



Kurds' defeat in Kirkuk foiled Barzani's plot: top advisor **2**



Watex2017 hosting 363 companies in Tehran **4**



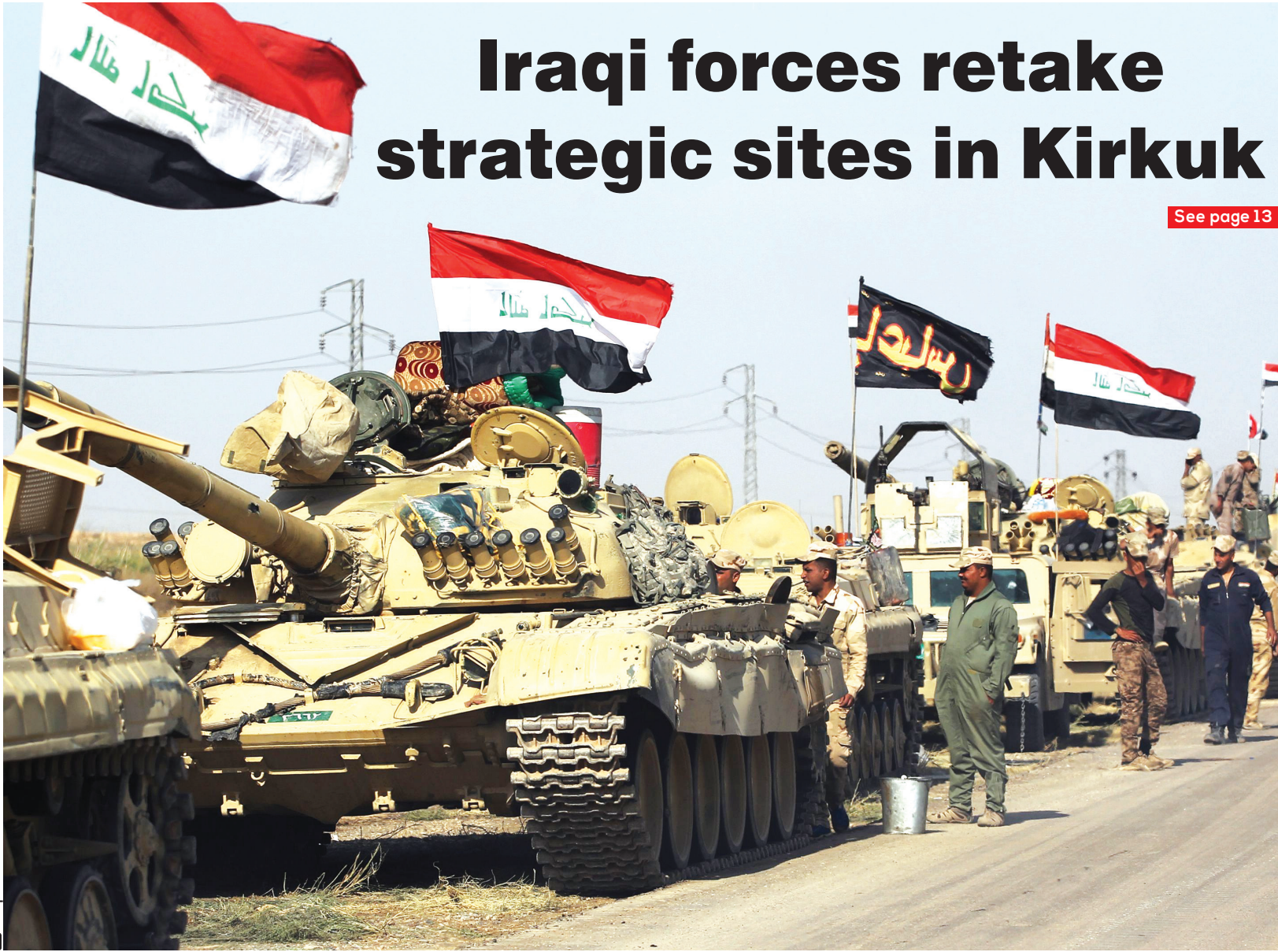
Iran U-17 coach Chamanian wary of dangerous Mexico **15**



Cinema Verite to review films from Cinéma du Réel **16**

Iraqi forces retake strategic sites in Kirkuk

See page 13



© File photo

EU insists on full implementation of nuclear deal

The European Union issued a statement on Monday after a foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg insisting the 27-nation bloc is committed to the "full and effective" implementation of the nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The EU is committed to the continued full and effective implementation of all parts of the JCPOA," the statement said. It also encouraged the U.S. to maintain its commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal. **->2**

Yazd on way to become first 'City of Tourists' in Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — The UNESCO-listed historical city of Yazd has launched a pilot project that could eventually turn it to the first "City of Tourists" in Iran, becoming a role model for other most-visited cities across the country. "The results of the arrangements that are being carried out in Yazd to transform the city into a 'City of Tourists' will be generalized to be applied in other tourist cities in the country,"

CHTN quoted Fatemeh Daneshyazdi, the director of Yazd province's tourism department, as saying on Sunday. The scheme of "City of Tourists" was invented after Yazd was made a UNESCO World Heritage in June. The notion has been supported by Yazd Municipality and the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization to buttress hospitality and transportation infrastructure in the ancient city. **->10**

Everything about Iranian nuclear spy

Translated by Morteza Ahmadi
TEHRAN — (MNA) — Conviction of a member of nuclear negotiating team was confirmed at Tehran Appeals Court; mentioning some points on his previous background and activities is very thinkable. Last week, Judiciary Spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje'i revealed the confirmation of espionage ruling of Abdol-Rasoul Dorri-Esfahani at Appeals Court and his conviction to five

years in prison. For enlightening public opinion, some questions may raise here: who is Dorri-Esfahani? How he entered into expert level of nuclear negotiating team? For which organization was he spying? In response to these question, it is better to know that he was cooperating and interacting with the U.S. Department of Treasury before the Islamic Revolution. **->7**

Iran set global precedent by opening refugees' access to healthcare: UNHCR

By Marjan Golpira
TEHRAN — In his recent interview with the Tehran Times, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Tehran has praised Iran for providing very affordable healthcare services for refugees.

"Iran has set a global precedent by opening the access of all refugees into its Salamat Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) which provides health insurance services similar to that of Iranian nationals," Sivanka Dhanapala notes. The UNHCR diplomat also says the launch of UPHI coverage can ensure refugees' "social protection" and "resilience".

The following is the complete text of the interview. ■ What strategy has UNHCR taken to shelter Afghan refugees in the world in general? A. UNHCR has certain responsibilities upon the arrival of refugees in a host country; this includes meeting their basic needs and providing them with shelter. There is a lot of material assistance they need which is provided directly through the government or with the assistance of our partners. It differs depending on the situation. In times of crisis or displacement, a core part of our protection mission is to guarantee access to adequate shelter which is a vital survival mechanism and key to restoring personal security, self-sufficiency and dignity.

Delivering protection and humanitarian assistance for refugees settled / sheltered in camps is common in some operations. While camps can be practical, particularly during emergencies, encampment can results in a range of problems, including aid dependency and isolation. In Iran, we are proud that only less than 3 % live in settlements, however UNHCR supports and complements the efforts of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in some targeted settlements, and by providing some support to renovate communal infrastructures. Examples of such interventions include electricity, water or gas connection. **->9**

Roots of change: Make migration work for rural development

By José Graziano da Silva
Throughout history, one of the most effective strategies for people to look for a better future has been to move. In most cases leaving impoverished rural areas in search of more productive opportunities elsewhere. Indeed, migration has since our earliest days been essential to the human story — the source of multiple economic and cultural benefits. But when migration is out of extreme need, distress and despair, it becomes another story. Forced migration is rooted in conflicts, political instability, extreme poverty, hunger, environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change.

In these situations, people have no choice other than to move. This year's slogan for World Food Day (16 October), "Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development", addresses the structural drivers of large movements of people in order to make migration safe, orderly and regular. This is all the more pertinent today because the numbers of hungry people are on the rise again after decades of progress. According to the 2017 State of Food Security and Nutrition report (SOFI), 815 million people suffered from hunger in 2016,

an increase of 38 million people compared to 2015 (777 million). This was largely due to conflicts, droughts and floods around the world. In fact, conflicts have driven northeast Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen to the brink of famine and triggered acute food insecurity also in Burundi, Iraq and elsewhere. Globally there are now around 64 million people forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution, the highest number since the Second World War. Furthermore, drought, due to an unusually powerful El Niño, has sharply reduced access to food in much of Africa. **->7**

EDITORIAL
By Mohammad Ghaderi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief
@mgghaderi

Challenges McCain-Graham's team face

John McCain and Lindsey Graham are two U.S. senators who from the start voiced opposition to the Iran deal didn't shy away from expressing their objections once again in 2015 congressional voting. Having gained the attention of American media for their radical stand against Iran, both senators are now quite puzzled at Trump's aggressive strategy and unwise approach to the Iran nuclear agreement. On the one hand, they cannot deny opposing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA, and on the other they fear Trump's recent strategy to the Iran nuclear-related pact. In his very recent strategy on Iran, McCain has said, "We hold Iran responsible for its actions and slap new sanctions regimes for its ballistic missile programs, put in place sanctions on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, IRGC, and Iranians accused of violating human rights, and intensify pre-existing sanctions on Iran government for the use of arms in Tehran." McCain has made an attempt at NOT taking a clear position on rejection or endorsement of Trump's policy on the JCPOA and he is yet to outline his stance on decertification of the JCPOA and return of nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. Such bewilderment is also noticeable in the behavior of the 62 year-old senator from South Carolina, Graham, who is among strong proponents of Iran's sanctions and subsequently opposition to the Iran nuclear deal in the Senate. Graham believes in modifying the Iran nuclear deal as an alternative to exiting the JCPOA. "The U.S. government is better off reviewing the Iran deal and slapping stricter terms on it than exiting the agreement. Iran may be in compliance with the JCPOA technically, but it is breaking the spirit of the deal by its ongoing destabilizing activities in the region", Graham noted. **->7**

ARTICLE
By Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Decoding UK FM's remarks: London's green light to US against JCPOA

Britain was a staunch supporter and main follower of the White House during Obama presidency in imposition of tough nuclear sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. In an exclusive interview with UK-based "Daily Telegraph", British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson emphasized "U.S. is still considered a part of JCPOA, so that suspension of sanctions has been continued and this is very significant issue that should be taken into serious consideration." Now, it is likely that U.S. Congress may rip off the JCPOA, he said, adding "I believe it is unlikely that U.S. will ditch the nuclear deal." "We will make our utmost effort to convince our colleagues and allies to live up to their commitments within the framework of JCPOA, because, JCPOA is a valuable and comprehensive pact," he observed. Most representatives at the U.S. Congress tend to modify and correct irregularities in JCPOA, so that this comprehensive plan will not be lifted by the U.S. government, British foreign secretary stressed. Currently, UK officials should clarify this issue both for Iranian and international audiences completely whether Iran's nuclear deal is controversial or valuable? Elsewhere in his remarks, he said "JCPOA should not be neglected and ignored by the British foreign diplomacy, so that the British government has shown green light to the U.S. Congress on modifying or correcting irregularities in JCPOA." Over the past two years, British authorities have announced their full support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action but in practice, they have breached their commitments in some cases in tandem with the United States of America. For example, **->7**



© IRNA / Motaba Mohammadi

Fishing season commences in Caspian Sea

Fishermen are pulling a massive net on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, northern Iran, October 15, 2017. The fishing season starts routinely on October 12 and lasts for about six months. Roughly four thousand people in two coastal provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran get engaged in fishing during the season.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Kurds' defeat in Kirkuk foiled Barzani's plot: top advisor

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top **d e s k** advisor to the Supreme Leader, said on Monday that the Kurdish forces' defeat in Kirkuk foiled a dangerous plot hatched by Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani against the region.

Velayati made the remarks after Iraqi government forces took control of the governorate building in the central part of Kirkuk.

Barzani's objective was seizing Kirkuk's oil wells in favor of Israel, he said, adding that if the plot was not foiled, Israel and Iran would have become neighbors.



Tehran to advance nuclear program if U.S. exits nuclear deal: MP

POLITICS TEHRAN — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, **d e s k** chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Monday that Iran would advance its nuclear program if Washington decides to withdraw from the nuclear agreement.

In a meeting with France's Special Envoy to Syria Franck Gallet, Boroujerdi said in such case "the world will see that Iran's nuclear ability is stronger than what it was before the nuclear accord."

He also stressed Iran's commitment to the NPT and the fatwa (religious decree) issued by the Leader in which he has declared production, use and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction as haram (banned).



Exiting international agreements open to Iran too: Rouhani advisor

POLITICS TEHRAN — Pointing to President **d e s k** Donald Trump's threat to exit the UN-endorsed nuclear deal, a senior political advisor to President Hassan Rouhani suggested on Monday that if the U.S. can pull out of international agreements then why not Iran.

In a tweet, Hamid Aboutalebi said Trump has begun a new movement in the international arena and based on that he has exited the Paris agreement, UNESCO and so forth.

He went on to warn of the consequences of such actions, saying if the "exit movement" becomes a norm, all countries would soon do the same.



Baghdad: Iran closes border with Kurdistan upon Iraq's request

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iraqi Foreign Ministry **d e s k** said on Sunday that Iran has shut its border crossings to the Kurdistan region at the request of the Iraqi central government.

Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Mahjub said in a statement that the closure of the border crossings was in the frame of measures taken by the Iraqi government to control the border ports and airports in the region.

He also said the decision came after the Iraqi Kurdistan held "the unconstitutional referendum".



Iraq ready to host Arbreen ceremony

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iraqi ambassador to **d e s k** Tehran Rajih al-Moussawi on Monday voiced his country's readiness to hold the Arbreen ceremony, saying some 3 million Iranian pilgrims come to Iraq annually which shows the two nations' close ties.

He also urged the Iranian pilgrims to apply for visas right away.

An Iranian official has also said both countries stress the need for pilgrims to obtain visas to attend the Arbreen ritual which falls on November 9 this year.

Arbreen marks the end of a 40-day mourning period that commemorates the seventh-century death of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).



Syria says U.S. proved it is not trustable

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Syrian Foreign **d e s k** Ministry on Sunday condemned U.S. President Donald Trump's refusal to certify Iran's compliance to the nuclear agreement, saying the move proves that Washington's attitude toward international security and stability cannot be trusted.

Trump's decertification of the nuclear deal, also known as the JCPOA, was "unacceptable," Syria's state news agency, SANA, quoted an official source as saying.

The source added that Washington's move "contravenes the international conventions and pacts," while Iran has strictly committed to the accord.

No country should ditch nuclear deal: CTBTO chief

POLITICS TEHRAN — Executive **d e s k** Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Lassina Zerbo said on Monday that no country should take actions to ditch the 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"The nuclear agreement is one of the most important deals in the past decade. The JCPOA is an international agreement and all signatories should make efforts to protect it," Zerbo said during a meeting with Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani in Saint Petersburg.

The remarks by Zerbo came three days after U.S. President Donald Trump officially announced he will not certify Iran's compliance to the nuclear deal and used harsh language against Iran.

Larijani said Iran will respond to Trump's inappropriate behavior.

"Iran is a member to the International Atomic Energy Agency



and accepted some commitments under the JCPOA. We have paid high costs and if we are supposed to just pay cost because of Trump's inappropriate

EU insists on full implementation of nuclear deal

Britain and France to work to enforce Iran JCPOA

The European Union issued a statement on Monday after a foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg insisting the 27-nation bloc is committed to the "full and effective" implementation of the nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The EU is committed to the continued full and effective implementation of all parts of the JCPOA," the statement said.

It also encouraged the U.S. to maintain its commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Also, according to Reuters, British Prime Minister Theresa May spoke to French President Macron on Monday saying London and Paris are firmly committed to the nuclear deal and will work to ensure it is enforced.

Following is the full text of the statement published by the EU website:

1. The JCPOA, the culmination of 12 years of diplomacy facilitated by the EU, unanimously endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, is a key element of the nuclear

non-proliferation global architecture and crucial for the security of the region. Its successful implementation continues to ensure that Iran's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful. The EU underlines that the International Atomic Energy Agency has verified 8 times that Iran is implementing all its nuclear related commitments following a comprehensive and strict monitoring system.

2. The EU is committed to the continued full and effective implementation of all parts of the JCPOA. The EU underlines that the lifting of nuclear related sanctions has a

The European Union says the JCPOA, which is the culmination of 12 years of diplomacy and endorsed by UN Security Council, is crucial for the security of the region.

Syria's future is promising: Larijani

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Monday that the future of Syria is "promising" and the crisis in the country will be settled.

"Syria resisted and paid a high cost for that, however, the country achieved a 'good capital' and has passed a five years crisis. The future of Syria is promising," he said during a meeting with Speaker of the People's Council of Syria Hammouda Sabbagh in Saint Petersburg.

He also highlighted the importance of stabilizing Syria.

Larijani also condemned Israel and Saudis' role in causing crises in the Middle East region.

For his part, Sabbagh praised Iran's supports for Syria. He also condemned Trump's Friday speech against Iran.

The U.S. only seeks to protect Israel's interests in the region, the top Syri-



an lawmaker noted.

Trump decertified the nuclear deal and used harsh language against Iran as part of his new Iran strategy officially declared on Friday.

Trump threatened to "terminate" the JCPOA if he could not "reach a solution working with Congress and our allies" to change it.

Russia: Iran deal working well, no need to fix it

POLITICS TEHRAN — A Russian deputy foreign **d e s k** minister says the international nuclear deal with Iran is working "quite efficiently" and requires no amendment, dismissing calls by the United States to address "flaws" in the deal.

Sergei Ryabkov told Russian news agency TASS that there was an American saying that goes "If it's not broke, don't fix it."

"That's what I would like to address to the colleagues in the United States," the Russian diplomat said.

The approach of calls for fixing the Iran deal "seems to be a wrong way to follow as the existing documents are working quite efficiently," he said of the deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran is fully compliant with the deal, while the U.S. is not, Ryabkov said. "What is to be improved in this context is the implementation of the existing agreements by the U.S. side," he added.

He also noted that by fully upholding their end of the bargain, the Iranians "have passed the ball to the

U.S. side."

The parties to the JCPOA are Iran, Russia, the U.S., China, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. They struck the deal in July 2015 and then took it to the United Nations Security Council, where it was unanimously endorsed in a resolution and effectively became international law.

But the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, which took office a year after the deal had begun being implemented, has been crying foul. In a speech on Friday, Trump said he was "directing my administration to work closely with Congress and our allies to address the deal's many serious flaws."

U.S. President Donald Trump has refused to certify the Iran nuclear agreement.

Trump and other U.S. officials had also in the past talked of amending certain aspects of the deal, which would technically require reopening negotiations. Iran has been clear that renegotiating is not an option.

Separately, French President Emmanuel Macron said

Senator: Efforts to renegotiate nuclear is "an absolute fantasy"

Just like the European allies of the United States, Iranians are also unwilling to reopen the tough nuclear talks that yielded the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, says a top senator at the Foreign Relations Committee.

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy made the comments Sunday as top national security aides in the Trump administration were busy calling for calm in the wake of the president's failure to recertify the nuclear agreement.

Any effort to renegotiate the deal is "an absolute fantasy," the Connecticut lawmaker told Fox news, adding that "The Iranians will not renegotiate it, and neither will the Europeans ... And so if we were to pull out of this agreement, as the president is threatening, Iran would get everything they want. They would be able to restart their nuclear program, because we would be in



violation of the deal. The Europeans would continue to grant them sanctions relief, their economy would continue to grow."

According to Murphy, Iran is complying with the deal and "the White House is required to tell Congress if they are not, and they've submitted absolutely no submissions."

on Sunday that he was opposed to a "tougher" approach toward Iran.

Speaking to TF1 and LCI in his first live TV interview since taking office, the French president said he had told Trump not to scrap the Iran deal.

The U.S. president had threatened on a number of occasions while campaigning for office that he would "rip up" the JCPOA.

Macron said Trump "wants to get tougher with Iran. I told him I thought this was the wrong approach because we have to look where we are now with [North] Korea."

The French leader said he had criticized the U.S. president's Iran policy as a "bad method."

He also threw his weight behind Iran's nuclear accord and spoke of imminent plans to visit the country.

But in further remarks, he said, "What I told him (Trump) was not to tear up the deal. After that I told him, 'let's have a demanding dialog, let's continue to conduct checks, but let's be much more demanding with Iran on its ballistic [missile] activity.'"

He urged the United States not to endanger the security of its allies and its own people for domestic policy reasons.

Hailed by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, the deal was also signed by China, France, Russia, Britain, Germany and the European Union.

European allies have warned of a split with Washington over the nuclear agreement and say that putting it in limbo undermines U.S. credibility abroad.

Trump has given the U.S. Congress 60 days to decide whether to reinstate economic sanctions on Iran that were lifted in 2016.

