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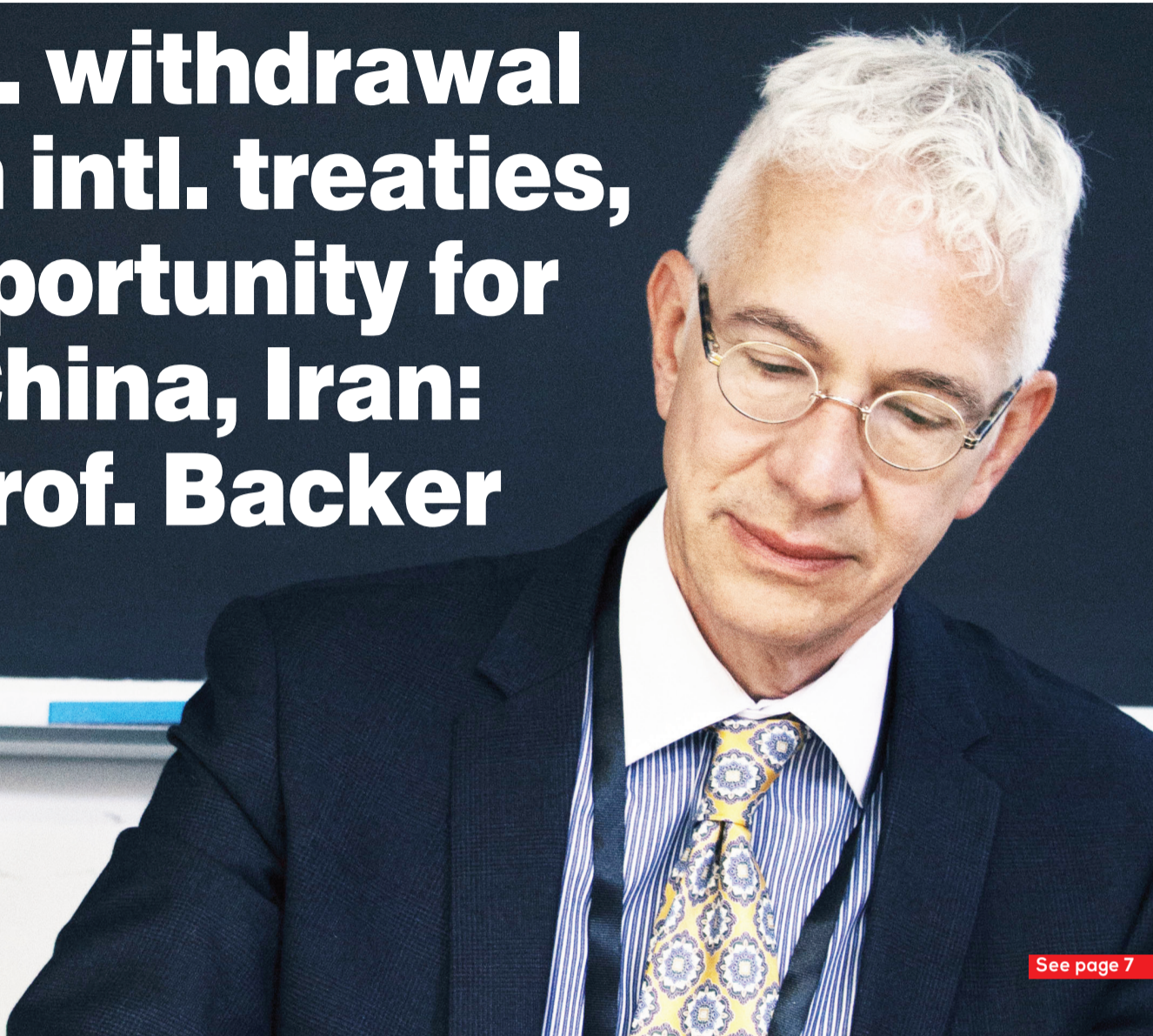


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Iraq's al-Abadi heading to Tehran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is visiting Tehran on Wednesday as part of a regional tour. Leading a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, the Iraqi premier will meet with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani. The trip comes two days after al-Abadi defended Iran's role in the fight against

Daesh at a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Baghdad. "Popular Mobilization fighters should be encouraged because they will be the hope of country and the region," he said. Tillerson had said the forces should "go home." Abadi said Popular Mobilization "is part of the Iraqi institutions," rejecting accusations that it is acting as an Iranian proxy.

Popular Mobilization Units calls for U.S. exit from Iraq

A top commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU/Hashd al-Sha'abi) has called for the immediate withdrawal of the United States troops from Iraq after the elimination of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists. "To the U.S. secretary of state, your military forces must prepare now to get out of our homeland Iraq immediately and without delay once the ISIL (ISIL) elimination excuse is over," Qais al-Khaz'ali, the secretary general of the League of Righteous, an Iraqi armed group fighting ISIL as part of Hashd al-Sha'abi, wrote on his Twitter page. The statement came after the U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said in a Sunday joint press conference with his Saudi regime counterpart Adel al-Jubeir in Riyadh that Iran and all other countries currently helping Iraq in its fight against the ISIL terrorist group needed to leave the country now that the battle was drawing to a close. A day later, Iraqi

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's media office criticized Tillerson's meddling comments, saying, "No party has the right to interfere in Iraqi matters." PMU is an Iraqi state-sponsored umbrella organization composed of some 40 groups, which are mainly Shia Muslims. The force reportedly numbers more than 100,000 fighters. Iraqi authorities say there are between 25,000 and 30,000 Sunni tribal fighters within its ranks in addition to Kurdish Izadi and Christian units. The fighters have played a major role in the liberation of ISIL-held areas to the south, northeast and north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, ever since the terrorists launched an offensive in the country in June 2014. Iran has been providing advisory military assistance to the central government in Baghdad and the regional government in the Iraqi Kurdistan, helping them both maintain ground and win back territory lost to the terrorist group in 2014. (Source: Press TV)

File photo



ARTICLE
 By Maryam Qarehgozlou
 Tehran Times journalist

Flouting the law aggravating air pollution, killing thousands

The winter is coming and once more days of choking smog are awaiting city dwellers in metropolises of Iran. A great deal of air pollution in Tehran and other big cities is blamed on a phenomenon called inversion. Inversions occur during the winter months when normal atmospheric conditions (cool air above, warm air below) become inverted. Inversions trap a dense layer of cold air under a layer of warm air. The warm layer acts much like a lid, trapping pollutants in the cold air near the earth. Wintertime inversions are a common event in metropolises. Extended inversions can lead to the high levels of fine particles (PM2.5). These high pollutant levels raise significant health and air quality issues, especially on days when the pollutant concentrations exceed the air quality indices. One of the most important things impacted by an inversion layer is smog. This is the brownish-gray haze that covers many of the world's largest cities and is a result of dust, auto exhaust, and industrial manufacturing. **Deaths linked with unhealthy environment** Tehraners as well as many other citizens living in cities of Tabriz, Ahwaz, and Isfahan feel suffocated by the choking smog at the onset of cold seasons. An estimated 12.6 million people died as a result of living or working in an unhealthy environment in 2012 – nearly 1 in 4 of total global deaths, according to estimates from World Health Organization (WHO) published in March 2016. In Iran around 33,000 people die each year because they are exposed to unhealthy environment. As much as 24 percent of global diseases are caused by environmental exposures. Environmental risk factors, such as air, **->12**

Bahraini prisoners in critical condition: Al-Wefaq member

By Ramin Hossein Abadian
TEHRAN — (MNA) — A Member of Bahrain's Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society Sheikh Mohammad Khojasteh pointed to the critical situation of Bahrain's political prisoners, captured by Al-Khalifa regime, and urged the international community to take immediate action to stop the suffering of these people. Al-Khalifa regime has recently intensified its hostile measures against Bahraini revolutionaries. The arrest of a large number of Bahraini children and torture of political prisoners in Al-Khalifa prisons is a solid evidence for this claim. In the same direction, Al-Khalifa regime terms political prisoners as offenders and violators of stipulated rules and regulations, a heinous move that is in fact considered as a kind of escaping from reality. All these measures happen at the time when Manama, capital of Bahrain, block the arrival of UN High Commissioner for the Human Rights (UN-

HCHR) in order to monitor the grave situation of human rights in this country. Meanwhile, the international community continues its silence toward Al-Khalifa's hostile actions against political prisoners in this country. On the other hand, the United States continues its financial and military support for Al-Khalifa regime regardless of warnings of the human rights institutions. Despite all developments and measures taken in this country, the UN High Commissioner for the Human Rights has not been able to grab the attention of Bahraini authorities for probing into the grave situation of human rights in this country. To shed more light on the details, Mehr News correspondent has conducted an interview with a member of Bahrain's Al-Wefaq Society Sheikh Mohammad Khojasteh, the full text of which is as follows: **Recently, many news outlets are covering reports on al-Khalifa's crackdown**

against Bahraini political prisoners. It is said that Al-Khalifa's military men commit heinous crimes against the politician prisoners. What is the main cause of these repressive measures? **A:** In response to your question, I should say that torturing political prisoners by military forces of this cruel regime is nothing new. There has been torture against political prisoners of this country since the start of Bahraini people's revolution in 2011. However, it seems that this trend has recently been exacerbated. Al-Khalifa regime is carrying out surprise attacks on prisons and political prisoners and these attacks have no justification. In general, Al-Khalifa regime beats up prisoners without any justification. On the other hand, political prisoners are also deprived of their inalienable rights, so that the injured are not treated. The meals distributed among the inmates do not suffice even for a child, let alone to all of them. **->13**

European firms pour money into Iranian renewable energy projects

By Dominic Dudley
 When it comes to energy sources the Middle East may be synonymous with oil, but these days governments across the region are trying to develop other, greener sources of energy. That ought to have some environmental benefits for the countries concerned, but their main motivation is economic. Not only is the cost of providing subsidized oil and gas for rapidly growing populations becoming prohibitively expensive, governments also know

that the less oil consumed at home the more they will be able to sell overseas at full price. Given its climate, the region has plenty of potential when it comes to renewable energy. Huge solar power plants are sprouting up in the desert, such as the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Solar Park in Dubai which, once completed in 2030, will cover 214 square kilometers. The likes of Morocco and Egypt have also been exploring the potential for wind power. Iran is the most advanced in its development

of renewable energy, mostly due to its past investments in hydropower schemes. Lately, however, it has been taking big strides in terms of wind and solar power, with a slew of new projects announced over the past few months. The largest to date was unveiled on October 17 when Norway's Saga Energy signed a €2.5bn (\$2.9bn) deal with the state-owned Amin Energy Developers to build a solar power plant with generating capacity of up to 2GW over the next five years. **->4**



Tehran Times/ Miliad Rafati

Exquisite art of carpet weaving in Kashan

A woman in the central Iranian city of Kashan weaves a handmade carpet. Kashan carpets are well-known for their longevity, lavish textures, strong colors, and elaborate designs. The traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan was registered on UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. Iran exported 5,700 tons of handmade carpets worth \$359 million in the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2016-March 2017).

MEPs demand external probe into parliament sex abuse

A group of MEPs (Member of the European Parliament) are demanding an external probe into allegations of sexual harassment at the European Parliament following a report of abuse of young female staffers in the Sunday Times newspaper. The article described the European Parliament as a "hotbed of sex harassment" following revelations a number of male senior MEPs had abused around a dozen female aides. Names of the alleged perpetrators have been kept from the public, although the Times newspaper did mention Yves Cochet, a former French environment minister and Green party MEP. The demand for an external investigation from the five MEPs also calls for a special committee on sexual harassment to help the victims and ensure the assailants are brought to justice. On Monday (23 October), EU Parliament president Antonio Tajani said that it was "with shock and indignation" that he had learned of the allegations of sexual harassment. He said people can already report the abuse to a special advisory committee of MEPs and promised "to further increase awareness of the facilities already in place." The committee has yet to receive any formal complaints but Tajani said the issue would be discussed among group party leaders. The allegations cited in the Sunday Times are serious. A senior MEP masturbating in front of a young assistant, a German MEP groping his assistant on her behind, another taking photos and sending them at night. They are also widespread. Politico Europe says it has so far collected the testimonies of 87 women and six men. The news portal has set up a special website to collect more testimonies for those who want to come forward. Politico notes some of the allegations collected so far include trading sex for legislative favors and work contracts, among others. Over half of them are from people working in NGOs (non-governmental organization) or in the private sector. (Source: euobserver)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



National working for Mossad sentenced to death: Tehran prosecutor

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Tehran prosecutor said on Tuesday that an Iranian national working for Mossad has been sentenced to death for revealing secret information to the Israeli spy agency.

One of the convict's actions was revealing information about thirty top Iranian experts and scientists working on military and nuclear projects, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said, adding that the suspect had contacts with eight Mossad officers.

He also said the espionage led to the assassination of two top nuclear scientists, Masoud Alimohammadi and Majid Shahrari, by Mossad agents.



MP warns of Europe's inaction on likely JCPOA breaches

POLITICS TEHRAN — A principlist parliamentarian, Hossein Naqavi Hosseini, on Tuesday warned the Foreign Ministry about European countries' inaction regarding possible U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, also known as the JCPOA.

If the U.S. exits the nuclear deal, the European parties to the deal would take no measures to ensure that Iran could benefit from the JCPOA, Naqavi Hosseini predicted, Tasnim reported.

Even now although the world's major banks are not restricted to cooperate with Iranian banks, they show no willingness to do so due to U.S. threats, he said.



Quadcopters need permits to fly in Tehran sky

POLITICS TEHRAN — The deputy chief of IRGC's Sarallah unit said on Tuesday that quadcopters can fly in Tehran's sky only after obtaining permits from the unit, IRNA reported.

"Quad copter owners need to obtain permits from the Sarallah unit to safely fly their quadcopters in permitted areas," Brigadier General Esmail Kosari said.

Kosari also said the Sarallah unit, which is responsible for maintaining security in the metropolis of Tehran and the larger Tehran province, has upgraded security arrangements as to be better able to counter security risks.



High-profile Iranian defense delegation in Baku

POLITICS TEHRAN — A high-profile delegation from the Iranian Defense Ministry has visited Baku to take part in the first joint Iranian-Azeri defense commission.

The joint commission aims to strengthen bilateral ties and boost the two countries' defense cooperation, Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

As well as participating in the commission, the delegation met with Azerbaijan's Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov.

The Islamic Republic attaches importance to expansion of ties with its neighbors, especially the Republic of Azerbaijan, the delegation said in a statement.



Kharrazi: Trump has discredited title of U.S. president

POLITICS TEHRAN — Kamal Kharrazi, head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, has said that President Donald Trump's language has discredited title of U.S. president.

"Given the policies that the U.S. follows, its animosity towards us is natural. The U.S. has unfortunately violated its obligations under the JCPOA [the official name for the international nuclear deal] which shows that it has problems with the Islamic Republic of Iran's existence," he told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday.

Kharrazi, a former foreign minister and Tehran's envoy to the United Nations, also noted that Iran is making efforts in line with its policy to help stabilize the region.



Iran's defense capability not related to nuclear deal: ambassador

POLITICS TEHRAN — Tehran's ambassador to Paris said on Tuesday that Iran's defense capability has nothing to do with the 2015 nuclear agreement Tehran signed with six world powers and the European Union, Tasnim reported.

"If Europe or others have concerns or questions about the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy regarding the Middle East or its defense capabilities, these are two separate things and have nothing to do with the JCPOA," Abolqasem Delfi said.

He also said the nuclear deal is a multilateral agreement endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution and cannot be changed.

Zarif meets South African president

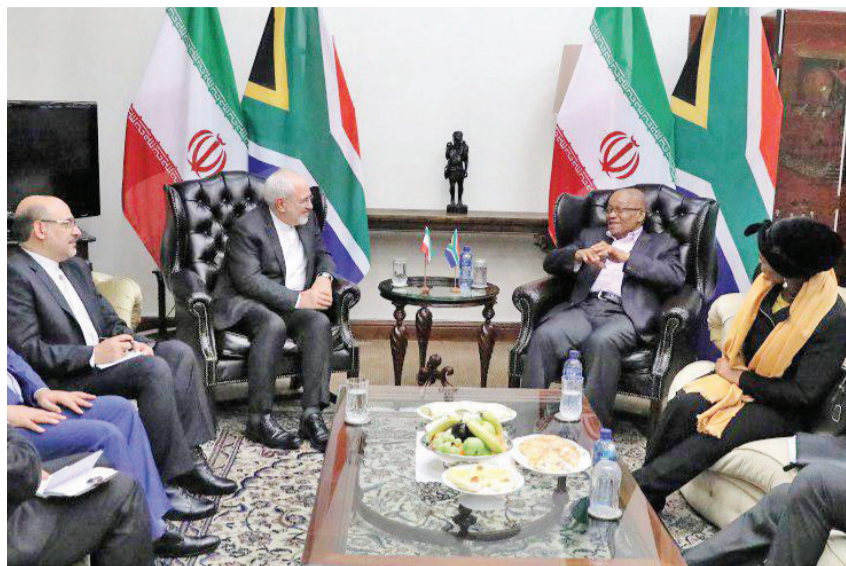
POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met on Monday with South African President Jacob Zuma in Pretoria.

Expansion of bilateral political and economic relations and international issues were discussed during the meeting.

Also during a meeting with Iranian residents in South Africa on Monday, Zarif said that Iranian people have been able to overcome the sanctions and counter aggressions over the past 40 years.

The chief diplomat also said that Iran does not depend on any other country to maintain security and make economic advances.

There are many countries that purchase military equipment because "their security does not come from within", he added.



"We are not like some Persian Gulf littoral states to go to Camp David after seeing the U.S. frowning," Zarif pointed out.

The Iranian foreign minister arrived in Pretoria as the first leg of his tour of Africa on Sunday.

Zarif and South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane signed a co-operation document in banking, development and investment, biotechnology, nanotechnology, agriculture, transportation, fisheries, beekeeping and shipping during the 13th meeting of Iran-South Africa Joint Economic Committee.

He announced that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani plans to visit South Africa in future months.

He left Pretoria for Uganda on Tuesday.

Russian senators urge U.S. Congress to stick to Iran deal

The upper house of Russia's parliament has prepared a statement urging the U.S. Congress to save the Iran nuclear deal from President Donald Trump, RIA Novosti reported on Monday.

"The Federation Council addresses the U.S. Congress members with an urgent request to use all available resources and prevent the extremely dangerous situation," the statement read.

Earlier this month, Trump refused to formally certify Tehran's compliance to the nuclear accord, warning that he might ultimately terminate the deal, also known as the JCPOA. That gave Congress 60 days to decide whether to reimpose economic sanctions against Tehran that were lifted under the JCPOA.

"At present time the implementation of this agreement is under threat of complete failure because of U.S. President Donald Trump's declared strategy concerning Iran that stipulates Washington's unilateral actions that violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) up to full cancellation of U.S. participation in it," the Russian senators said.

They also urged the parliaments of other Western countries to "use the influence on political leaders of their countries in order to keep in force the historical deal concerning the Iranian nuclear program."



People hold up signs during a protest calling for the Trump administration to continue diplomacy with Iran near the White House in Washington, DC on October 12, 2017. © Caballero-Reynold / AFP

They said that the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA would very likely prompt some reciprocal action from Iran.

Under the nuclear agreement, endorsed by the UN Security Council, Tehran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in return for termination of economic and financial sanctions. The agreement signed in July 2015 went into force in January 2016.

Top Iranian officials have already warned of the consequence of such actions, saying Iran was ready to respond to the possibility of U.S. government walking away from the agreement.

Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday responded to Trump's decertification of the nuclear deal, saying, "We will not tear up the nuclear deal so long as the other side has not torn it up, but if they do, we will cut it into pieces."

The Leader added, "I don't want to waste our time to respond to the rants and whoppers of the foul-throated president of the United States."

Despite the Trump administration's move, European countries have strongly supported the JCPOA, stressing the need to preserve it.

On Sunday, in what appeared to be a shift in Trump's tone toward the JCPOA, the U.S. president said he does not object to European countries' trade with Iran.

"I told them [the EU]: 'Just keep making money. Don't worry about it. We don't need you on this,'" he told Fox News.

World will not trust U.S. if it quits nuclear deal: Panetta

POLITICS Former secretary of defense Leon Panetta said on Monday that the world will not trust the word of the U.S. if it quits the 2015 nuclear deal.

"In foreign policy, in many ways, your word counts for a lot and when you tell someone you're going to do something, if you fail to stick to your word, it sends a clear message to others ... that you cannot trust America as a partner," The Hill quoted Panetta as saying during a Hudson Institute forum in Washington.

U.S. President Donald Trump decertified Iran's compliance to the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on October 13.

Congress will have 60 days to decide whether to restore the sanctions against the Islamic Republic that the U.S. has agreed to waive.

Panetta also expressed concern that the issue has now been thrown to lawmakers as "Congress is having a hard time sometimes finding its way to the bathroom much less dealing with issues that involve an area ... far better for the administration, for the president to deal with."

"Congress should hopefully develop a way to increase the enforcement of that agreement ... but in the end, to make clear that we're going to continue to enforce that agreement," he urged.

Decertification of Iran's compliance to the JCPOA came despite the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency has confirmed for eight times that Iran has been committed to its obligations under the nuclear deal.



Iran's missile program not negotiable: UN envoy

POLITICS Iran's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations said on Monday that Iran's missile program has a purely defensive and deterrent character and is not negotiable.

"Iran has always stressed that its missile program will continue with full force in accordance with its national defense program and is not, nor will it ever be, negotiable," Eshagh Al Habib said in a statement read before the First Committee of the UN General Assembly on Conventional Weapons.

Following is full text of the statement published by permanent mission of Iran in New York's website:

My delegation associates itself with the NAM statement delivered by Indonesia.

Iran reaffirms the inherent right of any State to acquire, manufacture, import and retain conventional arms and related parts, components and ammunition for its self-defense and security needs.

Iran shares the concerns over increasing global military expenditure. This is even more alarming in a region like the Middle East, where in addition to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, a large arsenal of sophisticated offensive conventional weapons of the Israeli regime continue to threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond.

In recent years, such an already complicated security situation in the Middle East has been exacerbated including by manifold increase in the military budgets and arms imports by certain States in the Persian Gulf. Only one example of this trend is the signing of a 110 billion dollar weapons deal by one of these countries with the U.S. in 2017, which is yet separate from a ten-year, 350 billion dollar arms deal that this country signed separately with the U.S.

These are only the tip of the submerged iceberg of the security situation, military expenditure and arms import in a region where we live. Yet some countries are criticizing Iran for launching only a handful missiles that are strictly designed to carry only conventional warheads and are proportionate with its security environment.

Iran's missile program has been developed to meet its defense and security needs. It cannot and should not be seen and assessed in vacuum.

For instance, historically, during the war imposed on Iran by Saddam, not only did the United States and its



Iran's missile program has a purely defensive and deterrent character. These missiles are strictly designed to carry conventional warheads and their range and precision are proportionate to our security environment and threat perception.

regional allies provide military, intelligence, logistical, economic and political assistance to Saddam, and offer their support and maintained their silence during his chemical weapons attacks campaign, they also did everything in their power to interdict the acquisition of even the most basic defensive capabilities by Iran.

