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Rouhani meets senior foreign officials at UN

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani have met a number of foreign leaders in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. During a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, Rouhani said Tehran attaches great importance to the European role in protecting the 2015

nuclear deal formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. "The JCPOA bore this message that the complicated international issues can be settled through dialogue and within a win-win framework and any harm to it can bear a dangerous message to the world that problems cannot be solved through diplomacy," Rouhani noted. **→ 2**

Iran, Russia set to boost transport, energy ties

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) and Russian Trade and Economic Development Council (RT-EDC) signed an agreement in Tehran on Tuesday to expand cooperation in rail, oil and gas, renewable energies, and auto industries. The agreement also addresses a \$2.5-billion financing for co-manufacturing of 1,000 freight, passenger and subway wagons during a 3-5 year period. The

deal was signed in July by IDRO and Russia's Transmashholding in Tehran. Central Bank of Iran Governor Valiollah Seif aid in August that three European countries including Austria, Denmark and Italy are set to open €22 billion credit lines for financing projects in Iran which in addition to the €8-billion credit line to be secured by South Korea's Eximbank the total value of loan deals will reach €30 billion after the implementation of the nuclear deal in 2016.

No obligations beyond agreements: Iran's nuclear chief

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's nuclear chief said on Tuesday that Iran has no obligations other than the IAEA safeguards agreement, the Additional Protocol and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the nuclear agreement.

Ali Akbar Salehi made the remarks after his meeting with Yukiya Amano, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Salehi also said the UN nuclear watchdog chief praised Iran's commitment to the nuclear deal. **→ 2**

PERSPECTIVE

Staff Writer

Time to withstand Trump at UN

World leaders are gathering at the United Nations headquarters in New York to give speeches about priorities, threats to global security, the scourge of terrorism, poverty, and generally the pressing needs of today's world.

Now it is an opportune time that world leaders warn about Donald Trump's unilateral approaches such as his order to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement.

The United States is the main culprit to the global warming. It is enough to know that for several decades or even maybe for more than a century the U.S. has been the biggest emitter to the world, lonely accounting for more than 30 of emissions to the atmosphere.

This sense of irresponsibility shows Trump's selfishness and his disdain for people of other countries who have been affected by the global warming and the ensuing consequences such as droughts, poverty, dislocation, war, etc.

Missteps by Trump who is the wrong side of history is not just limited to the climate agreement. In recent days he has also been leveling the harshest remarks against the nuclear pact clinched between Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany, and the European Union.

Now that he is making preparations to tear up the UN-endorsed nuclear deal which is also backed by the entire world how can countries expect other international treaties to survive.

In addition, his incendiary remarks may push the Korean Peninsula toward a nuclear holocaust.

Through such actions the U.S. president and his loyalists are gradually pushing the international order to the verge of collapse. People's memory is still fresh with inconsiderate actions by certain extremist statesmen who pushed the world toward disasters. World War I and World War II are just reminders.

Before it is too late world leaders must warn Trump of his inconsiderate and risky games. Failure to do may prove too costly for the world.

UK weapons companies earned over £6bn from Yemen war: Charity

British weapons manufacturers have earned more than £6 billion from their deals with Saudi Arabia ever since the beginning of the kingdom's ruthless war on its southern neighbor Yemen, a campaign group says.

War Child UK said Tuesday that companies such as BAE Systems and Raytheon had raked in £600 million in sheer profits from the deadly war, which has killed over 12,000 Yemenis since its beginning more than two and a half years ago.

The charity said the manufacturers were basically "profiteering from the deaths of innocent children" by arming the Saudis and their allies with advanced missiles and other equipment, including attack aircraft.

Rocco Blume, a conflict and humanitarian adviser at the organization, told The Independent that London was also getting money for maintaining the weapons.

He said the trend indicated that the country was becoming "less fussy" about international trading partners as it felt the pressure

to secure more deals before leaving the European Union (EU).

"We all want to see productive international trade, but this is damaging," Blume told the British daily. "The revenue has to be seen in the context of all the other costs incurred in this trade, especially to our international reputation, particularly on human rights."

He said a "lack of transparency" on part of the UK firms made it impossible to assess their role in the global weakening of protections for children in conflicts including Yemen, Syria and Iraq.

The Tory government of Prime Minister Theresa May has remained defiant in the face of growing pressure to stop the arms exports, defending the trade amid evidence of war crimes and civilian deaths in Yemen.

Last week, as London held world's biggest arms fair, British trade secretary Liam Fox said all of his country's arms deals were "ethical" because they prevented an eruption of unregulated sales.

"Those of us from advanced economies must remember that if we do not provide countries with means of defending themselves, then we will see a proliferation of uncontrolled and unregulated arms sales free from oversight or inhibitions," he argued.

UK Defense Secretary Michael Fallon also boasted at the same event that Britain had secured military orders totaling £5.9 billion in 2016, making it the world's second-largest weapons exporter.

Last year, the United Nations blacklisted Saudi Arabia for committing grave violations against children after killing and injuring over 3,000 of them in Yemen. However, the world body was forced to reverse the decision upon protests from the Riyadh regime.

The Saudi war has also triggered a deadly cholera epidemic across Yemen, which has killed 2,048 people and infected over 600,000 since its beginning in April.

(Source: Independent)

With eye on North Korea, Trump makes UN debut

U.S. President Donald Trump urged United Nations member states on Tuesday to turn up the pressure on North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, using his maiden speech to the world body to address what he has said is the top global challenge.

Beginning his speech shortly after arriving at UN headquarters in New York, Trump said the world faces destructive threats from rogue states and "terrorists and extremists."

"Rogue regimes not only support terrorists but threaten other nations with the most destructive weapon known to humanity," Trump said, referring to nuclear weapons.

It was Trump's first appearance in the green-marbled UN General Assembly hall, where applause from world leaders is generally muted.

Reading carefully from a script, Trump

promised the United States military would soon be the strongest it has ever been.

Trump, who came to power promoting an America First agenda, told world leaders that the United States does not seek to impose its will on other nations and will respect other countries' sovereignty.

"I will defend America's interests above all else," he said. "But in fulfilling our obligations to other nations we also realize it's in everyone's interest to seek a future where all nations can be sovereign, prosperous and secure."

The speech marked his latest attempt to lay out his America First vision for a U.S. foreign policy aimed at downgrading global bureaucracies, basing alliances on shared interests, and steering Washington away from

nation-building exercises abroad.

"Big day at the United Nations - many good things, and some tricky ones, happening. We have a great team," Trump wrote hours before his address in an early morning post on Twitter that also noted his "big speech."

Trump's first major turn on the global platform offered by the United Nations has been dominated by Iran and North Korea, which have been the focus of his talks with other world leaders.

Now eight months in the White House, Trump also has found time to criticize the world body, alleging gross mismanagement and demanding that the United States, the largest donor to the United Nations, get more for its investment.

(Source: Reuters)

ARTICLE

By Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the Economy Desk of the TehranTimes

Foreign finance a post-sanction necessity?

The implementation of Iran's nuclear deal in January 2016 lifted a majority of sanctions against the country. Among the most important removed sanctions were those on the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the oil industry, shipping lines and commercial aviation industry.

A month later, the global transaction network SWIFT said it had reconnected a number of Iranian banks to its system and according to the CBI officials, 29 Iranian banks are now connected to SWIFT, though some problems are still in place.

President Hassan Rouhani has reiterated that the post-sanction economy needs foreign investment and the government plans to attract \$65 billion of foreign investment by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021), of which \$30 billion is about to come in finance, \$20 billion in economic partnership and \$15 billion in direct investment.

While the barriers for banking transactions with Iran remain the main issue, some countries have opened credit lines for the Islamic Republic in the post-sanction era. The last one was opened by China.

China's CITIC Trust signed a 10-billion-dollar deal with five Iranian banks on September 15 to fund development and production projects in Iran.

Before that, on August 25, South Korea's Eximbank signed a deal with the Iranian banks to secure an €8-billion (\$9.4-billion) credit line to finance various projects in Iran. It was Iran's biggest loan deal since its nuclear accord.

Such deals, according to CBI Governor Valiollah Seif, are a sign of return of global trust in Iran's banking system. However, the question is that whether foreign finance is a necessity for the post-sanction economy? **→ 4**

The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists. Persian equivalents have been given for all entries, including idioms and expressions. The glossary also includes example sentences for entries the authors thought it would be a bit difficult to learn.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran strongly rejects renegotiation of nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Supreme Leader, on Tuesday voiced Iran's strong opposition to any renegotiation of the nuclear agreement, saying no country can impose such thing on the Islamic Republic.

"Any doubt and buyer's remorse by any country about the agreement is not accepted at all and we don't accept such proposals (for renegotiations)," Velayati was quoted by Fars news agency as saying.

The comments came a day after France's foreign minister suggested there could be talks to strengthen the deal for the post-2025 period.



Army to unveil new equipment on Friday

POLITICS TEHRAN — Commander of the Iranian Army Ground Forces Kiamars Heidari said on Tuesday that the army plans to unveil new military equipment on Friday, Tasnim news agency reported.

Heidari said the ground forces will hold events starting on Friday marking the beginning of the Sacred Defense Week.

The general added that the army will also hold military parades in Tehran and other provinces across the country.



Iranian, Azeri, Turkish foreign ministers to meet in Baku

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Azeri foreign minister will host a meeting of his Iranian and Turkish counterparts in Baku, Iranian Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan Javad Jahangirzadeh was quoted by Trend news agency as saying on Tuesday.

Jahangirzadeh did not specify any further details about the meeting.

Holding such trilateral meetings is very important in terms of international and regional cooperation.

The first trilateral meeting of the three countries was held in Urmia (Iran) in 2011. Then it was followed by meetings in Nakhchevan (Azerbaijan) in 2012, and Van (Turkey) in 2014, and Tehran in 2016.



Iranian Navy has escorted 4,200 commercial ships in Gulf of Aden since 2008

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian Navy has escorted 4,200 commercial ships in the Gulf of Aden since 2008 A.D., Navy chief Habibollah Sayyari said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters, Sayyari said 25 of the ships were from other countries which had asked for help.

The commander also said the country's navy has been actively present in international waters since 2008.

Iran's flag has been raised across the world, showing the country's power, he added.



Enemies won't dare attack Iran: Larijani

POLITICS TEHRAN — Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said on Tuesday that due to the bravery and preparedness of the armed forces, the enemies of the Islamic Republic do not dare attack the country.

Larijani made the remarks while visiting the country's northwestern provinces of West Azerbaijan and East Azerbaijan.

The parliament speaker underlined the importance of being vigilant when controlling the borders, saying the presence of the IRGC's ground forces in the region has secured the country's borders.



Independence vote to hurt all Iraqis, including Kurds: lawmaker

POLITICS TEHRAN — Parliamentarian Hossein Naqavi Hosseini on Tuesday urged the Iraqi Kurdistan's authorities to call off the upcoming independence referendum, saying the vote would be detrimental to all Iraqi nationals, including the Kurds.

Naqavi Hosseini, who serves as a spokesman with of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said the Zionists and Americans are seeking to disintegrate regional countries to make them weaker.

The Kurdish region is influential only when it's untied with Iraq, he added.

Rouhani meets senior foreign officials at UN



Presidents Rouhani of Iran and Macron of France shake hands during a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, September 18

→ He also said that the Trump administration's behavior towards the JCPOA is "worrying" for the international community.

"The only body that should monitor the JCPOA is the International Atomic Energy Agency which have confirmed for seven times Iran's compliance to the agreement," he said.

Rouhani told CNN on Monday that exiting the Iran nuclear deal "would carry a high cost for the United States of America, and I do not believe Americans would be willing to pay such a high cost for something that will be useless for them."

Elsewhere, Rouhani said that Iran seeks to expand relations with France in various spheres, adding Iran welcomes French investment.

French president says proposal to renegotiate nuclear deal is 'meaningless'

For his part, Macron said that France is determined to expand relations with Iran.

The post-JCPOA atmosphere has provides great opportunities to expand ties, the French leader added.

He also said that France supports implementation of the nuclear deal and brushed aside a U.S. proposal to renegotiate the deal as "meaningless".

Last month French the Macron said there was no "alternative" to the JCPOA. "In the context of what we are living through, the 2015 agreement is what allows us establish a constructive and demanding dialogue with Iran."

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including the U.S. signed

the nuclear deal on July 14, 2015. The agreement went into effect in January 2016.

Yukiya Amano, chief of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, reconfirmed on Monday that Iran is implementing its commitments under the deal.

'Iran welcomes expansion of ties with Austria'

In a separate meeting with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen, Rouhani said that Iran welcomes expansion of relations with the European countries especially Austria.

He highlighted the importance of the nuclear deal's role in expansion of cooperation.

"Full implementation of the JCPOA is beneficial to the European Union and the region [the Mideast region], so it is essential for the European Union to make efforts in line with its own interests," Rouhani stated.

For his part, the Austrian president called for expansion of relations with Iran in various areas.

'JCPOA can be a model for intl. peace'

In a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Rouhani also said that the JCPOA can serve as a "good model" for international peace and stability and called on Guterres to

support the multilateral agreement.

Elsewhere, Rouhani urged the UN to make any effort to protect the Iraqi territorial integrity as the Iraqi Kurdistan is planning to hold an independence referendum despite opposition by the central government, neighboring countries, and the world at large.

Guterres said dividing up Iraq or Syria has no benefit for the region.

He added UN is ready to cooperate with Iran to boost peace and security in the region.

Rouhani calls for better banking ties with Sweden

Rouhani said in a meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven that better banking ties will help expand economic relations.

He also praised Sweden's position in supporting the nuclear deal. Lofven said that there is no restriction for the two countries to deepen ties, adding Sweden welcomes removal of banking obstacles.

'Iran welcomes expanding ties with Latin American countries'

During a meeting with Bolivian President Evo Morales, Rouhani said that Iran welcomes expansion of ties in various spheres with the Latin American countries.

He called expansion of Iran-Bolivia relations beneficial to both countries.

Morales also called for expansion of cooperation with Iranian corporations in the petrochemical industry.

Bolivia is determined to expand relations with Iran, he said, adding that independent countries should establish closer ties.

British FM strongly supports nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has said that Britain strongly supports the 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

During a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Monday local times, Johnson highlighted the necessity of protecting and implementing the JCPOA.

The Iranian and British officials also discussed expansion of bilateral ties and crises in the Middle East region.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including the U.S. signed the nuclear deal on July



14, 2015. The nuclear agreement went into effect in January 2016.

The Iranian foreign minister also met separately

with Jan Kubis, the top UN envoy in Iraq.

Zarif told reporters that Joint Commission of the JCPOA were scheduled to hold a meeting on Tuesday.

Previous meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA took place on July 21, 2017 in Vienna.

Such meetings provide the opportunity to address the implementation of the JCPOA.

Zarif also said that a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission at the ministerial level will be held in future days.

According to reports, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has said that the JCPOA Joint Commission at the ministerial level plans to be held on Wednesday.

JCPOA belongs to whole world, not just U.S.: EU



European Union's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, says the nuclear agreement signed between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries works fine and belongs to the entire world, not just the United States.

"I have said many times that the agreement is working fine, [and] the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) [has] confirmed several times that Iran is fulfilling its obligations," Mogherini said on Monday.

Commenting on the possible U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), she said the agreement was not signed with one country.

"This deal belongs to the international community," the top EU diplomat said.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who had made no secret of opposing the nuclear agreement in his election campaign, has threatened to "tear up" the agreement, calling it "the worst deal ever negotiated."

The United State, which is a party to the landmark nuclear agreement, seems to be laying out a case for abandoning it, with Trump having expressed his readiness to declare Iran in breach of its side of the JCPOA as

early as next month.

However, Washington's European allies seek to prevent the collapse of the deal and are stepping up efforts to convince Trump not to abandon it as world leaders have gathered in New York for the 72nd annual session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mogherini added that she acknowledges the EU task to make sure that all parties to the JCPOA are fully implementing the obligations under the deal.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China – plus Germany signed the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran.

The senior EU official further noted that the ministerial meeting of the Iran-P5+1 Joint Commission monitoring the implementation of the JCPOA would be held on September 20.

(Source: Press TV)

Assembly of Experts chief: Iran cannot trust 'Western smile'



POLITICS TEHRAN — The head of the Assembly of Experts on Tuesday said "the Western smile cannot be trusted," warning against putting too much trust in ties with Western countries.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the assembly, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said trusting the United States of America in particular means falling in their trap.

Jannati also touched upon the Kurdistan Regional Government's proposed referendum and dismissed it as a U.S. plot.

"America wants to disintegrate the Kurdistan region and create another Israel out of it. We should take care that the American desire does not get anywhere."

Jannati also expressed concern over the agonies of Muslim in Myanmar and called on all countries to express condolence with the oppressed Muslims in that country and take initiative to end the miserable situation there.

Since October 2016, Myanmar's government has laid a siege to the western state of Rakhine, where the Rohingya Muslims are concentrated. There, horrific violence, including killing, rape and torching property, has been taking place against the minority

Muslims, according to reports and eyewitnesses.

The attacks have seen a sharp rise since August 25 after dozens of police and border outposts in Rakhine came under attack purportedly by a group claiming to be the defenders of the Rohingya. The alleged assaults were launched in response to a government clampdown in the area, where over a million Rohingya are based.

The United Nations last week said so far more than 400,000 desperate Rohingya Muslims have fled the violence in Myanmar and crossed into neighboring Bangladesh, as Dhaka pleads for global help to cope with the humanitarian crisis.

The brutality against Rohingya Muslims follows the fact that Myanmar does not recognize them as citizens and has denied citizenship rights to 1.1 million members of the community for several decades, alleging they are Bengalis who have in the past migrated to the country from Bangladesh.

The Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship in 1982 despite having lived in the country for generations.

Due to their status, the Rohingya are not free to travel and practice their religion, having little access to medical care, food or education.

Suu Kyi 'burying head in sand' over Rohingya crisis

Myanmar under fire at UN Human Rights Council

Myanmar's leader has finally broken her silence only to defend how her government is dealing with the massive human rights violations committed against Rakhine-based Rohingya Muslims, which the United Nations says amount to ethnic cleansing at the hands of military forces. Aung San Suu Kyi fell short of singling out the military in the globally-condemned violence, which has triggered a massive exodus of Muslim refugees to Bangladesh.

The Myanmar leader has cancelled a planned visit to the UN general assembly session underway in New York.

However, on Tuesday, Suu Kyi addressed the nation for the first time since August 25, when a fresh upsurge in violence subjected the Rohingya in Muslim villages across the western state of Rakhine to mass killings, torture, rape, and arson attacks and forced more than 417,000 to flee their homeland.

Suu Kyi has faced harsh international criticism amid several reports about systematic attacks by the Myanmar military and majority Buddhists against the persecuted Muslim community.

In her address, however, Suu Kyi claimed that most Muslim villages had not been affected by the violence, wondering about the reasons why the exodus to Bangladesh still continued, despite the fact that there had been no "clearance operations" since September 5.

She said her government intended to find out why people in almost 50 percent of Muslim villages that remained unaffected had preferred to stay, acknowledging in the process that half of Rohingya villages had been destroyed and burned to the ground in the ongoing bout of violence.

There have been "allegations and counter-allegations" that need to be investigated before taking any action, Suu Kyi said.

The leader of the Asian country's civilian government said Myanmar does not fear international scrutiny and is committed to finding a sustainable solution to the situation in Rakhine. Suu Kyi's silence has provoked immense international criticism in recent weeks, especially after dismissing reports of ethnic violence in Rakhine as "a huge iceberg of misinformation" meant to "promote the interests of the terrorists."

In her speech, Suu Kyi even refused to use the word Rohingya to refer to members of the minority group, naming them only once while making mention of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, a group that purportedly fights to defend the rights of the minority group. She claimed that peaceful conditions were disturbed only after armed groups had staged terrorist attacks on dozens of police outposts in August.

She claimed that Myanmar was ready



to verify the national status of the Rohingya refugees who have fled violence in recent weeks. "We are prepared to start the verification process at any time," she suggested.

But the brutality against the Rohingyas has its roots in the very fact that Myanmar does not recognize them as citizens and has denied citizenship rights to 1.1 million members of the community for several decades, alleging they are Bengalis who have in the past migrated to the country from Bangladesh. The Rohingyas were stripped of their citizenship in 1982 despite having lived in the country for generations.

Due to their status, the Rohingyas are not free to travel and practice their religion, having little access to medical care, food or education.

The de facto leader further said she felt deeply for the suffering of "all the people caught up in the conflict."

Amnesty: Suu Kyi 'burying head in sand'

Following the 30-minute rant, Amnesty International, which has been sharply criticizing Myanmar's recent conduct in Rakhine, was quick to respond, saying the Nobel laureate and her government are only "burying their heads in the sand" in the face of the violence.

"Refugees who have fled to Bangladesh cannot return to this appalling status quo," the rights group said, adding "at times her speech amounted to little more than a mix of untruths and victim blaming."

The government claims its attacks in Rakhine are a response to armed "terror-

ists," but reports and evidence presented by witnesses and international organizations tell a different story.

The latest evidence published by Amnesty International points to "a mass-scale scorched-earth campaign" across Rakhine State, where Myanmar's forces and vigilante mobs "are burning down entire Rohingya villages and shooting people at random as they try to flee. In legal terms, these are crimes against humanity – systematic attacks and forcible deportation of civilians."

The rights group further highlighted the "horrific situation" in Myanmar, criticizing the international community's failure to address the plight of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

The government forces in Myanmar do not even spare the fleeing Rohingya refugees. Recent reports by Amnesty and Bangladeshi officials say the military plants landmines on the path of those trying to cross into Bangladesh, causing them to sustain serious wounds or lose their limbs.

On Tuesday, the UN fact-finding mission on treatment of Rohingya minority in Myanmar reported to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on the crisis.

The mission demanded "full, unfettered" access to violence-stricken areas.

