the model of Ashura.



Austrian parliamentary team to visit Tehran soon

POLITICS TEHRAN — A delegation from the Austrian parliament is slated to pay an official visit to Iran in the coming days.

Austrian Parliament Deputy Speaker Karlheinz Kopf will head the parliamentary delegation during the visit to Iran, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The Austrian parliamentarians will meet Iran's Parliament Deputy Speaker Masoud Pezeshkian during their four-day stay in Iran.

Kopf and his accompanying delegation will also meet other senior Iranian officials to discuss mutual parliamentary relationship.

Iran: S. Arabia and its allies are responsible for regional troubles

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a strongly-worded statement on Saturday asserting that the conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya have mainly resulted from the interferences by Saudi Arabia and its allies which always been seeking to make accusations against others.

The statement came as response to a statement issued by the foreign ministers of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in their meeting in Riyadh on Thursday which accused Iran of interfering in the regional countries' affairs.

Following is full text of the Iranian foreign ministry's statement:

1- The countries whose irresponsible interferences have undermined security and led to war and terrorism and have violated national sovereignty of their neighbors are not in the position to advise others not to mediate in regional affairs.

The volatile and unstable situation



in Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq and Libya have been caused by interferences of the countries gathered in Riyadh and seek to compensate for their failed policies by blaming others.

2-These countries make unilateral response to efforts being made to liberate Aleppo from the terrorist groups whose crimes have created the worst humanitarian situation for the Syrians. The inter-

national community is required to make efforts in line with stopping genocide and crimes against humanity.

3-The Islamic Republic of Iran also condemns the mentioned countries' comments on Iran's three islands (in the Persian Gulf) and considers them as an example of interference in other countries' affairs.

4-In spite of these countries' request to establish relations with all countries based on the UN Charter and international law, Iran sees no honesty in the request and in the statement which is full of accusations.

5-There is no good intention in the statement's comments on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and is a meddling in Iran's legitimate defense capabilities.

6-The Islamic Republic of Iran has been the main architect of proposing a Middle East without weapons of mass destruction and is ready to cooperate with the above mentioned countries in line with realizing the goal.

Leader outlines election guidelines, calls for transparency

The announcement consists of 18 paragraphs as follows:

1. Determining constituencies for parliamentary and city council seats in commensurate with population indexes and unavoidable exigencies in such a way that paves the way for maximum electoral justice and people's understanding of candidates

2. Holding a two-stage parliamentary election if no candidate secures a majority in first round

3. Making sure all candidate benefit from equal share of election ads in TV channels, social media, and all other media outlets and public and state facilities

4. Delimiting the amount and type of expenditures and legitimate and illegitimate sources, making sure of candidates and political groups' financial transparency and announcing resources used to responsible entities, applying a strict and accurate supervisory mechanism, and clarifying how financial abuses

5. Barring mud-slinging, intimidation, bribery, deception, extrajudicial promises, and such actions as religious and sectarian divisions which are against the national security

6. Preventing candidates and political parties from drawing upon foreigners' backing and resources from financial and advertising resources

7. Preventing electoral crimes and frauds and any other sort of action which is against law, national interests, unity, and security, and launching urgent and immediate investigation into security, financial, and advertising crimes, particularly destructive actions against candidates

8. Promoting the public's knowledge and awareness and publicizing electoral norms and institutionalizing them in the public culture, defining regulations for healthy political competition in a bid to increase turnout and informed participation and help the people to select the fittest candidate

9. Determining a framework for political parties and groups and all real entities to act responsibly and legally in elections and in line with the foundations and prin-



Leader says candidates have to be as transparent as possible in connection with financial resources they use.

principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran in such a way that electoral competitions will result in informed participation in elections and trust in the (Islamic) establishment, its stability as well as power

10. Promoting meritocracy and simultaneously paving the way for the election of candidates in league with the Islamic Republic of Iran through:

a) Determining criteria and general and specific candidacy qualifications in line with the Constitution with an emphasis on scientific, physical efficiency, commitment to Islam, the revolution, and the Islamic establishment, the Constitution, commitment to the Velayat Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) in particular, and ethical, economic well-being

b) Initial evaluation of candidates during the registration stage via proper legal procedures

c) Accurate vetting of candidates

d) Taking measures to facilitate candidacy of employed candidates

e) Defining and announcing criteria and qualifications

so as for the Guardian Council to differentiate political, religious, and tactful candidates

11. The Guardian Council's supervision over processes, dimensions, and stages of presidential, parliamentary, and Assembly of Experts for Leadership elections, including having the final say in vetting candidates, looking into complains, confirming or rejecting elections, and attracting maximum participation via:

f) Determining transparent, scheduled, and reassuring mechanisms, and paving the way for candidates or their representatives to participate in all stages

g) Providing written explanation on why elections are called annulled as well as on why candidates are denied upon receiving any requests for reconsideration

12. Benefitting from modern technologies to maximize transparency, pace, and authenticity of vote counting and final announcement of voting results

13. Working out a mechanism for candidates to perform their duties in the best way possible, observe their oath of allegiance, and prevent financial, ethical, and economic abuses

14. Relative stability of electoral regulations within the general electoral policies and avoiding changes unless in necessary cases and approval from at least two thirds of lawmakers

15. Making sure of and preserving the freedom and health of elections as well as individuals' right in law-making

16. Barring armed forces, three branches of the government, including ministries and their affiliates, all intelligence and security entities, organizations, state-run companies and public institutes from joining political factions and groups and supporting candidates

17. Staging presidential, parliamentary, Assembly of Experts for Leadership and city and village council elections by the Interior Ministry

18. Setting a date for elections and making sure there is an interval of nearly two years between elections

Iran condemns deadly attack on Ashura mourners in Baghdad

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Saturday condemned a suicide terrorist attack against Ashura mourners in the Iraqi capital Baghdad which left over 32 people dead.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will stand beside the Iraqi government and people till the terrorists are fully defeated," Qas-

semi asserted.

Iran also hopes that the "despicable" phenomenon of terrorism would "be eradicated from the region" through the "Iraqi people's unity and integrity," he added.

He also said "joint cooperation" is needed in fighting terrorism and Takfiri groups.

Qassemi also said it is necessary that



the international community support the Iraqi people and government in these hard days.

The suicide attack carried out on Saturday on a tent with people taking part in Ashura rituals, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad.

ISL claimed responsibility for the attack.

Israel obstacle to nuclear-free Mideast: Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Gholam Hossein Dehghani, Iran's deputy permanent representative to the UN, said on Friday that the Zionist regime of Israel is the only obstacle in the way of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

"The Israeli regime, which possesses nuclear weapons, is the only obstacle in the way of the establishment of this zone and continues to block all international and regional efforts to fulfill this goal," Dehghani said during a speech at the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

Following is full text of the speech published by IRNA:

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express my warmest congratulations on your election to the Chairmanship of this Committee and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. We are happy that this important committee is being held under the guidance of a wise and experienced

diplomat from Algeria whose dedicated service to the cause of disarmament is well-known.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We seriously follow the debates on issues on the agenda of this Committee, as they deal with the most important common goods of all nations, i.e. disarmament and international security. As our detailed positions on disarmament issues will be elaborated in thematic debates, I will therefore focus only on certain issues of particular importance to us.

Nuclear disarmament: the highest priority and unfulfilled obligation

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament remains the first and foremost priority in the disarmament and international security agenda. The mere existence of nucle-

ar weapons is a source of threat and distrust in international relations. They undermine the Charter-based principle of equal right of all States to peace and security and the foundations of international humanitarian law. Nuclear disarmament is a vital undertaking, because the consequences of inaction can be global catastrophe. Along with reaffirming commitment to nuclear disarmament, action and political will is required to fulfill that objective.

Seven decades after the first use of atomic weapons which created a humanitarian disaster and killed more than 200,000 people, there is no absolute guarantee that such weapons will not be used again. Thousands of them that are associated with military strategies and war plans, which contemplate their use under certain circumstances, continue to exist in the arsenals of nu-

clear-weapon States and other possessors.

That is because nuclear-weapon States are not complying with their nuclear disarmament obligations. Almost half a century after the conclusion of the NPT under which all the States parties have an explicit legal obligation to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the gap between that nominal commitment and its implementation in practice is so wide. Upholding the integrity and credibility of NPT depends on the full implementation of all the obligations therein, in particular on nuclear disarmament.

Even more disappointing, contrary to the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their military doctrine, multi-billion-dollar programs for modernizing and replacing the nuclear arsenals and developing new types of advanced nuclear weapon systems are underway, in particular in France, United Kingdom and the United States.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Nuclear disarmament remains the first and foremost priority in the disarmament and international security agenda.

Saudi Arabia admits bombing Yemen funeral

The House of Saud regime has admitted that it bombed a funeral in the Yemeni capital that killed more than 140 people last week after initially denying it.

A statement by a Saudi investigative body said on Saturday the kingdom had carried out the strike based on what it called bad information.

Saudi warplanes attacked the hall where people were attending a wake for the father of Yemen's interior minister in Sana'a last Saturday.

Saudi officials initially said their aircraft had not carried out any attack on the Yemeni capital that day.

But on Saturday, the Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) said air operations officials failed to obtain approval for the strike from commanders in a violation of protocol, according to the statement carried by state news agency SPA.

"Because of non-compliance with coalition rules of engagement and procedures, and the issuing of incorrect information, a coalition aircraft wrongly targeted the location, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries," it said. The JIAT called for a review of rules of engagement and compensation for the families of victims.

"Appropriate action... must be taken against those who caused the incident, and... compensation must be offered to the families of the victims," it said.

The death toll from the Saudi attack was one of the largest in a single incident since March 2015, when Riyadh began its deadly military campaign in Yemen.

Sana'a Mayor Abdel Qader Hilal was among the victims of the bombing.

The incident prompted global condemnations, with Human Rights Watch denouncing the Saudi air raid as an apparent war crime.



■ Oman plane to evacuate wounded from Yemen

Meanwhile, an Omani aircraft landed in Sana'a on Saturday to evacuate 115 of the most seriously wounded from the Saudi airstrike, a Yemeni official said.

Oman is the only Persian Gulf Arab state that is not part of the so-called Saudi-led coalition against Yemen.

The Sana'a bombing was not the first attack on civilians by Saudi warplanes which have targeted busy markets, schools, weddings and hospitals over the past year, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries.

The United Nations Security Council has so far failed to agree on a statement condemning the October 8 Saudi airstrike.

The Omani aircraft also flew home to

Sana'a the rebel negotiating team which had been stranded in the sultanate's capital Muscat since the collapse of UN-brokered peace talks in Kuwait in August because of the air blockade, an AFP photographer reported.

■ 60 Saudi mercenaries killed in convoy attack

In another event, Yemeni forces have staged a retaliatory missile attack on a military convoy in a border area located in Saudi Arabia's extreme southwest, killing as many as 60 mercenaries, the al-Masirah television reports.

The counterattack came on Friday when Saudi military vehicles were traversing a border passage in the Najran region, the television cited a Yemeni army official as saying.

The channel, which aired the footage of the incident, said the missile barrage

had also injured a great number of the mercenaries and destroyed three of their United States-made Abrams tanks and six armored vehicles.

Yemen's military has been carrying out tit-for-tat attacks against the gatherings of Saudi mercenaries inside Yemen as well as targets in Saudi Arabia's southwest in retaliation for Riyadh's military campaign against the country.

On Monday, Yemeni army spokesman Sharaf Luqman told Lebanon's al-Manar television that Yemeni forces were present "20 kilometers inside the Saudi soil."

The war was launched in March 2015 to bring back to power a Saudi ally as Yemen's president. More than 10,000 people have died in the war, according to the United Nations.

(Source: agencies)

Saudi hacks Iraqi Foreign Ministry's website

Iraq's Foreign Ministry says a Saudi Arabian individual has hacked its website, putting offensive, sectarian-charged content on it.

Ministry spokesman Ahmad Jamal announced the news on Saturday, saying the ministry staff were trying to fix the problem, according to the country's Arabic-language al-Sumaria TV network.

The cyber-attack came only a day after Iraq's Foreign Ministry reacted harshly to earlier remarks by the House of Saud regime's Adel al-Jubeiri, who had said Baghdad should not recruit Iraqi volunteer fighters known as al-Hashad al-Sha'bi or Popular Mobilization Units in its pending push to liberate the northern city of Mosul from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

The fighters have proven a pivotal

force in extricating the country from the clutches of the terrorists, who have been ravaging it since 2014.

The ministry called the remarks void of any value and not even worthy of Baghdad's attention.

After closing in on the city for several months, Iraqi forces on Thursday started to take positions for the ultimate push to free it. ISIL has declared the city its so-called headquarters in Iraq.

Also, in a unilateral move, Saudi Arabia has withdrawn its ambassador to Baghdad Thamer al-Sabhan, naming Abdulaziz al-Shammari as the kingdom's chargé d'affaires at its diplomatic mission in the Iraqi capital.

The move is regarded as a unilateral downgrading of ties not yet recognized by the Iraqi government.

(Source: Press TV)

Poll: Trump narrows Clinton's lead in New Hampshire

The United States Democrat presidential nominee Hillary Clinton holds a small, 3-point lead over her Republican rival Donald Trump in the swing state of New Hampshire, a new poll released on Friday shows.

The MassINC Polling Group/WBUR-FM poll gives Clinton 41 percent support to Trump's 38 percent.

That's within the poll's margin of error of 4.4 percentage points. The same poll had the Democratic nominee leading by 7 points last month, 42 percent to 35.

Libertarian Gary Johnson has 11 percent of the vote, while Green Party nominee Jill Stein has 3 percent.

The poll shows the third-party candidates may be drawing support from the Democratic nominee. When those surveyed had only Trump and Clinton to choose from, Clinton had a 5-point lead

over Trump, 46 percent to 41 percent.

Granite State voters view Clinton more favorably than Trump.

While 40 percent of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Clinton, only 34 percent have a favorable view of the Republican nominee.

Still, 54 percent view Clinton unfavorably, and 60 percent view Trump unfavorably.

The poll also shows a tight race for one of New Hampshire's Senate seats.

Incumbent Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R) and Gov. Maggie Hassan (D) are tied at 47 percent support.

The race is viewed as a toss-up that could play a role in whether Republicans maintain control of the Senate after November.

The poll was conducted from Oct. 10 to 12 among 501 likely voters.

(Source: The Hill)

Russia envoy: Tensions with U.S. are probably worst since 1973

Russia's United Nations ambassador said that tensions with the United States are probably the worst since the 1973 Mideast war.

But Vitaly Churkin said on Friday that Cold War relations between the Soviet Union and Russia more than 40 years ago were different than U.S.-Russia relations today.

"The general situation I think is pretty bad at this point, probably the worst... since 1973," he said.

Churkin said that "even though we have serious frictions, differences like Syria, we continue to work on other issues... and sometimes quite well."

That wasn't the case generally during the Cold War.

When Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar in 1973, the Mideast was thrown into turmoil. And according to historians, the threat of war between the Soviet Union, which backed the Arabs, and the United States, Israel's closest ally, was the highest since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Churkin said there are "a string of things" that have brought U.S.-Russian relations to their current low point.

"It's kind of a fundamental lack of respect and lack of in-depth discussions" on political issues, he said.

Churkin pointed to the U.S. and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) deciding to build their security "at



the expense of Russia" by accepting many East European nations formerly in the Soviet bloc as NATO members, and the United States pullout from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2001. One of "the greatest provocations" during President George W. Bush's administration was the 2008 NATO summit, which decided that Ukraine and Georgia should become NATO members, he said.

Most important, he said, was the conflict that erupted in eastern Ukraine in April 2014, weeks after a former Moscow-friendly Ukrainian president was chased from power by massive protests. Churkin called it "a coup" supported by the United States. Soon after, Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, which has led to Western sanctions against Moscow.

Ties between Washington and Moscow have deteriorated further in the past month after the collapse of a cease-fire in Syria and intensified bombing on Aleppo by Syrian and Russian aircraft, and U.S. accusations that Russia is meddling in the U.S. presidential election next month.