Through that experience Iran learned that in order to protect its people, safeguard its independence and security, and defend its national honor, it must rely on indigenous capacities; it learned that it should not hesitate in developing the capability to meet its legitimate defense and security needs.

As regards the current security environment in the Middle East, and at a time when the hostile policies of the United States and its regional allies, especially the Zionist regime, as well as the transfer of hundreds of billions of dollars worth of arms into the region have turned the region into a tinderbox, why should Iran remain complacent about its defense needs?

When the U.S. allies in the region, whose combined population is far less than Iran, each spend exponentially

higher sums on their military than Iran, why Iran that has attacked no one in almost 300 years but has been the victim of aggression supported by the U.S. and its regional partners shouldn't acquire necessary tools of deterrence in the face the constant threats by aggressors?

While the combined total military expenditure of the Middle East countries in 2016 showed a 19 per cent increase compared with 2007, Iran's military expenditure decreased by 7.3 per cent during that period. This fact alone indicates how Iran exercises maximum restraint in reacting to skyrocketing security challenges in its region. This is also based on the understanding that our security can be achieved by our reliance on our people not by spending billions of dollars to import arms.

It is in this framework that Iran's missile program has a purely defensive and deterrent character. These missiles are strictly designed to carry conventional warheads and their range and precision are proportionate to our security environment and threat perception.

It is based on these facts and understanding that Iran has always stressed that its missile program will continue with full force in accordance with its national defense program and is not, nor will it ever be, negotiable.

I should also refer to arguments that consider Iran's missile launches as being inconsistent with the Security Council resolution 2231. This resolution only "CALLS UPON" Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles "DESIGNED" to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. Iran has repeatedly stated that none of its ballistic missiles has been designed to have such a capability. It is also worth mentioning that when the ballistic missile launches of Iran was considered by the Security Council in different occasions, according to its own documents, there was even "no consensus in the Security Council on how [such] particular launch related to resolution 2231".

Therefore, arguments in support of inconsistency of such launches with resolution 2231 are based on the wordings of resolution 1929, which was annulled and terminated by the Council itself in 2015 and therefore is not valid anymore. Making a comparison between the wordings of these two resolutions is recommended for having a better and clear understating of the context of this subject.

Pressure mounts on Trump over U.S. troops killed in Niger

The United States lawmakers on Capitol Hill were still searching for answers on Tuesday morning about the deaths of four American soldiers in Niger.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford said on Monday that the U.S. troops waited an hour after the ambush began to call for help. He said it took an additional 60 minutes for French air power to arrive on the scene, but by then it was too late for the four Americans. CBS News' Major Garrett reports that from President Donald Trump's earliest days in office, he has urged field commanders to carry out more counter-terrorism operations, all the while promising minimum second-guessing from Washington. But with Sen. John McCain and others calling for more information — and hinting at investigations — that approach may be meeting its deadliest, and most politically hazardous test in Niger, reports Garrett.

Trump ignored questions on Monday about the mission in Niger, but Dunford, his top military adviser, denied the Pentagon was withholding information. "I think we do owe the families and the American



people transparency in incidents like this, and we intend to deliver just that," Dunford said, calling the incident "complex."

He did release some basic details of the attack, saying that on October 3, a dozen U.S. soldiers joined more than two dozen Nigerien fighters on a mission north of Niger's capital, Niamey. A day later, the group came under attack from approxi-

mately 50 militants, described by Dunford as well-trained and well-equipped, and associated with or inspired by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit.

Gunfire raged for an hour before the Americans radioed for help. With minutes, a surveillance drone was overhead, but it was another hour before French

air cover arrived. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain said Americans want to know what went wrong, and what the mission was about.

"I have a question about the whole operation," McCain said on Monday. "Come on. I have a question, why four men died?"

Along with those answers, Dunford vowed to find out why Johnson was separated from his unit. Mired in a dispute with the president over his condolence call to her, Johnson's widow, Myesha, said on Monday that she hasn't been allowed to see his body. And she, too, wants to know "how he got killed, where he got killed, or anything."

Dunford said Pentagon policy allows the family to see the remains of a fallen loved one. He said he did not know if Johnson's widow was denied that right, but would find out.

The White House is deferring to the Pentagon on the investigation, though pressure is building for the commander-in-chief to demand, or provide, more answers.

(Source: CBS News)

Abadi tells Tillerson: PMF is hope of Iraq and region

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has rejected a call by Washington for Iranian-backed fighters to leave Iraq at a meeting with the United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Baghdad.

Tillerson made the unannounced visit to the Iraqi capital on Monday amid heightened tensions between the two countries over the role of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), Shia paramilitaries that helped defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group in Iraq.

The top U.S. diplomat had previously called for Iraq-based "Iranian militias ... to go home" as the fight against ISIL "is coming to a close".

But Abadi insisted on Monday that the force consists solely of Iraqi nationals who "fought terrorism" and made sacrifices that contributed to the victory over the ISIL Takfiri terrorist group.



Calling it "part of the Iraqi institutions," Abadi said PMU fighters "should be encouraged because they will be the hope of country and the region," according to a statement by his media office.

Tillerson's visit to Baghdad came a few days after the Iraqi army, backed by the PMU, claimed

control of all of oil-rich Kirkuk province after it captured Altun Kupri town following intense fighting with Kurdish Peshmerga forces.

Baghdad's forces had previously captured Kirkuk city, as part of a major military operation in the wake of a controversial September 25 referendum on Kurdish secession that Baghdad had declared illegal.

Tillerson and Abadi, along with the House of Saud regime's King Salman, also participated in the inaugural meeting of the Saudi regime-Iraq Coordination Committee in Riyadh on Sunday.

Earlier on Monday, before meeting Abadi for the second time in two days, Tillerson flew from Qatar to Afghanistan's Bagram Air Base, where he met President Ashraf Ghani and other Afghan leaders.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Erdogan: Turkey's membership to cure EU's problems

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that Turkey's full membership is the "cure for the chronic problems" of the European Union (EU).

Turkey, which applied for the bloc's membership in 1987, began accession talks with the EU in 2005. But negotiations between the two sides have been practically frozen for years now amid tense mutual relations. "A Europe without Turkey is only going to face isolation, desperation and civil strife. Turkey does not need Europe. Europe is the one that is in need [of Turkey]," Erdogan said, speaking at an event in Turkey's capital, Ankara, on Monday. "A Europe where xenophobia is on the rise and Neo-Nazi parties are so strong that they are coalition partners is going towards its doom," he said, referring to gains made by a number of far-right parties in recent elections across different parts of the



continent. "A Europe killing its own principles with its own hands would have a dark future."

Erdogan's comments come amid high tensions between the EU and Tur-

key. Turkish and European officials have been in a war of words, with Ankara accusing members of the EU of supporting "terrorism" and EU politicians alleging a deterioration of democratic

and human rights conditions in Turkey. In September, in a televised debate before Germany's parliamentary elections, Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Turkey "should not become a member of the EU". In a summit last week in Brussels, European leaders asked the EU Commission, the bloc's executive body, "to reflect on whether to cut and re-orient" the pre-accession support money.

In his remarks, Erdogan urged EU leaders to have "common sense" on issues related to Turkey and in their interactions with Ankara.

"Though they do not want to see it, Turkey and its full membership is the cure for their chronic problems."

Turkey and the EU have been cooperating on issues such as the refugee crisis, security and Syria's war - a situation that appears to have made some member states hesitant to cut ties.

(Source: agencies)

Italy ready to discuss calls for great autonomy: PM

The Italian government is ready to open negotiations with Lombardy and Veneto after the two wealthy regions voted overwhelmingly for greater autonomy, Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said on Tuesday.

Unlike a recent referendum on secession in Catalonia, which sparked a political crisis in Spain, the Italian votes this weekend were legal, but not binding on Rome.

Making clear he had no intention of making a drama out of the twin ballots, Gentiloni said he was ready to discuss how Lombardy and Veneto wanted to proceed.

"Here we are talking about how to make Italy work better. We are not calling into question Italy and its unity," Gentiloni said during a visit to an oil refinery close to Venice, the capital of the northeastern Veneto region.

"The government is ready to look into the merits of this ... it will be a complex discussion that can't be done in five minutes," he added.

Regional governments have the right to ask for greater oversight in 23 policy areas, including the en-



vironment, infrastructure, health and education.

The most delicate negotiations are likely to be over tax returns, with Veneto demanding that it be allowed to spend 90 percent of all the taxes raised on its own territory.

Among Italy's 20 regions, Lombardy and Veneto account for just under a third of its economic output and are home to around 25 percent of its population.

Italy's poorer, less developed southern regions are worried that they will receive less funding in future if

Lombardy and Veneto get to keep more of their own tax take.

Five regions in Italy -- the islands of Sicily and Sardinia and three relatively small border areas with linguistic minorities -- already have special autonomous status under the constitution. Veneto wants to join them.

However, this would need a change to the constitution, which the government seems unwilling to accept.

"We are ready (to grant greater powers) within the limits fixed by our laws and by our constitution," Gentiloni said. Negotiations are likely to take many months and look certain to be interrupted by national elections due by next May. Any deal between the government and the regions will have to be approved by parliament.

The latest opinion polls suggest a hung parliament will emerge from the forthcoming election, making it impossible to predict the government formation that will carry on the negotiations.

(Source: Reuters)

Widow of U.S. soldier killed in Niger demands answers

The widow of a United States soldier recently killed in Niger has raised questions about the government's account of the October 4 attack that led to the death of her husband and three other American servicemen.

Myesha Johnson, whose husband,

Sergeant La David T. Johnson, was killed in an attack that is still under investigation by the U.S. military, told ABC News on Monday that she was desperate to know more about the disappearance and death of her husband.

"I want to know why it took them 48

hours to find my husband," Johnson said. She was also furious and confused as to why the military kept preventing her from viewing the remains of her husband.

"They won't show me a finger, a hand," she said. "I know my husband's body from

head to toe and they won't let me see anything," she said. "I need to see my husband."

"They don't let me see anything. I don't know what is in that box. It could be empty for all I know," Johnson noted.

(Source: Press TV)

Kuwait emir warns of PGCC collapse and crisis escalation

The Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, warned of the collapse of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) - an alliance of the Persian Gulf Arab states - should the crisis with Qatar remain unresolved.

In a statement at a Kuwaiti parliament session on Tuesday, the emir warned PGCC leaders of the potential dangerous military and political intervention that may ensue as a result of the political deadlock.

"Contrary to our wishes and hopes, the Persian Gulf crisis has the potential of escalating; therefore, all of us must be fully aware of its potential consequences," Sheikh Sabah said. "Any escalation will bring with it an outright call for regional and international intervention, which will destroy the security of the Persian Gulf and its people."

The PGCC is a political and economic alliance of countries in the Arabian Peninsula, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Established in 1981, the alliance fosters economic, security, cultural and social cooperation between the six nations.

But the fate of the PGCC has been thrown into question as a result of the deep rift caused by the land, air and sea blockade imposed on Qatar by Bahrain, the House of Saud regime, the UAE and Egypt on June 5.

Sheikh Sabah stressed that Kuwait's mediation efforts should be seen through the lens of the family of the Persian Gulf nations: "We are not a third party in this crisis. Rather, we are a party of one with the other two brother-nations in this crisis."

He warned that the collapse of the PGCC would mean the collapse of the last bastion of joint Arab cooperation, noting that his country's goal was to resolve the crisis and prevent the PGCC from collapsing.

The countries that imposed a blockade on Qatar claim that it works to support "terrorism", maintains cordial relations with Iran and meddles in the internal affairs of their countries.

But Qatar maintains there is "no legitimate justification" for the actions taken by the four nations, calling their decision a "violation of its sovereignty".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

British activists face jail for 'disarming' Saudi regime-bound jets

Two British activists could face jail terms of up to 10 years after attempting to "disarm" BAE fighter jets heading to Saudi Arabia, where they would have been used to support the Regime's ongoing bombing campaign in Yemen.

Sam Walton, a Quaker activist, and Daniel Woodhouse, a Methodist minister, were arrested in January after breaking into a BAE Systems airbase in Warton, Lancashire, with hammers and crowbars as they tried to "prevent a war crime" in the Yemen.

The pair managed to get beyond fences, closed doors and CCTV camera at the site, which they claim was housing 13 fighter jets scheduled to be sent to Saudi Arabia.

"We brought a hammer and a crowbar and were intending on disarming the jets by hammering their noses, which houses the radars, as well as the side panels and the cockpits," Walton told Al Jazeera.

"We got within five feet of them ... but as we started to go at a door with our crowbars, we alerted security, and they found us."

Walton said the duo were scheduled to appear at Burnley Magistrates Court on Tuesday on charges of criminal damage and could face up to 10 years in prison.

"The UK can't continue building its economy on the bodies of the innocent," Walton said.

The duo entered the base 21 years after four women - known as the Ploughshare Four - caused more than 1.5 million pounds (\$2m) in damage to a Hawk fighter jet destined for Indonesia.

The women argued the jet would likely be used to kill civilians in East Timor and were later found not guilty of criminal damage under the Genocide Act.

"This could have been one of the largest conspiracies to commit criminal charges cases in UK legal history," Walton said.

"There was close to a \$1bn worth of planes in that hanger, but we've been charged with 1,000 pounds (around \$1,300) worth of damage - a mickey-mouse offence - because BAE wants this case to go away."

BAE did not immediately respond to Al Jazeera's request for comment on the case.

Since the House of Saud regime launched its military intervention in Yemen, British weapons companies, including BAE systems and Raytheon, have earned revenues exceeding \$8bn, generating profits estimated at almost \$775m.

Britain has approved sales of the Tornado aircraft, which is partially manufactured by BAE systems; BAE's Tactical armored vehicles, valued at \$580,000; vehicles and tanks; and \$1.48bn worth of grenades, missiles and bombs.

Andrew Smith, a spokesperson for the Campaign Against Arms Trade, told Al Jazeera that the "real crime" was Britain's decision to keep arming and supporting the Saudi regime.

The House of Saud regime war in Yemen has killed more than 10,000 people and injured more than 40,000 to date, according to the United Nations.

The country is also facing a deadly cholera outbreak, a direct consequence of the Saudi regime war that has claimed about 2,000 lives and affected more than 500,000 people since late April.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Exports from SMEs exceeds \$1b in 7 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The value of exports from Iran's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) reached \$1.1 billion in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), IRNA reported.

According to Ali Yazdani, the managing director of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization, the figure is expected to reach \$2 billion by the end of the current year (March 20, 2018).



Iran to export 10m tons of steel by Mar. 2018

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization Mehdi Karbasian announced that Iran has exported more than four million tons of steel during the first half of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21- September 22, 2018) and the figure will reach 10 million tons by the year end (March 20, 2018).

Iran exported 5.5 million tons of crude steel in the past year, with 27 percent increase from the figure of its preceding year.

Iranian Steel Manufacturers Association's Secretary Rasoul Khalifeh-Soltan believes that while the country's steel industry's growth has been 5.7 percent on average in the recent years, the figure can reach 10 percent this year, given the promising condition the sector enjoys at present.

European firms pour money into Iranian renewable energy projects

The deal is typical of many of the renewable energy deals in Iran that it is a European company making the investment. Among other recent examples, Norway's Scatec Solar has said it is in talks to build a 110MW solar power plant, worth around \$132m; it could expand it to 500MW at a later date. In addition, Hashem Oraee, president of the Iran Wind Energy Association (IRWEA), recently told local media that Danish companies are ready to invest as much as \$1bn in renewable energy projects in Iran.

It is not just Nordic countries which are getting involved. On September 20, the UK's Quercus said it planned to deliver 600MW of solar power in Iran at a total cost of some €500m. Local media have linked Germany's Solarwatt and Italy's Finergy Company to other schemes. In June, a delegation of seven German renewable energy companies toured North Khorasan province to examine potential sites for solar and wind power projects.

Some smaller projects are already at or near completion. In late July, work was completed on the 20MW Mokran solar power plant in Kerman province, backed by a joint venture of Germany's Adore and Switzerland's Durion. The companies are planning a 100MW solar plant for an adjoining site. In April, Iran's Ghadir Electricity and Energy Company and Greece's Metka announced they had completed a 10MW plant close to Isfahan. In February another 14MW solar plant was unveiled in Hamedan, in the west of the country.

In total, these deals are adding up to many billions of dollars of investment into the Iranian economy. In April, Iran's deputy economy minister Mohammad Khazaei said EU countries had invested \$3.6bn in Iran's energy sector since January 2016, when the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) came into force – the deal which cut sanctions on Tehran in exchange for its cutting its nuclear activities. Khazaei told the 1st Iran-European Union Business Forum on Sustainable Energy in Tehran that the government had "so far approved of 48 projects for electricity generation through renewable energies".

There are a few reasons behind the rush of investment, including favourable investment terms on offer from the Iranian government. The country's Energy Ministry typically signs deals guaranteeing to purchase the output of renewable energy plants for 20 years, via the Renewable Energy Organization of Iran (SUNA). The plants are also tax exempt for between five and 13 years.

There is also, from a European perspective, the welcome fact that the level of international competition in Iran is muted because American firms are absent from the country. There is a risk that the US government of President Donald Trump will make life harder for these investors in the future – Washington has threatened to walk away from the nuclear deal and impose more sanctions. For now though, that is a risk that companies seem happy to take.

"We are a little bit worried about what Trump is doing, we are very much in favour of the atomic deal, but we will of course continue with our plans whatever Trump does, no doubt about that, nothing can change that," said Saga Energy spokesman Rune Haaland, in quotes carried by Reuters.

Iran already has the largest green energy footprint in the Middle East, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency, an intergovernmental body based in nearby Abu Dhabi. It estimates Iran had 10,606MW of renewable energy generating capacity in place in 2016. The next nearest country is Iraq with 2,311MW, followed by Syria with 1,572MW and Israel with 852MW.

Most of Iran's existing renewable capacity as of 2016 came from hydropower plants. It had relatively little wind or solar power, with capacity of just 117MW and 32MW respectively last year, with bioenergy plants contributing a further 11MW. The investment rush on at the moment means those statistics will change markedly over the next few years.

(Source: Forbes)

NIOC to sign 3 oilfield development deals soon

ENERGY TEHRAN — An official desk at the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said on Tuesday that nominated companies for the development of three Iranian oilfields have been determined and the deals will probably be signed before the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018), ISNA reported.

According to Karim Zobeidi, NIOC's deputy managing director for consolidated planning, the results of the studies on Ab-Teymour and Mansouri (in southwestern Khuzestan province) and Changouleh (in western Ilam province) which were presented to NIOC by the assigned companies have been assessed and some companies are chosen for further negotiations.



Iran's Mansouri Oil Field

The NIOC official also noted that there has been some positive talks regarding the South Pars oil layer (in the Persian

Gulf) with Denmark's Maersk Oil and a deal with the Danish company for the development of this field is not far to reach.

"Two other companies (one of which is a Russian company) expressed tendency for the development of this field but the negotiations with Maersk have made great progress," he said.

According to the report, Indonesia's Pertamina, Russian Lukoil, Denmark's Maersk, Norwegian DNO along with Russia's Gazprom and Thailand's state-owned PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP) have presented the results of their preliminary studies on the mentioned oilfields to NIOC.

Inflation rate stands at 8.2% in Iran: statistical center

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Statistical Center of Iran announced that the inflation rate for the 12-month period ended on the last day of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr (October 22) compared to the same period in the previous year hit 8.2 percent.

The figure shows 0.2 percent rise from the inflation rate for the 12-month period ended on the last day of the sixth Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (September 22), IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The center put the point-to-point inflation rate at 8.7 percent, indicating



0.6 percent growth from the previous 12-month period.

Point-to-point inflation rate stood at 8.6 percent in the urban areas and 9.1 percent in the rural areas with 0.6 percent and 0.8 percent rise, respectively.

S. Africa potential exports hub for Iranian products: JCCI president

ECONOMY TEHRAN — President of Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) Herman Breedt announced that South Africa can act as a hub for exports of Iranian products to other African countries, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Tuesday.

In a meeting with ICCIMA Vice President Masoud Khansari, who visited the South African capital leading a delegation with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Breedt called for

expansion of economic ties between the two countries and said that South Africa can act as a bridge for Iranian businessmen to export their products, including LPG products and medicine, to other African countries.

He named auto industry, gold and diamond mines, and die casting as potential fields for the two countries to make joint ventures.

The South African official also announced that his country is inclined to import agricultural products including pomegranate, dates, and saffron from Iran.

Transport min. outlines plans for expansion of railway network

ECONOMY TEHRAN — In a meeting at Management and Planning Organization of Iran on Monday, Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhondi outlined the ministry's programs for expansion of the country's railway network.

As IRNA reported, the minister said 516 kilometers of railroad is going to be built by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).

According to the official, currently 400km of the mentioned 516 km has been constructed and the rest is under

construction.

Akhondi also mentioned the electrification of the country's railways saying, "In this regard we are working on two main projects namely electrification of Tehran-Mashhad railway and also implementing the Tehran-Qom-Esfahan high-speed train project."

Based on a report by IRNA, the minister also said that by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2022), 21 provinces' centers are planned to get connected to the national railway network.



JCCI President Herman Breedt (R) and ICCIMA Vice President Masoud Khansari

China lead, iron ore imports from North Korea sink after U.N. sanctions

China's imports of iron ore and lead concentrate from North Korea plunged to their lowest in more than six years, while coal arrivals fell sharply after the United Nations' latest sanctions against the isolated nation, data showed on Tuesday.

Lead ore and concentrate arrivals totaled just 1,321 tonnes, worth \$1.18 million, down 84 percent from a year earlier and the lowest on Reuters records dating back to January 2010, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

Iron ore shipments plunged 98 percent to 3,035 tonnes, worth about \$55,000, the lowest monthly volume on Reuters records from January 2011.

China imported 511,619 tonnes of coal, worth about \$44 million, from North Korea, down 71.6 percent from a year earlier.

The data represents the final shipments allowed through customs before the U.N. penalties came into force on Sept. 5, banning Pyongyang from selling



An employee walks between front-end loaders which are used to move coal imported from North Korea at Dandong port in the Chinese border city of Dandong, Liaoning province December 7, 2010.

coal, iron ore, lead, lead ore and seafood abroad.

Numbers released last week showed trade between the world's second-largest economy and its northern neighbor totaled \$412 million, the weakest since April.

The U.N. Security council unanimously imposed new sanctions on North Korea. The sanctions took effect this month, but China enforced the new measures from Aug. 15, amid growing pressure from the United States to rein in Pyongyang's missile program.

Gasoline and diesel shipments remained slow after China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) suspended sales of gasoline and diesel at the end of June to North Korea over concerns CNPC would not get paid for its goods. The measures are still in place, sources familiar with the matter say.

Gasoline exports were the lowest since January 2016, and diesel sales were the smallest since May. (Source: Reuters)

How will higher Bank of England rates affect Britain's economy?

The Bank of England is widely expected to raise interest rates for the first time in more than 10 years on Nov. 2, after the next meeting of its Monetary Policy Committee.

