



EU stance on judicial issues is 'unconstructive': Iran

"Standing in the Dust" crowned best at Resistance film festival

ART TEHRAN — d e s k "Standing in the Dust", Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's biopic on Iranian war hero Ahmad Motevasselian, won the award for best film at the 14th International Resistance Film Festival in Tehran on Friday evening.

"The movie was selected as best film by a unanimous vote," jury member Ahmadreza Darvish said during the closing ceremony of the festival at Milad Tower.

The International Resistance Film Festival is organized annually during the Sacred Defense Week to commemorate the anniversary of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

"I asked cultural officials to support filmmakers in this field," the secretary of the festival, Mohammad Khazaei, said in a short speech at the ceremony.

He proposed that the government should establish a fund for the filmmakers.

Austrian filmmaker Marko Naberšnik won the best director award for his 1st World War drama "The Woods Are Still Green".

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Power is peace: Shamkhani

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Supreme National Security Council secretary said on Saturday that Iran accepts no limitation to increase its defense power, noting that living in peace without military power is just a "dream."

Ali Shamkhani made the remarks while visiting the production line of drones and an exhibition featuring capabilities in the field of the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). "Unmanned aerial vehicles are the most important part of the Islamic Re-

public of Iran's preemptive power."

He said that experiences such as Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s and cruel sanctions proved that "reliable security" cannot be achieved without defense power and permanent attempt to develop it.

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Iran's first calligraphy works auction sells over \$7 million

ART TEHRAN — Iran's first auction for works in calligraphy and calligraphic painting has grossed a sum of 26.09 billion rials (about \$7.3 million).



A calligraphy work by Mir Emad Hasani (1554-1615) at 6 billion rials (about 170,000) was the highest-priced item sold during the auction held at Tehran's Espinas Palace Hotel on Friday.

The second most expensive work belonging to Mohammad-Hossein Shirazi sold at 4.2 billion rials (over \$150,000).

Artwork by Reza Rinei came in next at 1.4 billion rials (about \$40,000).

A selection of 66 artworks went under the hammer at the auction, which was organized by Taraneh Baran Art Gallery.

Photo: Auctioneer Shahram Shaki-ba conducts an auction of calligraphy works at Tehran's Espinas Palace Hotel on September 30, 2016 as employees hold a works by Salar Ahmadian. (Honaronline/Ramona Amirian)

Larijani urges people to trust statistics centre

POLITICS TEHRAN — Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani has emphasized that the information Iranian citizens provide to the Statistical Centre of Iran would remain confidential, Fars reported.

In a meeting with the head of the Statistical Centre of Iran on Saturday, Larijani said the information would not be used for taxation purposes or anything else.

"No organizations would have access to the data that the center gathers. According to the law, the center cannot give this information to different sectors," the parliament speaker pointed out.

He also said that without credible statistics, planning for the future of the country is not possible.

"People should know that if we want to have



a comprehensive plan for targeting unemployment, true and accurate information is needed," he noted.

Larijani said if the statistics are accurate, investments will also be made more carefully.

The top official referred to housing, healthcare and transportation as areas for which the government needs true and accurate information in order to adopt plans and carry out appropriate policies.

A week ago, the first web-based general census was launched in Iran. The general census will last until mid-October, IRIB reported.

The director of the Statistical Centre of Iran has said that some 45 percent of the population have access to the internet, and the new online data gathering system was designed so that people can use the internet to fill out a form which includes 29 questions about their personal information, educational status, marital status, career, etc.

Iran plans to produce 360 tons of saffron in calendar year

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The annual production of saffron in Iran has planned to reach 360 tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), the country's deputy agriculture minister, Mohammad-Ali Tahmasbi, told IRNA on Saturday.

The official put the country's saffron output at 351 tons in the previous calendar year and said that 113.5 tons of the produced saffron valued at \$165 million was exported in the past year.

Iran's worth of saffron exports during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year



(March 20-August 21) rose 5.7 percent compared to the same period of time in the previous year, Gholamreza Miri, the vice chairman of National Iranian Saffron Council, said on September 26.

The country exported \$73 million worth of saffron during the mentioned time, according to Miri.

Esteghlal advances to Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 32

SPORT TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team defeated Malavan Novin in the Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 64 on Saturday.

Ali Ghorbani and Bakhtiar Rahmani scored for Esteghlal in the 7th and 27th minutes respectively. Esteghlal will play Mes Kerman in Round of 32. Esteghlal's arch rival Persepolis was defeated

against second-tier Qashqaei in this stage on penalties and was knocked out of the competition.

The 2016-17 Hazfi Cup is the 30th season of the Iranian football knockout competition. Zob Ahan Isfahan is the defending champion. The final will be played on 23 May 2017.



With civilian drone competition, Iran battles against brain drain

The 26 drone-building teams descended on the polished, manicured technology park 15 miles east of Tehran with the overflowing enthusiasm of school kids preparing for the Science Olympiad.

Their challenge, in a competition sponsored by the fast-growing Digikala Company, Iran's version of Amazon, was to create the best drone for delivering packages.

For the drone builders, the prize that day at Pardis Technology Park, Iran's purpose-built version of Silicon Valley, was 50 million

tomans, or about \$14,300. But for Iran, the goal was much greater: a step toward providing the country's whiz-kid youth with the hope that they have a future in Iran.

The teams assembled their flying contraptions with everything from carbon fiber frames and propellers to homemade radio controls and imaging units bursting with wires. The drones had to carry a 2-kg (4.4 lbs) courier package for 700 meters (765 yards), avoiding obstacles and dropping it gently on one of four bar-code emblazoned targets.

The only casualty was a drone flown by the Amir Kabir University of Technology robotic center that struck a balloon and crashed. But it was flying again within an hour, and became one of three joint winners.

The drone challenge posed by Digikala, which handles more than 90 percent of Iran's online commerce, is similar to the technical problems faced by Amazon, DHL, and others as they seek innovative ways to speed deliveries.

But the competition organizers say the event was about more than

marshaling Iran's brightest young minds to someday bypass Tehran's notorious traffic jams with a fleet of Iran-built commercial drones. It was also about stemming the broader problem of a brain drain, even as Iran's annual legion of university graduates struggles to find jobs.

The "main reason of the contest is to recognize the high potential of youth here," says Babak Moghaddam, the head of innovation at Digikala, as the teams assembled their drones. "Many leave the country." →11

Iran's H1 gas condensate exports up 25% y/y

ECONOMY TEHRAN — d e s k Half-yearly gas condensate exports from Iran's South Pars gas field rose by 25 percent compared to the same period last year, Shana quoted a gas official as saying on Saturday.

According to Masoud Hassani, the managing director of South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC), during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) the company has exported 76 million barrels of gas condensate to the world markets.

The official noted that during the mentioned period, SPGC has sent 1.35 million tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to other countries as well.

According to Iran's custom administration, during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year gas condensate was reported to be the main non-oil export product with a total value of \$3.496 billion.

South Pars field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas and condensate, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.



EDITORIAL

By Hassan Lasjerdi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief

Peres: A war criminal or a peace dove

Shimon Peres has died with a legacy of destruction. Palestinians recall him as a criminal who has blood on his hands.

On one hand he claimed that he is after peace and on the other waged two wars on Gaza.

Some world leaders attended his funeral procession. He is known as the regime's "last remaining founding father".

Some nations condemned their leaders' participation in the funeral.

Bahrainis slammed the House of Khalifah's homage to Peres, by holding a rally.

The demonstrators in the northwestern village of Diraz in Bahrain denounced Foreign Minister Sheikh Khaled bin Ahmed al-Khalifah's message of condolences. They also rejected any normalization of relations with the Tel Aviv regime and expressed solidarity with Palestinians.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas participated in the funeral and offered condolences to Peres's family. And to many people's surprise, he described Peres as a partner in peace! To make the scene more romantic Abbas and Netanyahu shook hands and exchanged brief words during the funeral.

What peace was Abbas referring to is a big question. Actually there was no peace. Under Peres, nearly 4,000 Palestinian lives were lost during two wars launched by Israel between 2007 and 2014.

Some high-profile figures in Ramallah had earlier detested Abbas' designation of Peres as a "brave" partner for peace, saying he was no more than a "war criminal". Many across the globe remember Peres as a "war criminal", especially in light of the 1996 Qana massacre. At least 106 people were killed by Israeli forces in Qana. At the time Peres was Israel's prime minister. An Amnesty International report described the attack on Qana as deliberate.

The Hamas resistance movement also censured Abbas for joining the funeral. Hamas called Peres "the last remaining Israeli official who founded the occupation." →13

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Zarif to appear before Majlis over JCPOA

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is going to appear before the Majlis on Sunday to provide explanations in regard to the JCPOA, the official name for the nuclear deal that Iran signed with the 5+1 group (the U.S., UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany) in July 2015.

In the open session of the day, Zarif will be questioned by parliamentarians about the deal, Fars reported on Saturday.

Iran's diplomacy in the post-JCPOA era will also be subject of discussion.



Rouhani congratulates China on National Day

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday congratulated his Chinese counterpart on the 67th anniversary of the National Day of the People's Republic of China.

In his letter to President Xi Jinping, Rouhani congratulated Chinese nation and government on the occasion and expressed hope that Iran-China relations would improve in all spheres, ISNA reported.

"I hope to experience all-out mutual cooperation which will be in the interest of both sides," Rouhani wrote in his letter.



Bahonar: Principlists not seeking to rival Rouhani

POLITICS TEHRAN — Mohammad Reza Bahonar, the secretary general of the Islamic Society of Engineers, has said principlists are not looking for somebody to stand up against Hassan Rouhani in the next year's presidential election.

Speaking to the Arman newspaper in an interview published on Saturday, Mohammad Reza Bahonar even said that Rouhani is one of 12 people considered to be endorsed by principlists.

He added, "It's a treason to wish for problems to linger in favor of political rivalry... so I personally hope Mr. Rouhani continues to serve."



Iran says to prevent illegal trips to Iraq on Arba'een

POLITICS TEHRAN — The deputy foreign minister for consular affairs said on Saturday that Iranians are required to obtain visa to partake in the November 20 Arba'een rituals in Karbala, Iraq.

Hassan Qashqavi said Iran believed visa was not necessary for the Arba'een rituals but the Iraqi side did not agree, ILNA reported.

Arba'een Headquarters Commander Hossein Zolfaqari also said on Saturday that Tehran's attempts to waive visa for Arba'een have failed.



Female MPs meet families of Mina victims

POLITICS TEHRAN — The members of the women's parliamentary group on Friday evening visited the families of the victims of the 2015 Mina stampede as well as some martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war.

Fatemeh Zolghadr, a group member, told IRNA that the visit was "a show of respect for the bloods of the martyrs."

She underlined that during the visit, the education of the younger generation was stressed as a key role of the next-of-kin of the martyrs.



UN envoy for Lebanon to visit Tehran

POLITICS TEHRAN — The United Nation's special coordinator for Lebanon is scheduled to travel to Tehran on Monday.

During her two-day visit, Sigrid Kaag will meet a number of officials from the Iranian Foreign Ministry, including Deputy Foreign Minister for African and Arab Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Kaag has announced that after Iran, she will possibly travel to Saudi Arabia and Russia as well.

The reason for the trips is to discuss some necessary issues, she has said.

Does Rouhani still appeal to principlists?

POLITICS TEHRAN — As the presidential election in Iran draws near, parties and political figures are narrowing down speculation as to who will run and who will not.

Meanwhile, two scenarios are already certain.

While Ahmadinejad stepped out as the Supreme Leader did not see the prospect of his candidacy as being in the interests of the country, moderate Rouhani has an anticipative confidence to secure a second term with his arguably strong foreign policy.

Taking office in August 2013, Rouhani championed the nuclear deal, reined in inflationary strains, which rocketed to nearly 45 percent during the Ahmadinejad administration, and is seeking re-engagement with the global community.

Having said that, there are still many, including principlist circles who are nurturing an early end to the Rouhani administration, citing a divergent principlist campaign in 2013 as a main reason for Rouhani's victory.

"Rouhani owns his triumph in 2013 to a divided principlist camp," ISNA on Saturday quoted Amir Mohebian, a principlist theorizer, as having said.

According to Mohebian, Rouhani no



longer appeals to principlist minds and an "independent candidate" is gambled on.

"As far as I know, principlists have put aside Rouhani and are looking for an in-

dependent candidate... as principlism has to have its own identity."

But the principlist's comments give rise to a key question: how many qualified faces has the principlist camp in its bag?

"As far as I know, principlists have put aside Rouhani and are looking for an independent candidate... as principlism has to have its own identity," principlist says.

Power is peace: Shamkhani Iran unveils long-range bomber drone

➔ "Undoubtedly, our today's security has resulted from lessons our youths learned from the eight years of sacred defense and now they have reached great achievements in defense area," noted Shamkhani, an IRGC commander during Saddam Hussein's war against Iran.

The top security official added, "Our defensive and offensive power in complicated, multifaceted and based on domestic power and religious teachings."

It has also been proven in the course of modern history that Iran has not used its power for "aggression and expansionism", the security official remarked.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shamkhani said that the axis of resistance has challenged the most sophisticated arsenals in the world, a reference to Syria's resistance against militants who are equipped with modern weaponry and also Hezbollah and



Palestinians' resilience in the face of Israeli repeated invasions.

■ **Turning illegitimate presence into opportunity**
On Saturday the IRGC Aerospace Division unveiled

the production line of a new attack drone, which is similar to the United States' RQ-170 Sentinel spy drone that Iran captured five years ago. The drone, called Saegheh (Thunderbolt), could carry four precision-guided bombs.

"The power of reverse engineering, updating and turning the U.S. captured drones into Iranian products by the IRGC Aerospace Division indicates the ability to turn the U.S. illegitimate presence in the region into an opportunity to increase the power and capability," explained Shamkhani who was defense minister from 1997 to 2005.

Shamkhani also said that Iran's modern equipment and the new generation of drones have provided the country with a power that no "sane enemy" would even think of attacking the country.

He said that the only way to protect the Islamic Revolution and the country is to strengthen military power.

EU stance on judicial issues is 'unconstructive': Iran



POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday denounced EU officials for interfering in Iran's domestic affairs and making "unconstructive" statements about sentences issued by the country's courts.

"Since the human rights talks between Iran and the European Union are to be held in the near future, making such remarks is considered as unconstructive," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Saturday.

The EU had issued a statement against the Iranian judicial system after Narges Mohammadi, an Iranian citizen, was sentenced to 16 years in prison by the court.

Qassemi underlined that such political statements could never improve human rights situation in any country,

saying that the EU must not use human rights excuse for interfering in domestic affairs of other countries.

"Such issues fall on domestic laws and judicial systems of countries," he explained.

Qassemi noted, "Every effort to impose values of certain countries to others, which may have different cultures and customs, is a return to old paradigms in international relations."

The official further said that the EU must refrain from making "unconventional" remarks about the Islamic Republic's judicial processes.

Earlier in August, Judiciary Chief Sadeq Amoli Larijani announced Iran's preparedness to hold talks with European states, and not the U.S., on human rights issues.