Germany urges the United States not to endanger the security of its allies and its own people for domestic policy reasons.

Austria vote: Conservatives win, far right makes gains

The conservative People's Party (OVP), led by 31-year-old Sebastian Kurz, is projected to finish first in Austria's snap parliamentary election, according to exit polls that suggest a clear shift to the right.

A projection by pollster SORA showed centre-right OVP winning Sunday's election with 31.6 percent of the vote, based on a count of all non-postal ballots. Kurz's party, however, is far short of a majority and will need to form a coalition.

The center-left Social Democratic Party (SPO) was on 26.9 percent, just ahead of the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) on 26.0 percent.

The projection had a margin of error of 0.7 percentage points, meaning the race for second place was too close to call. Another projection by pollster ARGE Wahlen had the SPO just 0.5 percentage points ahead of the FPÖ.

Speaking after the announcement of the initial exit polls, Kurz said he will fight for a new style of politics in Austria.

"Today the voters, men and women in this country, gave us a great mandate," he told supporters.

"We must be aware of this opportunity, the women and men are putting their hopes into this movement. We will use all of our strength and all of our fight to bring about change in this country," added Kurz, who will become Europe's youngest government leader if he manages to form a coalition cabinet.

"There is much to do to establish a new style, a new culture of politics in this country."

During campaigning, Kurz did not rule out a coalition with the FPÖ, which adopted anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

On Sunday, he repeatedly declined to say which option he favored, adding that



he wanted to await the count of postal ballots that will settle the race for second place. The bulk of those ballots, which are roughly a sixth of those cast, will be counted on Monday.

"Let's give it a couple of days. Then we will see what the result really looks like," Kurz told broadcaster ORF when pressed on what he plans to do. He also said he planned to talk to all parties in parliament and did not rule out forming a minority government.

For his part, FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache said the projected result showed that his far-right party had "arrived at the center of society".

He added: "We are the ones that dominate the political debate."

■ Shift to right

Austria's election arrived almost a year earlier than expected, following a breakdown of an OVP-SPO coalition government in May.

Kurz, named OVP leader in May, pledged to shake up Austrian politics, which for decades has been dominated by coalitions between his party and SPO.

He built his popularity by adopting many of the FPÖ's mantras, making this an election defined by issues raised by the far right, such as stricter immigration and the role of Islam in Austrian society.

"What dominated the headlines [ahead of the election] was the attempt to try and change the way that Muslims have been integrated into society here,"

said Al Jazeera's David Chater, reporting from the OVP headquarters in Austria's capital, Vienna. "It does seem that this debate has been controlled by the centre right and the far right," he added.

A continued co-operation between Kurz's OVP and Chancellor Christian Kern's SPO looked increasingly unlikely, given the outcome and the deep rifts between the two centrist parties that led to the breakdown of their coalition in May.

"It seems pretty clear, if the polls are correct, that we will have a coalition between OVP and FPÖ reshaped under Kurz, controlling the government in parliament, and that would really change Austria's politics," said Chater.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Madrid moves towards direct rule over Catalonia

Catalan authorities must drop a bid for independence by Thursday, the Spanish government said, moving closer to imposing direct rule over the region after its leader missed an initial deadline to back down.

In a confrontation viewed with a mounting sense of unease in European capitals and markets, Carles Puigdemont failed on Monday to respond to an ultimatum from Madrid to clarify if he had declared independence.

Plunging Spain into its worst political crisis since an attempted military coup in 1981, Catalan voters backed a breakaway in a referendum on Oct. 1 that Spain's Constitutional Court said was illegal.

On that basis, Puigdemont made a symbolic declaration of independence last Tuesday, but immediately suspended it and called for negotiations with Madrid on the region's future.

Madrid had given him until 10:00 a.m. (0800 GMT) to clarify his position on independence with a "Yes" or "No", and until Thursday to change his mind if he insisted on a split - saying it would suspend Catalonia's autonomy if he chose secession.

Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said after the deadline passed that he had not answered the question and had to do so by Thursday.

"Mr Puigdemont still has the opportunity to start resolving this situation, he must answer 'yes' or 'no' to the declaration," Saenz de Santamaria said.

In a letter to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy made public on Monday, Puigdemont did not directly answer on the independence issue, instead making a "sincere and honest" offer for dialogue between the two men over the next two months.



In reply, Rajoy said Puigdemont's stance had brought Madrid closer to triggering Article 155 of the constitution, under which it can impose direct rule on any of the country's 17 autonomous communities if they break the law. Suggesting Puigdemont and his team remained in no mood to follow Rajoy's game plan, Catalan interior chief Joaquim Forn said Article 155 did not allow Madrid to remove members of the Catalan government.

■ Broader secessionist concerns?

The Catalan government says 90 percent of voters in the referendum backed a breakaway, but turnout was only 43 percent as most opponents of independence in the region boycotted it.

While that points to a lukewarm endorsement of Puigdemont's intentions, EU authorities remain concerned that the deepening impasse between Madrid and Barcelona may impel moves towards secession elsewhere in the bloc.

European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker

last week said Catalan independence would encourage other regions to follow suit, potentially making the European Union ungovernable, while investors believe a split could curb and eventually derail an economic rebound.

Spanish bonds and stocks sold off on Monday, sweeping away calm generated last week by soothing messages on stimulus from the ECB.

The terms of Article 155 on direct rule, which has never been applied, are vague.

It says that when a region does not meet its constitutional obligations or other laws, or goes against the general interest, the government "can adopt any measure needed to force those obligations to be met" once receiving approval from Spain's lower house.

The article's wording suggests that would include anything from taking control of the regional police and finances to installing a new governing team or calling a snap election.

Catalan police chief Josep Lluís Trapero appeared before Spain's High Court on Monday to be questioned over whether his force, the Mossos d'Esquadra, deliberately failed to enforce the court ban on the independence referendum.

Trapero has been put under formal investigation for sedition after failing to order to rescue Civil Guard police who were trapped inside a Catalan government building in Barcelona by tens of thousands of pro-independence protesters.

The heads of civic groups Asambleia Nacional Catalana and Omnium will also testify over their role in organizing those protests.

(Source: Reuters)

Turkey expands deployment of troops to Syria's Idlib

Turkey's army is expanding its deployment in Syria's militant-held Idlib province despite the Damascus government's call for an "immediate and unconditional" pullout of Turkish troops, militants and witnesses say.

They said Sunday Turkish bulldozers were working non-stop, digging fortifications and erecting observation posts. A new deployment of Turkish armored vehicles and personnel arrived along the Syrian border on Saturday.

"Turkish forces are still in a state of advancing and expanding," said Mustafa al-Sejari, an official with the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA).

Turkey deployed a convoy of around 30 military vehicles to Idlib province late on Thursday. The Turkish forces entered Syria near the Bab al-Hawa border crossing, and headed to Shaykh Barakat hill-top.

The hilltop overlooks lands controlled by foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants as well as the Afrin area held by U.S.-backed militants from the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

Ibrahim al-Idlibi, an FSA military adviser, said nearly 200 troops are now sta-



tioned in areas that separate the territory under the control of Kurdish groups and opposition groups.

Turkey says the deployment is part of the Astana agreements with Iran and Russia on the creation of de-escalation zones in Syria.

Damascus on Saturday dismissed Turkey's attempts to link the move to the implementation of the agreement, terming

it a "departure" from the deal.

Idlib and swaths of land in Syria's northern and northwestern regions are largely controlled by members of Tahrir al-Sham militant group.

Militant sources said the deployment comes following weeks of coordination between Tahrir al-Sham and Turkish intelligence officers.

FSA militant groups said the opera-

tion aims to push deeper into Idlib, with the expansion of supply lines and observation posts. "The Turks will be taking up positions 40 km deep inside Idlib as agreed," Idlibi said.

Like in the past when terrorists have left the territories under their control without a fight with Turkish troops, the Takfiri militants would reportedly be retreating further south in a phased withdrawal.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said his country's military operations in Idlib are the follow-up of the Euphrates Shield operation in northern Syria, which Ankara launched in August last year without any authorization from Damascus.

Ankara said back then that the main objectives behind the operation were clearing Turkey's southern border of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group and stopping the YPG from gaining more sway there.

Ankara views the YPG as the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group, which has been fighting for an autonomous region inside Turkey since 1984.

(Source: SANA)

UK Labor repeats calls for Saudi arms embargo over Yemen war



The UK's Labor Party has renewed calls for a ban on all arms sales to Saudi Arabia, as the kingdom's brutal military aggression against poverty-stricken Yemen continues.

Fabian Hamilton, the shadow minister for peace, said that unlike the ruling Tory government, a Labor administration would only provide weapons to countries that use them for defensive purposes.

"We should not be selling weapons to any state that uses, or could potentially use, weapons we supply for internal repression or for foreign wars," Hamilton told the Middle East Eye, noting that the ban should include all the Saudi allies, who have been participating in the deadly war since it began in March 2015.

More than 12,000 people have been killed ever since, and much of the country's infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and factories, has been ravaged.

The Saudi-led war has also triggered a deadly cholera epidemic across Yemen and has dragged the impoverished nation to the brink of a widespread famine.

When asked if Labor Leader Jeremy Corbyn would push for UK arms embargoes against the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Egypt, Hamilton responded, "Absolutely."

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

British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon went to Riyadh last month to discuss military cooperation with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who serves as the kingdom's defense minister and deputy prime minister.

May seeks to build on the traditionally strong ties with the Arab states of the Persian Gulf region before the UK's planned departure from the European Union.

She said last year that Britain would invest over three billion pounds in military forces of the oil rich countries over the next decade.

The Middle East has been a key market for the UK's arms industry, which has sold more than six billion pounds of arms to Saudi Arabia since it began its bombing campaign in Yemen.

British Trade Secretary Liam Fox argues that all of his country's arms deals were "ethical" because they prevented an eruption of unregulated sales.

(Source: agencies)

Palestinian Authority official in Gaza to advance unity deal



The Palestinian Authority's top official for border crossings visited the Gaza Strip on Monday, after Hamas agreed to hand over control of the borders under a landmark reconciliation deal.

The two sides signed a reconciliation agreement in Egypt last week aimed at handing control of the Gaza Strip back to the PA a decade after Fatah and Hamas fought a near civil war.

Nazmi Muhanna told journalists that he had been sent by president Mahmoud Abbas to implement the "first step" in the reconciliation agreement, "the taking over of the crossings."

He said he was hopeful that in talks with Hamas they would agree on handing over the borders quickly.

Hamas has controlled Gaza since seizing it in a 2007 near civil war with Abbas's Fatah.

The conflict followed an electoral dispute after parliamentary polls won by the Islamist movement.

The border crossings are seen as a key test case as to whether the reconciliation agreement will succeed.

They are meant to be handed over to the PA by the beginning of November ahead of the full transfer of power in December.

Multiple previous reconciliation attempts have failed.

Gaza borders both Egypt and Israel, but they have been largely sealed off by the two countries in recent years, citing security concerns around Hamas.

(Source: AFP)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran Telecom 2017 running with 102 foreign participants

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 18th International Exhibition of Telecommunications, Information Technology & Innovative CIT Solutions of Iran (Iran Telecom 2017) kicked off on Monday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRNA reported.

The four-day event is hosting 225 Iranian and 102 foreign companies from Slovenia, Britain, Germany, Taiwan, China, Russia, Japan, Switzerland, France, Finland, Kazakhstan, Canada, Latvia, Norway and Greece.



Watex2017 hosting 363 companies in Tehran

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Some 363 foreign and domestic companies are participating in the 13th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition (Watex 2017) which kicked off on Saturday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Alongside 258 Iranian companies, 105 exhibitors from Italy, Turkey, Germany, Azerbaijan, Hungary, China, France, Spain, Denmark, South Korea, India, Switzerland, Austria, United Kingdom, Sweden, Japan, Canada, Belgium, Iceland and the Czech Republic are showcasing their latest products and services during the four-day event.

The IMF has a message for emerging markets: Take advantage of easy money while it lasts

Emerging markets should get their fiscal houses in order while monetary conditions remain loose, the International Monetary Fund warned.

Governments have to some extent taken advantage of lower interest rates and cheap financing costs, but when monetary and financial conditions normalize, financing costs could rise, said Tao Zhang, the organization's deputy managing director.



Many countries hold high levels of dollar-denominated debt so when global central banks gradually begin to tighten monetary policy, the dollar could strengthen. The Federal Reserve recently signaled its commitment to monetary tightening while the European Central Bank began discussions on tapering last month.

Developing economies must use their current funds "in a smart way [and] make sure public sector spending or new borrowings can be sustainable," Zhang told CNBC on the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund meetings in Washington D.C.

Last week, S&P Global Ratings also sounded a word of caution on the matter.

Many emerging markets, particularly Turkey and South Africa, haven't taken full advantage of global liquidity to clean up their sovereign balance sheets, the company's sovereign global chief ratings officer Moritz Kraemer told CNBC.

On the topic of Asian growth, Zhang said he believed China's Belt and Road Initiative could benefit the region, but he cautioned that participating countries must adopt economic strategies so their financing needs can be properly accommodated. *(Source: cnbc)*

Kobe Steel shares hit near five-year lows as cheating scandal raises financial risks

Just over a week out from revelations of a cheating scandal that plunged Kobe Steel Ltd. in crisis and ensnared hundreds of firms, the embattled steelmaker's shares skidded to five-year lows on Monday as investors worried about the financial and legal fallout.

Kobe Steel Chief Executive Hiroya Kawasaki on Friday said about 500 companies had received its falsely certified products, more than double its earlier count, confirming widespread wrongdoing at the steelmaker.

Shares of Japan's third-biggest steelmaker hit 774.0 yen in the morning, the lowest since Dec. 11, 2012. They managed to recover and rise 2.7 percent by the close to 827.0 yen, but remain well off the pre-crisis level of 1,368 yen.

The broader Tokyo stock market .N225 ended 0.47 percent, touching a 21-year high.

No safety problems have surfaced as the Japanese steelmaker attempts to get a grip on the data tampering that it earlier said may go back as far as ten years.

The revelations over the past week rippled through supply chains across the world as companies from operators of Japan's famous bullet trains to the world's biggest aircraft maker, Boeing Co, (BA.N), were ensnared in the scandal. *(Source: Reuters)*

CBI, EXIAR ink MOU on financing

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and Export Insurance Agency of Russia (EXIAR) signed a financing memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Sunday.

The MOU was signed by Seyed Ahmad Araqchi, CBI's vice governor for foreign exchange affairs, and Alexey Tyupanov, EXIAR's chairman of the management board, CBI's official website reported.

During their talks, the two sides agreed on the framework and terms of the financing between Iranian and Russian banks.

Based on the agreement, Iranian banks can use financing from Russian banks to fund certified domestic projects in both private and public sectors.

In the meeting, Araqchi expressed satisfaction with the expansion of economic relations between the two countries and called for acceleration of project financings between the two sides.

Tyupanov for his part, expressed hope that Iranian projects in both private and state-run sectors would be able to use Russian banks' facilities.

Malaysian fin. min. to lead delegation to Iran in early 2018

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In a meeting with Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Masoud Karbasian, Malaysia's Minister of Finance Johari Abdul Ghani announced that he will lead an economic delegation to Iran in early 2018, Shada news agency reported on Monday.

During the meeting which was held on the sidelines of the 2017 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, the Malaysian minister expressed content about the held talks over construction of a subway line in Iran by Malaysian companies and called for further bilateral ties in various



Masoud Karbasian (1st L) and Johari Abdul Ghani (1st R)

economic sectors.

Karbasian, for his part, noted that economic relation between Iran and Malaysia is not at a favorable level and regarding their warm political relations, he called for more economic bonds between the two sides.

China's producer price index crushes expectations

China's consumer price index rose 1.6 percent in September from a year ago, meeting expectations, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday.

Meanwhile, the producer price index jumped 6.9 percent in September from a year ago, which topped expectations. This was spurred by a year-long drive in construction spending that includes government-led infrastructure investment.

According to a Reuters poll, China's Consumer Price Index was forecast to rise 1.6 percent in September from a year ago. August CPI was 1.8 percent.

The Producer Price Index was predicted to have risen 6.3 percent in September from a year ago, steady from August, according to Reuters.

The strong PPI print that points to higher factory gate prices may help markets outside of China as the East Asian



Alexey Tyupanov (L) and Seyed Ahmad Araqchi

With the MOU signed, it is expected implemented by both Iranian and Russian the financing deal to be signed and banks in near future.

Kish to host foreign investors, officials in 2 intl. events

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Top economic foreign officials and investors are to attend an international exhibition and an international conference on Iran's capital market on the southern Iranian Kish Island in late October, the Head of Public Relations at Securities and Exchange Organization Yaser Fallah announced.

As Tasnim news agency quoted him as saying on Monday, some 45 economic, financial and political senior officials and investors from 16 countries plan to take part in the 4th International Exhibition of Exchange, Banking, Insurance and Privatization besides the conference under the title of "Iran's Capital Market: More Oppor-



tunities, More Returns" in late October on Kish.

The two events seek improving the culture of making investments relying on Islamic-Iranian values, introducing opportunities available in Iran's capital market to foreigners, as well as better understanding of modern financial tools, standards and international regulations.

UK inflation set to hit five-year high, raising heat on interest rates

UK inflation is expected to hit a five-year high this week, outstripping growth in pay packets and putting renewed pressure on the Bank of England to raise interest rates.

City economists forecast that the consumer price index (CPI) will be shown to have risen to 3% in September, up from 2.9% a month earlier, its highest level since 2012.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will release its figures on Tuesday, just before an influential committee of MPs is set to question the Bank's governor, Mark Carney, and other officials involved in setting interest rates.

The expected increase in the squeeze on living standards comes as the weak pound pushes up the cost of imported fuel, food and raw materials. Sterling slumped following the Brexit referendum in June 2016, and is still worth 14% less against the euro and 10% less against the US dollar than before the vote.

Some economists predict September's CPI inflation rate could hit 3.1%. If so, Carney would have to write a letter to the chancellor, Philip Hammond, explaining why it had moved more than a percentage point from the Bank's 2% target.

Threadneedle Street's first interest rate hike in a decade could come as early as next month, which could help to keep inflation in check and strengthen the pound. That might help households' purchasing power, but their borrowing costs would also rise.

Carney is due to appear before the Commons Treasury select committee on Tuesday morning after the inflation figures are released. The committee is also due to question two new members of the Bank's monetary policy committee - the former treasury official Dave Ramsden and the economics professor Silvana Teneyro.

Economists at HSBC expect two rate hikes from the Bank, one in November and another in May next year. They estimate this could reduce annual average inflation to 2.5% from a previous forecast of 2.9%.

Last month's inflation figures are of key importance because they are used by the government to calculate increases in the state pension and other benefits for the next year. *(Source: The Guardian)*

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

EXTENSION OF INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO.96-07/131

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
Providing CDN Infrastructure and Cloud Storage Space (IRIB, Tehran) according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Wednesday Oct. 25, 2017**.
Place of Receiving Documents:
Secretariat of Tenders' Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 223,529** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee
Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Saturday Dec. 2, 2017** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Monday Dec. 4, 2017** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
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Public Relations Dept. of IRIB

OPEC sees 'healthy' oil demand growth to 2022

Oil demand will grow at a "healthy pace" over the next five years as renewables show the fastest expansion of any type of energy, the head of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries said.

Crude demand will climb an average 1.2 million barrels a day through 2022 and slow to 300,000 barrels a day in 2035 to 2040, OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo said Sunday in Kuwait, giving a preview of OPEC's 2017 World Oil Outlook set to be released Nov. 7. The share of fossil fuels in the global energy mix will slip below 80 percent by 2020 and fall to 75.4 percent by 2040, he said.

Wind, solar, geothermal and photovoltaic sources will be the fastest-growing energy, increasing by an average of 6.8 percent a year from 2015 to 2040, though still accounting for less than 5.5 percent of the world's total energy mix by 2040, he said.

Barkindo discussed his outlook for oil demand as OPEC and allied producers wrestle with a global oversupply that has dragged crude prices to half the level of their 2014 peak. OPEC, Russia and other suppliers are debating whether to extend output



cuts that are set to expire in March, in an effort to drain the glut -- fed partly by U.S. shale -- and shore up prices. Benchmark Brent crude, which ended Friday trading at \$57.17 a barrel, is up 0.6 percent this year as the cuts, which began in January, have

taken effect. OPEC plans to meet next month in Vienna to weigh its options.

"The medium-term outlook for oil demand is for a significant increase to 2022 with a healthy average annual increase," Barkindo said. "In the global energy mix, we see fossil fuels

retaining a dominant role albeit with a declining overall share through 2040."

With the global economy growing and oil demand expected to grow by 1.45 million barrels a day this year, oil market indicators are "rapidly improving," Barkindo said. Inventories in developed nations stood at the beginning of the year at 338 million barrels above the five-year average, OPEC's main criteria for assessing the re-balancing of the market. In August, they were at 159 million barrels, he said.