Chair of the Myanmar Fact-Finding Mission Marzuki Darusman said his team will investigate reports of mass killings, torture, sexual violence, use of landmines and burning of entire villages by Myanmar forces.

The UN fact-finding mission, tasked with filing a report on the treatment of

Rohingya Muslims, asked for a six-month extension on the deadline for presenting its report.

Myanmar's envoy, however, said the UN investigation was not helpful, adding that the Myanmar government was making efforts to restore law and order in Rakhine.

During the session, representatives from the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, France and Russia also called for an immediate cessation of violence against Muslims in Rakhine.

Muslims being wiped off Myanmar's map

On Monday, Chris Lewa, director of Arakan Project which is a humanitarian group reported that Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim community is literally "being wiped off the map" amid the ongoing crackdown.

Meanwhile, international opinion has hardened against Myanmar as the United States, Britain, Australia and France renewed calls for Suu Kyi to push for an end to violence against Rohingya Muslims.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a related development, said she spoke to the U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday about Rohingya refugees flooding into her country. However, she said expected no help from the U.S. president.

Refugees reject Aung San Suu Kyi's claim that Rohingyas are safe in Myanmar, as Amnesty accuses her of victim blaming. (Source: agencies)

Anti-Assad countries say will not help rebuild Syria



British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson says the United States, Britain, and other backers of the militants fighting to topple the Damascus government will not be supporting the reconstruction of Syria as long as President Bashar al-Assad is in power.

The top British diplomat made the remark at a meeting of countries that support the anti-Assad militants and that call themselves "Friends of Syria" on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The grouping also includes France, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, among other Western and Arab states opposed to Assad.

"We believe that the only way forward is to get a political process going and to make it clear to the Iranians, Russians and Assad regime that we, the like-minded group, will not support the reconstruction of Syria until there is such a political process and that means, as Resolution 2254 says, to a transition away from Assad," Johnson said, referring to a resolution adopted at the UN Security Council in 2015.

But Resolution 2254, which Syrian ally Russia also voted "yes" to, does not mention Assad or his future political role, contrary to what Johnson claimed.

U.S. Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Satterfield also said that all those at the meeting agreed that "there has got to be a political process if there is to be any international participation in the reconstruction of Syria."

Syria has been gripped by militancy since March 2011. The anti-government militants operating in Syria have since then received massive financial and logistical aid from a number of Arab monarchies as well as Western governments opposed to President Assad. Yet, the Syrian government and its allies have succeeded in pushing the militants out of large parts of the country.

The foreign-backed militancy in Syria has killed at least 400,000 people — according to an August 2016 estimate — has displaced millions, and has wrought significant damage on Syrian infrastructure.

As the government cements more victories, Russia, Iran, and Turkey have been leading a peace initiative for Syria in the Kazakh capital of Astana. The three guarantor states have been able to successfully broker four "de-escalation zones" across the Arab country, significantly reducing fighting.

The Astana process was launched several years after an initiative was undertaken by the UN to end the Syrian conflict. The UN-brokered talks, which have been taking place in the Swiss city of Geneva, have not made much progress compared to the negotiations in Astana. That has angered some of the backers of the militants operating in Syria, which would not like to see the Astana talks succeed.

"The reconstruction of Syria depends very much on... [a] credible political process. That political process is focused on Geneva and the role of the United Nations," Satterfield, the US diplomat, said.

Russia and Iran are Syrian government allies, and Turkey is an ally of the anti-Damascus militants. (Source: SANA)

Attack on North Korea could spare allies: Mattis



Days after Donald Trump referred to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as "rocket man" and members of his administration made it clear military options against Pyongyang remained on the table, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis sought to calm growing fears of American intervention on the Korean Peninsula by arguing that the United States had military options at its disposal that wouldn't necessarily spell disaster for allies in the region.

When pressed about escalating rhetoric from the White House regarding Kim's nuclear ambitions, Mattis was asked during a press briefing at the Pentagon if there were any military strategies for dealing with North Korea that would protect Seoul, the South Korean metropolis home to 25 million people. In a terse comment that surprised international relations experts, Mattis hinted that there were, although he refrained from elaborating.

"Yes there are. But I will not go into details," he said. When asked if they might include the use of lethal force, he replied: "I don't want to go into that."

If such military options do exist, they are largely new to

analysts studying the Korean Peninsula.

"I don't know what plan would not put Seoul at risk," said Melissa Hanham, a senior research associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. "The bottom line is: North Korea does have the artillery. It's vague enough that I want to give [Mattis] the benefit of the doubt, but I cannot conceive of a way where you would militarily engage with North Korea and not put Seoul at risk."

Seoul's geographic proximity to North Korea has been a deterrent for U.S. military intervention on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang has thousands of traditional arms ? rocket launchers and cannons ? buried in the mountains just north of the Demilitarized Zone that could rain down upon Seoul's skyscrapers if Kim felt threatened. The weaponry, built up in the decades since the end of the Korean War, is heavily fortified and would be almost impossible to take out in one fell swoop.

Jonathan Pollack, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution specializing in Korea and China, was puzzled by Mattis' statements, arguing that the defense secretary is usually a

"voice of real reason" in the Trump administration.

"He's a very sober, careful guy," Pollack said. "Frankly, I haven't got a clue about what he's talking about... He knows what the terrain looks like, he knows what the risks are, he knows how deeply buried and dispersed the North Koreans are... I guess I'm having difficulty connecting the dots."

Mattis' comments could unnerve American allies in South Korea as they once again raise the prospect of unilateral action by the U.S. against the north, Pollack added.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has openly warned the U.S. against doing just that, and has worked to use diplomacy and deterrence to counter Kim. The United Nations recently imposed harsh new sanctions against Pyongyang and the U.S. and South Korea staged joint bombing drills over the Korean Peninsula this week in a show of force.

But Trump officials continue to raise the specter of military action and signal that they are losing patience with Kim. North Korea recently conducted its second test of a ballistic missile that flew over Japan, following up on its sixth, and by far the most powerful, nuclear test earlier this month.

"If our diplomatic efforts fail, though, our military option will be the only one left," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "To be clear, we seek a peaceful solution to this."

Nikki Haley, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, echoed those sentiments on CNN that same day, saying: "If North Korea keeps on with this reckless behavior, if the United States has to defend itself or defend its allies in any way, North Korea will be destroyed."

However, it's unlikely such destruction would be one-sided.

Vipin Narang, an associate professor at MIT studying nuclear proliferation, said any expectation otherwise seemed like "extremely heroic assumptions."

"It is more likely that we cannot have 100 percent certainty in disarming the country," he said in an email. "Any attack on North Korea that doesn't fully annihilate its conventional and WMD forces exposes Seoul ?and U.S. forces and dependents, Japan, U.S. territories, and even possibly the U.S. homeland ? to potentially massive destruction." (Source: HuffPost)

Russia says U.S., Ukraine reject its UN proposal for Eastern Ukraine

Moscow's ambassador to the United Nations said the United States and Ukraine have told Russia they will not work on a Russian proposal to deploy United Nations peacekeepers in eastern Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin this month suggested armed UN peacekeepers be deployed to eastern Ukraine to help protect ceasefire monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to help end a conflict between Ukrainian troops and Russia-backed separatists, which has killed more than 10,000 people since 2014.

Putin originally said the peacekeepers should be deployed along the line of contact between Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists, but later said they could also be deployed in other areas where OSCE inspectors work.

However, Washington and Kiev also want peacekeepers to be deployed along those parts of Ukraine's border with Russia which Kiev does not control.

TASS cited Vasily Nebenzia, Moscow's UN ambassador, as saying on Monday the United States and Ukraine had formally told Russia in the United Nations Security Council that they were unwilling to work on Moscow's draft resolution on the subject because they had too many objections to it.

"The U.S. and Ukrainian delegations said after the first discussion that they were not ready to work on the (Russian) text in future," Nebenzia was cited as saying.

"(They said) they had significant objections and that, possibly, the Ukrainians would have a counter proposal to deploy peacekeepers to Donbass (eastern Ukraine)."

Moscow was not abandoning its own proposal, however, said Nebenzia, saying it would continue to advance it when the conditions were right.

Ukraine has advocated an alternative plan that would ban any Russian nationals from taking part in a peacekeeping mission which it wants deployed along the part of its border with Russia which it does not control, an idea Moscow has so far balked at. (Source: TASS)

More than 40 million people trapped in slavery globally

About 40 million people were trapped as slaves last year in forced labor and forced marriages, according to the first joint effort by key anti-slavery groups to estimate the number of global victims of the escalating crime.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), human rights group Walk Free Foundation, and International Organization for Migration said about 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016 — but added this was a conservative estimate.

They estimated 24.9 million people were trapped working in the sex trade, in factories, on construction sites, farms and fishing boats, and as domestic workers, while 15.4 million people were in marriages to which they had not consented.

Almost three out of every four slaves were women and girls and one in four was a child with modern slavery most prevalent in Africa followed by Asia and Pacific, the report said. (Source: Reuters)

Switzerland shuts up shop for providers of 'fake cryptocurrency' E-Coin in latest clampdown

A Swiss financial watchdog has closed down providers of a "fake" cryptocurrency called E-Coin.

The latest regulatory step follows a series of moves from China to toughen up on bitcoin and other digital tokens, signaling frustration in the continent over the phenomenon.

According to the central European country's Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA), at least 4 million Swiss francs (\$4.2 million) were paid to the developers of the sham cryptocurrency, who didn't hold the required banking license.

FINMA said it has also taken action to bankrupt the accused parties, through legal proceedings.

"Generally, regarding Swiss regulation in the area of fintech/cryptocurrency, I can state that FINMA as supervisory authority applies the currently applicable financial market regulation and intervenes if regulations are breached," a spokesman for FINMA said in an emailed statement.

An organization called the QUID PRO QUO Association was accused of manufacturing the fake digital coins, and working with two other entities, DIGITAL TRADING AG and Marcelo Group AG.

CNBC was not able to contact the accused parties at the time of publication.

■ E-Coin: 'Not an actual cryptocurrency'

The regulator said that E-Coins bore no similarity to cryptocurrencies.

Whereas virtual coins such as bitcoin and Ethereum are stored on distributed ledgers (blockchains), the counterfeit tokens were stored via local servers.

Investors were deceived into believing the digital cash would be 80 percent backed up by tangible assets.

"Moreover, substantial tranches of E-Coins were issued without sufficient asset backing, leading to a progressive dilution of the E-Coin system to the detriment of investors," the watchdog said in a press release.

FINMA has said it is investigating 11 other suspected activities related to fake cryptocurrencies.

The Swiss authority suggested investors visit its website to protect themselves from such hoaxes.

■ Concerns of bitcoin 'fraud' heighten

JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon last week referred to the original — and highest valued — cryptocurrency, bitcoin, as "a fraud" that will eventually "blow up".

Along with increased regulatory activity, Dimon's comments appeared to weigh on the asset heavily, as it fell 8.7 percent the following day.

Chinese financial authorities have put increased pressure on bitcoin and other currencies in recent weeks.

Earlier this month, several government administrations including the People's Bank of China announced a ban on initial coin offerings (ICOs), due to concerns over fraudulent practices.

And last week the country said it would close down domestic bitcoin exchanges, dealing another blow to the cryptocurrency. One of China's biggest cryptocurrency exchanges, BTC China, said it would close following the announcement. (Source: cnbc)

Qatar pours more billions into local banks as crisis drags on

Qatari authorities stepped up their support of domestic banks for the third month in a row in August in an attempt to offset foreign withdrawals as the showdown between the Persian Gulf emirate and a Saudi-led alliance show no sign of abating.

Public-sector deposits in the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas grew by 10.5 percent to 295 billion riyals (\$80 billion) from 267 billion riyals in July, according to central bank data. That brings the increase to about 53 billion riyals since the crises broke out more than three months ago.

The support helped total deposits grow 5 percent to 645 billion riyals even as non-resident deposits declined for a third straight month to 149 billion riyals, the data show. They stood at 171 billion in June.

The Qatari economy is bearing the brunt of the Saudi-led boycott, with economists expecting gross domestic product to grow at the slowest pace since 1995. The Qatar Investment Authority, the country's sovereign wealth fund, pumped almost \$40 billion of its \$340 billion of its "financial reserves to support its economy and financial system during the first two months of the standoff," Moody's Investors Service said in a report on Sept. 13. (Source: Bloomberg)

French companies planning long-time co-op on projects in Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Yve-Thibault de-Silguy, the vice President of France's largest employer federation MEDEF, announced that besides trade transactions, French companies are planning constant cooperation with Iranians in Iran, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Tuesday.

He made the remarks during Iran-France Business Forum at the place of ICCIMA in Tehran on Tuesday and in the presence of ICCIMA head and representatives of MEDEF (the Mouvement des entreprises de France or the Movement of the Enterprises of France).

The French vice president called the held forum an opportunity for boosting mutual transactions between Iran and France and noted that since the last meeting held between MEDEF and ICCIMA members, an important political event has taken place in both countries and now they are experiencing new governments after holding presidential elections. Both countries have remained eager on tightening their bonds, he added.

ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, for his part, referred to the strategic location of Iran in the region saying that "Iran can act as a bridge between France and 450-million-market of the Middle East, Caucus region, and the Central Asia."

"Iran is a country with low investment risk and high returns," he added.

"Increasing trade between the two countries requires removal of banking, customs, and transit impediments as well as offering new visa issuance services," he said hoping that the ground will be set for developing



Yve-Thibault de-Silguy, the vice president of MEDEF (L), and Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the chairman of ICCIMA

cooperation between Tehran and Paris in near future.

■ MEDEF delegation visits TSE

With MEDEF coordination, a high ranking delegation from French firms active in various areas including equipment, financial and legal services, transportation, and energy visited Tehran Stocks Exchange (TSE) on Monday, the official website of TSE reported.

The visiting delegation became familiar with

the structure of Iranian capital market, available opportunities for investments, and tradable instruments. They were also informed of legal issues about doing business in Iranian market besides financing projects in Iran via the capital market.

As accorded, delegation members who intend to commence their activities in Iran will discuss the issue in separate future meetings with Iranian officials.

Iran's renewables output set to cross 5GW by 2023

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Houshang Falahatian said the country plans to add 1,000 megawatts (MW) or 1 gigawatt (GW) of new renewable power capacity every year over the next five years.

"Revenues from renewables should reach \$60 billion if the plan succeeds," oilprice.com quoted the official as saying.

At the moment, Iran's power capacity is 77,000 MW, of which renewables make up a tiny 360 MW portion. Of this, wind power represents 141 MW, while the potential for wind power capacity in the country is 100,000 MW. Renewables, including hydropower, account for just 6 percent of energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

By 2022, however, renewables could come to account for a quarter of power generation in Iran, Mohammad Sadeqzadeh, the head of state-held Renewable Energy and Energy Ef-

iciency Organization (Satba), said last week. Overall, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW annual increase in power generation capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence on the regional electricity market.

The government is ambitious, however, eyeing an almost a double increase in renewables capacity to 700 MW by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 2018), versus earlier plans for 600 MW. Plans also include the addition of more than 4,000 MW in wind power capacity by 2020. Solar power also makes a lot of sense in Iran, which boasts an average of 300 sunny days and 2800 hours of sunshine annually.

Last month, Oilprice reported that foreign investors have filed proposals for a combined \$3.6 billion to develop renewable energy projects in oil- and gas-rich Iran. According to Sadeqzadeh, the target to add at least 1 GW of renewable capacity a year is feasible.

Iran may cut condensate exports to Asia in Oct.



ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran plans to reduce gas exports to Asia due to some maintenance in its giant South Pars gas field, Reuters reported on Tuesday quoting industry sources.

According to the report, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) may cut exports by at least 1 million barrels in the mentioned month. The company typically exports about 15 million barrels of South Pars condensate each month.

The drop in Iranian condensate exports in October comes as China's Uni-

pec is about to resume cargo liftings from Iran in October, a second source said. The trading arm of Asia's largest refinery Sinopec typically halts imports in summer months due to environmental restrictions at Chinese ports.

Demand for Iran's condensate is also on the rise as test runs continue at a new splitter operated by its Persian Gulf Star Refinery at Bandar Abbas, the sources said.

Condensate is an ultra-light oil that is processed in splitters to produce mainly naphtha, a petrochemical raw material.

Foreign finance a post-sanction necessity?

1 → ■ A credit for the country

Afsaneh Lak-Tabrizi, director of the international finance department of CBI, is of the opinion that receiving finance is considered as a credit for every country, because it means that the country enjoys enough reliability to receive it.

"Receiving finance is a positive point for the country, but management of using it is our own responsibility, in a way that we use it based on our requirements and with true anticipation of the repayment," she told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview on Monday.

Providing a ground to secure financial resources for implementation of production, infrastructure and development projects in the country is a good action, she noted.

■ Higher foreign debt

But, some economists and officials believe that using finance will increase the external foreign debt. They say the possible disability to repay the loans on time will bring some negative economic and even political results for the country.

In a condition when the government faces a mass of unfinished projects, using finance for some projects that may not be finished by the end of the repayment schedule means that the government



should repay the installments through its sources not the projects income which is a loss for its budget.

■ Oil income prioritized

Mehdi Taqavi, a leading economist, told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview on Saturday: "While repayment time is the most important matter when securing these loans, given the 1.5-fold increase in Iran's oil exports after the sanctions it's better that we use oil income rather than secure these foreign loans."

■ No hurry for finance

In a TV program on Saturday, Hos-

sein Abdoh-Tabrizi, a top economic advisor to the transport minister, said: "The money we receive from the foreigners is better to be in the form of investment and we should not be in a hurry for finance."

In the same program, Morteza Allahdad, another economist and a former advisor to the finance minister, said the government has moved toward foreign finance under the condition when the ground is not still prepared for credit lines and foreign investment.

■ Better banking a prerequisite

Mehdi Pourqazi, the chairman of

Industry and Mine Committee of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), believes that securing foreign finances is a good and positive movement, but these finances will be used mainly for the governmental projects not the private sector ones.

In addition, receiving these finances requires improvement of our banking relations on one side and attracting trust of the foreign companies to business in Iran on the other side.

■ Foreign banks line up

Foreign finance to open the capital floodgates for Iran or create unnecessary foreign debts for the government, the CBI government has said on Sunday that foreign banks are in a line to sign finance deals with Iran, announcing that several credit lines are expected to be opened for the country in near future.

He had previously announced that three European countries including Austria, Denmark and Italy are set to open €22 billion credit lines for financing projects in Iran which in addition to the €8-billion credit line to be secured by South Korea's Eximbank the total value of loan deals will reach €30 billion after Iran's nuclear accord.

German investor confidence surges as concerns over Euro fade

German investor confidence rose for the first time in four months in a sign that concern over the risk to growth from the strengthening euro is subsiding.

The ZEW Center for European Economic Research's index of investor expectations rebounded to 17.0 in September from 10.0 in August. The reading, days before the region's largest economy holds elections, compares with a median estimate in a Bloomberg survey for an increase to 12.0. The euro is showing signs of stabi-

lizing after climbing 14 percent against the dollar since the start of the year and prompting European Central Bank President Mario Draghi to warn that policy makers are closely monitoring exchange-rate developments. While the gains have weighed on German exports, the Bundesbank said on Monday that it expects the country's economy to continue its strong expansion in the third quarter.

"The solid growth figures in the second quarter of 2017 in combination

with a steep rise in bank lending and increasing investment activities by both the government and private firms are likely reasons" for the improvement, ZEW President Achim Wambach said in a statement. "The worries about the recent strengthening of the euro have, for now, also faded into the background."

The single currency traded at \$1.1986 at 11:45 a.m. Frankfurt time, up 0.3 percent on the day. It has largely fluctuated around current levels this month, after rising from less than \$1.04 in late De-

cember. ZEW's gauge for current conditions in Germany rose to 87.9 from 86.7 in August. A measure for expectations in the euro area advanced to 31.7 from 29.3.

German elections, scheduled for Sunday, haven't been a source of uncertainty, Wambach said. Polls show Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic-led bloc on track to defeat Martin Schulz's Social Democrats and retain power. (Source: Bloomberg)

OPEC output cut under fire but Iraq says it's not the oil cartel's 'bad boy'

On paper OPEC and its ten non-OPEC partners have penciled a headline production cut of 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in place until March 2018, following a rollover of the said reduction level in May. However, in practice, there are open rumblings that things aren't going so well.

Data aggregators and independent observers have been saying for a while that non-OPEC producers' compliance is not all that great at around 60 percent of headline promise of 500,000 bpd. However, what has been underpinning the deal - so far - is robust compliance by OPEC producers, with the exception of Libya and Nigeria - who are exempt from cuts and Iran which was permitted to pump more.

For much of this year, OPEC compliance to its share of the cuts, i.e. 1.3 million bpd, was above 100 percent. However, of late it has all changed. The International Energy Agency (IEA) recently noted that OPEC members' compliance for July had fallen to 75 percent.

"There would be more confidence that re-balancing is here to stay if some producers party to the output agreements were not, just as they are gaining the upper hand, showing signs of weakening their resolve," the think-tank noted.

Most independent observers put OPEC compliance at 70 percent for August; the lowest since the current round of cuts began in January.

It is troubling for some that Iraq - an OPEC heavy-weight - has been specifically flagged up among the non-complaint parties, by the IEA and others. However, according to Jabbar Al Luiebi, Oil Minister of Iraq, the criticism of both - his country and OPEC - is unfair.



"The OPEC cuts and the correction to output remain healthy. Compliance is now up to 80% in the case of some members and 73% in Iraq's case. Overall picture seems to be bright and we sense improvement in market," Al Lueibi told the Gulf Intelligence Energy Markets Forum in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates on Tuesday (19 September).

(Source: Forbes)

Oil steady on tighter Middle East supplies, as rising U.S. output weighs

Oil markets held largely steady on Tuesday, even as OPEC producers Saudi Arabia and Iraq pointed to a reduction in supplies in line with efforts to tighten the market and prop up prices.