By contrast, Churkin pointed to agreements in the UN Security Council in recent years supported by Moscow and Washington, even on Syria — allowing cross-border aid deliveries without government approval and establishing a team of experts to determine responsibility for chemical weapons attacks in the country. He also cited council resolutions to combat terrorism.

The United States and Russia were also key players in last year's nuclear agreement with Iran, and last week they agreed on the Security Council's nomination of former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres as the next UN secretary-general, which Churkin said was "maybe the best success of the Security Council in the last five years." Guterres was elected by acclamation on Thursday by the General Assembly. Churkin said Russia would like to normalize relations with the United States.

"If the change of administration is going to help, that's fine," he said. But even if President Barack Obama stayed for another term, which he is barred from doing, "we would be pushed to trying to get back to normal in our relations."

(Source: AP)

Egyptian jets strike militants in restive Sinai after deadly attack

Egypt has launched airstrikes against Takfiri militants in the country's restive Sinai Peninsula, a day after the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists attacked a security checkpoint in the area and shot 12 soldiers dead.

The military announced in a televised statement that its fighter jets had carried out a string of aerial attacks in the area on

Saturday morning based on intelligence and in coordination with local residents.

The statement said the airstrikes lasted for three hours, and a number of terrorists responsible for the checkpoint attack were killed. Seven sport utility vehicles used by the terrorists were destroyed as well.

It further said that operations against the terrorists were going on in North Sinai.

On Friday, 12 soldiers lost their lives and six others sustained injuries when ISIL terrorists attacked a security checkpoint near the town of Bir el-Abd.

A military statement later said 15 assailants had also been killed and an unspecified number of others wounded in an ensuing gun battle with the terrorists.

(Source: Press TV)

Syria is top priority: Guterres

Newly appointed United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told FRANCE 24 on Saturday that resolving Syria's five-and-a-half-year civil war would be his top priority.

This war "became not only a tragedy for the Syrian people, but a big threat for the stability of the region, and a threat to the security of everybody everywhere", the former UN high commissioner for refugees said in the exclusive interview. "It is in everybody's interests to come together and put an end to this war."



Guterres, who was Portuguese prime minister from 1995 to 2002, will take over from current UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the beginning of January 2017. He will become the ninth UN chief in the world organization's 71-year history.

Asked what influence he could wield to restore peace in Syria, Guterres said he was aware of the challenges the UN faces, but warned that he was not becoming "the leader of the world" and that the position required a "humble" approach.

The secretary-general "must work as a convener, facilitator, as a mediator, as a bridge builder, an honest broker and try to bring people together", he told FRANCE 24.

Warning that "we are witnessing a multiplication of new conflicts...with links to global terrorism", Guterres said he aimed to persuade people to "engage in a surge of diplomacy for peace".

Guterres was elected to his new position at the UN headquarters in New York on Thursday.

Secretary-General Ban, recalling Guterres' decade as the UN's refugee chief, told the assembly that his successor was "best known where it counts most, on the front lines of armed conflict and humanitarian suffering".

(Source: France 24)

Putin rejects accusations of meddling in U.S. election

Russian President Vladimir Putin insisted on Wednesday his country was not involved in an effort to influence the United States presidential election even as WikiLeaks released another trove of internal documents from Hillary Clinton's campaign.

Last week, the U.S. government formally accused Russia of launching a hacking campaign to "interfere with the U.S. election process."

Clinton's campaign, which has charged the Kremlin is trying to help Republican Donald Trump win the White House on Nov. 8, took its allegations a step further on Tuesday when John Podesta, chairman of the Democratic nominee's campaign, accused the Trump campaign of colluding with Russia.

At events in Florida, Trump said he had nothing to do with Putin or Russia.



"I promise you, I don't have any business deals with Russia," Trump said at a rally in Lakeland.

In Moscow, Putin said nothing in the hacking scandal is in Russia's interests and accused all sides in the U.S. presidential campaign of misusing rhetoric about Russia for their own purposes.

"They started this hysteria, saying this (hacking) is in Russia's interests, but this has nothing to do with Russia's interests," Putin told a business forum.

Putin said his government would work with whoever won the U.S. election, "if, of course, the new U.S. leader wishes to work with our country."

Trump escalated his attacks on U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan on Wednesday, deepening a fracture in the Republican Party. Clinton, a former secretary of state, has repeatedly accused Trump of having overly friendly ties with Putin and Russia.

During a presidential debate on Sunday, Trump publicly disagreed with his own vice presidential choice, Mike Pence, who had called for a more hawkish approach toward Russia.

At that debate, Trump questioned whether Russia was behind the hacks, as the U.S. government has asserted. And on Wednesday, during a rally in Ocala, Florida, Trump echoed those remarks.

"Have you ever noticed, anything that goes wrong they blame Russia?" Trump told the crowd. "They always blame Russia and then they says Donald Trump is friends... I don't know Putin, folks. What the hell do I have to do with Putin?"

Trump has said that as president he would seek warmer relations with Russia and that it would be in the United States' best interests to seek Russia's help to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran's shipping line ranks 19th globally

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) ranks 19th among the world's international shipping lines according to the latest report released by Clarksons Research's Container Intelligence Monthly, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.



IRISL currently has the capacity of 92,674 twenty-foot-equivalent unit (TEU), the report says.

Container Intelligence Monthly tracks developments in the container shipping market, providing easy access to the data required by busy executives in the container industry.

Iranian trade delegation to embark for Kenya in late Oct.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) will dispatch a trade delegation to Kenya on October 30 in order to expand Iranian exports of commodities and services and also visit the Big 5 Construct East Africa Exhibition in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, the official website of TPO reported.

During their six-day stay, the delegates are scheduled to meet Kenyan economic and trade officials, hold meetings with Iran's ambassador as well as commercial attaché in the East African country, hold B2B match meetings with the Kenyan traders and businessmen, hold meeting with one of the Kenyan banks, investigate the market of Kenya and hold meeting with the members of Iranians Trade Council in the African country.

Royan welcomes foreign investment in tourism sector

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Royan, a coastal city in the Iranian northern province of Mazandaran, welcomes foreign investors to participate in its tourism projects.

Addressing a press conference on October 10, Ahmad Tavakoli, the mayor of Royan, referred to noticeable tourist attractions of the city such as Caspian Hyrcanian forests and Alborz mountain range, which have laid the groundwork for the development of tourism.

He said many international hotel groups including Rotana Hotel Management Corporation in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Accor Hotels in France, Meliá Hotels International in Spain, and Steigenberger Hotels in Germany are currently in a rush to enter the Iranian growing tourism sector and Royan is completely prepared to cooperate with them.

During the same conference, Kambakhsh Salarian, the chairman of Royan Islamic City Council, announced that coastal and marine tourism (CMT) will be launched soon in the city.

"We are currently negotiating with a Turkish company to develop CMT in Royan," he added.

'Mazandaran apt to be a regional tourism hub'

In a separate press conference on developing tourism in Mazandaran, Mohammad Khandaq-Abadi, a tourism official of the province, noted that regarding its great potentials, Mazandaran can be turned into a tourism hub in the region.

"Tourists from the Persian Gulf countries are very interested in visiting this region and we are negotiating with these countries in this regard," he added.

U.S. fiscal year budget deficit widens to \$587b

The U.S. budget deficit widened to \$587 billion for the fiscal year 2016 on slower-than-expected revenues and higher spending for programs including Social Security and Medicare, the Treasury Department said on Friday.

The 2016 deficit increased to 3.2 percent of gross domestic product.

It was the first time the deficit increased in relation to economic output since 2009, according to figures from the Congressional Budget Office. That year, the deficit peaked at \$1.4 trillion amid the financial crisis.

Last fiscal year's deficit was \$439 billion, with a deficit-to-GDP ratio of 2.5 percent. Accounting for calendar adjustments, the 2016 fiscal year deficit was \$548 billion.

Fiscal 2016 revenues grew 1 percent to \$3.267 trillion, while outlays rose 5 percent to \$3.854 trillion.

Revenue growth was reduced by the retroactive extension of some expired individual and corporate tax deductions passed by Congress as part of the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act late last year, Treasury said.

With an aging population, mandatory spending for Social Security and Medicare, the federal retirement and healthcare programs for the elderly, have increased.

For September, the Treasury posted a \$33 billion budget surplus, a 63 percent decline from the same month last year.

Analysts polled by Reuters had expected a \$25 billion surplus for last month.

When accounting for calendar adjustments, September would have shown a \$75 billion surplus compared with an adjusted \$91 billion surplus in the same month a year ago.

Receipts last month totaled \$357 billion, a 2 percent decline from September 2015, while outlays stood at \$323 billion, an 18 percent rise from the same month a year ago.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran targeting a diverse market for exports: TPO head

"In some sectors export is not considered as a priority, so the National Exports Day is set to highlight the importance of exports in the country's economy," he noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks the official mentioned the criteria for selecting country's top exporters and said "Our first yardstick is the quantity, while continuous exports, technical skills and expertise, international advertisements and etc. are also considered in making the choice."

'Bilateral trade, Iran's priority'

Addressing the current economic position of Iran among the world's countries, Khosrotaj said "Within the framework of the country's policies we need to have appropriate interaction with all countries around the world. After the Islamic Revolution, we have boosted trade with OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries) and applied the same strategy with the non-aligned countries."

"With the West sanctions imposed on the country the situation changed and we lost most of our markets, and



now again in the post-sanctions era we plan to have an ideal presence in the world's trade," he added.

'Banking issues most important post-JCPOA challenge'

Explaining the main obstacles impeding Iran reaching its full potentials in trade with Europe, the head of Iran's

TPO said "After lifting of the sanctions European countries have shown great interest in investment in Iran and trade with the country but still the main obstacle and challenge that Iran is facing in trade and exports is 'banking issues'."

"West claims that Iran does not have the necessary banking standards, but we

believe it is not true and European banks must support trade with Iran," he added.

The deputy minister further emphasized that there is no problem regarding Iran's access to European airports and shipping ports and "banking" is the only obstacle.

'50 countries identified as target markets'

Asked about the potential target destinations for Iranian commodities the deputy minister said that based on research and gathered information, so far 50 countries which have ideal capacities and potentials for trade are identified as target markets.

He also mentioned holding exhibitions and exchanging trade delegations, holding joint committee meetings and establishing free trade zones as some of the government's plans for boosting the country's exports level.

"China, Japan, the UAE, Iraq, Turkey, South Korea, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Oman, Italy, Germany, Spain, Taiwan, Armenia, Thailand, Syria and Egypt are among the destinations of Iranian goods," he noted.

Irish sheepmeat exports to Iran given the green light

Irish sheepmeat exporters can now ship sheepmeat to Iran following an agreement with the relevant Iranian authorities.

The decision was welcomed by the Minister for Agriculture, Michael Creed, who said it was a direct outcome of the agri-food trade mission to Iran in April, when negotiations took place between the Department of Agriculture and Iranian authorities.

"It is also an issue which I raised directly in bilateral meetings with the Iranian Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Javad Kachoueian.

"I am delighted to see yet another third country market open for Irish meat products, particularly for the sheep sector which I am very keen to see develop further and deliver more for all levels in that sector," he said.

The agreement means that Ireland now enjoys access for both beef and sheepmeat to Iran and this could be beneficial to Irish farmers as Iran is the second largest consumer market in the Middle East and North Africa.

In total, the Middle Eastern state has around 80m consumers and economic

growth is expected to intensify following the recent easing of economic sanctions.

Minister Creed also said that the search for new and third country markets is a top priority for his Department and he is fully committed to ensuring that Irish meat exports have access to as many international markets as possible.

"This search for new markets for Irish food and drink has taken on an added urgency in the context of the challenges posed by possible upcoming UK exit from the European Union.

"Today's announcement on Iran is an-

other example of achieving the market access goals in the Food Wise 2025 strategy.

"We have already had a very successful trade mission to four Asian Countries in recent weeks and I expect to be making further announcements on upcoming trade missions in the near future.

"My Department, led by the Market Access unit, will continue to work closely with Bord Bia, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Irish exporters to continue to seek new markets for our exports," he said.

(Source: agriland.ie)

Britain's \$1.8t bond market ensnared in Brexit battle

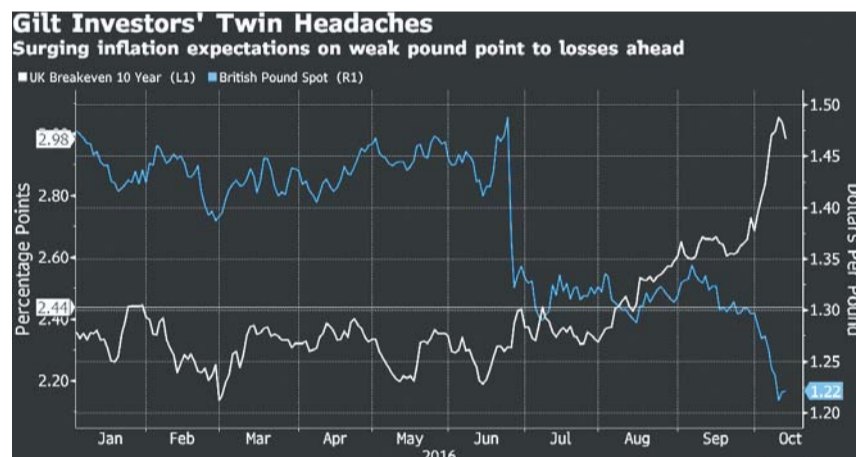
The prospect of a messy divorce between the U.K. and the European Union threatens to overwhelm support for nation's bonds from the Bank of England's asset purchases.

Gilts have been the worst performers in the developed world this month as a sliding currency pushed investors' expectations for consumer-price growth to a more than two-year high. Still, with the BOE having committed in August to buying 60 billion pounds (\$73 billion) of bonds over six months that move pales in comparison to the currency's 18 percent drop since Brexit.

Despite the BOE's support, the danger signs for gilts are mounting. Bets that inflation may stay the central bank's hand have seen traders remove wagers on interest-rate cuts all the way through 2017. On top of that, should Prime Minister Theresa May's government pursue a departure from the EU that deprives the country of tariff-free access to the single market, it may create an even more toxic environment for bonds, boosting prices for domestic producers while hurting exporters' prospects.

With the government eyeing fiscal stimulus to support growth, a dramatic increase in funding costs may ultimately prove a more serious problem than the currency's weakness.

"U.K. government bonds are among the most vulnerable assets," said Alberto Gallo, London-based head of macro strategies at Algebris Investments LLP, which oversees \$5.2 billion. "They are at these levels because the BOE is still buying them, but



that's an artificial level. With sterling declining more and more, the BOE will be under pressure from inflation." Algebris has a short position on gilts, Gallo said, meaning a bet the assets will decline.

The yield on U.K. 10-year gilts rose 13 basis points, or 0.13 percentage point, this week, adding to a 22 basis-point increase in the previous five days. It jumped to 1.15 percent on Friday, the highest since the June 23 referendum. Yields touched a record-low 0.5 percent in August, and were as high as 1.99 percent on the last day of 2015.

'World's worst'

Gilts lost 2.3 percent in October through Thursday, the biggest decline among sovereign markets tracked by the Bloomberg World Bond Indexes.

"I get the sense that the market has got fairly numb to these kind of gilt moves over the last few months" said Mike Riddell, a London-based debt-fund manager at Allianz Global Investors, which oversees about \$520 billion. "Most people are attributing it to a lower pound and therefore higher inflation, which I think is only partly true. Sterling and gilts have been hit hard by Theresa May's comments on the likelihood of 'hard Brexit' and the lack of visibility that this brings, plus the prospect of more fiscal stimulus."

It's a fall from grace for a market that investors looked to as a haven during the euro-area's sovereign debt crisis. Back then, investors were attracted by the U.K.'s relative political and economic calm at a time when concern that its neighbors' debt loads had

reached unsustainable levels was bringing into question the existence of the euro, toppling governments and forcing some countries to seek bailouts.

'Standing out'

Now it's the U.K. standing out for the wrong reasons, with the pound's decline making headlines and filtering through to the real economy in the form of disputes between supermarkets and suppliers. Sterling's slide versus the dollar since the June 23 vote is also threatening to erode the value of the fixed returns on the nation's bonds, particular for international investors.