Majlis to publish 6-month report on JCPOA implementation



POLITICS TEHRAN — A lawmaker said on Saturday that the Majlis will release its six-month report on implementation of the JCPOA by the end of the current month, which ends on October 21.

Speaking to Mehr news agency, Mojtaba Zonnour, head of the parliament's Nuclear Committee, said, "In order to complete the report, members of National Security and Foreign Policy Committee will visit the Isfahan and Natanz nuclear facilities."

He further said that the exact time of the visit will be announced by the committee in the coming days.

"Since the committee is very busy these days, the preparation of the report has taken more time than expected," he explained.

Under the Islamic Republic's law, the

Foreign Ministry must submit every three months a report on the implementation of the JCPOA to the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee. The committee, for its part, must also publish a report on the issue every six months.

Iran and the 5+1 group (the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany) finalized the text of the JCPOA in Vienna in July 2015.

In July 2015, the UN Security Council turned the JCPOA into an international law by endorsing a resolution, setting the stage for the lifting of the Security Council sanctions against Iran.

The nuclear agreement went into effect in January 2016. The IAEA has issued several statements since January confirming Iran's is abiding by the obligations under the JCPOA.

Iran says accepts no condition for normal ties with Germany

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday that Iran-Germany relations are based on mutual respect and Iran will accept no precondition for a friendly and normal ties with Berlin.

"As we have stressed for many times, relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Germany are based on mutual interests and respect and no precondition is accepted in relations; in addition, we consider mediation of a third side totally un-

ceptable and detrimental to bilateral ties," Qassemi remarked.

His comments came as German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said in an interview published by weekly news magazine Der Spiegel on Friday that Iran could have normal, friendly relations with Germany only when it accepted Israel's right to exist.

Qassemi said that Iran will let no country interfere in its domestic affairs.

He warned Germany of "ill-wishers" who spare no ef-

orts in causing harm to bilateral relations.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran considers defending the Palestinian people's rights as part of its "unwavering" foreign policy and will not abandon supporting the Palestinian cause.

"In a situation that the international terrorism threatens all countries' interests, it is expected that the countries, especially the ones which have been victims of terrorism, seek fighting extremist ideologies seriously," he pointed out.

Russia warns U.S. against 'direct aggression'

Lavrov: U.S. sparing terrorists

Russia has warned that any "direct aggression" by the US against the Syrian government or army would lead to "frightening, tectonic shifts" in the Middle East.

The warning by Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Saturday came after U.S. officials said Washington had begun considering tougher responses to an ongoing Syrian assault on Aleppo, including military options.

Russia has been supporting the Syrian government in its push to take back Aleppo from Takfiri terrorists.

The U.S. is backing what it calls "moderate" militants fighting to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad besides carrying out airstrikes against what it calls ISIL (Daesh) targets.

However, with Syrian advances on Aleppo gaining momentum, U.S. officials have hinted at direct attacks on Syrian troops.

US aircraft recently bombed Syrian army positions in Dayr al-Zawr, killing 83 soldiers. The airstrike, which helped Daesh briefly overrun government positions in the area, was characterized by Washington as unintentional but Syria rejected the allegation.

"How could they (Daesh) know that the Americans are going to attack that position in order to gather their militants to attack right away and to capture it one hour after the strike?" Assad asked during an interview with the Associated Press.

Last week, the Middle East Eye news portal cited a source close to militants as saying that the US was resolved to prevent the fall of Aleppo.



The U.S. State Department has warned it was considering the suspension of "bilateral engagement" in Syria unless Russia took "immediate steps to end the assault on Aleppo."

A U.S.-Russian brokered ceasefire recently fell apart after the American airstrike on Syrian troops.

U.S. sparing terrorists

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused the United States of protecting a terrorist group in Syria in its effort to overthrow the beleaguered

regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

In an interview aired on BBC World News, Lavrov said Washington had vowed to "take as a priority an obligation to separate the opposition" from the former Al-Qaeda affiliate once known as Al-Nusra Front, but that it had not done so.

"We have more and more reasons to believe that from the very beginning the plan was to spare Nusra and to keep it just in case for Plan B or stage two, when it would be time to change the regime,"

Lavrov said.

Moscow has repeatedly accused the U.S. of failing on its commitment to persuade rebel forces to distance themselves from extremist groups such as Al-Nusra, which changed its name to Fateh al-Sham Front in July after renouncing its ties to Al-Qaeda.

A short-lived truce brokered by Moscow and Washington earlier this month could have led the two countries to coordinate strikes against extremists, but the deal fell apart as both sides blamed each other for its failure.

Moscow has been accused of indiscriminately bombing Aleppo's opposition-controlled east as it helps an assault currently being conducted by Syrian government troops to capture all of the country's second city.

The United Nations has warned that a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding in Aleppo unlike any witnessed so far in Syria's five-year war, which has claimed more than 300,000 lives.

Russia has said it would continue its Syrian bombing campaign in spite of U.S. warnings that Washington would suspend talks unless Moscow stopped its assault on Aleppo.

In a phone call with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Friday, Lavrov stressed Moscow's "readiness to continue to consider additional possibilities" to work with the United States on normalizing the situation in Aleppo, Russia's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Lavrov also stressed Russia "remains open for dialogue with the United States on all key issues" regarding Syria, the statement said.

(Source: agencies)

Yemeni forces destroy Emirati military vessel

A military source said Ansarullah fighters and allied army forces launched rockets at an HSV-2 Swift hybrid catamaran operated by the Emirati navy off the shores of the Red Sea port city of Mokha early on Saturday, al-Masirah television reported.

The catamaran was reportedly a high-speed logistical ship capable of locating mines, controlling military operations and transporting troops and equipment. The vessel formerly belonged to the US navy, al-Masirah said.

Ansarullah fighters working in cooperation with the Yemeni army have so far destroyed several hostile warships and boats.

On October 10, 2015, Yemeni army forces destroyed a Saudi warship in a missile attack in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. That development came only three days after Yemeni forces managed to destroy another Saudi vessel in the area.

Emirati casualties
The United Arab Emirates has been suffering heavy casualties in Yemen, where Ansarullah fighters and allied military units have been fighting back the Saudi-led invaders.

On Jun 13, an Emirati military helicopter crashed near the al-Buraieq coast of the southern Yemeni port city of Aden, killing its two pilots.

On March 14, two Emirati pilots died when their Mirage fighter jet crashed



while conducting military operations in the same Yemeni district.

A senior Emirati military commander and three Saudi-backed foreign mercenaries had been killed in an attack by Yemeni forces in the Dhubab district of the southwestern province of Ta'izz two months earlier.

The biggest casualties, however, came last September, when the UAE confirmed that at least 52 of its soldiers had been killed in a barrage of missiles fired by Yemeni forces at Saudi-led foreign troopers in the central Ma'rib Province. At least 70 soldiers were also injured in the missile attack.

The official Saudi Press Agency, meanwhile, reported the death of one of its border guards, who was killed after a mortar shell fell on the southwestern border region of Jizan in Saudi Arabia from the direction of Yemen on Thursday.

In a separate development, a massive bombing reportedly targeted the Craiter district in the southwestern Yemeni province of Aden, killing two people and injuring three others.

(Source: al-Masirah)

Jordanians decry deal to import Israeli natural gas

Hundreds of Jordanians have taken part in a demonstration in the center of Amman in protest against a deal signed this week to import natural gas from Israel.

Demonstrators carried banners, reading: "No to financing the Zionist entity from the pockets of Jordanian citizens" and "No to gas imports from the Zionist enemy".

The protest was called by trade unions and political parties opposed to the 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, half the population of which is of Palestinian origin.

"Gas from the Zionists is a disgrace," the demonstrators chanted.

A U.S.-led consortium leading the development of Israel's offshore gas reserves announced the signing on Monday of a deal to sell natural gas from its Leviathan field to Jordan.

U.S. firm Noble Energy, the lead partner, said the contract with the National Electric Power Company of Jordan (NEPCO) was for 8.5 million cubic metres per day over a 15-year term.

It includes an option to purchase a further 50 million cubic feet, up to a total of 350 million daily.

Friday's protests against the gas deal are likely to put pressure on a government facing multiple domestic challenges, notably in security matters.

Writer's killing

The demonstration in Amman came just a day after King Abdullah II visited



the home village of Nahed Hattar to pay condolences to the Christian writer's family, following his murder on Sunday outside a court.

Abdullah "strongly condemned this heinous crime" which was "alien to our [Jordanian] culture", the royal palace said in a statement.

On the visit to the Christian village of Al-Fuhais, 20km northwest of Amman, Abdullah, who was accompanied by Hani al-Malki, the prime minister, said Jordan's Muslims and minority Christians were united against "extremism, violence and bigotry".

Hattar, 56, was shot dead by a bearded assailant on the steps of an Amman court where he was on trial for allegedly insulting Islam with a cartoon he shared on social media.

Hattar's family accused the authorities of failing to protect the writer despite warnings that his life had been under threat. The assailant, who surrendered to police at the scene, has been charged with premeditated murder, terrorism and possession of an illegal firearm.

If convicted, the suspect could face the death penalty. (Source: Al Jazeera)

Famine killing tens of thousands in Boko Haram region: UN

Tens of thousands of people are dying of hunger in the area of west Africa where Boko Haram militants are active, the UN humanitarian coordinator for the region, told a news conference.

About 65,000 people are in a "catastrophe" or "phase 5" situation, according to a food security assessment by the IPC, the recognized classification system on declaring famines.

Phase 5 applies when, even with humanitarian assistance, "starvation, death and destitution" are evident.

"The tragedy of using the F word is that when you apply it it's too late," said Toby Lanzer, who has also worked in South Sudan, Darfur and Chechnya.

Boko Haram militants have killed about 15,000 people and displaced more than 2 million in a seven-year insurgency and they still launch deadly attacks despite having been pushed out of the vast swathes of territory they controlled in 2014.

"This is the first time I've come across people talking about phase 5. The reason for that was simply a lack of access. We couldn't get to places," Lanzer said.

"Because of the insecurity sown almost exclusively by



Boko Haram, people have missed three planting seasons."

Asked if it was safe to assume that tens of thousands of people were dying, Lanzer said: "It's not what we're assuming, it's what the IPC states. And I back that number.

"I can tell you from my first trip outside (the regional

capital) Maiduguri, I had never gone to places that had adults who were so depleted of energy that they could barely walk."

One aid agency reported back from the Nigerian town of Bama that its staff had counted the graves of about 430 children who had died of hunger in the past few weeks, Lanzer said.

With millions more short of food in northern Nigerian and regions of the adjoining countries, the situation could get much worse, and could turn into the "biggest crisis facing any of us anywhere", he said.

"We're now talking about 568,000 across the Lake Chad basin who are severely malnourished, 400,000 of them are in the northeast of Nigeria. We know that over the next 12 months, 75,000, maybe as many as 80,000, children will die in the northeast of Nigeria, unless we can reach them with specialized therapeutic food," Lanzer said.

Across the Lake Chad region, more than 6 million people are described as "severely food insecure", including 4.5 million in Nigeria, he said.

(Source: AFP)

German government believes Trump would ravage U.S. economy: Spiegel

Germany's economy ministry believes a Donald Trump presidency would severely damage the U.S. economy, according to an internal memorandum reported by Der Spiegel magazine on Saturday.

The ministry expects "shrinking gross domestic product, fewer jobs and higher unemployment," in the United States if the Republican candidate were to implement his campaign pledges, the magazine cited the memo as saying.

Trump, a billionaire businessman seeking his first public office, has proposed tax cuts worth \$4.4 trillion and wants to curb government regulation and take a tougher stance on negotiating trade deals.

He says his economic plan would produce annual economic growth of 3.5 percent and create 25 million jobs over a decade. But some economists have questioned the assumptions underpinning the plan.

Trump's pledges are "not feasible", Spiegel cited the memorandum as saying. Moreover, the plans would violate international or U.S. law and could be "no basis for a realistic economic policy."

A spokeswoman for the German Economy Ministry declined to comment on the Spiegel report.

Last month, economic research firm Oxford Economics projected the U.S. economy could be \$1 trillion smaller than otherwise expected in 2021 if Trump becomes president.

Trump faces Democrat Hillary Clinton in the Nov. 8 election. (Source: DPA)

India, Pakistan soldiers exchange fire across frontier SAARC summit postponed amid rising Pakistani-Indian tensions

India and Pakistan exchanged fire across their de facto border in the Kashmir region on Saturday, in minor skirmishes that come at a time of heightened tension between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

Army officers from both countries blamed each other for starting the firing, which took place in the morning along the so-called "Line of Control" dividing them in the disputed Himalayan region. No casualties were reported.

The exchange came two days after New Delhi said Indian troops had crossed into Pakistan's side of Kashmir and killed suspected militants in a "surgical strike", an operation Pakistan says never took place.

That was in response to an attack last month on an army base in India-controlled Kashmir that killed 19 soldiers and which New Delhi blamed on militants who crossed from Pakistan. Islamabad denied any involvement.

"Pakistani troops today violated (the) ceasefire along Paltanwala sector of Akhnoor area of Jammu," a senior Indian army officer said on Saturday.

"They targeted five of our posts (with) small arms and we also responded and fired back. However, there was no damage."

An official from the Pakistani army said its troops had "befittingly responded to Indian unprovoked firing."

The two countries have fought two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947 over Kashmir. Both claim the former princely state in full.

Regional summit postponed

Meanwhile, a summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) leaders set for Islamabad in November has been postponed indefinitely, the Pakistani government said, amid rising tension between arch-rivals India and Pakistan.

India's foreign ministry had announced on Tuesday that it would skip the meeting, blaming Pakistan for a deadly assault this month on an army base in the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir. Pakistan denies the accusations.

India's decision was followed by Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan expressing their "inability" to attend.

"Pakistan depletes India's decision to impede the SAARC process by not attending the 19th SAARC Summit at Islamabad on 9-10 November 2016," the foreign office said in a statement.

"The spirit of the SAARC Charter is violated when a member state casts the shadow of its bilateral problems on the multilateral forum for regional cooperation."

A spokesman for India's foreign ministry said on Twitter: "We note Pakistan's decision to postpone SAARC summit. They've been compelled to recognize the regional sentiment against terrorism."

India said on Thursday that it had sent troops across its disputed border in Kashmir to kill men preparing to enter its territory and attack cities.

Pakistan has rejected Indian claims of "surgical strikes" into its territory and maintained that India fired unprovoked from its side of the heavily militarized frontier in Kashmir, killing two soldiers.

This area has been the flashpoint for two of three wars between the nuclear-armed neighbors since 1947.

India's announcement of the raid on Thursday raised the possibility of military escalation that could wreck a 2003 Kashmir ceasefire.

India evacuated more than 10,000 villagers living near the border, and ordered security forces to upgrade surveillance along the frontier in Jammu and Kashmir state, part of the two countries' 3,300-km (2,100 miles) boundary.