The amount of crude in floating storage has also declined, down an estimated 40 million barrels since the start of the year, he said. Backwardation in the Brent market is one more sign of improving market conditions, Barkindo said.

"Retaining sustainability in market stability beyond 2018 is an absolute prerequisite for investments to be able to cover future oil demand,"

"Beyond our forecasts and the positive momentum we are seeing now, there is still the fundamental need to ensure sustainable stability, so that the market does not stall once the necessary stocks are withdrawn," Barkindo said. (Source: Bloomberg)

China can solve wasted renewable energy problem by 2020



China expects to solve the problem of renewable energy going to waste by 2020, an official at the National Energy Administration (NEA) said on Monday, as the government takes aim at one of the biggest challenges in its efforts to promote clean energy.

Liang Zhipeng, deputy director of the NEA's new energy and renewable energy department, also said at a conference that the agency expects the wind sector to wean itself off government subsidies by 2022.

Wind power is often wasted as there is not enough transmission capacity to handle all the electricity generated, resulting in curtailments. But in the first three quarters of this year, curtailment dropped 7 percentage points, he said.

Getting stranded power in the west

to urban users in the world's top energy consumer has been a major headache for the government as Beijing seeks to boost the use of more renewable energy and cut dependence on coal, the nation's favorite fuel. The world's second-largest economy is one of the world's top producers of renewable energy.

Liang also said the government should encourage more small-scale wind projects to be built closer to users, so it's easier to connect power to the grid.

To reduce dependency on subsidies, more technology innovation and an improvement in government policy are required, Liang said. He did not give details.

(Source: Reuters)

OPEC's output curbs squeeze world's biggest oil refining complex



Being sophisticated in the age of OPEC output curbs can prove a disadvantage, as the operator of the world's biggest oil-refining complex is discovering.

Reliance Industries Ltd.'s 1.24 million barrel-a-day facility in western India features highly advanced units designed to process the globe's heaviest types of crude, which have historically been cheaper than lighter varieties because they are more difficult to break down into fuels. Now, a drive by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to stabilize the oil market is squeezing supplies of such grades and making them relatively costlier.

The result: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's company posted quarterly profit that lagged behind estimates for the

first time in more than two years. Reliance earned \$12 for every barrel of crude it turned into fuel in the second quarter ended Sept. 30, compared with a prediction by CLSA India Pvt. for as much as \$12.80 a barrel.

Shares of the company were down 0.7 percent on Monday at 12:28 p.m. in Mumbai, compared with a 0.3 percent gain in the broader S&P BSE Sensex Index.

Refining margins fell below expectations as OPEC's curbs led to the lower availability of cheaper grades of crude, according to Srikanth Venkatachari, Reliance's joint chief financial officer. "There is nothing which suggests that suddenly supply of heavy crude has eased, so this condition will persist"

(Source: Bloomberg)

Asia oil buyers turn to U.S. in hunt for cheap supply

Asia is set to ramp up crude oil imports from the United States in late 2017 and early next year, with buyers searching out cheap supplies after hurricanes hit U.S. demand for the commodity at a time of rising production in the country.

As many as 11 tankers, partly or fully laden with U.S. crude, are due to arrive in Asia in November, with another 12 to load oil in the United States later in October and November before sailing for Asia, according to shipping sources and data on Thomson Reuters Eikon.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude benchmark stands at its largest discount in years against the Atlantic Basin's Brent, with local appetite curbed as U.S. refineries are still pushing to get back on track in the wake of hurricanes such as Harvey.

"Between November and January, there is a very big volume of U.S. crude heading to Asia," said a Chinese trader who has bought 4 million barrels of medium-sour U.S. oil to arrive in December. He declined to be identified as he was not authorized to speak with media.

The price-spread between the two crudes had already pushed U.S. crude exports to a record 1.98 million barrels per day by late September, according to the Energy Information Administration in the United States.



Exports in the next two to three weeks could hit 2.2 million bpd, Marco Dunand, chief executive of trading house Mercuria, said last week.

That has also been driven as some Asian governments look to diversify supply sources and reduce trade surpluses with the world's top economy. India joined China, Japan and South Korea when it imported its first U.S. crude in October.

And high premiums for Middle East-

ern grades of crude are also stoking Asian appetite for U.S. supplies.

"U.S. medium sour grades can replace most Middle East grades and the light sweets may replace some African crude," said the Chinese trader.

The tankers to arrive in Asia in November include eight Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCC), capable of carrying 2 million barrels of oil each, and three Suezmaxes that can load half that volume, according to shipping data in Eikon.

China remains the largest buyer with four tankers, followed by three to South Korea and two to India. The remaining two could head to Singapore, the data shows.

Unipet, the trading arm of Asia's largest refiner Sinopec, dominates the trade with imports set to hit 5.7 million tonnes in 2017, up from 3.6 million tonnes in the first eight months, a source familiar with the matter said. The company buys about 8 million barrels of U.S. crude on average per month, the source said. Reuters could not immediately reach the company for comment.

Another 12 tankers are provisionally chartered to load U.S. oil in October and November, the data showed.

Four of these are supertankers chartered by South Korean buyers to load Mexican and U.S. crude. The country's top refiner SK Energy has bought 6.5 million barrels of U.S. crude to be delivered between November and January.

Several Indian refiners have also purchased their first U.S. crude for delivery in the fourth quarter, including the country's largest refiner Indian Oil Corp.

Japan's largest refiner JXTG Holdings has provisionally chartered a VLCC to load crude in Mexico and the U.S. Gulf in November. The company declined to comment on individual trades.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil rises as fighting escalates in Iraq's oil-rich Kirkuk

Oil markets jumped on Monday as Iraqi forces entered the oil city of Kirkuk, taking territory from Kurdish fighters and raising concerns over exports from OPEC's second-largest producer.

Pump Jacks are seen at sunrise near Bakersfield, California October 14, 2014.

Iraq launched the operation in the multi-ethnic region on Sunday as the crisis between Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) escalated. Tensions have been building since the KRG voted for independence in a Sept. 25 referendum.

International Brent crude futures were at \$57.75 per barrel at 0733 GMT, up 58 cents from the previous close, after trading as high as \$58.13. U.S. WTI crude was at \$51.95 per barrel, up 50 cents. Earlier in the day, it traded as high as \$52.22.

"The escalation in Northern Iraq is the main driver," Commerzbank analyst Carsten Fritsch told the Reuters Global Oil Forum. "Oil supply from this region is at risk."

Prices tempered gains as an Iraqi oil ministry official said oil and gas production in Kirkuk was "proceeding normally", and that Kurdish leaders had agreed to avoid fighting in oil and gas facilities.

The conflict heightened worries over oil exports. Kirkuk accounts for 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) of the some 600,000 bpd of oil produced in the KRG region. Turkey has threatened to shut a KRG-operated pipeline that goes to the Turkish port of Ceyhan at Baghdad's request.

Prices were also underpinned by worries over renewed U.S. sanctions against Iran.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday refused to certify that Tehran is complying with the accord even though international inspectors say it is.

Under U.S. law, the president must certify every 90 days that Iran is complying with the deal. Congress now has 60 days to decide whether to re-impose economic sanctions on Tehran.

During the previous round of sanctions, roughly 1 million bpd of Iranian oil was cut off. Analysts said that while renewed sanctions were unlikely to curtail that level of exports again, they warned that such a move would be disruptive.

Cuts to U.S. drilling rigs, and an explosion overnight at an oil rig in Louisiana's Lake Pontchartrain, also boosted prices.

Drillers cut five oil rigs in the week to Oct. 13, bringing the total count to 743, the lowest since early June, Baker Hughes energy services firm said late on Friday.

Oil consumption has also been strong, especially in China, where the central bank governor said on Monday that the economy is expected to grow by 7 percent in the second half of this year, defying widespread expectations for a slowdown.

(Source: Reuters)

Kuwait oil min says no impact on oil supply from Iraq, Iran tensions

Kuwait's oil minister Essam al-Marzuq said on Sunday that there were no signs at the moment of oil supply disruptions as a result of the United States hardened stance on a nuclear deal with Iran or a dispute in Iraq between Baghdad and Kurdish authorities.

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam al-Marzuq adjusts his glasses during a news conference of the 4th OPEC-Non-OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee in St. Petersburg, Russia, July 24, 2017.

"Until now there are no indications (of an impact on oil production) whether from the actions against Iran or in Iraq's Kurdistan," al-Marzuq told reporters in Kuwait City.

(Source: Reuters)

Danish deterrent won't kill off Nord Stream 2 economic benefits

Denmark is designing a new law that could stop pipelines in Danish waters for security reasons. Although it remains unclear whether Russia's Nord Stream 2 energy project will be affected, Nord Stream leadership has a back-up plan at hand.

At present, Denmark, like its Nordic peers, can say no to a pipeline only on environmental grounds. Should the new bill be ultimately passed, security concerns, foreign policy and defense issues will also be considered in connection with applications for pipelines in Danish territorial waters, Danish Radio reported.

"Denmark is currently unable to take into account foreign policy, security policy or defense policy when someone applies to build a pipeline, gas or electricity line in Danish territorial waters. This bill rectifies that," Climate and Energy minister Lars Christian Lilleholt of the ruling Liberal Party told Danish Radio.

Previously, the Nord Stream 2 leadership had applied for environmental permits for the project regarding the affected countries in the Baltic Region, including Denmark. At present, Nord Stream 2's application is being processed by the Danish Energy Agency. The bill, which purportedly has "broad political support in Danish parliament," may at the earliest come into force at the beginning of the new year and it remains unclear whether it will affect the process at all.

European Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager admitted last week that the EU has no legal means of stopping the pipeline. According to Nord Stream 2 spokesperson in Finland Minna Sundelin, it is imperative that projects of this size are planned long-term and rely on existing legal framework.

"Nord Stream 2 has applied for permission based on current legislation and on the directives given by the Danish authorities. Five major European energy companies have already committed themselves to investments of €4.5 billion, Minna Sundelin said, as quoted by the Finnish daily Hufvudstadsbladet.

Although Denmark's attempts to block Nord Stream 2 do not appear fully viable, the company's leadership has alternative routes for its prized project.

(Source: Sputnik)

What the EU must confront if it wants to survive

By Rick Noack

At first glance, the European Union appears to be back on track. Election results in places such as Britain and France halted last year's populist wave, and some far-right parties have dropped their demands to leave the bloc. Meanwhile, the euro-zone economy recently outperformed the United States.

But what may look like a swing of fortunes is more likely a quick breather, and Austria's elections on Sunday showed why.

The country's far-right Freedom Party is projected to make significant gains, and it may end up sharing power in a coalition with the center-right People's Party. The latter, led by 31-year-old foreign minister Sebastian Kurz, has already co-opted many of the far-right's policy proposals and repackaged them for the mainstream.

Even as he served in a left-right "grand coalition," Kurz's skepticism of some EU policies as foreign minister caused headaches for his counterparts abroad. If he becomes chancellor in a right-wing coalition, his stance on the union is likely to harden, putting Austria in a group of EU member states deeply critical of some key EU principles and goals.

For those governments, Brussels looks far too powerful already — even as it pushes for further political integration of the union.

The European Commission acted several times this year to rein in member states, most recently launching legal action against Poland to protest the government's moves against judicial independence.

The union has few tools to enforce such moves — it mostly relies on its member states to voluntarily follow the rules — but its actions still fuel tensions between the bloc and its members. Philip Hammond, Britain's chancellor of the exchequer, referred to EU representatives last week as the "enemy," and he's hardly the first major European politician to do so. (Hammond later apologized.)

And even as Britain prepares to leave the union in 2019, EU leaders are casting Brexit as a chance to finally focus on handling more political and economic powers over to Brussels without being held back by London. But plenty of the EU's smaller countries have demanded that integration slow down, and there's no sign they will drop those complaints.

■ Austria's election

Some countries, such as Poland and Hungary, have been openly confrontational with the European Union, and Austria's election result indicates that Vienna may soon join them. But Britain has served as the de facto ambassador of smaller countries such as Denmark that are more quietly opposed to speeding up integration.

There is no easy solution to those complaints, which run along a number of political fault lines. Northern countries may oppose deeper economic ties because of Southern Europe's weak growth; Western European countries might participate in closer immigration cooperation while Eastern Europe remains staunchly opposed; EU members in the euro zone are in favor of deeper financial integration, whereas countries with their own currencies fear they might be left out of crucial decisions in the future.

EU skepticism becomes especially problematic when it is used by governments to pursue their domestic agendas — or when it mixes with historical resentment, as can be observed in Poland. Politicians there are stirring tensions against the EU and Germany by arguing that the union is dominated by Berlin and designed to damage Poland.

With Britain about to leave the European Union, France and Germany are the key countries that will define the union's future. In an interview with Germany's Der Spiegel magazine that was widely discussed in Europe over the weekend, French President Emmanuel Macron reemphasized the need for expansive reforms. "Since 2005, when the French and the Dutch voted no on a constitution for Europe, nobody has developed a real project for the EU," Macron acknowledged.

Now he is vowing to change that. Macron laid out a detailed proposal for the first time during a speech last month. His approach includes deeper security and defense ties, more cooperation on migration and a joint finance minister. Macron also voiced support for a so-called multispeed economic model, which would allow some countries to pursue more extensive changes than others.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel looks likely to follow Macron's lead. Merkel is often cast as Europe's preeminent leader, but the losses suffered by her party in last month's German election have weakened her hand. Jürgen Kaube, one of the publishers of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany's leading conservative newspaper, placed some veiled blame for euro skepticism at the feet of Merkel's government Sunday.

"To many, Europe is only a word or a collection of administrative fiats and court rulings — and it is expensive," Kaube wrote in an editorial.

The problem with Macron's proposed reforms is that the proposals themselves are mostly not new — and some have already proved difficult to implement. Eastern European nations have been reluctant about or openly hostile to EU proposals to share responsibility for the refugee influx. Deeper security ties are restricted by a consensus among most experts that Europe probably won't have a unified military anytime soon. Even devastating terror incidents such as the 2015 Paris attacks failed to persuade member states to significantly expand their counterterrorism cooperation.

And what Macron described as a multispeed vision for Europe is already a reality: Instead of trying to find common ground with all 28 member states, many EU leaders have resorted to building coalitions with countries that have similar goals. The EU is not moving ahead as one union, but rather as many different ones.

Polish President Andrzej Duda warned last month that becoming a union of unions would eventually turn the EU into a class society, with some groups or countries effectively becoming second-class members. Such a balkanized bloc, he said, could easily fall apart.

Whether Macron's approach might rescue the union or destroy it remains to be seen. But the fact that a key reform proposal could also be a death blow may tell us more about the state of the EU than anything else.

(Source: The Washington Post)

With Russia trip, Saudi Arabia sent a message to Washington: we have choices

By Frida Ghitis

When U.S. President Donald Trump visited Saudi Arabia last May, making it the first stop in his first foreign trip as president, he unleashed a wave of euphoria in the kingdom. The Saudis viewed Trump as a like-minded leader, whose ascent augured a future of closely coordinated foreign policy and firm advances for a U.S.-backed Saudi Arabian agenda in the Middle East. But five months later, in a twist few could have anticipated, Saudi King Salman landed in Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, signaling that Trump's embrace of the kingdom has proved less fruitful than the Saudis had expected.

The arrival of Salman and a huge Saudi delegation — some 1,500 people — was a major event in Russia. Salman was the first reigning Saudi monarch to visit the Russian capital, and the streets were filled with posters promoting "Saudi Culture Week," one of the many events held in conjunction with the Salman-Putin summit.

The visit was a recognition that Russia has become a major player in the Middle East. It was undoubtedly a feather in Putin's cap, but its significance was far more than cosmetic.

While much of the Western media focused on the odd sight of the king's golden escalator getting stuck as he descended from the royal aircraft, Russian and Arab outlets heralded the trip's strategic significance.

Until now, Saudi Arabia has relied almost exclusively on its relationship with the United States to ensure its security. Since the iconic 1945 meeting between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz, the kingdom's founder, the U.S. has protected Saudi Arabia in exchange for a steady supply of oil.

But the Saudis have grown wary of Washington. Concerns started when former President Barack Obama tried to repair relations with Iran, the Saudis' archenemy. Trump was supposed to redirect U.S. policy in the Middle East, but so far he has failed to stop Iran's growing strength in Iraq, Syria or Yemen, while his increasingly chaotic performance does not inspire confidence in Riyadh.

Against this backdrop, Salman's Moscow trip must be seen as part of a push to widen Saudi Arabia's foreign relations, and potentially reduce the kingdom's reliance on Washington.

■ The top item

The top item on the agenda was oil, a topic on which Moscow's and Riyadh's interests coincide. The two countries' economies have struggled as a result of the sharp drop in oil prices in recent years, and they are working together to limit oil supply in order to prop up prices. Saudi



Salman's Moscow trip must be seen as part of a push to widen Saudi Arabia's foreign relations, and potentially reduce the kingdom's reliance on Washington.

Arabia wants to make sure that Russia, a non-OPEC member, holds the line.

But the talks went far beyond oil — far enough that American strategists surely took notice.

Salman and Putin discussed the future of Syria and explored areas of economic and military cooperation, reaching agreements whose progress Washington and its allies will follow very closely.

Also watching with great interest, undoubtedly, was Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The visit had to be cause for celebration at the presidential palace in Damascus. Throughout the almost six-year-old Syrian civil war, Riyadh has supported the rebels seeking to topple Assad. Now that Russian intervention has turned the tide of the war, Salman appears to be acquiescing to Assad's survival.

That may or may not be good news for Iran, Assad's top ally and benefactor. The Islamic Republic welcomes all signs that Assad will remain in place, securing its sway in Syria. But the rapprochement between Moscow and Riyadh surely creates some unease in Tehran, which worries about the Saudis interfering in its relationship with Russia.

In Moscow, Salman spoke out against Iran, telling Putin that Iran must stop meddling and "give up interference with the internal affairs of the region."

If the Saudis can drive a wedge between Moscow and Tehran, Washington would be

delighted. But for now, that seems unlikely, as Russia and Iran work together to secure a victory for Assad in Syria.

That didn't stop Putin and Salman from signing a number of other agreements. Saudi Arabia agreed to make multibillion dollar investments in Russia, potentially punching a hole in Western sanctions by helping to fund technology, energy projects and new roads.

The two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding, reportedly committing Saudi Arabia to purchase the Russian S-400 missile defense system. The day after that announcement, the Pentagon said the U.S. had approved a \$15 billion purchase by Saudi Arabia of the U.S.-built THAAD anti-missile defense system. Russian officials said the agreement on the Russian missile defense system was firm.

In addition to the S-400, the deal includes purchases of anti-tank Kornet rocket systems, automated grenade launchers, Kalashnikov rifles and other items.

The question for the U.S. is whether this array of agreements signifies the beginning of a major shift in Saudi Arabia's allegiance.

■ The strategic significance

The Russian media played up the strategic significance of Salman's visit and the extent to which it confirmed Russia's renewed standing as a major player in the

Middle East.

Saudi diplomats in Moscow were waxing exuberantly about the bilateral prospects. Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir declared that "new horizons have opened up for the developments of our relations that we could not previously have imagined," calling this a "historical moment."

But al-Jubeir also took pains to reassure Washington. "We do not think that in developing relations with Russia, we damage [relations with the U.S.]," he said. "The more partners we have, the better for all."

Unless the Saudis can convince Russia to move away from Iran, though, a closer relationship between Russia and Saudi Arabia is not better for the United States. Any influence Moscow gains in Riyadh potentially diminishes Washington's.

It's very possible that one of Saudi Arabia's objectives with the trip was to send a message to Washington — which has wavered in supporting Riyadh in its dispute with Qatar — that the Saudis have choices.

If Putin was being used to send that message, he enjoyed it thoroughly. Asked about the close links between Riyadh and Washington, he replied with his own question. "Is there anything permanent in the world?" He answered that himself. "On the contrary, the world is changing all the time."

(Source: WPR)

Mogadishu atrocity may provoke deeper U.S. involvement in Somalia

For many years, Somalia was a forgotten front among the various campaigns against violent extremists around the world.

The massive bombing of the center of Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, will bring the international spotlight back on to the battered country — at least for a few days.

Al-Shabaab, the terrorist group based in the country, is almost certainly responsible for the huge truck bomb that killed as many as 300 people in Mogadishu on Saturday.

The attack proves once more it is among the most capable and tenacious militant organizations anywhere.

Al-Shabaab's roots run back through a series of violent — and sometimes non-violent — revivalist movements in Somalia over the past 40 years. In the past decade, it has been fighting local, regional and international forces, and has survived significant strategic setbacks primarily by exploiting the weaknesses and failings of central government in the shattered state.

One reason for the relative lack of attention devoted to al-Shabaab in recent years in Washington, London and other western capitals is that the group has ruthlessly purged anyone who wanted to swear allegiance to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS/ISIS) from its ranks.