In addition to the inflation outlook, doubts about BOE Governor Mark Carney's ability to extend quantitative easing were reinforced at the Conservative Party conference, where Prime Minister Theresa May said ultra-loose monetary policies helped to widen inequality. The central bank has been buying gilts since August, with initial concerns over potential scarcity fading as the outlook for inflation picked up.

"If you look at break-even rates, they've already jumped quite a bit," said Vatsala Datta, a rates strategist at Royal Bank of Canada in London. "One of the factors is doubts about how prominent QE is going to be. If the market expects that QE is not going to be the main policy tool and the baton is going to be picked up by fiscal policy, then technically you'd have one of the buyers of nominal gilts out of the market."

(source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Volkswagen to pay \$175m to U.S. lawyers suing over emissions

Volkswagen AG (VOWG_p.DE), in another step to move past its costly diesel emissions cheating scandal, has agreed to pay \$175 million to U.S. lawyers suing the German automaker on behalf of the owners of 475,000 polluting vehicles, two people briefed on the agreement said.

In August, the lawyers in the class action litigation sought up to \$332.5 million in fees and costs for their work in a \$10 billion settlement that gives U.S. owners of 2.0 liter polluting cars the ability to sell back their vehicles to Volkswagen (VW).



Rosneft, Trafigura to buy 98% stake in Essar oil for \$13b

Essar Group, controlled by India's billionaire Ruia brothers, signed binding agreements to sell a combined 98 percent stake in its refinery unit to Russian energy giant Rosneft PJSC and a consortium of Trafigura and United Capital Partners.

The Indian conglomerate agreed to sell 49 percent each of Essar Oil Ltd. to Rosneft and the consortium for an enterprise value of 728 billion rupees (\$10.9 billion), Essar said in a statement on Saturday. The all-cash deal includes India's second-largest refinery at Vadinar, and another \$2 billion will be paid for a port terminal that helps feed the refinery. All approvals are expected before the end of this year.



Libya's \$1.2bn claim against Goldman Sachs thrown out

The London High Court has dismissed a \$1.2bn (£840m) claim against US investment bank Goldman Sachs over Libya's sovereign wealth fund.

The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) was looking to recoup funds it said had been lost through nine disputed trades conducted in 2008.

The Libyans said the bank had taken advantage of its lack of financial savvy, exerting "undue influence".

Goldman Sachs told the court he claims were without merit.

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The U.S. election and the world

By Nabil Fahmy

The Republican Party's candidate for the American presidency, Donald Trump, is clearly not the GOP establishment's first choice. Even this close to the November 8 election, more than a few prominent Republicans refuse to endorse him, and it goes without saying that Democrats loathe him. He won his party's nomination because he was by far the most popular choice among Republican primary voters.

On the other hand, the centrist Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, is clearly an establishment candidate. Still, to clinch her party's nomination, she had to combat a strong challenge from Senator Bernie Sanders, a declared socialist whose political leanings are far left of hers, and whose message resonated particularly among younger primary voters.

The Trump and Sanders phenomena suggest that American voters are uncomfortable with traditional political choices. According to recent polls, Trump and Clinton are running within 5% of each other, and both have historically high unfavorable ratings. Regardless of who wins, Americans will most likely elect their next president not because they like their choice, but because they dislike the alternative.

Opponent's character flaws

So far, the two candidates seem to be focusing less on policy alternatives and more on their opponent's character flaws: the Clinton campaign describes Trump as lacking the appropriate temperament, knowledge, and experience to be president, and the Trump campaign portrays Clinton as a corrupt political opportunist.

Americans alone will determine the election result, but they should remember that a concerned and perplexed world is watching. For outside observers, the paramount question is not who will be elected, but whether the United States will be an effective global leader in the years to come.

Many countries are justifiably worried that a Trump administration would not appreciate the complexity of global issues, and would recklessly disrupt existing strategic alliances. At the same time, regardless of who wins, many countries also fear American inaction. →13



The coming battle for Mosul

**If, as the allies expect, Mosul is soon liberated, ISIL will suffer a huge blow.**

The coming battle to retake Mosul in northern Iraq could be a turning point in the American-led fight against the Islamic State (ISIL). The city is the terrorist group's stronghold in that country and critical to its claim to having established a caliphate.

For two years the Islamic State, or ISIL, has exercised total authority over Mosul's inhabitants and subjected many of them to brutal treatment. If, as the allies expect, Mosul is soon liberated, ISIL will suffer a huge blow.

A comprehensive post-battle arrangement

But what happens next? Despite months of planning by the United States, the Iraqi government and their partners, much could go wrong. A comprehensive post-battle arrangement for governing the city has yet to be worked out, meaning that even the best-executed military operation could unleash new tensions. It is also not clear whether the allies are prepared to handle the humanitarian needs of hundreds of thousands of civilians who might flee the fighting.

The one lesson America should have learned in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 15 years is that unless governments reduce corruption, calm sectarian divisions, integrate all groups into the political process and deliver services to their citizens, extremists are sure to rise again.

The current Iraqi prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, has tried to be more inclusive. But old resentments linger whose anger at being largely excluded from governance contributed to the rise of the Islamic State.

These forces are in play in Mosul, a Sunni-majority city that some Sunnis say should be granted more autonomy from the central government once ISIL is pushed out. For that reason, some experts have argued that the attempted liberation of Mosul should be delayed until governance and other issues are addressed.

The American-Iraqi coalition

The counterargument is that delaying the battle for Mosul would carry its own risks. American officials say that after recent victories in retaking Ramadi, Falluja and other towns from ISIL, the American-Iraqi coalition has momentum. Meanwhile, ISIL — knowing something is coming — has stepped up its abuse of the local population and strengthened its defenses. Obama also does not want to leave the operation to his successor.

The Americans and Iraqis have made some attempt to improve governance by assigning advisers to bolster the weak governor in Nineveh Province, where Mosul is located. As for the threat of mass displacement, the hope is that residents will stay put and help secure the city once ISIL is routed. Nevertheless, American, Iraqi and United Nations officials have planned for a worst-case outcome — in

which 750,000 or more people flee the fighting — by setting aside \$2 billion and preparing emergency sites where civilians can live until it is safe to return.

The Americans have already negotiated an elaborate battlefield plan with the Iraqis that is designed in part to avoid more sectarian conflict. The best American-trained Iraqi counterterrorism forces, backed by some army units, federal police and American air power, will make the assault on Mosul. Post-battle security is being assigned to thousands of local police officers and tribal fighters.

There is a lot riding on a victory against ISIL — for the civilians suffering under the terrorists' rule; for Abadi, Iraq's embattled leader; and for Obama, whose regional credibility has been damaged by his decision not to intervene directly in Syria. But retaking Mosul may be the easier part of an operation whose ultimate success will depend on putting in place effective long-term plans for maintaining stability and rebuilding a shattered city.

(Source: The NYT)

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By Conn Hallinan

U.S. Diplomacy: A Dangerous Proposal

Samantha Power is suggesting that the United States elevate R2P to the level of national security, which sounds uncomfortably like an argument for U.S. intervention in any place that doesn't emulate the American system.



While the mainstream media focuses on losers and winners in the race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, a largely unreported debate is going on over the future course of U.S. diplomacy. Its outcome will have a profound effect on how Washington projects power—both diplomatic and military—in the coming decade.

The issues at stake are hardly abstract. The United States is currently engaged in active wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia. It has deployed troops on the Russian border, played push-and-shove with China in Asia, and greatly extended its military footprint on the African continent. It would not be an exaggeration to say—as former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry has recently done—that the world is a more dangerous place today than it was during darkest times of the Cold War.

Tracking the outlines of this argument is not easy, in part because the participants are not always forthcoming about what they are proposing, in part because the media oversimplifies the issues. In its broadest framework, “realists” represented by former National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, Harvard’s Steven Walt, and University of Chicago’s John Mearsheimer have squared off against “humanitarian interventionists” like current UN Ambassador Samantha Power. Given that Power is a key advisor to the Obama administration on foreign policy and is likely to play a similar role if Clinton is elected, her views carry weight.

In a recent essay in the *New York Review of Books*, Power asks, “How is a statesman to advance his nation’s interests?” She begins by hijacking the realist position that U.S. diplomacy must reflect “national interests,” arguing that they are indistinguishable from “moral values.” What happens to people in other countries, she argues, is in our “national security.”

Power—along with Clinton and former President Bill Clinton—has long been an advocate for “humanitarian intervention,” behind which the United States intervened in the Yugoslav civil war. Humanitarian intervention has since been formalized into “Responsibility to Protect,” or R2P, and was the rationale for overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. Hillary Clinton has argued forcibly for applying R2P to Syria by setting up “no-fly zones” to block Syrian and Russian planes from bombing insurgents and the civilians under their control.

It would not be an exaggeration to say—as former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry has recently done—that the world is a more dangerous place today than it was during darkest times of the Cold War.

But Power is proposing something different than humanitarian intervention. She is suggesting that the United States elevate R2P to the level of national security, which sounds uncomfortably like an argument for U.S. intervention in any place that doesn’t emulate the American system.

Facing Off against the Kremlin

Most telling is her choice of examples: Russia, China, and Venezuela, all currently in Washington’s crosshairs. Of these, she spends the most time on Moscow and the current crisis in Ukraine, where she accuses the Russians of weakening a “core independent norm” by supporting insurgents in Ukraine’s east, “lopping off part of a neighboring country” by seizing Crimea, and suppressing the news of

tens of millions they lost in World War II, something of which Power seems oblivious.

What Power seems incapable of doing is seeing how countries like China and Russia view the United States. That point of view is an essential skill in international diplomacy, because it is how one determines whether or not an opponent poses a serious threat to one’s national security.

Is Russia—as President Obama recently told the UN—really “attempting to recover lost glory through force,” or is Moscow reacting to what it perceives as a threat to its own national security? Russia did not intervene in Ukraine until the United States and its NATO allies supported the coup against the President Viktor Yanukovich government and

Russian intervention from its own people. Were the Russian media to report on the situation in Ukraine, she writes, “many Russians might well oppose” the conflict.

Power presents no evidence for this statement because none exists. Regardless of what one thinks of Moscow’s role in Ukraine, the vast majority of Russians are not only aware of it, but overwhelmingly support President Vladimir Putin on the issue. From the average Russian’s point of view, NATO has been steadily marching eastwards since the end of the Yugoslav war. It is Americans who are deployed in the Baltic and Poland, not Russians gathering on the borders of Canada and Mexico. Russians are a tad sensitive about their borders, given the

China in World War II, the Chinese have been invaded and humiliated time and again. Beijing believes that the Obama administration designed its “Asia pivot” as to surround China with U.S. allies.

Power argues that there was no coup, but U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and the U.S. Ambassador to the Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt were caught on tape talking about how to “mid-wife” the takeover and choose the person they wanted to put in place.

As for “lopping off” Crimea, Power had no problem with the United States and NATO “lopping off” Kosovo from Serbia in the Yugoslav War. In both cases local populations—in Crimea by 96 percent—supported the takeovers.

Understanding how other countries see the world does not mean one need agree with them, but there is nothing in Moscow’s actions that suggests that it is trying to re-establish an “empire,” as Obama characterized its behavior in his recent speech to the UN. When Hillary Clinton compared Putin to Hitler, she equated Russia with Nazi Germany, which certainly posed an existential threat to our national security. But does anyone think that comparison is valid? In 1939, Germany was the most powerful country in Europe with a massive military. Russia has the 11th largest economy in the world, trailing even France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Brazil. Turkey has a larger army.

Power’s view of what is good for the Russian people is a case in point. Although one can hardly admire the oligarchy that dominates Russia—and the last election would seem to indicate considerable voter apathy in the country’s urban centers—the “liberals” Power is so enamored with were the people who instituted the economic “shock therapy” in the 1990s that impoverished tens of millions of people and brought about a calamitous drop in life expectancy. That track record is unlikely to get one elected. In any case, Americans are hardly in a position these days to lecture people about the role oligarchic wealth plays in manipulating elections.

The View from China

The Chinese are intolerant of internal dissent, but Washington’s argument with Beijing is over sea lanes, not voter rolls.

China is acting the bully in the South China Sea, but it was President Bill Clinton who sparked the current tensions in the region when he deployed two aircraft carrier battle groups in the Taiwan Straits in 1995–96 during a tense standoff between Taipei and the mainland. China did not then—and does not now—have the capacity to invade Taiwan, so Beijing’s threats were not real. But the aircraft carriers were very real, and they humiliated—and scared—China in its home waters. That incident directly led to China’s current accelerated military spending and its heavy-handed actions in the South China Sea.

Again, there is a long history here. Starting with the Opium Wars of 1839 and 1860, followed by the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and Tokyo’s invasion of

China in World War II, the Chinese have been invaded and humiliated time and again. Beijing believes that the Obama administration designed its “Asia pivot” as to surround China with U.S. allies.

While that might be an over simplification—the Pacific has long been America’s largest market—it is a perfectly rational conclusion to draw from the deployment of U.S. Marines to Australia, the positioning of nuclear-capable forces in Guam and Wake, the siting of anti-ballistic missile systems in South Korea and Japan, and the attempt to tighten military ties with India, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

“If you are a strategic thinker in China, you don’t have to be a paranoid conspiracy theorist to think that the U.S. is trying to bandwagon Asia against China,” says Simon Tay, chair of the Singapore Insti-

From the average Russian’s point of view, NATO has been steadily marching eastwards since the end of the Yugoslav war. It is Americans who are deployed in the Baltic and Poland, not Russians gathering on the borders of Canada and Mexico.

tute of International Affairs.

Meanwhile in Latin America...

As for Venezuela, the U.S. supported the 2002 coup against Hugo Chavez and has led a campaign of hostility against the government ever since. For all its problems, the Chavez government cut poverty rates from 54.5 percent of the population to 32 percent, and extreme poverty from around 20 percent to 8.6 percent. Infant mortality fell from 25 per 1,000 to 13 per 1,000, the same as for Black Americans.

And the concern for the democratic rights of Venezuelans apparently doesn’t extend to the people of Honduras. When a military coup overthrew a progressive government in 2009, the United States

pressed other Latin American countries to recognize the illegal government that took over in its wake. Although opposition forces in Venezuela get tear-gassed and a handful jailed, in Honduras they are murdered by death squads.

Power’s view that the United States stands for virtue instead of simply pursuing its own interests is a uniquely American delusion. “This is an image that Americans have of themselves,” says Jeremy Shapiro, research director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, “but is not shared, even by their allies.”

The “division” between “realists” and R2P is an illusion. Both end up in the same place: confronting our supposed competitors and supporting our allies, regardless of how they treat their people. Although she is quick to call the Russians in Syria “barbarous,” she is conspicuously silent on U.S. support for Saudi Arabia’s air war in Yemen, which has targeted hospitals, markets, and civilians.

The argument that another country’s internal politics is a national security issue for the United States elevates R2P to a new level, sets the bar for military intervention a good deal lower than it is today, and lays the groundwork for an interventionist foreign policy that will make the Obama administration look positively pacifist.

Looking Toward November

It is impossible to separate this debate on foreign policy from the current race for the White House. Clinton has been hawkish on most international issues, and she is not shy about military intervention.

She has also surrounded herself with some of the same people who designed the Iraq war, including founders of the Project for a New American Century. It is rumored that if she wins she will appoint former Defense Department official Michele Flournoy as secretary of defense. Flournoy has called for bombing Assad’s forces in Syria.

On the other hand, Trump has been less than coherent. He has made some reasonable statements about cooperating with the Russians and some distinctly scary ones about China. He says he is opposed to military interventions, although he supported the war in Iraq (and now lies about it). He is alarmingly casual about the use of nuclear weapons.

In Foreign Affairs, Stephen Walt, a leading “realist,” says that Trump’s willingness to consider breaking the nuclear taboo makes him someone who “has no business being commander in chief.” Other countries, writes Walt, “are already worried about American power and the

ways it gets used. The last thing we need is an American equivalent of the impetuous and bombastic Kaiser Wilhelm II.” The Kaiser was a major force behind World War I, a conflict that inflicted 38 million casualties.