Hundreds of villages were being cleared along a 15 km (9 mile) strip in the lowland region of Jammu and further north on the Line of Control in the Himalayan mountains of Kashmir.

Modi's government has been struggling to contain protests on the streets of Kashmir, where more than 80 civilians have been killed and thousands wounded in the last 10 weeks after a young separatist militant was killed by Indian security forces.

(Source: agencies)

Gas pipeline TAP installs first pipes in Albania

The Trans Adriatic Pipeline has started building its gas pipeline in Albania.

The TAP on Friday started putting the first of its 13,000 pipes along 215 kilometers (133 miles) in Albania.

The pipeline runs 878 kilometers (545 miles) long from the Shah Deniz field in Azerbaijan to Turkey, then Greece, then goes up to 1,800 meters (5,900 feet) high in Albania and 820 meters (2,690 feet) deep under the Adriatic Sea to southern Italy.

The first gas deliveries to Europe are expected in 2020.

TAP is a joint project by Britain's BP, Azerbaijan's SOCAR, Italy's Snam, Belgium's Fluxys, Spain's Enagas and Switzerland's Axpo.

It's the most western of three sections of the Southern Gas Corridor — a 3,500-kilometer (2,175-mile) chain of pipelines intended to deliver natural gas from Azerbaijan to Europe.

(Source: AP)

Russia's Lukoil looks to sign 2 oilfield agreements with Iran in fall 2017

Russia's Lukoil Company plans to sign agreements with Iran on two oil fields in the fall of 2017, the company's president Vagit Alekperov said Friday.



Alekperov said earlier this month that technical studies over the Ab Teymour and Mansouri fields in southwestern Iran would be presented to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in the near future.

"We hope that legislation will be approved before the end of the year, somewhere in October. We will present basic principles in October-November and will be ready to discuss a specific contract by May. The expected contract signing is October-November of next year," Alekperov said at the Sochi-2016 forum.

He estimated that each of the fields contained more than one billion metric tons of recoverable oil reserves.

(Source: Sputnik)

Stock-market 'weather report' has something for bulls and bears

By ROBERT BITTIS

There are endless analogies between the stock market and the weather. Both are difficult to predict, go through regularly changing conditions, and require different methods of preparation depending on those conditions. A couple of years ago, my firm created the "Investment Climate Indicator" (ICI), a collection of what we consider to be the most important gauges of the market's health. We rolled them up into a single indicator, and track that indicator monthly. The goal is to size up where the stock market is currently positioned within the longer-term cycle. Each month we publish the Investment Climate Report which features the ICI and our corresponding thoughts about the market environment.

We wanted to put some historical perspective around it, so this past summer we decided to back-test the ICI back to 1994. That is around the time at which I think the modern investment era started, thanks to financial television, the internet, and the increasing presence of high-frequency traders and hedge funds on market movements. We did this research to see if it could truly help us determine whether our portfolios should be wearing sunglasses, a windbreaker, galoshes or snow boots.

We distinguished between four distinct types of market conditions: Sunny, Partly Sunny, Overcast, and Stormy. Each one has its own personality, and goes well beyond the basic "bull market/bear market" characterizations we have all heard and spoken about.

We liked what we learned from the study so much that we decided to produce a short whitepaper on it. Here is one of the key pictures from the study, showing how ICI conditions have changed since 1994 to the present time.

Here is a summary of what we concluded:

1. The market spends the vast majority of its time in the Sunny zone.
2. As with the weather, Sunny periods eventually weaken into Partly Sunny conditions, then Overcast, and finally become Stormy. Along the way, some investors become arrogant and complacent, and leave themselves open to getting caught in the market "storm."
3. The ICI's current message is that the worst of this market cycle is likely not imminent. We are currently in the Partly Sunny stage, after the ICI pulled itself back from the brink of the Overcast range at the start of this year.
4. Partly Sunny conditions mean two things:
 - The market's condition is gradually getting worse. Markets don't go back to Sunny from Partly Sunny until they have completed the bad part of the cycle.
 - We can still have a correction of 10 percent or so, or a fast "crash" that lasts days, weeks or even a few months, even before the ICI shifts toward Overcast and then to Stormy.
5. This indicator, as any other, is not foolproof. It is just one more piece of evidence we are mindful of when setting investment strategy. However, it strengthens my already strong belief that long-short investing can be a very helpful strategy for those who are retired or approaching retirement.

(Source: Market Watch)

Iran-Germany business commission to meet on Monday

German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, leading a 100-member delegation, will attend Iran-Germany business commission in Tehran on Monday and he also plans to take part in some meetings to be held in the building of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Shana reported on Saturday.

The German minister says the commission will meet for the first time in 15 years, and forecasts concrete business deals will be announced, Reuters reported on Friday.

He is making his second visit to Tehran since the Islamic Republic reached a deal with world powers in July last year to lift economic sanctions imposed on Iran over its nuclear program, in return for curbs on its nuclear activities.

Industrial giant Siemens AG and automaker Daimler will be among the first German firms to benefit from opportunities in Iran, but they are proceeding carefully and only after legal reviews.



Exports to Iran jumped 15 percent in the first half of the year to 1.13 billion euros and could reach 4 billion euros in the full year, said Michael Tockuss, head of the Hamburg-based German-

Iranian Chamber of Commerce.

One big issue for small- and medium-sized firms is the inability to secure letters of credit for shipments of goods, said Werner Schroepfel, man-

aging director of IMO GmbH, which exports components for wind energy facilities in Iran.

Schroepfel's firm is now using third parties to do business in Iran, but hopes the process can be streamlined so it can take part in an expected boom in Iran's wind energy sector.

The Europaeische-Iranische Handelsbank AG in Hamburg offers such instruments already, but Germany's two biggest banks, Commerzbank AG and Deutsche Bank AG said they remain cautious.

Michael Sabet, an Iranian-German business executive whose company imports tons of saffron from Iran, said more banks are ready to provide letters of credit which he said could save up to 3 percent of the cost of a deal.

"The situation is easing," he said. "We used to have to wait three to four months to get approval. Nowadays it's just a phone call and some documents to exchange and that's it."

(Source: agencies)

IRAN SEA FEX operational in Tehran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's Fisheries, Aquaculture and Fishery Industry Exhibition (IRAN SEA FEX 2016) became operational in Tehran's Milad Tower on Saturday, IRIB news reported.

Some 80 domestic companies as well as 15 foreign ones from Norway, France, China, South Korea, the Netherlands, Italy, the United States, Denmark, and Turkey are participating in the three-day exhibition.

As reported, the exposition was inaugurated in the pres-



ence of Iranian Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojjati, the head of Iran's Fisheries Organization, Norwegian Minister of Fisheries Per Sandberg, and a group of commercial attachés and ambassadors.

Tehran, Oslo ink 13 co-op deals on fishery

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran and Norway on Saturday signed 13 deals on fishery cooperation, Tasnim news agency reported.

The deals inked by Iranian Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojjati and Norwegian Minister of Fisheries Per Sandberg include cooperation between the two countries companies on the supply of equipment and build-

ing infrastructures for the farming of 20,000 tons of fishes.

Signing of the mentioned deals came on the sidelines of Iran's Fisheries, Aquaculture and Fishery Industry Exhibition (IRAN SEA FEX 2016) which was inaugurated in Tehran on Saturday and will run until Monday.

Hojjati mentioned holding this exhibition and signing these deals a turning point in the Iran's fishery sector.

India Essar's August oil imports from Iran rise 33.6%

Essar Oil, the top Indian buyer of Iranian crude, imported about 33.6 percent more oil from Iran in August compared to July, according to tanker arrival data obtained from trade sources and ship-tracking services on the Thomson Reuters terminal.

Essar shipped in about 248,300 barrels per day (bpd) of oil from Iran last month compared to 109,300 bpd a year ago, the data showed.

Essar's oil imports from Iran averaged about 170,200 bpd in the first eight months of 2016 compared with 104,400 bpd in the previous year, when the pri-



vate refiner had to cut imports under pressure from western sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, the data showed.

Iran's share in overall imports by Essar Oil in the January-August period rose to about 48 percent from about 30 percent in the year-ago period. (Source: Reuters)

Iran, Hungary finalize 1mb oil deal: official

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran has finalized the deal to sell one million barrels of crude oil to Hungary, Shana quoted Mohsen Qamsari, the director for international affairs of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), as saying on Saturday.

"The shipment has been scheduled for the upcoming month" he said.

According to Qamsari, talks to sell oil to Hungary began in the final months of the last Iranian calendar year (which ended on March 19, 2016).

The official earlier said that Iran has signed agreements to sell crude to European countries like France, Spain, Italy, Poland and Greece and, "negotiations with other European countries are underway".

Indonesia, Iran considering cooperation in development of aircraft industry

JAKARTA (ANTARA News) — Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran are studying possibility of cooperation in the development of civil aircraft industry as currently Iran needs to renew a large number of its aircraft for civil aviation service.

The Policy Study and Development Body (BPPK) of the Foreign Ministry said here on Friday, PT Dirgantara Indonesia (PTDI) could study cooperation with the Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA).

The cooperation possibility was an important point in the economic discussion during the visit of an Iranian government delegation to the state-owned aircraft factory PTDI in Bandung on Thursday.

The visit by the Iranian delegation is part of the activities of 5th "Policy Research Consultation" (PRC) of Indonesia-Iran, between BPPK and the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), a think tank of the Iranian Foreign Ministry held by Asia Africa Museum in Bandung.

The Iranian delegates included Iranian Ambassador to Indonesia Valiollah Mohammadi and Vice President of IPIS Rasoul Mousavi.



PRC is an annual activity of BPPK and IPIS to exchange views and information about position and foreign policy of the two countries - bilaterally, regionally and internationally.

BPPK said after the implementation of "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" (JCPOA) on 16 January 2016, followed with the lifting of international economic sanction on Iran, that country needs many units of aircraft for civil aviation.

The lifting of the economic sanctions on Iran opened

an opportunity for Indonesia to develop closer cooperation with Iran, an oil rich country with a population of 80 million.

Large purchase of aircraft by Iran has been widely reported by international mass media. Iran was reported signing a contract for the purchase of 100 units of Boeing aircraft at a price of \$17 billion in September 2016, and 118 units of Airbus aircraft valued at \$25 billion in January, 2016.

The U.S. finance ministry allowed the purchases by phases.

Iran also is studying purchase of aircraft from the Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer.

Technology and Development Director of PTDI, Andi Alisjahbana, said PTDI, which already has international reputation as an aircraft maker has a big opportunity to sell aircraft to Iran.

Propeller aircraft products of PTDI are suitable for domestic flights, Andi said.

So far, PTDI has exported aircraft to various countries including Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea, Pakistan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Venezuela.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Petronas weighs sale to exit \$27b Canada LNG project

Malaysian state oil firm Petroliaam Nasional Bhd is considering selling its majority stake in a \$27 billion Canadian liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant, three people familiar with the matter said this week.

Petronas, as the company is known, said in a statement on Saturday that it "categorically denied" the Reuters report on Friday that the company is considering the stake sale.

Petronas is weighing options for the project as a more than 50 percent slide in crude oil prices since the middle of 2014 has hit the group's profits and prompted cuts to capital expenditure and jobs.



Ireland at risk of another banking disaster

One of the Central Bank's most senior officials has warned that Ireland is at risk of repeating the catastrophic economic mistakes of the past less than a decade after the country was cast into financial ruin writes Peter O'Dwyer.

In a series of pointed remarks, Central Bank director of credit institutions supervision Ed Sibley warned that Ireland must, at all costs, remember the lessons learned since 2008 but added that he feared they are already being forgotten.

He further admonished Irish banks for failing to meet targets set by the Central Bank, as well as for showing signs of returning to a toxic culture of bad lending and dragging their feet in finding solutions for thousands of mortgage holders in arrears.



Volkswagen will pay \$1.21b to settle U.S. dealer claims

Volkswagen AG confirmed late Friday it will make \$1.21 billion in payments to 652 U.S. brand dealers as part of its \$16.5 billion diesel emissions settlement to date.

VW's dealers will receive an average of \$1.85 million each on average over 18 months under the settlement that was first announced in principle in August.

Separately, the U.S. Justice Department, Federal Trade Commission and lawyers for owners of 475,000 polluting diesel cars filed legal papers late Friday asking a federal judge to grant final approval to buy-back offers and diesel remediation efforts at an Oct. 18 court hearing.

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Plans to repatriate 3 million Afghan refugees are dangerous and misguided

By Jamil Danish

Europe and Pakistan's proposals to send millions of people back to Afghanistan will cause mayhem in an already fragile country.

For Afghan refugees such as me, we are now entering a perfect storm. Europe wants to make aid to our country contingent on its acceptance of at least 80,000 deported asylum seekers who arrived on the continent last year. Simultaneously, Pakistan – the country that houses more expatriate Afghans than any other – plans to repatriate the 3 million Afghans who have sought refuge there since 1978. The former face reprisals from the extremists from whom they fled. The latter must head for a country where most of them have never even set foot.

Three separate crises

All this will create or worsen three separate crises. The European asylum system might have to bend its own rules to send people back to a war zone, which would set a bad example to other countries – not least Pakistan. It will also greatly affect refugees already in Europe – people in similar situations to me.

I am an Afghan refugee living in the UK. Thankfully I am now a legal resident here – but if I were sent back to Afghanistan, I would risk being killed by the militias that forced me to flee in the first place. And then there are the Afghans currently in Pakistan. Tens of thousands of these people are second- or third-generation immigrants who were born and raised in Pakistan. These refugees made Pakistan their home, started businesses, went to college. For most of them, Afghanistan is a foreign country.

It could also spark crisis in Afghanistan itself. The return of more than 3 million people would cause mayhem in an already fragile country. It would stretch limited resources, increase ethnic and religious tensions and exacerbate the violence that is already forcing many people from their homes. According to a recent report by the Afghan government's Independent Directorate of Local Governance, over 50% of the country's 384 districts face some threat of violence.

The return of millions more people can only make this situation worse – and cause yet another wave of refugees to flee their homes. In trying to contain one refugee crisis, Europe and Pakistan are about to create another. There are no quick fixes, and it is foolish to think otherwise.

A bit of context: in historic terms, Afghanistan is the world's top exporter of refugees. Together, the communist revolution in 1978 and the Soviet invasion in 1979 sent 5 million refugees to Pakistan and 3 million to Iran.

→13

By Wesley Pruden

Throwing a stone at Saudi Arabia, where stoning women is the national sport, is great fun, and nobody deserves an occasional stoning like the Saudis, just to let the king and his legion of princes know how it feels.

They're feeling the pain inflicted by Congress with the passage of legislation enabling the families of 9/11 to sue the Saudi government in American courts for damages, and they'll soon be at the mercy of American trial lawyers. They can expect more pain.

Barack Obama can feel the pain, too. Feeling the pain of others is something of a presidential ritual now, since Bill Clinton first popularized the idea. Only four months before the happy day that President Obama is "out of here," he felt the sting of the first override of a veto, and the vote was neither close nor even respectable — 97 to 1 in the Senate and 348 to 77 in the House of Representatives.