Most economists polled by Reuters are not persuaded a rate rise is necessary, and its symbolic value is likely to overshadow its fairly modest effect on the economy.

Following is a set of best guesses from economists in academia, the private sector and at the Bank of England on what a quarter point increase in rates to 0.5 percent will do, based on models of how the economy has performed in the past.

Public reaction

This cannot be calculated precisely. The British public could take fright at a first rate increase since 2007, especially at a time of weak growth as the country prepares to leave the European Union.

While the BoE has ruled out returning rates to their pre-crisis level of about 5 percent, public or market expectations that this rate hike would be the first of many could also give it a disproportionate public impact.

What will happen to growth?

Britain's economy is growing at around 0.3 percent a quarter this year, half its long-run average and a slowdown from 2017 after its weakest start to the

year since 2012.

A BoE research paper from 2014 - which represents the views of its authors, not an official BoE position - estimates that raising rates by 1 percent reduces output by 0.6 percent over a 2-3 year period.

A quarter point rise would trim a modest 0.15 percent from GDP - equivalent to six weeks' growth at current rates.

Other estimates are slightly higher. Amit Kara, a forecaster at the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) sees an effect of around 0.2 percent from a quarter point rise, while Martin Beck of consultants Oxford Economics says it could be up to 0.3 percent after three years.

"Arguably a rise now could have a magnified effect," Beck said, pointing to headwinds from Brexit uncertainty and public spending restraint, as well as a possible shock factor.

Credit Suisse economists think a quarter point rate rise could boost the chance by around 5 percent of the UK economy tipping into recession, based on an analysis of factors that have contributed to downturns since the 1970s.

How will Sterling react?

Sterling gained 4 cents against the U.S. dollar in the 24 hours after the BoE said last month it was likely to raise rates

in the coming months, taking it above \$1.36.

Currency strategists say a November rate rise is now almost entirely priced into sterling, so the pound is likely to rise only slightly on Nov. 2 if the BoE acts as expected.

"Whether that's sustained or not depends on whether there's an indication that there could be more steps to follow," said Ian Gunner, portfolio manager at the Altana Hard Currency Fund in London.

What will happen to inflation?

The main aim of a rate rise is to curb inflation, which hit a five-and-a-half year high of 3.0 percent in September.

The BoE research paper estimates a 1 percent rate rise would lower the inflation rate by 1 percentage point after 3 years, so a quarter point rise would only put on modest downward pressure.

The current inflation overshoot is due to a one-off hit from sterling's sharp fall after last year's Brexit vote, which the BoE thinks will soon start to fade.

Instead, a BoE rate rise now is insurance against its concern that the economy cannot grow as fast it used to without generating excess inflation from an overheating labor market.

Most economists are more doubtful that wages are set to grow strongly, even with unemployment at a 42-year low.

There is also less conviction that a small rate rise has much effect on inflation. NIESR's Kara said a 0.25 percentage point rate rise would probably trim inflation by just 0.1 percentage points.

Will a rate rise surprise households?

The BoE's message that a rate rise is probably coming has reached some but not all households. A survey from financial data company IHS Markit this month showed 40 percent of households expect rates to rise over the next three months, up from 12 percent in September. Some 63 percent expect a rise in the next six months, up from 29 percent before.

Nonetheless, some damage to consumer sentiment is possible. A gauge of consumer sentiment from market research company GfK sentiment often showed a fall in months when the BoE raised rates during its tightening cycle in the mid-2000s.

Will higher rates hurt business investment?

Business investment has been fairly subdued, growing by 2.5 percent over the past year. The cost of finance is not the reason, however. Uncertainty about demand and a lack of profitable opportunities were the main grounds given in a Confederation of British Industry survey. (Source: Reuters)

Oil slips towards \$57 as Iraq's northern pipeline pumps more

Oil fell towards \$57 a barrel on Tuesday as crude flows through Iraq's northern pipeline to Ceyhan in Turkey rose further, offsetting an expected fall in U.S. crude inventories.

Pump jacks pump oil at an oil field on the shores of the Caspian Sea in Baku, Azerbaijan, October 5, 2017. Picture taken October 5, 2017.

Pumping along the pipeline rose to 300,000 barrels per day on Tuesday, a shipping source said, adding to a gain on Monday. Output fell from 600,000 bpd last week when Iraqi forces retook control of oilfields from Kurdish fighters.

"The increase is minimal and is way below the normal 600,000 bpd, nevertheless the market took it as a positive development as far as oil supply is concerned," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM, referring to the gain in flows on Monday.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, was down 16 cents at \$57.21 by 0853 GMT. It reached \$59.49 on Sept. 26, its



highest since July 2015. U.S. crude fell 12 cents to \$51.78.

The disruption to exports from Iraq, the second-largest producer in OPEC,

has helped support the market, adding to the supply cut being carried out by OPEC and allied producers since January to get rid of excess supply.

Shipments from the north and south of Iraq in October have fallen more than 200,000 bpd, according to export data and an industry source, although Iraq is hoping to boost southern exports to compensate for the northern drop.

That should give OPEC's already high compliance with the cutback agreement a boost. In September, the OPEC and non-OPEC countries participating in the supply cut met 120 percent of their commitments, OPEC said.

OPEC and its allies are hoping to drain excess supply that is keeping prices at half their level of mid-2014. In a further sign that the glut is easing, analysts expect U.S. crude inventories to decline by 2.5 million barrels in the latest weekly supply reports.

Industry group American Petroleum Institute (API) is scheduled to release its data at 2030 GMT on Tuesday and the government's Energy Information Administration reports on Wednesday. (Source: Reuters)

Russia's Novak to discuss global oil deal with Saudi's Falih in Nov.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Tuesday he plans to discuss a possible extension of the global oil output cut deal and the general situation on world oil markets with Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih in Riyadh in early November.

"This does not mean that we will make any decisions," Novak told reporters.

Speaking at a business forum in Moscow, Novak said it was too early to take a decision on whether the output deal should be extended beyond the end of March.

Novak also noted that compliance with a global output cut deal in the past nine months had been 102 percent.

He said compliance by OPEC countries had been 100 percent and compliance by non-OPEC countries 106 percent.

The deal by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and non-OPEC producers including Russia to cut supply by about 1.8 million barrels per day runs until March 2018.

The OPEC-led supply cut at present covers 24 countries. (Source: Reuters)

Iraq adds oil-export facility to offset output drop in Kurd feud

Iraq began using a new offshore crude-exporting facility to help boost shipments by sea and make up for a suspension of pipeline exports from the country's north due to a conflict with the self-governed Kurdish region.

The supertanker Chloe, which can transport about 2 million barrels of oil, was moored at the new loading point in the Persian Gulf off the coast of southern Iraq on Monday, according to shipping agent reports and Bloomberg tanker tracking. Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Luaibi said last week that southern exports would rise by 200,000 barrels a day to offset production that halted at some northern fields in the aftermath of fighting over disputed territory.

Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer, joined the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allied suppliers this year in cutting output to mop up a glut of crude that has depressed prices by half since 2014. That hasn't stopped the country from trying to boost its capacity to pump and sell oil; it aims to raise production capacity to 5 million barrels a day this year. Iraq currently pumps most of its 4.47 million barrels of daily output from fields in the south and ships them through the Persian Gulf. (Source: Bloomberg)

IEA sees Southeast Asia oil demand growing until at least 2040

Southeast Asian demand for oil will keep growing until at least 2040 as emerging nations there rely on the fossil fuel to transport their rapidly growing populations, ship goods and make plastics, the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday.

Oil usage in the region will expand to around 6.6 million barrels per day by 2040 from 4.7 million bpd now, with the number of road vehicles increasing by two-thirds to around 62 million, the agency said in a report. It did not make any forecasts beyond 2040.

A global push to replace combustion engines in vehicles with electric-powered ones to fight climate change has raised concerns in the oil industry that demand for the commodity could peak in the next 10-20 years.

But oil will continue to meet around 90 percent of transport-related demand in Southeast Asia, especially for trucks and ships, Keisuke Sadamori, the IEA's director of energy markets and security, said at the Singapore International Energy Week.

"Unless there are any drastic technological changes that can decarbonize these areas, we do not expect oil demand to fall," he said.

Oil demand from the petrochemicals sector, one of the largest users of the fossil fuel, will also grow fairly substantially, Sadamori said. Oil can be used as a raw material for plastics and textiles.

The IEA expects electricity to account for only 1 percent of transport energy demand in 2040, saying there will be only about 4 million electric cars in

a total passenger vehicle stock of 62 million.

Meanwhile, Southeast Asia's overall energy demand is expected to climb nearly 60 percent by 2040 from now, led by power generation, as rising incomes in the region spur more people to buy electric appliances including air conditioners, the IEA said.

The region will have universal access to electricity in the early 2030s and is expected to install more than 565 gigawatts (GW) of power-generation capacity in 2040, from 240 GW today, the agency said. Coal and renewables account for almost 70 percent of new output, it added.

Coal alone will account for almost 40 percent of the growth while renewables will quadruple by 2040 to become the

second largest source of electricity after coal, overtaking gas, IEA forecasts showed.

Southeast Asia will become a key driver for energy demand globally as its economy triples in size and its total population grows by a fifth, the IEA said. But the region's net energy import bill is also climbing as oil production declines, raising concerns over energy security.

Southeast Asia will have to fork out more than \$300 billion in 2040 for net energy imports, equivalent to about 4 percent of the region's total gross domestic product, the IEA said.

"Apart from the mounting import bill, the region's increasing dependence on imported energy raises significant energy security concerns," the agency said. (Source: Reuters)

Elegance is an attitude

Andre Agassi
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Conquest Classic Moonphase

Xi Jinping, China's new revolutionary hero

By Tom Mitchell

At their first meeting in April, Chinese President Xi Jinping tried to warn his U.S. counterpart about how dangerous a confrontation with North Korea would be.

"We have fought them many times over the centuries," Mr Xi told Donald Trump, according to those briefed on their conversation. "There were terrible casualties on both sides."

Mr Xi, 64 and embarking on his second five-year term as leader of China's ruling Communist party, was referring to the periodic wars between various Chinese empires and Korean kingdoms as far back as the fourth century BC.

The lesson, and Mr Trump's other interactions with China's president, left a deep impression. "He's so smart," Mr Trump later said. He also describes Mr Xi as "tough".

Most powerful leader since Mao Zedong

Smart, tough, calculating and deeply versed in history - these traits, demonstrated over the past five years by Mr Xi, have helped delineate a man now regarded as China's great centralizer and most powerful ruler since Mao Zedong, the party's revolutionary hero.

In private, Mr Xi intimidates his peers with long silences and "this face that doesn't move, never smiling", as one person who has observed him in meetings puts it.

His public image is also stern, a man popular with the masses because of an anti-corruption campaign that has devastated the party's upper ranks.

But the cult of personality created by the party's propagandists also presents him as a warm character, sometimes referred to as Xi Dada or Uncle Xi, who is familiar with the struggles of ordinary Chinese.

Before Mr Xi assumed power in November 2012, the world knew little about him.

What was known was that he and his father, a high-ranking Communist official and vice-premier under Mao, both suffered during the Cultural Revolution.

The elder Xi was purged and imprisoned. His son joined tens of millions of other "sent-down" youth laboring in impoverished villages across the country.

Mr Xi's father was later rehabilitated by Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's economic "reform and opening" program, and became a member of the party's politburo in the mid-1980s. Mr Xi, meanwhile, began his much more successful party career in 1982, as deputy head of a poor county in Hebei province.

Although this communist princeling would later marry one of China's most famous singers and send their only child, a daughter, to Harvard, Mr Xi's party hagiographers have played up his early experiences to present him as a man of the people.

Earlier in his career, there were hints that Mr Xi, like most Chinese politicians, was a staunch nationalist. "There are a few foreigners, with full bellies, who have nothing better to do than try to point fingers at our country," Mr Xi said on a visit to Mexico in 2009, when he was vice-president. He said:

China does not export revolution, hunger or poverty. Nor does China cause you headaches. Just what else do you want?

The communist party's cause

Over the past five years, the world has also learnt that Mr Xi still believes deeply in the Communist party cause.

The three policies that have defined the Chinese president's first term in office have been his anti-corruption campaign, a much more assertive foreign policy in defense of China's "territorial integrity" and a determination to reassert the party's dominance in all spheres of life.

Mr Xi's record to date has made clear he will not tolerate any reforms, economic or political, that weaken the party's power.

"Government, military, society and schools - north, south, east and west - the party is leader of all," Mr Xi proclaimed in a three-and-a-half hour speech last Wednesday to the party congress.

"Because of the economic prosperity of the reform era, almost everyone in officialdom was corrupted," he says. "Xi used this fact as leverage to scare everyone. They have to follow him because everyone is vulnerable. All you have to do is investigate them."

In his marathon address to the congress this week, Mr Xi positioned himself not just as modern China's third great leader after Mao and Deng, but also the heir to a glorious Communist tradition stretching back to Russia's Bolsheviks.

"A hundred years ago, the salvos of the October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to China," Mr Xi said, noting that the Chinese Communist party was founded just four years later. He said:

From that moment on, the Chinese people have had in the party a backbone for their pursuit of national independence and liberation, prosperity and happiness.

According to Mr Xi's arc of history, China is only three decades away from resuming its traditional and rightful place as the world's dominant economic and cultural power, with the U.S. caught in a downward spiral accelerated by Mr Trump's election.

Mr Xi hailed China as a model for "nations that want to speed up their development while preserving their independence". In private, many party colleagues speak far more bluntly.

"The American people elected a 70-year-old celebrity with no relevant experience," one of them recently told the Financial Times. "Our system forces men like Xi to prove themselves for decades in a series of increasingly difficult posts."

(Source: channelnewsasia.com)

Trump has already upset allies: Chinese professor

By Zahra Sadat Khezri

TEHRAN — A Chinese university professor believes that the Trump administration has already has "upset" Washington's allies and set a "bad precedent" by withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement and the Trans Pacific Partnership.

On Oct. 23 Donald Trump declared the U.S. would not certify Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal despite repeated confirmations by the UN nuclear watchdog that Tehran is honoring its commitments.

Under the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for a termination of economic and financial sanctions.

On the motives behind such a decision by Trump, Prof. Shen Dingli says in "Trump's view the Obama's Iran nuclear deal has not benefited America enough, as it only obliges Tehran for ten years but still allows it certain right of nuclear development, albeit at a reduced level."

Officials and analysts say Trump's approach to the international nuclear deal has already caused a crack in confidence of Washington's allies that America can keep its word. They even say if the nuclear deal is ditched it would set a bad precedent in the world and push the world toward new crises.

"America's allies have already been upset, but they are somehow relaxed because Trump didn't abolish the deal yet, though he could do so at any time later, much due to the worldwide opposition to his approach," Dingli, associate dean of Institute of International Studies at Fudan University of Shanghai in China, tells the Tehran Times.

He says, "The Trump administration doesn't need to use his handling of the Iran nuclear deal as a bad precedent, as he has already set such example through quitting Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement and Paris Climate Change Accord."



In his speech he called Iran a rogue state. However, he himself is presenting the U.S. as a renegade country state by contesting the UN-endorsed nuclear

agreement.

Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain have been the only countries in the world which have praised Trump's strategy

towards the nuclear deal.

Dingli says Israel and Saudi Arabia "are dismayed that Trump isn't straightforward to quit JCPOA right away."

European Union foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, has said the nuclear deal is an international agreement and Trump cannot unilaterally terminate it. She has also said the European Union will remain loyal to the international deal with or without the United States.

Dingli says, "Even if the U.S. quits (the deal), Iran still could commit to stay with it. Then, the deal, without the U.S., would stay. But if Iran would follow suit, then the deal will not survive."

Some Democratic lawmakers have expressed concern that a withdrawal from the deal could lead to war in the Middle East.

Dingli says such a viewpoint "makes some sense though could be exaggerated."

He also says if the Trump administration quits the nuclear deal then Iran has reason to remove limits on its nuclear activities. "If the U.S. withdraws from the deal, Iran would have reason not to be bound by it as well."

Iranians both inside and outside the country and with whatever political tendencies were angered when Trump referred to the centuries-old name Persian Gulf as "Arabian Gulf". Most analysts and politicians believe Trump purposefully used the fake name for the Persian Gulf to please Saudi Arabia and some other Arab countries.

However, the professor of Fudan University says this is not important issue.

"Takes it easy. South Korea calls Japan Sea East Sea, though Japan Sea is not necessarily Japan's. The Philippines calls South China Sea as West Philippine Sea, and Vietnam calls it East Sea, though South China Sea is not necessarily China's. In the same vein, Persian Gulf is not necessarily Iran's."

"They (Israel and Saudi Arabia) are dismayed that Trump isn't straightforward to quit JCPOA right away."

"If the U.S. withdraws from the deal, Iran would have reason not to be bound by it as well."

What now for Japan after Abe's landslide election victory?

Experts give their views on where Japan is headed after a sweeping win for the incumbent prime minister

By Justin McCurry

After Shinzo Abe's crushing defeat of the opposition in Sunday's election five Japan experts give their views on what lies ahead for the country - and the region.

We need to talk about pacifism

A mature debate about constitutional reform is exactly what Japan needs right now. It's extremely important, but it's been largely sidetracked by ideological disagreements from both the left and right. The left insists that the pacifist Article 9 must remain untouched. That's not a realistic proposition because the world has changed and Article 9 is now something of an anachronism. It's not realistic to keep it in the current environment, with Chinese ambitions and uncertainty over the U.S.'s willingness to continue contributing to regional security in the way it has done before.

It's unavoidable that countries like Japan and Australia need to contribute more to help keep the status quo in place. I can't see any country in the region, with the exceptions of China and North Korea, opposing a more normal security stance by Japan. Gone are the days when south-east Asia and Australia were concerned about a revival of Japanese militarism.

In terms of Japan's relations with the U.S., if Japan wants to maintain its alliance with the U.S. and build security relations with others then the benefits have to go both ways. As we know, these days Washington has no time for freeloaders on security.

Michael Heazle, associate professor at Griffith University in Brisbane

Abe's dream of change is within his grasp

Liberalism is on life-support in 21st century Japan as the political center has shifted rightward, but Yukio Edano's Constitutional Democratic party caught fire and is the Cinderella story of his election.

Edano represents principled uncompromising resistance to constitutional revision and favors repeal of the 2015 security legislation that most of the public also oppose. He will also tap into public perceptions that Abenomics is welfare for the wealthy and has caused growing disparities in Japanese society. Edano is now the torchbearer of liberalism in Japan, and even if the flame now seems flickering, his party is well positioned to expose Abe's shortcomings and flaws.

Abe sees that his dream (of constitutional revision) is within his grasp. Although public opinion now is not in favor of revision, if he pushes revisions through the Diet and holds a national referendum there will be a massive PR campaign to persuade the public to back the proposals. With a little help from Pyongyang and Beijing, I wager the chances are fairly good Abe can prevail.

Jeff Kingston, director of Asian studies at Temple University in Tokyo



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his party's lawmakers

Japanese people are being asked if they are happy with postwar liberal democracy or whether they want to revive an older Japan and its values.

Don't expect major changes

Abe's retention of a small supermajority makes it easier to pass a constitutional amendment bill in the lower house. But there will be no major shifts in economic policy. On security, it will remain the case that the Japan-U.S. alliance equals good, and North Korea bad.

The Party of Hope briefly emerged as a viable alternative to the ruling coalition. Suffice it to say that the Tokyo governor, Yuriko Koike, again displayed her worst traits - an inability to take counsel and a penchant for secretive decision-making - that made a disaster out of the deal that she cut with the then biggest opposition party, the Democrats.

Meanwhile, Japan looks likely to limp through its early 21st century Indian summer, at least through the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Considering what is happening in some countries in the west - of which Japan is arguably a part - it could be worse.

Jun Okumura, visiting scholar at the Meiji Institute for Global Affairs

Abe has no mandate - despite his landslide

Because of faults in Japan's first past the post electoral system there is a huge gap between public opinion on key issues and the distribution of seats in the Diet. It's hard to say that Abe has a real mandate for constitutional reform, even though the LDP won by a landslide.

With such a low turnout, it isn't as if the LDP and Abe enjoy huge public support. It is yet another case of the LDP benefiting from electoral system dysfunction and a divided opposition.

The constitution is the most divisive issue - it's like Brexit in the UK. It's part of a global shift from interest-based politics - who gets what - to identity politics. In America, it's immigration and abortion, in Britain it's the EU and in Japan it's the constitution. Japanese people are being asked if they are happy with postwar liberal democracy or whether they want to revive an older Japan and its values.

It's a deeply emotional issue, particularly for Abe. That's why he is talking about it, even though he already pushed through a law allowing Japan to engage in collective self-defense. Why else would he bother with the constitution, especially when there are more pressing issues such as the economy and ageing society?

The coalition has the numbers in parliament, but it's safe to say that the public is at least very divided on constitutional reform. It is not clear at all that Abe would win a simple majority in a national referendum (a requirement to revise the constitution). As Brexit proved, incumbent governments don't necessarily get their way in referendums.

Koichi Nakano, professor of political science at Sophia University in Tokyo

No progress for women in this election

The election caused a lot of excitement, with the main opposition Democratic Party effectively disbanding and the emergence of two new political parties.

The other story, unfortunately common but one mostly unremarked upon, is the lack of progress for women's political representation. Male domination of politics in Japan is so normative and so long-standing that it is almost unremarkable.

Yet, the fact that one of the world's most economically advanced countries with a relatively strong record on human rights and women's empowerment in health and education, comes last amongst OECD countries when it comes to political and economic empowerment, raises questions about democracy and equality.

The long-ruling Liberal Democratic party's enduring grip on power and the low level of female political representation are not unrelated. A mere 8% of LDP candidates in Sunday's election were women. Women's groups have been campaigning for the introduction of gender quotas as a way of addressing the gender imbalance in politics for more than 20 years, and the LDP is more consistent than any other major party in its opposition to such measures.

Indeed, a bill to encourage parties to implement internal gender quotas was effectively quashed, before having a chance to be voted on, when Shinzo Abe called the snap election. With the LDP in power again, increased attention to addressing this problem seems unlikely.

(Source: The Guardian)

U.S. withdrawal from intel. treaties, opportunity for China, Iran: Prof. Backer

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Commenting on withdrawal of the Trump administration from international treaties including the JCPOA, Prof. Larry Backer says the withdrawals may provide substantial opportunity for China and for regional powers like Iran.

According to many western thinkers who believe in Liberalism, international treaties and agreements are necessary for world security and stability. These multilateral approaches can guarantee the world security and stability by creating interdependency among many nations of the world.

After the Second World War, the U.S. has always been trying to develop multilateral liberal regimes in order to keep its power and hegemony. But, nowadays the world is witnessing that the US president Donald Trump is walking away from many of these agreements one after the other like Paris Climate Accord, TPP, NEFTA and recently trying to scrap the nuclear deal with Iran (JCPOA).

To know more about the issue and to find out whether Trump's approach is a right and wise one or not, Tehran Times reached out to Larry Backer, Professor of Law and International Affairs in Penn State University.

■ According to Liberalism, international treaties and agreements are necessary for world security and stability. Some believe President Trump's exit from international treaties is a threat to liberalism. What do you think of this?