Prices were capped by rising U.S. shale output and fears that another strong hurricane hitting the Caribbean could knock out refineries and disrupt shipping to and from the United States.

Brent crude futures, the international benchmark for oil prices, were at \$55.50 per barrel at 0653 GMT, up 2 cents from their last close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI)

crude futures were at \$50.01 per barrel, up 10 cents, or 0.2 percent, from their last settlement.

Iraq's oil minister Jabbar al-Luaibi said on Tuesday that his country's crude oil production was currently at 4.32 million barrels per day (bpd). That compares to almost 4.5 million bpd in May and June.

His comments came after data showed Saudi crude exports fell to 6.693 million bpd in July, down from 6.889 million bpd in June.

Saudi Arabia together with some non-OPEC producers like Russia, has pledged to hold back around 1.8 million bpd of

supplies this year and into 2018 in order to tighten the market and prop up prices.

But with the United States not part of this agreement, analysts said the upside for prices was limited due to the rising U.S. output.

U.S. shale production is set to rise for a tenth month in a row in October, the U.S. government said late on Monday. Output across seven shale plays is forecast to rise by nearly 79,000 bpd to 6.1 million bpd, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

"Technological advancements continue to make inroads in the U.S. shale industry,

boosting well-level economics ... 80 percent of the cost base is below \$60 per barrel (and) breakevens have fallen a further 15 percent just in the last year," Barclays bank said in its September market outlook.

It said significant numbers of producers could also operate below \$40 per barrel.

"We remain bearish on prices at current levels due to expected shale growth, Chinese economy concerns," the bank said, adding that its average Brent and WTI price forecast was \$53 and \$49 per barrel, respectively, for this year and \$52 and \$49 per barrel for 2018.

(Source: Reuters)

Renewable sources to account for 85% of global electricity production by 2050

Renewable energy sources will provide 85 percent of global electricity production in 2050, led by solar PV and onshore wind, according to a new report published this month.

Electricity consumption will be the largest energy carrier in 2050, increasing by 140 percent over the next 30 years, followed by natural gas, while other energy carriers such as coal and oil will experience significant reductions, or only slight increases in consumption over the same period. Meanwhile, over the same period, renewable energy sources will rise to become the leading source of global electricity production, accounting for 85 percent. Solar PV will account for around a third of the world's electricity, followed by onshore wind, hydropower, and offshore wind (in that order).

These are the key findings from the Energy Transition Outlook (ETO): Renewables, Power and Energy Use report, the first report in a new suite of Energy Transition Outlook publications by global quality assurance and risk management company, DNV GL. Unfortunately, the report also concludes that humanity will exhaust the 2°C carbon budget - the amount of CO2 that can be emitted without triggering dangerous levels of climate change - by 2041, which leads DNV GL to predict that global warming will reach 2.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Based on the modeling done for the report, DNV GL determined three key global themes across the forecast period. First among these is the prediction that final energy demand will plateau around 2030 at 430 exajoules (EJ), 7 percent higher than in 2015, thanks primarily to greater energy efficiency of end-users, less use of fossil fuels at relatively low thermal efficiency, and slower population and productivity growth.

(Source: cleantechnica.com)

Iraq says does not see need for more output cuts now

Iraq does not see the need for more output cuts now, but if there is a need the country will support consensus within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Iraq's oil minister Jabbar al-Luaibi said on Tuesday.

Iraq's oil supply cuts are around 260,000 barrels per day, exceeding its share of planned reduction, al-Luaibi told Reuters on the sidelines of an energy conference in the United Arab Emirates.

He said also said prices in the range of \$55 to \$60 barrels a day are better for everyone.

OPEC and other producers, including Russia, have agreed to reduce output by about 1.8 million barrels per day until March 2018 in a bid to reduce global oil inventories and support oil prices.

(Source: Reuters)

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Kurdish referendum set to plunge Iraq into existential crisis

By Mahan Abedin

As the Iraqi Kurdish administration continues to defy international opinion by pressing ahead with its plans to hold an advisory independence referendum next Monday, Iraq's two most powerful neighboring countries have stepped up rhetorical opposition to the move.

At the weekend Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, made clear Iran's fundamental opposition to the referendum and warned that the Islamic Republic only recognizes a united Iraq.

Meanwhile Turkey has gone a step further by holding military drills on sensitive points on the Turkish-Iraqi border, presumably to intimidate Iraqi Kurdish leaders. This follows a warning by Turkish Prime Minister, Binali Yildirim, that Ankara may impose sanctions on the regional Kurdish administration following the referendum.

These unequivocal positions by two powerful states make clear the unassailable strategic barrier to Kurdish statehood, at least for the foreseeable future. Iraqi Kurdish leaders may be bold enough to ignore these warnings by holding the referendum next week but they are unlikely to undertake concrete secessionist actions for fear of drawing a military response.

But rather than planning to intervene directly to scupper Kurdish plans, both Iran and Turkey hope that their robust posturing will bolster the morale and resolve of Iraqi political actors to counter Kurdish moves in the critical weeks, months and years ahead. However, whether the divided Iraqi political landscape will rise to the challenge is a different matter altogether.

Strategic barrier

In respect of the forthcoming advisory Kurdish independence referendum it is important to point out that under Article 1 of the United Nations charter the Kurdish people have a right to self-determination. Therefore, opposition in principle to the very notion of Kurdish statehood is neither morally nor legally sustainable.

The most credible opposition to these plans rest on the argument that Iraqi Kurdish leaders need to assess the viability and desirability of statehood, both in respect of the internal Iraqi context and the expected regional and international reaction to Kurdish independence.

Within Iraq, and of course outside of the core Kurdish region (i.e. excluding "disputed areas"), there is strong opposition to the advisory independence referendum.

The decision by Iraq's top court comes on the heels of a stern warning by Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider Al-Abadi, that Iraq will use force in the event of the Kurdish referendum turning violent. Whilst Al-Abadi hinted at the potential aggressive reaction by Iraq's neighbors to Kurdish plans, he is likely more worried by the potential for conflict between the Kurds and the Shia militias, particularly over the disputed oil-rich province of Kirkuk.

But Al-Abadi is right to worry aloud about potential Turkish and Iranian reactions, which may include long-term military interventions. In Turkey's case, a Kurdish state on its southern border, abutting Kurdish-majority regions inside Turkey, is simply intolerable as that scenario will inevitably embolden secessionist Turkish Kurds. The Turkish state is terrified of disintegration and has both the will and the means to intervene decisively in northern Iraq, as it has done repeatedly since the early 1990s.

In Iran's case, the response will likely be more nuanced as, unlike Turkey, Tehran doesn't have a major internal Kurdish insurgency to contend with. Moreover, unlike Turkey, Iran doesn't have a history of militarily intervening in Kurdish-majority areas of Iraq, intermittent border shelling notwithstanding.

However, Iran is extremely sensitive to the Kurdish issue in so far as the Iranians view the Kurds as a natural extension of the greater Iranian nation on account of ethnic, cultural and linguistic affinity. Furthermore, hardline ideologues in Tehran are already seeking to influence policy by painting Iraqi Kurdish leaders as the "seventh victim" of the Israeli Zionist project to block the "Islamic Revolution" and its regional allies (i.e. the Iran-led "axis of resistance") from landing a decisive blow on the Jewish state.

Resurgent Iraq?

Unequivocal Iranian and Turkish opposition to Kurdish independence effectively renders Kurdish statehood unsustainable, if not impossible, as this putative land-locked state will be immediately faced with intolerable political, military and economic pressures.

This bitter reality is not lost on Iraqi Kurdish leaders, notably KRG President Massoud Barzani, who is widely regarded as a wily and shrewd politician. From the outset, there was speculation that Barzani was using the stick of a referendum to exact political and financial concessions from Baghdad. The same logic applies to post-referendum posturing; Barzani may use the result (which is likely to be overwhelmingly in favor of independence) to strengthen his hand in negotiations.

However, once the referendum has taken place, and the proverbial genie is out of the bottle, this will make the case for secession much stronger in the very long term. Beyond Iraq, it is precisely based on this fear that the Spanish state is doing all it can to scupper plans for an independence referendum in the Catalonia region.

To deal effectively with post-referendum fallout with a view to a clear-eyed containment of Kurdish ambitions, Iraq has two main priorities. Foremost, it needs to demonstrate political unity and strategic resolve in the face of a determined centrifugal threat. This task is made easier by the fact that barring Israel, and possibly Saudi Arabia, every major regional and international actor is opposed to Kurdish plans.

Second, the Iraqi government needs to prevent an armed conflict between the Kurdish Peshmerga and the Shia militias in Kirkuk and Saladin provinces as well as the northern extremity of Diyala province. This can only be achieved by demonstrating unity of command and purpose at the military and security levels. This calls for greater alignment between Iraq's pro-American army and the Popular Mobilization Units.

We are about to find out if Iraq has both the will and the skills to fight for its very survival.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

World peace festival kicked off in Republic of Korea

A Culture of Peace was envisioned at a Peace Festival at the 3rd Annual Commemoration of the WARP Summit

By Hamid Gholamzadeh

A Global Peace Festival with 200,000 People from 30 Countries was held in Republic of Korea.

On September 18, a global peace festival celebrating the 3rd Annual Commemoration of the Alliance of Religions' Peace (WARP) Summit was held. Along with the main venue held at Hwaseong Sports Complex in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, 200,000 people from 230 cities in 30 countries including USA, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, and the Philippines participated in the summit through live broadcasting.

Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL), a global NGO under the UN ECOSOC, showed colorful parade and performances to raise awareness of peacebuilding at the second day of the summit. Despite the increased tension caused by a series of North Korea's nuclear tests, the summit has sought ways to implement peacebuilding based on the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW) advocating conflict resolution and development of peace as a culture. The card section performance prepared by volunteers of the summit appealed to participants with images regarding a peaceful world achieved by global cooperation.

Mr. Man Hee Lee, Chairman of HWPL, urged the active participation for the implementation of the DPCW by saying, "This precious and indispensable gift



Former president of Tunisia Moncef Marzouki, delivered, "Today we are closer to each other than to people sharing with us the same nationality but not the same values, the first being the protection and promotion of peace in the world."

was bestowed upon the human race as a legacy from heaven. Who must protect our world? It is us, the family of the global village. Neither wealth nor power can be passed down as a heritage if we fail to stop wars. Mankind and our Earth will share a fatal destiny."

Ms. Nam Hee Kim, Chairwoman of International Women's Peace Group (IWP), said "We already know the solution, the answer, to achieve peace, but if we do not act upon it, what will happen to the fate of this world? The choices we make can change the world. We must

unite and show the world the strong influence that peace can make."

In his congratulatory message, H.E. Dr. Moncef Marzouki, Former President of Tunisia, delivered, "Today we are closer to each other than to people sharing with us the same nationality but not the same values, the first being the protection and promotion of peace in the world. In these conditions of fragile peace and terrible wars, the permanent effort for peace must be continuous and mobilize all goodwill in the world."

H.E. Adrien Houngbedji, President of the National Assembly of Benin, mentioned the value and future development of the DPCW, explaining that "It (the DPCW) is a praiseworthy effort which needs to be saluted. However, the different principles of this declaration must still be operationalized through a course of action, so that our countries as well as the international community can look for the possibility of implementing these measures in their national laws and treaties, agreements and international conventions."

Plaques recognizing dedication to peacebuilding were given to the HWPL's International Law Peace Committee for the members' contribution to drafting the DPCW. At the end of the event, the participants held each other's hands and marched together, symbolizing a commitment of individuals transcending borders, races, and religions to work for peace.

The seventh son rises



A crackdown on dissent by the youngest heir apparent in Saudi history will not help the desert kingdom find a way out of an economic mess at home and misguided entanglements abroad.

declared homosexuality a sin but added that it shouldn't be punished in this world. Both are popular with the Saudi public, with millions of Twitter followers. Another journalist has been banned from writing opinion columns, while human rights activists have been given outlandish eight-year prison sentences for peaceful campaigning.

The ascension in June of Mohammed bin Salman as crown prince of Saudi Arabia was an instant Rorschach test for observers of the desert kingdom. Is he a reformer prepared to drag his kingdom, a repressive regime that writes very large welfare cheques, into the 21st century or a callow princeling whose rise to power could destabilize the region? The 31-year-old prince has undoubtedly amassed great power and dominates Saudi economic, diplomatic and domestic policy. The crown prince, known as MBS, is also the architect of the bloody quagmire of the Yemen war and a hardliner in the current Persian Gulf row with neighboring Qatar. His father, King Salman, 81, is not in good health, walks with a stick and suffers from brain fades in meetings. By anointing his seventh son as the youngest heir apparent in Saudi history, the ailing monarch has signaled a decisive break with the past.

Game of Thrones

If the first few months are a reliable guide, then the omens for the future are not good. The palace coup that saw MBS take power was bloodless. In the summer's Game of Thrones, his powerful uncles and rivals were either sidelined or placed under house arrest. The sense of how riven the Saudi royal house is could be gleaned from reports, sourced from within the court, claiming the other leading contender for the throne had a drug problem. Last week it emerged that Saudi authorities had launched a crackdown on dissent, targeting Islamic thinkers, public critics and political rivals. Two prominent clerics were taken away for failing to publicly declare their support for the crown prince's stance toward Qatar. Neither cleric is reflexively conservative – one famously

Whatever MBS's public face, this intolerance of dissent is almost paranoid.

If there was time for Saudi society to debate how to proceed, it's probably now. Saudi Arabia was the cradle of terrorism so its stability is a global concern. In domestic terms, Saudi Arabia is a mess. The kingdom is the world's largest oil exporter, with reserves of 260bn barrels – but it is a one-trick economy. Oil prices have plummeted from the highs of 2014, forcing Riyadh to spend some \$200bn from its foreign exchange reserves to cover its deficit. In response the crown prince instigated a Thatcherite program of privatization and subsidy cuts to balance the books. But these moves threatened the social contract between the royal family and its subjects, the majority of whom are under 35.

On the world stage, Saudi Arabia has been forced on the back foot by events and its own incompetence. The war in Yemen, costly in civilian lives, and a blockade of Qatar are a result of two draining infatuations: curbing Iran's influence in the Arab world; and snuffing out any whiff of political Islam. Neither has resulted in much success. Instead, both have been embarrassments for the crown prince. Riyadh is now courting Iraq's leadership – especially those close to Iran. It has withdrawn from Syria, leaving that country's future in the hands of Moscow, Ankara and Tehran. Now Riyadh faces a tough choice on Afghanistan between its ally Pakistan and Donald Trump, on whom the crown prince ill-advisedly models himself. The crown prince has the vision thing. But his impetuous lack of judgment risks turning it into a mirage.

(Source: The Guardian)

Bahrain goes public with shifting stance on Israel

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa denounces the Arab boycott of Israel and allows the subjects of his kingdom in the Persian Gulf to visit Israel freely. This appeared in a declaration that was revealed Sept. 15 during a multinational event at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. The king's surprising declaration, including a harsh denouncement of terror, was published by The Jerusalem Post Sept. 17.

The king's pronouncements were revealed at the event by American Rabbi Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper, who head the Simon Wiesenthal Center. They received the statements from the king himself during a visit they made to Bahrain at the beginning of the year, and they had received permission to make the declaration public at this time. (Bahrain does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.) The king told them that he plans to establish a museum of religious tolerance by the end of the year. Hier and Cooper spoke enthusiastically about their visit to Manama, the capital of Bahrain, and the prayer houses they saw that represent the major religions: a church with a large cross on top, a Hindu temple next door, a small mosque in the same area and an ancient synagogue, too.

It has been almost two full days since the declaration of the Bahraini king went public and, so far, no denial has been circulated.

The son of the Bahraini king, Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, also spoke at the event in Los Angeles, and the Bahrain National Orchestra played Israel's national anthem "Hatikva" preceded by the Bahraini and U.S. national anthems. The event itself was devoted to religious tolerance and the struggle against terror and violence. Members of all of the religions were in attendance, and all listened respectfully to each national anthem.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry kept mum and refused to release a statement about the king's proclamation. Associates of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (who also serves as Israel's foreign minister) remained silent, too. No one wants to fix something that is not broken. Highly placed diplomatic sources in Jerusalem told Al-Monitor that the king's declaration did not surprise any of Netanyahu's associates.

"The Wiesenthal Center has been active in Bahrain for years," an Israeli official said on condition of anonymity. "The center brings guests from Bahrain to visit Israel and even helped the Bahraini government renovate an ancient synagogue. A Jewish woman [Nancy Khedouri] is a member of the Bahraini parliament, replacing another Jewish member who served a few years.

In recent years, Bahrain has begun to

slowly externalize its relations with Israel.

Bahrain's pro-Israel activity

Meanwhile, most of Bahrain's pro-Israel activity takes place through the heads of the Jewish community in the United States, in order to stay close to Washington and earn points in the White House.

Al-Monitor learned that the government in Bahrain recently contacted high-ranking officials in Israel with the suggestion to institutionalize mutual visits and trade between the two countries. "Bahrain has nothing to lose," an Israeli diplomatic source told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity. Nonetheless, diplomatic sources claim that Bahrain's changed attitude reflects Saudi Arabia's stance. Statements such as the one by Bahrain's king are not made without receiving the go-ahead from Riyadh. It is likely, they argue, that Saudi Arabia was the one encouraging Bahrain to step forward in regard to Israel. Saudi Arabia has recently been trying to draw closer to Iran and is keeping its options open by not giving up on its relations with Israel.

The Bahraini statements constitute a rare but significant victory for Netanyahu. High-placed Israelis have, in recent years, hinted at the fact that Israel conducts "underground" relationships with its Middle East neighbors, including those with whom it does not have diplomatic relations. Netanyahu himself repeated in

recent weeks and on Sept. 15 from New York that Israel will not tolerate an Iranian foothold in Syria. "An [Iranian] military presence endangers not just us, but also our Arab neighbors," he said.

In this way, Netanyahu revealed a bit of the underground drama taking place in which Israel assumes the main, on-stage role while the rest of the actors hide in the margins at best, or inside the closet, at worst.

Israel has been demanding that the United States, Russia and the entire global community prevent Iran from having a presence in Syria and being anywhere near the Israeli border. According to Israeli sources, these efforts have also reflected the desires of the pragmatic Sunni countries. The members of this covert alliance, which was once composed of U.S. allies in the region, now look desperately at the Trump administration; these states are concerned over the United States' intentions to disengage from the Middle East after the victory over the Islamic State is completed. This disengagement, which will abandon the arena to Iran and Russia, intensifies the panic in the Persian Gulf on one hand, but also strengthens the self-confidence of the Sunni states into publicizing "forbidden" relations with Israel, on the other.

The words of the Bahraini king are only the tip of the iceberg.

(Source: Al Monitor)

U.S. not in position to apportion Iraqi territory : Turkish politician

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Responding to reports that the U.S. has proposed the Kurdistan Regional Government president to postpone independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan in exchange for a handover of Kirkuk to Erbil, a senior member of the Turkish Republican People's Party (CHP) says the U.S. "is not in a position to apportion Iraqi territory to suit its own interests".

"It (Kirkuk) belongs to all the people of Iraq," Osman Faruk Logoglu tells the Tehran Times.

Despite growing opposition from Baghdad and neighboring countries and pressure on KRG President Masoud Barzani to withdraw from the independence plan, the Iraqi Kurdistan region is still insisting on going ahead with the referendum on September 25, which may have many destabilizing consequences for the region.

Tehran Times reached out to Dr. Logoglu to discuss the issue.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan is slated for September 25 despite opposition from some Kurdish parties such as the Kurdistan Islamic Group (KIG) or Gorran Movement. From the viewpoint of Kurdish parties, what will be the effects of referendum on the said parties?

If held, the referendum will establish a new reality in the region. The Iraqi Kurdish groups, pro- and con-referendum, will all reassess their positions. A different debate on the "next step" in the light of a probable "yes" vote will commence among them. While their differences over their own future and the future of Iraq will continue and likely to be sharpened, the referendum might also generate an over-arching sense of unity and solidarity among the Kurds.

Regionally, the greatest impact will be on the Syrian Kurds who are also seeking self-rule in that country. They will be embold-



ened in their demands and expectations in the negotiations about the future design of Syria. As for the Kurds in other regional countries, the referendum would be a new variable in their discourse and in the broader discussion about the Kurdish issue in their countries.

■ Given the strict opposition of Baghdad to referendum, particularly Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi who has called the Kurdish independence plan "playing with fire", is there any possibility of Baghdad's military confrontation with Erbil is referendum is held?

No, I do not think a military confrontation between Baghdad and Erbil is in the works or imminent at this time. The Prime Minister was referring to military action by the Iraqi army in case violence ensued during or after the referendum. Of course, it would be a difficult situation to control if there is violence and if the Iraqi army does take action in response. Barzani himself threatened military action against detractors. So it is a delicate and precarious situation for sure. This is why Barzani will probably do everything to make sure that the referendum is conducted quietly and that 26 Sep-

tember is also a peaceful day.

■ The U.S. and the UK have opposed the referendum. Are they fundamentally against the separation of the Kurdistan region or just don't think the timing is right?

The objection of the U.S. and the UK to the referendum is without bite, toothless. At the end of the day, probably neither has any problem with Iraqi Kurdish independence. They feel obliged to appear to be opposing the referendum because they are not prepared to apply sanctions against Erbil. Have you heard of any sanctions talk from the U.S. and the UK?

■ What will be the possible reaction of Turkey to the referendum? Is Ankara's military confrontation with Erbil conceivable?

The Turkish President has in his most recent statement implied that strident measures are in the making if Barzani proceeds with the referendum. These measures will be decided for action by the Government in the upcoming meeting of the National Security Council on 22 September, rescheduled from its original date of 27 September. In the meantime, Prime Minister Yildirim has stated that the referendum issue is a "matter of national security for Turkey", implying per-

haps that all options are on the table for Turkey. On the other hand, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has declared that the legitimate demands of Erbil arising from Constitutional disputes must be taken up with Baghdad through dialogue and negotiations.