The president first sent his press agent out to express his disappointment. "I would venture to say that this is the single most embarrassing thing that the United States has done, possibly, since 1983," said Josh Earnest, who has apparently been holding something embarrassing for 33 years.

Later in the day, the president, perhaps realizing that his anger over the veto could be seen as just more of his pandering to the Islamic world, stepped up the firepower of his disappointment. "The concern that I've had has nothing to do with Saudi Arabia per se or my sympathy for 9/11 families," he told CNN News, "it has to do with me not wanting a situation in which we're suddenly exposed to liabilities for all the work that we're doing all around the world, and suddenly finding ourselves subject to the private lawsuits in courts where we don't even know, exactly, whether they're on the up and up, in some cases.

"So this is a dangerous precedent and it's an example of why sometimes you have to do what's hard. And frankly, I wish Congress had done what's hard. I didn't expect it, because if you're perceived as voting against 9/11 families before an election, not surprisingly, that's a hard vote for people to take. But it would have been the right thing to do."

Unpopular presidency

The president even has a point, but at

Rough justice for Obama and the Saudis



"I would venture to say that this is the single most embarrassing thing that the United States has done, possibly, since 1983," said Josh Earnest.

the end of an unpopular presidency he can't expect Republican senators, whom he has treated as if they were something on the bottom of his shoe, to fall in line now to do "the right thing" to help him. He'll twist slowly, slowly in the wind for a little while. That's always a delicious sight for an angry senator.

The argument that there's no hard proof that the Saudi government was complicit in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, is irrelevant. The line between mosque and state in the Islamic world, particularly in Saudi Arabia, is so thin and dim as to be invisible. One author likens examining the al-Saud dynasty at work to watching a black widow spider snare its prey.

President Obama's most persuasive point is that the legislation enabling Americans to sue Saudi Arabia breaks long-held tradition and takes the right and responsibility for "consequential decisions" away from presidents and conveys them to the courts and private litigants — in effect, to trial lawyers.

Indeed, observes The Wall Street Journal, "Democrats want another income stream for their trial-lawyer campaign funders, while Republicans stampeded because no one wants to be seen as defending Saudi Arabia in an election year."

The legislation sets no limits on the operating room for the lawyers and the 9/11 families, and some of the lawyers will no doubt get rich. Some of the families might

even collect something, too, though trial lawyers learn early how to limit what they must share with clients.

The Saudis, who have the best lawyers money can buy, are expected to liquidate some of their holdings in the United States to prevent their becoming hostage to friendly courts and juries out to punish the Saudis.

All but one of the men who flew American airliners into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a bean field in Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001, were Saudi-born Muslims. Making the Saudi government pay up is a rough justice, but rough justice is something the king and his many princes can readily understand.

(Source: The Washington Times)

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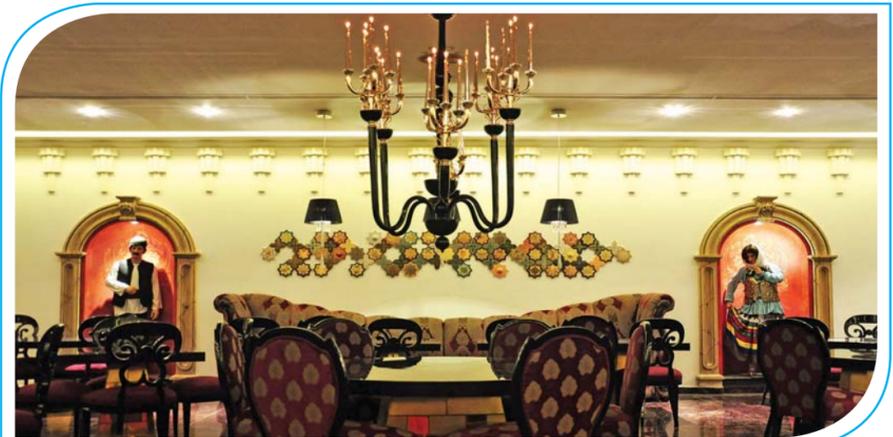
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The devil's advocates in region

By Lachin Rezaian

Since March 26, 2015, Saudi Arabia has led a Western-backed coalition that has rained bombs down on Yemen, claiming the lives of thousands of civilians including defenseless and innocent women and children.

Saudi Arabia invaded Bahrain amid Islamic Awakening or Arab Spring protests in 2010 and 2011 to suppress peaceful and legal protests that were going on there. It has attacked Yemen who has been seeking to have self-determination in terms of who is governing them, rather than a puppet who is appointed by Riyadh.

The blistering assaults against Yemen has been repeatedly condemned in the strongest possible terms by regional and Western countries, top United Nations officials, U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC), Human Rights Watch and other international NGOs across the world, however, their opposition and condemnations were only on paper and have never been a strategy to prevent the country from raising atrocities in impoverished Yemen, putting the credibility of the U.N. Human Rights Council at stake.

Saudi Arabia has even blocked attempts to create an international inquiry which is a betrayal of the people of Yemen who have suffered so much during this conflict. A fully independent international enquiry is the least the people of Yemen deserve.

Instead, Saudi Arabia and its allies, created a national commission of inquiry in Yemen, which is being carried out by the Saudi-backed government of former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who fled to Saudi Arabia when the war began.

The commission was deemed toothless, due to its failure after nine months to credibly investigate allegations of war crimes and other serious violations.

U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon blacklisted Saudi-led coalition for killing children in Yemen in May. After the report was released, Ban's office was bombarded with calls from the Persian Gulf Arab foreign ministers, as well as ministers from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to remove the regime's name from the list of states and armed groups that have violated the human rights of children.

In June, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch condemned the U.S.-backed Saudi regime's breaching of rights, calling on the United Nations General Assembly to immediately suspend Saudi

Arabia from the Human Rights Council membership over its "gross and systematic violations of human rights abroad and at home. HRW has documented Saudi Arabia of repeatedly using internationally banned cluster munitions in civilian areas; in 19 different attacks, they have used at least six different types of cluster bombs, which were made in the U.S., UK and Brazil.

Riyadh threatened in early June to cut Palestinian aid and funds to other U.N. programs if the agency keeps the country's name as children right abuser, a threat which made Ban to drop Saudi Arabia from its annual blacklist, only one week after it announced the blacklisting of the regime. Ban calls his decision the most painful and difficult due to the fact that millions of other children likely would suffer if funding for U.N. programs was cut off.

Accusing Ban of giving in to political manipulation by the kingdom, dozens of prominent human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Oxfam, wrote a letter and urged United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon to put Saudi Arabia back on a blacklist for overwhelmingly violating children's rights in Yemen.

"The evidence of grave violations against children in Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition is overwhelming," reads the letter.

They said the U.N. chief's decision undermined an invaluable tool in efforts to curb violations against children in armed conflict.

Increasing attacks against civilians in Yemen after a total of 180 civilians were

killed in one month, raising the death toll to nearly 4,000 since the conflict began in March 2015, and the rise in the number of attacks against civilian facilities including hospitals, markets, and places of worship, has raised concerns among human rights activists across the world and among regional countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran which has played a key role in resolution of regional issues.

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation led by Saudi regime has repeatedly condemned Iran for what it called supporting terrorism and meddling in the affairs of other countries, the message which fuels division in the Islamic community.

The history proves that Iran has played a constructive role for good of the region. It

has military advisory presence in Syria and Iraq at the request of the Damascus and Baghdad government fighting terrorism.

When ISIL emerged many countries were slow to offer any assistance, however, Iran made a number of requests to countries asking for assistance and was the first which sent military advisers to train the depleted Iraqi army and the Kurdish forces.

While Iran is portrayed in Western and

it comes to politics, making money is what comes at the top of the agenda, it doesn't matter whether civilians are being killed with the weapons the West or the U.S. helped provide to another country.

Britain's foreign policy is devoted towards suppressing any form of democracy in the Middle East. And now, in the case of Yemen and despite all the evidence for crimes and suppression that has been gathered in terms of what has been going on, the UK government continues its policies towards Saudi regime.

Historically, the UK government pry into other countries affairs like Iraq, Yemen and Libya under the guise of "humanitarian crisis", overthrow their governments, killing their rulers, leaving a power vacuum, enabling Al Qaeda and ISIL to take a stronghold.

Does the UK Government really care? Only when it suits them or there's econom-

ic interests involved. They are notorious for hypocrisy!

It is clear that Saudi war in Yemen has helped British economy through privileged access to cheap oil, sale of weapons in billions of dollars and other economic and trade agreements.

The UK government's claims over support for human rights and democracy is a

less conduct of Saudi officials regarding the 2015 Hajj tragedy.

Saudi regime has decided not to accept responsibility and not to pay damages and compensation to countries including Iran whose citizens were killed or were injured during the Mina incident.

It also adopted an offensive approach towards those calling on it to account.

The regime is not alone; so-called human rights advocate, the UK, supports crimes of Saudi Arabia in Yemen. British support for Saudi Arabia's warmongering policies in Yemen is not a random issue; behind the support, definitely lies economic and power interests.

Saudi money is a key incentive for the UK and other allies to back Saudi friends. When

funny excuse for providing support for the regimes that are repressing and slaughtering the people of Yemen and Bahrain.

Recently, Britain, accused of blocking EU efforts to set up an inquiry into Saudi Arabia's actions in the country, dismissed facts that the reported bombing of international hospitals, schools and wedding parties by the autocracy amount to war crimes.

They have repeatedly claimed that Saudi Arabia is best placed to investigate its own crimes; Saudi Arabian investigations into its own actions have thus far absolved itself of any wrongdoings.

UK government is trying to cover up the Saudi Arabian military's flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

It even continued military support for the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen after human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT), wrote a letter to the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC), saying British-made munitions were responsible for the rising civilian death toll in Yemen's brutal war. They also called on UK Prime Minister Theresa May and Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson to end the arms sales and put a stop to the uncritical support that the UK provides for the Saudi regime.

Saudi regime has repeatedly bribed Western countries, including the UK, claiming that their support was in their own interest to prevent Yemen falling into the hands of terrorists.

In early September, Adel al-Jubeir, the Saudi Foreign Minister, speaking to the Telegraph, warned if the UK suspends arms sales, there might be even higher risks of terrorism spreading. A statement which seems more to be a threat from a country who has a dark history of nurturing terrorism and extremist ideology. Al-Jubeir on one hand threatens the United Kingdom that if London retreats from supporting Riyadh's invasion of Yemen, it would see Wahhabi affiliate terrorists committing terrorist acts in the European country. And, meanwhile, on the other hand, tries to bribe London by promising billions of dollars of investments

after Brexit.

In fact, the West is willing to be bribed and fooled by a rich country. They pretend to be helping fight against terrorism, however, they promote the ever-growing terrorist groups like ISIL, Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra Front and reversing advances other peace-making countries, including Iran, make to suppress the terrorists and extremists doing atrocities

in the region or Western countries.

Saudi Arabia is currently the UK's largest arms export market. The British addiction to money is encouraging it to give billions pounds worth of weaponry to Saudi Arabia. Actually, arms sales to the country breach British and European weapons export laws.

Britain's Committee on Arms Exports Control, comprising 16 MPs from four parties, urged British government to avoid its sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia since they had been used to violate international law, which is suppressed by the government saying it has not seen evidence of Saudi war crimes.

Anger over the Saudi-led campaign and the United States role in the war is also growing in U.S. Congress. In April, a bipartisan group of American lawmakers, representatives Ted Lieu of California, Ted Yoho of Florida, John Conyers of Michigan and Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, wrote a letter asking President Obama to withdraw his request for Congressional approval for a \$1.15 billion sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia amid the Riyadh regime's crimes against civilians in Yemen.

They raised concerns that the actions of the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen are as reprehensible as they are illegal. The multiple, repeated airstrikes on civilians look like war crimes, they warned.

The \$1.15 billion deal for weaponry to Saudi Arabia, including over 150 Abrams tanks, reveals more than ever, the blood of thousands of innocent Yemenis dripping from American hands.

The Obama administration has already approved more than \$100 billion in arms sales to the kingdom; however after a year and a half, the new sale will definitely prove Washington's involvement in a deadly war that the White House has kept largely quiet about.

Obama's pretended distaste for regional proxy wars is not working now. The U.S. gives with one hand and takes back with the other. With words, it touts opposition to terrorism and war crimes, but in practice, sends weapons to the terrorists like Al Saud to kill women and children in Yemen.

Saudi allies, including the U.S. and the UK, are panting for Saudi oil and money. The incentive is enough for them to dash off and in the name of human rights and suppression of terrorism make turmoil in the region.

Saudi regime well knows its money-addicted allies. It throws prey in battle ground and directs dogs looking for the prey.

Under the pressure of Saudi regime, U.S. government even obstructed the release of remaining 28 pages of the factual information of the 9/11 report to the public in 2015. The report pointed a very strong finger at Saudi Arabia as being the principal financier of the attack to the North and South towers, and the World Trade Center complex in New York City.

Under public pressure, U.S. government published a censored version of the report with many redactions; however, even after more than fifteen years, a cloud of secrecy hangs over the events of September 11, 2001 which proves the footprints of Saudi regime in the terrorist attacks.

Needless to say, it has been revealed to the world public opinion that the Saudi regime is the axis of support for the terrorist streams in the region and beyond.

Today, all the world has figured out that, MKO, the ISIL, Taliban, al-Qaeda and tens of other terrorist groups spread in the geography of Islam and humanity commit the biggest crimes against humanity under the leadership and strategies of the U.S., the Zionist regime and the regional reactionary regimes with the extensive financial supports of the al-Saud.

The world has learned that Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism, the radical ideology freely preached in the Arab country, are to blame for the violent acts of extremism in the Middle East region and elsewhere.



British support for Saudi Arabia's warmongering policies in Yemen is not a random issue; behind the support, definitely lies economic and power interests.



di Arabia from the Human Rights Council membership over its "gross and systematic violations of human rights abroad and at home. HRW has documented Saudi Arabia of repeatedly using internationally banned cluster munitions in civilian areas; in 19 different attacks, they have used at least six different types of cluster bombs, which were made in the U.S., UK and Brazil.

Riyadh threatened in early June to cut Palestinian aid and funds to other U.N. programs if the agency keeps the country's name as children right abuser, a threat which made Ban to drop Saudi Arabia from its annual blacklist, only one week after it announced the blacklisting of the regime. Ban calls his decision the most painful and difficult due to the fact that millions of other children likely would suffer if funding for U.N. programs was cut off.

Accusing Ban of giving in to political manipulation by the kingdom, dozens of prominent human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Oxfam, wrote a letter and urged United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon to put Saudi Arabia back on a blacklist for overwhelmingly violating children's rights in Yemen.

"The evidence of grave violations against children in Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition is overwhelming," reads the letter.

They said the U.N. chief's decision undermined an invaluable tool in efforts to curb violations against children in armed conflict.

Increasing attacks against civilians in Yemen after a total of 180 civilians were

Israeli circles as a supporter of terrorism worldwide, there is a less politically convenient reality: that of Iran as a victim of terror.