A: It is indeed true that the international settlement achieved after the end of the Second World War was grounded in a well-structured multilateral internationalism. That internationalism was based on projects of legalization of the political sphere—especially with respect to the rules for conventional (and later unconventional) warfare and for the protection of the dignity and human rights of individuals (and later groups). Both, of course, were direct responses to

within the international liberal order. These practices cluster around the characteristics of law systems within liberal states. They include issues of negotiating terms, the interpretation and application of laws and norms through the administrative institutions established for that purpose, the control of the structures within which law is administered, and the constant efforts to assert greater influence over law making, interpretation and the structures of administration. These are what pass for the modern, conventional and byzantine behaviors of states within the institutions established for the interactions of the community of states. The system was not designed to be bloodless or to operate with the soulless precision of a well programmed machine. It was meant to channel the old clashes of states into the language and narratives of law, and of the administrative state, now transposed into the international arena. As such it was to be messy, loud, clumsy and sometimes painfully foolish. But it was meant to be all those things within a confined operating space (that is a space for acceptable behaviors) that avoided or minimized the destructive effects of war. (I once wrote a little about this in "The Führer Principle of International Law: Individual Responsibility and Collective Punishment," Penn State International Law Review 21(3): 509-567 (2003)).

In a sense, then, the periodic exiting and re-entry of states within international organizations and in international treaties or conventions reflect conventional moves in the governance of those systems and in the constant negotiating that marks the dynamic development of legal structures around policy, ambition and objectives of nations that cooperate and compete amongst themselves. Unless it becomes clear that long term strategic planning aimed at the destruction of the system is being attempted, the withdrawals, by themselves, do not threaten the system, though they

withdrawals, by themselves, do not threaten the system, though they may provide substantial opportunity for large states like China, and the possibilities of greater political roles for regional powers like Iran.

what was seen as the perversions of the prior apex state system by the German Third Reich (ethno-nationalism and human rights) and Imperial Japan's East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere (national chauvinism, hierarchy and militarism). Legalization of the politics and norms that served as the basis for the proper relations among states and for the limits of state power against their own people required both the imposition of firm law-state structures inside states and a construction of legal relationships among states. To the later end, it is true, international treaties were necessary. The necessity was not solely for the protection of world security and stability, but for the socialization of politics (and war) within of law, and disputes resolution through tribunals. It is in that sense, for example, that the Nuremberg trials and those in Tokyo were meant to set a template—legal-judicial collective action to preserve consensus based rule systems among the community of states. Over the years that template has been filled in by a large number of international agreements and structures, including the ever widening institutional governance and oversight structures of international public organizations. It follows, of course that at a very general level, exiting international treaties and their institutional structures could imperil the liberal order so painstakingly constructed.

But the simple insight does not tell the entire story. The effort to legalize politics (and war) has perversely enough also served to politicize law. Where law—especially in the form of international law and norm making structures—is politicized (and I believe necessarily politicized within the structures of liberal internationalism), then it would follow that a number of political practices emerge

may provide substantial opportunity for large states like China, and the possibilities of greater political roles for regional powers like Iran.

■ What can be the possible effects of Trump's walking away from international treaties on international law and international legal customs?

A: With the answer to the first question in mind the answer to the question becomes simple but unstable: Under ordinary circumstances, the American exit form some international treaties and some international organizations does not threaten the stability of the international order. Rather it reflects the use of a political tactic to move international consensus and the administrative behaviors of those organizations in a preferred direction that is in a direction preferred by the United States and its allies. Every state in the UN system has resorted to the use of these tactics and others and it merely reflects the dynamic but stable characteristic political behaviors of states within international bodies. But in this case the answer may be more unsettling. If the object of these withdrawals is part of a systematic and well thought out process of undermining, attacking and ultimately undoing the current system of international relations—of the careful and well thought out administrative apparatus of the liberal international order created after 1945—then indeed, the peril is great. The peril is great for the United States if these fundamental actions are undertaken without robust democratic participation by the US electorate and its representatives in government, and if it undermines long term interests. It is perilous for the system if it loses its key anchor. But it also provides an opportunity to reshape that system in another image. Imagine the irony of a state like China step-



ping into the shoes of the Americans and reorienting but retaining the current system to suit its own policy and political orientation! One would then produce a situation of the 1960s but with the roles of the United States and the People's Republic reversed. But this is all speculation. It is unclear, in the present circumstances what the long-term objectives are. In the short term, the actions, relatively few and isolated, are disquieting but not yet perilous.

The simple answer is that the effect will very much depends on the reaction by the rest of the community of nations. Recall that the United States walked away from international organizations in the early 1980s in a similar fashion (though the ideology of the times and the objectives were somewhat different). At that time, calculated withdrawal was meant to challenge the increased dominance of the world bodies (and their law and norm making potential) by the Soviet bloc and their allies among developing states. This ascendancy was seen as a threat to U.S. interests and those of its key allies. But more fundamentally, it was seen as a threat to the normative foundations under which the international system was set up. It was a key moment for the realization of those normative objectives—globalization was about to burst onto the scene and with it the ascendancy of markets based decision making. It was to serve as the last phase of post WW2 internationalization: to couple the legalization of politics with the shift in the language of administration from that of politics to the language of economics. As a result, law served as the form of politics, but economics provided the language within which politics and law would be administered. At the time, the tactic worked and the system remained stable and under the socio-cultural management of the United States and its allies (with appropriate room for regional expression to the extent it did not damage core objectives or the core functioning of the system).

But it is not the 1980s anymore, and President Trump is not Ronald Reagan. Because the situation is different, and because the rhetoric has changed to suit the times, the real query must eventually center on motivation. President Trump is walking away from conventional multilateralism in trade (including the WTO structures) in favor of state centered piecemeal multilateralism. But the outlines of that movement also mirror some of the fundamental characteristics of China's One Belt One Road Initiative. President Trump is walking away from some of the key structures of the UN's human rights apparatus in Geneva. But that has been a favorite object of fear and loathing among a large segment of the American electorate (but not its elites) for some time. If the object is strategic, then bravo. If it has a more fundamental objective—not to reshape but to destabilize the current system—than that is a conversation suitable for the

global community to begin.

■ The liberal order is basically based on multilateralism. Trump's exit from Paris Climate Accord, TPP, NAFTA and possibly from the JCPOA is in contradiction with multilateralism. Can such an approach guarantee the US power?

A: With the answer to Question 2 in mind, the response to this question follows easily. The answer is unclear but the scope of the gamble it implies is enormous. Until now, the liberal order has been based on the sort of systemic multilateralism that I have written about before (see e.g., here). Yet that foundation is itself a function of the strategic decisions made in the first decades after WW2. So the interesting question is whether the liberal order is inevitably tied to a particular vision of multilateralism or whether there are a range of or variations that can still support the vision post 1945. The Chinese, for one, believe that the liberal order supports a substantial number of variations, including their own. Regional powers—the BRICS, Iran, and East Asia—also have put forward variations, usually more of less state based and more or less grounded in state engagement with economic activity. But then so do the Norwegians for example. And so, apparently, so may the current American administration. Most of the conventional American elites, children of the old vision, have reacted badly to this shift—their preference has been to create a string identity between the liberal international order and their vision for multilateralism. But I think it is becoming clearer that this identity might be increasingly understood as a historical artifact.

But the response that the liberal order supports a variety of forms of multilateralism also suggests that something like a form exists. And that may be the underlying concern built into the question. If Mr. Trump has a master plan for reshaping multilateralism—that is one thing. And one can argue its virtues or challenges the way the global community has argued (and used) the current order. But if the actions of the Administration are merely the accumulation of serendipity, or worse, the disordered effort to shape the internal politics of the United States through the reshaping of the appearance of its foreign engagements, then the challenges become much more formidable—for everyone.

And that leads to the essence of the question—can current approaches enhance US power? The first answer is that it will reshape it, certainly. With the US withdrawal, global multilateral institutions are in danger of fracture and ultimately of being unable to serve their purpose. The resulting pressure could create incentives to seek to renegotiate the terms of American reentry—precisely the result that Mr. Trump campaigned on during the recent Presidential elections. That renegotiation, if successful, would reshape multilateralism abroad and substantially weaken the old internationalist elites in the United

States, some of whom would remain in the intellectual (and political) opposition but many of whom would come to terms with the new reality and serve their new masters—until something better came along. Or the move can break the system utterly (the preferred outcome for the extreme nationalists counted among Mr. Trump's supporters). For this camp, the breaking of the current system is as much a priority as it has been for developing states for decades and regional powers for some years now. But the expected result would thoroughly undermine American competitors—so it may be believed. Indeed, the idea is that the US might be better able to compete with rising powers—China, the BRICS and regional powers like India and Iran—were it freed from the restraints it had imposed on itself in constructing the post 1945 global economic order. In a world of free competition, American power, it is thought would carry the nation forward. But to what end? And how might it reshape American labor markets and industrial capacity? No one knows; there is risk and calculation in this uncertainty that many states are seeking to use to their strategic advantage. In either case, there is a plausible case for enhancing American power through strategic withdrawals.

Interestingly, rising states (especially China but also India), regional powers (like Iran), and old former superpowers (like Russia) may also be betting that this strategic American withdrawal is good for them too. It is interesting that it is only the members of the global international intelligentsia—an intelligentsia whose power an influence is directly tied to the sustaining of the post 1945 system—appear to be the most important group who remain firmly opposed to the American efforts. There are many reasons for this. Among the most important, perhaps, is that each of these rising states, like the Americans, have long felt that the rules of the

create a system that they dominated, and then abandon it when it no longer served its purpose, is certainly an argument that has gotten much attention recently. I recently made a variation of this argument suggesting the value of TTP and TTIP to the Americans as a means both of challenging Chinese ambitions and of bypassing the World Trade Organization. While appealing, though, the problem with this simple approach is that it incorrectly assumes that there is consensus and something like a coherent strategic vision guiding these actions. My sense suggests that this is unlikely. Few American administrations recently have been able to develop strong coherence in policy strategies, especially relating to global trade and politics—and to the cultivation of a fidelity to the old order the Americans themselves created. That incoherence, in fighting and rifts among leaders, to some extent, substantially weakened American responses to challenges from its economic competitors. TPP is a great example of this weakness throughout the Bush II and Obama administrations. This Administration is no different from its predecessors. It is unlikely that senior officials have reached a consensus. It is more likely that these American moves are made as a result of internally driven short term opportunistic thinking that—if the Americans are lucky—will back into a plausible strategy that advances American interests. But that may be too much to hope for at this time. For all that, it appears plausible that, like all great states especially in times of challenge, that they will choose to engage or withdraw from multilateral activities to the extent it appears to advance their interest in increasing or preserving their dominance. And to some extent that is a likely motivator here (the "we can make a better deal" strategies; the "we should no longer serve to subsidize the rest of the world" policy as well).

Yet the interesting thing is that it

the US might be better able to compete with rising powers—China, the BRICS and regional powers like India and Iran—were it freed from the restraints it had imposed on itself in constructing the post 1945 global economic order.

international system constrain their own development ambitions. They have long sought to remake the system. The Americans merely provide the cover and the excuse they need for engaging more openly in strategies of resistance and transformation some have been following for many years. Those strategies are based, in turn, on a sense that some of these states can beat the Americans at their own game, or that they can create regional trade zones better suited to internal needs and objectives. Yet, for the old internationalist intelligentsia, those are precisely the sort of calculations that from the late 19th century through 1945 brought the world to the brink of disaster—in economics, politics and in the social ordering of communities. Might the "post globalization" version avoid the misstates of early 20th century ethno-chauvinism? It is too early to tell, but it is certainly possible if the new world order is built around strong regional trading-political blocs that then compete in the global market place. And it is even more likely if these regional blocs develop a common language of trade and politics—and the treatment of their members. An exciting time!

■ Some say the regimes created after Second World War helped a lot to the US hegemonic power and the creation of the US favored orders, but now these regimes doesn't serve the US interest anymore, so the Trump's measures to walk away from these regimes are very wise to weaken the regimes and exit. What do you think of this?

A: The answer to Question 3, of course, is suggested by the thrust of the answer to this last question: The argument that the US, position and action merely suggests that strategic interests drove the Americans first to

is easier to abandon the forms of the old version of the liberal multilateral order than it is to abandon its norms and ethics. Those have been built into the practices and relations of the key actors in globalization—businesses, civil society, and mass sentiment—in ways that a collection of states may find difficult (and uneconomic) to reject. Thus, modification may be in order. That, certainly, was the thrust of Xi Jinping's Report that opened the 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress—a new vocabulary and a new approach in a "New Era". The meaning is clear, not rejection but management of the old norms to suit emerging conditions. In China's case that requires a hard look at socialist modernization and its outward manifestations. But it also aids in the ambitions of preserving the old system to the extent that China can take advantage of it by substituting itself within that system for the United States. In that event, American interest might shift from withdrawal to system destruction. And in these decisions there is risk and opportunity for regional powers like Iran. The risk comes from the disappearance of strong ordering powers to constrain the excesses of policy choices that turn out to be disastrous or dangerous in the sense of creating an opportunity for conventional warfare. That is a particular danger for rifts and competitions in the area from Morocco to Myanmar. The opportunity emerges from the absence of a large ordering power that tended to seek to shift the benefits of activity toward their own enrichment. In the end, though, power cannot be avoided, and regional powers must always be on alert for the value of cooperation with the larger powers while avoiding the suffocating embrace of too close a relationship.

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Shariati was intellectually open to all religious and ideological horizons

For a philosopher, the world is like a theater stage

By Sara Faraji & Somaye Rezaei

The late Dr. Ali Shariati is one of the most significant and influential intellectuals of the contemporary era in Iran. Even though many summits and conferences are still being held on Ali Shariati, nowadays it seems that his legacy is not used to its fullest in the scientific and intellectual assemblies and only some of his quotes and sayings are mentioned in social contexts.

Ali Shariati's children have all followed his example and turned to philosophy. His eldest son, Ehsan Shariati (born: Shahrivar 12 1338/September 3 1959 in Mashhad) has studied philosophy at Paris-Sorbonne University in France. He has worked as a guest professor at the University of Tehran and Islamic Azad University's Science and Research Branch in Tehran. His books include Heidegger's Philosophy and an Iranian Reading of it, Religion and Government and The Philosophy of Self in Muhammad Iqbal's Thought.

We sat with him to talk about a range of issues including Ali Shariati's relationship with philosophy and ideology and power, his intellectual methodology, his role and place in contemporary thought, the traditions that he belonged to as well as the reason behind the occasional attacks against him. Here is the full text of the interview:

■ Before starting our discussion about Dr. Ali Shariati and his relation with philosophy and ideology, I would like to know your opinion on the philosophy/ideology dichotomy and their respective tasks.

A: Ideology, similar to religion is a general, ambiguous, elusive and ambivalent term. The word 'idea' (form) has a history in philosophy. Its initial meaning from the Greek root of *eidomai* was "aspect, appearance and to be seen" (the Latin counterpart 'species' meant shape-aspect and typical form) which later acquired the metaphysical meaning of 'eidos' (the essence or nature of things). Plato turned this word into the key concept and symbol of his philosophy; e.g. the world of ideas and the ideas (forms). Therefore, 'idea' has an ancient history and one can even say that the history of philosophy is the history of 'idea'.

In the technical sense, after Pythagoras coined the word philosophy, Plato is the first person who has done philosophy. He is the head of philosophers and

sit in their ivory tower and criticize the circumstances without having paid attention to pragmatic aspects and the real politics and power. Later in the survey of changes in the definition of ideology, this Napoleonic meaning was favored. The reason is that in 1845, Marx and Engels wrote a book named *The German Ideology*, which was not published at the time. It was published before the WWII in 1932.

In this book, ideology and Idealism were considered synonymous. There Marx attacks "German Idealism," because the left-wing Hegelians thought that the ideas are moving the history forward and one can only reform the society by criticizing the religious ideas and beliefs; however, it is the life and the lifestyles that realize ideas. Therefore, Idealism is a kind of "reverse thinking," like in a photography dark room, where photo negatives show reality inverse. After Marx, Karl Mannheim in his book called *Ideology and Utopia*, discussed ideology as "false consciousness" in the Marxist sense.

Therefore, the first person to present a negative scientific definition of ideology is Marx. It is a paradox that the biggest and most comprehensive ideology in history is named after Marx. Thus, today we literally are talking about Marxism when we talk about ideology. After WWII, when fascist, right-wing authoritarian and left-wing communist ideologies gave rise to ideological regimes, ideology was redefined and criticized. In short, ideology has been defined differently in different eras.

■ What is the history of the concept of ideology in Iran?

A: In Iran, before Dr. Ali Shariati, the late Mr. Bazargan published two books called *The First Revelation and Ideology and Islam*, the *Contester and Productive School*. At the time, the Muslim intellectuals were trying to come up with an ideological criticism with regard to the religious tradition. Their goal was to transform religion from its superstitious, hereditary, and unconscious state—which was deterrent to social changes that could result in a better, more developed, freer and more just world—into the moral and spiritual backing of progress. It is in this critical sense that Shariati says that he has changed religion from a hereditary and unconscious superstitious tradition into an ideology. Nowadays, by religion we refer to the theist worldview, a school



© Tehran Times/Maryam Kamyab

Being open to all the horizons of all religions and ideologies is among his characteristics, but it does not mean that he is positively eclectic or syncretic or a negative mixer of incongruous elements. If Shariati were present now, he would have remained a teacher and a researcher. He did not like running for the office, or working in the government as a minister or getting a position

from Kant until now, either in analytical or phenomenological branch. Therefore, what we call ideology in sociology or politics is called metaphysics and Idealism in philosophy.

■ Some categorize philosophy as logocentric or anti-logocentric. For instance, Dr. Mohaddethi believes that Shariati's thought was anti-logocentric and non-Idealist. What do you think?

A: Essentially, western thought is logocentric or linguistic. In Derrida, logos has priority over writing. Socrates believed that one should live by philosophy. Therefore, one should express it in words. In the eastern tradition, there are people of the Book (*Ahle-ketab*) and Quran starts with [the words] 'God of pen, and writing and education'.

Shariati was a scholar of comparative studies. Namely, by ideology, he is not referring to constructing a dogmatic system in which explanation manuals (*risalas*) are written and all questions are answered; what he does is drawing a table, where all these schools can be compared to one another. His lectures on geometrical Islamology in Hosseiniyeh Ershad is such a comparative study. Inspired by the suggestion of the French epistemologist Bachelard, he draws a geometrical shape where all intellectual and religious systems are compared to each other and their characteristics are exposed.

■ Therefore, one cannot put Dr. Shariati under a certain -ism. However, some are of the opinion that this approach risks calling him eclectic.

A: That is correct. Being open to all the horizons of all religions and ideologies is among his characteristics, but it does not mean that he is positively eclectic or syncretic or a negative mixer of incongruous elements. Syncretism is the amalgamation of non-related elements, which is the bad type of eclecticism. However, the positive sense of eclecticism refers to combining congruous elements; which is a constituent of all great ideologies and religions. In Shariati's opinion, what is meant by religion is not religious forms but the religious, spiritual, mystical or ethical human being, or the human being who is a transcendental and superior manifestation of humanity's encounter with the divinity. Shariati uses an open and dialogic method; for instance, he teaches history of religions with an interpretive-hermeneutic approach. He states that in order to understand Buddhism, one should learn about Buddha's personality. Again, this is a methodological; he is not trying to convert anyone into Buddhism. In other words, it is a hermeneutic approach for sympathetic interpretation and search for meaning.

Overall, he was neither a Marxist, nor Buddhist, nor existentialist, nor Christian or Protestant. He criticizes Marxism, stating that Marxist ethics is more bourgeois than the bourgeois ethics. His attacks on Marxism and modernism is

unparalleled to any critic in the ethical and spiritual sense.

Contrary to the popular belief, he was neither against modernism, nor against the west. In contrast, he believed that east and west are two aspects of human beings. Thus, he has the same relationship with western thinkers as with the eastern scholars; he says that he loves both Abu Dhar and Charlie Chaplin. Among the characteristics that makes him attractive to the young people is that all these aspects are not paradoxical in him. That is to say, many question the compatibility of being religious and being open to other issues and realms! Although, this also leads to some misunderstanding and misconceptions.

■ Shariati has harshly attacked some philosophers as well. Why has he done this and what is his goal?

A: He attacks and defends certain kinds of philosophy (and mysticism). He says, "only philosophy and mysticism satisfy my soul's thirst." True philosophy is questioning and the freedom of thought; when he attacks philosophers, he is attacking the theoreticians who justify power, because a requirement of philosophy is criticizing power and being independent from it. Plato's idea of philosopher-king as evidenced by his own fate, is an illusion because being a king and being a philosopher are two separate things.

■ So must a philosopher always be outside power?

A: Yes, but not in the sense that the intellectual is indifferent to power or does not participate in reform. In contrast, she or he always tries to help the better people gain power; however, an intellectual is considered a true intellectual when she or he keeps his critical distance from power—even the best kind—in order to see the deficiencies.

■ In my opinion, the philosophy/ideology dichotomy does not make any sense, because they are not parallel; philosophy is a top-down macro-process while ideology deals with actions. Therefore, it could be that comparing them is an insult to philosophy, lowering its status. I believe that philosophy can control ideology not reject it. Basically, what is the function of philosophy?

A: Right, as I said ideology both had negative and neutral or scientific connotations. In the latter sense, in the modern democratic society, classes, parties and different ideologies compete with each other. A democratic society is a society in which a collection of ideologies competes and contests based on their politics and beliefs, in a free and organized way.

■ Has ideology always something to do with classes?

A: A society is made of classes with distinct ideologies. In Marx's sociology, ideology is a superstructure that consists of cognitions, rights, politics, culture, knowledge and information. In the neoliberal modern times, power is invisible; for instance, we all think that

we are looking at the internet, while it is the internet that is looking at us and controlling us. That is why this kind of ideology is far more totalitarian and dangerous, because in the fascist and communist totalitarian regimes, one could see the leader and be afraid of the government is controlling everything; but in this software ideology, one can see no one.

Well, if we are to talk in scientific and not argumentative terms, having an ideology, similar to the existence of classes in the society, is an inherent and natural part of all classes, so that every class has its own distinct ideology and every government has its own ideology as well.

■ Thus, can we say that concurrent competition and dialogue between ideologies is natural, but exclusive ideologies are dangerous?

A: Exactly. Exclusivity is dangerous, like the implementation of inquisition in the Middle Ages. In my opinion, ideology is the sum total of all its positive and negative connotations in history; I look at it as a scientific and neutral term referring to a systems of ideas that can be positive or negative. Therefore, there is no paradox between philosophy and worldview except that they have different functions and subject matters.

In the modern era, in Heidegger's words, the world has changed into the pictures of the worldviews. Namely, imagined pictures of the world make the basis of the new ideologies. In the modern era, Idealism has turned into an ideology; new ideologies are the new religions.

In Jaspers's opinion, in a certain historical epoch, great religions emerged and now that epoch is over. In religious terms, it is called "finality [of the prophethood]." The Middle Ages in the West or Europe were entirely religious times; however, the modern era is non-religious, common or secular. Generally, the secularity of spirit rules and ideologies emerge. Sometimes ideologies play the same role that religion used to play.