That al-Shabaab — the name means "the youth" — is not seen as particularly dangerous beyond its immediate region is another reason.

Though the group has been a formal affiliate of al-Qaida since 2011, it has not engaged in terrorist planning against European or U.S. targets. Though it has attracted militants from the west, it has not sent many back the other way.

Al-Shabaab has, however, launched a series of bloody attacks in east Africa, such as the assault on an upscale shopping mall in Kenya in 2013 in which 67 people were killed.

It has been regional powers, including Kenya, that have done the heavy lifting in terms of military deployments in Somalia in recent years.

More than 20,000 troops have been deployed by the African Union there. But they have been much criticized,



President Trump had already approved use of U.S. troops in Somalia before hundreds died in truck bomb blamed on al-Shabaab.

accused of being arrogant and sometimes brutal toward local populations, corruption and military incompetence.

A series of assaults by al-Shabaab on African Union bases have undermined political will to continue this commitment among regional states — as the extremist strategists intended it would.

The bombing in Mogadishu may now intensify a growing U.S. commitment to pursuing a more active role in Somalia.

■ Zone of active hostilities

Earlier this year, the U.S. president, Donald Trump, designated Somalia a "zone of active hostilities", allowing commanders greater authority when launching airstrikes, broadening the range of possible targets and relaxing restrictions designed to prevent civilian casualties. He also authorized the deployment of regular U.S. forces to Somalia for the first time since 1994.

The U.S. in effect pulled out of Somalia after the "Black Hawk Down" episode of 1993, when two helicopters were shot down in Mogadishu and the bodies of

American soldiers were dragged through the streets.

In May a U.S. special forces soldier was killed in a skirmish with al-Shabaab, the first U.S. casualty in Somalia since then.

Any deeper involvement in Somalia would come against a background of greater involvement across Africa. Earlier this month, four U.S. servicemen were killed in a firefight in Niger with militants there.

Yet the same challenges experienced in conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan face any counter-insurgency effort in Somalia.

Somalia is suffering its worst drought in 40 years, with the effects of climatic catastrophe compounded by war and poor governance. Al-Shabaab's control over populations in rural areas in much of the south and central Somalia is such that the group was able to impose a ban on humanitarian assistance in areas they control, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to choose between death from starvation and disease or brutal punishment.

(Source: The Guardian)

“Chang JCPOA” is not different from “Violate JCPOA”

Points Regarding the Latest Changes in JCPOA in the United States

By Ali Alemi

TEHRAN — Finally, Donald Trump, President of the United States, refused to confirm Iran's commitment to the JCPOA, on the advice of individuals such as the United States representative in the Security Council, Nikki Haley, and urged Congress and his European companions to find a solution to the disadvantages of the nuclear deal. Subsequently, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said the United States has not intended to change the current version and is seeking a "secondary agreement" in this regard. There are some points that need to be addressed in this regard:

■ **1.** Donald Trump, in various lobbies and negotiations with some congressional senators, European Troika and AIPAC lobbyists, has explicitly sought to change some of the provisions of the nuclear deal with Iran. These cases mainly contain:

- The International Atomic Energy Agency could have full access to military sites in Iran, on the pretext of revising Section T of the Annex 1 of the JCPOA.

The expiry date of certain nuclear restrictions on Iran's nuclear program is to be eliminated, and these are subject to permanent constraints. In this regard, it is necessary to revise and change the section called Sunset.

- The issue of Iran's missile power in the form of an addendum will be attached to the nuclear deal or arranged in such a way that Iran's missile power can be limited in parallel with the JCPOA.

■ **2.** As we can see, making changes in any of these cases will be the same as changing the nuclear deal and turning it into an agreement that has not been accepted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the past, present and future. Meanwhile, American and European officials, instead of focusing on the nature and content of the issue, have sought to maintain a framework for the nuclear deal and, at the same time, change its content. The U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in his most recent statement has emphasized that one of America's worries is the Sunset clauses in JCPOA, and accordingly there may be a need for a second deal!



The expiry date of certain nuclear restrictions on Iran's nuclear program is to be eliminated, and these are subject to permanent constraints.

The fact is that among the U.S. game with words such as the "secondary agreement", "complementary agreement", and "addendum", our country's foreign diplomacy and foreign policy device, must emphasize one important principle: That any re-negotiation or action over JCPOA is considered our red line. What is certain is that any action that leads to a change in the content of the JCPOA, should be identified as a real red line by the Iranian diplomacy and foreign policy system.

Tom Cotton's negative attitude has always been backed up by AIPAC lobbyists and the opponents of the nuclear deal have opened a special account on his lobbies in the Senate.

In the meantime, it does not matter that how do the American and European authorities try to change the nuclear deal and meet the demands of Trump administration. In this regard, the "essential" dimension of the subject should be focused on by our diplomatic and foreign policy apparatus. Obviously, any negotiations in this regard should be taken as synonymous to change in the nature of JCPOA and

subsequently annulment of the nuclear agreement.

- The role of the United States Representative in the United Nations, Nikki Haley, has been highlighted in the recent Trump's report against the JCPOA and the announcement of our country's lack of commitment to the nuclear deal. The Politico announced in its recent report that it was Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, who, in contrast to the prudence of other members of Trump administration, paved the way

■ **3.** Tom Cotton, the 40-year-old Senator of the State of Arkansas is also considered the main opponent of the JCPOA in the Congress. Tom Cotton is in favor of complete abolition of the nuclear deal and the resumption of sanctions against Iran. Cotton's goal of maneuvering on this issue is not merely the cancellation of JCPOA and walking away from the nuclear deal with Iran. He is thinking of another purpose which is becoming the Director of the CIA. In one of his most recent positions, Cotton told to the opponents of the JCPOA's violation within Trump's administration to resign from their post or to follow the President of the U.S. in this way.

These statements by Cotton have raised a lot of controversy in the U.S. media. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and James Mattis, Secretary of Defense, have been the main addressees of Tom Cotton. Tom Cotton's negative attitude has always been backed up by AIPAC lobbyists and the opponents of the nuclear deal have opened a special account on his lobbies in the Senate. Interestingly enough, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the UN have also stated her agreement with Tom Cotton in confrontation with some of Trump's administration members.

- Trump has threatened the congressmen and some of his European allies to unilaterally withdraw from the nuclear deal, if it's not to be reformed (in favor of U.S. interests). In this regard, Trump has practically threatened other members of the P1 + 5 to use of the trigger mechanism. Undoubtedly, we will soon hear more about the trigger mechanism and the Trump's reason for making use of this part of resolution 2231 in the media.

Finally, the "change of JCPOA" does not have the slightest difference with "Violation of JCPOA". Even the costs of changing the deal will be far greater than its cancellation. Hence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, under any circumstances, should condemn any action in the context of a re-negotiation of the nuclear deal or any related subject (including the conclusion of a secondary agreement in this regard).

Everything about iranian nuclear spy

➡ After the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution, he was employed at the Ministry of Defense and undertook the responsibility of looking into the claims of Iran from U.S. government. After a while, Iranian Defense Ministry found that he was ruling in favor of America in most litigations between Iran and U.S.

In general, despite all well-grounded documents, he was throwing his heavyweight on the US government in almost all cases and for this reason, he was fired from the Ministry of Defense and headed to Canada.

In 2013 and shortly after the establishment of 11th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence", he was appointed as the senior adviser to the Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Valiollah Seif. Concurrently, he was cooperating at the Board of Directors of one of private banks in the country, earning huge amount of salary per month.

In the wake of nuclear talks and when the parties involved in the talks were negotiating with each other, Dorri-Esfahani was introduced by the Central Bank of Iran to the nuclear negotiating team as an expert official in charge of following up financial issue and banking relations officially. After implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official title of nuclear deal, in mid-July 2015, he was appointed as an active member in the Headquarters to Follow Up JCPOA by the Iranian President Rouhani.

It should be noted that he has Canadian citizenship who was arrested in July 2016, charged with having relationship with western intelligence services.

According to the well-grounded documents, he has done his cooperation with western companies through a corporation named PWC.

"PWC", covering espionage system around the World PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) is a multinational company, headquartered in London, which is offering widespread services in the field of accounting, financial, trade, business and insurance.

Moreover, PWC has main offices in the countries including Egypt, Germany, U.S., Peru, Australia, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Poland, Spain, Ghana, New Zealand and United Arab Emirates (UAE).

It should be noted that regional office of this British corporation in the United Arab Emirates is responsible



for covering activities in the Middle Eastern countries and Persian Gulf littoral states.

In the wake of nuclear talks and when the parties involved in the talks were negotiating with each other, Dorri-Esfahani was introduced by the Central Bank of Iran to the nuclear negotiating team as an expert official in charge of following up financial issue and banking relations officially.

"Dorri" Used for Western Intelligence Services

When Dorri was employed in this company, he was responsible for following up activities in Dubai repre-

sentative office as subsidiary of Regional Office in the Middle East. The main task of this office was collecting Iran's economic data for Iranian employees with dual nationalities covered by financial and auditing consultations, details of which were provided to the western's intelligence services.

Of his other activities, we can name facilitating in introduction of key individuals, assisting and giving consultation services with relation to any meeting or dialogue that PWC has had with 5+1 (the five permanent members of UN Security Council plus Germany).

In the same direction, his daughter, moreover doing financial and business activities and cooperating with PWC, was considered as one of the member of Board of Directors of a company tasked with extraction of gold in Canada.

It should be noted that Dorri-Esfahani has made his utmost effort to set up a representative office of PWC Company in Tehran and finally, he failed to do it.

Roots of change: Make migration work for rural development

➡ Rural households often bear the brunt of these drivers. Most of the world's poor live in rural areas, and many rural youth, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, migrate in the absence of productive opportunities.

But let's set the story straight: Despite widely held perceptions, most of those who migrate remain in their countries of origin. There are around 763 million internal migrants worldwide, one in every eight people on the planet with the majority moving from the countryside to cities. Of the 244 million international migrants recorded in 2015, one-third came from G20 countries and consisted of people who moved to pursue more productive opportunities. South-South migratory flows are now larger than those from developing to the developed nations.

-----Make migration a choice

Conflict, rural poverty, and climate change, all demand increasing attention as they drive up distress migration as a last resort, which generates a tangle of moral, political and economic problems for migrants, their eventual hosts and the transit points in between. We all have roots and few of us wish to sever them. In fact, even in the most extreme situations, people would rather remain at home.

Inclusive rural development can help on all fronts, curbing conflict, boosting sustainability and making migration a matter of choice rather than desperation.

Decent employment opportunities – which can be generated by productive agriculture and supporting activities ranging from seed research and credit provision to storage infrastructure and food processing businesses – are urgently needed to convince a fast-growing number of young people in rural areas that there are better fates than hazardous journeys to unknown destinations.

Migration itself is part of rural development, seasonal migration is closely linked to the agricultural calendars, and remittances are a huge force for improving both rural welfare and farm productivity. Migrants' contribution to development needs to be recognized and cherished, as they are the bridges between countries of origin, transit and destination.

FAO is working to address the root causes of migration. This means promoting policy options that favour vulnerable people. It includes youth job training and inclusive access to credit, crafting social protection programmes that offer cash or in-kind transfers, specific measures to support those returning to rural areas of origin, and offering assistance for the provision of seeds, fertilizers and animal-health services, fine-tuning early warning systems for weather risks and by working for sustainable natural resource and land use.

As co-chair in 2018 of the Global Migration Group, comprising 22 UN agencies and the World Bank, FAO will advocate for solutions that make migration an act of choice and not a desperate last resort. Agriculture and rural development have a key role to play in this.

Challenges McCain-Graham's team face



➡ Interestingly, McCain and Graham, who both have concerns over Trump in the White House, are the two influential senators in the U.S. senate where some of the members of the Congress follow in their footsteps.

U.S. president's irrational, emotional and distant attitude has even made the most radical senators such as McCain and Graham to struggle to justify and support the president.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt in the next weeks or even months, we will witness escalation of internal arguments among the U.S. republicans over Trump leadership like his strategy on the Iran deal.

Decoding UK FM's remarks: London's green light to U.S. against JCPOA

➡ UK Foreign Ministry in a statement has called Iran as a controversial hub for the business transactions.

Currently, Boris Johnson is missioned to showcase the issue of "Iran's nuclear deal, JCPOA" as ordinary in order to render services to the authorities in Trump Administration.

After that, Boris Johnson along with U.S. authorities will try to consider Iran's opposition with renegotiation of nuclear deal under the title of an "Unusual Objection".

Under such circumstance, it is obvious that Iranian Foreign Ministry should be vigilant and careful of UK role on Iran's nuclear deal.

Undoubtedly, the role of UK authorities will be more complicated in coming days particularly at the threshold of final decision of representatives at the U.S. Congress on JCPOA.

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Iran set global precedent by opening refugees' access to healthcare: UNHCR rep.

1 → UNHCR is also supporting the local authorities to renovate some limited number of shelters in settlements where and when the needs are greatest and most urgent. Renovating shelters ensures the physical safety and dignity of refugees and prevents possible accidents due to any deterioration of building structures.

■ It is not just Afghan refugees, but also Iraqis who have found shelter in Iran from their war-stricken countries. What has UNHCR done to help Iran provide better facilities such as health benefits and education for refugees and their children?

A. As for Afghans and Iraqis, Iran hosts some 950,000 registered Afghan and 29,000 Iraqi refugees. These are individuals who are recognized as refugees by the government of Iran and UNHCR and hold Amayesh cards.

UNHCR in Iran is very grateful for the protection and assistance that the Islamic Republic of Iran has provided to refugees for now over 35 years.

The Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior is UNHCR's main governmental counterpart in Iran with regard to refugee affairs in Iran with whom we have built very good working relations.

Our main interventions are in the areas of health, education, and livelihoods in an effort to improve access to services for refugees. We work under the umbrella of a regional multi-year strategy known as the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) in an effort to find more viable solutions for the very large population of refugees hosted in Iran. I mention some major interventions and policies as examples of services provided to refugees in Iran.

In regard to health, the Islamic Republic of Iran is rendering free of charge primary healthcare services to all refugees. In addition, Iran has set a global precedent by opening the access of all refugees into its Salamat Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) which provides health insurance services similar to that of Iranian nationals.

The implementation of the UPHI creates large protection dividends and plays an essential role in enhancing refugees' social protection and their resilience.

In the area of education, refugee children have access to education and over 360,000 refugee children study side by side with Iranian children. As one of its major contributions, UNHCR supports the government through construction of co-funded schools, benefiting both refugees and host communities in areas with high refugee population. In May 2016 the revision of the regulations on the registration of foreign national students in Iran resulted in the removal of any refugee-specific tuition fees (USD \$70-90 per child) for primary and secondary education, which further facilitated the access of the refugee children to education, including for the most vulnerable and economically challenged families. Additionally, UNHCR supports the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) in their efforts to provide literacy-related services to refugee adults and over-aged children.

In May 2015, Iran's Supreme Leader issued a decree allowing all Afghan children of school age, regardless of their documentation status, to attend primary and secondary school education, resulting in an additional 50,000 Afghan and Iraqi children enrollments.

In the area of livelihoods, the government of Iran together with UNHCR strive towards ensuring that refugees gain access to vocational education and demand-driven skills so that they can earn a sustainable living and positively contribute to society during their stay in Iran and that they are equipped with the necessary skills to help rebuild their lives and their society when they voluntarily return to their homeland.

■ Iran has banned presence and restricted travels of Afghan refugees in certain cities and provinces. To what extent do you believe Iran's refugee regulation on Afghan mobility across the country is in conformity with international law on refugees?

A. In 2001, the government adopted a No-Go Areas (NGAs) policy, whereby entire or specific parts of provinces were declared as 'no-go' for foreigners, including refugees. However the policy was not implemented until 2007, and



© Tehran Times/Mohammad Khodabakhshi

When the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, was in Iran in June 2016, he noted that he was taken by surprise by the steadily growing volume of services rendered to refugees in Iran.

then refugees in NGAs were given the choice of relocating to designated areas, or returning to their country of origin. Of the 31 provinces in Iran, currently 17 are entirely NGAs and 11 are partially NGAs. They are largely near border areas which remain sensitive for security reasons. The government informed UNHCR that there is no plan to declare new NGAs.

While the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees sets the threshold on the enjoyment of rights and obligations of refugees in their host countries, refugees are expected to conform to the laws and regulations, as well as measures taken for the maintenance of public order in host societies. It is important to mark that the enjoyment of rights is fundamentally guided by the principle of non-discrimination based on race, religion or country of origin. In the same context, specific regulations introduced by the host countries, such as the establishment of the no-go areas that are applicable to all non-nationals and based on the protection of specific government interests that are not specifically targeting refugee populations would not amount to contradicting the principle of freedom of movement of refugees as set in the context of the Art. 26 of the Geneva Convention.

Art. 26. "Each Contracting State shall accord to refugees lawfully in its territory the right to choose their place of residence and to move freely within its territory subject to any regulations applicable to aliens generally in the same circumstances".

■ Has UNHCR taken any initiatives for safe and voluntary refugee repatriation from Iran?

A. UNHCR continues to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghans and Iraqis to their respective countries of origin, although voluntary return has reduced over the years due to the increasing insecurity in Afghanistan and Iraq. The figure of 16,000 individuals that repatriated in 2012, has decreased to only 2,426 individuals in 2016.

Documented Afghan refugees who volunteer for return approach a BAFIA office to submit their Amayesh refugee ID card, receive their Laissez Passer (LP), approach UNHCR offices (Voluntary Repatriation Centres), reconfirm their voluntary repatriation, receive a transportation grant and a number of relief items for their journey home and finally receive their voluntary repatriation fund at entry level inside their home country, assisting them to settle down upon arrival.

■ Will UNHCR provide volunteer positions for Iranian citizens to gain experience at UNHCR?

A. UNHCR Iran operation systematically posts several internship positions for its Programme, Protection, External Relations and Field units open to all Iranian citizen applicants. These internship positions, which are usually for a six month period, offer a unique opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge regarding the operation and its various projects and joint activities with the government.

■ Do you personally know of any immigrant or their family whose story touched your heart?

A. Recently the story of a 1 year old infant baby girl named Masoumeh who was born with a birth deficiency in which the backbone and spinal canal do not close before birth, a life-threatening condition with high risk of permanent paralysis, touched the hearts of many in our office. Masoumeh needed urgent surgery yet treatment cost would place a huge financial burden with many ramifications for her entire family like putting them at risk of eviction from their house, her siblings not being able to attend school due to financial barriers, debt, and so on. However enrolling in the UPHI scheme and obtaining the Salamat insurance booklet, enabled her to receive her life saving surgery this July (costing 150,000,000 IRR) in Children's Hospital in Tehran. The insurance paid 90% of the expenses (hospital bill and other medical costs) and gave her the chance for a new healthy life. She is continuing to use the insurance for her follow up treatments and her family will definitely continue to enroll in the scheme in the coming cycle knowing the benefits. Her family is overcome with joy and are ecstatic to see their baby girl healthy and happy.

■ How much has your organization highlighted Iran's services to Afghan refugees, especially free education for their children? Iran itself is suffering from high unemployment rate and the refugees have robbed many job opportunities, yet Iranians think the international community is not thankful enough of them.

A. UNHCR believes that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been an exemplary host to refugees yet not enough is known to the international world. Hence, for more information sharing and awareness raising, UNHCR takes every opportunity - at international and national fora, conferences and meetings - to highlight the generosity and exemplary services rendered by Iran to refugees residing here; going from the United Nations Secretary General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and myself as the UNHCR Representative in Iran. We also use any advocacy tool, whether through Press Releases, interviews and organizing events among others so-on many more to reflect these laudable services and the kindness of the people of Iran for hosting such a large population of refugees now for more than three decades whilst highlighting that UNHCR contributions are very minimal in comparison to that of the government of Iran.

When the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, was in Iran in June 2016, he noted that he was taken by surprise by the steadily growing volume of services rendered to refugees in Iran, and expressed hope international bodies would further assist refugees in Iran. He further stated that "the international community should be very grateful for Iran's very high quality services to refugees."

■ What action has UNHCR taken

to relieve the sufferings of hundreds of thousands of the minority Rohingya community who have been trying to escape atrocities and execution brought upon them by the Myanmar military since August?

A. It is a terrible tragedy going on. We've seen tensions there in the past. I was actually the deputy representative of UNHCR in Myanmar from 2004 to 2007, some time ago, and so I am intimately familiar with Rakhine State where the Rohingya have fled from. The root problem is the fact that the government of Myanmar for some time now has not

given a legal status to these people. So it is not simply another ethnic group, it is a group that has not been recognized by the government. That is the primary, let's say, problem.

Myanmar is a very diverse country. You have the Bamar population as majority. But then you also have something like 135 national races as they call them. The Rohingya do not feature among those 135 national races. So, I think to describe it as a situation where you have discrimination against a Muslim community by itself maybe is a mischaracterization of it, because it is not simply that; it is beyond that. It is that fact that these people haven't been recognized, and so the government of Myanmar has been saying that they belong to Bangladesh; the government of Bangladesh saying No, No, these people have always been in your territory. And it has been very difficult.