Thousands of innocent people in Iran have been killed as a result of terrorist operations led by the West and Saudi agents in the country since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Many countries have acknowledged Islamic Republic is trying to help restore peace, stability and security to the region to the best of its ability.

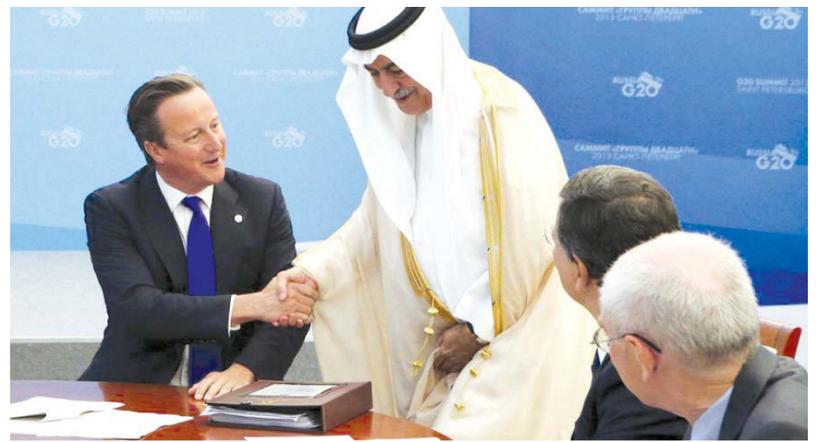
The Islamic Republic of Iran has always reiterated that there could be no military solution to the war in the region and has urged an end to hostilities and a peaceful resolution of this conflict through negotiations and the utilization of peaceful mechanisms.

Iran's key role in the region and resolution of regional issues is not a pleasant fact for Saudi Arabian regime. Truth hurts. They say when someone goes down the well he tries to take with him another person: misery loves company.

The saying best suits to the situation of Saudi allegations against the Islamic Republic.

The desperate Saudi regime facing backlash for its crimes in the region tries to shift blame to Iran in an attempt to redeem its battered image globally.

Saudi hostile actions against Iran pursues one important objective: preventing Iran's positive role in the region and hitting back to Iran which has been protesting the reck-



Needless to say, it has been revealed to the world public opinion that the Saudi regime is the axis of support for the terrorist streams in the region and beyond.



Saudi FM Al-Jubeir's early September warning of 'high risks of spread of terrorism' if UK suspends arms sales to Saudis is in fact a threat to London that Wahhabi-affiliated terrorist might be directed toward the UK.

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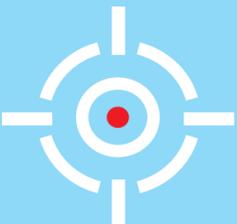
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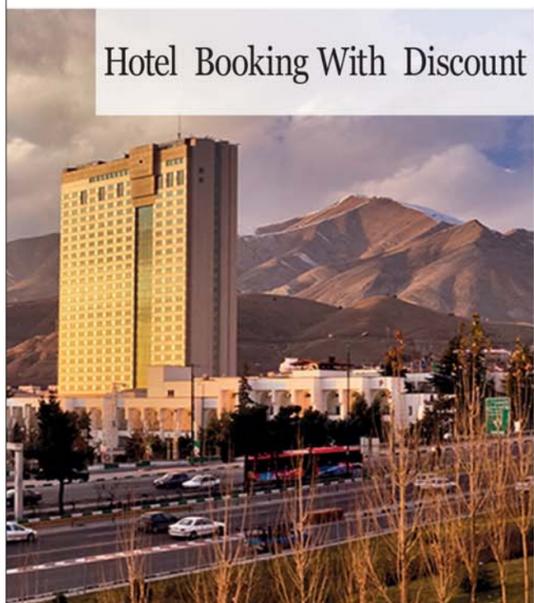
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UNDER VISITORS' EYES
Blue Mosque in Tabriz

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Blue Mosque, known as Masjid-e Kabud in Farsi, is one of the notable historic buildings scattered across the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz.

The mosque has long been distinguished for the grandeur of its intricate blue tilework and calligraphy for which it is nicknamed. The ornament took artists about a quarter century to cover every surface.



Detail showing some intricate tilework embellishing the interior of the Blue Mosque in Tabriz.

Completed in c. 1465 it is remarkable for its simplicity, brickwork, and great size as well. The mosque survived a devastating earthquake in 1727. However, many parts of it caved in due to a quake struck later in the same century. Many parts of the structure was rebuilt in 1973.

In the southern part of the mosque lies a time-honored mausoleum, itself a source of splendor. It is entirely covered with massive marble slabs on which verses from the holy Quran have been engraved with a background of fine arabesques.

Mahmud Ghazan, who was the seventh ruler of the Mongol Empire's Ilkhanate, made Tabriz his capital in the late 13th century.

In 1392, the city was taken by a Turkic conqueror named Timur (Tamerlane) and some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen chose it as their capital. The Blue Mosque was built under their rule.

Tabriz retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasb I who enjoyed the longest reign of any member of the dynasty, moved his capital westward to Qazvin.

During the next two centuries Tabriz changed hands several times between Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

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

■ **"Masterpiece of Iranian decorative tilework"**

The blue mosque has been restored with great craftsmanship. Only small parts of the original decoration remain, but the quality of the work, the finesse of the designs and the range of colors used is exceptional. (Wim Antwerp from Belgium, visited September 2016)

■ **"Beautiful with nice nearby park"**

From the outside it looked first a bit disappointing but the interior is beautiful and worth the entrance price. The park next to the mosque is also a nice place. (Ellisveen from the Netherlands, visited April 2016)

■ **"Very nice and old mosque"**

Oldest mosque in Tabriz, very nice architecture and courtyard. Price for foreigners: 6x locals. (Ana L. from Sweden, visited March 2016)

■ **"Impressive reconstruction"**

This mosque was all but destroyed in an earthquake in 1779, but has been well reconstructed (and work continues). The original tile work is very impressive, in particular the shine of the glaze which the reproductions struggle to replicate. (PeterC489 from London, visited September 2015)

■ **"Colorful Mosque"**

Very nice building, with a very nice front facade, although not very well conserved! When I visited it we were the only persons there! (Rui Cardoso from Portugal, visited May 2015)

IN THE NEWS

Spain marks monthly record for tourist arrivals in August

Spain hosted 10.1 million foreign tourists in August, the National Statistics Institute (INE) said on Friday, 5.8 percent more than a year earlier and marking a monthly record for arrivals as the influx of visitors bolsters the economy.

Spain's thriving tourism industry has fueled a jobs surge over the summer months, extending an economic recovery throughout a period of political uncertainty triggered by two inconclusive national elections.

In the first eight months of 2016, the number of tourists rose more than 10 percent from the same period in 2015 to 52.5 million, INE said, putting Spain on track to surpass last year's record 68.1 million arrivals for the full 12 months.

Security fears in competing destinations across the Mediterranean and in the Middle East have helped lure more tourists than ever to Spain's shores. Northeastern Catalonia, home to vast stretches of beaches, was the most visited region in Spain, followed by the Balearic Islands.

Britons remained the most numerous visitors to Spain and arrivals from the United Kingdom were up 3.9 percent year-on-year in August. But this marked a slowdown compared to previous months and follows the UK's vote to leave the European Union, after which the British pound weakened against the euro.

Tourism provides some 11 percent of Spain's gross domestic product. (Source: Reuters)

Tehran to host high-profile hotel builders, investors

TOURISM TEHRAN — Representatives of top hotel builders, investors, and hoteliers from 17 countries across the globe along with their fellow Iranian businesses are attending a two-day conference, which opens this morning at the Iran International Conference Center in Tehran.

Vinci Construction from France, Daelim Hotel from South Korea, and Steigenberger Hotel Group from Germany are among the attendees to the meeting that revolves around the motto of "100 Hotels, 100 Businesses", ISNA reported on Friday.

Other corporations and holding companies are coming from the Netherlands, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, Spain, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan.

Meanwhile, First Vice-President Es'hag Jahangiri, Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhoundi, Labor and Social Welfare Minister Ali Rabiei, and Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization Director Masoud Soltanifar are on the panel of high-ranking Iranian officials who will join the conference.

Subjects involving connections between domestic companies, foreign



A view of the 190-room, five-star Dariush Grand Hotel on Kish Island

companies, and investors; capacity of leading brands in global tourism; and investment opportunities in the tourism sector will be discussed during the event.

Since the signing of the landmark nuclear deal between Tehran and the six major world powers last year, a number

of top international hotel chains have either started making moves or have expressed an interest in entering the Iranian market.

Some \$24 billion came into Iran over the past three and a half years because of foreign tourists, the deputy director of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Hand-

icrafts Organization, Morteza Rahmani-Movahhed, announces last week.

In 2014, the country hosted over five million tourists, bringing in some \$7.5 billion in revenue. Moreover, last year, official figures put the number of incoming tourists at more than 5.2 million, generating over \$8 billion.

Isfahan museum's homage to Iran's rich musical traditions

A beguiling new museum in Iran's most popular tourist city showcases instruments that were the precursors of today's guitar and violin.

In a leafy street in Isfahan's laid-back but ancient Jolfa quarter, away from Imam Square and the bazaar for which the city is renowned, the Isfahan Music Museum provides welcome refuge. A love letter to Iran's rich musical heritage, the small museum is much more than a series of instruments hanging on a wall. Founded and funded by local musicians Mehrdad Jaihooni and Shahriar Shokrani in December 2015, it showcases more than 300 instruments from around Iran, many unchanged from their depictions in centuries-old paintings or miniatures on display around the city's historic sites.

These instruments include the kamancheh, thought to be the ancestor of the modern violin and the tar, sup-



A number of time-honored traditional musical instruments native to Iran being on display at the Isfahan Music Museum

posedly the precursor of the guitar. There is also a variety of animal-skin drums, reed flutes (ney), nomadic camel bells and a majestic harp, all in beautifully lit glass cabi-

nets on crisp white walls, with descriptions in English and Farsi. (Visitors are welcome to pick up and try the less precious pieces.)

After a guided tour – whether for one person or a group of 20 – the visit culminates in a small, intimate performance, where traditional love songs and Persian poetry are played by modern masters.

In the short time it has been open, the museum has received two awards, the latest from the International Council of Museums (Icom) for the best private museum in Iran. Even those who are not music fans will be entranced by the energy, warmth and sheer joy Mehrdad and Shahriar exude at the sight of visitors.

"We are mad! Totally mad for music," acknowledges Mehrdad, a broad smile appearing beneath his impressive moustache. (Source: The Guardian)

THAI launches Bangkok-Tehran

Thai Airways International (THAI)'s inauguration of its Bangkok-Tehran service on Saturday is expected to help ramp up passenger traffic between the two countries.

The flag carrier's launch of four flights per week is projected to double the number of Iranian arrivals to Thailand this year to nearly 200,000 and multiply Thai visitors to the Islamic Republic, currently numbering in the thousands.



Iranian visitors to Thailand grew by 20% to 88,000 last year, a figure that was set to grow to 120,000 this year prior to THAI's decision to launch its Tehran service.

"We should see a surge in traffic volume this year as Bangkok and Tehran are better connected," said Sunanta Wuthisakul, chief executive of Thai Orchid Tour and Holiday Co, a Bangkok-based travel agent that has long specialized in arranging tours to Iran.

The presence of THAI, a well-established airline with a good international image and safety track record, is set to encourage greater travel on both ends, she told the Bangkok Post.

THAI is providing a third option for non-stop flights between the Thai and Iranian capital, joining long-haul low-cost carrier Thai AirAsia X (TAAX) and Tehran-based Mahan Airlines, whose safety and service images are perceived as falling below international standards.

THAI is operating a Boeing 777-200 jet configured with 309 seats on the route, adding a sizeable increase in capacity.

TAAX, which started offering non-stop Tehran service on June 22 with three flights a week, operates an Airbus 330-300 with 370 seats on the route.

Mahan Air alternates between a single-aisle Airbus 310-300 (202 seats) and a wide-body Airbus 340-300 (215 seats), with four flights per week.

The lifting of sanctions against Iran in January has turned Tehran into a new economic frontier and an emerging tourism market, thus catching the attention of international airlines like THAI.

(Source: Bangkok Post)

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With civilian drone competition, Iran battles against brain drain

That's one reason the three winning teams – two university groups and one drone-making start-up from Tehran – are to join forces into a single "golden team" for Digikala that starts laboratory work next December.

■ Losing 'educated brains'

While Amazon and DHL focus on in-house drone creation, Digikala has chosen a different model based on what it calls "open innovation and crowd sourcing" to pool creative talent.

"It helps, seriously. But we need a lot of these competitions and more investment to help people think of living in Iran," says Reza Kalantarinejad, a competition jury member and founder of Shezan, a bio-tech and nanotechnology company.

"It's a chance, it helps people have a belief in the future of Iran and high-tech," says Mr. Kalantarinejad. "Such tech development helps keep people here."

Anything that eases Iran's chronic brain drain is welcomed by officials, who have struggled to find solutions. The former minister of Science, Research, and Technology, Reza Farajdana, has estimated that 150,000 "educated brains" leave the country each year, calculating the cost to Iran to be tens of billions annually.

Official statistics in 2012 indicated that 64 percent of Iran's International Science Olympiad winners in the previous 14 years had left the country. Another official source that year stated that 90 of Iran's 125 medal winners from 2008 to 2011 had immigrated to the U.S.



The "problem will lead Iran toward becoming a nation void of intelligent genes," lamented Hamid Mirzadeh, the head of Islamic Azad University in 2014.

The Digikala success story one way the government is trying to check the flow is supporting projects like the Pardis Technology Park, which aims to nurture high-tech and start-ups. The compound, carved out of desert along the highway, has streets with names like "Innovation." The board of trustees is headed by an Iranian vice president and includes the president's deputy for science and research.

After an initial private investment,

which made space for some 200 science-based companies, an expansion is under way that officials hope will eventually create 5,000 jobs.

Among the success stories they would like to recreate is Digikala, which has experienced exponential growth, jumping from 250 to more than 1,900 employees in the past two years alone. Digikala sells more than 100,000 items online, to between 1.4 million and 1.7 million unique visitors each day, but the challenges of getting purchases to customers in real time are technical – and fraught with security restrictions.

Even getting the contest approved re-

quired extensive meetings with officials, both civilian and from Iran's security forces, anxious about having drones in the air that they don't control.

"This is only the first step; we have a long way to go," says Digikala's Mr. Moghaddam. "We need to convince the government and police it is not a threat but a tool for customer satisfaction."

■ 'Ready for the future'

Iran's drone exploits are best known for the intact capture of an American RQ-170 Stealth drone on a CIA spying mission over Iran in December 2011. Unveiling new military drone capabilities in mid-September, Iran's Army chief said drones were the "sharp eyes and far-reaching arms" of his forces. In August, Iran presented a new drone it said was designed for "jamming and deception operations."