■ Reportedly, the U.S. has proposed an alternative plan to Barzani, based on which Kirkuk will be handed to KRG and in return the referendum will be delayed. How do you evaluate this proposal?

This is absurd. The U.S. is not in a position to apportion Iraqi territory to suit its own interests. Kirkuk has a particularly special status in the Iraqi context. It belongs to all the people of Iraq. It is not part of the territory of KRG. Kirkuk as well as Mousul, Diala and Selahaddin are all contested areas that Barzani has arbitrarily included in the map of the referendum. This fact alone makes the referendum illegal and unconstitutional vis-à-vis the Iraqi Constitution.

■ Considering the fact that conflicting regions like Kirkuk will take part in the referendum, how will non-Kurdish movements and residents like Turkmens react to this referendum? Will they accept its results?

The referendum is mostly opposed by the Turkmens and the Arabs along with some Kurdish groups. The potential for violence lies precisely in this fact. How will the Kurds act and what will they do after the referendum? How will the Turkmens and the Arabs in the regions react? The Kurds, the Arabs and the Turkmens are also divided along sectarian lines, making the situation all the more complicated. Whatever the outcome of the referendum, Iraq's troubles are going to be compounded in ways hard to predict, because there are many unknown variables at work here. The best hope is for no violence to flare up during or after the referendum and that Barzani and all others act sensibly and responsibly for the sake of their well-being, of Iraq and for the region as a whole.

Turkey's position on Iraqi-Kurdistan's independence is ambiguous: Shireen Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A professor of political science at Georgetown University says "the Iraqi government would not like to see its Kurdish inhabited parts separate from it, especially that this might encourage the formation of other local governments in other parts of the country such as the Sunni majority regions, and eventually lead to Iraq's territorial disintegration."

"The US and the UK at the moment oppose the referendum and an independent Kurdish state because they are not certain that it can come about easily. They are concerned about the impact that it might have on Turkey, a NATO ally," Shireen Hunter tells the Tehran Times.

She also adds that "Turkey's position on Iraqi-Kurdistan's independence is ambiguous. Despite Ankara's declarations of opposition to the referendum, Turkey can live with an independent Kurdistan in Iraq."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ The Kurdish Referendum is to be held on September 25 despite the opposition of Kurdish movements such as the Gorran Movement. How will this referendum influence Kurdish movements within the region?

A: Kurds of Iraq and Turkey and even some of Iran's Kurds have for sometime wanted an independent Kurdish state. Therefore, if the referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan is held and the people vote for an independent Iraqi Kurdistan, this event could encourage other Kurdish populations in other countries also demand independence or at least large scale autonomy from their central governments.

Of course, in those states where Kurdish minorities' are not treated equally and face discrimination such sentiments are more likely to rise.

■ Concerning the objection of Baghdad and the Prime Minister himself to this referendum which described the referendum as "playing with fire", is there a possibility of



military conflict between Baghdad and Erbil following the independence referendum?

A: Obviously, the Iraqi government would not like to see its Kurdish inhabited parts separate from it, especially that this might encourage the formation of other local governments in other parts of the country such as the Sunni majority regions, and eventually lead to Iraq's territorial disintegration. The Iraqi government will try to prevent this from happening if need be by resorting to military force. However, the success of such operations cannot be guaranteed, especially if some other states help Masoud Barzani in the pursuit of his ambitions. It is useful to remember that the Kurds fought a long war with Baghdad in the 1970s.

It seems that Masoud wants to realize his father, Mulla Mustafa Barzani's, dream of an independent Kurdish state. However, this will not be easy and in all likelihood, any attempt at Kurdish independence would lead to a region-wide conflict which could last for many years.

■ The US and UK have objected to the referendum. Are these two countries against the separation of Kurdish Regional Government from Iraq or do they think that the

timing isn't quite appropriate? What exactly is their objection based on?

A: The US and the UK at the moment oppose the referendum and an independent Kurdish state because they are not certain that it can come about easily. They are concerned about the impact that it might have on Turkey, a NATO ally.

The start of another civil war in Iraq is also not something that they want at this point. In general, the unpredictability of the consequences of Kurdish independence is what is making them cautious regarding Barzani's referendum plans.

■ How will Turkey react to the KRG referendum? Will it lead to a clash between Ankara and KRG?

A: Turkey's position on Iraqi-Kurdistan's independence is ambiguous. Despite Ankara's declarations of opposition to the referendum, Turkey can live with an independent Kurdistan in Iraq. At least, Ankara thinks, that an independent Iraqi Kurdistan will be dependent on Ankara economically and in terms of access to outside world. Turkey also thinks that it can control its own Kurdish population.

This is why Iran should be very careful and not trust Ankara on this issue. Iran also needs to walk a tightrope between Erbil and Baghdad and not throw all its weight behind Baghdad, especially that the Iraqi government has been courting the Saudis and other Arab states, at the expense of relations with Iran.

■ Considering the fact that conflicting regions like Kirkuk will take part in the referendum, how will non-Kurdish movements and residents like Turkmens take this referendum, will they accept its results?

A: Turkmens will not be happy to live under a Kurdish state, but because their numbers are few, unless they are supported by Ankara, there is nothing much they can do should Erbil become independent. They can only move to other parts of Iraq or to Turkey.

No Kurdish state can survive without Turkish and Iranian support: SISU professor

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A professor University of Chicago Law School says "If Kurdish politicians view the referendum as an attempt to bolster Barzani's power, they might use the issue to rally rival groups, particularly outside of Arbil where the Regional Government's authority is weakest."

Professor of Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) says "Residents of Kirkuk—including Kurds—are accustomed to wide freedom in managing their local affairs and they will not welcome interference from Arbil."

Robert R. Bianchi also tells the Tehran Times that "No Kurdish state can survive without Turkish and Iranian support."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ The Kurdish Referendum is to be held on September 25 despite the opposition of Kurdish movements such as the Gorran Movement. How will this referendum influence Kurdish movements within the region?

A: If Kurdish politicians view the ref-

erendum as an attempt to bolster Barzani's power, they might use the issue to rally rival groups, particularly outside of Arbil where the Regional Government's authority is weakest. Residents of Kirkuk—including Kurds—are accustomed to wide freedom in managing their local affairs and they will not welcome interference from Arbil.

■ Concerning the objection of Baghdad and the Prime Minister himself to this referendum which described the referendum as "playing with fire", is there a possibility of military conflict between Baghdad and Arbil following the independence referendum?

A: Military clashes can arise in many places even if officials in Baghdad and Arbil try to prevent them. If fighting escalates, the regular forces could easily be drawn into the fray. Across such a patchwork of battlefields, cease fires would be difficult to negotiate and impossible to enforce.

■ The US and UK have objected to the referendum. Are these two countries against the separation of Kurdish Regional Government from Iraq or do they think that the timing isn't quite appropriate? What ex-

actly is their objection based on?

A: Neither Washington nor London has any appetite for an independent Kurdish state. Outside powers could not control it and they would face constant demands to manage the turmoil it would provoke.

■ How will Turkey react to the KRG referendum? Will it lead to a clash between Ankara and KRG?

A: Turkey is accustomed to dealing with Arbil's maneuvers. Ankara knows that Barzani's leverage is temporary, but that his weaknesses are permanent. No Kurdish state can survive without Turkish and Iranian support. Everyone understands that—especially the Kurds and their leaders.

■ Reportedly, the US and other western countries have proposed an alternative plan to Barzani based on which Kirkuk is handed to KRG and in return the referendum is delayed. How do you evaluate this proposal?

A: No one has the power or authority to "hand" Kirkuk to either side. There are many rumors about American and British inducements to Barzani if he postpones the vote.



None of those supposed inducements are credible and none are deliverable.

■ Considering the fact that conflicting regions like Kirkuk will take part in the referendum, how will non-Kurdish movements and residents like Turkmens take this referendum, will they accept its results?

A: One of the strongest arguments for retaining the territorial integrity of Iraq is the impossibility of severing Kirkuk from its surroundings. Kirkuk is a crossroads of migration, trade, and culture that cannot be reserved for a single ethnic group or denied to others. Turkey—and perhaps Iran—would occupy the city and administer it directly if Kurdish forces attempted to seize it.

U.S. wants limit Iran's influence in the Middle East: Hossein Askari

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Hossein Askari, a professor of international business at George Washington University, says "The U.S. wants to limit Iran's reach and influence in the Middle East."

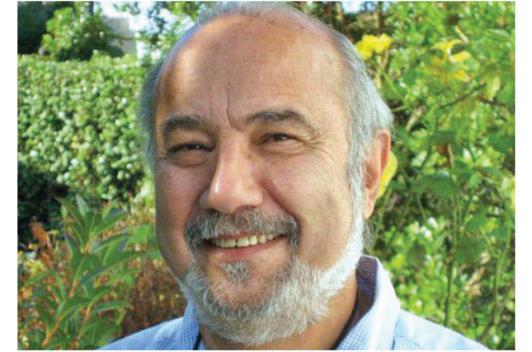
Hossein Askari tells the Tehran Times that "The only way the U.S. can address these fears and goals is to limit Iran's military capabilities and especially the future of its nuclear option."

Former adviser to Saudi finance ministry also adds "the U.S. is trying to find an excuse for a preemptive attack on Iran's military facilities. Iran stands in the U.S. way in the region."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ While the recent IAEA report confirms that Iran has met its obligations under JCPOA, the US seeks to withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran and says the IAEA inspection mechanisms are not sufficient and asks for inspection of Iran military sites. What is the US in fact after?

A: The U.S. wants to limit Iran's reach and influence in the Middle



East. It sees Iran as its only real adversary in the region and it wants to clip Iran's wings. It sees Iran opposed to its policies in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen and Iran is the primary adversary of its two main allies—Israel and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it fears that Iran will have nuclear breakout capabilities and when it does, the U.S. will have even less options.

The only way the U.S. can address these fears and goals is to limit Iran's military capabilities and especially the future of its nuclear option. Trump does not see diplomacy as a viable option to address these fears. He wants to find an excuse and launch a massive preemptive strike on all of Iran's military sites.

■ Recently Trump has extended Iran sanctions relief for another 120 days and at the same time the U.S. Treasury imposed new sanctions on some Iranian companies and individuals. Some say Trump has chosen diplomatic approach and just not to reduce his political pressure and attack on Iran he imposes new sanctions beside extending sanction relief. What do you think of this?

A: I think that Trump wants to appear to be taking the diplomatic route. He has to do this in order not to break with Europe, Russia and China. But he has Saudi and Israeli pressure on him to impair Iran's military capabilities and he is trying to balance the diplomatic and the preemptive attack.

■ Iranian FM has said inspections must not lead to leak of Iran's military secret information and because of this Iran won't allow its military sites to be inspected. How possible is it for the US to create fake documents against Iran as it did in Iraq in 1990s (some experts like Tariq Rauf, ex-IAEA official believes in it)?

A: The U.S. can easily do this. We live in an age of fake news. Who knows the power of this better than Donald Trump?

■ If the US withdraws from the Nuclear Deal, obviously the European companies and banks won't work with Iran even if their governments remain committed to JCPOA. This won't be pleasing for Iran. Shouldn't European countries provide their companies and banks with necessary guarantees?

A: If the U.S. withdraws, it had the power of extraterritoriality. Namely, it will tell foreign banks and companies that if they do business with Iran, they will be shut out of the U.S. market and will be fined when they want back in. It is a powerful tool. European banks and companies will always choose the U.S. market over Iran's. There is no guarantees that the European governments can give to their banks and companies to alleviate this threat. The only way the Europeans can combat this is to threaten U.S. companies and banks in a similar way. Namely, either sanction them if they do not do business with Iran OR impose sanctions on U.S. banks and companies if the U.S. sanctions European entities. Will Europe be willing to take such measures? I doubt it.

On a broader and related issue, Iran's team at the nuclear negotiations was strong on diplomacy and nuclear physics/engineering but weak in economics/sanctions. Iran could have gotten a better deal if the Iranian side had a better appreciation of sanction economics.

■ Trump administration, specifically Nikki Haley, accuse Iran of destabilizing the region and relates the issue to the Nuclear Deal, while these issues have nothing to do with the Nuclear Deal. Why does the US bring up such issues?

A: As I said earlier, the U.S. is trying to find an excuse for a preemptive attack on Iran's military facilities. Iran stands in the U.S. way in the region.

The propaganda against Iran lists: state sponsor of terror; interfering in other countries (Bahrain, Yemen, Syria and Iraq) and secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. The U.S. designates who are terrorists. And it has decided that Hezbollah and Hamas are terrorists. If Iran supports these then Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. The U.S. and its allies in the region want to support whomever they want; they want to interfere wherever they want; and they have nuclear arms (the U.S. and Israel). They want to deny all these to Iran.

Iran needs to develop a better—more articulate and professional—propaganda machine. The U.S. has bases everywhere in the region. The U.S. and its allies interfere and wage war in the region. Some activities of some U.S. allies in the region constitute crimes against humanity and are also acts of terror but they are not designated as sponsors of terror!

What Nikki Haley is doing is to pursue all possible accusations against Iran—accusing it as a sponsor of terror, destabilizing influence in the region and pursuing military superiority. It is doing this because it cannot get the IAEA to say that Iran is cheating. It has to find some other reasons to take action against Iran and it has to relate it to the nuclear deal because that is what scares the world. With Saddam Hussein it was WMD and here it is the nuclear issue that frightens the region and the world.

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Ways to reverse a fatty liver

Fatty liver occurs when excess fat accumulates inside liver cells. This means normal, healthy liver tissue becomes partly replaced with fatty tissue. The fat starts to invade the liver, gradually infiltrating the healthy liver areas, so that less and less healthy liver tissue remains. The fatty liver has a yellow greasy appearance and is often enlarged and swollen with fat.

Fatty liver is now recognized as the most common cause of abnormal liver function test results in the USA, UK and Australia. Around one in five people in the general population, in the USA and Australia has a fatty liver. Fatty liver is usually associated with abdominal obesity, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. If severe, it can eventually lead to cirrhosis and liver failure.

How would you know if you have a fatty liver?

Many people with a fatty liver are unaware that they even have a liver problem, as the symptoms can be vague and non-specific, especially in the early stages. Most people with a fatty liver feel generally unwell, and find they are becoming increasingly fatigued and overweight for no apparent reason.

Possible symptoms of fatty liver include:

- Weight excess in the abdominal area
- Elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Tiredness and fatigue
- Nausea
- Gallstones
- Overheating of the body
- Excessive sweating



• Red itchy eyes
Fatty liver is diagnosed with a blood test and liver ultrasound.

Luckily fatty liver is reversible. Here are 5 ways to achieve this:

1. Eat less carbohydrate

Poor diet is the leading cause of fatty liver disease. The biggest offenders are sugar and foods made of white flour; they need to be avoided completely. However, a high intake of carbohydrate rich foods in general can promote fatty liver, as the liver converts excess carbohydrate into fat. Foods that need to be restricted include bread, pasta, rice, breakfast cereals, potatoes and any food made of flour.

2. Eat more vegetables, protein and the right fats

Raw vegetables and fruits are the most powerful liver healing foods. These raw foods help to cleanse and repair the liver filter, so that it can trap and remove more fat and toxins from the bloodstream. Eat an abundance of vegetables (cooked and raw salads). Fruit is healthy for most people, but if you have high blood sugar or insulin resistance, it's best to limit fruit to 2 servings per day. Protein is important because it helps to keep the blood sugar level stable, helps with weight loss from the abdomen and reduces hunger and cravings. Protein should be consumed with each meal. Good sources of protein include eggs, poultry, seafood, meat, nuts, seeds, whey protein powder, legumes and

Fatty liver is usually associated with abdominal obesity, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. If severe, it can eventually lead to cirrhosis and liver failure.

Symptoms of depression

Most of us feel sad, lonely, or depressed at times. It's a normal reaction to loss, life's struggles, or injured self-esteem. But when these feelings become overwhelming, cause physical symptoms, and last for long periods of time, they can keep you from leading a normal, active life.

That's when it's time to seek medical help.

Your regular doctor is a good place to start. They can test you for depression and help manage your symptoms. If your depression goes untreated, it may get worse and last for months, even years. It can cause pain and possibly lead to suicide, as it does for about 1 of every 10 people with depression.

Recognizing the symptoms is key. Unfortunately, about half the people who have depression never get it diagnosed or treated.

Symptoms

- They can include:
- Trouble concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
 - Fatigue
 - Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
 - Pessimism and hopelessness
 - Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or sleeping too much
 - Irritability
 - Restlessness
 - Loss of interest in things once pleasurable
 - Overeating, or appetite loss
 - Aches, pains, headaches, or cramps that won't go away
 - Digestive problems that don't get better, even with treatment
 - Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
 - Suicidal thoughts or attempts

Diagnosis

There isn't a "depression test" a doctor can use to see if you have it, so figuring that out often starts with a thorough history and physical exam.

- When your symptoms started
- How long they've lasted



- How severe they are
- If depression or other mental illnesses run in your family
- If you have a history of drug or alcohol abuse
- You'll also be asked if you've had similar symptoms of depression before, and if so, how it was treated.

Treatment

If your doctor rules out a physical cause for your symptoms, he may start you on a treatment or refer you to a mental health professional. This specialist will figure out the best course of treatment. That may include medicines (such as antidepressants), a type of therapy called psychotherapy, or both.

Are there warning signs of suicide with depression?

Depression carries a high risk of suicide. Suicidal thoughts or intentions are serious. Warning signs include:

- A sudden switch from sadness to extreme calmness, or appearing to be happy

It's important to understand that feeling depressed doesn't mean you have depression. That condition involves not only changes in mood, but also changes in sleep, energy, appetite, concentration, and motivation.

- Always talking or thinking about death
- Clinical depression (deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating) that gets worse
- Taking risks that could lead to death, such as driving through red lights
- Making comments about being hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Putting affairs in order, like tying up loose ends or changing a will
- Saying things like "It would be better if I weren't here" or "I want out"
- Talking about suicide
- Visiting or calling close friends and loved ones

If you or someone you know shows any of the above warning signs, call your local suicide hotline, contact a mental health professional right away, or go to the emergency room.

Does electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) treat symptoms of depression?

Electroconvulsive therapy, or ECT, is a treatment option for people whose symptoms don't get better with medicine or who have severe depression and need treatment immediately.

When should I seek help?

If your symptoms of depression are causing problems with relationships, work, or your family -- and there isn't a clear solution -- you should see a professional.

Talking with a mental health counselor or doctor can help prevent things from getting worse, especially if your symptoms stay for any length of time.

If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts or feelings, get help right away.

It's important to understand that feeling depressed doesn't mean you have depression. That condition involves not only changes in mood, but also changes in sleep, energy, appetite, concentration, and motivation.

If you have physical symptoms like these and find yourself feeling depressed much of the time for days or weeks, see your doctor.

(Source: webmd.com)

Playing through the pain: How one hockey player put his pain on ice

By Debra Goldschmidt

Greg Ozubko never thought he'd be tending goal at this point in his life. Not just because he's 50, but because 16 years ago he was having so much pain in his hands and feet he couldn't walk across a parking lot, let alone put his feet in a pair of skates or drop to his knees to stop a puck.

Like many Canadians, Ozubko started playing hockey as a kid. When he grew up he wanted to be Wayne Gretzky. He played through high school and college, but knew he wasn't good enough to realize his NHL dreams. So he moved on in life. He started a graphics business, got married and settling down in Atlanta.

His hockey gear, it collected dust in the closet.

In 1998 he started having unexplained pain. It was so severe that nothing could touch his joints.

"Once the symptoms started they were pretty debilitating," he remembers.

After a series of doctor's visits and tests, he was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.



Doctors were able to find a medication that worked for him. That was life changing.

By 2002, he felt so great that while watching his home NHL team, the Atlanta Thrashers, he made a decision. The team was horrible that year and watching them struggle motivated him. He would get back on the ice.

"One night it just flipped a switch and it just went, I wanna go do this again," he says.

The next day Ozubko says he unearthed his old goalie gear from the 1980s. He dusted it off and headed to

the rink.

He decided he wanted to be a goalie. There was a learning curve though.

The modern techniques goalies used were different from when he was a kid. He had to learn.

He must have been a quick study, because his style of playing caught the attention of some coaches along the way. They invited him to play in an elite group of hockey players in the Atlanta area. That led to an invitation to training camp for the minor league team called the Gwinnett Gladiators.

Ozubko made the cut and was

dairy products.

Most vegetable oil and margarine can worsen a fatty liver. Healthy fats to include more of in your diet are found in olive oil, oily fish, flaxseeds, coconut oil and raw nuts and seeds.

3. Drink raw vegetable juices

Raw juices are an excellent source of highly concentrated vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Your juice should be comprised of 80 to 100 percent vegetables, with the remainder comprised of fruit. Do not drink fruit juice; it is too high in carbohydrate and calories. Our book Raw Juices can Save your Life contains numerous raw juice recipes.

4. Take a good liver tonic

Choose a liver tonic that combines the clinically proven dose of St Mary's thistle with B group vitamins, antioxidants and sulfur rich amino acids. A good liver tonic can promote repair of damaged liver cells and facilitate the fat burning and detoxification abilities of the liver. Livatone Plus contains all of those ingredients and is available in powder or capsule form.

Extra tip: Increase glutathione production

Glutathione is your liver's most powerful detoxifier and it is strongly anti-inflammatory. If you have a fatty liver you need more of it. N-acetyl cysteine is a precursor of glutathione and is known to raise blood levels powerfully. Eating sulfur rich foods also helps with glutathione; examples include eggs, cabbage, broccoli and garlic.