So what UNHCR and a number of other bodies have been advocating for is that they are given residency and national legal status inside Myanmar. They have faced tremendous difficulties in that country, being sequestered in a particular area and their freedom of movement is extremely restricted.

And the issue of establishing a camp came up in 2012 because of some violence in 2012. We can go back. There have been a number of sad milestones of violence over the decades. The last very large movement from Myanmar to Bangladesh of Rohingya was in the early 1990s; let's say 1992 or so. Soon after that there was an agreement between the two countries and UNHCR that we head. And we had quite a large voluntary repatriation movement from Bangladesh back to Rakhine State, and because of that agreement UNHCR was given a role in monitoring that repatriation movement. So actually we had a very early presence in that part of Myanmar in Rakhine State.

Now, after the 2012 violence, there

was a lot of internal displacement and you have these camps that are being established since then. But you also now, after 2012, have much larger international humanitarian community working in the area as well. In addition to UNHCR, a number of UN agencies and a number of NGOs and others are working there.

What are we doing for the Rohingya are on the Myanmar side. Obviously, there is a lot of advocacy with regard to how we can advance this argument for legal status. That has now become a political issue and I think Kofi Annan was given the mission at the request of Aung San Suu Kyi and he has come up with a set of recommendations. So I think what everybody is calling for is that the set of recommendations be reviewed by the government and be implemented.

But from humanitarian point of view, of course, there is a lot of work going on inside Myanmar in that area in terms of assisting those people who are internally displaced but also those people who are in their villages and are finding it still quite difficult.

On the Bangladesh border, of course, the high commissioner for refugees was actually in Bangladesh in the camps on September 23. But we are stepping up our activities in the area. The location where they are is completely overwhelmed. No body one month ago could have envisaged 400,000 people crossing the border in such a short time. Because we had two camps in that area of registered refugees because there was also a number of unregistered persons who were also outside of the camp. But those camps had collectively about 28,000 people. So you can imagine how they are completely overwhelmed. There are some new camps that I believe are being established and thank God for the generosity of the government of Bangladesh for opening their borders and welcoming these people because it is a very, very desperate situation.

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex, a Gem in Northern Iran

Special Offer for Travelers Who Want to Enjoy a Trip in Northern Iran

In hot days of summer, travelers, who choose the coastal towns of Mazandaran Province for recreations alongside of the sea with breathtaking views, will experience a memorable days with their families in "SHAHR" Welfare Complex. Travelling to the northern cities of the country and visiting must-see sites and sceneries of the Caspian Sea is one of the first decisions taken by families for summer trips and holidays.

Meanwhile, most travelers prefer to use the coastal waters of Mazandaran Province to make unforgettable memories along with family or friends.

Among coastal cities of Mazandaran Province, Izadshahr is an ideal place for summer trips due to its favorable climatic condition. This city is located at 8 km West of Mahmoudabad and 7 km east of the Noor city in Mazandaran Province.

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex is one of the best welfare and recreational hubs in Izadshahr which is offered to the northern travelers. It has a beautiful residential and tourist area along with all amenities and facilities and can be considered as the most suitable option for staying a few days along the Caspian Sea.

This modern and newly-built complex is equipped with 188 seafront apartment units, constructed in seven floors with a unique view, located in a dreamy town for passengers and travelers special of ESKANO.

All units of this residential and welfare complex are equipped with two- and three-bedrooms, duplex, fully furnished (with stylish and classy furniture). It should be noted that the beachfront terrace has increased the attractions of the surrounding environment to a great extent.

Of the other amenities of this Complex, it should be referred to the private beach, a children's park, a football field, beach volleyball, basketball, Ping-Pong, a gym, a bike ride, a swimming pool, sauna and Jacuzzi as free of charge, etc.

On the other hand, senior managers of "SHAHR" Welfare Complex have considered special offer for government departments and organizations and can benefit from special discount within the framework of conclusion of a yearlong and/or long-term contract.



For more information about the facilities of this Complex and other units, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the following number: **01144536231, 01144536250 and/or 02144536093** @shahr_66

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex's Address:
Golsar No. 3, Izadshahr, Noor, Mazandaran Province

Traces of Elamite urban life detected in northcentral Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Vestiges of urban life attributed **d e s k** to Elamite-era (c. 2700 – 539 BC) have been found at Tappeh Sofalin, a prehistoric archaeological site located near Pishva, Tehran province, Mehr reported on Monday.



Experts are seen at an excavation site at Tappeh Sofalin, northcentral Iran.

“For many years, we have been searching for such architectural evidence that proves Tappeh Sofalin was not solely a marketplace or bazaar but a dwelling place as well,” Mehr quoted Morteza Hessari who leads a team of Iranian and German archaeologists at the site.

“We already encountered some remnants of human life including fragments of potteries as well as architectural remnants by the end of the sixth excavation season.”

The team ultimately expanded excavation zones when the seventh season commenced, a strategy that resulted in further discoveries associated with urban architecture, he explained.

Several famous ceramics unearthed such as pot-shaped, nose-handle containers, a tray, as well as dual and multiple color vessels, Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism reported.

Experts believe that Tappeh Sofalin was inhabited since fourth millennium BC up to the Iron Age. Excavation at the site started in 2006 under the supervision of Hessari.

Tappeh Sofalin is located northward Pishva and east of the Rey plain adjacent to Varamin.

Elam was an ancient pre-Iranian civilization centered in the far-west and south-west of what is now modern-day Iran, stretching from the lowlands of what is now Khuzestan and Ilam provinces as well as a small part of southern Iraq.

Filipinos to enjoy visa-free entry to Taiwan

Philippine nationals could become eligible for visa-free entry for stays in Taiwan of up to 14 days by next month or November, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Director-General Winston Chen said on Sunday.

The details of the new policy were hammered out at an inter-ministerial meeting of national security, police, immigration and other officials, Chen said at a news conference, adding that Premier William Lai approved the program on Wednesday.

The government has decided to implement the visa-free program on a trial basis to promote people-to-people, tourist and commercial exchanges between Taiwan and the Philippines, Chen said, adding that the start date for the trial is expected to be announced in a month. (Source: Taipei Times)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Garajonay National Park

Not far off the north-west coast of Africa lies the island of La Gomera, one of Spain’s seven islands that make up the Canary Islands archipelago in the Atlantic.

These high, volcanic islands are the first to receive the rains arriving from the west, and have thus retained the remnants of a rich and luxuriant forest — the laurisilva or Laurel forest — on their windward peaks.



Tourists revel in Garajonay National Park in Spain, the UNESCO-registered property embraces a great diversity of plant species.

Next to the Laurisilva of Madeira (Portugal), Garajonay National Park preserves an outstanding example of this unique vegetation, which remains almost permanently shrouded in clouds and mist.

These forests are relict ecosystems, living remnants of the old rainforests and warm temperate forests that occupied much of Europe and North Africa during the Tertiary. Today, they are a refuge for an exceptional number of endemic species, which in many cases are also threatened.

A UNESCO World Heritage, Garajonay National Park covers some 11% of the island and is an important source of water for Gomera, with its network of permanently flowing streams, the best preserved in the Canary Islands.

The forest hosts a great diversity of plant species, which are often surrounded by a sea of fog that gives the forest a magical aspect. These fogs are vital for the forest, producing the necessary moisture essential for the survival of this lavish green environment located within an otherwise arid island. (Source: UNESCO)

Yazd on way to become first “City of Tourists” in Iran

I → The oasis city of Yazd is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains. Its historical structure enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

With its winding lanes, forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring as a ‘don’t miss’



The skyline of Yazd, a UNESCO-registered city in central Iran

destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The city has an interesting mix of people as well, some 10 percent of whom follow the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism.

Booming small businesses can buttress tourism in Iran: official

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Empow-**d e s k** ering small businesses can be used as an initiative which can consequently cater to boom in the country’s travel and hospitality sectors, said Ali-Asghar Mounesan, the director of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization.

“We have pursued [the goal of] promoting small businesses that are associated with the tourism sector in order to benefit from those capacities in the short term until we are able to develop the necessary infrastructure,” CHTN quoted Mounesan as saying on Sunday.

One of the objectives that are being pursued by organization is to take advantage of potentials that are currently accessible in the country and expand them, he added.

“Presently, tourism industry is ranked third in the global economy while the sector accounts for 2400 billion dollars of the world’s gross domestic product,” the official said, adding “The latest figures show that the number of tourists in the world



Foreign travelers pose for a photo during their visit to the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, in southern Iran.

Safavid-era bridge undergoes restoration



A view of Seyyed Abad bridge in Ardebil, northwest Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iran’s **d e s k** cultural heritage body has rehabilitated the historical bridge of Seyyed Abad that stands tall in Ardebil, northwest Iran, CHTN reported on Sunday.

The monument is a combination of cobblestones and mudbricks, which also dates from Safavid era (1501–1736).

Measuring 24 meters long,

3.5 meters wide and 5.35 meters high, the bridge is named after the neighborhood it is situated at.

Ardebil, the capital of East Azarbaijan province, makes an interesting stopover for travelers to the country. The UNESCO-listed Sheikh Safi-od-Din Mausoleum, which also dates from Safavid dynasty, is amongst attractions of the city.

Discovery of Arabic words “Allah” and “Ali” on Viking funeral costumes raises questions on influence of Islam in Scandinavia

The discovery of Arabic characters that spell “Allah” and “Ali” on Viking funeral costumes in boat graves in Sweden has raised questions about the influence of Islam in Scandinavia.

The grave where the costumes were found belonged to a woman dressed in silk burial clothes and was excavated from a field in Gamla Uppsala, north of Stockholm, in the 1970s, but its contents were not cataloged until a few years ago, Annika Larsson, a textile archaeologist at Uppsala University, said on Friday.

Among the contents unearthed: a necklace with a figurine; two coins from Baghdad; and the bones of a rooster and a large dog.

Dr. Larsson discovered the Arabic characters in February, as she was preparing some of the items for an exhibition on Viking couture in Enköping, Sweden. She had been trying to recreate textile patterns for the exhibits — by comparing motifs on the burial dress with a silk band found around the head of a skeleton in a Viking grave at Birka, Sweden — when she discovered Kufic characters of Arabic.

At first, she said, she could not make sense of the tiny geometric designs in both fabrics.

“Then I remembered seeing them in similar Moorish designs in silk ribbons from Spain,” she said. “I understood it had to be a kind of Arabic character, not Nordic.”

Upon closer examination of the band from all an-

gles, she said, she realized she was looking at Kufic script. The words “Allah” and “Ali” appeared in the silk found in Boat Grave 36 and in many other graves — and, most intriguing, the word Allah could be seen when reflected in a mirror. The same patterns have been found in mosaic grave monuments in Central Asia.

Dr. Larsson has long noted the prevalence of silk from Asia in Scandinavian Viking graves. But the analysis of these materials, the weaving techniques and design indicated a combination of Persian and Central Asian origins.

“A giddy thought is that the bands, as well as the costumes, were produced west of what was the Muslim heartland,” she said.

The evidence, she added, supported the theory that the Viking settlements in the Malar Valley of Sweden were, in fact, a western outpost of the Silk Road that stretched through Russia to silk-producing centers east of the Caspian Sea.

It is well known that the Vikings traded with the Arab world, and archaeologists have found plenty of Arab coins in Viking settlements. The trade lasted 150 years, beginning in the first half of the ninth century.

But Dr. Larsson said that the silk and other artifacts found in the Viking graves suggested not just trade or plundering — but a deeper cultural exchange and shared ideas. (Source: The New York Times)

Tehran exhibit features wooden handcrafted vessels, utensils



Wooden fruit bowls are seen in a file photo

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A **d e s k** patchwork of wooden vessels and utensils, handcrafted by Iranian artisan Sajjad Badkoubeh, has been put on show at the headquarters of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization in Tehran.

“High-density wood pieces have been used for making the dishes and vessels,” Badkoubeh who is a native of Gilan province told Mehr on Sunday, adding, finishes of all the products are free of any chemicals.

“The woodcutting process has been done completely in a traditional style using an ax and without the intervention of machineries.”

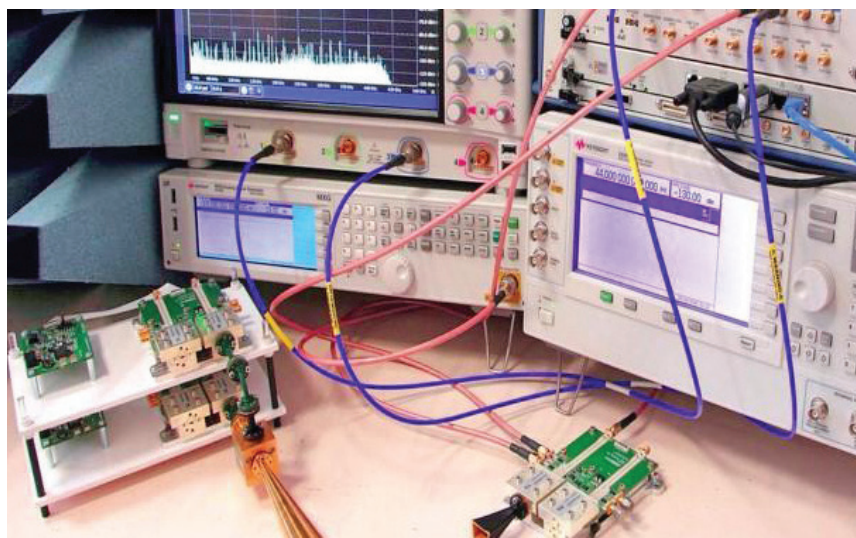
The exhibit will be running until October 18. It features over 200 workable products such as bowls, plates, spoons, trays, disposers and other forms of utensils.

Over the past couple of years, dozens of high-quality Iranian handicrafts have been honored with the UNESCO Seal of Excellence.



A Viking figurine from Bornholm, Denmark, with the typical circular motifs found in silk fabric from Central Asia. Similar patterns were found in the graves in Sweden.

5G networks to use new millimeter wave antennas: Iranian scientist



The need to roll out 5G networks can't be more urgent than now, what with the proliferation of internet based devices and data usage, which is higher than ever in the past.

A new research might hold the key to faster rollout of 5G networks — researchers at the Ohio State University have created hovering antennas that will be able to put out 5G signals that can avoid interruptions.

This is important as 5G signals are

very sensitive and more susceptible to interruptions than current 4G signals.

The researchers have taken up the millimeter wave technology — which is being worked upon for 5G network penetration — and are working on spreading it through “hovering” antennas capable of high-speed data transmission on high frequencies.

“Nowadays, we use cellphones for all sorts of wireless communication for voice and video transmission. There is a need

and a growth every year. Every year we need a lot more [signal strength] to send and receive more data than the previous year. We are trying to go about 50 times higher frequency to get us 50 times higher bandwidth. So, the idea is to create devices that transmit and receive data at these very high frequencies,” Nima Ghalichechian, assistant professor in electrical and computer engineering at the Ohio State University and the leading author on the project said in a press release.

Higher frequencies would mean higher data proliferation, as the lower frequencies are already crowded due to current data demands.

Not only that, the solution provided by the researchers is also more cost efficient than say, laying fiber optic cables, and will help in creating 5G infrastructure much faster. The researchers have 3D printed special antennas that can utilize millimeter wave technology for this.

“Think of it like a diaphragm supported by small posts, but it's mostly floating. The idea is to physically isolate the antenna from the lossy substrate. Suspend it in air,” Ghalichechian further stated, explaining the functioning of the antennas, which are currently mounted on silicon substrates, which create a loss in signals, but the researchers are working on spe-



Nima Ghalichechian

cial 3D printed lensing structures that will contain this loss.

Data usage is currently on a high, but 5G is more important because of the popularity of internet of things devices such as smart speakers. For such devices to function around the clock they need to be connected 24/7 and need to have access to high speed data networks so that they can transmit high amounts of data easily — for example if you have a smart security camera and need data from a particular time last week, the camera should be able to filter data and provide the user the video feed within minutes.

(Source: lbt)

Study says a large number of Adélie penguins are dead in Antarctica

A catastrophic event in Antarctica has left a large number of Adélie penguins dead. Only two chicks out of a colony of nearly 40,000 birds have managed to survive the disaster.

The World Wildlife Fund for Nature said the Adélie penguin chicks have starved to death since the beginning of this year, due to the “unusually extensive sea ice”, which made food supplies very difficult to find.

Adélie Land, or Adélie Terre, is a sector of Antarctica claimed by France and was discovered by French explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville back in the 1840's. It is home to a large number of penguins and was the filming location of the 2005 French documentary, “March of the Penguins”.

Most amazing animals

“Adélie penguins are one of the hardiest and most amazing animals on our planet,” said Rod Downie, Head of Polar Programs at the World Wildlife Fund.

“This devastating event contrasts with the image that many people might have of penguins. It's more like ‘Tarantino does Happy Feet’, with dead penguin chicks strewn across a beach in Adélie Land.”

This is not the first time this has happened. Four years ago, the breeding activity of Adélie penguins was also disrupted by “unusual environmental conditions” both on land and at sea. During the 2013-2014 breeding season, no chicks survived.

What Happens Next?

Right now, environmental groups are worried that proposals to open up the area to krill fisheries would further deteriorate the situation, because Adélie penguins depend on krill availability to survive.

Protecting penguin population

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) plan to meet in

Hobart, Australia next week, in order to discuss and consider a new Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposal that will protect the local penguin population and keep the area “off limits” to the krill finishing industry. This will also provide a safe spot where the breeding activity will take place.

Due to the effects of global warming, the population of Adélie Penguins has experienced a 50 percent decline since the 1980's, according to a report by Oceanites. The population of Gentoo penguins, on the other hand, has witnessed nearly a 40 percent growth during the same period.

A recent study has shown that most of the terrestrial biodiversity of Antarctica is found in only 1 percent of the continent's ice-free area. This isolated area can become a suitable place for breeding activities for other animals.

(Source: Tech Times)

Ion thruster prototype breaks records in tests, could send humans to Mars

A thruster that's being developed for a future NASA mission to Mars broke several records during recent tests, suggesting that the technology is on track to take humans to the Red Planet within the next 20 years, project team members said.

The X3 thruster, which was designed by researchers at the University of Michigan in cooperation with NASA and the U.S. Air Force, is a Hall thruster — a system that propels spacecraft by accelerating a stream of electrically charged atoms, known as ions.

In the recent demonstration conducted at NASA's Glenn Research Center in Ohio, the X3 broke records for the maximum power output, thrust and operating current achieved by a Hall thruster to

date, according to the research team at the University of Michigan and representatives from NASA.

Range of power

“We have shown that X3 can operate at over 100 kW of power,” said Alec Gallimore, who is leading the project, in an interview with Space.com. “It operated at a huge range of power from 5 kW to 102 kW, with electrical current of up to 260 amperes. It generated 5.4 Newtons of thrust, which is the highest level of thrust achieved by any plasma thruster to date,” added Gallimore, who is dean of engineering at the University of Michigan. The previous record was 3.3 Newtons, according to the school.

Hall thrusters and other types of ion engines use electricity (usually generat-

ed by solar panels) to expel plasma — a gas-like cloud of charged particles — out a nozzle, thus generating thrust. This technique can propel spacecraft to much greater speeds than chemical propulsion rockets can, according to NASA.

That's why researchers are so interested in ion propulsion's potential application for long-distance space travel. Whereas the maximum velocity that can be achieved by a chemical rocket is about 5 kilometers per second, a Hall thruster could get a craft up to 40 kilometers per second, Gallimore said.

Chemical-powered rockets

Ion engines are also known to be more efficient than chemical-powered rockets, featuring what Gallimore described as a better “miles per gallon” ra-

tio. A Hall-thruster-powered spacecraft would get cargo and astronauts to Mars using much less propellant than a chemical rocket, he said. (A common propellant for ion thrusters is xenon; indeed, NASA's Dawn spacecraft, which is currently orbiting the dwarf planet Ceres, uses this gas.)

A head-on shot of the X3 ion thruster firing at 50 kilowatts, viewed through a warped mirror in the vacuum chamber.

A head-on shot of the X3 ion thruster firing at 50 kilowatts, viewed through a warped mirror in the vacuum chamber.

“You can think of electric propulsion as having 10 times the miles per gallon compared to chemical propulsion,” Gallimore said.

(Source: space.com)

IRANCELL to Take Part Strongly in Iran Telecom 2017 with Latest Achievements

As the most prestigious event in the field of information technology (IT) and communications in the country, the 18th International Exhibition of Information and Telecommunications Industries dubbed “IRAN TELECOM 2017” will be held on Oct. 16-19, 2017 at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Like previous years, IRANCELL will showcase its latest achievements and services in exclusive Hall No. 27 with the

motto of “Experience of Digital Life”.