Whoever wins in November will face a world in which Washington can’t call all the shots. As Middle East expert Patrick Cockburn points out, “The U.S. remains a superpower, but is no longer as powerful as it once was.” Although it can overthrow regimes it doesn’t like, “it can’t replace what has been destroyed.”

Power’s framework for diplomacy is a formula for a never-ending cycle of war and instability.

(Foreign Policy in Focus)



Is the United States on the verge of enshrining humanitarian intervention as a bedrock principle of foreign policy?



As for Venezuela, the U.S. supported the 2002 coup against Hugo Chavez and has led a campaign of hostility against the government ever since.

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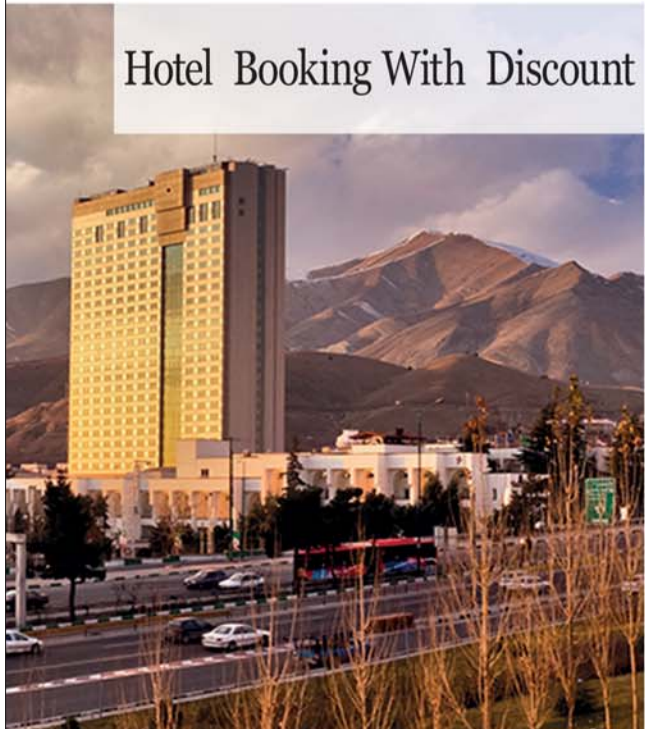
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UNDER TOURISTS' EYES
Grand bazaar in Tehran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The relatively historic grand bazaar in the heart of Tehran boasts various mazes, corridors, lanes, intersections, entrances and passageways with hundreds of shops offering different types of goods and services.

While most of its covered structures and marketplaces are associated with the 19th century onwards, the history of trade in the bazaar is rooted much deeper in time.



A view of the bustling grand bazaar in the heart of Tehran

Some visitors to the bazaar refer to it as "a city within a city" because it also includes several mosques, guesthouses, banks, and once thriving caravansaries.

Most mazes and lanes are particularly allocated to commodities such as carpets, metalwork, spices, toys, clothing, jewelry, woodturning, and kitchen appliances.

One can also encounter with grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers, among others.

A majority of traders in the bazaar, better known as bazaaris, played a pivotal role in the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution as they strongly backed Islamic and social movements spearheaded by the clergy elites in the country.

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the grand bazaar have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

■ "Daily life of Tehran"

If you want to see the life of everyday people in Tehran - visit the main city bazaar. It's a warren of narrow streets heaving with people. I unlike the grand bazaar in Istanbul, this bazaar is very much for the locals. There are just a few shops catering to the tourist and best of all - no one hassles you to come in and buy. The place is full of everyday items and it fills exactly how a bazaar should - a place to shop, to work and to socialize... (Duncan W. from Thailand, visited September 2016)

■ "Amazing sights"

Like any market, you can buy just about anything. But this is quite something. In one section you can get some of the best carpets in town. Take a local specialist to do the business for you - quite a spectacle and an experience. There are spice stalls selling the most beautiful and aromatic dried flowers, seeds, herbs - worth just standing there and taking in the colors and smells.

Don't forget to look up at the traditional vaulted ceilings as you walk down the bustling inner streets... (Inszor from the UK, visited August 2016)

■ "The good memory I keep from Tehran"

During my short stay in Tehran, that's the only good thing I remember. The bazar is huge, not really beautiful, but incredibly picturesque. That's not a place for tourism attraction, so don't expect finding souvenirs, but it's wonderful just to sneak in the middle of the crowd and observe the people bargaining, the various communities present, the delivery of goods, merchant offering pastries to people, etc. Do go there, you'll find the attractiveness the rest of the city lacks of! (Jerome C. from Serbia, visited August 2016)

■ "Interesting market to visit"

It's a topical local market, most of the parts are covered. You can find many things...all kind of local food, craft item, textile, watches and fake fashion products... (Chinatie from Italy, visited August 2016)

NOTABLES

Sir William Jones: British orientalist and jurist

Sir William Jones, (born Sept. 28, 1746, London—died April 27, 1794, Calcutta) was a British Orientalist and jurist who did much to encourage interest in Oriental studies in the West.

Of Welsh parentage, he studied at Harrow and University College, Oxford (1764–68), and learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian. By the end of his life, he had learned 28 languages, including Chinese, often by teaching himself.

After several years in translating and scholarship, he turned, for financial reasons, to the study of law and was called to the bar in 1774. Meanwhile, he did not give up Orientalism. His Grammar of the Persian Language (1771) was authoritative in the field for a long time. His Moallakât (1782), a translation of seven famous pre-Islamic Arabic odes, introduced these poems to the British public.

In 1783 he was knighted and sailed for Calcutta as judge of the supreme court. In 1784 he founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal to encourage Oriental studies. He himself took up Sanskrit, to equip himself for the preparation of a vast digest of Hindu and Muslim law. Of this uncompleted venture, his Institutes of Hindu Law was published in 1794 and his Muhammedan Law of Inheritance in 1792. In his 1786 presidential discourse to the Asiatic Society, he postulated the common ancestry of Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek, his findings providing the impetus for the development of comparative linguistics in the early 19th century.

Jones's letters, edited by Garland Cannon, were published in two volumes in 1970. Cannon was also the author of a biography published in 1964.

(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

Iranian female entrepreneur to receive EBC*L Prize

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iranian businesswoman Soheila Pirmoradian is amongst selectees who will be honored with European Business Competence* License) EBC*L Women Entrepreneur Awards, during a ceremony scheduled to be held in Paris on November 3.

Pirmoradian, who holds a nurse midwifery degree from an Italian university, has served as a tour guild for Italian travelers for about 15 years. She is currently manager of a thriving travel agency in her homeland, Iranian Students News Agency reported on Saturday.

The EBC*L website says there will be some Iranian entrepreneurs who will be awarded the prize but has not revealed their names yet.

The website describes them as: "Talented and ambitious Iranian women have proved competent in various social, economic, and political areas. They have made inroads in business field and many are entrepreneurs today, providing employment to men, further enjoining their equal halves to be involved in the national development process."

"Following the removal of anti-Iran sanctions, the EBC*L management has decided to present the prestigious prize to several female Iranian entrepreneurs," IRNA quoted Azim Fazlipour, the EBC*L CEO for Persian language countries as saying in a press conference earlier in August.

The EBC*L considers several indicators for presenting prizes to different companies including entrepreneurship,



An undated picture provided by viaggioiniran.com shows Iranian entrepreneur Soheila Pirmoradian (C) surrounded by local schoolgirls pose for a photo. The colorful Noruz spread in the foreground indicates they are celebrating Iranian new year.

innovation, branding, development of domestic industries, development of crafts, customer satisfaction, compliance with environmental and human values and social responsibility.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report, the rate of entrepreneurship in Iran among women between the ages 18 to 64 fluctuated from 4 to 6 percent between 2008 and 2012.

Based on the Fifth Socio-Economic Development Plan of Iran (2010-2015), the rate of female entrepreneurs has increased from 7.1 percent in 2010 to 8.4 percent in 2015.

The EBC*L jurors believe that Iran's talent for workarounds has drastically shaped its new business culture and years of economic isolation created both duress—and opportunity. They assess that the result of these

changes has culminated in a wave of business activity and optimism, while also consider Iran an exciting environment for foreign investors, especially in the financial, energy and transportation industries.

European Business Competence* License is established internationally as standard of education in business administration.

It offers, with its three levels A, B and C, the possibility to prove exactly practice-relevant economical core knowledge which is necessary in economic life. At the moment the EBC*L examination is done in 31 countries and in 24 languages.



As Thais mourn, tourists cautioned against behaving badly

BANGKOK (Reuters) — Embassies in Thailand have advised tourists to respect the feelings of the Thai people following the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, a man seen as a father-figure in the country.

King Bhumibol, who was the world's longest-reigning monarch, died on Thursday aged 88, sparking an outpouring of grief. The government has declared one year of official mourning and asked Thais to wear black and

avoid "festivities" for 30 days.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, however, has called on businesses to stay active. The cabinet declared a government holiday for mourning on Friday but the Stock Exchange of Thailand and banks operated normally.

Britain's Foreign Office said in a travel advisory those traveling to Thailand had to be respectful of people's feelings. "You should respect the sensitivities of the Thai people

at this time; access to entertainment, including restaurants, bars and shopping areas may be restricted and you should behave respectfully when in public areas," it said.

Tropical Thailand, with its beaches, Buddhist temples and infamous night life, remains a magnet for travelers despite weathering more than a decade of unrest, including two coups, floods in 2011 and a wave of bombs in tourist towns in August.

Five underrated pioneers in circumnavigation

Nicholas Kulish [an author and journalist who reports for The New York Times] may have traveled the world unintentionally but others made a mission of circling the globe. Five trailblazers are below:

■ Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg 2016

Mr. Piccard, a Swiss psychiatrist who completed the first circumnavigation by hot air balloon, and Mr. Borschberg, a Swiss businessman and pilot, created the team behind the Solar Impulse airplane. They completed a multi-leg journey around the world without fuel. It was the first circumnavigation by solar plane.

■ Steve Fossett 2002 and 2005

Mr. Fossett, an American businessman-cum-adventurer, became the first person to complete a solo hot-air balloon flight around the world in 2002. His journey, from Australia and back again, took nearly two weeks and covered roughly 20,000 miles. Three years later, he made the first solo, nonstop flight around the world without refueling. That journey began and ended in Kansas and lasted 67 hours. He died in a plane crash in the Sierra Nevada in 2007.

■ Sally Ride 1983

Sally Ride became the first American woman to fly in space in June 1983, when she was an astronaut on the Challenger. Her inaugural mission lasted more than six days and traveled a distance of more than two million miles.



Sally Ride communicating with ground controllers during the six-day space mission of the Challenger in 1983.

■ Hugo Eckener 1929

Mr. Eckener, head of the Zeppelin airship company, flew the first aerial circumnavigation at the behest of William Randolph Hearst, who financed the trip. Among the passengers was a journalist, Lady Hay Drummond-Hay, who became the first woman to circumnavigate the globe by air.

■ Jeanne Baret 1766 to 1775 (or so)

Jeanne Baret became the first woman to circumnavigate the world by sea after disguising herself as a male assistant to the botanist Philibert Commerson to gain entry to a French naval ship.

(Source: The New York Times)

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A comet smashing into ancient Earth may have set off catastrophic global warming

The warming was almost instantaneous. In the blink of an eye, geologically speaking, thousands of gigatons of carbon were released into the atmosphere. The global temperature rose by as many as 8 degrees Celsius. The oceans became more acidic. Sea levels surged upward. Hundreds of species went extinct.

Sound familiar? These events actually happened 55.6 million years ago, during a period of dramatic global warming called the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM).

Clues from the geologic record show how hot it was: Arctic sediment cores containing no evidence of ice; rock layers with unusual ratios of carbon isotopes; billions of tiny, shelled microorganisms that died. This catastrophic period in Earth's history is the best analog we have to the climate change that is happening today.

Atmospheric carbon

But there were no humans around burning fossil fuels in the year 55.6 million before present. Primates had only just evolved. So what could have caused atmospheric carbon and global temperatures to spike so dramatically?

In the journal *Science* on Thursday, researchers report the discovery of tiny, glass globules in rock core samples as far apart as New Jersey and Bermuda — which they believe may be evidence of an



ancient, catastrophic comet impact that set off the period of global warming.

The glass spheres, called microtektites, are the remains of the molten rock that gets blown in the air when a massive object collides with the Earth. They contain

"shocked" quartz that appears only in the wake of an impact. In 1980, the discovery of shocked quartz and tektite deposits in the Caribbean from 66 million years ago helped convince Nobel Prize-winning physicist Luis Alvarez that a massive

asteroid may have been what killed the dinosaurs; a decade later, geophysicists discovered the Chicxulub crater off the coast of Mexico, where the impact occurred.

"Those glass impact spherules really point to that there may have in fact been an impact," said Dennis Kent, who studies Earth magnetism at Rutgers and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and is a co-author on the paper. "If so, the fact that it occurred just at the time of the PETM is either an amazing coincidence, or it says there may be some close correlation, there may be some causation involved."

Comet impact

Kent has argued that a comet impact could have triggered the thermal maximum since 2003, when he reported on finding strange magnetic nanoparticles in sediment cores taken off the Atlantic coast.

Comets carry large amounts of carbon-12, the isotope that became suddenly abundant during the PETM.

Kent believes that an initial, instantaneous release of carbon from the impact could have set off a greenhouse effect that caused frozen methane in the sea-floor to melt, releasing more carbon and starting a positive feedback cycle that made the planet hotter and hotter.

(Source: *The Washington Post*)

There were no humans around burning fossil fuels in the year 55.6 million before present. Primates had only just evolved. So what could have caused atmospheric carbon and global temperatures to spike so dramatically?

Heart surgery patients at risk for deadly infection, CDC warns

Patients who have undergone open heart surgeries since 2012 may be at risk of a life-threatening infection linked to a medical device used during their operations, health officials warned Thursday.

Patients who have had valve implants or prosthetic product implants are at higher risk of infection with a bacterial species of nontuberculous mycobacterium (NTM), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Based on the number of surgeries conducted over the past four years, an estimated 600,000 patients are at risk for a potential infection.

The CDC has confirmed infections in 28 heart surgery patients in the U.S. Meanwhile, worldwide, at least 12 patient deaths have been reported, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

Though upsetting, this news should not raise pulses, says Dr. Vinod Thourani, co-chair of the American College of Cardiology's surgeon's council. The "overall risk is exceedingly low," said Thourani, who is also a professor and chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Emory University Hospital.

The CDC estimates that in hospitals where at least one infection has been identified, the risk of a patient getting an infection from the bacteria is between about one in 100 and one in 1,000.

Potential infection

The source of a potential infection is the Stöckert 3T heater-cooler device, produced by LivaNova PLC. Heater-cooler devices are commonly used during cardiac surgical procedures to warm and cool a patient's blood and organs. During manufacture, these devices may have become contaminated with NTM.

Symptoms of infection with NTM include night sweats, muscle aches, joint pain, weight loss, fatigue and unexplained fever.

Between January 2010 and August 2016, the FDA received 91 reports of patient infections worldwide associated with the 3T heater-cooler unit, noted Kotz, and of these 91 reports, at least 79 infections were confirmed.

Following exposure to NTM through open-heart surgery, symptoms often take months to develop and so a diagnosis can be missed or delayed -- sometimes for years -- making these infections more difficult to treat. No test can determine whether a person has been exposed to the bacteria, though a laboratory culture can diagnose an infection. The slow growing nature of the bacteria can require up to two months to rule out infection, according to the CDC.

"What people should know is transmission can occur from environmental sources at any time, it is not specific



to heart surgery," said Thourani, who also said NTM doesn't spread from infected people to uninfected people -- it's not contagious.

It is also unlikely a healthy patient coming in for elective heart surgery would develop an infection, noted Thourani.

More than 250,000 heart bypass procedures are performed every year in the U.S. and of these operations, 60% use the heater-cooler device associated with these infections, the CDC said.