For instance, in our country when religious youth turned to Marxism, they were still to some extent 'religious,' but they believed in Marxism-Leninism. Nowadays, the reigning religion is neoliberalism, which is not the original revolutionary anti Middle

From political and intellectual perspectives, to which traditions does Dr. Shariati belong?

A: From a political perspective, he belongs to the national-popular movement originated during the Constitutional Revolution and continued by Dr. Mosaddegh; and from a religious perspective, he belongs to Islamic Modernism that Sayyid Jamal and Muhammad Iqbal set in motion. It is evidenced by the posters published in early years of the Islamic Revolution in which Sayyid Jamal, Iqbal and Shariati are depicted. Such depictions were not unique to Iran, it happened all over the Muslim World. Nowadays, there is a fallacy that states that since Sayyid Jamal was a proponent of revisiting the original true Islam and talked about Salaf-e-Salih (the virtuous predecessor), he belongs to the same Salafism that ISIS and Al-Qaeda are now part of. The word Salaf (predecessor) has confused these people to consider opposite tendencies the same, tendencies that are not related at all.

Sayyid Jamal and his associates were intellectuals supporting Islamic Modernism; in contrast, ISIS wants to return to Sharia and re-establish caliphate. The revisiting that Shariati talked about is not 'returning.' It is revisiting, namely, starting over, 'a new beginning, and a different start.'

■ As a concluding remark, in your opinion if Dr. Shariati were present in the decades after the Islamic Revolution, especially during 1390s/2010s, what could have his stand been?

A: If he were present now, he would have remained a teacher and a researcher. He did not like running for the office, or working in the government as a minister or getting a position. Although he would have remained politically active and committed, he would certainly have been critical of the existing circumstances and part of the popular and national opposition and would remain a committed and independent person. He would criticize the foreign powers and domestic problems. He was not and would not be solely critical of the current circumstances in Iran, but the entire world.

However, such criticism and reformism would have not been an invitation to violence, because he had drawn his line regarding violence and was against



Ages democratic liberalism, but a nonchalant democracy, without any firm commitment to any value or belief.

■ In the survey of the current thought movements, where does Dr. Ali Shariati stand? What role did he play in our contemporary thought?

A: We had a comprehensive debate on this in Rokhdad Institute entitled "The genealogy of the contemporary thought in Iran." Since the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, there are two "thought groups" in the country, the traditionalist and the progressive. Clergies also follow one of these two tendencies. In the middle, there are people like Sayyid Jamal in Iran and Muhammad Iqbal in India who started Islamic Modernism. There were also people like Kasravi, Sanglaji among others from other thought movements, and later Bazargan, Sahabi, Taleghani, etc. and especially in Mashhad there was Mohammad Taghi Shariati who founded "The Center for Publication of Islamic Truths." In fact, when Shariati is talking about national and religious reforms, he is following the path and the direction of these movements from 1320s to 1350s/1940s to 1970s.

Although, he is been called "the Teacher of the Revolution" and is famous for his teachings, but in fact, he rejected all kinds of "premature revolutions," as he believed that a real revolution would entail a long-term process and that changing governments would not result in epistemological, moral and ideological break that a real revolution would bring about.

His thought was revolutionary in its truest form, not like the current shallow and political trends of revolutionary thought. Nowadays, some are blaming the revolutionaries because of their participation in the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution. However, it is better to say that one of our problems is that the revolution is not completed yet. Our Islamic Revolution happened extremely fast; the government and the rulers changed, but it seems that there has been no revolution in culture, structures and habits. That is to say, that change is not that simple; habits formed over 2500 years cannot be reversed overnight. If Dr. Shariati were present now, he would still have had a historically pro-change and revolutionary vision.

Shariati was a scholar of comparative studies. Namely, by ideology, he is not referring to constructing a dogmatic system in which explanation manuals (risalas) are written and all questions are answered; what he does is drawing a table, where all these schools can be compared to one another.

Idealism – in its realist concept. In contrast, our modern ideology, influenced by Condillac and Locke, is a criticism of Idealism through learning ideas and recognizing the sensory origin of the development of ideas. Let us not discuss the way the word 'idea' is translated into Farsi. For instance, the late Ahmad Fardid translated it as 'didar shenasi' [knowledge of what is seen].

Since the beginning of the 19th century, after the French Revolution, some revolutionary liberal theoreticians like Destutt, Comte de Tracy, and his fellow thinkers introduced "ideology" as a branch of epistemology. A branch that was dealing with ideas, and the origin of ideas and knowledge (in fact the subtitle of Destutt's book *Elements of Ideology* is for use in the central schools of the French Republic). Thus, in this sense, ideology is the discipline of the development of ideas or the origin of the ideas and sensory knowledge. In contrast to Idealism and metaphysics, these theoreticians claimed that the origin and development of ideas are more important than the ideas themselves.

However, Napoleon fell out with them and called them 'ideologues,' namely theoreticians and people who makes doctrines. Thus, for the first time, ideology was used with a negative connotation, in the sense that ideologues are theoreticians who

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

- 1** Kaspersky: security firm tries to win back trust after Russian spying scandal. New transparency initiative aims to open up software and security practices to independent auditors to prove firm's antivirus program is safe
- 2** Networking giant Cisco has announced plans to pay out \$1.9 billion to acquire Broadsoft, a Maryland-based cloud communications company that creates software for PBX systems, team collaboration, and other related enterprise products.
- 3** Foxconn expected to ship only 25-30 million iPhone X units in 2017, down from 30-35 million. Although iPhone X pre-orders will open on Friday, reports say only 2-3 million units will actually be available to ship on November 3, down from around 10 million units that Apple is usually able to deliver when a new iPhone hits the shelves.
- 4** New York City Transit to start accepting NFC payments over the next few years. The new payment system would allow riders to pay the flat-rate fare with a contactless card, or NFC mobile payment service like Apple Pay, Android Pay or Samsung Pay. The full rollout of the new payment system is slated to be completed in 2020.
- 5** The Samsung Galaxy S9 has already been the subject of a handful of rumors, and things are only expected to heat up from here. A patent filed by the South Korean company in its home country suggests the next-gen Galaxy S series of devices may come with a fingerprint sensor on the front.
- 6** Paypal co-founder Max Levchin launched Affirm back in 2012 to extend credit for folks to buy things online. Today, his company has extended that feature to a mobile app, functionally creating a virtual credit card for anyone who wants to trust a tech company instead of banks.
- 7** Robot detective game 'Subsurface Circular' is out on iPad. The developer of Thomas Was Alone and Volume stealthily made the science fiction text adventure game for iOS after he asked Twitter followers in April if they'd buy a unique hour-long video game for \$5. Now the game is out and available on the App Store for iPad.
- 8** Samsung and Apple may soon face each other in court once again to battle over how much money Samsung owes Apple for patent infringement. In a ruling picked up by Foss Patents, Judge Lucy Koh declared that Apple and Samsung would head back to court with roughly \$400 million on the line, unless the companies decide to settle it outside the system.
- 9** Consumer Intelligence Research Partners has released data showing that 2015's Apple iPhone 6s and iPhone 6s Plus are outselling the Apple iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 Plus. According to the CIRP, the Apple iPhone 8/8 Plus accounted for 16% of all iPhone sales during the last quarter. Compare that to the 24% achieved by the Apple iPhone 6s/6s Plus.
- 10** Animal Crossing mobile to be revealed in Nintendo Direct. Animal Crossing is a franchise that transcends the language barrier.

Microsoft has had Apple's new face-scanning feature for years

By Matt Weinberger

There's a lot of angst right now over FaceID, Apple's new facial recognition system that's a core feature of the upcoming iPhone X.

Besides the obvious privacy concerns, some people are worried that FaceID won't be fast enough or reliable.

I think those fears are overblown.

Microsoft has offered a similar feature since 2015, and it works great! I can't guarantee FaceID will work just as well when Apple releases its new \$999 phone, but Microsoft's success offers a good sign.

Microsoft's face recognition feature, which debuted on the Surface Pro 4, is called Windows Hello. Like FaceID, it allows you to log into your device — in this case, a Windows computer — with just your face.

Setting up Windows Hello takes about a minute. The system asks you to stare directly at your camera for a bit while it scans your face. If you'd like, you can repeat the process to improve its ability to recognize you. When setting up a new Windows computer, I usually have it scan my face twice, first with my glasses on and next without.

After that, Windows Hello generally just works. Typically, I barely have to glance at the Surface computer I'm using before it unlocks. Because the camera Windows Hello uses relies on infrared light, it works in the dark. When the feature fails, which isn't often, you can unlock your computer by typing in a PIN code or a password.

Windows Hello wasn't always as good as it is today. Security-wise, Windows Hello seems to be on solid footing. Tests by tech experts found the system was able to distinguish between identical twins, meaning it's not as easy to fool as some previous facial recognition technologies.

And since Windows Hello debuted, there's been no evidence that the security of the system itself has been compromised.

There are some clear differences between Windows Hello and FaceID. Most notably, a laptop sitting on your table is different from a phone you whip out of your pocket.

Meanwhile, it could be galling to Apple that Microsoft got there first. (Source: Businessinsider)

AI and quantum algorithms together can compute a better world

By Greg Robinson

We are in a race for quantum supremacy. Google, IBM, and researchers across the globe are working on solving the most complex of computations, computations that could only be solved by the most advanced quantum computers.

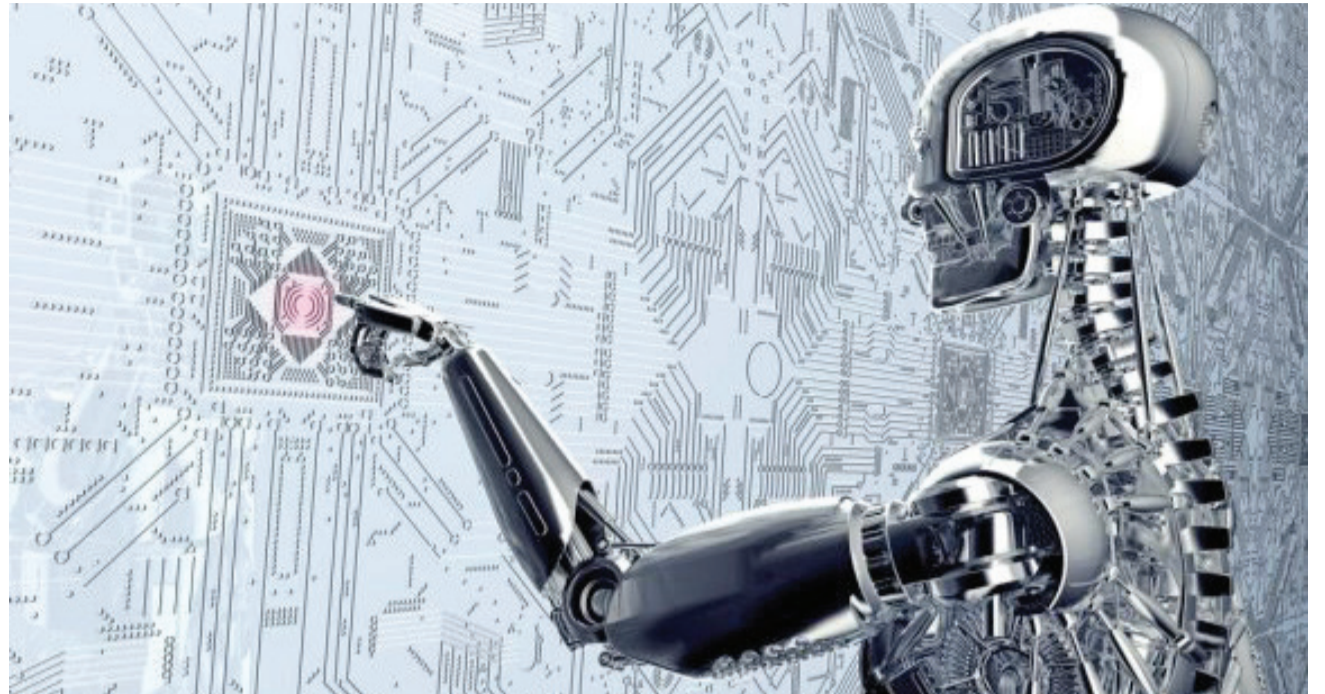
Quantum computers are very similar to the computers in households today — only much more powerful. So powerful, in fact, that they can solve in milliseconds problems that would take a normal computer thousands of years to solve.

For several reasons, quantum computers could prove quite beneficial with more widespread application. They could help with a multitude of complex issues, from things like creating solutions for climate change to organizing massive sets of data about health care.

"As companies such as Microsoft, Google, and IBM continue to develop technologies such as this, dreams of quantum computing are becoming a reality," writes Daryl Harrington for InfoWorld. "This technological innovation is not about who is the first to prove the value of quantum computing. This is about solving real-world problems for our future generations in hopes of a better world."

In the example of the Internet of Things (IoT), where billions of devices are constantly connected, we are inundated with data. According to IBM, we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data every day — and that number is increasing. This data is invaluable, but it is so abundant that we are unable to analyze it. Quantum computers could assist in our understanding of the data we're generating, but only with the help of artificial intelligence.

"Machine learning, the field of AI that allows Alexa and Siri to parse what you say and self-driving cars to safely drive down a city street, could benefit from quantum computer-derived speedups," writes Mark Anderson for the IEEE.



The hybrid study of quantum computers and artificial intelligence, or quantum machine learning, is still in its very early stages. Many of the machine learning algorithms are still theoretical and require large-scale quantum computers to be tested. Still, the marriage between the two has already proven fruitful.

How far has AI come? Artificial intelligence has integrated itself, in some form, in many areas of our everyday lives. From algorithms that sort our emails to machines that best us in video games, we seem to live in a world populated with smart machines.

Why do we need quantum computers when our best chess players are outmaneuvered by a machine? Why power up automation software that can run autonomous cars? While it may seem that artificial intelligence has already reached

its zenith, in reality, we are far away from creating truly intelligent machines capable of solving difficult problems.

Artificial intelligence still feels artificial. At this moment, we aren't able to recreate the creativity, the versatility of the human mind. While AI can excel at a single task or even a grouping of related tasks, it is still unable to achieve general intelligence. There have been strides in AI that have made deep learning possible which have approximated this type of intelligence. Quantum computers could further this deep type of deep learning.

"The field of artificial intelligence has experienced incredible growth and progress over the past decade," said John Kelly III, IBM's senior VP of cognitive solutions and research, in a recent press release. "Yet today's AI systems, as remarkable as they are, will require new

innovations to tackle increasingly difficult real-world problems to improve our work and lives."

As Kelly suggests, the traditional approach to AI is limited. Artificial intelligence is unable, at present, to reach its full potential. In order for AI to become truly deep and robust, it will have to have the superpowered hardware to process its complex software.

Quantum algorithms could solve problems within AI and vice versa. In addition, quantum theory could help develop more robust AI and help researchers formulate better algorithms. With this technology, we could see groundbreaking research in virtually all areas of study, from cancer research to geopolitics. We could use AI to help scientists solve incredibly nuanced and complex issues. (Source: Venturebeat)

Google Brain chief: Deep learning takes at least 100,000 examples

By Blair Hanley Frank

One of the things people frequently talk about as a drawback of the current class of deep learning techniques that are helping fuel the AI wave is that they require a lot of data to work. But how much is enough data?

"I would say pretty much any business that has tens or hundreds of thousands of customer interactions has enough scale to start thinking about using these sorts of things," Jeff Dean, a senior fellow at Google, said in an on-stage interview at the VB Summit in Berkeley, California. "If you only have ten examples of something, it's going to be hard to make deep learning work. If you have 100,000 things you care about, records or whatever, that's the kind of scale where you should really start thinking about these kinds of techniques."

Dean knows a thing or two about deep learning — he's the head of the Google Brain team, a group of researchers focused on a wide-ranging set of problems in computer science and artificial intelligence. He's been working with neural networks since the 1990s, when



he wrote his undergraduate thesis on artificial neural networks.

In his view, machine learning techniques have an opportunity to impact every industry, though the rate at which that will happen depends on the industry.

There are still plenty of hurdles that humans need to tackle before they can take the data they have and turn it into machine intelligence, though. In order to be useful for machine learning, data needs to be

processed, which can take time and (at least at first) significant human intervention.

"There's a lot of work in machine learning systems that is not actually machine learning," Dean said. "And so you still have to do a lot of that. You have to get the data together, maybe you have to have humans label examples and then you have to write some data processing pipeline to produce the dataset that you will then do machine learning on."

One area that Google is looking to tackle in order to help make the process of creating machine learning systems easier is using machine learning to determine the right system for solving a particular problem. It's a tough problem that isn't anywhere near solved yet, but Dean said that early work is promising.

For example, a network that trained itself was able to post state-of-the-art results on identifying images from the ImageNet dataset earlier this year, and Google-owned DeepMind just published a paper about a version of AlphaGo that appeared to master the game solely through playing itself. (Source: Venturebeat)

Android creator's new smartphone was doomed from the beginning



Android creator Andy Rubin's latest project seems to be a flop.

The company announced that it was slashing the price of its first product, a \$699 smartphone called the Essential Phone, by \$200.

Such a dramatic price cut just a couple months after the product's launch is never a good sign, and it's validation to those early reports that sales are pretty dismal. One ugly estimate from research firm BayStreet said Essential only sold 5,000 phones by the end of September.

Essential's announcement

Saturday skirted around the low-sales figures, framing the price cut as a way to "make it even easier" to get the phone instead of spending on a "a massive TV campaign to capture your attention." That's one way to put it. The other is that no one bought the phone and now it's time to cut prices in an attempt to generate sales.

The Essential phone's price cut and poor performance may have been a surprise to Rubin, but not to anyone else who knew what he was getting himself into. (Source: businessinsider)

Apple co-founder Wozniak will not buy the iPhone X



We've seen Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak with other phones besides the iPhone, and the straight shooting tech icon has often been brutally honest even if it meant saying something unkind about the company he helped create. While the Woz is known for hanging out in an Apple Store whenever a new iPhone model launches, yesterday he said that he plans on sitting out the launch of the Apple iPhone X on November 3rd.

Wozniak said that he is happy with his Apple iPhone 8. And while that might sound like a complement to the new model, the 67-year old added that

as far as he is concerned, the iPhone 8 is the same as the iPhone 7 which is the same as the iPhone 6. He notes that the iPhone X will be the first iPhone model that he didn't upgrade to.

Wozniak, who has often discussed owning more than one phone at a time, says that he is unconvinced that the Face ID facial recognition system will work as well as Apple expects it to.

Pre-orders for the Apple iPhone X begin this coming Friday at 3am EDT. The 64GB model is priced at \$999 while the 256GB version will cost \$1,149. The phone will be available in Silver or Space Gray. (Source: CNBC)

The brain still works after you're dead, claims Iranian researcher

Death just got a bit scarier, following a new discovery where scientists found that the consciousness does not disappear immediately after someone is pronounced clinically dead.

As such, theoretically, a person may hear the announcement of their own death by doctors, reports the Independent.

The claim was made by Dr. Sam Parnia, director of critical care and resuscitation research at New York University's Langone School of Medicine in the eponymous city.

The doctor and his team had been examining people who suffered cardiac arrest, technically died, but were later revived.

Complete awareness

It's the largest study of its kind ever carried out.

Some of the people who were studied claimed that they had complete awareness of what was going on around them, including conversations that were taking place, even after the declaration of their death.

Their claims were verified by the medical and the nursing staff who were present at that time.

Death is defined as the point at which the heart no longer beats, and blood flow



to the brain is cut off. Dr. Sam Parnia said: "Technically, that's how you get the time of death – it's all based on the moment when the heart

Death is defined as the point at which the heart no longer beats, and blood flow to the brain is cut off.

stops.

"Once that happens, blood no longer circulates to the brain, which means brain function halts almost instantaneously.

"You lose all your brain stem reflexes – your gag reflex, your pupil reflex, all that is gone."

However, there's evidence to suggest that there's a burst of brain energy as someone dies.

Electrical signals

In 2013, researchers at the University of Michigan looked at the electrical signals inside the brains of nine anesthetized rats after having induced a heart attack.

They saw activity patterns which are linked to a "hyper-alert state" in the brief period after clinical death.

Dr. Parnia said: "In the same way that a group of researchers might be studying the qualitative nature of the human experience of 'love', for instance, we're trying to understand the exact features that people experience when they go through death, because we understand that this is going to reflect the universal experience we're all going to have when we die."

Dr. Sam Parnia said: "Technically, that's how you get the time of death – it's all based on the moment when the heart stops.

(Source: dhakatribune.com)

There are probably fewer deadly asteroids than we originally thought

Beyond Earth's orbit, there are innumerable comets and asteroids that are collectively known as near-Earth objects. On occasion, some of these objects will cross Earth's orbit, and every so often, one will pass too close to Earth and impact on its surface.

While most of these objects have been too small to cause serious damage, some have been large enough to trigger Extinction Level Events (ELEs).

For this reason, NASA and other space agencies have spent decades cataloguing and monitoring the larger NEAs (near-Earth asteroids) in order to determine if they might collide with Earth at some point in the future.

Recent analysis

The only question has been, how many remain to be found? According to a recent analysis performed by Alan W. Harris of MoreData! -- a California-based research company -- only a handful of NEAs haven't been catalogued yet.

These findings were the subject of a presentation made this week at the 49th annual meeting of the American Astronom-



ical Society's Division for Planetary Sciences in Provo, Utah.

As Harris indicated during the presentation, titled "The Population of Near-Earth Asteroids Revisited", previous estimates of the remaining NEAs have been plagued by a consequential round-off error that have skewed the results.

The source of this error has to do with how organisations that monitor NEOs determine "size-frequency distribution". Basically, estimates are given in terms of number versus brightness, since most discovery

surveys were conducted in the visible spectrum.

This is not a reliable way of determining size though, since asteroids don't all have the same albedo (aka reflectivity).

As such, NEA brightness is expressed in units of absolute magnitude (H), where lower numbers indicate brighter objects.

Asteroid measurements

The IAU Minor Planet Center -- which is responsible for maintaining information on asteroid and other small-body measurements -- rounds off the reported values of

H to the nearest 0.1 magnitude. As Harris explained during the course of his presentation:

"So, for example, a bin from H of 17.5 to 18.0 is really from 17.55 to 18.05, or 17.45 to 17.95, depending on which side of the bin you take "less than or equal to" rather than "less than."

While this has not caused much in the way of problems in the past, it has become significant as far as assessments of how many larger objects remain to be found are concerned.

Harris first became aware of the potential for problems this past year after Dr. Pasqual Tricarico -- a Senior Scientist at the Planetary Science Institute -- conducted a study that produced estimates different from those obtained by Harris and Italian astronomer Germano D'Abramo two years before.

The 2015 study conducted by Harris and D'Abramo -- which appeared in Icarus under the title "The population of near-Earth asteroids" -- yielded an estimate of 990 NEAs that were larger than 1 km (0.6 miles) in diameter.