As the largest data operator in the country, IRANCELL tries to showcase its latest achievements and services based on modern telecommunications technologies in various fields such as organizational strategies, experience of digital life, modern information and communications methods and mobile payment, new experiences in the market of telecommunications in compatible with the interests and requirements of various strata of society.

It is worth mentioning that IRANCELL will display diversified products and services such as “Lens-Interactional TV Application” and other applications, multipurpose account and also diversified packages of mobile internet, etc.

Of the other divisions of IRANCELL exclusive hall, it should be referred to introducing services such as roaming and smart island of IRANCELL, so that visitors will be familiarized with the evolution of development of communication technologies.

Possibility of experiencing high-speed internet (4-G and 4.5-G), free Wi-Fi station, introduction of audio conversation on the bedrock of 4-G (VoLTE), etc. are of the other salient services which will be displayed on IRANCELL Exclusive Hall.

It should be noted that IRANCELL will welcome dear visitors at 18th International Exhibition of Telecommunications and Information Industries dubbed “IRAN TELECOM 2017” and invites them all to pay a visit to the IRANCELL HALL.

Electricity Export to Azerbaijan Up 82%: CEO

Statistics showed that 882,000 KW/hour power energy was exported to Republic of Azerbaijan by Gilan Regional Power Company in 2016.

Managing Director of Gilan Regional Power Company Eng. Azim Bolbolabadi announced the above statement and said: “Although 100 KV and 882,000 KW/hour electricity was exported to neighboring Azerbaijan, any power was not imported into the country in the last Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017).”

He pointed to the rate of exchanging electricity with regional power companies and said: “1,062,162 MW and also 1,127,954 MW/hour electricity was exchanged between Azerbaijan and Mazandaran regional power companies respectively in the last Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017).”

In the end, senior official of the company pointed out that 4,592,201 MW/hour electricity was exchanged with Zanjan Regional Power Company in the same period.



EDBI Chief Reveals Finance and Refinance Credit Lines Received

Using short-term finance and refinance resources of foreign banks is considered as one of the methods for attracting foreign financial resources, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Moreover emphasizing on the promotion of export of nonoil commodities, Export Development Bank of Iran is playing the role of import and export bank (EXIM Bank) in the country.

As a matter of fact, EDBI facilitates

foreign trade in the import and export field of country.

Financing import of services to the Islamic Republic of Iran (implementation of plan inside the country) with long-term and repayment period is

the main aim of finance contracts.

It should be noted that repayment period of refinance contracts is set maximum one year for financing import of goods and services into the country, EDBI concluded.

These carbon fiber chairs are designed to be used on Mars

If Elon Musk wants to get a human crew to Mars by 2024, they'll need chairs, right?

That's the priority for Switzerland-based designer Thomas Missé, who has designed the “Mars Chair” with interplanetary colonization in mind.

“Before industries get set up in this new home all products will have to be imported from earth,” says Missé on his website. “This will be a drastic change in the way we look at the production: transportation will represent most of the cost.”

Missé has designed the lightweight, carbon fiber chair with the optimization of space and cost in mind — his team has estimated that furniture transportation to Mars would cost around 5000€ (\$5899.75) per kilogram.

“This approach allows to save around 7000€ per Mars Chair as well as 75 percent of the packed volume compared to an average stackable chair”

Missé has created each chair with a weight of just 500g on Earth, with eight-degree angled legs for “better stability in low gravity.” Plus, it's only 2mm thick, so can be stacked effectively within a ship — storage volume, according to Missé, is a key hurdle.

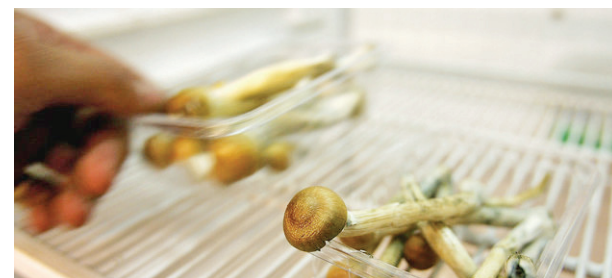
“Carbon fiber is usually an expensive material, however in this context its ratio between weight and strength will make it a cheap alternative to most furniture's materials,” says Missé on his website.

While there's a considerable amount to worry about before we figure out where to sit on Mars, at least some designers are considering the more practical, domestic aspects of colonizing another planet.

(Source: Mashable)

Magic mushrooms reset the brains of people with depression

A recreational drug beloved by Deadheads and Burning Man attendees could one day become a first-line treatment for clinical depression and a viable replacement for antidepressants such as SSRIs.



Researchers from Imperial College London suggest that magic mushrooms, also known as psilocybin, may help ease symptoms of the mental condition. Their study, published Friday in Scientific Reports, found that magic mushrooms are effective for depression as a way to “reset” the brain.

The researchers tested the drug on 20 patients with treatment-resistant depression. Two doses of psilocybin were effective in these patients five weeks following the treatment. Further assessments through brain scans showed physical changes as well, when comparing imaging before and after the treatment. The researchers noted critical neurological changes such as activity in the amygdala, the emotional center of the brain that is involved in producing feelings of stress and fear.

“Through collecting these imaging data, we have been able to provide a window into the aftereffects of psilocybin treatment in the brains of patients with chronic depression,” Dr. Robin Carhart-Harris, head of psychedelic research at Imperial College, said in a press statement. “Based on what we know from various brain imaging studies with psychedelics, as well as taking heed of what people say about their experiences, it may be that psychedelics do indeed ‘reset’ the brain networks associated with depression, effectively enabling them to be lifted from the depressed state.”

This is not the first study to show that psilocybin could effectively treat mental health conditions. Other research shows the drug is effective and safe to treat depression and anxiety in cancer patients.

(Source: Newsweek)

Men develop irregular heartbeat earlier than women, new study says

Men develop a type of irregular heartbeat, known as atrial fibrillation, about a decade earlier than women on average, and being overweight is a major risk factor, according to a large new study published in the American Heart Association's journal Circulation.

In atrial fibrillation, the upper chambers of the heart, or atria, quiver instead of beat to move blood effectively. Untreated atrial fibrillation increases the risk of heart-related death and is linked to a five times increased risk of stroke. In the new research, having the condition more than tripled a person's risk of dying.

“It's crucial to better understand modifiable risk factors of atrial fibrillation,” said study author Christina Magnussen, M.D., a medical specialist in Internal Medicine and Cardiology at the University Heart Center in Hamburg, Germany. “If prevention strategies succeed in targeting these risk factors, we expect a noticeable decline in new-onset atrial fibrillation.”

This would lead to less illness, fewer deaths and lower health-related costs, she said.

Researchers reviewed records of 79,793 people (aged 24 to 97) in four community-based studies in Europe. The participants did not have atrial fibrillation at the outset. Later assessments of their health -- with a median follow-up period of 12.6 to a maximum of 28.2 years -- showed that 4.4 percent of the women and 6.4 percent of the men had been diagnosed with the condition.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Iran seeks stronger ties in women's affairs with Pakistan, Mexico

W O M E N TEHRAN — The Iranian vice president, Masoumeh Ebtekar, in separate meetings with Pakistani and Mexican officials expressed Iran's interest to boost mutual ties in women and family affairs.

In a meeting in Tehran on October 14 with Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, the speaker of the provincial assembly of Pakistan's Balochistan, Ebtekar said "there are many women in Pakistan who are highly active in social and political arena."

"Women's activities in Iran are also developing in social, cultural and political fields," Mehr quoted Ebtekar as saying.

Referring to religious, historical, cultural and social commonalities between the two nations, she noted that cooperation in issues related to women can further develop.

In another meeting held on October 11, Ebtekar visited the Mexican ambassador to Iran Jose Alfonso Zegbe Camarena, expressing her country's willingness on developing bilateral ties.

The two sides expressed interest in exchanging experience in women's educational fields.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Fresh pumpkin pie

"Pumpkin Pie using fresh garden pumpkins. Best served barely warm, with freshly whipped cream on top of each serving. Use the remaining pumpkin puree in any recipe that calls for canned pumpkin."

Ingredients:



- 1 medium sugar pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 recipe pastry for a 9 inch single crust pie
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup honey, warmed slightly
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

Directions:

Cut pumpkin in half, and remove seeds. Lightly oil the cut surface. Place cut side down on a jelly roll pan lined with foil and lightly oiled. Bake at 325 degrees F (165 degrees C) until the flesh is tender when poked with a fork. Cool until just warm. Scrape the pumpkin flesh from the peel. Either mash, or puree in small batches in a blender.

In large bowl, blend together 2 cups pumpkin puree, spices, and salt. Beat in eggs, honey, milk, and cream. Pour filling into pie shell.

Bake at 400 degrees F (205 degrees C) for 50 to 55 minutes, or until a knife inserted 1 inch from edge of pie comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack.

LEARN ENGLISH

Gardening

A: I've decided to grow my own garden!

B: What? You don't know the first thing about gardening!

A: **On the contrary**, I have been reading a lot of books about the subject.

B: Oh yeah? Tell me then, **smarty pants**, how will you go about **setting up** your garden?

A: Well, first I need to buy some things, such as fertilizer, seeds and tools.

B: What type of tools?

A: You know, the basics. A **rake**, **shovel**, **spade** and a **hoe**.

B: Right. Well it seems like you have all your **bases covered**. What's next?

A: I'll **till** the soil and then sow the seeds. I'll then add some fertilizer and **voila!** Gardening all done!

B: Well, good luck with your garden, especially considering we are in the dry season and it won't rain for the next three months!

Key vocabulary

on the contrary: in opposition to what has been stated

smarty pants: a person who tries to show he is so smart

set up: to make ready for use

rake: a hand implement consisting of a row of teeth

shovel: a tool with a long handle used for lifting

spade: a tool with a heavy metal blade used for digging

hoe: a garden tool that has a ?at blade on a long hand

base covered: have all the things prepared

till: prepare for growing plants

voila: something used when something is being presented

Supplementary vocabulary

sprinkler: a device attached to a water hose to spread water

pruner: a tool used to remove small branches from trees

hedg: a kind of shrub plant

garden hose: a long tube connected to a facet to disperse water

gardener: a person who tends to gardens

(Source: irlanguage.com)

MOU signed to support rural and nomad women for healthy food production

W O M E N TEHRAN — A memorandum of understanding was signed here on Sunday in support of producing healthy food by rural and nomad women.

The MOU was signed between vice president for women and family affairs, Masoumeh Ebtekar, and head of the National Standards Organization, Nayereh Piroozbakht, at the place of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mehr reported.

Empowering women for producing healthy food, decreasing the use of agricultural toxics and optimum use of water resources are the key factors of women's success in agriculture, Ebtekar stated.

Meanwhile, head of the Agricultural Research Organization, Eskandar Zand, said family agriculture makes up 70 percent of the world's agriculture and women's role is vital in family agriculture.

Today, the agriculture sector is divided into two categories of family agriculture and industrial agriculture, Zand explained, adding valuing the farmer is more important than valuing the agriculture itself and the world gives the priority to rural and nomad women.

A book on 23 years of experience of rural and nomad women's capabilities was unveiled by the minister of agriculture and the VP for women's affairs.

Great role of women in food security

Rural women take responsibility of



providing 43 percent of the needed food in developing countries, therefore, the role of rural women in food security and decreasing poverty is essential, the temporary representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iran, Esther Kuisch Laroche said, speaking at the congress.

Nomad and rural women are usually neglected, however, they make of one fourth of the world population Laroche added.

Study shows the women who are earn money, use their income for the

food security, clothing, education and health of their children, she added.

While 1991 statistics show that only about 8.5% of rural women are economically active, research and field observations indicate that the number is much greater.

Rural women play an active part in food and other crop production, fisheries and livestock, especially poultry raising.

In forestry, women are involved in the production and transplanting of seedlings.

Since income from agriculture is

often insufficient for subsistence, rural women's nonagricultural activities, such as carpet weaving and other crafts, are important to household survival.

Although information on agricultural activities is not gender-disaggregated, case studies and observations show that rural women are engaged in various phases of crop production, including planting (particularly of rice), weeding, pest control, harvesting, processing and marketing.

Women also play an important role in livestock raising and dairy production and in the processing and marketing of fish. Activities vary by region and crop.

Increased farm mechanization has decreased women's part in planting operations, but has increased opportunities for employment in processing of food and animal products.

Most decisions related to food and other crops are made by men, although women sometimes participate in decisions on surplus production and the use of income from crops such as sugar beets, pulses and garden fruits.

Women and men share equally in decisions on poultry and women also have a say in decisions regarding cattle and, to a lesser extent, sheep.

Although, due to tradition, women have little decision-making power at the local level, elderly women have a special status and their opinions carry weight in household decision-making.

Shiraz to host intl. seminar on women's health

W O M E N TEHRAN — The seventh international seminar on women's health is to be opened on Wednesday in the city of Shiraz, southern Iran.

The two-day conference pivots on the subject of fertility health, Mehr reported.

Fertility and sexual health, divorce and emotional

divorce, sexual infections, and population issues are to be discussed during the event. Meanwhile, 32 essays by Iranian and foreigner lecturers will be presented.

One of the researcher women who has published the most cited essays on women issues is to be honored in the seminar.

Teacher 'told to remove hijab' if she wants a job in Kuwait

A preschool English teacher was told to remove her hijab if she wanted to be hired by a school in Kuwait.

The 23-year-old British woman applied for a job in Kuwait's the English Playgroup. After an interview, she received an email from a school official saying that her new job depended on whether she was OK with teaching without a hijab on.

Fouzia Khatun shared a screenshot of the alleged email on her Instagram page. The email was sent by Caroline Brooks, a human resources employee from the English Playgroup, a prestigious education company dedicated to early childhood education, with over 25 schools throughout the country.

Brooks wrote, "The customer (parents) do not want their children taught by covered teachers. It is an English school!"

She continues, "if this isn't acceptable to you I wish you every success. This is s a non-negotiable."

Khatun's post has received nearly 2,000 likes and 1,000 comments.

Khatun, who currently lives in the city of Bradford in England, shared a thorough message, reflecting upon the alleged discrimination.

The teacher wrote, "I applied for a job in Kuwait where I felt I would easily fit in due to same religious beliefs and Islamic mind of thoughts, where I thought being a hijabi would be an honor rather than an accepted dress code, where I was hoping to feel free and liberated, only to go and be asked to take off the one piece of clothing that made me want to move to Kuwait in the first place."

"I find it disgusting that you think it's acceptable to ask your employees to remove such a personal and important thing for the sake of appearing physically acceptable to parents, when in fact you should be demonstrating to your students' acceptance of all kinds of people and presenting this with your varied choice of employee."



Hijabi teacher discriminated against by school.

She continued, "There is enough discrimination against female Muslims from non-Muslim countries, it's extremely sad to see that your school in a Muslim country like Kuwait also demonstrates this kind of discrimination and frankly such a superficial judgmental ethos! I am sorry that you have judged the capability of a teacher based on a piece of clothing that covers my hair."

"Please stop corrupting the minds of innocent angels and let them blossom into beautiful human beings and not the narrow-minded monsters that you are guiding them towards."

'EmPOWER' girls before, during and after crises, UN says on International Day of the Girl Child

The world's 1.1 billion girls are a source of power, energy, and creativity — and the millions of girls in emergencies are no exception, the United Nations said on the International Day of the Girl Child (October 11), which kicks off a year-long effort to draw global attention to and action on the challenges and opportunities girls face before, during, and after crises.

"Because of entrenched gender inequalities, disasters and conflict can make a bad situation even worse for girls," said UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem, in a statement marking the International Day, which this year is

on the theme, 'EmPOWER Girls: Before, during and after crises.'

"They and their families, struggling to survive, are left with few choices, leaving girls even more vulnerable to child marriage, sexual- and gender-based violence, including trafficking, rape and sexual slavery," she added.

According to the organization's main entity on gender issues, UN Women, due to growing conflict, instability and inequality in 2017, 128.6 million people are expected to need humanitarian assistance, and more than three-quarters of those forced to flee are women and children.

"No society will flourish and no peace agreement will be lasting without empowering girls in peacebuilding and reconstruction," said Irina Bokova, director-general of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "It is time to put this imperative at the heart of all of our efforts in addressing fragility, conflict and violence."

Our special photo story on the international day examines the challenges girls face during emergencies and highlights the critical role they play in building a better future for themselves and their communities.

(Source: UN News Center)



Students attend class at a public school in Taliko, a neighborhood of Bamako, Mali

Iraqi forces retake military base, strategic sites in Kirkuk

Iraqi forces have gained control of the main military base in Kirkuk as well as other strategic locations in the oil-rich province from Kurdish fighters.

The operation is carried out to take key areas in the disputed region following last month's referendum held for possible secession of the Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iraq's Joint Operations Command (JOC) said on Monday that "anti-terrorist units" had captured the K1 military base northwest of Kirkuk city following the withdrawal of Kurdish Peshmerga fighters.

The militants moved into Kirkuk in 2014, capitalizing on a quick withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the city amid Daesh assaults.

The JOC, which groups all pro-government forces, also said that it was making progress in its operation to "restore security" to Kirkuk. After the capture of the military base, the Iraqi forces managed to take control of the headquarters for Iraqi state-owned North Oil Company and a nearby refinery from Kurdish forces without fighting. The central government troops also took the nearby Baba Gurgur field from the Kurds.

Despite the ongoing operation, oil and natural gas production from the region is proceeding normally, an official within the Iraqi Oil Ministry said.

"Kurdish leaders, we consider as our brothers, have agreed to hand over control of North Oil and North Gas company facilities who belong to the state," a military commander involved in the operation said.

"We have an agreement with some Kurdish leaders that the oil and gas facilities should stay out of the conflict," the ministry official said.

The JOC further noted that the central government forces had gained control of



two bridges, two roads and an industrial zone to the southwest of Kirkuk.

The Iraqi troops also took control of a power station, a police station and three areas in the province.

The advances came hours after artillery fire was exchanged between Iraqi and Kurdish forces early Monday south of the city.

Tensions are high between the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) over the controversial referendum.

The plebiscite took place on September 25, sparking strong objection from Baghdad. Iraq's neighbors and the international community also voiced concerns about the repercussions of the vote, which was only supported by Israel.

Kurdish leaders have coveted Kirkuk, with some 10 percent of Iraq's oil reserves, for long and described it as part of their proper even as, roughly two-thirds of the city's population are non-Kurd.

■ PKK in Kirkuk

The Iraqi government has accused authorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of bringing militants from Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to the disputed oil province of Kirkuk, saying it considered the move as a "declaration of war."

Iraq's National Security Council, headed by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, said in a statement on Sunday that the presence of "fighters not belonging to the regular security forces in Kirkuk" was a "dangerous escalation."

"It is impossible to remain silent" when faced with "a declaration of war towards Iraqis and government forces," the statement said, adding, "The central government and regular forces will carry out their duty of defending the Iraqi people in all its components including the Kurds, and of defending Iraq's sovereignty and unity."

The Iraqi government has said that

it will seek to impose its authority over Kirkuk and other disputed areas.

The statement came just hours before the expiry of a deadline for Kurdish Peshmerga fighters to withdraw from strategic areas in Kirkuk.

Kurdish fighters have already rejected a call from the Iraqi government forces to withdraw from a strategic location in Kirkuk's southern region. Earlier on Sunday, a Kurdish security official announced that Peshmerga fighters had not withdrawn from a key junction south of Kirkuk.

Peshmerga forces moved into Kirkuk in 2014, when ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group launched an offensive across Iraq.

■ Iraqi Kurds deny presence of PKK militants

Later on Sunday, Kurdish Iraqi officials denied that any PKK militants were present in Kirkuk.

"There are no PKK forces in Kirkuk, but there are some volunteers who sympathize with the PKK," said General Jabar Yawer, the secretary general of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region's Peshmerga Ministry.

Tensions have been simmering between the central government in Baghdad and the KRG over a recent controversial referendum on the secession of the region.

The plebiscite took place on September 25, drawing strong objection from Baghdad. Iraq's neighbors and the international community also voiced concern about the repercussions of the vote, which was only supported by Israel.

On Sunday, Kurdish leaders dismissed the Iraqi government's demand that the KRG annul the results of last month's independence referendum.

(Source: agencies)

Pope implicitly criticizes U.S. for leaving Paris climate accord

Pope Francis implicitly criticized the United States on Monday for pulling out of the Paris agreement on climate change, praising it as a means to control the devastating effects of global warming.

The United States is the only country out of 195 signatories to have withdrawn from the accord, which aims to cut emissions blamed for the rise in temperatures.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced the decision in June shortly after visiting the pope, a strong supporter of the deal. At the time a Vatican official said the move was a "slap in the face" for the pope and the Vatican.

"We see consequences of climate change every day," the pope said in an address to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at its headquarters in Rome.

"Thanks to scientific knowledge, we know how we have to confront the problem and the international community has also worked out the legal methods, such as the Paris Accord, which sadly, some have abandoned," he said.