(Source: *cnn.com*)

Study: Decline in forest diversity could cost billions per year

The world's forests constitute the most varied and diverse terrestrial ecosystems on the planet, and are home to thousands of species of plants, animals and microorganisms.

A new study of all major forest ecosystems on Earth finds that conserving these diverse forests not only retains a species-rich environment, but also maintains the forests' output and services for future generations.

The study reveals that biodiversity — the variety of living things on Earth — in forests promotes productivity.

In other words, when the number of tree species increases, so does the amount of timber that can be harvested. They also found the opposite to be true — a decline in biodiversity would result in an accelerating decline in forest productivity.

"This is further evidence that biodiversity generates productivity benefits. Indeed, the productivity gains from conserving forest species far exceed the costs of conservation," said Chris Barrett, a co-author of the study and the Stephen B. and Janice G. Ashley Professor of Applied Economics and Management at the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management. "This finding is extremely robust across eco-regions and countries worldwide. Forest biodiversity conservation pays."

The research team worked on an impressive scale, collecting massive amounts of data from around the world.

"We are very fortunate to have worked with so many dedicated foresters and researchers on this study," said Jingjing Liang of West Virginia University, lead

author of the study. "This team by itself shows that diversity can bring forth great productivity in scientific collaboration."

Scientists from 90 institutions consolidated field-based data forming one of the largest global forest inventory databases in the history of forestry research.

Underpinning data

Tens of thousands of forestry professionals collected the underpinning data, which extended over a period of 150 years.

In total, data was collected from more than 770,000 plots consisting of more than 30 million trees across more than 8,700 species.

The study took into account all major global forest ecosystems across 44 countries and territories. It included some of the most distinct forest conditions on

Earth, such as the northernmost, in Siberia; the southernmost, in Patagonia; the coldest, in Oymyakon, Russia; the warmest, in Palau, an archipelago in the western Pacific Ocean; and the most diverse, in Bahia, Brazil.

After analyzing the data, researchers determined that loss of tree species richness — through deforestation, forest degradation and climate change — would accelerate the decline in forest productivity worldwide.

Researchers estimated that with a decline in tree species richness from the current level to one species, commercial forest productivity across the world would also decline up to 66 percent, even if other things including the total number of trees remained the same.

(Source: *news.cornell.edu*)

Study links antidepressants in pregnancy with language disorders

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, known as SSRIs, are the most common type of antidepressants prescribed to pregnant women. Yet a new study indicates that when taken during pregnancy, the drugs are associated with a higher risk of language disorders, including dyslexia, in offspring.

The children of women who took SSRIs while pregnant have a 37 percent greater risk of speech or language disorders compared with the children of depressed but unmedicated mothers, the researchers say.

In practical terms, if a depressed mother did not take antidepressants, her child's risk of being diagnosed with a speech or language disorder would be about 1 percent, but if she took an SSRI, it would increase to 1.37 percent, explained Dr. Alan Brown, lead author of the study and a professor of psychiatry and epidemiology at Columbia University Medical Center.

Relative risks

"When you have relative risks that are 1.37, they're considered to be low. But because so many people are exposed — 6 percent to 10 percent of mothers are exposed (to antidepressants) throughout the world — it's increasing the public health burden," Brown said, explaining that this burden amounts to more expenses.

"I don't think individuals have to worry about this, but

I do think at the population level, it makes a very big difference," added Brown.

For the study, Brown and his colleagues examined the national medical registries of Finland. The team waded through records from 845,345 single live births between 1996 and 2010 and categorized mothers into three groups.

The first "exposure" group included 15,596 mothers who purchased SSRIs once or more before or during pregnancy. A second group consisted of 9,537 mothers who had been diagnosed with depression or another psychiatric disorder but did not purchase antidepressants during pregnancy. The third group included 31,207 mothers who had never been diagnosed with depression and never purchased antidepressants.

Brown explained that he and his colleagues used the purchase of antidepressants to represent antidepressant use. When a woman refilled her prescription, it seemed likely she had been taking the pills and wanted to continue doing so.

Language disorders

Using data from the registries, the researchers discovered an increased risk of speech/language disorders diagnosed among children of women who used SSRIs during pregnancy and the children of women with depression who did not take an SSRI, compared with the children of women



who were not depressed (or medicated).

However, comparing children born to the two groups of depressed women, Brown and his colleagues discovered an even higher rate of speech/language disorders among the children of women who purchased SSRIs at least twice during pregnancy.

Dyslexia, articulation disorders and other diagnosed language disorders can have a "potentially big effect on school function and later life function," he added.

(Source: *ksl.com*)

New craters reveal that the moon is still getting pummeled by space rocks

New craters are forming on the surface of the moon more frequently than scientists had predicted, a new study has found. The discovery raises concerns about future moon missions, which may face an increased risk of being hit by falling space rocks.

The moon is dotted with a vast number of craters, some billions of years old. Because the moon has no atmosphere, falling space rocks don't burn up like they do on Earth, which leaves the moon's surface vulnerable to a constant stream of cosmic impacts that gradually churn the top layer of material on its surface. You can see a before-and-after video of a new moon crater here.

Previous studies of lunar craters shed light on how they formed and on the past rate of cratering, which in turn yielded insights on the age of various features of the moon's surface. However, less was known about the contemporary rate of lunar crater formation, which could give insight on the risk of bombardment that any missions to the moon might face.

To find out more about the present lunar crater formation rate, a group of scientists analyzed more than 14,000 pairs of before-and-after images of the moon's surface, taken by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO). These images covered 6.6 percent of the lunar surface — about 960,000 square miles (2.49 million square kilometers) — and could reveal when a spot was crater-free and when it later had a crater. The time gaps between observations spanned between 176 and 1,241 Earth days.

(Source: *The CSM*)

People with autism are more able to ignore their impulses

A condition called "emotional blindness" causes people with autism to ignore their emotions when making a decision.

Decisions are based on the way choices are framed. This is because people use emotion when making decisions, leading to some options feeling more desirable than others. For example, when given £50, we are more likely to gamble the money if we stand to lose £30 than if we are going to keep £20.

Although both options are mathematically equivalent, the thought of losing money evokes a powerful emotional response and we are more likely to gamble to try to avoid losing money. This cognitive bias, first described by the psychologist Daniel Kahneman in the 1980s, is known as the "framing effect." Despite this phenomenon being well documented, scientists are still trying to understand why our emotions have such a powerful influence on decision making.

My colleagues and I at King's College London investigated how the perception of internal bodily sensations is related to emotion and how this may, in turn, be linked to how we make decisions. First, we gave a group of typical adults a gambling task to measure their susceptibility to the framing effect. They were later asked to close their eyes and count their heartbeats to measure how well they monitored internal sensations. Their emotional awareness was also measured using a questionnaire. We discovered that people who were good at monitoring their heartbeat — people who "followed their heart" — were most guided by emotion and particularly susceptible to the framing effect.

(Source: *Newsweek*)

The world's largest telescope will be used to search for aliens

The Breakthrough Initiatives to search for extraterrestrial life are split into three main projects: Breakthrough Listen, Breakthrough Starshot, and Breakthrough Message. Starshot is an attempt to send a nanoprobe to Alpha Centauri, the closest star to us, using photonic propulsion. Message is a competition with \$1,000,000 in prize money available to science teams who come up with the best platform to send a digital message out to any intelligent aliens who might be listening. And Listen, the flagship of the Breakthrough Initiatives, uses ground-based radio telescopes to search for any signals given off by an alien civilization.

The Breakthrough Initiatives just announced that they will join forces with China's space program to use the recently-completed Five-Hundred-Meter Aperture Spherical Telescope (FAST), the largest single-dish telescope in the world. The massive radio telescope in the southwestern province of Guizhou should be able to detect fainter signals than ever before.

A team of researchers at FAST will share data and information with researchers at the Green Bank Telescope in the U.S. and the Parkes Observatory in Australia to refine search methods and scour the sky for any signs of intelligent life.

The "Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope (FAST), located in Guizhou, China, achieved first light in September 2016. It is the world's largest filled-aperture radio receiver, and will be one of the most powerful instruments to search for the potential intelligent life beyond Earth," said Professor Jun Yan, the Director General of National Astronomical Observatories of China (NAOC), at a signing ceremony at NAOC headquarters in Beijing. "We are delighted to be collaborating with the Breakthrough Initiatives."

(Source: *Popular Mechanics*)



Over 5.1m Iranian families opt for online census

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 5.16 million Iranian families constituting 17.4 million individuals chose web-based services to fill out census forms so far, the director of the Statistical Center of Iran, has said.

The online census which was supposed to end on October 15 has been agreed to extend for three more days, Omid-Ali Parsa said, IRIB reported on Saturday.

He further encouraged the public to take part in the online census as it helps to reduce expenses incurred by the door-to-door visits of the surveyors.

Over the last national census some 65,000 census takers across the nation had to go door to door to collect information while the number have decreased to 25,000 this year, he highlighted.

Tehran, Markazi and Khuzestan are the provinces with the least level of participation, he added, asking

people living in metropolises to help improve the participation rate by taking part in the online for filling.

"So far some 20 percent have taken part in the online census which makes us to hold the second place worldwide after Japan with 35 percent participation," he pointed.

He went on to say that all the information people provide to the website are confidential and none of the other bodies have access to them.

Over the second phase of the census the surveyors will visit the rest of the households to fill out forms for those who did not use the website.

LEARN ENGLISH Feeling Embarrassed

Lois: Please don't **embarrass** me at the party tonight.

Roger: Me, embarrass you? I'd never do that.

Lois: You have, though, more than once.

Roger: Name one.

Lois: At the Johnsons' party, you danced on the table while singing "I Am Woman!"

Roger: I was being **the life of the party**. Everybody thought it was funny.

Lois: It was **humiliating!** Didn't you notice more than one person **cringing** and the **awkward silence** in the room when your song ended?

Roger: No, I didn't, but I did notice Malik **laughing his head off** and the Johnsons smiling.

Lois: That's because Malik has your **sense of humor** and the Johnsons were **humoring** you. They were trying to **put a good face on** your **impromptu** performance.

Roger: I'm not going to be a **wallflower** just because you **can't take a joke**. My **exuberant** personality is what gets us invited to so many parties.

Lois: Yeah, right. Can I at least get you to promise not to sing?

Roger: And **disappoint** my audience? **Not a chance!**

(Source: *espod.com*)

Words & phrases

embarrass: to make someone feel ashamed, nervous, or uncomfortable, especially in front of other people

the life of the party: a lively, amusing person who is the center of attention at a social gathering

humiliating: making you feel ashamed, embarrassed, and angry because you have been made to look weak or stupid; embarrassing

cringe: to feel embarrassed by something you have said or done because you think it makes you seem silly

awkward silence: an uncomfortable pause in a conversation or presentation; the unpleasant nature of such silences is associated with feelings of anxiety as the participants feel pressure to speak but are unsure of what to say next

laugh your head off: laugh heartily or uncontrollably

sense of humor: the ability to understand and enjoy things that are funny

humor: to do what someone wants or to pretend to agree with them so that they do not become upset

put a good face on something: try to find something positive to say about something that is disappointing us

impromptu: done or said without any preparation or planning

wallflower: someone at a party, dance etc. who is not asked to dance or take part in the activities

can't take a joke: used to say that someone is not able to laugh at jokes about themselves

exuberant: happy and full of energy and excitement

disappoint: to make someone feel unhappy because something they hoped for did not happen or was not as good as they expected

not a chance: it will not happen



Without water,
everything
withers

Iran to unveil first home-grown weather radar by summer 2017

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iranian scientists will develop a weather radar for the first time in the country by summer 2017, the director of Iran Meteorological Organization has said.

Following the talks between Iran Meteorological Organization and Iranian Space Agency Research Center (an organization affiliated with Ministry of Communication and Information Technology), a working prototype of the radar is scheduled to be designed and tested by the next summer, Davoud Parhizkar said, IRNA news agency reported on Friday.

"So far we have taken primary measures to sign a memorandum of understanding with Iranian Space Agency Research Center to initiate the project," he added.

He further said that "we didn't have the technology for building such advanced weather equipment domestically but now the project is getting off the ground and Japanese scientists and experts will also help us on this project."



Currently there are nine weather radars in Iran which should be increased to 24 to provide the whole country with full coverage, Parhizkar explained.

Complaining about low budget allo-

cation for meteorological devices Parhizkar explained that limited finances are impeding the raising of standards in meteorology in Iran.

Elsewhere in an interwove with ISNA

news agency Ebrahim Mirzaei, another official with Iran Meteorological Organization explained that Iran must spend some 100 billion rials (nearly \$3 million) on buying each radar from other countries.

Compared to satellites radars can transfer more accurate data on whether phenomena that emerge in smaller scales and better detect them, Mirzaei said, adding meteorological phenomena that occur in smaller scales are usually more intensive and cause more damages and radars are capable of predicting such extreme weather in less than six hours before they start.

Weather radars or weather surveillance radars are used to locate precipitation, calculate its motion, and estimate its type (rain, snow, hail etc.). Modern weather radars are mostly pulse-Doppler radars, capable of detecting the motion of rain droplets in addition to the intensity of the precipitation. Both types of data can be analyzed to determine the structure of storms and their potential to cause severe weather.

Nations strike wide-reaching deal to cut greenhouse gases

Nearly 200 nations have hammered out a legally binding deal to cut back on greenhouse gases used in refrigerators and air conditioners, in a major step against climate change.

The deal, which includes the world's two biggest economies, the United States and China, divides countries into three groups with different deadlines to reduce the use of factory-made hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) gases, which can be 10,000 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as greenhouse gases.

"It's a monumental step forward," US Secretary of State John Kerry said as he left the talks in the Rwandan capital of Kigali late on Friday.

As Rwanda's Minister for Natural Resources, Vincent Biruta, began spelling out the terms of the deal shortly after sunrise on Saturday, applause from negotiators who had been up all night drowned out his words.

Under the pact, developed nations, including much of Europe and the United States, commit to reducing their use of the gases incrementally, starting with a 10 per cent cut by 2019 and reaching 85 per cent by 2036.

Many wealthier nations have already begun to reduce their use of HFCs.

Two groups of developing countries will freeze their use of the gases by either 2024 or 2028, and then grad-

Two groups of developing countries will freeze their use of the gases by either 2024 or 2028, and then gradually reduce their use. India, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the Persian Gulf countries will meet the later deadline.

ually reduce their use. India, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the Persian Gulf countries will meet the later deadline.

They needed more time because they have fast-expanding middle classes and hot climates, and because India feared damaging its growing industries.

"Last year in Paris, we promised to keep the world safe from the worst effects of climate change. Today, we are following through on that promise," said UN environment chief Erik Solheim in a statement.

The deal binding 197 nations crowns a wave of measures to help fight climate change this month.

Last week, the 2015 Paris Agreement to curb climate-warming emissions passed its required threshold

to enter into force after India, Canada and the European Parliament ratified it.

But unlike the Paris agreement, the Kigali deal is legally binding, has very specific timetables and has an agreement by rich countries to help poor countries adapt their technology.

The United Nations says phasing out HFCs will cost billions of dollars.

But a quick reduction of HFCs could be a major contribution to slowing climate change, avoiding perhaps 0.5 degrees Celsius of a projected rise in average temperatures by 2100, scientists say.

Environmental groups had called for an ambitious agreement on cutting HFCs to limit the damage from the roughly 1.6 billion new air conditioning units expected to come on stream by 2050, reflecting increased demand from an expanding middle class in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The HFC talks build on the 1987 Montreal Protocol, which succeeded in phasing out the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), widely used at that time in refrigeration and aerosols.

The aim was to stop the depletion of the ozone layer, which shields the planet from ultraviolet rays linked to skin cancer and other conditions.

(Source: *Stuff*)

IN FOCUS @ IRNA/Morteza Aminoroayaei



Farmers in Neishabur, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, are harvesting tomatoes. Some 1,250 hectares of lands in the region are under the cultivation of tomato, yielding some 46,250 tons of the crop annually.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Iranian drug lord captured with 800 tons of narcotics

Iranian drug lord was arrested with 800 tons of narcotics, Sistan-Baluchestan province's police chief Hossein Rahimi said on Monday.