Such experience by Iran's military – as well as fielding reconnaissance drones in Syria, Iraq, and other battlefields – has made launching commercial drone use a particular challenge.

The "government has two faces," says Moghaddam. "It wants to follow these trends and show that Iran is modern, but it also wants to be careful for security and safety reasons. In the end we should not fight the technology, we should use it ... we should be ready for the future."

And that is exactly what the drone competition teams aimed to achieve, as they prepared their creation for flight.

(Source: CSM)

Reservoirs play substantial role in global warming

Washington State University researchers say the world's reservoirs are an underappreciated source of greenhouse gases, producing the equivalent of roughly 1 gigaton of carbon dioxide a year, or 1.3 percent of all greenhouse gases produced by humans.

That's more greenhouse gas production than all of Canada.

Writing in the journal *BioScience*, the WSU researchers say reservoirs are a particularly important source of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide over the course of a century.

Reservoir methane production is comparable to rice paddies or biomass burning, both of which are included in emission estimates of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the leading international authority on the subject.

John Harrison, co-author and associate professor in the WSU Vancouver School of the Environment, last month attended a meeting in Minsk, Belarus, to discuss including reservoir emissions in a planned 2019 IPCC update of how countries report their greenhouse gas inventories.

"We had a sense that methane might be pretty important but we were surprised that it was as important as it was," said Bridget Deemer, WSU research associate and lead author. "It's contributing right around 80 percent of

the total global warming impact of all those gases from reservoirs. It's a pretty important piece of the budget."

■ Comprehensive look

The *BioScience* analysis, which drew on scores of other studies, is the largest and most comprehensive look to date at the link between reservoirs and greenhouse gases, Harrison said.

"Not only does it incorporate the largest number of studies," he said. "It also looks at more types of greenhouse gases than past studies."

Acre per acre, reservoirs emit 25 percent more methane than previously thought, he said.

The researchers acknowledge that reservoirs provide important services like electrical power, flood control, navigation and water. But reservoirs have also altered the dynamics of river ecosystems, impacting fish and other life forms. Only lately have researchers started to look at reservoirs' impact on greenhouse gases.

"While reservoirs are often thought of as 'green' or carbon neutral sources of energy, a growing body of work has documented their role as greenhouse gas sources," Deemer, Harrison and their colleagues write.

Unlike natural water bodies, reservoirs tend to have flooded large amounts of organic matter that produce carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide as they decompose. Reservoirs also receive a lot of organic matter



and "nutrients" like nitrogen and phosphorous from upstream rivers, which can further stimulate greenhouse gas production.

In 2000, *BioScience* published one of the first papers to assert that reservoir greenhouse gases contribute substantially to global warming. Since then, there has been a nine-fold increase in studies of reservoirs and greenhouse gases. Where earlier studies tended to be confined to reservoirs behind power stations, the newer studies also looked at reservoirs used for flood control, water storage, navigation and irrigation.

(Source: *phys.org*)

The mystery of a newly discovered 'dark galaxy'

Among the thousand-plus galaxies in the Coma cluster, a massive clump of matter some 300 million light-years away, is at least one — and maybe a few hundred — that shouldn't exist.

Dragonfly 44 is a dim galaxy, with one star for every hundred in our Milky Way. But it spans roughly as much space as the Milky Way. In addition, it's heavy enough to rival our own galaxy in mass, according to results published in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters* at the end of August.

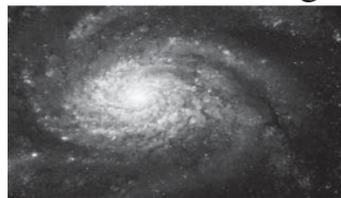
Dragonfly 44 is so dark, so fluffy, and so heavy that some astronomers believe it will either force a revision of our theories of galaxy formation or help us understand the properties of dark matter, the mysterious stuff that interacts with normal matter via gravity and not much else. Or both.

■ Testing theories

The discovery came almost by accident. The astronomers Pieter van Dokkum of Yale University and Robert Abraham of the University of Toronto were interested in testing theories of how galaxies form by searching for objects that have been invisible to even the most advanced telescopes: faint, wispy and extended objects in the sky. So their team built the Dragonfly Telephoto Array, a collection of modified Canon lenses that focus light onto commercial camera sensors. This setup cut down on any scattered light inside the system that might hide a dim object.

"You've been on the ship for months, and suddenly somebody said, 'Land ho! And it's not on the map.'"

The plan was to study the faint fring-



es of nearby galaxies. But the famous Coma cluster—the collection of galaxies that long ago inspired astronomer Fritz Zwicky's conjecture that such a thing as dark matter might exist—beckoned. "Partway through, we just could not resist looking at Coma," Abraham said. "You could argue that this discovery emerged from a lack of discipline." They planned to study the Coma cluster's intracluster light — the faint glow of loose stars floating

between the cluster's galaxies.

Instead, they found 47 faint smudges that wouldn't go away. These smudges seemed to have diameters roughly the same size as the Milky Way. Yet according to the commonly accepted models of galaxy formation, anything that big shouldn't be so dim.

In these theories, clumps of dark matter seed the universe with light. First, clouds of dark matter coalesce into relatively dense dark-matter haloes. Then gas and fragments of other galaxies, drawn by the halo's gravity, collect at the center. They spin out into a disk and collapse into luminous stars to form something we can see through telescopes. The whole process seems to be reasonably predictable for big galaxies such as our Milky Way.

(Source: *The Atlantic*)

DIY 'garage' scientists could unleash genetically-edited organisms into wild, warn experts

Garage scientists' could unleash dangerous genetically-modified organisms into the environment using unregulated technology which is already available online, a new report has warned.

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics said that chemistry kits which allow genetic editing can already be bought online for under £100.

Scientists are concerned that a new technique, called clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR), is now so cheap and widely available that amateurs will start experimenting at home, or in school labs.

The technique works like genetic scissors to cut away DNA code and replace it with new genes. It has been hailed as one the most significant scientific breakthroughs in recent years, with enthusiasts claiming that it could wipe out inherited diseases like cystic fibrosis and produce crops which are resistant to drought or pests.

Yet there are fears that, in the wrong hands, the proce-

dures could unleash dangerous strains of bacteria or other organisms. Others worry it may usher in a future of eugenics, with wealthy parents selecting for beneficial traits.

The "comparatively low cost and ease of use of the CRISPR system has made it feasible for a greater range of users, beyond those who would ordinarily make use of the techniques of molecular biology.

■ Biological products

"DIY or garage biologists, biohackers and enthusiastic amateurs carrying out informal research or making biological products. It is possible for individuals to pursue this interest in private homes using kits that are available to order online.

"Genetically altered organisms present a theoretical risk of harm to those handling them, and if they escape or are released from laboratories or controlled environments, to other people and natural ecosystems."

The panel is launching two reviews looking into the

ethical implications of genome editing both for human health and animals.

Transferring a genetically-edited embryo to a woman is currently banned, but the first tests to allow the genetic modification of an embryo were given the go-ahead earlier this year.

The report warned that widespread use of genome editing could allow the spread of 'consumer' eugenics and 'engineering humans with desirable genetic traits' to suit environmental conditions or enhance athletic ability.

Karen Yeung, Professor of Law at Kings College London said: "Many people have concerns about the possible use of genome editing in human reproduction, for example concerns about making genetic changes that would be passed on to future generations and the possibility of the techniques being used to confer other desirable characteristics.

(Source: *The Telegraph*)

Europe's food safety watchdog says to release studies on weed-killer glyphosate

Europe's food safety watchdog will release data from some of the scientific studies it reviewed in its assessment of glyphosate, an ingredient in Monsanto's widely used herbicide Roundup and subject of a fierce row over possible cancer risk.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) said on Thursday it had decided to release the raw data as part of its "commitment to open risk assessment".

EFSA had received several requests for data in relation to its glyphosate assessment, including from members of the European parliament.

"Transparency and openness are essential values for EFSA because they strengthen confidence in science," EFSA said in a statement. The "information will be shared with a group of MEPs following a public access to document request".

It was not immediately clear when the information will be released. Glyphosate, which is used in Roundup as well as other companies' weed-killers, is at the heart of a dispute in Europe and United States about whether its wide-spread use as a weed-killer on crops could heighten cancer risks. Monsanto has long defended the safety of its herbicide, saying the renewal of glyphosate's license in Europe was vital to European farmers.

The European Union in July granted a temporary extension of its approval for the weed-killer, pending further scientific study after a proposal for full license renewal met with opposition from member states and campaign groups.

The issue blew up in March 2015 after the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), based in Lyon and part of the World Health Organization (WHO), said that glyphosate is "probably carcinogenic". This finding was at odds with previous risk assessment in Germany and the United States, and was followed seven months later by EFSA's own assessment of glyphosate as "unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans".

(Source: Reuters)

'World's deepest flooded cave' discovered in Czech Republic

A Czech-Polish team said Friday it had discovered the world's deepest underwater cave in the eastern Czech Republic.

At 404 meters (1,325 feet) deep, the Hranicka Propast, a limestone abyss near the city of Hranice, beats out Italy's Pozzo del Merro cave that is 392 meters deep for the world record, Miroslav Lukas of the Czech Speleological Society told AFP. "We wanted to beat the Italian record. We succeeded and now we have the magic number of 404 meters," said Lukas, insisting the cave was "definitely" deeper than that.

"I don't know if it's by five meters or a hundred, but the depth is set to change," he said.

Lukas said the figure was confirmed by a depth gauge carried by a robot and by the length of a data cable connected to the robot.

On September 27, Polish diver Krzysztof Starnawski first descended to 200 meters to install a signal line for the robot, then navigated the device down to the record depth. The "robot broadcast information about its depth and course into a monitoring device on the surface," Lukas explained to AFP.

"It fell deeper and deeper, heading into places where we could see no bottom, until it reached 404 meters," he added.

Lukas said the project was co-financed by the National Geographic society, which broke the story online late Thursday.

Research at Hranicka Propast started in 1963, said Lukas, who first dived there in 1974.

(Source: AFP)

Researchers studied 1,000 animal species and found the one most likely to murder one of its own

If you think humans are a violent species, spare a thought for meerkats. A study on violence in more than 1,000 mammals has revealed that pretty much all of them are murderous, but meerkats are the most bloodthirsty of all.

Evolutionary biologists, led by José María Gómez from the University of Granada in Spain, conducted the study in order to understand human violence in an evolutionary context. They found that when *Homo sapiens* first came into existence, roughly one in 50 of us were killed by members of our own species. This made us typically violent for a primate, though around six times more murderous than an average mammal.

Our murderous tendencies have shifted over time though. Gómez's research found that we became considerably more violent during the Iron Age and Medieval period of Africa, Europe and Asia, but over the past few centuries, have become significantly less violent than when humans first existed. This suggests that as we formed large, organized states, complicated social structures have kept our violent urges in check.

But where do meerkats fit in? The researchers weren't focused on these unexpectedly lethal creatures, but Ed Young at The Atlantic organized the research to rank the top 30 most murderous mammals. Meerkats come well ahead of lions, wolves, and leopards. Roughly one in five meerkats die at the hands of their own species.

(Source: Quartz)



Isfahan on track to become a city of bicycles

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Isfahan Municipality is arranging for the city to become a city of bicycles, an official with the Department of Environment has said.

"Isfahan Municipality has initiated talks with the Dutch to develop the necessary technical infrastructure to turn the city into a city of bicycles," Mohammad Darvish said, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Isfahan and Neishabur municipalities did best in creating bike lanes and cycling infrastructure, Darvish noted.

In Neishabur buses are equipped with bicycle racks and cyclists can put their bikes onto them and travel with the bus, he said, adding, additionally in Isfahan, Chahar-bagh street is close to the cars on car-free Tuesdays (a public-led campaign encouraging the citizens to use bicycle instead of car on Tuesdays) and create a 100-kilometers road for the cyclists to ride safely.

"Isfahan Municipality has pledged to double the path in the near future," he added.

In cities of Yazd, Mashhad, Tabriz and Sirjan have also taken some measures to encourage using bicycles as well, he said.

He went on to say that unfortunately Tehran Municipality has not taken the issue seriously yet and despite the fact that there are some bike lanes in some of the districts they are not practical.

However, Darvish said, the municipality have recently announced that they would finish contracting some bike lanes in district 12 and would close the path to the motorcycles by October 21.

Bike lanes must be practical is a way that they enable the users to take them for long distances and ride safely along them, he suggested.



LEARN ENGLISH

Running a Family-Owned Business

When I **took over** the family business three years ago, I didn't know what I was **letting myself in for**. My uncle, who ran the business before me, established a **clear chain of command**, which I thought would **eliminate infighting** and **bickering**. I couldn't have been more wrong. Despite **clear lines of authority**, family members tend to **take sides** and **play the blame game** whenever anything goes wrong. In the end, they always look to me to **resolve conflict**, and I have no choice but to **enter the fray**. Another big problem is the **hangers-on**. Those are the family members who aren't **suit**ed for this line of work, but who need jobs. What do I do with them? What do you do when everything **falls on your shoulders**? Well, I've developed a **thick skin**, and when someone **inevitably** reminds me that **blood is thicker than water**, I remind them that **business is business**.

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

take over: to take control of something

let yourself in for: to do something that will cause you a lot of trouble

clear: impossible to doubt, question, or make a mistake about

chain of command: a system in an organization by which decisions are made and passed from people at the top of the organization to people lower down

eliminate: to completely get rid of something that is unnecessary or unwanted

infighting: when members of the same group or organization argue, or compete with each other in an unfriendly way

bicker: to argue, especially about something very unimportant

line of authority: the line of authority within a business establishes who is in charge of giving who orders, and it contributes to the efficient attainment of the company's objectives when property is used

take sides: to choose to support one person or group in an argument, and oppose the other one

play the blame game: a situation in which people try to blame each other for something bad that has happened

resolve conflict: to find a satisfactory way of dealing with a problem or difficulty

enter the fray: to take part or join an argument or fight

hangers-on: someone who spends a lot of time with a rich or important person, because they hope to get some advantage for themselves

suit: to have the right qualities to do something

fall on your shoulder: to become as a personal responsibility for someone

thick skin: not easily offended by other people's criticism or insults

inevitably: used for saying that something is certain to happen and cannot be avoided

blood is thicker than water: used to say that family relationships are more important than any other kind

business is business: used to say that profit is the most important thing to consider



Without earth no birth!

World Food Program commemorates 29 years of presence in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — In a ceremony held on Thursday, World Food Program (WFP) commemorated 29 years of presence in Iran, Khabaronline reported.

With the sole purpose of fighting hunger worldwide WFP relies entirely on voluntary contributions to finance its humanitarian and development projects, Negar Gerami, WFP representative in Iran said.

"In today's world where we are facing successive crises, raising fund is one of the biggest challenges," Gerami noted.

Gerami also extended the Islamic Republic of Iran's gratitude for South Korea's generous \$4 million contribution donated to fight hunger in Iran.

"The \$4 million contribution fits the budget expenditure for providing food for the refugees for a year," she added.