Under the deal, United States had committed to reducing its own emissions by 26 to 28 percent, compared with 2005 levels, by 2025. Many world leaders have criticized Trump for deciding to pull out.

In his Spanish-language address to the U.N. agency, Francis denounced "negligence toward the delicate equilibriums of the ecosystems, the presumption of manipulating and controlling the limited resources of the planet, and the greed for profit."

Agriculture ministers and diplomats from the Group of Seven (G7) world power nations attended the gathering, which marked FAO's World Food Day.

"We can't be satisfied by saying 'someone else will do it,'" the pope said.

Ending local conflicts and curbing the effects of climate change were two of the "prerequisites" for dealing with world food security, Francis also said.

"The yoke of poverty caused by the often tragic movement of migrants can be removed by prevention, consisting of development projects that create jobs and offer the capacity to respond to climatic and environmental changes," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Anger as UK university allows Balfour 'celebration'

A British university has drawn criticism for its decision to allow a Balfour Declaration "celebration" organized by a pro-Israel group.

The Manchester Balfour 100 event will be held at the University of Manchester's main campus later in October and is part of a broader series of events to mark the anniversary of the declaration made by then British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour on November 2, 1917.

For supporters of the Zionist cause, the declaration marks the first major milestone leading to the creation of Israel in 1948.

However, for Palestinians, the declaration would lead to the eventual loss of their land, subsequent displacement, and later occupation.

The university's decision has been slammed by both academics and students.

"Having the celebration of the Balfour declaration on campus is totally disrespectful to students of Palestinian origin," said Ayham Madi, a Palestinian studying at the university, adding: "Many people lost their homes, land and their lives."

The cybersecurity student said a hundred years later, Palestinians continued to feel the impact of the declaration and that he felt "great pain" that the university has allowed the event to take place.

"My grandfather owned land in Palestine and it was taken away from him with no right to do so, my father was born in a refugee camp and spent most of his life in one," he said, continuing:

"I lost an aunt due to the bad condi-

tions inside a refugee camp and I have another aunt who lives under occupation and I have never seen her in my life.

"All this is as a result of the Balfour declaration."

In a letter to leading English Zionist, Lord Walter Rothschild, Balfour promised British help in creating a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine.

The letter conditioned British assistance so that there be no "prejudice" against the rights of existing non-Jewish populations living in the area.

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire during the first world war, the UK became the dominant power in the region and established Mandate rule in Palestine.

University of Manchester academic Nick Thoburn said he was "dismayed" that the institution had allowed the event to take place on its campus, which he said commemorated the moment Britain, "with its imperial chauvinism and entitlement, knowingly gave the green light to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine."

"Lord Balfour (declared), chillingly, that Zionism was 'of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land,'" he said.

"That this could be a cause for celebration, hosted in whatever way by a British university, when the consequences then and now have been so devastating ... is indicative of the contempt that Israel and its advocates hold both for Palestinians in the region and in exile," he added.

■ 'Double standard'

Al Jazeera contacted the university to confirm whether the event was taking place at one of its venues.

A university spokesperson said: "The University allows some of its premises to be hired by third parties for external events, provided that the events in question comply with the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech," adding: "This (Balfour 100) event is one such commercial booking and it has no connection to, nor is it endorsed by, the University."

The university's spokesperson did not mention whether it had taken into consideration the concerns of Palestinian students.

Over the past year, tensions between pro-Palestinian activists and university administrators have become strained over allegations of censorship of Palestinian events.

Events marking Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) were only allowed to go ahead after several meetings and were subject to a strict set of conditions, which included a university veto over speakers.

The university also withheld approval for two talks organised by Palestinian activists in October 2016 and February 2017, but blamed administrative issues for the events not going ahead.

In February 2017, a Freedom of Information request revealed that the Israeli ambassador to the UK met University of Manchester officials to discuss alleged

anti-Semitism on campus.

The university agreed to prohibit the title of a talk by a Holocaust survivor based on that meeting.

"Many colleagues are concerned that there is a double standard at play," said Thoburn, a senior lecturer in sociology.

"The university seemingly allowing this centennial celebration of ethnic cleansing without complaint, while having imposed numerous constraints on a recent student-organised event during Israel Apartheid Week."

Huda Ammori, a Palestinian student, who worked on the IAW events said the university was frequently putting obstacles in the way of Palestinian activists.

"The university's senior management team is happy to meet with the Israeli embassy to discuss events run by a student campaign, but they won't respond to a student request for meetings with Palestinian students," Ammori said, adding the university was now allowing a "celebration of Palestinian suffering".

Ammori along with other activists is planning to protest outside the event when it takes place later this month.

Palestinian groups have ramped up pressure on the UK to apologise for the Balfour Declaration in the run-up to the centenary next month.

The British government has said the declaration was a "historic statement" and one it would not be apologizing for.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

neared his coastal town.

The fires have spread rapidly, in part because of strong winds tied to Hurricane Ophelia in the Atlantic Ocean, Spanish meteorologists said. But investigators are looking at human causes.

Alberto Núñez Feijóo, the leader of Galicia, said on Monday that many of the fires started as acts of arson. "The only thing we desire is that these criminals pay for what they have done," he told a news conference on Monday.

(Source: NY Times)

Trump to visit Asia Nov. 3-14, focus on North Korea, alliances

U.S. President Donald Trump will travel to Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam, the Philippines and Hawaii between Nov. 3-14, the White House said on Monday, amid rising tensions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

Trump will "call on the international community to join together in maximizing pressure on North Korea," the White House said in a statement, and will meet family members of Japanese citizens who have been abducted by North Korea.

During his visit, Trump will emphasize his commitment to U.S. alliances and partnerships, attend events at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

He will also meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte and Vietnam President Tran Dai Quang.

(Source: AP)

Two most-wanted ISIL terrorists in south-east Asia killed in Philippines

ISIL's emir in Southeast Asia Isnilon Hapilon has been killed in offensive by Philippine troops, the country's defense secretary claimed on Monday.



His death deals a blow to ISIL's reported ambition to create a regional base to carry out terrorist activities across Asia.

Minister Delfin Lorenza said Hapilon had been killed alongside Omar Maute, leader of the ISIL-linked Maute group, during a final push to retake the southern Muslim city of Marawi, which has been besieged by extremist militants since May.

"We have received a report from AFP ground commanders in Marawi that the operation...has resulted in the death of the last terrorist leaders Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute, and that their bodies have been recovered by our operating units," he said in a statement.

He added that the "termination" of the five month battle would be confirmed when government forces were sure there were no more "terrorist-stragglers" and had cleared buildings of IEDs and booby traps. So far 822 militants, 162 troops and 47 civilians have been killed.

Over 360,000 civilians have been forced to flee the fighting, with many currently living in temporary camps across the southern province of Mindanao. Over one third of the cities buildings have been destroyed by fierce fighting and military airstrikes.

Hapilon, 51, rose to prominence when he was endorsed as ISIL emir in 2016. He was already the commander of the local Abu Sayyaf terrorist group and wanted for piracy and beheadings.

Abu Sayyaf is responsible for the beheadings of Canadians Robert Hall and John Ridsdel, and of German tourist Jürgen Kanter, 71, who was murdered earlier this year.

Hapilon fought alongside the ISIL-inspired Maute group to capture Marawi, with ISIL appealing for Muslim brothers in East Asia to join the jihad.

Both Hapilon and Omar Maute have been declared dead before. Maute was reportedly killed in June, but it was later discovered that he had only been injured. Hapilon was said to have died in battle in a battle in Basilan a few years ago, when, in fact it was his son.

Meanwhile, the Philippines has announced it will join neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia in coordinated air patrols to combat the growing threat posed by militants.

(Source: Telegraph)

Putin signs decree imposing restrictions on N. Korea

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree imposing restrictions on North Korea in order to comply with a UN Security Council resolution.

The decree specifically refers to the UN Security Council resolution on restrictions imposed against North Korea in November 2016. The document, spanning almost 40 pages, specifies certain punitive measures that were introduced in 2007. It also refers to 11 North Korean individuals, who have been linked with the country's nuclear program.

The move comes as a North Korean delegation arrived in St. Petersburg for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assembly.

On Monday, the EU also adopted a new range of sanctions against Pyongyang, which are designed to punish the North for its "continued and accelerated nuclear- and ballistic-missile programs."

The decision taken on Monday made changes to penalties that were introduced earlier in response to the North Korean ballistic launches. These prohibited the import, sale or transfer of petroleum by the state, as well as transactions involving crude oil to Pyongyang. The fresh range of restrictions also extends to the transfer of funds.

(Source: RT)

Fires in Portugal and northern Spain kill at least 30 people

At least 30 people have been killed and dozens more injured by wildfires in Portugal and northern Spain, as strong winds from a hurricane fanned hundreds of blazes sweeping across densely forested territory.

The authorities in Portugal declared a state of emergency over the weekend, when about 500 fires were reported in the central and northern regions, and at least 27 people died. More than 4,000 firefighters were working to extinguish at least 65 blazes Monday morning.

Across the border in Spain, fires reached the outskirts of the port city of Vigo, forcing the temporary closing

of a car factory. Television news reports showed residents forming human chains to pass water buckets and to help put out flames.

The Spanish authorities said that more than 90 fires were burning in the northern regions of Galicia and Asturias, and Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who is from Galicia, said he would travel to the region on Monday.

The area also saw some relief, however, as rain began to fall early Monday and was expected to intensify. "The rain has now been helping us," Ángel Rodal, the mayor of Baiona, told the television channel Antena 3 as flames

France join top seeds for World Cup draw

France will be among the top seeds for next month's World Cup draw after they climbed to seventh in the FIFA rankings published on Monday.

The draw for next year's finals will be held in Moscow on Dec. 1 when the 32 teams will be divided into four pots according to their position in the rankings.

The seven top-ranked sides plus hosts Russia go into in pot one, the next eight ranked teams will be in pot two and so on. Each of the eight four-team first-round groups will consist of one team drawn from each pot.

The top seven teams on Monday were Germany, Brazil, Portugal, Argentina, Belgium, Poland and France - all among the 23 teams who have guaranteed their places in Russia.

Spain will be in pot two, where they will be joined by England, Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay. Peru, Switzerland and Italy, who all face playoffs in November, will also go into pot two if they qualify. Peru, who face New Zealand in November as they attempt to end a 36-year absence from the World Cup, climbed into the top 10 for the first time.

New Zealand are 122nd, the lowest of any team still in contention for a place in Russia. South American champions Chile, ninth, were the highest-ranked team to fail to qualify.

The rankings also confirmed that Switzerland, Italy, Croatia and Denmark will be the seeded teams for the European playoffs, which will be drawn on Tuesday and played over two legs in November. Northern Ireland, Ireland, Greece and Sweden are the other teams involved.

At 65th, Russia are the lowest placed of the teams who have qualified so far although they have only played friendlies since Euro 2016 which earn fewer points under the complex ranking system. Iceland, who became the smallest country to qualify for a World Cup when they won their European group last week, will either be in pot two or three depending on who else qualifies. Panama, the other debutants, will be in pot four. Nigeria and Serbia could also end up in pot four, depending who goes through from the playoffs.

(Source: Reuters)

Kaepernick files lawsuit against NFL over ‘collusion’ not to sign him

Colin Kaepernick has filed a lawsuit against NFL team owners he believes are conspiring not to hire him because of his protests against racial injustice.

Kaepernick, 29, has been without a team since he opted out of his contract with the San Francisco 49ers in March.

He first protested by sitting during the national anthem in August 2016, before opting to kneel instead.

Other players followed suit, and criticism from President Donald Trump this September saw the protests spread.

In a statement released on Sunday, Kaepernick's lawyers wrote: "We can confirm that this morning we filed a grievance under the CBA on behalf of Colin Kaepernick.

"This was done only after pursuing every possible avenue with all NFL teams and their executives.

"If the NFL (as well as all professional sports leagues) is to remain a meritocracy, then principled and peaceful political protest - which the owners themselves made great theatre imitating weeks ago - should not be punished and athletes should not be denied employment.

"Such a precedent threatens all patriotic Americans and harkens back to our darkest days as a nation. Protecting all athletes from such collusive conduct is what compelled Mr Kaepernick to file his grievance.

"Colin Kaepernick's goal has always been, and remains, to simply be treated fairly by the league he performed at the highest level for and to return to the football playing field."

Speaking to BBC Sport last week, Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots said he had "never heard anyone talking about excluding" Kaepernick.

Some players from the 49ers again knelt during the anthem before their match on Sunday.

(Source: BBC)

Bale could miss both Tottenham games, concedes Zidane

Gareth Bale's persistent injury problems are showing no signs improvement after Zinedine Zidane confirmed he will miss Tuesday's clash with Tottenham and could even miss the trip to Wembley on November 1.

The Wales international has endured an injury-hit start to the season and has not played for club or country since September 26 due to a calf problem.

When he could make his Madrid return remains unclear with Zidane unable to pinpoint a fixture in which he might feature. Zidane has even accepted that playing against his former team at Wembley at the start of next month is by no means a certainty for Bale.

"I can't tell you the date for Bale," Zidane told reporters. "We have to wait and see. "We know that each day is a day less - he wants to get back quickly of course. "But on Gareth I can't say if he'll be back in the return game or not. I hope he is, but I can't assure you of anything."

Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino recently sang the praises of Sergio Ramos, saying he would pay to watch the defender play, and Zidane was similarly glowing of the Spain international. "I could spend an hour talking about Sergio," Zidane added. "He's our captain, leader, but also off the pitch he is a leader, that's what I want to underline.

"He's not just a player, but it's his attitude as a person - he's a phenomenal person.

"He's very noble; if he has to say something, he says it to your face. He's direct and I like that.

(Source: Soccerway)

Ginola says it is a ‘miracle’ he survived cardiac arrest last year

Former France international David Ginola said it is a "miracle" he survived his "sudden death" after suffering cardiac arrest last year.

Ginola, 50, who played for Newcastle, Tottenham and Aston Villa, had a quadruple heart bypass after collapsing during a charity match in France.

He was given CPR on the pitch, which he says was crucial to his survival.

"Thank God there was somebody next to me who did know how to perform CPR," he told BBC Radio 5 live.

Ginola was "shocked four times on site" to "restore a normal heart rhythm and within 10 minutes a helicopter arrived to transfer him to Monaco Heart Centre", said his surgeon at the time.

The former winger called the person who gave him CPR his "hero" as he recalled the events of that day in May 2016.

"It was supposed to be a very charming day in the south of France," said Ginola, who is part of an annual initiative to try to teach as many schoolchildren as possible CPR in one day.

"It ended up with hospitals, people crying and plenty of emotions, but the end of the story is that I recovered very quickly from my sudden death.

"The funny thing, if we can talk about funny things in that story, is that I didn't feel any pain at all. The time I fell on the ground until the time I woke up at the hospital after the surgery, I didn't feel any pain at all.

"It wasn't painful, it was just not really knowing what happened to me but thank God there were very clever people around me.

"I ended up with five broken ribs after nine minutes of CPR. "It doesn't matter if you break ribs, it is just performing CPR because it is about irrigating the brain with blood and the only way to do that is by performing CPR."

He added: "Having a go is the key. No matter what you do, you need to do it because we are talking about



saving lives. If you know about CPR, you need to have a go."

■ ‘The professor told me it was a miracle’

Ginola, who won 17 caps for France, retired in May 2002 and has gone on to become a pundit with the BBC, BT Sport, Canal Plus and CNN.

He moved to England in 1995, when Newcastle signed him from Paris St-Germain for £2.5m.

A fans' favorite at St James' Park, he joined Tottenham in 1997, winning the 1999 League Cup with the Londoners.

That same season, he was named the PFA Players' Player of the Year and the Football Writers' Association's Footballer of the Year. "If I can tell the listeners one

single thing, it's not really the surgeons who operated on me down in Monaco with a quadruple bypass who saved my life," he said.

"When I left the hospital, the surgeon called me into his office and said 'David I need to have a word with you - just praise the people who were with you on the football pitch because if your kids still have their Dad today it is because they did perform the CPR perfectly on the football pitch that day at that moment'. 'Anyone can be a savior knowing how to perform CPR. "The professor in Monaco told me that it was a miracle. Nine out of 10 will have died from that and I survived and he couldn't believe it."

(Source: BBC)

Sharapova climbs rankings after ‘special’ Tianjin victory



Maria Sharapova soared into the top 60 of the women's tennis tour rankings after she won her first title in two years.

Sharapova's 7-5, 7-6 (10-8) over Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus to clinch the Tianjin Open in China at the weekend marked her first victory since returning from a 15-month doping ban in April.

"It is a special title, a special victory," the former top-ranked Russian said in a post-match news conference. "It has been a couple of years since I have held the winner's trophy. It is a great feeling, a team effort."

It was the 36th singles title of her career, which she won without losing a set. Sharapova's first tournament victory since winning on clay in Rome in 2015 pushed her 29 places higher to No. 57 of the rankings of the women's WTA Tour on Monday, meaning she is

guaranteed direct entry into January's Australian Open.

Earlier in the season, the French Open refused to give Sharapova a wild card while the US Open did grant her direct entry into the main draw. She pulled out of Wimbledon with an injury.

Sharapova had been in need of receiving wild cards because she no longer had a ranking following her ban.

Sharapova's ranking may get another boost this week at the Kremlin Cup in Moscow, which gave her a wild card last week.

"I am really looking forward to playing in my home country as the last event of the year," Sharapova said.

"Obviously coming there with the title already means a lot, but I do really want to finish strong."

(Source: CNN)

Federer eyes ATP Finals title, top ranking after Shanghai triumph



Roger Federer is eyeing a seventh ATP Finals crown and has not ruled out pinching the world number one ranking from Rafa Nadal if he maintains the form that won him his second Shanghai Masters trophy on Sunday.

The 19-times grand slam winner claimed his 94th title and sixth this year with an emphatic defeat of Nadal in the Shanghai final and is hungry for a first ATP Finals win since 2011.

"London is my priority now and I really want to win the World Tour Finals," the evergreen 36-year-old told Sky Sports. "I am very excited to have had the year that I have had and everything that comes from here is a bonus.

"Finishing the year as world number one is a long shot, and I don't think it will happen but if I play like

this, who knows? Maybe I will get close again."

Shanghai was Federer's first tournament since the U.S. Open and the confidence he gained from his opening matches helped him through a taxing schedule.

"It's been a tough week, five straight matches is always a test and a challenge for anybody's body, especially with the pressure rising," he said.

"I felt I was playing well all week and that settled my nerves because I was returning well from the (opening) match here against (Diego) Schwartzman.

"The serve only got better and I saved the best for last ... In a way, not surprising because I felt good all week - I was ready."

The Swiss next headlines his home Basel International starting Oct. 21.

(Source: Reuters)

Kaká bids farewell to Orlando City SC: A “hard day, but very happy”

ORLANDO, Fla.—In the end, the emotion was too much, the nerves were too raw and a former FIFA World Player of the Year ran on empty. Kaká said a final farewell to the Orlando City SC faithful after a 1-0 defeat at the hands of Columbus Crew SC.

"You don't think that any type of emotion or pressure would affect a player like that," said head coach Jason Kreis. "It was a difficult night for a lot of players, but I can't fault [Kaká's] effort and I can't credit him enough for every single minute that he has played. He has given everything of himself, and you can't ask for any more than that."

From the moment he walked out on the field with his two children, the vivid feelings of pride, affection and community weighed upon Kaká.

"It was hard to play sometimes. When I was on the field, a lot of things were on my mind and it was difficult to focus on the game," Kaká said. "It was a really, really special game, and I wanted to finish with a win."

There were red eyes before kickoff, a sense of profound will during the game, and an outpouring of warmth and genuine love at the end as he toured the stadium and bid a fond farewell to Orlando City fans.

Back in the locker room, Kaká hugged his team-



mates, staff, majority owner Flavio Augusto da Silva and CEO Alex Leitaó in a bond of Brazilian friendship.

"Ultimately it wasn't about the results, but the things we could change here," Kaká said. "I have learned a lot from this city, this club. It has been a hard day but very happy as well."

The evening concluded with a long, lingering tour of the stadium, a parade with teammates and fans alike, greeting everyone with the same warmth and

humility he showed from Day One of his Orlando adventure.

"Most of that was just to say 'thank you' because a lot happened during these three seasons," he explained. "And, at the end of the day, it is about what we can do as human beings. One day, I don't know when but soon, I will retire, but I will still have these guys as friends in the future."

At the end, he looked back on three seasons of toil, the successes and heartbreaks, with a calm demeanor.

"Every moment with all the clubs that I played was special," he said. "I can remember exactly what happened in the last games [with each of them]. Today was also like that, a special day that will be in my heart forever."

But there was something extra special about his bond with Orlando and their community-focused fans.

"It's very good when you leave a place and the door is still open and that's what it feels like for me here," he said. "I will always have a relationship with this club and I will always be a Lion forever, supporting this team. For me it is most important that I could build a relationship with this club - and the club is about people."