(Source: space.com)

The world's first trees grew by splitting their guts

Scientists have discovered some of the best preserved specimens of the world's first trees in a remote region of China. At up to 12 meters tall, these spindly species were topped by a clump of erect branches vaguely resembling modern palm trees and lived a whopping 393 million to 372 million years ago.

But the biggest surprise is how they got so big in the first place.

Today's trees grow through a relatively simple mechanism. The trunk is a single cylindrical shaft made up of hundreds of woody strands called xylem, which conduct water from the roots to the branches and leaves.

New xylem grow in rings at the periphery of the trunk just behind the bark, adding girth so the tree can get taller.

This is not how ancient trees known as cladoxylopsids grew, however.

Two specimens discovered

Two specimens discovered in a desert in China's north-western Xinjiang Province in 2012 were remarkably well preserved. That's because they underwent a process in which silica -- likely emitted by a nearby volcano -- saturated the tree and took on the shape of the wood's internal structure as it decayed, preserving its 3D cellular structure.

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The fossils reveal that, unlike modern trees with a single shaft, cladoxylopsids had multiple xylem columns spaced around the perimeter of a hollow trunk.

A network of crisscrossing strands connected the vertical xylem -- much like a chain-link fence spreads from pole to pole -- and soft tissue filled the spaces between all these strands. New growth formed in rings around each of the xylem columns while an increasing volume of soft tissue forced the strands to spread out.

Girth of trunk

All of this expanded the girth of the trunk, allowing for a taller tree. But it also split apart the tree's xylem skeleton, which required the tree to continually repair itself, the team reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The weight of the tree squeezed tissue at the base of the trunk outward.

In the largest of the two fossil trunks, above the bulge, the xylem and soft tissue occupied a ring about 50 centimeters in diameter and 5 centimeters thick, with external roots making up the remainder of the 70-centimeter-diameter tree trunk. The scientists estimate cladoxylopsids could have been 8 to 12 meters tall.

This growth strategy has not been seen in any other tree in Earth's history, says Xu Hong-He, a paleontologist at the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology in China who discovered the fossilized tree trunks. "It's crazy that the oldest trees also had the most complex growth



strategy," adds Christopher Berry, a plant paleontologist at Cardiff University in the United Kingdom who helped analyze the fossils.

(Source: sciencemag.org)

PGPICO Assumes Offices in Four European Cities

Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPICO) set up four branch offices in four European cities, Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

For his part, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company Nejadshalim expounded on overseas activities of the company and added: "Observing requirements of international standards promoted us to travel to four European cities in line with supporting objectives of Persian Gulf Holding Petrochemical Company."

He pointed to the situation of company in worldwide and said: "Thanks to its salient achievements, PGPICO is ranked among world's top 50 petrochemical companies. Despite sanctions overshadowed the country in previous years, the company managed to materialize most of its economic objectives in this tough period."



Given the above issue, the company managed to set up branch offices in three European cities, the issue of which is considered as an honor for the company in international level.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the guidelines put forward by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution on the implementation of macro policies of

resistance economy and also cutting petrochemical industries' dependency to foreign countries and emphasized: "Productivity should be promoted deservedly in the country, so that materializing objectives of resistance economy is our major concern."

Turning to the fulfillment of social responsibilities of the company, Nejadshalim said: "Social responsibility is one of the main duties of companies in the whole world, the issue of which should be taken into serious consideration."

In the end, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company Nejadshalim pointed to the strategic plan of the company and said: "With the coordination made in this regard, the company has compiled a comprehensive 2nd five-year strategic plan."

New tool to track underwater acoustic waves could find MH370

Looking at the ocean, a lake, or even a pond, you may wonder what happens to the waves you see when they "disappear". These surface waves tend to become smaller and smaller until you can't see them anymore. But they keep traveling through the water at a lower depth. These "acoustic-gravity waves" can travel for thousands of kilometers undisturbed, and even cross an entire ocean.

These compression waves are generated by a sudden change in the water pressure. They can be caused by anything from submarines, earthquakes and landslides, to falling meteorites or other objects impacting the sea surface. And although they are "acoustic" waves, they are below the range of human hearing -- the only way to pick up record them is using hydrophones, special microphones that work underwater.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has hydrophone stations dotted in oceans across the world. They are used by the organization to detect shock waves that may be a consequence of an underwater nuclear test -- but we have found a way to use these signals, to find where and when acoustic waves are originally generated.

This configuration lets us calculate the direction of the waves quite accurately because the incoming waves hit the hydrophones in a particular order, similar to how soundwaves hit human ears.

To do this, we used mathematical tools which consider the way acoustic-gravity waves behave. As these waves travel through the water, they disperse. This means that groups of waves created by a source start off being close together, but tend to become more spread apart as they travel further -- this is because lower frequency soundwaves are a bit slower than those at higher frequency.

(Source: The Conversation)

Fear of spiders and snakes stems from our ancestors

A new study finds that the fear of spiders and snakes actually stems from our ancestors. We likely developed these fears as a result of our ancestors' coexistence with them for millions of years.

Over a third of both the children and adult population have a strong dislike or fear of spiders, despite having only a 5 percent prevalence rate of related clinical fear or phobia. Somehow it makes sense. After all, earlier this year, scientists found that the world's spiders could eat every human in a single year and still crave for more.



That unsettling finding aside, this fear is prevalent even in countries where people do not often have snake or spider encounters. They're not much of a threat today, and yet people still tend to fear them. As it turns out, humans today don't even have to have negative experiences with the creatures to fear them because they are likely embedded in us thanks to our ancestors' coexistence with them for 40 to 60 million years.

In order to test the hypothesis, researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (MPI CBS) in Sweden measured the pupil dilation of 6-month-old infants when they were shown photos of either spiders or flowers, and snakes or fish.

Results showed increased pupil dilation when the infants were presented with spider pictures compared to the non-threatening stimuli of the flower photos. Further, the participants also looked at spider photos for a longer amount of time. This suggests stimuli arousal and fear-associations to spiders even at such a tender age. However, the snake-fish experiment rendered minimal differences in pupil dilation, suggesting perhaps that the infant merely have an eye for living things.

(Source: Tech Times)

Forest fires contributed to record global tree cover loss

A sharp increase in forest fires stoked record losses in global forest cover equivalent to the area of New Zealand in 2016, a Global Forest Watch report said Monday.

The alarming pace of destruction -- 51 percent higher than the prior year with a loss of 73.4 million acres (29.7 million hectares), according to data from the University of Maryland -- was partially due to climate change that has increased the risks and intensity of wildfires by triggering temperature rise and drought in some places, the monitor said.

The 2015-2016 weather phenomenon El Nino, one of the strongest on record, also played a role, having created particularly dry conditions in the tropics.

Many of those tropical areas are not naturally prone to catching fire -- but vulnerability increased due to poor management and was exacerbated by El Nino.

Deadly blazes in Brazil and Indonesia were among those contributing to the loss. This year, deadly blazes have again devastated regions of Portugal as well as California.

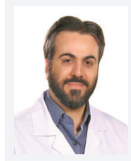
Brazil's Amazon region lost 9.1 million acres of tree cover -- more than three times that of 2015.

And Portugal saw some four percent of its forests go up in smoke in 2016, the highest proportion of any other country.

Nearly half of all forests burned in the European Union in 2016 were in Portugal, where fire-prone eucalyptus and pine plantations along with poor soil encouraged the deadly flames.

(Source: AFP)

Traditional medicine: How to keep healthy in autumn?



ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

Part 1

TEHRAN — In regard to the fact that seasons [link] as well as everything else in the world have distinguishing temperaments, one should follow lifestyle tips and consume food stuff depending on the season to stay healthy all year round.

The temperament (Mizaj) of the autumn is cold and dry. During autumn the temperature drops and the level of humidity is not as high as winter. In general, drastic temperature changes occur twice a year when the season is shifting; once at the end of the winter and beginning of the spring when temperature rise and once when the summer is coming to an end and the autumn is beginning and the temperature cool again.

Some of the mental or physical problems (such as allergies, psychiatric disorders, digestive system malfunctions, pulmonary diseases, or joint disorders) may also develop during these times of the year due to the changes in the weather and temperature.

Remain healthy over autumn

Protect yourselves from the wind blowing during autumn because it can ruin one's health in the same manner that it pulls leaves off trees.

Since people are used to wear less clothing to beat the summer heat, at the onset of autumn when the temperature starts to cool and the wind comes, many will come down with cold, flu, pulmonary and sinus infections.

Here are tips to keep healthy during autumn:

During autumn it is warm around midday but it cools in the morning and at night. So pay attention to what you are wearing as you need extra layers during cold seasons and make sure to have warm clothing with you.

As autumn has a cold and dry temperament so be careful not to consume food stuff with cold and dry Mizaj which increase black bile in the body. Frozen food, canned food, leftovers, fast foods, pickled vegetables, food with vinegar content, lentil, eggplant, cabbage, mushroom, tomato, sour fruits, cold or icy water, and dairy products must not be consumed much.

On the other hand, using foodstuff with warming characteristics such as red meat, salty food, spices, Abgoosht (Iranian stew made with lamb, chickpeas, white beans, onion, potatoes, and tomatoes, and dried lime), lamb meat, camel meat, quail, eggs, beans, bread, and foods high in calorie, sweet foods and drinks especially grape and date syrup, almond porridges, rice pudding, jams, sweet fruits or sweet dried fruits such as raisin, berry, and fig is highly recommended.

Not long ago children used to take leblebi, raisin or dried berry to school as a snack which is now replaced by chips and cheese puffs which either has cooling characteristics or can cause excessive warmth in the body.

In general lifestyle tips for melancholic temperament [link] can be adopted during autumn to avoid unfavorable conditions.

Not staying in cold places, avoiding constipation by consuming figs or flaxseed, applying oils such as coconut oil or sweet almond oil on the skin to avoid dry skin, taking a nap in the afternoon, smelling pleasant odors, and avoiding sad feelings are highly recommended during this season.

The rest of tips that might come in handy during autumn to remain healthy will be thoroughly explained in the next article.

Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, holds a PhD degree in medical physiology and is an Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine researcher. He is also an assistant professor in AJA University of Medical Sciences, Tehran.

LEARN ENGLISH

Supermarket Cashier

A: Excuse me sir, this is the **express check-out lane** for people that have fifteen items or fewer. It looks like you have more than fifteen items there.

B: Oh, come on! I have sixteen items! **Cut me some slack**, will you?

A: Fine! Please place your items on the belt and push your shopping cart through. Do you prefer paper or plastic?

B: Plastic. I also have a couple of coupons.

A: No problem, I'll take those. Sir, these coupons expired yesterday.

B: Darn! Oh, well. I guess **it's just not my day**. Thanks anyway.

A: Do you have a **club card** or will it be cash?

B: Yeah I got a club card. Here you go.

A: Will this be debit or credit?

B: Debit please. Also, could I get **cash back**? Fifty dollars would be great.

A: Yeah, sure. Have a nice day.

Key vocabulary
express: designed to help you move through a place more quickly
check-out lane: the place you line up to pay for the things you want
cut me some slack: don't be so strict, bend the rules
it is just not my day: a lot of bad things happened to me today
club card: a type of charge card that can be used to pay for goods and services all over the world
cash back: charging more money to your card in order to receive cash back

Supplementary vocabulary

stock: to supply (a shop) with merchandise

bag boy: a person, usually a teenager that works at a supermarket and places groceries that a person buys in plastic or paper bags

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Flouting the law aggravating air pollution, killing thousands

1 → water and soil pollution, chemical exposures, climate change, and ultraviolet radiation, contribute to more than 100 diseases and injuries.

In terms of air pollution according to another report released by WHO, in 2012 around 7 million people died - one in eight of total global deaths - as a result of air pollution exposure. As per another report, more than 5.5 million people worldwide are dying prematurely every year as a result of air pollution making it the fourth-leading cause of death worldwide. The data was compiled as part of the Global Burden of Disease project.

Since 2015, Iran's Ministry of Health has been calculating the number of deaths linked to air pollution. Based on the figures given by Abbas Shahsavani, a ministry representative who is in charge of air pollution committee, some 12,798 deaths in 25 cities of Iran with a population of 30 million are attributed to air pollution in 2015.

Shahsavani further said that in Tehran alone some 4,810 deaths occurred in 2016 are attributed to air pollution. That was while based on WHO guidelines the PM2.5 must stand at 10 micrograms per cubic meter air annually in Iran it stands at 31.1 micrograms per cubic meter air which is pretty high.

What contributes to air pollution?

Most of the air pollution results from the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, natural gas, and gasoline to produce electricity and power the vehicles.

After years of suffering highly polluted autumn and winter it is a common knowledge to citizens that vehicles, most significantly clunkers including taxis, buses, and trucks, and also carburetor motorcycles, in addition to power plants, factories, and mines established in close proximity of the cities are the main pollution sources in the country.

It is not lack of knowledge or even



© Tehran Times/ Shahab Ghayoumi

inadequate laws that has contributed to such high levels of air pollution.

The clean air bill which turned into a law last October has mandated some 14 responsible organizations and ministries including ministries of oil, interior, culture, industry, intelligence, transport, science, economic affairs, education, justice, presidential directorate executive affairs, central bank, management and planning organization, and Department of Environment to regulate pollutant industries and other factors contributing to air pollution.

What is actually impeding substantial progress in abating air pollution is budget deficiency, lack of professional integrity, mismanagement, and shortsighted and in some cases misguided policies seeking short term benefits or results and on top of that breaking the law to the advantage of a small minority.

Substandard automobile industry

For one, Iran's automobile industry is failing to live up to international standards in manufacturing low-emission vehicles. Although the industry ministry and car manufacturers are legally bound to observe the law in producing clean and eco-friendly vehicles in practice they ignore or fail to meet the standards.

As explained by Mehdi Nikdar, head of the transport fleet and fuel management headquarters affiliated with the transport ministry, all car manufacturers are obligated to scrap a car in exchange for each car they produce.

However, despite the fact that some 1.4 million cars are being produced domestically per annum the manufacturers refuse to follow the law and that's why only 350,000 cars were scrapped last year.

"Some 2 million cars were scrapped

over the past 10 years, but the remaining 1.2 million clunkers which will certainly increase every year will also take another 10 year to be scrapped which is too long," Nikdar regretted.

Only those who import cars are actually scrapping clunkers; car importers are required to scrap 400,000 clunkers for importing 75,000 cars but once the government decides to temporarily reduce or halt car import the number of cars being scrapped will significantly decrease, and that's where the problem lies, Nikdar added.

Vehicles are recognized as the preliminary culprits of air pollution. There are adequate laws authorizing the responsible organizations to track down pollutant vehicles and either fix them or omit them. But what seems to be real problem is flouting the law by those who are after short-term results regardless of the health threats posed to the public.

24 October: United Nations Day



UN Day marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations officially came into being.

24 October has been celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that the day be observed by Member States as a public holiday.

The United Nations feeds 80 million people, vaccinates 45 percent of the world's children, protects 65 million people forced to flee, tackles climate change, keeps peace with 117, 000 peacekeepers, fights poverty, promotes human rights, prevents conflict through diplomacy and works for a more peaceful world.

"Our world faces many grave challenges; widening conflicts and inequality; extreme weather and deadly intolerance; and Security threats including nuclear weapons. We have the tools and wealth to overcome these challenges. All we need is the will. The world's problems transcend borders. We have to transcend our differences to transform our future," said the UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

"When we achieve human rights and human dignity for all people - they will build a peaceful, sustainable and just world. On United Nations Day, let us, 'We the Peoples', make this vision a reality," Guterres added.

U.N. Day has traditionally been marked throughout the world with meetings, discussions and exhibits about the achievements and goals of the organization. In 1971, the General Assembly recommended that member states observe it as a public holiday.

Several international schools throughout the world also celebrate the diversity of their student body on United Nations Day (although the event is not necessarily celebrated on 24 October). Celebrations often include a show of cultural performances in the evening and a food fair, where food is available from all over the world.

(Source: un.org)

GENERAL PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Islamic Republic of Iran
MAZANDARAN SANITATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Iran Water and Wastewater Sector



اعلامیه عمومی

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
پروژه فاضلاب استان مازندران
بخش آب و فاضلاب ایران



Mode of Financing: Instalment Sale

The Islamic Republic of Iran has applied for financing in the amount of Euro 281.27 Million from the Islamic Development Bank toward the cost of the MAZANDARAN SANITATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments for goods, works, related services and consulting services to be procured under this project.

The project will include the following components:

- 1) Wastewater treatment Plants in the cities of Amol, Mahmoodabad, Qaemshahr, Tonekabon and Ramsar for about 457,000 PE (Total Capacity of 93,790 m3/d)
- 2) Wastewater Collection Networks in the above cities including:
 - a) Collection Networks
 - b) transmission lines
 - c) Pump and lift stations
- 3) Project Management Consultant
- 4) Project Implementation Support

Procurement of contracts financed by the Islamic Development Bank will be conducted through the procedures as specified in the Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Works under Islamic Development Bank Financing (May 2009-Amended February 2012), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the guidelines. Consulting services will be selected in accordance with the Guidelines for the Use of Consultants under Islamic Development Bank Financing (May 2009-Amended February 2012).

The infrastructure related components (1 & 2) will be procured through National Competitive Bidding (NCB), using IDB procurement procedures, with the exception of the WWTPs in Amol and Qaemshahr, which will be procured through International Competitive Bidding limited to IDB Member Countries (ICB/MC). The Consultancy services for components 3 & 4 will be selected according to IDB procurement procedures, through shortlists of local consultancy firms, to be agreed on between the Bank and MWWC. Prequalification of contractors will be required for all the contracts under components 1 & 2.

Interested eligible bidders who wish to be included on the mailing list to receive invitations to prequalify/bid under NCB or ICB/MC procedures, and interested consultants who wish to receive a copy of advertisement requesting expressions of interest for consultancy contracts, or those requiring additional information, should contact the addresses below.

National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company
Contact: Mr. Alipour,
Address: No. 6, Shahid Abdullah Zadeh Ave. Keshavarz Boulevard, Tehran, IR of Iran
Phone: +98 21 89602918
Fax: +98 21 88990190
E-mail: alipour@nwwc.ir

Mazandaran Water and Wastewater Company
Contact: Mr. Hosseini
Address: Corner of Mivehchin Alley, Khazar Blvd., Sari, Mazandaran, IR of Iran
Phone: +98 11 33260291-4
Fax: +98 11 33246473
E-mail: hosseini45@yahoo.com

Notice: potential bidders desiring additional information on the procurement in question or the project in general should, unless indicated otherwise, contact the project agency and not the IDB.

روش تأمین مالی: فروش اقسالی

جمهوری اسلامی ایران درخواست تأمین مبلغ ۲۸۱/۲۷ میلیون یورو جهت تأمین بخشی از هزینه های پروژه فاضلاب مازندران را به بانک توسعه اسلامی ارسال و قصد دارد بخشی از این مبلغ را صرف کالا، کار و خدمات مرتبط و همچنین خدمات مشاوره ای مورد نیاز این پروژه نماید.

اجزاء پروژه به شرح ذیل است:

- ۱) احداث تصفیه خانه فاضلاب در شهرهای آمل، محمود آباد، قائمشهر، تنکابن و رامسر برای جمعیتی معادل ۴۵۷،۰۰۰ نفر (ظرفیت کل معادل ۹۳،۷۹۰ متر مکعب در شبانه روز)
- ۲) شبکه های جمع آوری فاضلاب در شهرهای مذکور شامل:
 - الف- شبکه های فاضلاب
 - ب- خطوط انتقال
 - ج- ایستگاه های پمپاژ و بالابر
- ۳) مشاوره مدیریت پروژه
- ۴) امور پشتیبانی اجرای پروژه

تدارک قراردادهایی که توسط بانک توسعه اسلامی تأمین مالی می شوند مطابق با شیوه نامه های خواهد بود که در دستورالعمل تدارک کالا و کار بهره مند از منابع مالی بانک توسعه اسلامی (نسخه مه ۲۰۰۹ - بازنگری شده فوریه ۲۰۱۲) درج شده است و شرکت در آن برای کلیه مناقصه گران واجد شرایط تعریف شده در دستورالعمل آزاد است. خدمات مشاوره مطابق با دستورالعمل انتخاب مشاور در پروژه بهره مند از منابع مالی بانک توسعه اسلامی (نسخه مه ۲۰۰۹ - بازنگری شده فوریه ۲۰۱۲) انتخاب خواهد شد.

اجزای زیر ساختی (۱ و ۲) از طریق مناقصه داخلی و با اعمال مقررات تدارکاتی بانک توسعه اسلامی احداث خواهد شد به استثنای تصفیه خانه های شهر آمل و قائمشهر که از طریق مناقصه بین المللی محدود به کشورهای عضو، تدارک خواهد شد. خدمات مشاوره (اجزای ۳ و ۴) مطابق با مقررات تدارکاتی بانک توسعه اسلامی و از میان فهرست کوتاهی از مشاورین داخلی که مورد توافق بانک و شرکت آب و فاضلاب استان مازندران می باشد، انتخاب خواهد شد.

تمامی پیمانکاران متقاضی قراردادهای اجرایی مرتبط با اجزای ۱ و ۲ مشمول مراحل پیش صلاحیت خواهند بود. مناقصه گران واجد شرایط علاقمند به دریافت دعوت به پیش صلاحیت مناقصه تحت مقررات مناقصه داخلی و یا مناقصه بین المللی محدود به کشورهای عضو، و نیز مشاورین علاقمند به دریافت فراخوان اعلام آمادگی برای خدمات مشاوره ای و نیز کسانی که تمایل به دریافت اطلاعات بیشتر دارند می توانند به نشانی های ذیل مراجعه نمایند.

شرکت مهندسی آب و فاضلاب کشور
تأمین: آقای علی پور
نشانی: جمهوری اسلامی ایران - تهران - بلوار کشاورز - کوچه شهید عبید - زاده - پلاک ۶

تلفن: ۰۲۱ - ۸۹۶۰۲۹۱۸
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تذکر: مناقصه گرانی که نیاز به اطلاعات بیشتر در رابطه با روند تدارکات مرتبط و یا درخصوص کل پروژه دارند، به استثنای مواردی که اعلام خواهد شد، باید به مجری پروژه مراجعه و از تماس مستقیم با بانک توسعه اسلامی پرهیز نمایند.

5,600 ISIL terrorists return to their countries, including U.S., Britain: report

A new report has found out that at least 5,600 ISIL terrorists have returned to their countries, including the United States and Britain, as the terrorist group loses ground in Syria and Iraq.

The U.S.-based think tank Soufan Center published a report on Tuesday saying that those returning home will be a security challenge for years to come. They include half of the estimated 850 people that left Britain to join the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) and also 400 of the 3,417 fighters from Russia; 760 of the 3,244 from Saudi Arabia; 800 of the 2,926 from Tunisia; and 271 of the 1,910 from France.

This is while Moscow announced on Tuesday that less than five percent of the Syrian territory remains under the grip of ISIL terrorists as government forces, backed by Russian air power, press ahead with an offensive to drive the Takfiri outfit out of its main stronghold in eastern Syria.

The Soufan Center's report says the flow of foreign fighters came to a virtual standstill in late 2015, as the terrorist group began to suffer defeats and states



implemented better measures to prevent travel.