"I hope we could soon celebrate end of hunger in the world," she suggested.

Korean ambassador to Iran Kim Seung-Ho, for his part, noted that the money is a small contribution made to



(Korean ambassador to Iran Kim Seung-Ho (L) and Negar Gerami, Photo by Sarah Abdollahi/ Borna news agency)

fight hunger.

Korea is very well aware of the pangs

of hunger and know how important it is to fight it, the ambassador said, stating,

"As hard as fighting hunger could be we believe it is attainable."

"We would keep on fighting until hunger fades into history," he added.

Iran is the 4th largest refugee hosting country, with just under one million refugees, according to WFP website. As a result of the refugee flow, a significant number of poor and food-insecure refugee households continue to require humanitarian support, including WFP food assistance. More than 951,000 Afghan refugees and 28,260 refugees from Iraq were registered in Iran as of early 2016. Basic services and housing are provided in the settlements by the Government, WFP, and United Nations High Committee on Refugees (UNHCR).

WFP assistance to refugees in Iran, which started in 1987, has been a major factor in the prevention of hunger and malnutrition. WFP aims to ensure basic food security for vulnerable Afghan and Iraqi households in refugee settlements in Iran.

1.4b older persons by 2030: Ban

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on International Day of Older Persons, 1 October 2016, said the global population of older persons is expected to rise from just over 900 million in 2015 to 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050, when there will be roughly the same number of older persons and children under 15.

The full text of his message reads:

The International Day of Older Persons is our chance to take a stand against the destructive problem of ageism.

While older persons are often said to enjoy particular respect, the reality is that too many societies limit them, denying access to jobs, loans and basic services. The marginalization and devaluing of older persons takes a heavy toll. It undermines their productivity and experience in the workforce, in volunteerism and through civil engagement while constraining their capacity for caregiving as well as financial and other support to families and communities. Ageism frequently intersects with other forms of discrimination based on gender, race, disability and other grounds, compounding and intensifying its effects.

Ending ageism and securing the human rights of older persons is an ethical and practical imperative. The stakes are high and growing. The global population of



older persons is expected to rise from just over 900 million in 2015 to 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050, when there will be roughly the same number of older persons and children under 15.

I condemn ageism in all its forms and call for measures to address this violation of human rights as we strive to improve societies for people of all ages. This demands changing the way older persons are portrayed and perceived, from being seen as a burden to

being appreciated for the many positive contributions they make to our human family.

I also call for greater legal guarantees of equality for older persons to prevent ageism from resulting in discriminatory policies, laws and treatment. I urge policy makers to compile better data and statistics on older persons' health, economic status and general wellbeing in order to better address their concerns. And I hope we will all reflect on our prejudicial attitudes and consider how, as individuals, we can counter ageism.

We have a clear roadmap to transformation: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This visionary plan and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize inclusion and equality, promising to leave no one behind. Older persons are both agents and beneficiaries of change. By advancing progress on the SDGs, we can mobilize the considerable talents, energy and experience of all older persons in carrying out this Agenda.

Let us mark the International Day of Older Persons by forcefully rejecting all forms of ageism and working to enable older persons to realize their potential as we honor our pledge to build a life of dignity and human rights for all.

(Source: UNIC)

IN FOCUS Tehran Times/ Masoud Saki



On the occasion of the International Children's Day Tehrani children gathered in Maryam Park on Friday and draw paintings with the central theme of peace.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Air units to support firefighters in Tehran

Air units will be launched in Tehran to support firefighters at operational incidents, Tehran's Fire Department director general has said.

The idea of the air unit was proposed last September by Tehran's Mayor Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Sa'eed Sharifzadeh told Fars news agency.

"We have discussed different aspects of this scheme and we are now attempting to finance this project," Sharifzadeh said, adding "We need some 2 trillion rials (nearly \$57m) to buy four helicopters with equipment and maintenance expenses as well."

The Velayat Park, southern Tehran, and the Milad Tower, northern Tehran, are considered as the airports for the helicopters to land and takeoff, he noted.

تشکیل یگان هوایی آتش‌نشانی در تهران

مدیرعامل سازمان آتش‌نشانی شهر تهران از ایجاد یگان هوایی برای کمک به آتش‌نشانان در عملیات‌ها خبر داد.

سعید شریف‌زاده در گفت‌وگو با خبرگزاری فارس گفت: ایده‌ی این طرح مهر ماه سال گذشته توسط محمد باقر قالیباف شهردار تهران مطرح شد.

شریف‌زاده ادامه داد: در طی یک سال جنبه‌های مختلف ایجاد این یگان هوایی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و در حال حاضر منتظر تأمین اعتبار لازم برای خرید ۴ فروند بالگرد هستیم که حدود ۲۰۰ میلیارد تومان با تجهیزات و نگهداری اعتبار نیاز دارد.

وی خاطر نشان کرد: ۲ فرودگاه در بوستان ولایت و برج میلاد برای یگان هوایی سازمان آتش‌نشانی شهر تهران در نظر گرفته شده است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

No man can serve two masters

■ **Explanation:** you cannot work for two different people, organizations, or purposes in good faith, because you will end up favoring one over the other

■ **For example:** Al tried going to school and working, both full-time, but soon discovered that he could not serve two masters.

PHRASAL VERB

Beat yourself up

■ **Meaning:** to blame yourself too much for something

■ **For example:** If you do your best and you lose, you can't beat yourself up about it.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Be up in arms

■ **Explanation:** if you are up in arms, you are very angry about something and protest very strongly

■ **For example:** The population was up in arms over the demolition of the old theatre.

Iraqi forces seize ISIL central telecom network in Sharqat

Iraqi pro-government Hashd al-Shaabi, also known as the Popular Mobilization Units, has managed to discover and neutralize the central telecommunication network of the ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group in the central-northern province of Salahuddin.

According to a report published on Iraq's al-Masalah news website, the intelligence unit of the forces found the network, including a collection of devices designed for long-distance communication, huge wireless sets and their batteries, in the recently-liberated city of Sharqat, some 80 kilometers south of the city of Mosul.

The report added that the heavily camouflaged systems were used by terrorists to make contact with other members of the terror group in Mosul, Daesh's de facto capital in Iraq, and Hawijah in Kirkuk province, among other places.

Iraqi forces took full control of Sharqat



on September 22, and raised the national Iraqi flag over government buildings there, after the city fell to Daesh in 2014.

Iraqi forces are preparing for a major offensive to liberate Mosul, Daesh's last major bastion on Iraqi soil. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has, time and again, pledged that the country's forces will win back the city by the end of the year.

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

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

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

(Source: Press TV)

100-day countdown ticks in Venezuela political crisis

The next 100 days in Venezuela could mark a turning point in the South American country's seething political crisis, deciding whether the socialist president and his party stay in power.

On January 10, 2017, President Nicolas Maduro will have completed four years of his six-year term at the helm of the major oil exporter, whose economy is reeling from sharply lower global crude prices.

Saturday begins the 100-day countdown for Maduro's opposition to mount a recall referendum.

If the recall vote occurs before January 10 and Maduro is ousted, early elections will be held.

But the National Electoral Council (CNE) has announced that, according to the rules, the referendum could only be held in the middle of the first quarter of 2017.

If Maduro loses the recall vote post-January 10, he would be replaced by his hand-picked vice president, defeating the opposition's hope to change government.

The center-right opposition coalition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) has set a petition drive on October 26-28 aimed at collecting four million signatures, or 20 percent of voters, supporting a recall vote.

The coalition insists that the referendum should be held in 2016.

Nevertheless the CNE, which the opposition says is beholden to Maduro's government, says there is not enough time left to review the petition signatures and organize the vote this year.

With the prospect of holding a referendum in 2016 dim, analysts have projected at least three scenarios in the unfolding crisis.

■ Recall in 2017 -

The MUD wants the petition drive's required 20 percent minimum of support for success to be calculated on a nationwide basis. But the CNE has said the 20 percent threshold will be determined state-by-state.

The opposition is "very likely" to muster the required signatures because of the "vision of change" in the country, said Francine Jacome, head of the Venezuelan Institute for Social and Political Studies.

According to pollster Venebarometro, seven in 10 Venezuelans want a change in government and 76.4



percent disapprove of the job Maduro is doing.

If voters overwhelmingly want a recall vote, "it will be difficult if the authorities don't hold a referendum," economist Luis Vicente Leon, head of the research firm Datanalisis, told AFP.

"But they will do it in 2017 and it remains to be seen what the opposition response will be. It would raise tensions," he added.

The authorities for now have supported Maduro, because he is at risk of losing "Chavismo," the movement named for Maduro's late predecessor and mentor, the socialist firebrand Hugo Chavez.

"The demons will be let loose beginning January 11 when the fighting over the presidential succession begins," said Benigno Alarcon, a political science professor at Andres Bello Catholic University.

- Victory in doubt -

The opposition is hoping to collect signatures on a national basis, in case it fails to meet the 20 percent minimum in at least one of Venezuela's 24 states.

"We are going to see national and international pressure," Jacome said, adding that "the voter participation could be so massive that it forces the CNE to acknowledge the national basis."

Leon agreed that tension will rise, because the opposition is trying to force the CNE to accept the referendum and "there will be people there trying to defend their turf"

To pressure the electoral body to recognize a 20

percent national level, MUD has called a mass street throughout the country for October 12.

"The pressure of the street could yield some changes in the CNE," said Jacome.

"What is certain is that they will make the required numbers -- the problem is that in this method the signatures easily can be invalidated," Alarcon said.

"And the opposition would be left with no other option than to escalate the conflict."

■ Signatures miss? -

If there is no referendum, the opposition would have to wait for elections in late 2018 and Maduro would finish his term in January 2019.

Analysts warn that the CNE's conditions could make a recall difficult: 20 percent threshold in each state; only 5,392 of the machines used in the process -- less than one-third the number MUD was asking for; and time, restricted to seven hours a day.

Eugenio Martinez, an elections expert, pointed out that the referendum's postponement to 2017 could discourage some voters from signing because they "know they would be left with the same government" even if Maduro is recalled.

But all will depend on how the economic crisis evolves. A significant deterioration in the economy, already beset with inflation and food shortages, could stoke further fury among the public and raise the pressure for Maduro to be pushed out, according to Martinez and Jacome.

There is also the possibility that a failure in the petition drive "deflates pressure" and generates "frustration and divisiveness in the opposition," warned Leon.

Alarcon pointed out the "lack of a single leader" in the MUD coalition.

Although the government is counting on raising its popularity by reducing the severe level of food shortages by 2019, analysts see more conflict if there is no recall vote.

Jacome warned that in all these scenarios the nation's Supreme Court -- which the opposition calls the government's "law firm" -- could simply annul the process.

(Source: AFP)

Bulgaria's Georgieva unsettles race to be UN chief

The newest candidate to be UN secretary-general, Kristalina Georgieva, says she may be a "latecomer" to the race, but still has strong credentials to become the first woman to lead the United Nations.

The 63-year-old Bulgarian economist who served as European budget commissioner has shaken up the contest to succeed Ban Ki-moon, who steps down at the end of the year after serving two five-year terms.

On Monday, she goes before the General Assembly for a two-hour question-and-answer session, hoping to persuade world diplomats that she is as ready as some of the other candidates who have been in the race for months.

"I hope to be judged on merits, not on the duration of the campaign trail," Georgieva told AFP in an interview on Friday.

"I'm a latecomer not by choice, but by necessity. The Bulgarian government has invited me to join the race now," said Georgieva, who had been tipped to be a candidate for months.

The Bulgarian government this week withdrew its support for UNESCO chief Irina Bokova after she failed to make a strong showing during informal voting for the new UN chief at the Security Council.

Despite the late entry, the former World Bank vice-president said she was not "an unknown quantity" in international circles and at the United Nations, where last year she led a high-profile panel on humanitarian financing.

"What I bring to the position is a breadth of experience in international development, humanitarian aid and dealing with fragility," she said.

■ Representing half of the world -

Georgieva is considered a strong contender because she would satisfy calls for a woman to lead the United Nations and for a candidate from eastern Europe to be chosen, the only region that has yet to be represented in the top post.

"It is important for the world that there be a woman secretary-general," she said, adding that in the UN's 71-year history "only half of the world" has been represented in the eight men that have held the top job.

After five straw polls by the Security Council to pick the new UN chief, Portugal's former prime minister Antonio Guterres has emerged as the frontrunner.

On Wednesday, the contest will head into new territory when the five permanent Security Council members -- Britain, France, China, Russia and the United States -- will use colored ballots in the straw poll.

That will indicate to the 10 candidates in the race whether they face a veto if the council moves to a formal vote, which could happen in the coming weeks.

While Georgieva has the backing of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other European governments, the question is whether Russia will support her.

Russia has said it would prefer a candidate from eastern Europe, but Georgieva's ties to the European Union, which has slapped sanctions on Russia

over Ukraine, could disqualify her in Moscow's eyes.

A fluent Russian speaker, Georgieva has however developed good relations during her time as country director in Moscow for the World Bank, from 2004 to 2007.

■ Syria, UN reforms -

With the United Nations facing criticism of being ineffective and overly bureaucratic, Georgieva spoke of her "unwavering, roll-my-sleeves and get-it-done attitude" and of holding a "long track record on reforms."

On Syria, now in its sixth year of a worsening war, Georgieva pointed to a lack of "determined political will" to achieve a settlement to a very complex conflict, with multiple actors.

"We have to recognize that even with the best of wills, peace requires more than agreements in New York," she said.

"It requires locally an ability to overcome deep ethnic divisions, to overcome a myriad of conflicting interests within Syria and in the countries that surround it."

Born in Sofia, Georgieva began her career as a university professor before joining the World Bank where she worked for 17 years, climbing the ranks to become vice president and corporate secretary in 2008.

It was as European Commissioner for humanitarian aid -- a position she held from 2010 to 2014 -- that Georgieva's star rose in European circles.

Described as media-savvy and well-spoken, Georgieva was able to mo-



bilize Europeans to respond to world humanitarian crises, traveling to flood-hit Pakistan, the Sahel and raising her voice for aid in Syria and Yemen.

A self-described workaholic, she moved on in 2014 to the post of European budget commissioner, overseeing the European Union's annual budget of \$155 billion and also serves as the commission's vice-president.

(Source: AFP)

Peres: A war criminal or a peace dove



Hundreds of Palestinians in the impoverished and Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip also staged a demonstration against the Israeli regime to protest the participation of Abbas in the funeral procession.

Palestinians say Peres has their blood on his hands. Peres allowed Israeli construction settlements to take place in the Palestinian lands during his long years of leadership.



Born in Poland in 1923, Peres emigrated to what was then British-mandated Palestine when he was 11. Peres never lost his Polish accent when speaking in Hebrew.

He joined the Zionist movement and met David Ben-Gurion, the so-called "primary founder of Israel" and first Israeli premier who became his mentor.

He was chosen as a protégé by Ben Gurion. Israel claimed existence in 1948 after carrying out a wholesale war against Arab states and capturing massive swathes of the Arab lands.