(Source: liverdoctor.com)

Exercise and physical fitness

Regular exercise is one of the best things you can do for your health. It has many benefits, including improving your overall health and fitness, and reducing your risk for many chronic diseases. There are many different types of exercise; it is important that you pick the right types for you. Most people benefit from a combination of them:

- Endurance, or aerobic, activities increase your breathing and heart rate. They keep your heart, lungs, and circulatory system healthy and improve your overall fitness. Examples include brisk walking, jogging, swimming, and biking.



- Strength, or resistance training, exercises make your muscles stronger. Some examples are lifting weights and using a resistance band.

- Balance exercises can make it easier to walk on uneven surfaces and help prevent falls. To improve your balance, try tai chi or exercises like standing on one leg.

- Flexibility exercises stretch your muscles and can help your body stay limber. Yoga and doing various stretches can make you more flexible.

Fitting regular exercise into your daily schedule may seem difficult at first. But you can start slowly, and break your exercise time into chunks. Even doing ten minutes at a time is fine. You can work your way up to doing the recommended amount of exercise. How much exercise you need depends on your age and health.

Other things that you can do to make the most of your workouts include:

- Choosing activities that work all the different parts of the body, including your core (muscles around your trunk and pelvis). Good core strength improves balance and stability and helps to prevent lower back injury.

- Choosing activities that you enjoy. It's easier to make exercise a regular part of your life if you have fun doing it.
- Exercising safely, with proper equipment, to prevent injuries. Also, listen to your body and don't overdo it.

- Giving yourself goals. The goals should challenge you, but also be realistic. It's also helpful to reward yourself when you reach your goals. The rewards could be something big, like new workout gear, or something smaller, such as movie tickets.

(Source: exercisefitness.com)

Don't eat lemon in the morning. Eat tomato at night.

Vegetables and fruits are obviously good for you, but did you know that some kinds of them have specific timing to be eaten?

Do not eat Lemon, Orange, Grape Fruit, Celery, Parsley, Potato, or Eggplant during the day.

Why?

These include Solarene, substance that absorbs UV rays. By having psoralen inside your body, your skin gets more sensitive to UV rays, which causes 80% of skin aging.

But, psoralen is broken down in 8 hours, so it's ok to eat at night.



By the way, this principle applies to cosmetics too. If your moisturizer or serum includes lemon extract, or such extract from the vegetables and fruits above, you are at risk of absorbing more UV rays, which is terrible for skin. (Ex. Citrus Medica Limonum (lemon) oil) If your cosmetics already include them, don't use in the morning but use at night ONLY. That's why some night creams are directed for the use only at night. If the lemon extract was already extracted of psoralen, it's ok to use day time. Please ask the company. Also, if your cream has retinol, the same applies too even though retinol has no psoralen.

Eat tomato at NIGHT

Its lycopene is powerful antioxidant which offers so many benefits in your body and skin.

- Prevent skin damage from UV or any other oxidized stress
- fight cancer
- keeps your cells strong, young and prevent

After you eat tomato, its lycopene travels over the body from small intestine and arrive in skin cells in 6-8 hours. So, it's the most ideal to eat tomato at night and then go outside in the morning so that the lycopene you had works to protect your skin from harmful UV rays.

By the way, if you heat and mix the tomato with oil, that would be the best effective for absorption (bioavailability).

(Source: miraclinical.com)

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

Here are high rated IT titles in the world that reviewed by savvy tech users:

- University of Sydney researchers turn optical data into readable soundwaves
Researchers from the university have demonstrated a memory for digital information that transfers between light and sound waves on a photonic microchip.
- Americans would use AI to help with banking: Varo Money
79 percent of the 1,000 US adults surveyed by Varo Money think artificial intelligence can help them better manage their finances.
- Switzerland's financial watchdog has closed down what it said was the provider of a fake cryptocurrency and is investigating around a dozen other possible fraud cases, in the latest clamp-down on the risks involving virtual money.
The move by the FINMA watchdog comes on the heels of Chinese authorities' ordering Beijing-based cryptocurrency exchanges to stop trading and immediately notify users of their closure.

4 The U.S. Senate on Monday voted to ban Moscow-based cyber security firm Kaspersky Lab's products from use by the federal government, citing concerns the company may be a pawn of the Kremlin and poses a national security risk.
The U.S. Senate on Monday voted to ban Moscow-based cyber security firm Kaspersky Lab's products from use by the federal government, citing concerns the company may be a pawn of the Kremlin and poses a national security risk.

5 China's Tencent Holdings and Guangzhou Automobile Group Company Ltd have agreed to collaborate on internet-connected cars - a strategic pact that sent shares in Guangzhou Auto surging.
The development of self-driving cars and fast-changing technology have set in motion a flurry of alliances between internet giants and automakers. Earlier this year, Tencent bought 5 percent of U.S. electric car maker Tesla Inc for \$1.78 billion.

6 JPMorgan Chase & Co has been routing customer orders for bitcoin-related instruments, a spokesman said on Monday, despite the bank's chief executive's calling the crypto currency "a fraud."
Like other Wall Street banks, JPMorgan acts as an agent for buyers and sellers of Bitcoin XBT, an exchange-traded note designed to track the value of the crypto currency.

7 Cisco Systems Inc said on Monday that Executive Chairman John Chambers would not seek re-election after his term expires in December.
Chambers, who lead the networking gear maker for two decades as its chief executive, became the executive chairman in July 2015.
Under his leadership, Cisco's sales surged to about \$48 billion from \$1.2 billion in 1995.

8 Oracle has unveiled its eighth-generation SPARC platform, its engineered systems and as a cloud service.
The platform is powered by the new SPARC M8 microprocessor, and Oracle claims that it can deliver encryption and hashing two times faster than Intel's x86 platform, as well as double the speed of its own SPARC M7 microprocessor.

9 Microsoft to hold mixed reality showcase event October 3.
Microsoft will highlight its mixed-reality strategy at an invitation-only event on Oct. 3 in San Francisco

10 Apple blocking ads that follow users around web is 'sabotage', says industry.
New iOS 11 and macOS High Sierra will stop ads following Safari users, prompting open letter claiming Apple is destroying internet's economic model

Intel Capital has invested over \$1 billion in companies focused on AI

Intel's putting its investment fund where its mouth is when it comes to artificial intelligence: The chipmaker announced today that it has funneled over \$1 billion into AI startups via its Intel Capital center arm. That includes participating in rounds in companies including Mighty AI, Data Robot, Lumiata, AEye and many more.

Intel's investment focus has spanned a range of industries, from autonomous driving, to medical tech, to climate change research and more. It's thinking strategically about where it places these investments as it continues to build out its AI expertise and focus the business on areas like autonomous flight, self-driving, automated equipment inspection and AI computing at the edge.

Alongside its investments via Intel Capital, Intel has also spent significant resources on making AI a key part of its core business. That includes its headline-grabbing acquisitions of smaller companies, including Nervana in 2016, and Israeli automotive tech co. MobileEye, in a deal which closed earlier this year.

Those acquisitions add up to an estimated total spend of around \$16 billion, with MobileEye accounting for the lion's share of that amount.

I'm speaking to Intel CEO Brian Krzanich on stage at TechCrunch Disrupt SF 2017 today, and we'll be speaking about the company's growing focus on AI and what that means for its investment business and corporate strategy.

(Source: Techcrunch)

Hackers compromised free CCleaner software

By Joseph Menn

Hackers broke into British company Piriform Ltd's free software that optimizes computer performance last month, potentially allowing them to control the devices of millions of users, the company and independent researchers said.

More than 2 million people downloaded tainted versions of Piriform's program, which then directed the computers to get instructions from servers under the hacker's control, Piriform said.

Piriform said it worked with law enforcement and cut off communication to the servers before any malicious commands were detected. This came after security researchers at Cisco Systems Inc (CSCO.O) and Morphisec Ltd alerted Piriform's parent Avast Software of the hack last week.

The malicious program was slipped into legitimate software called CCleaner, which cleans up junk programs and advertising cookies to speed up devices.

CCleaner is the main product made by London's Piriform, which was bought in July by Prague-based Avast, one of the world's largest computer security vendors. At the time of the acquisition, the company said 130 million people used CCleaner.

A version of CCleaner downloaded in August and September included remote administration tools that tried to connect



to several unregistered web pages, presumably to download additional unauthorized programs, security researchers at Cisco's Talos unit said.

Talos researcher Craig Williams said it was a sophisticated attack because it penetrated an established and trusted supplier in a manner similar to June's "NotPetya" attack on companies that downloaded infected Ukrainian accounting software.

"There is nothing a user could have noticed," Williams said, noting that the optimization software had a proper digital certificate, which means that other computers automatically trust the program.

In a blog post, Piriform confirmed

that two programs released in August were compromised. It advised users of CCleaner v5.33.6162 and CCleaner Cloud v1.07.3191 to download new versions. A spokeswoman said that 2.27 million users had downloaded the August version of CCleaner while only 5,000 users had installed the compromised version of CCleaner Cloud.

Piriform said that Avast, its new parent company, had uncovered the attacks on Sept. 12. A new, uncompromised version of CCleaner was released the same day and a clean version of CCleaner Cloud was released on Sept. 15, it said.

Only the cloud version could be updated automatically to remove the bad code.

The nature of the attack code suggests that the hacker won access to a machine used to create CCleaner, Williams said.

CCleaner does not update automatically, so those who installed the problematic version will need to delete it and install a fresh version, he said.

He also recommended running an antivirus scan.

Williams said that Talos detected the issue at an early stage, when the hackers appeared to be collecting information from infected machines, rather than forcing them to install new programs.

Piriform said in a news release that it had worked with U.S. law enforcement to shut down a server located in the United States to which traffic was set to be directed.

It said the server was closed down on Sept. 15 "before any known harm was done."

Avast said little about the breach, posting nothing on its Twitter account in the 12 hours after the announcement and displaying nothing on its main web page.

Piriform's news release and technical blog post did not mention Cisco or its partner Morphisec, instead crediting Avast with discovering the still-unexplained compromise.

After the controlling web addresses were seized, Cisco saw 200,000 attempts to connect to them.

(Source: Reuters)

Audi takes lead in automated driving, but others wary to follow

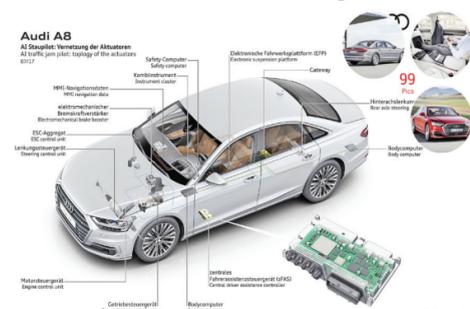
German carmaker Audi is taking a lead in bringing more automated driving to roads, but rivals seem in no rush to follow while legal and regulatory uncertainties still cloud the technology.

At the Frankfurt car show, Audi paraded the A8 which can drive itself under certain conditions, help the driver to change lanes and does not require drivers to monitor the road - though they must be ready to intervene at the sound of an alarm.

On a scale where zero is a fully manual car and five a fully autonomous one, the A8 is a level three, putting it ahead of level two features offered by Tesla and General Motors (GM).

Struggling to emerge from the shadow of parent Volkswagen's diesel emissions scandal, Audi is badly in need of a new prestige model and a marketing coup.

"It's gratifying that we are able to set a positive sign for real 'Vorsprung durch Technik'," said research and devel-



opment chief Peter Mertens, referring to Audi's advertising slogan meaning "advancement through technology".
But with special approval still required almost every-

where to drive such a car, and question marks over how quickly the driver has to take back control - and who is responsible during handover - some rivals are skeptical the market is ready.

"Who will accept to pay for something that they can use only in extremely limited conditions?" asked Didier Leroy, European chairman of Japanese carmaker Toyota.

"The fact that Audi is introducing this one now doesn't mean that we will rush in the coming months to say that we are able to do it too. That is not our logic," he told Reuters at the car show.

Among the A8's new features is the "traffic jam pilot", which can completely control driving at up to 60 kilometers (37 miles) per hour on a divided highway.

The German company expects customers will be able to use all the model's self-driving functions next year or in 2019.

(Source: venturebeat)

August's latest smart locks warn if you left the door open

August Home introduced two new locks, a lower-cost August Smart Lock (shown at center) and the August Smart Lock Pro (at left), that include a sensor to determine whether or not the door is really closed. If it's ajar and the deadbolt didn't engage, you can find out through your phone instead of having to return home.

The differences between locks come down to connectivity. The \$279 Smart Lock Pro is the full-featured, familiar-looking model with support for WiFi (through a bundled Connect bridge), Bluetooth, HomeKit and Z-Wave Plus. The regular Smart Lock, meanwhile, has a new, no-frills design that drops the starting price for a lock from \$179 to \$149. Both locks still carry signature tricks



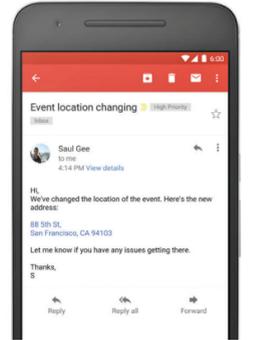
like auto-unlocking and virtual guest keys, and they're available right away.

(Source: August)

Gmail finally turns addresses and phone numbers into links

Next time someone emails you an address, you no longer have to copy-paste it on Maps after viewing it on Gmail or Inbox. Google has rolled out an update that gives its mail apps the power to turn addresses, phone numbers and email addresses into hyperlinks. It's definitely a welcome addition, especially since most other mail apps have been making contact details easier to click for a long time now. Now, you can click addresses to look them up on Google Maps, email addresses to automatically open your default mail app's compose window and phone numbers to start a call on the default phone app if you're on mobile.

Addresses and phone numbers will appear as hyperlinks whether you're



using Android and iOS on mobile or the web on your computer.

(Source: Google)

Niantic's next AR game after 'Pokémon Go' may use audio cues

Niantic is keen to prove that it's no one-trick pony. The company that brought augmented reality mobile gaming to the masses with Pokémon Go is dropping some interesting tidbits about its followup.

The title will integrate audio prompts into its AR gameplay experience, the company's CTO Phil Keslin told TechCrunch. Instead of asking people to hold their phone up while interacting with the game, Keslin says the developer is seeking a more natural alternative. And, it seems audio cues could be the key to the Pokémon Go successor.

Speaking on a panel at the TechCrunch Disrupt event, the Niantic exec discussed the current problems with AR. "I can tell you from experience that people don't do



this," he said, imitating how users are expected to hold their phones while playing an AR game. "It makes them look like a total doofus if they're doing it for an extended period of time," he continued.

Sound could fix that by tapping into your smartphone and audio earbuds, noted Keslin. Audio signals -- including a phone call or something akin to a proximity sensor (that accesses your handset's accelerometer) -- could give you clues, he added.

Of course, AR wasn't Pokémon Go's sole selling point. It helped that it was based on a massively popular existing property that had found success on Nintendo's handhelds and home consoles.

(Source: engadget)

Google launches Tez, a mobile payments app built for India

Internet giant Google on Monday forayed into the crowded but promising space of payment solutions in the country with the launch of its 'Tez' application.

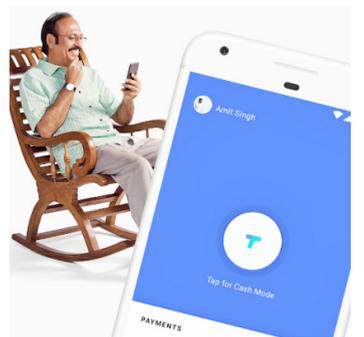
Built on the government-backed Unified Payment Interface (UPI) platform, the app allows users to do financial transactions like sending money and receiving payments directly into bank accounts of individuals and merchants.

Designed in a chat-like interface, Google has released Tez on both Android and Apple iOS platforms. Google has partnered with four banks - Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India (SBI) - for the solution. While they will be exclusive platform partners, Tez will work with all 55 banks who are on the UPI platform, Google said.

"Tez has been made for India and will make payments as simple as cash," said Caesar Sengupta, vice president, Next Billion Users team, at Google.

It comes with features that Google said makes it easy and safe to use. To tap into the large merchant base with whom people may not be comfortable sharing their details, Tez offers a feature called Cash Mode where one can pay without sharing bank details or phone number. This is done through technology called audio QR that works like near field communication (NFC) and uses ultrasound waves to connect two phones through microphone and speaker.

(Source: indiatiimes)



Study of Martian sedimentary layers reveals more about the planet's past

As of 2016, Mars became the permanent residence of no less than eight robotic missions, a combination of orbiters, rovers and landers. Between extensive studies of the Martian atmosphere and surface, scientists have learned a great deal about the planet's history and evolution. In particular, they have uncovered voluminous amounts of evidence that Mars once had flowing water on its surface.

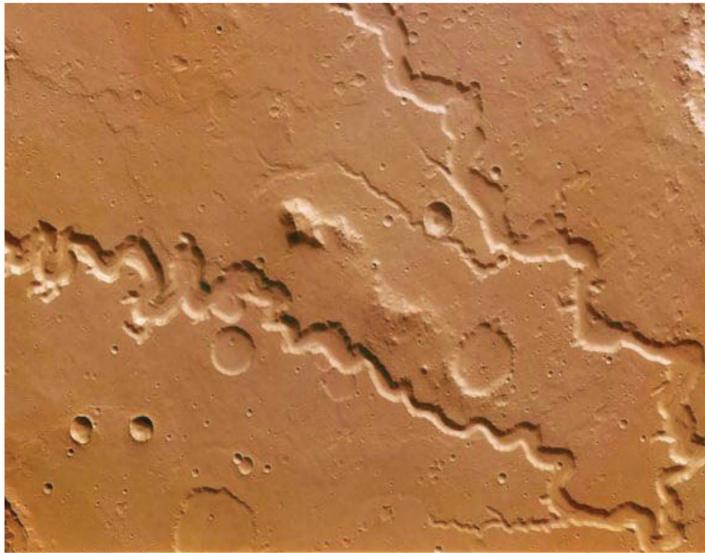
The most recent evidence to this effect from the University of Texas at Austin, where researchers have produced a study detailing how water deposited sediment in Mars' Aeolis Dorsa region.

The study, titled "Fluvial Stratigraphy of Valley Fills at Aeolis Dorsa, Mars: Evidence for Base-Level Fluctuations Controlled by a Downstream Water Body", recently appeared in the scientific journal *GeoScienceWorld*. Led by Benjamin D. Cardenas - a geologist with the Jackson School of Geosciences at the University of Texas at Austin - the team examined satellite data of the Aeolis Dorsa region to study the structure of sedimentary deposits.

■ Martian sedimentary layers

For years, Aeolis Dorsa has been of interest to scientists since it contains some of the most densely-packed sedimentary layers on Mars, which were deposited by flowing water (aka. fluvial deposits).

These deposits are visible from orbit because of the way they have under-



gone a process known as "topographic inversion" - which consists of deposits filling low river channels, then being exhumed to create incised valleys.

By definition, incised valleys are topographic lows produced by "riverine"

erosion - i.e. relating to a river or river-bank. On Earth, these valleys are commonly created by rising sea levels, and then filled with sediment as a result of falling sea levels. As sea levels rise, the valleys are cut from the landscape as

For years, Aeolis Dorsa has been of interest to scientists since it contains some of the most densely-packed sedimentary layers on Mars, which were deposited by flowing water.

the waters move inland; and as the sea levels drop, retreating waters deposit sediment within them.

■ Three dimensions

According to the study, this process has created an opportunity for geophysicists and planetary scientist to observe Mars' geological record in three dimensions and across significant distances.

"Sedimentary rocks in general record information about the environments under which they were deposited. Fluvial (river) deposits specifically record information about the way rivers migrated laterally, the way they aggraded vertically, and how these things changed over time."

The dotted white arrow points to curved strata recording point bar growth and river migration while the black arrow shows topographically inverted river deposits outcropping as ridges (e.g., black arrow).

Here on Earth, the stratigraphy (i.e. the order and position of sedimentary layers) of sedimentary rocks has been used by geologists for generations to place constraints on what conditions were like on our planet billions of years ago.

It has only been in recent history that the study of sedimentary layers has been used to place constraints on what environmental conditions were like on other planetary bodies (like Mars) billions of years ago.

(Source: Universe Today)

Ancient meteorite impact produced highest natural temperature ever on Earth

In the Canadian Labrador region, temperatures during the short summers reach a balmy 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 degrees Celsius) on average. That's not bad for a province that's partially tundra, but scientists now believe that Labrador was quite a bit hotter for a very short time in the distant past. In fact, Labrador might have been the hottest place ever on the surface of Earth some 36 million years ago when it was struck by a meteorite.

Scientists have long known there was a large impact in the Labrador region (the mainland portion of the Newfoundland and Labrador Province) thanks to the Mistastin crater.

This 17-mile (28-kilometer) depression contains Mistastin Lake, which is quite obviously an impact crater when seen from above. There's an arcuate central island in the lake, which is the central uplift of the original impact crater, and the lake itself is roughly circular.

■ Original crater

Although, the lake is somewhat smaller than the original crater, at just under 10 miles across.

The walls of the crater have eroded over the eons,

but the geological evidence clearly points to a massive object smacking into the ground there. The area around the lake is rife with melted rocks, shatter cones, and other signs of a particularly violent impact.

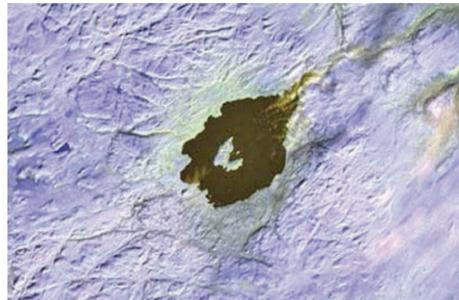
Scientists often have trouble characterizing large impacts; there's so much energy released that both the object and the surrounding landscape are vaporized. In the case of the Mistastin impact, there are some fascinating leftovers.