The drug lord has been committing his criminal activities since 1992 both in Iran and across the borders, Nasim news agency quoted Rahimi as saying.

More than 300 other dealers who were following his lead are also arrested, he said, adding that the drug lord was also collaborating with 11 other drug trafficking organizations in Iran.

He was living in Iran and commuted between Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces, he added.

قاچاقچی بزرگ مواد مخدر با ۸۰۰ تن مواد دستگیر شد

حسین رحیمی فرمانده انتظامی سیستان و بلوچستان روز دوشنبه از دستگیری یکی از بزرگترین واردکنندگان مواد مخدر به ایران با ۸۰۰ تن مواد خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری نسیم رحیمی گفت: این فرد از سال ۷۱، فعالیت خود در قاچاق مواد مخدر را آغاز کرده بود و علاوه بر قاچاق مواد مخدر در داخل کشور، خط و مسیر بین

المللی خاصی در خارج از کشور نیز داشته است.

وی اضافه کرد: بالغ بر ۳۰۰ نفر از افرادی که تحت هدایت وی در قالب باندهای قاچاق مواد مخدر فعالیت داشتند نیز دستگیر شدند. این در حالی است که فرد دستگیر شده

با ۱۱ باند بزرگ قاچاق مواد مخدر در کشور همکاری داشت.

وی افزود: این فرد ساکن ایران بوده و در دو استان سیستان و بلوچستان و کرمان تردد داشت.

ENGLISH PROVERB

One good turn deserves another

■ **Explanation:** if someone does you a favor, you should do a favor for that person in return

■ **For example:** Jill: Thanks for the ride. Jane: It's the least I can do after you helped me wash the car last week. One good turn deserves another.

PHRASAL VERB

Blow somebody/ something off

■ **Meaning:** to treat someone or something as unimportant, for example by not meeting someone or not going to an event

■ **For example:** Bud got into trouble for blowing off the meeting.

ENGLISH IDIOM

At stake

■ **Explanation:** someone who has a lot at stake is in a risky situation, with a lot to be won or lost

■ **For example:** He was nervous about signing the agreement because there was a lot at stake.

UNSC forum raps Israeli settlement expansion in occupied Palestine

A special United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session has denounced Israel for building "illegal settlements" in the occupied Palestinian territories, paving the way for a Security Council resolution against the Israeli regime.

The session, categorized as an "Arab-Formula" meeting or an informal session, was held at the UN headquarters in New York on Friday at the request of UNSC member states Angola, Malaysia, Venezuela, Senegal and Egypt, with a push from the Palestinians.

The forum was attended by some human rights groups, including Americans for Peace Now and B'Tselem, an Israeli organization that monitors human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian lands. Both groups called for an international boycott of Israel's settlements and foreign companies that invest in them.

B'Tselem Executive Director Hagai El-Ad said "invisible, bureaucratic daily violence" dominates Palestinian life "from cradle to grave," adding, "With every



breath they take, Palestinians are breathing in occupation."

"The UN Security Council must act and the time is now," he said in conclusion.

Lara Friedman, the director of policy and government relations for Americans for Peace Now, also criticized Israel's set-

tlement activities, calling them "illegal growth."

She further said that the Tel Aviv regime had illegally granted settlement expansion permits, which would "lead inevitably to permanent occupation" of the expropriated lands.

The United States representative to the

session, David Pressman, also said that Washington was "deeply concerned about continued settlement activity," which he described as "corrosive to peace."

According to Americans for Peace Now, the number of Israeli settlements has grown dramatically over the past 20 years, with the construction of 11,000 new settler units authorized under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Israeli anti-settlement Peace Now group reported earlier this month that plans to construct 2,168 new housing units moved forward over the last Jewish year by Tel Aviv, compared to 553 ones the year before.

Britain, France and Russia have already slammed Israeli settlement construction as an obstacle to peace and the establishment of a sustainable Palestinian state. The Chinese envoy has also called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital.

(Source: Press TV)

ISIL bombing targeting Iraqi Shias kills at least 32

A suicide bombing claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group killed at least 32 people in the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Saturday, the deadliest single attack to hit the capital in over three months.

The blast is the latest in a series of ISIL-claimed attacks targeting members of Iraq's Shia majority in Baghdad that have left more than 60 people dead in less than three weeks.

The latest attack, which hit the Shia-majority Shaab area of north Baghdad, also wounded at least 36 people.

Officials gave two different accounts of the attack, saying the bomber targeted either a funeral tent or one at which Shia Muslims distribute food and drinks on the occasion of the annual religious commemorations.

ISIL issued an online statement claiming the bombing and confirming the latter account of the attack, but a witness at the scene said the bomber had targeted a

funeral tent, entering and blowing himself up as lunch was being served.

The ISIL terrorist group considers Shias to be heretics, and frequently carries out suicide bombings and other attacks against them in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country.

The Saturday bombing is the deadliest to hit the Iraqi capital since early July, when a suicide bombing in central Baghdad set crowded shopping centers ablaze, killing more than 300 people.

ISIL has claimed several recent bombings targeting Shias in Baghdad, including one on October 9 that killed at least five people.

Two more ISIL-claimed bombings in Baghdad earlier in the month left a total of at least 10 dead, while two others killed at least 17 people at the end of September.

■ Preparing for Mosul operation

The attacks come as Iraqi forces prepare for an offensive in northern Iraq to retake Mosul, the last ISIL-held

city in the country, after regaining much of the territory that the terrorists seized in 2014 and 2015.

The launch of the operation is expected to be announced soon, but it will mark only the start of a battle that is likely to be the most difficult and complex yet in the war against ISIL.

Once the battle is announced, a coalition of heterogeneous but mostly Iraqi forces will have to fight their way through ISIL defenses to reach the city, in some cases over distances of dozens of kilometers.

Then they will likely seek to surround the city before launching an assault, which will mark the start of deadly street fighting with die-hard jihadists in a city with a large civilian population.

The battle may spark a humanitarian crisis, with the United Nations warning that up to one million people may be displaced by the fighting as winter sets in.

(Source: AFP)

War is never justified

1 →

The UK's policy on Iraq was made on the basis of flawed intelligence and assessments. They were not challenged, but should have been.

Tony Blair, following the publication of the Chilcot Report, which included heavy criticism of him when he was prime minister, said that he felt sorry for the losses in the Iraq War, but had made the decision in good faith and he didn't regret it.

Freddy Ford, the communication director of former U.S. President George W. Bush, a main player and architect of the Iraq War, also spoke after the inquiry results were published. He said: "Despite the intelligence failures and other mistakes he has acknowledged previously, President Bush continues to believe the whole world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power."

Clearly, the Iraq War wasn't a 'war of necessity', but instead a 'war of choice', based on different agendas. As a matter of fact, Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, after opposing the war decision in 2003, also said that the Iraq War 'was an act of occupation based on the deliberate misrepresentation of facts.'

The correspondences between Blair and Bush made during those days and that were leaked by Wikileaks clearly show that they knew since the beginning

that there had been no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, but used it instead as an excuse to invade and occupy the region.

Another recent example of wars portrayed as a 'war of necessity' is the Afghanistan War. This time the 9/11 attacks used as an excuse. In the war, known as the 'fight against terrorism', countless carpet bombings took place without making any distinctions between civilians or soldiers. Tens of thousands of civilians lost their lives as a result of air strikes, drone attacks and attacks of coalition forces.

Afghan scientist Mohammad Daud Miraki, in his book entitled 'Afghanistan after Democracy', explains how the occupying NATO forces tested their white phosphorus and depleted-uranium munitions on the Afghan people, despite these being considered crimes against humanity for the horrendous deaths they cause.

There are thousands of Afghan women, children, elderly, disabled civilians that were shot by firing squads on the roads, in villages and towns by the so-called 'death teams' of U.S./UK soldiers and mercenaries, just for their supposed fun. Except for a few procedural investigations, countless cases of such shameful incidents are not even being thoroughly investigated.

Interestingly, U.S. President Barack

Obama, despite being awarded 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, would defend this war of atrocities, in a clear contrast to his prize. He said: 'This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity. ... So this is not only a war worth fighting. This is fundamental to the defense of our people.'

Like thousands before them now Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and others are the most recent locations of wars that were certainly 'not necessary'. No war can be justified or considered necessary, unless it is fought to defend oneself, one's country, life, dignity or freedom in the face of attacks.

War is considered a necessity only by imperialist countries, deep states, arms dealers, business speculators and certain central banks to maintain their wealth in the face of dwindling revenues.

In the past, wars were fought between soldiers in the battlefronts, but today that has been replaced by air strikes and mass destruction. Therefore, in the wars of the future, massive civilian death tolls are inevitable; indeed, WWII was in retrospect a preview of such atrocities. That's why, no matter what the reasons are, starting or participating in a war is tantamount to making the decision of massacring thousands of innocent lives.

The right to life is an unchangeable article of all international treaties

on basic human rights and freedoms. Violation of the right to life is punishable by capital punishment, a life sentence or aggravated life imprisonment in many legal systems due to its being immoral, cruel and illegal. Inciting wars, fueling conflicts and exacerbating tensions, which could lead to massive casualties would be a serious lapse of reason.

For this reason, it is crucial to swiftly eliminate every bit of war justification, through peaceful and diplomatic methods.

This is certainly not a utopian idea, but a clear fact. A lack of love and compassion play an important role in the current fight for sharing the world. Certain circles are making the mistake of trying to solve their problems not with communication and diplomacy but with violence.

However, it is very easy to reason with people just like it is very easy to get out of a system that tries to achieve results by killing people. Surely, this may not be achieved overnight, but it is important that every conscientious person supports this goal and voices opposition through legal rallies. The time has come for the international public, media, and NGO's to come together and stand in solidarity against lobbies of war. The bloodshed has to stop.

Narges Kalbasi Ashtari story: An outcry for help

1 →

A couple of years after the establishment of her schools, in 2013, ASSIST took away Narges's first children's home, the orphanage, through "forged documents" and "false promises."

The founder and secretary of ASSIST registered the Narges Foundation in his own name, manipulating Narges into believing she could not register a foundation as a foreigner.

The NGO then tried to take Narges's second home for visually impaired children, but this time she fought back.

"I filed a complaint at the police station in Rayagada and the husband and wife behind ASSIST were sent to jail."

But soon, the court granted the couple bail, and from then on Narges's life became a "living hell" as she receives life threats constantly.

"They have tried to ruin my reputation, take away my second children's home, threaten to send me to jail and have my Indian visa revoked."

But there's more to the story than meets the eye. Narges's life took a turn for the worst when she found herself charged with involuntary manslaughter.

In 2014, while on a one-day field trip, where Narges ended up paying most of the expenses out of her own pocket, her father's pension, one of the blind children fell into a river and was swept away.

Although the child's parents, who both worked for the school at the time, had accompanied their son on



Narges Kalbasi Ashtari (L) and Iranian Consul General in Hyderabad Hassan Nourian (C) in front of the court in Rayagada

the excursion, greed and pressure by ASSIST made them lodge a complaint against Narges, accusing her of throwing their child in the river and murdering him.

"They made up the story in the hope that they would receive a hefty compensation from me."

Since two years, Narges's life has turned into a night-

mare. She has been in and out of court rooms for a crime she never committed.

However, social media played a pivotal role in disseminating the news of the Iranian-British girl, particularly in Iran, causing a huge public outcry.

As Narges's story went viral, the Iranian Consul General in Hyderabad, Hassan Nourian, was among the first Iranian authorities to reach out to her.

Nourian paid Narges a visit in Rayagada and joined her in one of her court hearings.

Iranian Ambassador to New Delhi Gholamreza Ansari also reached out to her by meeting Indian officials in ministry of external affairs and requesting protection for Narges from threats and harassment she had to put up with in Odisha.

Although through her help hundreds of thousands of children and families now have a better life in that country today Narges is faced with an uncertain future in India as she waits for her next round of court hearing.

Iran awaits the day that justice is observed in the Narges case, and when she is free from all the troubles and charges, gaining lawful possession of what belongs to her and her many unprivileged children.

In the end, we leave you with a powerful statement of an Indian spiritual master whom Narges reminds us all very much of.

"The good you do today, people will forget tomorrow. Do good any way." Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Major players gather for Syria crisis talks amid low hopes

1 →

There are varying degrees of hope as to whether the talks will be successful in ending the violence in Syria, even if temporarily. Iran and Russia support the elected Syrian government, while the U.S., Saudi regime, and Turkey back the militants fighting the state.

Vitaly Churkin, who is Russia's ambassador to the United Nations and the Security Council's current president, said Lavrov and Kerry will try to get Saudi Arabia and Turkey to use their influence with militant groups in Syria for a fresh truce.

Churkin said Lavrov and his U.S. counterpart decided "to revisit" the format of some 20 countries in the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) to a small group of countries as it was difficult to reach consensus on specific topics.

"I think it will be very important to see: are they prepared to really work for a cessation of hostilities? If this time they are more responsible about it, then progress can be made," Churkin commented.

The Russian diplomat further expressed concern at reports "that those so-called moderate groups are making new arrangements" with al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra) terrorist group.

By "moderate" groups, he was referring to the militant outfits that the U.S. likes to brand as such but that are linked to terrorist groups anyway.

"So this is one of the major sticking points, and hopefully at this meeting in Lausanne, those countries that have an influence will take a stronger stand so that those groups, in fact, could distance from (al-) Nusra," Churkin said.

Earlier on Friday, Lavrov had played down the possibility for the Lausanne talks to produce results.

Lavrov also insisted that Russia has no intention to introduce fresh initiatives during the meeting.

The Russian foreign minister's pessimism about the Lausanne talks was reflected by an unnamed French diplomatic source, who said, "When you see the results from the previous efforts, quite frankly, I'm a bit skeptical about the next ones."

A senior U.S. official, though, said the meeting was designed to come up with ideas meant to end the Syrian conflict, not an immediate breakthrough.

"I think we need to see what happens in the room to determine whether this is the beginning of a new process that continues in this format or not," he said.

A U.S.-Russian brokered ceasefire for Syria expired on September 19 after being in effect for only a week.

Damascus refused to extend the truce after U.S. airstrikes targeted a Syrian military base in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr in violation of the agreement, leaving over 80 soldiers dead and some 100 others wounded.

(Source: Press TV)

The U.S. election and the world

6 →

Will the U.S. continue to focus on short-term crisis management with an eye to domestic considerations? Or will it adopt the global perspective that today's interconnected world needs?

Trump's "America first" approach is obviously inconsistent with an expansive international leadership role and would lead the U.S. down a path of isolationism. Clinton's inclination for political calculation suggests a preference for instrumentalism on global challenges. Neither approach is bold or inclusive enough for a world plagued with bloodshed and instability, especially in the Middle East, where conflicts rage in Syria and Libya, and tensions mount between Israel and the Palestinians.

Very few Middle Easterners miss George W. Bush's administration, and we continue to pay a heavy price for the disastrous 2003 invasion of Iraq. But just as few people still applaud President Barack Obama, whose foreign-policy achievements in the region fell far short of the lofty ideals and expectations he set in his first inaugural address, and in his subsequent speech in Cairo in June 2009.

■ Ambitious solutions

The next U.S. president will have to devise ambitious solutions not just to challenges in the Middle East, but to issues affecting the entire planet, including climate change, poverty, epidemics, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and regional conflicts on almost every continent. He or she, may even participate in reforming key international institutions, such as the United Nations, that have led global-governance efforts since World War II – and will confront a world order in which non-state actors can play as prominent a role as traditional nation-states.

The next president will also have vast opportunities to leverage new technologies for the benefit of all people. But, like security, technological and economic progress is sustainable only with the active involvement of major international stakeholders such as the U.S., which continues to have the largest economy and strongest military.

World leaders attending the 71st session of the UN General Assembly will have had an opportunity to acquaint themselves with Trump and Clinton, and with the candidates' most senior advisers. Along with my country's president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, I have personally met both candidates, and I predict that foreign leaders will leave these meetings less alarmed, but still uncomfortable.