(Source: MLSsoccer)

Iran U-17 coach Chamanian wary of dangerous Mexico



S P O R T S Iran coach Abbas Chamanian has **d e s k** warned his players there will be no margin for error when they face Mexico in the FIFA U-17 World Cup quarter-final. --
Iran will face Group F's third-placed Mexico at the Fatorda Stadium in Margao on Tuesday.
"Mexico are a strong team and they could have qualified as the first or second team if their strikers could score their chances. We have watched their films and they have a powerful attacking lineup," Chamanian said in the news conference.
"Mexico have also weak points as well and we have

plans for that," he added.
Iran defeated Mexico 3-0 one week ahead of the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Marbella training camp in Spain but Chamanian says that they will take nothing for granted in the match again the Mexican team.
"History belongs to the past time. Each team make no mistake will win the match. We have to score our opportunities against the Mexican team," Chamanian added.
Having beaten the likes of Guinea (3-1), Germany (4-0) and Costa Rica (3-0) in the group stage, Chamanian sees no reason why they cannot become the first Asian nation to be crowned champions.

"Why not? Iran has an excellent team. Decisively, in any match, if we play the way we played against Germany, we will get three points," he continued to gauge Mexico's attributes in the youth competition.
Team Melli will miss the services of skipper Mohammad Ghobeishavi on account of two yellow cards despite prayers for the suspension to be overturned.
"Although we complained about the decision (suspension) to FIFA, we ultimately respect the decision of the referee and he will not be with us on Tuesday. Fortunately, our bench strength is very good," said Chamanian.

Paralympic shooter Jonsson serves one-month ban for positive drugs test



The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has revealed that Swedish Para-shooting athlete Philip Jonsson has served a one-month long suspension for committing an anti-doping violation in April.
Jonsson returned a positive test for prednisolone and prednisone in a urine sample provided on April 27 of this year.
He provided the sample after competing at the Szczecin 2017 World Shooting Para-sport Grand Prix in Poland.
The substance is included on the World Anti-Doping Agency 2017 Prohibited List under the category of glucocorticoids and is prohibited in competition.
However, following notification of the positive test, Jonsson provided sufficient corroborating evidence to explain how the substance entered his body.
He also explained that the substance

was being used for a medically justified reason although his Therapeutic Use Exemption certificate was not valid at the time of the test.
Following analysis of the evidence, the IPC was satisfied that he did not consume the banned substance intentionally.
In accordance with the IPC Anti-Doping Code, a suspension of one month was imposed on Jonsson from August 16 to September 16.
The Swede's results in Szczecin have been disqualified including forfeiture of any medals, points and prizes.
Jonsson won the 10 metres air rifle standing mixed SH2 competition in the Polish city.
He also finished in eighth position in both of the 10m air rifle standing SH2 and 10m air rifle prone SH2 competitions at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.
(Source: Insidethgames)

Iran men's goalball team named world's second best after Lithuania



Press TV — The Iranian men's national goalball team has been named the world's second best squad for September 2017, thanks to its remarkable displays at the 2017 International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) Goalball Asia/Pacific Championships.
According to the latest monthly rankings released by the IBSA, the governing body for blind sports, the Iranian outfit gained 510.322 points.
Lithuania claimed the top spot in the global rankings with 661.162 points.
China garnered 479.827 points, and sat in the third slot.
The Chinese squad was followed by German and Turkey, which landed in the fourth and fifth spots respectively, having accumulated 449.309 and 426.359 points.
The Iranian men's national goalball

team slumped to a 2-10 defeat against China on August 26, and became the runner-up of the 2017 IBSA Goalball Asia/Pacific Championships.
The tournament started in Bangkok, Thailand, on August 19, and finished on August 27.
Goalball is a team sport designed specifically for male and female athletes with a visual impairment. Participants compete in teams of three, and try to throw a ball that has bells embedded in it into the opponents' goal.
Teams alternate throwing or rolling the ball from one end of the playing area to the other, and players remain in the area of their own goal in both defense and attack. Players must use the sound of the bell to judge the position and movement of the ball. Games consist of two 12-minute halves.

AFC Champions League Semi-finals 2nd Leg: Persepolis v Al Hilal preview

Muscat: Al Hilal will look to confirm their place in the 2017 AFC Champions League final when they take on Persepolis in the second leg of the semi-final on Tuesday after posting a 4-0 victory in the first leg three weeks ago.
Omar Khribin's hat-trick in Abu Dhabi helped put the Saudi Arabian side well on their way to a second final in four years and leaves their Iranian opponents with a mountain to climb at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.
■ Persepolis
Persepolis' first appearance in the AFC Champions League semi-finals could not have gone any worse and means they now need to record their biggest win ever in the competition in order to advance.
Trailing 2-0 at the break in the first leg, the Tehran club were handed a lifeline early in the second half when Abdullah Otafy was sent off, but they then proceeded to concede two more and are now staring elimination firmly in the face.
Without their leading scorer Mehdi Taremi, Persepolis need the rest of their frontline to step forward and the striker's direct replacement, Godwin Mensha, will hope



to add to the two goals he scored against Al Ahli in the last round.
No other Persepolis player has scored more than a single goal in the competition, but the attack-minded trio of Mohsen Mosalman, Vahid Amiri and Ali Alipour are all capable of finding the back of the net and will

need to do exactly that if the Iranian team are to have any chance of making the final.
■ Al Hilal
Al Hilal remain the only unbeaten team in this year's competition and, after their 3-0 victory over Al Ain in the second leg of the quarter-finals, have now netted seven without reply in their past two games.
Syrian striker Khribin opened the scoring in Abu Dhabi, before a rare goal from Yasser Al Shahrani put Al Hilal two up at the interval. Otafy was then dismissed for a second bookable offence, but Khribin added a brace in what proved a thoroughly convincing win.
Khribin has been in fine form for both club and country of late and seven goals on the continent leaves him just two adrift of the tournament's leading scorer, Hulk, but Al Hilal boast plenty of attacking options elsewhere.
Carlos Eduardo also sits on seven goals after the Brazilian registered a treble against Al Ain, while Nawaf Al Abed always poses a threat and Salem Al Dawsari was outstanding in the first leg in claiming two assists.
(Source: the-afc)

Bijan Taheri named Esteghlal assistant coach

Bijan Taheri has been appointed as assistant of Esteghlal German coach Winfried Schafer.
The 56-year-old coach started his coaching career at Paykan and has worked at Mes Kerman, Saba Battery, Sepahan, Saipa and most recently Gostaresh Foolad as assistant coach.
During a technical commission session on Sunday, former



Esteghlal midfielder was named Schafer's assistant.
Schafer was appointed as the new head coach of Iranian professional football club Esteghlal Tehran, which plays in the highest level of the Iranian football league division – the Persian Gulf Pro League.
Schafer started his coaching career with German association football club Borussia Mönchengladbach II in 1982.

Omani Abu Bakar to officiate Persepolis v Al Hilal Match

TASNIM — Omani referee Ahmed Abu Bakar Said Al-Kaf has been chosen to officiate the match between Iran's Persepolis and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal.
The match has been scheduled for Tuesday in Muscat's Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.
Ahmed Abu Bakar, 34, has been a full international for FIFA since 2010. He has refereed some matches in AFC Champions League.
Abu Bakar will be assisted by his countrymen Hamad al Mayahi and Abu Bakar Salim Mahad Al Amri.
Persepolis lost 4-0 in the first leg which was held in Abu Dhabi, the UAE.

Jenson Button: Hamilton was a 'bit weird' as a team-mate

Jenson Button says Lewis Hamilton acted a "bit weird" during their time as McLaren team-mates, after revealing in his autobiography just how strained their relationship got at times.
In an exclusive extract from his new book 'Life to the Limit', which appeared in The Daily Telegraph, Button said there were several flash points in their time together that he found difficult to understand.
The first came in their first season together during the 2010 Turkish Grand Prix.
"Midway through that first season, I was ahead of Lewis in the points," wrote Button.
"Did he like being beaten by his team-mate? Probably not, but he's a competitor and I'm sure that like me he relished the challenge.
"That's why we do what we do.
"Personally, he was fine with me, but you could just tell he was a little bit peeved. I don't think that I was to his taste, if I'm honest.
"And things took a bit of a turn for the worse in Turkey, when we almost had a collision that led to a minor falling-out between us."
In that race, then leader Hamilton was angry that Button had overtaken him at a time when he thought they were holding position and confronted Button about his actions afterwards.
"On the podium there was what the media called some 'frosty' body language and a 'muted' celebration," Button added.
"In fact, he came straight out and asked me about it: 'Did you pass me against team orders?'" He was the winner. Jesus.
"No," I told him, "I did not pass you against orders. I was never told not to pass you. It was a bit weird, slightly unnecessary and a little more proof that all was not well behind the smiles."

Button added he had been unimpressed during the 2012 Belgian Grand Prix weekend, when Hamilton tweeted secret telemetry data to show why he had lost out by running a different rear wing design in qualifying.
"Quite what was in his thinking, I couldn't say," said Button.
"Certainly any displeasure he was showing was aimed at the team, not me, but I ended up being collateral damage because you don't make telemetry public. You just don't."
"The screen grab showed the kind of things you work hard to keep hidden from your rivals. I made my feelings known about that.
"The official version was that I was "disappointed". Had I gone with my unofficial reaction it would have made 'WTF' seem very tame indeed.
"But at the same time I knew it wasn't personal. Bit dumb maybe. But not an 'I hate Jenson' thing so much as an 'I'm fed up with McLaren' thing.
"Later in the season, it was officially announced, that Lewis was leaving to partner Nico Rosberg at Mercedes.
"That was a shame for me; I'd enjoyed our rivalry. Off the track, however, he was still being a bit weird."
(Source: Eurosport)

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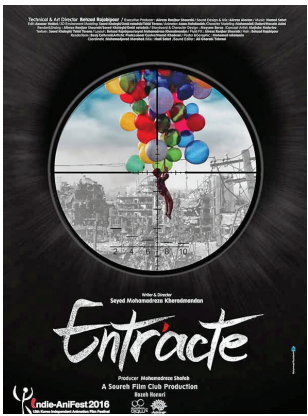
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“Entr’acte” wins award at Nazra Palestine Short Film Festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Mohammadreza Kheradmandan's animated movie “Entr’acte” has won the award for best experimental short movie at the 1st Nazra Palestine Short Film Festival.



A poster for Iranian filmmaker Mohammadreza Kheradmandan's animated movie “Entr’acte”

The festival was organized in the Italian cities of Venice, Florence, Bologna, Rome and Naples as well as the Palestinian cities of Gaza, Jerusalem and Ramallah from September 26 to October 9.

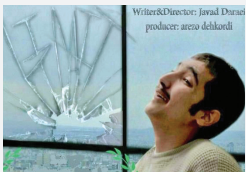
“Entr’acte” received the award “for telling in an overwhelming way the killing of a child by a sniper, mixing with astonishing effectiveness animation and film quotes. The film connects the narrative dramatic force with very strong emotional involvement and pietas, alternating in a heartbreaking way the prevailing black-and-white with color flashes,” the festival jury said in a statement.

This animated film is inspired by the true story of an Israeli sniper who, during the 2014 Gaza conflict, boasted on Instagram about having killed 13 Palestinian children in one day.

The award for best fiction by a Palestinian author was presented to “Ave Maria” by Basil Khalil, while the award for best fiction by an international author went to “One minute” by Dina Naser from Jordan.

“Mate Superb” Hamdi Alhroub won the award for best documentary by a Palestinian author and “High Hopes” by Guy Davidi from Israel was named best documentary by an international author.

NEWS IN BRIEF



“Limit” wins Hollywood Hills Award for best foreign short

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — “Limit” by Javad Darai was selected as best foreign short film at the International Hollywood Hills Awards, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The short film highlights the problems that the disabled face in the society.

Based in the Hollywood Hills, the festival rewards outstanding filmmakers who not only write their stories but also produce them.



Culture minister appoints two female advisors

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi has appointed two female advisors in social and women's affairs, the ministry announced on Sunday.

Parvin Dadandish has been appointed the minister's advisor on social affairs, and Marzieh Meratnia was selected as the advisor for women's affairs.

Viacom, Charter agree to extend renewal deadline

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Viacom Inc and Charter Communications Inc agreed on a short-term extension of their renewal deadline, a source familiar with the matter said, as the companies aim to avoid the immediate blackout of Viacom networks.

If no deal is reached, 16.6 million subscribers of Charter's Spectrum service will lose Viacom's networks, which include Comedy Central, MTV and Nickelodeon.

Viacom and Charter are working to “reach a mutually beneficial deal,” said the source, who did not want to be identified.

Viacom stands to lose \$760 million, or about 16 percent, of its annual affiliate revenue if an agreement is not reached, according to an analyst at Gabelli & Co, Viacom's second-largest voting shareholder.

Both sides are under pressure from cord-cutting, or dropping of pay television, as audiences flock to cheaper streaming services that have emerged in the past decade.

Cinema Verite to review films from Cinéma du Réel

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Five documentaries selected from the films screened at Cinéma du Réel, the French international documentary film festival, will be reviewed during the 11th edition of the Cinema Verite festival in Tehran in December.

“On Call” (La Permanence) highlighting refugee crisis in Europe by Alice Diop from France, “Long Story Short”, exploring poverty in the U.S. by Natalie Bookchin from the U.S., and “The Dreamed Ones”, a doc on love and hate by Ruth Beckermann from Austria are among the films, the organizers announced on Monday.

“Mama Colonel” by Dieudo Hamadi from France and Congo and “Through the Looking Glass” by Yi

Cui from China are also included.

Cinéma du Réel is organized by the BPI -- Public Information Library in Paris.

The Cinema Verite festival also plans to screen “Makala”, a Congo-set non-fiction film by Emmanuel Gras, in a special program.

“Makala”, which follows a young man (Kabwita Kasongo) who lives in the Congolese countryside and works on production of charcoal to give his family a better future, won the Nespresso Grand Prize at the Critics' Week of the Cannes Film Festival this year.

The Experimental and Documentary Film Center is the organizer of the Cinema Verite festival, which will be held in Tehran from December 10 to 17.

NLAI to showcase Belgian historical documents on Iranian customs



The National Library and Archives of Iran, Tehran

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) plans to put on display a collection of documents about Iran's customs dating back to the early years of the 20th century during spring 2018.

The collection belongs to Marc Molitor, the grandson of Lambert Molitor, Belgian co-founder of Iran's customs, NLAI

deputy director Gholamreza Amirkhani said in press release on Monday.

Lambert Molitor had accumulated the documents when he was in charge of customs offices in several Iranian cities, including Kermanshah and Tehran, he added.

Marc Molitor, who is currently in Iran, attended a meeting with a number of Iranian historians at the NLAI on Monday.

Iran sends illustrations for Bologna Children's Book Fair catalog

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) has submitted works by 16 Iranian illustrators to the Bologna Children's Book Fair to publish in its 2018 catalog.

“10 Numbers, 10 Stories” illustrated by Elnaz Pursistani, “Azadeh” by Sahar Bardai, “A New Friend” by Samaneh Qasemi and “Two Sweet Apples” by Amir Alai are among the selected works.

Also included are “A Better Way” by Zahra Modarresi,



A poster for Bologna Children's Book Fair 2018.

We are closer than ever to 1930s-style totalitarianism: Atwood

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — The world is closer to the dark days of the 1930s than at any time since, Canadian author Margaret Atwood said on Saturday in Frankfurt, where she received a prestigious German literary award.

Atwood's dystopian novel “The Handmaid's Tale”, first published in 1985, has shot back up the bestseller lists after being made into an award-winning TV series depicting a totalitarian future in a United States where women are forced into sexual servitude.

Donald Trump's election as U.S. president has, for some critics, brought that vision closer to reality as he uses social media to browbeat opponents, and lawmakers in a number of states seek to restrict women's reproductive rights.

“It feels the closest to the 1930s of anything that we have had since that time,” the 77-year-old Atwood told a news conference, drawing parallels with the fascist and communist regimes which then ruled parts of Europe.

Atwood was attending the annual Frankfurt Book Fair, where she received the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade on Sunday. The award citation praised Atwood's “political awareness and alertness for developments beneath the surface.”

Past winners include Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk, American writer and filmmaker Susan Sontag and Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian-born writer and politician.



Margaret Atwood, author of “The Handmaid's Tale” is seen at the 69th Prime-time Emmy Awards in Los Angeles, California, U.S., 17/09/2017. (Reuters/Lucy Nicholson)

Atwood, author of more than 40 books of fiction, poetry and critical essays, said it was surprising to many that signs of totalitarianism were manifesting themselves in the United States of today.

It's a far cry from the Berlin of the Cold War, still surrounded by the wall that divided Germany, where she started writing The Handmaid's Tale, she recalled.

“People in Europe saw the United States as a beacon of democracy, freedom, openness, and they did not want to believe that anything like that could ever happen there,” she said.

“But now, times have changed, and, unfortunately it becomes more possible to think in those terms.”

Although work on the TV series starring Elisabeth Moss began before last November's U.S. presidential election, Trump's victory changed the setting “quite radically,” said Atwood.



A poster for “On Call” (La Permanence), French filmmaker Alice Diop's documentary on refugee crisis in Europe, which will be screened at the Cinema Verite festival in Tehran in December

Iranian movies to compete in intl. festival



Mina Sadati (L) and Milad Keymaram act in a scene from “Mina's Option”.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A lineup of Iranian movies will be screened at several international events this month and during November.

“Mina's Option” by Kamal Tabrizi is scheduled to compete in the International Historical and Military Film Festival, which will be held in the Polish capital of Warsaw from October 23 to 27.

Starring Milad Keymaram and Mina Sadati, “Mina's Option” is about the happy marriage

of Mina and Mehran, which falls apart in the wake of mistrust and finally infidelity.

The Anatomy Crime and Horror International Film Festival, which will be held in Athens, Greece from October 29 to November 5, will screen five movies from Iranian filmmakers.

The films are “Self..less”, “Trace” and “Mate”, all three by Mashhud Mohsenian, “The Servant” by Farnush Abedi and “Limit” by Javad Darai.

“In Silence of Sands” by Mahnaz Ansari and “Little Elephant, Where Have You Slept” by Hassan Musavi.

The illustrations have been selected by a group of experts composed of Farshid Mesqali, Behruz Gharibpur, Behrad Amin-Salmasi and Reza Mozuni, the IIDCYA announced on Monday.

“The Bird, the Little Boy and the Train” by Iranian illustrator Rashin Kheirieh appeared on the fair's catalog in 2017.

The Bologna Children's Book Fair will take place in the Italian city from March 26 to 29.

Richard Wilbur, poet laureate and Pulitzer winner, dies at 96

BELMONT (N.Y. Times) — Richard Wilbur, whose meticulous, urbane poems earned him two Pulitzer Prizes and selection as the national poet laureate, died on Saturday in Belmont, Mass. He was 96.

His son Christopher confirmed his death, in a nursing home.

Across more than 60 years as an acclaimed American poet, Mr. Wilbur followed a muse who prized traditional virtuosity over self-dramatization; as a consequence he often found himself out of favor with the literary authorities who preferred the heat of artists like Sylvia Plath and Allen Ginsberg.

He received his first Pulitzer in 1957, and a National Book Award as well, for “Things of This World”. The collection included “A Baroque Wall-Fountain in the Villa Sciarra”, which the poet and critic Randall Jarrell called “one of the most marvelously beautiful, one of the most nearly perfect poems any American has written.”

By the early 1960s, however, critical opinion generally conformed to Mr. Jarrell's oft-quoted assessment that Mr. Wilbur “never goes too far, but he never goes far enough.”

Typical of complaints in this vein was a review by Herbert Leibowitz of Mr. Wilbur's collection “The Mind-Reader” in The New York Times of June 13, 1976: “While we acknowledge his erudition and urbanity, we regretfully liken his mildness to the amiable normality of the bourgeois citizen.”



Richard Wilbur in 2006 in his home at the time in Cummington, Mass. (Credit Nancy Palmieri/Associated Press)

But there were many on the other side who objected to the notion that Mr. Wilbur's poems were somehow unimportant because they were pretty. Jack Butler, for example, a resident of Okolona, Ark., wrote a letter to the editor in response to Mr. Leibowitz's review, remarking, “Sirs, the man has had a feast set before him, the very best, and complains because it is not a peanut butter and ketchup sandwich.”

Mr. Wilbur sailed on regardless of which way the wind blew. He won a second Pulitzer in 1988, for “New and Collected Poems”; became the second poet laureate of the United States, succeeding Robert Penn Warren, in 1987-88; and won many other awards over the years, including the \$100,000 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize in 2006, when he was 85. In all, he produced nine volumes of poems and several children's books, which he himself illustrated.

He was also an esteemed translator of poems and other works from the French, Spanish and Russian, including the plays of Molière and Racine.