According to a new paper in *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, geologists have found evidence of zircon being transformed into cubic zirconia around Mistastin crater. Zircon is a common enough mineral, but laboratory research indicates that you need temperatures in excess of 4,298 degrees Fahrenheit (2,370 degrees Celsius) to transform it into cubic zirconia.

■ Massive impact

Therefore, the heat generated by this massive impact must have reached at least that warm, making it the hottest naturally occurring temperature on Earth.

The Mistastin impact is far from the largest impact in Earth's history, but it was still big enough to have global ramifications for decades. The impact that



wiped out dinosaurs 65 million years ago was larger. Certainly, the moon-forming impact in Earth's formative years was more violent than both.

It's possible the composition of the impactor, and the bedrock in Labrador contributed to an unusually high temperature. But these larger impacts could have produced even higher temperatures, and we just don't have evidence for it.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Official Appreciates Key Role of Bank Maskan in Paying Facilities to Applicants

The key role of Bank Maskan in offering loans and facilities to applicants is laudable.

Chief Executive of Iran Urban Upgrading and Development Company Mohammad Saeed Izadi announced the above statement and said: "Measures and programs for upgrading and renovating housing in worn-out urban structures in the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017) have been planned in eight topics and here, key role of the bank

as operating bank for paying pertinent facilities to the target applicants is significant."

With the coordination made in this regard, construction operation and financing 60,417 worn-out residential units have currently been identified, he said, adding: "Financing and constructing 150,000 residential units using affordable facilities of the bank in worn-out structures has been put atop agenda of the bank."

Supporting and helping mass-hous-



ing developers, backing implementation of capacities of the Land and Housing Funds, Local Development Fund, Charity Fund, etc., renovating 7,500 residential units through participation with the private sector as joint venture, renovating 7,500 residential units through cooperatives, renovating and constructing 3,000 residential units have been considered as the main topics of the Organization in the current year, the managing director ended.

China's CITIC Group to Finance Development of Iran's Urban Structures

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was inked between Bank Shahr and China's CITIC Group for the development of urban infrastructures, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, Chief Executive of Bank Shahr said that role of banks has changed in the contemporary world of today, adding: "Earlier, most banks were responsible for financing large industries but presently, some chang-

es have been created in the model of their credibility and validation, so that banks have been turned into efficient tools to finance diversified infrastructures such as urban fields."

Development of urban services and infrastructures has been put at the focal attention of banks, he said, adding: "Opening a credit line by Chinese CITIC Group, worth \$10 billion, in Iran for the development of urban projects such as Tehran subway, Imam Ali (AS),

Niyayesh and Sadr highway projects is considered as one of the most important activities launched in recent years."

After its successful experience of cooperation with Iran even in sanctions period, China embarked on clinching a contract, worth \$10 billion, within the framework of joint venture after the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the managing director ended.



BMI Managing Director: Hong Kong Branch Restarts Its Activities

Managing Director of BMI announced that Hong Kong branch restarts its activities.

As reported by Public Relations Dept. of BMI, Dr. Mohamad Reza Hosseinzadeh, saying that one of the measures that is needed to be taken by BMI to remove the obstacles on the way of the Hong Kong branch's reopening was choosing and introducing a valid and independent institution to render a report about the readiness of this branch for restarting its activities, added that Ernst & Young firm was selected under special regulations and then introduced to Hong Kong Monetary Authority.

He said, "Another measure was keeping precautionary orders based on selected firm's recommendations and international standards and afterwards, receiving



the confirmation of that."

He added that Hong Kong Monetary Authority confirmed the final report provided by Ernst & Young firm, so that agreed on Hong Kong branch's reunion.

Hosseinzadeh said; "Melli Bank Plc also released news on it on its website and reported that the branch is now ready to offer a wide range of banking services to its customers."

He emphasized that in some cases including obtaining the banking license, it was required to resolve lots of various and complex issues in order to gain satisfaction and confirmation of supervisory authorities, so I feel like expressing my appreciation to my colleagues.

He continued; "Meanwhile, our representatives from Melli Bank Plc made a visit to Iran Consul General in Hong Kong and Macau and expressed our gratitude for their assistance."

It must be said that Bank Melli Iran is the majority shareholder of Melli Bank Plc.

Scientists find magma source of supervolcano that may erupt soon

Scientists have discovered the magma source, also called the "hot zone," of Campi Flegrei, a supervolcano in southern Italy that experts fear may be brewing for an eruption.

The volcano has not erupted for centuries, but scientists fear that it may blow up soon. A May 2017 study found evidence that the energy inside the volcano is building up in the past few decades, which increases the possibility of an eruption.

In the 1980s, injection of magma or fluids in the Camp Flegrei's shallower structure caused small earthquakes.

In a new study published in the journal *Scientific Reports* on Aug. 14, researchers found the location of the hot zone that served as source of the magma that flooded into the volcano's chamber and caldera.

Using seismological techniques, Luca De Siena, of the University of Aberdeen, and colleagues, were able to identify the hot zone where the hot materials rose to flood the caldera in the 1980s.

The "temporal and spatial correlations we observe between seismic, tomographic, geochemical, and deformation models show that the high-attenuation and deformation area offshore Pozzuoli was the most feasible hot feeder for the seismic, deformation, and geochemical 1983-84 unrest," the researchers wrote in their study.

The research likewise suggests that a 1-2 km-deep rock formation prevented the magma from rising to the surface in the 1980s. The rock formation blocked the magma forcing the latter to release the stress along a lateral route.

Analysis of the hot zone backs up findings of earlier studies that suggest Campi Flegrei, one of the most dangerous supervolcanoes on Earth, could be nearing eruption.

The supervolcano showed relatively low amount of seismic activity for decades suggesting that pressure could be building within the supervolcano's caldera. Researchers said that this makes Campi Flegrei more dangerous. (Source: Tech Times)

Light has been stored as sound for the first time

For the first time ever, scientists have stored light-based information as sound waves on a computer chip - something the researchers compare to capturing lightning as thunder.

While that might sound a little strange, this conversion is critical if we ever want to shift from our current, inefficient electronic computers, to light-based computers that move data at the speed of light.

Light-based or photonic computers have the potential to run at least 20 times faster than your laptop, not to mention the fact that they won't produce heat or suck up energy like existing devices.



This is because they, in theory, would process data in the form of photons instead of electrons.

We say in theory, because, despite companies such as IBM and Intel pursuing light-based computing, the transition is easier said than done.

Coding information into photons is easy enough - we already do that when we send information via optical fiber.

But finding a way for a computer chip to be able to retrieve and process information stored in photons is tough for the one thing that makes light so appealing: it's too damn fast for existing microchips to read.

This is why light-based information that flies across internet cables is currently converted into slow electrons. But a better alternative would be to slow down the light and convert it into sound.

This means that computers could have the benefits of data delivered by light - high speeds, no heat caused by electronic resistance, and no interference from electromagnetic radiation - but would also be able to slow that data down enough so that computers chips could do something useful with it.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Astronomers discover pitch-black exoplanet

Exoplanets come in pretty much all colors, including pitch black. The huge, blistering-hot alien world WASP-12b has a reflectance, or albedo, of just 0.064 at most, a new study reports.

"This is an extremely low value, making the planet darker than fresh asphalt!" lead author Taylor Bell, a master's student in astronomy at McGill University in Montreal, said in a statement.

For perspective, the moon's albedo on the same scale is 0.12, and Earth's is 0.37. The icy Saturn satellite Enceladus, the most reflective object in our solar system, clocks in at 1.4, study team members said.

WASP-12b lies about 1,400 light-years from Earth. The exoplanet is about twice the size of Jupiter and completes one lap around its star every 1.1 Earth days.

This super-close orbit has made the planet a bizarre and hellish world. The powerful gravitational tug of its parent star has pulled WASP-12b into an egg shape, and temperatures on the planet's dayside reach about 4,700 degrees Fahrenheit (2,600 degrees Celsius), study team members said. (Close-orbiting planets like WASP-12b tend to be tidally locked, always showing the same face to their star, just as the moon always shows its "near side" to Earth.)

WASP-12b has been studied extensively since its 2008 discovery. But Bell and his colleagues took another look in October 2016, investigating the "hot Jupiter" with the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph instrument aboard NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. (Source: scientificamerican.com)

19 Asiatic cheetahs spotted in Iran in past 3 months: CACP director

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

TEHRAN — Over the past three months some 19 Asiatic cheetahs were spotted in Iran three of which were females, Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project (CACP) director Houman Jowkar said on Monday.

The Asiatic cheetah mainly inhabits the desert areas around Dasht-e Kavir in the eastern half of Iran, including parts of the Kerman, Khorasan, Semnan, Yazd, Tehran, and Markazi provinces. Most live in five protected areas, Kavir National Park, Touran National Park, Bafq Protected Area, Dar-e Anjir Wildlife Refuge, and Naybandan Wildlife Reserve. The cheetah has been listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List since 1996.

According to Jowkar based on the sightings the number of remaining Asiatic cheetahs can be estimated at almost 50. However, Jowkar explained, due to the shortcomings of trap cameras installed in the protected areas and other techniques of counting cheetahs it is not easy to tell the gender composition.

The cheetah/livestock interactions and the presence of human beings and guard dogs in cheetah's habitats, road accidents and habitat fragmentation due to human encroachment are of the threats making the cheetah's future uncertain.

"Since the year 2001 some 13 road crashes resulting in the death of 19 cheetahs have occurred in roads in provinces of Semnan, Yazd and South Khorasan," Jowkar regretted, saying that since May 2016 no records of road crashes resulting in death of cheetahs have been filed.

Cheetahs don't usually stay in one place and might move from one habitat to another. Mining development and road construction near reserves or between fragmented habitats also threaten the population and over the past years the unsafe roads and careless drivers have resulted in increased roadkills.

As Jowkar said limited budget and the responsible organizations', such as Ministry of Transport, incompetence in fencing the roads have worsened the situation as road crashes [the ones recorded by the Department of Environment] accounts for 52 percent of the cheetahs fatality rate.

'Cheetah forever' campaign

Lately, on the occasion of the National Asiatic Cheetah Day, August 31, a campaign called 'cheetah forever' was launched by Iranian Actress Hediéh Tehrani seeking to collect contributions to help Asiatic Cheetah conservation project. Many celebrities, actors, athletes, and environmentalist have taken part in the campaign ever since.

As Jowkar have thoroughly explained the overlapping home ranges in Touran National Park, Semnan province, have caused some livestock/cheetah conflict. The campaign is soliciting contributions from the public to help purchase some 12 home ranges in 100,000 hectares of Touran National Park within next two months to minimize the conflicts between the livestock and the wild animals as much as possible, Jowkar added.

In addition to international funds amounting to 85,000 euros some additional 4 billion rials (about \$100,000) is required to buy the rangelands from the ranchers, Jowkar stated, saying, the campaign is striving to collect the required money to protect cheetah's habitats.

Wildlife conservation is the attempt to protect endangered animal and plant species, along with their natural habitat. It is essential to take actions to protect wildlife from extinction. By doing so, we do not only ensure their survival, but also the diversity of the ecosystem. As a result, it will help improve the ecological health of the earth.

LEARN ENGLISH

Flattering

A: Valerie! Hi! Wow how are you? It's been such a long time!
B: Darlene! Indeed, it's been a while! How have you been? Wow, you look amazing! I love what you've done with your hair!

A: Really? Thanks! I went to that hair salon that you told me about, but enough about me! Look at you!
You haven't aged a day since the last time I saw you! What is your secret!

B: Ha ha, come on! Well, I've been watching what I eat, and working out three times a week. By the way, I heard your son recently graduated!

A: Yes, my little Paul is finally a doctor. They grow up so fast you know.

B: He is such a handsome guy. He gets his looks from his mother of course!

A: Thank you! What about your daughter, Pamela? I heard she has passed the bar exam and married recently.

B: Oh yes. She had a beautiful wedding in Cozumel Mexico and we all attended.

A: Such a lovely girl. I hope my Paul is lucky enough to find a girl like that someday!

B: But of course! Well, it's been great talking to you, but I have to get going.

A: Same here! We will catch up soon, maybe over coffee!

B: That would be great! Give me a call!

A: See you soon! Bye! Ugg... I can't stand that woman or her obnoxious son.

■ **Key vocabulary**
I love what you have done with: I really like the design or the change you made

you haven't aged a day: you haven't gotten older; you look young

work out: do physical exercises

by the way: phrase used to shift to another topic

bar exam: the exam to qualify as a lawyer

get going: leave

obnoxious: really annoying

■ **Supplementary vocabulary**

small talk: short, friendly, unimportant conversations

talk behind (someone's) back: speak badly of someone without them knowing

two-faced: pretend to like someone when you don't; be hypocritical

stab (someone) in the back: do something unkind to a friend

gossip: talk about the details of other people's lives

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Iran expands centers for emergency social services

By Setareh Behroozi

TEHRAN — Iran's Welfare Organization has launched 150 new centers for emergency social services across the country during the current Iranian calendar year, starting on March 21, 2017.

Last year, the organization established 197 centers and equipped 297 minivans for social services, the head of the organization, Anoushiravan Mohseni-Bandpei said on Tuesday on the sidelines of inaugurating a number of the centers.

The new centers have been set up in cities with a population of 50,000 or more, aiming to boost activities during individual or social crises, he explained.

People can call hotline 123 to report any social harms they witness including child abuse, suicidal behaviors, street children, and family violence, he added.

According to the official, the centers helped rescue 5,231 persons from suicide during the past year.

Social structural changes lead to increasing of social harms in various kinds, which is one of the main concerns of the



A center for emergency social services launches in Bardaskan, Khorasan Razavi Province on September 6, 2017

Welfare Organization, he said.

Individuals are vulnerable!

During the ceremony, labor minister Ali Rabiee lauded the social services provided by the organization saying that in modern

world many people feel alone and vulnerable even in crowded communities.

Lifestyles and social conditions are seriously affected by social media and telecommunications, which bring some

harms as well, he explained.

Emergency social services expansion is essential

First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri also made a short speech during the ceremony saying that the expansion of social services is essential today.

"Such services can confront social harms, which is essential for development of the country," he explained.

He pointed to social crime prevention as a crucial activity to decrease social harms in the society.

Urban squatter settlement, drug addiction, divorce and criminal behaviors are some problems, which lead to social harms, he said.

Jahangiri said that citizens should learn social skills to deal with their problems and ask help from social services to deal with social abnormalities, he concluded.

The Social emergency hotline 123 was launched in Tehran in 2004 and became accessible in other provinces since 2008.

Experts at centers for emergency social services offer phone consultations and attend the scene of violence and abuse in emergency cases.

Everything has a temperament: Colors, seasons, day and night



ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

part 2

TEHRAN — As formerly discussed, beside human beings everything in the universe namely animals, plants and inanimate objects, seasons, climatic conditions, age, or gender have a temperament (Mizaj).

In previous articles, Mizaj, its kinds, importance in living a healthy life, ways to recognize one's distinguishing Mizaj, adopting the lifestyle that suits it, and the causes mal-temperament were thoroughly discussed.

Mizaj, representing the lack or excess of warmness and humidity in everything (human body, animals, plants, and objects), is a set of distinguishing characteristics. Treating everything in accordance with its own Mizaj would benefit us in that human beings are a part of the world and will be, one way or another, affected by all phenomenon and objects.

In other words everything can be classified according to its warmness and humidity.

In the previous article the Mizaj of organs were thoroughly explained. Below are the Mizaj of seasons and colors.

Colors temperament

Colors have temperament, meaning that they can reveal the real temperament of the objects or intensify the temperament of the individuals.

The color yellow is the symbol of warm and dry temperament and red represents warm and wet Mizaj. On the other hand dark colors such as black, grey, and brown symbolizes cold and dry Mizaj and



bright colors such as white and blue are the symbols of cold and wet Mizaj.

Warm colors (red, orange, and yellow) are signs of warmness and can increase the temperature in a confined area. These colors are associated with danger, threat, warning, and movement and the way they affect the brain they increase metabolism and heat in the body and put it on alert which from Iranian traditional medicine point of view are sign of excessive heat.

Therefore, those with cold Mizaj who normally have slow metabolism, and feel sluggish had better use warm color for their clothes and houses while for people with warm Mizaj the reverse is true. People with warm temperament who are normally vibrant, brisk, lively and stressed should avoid using such colors and use cool colors such as white, blue, and light green. Such cool hues can bring about a more passive reaction in the brain and can make a person feel pleased and relaxed. Accordingly cool colors do not suit people with cold temperament.

Schools welcome students with health screening tests

SOCIETY TEHRAN — About 4.5 million students across Iran are undergoing health screening tests before the beginning of the new school year, which falls on September 23, deputy health minister said on Tuesday.

The screening tests are offered to students with 5, 6, 9, 12, and 15 years of age, Mohammad Esmail Motlaq explained.

The tests include vaccination, dental checks, person-

al health record, growth monitoring, vision assessment as well as physicals including skin and hair, cardiac, lung and thyroid problems, he explained.

He said that mental health screening tests include panic, generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, ADHD, and psychosis.

"We teach health diet, physical activities, life skills, and individual hygiene to students after screening tests," he explained.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Five autism centers operational in Tehran province

There are five autism centers operational in Tehran province providing patients suffering the disorder with proper services, an official with Tehran province's welfare organization said.

"Some five more centers are to be set up in the near future in Tehran," Mohammadreza Asadi said, ISNA news agency reported.

Currently each center is offering treatment and support for some 280 patients, Asadi said, explaining, each center charges a monthly fee of some 5.68 million rials (nearly \$140) which receives direct subsidies amount to 4 million rials (nearly \$100).

"Currently some 20 patients are receiving home care in pilot program and in case we get satisfactory results and families welcome the program we will administer the program on a larger scale," he added.

فعالیت پنج مرکز اوتیسم در استان تهران

معاون توانبخشی بهزیستی استان تهران از فعالیت پنج مرکز اوتیسم و خدمت رسانی به مددجویان در حال حاضر در استان تهران خبر داد.

به گزارش ایسنا، محمدرضا اسدی گفت: ۵ مرکز اوتیسم در آینده‌ای نزدیک در استان تهران راه اندازی خواهند شد

اسدی توضیح داد: این مراکز با ظرفیت ۲۸۰ نفر فعالیت میکنند. شهریه مراکز اوتیسم ۵۶۸ هزار تومان است که خانواده ها تنها ۱۶۵ هزار تومان از کل مبلغ را می پردازند و به ۱۰۰ درصد ظرفیت مراکز اوتیسم یارانه تعلق می گیرد.

وی گفت: در طرح مراقبت در منزل اوتیسم ۲۰ نفر از افراد شناسایی شده مبتلا به اوتیسم به صورت پایلوت مورد مراقبت و تحت پوشش قرار گرفته اند که در صورت نتیجه مطلوب و استقبال خانواده ها قابل افزایش خواهد بود.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Any port in a storm

■ **Explanation:** any solution, however unappealing, is acceptable in times of trouble

■ **For example:** He hates his job, but he can't get another. Any port in a storm, you know.

PHRASAL VERB

Draw somebody in

■ **Meaning:** to get someone involved in something

■ **For example:** Despite himself, he found himself being drawn in by the man's warmth and ease.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Better safe than sorry

■ **Explanation:** it's better to be too cautious than to be careless and have regrets later

■ **For example:** Let's book tickets in advance - better safe than sorry!

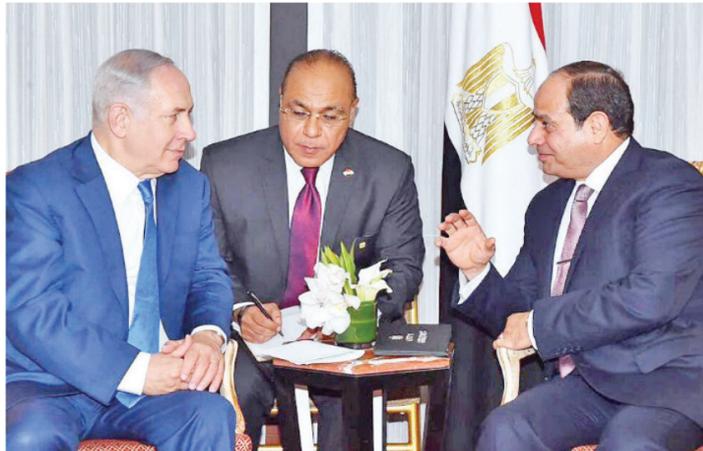
Egypt's Sisi, Israel's Netanyahu meet for first time in public

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have met for the first time in public in what Egypt said was part of an effort to revive the Middle East peace process.

Egyptian authorities said in a statement the two had met on Monday ahead of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Sisi separately met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at his residency, where they agreed to continue working toward a two-state solution.

The meeting came just days after Egypt helped broker an agreement with the Palestinian Hamas group to dissolve the administration that runs Gaza and hold talks with Abbas' Fatah movement, its Palestinian rivals.

For much of the last decade, Egypt has joined Israel in enforcing a land, sea and air blockade of the Gaza Strip, a move to punish Hamas, which has ruled Gaza



since a brief Palestinian civil war in 2007. Netanyahu has said in recent weeks that ties between Israel and its Arab neighbors have been improving and that cooperation exists "in various ways and (at) different levels". (Source: Reuters)

Egypt was the first of a handful of Arab countries to recognize Israel under the U.S.-sponsored peace accord in 1979. But Egyptian attitudes to its neighbor remain icy due to what many Arabs see as the continued Israeli occupation of land that is meant to form a Palestinian state.

In recent weeks, Egypt has hosted delegations from Fatah and Hamas to help reach an agreement between the two sides and talk about the Gaza border. But reunification a decade after their battle for control may hinge on whether complex power-sharing issues can be resolved.

Under pressure from the blockade, Hamas has sought to mend ties with Egypt, which controls their one border crossing. Egypt under Sisi has been wary of ties between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, which Sisi ousted from power after mass protests.