"Although there is disagreement over the threat that returning foreign fighters may present to their countries of residence or origin, or to other countries they pass through," the report says. "Returnees may be particularly vulnerable to contact from people who were part of

the network that recruited them, or appeals for help from ex-comrades in arms."

In addition to losing large swathes of its occupied lands in Syria, ISIL has also been pushed out of Mosul, Iraq's third largest city, from the hands of ISIL following a months-long military campaign.

Thirty-three U.S. states have reported returns over the past two years.

Britain has also been hit with a series of terrorist attacks over the past few months.

London announced in January last year that around 800 Britons had gone to fight with ISIL or other terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq.

ISIL took control of swathes of land in Iraq and Syria over the past three years with some 20-thousand foreigners joining the terrorist group in the two countries.

The head of Britain's Security Service, MI5, reported to BBC last week that fewer than expected of the 800 Britons who joined IS had returned recently and that at least 130 had been killed.

Those who were still in Syria and Iraq might not now attempt to come back because they knew they might be arrested, Andrew Parker said.

The U.S. and European countries are also believed to be the main suppliers of arms and other assistance to the terrorists, effectively feeding terror that is returning to affect themselves.

(Source: Press TV)

Germany's Schauble elected head of lower house

Former finance minister Wolfgang Schauble was elected speaker of Germany's lower house of parliament on Tuesday, a position from which he will try to impose discipline on far-right lawmakers who opposed his appointment.

Schauble won 501 of 705 votes from fellow lawmakers for the post of Bundestag president, or speaker. The Alternative for Germany (AfD), which was elected to the parliament for the first time last month, immediately set the stage for further clashes.

To the alarm of Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives, the anti-immigration AfD is now the third largest party in the Bundestag. The highly experienced Schauble, 75, is one of Germany's most powerful politicians and seen as well qualified to tame recalcitrant lawmakers.

In an inaugural Bundestag session following the Sept. 24 federal election, the AfD - the first far-right party to enter parliament in more than half a century - made clear its intention to shake up German politics on the national stage.

"The people have decided, now a new era begins,"

AfD parliamentary leader Bernd Baumann told the chamber.

In his maiden speech as Bundestag president, Schauble shot back: "Nobody on their own represents the people."

"The way we speak to each other here can set an example for debate in society," he said, adding: "I am looking forward to the new challenges."

By agreeing to move to the Bundestag, Schauble has opened the way for the liberal Free Democrats (FDP) to take over his powerful ministry, helping to unblock talks on a new three-way coalition likely also to include the Greens.

FDP leader Christian Lindner told broadcaster N-TV that Schauble was an extraordinary figure in German politics: "He has gravitas, a clear position and a natural authority that will be good to have in a parliament has just become more diverse, and where some manners may be called into question."

The AfD's Baumann shocked other lawmakers by suggesting that they had used Nazi-era tactics to prevent an AfD member from taking a top post in parlia-



ment. FDP politician Marco Buschmann said the comments were "beyond tasteless."

After opposing Schauble's Bundestag appointment, the AfD is set to clash with other parties over its nomination for one of six vice presidents - one from each party group.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia criticizes U.S., regional allies' missile warning drills over Korean Peninsula

Russia has criticized the United States for conducting joint military drills with its regional allies, Japan and South Korea, over the Korean Peninsula in a declared aim of preparing to counter any potential threat posed by North Korea's ballistic missiles.

"We decisively condemn North Korea's missile and nuclear tests. At the same time, we oppose excessive military activity of several countries of the region that provoke such tests," said Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defense Ministers' Meeting on Tuesday, adding that such moves would provoke Pyongyang.

Shoigu's remarks came a few hours after Washington and its two allies in the Far East region, Tokyo and Seoul, kick-started a two-day Missile Warning Exercise, off South Korean and Japanese coasts aimed at tackling North Korea's nuclear and missile alleged "threats."

According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Republic of Korea, the drills are being conducted to practice the cross-navy capabilities in detecting and tracking any potential North Korean ballistic missiles.

The provocative exercise is report-



edly being led by the American Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Stethem, Japanese Kongo-class guided missile destroyer JDS Kirishima and South Korean Sejong Great-class destroyer, which are all equipped with Aegis Combat System.

On Monday, the United States Secretary of Defense James Mattis, Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and South Korean Minister of National Defense Song Young-moo, in a trilateral meeting in the Philippines, vowed to increase joint air exercises over the Korean Peninsula.

"The three ministers lauded collective efforts to expand information sharing on North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and enhance response capabilities, including the execution of multiple combined flight training missions with U.S. bomber aircraft," the military chiefs said in a joint statement at the time.

The war games, which will not include intercepting and destroying projectiles, began at a time of increased tensions around the North's nuclear and missile test launches.

North Korea has threatened to carry out unimaginable strike on the U.S. amid U.S.-South Korean military drills near the Korean Peninsula.

Washington's military maneuvers with its close allies also come ahead of the U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to Japan and South Korea scheduled to start on November 5.

Trump has taken a tough stance against Pyongyang, threatening to "totally destroy" North Korea if necessary and calling North Korean leader Kim Jong-un names. Kim has responded with threats, vowing to take

the "highest-level" measures against the U.S.

The North has already denounced such war games around the peninsula, condemning the drills as a "rehearsal for war" against Pyongyang.

The U.S. and North Korea have been at loggerheads over Pyongyang's weapons and nuclear programs. However, tensions on the Korean Peninsula have recently risen sharply following a series of weapons tests by Pyongyang, including its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on September 3 and two missiles launched over Japan. Back in July, the North also claimed that it had fired two intercontinental ballistic missiles.

North Korea is under mounting international pressure over its missile and military nuclear programs and has been subjected to an array of sanctions by the United Nations. However, Pyongyang says it needs to continue and develop the programs as a deterrent against hostility by the U.S. and its regional allies, including South Korea and Japan.

(Source: Press TV)

Qatar opens military office in U.S. amid Persian Gulf tensions

Qatar has opened a new military office in the United States as a diplomatic crisis between Doha and its Persian Gulf neighbors continues unabated.

Qatar's Defense Ministry inaugurated on Monday the Washington Office for Defense Attaché Staff Brigadier General Yousef al-Kuwari, situated near the Qatari Embassy.

The Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance announced that the opening of the office is part of a new approach to boost defense ties between Qatar and the U.S.

Kuwari said that six officers and one non-commissioned officer would be posted to the office, representing Qatar's Army, Navy, Air Force and Special Forces.

Qatar is, itself, home to the largest American air base in the Middle East, al-Udeid, where some 10,000 military personnel are stationed.

Since June, Qatar has been under a trade and diplomatic embargo imposed by the House of Saud regime,

Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who accuse Doha of supporting terrorism, an allegation strongly denied by Doha.

The Saudi regime-led bloc presented Qatar with a list of demands, among them downgrading ties with Iran, and gave it an ultimatum to comply with them or face the consequences. Doha, however, refused to meet the demands and said that they were meant to "bully" the nation and make it abandon its independent foreign policy.

The U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has tried to facilitate a dialogue between Qatar and the Saudi regime-led quartet, but his efforts have so far been unsuccessful.

Tillerson says Riyadh is not ready to talk to Doha to end a months-long diplomatic dispute between the Arab states.

"In my meetings with [Saudi] Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, I asked him to please engage in dialog, [but] there is not a strong indication that parties are ready to talk yet," Tillerson said.



The top U.S. diplomat made the remarks in a joint press conference with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Doha after a visit to Saudi Arabia.

(Source: Press TV)

Bahraini prisoners in critical condition: Al-Wefaq member

These suppressive measures are even carried out against leaders of Bahraini revolution. Until now, only ordinary political prisoners were subjected to the brutal and cruel attacks of Al-Khalifa regime. But today, leaders of Bahraini revolution are also the targets of these actions. Al-Khalifa has even plundered all Bahraini belongings including their books.



Foreign Minister of Al-Khalifa regime has recently said that Bahraini political prisoners are criminals and measures taken in prisons are completely within the framework of the law. What is your opinion on these statements?

A: Foreign Minister of Al-Khalifa regime's understanding of the criminality of the political prisoners is completely rejected. Even human rights organizations and institutions acknowledged that more than 4,000 political prisoners kept in Al-Khalifa prisons are prisoner of conscience.

These prisoners only demanded their rights. Of course, it is natural that the minister, who stands in the line of criminals and himself is considered as a human rights violator, makes such a claim to justify Al-Khalifa crimes against the revolutionaries.

Do you think that these repressive measures taken by Al-Khalifa regime have so far led to halting the revolutionary movement? Is it possible that brutal acts of Al-Khalifa regime can have an effect on the will of Bahraini people?

A: I should say that what has happened today is just the opposite of this issue. The determination and will of Bahraini people have increased more and more and this fact is not unbeknown to anyone. Not only these brutal acts have failed to impede the revolutionary spirit of Bahraini people, but also this fighting spirit has been brought into the prisons themselves. Today, Bahraini prisoners stand against Al-Khalifa's savagery and their brutal acts. Today, we are witnessing the revolutionary movements against this regime in Al-Khalifa's prisons, such as the hunger strikes. An international effort is needed to put an end to the grievous condition of Bahraini prisoners who are in dire need of medical treatment.

Arresting children and young adults in Bahrain is another new move taken by Al-Khalifa against revolutionaries. In this regard, Al-Khalifa has recently arrested eight Bahraini children. What is your assessment in this respect?

A: The fact is this the Al-Khalifa regime does not discriminate in committing crimes against Bahraini people. This regime arrests and tortures underage children. Therefore, it is clear that no one is safe from crimes that Al-Khalifa commits against oppressed people of Bahrain. Today, there are many children, women, old men and women in Al-Khalifa prison. Presently, prisoners, aged above 70 and underage children, are in Al-Khalifa solitary confinements. These measures are done to stop Bahraini Revolution, but none of them have so far yielded any results.

U.S. secretary of state in Pakistan as Washington warns about Taliban 'havens'

The United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is in Islamabad amid Washington's allegations that Pakistan is providing "safe havens" for Taliban militants.

The top U.S. diplomat landed in the Pakistani capital on Tuesday and he is set to hold meetings with Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and the military chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Tillerson received a cold welcome and was greeted only by a mid-level official from Pakistan's Foreign Office and the US ambassador at the military airport in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. He arrived in Islamabad a day after visiting Iraq and Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, he told reporters that Pakistan's cooperation on counterterrorism was essential for a good relationship with the U.S. During his brief trip to Bagram air base on Monday, Tillerson said Pakistan needed to "take a clear-eyed view of the situation that they are confronted with in terms of the number of terrorist organizations that find safe haven inside" the country. The U.S. secretary of state warned that Washington had made "very specific requests" of Pakistan seeking to "undermine the support that the Taliban receives."

Tillerson's visit comes months after U.S. President Donald Trump angrily accused Pakistan of harboring "agents of chaos" who can attack the U.S.-led forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

Washington and Kabul have long accused Islamabad of supporting militant groups including the Taliban.

Successive U.S. governments have criticized Pakistan for links with the Taliban and for harboring slain al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

The U.S.-Pakistan relationship has waxed and waned dramatically since Trump took office in January.

Kabul blames elements in the Pakistani spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for supporting Taliban militants. Islamabad blames the Afghan government for giving refuge to the militants on its side of the border. The two sides also accuse one another of not doing enough to stop militants engaging in cross-border attacks.

(Source: agencies)

'Disappointed' Koeman wishes Everton luck after losing job

Ronald Koeman has expressed disappointment after being sacked as Everton manager, but thanked his players and staff for their work and commitment during his time in charge and wished the club well for the future.

The Dutchman was sacked on Monday after Everton dropped into the Premier League relegation zone following Sunday's humiliating 5-2 home defeat by Arsenal.

"I would like to place on record my thanks to the players and staff for all of their work and commitment during my 16 months as Everton manager," Koeman said on his official Twitter account on Tuesday.

"I would like to thank (chairman) Bill Kenwright, (major shareholder) Farhad Moshiri and the Everton Board for the opportunity to have managed a great club, and to the fans as well for their passionate support for the club.

"Naturally, I am disappointed at this moment, but I wish the team good luck in the future."

The 54-year-old, who replaced Roberto Martinez at Goodison Park, spent a significant amount of money overhauling the squad in the last transfer window, but Everton made their worst start to a season since 2005-06.

He is the third Premier League manager to lose his job in the current campaign, after bottom-side Crystal Palace fired Frank De Boer after just five games in charge and Leicester City parted company with Craig Shakespeare last week.

(Source: Daily Star)

Djokovic set for December return



Novak Djokovic is set to return at the World Tennis Championship in December – his first event since Wimbledon.

The 12-time Grand Slam champion disappeared from the tennis circuit in July to heal an elbow injury, but is a confirmed entrant at the exhibition in Abu Dhabi.

Djokovic endured a difficult 2017 – which saw old foes Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal return to the summit of the men's game – as he failed to progress beyond the quarter-finals at a Slam.

"It is a huge honour to take part in such a special tournament," Djokovic told the tournament's official website. "The line-up is very strong as always and it will be the perfect way to make my comeback and begin the season."

"My recovery is going well and I can't wait to be back on court. I'm working hard together with my team and looking forward to being back."

Stan Wawrinka is also targeting his return at the event after an extended lay-off with a knee complaint.

Rafael Nadal, Dominic Thiem, Pablo Carreno Busta and Milos Raonic complete the six-strong field.

(Source: Eurosport)

Leicester 'reluctantly accept' FIFA preventing Silva registration

Leicester City have been left "powerless" in their wish to register Adrien Silva before January, unless the player lodges a personal appeal.

The 2015-16 Premier League champions agreed a deal with Sporting CP worth up to €29.5million to sign the Portugal international as a replacement for Danny Drinkwater, who joined Chelsea shortly before the close of the transfer window.

Leicester reportedly missed the deadline to register Silva by a matter of seconds, meaning FIFA refused permission for the move to be completed.

After an appeal against that ruling was turned down, Leicester planned to take their case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, but FIFA's decision not to support an expedited process has left the club's hands tied.

Unless Silva pursues and succeeds in his own appeal, he will not be registered until January 1, when the Foxes are due to host Huddersfield Town in the Premier League.

"It was our intention to submit an application to the Court of Arbitration for Sport for expedited proceedings so that the matter could be resolved as quickly as possible," a Leicester statement read.

"However, it has been made clear to us that FIFA will not support an expedited process, forcing the club to reluctantly accept the single-judge ruling of FIFA's Players' Status Committee without reasonable opportunity for independent arbitration that is timely enough to be effective.

"Our frustration at the denial of effective due process doubles our disappointment at the original outcome and while the club is now essentially powerless to continue to challenge the decision, we will continue to support Adrien in any personal appeal he wishes to undertake.

(Source: Soccerway)

The end of Cristiano v Messi? It's just starting, says Ronaldo

Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo has beaten Lionel Messi and Neymar to win the Best FIFA Men's Player award for the second year running.

Ronaldo, who won the inaugural prize last year, was presented the award at the Best FIFA Football Awards ceremony in London on Monday.

The Portugal captain had been favorite to claim the accolade after a year that saw him help Madrid to a third Champions League crown in four seasons and a first La Liga title in five years, as well as the FIFA Club World Cup.

Ronaldo scored twice as Madrid beat Juventus 4-1 in the Champions League final, while also finishing top scorer in the competition with 12 goals.

The award, which covers the period of Nov. 20, 2016, to July 2, 2017, is voted for by national team coaches, captains, selected media and fans. Once again, neither Messi nor Ronaldo voted for each other.

All tallied, Ronaldo won 43.16 percent of the total votes, while Lionel Messi came away with 19.25 percent and Neymar just 6.97 percent.

"Thank you a lot to the guys for voting for me," Ronaldo said in accepting the award. "[I want] to give a mention to Leo and Neymar to be here, Real Madrid supporters, my teammates, my coach, my president—they support me all the year so I have to say thank you to them.

"We are in England for the first time



and I win consecutive awards. This is a great moment for me."

The Madrid man will hope to follow up this success by winning the 2017 Ballon d'Or, which would see him draw level with Messi in having won the prize five times. FIFA ran its own awards for the second time after ending its partnership with France Football.

Ronaldo said of his competition with Messi for top individual honors: "I do not compete with Leo. We are sharing the same era, he won the trophy five times and I did it another five..."

"I'm just happy, I play in the best club in the world and I have the possibility to

prove that I am still at a high level high." He then jokingly said the Cristiano-Messi era "is just starting."

Also at Monday's award ceremony, Real Madrid manager Zinedine Zidane was named the Best FIFA Men's Coach.

Zidane won the award over fellow finalists Massimiliano Allegri of Juventus and Antonio Conte of Chelsea, both of whom won domestic league titles this year.

In a new award this year, Gianluigi Buffon was named the Best FIFA Goalkeeper for his play with Juventus and Italy. Buffon was also named to the FIFPro World 11 for the first time in a decade.

Buffon guided Juve to a sixth consecutive Serie A title and managed 600 Champions League minutes without conceding a goal. The 39-year-old held off competition from fellow nominees Keylor Navas of Real Madrid and Manuel Neuer of Bayern Munich.

"I am very happy, for me it is a great honor to receive this award at my age," Buffon said. "I think the last year has been a fantastic season for Juventus and for me personally. It wasn't enough to win in Europe and for this year I hope that we can play better and with the national team and Juventus."

Netherlands' Lieke Martens won the Best FIFA Women's Player award over last year's winner, Carli Lloyd of the U.S., while Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman received the women's coach award after winning Euro 2017 this summer.

Arsenal forward Olivier Giroud won the Puskas Award for the year's best goal after his acrobatic scorpion kick against Crystal Palace in the Premier League in January.

Celtic received the FIFA Fan Award for their 360-degree tifo display honoring the 50th anniversary of their European Cup-winning team.

The Fair Play Award went to Slovakia's Francis Kone, who saved the life of Martin Berkovec during a Czech First League game, after the Bohemians goalkeeper was knocked unconscious in a collision with a teammate.

(Source: Soccernet)

Lazio condemn fans for anti-Semitic graffiti



Lazio have condemned sections of their supporters after anti-Semitic graffiti and stickers were found in the Stadio Olimpico following Sunday's 3-0 win over Cagliari. The north stand – where Lazio's 'ultra' fans are usually located – was closed for the match due to a punishment handed down to the club in response to racist chanting from some fans against Sassuolo on October 1.

In response to that, the club opted to allow their 'ultras' into the south stand, which is the area Roma's most vocal fans are situated for their home matches in the shared stadium.

Maintenance staff then found graffiti and numerous anti-Semitic stickers in the south stand on Monday, with some reportedly depicting Anne Frank in a Roma jersey, and Lazio blasted these actions.

Lazio spokesperson Arturo Diaconale said: "SS Lazio always condemns racism in all its forms. We are speechless after this news, that clearly involves a limited amount of people among the mass, who instead always behave in a fair way.

"We are worried by the fact that a

small group of reckless people, who are struggling to keep up with the times, could bring such a big damage to a club."

Lazio's 'Irriducibili' supporters refused to distance themselves from the incident, claiming to be "surprised" by the news coverage.

"We are surprised by such an echo from the media," a statement read. "Everything should be mitigated by the context.

"We talk about about sport; there's jokes, irony and cheerfulness. There have been other cases which, in our opinion, should deserve much more attention by newspapers and TV.

"We don't take distance from what we've done, we simply wonder why nobody take our part when we are the victims of these alleged incidents.

"We wonder why nobody talked about our initiatives to remember the victims of terrorism. We think these moves are oriented to block and boycott Lazio's growth, as they're one of the best Serie A teams."

(Source: Four Four Two)

Maradona: Giving Ronaldo award 'hurt soul'



Argentina great Diego Maradona admitted it "hurt his soul" to hand the Best FIFA Men's Player award to Cristiano Ronaldo and not to compatriot Lionel Messi.

Real Madrid star Ronaldo won the accolade for the second year running on Monday, beating off competition from Barcelona's Messi and Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar.

Maradona and former Brazil international Ronaldo presented the award to Ronaldo at the Best FIFA Football Awards ceremony in London.

"To give the Best [award] to Ronaldo and not be able to give it to Messi hurt my soul," Maradona told TyC Sports.

Maradona, who coached Messi while in charge of Argentina between 2008 and 2010, went on to deny reports that his relationship with the Barca star is a bad one. Messi has been criticized in the past by some, including by Maradona, for lacking "personality to be a leader" when wearing the Argentina shirt.

Argentina and Messi have lost three straight finals at major competitions in a

three-year span — the 2014 World Cup against Germany, the 2015 Copa America against Chile and the 2016 Copa America Centenario also against Chile.

Maradona, who captained Argentina to the 1986 World Cup, was disappointed Messi did not invite him to his wedding this summer in their homeland, fueling speculation that the two do not get along.

However, former Napoli hero Maradona was seen affectionately saluting Messi during Monday's ceremony.

"The meeting with Messi was fantastic," Maradona said. "I spoke to him, and the same love and affection was there as always."

Messi came to Argentina's rescue by scoring a hat trick in a 3-1 win at Ecuador on Oct. 11 in their final World Cup qualifier to book their place at next year's tournament.

Maradona believes that Messi will continue to delight football fans for many years to come, adding: "He can go on for a long time."

(Source: Soccernet)

Pyeongchang 2018 Games torch lit in ancient Olympia

The torch for the Pyeongchang 2018 winter Olympics was lit in ancient Olympia on Tuesday using the backup flame from the dress rehearsal due to rainy weather, kicking off the countdown for the first winter Games in Asia outside Japan.

The run-up to the Feb. 9-25 Olympics has been overshadowed by the escalating crisis on the Korean peninsula triggered by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile tests but organizers said the Games would be safe.

The traditional ceremony, introduced for the first time ahead of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, did not benefit this time from the Greek sun.

Light rain and clouds forced the high priestess, played by actress Katerina Lechou, to deploy Monday's backup flame instead of the reflector used to light the flame with the sun's rays.

"Our dream of hosting the Olympic winter Games has now become a reality. Korea is only the second Asian nation to have the honor of hosting the winter Games," Games chief Lee Hee-beom said.

"We want the international community to understand that we are committed to hosting a safe and secure



Olympic winter Games."

The ceremony inside the stadium, site of the ancient Olympics, was also attended by South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach and the President of Greece, Prokopis Pavlopoulos.

"The Olympic Games are sacred and universal," Bach said.

"They stand above and beyond all the differences that divide us. In our fragile world that seems to be drift-

ing apart, the Olympic Games have the power to unite humanity in all its diversity."

Former Manchester United midfielder Park Ji-sung, among the most successful and decorated athletes from his country, was the first South Korean to run with the torch, picking up the flame from Greece's Nordic skier Apostolos Aggelis, the first torch-bearer, just outside the ancient stadium.

"We will make sure to show the world how we have grown up, how we can organize this sports event," Park told reporters after his short run.

"This is bigger than Seoul (summer Olympics) 1988. These are the largest winter Olympics ever and I am excited to be part of it."

The flame is due to arrive in South Korea on Nov. 1 for the start of the domestic torch relay as organizers look to boost local enthusiasm amid low ticket sales.

Tensions on the Korean peninsula have risen in recent months as Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump exchanged threats and insults over the North's nuclear and missile development programme.