To confront past and present demons, and to build a more just and stable world order, members of the international community must engage with one another, even when they hold conflicting views on particular issues. The U.S. must not – and cannot – withdraw into an opaque cocoon of false isolationism, or allow strategic global decisions to be clouded by domestic political considerations.

As we outside observers await the election of the next American president, we can only hope he or she will set an example of respect and compassion for their country, and bring wise, courageous leadership to the global stage.

(Source: project-syndicate.org)

Andy Murray storms into Shanghai Masters final with win over Gilles Simon

Andy Murray battled into the final of the Shanghai Masters with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Gilles Simon, while Novak Djokovic crashed out, raising the prospect of the Scot ousting the Serb as the world's No1.

The current world No2 took an hour and 43 minutes to dispatch his French opponent and will face Roberto Bautista Agut in Sunday's final, the Spaniard having shocked Djokovic in the other semi-final.

Sunday's showpiece will be Murray's 10th final of a remarkable year and his form, coupled with Djokovic's troubles in the latter part of the season, have given him a slim chance of edging past his rival at the top of the rankings before the end of 2016.

"I said that I want to try to get to No1, but this year is going to be extremely difficult," Murray said after beating Simon. "The loss [by Djokovic] today helps me a little bit but I'm still quite



far away from him, so I'm not thinking about the No1 ranking this week or right now."

He may be a long way behind but the chance is there nevertheless. Murray currently trails Djokovic by 3,605 ranking points. The Serb collects 360 points for reaching the Shanghai semi-finals, while Murray will claim 1,000 if he beats Bautista Agut on Sunday or 600 if he loses. Thanks to the complex nature of the ATP rankings system, those points in essence replace the points

won at the 2015 edition of the tournament, won by Djokovic with Murray going out in the semi-finals.

Djokovic is therefore losing 640 ranking points, while Murray could pick up the same amount if he wins on Sunday or a more modest 240 if Bautista Agut springs another surprise. The maximum swing then is 1,280. Either way the gap between the two is set to drop below 3,000 and could be as low as 2,325.

Djokovic's position is made all the more precarious by his victories in the 2015 versions of the two remaining tournaments he is currently scheduled to play this season – the BNP Paribas Masters, which begins later this month, and the ATP World Tour Finals in November.

Advertisement

The Serb will therefore be defending 1,000 points in Paris and 1,300 in London. Murray, on the other hand, was beaten in the final in Paris last year and exited at the group stages at the O2, picking up 600 and 200 points respectively. A strong end to the season for Murray, particularly at the World Tour Finals where there is the potential for a huge ranking points swing, could see him become the world No1 for the first time.

The prospect remains unlikely, however, with Murray in all likelihood needing wins in all three tournaments while Djokovic continues to struggle. What seemed an iron grip, though, appears to be loosening.

And there can be no question about Murray's form. He has now won 18 sets in a row on the ATP World Tour and arrived in Shanghai after winning his fifth tour-level title of the season at the China Open where he did not drop a set all week.

Simon provided stubborn resistance, the world No32 and Murray sharing seven breaks of serve in the first 10 games of the match, but Murray's class told in the end.

"I just want to finish this year as best as I can, it's been the most successful in my career," Murray told Sky Sports. "The last few months have been some of the most consistent I have been, so I just want to keep it going until the end of the year and finish as strong as possible."

Djokovic, meanwhile, lost his cool during his defeat to Bautista Agut, smashing his racket to bits after losing the first set and ripping his shirt open in anger during another point on his way to a 6-4, 6-4 defeat.

(Source: Guardian)

Djokovic stunned by Bautista Agut, Murray eases through

World number one Novak Djokovic suffered a shock 6-4 6-4 loss to Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut and his fierce rival Andy Murray beat France's Gilles Simon 6-4 6-3 in the Shanghai Masters semi-finals on Saturday.

Serbian Djokovic, 12-times grand slam champion, made 29 unforced errors against the 15th seed and converted just two of nine break points.

He saved three match points before Bautista Agut broke his serve for the fourth time to wrap up victory in one hour 48 minutes.

Djokovic, who smashed his racket after losing the first set and tore his shirt during the match, was left fuming after umpire Carlos Bernardes gave him a time violation when changing his shirt.

"He was the star of the show. That's what he wanted to be today," the 29-year-old told reporters.

"But there are definitely things that I need to regain from the emotional, mental point of view."

Bautista Agut said aggressive tactics were key to him picking up his first victory in six attempts against Djokovic.

"I tried to force him to play his best tennis. I think in the first set he played some good tennis. He played a little bit better than me," Bautista Agut said.

"But then I knew that I had to increase my level. I had to play more aggressive."

World number two Murray took a strong hold of his match against Simon after breaking the Frenchman's serve to clinch a tight first set. Murray, bidding for his third Shanghai Masters title, carried his momentum into the second set as he broke Simon's serve twice to wrap up the match in one hour 43 minutes.

Bautista Agut, who has lost to Murray in their two previous meetings, will face the 29-year-old Scot in the final on Sunday.

(Source: Reuters)

Man City held by Everton, Arsenal beat Swansea, Chelsea ease past Leicester



Manchester City came from behind to draw 1-1 at home to Everton, but will feel like they should have won after missing two penalties.

City could have opened the scoring shortly before half-time when they were given a penalty after Phil Jagielka had tripped David Silva, but Maarten Stekelenburg was on hand to turn away Kevin De Bruyne's spot kick.

And City were made to pay for that miss in the second half when Romelu Lukaku ran from the halfway line before finishing calmly past Claudio Bravo.

The hosts had a chance to equalise when they were awarded their second spot kick of the day after Sergio Aguero had been brought down by Jagielka, only for Aguero to also see his effort turned away by Stekelenburg.

But City did finally find the back of the net in the 72nd minute when substitute Nolito beat the Everton keeper with a header as his side ultimately endured a third consecutive game without victory.

Arsenal moved level on points with City at the top of the Premier League table after defeating Swansea 3-2 at the Emirates Stadium in Bob Bradley's first game in charge of the Swans.

The Gunners broke the deadlock in the 26th minute through Theo Walcott, who bagged his fifth goal in five games for the club, poking home from close range after Swansea had failed to deal with the danger.

And Walcott soon made it six goals in five games a few minutes later, again capitalising on a mistake at the back before prodding in from just a few yards out.

Swansea pulled one back through Gylfi Sigurdsson, curling an effort from the edge of the area past Petr Cech, but Mesut Ozil restored Arsenal's two-goal

advantage in the second half after volleying a cross into the roof of the net.

Borja Baston soon grabbed a second for the Swans, finishing off Modou Barrow's cross, but Arsenal were able to hold on for a sixth straight Premier League victory despite seeing Granit Xhaka dismissed for bringing down Barrow.

Diego Costa, Eden Hazard and Victor Moses were all on target for Chelsea as they brushed aside Leicester City with a 3-0 victory at Stamford Bridge.

The Blues raced into the lead inside just seven minutes as Nemanja Matic flicked on a corner at the near post, with Costa arriving unmarked in the middle to fire past Kasper Schmeichel for his seventh Premier League goal of the season.

Hazard made it two in the 33rd minute, taking advantage of some sloppy Leicester defending before rounding Schmeichel and slotting into an empty net.

And Moses rounded off the scoring in the 80th minute, firing past Schmeichel and into the back of the net after being fed in by a brilliant Nathaniel Chalobah pass.

Dele Alli scored a last-minute equaliser to secure Tottenham Hotspur a 1-1 draw against West Bromwich Albion at the Hawthorns.

Tottenham did everything but score in the first half, dominating the play with Dele Alli and Christian Eriksen both being denied by fine saves from Ben Foster.

And Spurs continued their search for a goal in the second half, with Moussa Sissoko and Eriksen both going close but unable to break the deadlock.

With just eight minutes left on the clock, Nacer Chadli came back to haunt his former club, blasting

home from close range after Hugo Lloris had denied James McClean.

However, Alli had the final say, poking home from close range for Spurs after the ball had ran loose inside the area.

Joe Allen scored a brace as Stoke City secured their first Premier League win of the season with a 2-0 victory at home to fellow strugglers Sunderland to climb out of the relegation zone.

Allen needed just eight minutes before getting on the score sheet for Stoke, for the third successive Premier League game, arriving in the box to get on the end of Marko Arnautovic's delivery.

And the Wales international grabbed his second of the afternoon on the stroke of half-time, firing into the back of the net from the edge of the box after a corner had been cleared.

Mike Phelan's first game since being appointed permanent Hull City boss ended in defeat as Bournemouth ran out 6-1 winners at the Vitality Stadium.

The Cherries opened the scoring through Charlie Daniels, who was on hand to fire home the rebound after Junior Stanislas' free kick had come back off the post.

Hull drew level through Ryan Mason, with the midfielder's strike deflecting past Artur Boruc, however, Bournemouth were soon back in front thanks to Steve Cook, who headed home Stanislas' delivery.

Stanislas then got on the score sheet himself just minutes later, slotting into the roof of the net from the penalty spot, before finding the back of the net once more in the second half, with Callum Wilson and Dan Gosling adding a fifth and sixth late on.

(Source: Soccer.net)

Man United's Jose Mourinho: Liverpool game exciting but won't define season

Jose Mourinho said he is looking forward Manchester United's trip to Liverpool but does not feel the match will define his club's season.

Mourinho leads United into his first North-West Derby on Monday seeking a victory that would lift his side level with fourth-placed Liverpool on 16 points.

The former Porto, Inter Milan, Real Madrid and Chelsea boss told reporters: "I have to feel it, to play it, and then take my conclusions, but I have been in England for a long time.

"Obviously I have never played

this match, but I played many times against Liverpool, many times against Manchester United, I understand the dimension of the clubs, and now I understand better the dimensions of two big historical rivals.

"I go there to play my game. I go to do my work and normally I do enjoy my work there.

"I like the atmosphere, normally the characteristics of the matches, but being Manchester United manager means something more, because we cannot compare the historical rivalry

between my previous club [Chelsea] and United and Liverpool.

"I look forward to it. I always like to play at Anfield. I won many times there. I also lost. I won big matches, I lost big matches, so I cannot say I like to go there because I'm always successful, because it's not true, but I do like to go there.

"It is just a big match. It can be comparable to Inter vs Milan, Real Madrid vs Barcelona, Benfica vs Porto -- these kind of matches -- and I like it."

However, he added: "The season for me is not about the Anfield match and Old

Trafford match in January. I think, the season is about many matches, many points to win, many points to lose and targets to achieve."

Liverpool have been in fine form, recording four straight wins in the league, and Jurgen Klopp has been named September's Premier League Manager of the Month.

Mourinho was in no mood to discuss Liverpool's fine start, though, telling reporters: "I have nothing to say."

Pressed on the quality of Klopp's side, he replied: "They are good."

(Source: Soccer.net)

Bolt sets last race in Jamaica for June

Jamaica's Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt will run his last race on home soil at June's Racers Grand Prix before retiring from competition two months later, he said on Friday.

The 30-year-old, who won the 100 meters at this year's Racers Grand Prix, has already said he plans to retire from the sport after the Aug. 5-13 world championships in London having won nine Olympic gold medals.

"The Racers Grand Prix will be my last race in Jamaica people, it will be the last time I run in Jamaica," Bolt told Television Jamaica's "Smile Jamaica" morning magazine program.

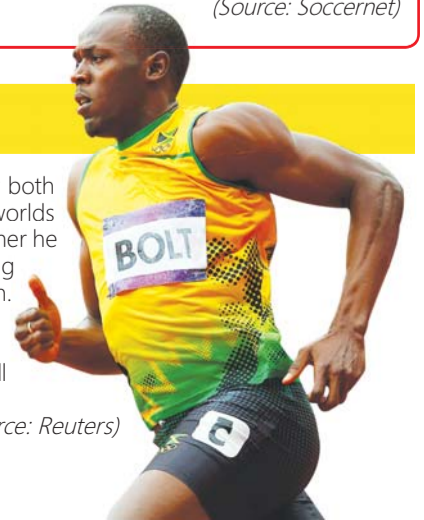
The Racers Grand Prix will be held on June 10.

The Jamaican, who drew down the curtain on his Olympic career in August by securing a sweep of the sprint titles for a third successive Games, will resume training next month.

Bolt has wild card entries for both the 100 and 200 meters at the worlds but remains undecided on whether he will run one or both events, saying only it will be his last competition.

"Yes I am definitely going to retire after the world championships in London, that will be my last one," said Bolt.

(Source: Reuters)



Petrochimi fails to advance to FIBA Asia Champions Cup final

SPORTS Iran's Petrochimi was defeated against China Kashgar 90-86 at the FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2016 semi-final on Saturday.

Naturalized Filipino Andray Blatche was in the starring role in this pivotal win for the host, posting a sublime double-double to lead his club past the Iranians. Fellow import Darius Adams also impressed, scoring 20 points to go along with 6 assists and 3 rebounds. Muge daer Xireljiang and Makan Kelanbaik both came up big, too, hitting crucial shots in the fourth quarter and ending up with 11 and 10 points respectively.

The Iranians were paced by Behnam Yakhchali and James White, each of whom scored 26 points, while Gerald Robinson missed more than he made as he tallied just 12 points.

This was a tough loss to take for Petrochimi as they became the first Iranian club to miss the Champions Cup Final since 2006.

Petrochimi will face Al-Ahli of the UAE in third place match on Sunday while China Kashgar meet Al-Rayyan of Lebanon in the final match.

The 24th edition was held in 2013 in Amman, Jordan, where Iranian club Foolad Mahan Isfahan emerged victorious.

The Fiba Asia Champions Cup that started way back in 1981 was a yearly event since 1990 before being stopped in 2013. After a two-year break the club-level championship returns to Fiba's regular competition format.



Iran's Javanmardi candidate for Best Female Athlete of Month

Iranian shooter Sareh Javanmardi has been shortlisted for the Best Female Athlete of September.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has revealed the shortlist based on performances at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, and the public can now vote for the winner on www.Paralympic.org. In lieu of the IPC Athlete of the Month award for September, the honor is being separated into three different categories – Best Male Athlete, Best Female Athlete and Best Team – based on results at Rio 2016.

Siamand Rahman won the Best Male honor. Now a one-

week voting period will be dedicated to decide the Best Female Athlete of September.

The candidates are as follow:

- Sareh Javanmardidodmani, Iran, shooting
- Grace Norman, USA, triathlon
- Josephine Orji, Nigeria, powerlifting
- Sophie Pascoe, New Zealand, swimming
- Beatrice Vio, Italy, wheelchair fencing
- Li Zhang, China, swimming

(Source: Paralympic.org)



Iran's Razzaghpour relieved after finding redemption



Riffa: Islamic Republic of Iran defender Abolfazl Razzaghpour turned from villain to hero in less than 60 minutes when his team held Qatar to a 1-1 draw in their Group C opener at the AFC U-19 Championship Bahrain 2016 at the Bahrain National Stadium on Friday.

Razzaghpour first gifted Qatar the lead with an own goal in the 38th minute but turned saviour after netting a powerful left-footer from outside the box to earn a precious point for his side.

"I pray before each game that if I make any mistake in the game, I should remain focused to help my team in all the ways

possible," he told the-AFC.com on his thoughts after the dreadful own goal.

"I kept my concentration on the game and had told my friend midfielder, Omid Nor Afkan before to pass me the ball if he sees any space in front me so that I can take the shot with all my power.

"Thankfully, I got the space, the pass and I did not want to miss this chance."

"We are not under any kind of pressure. We don't think about the performances of other Iranian teams and want to think only about our match," he said about Iran's recent successes in football and futsal fields.

(Source: AFC)

Persepolis moves top of Iran Professional League



SPORTS Persepolis football team defeated Naft Tehran 3-0 to move to top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Hossein Mahini gave Persepolis a lead from the penalty spot in the 14th minute.

Mehdi Taremi extended Persepolis' lead in the 30th minute and Kamal Kamyabinia made it 3-0 with a header in the 82nd minute.

Earlier in the day, Persepolis' arch-rival Esteghlal defeated

Siahjamegan in Mashhad thanks to a goal from Kaveh Rezaei in 27th minute.