Rebels say U.S. evacuates base in southern Syrian desert Syrian forces inch closer to besieging Daesh terrorists in Dayr al-Zawr

U.S. troops and allied Arab fighters have evacuated a garrison set up in June in the Syrian desert near the border with Iraq and relocated to their main Tanf base, rebel sources said on Tuesday.

They said the move follows a deal between Washington and Moscow to abandon the Zakf site, located around 60-70 km (40-50 miles) northeast of Tanf.

Meanwhile, Syrian government forces, backed by allied fighters from popular defense groups, have come closer to encircling ISIL (Daesh) terrorists in a pocket of the strategic eastern city of Dayr al-Zawr after crossing over the Euphrates River.

"Today, Syrian government forces, reinforced by a unit of the 4th Armored Division and with the support of Russian aviation, crossed the Euphrates River in the Dayr al-Zawr region," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

The statement added that "shock troops" had already captured several villages on the eastern banks of the river from Daesh and were making further advances eastward.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) also reported that Syrian army commandos and reconnaissance units had crossed the river using a floating bridge.

"This paves the way for completely besieging the city," the observatory's head, Rami Abdel



Rahman, commented. Syrian army troops and their allies have sealed off Dayr al-Zawr, located 450 kilometers northeast of the capital Damascus, from three sides, but Daesh terrorists still control the eastern flank along the Euphrates River. Syrian troops are fighting only west of the river, while U.S.-backed militiamen from the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have waged a rival operation to the east of the Euphrates. Syria's official news agency SANA has reported that the Dayr al-Zawr military airport has begun functioning for the first time in nearly a year. (Source: agencies)

Syria repels massive attack led by Nusra Front

Syria's army and its allies have repelled a large-scale attack spearheaded by the notorious al-Nusra Front terrorist group on the western Syrian city of Hama.

The army and its allies repelled the attack by an alliance of militants led by Nusra on the north of the city on Tuesday, a media outlet run by the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement said.

The northern Hama area is adjacent to the province of Idlib, where there are large concentrations of Takfiri militants.

Al-Nusra recently denounced ongoing peace talks between the Syrian government and armed opposition in the Kazakh capital of Astana. Al-Nusra and other internationally-designated terrorist groups are excluded from the peace process.

The talks have so far led to the establishment of four "de-escalation zones" in the country. An agreement was reached on the specific borders of the fourth zone, which covers Idlib, on Friday, and al-Nusra has said it is not bound by the agreement.

The Syrian government and its allies have been making steady progress against militants in the country. Most recently, they have been making headway in Dayr al-Zawr Province.

Polls suggest jump in German far-right party's support

Germany's right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party ramped up attacks against immigration and Islam as its poll ratings jumped in the final stretch of election campaigning.

The Muslim religion "does not belong in Germany", said a leading AfD candidate Alexander Gauland, who argued its "political doctrine is not compatible with a free country".

Among other proposals, AfD wants a ban on minarets and public calls to prayer from mosques, a ban on headscarves for teachers and students, and for imams to lead prayers only in German.

The latest polls show the AfD securing 10-12 percent of the vote, up from 8-10 percent.

The first far-right party set to enter Germany's parliament for more than a half a century has been saying it will press for Chancellor Angela Merkel to be "severely punished" for opening the door to refugees and migrants.

It has won support with calls for Germany to shut its borders immediately, introduce a minimum quota for deportations, and stop refugees bringing their families here.

Merkel's Christian Democrat alliance

CDU/CSU slipped two points to 36 percent, close to the all-time low of 35 percent when the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) led by Gerhard Schroeder defeated it in 1998.

Merkel's conservative alliance still commands a huge lead over the SPD of her top rival Martin Schulz, which slipped to 23 percent.

AfD, which has also called for Germany's immigration minister to be "disposed of" in Turkey where her parents come from, could become the third-largest party in the September 24 election, polls show.

The prospect of a party that has been compared with the Nazis entering the heart of German democracy is unnerving other parties. They all refuse to work with AfD and no one wants to sit next to them in parliament.

Gauland denies they are Nazis, saying others only use the term because of the party's popularity.

The other top AfD candidate Alice Weidel along with Gauland have stirred controversy while campaigning.

Gauland has argued Germany should be proud of its veterans of two world wars. And Weidel reportedly employed



an asylum-seeker without paying tax, a claim she has denied. Founded as an anti-euro party, the AfD recorded a surge in support after it began capitalising on unease in Germany over the arrival of more than a million asylum-seekers since 2015. Its members now sit in 13 of 16 state assemblies and, eyeing the national parliament, have plastered towns and cities with posters carrying the slogans "Burqas? We prefer bikinis" or "New Germans? We make them ourselves!". Its supporters have loudly disrupted Merkel's rallies, where they loudly jeer, boo and whistle in a bid to drown her out. (Source: agencies)

Syrian army crosses eastern bank of Euphrates River in Deir Ezzor

MNA — A military source said that Syrian army units crossed the eastern bank of the Euphrates River during their continuous operations against ISIL terrorists in Deir Ezzor.

The source told SANA that the army units in cooperation with the allied forces, crossed the Euphrates river from the direction of al-Jafra towards Huweijet Saqr, where they are now fighting fierce battles against ISIL in the area.

Earlier, army units, in cooperation with the allied forces, continued to advance on all fighting axes against ISIL terrorist organization and established control over new points on the outskirts of Deir Ezzor city and its countryside.

SANA reporter in Deir Ezzor said that after the army units established control over al-Jafra village, they con-



tinued to advance and chase the remaining ISIL terrorists who fled towards Huweijet Saqr and established control over a number of points on the south-eastern outskirts of the city and in the southeastern countryside on Deir Ezzor-al-Mayadin road after carrying out accurate operations, in which a number of terrorists were killed or injured, in addition to the destruction of their weapons and ammunitions. In the western countryside, the re-

porter said that army units advanced to the direction of Ayn al-Bo-Jimaa and al-Kharita after they restored new points amid the withdrawal of terrorists Takfiri organization towards the remaining terrorist groups in specific locations in the desert.

The reporter said that the military operations resulted in the death of a number of terrorists, including Mohammad Aziz al-Hanto, Omar Jamil al-Alloum, Abdul-Hadi al-Alloum from al-Shaqr village.

Meanwhile, a group of locals ambushed a car belonging to ISIL near the railway in the vicinity of the city of al-Bukamal in the far eastern countryside of the province, destroying it and leaving all the five terrorists on board dead.

Curfew imposed in Iraq's Kirkuk after clashes over Kurdistan vote

Iraqi police have imposed a curfew in the northern city of Kirkuk, which witnessed skirmishes between Kurds and Turkmen days before a controversial Kurdish referendum on independence from the mainland.



The Iraqi Kurds plan to hold the plebiscite on September 25 in three provinces that make up their region, as well as in disputed areas that are controlled by Kurdish forces but claimed by Baghdad, including the oil-rich Kirkuk Province.

Baghdad has slammed the upcoming vote as unconstitutional, calling on the Kurdish leadership to drop the plan.

On Monday, Iraq's top court temporarily suspended the Kurdish independence referendum, saying it "issued a national order to suspend the referendum procedures ... until the resolution of the cases regarding the constitutionality of said decision." Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi also formally asked the Kurdish officials to halt the process.

Later in the day, gunmen opened fire on one of the Kirkuk offices of the Iraqi Turkmen Front political movement, which is opposed to the Kurdish vote.

Mohammed Samaan Kanaan, in charge of the Front's offices, told The Associated Press that guards returned fire, killing one and wounding two of the assailants.

Hours later, a police patrol attacked another office of the Iraqi Turkmen Front, but there were no casualties, he added.

Afterwards, Kirkuk was placed under a nighttime curfew, with provincial police chief Brigadier General Khattab Omar saying that an investigation committee was probing the incident.

He blamed Monday's clashes on "reckless enthusiastic youths" and said that arrests have been made.

Locals said Iraqi police had deployed overnight in Kirkuk to prevent any outbreak of ethnic violence ahead the Kurdish vote.

Last week, Iraqi Kurdish lawmakers approved holding the secession vote in the face of fierce opposition from the central government in Baghdad.

The United Nations and the United States as well as regional powers like Iran and Turkey have also expressed concerns about the planned referendum by the semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), arguing that it could create further instability in the already volatile region.

The president of Iraq's Kurdistan region, Massoud Barzani, said once again late Monday that he would proceed with the referendum despite warnings at home and abroad.

(Source: Press TV)

Chinese-Russian naval drills begin off North Korea

China and Russia have started joint naval drills in the waters near the Russia-North Korea border, local media reported.

The exercises, which began on Monday off Russia's southeastern port of Vladivostok, are the second part of China and Russia's 'Joint Sea-2017' program that started in June.

The drills, which include submarine rescue and anti-submarine exercises, are not directly linked to increasing tensions over North Korea, China's state-owned Xinhua news agency reported.

The exercises are taking place in the Sea of Japan and, for the first time, the Okhotsk Sea.

South Korea and the United States also staged military drills in the Korean Peninsula on Monday, conducting bombing exercises involving six United States planes and four South Korean fighter jets, according to Song Young-moo, the South Korean defense minister.

Joint drills organized by Washington and Seoul are now being conducted "two to three times a month these days", he said.

Tensions have been rising on the Korean Peninsula in recent weeks, following North Korea's sixth, and most powerful, nuclear test to date on September 3.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) voted unanimously to impose fresh sanctions on North Korea last week after a meeting on September 11 in response to the crisis.

Pyongyang has claimed the measures - including a ban on textiles and a cap on oil supplies - will speed up North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

"The increased moves of the U.S. and its vassal forces to impose sanctions and pressure on the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) will only increase our pace towards the ultimate completion of the state nuclear force," a statement on North Korean state media said on Monday.

China and Russia have repeatedly called for a peaceful solution to the crisis.

However, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, claimed the UNSC has now run out of options and has warned the matter may now need to be turned over to the Pentagon.

Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, claims Pyongyang needs a nuclear weapons program to deter the U.S. from invading the isolated state.

The U.S. and South Korea are technically still at war with North Korea because the 1950-53 Korean conflict ended with a truce and not a peace treaty.

(Source: agencies)

Manchester United seek advice on "racist" Romelu Lukaku chant



Manchester United are seeking advice on a "racist" Romelu Lukaku chant in response to a complaint from an anti-discrimination body.

Kick It Out has said it is aware of "alleged racist chanting by supporters of Manchester United that emerged on Wednesday evening (September 13)" in a song which included "offensive and discriminatory" lyrics about the size of Lukaku's penis.

"Manchester United are speaking to the relevant authorities about the song and will act accordingly depending on the advice they're given," a club statement read in response.

"United have a zero tolerance stance towards any forms of racism. Greater Manchester Police have had no complaints about the song at all."

United have confirmed they will liaise with Kick It Out on the matter.

"Racist stereotypes are never acceptable in football or wider society, irrespective of any intention to show support for a player," a Kick It Out statement read.

"We have contacted Manchester United regarding the issue and will be working closely with them and The FA to ensure that it is addressed swiftly."

"If we receive any reports relating to the discriminatory chant, those will be passed on to the governing body and the perpetrators can expect to face punishment."

(Source: Mirror)

Italian senator wants Dybala to solve North Korea crisis



Italian senator Antonio Razzi has a bizarre idea for solving the North Korea crisis - "I want to bring Paulo Dybala".

The Forza Italia politician is a Juventus fan, and has attracted controversy in the past for praising Kim Jong-Un and claiming work camps in the country are in fact tomato greenhouses.

"I want to bring Paulo Dybala to North Korea, and I'm also trying with [pop group] Il Volo," Razzi said on Radio Cusano Campus.

"I know that Kim Jong-Un is very passionate about sports and music, that's why I'm trying to get the Juventus superstar involved."

"If I take Dybala there, there will be 200,000 people in the stadium and they'd have to put up big screens too. It would be a national party."

(Source: Football Italia)

Rio Ferdinand hasn't applied for a boxing license yet



Rio Ferdinand's boxing announcement was "surprising" to the British Boxing Board of Control because he hasn't applied for a license yet, the organization claim.

The ex-Manchester United and England footballer revealed his intention to step into the ring on Monday night but hasn't yet gone through the necessary procedural steps, according to the BBBofC.

"It was surprising that anybody would announce anything without contacting the governing body," BBBofC general secretary Robert Smith told Sky Sports.

"I have not received an application so there's nothing to consider. I heard, for the first time, on the radio."

"If we receive an application we will consider it, as we have to do. But we've had no correspondence from Mr. Ferdinand."

Asked about former England cricketer Freddie Flintoff's sole boxing match in 2012, Smith added: "Freddie Flintoff went through a training period for over six months before he even considered applying."

Ferdinand is nearly 39-years-old but, since retiring from football, has frequently posted social media clips of himself in boxing training.

(Source: Sky Sports)

South Africa's court to hear state's appeal against Pistorius in November

South Africa's Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) will hear the state's appeal against the six-year murder sentence handed to Paralympic gold medalist Oscar Pistorius on Nov. 3, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) said on Tuesday.

The state will argue that six years in jail is too lenient a sentence for the murder of Pistorius of Reeva Steenkamp, his girlfriend, in 2013.

"The state, in the papers, we stipulate clearly that the sentence imposed is shockingly low," said NPA spokesman Luvuyo Mfaku.

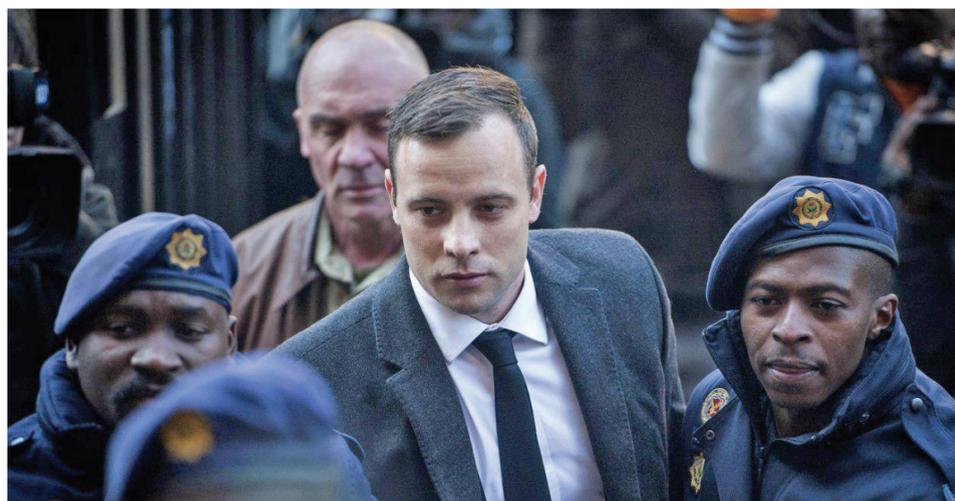
"The presiding officer has the discretion to deviate from the minimum prescribed sentence when compelling and substantial circumstances exist. But... with this matter, the presiding officer exercised that discretion in a very lenient manner."

Women's rights groups in a country beset by high levels of violent crime against women say Pistorius has received preferential treatment compared to non-whites and those without his wealth or international celebrity status.

The SCA told state prosecutors and the defence in November that they would need to argue their cases in court before it would rule on the matter.

State prosecutors, led by advocate Gerrie Nel, say the sentence was too lenient as the jail term was less than half the 15 years they had sought. In his arguments at the trial, Nel said Pistorius had shown no remorse for the 2013 shooting.

Lawyers for the gold medalist, known as the "Blade



Runner" for his carbon-fibre prosthetics, say he did not deliberately kill model and law graduate Steenkamp.

The athlete was originally convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five years in jail. That conviction was increased to murder by the SCA in December 2015 and his sentence increased to six years by trial Judge Thokozile Masipa.

She dismissed in August 2016 a request by Nel to appeal Pistorius' sentence, saying she was not persuaded that there was a reasonable prospect of success at another court.

Nel then launched his case at the SCA, in Bloemfontein, 400 km (250 miles) southwest of Johannesburg.

(Source: Reuters)

I hope it's the last time - Zidane relieved to welcome back Ronaldo

Zinedine Zidane hopes Real Madrid will not have to make do without Cristiano Ronaldo again as the Portugal star prepares to make his comeback against Real Betis.

The 32-year-old is set to make his first LaLiga appearance of the season on Wednesday, having served a five-game domestic ban for pushing the referee after being sent off in the Supercopa de Espana first-leg win over Barcelona.

Zidane is delighted to welcome Ronaldo back to the team and says he looks thrilled to be able to return.

"We will not discuss the suspension,

we are glad that he is back and I hope that to be the last time we have to do without him," Zidane told a news conference. "I see that Cristiano is happy, because what he likes is to play and to be with his team-mates."

"He's coming back for a league game at home and we know everyone likes to play in this stadium."

Ronaldo scored twice when he played in the 3-0 Champions League win over APOEL at the Santiago Bernabeu but watched his side slip to draws at home to Valencia and Levante in LaLiga in his absence.

Betis boss Quique Setien is unhappy

the former Manchester United man will be unleashed against his side.

"Cristiano is a voracious player in front of goal. Everyone wants to stop him and nobody can stop him," he said.

"Every time you face him, you run the risk of him scoring another goal, because his percentage is very high compared to others."

Gareth Bale has been subjected to jeers from fans for some of his displays during Ronaldo's absence, but the Wales international scored a brilliant goal in Madrid's 3-1 win at Real Sociedad last weekend.

Zidane thinks Bale is short of his best

but is confident he is on track to recapture that level of form.

"It's coming little by little. It will take time to see the best Bale. But he's doing well, very well," he said.

"I think it's not incorrect to say that, when there is space, he can do damage, because of the speed he has. We saw that with his goal the other day. But, Gareth is also very good technically."

"He can also play without space, he handles himself well there. It does not hurt him to play with the ball and to bring others into play."

(Source: Four Four Two)

Manuel Neuer underwent surgery for foot injury, out until January

Bayern Munich have announced that goalkeeper Manuel Neuer has undergone surgery on a foot injury he picked up in training on Monday and will not be available until January.

Bayern confirmed Neuer "sustained a repeat hairline fracture of the metatarsal in his left foot" and had a procedure to insert a plate into the fracture.

"Manuel Neuer has sustained another injury and we're incredibly sorry for him," Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said in the club release. "The operation went perfectly, which is the most important thing for now. We and our captain are now looking to the future. Manuel will be back to his previous best and available to us again in January."

Neuer is the undisputed No. 1 at the Allianz Arena and widely regarded as the best goalkeeper in the world for the

last few years—he has been in every FIFA FIFPro World XI since 2013.

Back-up Sven Ulreich is more than capable, but he has made just seven Bundesliga appearances for Bayern since he joined the club in 2015, so he does not inspire the same confidence as Neuer does.

Neuer, a FIFA World Cup and UEFA Champions League winner and multiple Bundesliga champion, can produce saves few other stoppers can and also plays a vital role in starting Bayern's attacks.

Bayern's experienced defensive line will need to step up in Neuer's absence to ensure that Ulreich can work effectively and feel comfortable in his role.

The German champions have more than enough quality to cope without their No. 1, but manager Carlo Ancelotti will await Neuer's return eagerly.

(Source: Telegraph)



Women work just as hard, sacrifice as much as men: Murray

Britain's world number three Andy Murray has stressed the importance of gender equality in tennis, saying the work ethic required to succeed is the same for both men and women.

Murray, who is seen as the voice of women's equality within the game for his previous views on various issues, was coached by Frenchwoman Amelie Mauresmo for two years from 2014.

The Scot, who won seven titles and reached two Australian Open finals with Mauresmo, said he had a better understanding of the struggles women face in the game because of the partnership.

"People often underestimate the amount of work that it takes to become a top tennis player," Murray said in comments published by BBC Magazine. "And that work ethic is the same whether you are a man or a woman."

"There are hours spent in the gym,

on court, in physio, travelling, analysing matches and opponents, talking with your team, managing your body, and of course, making plenty of sacrifices," added the three-time grand slam champion.

"Anyone who has spent any time with any of the top women will know they make those same sacrifices and are as determined and committed to winning as any of the top men on the tour."

Murray said he worked with Mauresmo because she was the right person to coach him and not because of her gender but discovered she wasn't treated the same as men in similar jobs.

"Since then, I have been asked about women's equality and I would find it hard to look any of the top female tennis players in the eye if I did not speak my mind," he said.

(Source: Reuters)



Neymar, Cavani reportedly separated in PSG dressing room after Lyon game

Paris Saint-Germain forwards Edinson Cavani and Neymar were reportedly prevented from coming to blows by club captain Thiago Silva in the dressing room after their 2-0 win over Lyon on Sunday.

The duo were involved in an on-field disagreement over who should take a penalty during the contest, with Cavani eventually taking the kick. They also appeared to clash over who should take other set pieces during the game, with Dani Alves smuggling the ball to Neymar away from Cavani at one stage.

According to L'Equipe, the pair were then involved in an angry exchange in the dressing room after the fixture.

According to Alex Richards of the Daily Mirror, Cavani, who didn't get involved in the team's post-match celebrations, told Neymar he was not impressed with his attitude after the game. The pair are then said to

have squared up, before Silva and Marquinhos intervened—per Sport.

Cavani then left the dressing room earlier than the rest of his team-mates and was pictured departing through a back door instead of going through the mixed zone.

Cavani has spoken about the exchanges with Neymar since the game, telling Gol de Medianoche de Radio Universal that he has no issue with his new forward partner.

"I learned of the story just now talking with my brother, about people saying that Cavani won't let anyone take penalties and that there's a problem with Neymar," he said. "The truth is that there's no problem. He [Neymar] has just arrived and like I said from the off we are keen for him to adapt in the best way possible."

The reports of unrest have punctured what has been a perfect start to the season otherwise. After all, they did beat Lyon in a hard-fought game on Sunday and their record remains perfect in the Ligue 1 after six games.