(Source: Reuters)

Ex-Iran defender Ashtiani dies at age of 71

S P O R T S Former Iran national football team and Persepolis defender Ebrahim Ashtiani passed away at the age of 71 in Tehran's Shahid Rajaei Hospital on Tuesday.

He died as a result of a preexisting heart disease.

Ashtiani began his playing career with Boostan and Poolad (under-19 and under-23 teams of Shahin) in and was promoted to the first team in 1964 by Abbas Ekrami.

After Shahin was dissolved, Ashtiani and many other players of the team joined another Tehran based club Persepolis. He played with the team in Asian Club Championship in his first season.

Ashtiani caught the eye of Hamburg SV in 1970 after a friendly match and the German club offered him a contract to join to the team, which Ashtiani rejected that to play for Persepolis until his retirement.

He also had bids from Manchester City and Al-Arabi.

Ashtiani provided an assist for Hossein Kalani in a historic 6-0 derby win against Esteghlal in September 1973.

He won the Asian Cup in Thailand in 1972 as well as the football tournament of the 1974 Asian Games in Tehran with Iran national football team.

Ashtiani made 35 appearances for the Iran national football team from 1969 to 1974 and was part of the team competing in the Olympics in Munich 1972.

Ashtiani hung up his boots in the summer of 1976 at the age of 30.

The ex-Iran and Persepolis defender will be laid to rest in Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery on Wednesday.

Tehran Times staff wish to express deepest sympathy and condolences to his family and Persepolis club.



Persepolis coach Ivankovic sees Tehran derby as an asset for Iran football

S P O R T S Persepolis football coach Branko Ivankovic says that Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal is an asset for the Iranian football.

The match has been scheduled for Thursday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

"I am happy because of upcoming Tehran derby since I think the match is an asset for Iran football. Our players are also happy for derby and should dedicated their lives for this match," Ivankovic said.

In response to Esteghlal coach Winfried Schaefer's

claims that they are going to win the derby, Ivankovic said, "Mr. Schaefer is an experienced coach and it's normal he says that they want to win the match because we also want to win the match."

"We qualified for the AFC Champions League semi-final and defeated Naft Tehran in Hazfi Cup and earned good results in Iran Professional League. It shows we've been doing a good job," the Croat added.

Asked whether he would be interested in extending his contract, Ivankovic said that he is happy to be here in Iran but it's not good time to talk about the issue.

Zidane: The players believe in my message

When he retired as a player, Zinedine Zidane's trophy cabinet was already full to bursting. Now, he has picked up where he left off as a coach, claiming title after title with Real Madrid. On 23 October, he added yet another award to his personal collection when he was named The Best FIFA Men's Coach ahead of the formidable Italian pairing of Antonio Conte and Massimiliano Allegri.

This latest prize will sit proudly alongside Zizou's impressive trophy haul from the 2016/17 season, which included the FIFA Club World Cup and a second successive UEFA Champions League, in addition to the Spanish title. With customary humility, Zinedine Zidane spoke exclusively to FIFA.com about his remarkable run of success.

FIFA.com: Zinedine, last year you told us that you had not expected to be so successful as a coach. This is now the second year in a row that you have been nominated for The Best FIFA Football Awards. Did it come as less of a surprise to you this time around?

Zinedine Zidane: I don't know if it was any more expected but, in any case, it was my wish. The wish to be able to carry on doing what I love and to try to keep improving as a coach, which is not an easy job. I'm happy to be invited back for a second year running, and I'm pleased with how things are going for me as a coach.

How has the year 2017 differed from what you went through last year?

When you win during your first year, the hardest thing is to do it again the following year. I'm very aware that I'm at a club where people are used to winning trophies. And I know that I'm surrounded by great players. But it's never easy to win trophies. That goes for the Champions League, of course, but even more so for the Spanish title, which for me is the hardest one of all. We had to consolidate our success, and that's never easy.

At what point in the season did you sense that those achievements were within your reach?

From the word go! Fighting for silverware is in the

DNA of this club. Believing that we're going to win a trophy is what motivates me, my staff and my players, because we mustn't forget that they're the ones competing every weekend out on the pitch. Believing in victory is what drives this sport, and it's what makes it so magical.

Is there one particular moment from the last year that will stay with you?

It's all been wonderful. It will all stay with me forever. But if there's a trophy that I'll hold dear, then it's La Liga. Thirty-eight games is a lot of football. The Spanish title is very hard to win.

Everything is going well for you at the moment, and long may it last. But have you allowed yourself to imagine a time when things may not be going quite so well?

Of course! Over a career, a season, a lifetime, you go through highs and lows. If you're going through a low point, you've got to be capable of bouncing back. If you're on a high, you've just got to try and enjoy it for as long as possible. But I'm well aware that my good run at Madrid will have to come to an end one day. I'm prepared for that. For the moment, I'm making the most of the great times I'm experiencing at this club.

You ended the 2016/17 season with a Spanish league and Champions League double, as well as a FIFA Club World Cup winner's medal. Are you able to take a step back in the face of all that success?

Yes, I really distance myself from it. I won a lot as a player, but it never went to my head. And that's not going to change now that I'm winning things as a coach. Quite the opposite. I'm more experienced, my children are grown up, I've got even more perspective. I'm just making the most of what I'm going through, enjoying it fully but only for what it is.

As a coach, you clearly have a great capacity for managing a dressing room full of stars. What is your secret?

What's for sure is that I've experienced the dressing room as a player. I know how it works. That has helped me. I think that's the key. As for my supposed capacity



for managing big players, I think that it's driven purely by my passion for football and for my profession.

But when your name is Zinedine Zidane, and with a track record like yours, that forces the players to show more respect...

A bit, maybe. But, more than any World Cup or European Cup winner's medals, I believe my results as a coach are what count. The important thing is that the players believe in my message, in what I'm putting together. If the players have faith in you, you can go a long way.

Speaking of the World Cup, do you believe that the French team have a chance to win in Russia?

Yes. It's a young team, with a lot of quality and a lot of individual talent. They could be very dangerous in Russia.

Do you like watching them play?

Before being a player, first and foremost I was always a fan. I like this team. It's a team that's growing year after year, with talented young players who are still improving. The future is bright for Les Bleus.

Which teams are capable of standing in their way in Russia?

There are plenty: Brazil, Germany, Argentina, Spain... The teams that always show up for the big occasion!

(Source: FIFA)

WADA to investigate claims of systematic doping in China

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) will investigate allegations by a retired physician that systematic doping took place in Chinese sport during the 1980s and 1990s, the international anti-doping agency said in a statement.

In a program on German channel ARD at the weekend, Xue Yinxian, who worked with several Chinese national teams, called for all medals awarded to the nation's athletes during that period to be withdrawn.

The 79-year-old, who made similar allegations in 2012, said "medals were showered in doping" and claimed around 10,000 Chinese athletes had used banned substances.

Xue, who is claiming asylum in Germany, alleged that she was sacked after refusing to administer banned substances ahead of the 1988 Seoul Olympics.



"The Agency will ensure that, if action is warranted and feasible under the World Anti-Doping Code, the necessary and appropriate steps

will be taken," WADA said.

"As a first step, the Agency has asked its independent Intelligence and Investigations (I&I) team to initiate an investigative process in order to collect and analyze available information in coordination with external partners."

Chinese athletes regularly failed dope tests after the country returned to the Olympic fold in the early 1980s but there was concerted effort by the government to crack down on the use of banned substances ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Russia's athletics federation, Paralympic committee and anti-doping agency (RUSADA) remain suspended after reports commissioned by WADA alleged state-sponsored doping.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran sink New Zealand in IWBF Asia Oceania Championships

Iran earned second successive victory in the IWBF (International Wheelchair Basketball Federation) Asia Oceania Championships.

Iran, who started the competition with an 85-31 win over Saudi Arabia on Monday, overpowered New Zealand 91-15 in Group C on Tuesday.

The debutants Iranian women team also lost to China 79-22 after the team was defeated against Japan 86-15 in the first day.

In the men's competition, the 14 teams are divided into four pools and play a round-robin.

Defending champion Australia, who beat Iran 78-60 in the 2015 final, has been drawn in Group A alongside Chinese Taipei and Iraq.

Japan, the 2015 bronze medalists, is in Group B with Hong Kong and Kuwait.

Iran has been pitted against Thailand, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand in Group C.

Host China meets South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan in Group D.

The top two in each pool will progress through to the quarter-final.

The four semi-finalist will secure a ticket to the 2018 World Championships, scheduled to take place in Hamburg next year from August 17 to 26.

Carlos Queiroz voted for Cristiano Ronaldo for FIFA Award

TASNIM — Iranian national football team coach Carlos Queiroz voted for Cristiano Ronaldo over Lionel Messi on his FIFA ballot for The Best Men's Player Award.

Queiroz voted for his countryman to win the award ahead of Messi, placing the Barcelona star second ahead of Neymar.

The 63-year-old has worked with Ronaldo at both Manchester United and the Portugal national team.

Ronaldo retained the prize after scoring 44 goals in 48 appearances in 2017, including 33 for Real Madrid and 11 for Portugal.

Iranian national football team's captain Jalal Hosseini also voted for Ronaldo, Messi and Neymar respectively.

Giggs interested in Leicester and Everton jobs

Manchester United and Wales legend Ryan Giggs says he is interested in the Leicester and Everton manager jobs.

Both clubs are without bosses after Leicester sacked Craig Shakespeare last week and the Toffees fired Ronald Koeman on Monday. Giggs was Louis van Gaal's number two at Old Trafford, and was interviewed for the job at Swansea in 2016.

"For me these are clubs I would be interested in," 43-year-old Giggs told Sky Sports.

"I think you look at those two teams, Leicester being champions two seasons ago, Everton being a fantastic club with a fantastic history."

"However, there are a lot of coaches out there who would be interested in those positions."

Giggs is not thought to be in contention for the job at Everton, while Leicester made a winning start under caretaker boss Michael Appleton as they beat Swansea 2-1 at the Liberty Stadium.

Giggs has not been involved in top-class football since Van Gaal's dismissal in May 2016, with the Welshman finally ending a 29-year association with United in July 2016.

Giggs decided to take a sabbatical from football but has always said he intends to get into management with an ambitious club. "I've said all along that I'd be open to clubs which share the ambitions of myself," he said.

"I want to improve clubs and improve players, to enjoy working for them and for players to enjoy the challenge."

"There are clubs in the Premier League which would be good jobs but also in the Championship and League One."

(Source: BBC)

Chelsea players will fight for manager Conte, says Courtois

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte will have the full support from his players to help the Italian avoid suffering the same fate as Jose Mourinho two years back, the Premier League champions' goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has said.

Chelsea ended a three-match winless streak with a league win over Watford last weekend but the build-up to that game was clouded by speculation about Conte's future with media reports suggesting the players were unhappy with his training methods.

Courtois compared the situation to that of Mourinho, who won the league in 2014-15 but was sacked the following season after a poor run of results.

"We are ready to fight for the coach," Courtois told Standard Sport. "I remember what happened two years ago under Jose Mourinho and things started to be said, there were stories about the dressing room without knowing what was happening."

"We are happy to show that we are ready to fight. We all know what would have happened (more debate over Conte's future) if we had lost against Watford."

Courtois, 25, dismissed reports regarding player unrest over the manager's training methods.

"Every manager has his own routine. With Antonio we do a lot of tactical sessions and drills. We are fine with it," the Belgian said. "Last season we were champions with his way and we trained much more than this season, so I don't know why somebody would complain. It's not as if we don't like to train."

(Source: Guardian)

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Mehraveh Sharifinia crowned best at Greece Bridges filmfest

A R T TEHRAN — Mehraveh Sharifinia, the star of Iranian director Ghazaleh Soltani's drama "Wander about Me", has been selected as best actress at the 8th Bridges International Film Festival in Greece.



Actress Mehraveh Sharifinia acts in a scene from "Wander about Me" by Ghazaleh Soltani

Sharifinia portrays a woman from the capital city of Tehran who chooses to follow her dreams on the verge of turning 30.

The festival took place in Corinth from October 12 to 18 and Nafplio from October 19 to 22.

The best actor award went to French actor Benoit Chauvin for his role in "The Ones Who Stay".

"Four Chinese Poems" by director Cui Ren also received awards in several categories, including best film design, best film edit and best set.

The award for best art film was presented to "Impromptu" by Gio Kaptra from Italy.

Anthologies of Persian, Korean poems published in Tehran

CULTURE TEHRAN — A book containing a selection of contemporary Persian poems translated into Korean and another carrying dozens of contemporary Korean poems translated into Persian have been published in Tehran.



"A Dream under the Peach Blossoms", which contains Korean poems, and "I Took a Look at the Sky Madly", which has Persian poems, were unveiled during a ceremony at Art Bureau on Tuesday.

The two books were compiled and translated based on an agreement signed between the Literature Translation Institute of Korea and Iran's Art Bureau.

Al Hurricane, 'Godfather of New Mexico music,' dies

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Al Hurricane, known as the "Godfather of New Mexico music" for developing a distinct sound bridging the state's unique Hispanic traditions with country and rock, died Sunday.

His son, Al Hurricane Jr, told The Associated Press that his father died from complications related to a long battle against prostate cancer. Two of his daughters were at his side.

Hurricane Jr said his father, who was 81, had already said his goodbyes to his friends, fans and children.

"He didn't want people crying when it was his time to go," his son said.

The death of Hurricane Sr. came two years after he went on a farewell tour following an announcement that he had Stage 4 prostate cancer. He kept performing despite receiving chemotherapy.

Born Alberto Nelson Sanchez on July 10, 1936, in the tiny village of Dixon, New Mexico, he was raised for a time in Ojo Sarco before moving to Arizona and later Albuquerque. He learned to play the guitar thanks to his mother and his father, a miner.

Hurricane began his professional music career by singing in Albuquerque Old Town restaurants before releasing his first songs, "Lobo" and "Racer" under the band Al Hurricane & the Night Rockers in 1962.

He released his first album, "Mi Saxophone", in 1967. The album contained his signature song "Sentimiento", a ballad he wrote for his first wife and mother of his four children. Years later, a young Tejano singer named Selena would hear the song and record her own version of it.

In 1969, while on a trip to Colorado, a car carrying Hurricane and five band members skidded on an icy bridge and flipped five times. A piece of glass struck Hurricane, and he lost his right eye. He would wear an eye patch for the rest of his life, and it would become part of his unique look.

Misery of Myanmar Muslim refugees in focus at Tehran exhibit

A R T TEHRAN — "Border of Loneliness", an exhibition of photos depicting the Myanmar Muslim refugees' pain and sorrow, opened at the Iranian Photographers Center (IPC) of the Art Bureau in Tehran on Monday.

Noor Alam and Suman Paul, two photographers from Bangladesh, have recorded the bitter moments experienced by the Myanmar refugees while streaming across the border fleeing to Bangladesh in addition to their lives in camps and handmade shelters on the border of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, IPC director Ehsan Baqeri, said that Alam and Paul were commissioned by his center to prepare the collection after the IPC held talks with different Bangladeshi photographers.

"We agreed that they would approach the border and take photos preferably in black and white to better convey the pain and bitter feelings of the refugees, with some portraits on the highlight," Baqeri added.

Alam, who was also attending the opening ceremony, said that he has witnessed the escape of over half million Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar toward Bangladesh and noted that children and the elderly have suffered the most.

He also added that he only wants to help the cry of the oppressed people of Myanmar be heard in the world.

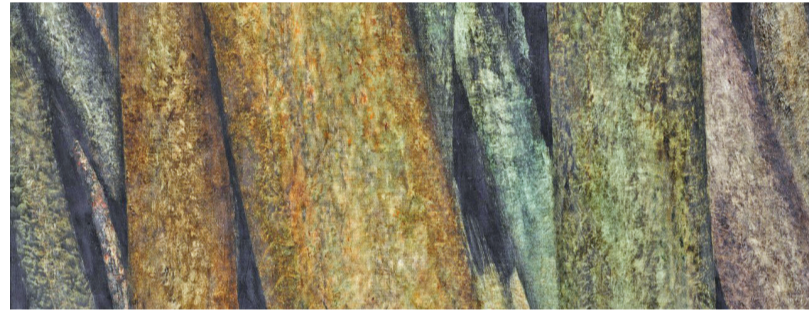
A large number of photographers and officials, including the Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpur, attended the opening ceremony of the showcase, which will be running until November 8 at the center located on Somayyeh St., off Hafez Ave.



Bangladeshi photographer Noor Alam attends the opening ceremony his exhibit "Border of Loneliness" at the Iranian Photographers Center in Tehran on October 23, 2017. (Mehr/Asghar Khamseh)

The Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar have long faced severe discrimination and were the targets of violence in 2012 that killed hundreds and drove about 140,000 people from their homes to camps. More than half a million Muslims have fled Myanmar for Bangladesh since August.

Iranian art holds big sale at London Sotheby's



An untitled painting from Sohrab Sepehri's Tree Trunk series was the first top seller, fetching \$360,000 at Sotheby's in London during its Middle East 20th Century Art auction on October 23, 2017. (Sotheby's)

A R T TEHRAN — Works by Iranian artists shone at Sotheby's in London during its Middle East 20th Century Art auction on Monday by grossing over 60 percent of the total sales of \$2.7 million.

A total of 57 artworks from Middle Eastern artists went under the hammer at the sale in which just 19 works from Iranian artists grossed about \$1.6 million of the total sales, the Persian service of Honaonline announced on Tuesday.

An untitled work from Iranian poet and painter Sohrab Sepehri's Tree Trunk series sold for \$360,000 and was the

most expensive item sold at the auction, followed by Egyptian artist Mahmoud Mokhtar's bronze sculpture "On the Banks of the Nile" that sold for \$297,000.

The third most expensive item sold at the auction was an untitled painting by Iranian artist Bahman Mohasses. The painting sold for \$280,500. It was followed by a painting from Hossein Zenderudi that went for \$264,000.

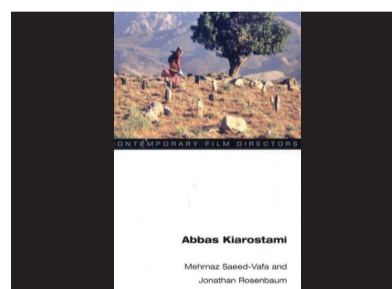
Works by a number of Iranian artists are scheduled to be auctioned at Christie's in London during the Middle Eastern, Modern and Contemporary Art sale today.

"Abbas Kiarostami" comes to Iranian bookstores

A R T TEHRAN — "Abbas Kiarostami", co-written by Iranian filmmaker Mehrnaz Saeid-Vafa and American critic Jonathan Rosenbaum about Iranian legendary filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, has been published in Persian in Tehran.

Yahya Nazari is the translator of the book, which has been published by Cheshmeh Publications.

The book was originally published in English by University of Illinois Press in 2003. It is a penetrating study of Kiarostami's life and works as well as



a cross-cultural dialogue between the Iranian and American writers, who both have an intense interest in Kiarostami's works.

Movies from Iran selected for intl. events



A scene from "Genesis" by Abtin Mozaffari

A R T TEHRAN — Ten Iranian films have been selected to be screened at several international festivals in Italy, Morocco and Ireland.

"Genesis" by Abtin Mozaffari and "Plight" by Mohammadreza Khavari are competing in the short film section of the PiGrecoZen FilmFest, which is currently underway in the Italian city of Ancona.

Short films "The Guy Came on Horseback" by Hossein Rabiei Dastjerdi and "Runaway", co-directed by Khorshid Aalami and Negar Najafzadeh, are also on screen in the non-competitive section of the festival that will run until October

28. "Starless Dreams" by Mehrdad Oskui, "Daughter" by Reza Mirkarimi and "Valderrama" by Abbas Amini will be shown at the International Festival of Auteur Cinema, which will be held in Rabat, Morocco from October 27 to November 4.

The 62nd edition of the Cork Film Festival that will be held in the Irish city from November 10 to 19 will be hosting "A Man of Integrity" by Mohammad Rasulof.

The festival will also screen short films "The Distance" by Yusef Kargar and "A Few Knots Away" by Mansur Foruzesh.

Alireza Qorbani to perform at WOMEX

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian vocalist Alireza Qorbani is scheduled to perform a concert at WOMEX – the World Music Expo, which will open today at Katowice, Poland.

Composer Saman Samimi, tar player Milad Mohammadi and percussionist Hossein Zahavi will accompany him at the performance.

Music ensembles from Ukraine, Greece, India, Colombia, Sweden, Germany, the U.S., France and several other countries will give performances at the expo, which will run until October 29.



Qorbani is also scheduled to give a concert at the Konzerthaus, Vienna's concert hall on October 29.

Sierra Leone to auction multi-million dollar diamond to benefit poor

Freetown, SIERRA LEONE (Reuters) — Sierra Leone hopes to raise millions of dollars for development projects by auctioning a huge uncut diamond, believed to be one of the world's largest, in New York in December.

It will be the government's second attempt to sell the 709-carat gem, known as the "Peace Diamond", after it rejected the highest bid of \$7.8 million at an initial auction in New York in May.

Over half of the proceeds from the sale will be used to fund clean water, electricity, education and health projects in Sierra Leone, and particularly in the village of Koryardu, in the Kono region in eastern Sierra Leone, where the diamond was discovered.

"There's a reason God gave these diamonds



A 709-carat diamond, found in Sierra Leone and known as the "Peace Diamond", is displayed during a tour ahead of its auction, at Israel's Diamond Exchange, in Ramat Gan, Israel October 19, 2017. Picture taken October 19, 2017. (Reuters/Nir Elias)

to the poorest people in the world and made the richest people want them. This is Tikun Olam (Hebrew for correcting the world), this is making the world a better place," Martin Rapaport, chairman of Rapaport Group, a network of diamond companies which will manage the auction, told Reuters.

The diamond, which the auctioneers described as the 14th largest in the world, was unearthed in Koryardu in March by a Christian pastor who gave it to the government.

Diamonds fueled a decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone, ending in 2002, in which rebels forced civilians to mine the stones and bought weapons with the proceeds, leading to the term 'blood diamonds'.

Justin Timberlake to headline Super Bowl halftime show

HOLLYWOOD (Reuters) — Grammy Award-winning pop singer Justin Timberlake will headline the Super Bowl halftime show in February, 14 years after a "wardrobe malfunction" overshadowed his last gig at the championship game, the NFL said on Sunday.

This will mark Timberlake's third time on the halftime stage, giving the "Can't Stop The Feeling" singer the distinction of having the most appearances by an individual entertainer, the National Football League said in a statement.

The 10-times Grammy winner last

performed at the Super Bowl in 2004 when he famously ripped off part of Janet Jackson's garment during their halftime show in Houston.

The incident coined the phrase "wardrobe malfunction".

The Super Bowl is the most-watched event on U.S. television, drawing more

than 100 million viewers. Previous halftime headliners include Lady Gaga, Coldplay, Beyonce, Katy Perry, Bruno Mars and Madonna.

Singer Justin Timberlake arrives at the 89th Academy Awards Red Carpet in Hollywood, California, U.S. - 26/02/17. (Reuters/Mike Blake)