Tractor Sazi was held to a goalless draw by Saipa in Tehran and fell from top to second.

Zob Ahan defeated Sepahan in Isfahan derby with a brace from Morteza Tabrizi.

Machine Sazi suffered a 3-1 defeat at home to defending champion Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Persepolis moved to top of the IPL table with 18 points, two points clear of Tractor Sazi.



Usain Bolt to be immortalized with statue in Jamaica

Legendary sprinter Usain Bolt will be honored with a statue alongside three Olympic champion teammates in a park outside the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.

Bolt, along with Asafa Powell, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Veronica Campbell-Brown, will join other famous Jamaicans who have been immortalized in the park, including singer Bob Marley and top athlete Merlene Ottey.

The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport commissioned the production of the statues, in honor of the stars' outstanding contribution to the

development of Jamaican athletics.

Leading Jamaican artist and sculptor Hon. Basil Watson, who has previously sculpted a statue for sports icon Herb McKenley, has been tasked with creating the new monuments.

They will be mounted at the National Stadium Statue Park as part of a wider planned redevelopment of the area, which includes the National Sport Museum.

Sport Minister, Hon. Olivia Grange, confirmed the first two statues – Bolt and Fraser-Pryce – will be ready in time for the Jamaica 55 Independence celebrations in 2017.

Campbell-Brown and Powell's statues will be completed for the following year.

The announcement was made ahead of celebrations to honor Jamaica's Rio 2016 medalists which take place from Friday, October 14 to Sunday, October 16.

Bolt's statue is recognition for his dominance of the sprinting scene over the last decade.

He ended his Olympic career by claiming an unprecedented 'triple triple' and his ninth gold as Jamaica won the 4x100m relay final in Rio.

Bolt had won the 100m and 200m in Brazil and is the only man to win all three sprint events at three Games.

He holds the current men's 100m world record of 9.58 seconds and the 200m world record of 19.19s. Both were set in 2009.

Bolt was also part of the team that set the fastest-ever time for the 4x100m relay, at the London 2012 Games.

Nesta Carter, Michael Frater and Yohan Blake joined Bolt in breaking the 37 seconds barrier for the first time with a stunning 36.84 seconds performance.

(Source: RT)

Iran's Rahman & Nemati among 10 Asian athletes who made history in Rio

With China leading the way, Asian countries had a Paralympic Games to remember, in Rio.

A total of 25 won at least one medal, with Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Uzbekistan and Vietnam claiming their maiden Paralympic titles and Qatar making their first appearance on the podium.

Check out 10 Asian athletes who shined at Rio 2016.



■ Siamand Rahman (IRI)

The Iranian powerlifter confirmed his status as the world's strongest Paralympian with a staggering performance. In his first attempt, Rahman secured gold in the men's over 107kg with a 270kg lift. He went on to lift 300kg breaking his own world record and doing what no man had ever done before. The 28-year-old lifted 305kg in his third attempt and cleared the bar at 310kg in the last one to write his name with indelible ink in to the history books.

■ Zahra Nemati (IRI)

The 31-year-old archer spent two unforgettable months in Rio. Nemati first competed at August's Olympic Games, where she carried the Iranian flag at the Opening Ceremony. And in September she went on to win one gold and one silver at her second Paralympic Games. Nemati's finished second in the mixed team recurve open behind China and ahead of Italy, but then sealed the women's individual recurve open title. She added those medals to the gold and the bronze she had claimed at London 2012.

■ Wenpan Huang (CHN)

China topped the medals table for a fourth consecutive Paralympic Games after claiming 239 overall -107 golds, 81 silvers and 51 bronzes- in Rio. And amongst all the Asian country's multiple medal-winners, swimmer Wenpan Huang finished as the most decorated one with five golds and one silver, breaking the world record in four different events along the way.

■ Ho Wo Jeong (KOR)

As a three-time Paralympic medallist, the 30-year-old boccia player arrived in Rio seeking to increase his medal haul. And he did so with outstanding performances in both his events. Jeong first teamed up with Han Soo Kim to claim silver in the men's mixed pairs BC3 after losing to the Brazilian pair in the final. But the South Korean took revenge in the mixed individual BC3, beating home crowd favourite Evelyn De Oliveira in the quarter-finals and going on to claim the second Paralympic gold in his career.

■ Fotimakhon Amilova (UZB)

At only 17-years-old, Amilova had a formidable Paralympic debut, reaching the finals in all her six swimming events and winning one gold, one silver and one bronze. Her first medal came in the women's 100m butterfly S13 on 9 October, touching in third (1:04.93) after USA's Rebecca Meyers (1:03.25) and compatriot Muslima Odilova (1:04.92). Two days later, Amilova achieved glory by breaking the world record (1:12.45) on her way to gold in the 100m backstroke SB13 and following that up with silver (2:25.23) in the 200m individual medley SM13, behind Meyers (2:24.66).

■ Pin Xiu Yip (SIN)

After missing out the podium in London, Great Britain, four years ago, Singapore's only Paralympic champion felt ready to reclaim the swimming titles she had won in Beijing, China, in 2008. The 24-year-old began her winning run on 9 September by setting a world record of 2:07.09 in the women's 100m backstroke S2 final and added a second gold in the 50m backstroke S2 seven days later.

■ Paeyo Pongsakorn (THA)

The 19-year-old's Paralympic debut could not have been better, winning medals in all four events he took part in. Pongsakorn's winning run started on 10 October, when he claimed silver in the men's 100m T53. The Thai's first title came in the 400m T53 the following day, with a Paralympic record time of 47.91. He topped the podium again in the 800m T53 and closed his fantastic Games with another silver in the 4x400m relay T53/54.

■ Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli (MAS)

Since their Paralympic debut at Heidelberg 1972, Malaysia had never won a gold medal. In Rio, the Asian country claimed two within one hour. On 10 September, Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi sealed the country's first in the men's 100m T36. Only 60 minutes later, Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli, who won bronze at both London 2012 and the Doha 2015 World Championships, broke the world record (16.84m) to top the podium in the men's shot put F20. Malaysia would later add one more gold and one bronze to round off their best Paralympic Games to date.

■ Abdulla Sultan Alaryani (UAE)

He may not have won gold at last month's Games, but Rio 2016 triple-silver medallist Alaryani showed the world that becoming United Arab Emirates' first shooting Paralympic champion four years ago in London was not a matter of good fortune. The 46-year-old finished second in the R1 (men's 10m air rifle standing SH1), the R7 (men's 50m rifle 3 positions SH1) and the R6 (mixed 50m rifle prone SH1), and confirmed he will continue to be one of the sport's big names in the upcoming years.

■ Ammar Ali (IRQ)

Until Rio 2016, only track and field athletes and powerlifters had been Iraq's medal winners at Paralympic Games. But 31-year-old Ali added wheelchair fencing to the list after sealing silver in the men's individual epee category B, last month. Ali progressed through the pool stage and then defeated France's Marc-Andre Cratere and Yannick Ifebe in the quarter-finals and semi-finals, respectively, to qualify for the gold-medal match, which he lost to Belarus' Andrei Pranevich.

(Source: Paralympic.org)



Poem of the day

We are as the flute, and the music in us is from thee;
we are as the mountain and the echo in us is from thee.

Rumi

Prayer Times

Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:46 Dawn: 4:49 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:13 (tomorrow)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Basilica Hudson to screen "Starless Dreams" from Iran

T I A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Mehrdad Oskui's "Starless Dreams" will go on screen in Basilica Hudson, a non-profit multidisciplinary arts center in Hudson, NY, supporting the creation, production and presentation of arts and culture.

The film will be screened on October 20 in the Basilica non-fiction screening series section co-curated with Chris Boeckmann of True/False Film Fest, the organizers have announced on the website.

A haunting portrait of stolen childhood, "Starless Dreams" plunges us into the lives of seven young teenage girls sharing temporary quarters at a rehabilitation and correction center on the outskirts of Tehran.

Founded in 2010 by musician Melissa Auf der Maur and filmmaker Tony Stone, Basilica Hudson makes its home in a spectacular solar-powered reclaimed 1880s industrial factory on the waterfront of the historic City of Hudson.

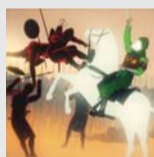


"A157" to compete in Dok Leipzig

T I A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Behruz Nuranipur's "A157" will be competing in the 59th International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film -- Dok Leipzig, which will be held from October 31 to November 6.

The film narrates the tragedy of three Kurdish girls who became pregnant after being raped by members of ISIS.

The film will be competing with 11 other documentaries coming from different countries, including France, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine.



"Sinus" hits silver screens in Iraq

T I A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Kianush Dalvand's animation "Sinus" had its premiere in Iraq yesterday.

The animated film is about Ubayd Allah Ibn Hurr Ju'fi, one of the bravest men of Kufa, who refused the request of Imam Hussein (AS) for assisting him at the battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

Mohammad-Hossein Qasemi and Dariush Dalvand are the producers of the animation, which has been dubbed into Arabic for screening in Iraq.

Flemish altarpiece masterwork part-restored to former glory

GHENT (Reuters) — Scientists and art historians in Belgium on Wednesday finished the first restoration stage of one of the most important pieces of early Renaissance art: the Van Eyck brothers' altarpiece in Ghent.

Completed in 1432, the "Adoration of the Mystic Lamb" is a complex painting some four and a half meters (14.75 ft) wide by three and a half meters tall, consisting of 12 panels, eight of them painted on both sides to enable the whole work to be opened and closed up.

The first stage of the restoration took four years to complete and focused on the outside panels, which depict the Annunciation - the angel Gabriel telling Mary she will give birth to Jesus - as well as showing prophets and two portraits of the praying donors of the painting.

"This is not about Belgium or the Low Countries, this is world heritage," said Sven Gatz, minister of culture for Belgium's Flanders region.

The painting has had a tumultuous history, surviving not only the destruction of religious images which swept through the Low Countries in the summer of 1566. It was also taken as loot by invading French and German forces in different wars, ending up in an Austrian salt mine at the end of World War Two.

The painting has undergone several restoration attempts over the past 600 years, which is why difficult decisions on which layers to remove and which layers to amplify needed to be taken.

It was not always clear which strokes were made by Hubert Van Eyck, which by his younger and better-known brother Jan and which by others, requiring an international team of scientists to assess the painting meticulously.

The result is a much brighter image with much more depth, shedding a yellow hue that had built up, said Anne van Grevenstein, an emeritus professor at the University of Amsterdam who advised on the project.

Young artist relishes chance with her suede paintings

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Maliheh Sorayya Nojeh Sadat, a young artist whose paintings on suede have turned out to be her trademark, says as along she does not take a risk, she will not reach a higher point.

"I was always a top student when I was studying at the university. I have been curious to try different materials and various types of canvases and I arrived at suede. I am a challenging and a risky girl," she told the Tehran Times in an interview conducted in early October on a cool autumn day.

"I personally like unique and different works. I have worked with all kinds of different techniques to create my works. Afterwards I realized that working on suede shows one's skill in paintings and the quick sketches an artist makes. There is no chance to make a mistake once you make a mistake the work is ruined," she explained.

Working on suede and producing a clean, bright work requires patience and much skill, she said.

"The first time you put on the color, the suede absorbs the paint, and for three days it soaks into the suede and you have to give it time and let it dry. It also requires time and needs material," she added.

She also explained that not just any image can be painted on suede. "It is limited. The shadows and the colors, and it is the artist who chooses the images based on her own experience. Light is very important in these types of works."

Sadat showcased some of her works for the first time in a group exhibition at the Aftab Gallery of the Zargandeh Cultural Center in northern Tehran in 2005. Her first solo exhibit was held at Tehran's Melal Cultural Center in 2012.

The artist noted that she is a graduate of architecture and has also studied English and works as a private translator with some companies, adding that once



A painting by Maliheh Sorayya Nojeh Sadat

she was in the Iraqi city of Erbil, the idea to hold an exhibit sparked in her mind.

"When I was in Erbil in 2014 I was surprised to see the beautiful paintings on the walls of where we were staying, hanging on the walls with high prices. I asked about it and the manager introduced me to the Shanidar Gallery in Erbil. The gallery owner is an artist and liked my series of paintings on suede and invited me for the exhibit in 2014 in Erbil," she explained.

Her second exhibit in Erbil was a charity one to help raise funds for the war-stricken children of the region, and the exhibit was

warmly received.

"I mainly focus on displaying my works in other countries. In Iran, I have spent a lot of time and energy but the visitors prefer to buy carpet tableaus. They ask me the price and when they find out about the price they say that they prefer to purchase two carpet tableaus instead. But when I hold an exhibit in another country, I make more money," she added.

She also mentioned her cooperation with the MSS Art, a company based in Dubai cooperating with Swarovski, an Austrian producer of luxury cut lead glass,

which embellishes the paintings with Swarovski pearls and sets of jewelry.

In her next projects, she said that she is planning to have an exhibit before Noruz. "I prefer to have a charity exhibit, but I have to see which organization cooperates; I prefer to work with an organization working for children. I am also thinking of holding an exhibit in Turkey next year."

"Painting costs a lot of money, and I have several students to teach. I would also like to establish my own school to teach painting to students," she concluded as her future plan.

Tajik festival dedicates special section to Iranian cinema

T I A R T TEHRAN — The Didor International Film Festival of Tajikistan, which is scheduled to open in Dushanbe today, has dedicated a special section to Iranian films.

"The Daughter" (Reza Mirkarimi), "Where Are My Shoes?" (Kiumars Puraahmad), "Yahya Didn't Keep Quiet" (Kaveh Ebrahimipur), "Atlan" (Moin Karimeddini), "Crazy Castle" (Abolhassan Davudi) and "What's the Time in Your World?" (Safi Yazdani) are among the award-winning Iranian films to go on screen in this section, Farabi Cinema Foundation has announced in a press release published on Saturday.

In addition, actor Reza Kianian is among the jury members in this edition

of the festival running until October 20. "Crazy Castle" won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 33th Fajr Film Festival last year.

The movie is about some young members of an online community who meet at an event in Tehran. One girl's urgent need for drugs brings six of them together, and what starts out as a prank quickly escalates out of control.

"The Daughter" scooped awards for best film and best actor, won by Farhad Aslani, at the 38th Moscow International Film Festival in July.

The film is set in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan, where Mr. Azizi, an engineer for the Abadan Oil Refining Company, is making

arrangements for an engagement party for one of his daughters while his other daughter, Setareh, plans to leave Abadan to attend her friend's goodbye party in Tehran.

"Atlan", a film about the life story of Ali, an Iranian Turkmen horse-riding instructor and his horse Ilhad, won the award for best documentary at the 12th Rural Route Film Festival in New York in July.

Moreover, "Yahya Didn't Keep Quiet" won the award for best long fiction at the Tripoli Film Festival in April. The film starring Fatemeh Motamed-Arya tells the story of a seven-year-old boy who strives diligently to uncover the mysteries of his aunt's life.



"Parting" honored at Busan film festival

T I A R T TEHRAN — "Parting", an Iran-Afghanistan coproduction by Navid Mahmudi, received the jury's special mention in the New Currents section of the 21st Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), which was held from October 6 to 15.

In this section, two Chinese films, Wang Xuebo's "Knife in the Clear Water" and Zang Qiwu's "The Donor", shared the top award, the organizers announced on Saturday.

Moreover, Iranian cinematographer Mahmud Kalari was among the jury members in the New Currents section, which focuses on up and coming filmmaking talent from Asia.

"Parting" is about teenage lovers Nabi and Fereshteh who are separated by her family's flight from Afghanistan. After years apart, Nabi decides to find Fereshteh and risk the hardship of flight and resettlement in Europe with a hope of a better life.

The film was selected as Afghanistan's official submission to the foreign language Oscar category this year. However, the title appears to have been disqualified as it was omitted from the 85-title list published earlier last week.

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline, Sharareh Samei



A painting from Ehsan Barabadi's series "Stone Garden" is on display in an exhibition at Tehran's Seyhun Gallery on October 9, 2016. The exhibition runs until October 26 at the gallery, which can be found at 24 Sinai Alley, off Keyhan St. and Moqaddas-e Ardabili Ave.