In terms of their linkup on the pitch Cavani, Neymar and new signing Kylian Mbappe have been sensational this season, too. Cavani leads the line with incisive and physicality, while the latter duo add blistering pace, versatility and flair.

Since the departure of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Cavani has relished being the main man at PSG and perhaps he's not too keen to relinquish any responsibility quite yet. But from Neymar's perspective, after a world-record transfer in the summer, it's understandable he's desperate to make as big an early impression as possible.

(Source: Bleacher Report)

Persepolis will win ACL title if we beat Al Hilal: Branko Ivankovic

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Persepolis **d e s k** football coach Branko Ivankovic says that they will lift the 2017 AFC Champions League title if they defeat Al Hilal.

The Iranian giants will face Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in Abu Dhabi, the UAE on September 26 in the first leg of the ACL semi-final and meet the team on October 17 in Muscat in the second leg.

Persepolis suffered a 1-0 home defeat to Paykan in Iran Professional League on Sunday.

"To play in domestic league after the AFC Champions League's competition is always difficult. I had already said in the pre-match news conference the match with Paykan would be dangerous for us," Branko said.

"Al Hilal are a strong team and I had previously said they would qualify for the semis. We also are proud of being in this stage and we are going to enjoy our matches," the Croat added.

Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini missed the matches against Al Ahli in ACL quarters due to his suspension and injury, respectively.

"Hosseini will not play against Sepahan on Wednesday but I hope that he will be fit for the match against Al Hilal," Branko concluded.



AFC Champions League Semi-Finals – Three Key Players: Persepolis

Kuala Lumpur: Ahead of the highly anticipated 2017 AFC Champions League semi-final between Persepolis of Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal, we look at some of the key men who could make the difference.

First off, we begin with the Tehran giants who boast a striker on a hot streak, a talented playmaker, and a youthful right-back who continues to impress.

■ Mehdi Taremi

Position: Forward

Age: 25

Nationality: Iranian

It's fair to say that 2017 has been a stand-out year so far for Mehdi Taremi.

Part of the IR Iran side that went unbeaten to qualify for the 2018 FIFA World Cup with two games to spare, the striker has also fired club Persepolis to a first-ever AFC Champions League semi-final.

After netting six goals in the group stage, Taremi was on target again in the quarter-final, second leg against Al Ahli.

The Bargh Bushehr Academy graduate is very much a penalty-box specialist – all his goals have come from inside the area – adept in the air, and with predatory instincts.

Taremi averages 3.2 shots per match, has a shooting accuracy of 46 percent, and has been responsible for almost half of Persepolis' tally so far in the continental campaign.

He was, though, blanked in the two Group D matches against an Al Hilal side who have yet to taste defeat in the competition.



■ Mohsen Mosalman

Position: Midfielder

Age: 26

Nationality: Iranian

Unlike Taremi, Mohsen Mosalman does not know what it feels like to score against Al Hilal, having netted the opener against the Saudi Arabian side on Matchday One.

The playmaker might not have scored in the AFC Champions League since, but he has been far-and-away Persepolis' creator in chief.

With 21 chances created – in the heady company of Hulk and Wu Lei as the joint highest amongst the semi-finalists – Mosalman's importance is self-evident.

Mosalman is noted for his passing ability and superb technique and he has flourished since joining the Tehran side from Zobahan in 2016.

The 26-year-old is normally the most advanced central midfielder behind Taremi, dictating play while the likes of Ali Alipour and Vahid Amiri occupy the wider positions.



■ Sadegh Moharrami

Position: Defender

Age: 21

Nationality: Iranian

Sadegh Moharrami's 21 tackles won is more than any player amongst the four semi-finalists. The same number as the age of the precociously talented full-back.

The man from the northern Iranian city of Hashtpar rose through the ranks at Malavan FC before joining Persepolis last year.

The Iran U-23 player is largely used on the right flank of defence but is given the license to push forward.

With 79 duels won, Moharrami is second behind only Hulk, and he also boasts an impressive 81 percent passing accuracy, 76 percent accuracy in the opponents' half.

The youngster was an unused substitute in the quarter-final second leg against Al Ahli, but it was the only tie he has missed so far in the continental campaign.

A semi-final appearance is surely on the cards for the rising starlet.

(Source: AFC)



Iran show their pedigree in Ashgabat

A Mahdi Javid hat-trick was the highlight as Islamic Republic of Iran beat Jordan 7-3 in a Ashgabat 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games men's futsal Group D match on Tuesday.

IR Iran hit four past a Jordanian side - who beat Kyrgyz Republic 7-1 in their opener - to take a 4-0 lead at the break as their opponents could not find a foothold in the match.

Iran were relentless, scoring three more in the second period to go seven up as their goals came from Ahmad Esmailpour (3rd, 22nd), Abolghasem Orouji (5th), Hossein Tayebibidgoli (16th) and Javid (20th, 28th, 34th).

Jordan, however, finally found a breakthrough after IR Iran's goalkeeper Alireza Samimi was substituted in

the 33rd minute as they attempted a fightback.

Goals from Qais Mohammad Fawzi Shabib (33rd) and a brace from Tamem Ibrahim Mohammad Gedan (36th, 37th) were not enough though as IR Iran stayed in control for the win.

"This was just training for us. We tried different things and tactics. From the semi-finals and the final onwards it will be difficult," said IR Iran's Farhad Tavakoli Roozbahani.

Meanwhile, in another Group D tie, Kyrgyz Republic bounced back from their opening match loss against Jordan to register a 4-2 win over Tahiti.

In Group C action, Thailand overcame Lebanon 5-2 in their opening match.

The 2013 bronze medallists scored first



through Suphawut Thueanklang in the second minute but Lebanon equalised with Ali Theich's strike in the fifth.

Apiwat Chaemcharoen added the second for Thailand a minute later as they took a 2-1 lead at halftime.

Warut Wangsama-Aeo scored the third for Thailand in the 33rd minute

as Muhammad Osamanmusa scored a brace in quick succession in the 38th to put the tie out of reach.

Lebanon however, scored a minute before the final whistle through Ali Theich – for his second in the match to leave the score at 5-2.

"It was in the last minute and we were winning 5-1. It was a lack of concentration. We must show more experience in those situations," said Japan coach Jose Maria Pazos Mendez after his team conceded a late goal to Lebanon.

"Now we must beat Japan to win the group and avoid Iran in the next round. They are the strongest team here and we would prefer to meet them in the final," he added.

(Source: AFC)

Iran clinches dozen medals in Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games

The Iranian sports delegation has exhibited awe-inspiring displays of athletic talents at the 5th edition of Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games, and been awarded twelve medals in the multinational and multi-sport event.

On Monday, the Iranian cycling outfit, comprised of Mohammad Daneshvar Khorram, Ali Aliaskari and Ehsan Khademi, participated in the team sprint event, and clocked 45.535 seconds to snatch the gold medal.

The Kazakh team stood on the second podium with the time of 45.588 seconds. The Thai squad recorded the time of 46.920 seconds to land in the third spot.

Furthermore, Iranian traditional wrestler Hamed Mirzapour conceded a 1-2 defeat to Turkmen opponent Murgaggeldi Atdayew in the final bout of men's classic style minus 90-kilogram, and collected a silver medal.

Leila Sijahvashi and Reyhaneh Sheikhan also pocketed two bronze medals in the women's minus 52-kilogram and minus 58-kilogram weight classes respectively.

Earlier, Esmail Amiri, Ghasem Dazi and Habibollah

Torabi had bagged three bronze medals in the men's minus 68-kilogram, minus 75-kilogram and minus 82-kilogram categories.

Traditional wrestling is a combat sport, which involves grappling techniques such as clinch fighting, throws and takedowns.

Each bout takes place on an octagonal or square mat, 12 meters by 12 meters. A marked circle measuring 9 meters in diameter is split into two zones: the dark blue central zone and the orange passivity zone.

Iranian male and female taekwondo practitioners also staged remarkable performances, and brought home three medals, including two gold ones.

Fatemeh Madahi vied in the women's minus 46-kilogram competitions, and picked a bronze medal.

Mahdi Eshaghi snatched the gold medal in the men's minus 54-kilogram weight division after he managed to down his Tajik rival Manuchehr Nematov 23-5 in the final encounter of the category.

Iranian taekwondo fighter Mahdi Jalali also collected

the gold medal in the men's minus 74-kilogram weight category, after he managed to overcome Kairat Sarymsakov from Kazakhstan 5-2 in the title contest.

Additionally, Iranian jujitsu practitioner Masoud Jalilvand overcame his compatriot Masoud Hassanzadeh Vasoukolaei in the men's ne-waza over 94-kilogram, and struck the gold.

The 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, which is the 5th edition of the continental tournament, opened in the Turkmen capital city of Ashgabat on September 17, and will finish on September 27.

Turkmenistan is on the top of the medal count table with 62 medals (29 gold, 21 silvers and 12 bronzes).

The Islamic Republic of Iran has claimed the second spot with 12 medals (four gold, two silvers, six bronzes), while Uzbekistan is on the third with a total of 28 medals (three gold, five silvers and 20 bronzes).

Thailand, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates and China have earned the 4th to 7th places respectively.

(Source: PressTV)

Iranian athlete shines at Italy kickboxing champs

Iranian athlete Reza Majidi ranked second in kickboxing championship held in Italy.

Majidi managed to bag the silver medal in the competition opened in Italy on Sep 14.

The championship is slated to wrap up on Sep 19.

Majidi also has snatched a gold and a bronze medals in World Martial Arts Championship in Georgia last year.

Kickboxing is a group of stand-up combat sports based on kicking and punching, historically developed from Karate and Muay Thai.

(Source: Irna)

United will miss Pogba, says Mkhitarjan

Manchester United may struggle to maintain their explosive start to the Premier League season if injured midfielder Paul Pogba is out for long, the club's playmaker Henrikh Mkhitarjan has said.

Pogba hurt his hamstring during United's Champions League win over Basel last week and will undergo further scans to determine his recovery period.

The France international, who captained United against the Swiss champions, limped off in the 3-0 win and some reports have suggested he could be out for 12 weeks with a muscle tear.

But manager Jose Mourinho has said the nature of the injury would not be known until after the results of the scans.

United thumped Everton 4-0 over the weekend with Marouane Fellaini stepping in for Pogba but Mkhitarjan said the club would miss Pogba's creativity that has helped them script big victories this season.

"It's hard, because he's a top player for us," he told France's SFR Sport. "It's going to be very difficult, but the coach knows how to make up for that and we're going to help him come back stronger."

Mourinho's side share top spot in the Premier League table with Manchester City and have 13 points from five games. Both Manchester clubs have scored 16 goals and conceded only two.

United host Championship side (second tier) Burton Albion in the third round of the League Cup on Wednesday before travelling to Southampton in the league on Saturday.

(Source: Reuters)

Verstappen: Vettel hasn't apologized to me

Max Verstappen has revealed that Sebastian Vettel has not apologized following the chaotic start to the Singapore Grand Prix.

Verstappen blamed Vettel for the incident as the German came over the left to cover him off, while Kimi Raikkonen attacked down his left side.

Verstappen, who said he was caught in the middle of a Ferrari sandwich and maintained his line throughout, had a quick conversation with Vettel about the crash, but the Ferrari driver does not feel he is to blame.

When asked if Vettel had said sorry for his part, Verstappen said: "No."

"He did say something like, 'yes, in hindsight things could have been done differently'. But what's done is done."

Verstappen also branded Vettel's move as 'risky', especially with the World Championship title at stake.

"Vettel is fighting for the championship, so you don't need to take so much risk if you know that Hamilton starts fifth," Verstappen added.

"If this would have been with Hamilton then it would have been a completely different story. From his [Vettel's] side, I don't understand that something like this happens."

(Source: Fox Sports)

Cologne drop protest against Borussia Dortmund VAR goal

Cologne have confirmed they will not appeal against the decision to award Borussia Dortmund's second goal in their 5-0 Bundesliga defeat on Sunday.

Sokratis Papastathopoulos' goal was initially ruled out by referee Patrick Ittrich for a foul on goalkeeper Timo Horn, but the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) was used to overturn the decision.

Cologne sporting director Jorg Schmadtke said they would demand a replay of the match, prompting Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke to brand them sore losers and director Michael Zorc to dismiss the complaint as "ridiculous".

The club announced on Tuesday that they will not launch an appeal and insist they accept Dortmund deserved to win the match.

"The accusation that, in view of the clear result, Cologne do not accept the defeat is wrong," they said in a statement.

"The club never questioned the fact that Borussia Dortmund won the game deservedly, regardless of what we consider to be an incorrect goal."

"Nevertheless, on Tuesday, after a detailed weighing-up of all the factors, Cologne have decided to forgo a formal protest against the awarding of the goal."

"The reason for this, above all, is that the prospects of success for such a protest are low."

(Source: Soccerway)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Movies from Iran to compete in Istanbul children's festival

A R T TEHRAN — Four films from Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation will go on screen at the Istanbul International Children's Film Festival in Turkey, the foundation announced on Tuesday.



A scene from "Hell of a Wedding"

Director Reza Khatibi's comedy film "Hell of a Wedding" and Gholamreza Sagharchian's drama "Hura" are among the films. The festival, which will be held from September 22 to 24, will also screen "Pearl" by Sirus Hassanpur and "Coldness" codirected by Bahram and Bahman Ark.

New Banksy works mark Basquiat show at London's Barbican

LONDON (Reuters) — Two murals by British street artist Banksy have appeared at London's Barbican center to mark an exhibition of the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat, a U.S. artist who achieved fame through the New York graffiti scene.

One references Basquiat's 1982 "Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump", showing a boy being searched by police officers. "Portrait of Basquiat being welcomed by the Metropolitan Police - an (unofficial) collaboration with the new Basquiat show", Banksy said of the work on his official Instagram feed.



A mural painted by the artist Banksy is seen near the Barbican Centre in London, Britain, September 18, 2017. (Reuters/Peter Nicholls)

The second depicts people queuing up to ride a Ferris wheel with carriages shaped like crowns, referencing Basquiat's 1983 "Crown". The Barbican show "Basquiat: Boom for Real", is the first large-scale exhibition in Britain of the work of the artist, who rose meteorically in 1980s New York and died aged 27 of a drugs overdose.

A 1982 Basquiat painting of a skull sold for \$110.5 million in May. "Major new Basquiat show opens at the Barbican - a place that is normally very keen to clean any graffiti from its walls," Banksy said. Banksy, whose keeps his identity secret, rose to prominence through street art in the English city of Bristol in the 1990s. His works, often stenciled onto the outside walls of buildings, combine humor and social commentary.

Country music singer Thomas Rhett debuts atop Billboard chart

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Country singer Thomas Rhett's latest album debuted at the top of the weekly U.S. Billboard 200 album chart on Monday, leading six new entries in the top 10.

"Life Changes," the third studio album by Rhett, sold 94,000 albums, 90,000 songs and was streamed 30 million times, totaling 123,000 album units, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan. The Billboard 200 chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Electro-pop group Odesza debuted at No. 2 with "Moment Apart" selling 63,000 album units, while alt-rock band The National entered the chart at No. 3 with "Sleep Well Beast" selling 62,000 album units.

Other new entries in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart included singer-songwriter Jack Johnson at No. 5 with "All The Light Above" and country music singers Dustin Lynch at No. 7 with "Current Mood" and Kip Moore at No. 10 with "Slowheart".

Last week's chart-topper, LCD Soundsystem's "American Dream," dropped to No. 56 this week.

Anti-war drama "Breath" to represent Iran at Oscars

A R T TEHRAN — The acclaimed anti-war drama "Breath" by director Narges Abyar has been selected as Iran's submission to the 90th Academy Awards in the best foreign-language film category.

A committee of nine cineastes picked the film from a shortlist of 10 films, including "The Midday Event" by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian, "Malaria" by Parviz Shahbazi and "Subdued" by Hamid Nematollah on Tuesday.

"Breath" is about four children whose mother had died a few years earlier and their father decides to join the Iranian volunteers on the war-front following Iraq's attack in September 1980.

The film has been acclaimed in several Iranian and international events.

The 20th Black Nights Film Festival in Estonia awarded Abyar the Golden Wolf for best director. She also won the award for best director for the film at the Vancouver International Women in Film Festival.

Iranian cinema has so far won the Oscar for best foreign-language film two times. "The Salesman" and "A Separation", both by Asghar Farhadi, who won the prestigious award in 2017 and 2012. Majid Majidi's "Children of Heaven" also received a nomination at the Oscars in 1998.

The 90th Academy Awards ceremony will take place in Los Angeles, California on March 4, 2018.



Sareh Nur-Musavi acts in a scene from "Breath".

Tehran short film festival announces experimental lineup



A R T TEHRAN — Twelve films by foreign directors have been selected for the experimental competition of the 34th Tehran International Short Film Festival, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

"First of November" by Yuri Pirondi from Portugal, "Doors of Perception" by Caroline Schwarz from Germany, "Sleep Paralysis" by Fernando Gallucci from Argentina and "Confident" co-directed by

Karen Akerman and Miguel Seabra Lopes from Brazil are among the films.

The lineup also includes "Nature" by Sebastian Mulder from the Netherlands, "The Other" by Will Sankhla from India and "Through the Supermarket in Five Easy Pieces" by Anna Maria Jóakimsdóttir Hutri from Finland.

The 34th Tehran International Short Film Festival will be running from October 17 to 22.

Art exhibition warns cotton farming in decline in Iran

A R T TEHRAN — An artist has set up a video art installation at Tehran's Vista Gallery, warning that cotton farming is sinking into oblivion in the northern Iranian fields that once gleamed white in the autumn with cotton ready to be picked.

Mohammadreza Arab-Khazaeli has used numerous gunnysacks filled with raw cotton to perform his installation art entitled "Cotton Gunnysacks".

Earlier in February, the impression of "Cotton Gunnysacks" was selected as the best artistic idea of the year at the first annual Vista Contemporary Art Prize.

Arab-Khazaeli who spent years of his childhood near the cotton fields in the northern Iranian region of Mazandaran said in a press release on Tuesday that people of the region look back on those years with a certain amount of nostalgia.

"The cultivation of cotton has declined in the region and perhaps, the closure of Ghaemshahr Textile Company caused the decline, and in my opinion, cotton farming is spending the last years of its life in the region," he stated.

"The decline in the cultivation of



Artist Mohammadreza Arab-Khazaeli poses at Tehran's Vista Gallery on September 15, 2017. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

cotton will definitely affect the social behavior and lifestyle of the cotton growers and the people living nearby," he lamented.

It was a difficult task to implement the "Cotton Gunnysacks" idea in practice at an art gallery, Arab-Khazaeli said. However, he is satisfied with the result.

The exhibition will run until October 31 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

San Francisco Public Library displaying works by Iranian calligraphers

A R T TEHRAN — Works by over ten Iranian calligraphers are in a collection of artworks from the calligraphers of other countries on display in an exhibition at the Skylight Gallery of the San Francisco Public Library.

The international exhibition titled "Calligraphies in Conversation" has been organized to explore connections between calligraphy traditions and practices from different cultures and languages across the world, the curator of the exhibit, Arash Shirinbab, said in a press release on Monday.

The collection is comprised of over 70 artworks with a range of diverse traditions and languages, including Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Baybayin, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Armenian and Hindi traditional calligraphy styles.

"We are glad to see Iranian artists have the high quality skills and potential to participate in international exhibitions and promote Iranian and Islamic culture through arts," Shirinbab stated. The artworks have been selected



American calligrapher Rick Paulus (2nd R) speaks at the Calligraphies in Conversation exhibition at the San Francisco Public Library on September 17, 2017. (Amirbehnam Tehranifar)

from over 250 submissions from the U.S., Germany, Canada, Iran, Japan, Hong Kong, France, Hungary, Australia, Qatar, Peru, South Korea, Egypt, Finland, India

Audience, actors cry foul about arrest of Russian theater director

MOSCOW (Reuters) — A play staged by arrested Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov drew a full house on its first night at a Moscow theater, with many in the audience and cast expressing solidarity with the director who they said is being punished for his liberal views.

Russian authorities detained Serebrennikov, an award-winning film and theater director and critic of Kremlin policies, in August on charges of embezzling state funds. He is being held under house arrest until Oct. 19 pending trial.

Serebrennikov had started work on his production of Alexander Pushkin's "The Little Tragedies" at his Gogol Center in central Moscow before his arrest.

After the cast took the bow at the end of the play's premiere this weekend, the audience broke into rapturous applause when a video projection threw up his image on a screen hung across the stage.

"It's a shame that our state is trying to lock up people like him, who are trying to think and to express their opinions," Gennady Volkov, one of the viewers, told Reuters.

In some of his works, Serebrennikov has particularly poked fun at the growing role of the state and the Russian Orthodox Church in society.

Though Serebrennikov has a history of criticizing the authorities, President Vladimir Putin denied this month that

ensorship or political pressure was behind his detention.

"All of this is pure politics. KGB agents have always done that to people who challenge the public, and they are doing it again now," said journalist Yevgenia Albats, an outspoken critic of Putin.

"And (Kirill) Serebrennikov is a victim of the processes which are going on in the country."

Russian investigators say Serebrennikov embezzled at least 68 million rubles (\$1.18 million) in state funds earmarked for an art project. Serebrennikov denies the charges.

"For people who think and who know what is going on, the whole situation looks absurd. And first of all for us," said Filipp

Avdeyev, one of the cast.

"We know him not just as spectators who watch his plays, we know him as a personality. And it is impossible to believe in that (what he is accused of)."

Serebrennikov's arrest has complicated plans too to stage the premiere of a ballet about the late Soviet ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev at the Bolshoi Theater, its director general Vladimir Urin said last week.

The ballet 'Nureyev' might also be performed in the absence of its director, Urin said.

The ballet was pulled on July 11, just two days before it had been due to open. Urin said at the time the performers were not ready and that it would instead be staged next May.