A year earlier, Peres had joined the Haganah, the predecessor of the Israeli military. He had been tasked by Ben-Gurion, with recruitment of personnel and arms purchases.

He began his political career in the late 1940s, holding several diplomatic and military positions during and directly after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

He was also seen as a driving force in the development of the Israeli regime's undeclared nuclear program with assistance from France.

Israel keeps an estimated stockpile of some 200-400 nuclear warheads.

Peres won the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize together with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat for the peace talks that he participated in as Israeli foreign minister, producing the Oslo Accords.

He is sometimes referred to a peacemaker. However to many others he is branded a full version criminal. One should think how is it that a peace process have taken so long, almost a quarter of a century.

The outcome of the so-called peace process is very obvious. Blood of innocent Palestinian women, and children and men is shed in cold blood, the occupation has grown, the siege on the Palestinian enclave of Gaza still holds, and the illegal settlements are mushrooming day by day. Well that is not peace, not at all. Gaze Strip is an open prison.

Plans to repatriate 3 million Afghan refugees are dangerous and misguided

More followed during the civil wars between the extremist factions who defeated the Soviets. Then more fled the Taliban. And while the western invasion in 2001 may have ousted the Taliban from power, the conflict -- and the migration -- continues to this day. The U.S. and UK armies gave Afghans little reason to stay, and neither has the new Kabul government.



Many Afghans living in major cities would rather take a risky route to reach Europe than live with the economic uncertainty and the security threats. And if you live in a rural area -- like nearly 70% of the Afghan population -- you might prefer to leave than be recruited into the ranks of the Taliban, al-Qaida, or Islamic State.

Meanwhile, many believe the 2014 presidential election was rigged and that the government is incapable of responding to their basic needs. The rivalry between the president, Ashraf Ghani, and his chief executive, Abdullah Abdullah, has made things harder -- the two have been squabbling since beginning a power-sharing exercise in November 2014. All the while, political polarization is on the rise due to ethnocentric agendas within the Afghan government.

The west's response has been to throw aid money at the government. The UK remains one of the largest aid donors, giving £178m per year. But this is wasted money. It so far has no proper strategy for re-assimilating such a large number of refugees, nor the funding to make it possible. This makes it very hard for any repatriation plan to be successful.

There is little hope that the government in Kabul can care for the existing residents of Afghanistan -- let alone another 3 million with no shelter and food. The plan to return 80,000 Afghans from Europe -- as well as millions from Pakistan -- is dangerous and misguided.

(Source: The Guardian)

The Week in Quotes

"I think he'll go down as one of the all-time great managers of the club, possibly the greatest. I know Herbert Chapman and the history of Arsenal, is an iconic figure but Wenger, in his 20 years, particularly in his first ten, was magnificent. We were the only team to challenge Manchester United, who were really on top of their game and had probably the finances to outstrip any of the competition. So when Wenger came in, his buys in the transfer market, the like of [Marc] Overmars, [Emmanuel] Petit, [Robert] Pires, [Patrick] Vieira in particular, made sure we competed with them."



Ahead of Arsene Wenger's landmark of 20 years with Arsenal this weekend, former Arsenal and Republic of Ireland midfielder Liam Brady tells Omnisport that Wenger will go down as one of the club's greatest ever managers

"I think he has been fantastic, we owe him so much gratitude. I think he introduced better play which we all took inspiration off. The competition he had with Sir Alex Ferguson made Manchester United much better, that's for sure. I think all in all he has made the Premier League so much better and I am not one of those guys who want him gone. I want to see him carry on because he has so much to offer English football."

Former Manchester United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel speaks with Omnisport about Arsene Wenger's qualities as the Arsenal manager celebrates 20 years with the club this weekend

"What's this rubbish about you playing football? You can't. It was partly down to stubbornness, to wanting to show him that I could play. At the beginning, I didn't like football."

Mexico winger Jacqueline Ovalle on how a rivalry with her brother got her involved in football, in an interview with FIFA.com ahead of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Jordan 2016

"I grew up as a kid coming to this stadium, all my memories are around here. It's a special year for us and all the fans, a magical one. It would be a great year to do something special, to remember this as one of the best seasons in our history."

Atletico Madrid forward Fernando Torres hopes the club can have a successful final season at the Vicente Calderon, in an interview with Fox Sports

"There are new anecdotes, almost every day — lots of stories I did not know. People always say how sorry they are, what he meant to them. I have been to various countries these last few months, and you see men who are 65, 70, and they are emotional. They had moments when my father touched them, in whatever way, and they want to talk about it."

Jordi Cruyff speaks with The New York Times about his father, the late Johan Cruyff

"My answer to the England job would be a big fat no. I think the next England manager should be an Englishman. It shouldn't be anyone from overseas; I don't care what his record is. Unless you're from that country you can never ever know what it means to represent that country. You'd never see Germany, Italy or Spain looking outside. Why should England look further afield? Gareth [Southgate], Brucey [Steve Bruce], that's where they should be looking. Certainly not a Welshman. Certainly not this Welshman."

Speaking at a news conference, Wales manager Chris Coleman rules himself out of the England manager's job

"I've been playing FIFA a good ten years easily. I get it every year. I won't queue for it at midnight, but I definitely get it every year. I play online against my friends. The lads here play online too. There hasn't been much competition before at the club, but there will be this year with the new game coming out. It's cool. I was coaching summer camps here, and the kids were asking me if I was going to be in FIFA and things like that. It's pretty cool to say 'yeah, I'm in FIFA'. It's cool that people can go and check you out in FIFA and play as you."

Wexford Youths midfielder Shane Dunne talks with Goal about the club's first appearance in FIFA 17

"It was like something fell from the sky. It's a moment that I can't really describe. In that instance, I was a little bit anxious, worried I might not take the opportunity, but all I was thinking about was connecting with the shot. I knew it could change the destiny of our team."

Iran's Ahmad Esmailpour recalls his dramatic strike against Paraguay with FIFA.com at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016

"He reminds me of his uncle, Jay-Jay Okocha. He was a player I loved watching. Alex reminds me of a mixture of him and Edgar Davids. He's really strong on the ball, also defensively, but he's good in front of goal too. He's developing really well and if he continues the way he's been playing for the whole season, he will enhance his game. The manager knows exactly how good he is and I wish him all the best."

Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil says team-mate Alex Iwobi plays like a mixture of Jay-Jay Okocha and Edgar Davids in the club's matchday programme

"Football isn't only for men. Women have shown that they can play it. No woman should hesitate to play this game — it won't detract from them in any way. Families should support their daughters who watch this World Cup and become inspired to follow this path and play."

Lebanese singer Carole Samaha talks with FIFA.com about the significance the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup can have in empowering women to play football in Jordan

"This is tiring. I will be talking with my family and with the people I need to talk to. Yes, I would consider retirement, but I would like to play for the rest of my life with this club. Coming into the Bombonera on Sundays is what makes me happy."

Boca Juniors forward Carlos Tevez admits he is considering retirement, in an interview with Ole

(Source: FIFA)

Harry Redknapp filmed saying his players once bet on their own game

Harry Redknapp has told undercover reporters of a game during his career as a manager when players gambled on the result, according to the Daily Telegraph.

Redknapp is the latest manager to be filmed in the newspaper's series of investigative reports on corruption in football, the first of which led to the sacking of England manager Sam Allardyce earlier this week.

Football Association rules prohibit players from gambling on games in which they play, while managers must report any knowledge of betting to the governing body.

Redknapp said he only learned of his players' gambling after the game, which his side won. The Telegraph reported that he did not report any misconduct to the FA, while the FA has now said it will investigate all the allegations made once it has received the newspaper's full evidence file.

Redknapp is shown saying in a video that the opposition "murdered us early on," and adding: "At half-time I took [a player] off and put, erm, [another player on] and they're all looking at me, all the lads, 'cause I didn't know they'd had a bet, 'cause they was [sic] all choked, they'd all had a spread bet and everything."

Football agent Dax Price, who was also present in the Telegraph's film, said players from both teams were betting on the result, with one player having as much as "20 grand" on the line.

Redknapp said the gambling was particularly high on this game because his club, with nothing to play for, had been expected to field a weakened squad, but the players knew he planned to play a strong team.

The Telegraph, citing legal reasons, did not reveal which game, teams, or players were involved in the gambling.

When contacted later by the newspaper, and told that betting by players was



against the rules, Redknapp reportedly replied: "Oh would it? Oh, okay. But not at that time I don't think it was, was it? They weren't betting on the other team, they were having a bet on their own team."

Asked about his remarks about the players gambling on the game, the Telegraph claims he told the newspaper: "Unbeknownst to me. No, not a spread bet. It wasn't a spread bet. I think they had a bet on the game, but it wasn't, that was nothing to do with me ... after the game I'd heard the rumour the lads had had a bet that day

... I'm not in control of whether they go and have a bet or not."

Price is quoted during the filmed conversation as saying a player, who is not identified, had been in touch about the match in question and urged him to bet on a victory for Redknapp's side.

Price reportedly said the player from Redknapp's club "phoned me and said remortgage your house 'cause the odds were mental, they were 5/2 at the time."

Redknapp, 69, had a long managerial career, starting at Bournemouth in the

1980s before moving to West Ham for much of the '90s. He then had two stints at Portsmouth, one season at Southampton, four at Tottenham and three at QPR, before stepping down in 2015.

Allardyce's sacking came after he was filmed telling reporters how to get around FA and FIFA rules on third-party ownership of players, and Allardyce said he couldn't understand any objection to the practice, which has been forbidden in England since 2008 and worldwide since 2015.

(Source: ESPN)

Andy Murray to play in China Open after overcoming thigh strain



Andy Murray will continue his bid to overtake Novak Djokovic at the top of the world rankings after deciding to take part in the China Open.

Murray has targeted Djokovic's No. 1 spot following a superb summer, but after suffering a thigh strain in Great Britain's Davis Cup defeat to Argentina a fortnight ago, he said he was in need of a rest and would take a look at his schedule.

The Scotsman has decided to play in Beijing, however, and can close the gap on Djokovic by 1,000 points if he wins the tournament. Djokovic pulled out earlier in the week, continuing a frustrating few months for the Serbian.

He suffered a surprise early exit at Wimbledon, later attributed to personal issues, while also suffering a first round exit at the Olympics before withdrawing from the Cincinnati Open in August.

(Source: SkySports)

Djokovic reflects on career pressure



Novak Djokovic says Grand Slam trophies and the No. 1 ranking are no longer his priorities.

The top-ranked Serb, who has won 12 major titles, said after a light training session in Belgrade on Friday that he felt emotionally drained after winning the French Open in June for his first Grand Slam on clay.

The 29-year-old Djokovic became only the third man to win all four major tournaments in a row, something last done almost 50 years ago.

"I psychologically felt huge pressure, and now I'm no longer thinking about the number of titles. If they come, super, I will accept them," Djokovic said.

"After all, tennis is not the only thing in the world."

He had a poor midseason, losing

early at Wimbledon and the Olympics, and was undone in the U.S. Open final. He has reportedly had physical and personal issues which reflected on his recent results.

Djokovic said he will "sit and talk" with his coach Boris Becker about their future cooperation. The German has helped Djokovic win seven Grand Slam titles.

"I'm happy with the cooperation ... he helped me a lot," Djokovic said.

He withdrew from the China Open next week because of an elbow injury. He said he expects to play at the Shanghai Masters from Oct. 10.

Djokovic said the "micro injury" hampered his serve during the U.S. Open, where he was stopped in the final by Stan Wawrinka.

(Source: AP)

Ivan Gazidis targets trophies after Arsenal post £191m in cash reserves

Arsenal chief executive Ivan Gazidis believes the club's latest set of robust financial results, which include cash reserves of some £191 million, show they are on course to deliver more major trophies to the Emirates Stadium.

Although the Premier League club's latest figures from Arsenal Holdings plc show a drop in overall group profit before tax from £18.2m to £2.9m, there has been a significant increase in turnover from football, up to £350.6m from £329.3m over the same period in 2015.

Significant additional broadcasting revenues have been supported by improvements in the Gunners' commercial activity, all of which has allowed manager Arsene



Wenger to again further strengthen a squad which finished runners-up to Leicester in the last Premier League campaign.

As a result, though, wage costs continue to rise, at £195.4m, while income from player sales is down as the club remain determined to keep key men on board.

With the only debt related to long-term fix-rate payments against the financing of the move to the new 60,000 stadium from Highbury in 2006, Arsenal's "cash balances" show at £191.1m, which is slightly down from £193.1m in 2015.

Gazidis said in his chief executive report accompanying the results: "We are in a strong position to continue moving forward at every level of the club."

"On the pitch we have an outstanding squad. Off the pitch we have developed our infrastructure across all aspects of our

operations to ensure we have the right assets and skills to progress.

"I am confident this progress, coupled with strong underlying values, will bring the success we all seek."

"Our ultimate ambition is clear: to win major trophies and make Arsenal fans at home and around the world proud of this great club. Proud of our values, proud of the way we act and proud of our team."

Arsenal head into the next round of Premier League fixtures away at Burnley on Sunday in third place, five points behind leaders Manchester City, and on the back of an eight-match unbeaten run, which includes four straight wins.

(Source: Soccernet)

Top official: Women chess players made up story about Iran

T I S P O R T S World's top chess official Susan Polgar says that the women players need to respect 'cultural differences' after many of the highest-ranking female players have called for a boycott of the next year's world championships in Iran.

They are going to boycott the competition after being told that they'd need to compete wearing hijabs.

Grandmasters have accused FIDE of disregarding sexual discrimination by selecting a place that would require the competitors to wear hijabs. Meanwhile, FIDE's Commission for Women's Chess has urged participants to accept the hijab regulations in respect of "cultural differences."

American Grandmaster Susan Polgar, chairman of Fide's Commission for Women's Chess, has said the players need to respect 'cultural differences'.

"If any player has a problem with it, she can and should voice her opinion to the Commission for Women's Chess or FIDE and we can address it in our next meeting," she added.

"I kept hearing in recent years about media bias and dishonesty. I never really paid attention to it until today. All these articles from major media sources either got the facts wrong or simply completely made up," Polgar said.

Mehrdad Pahlevanzadeh president of Iranian chess federation says that the female players are going to create negative atmosphere since the 2016 Women's Grand Prix took place in Tehran.

"I think there is no problem and a total of the 12 players took part at the Chess Grand Prix held in Tehran. It will be the biggest sporting event women in Iran have ever seen. It's not right to call for a boycott," Pahlevanzadeh said.



Iran futsal captain Keshavarz hangs up boots



Iranian futsal captain Mohammad Keshavarz announced his retirement from the national duty aiming to give more chances to younger players.

Keshavarz has already missed Futsal World Cup third-place play-off against Portugal scheduled for Saturday.

He will be out for four weeks after suffering a knee injury against Russia in the competition's semis.

Keshavarz said he has made the decision before the competition.

The 34-year-old defender currently is a member of Giti Pasand futsal club.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran's Sarkhosh wins gold at Asian Billiards Sports C'ship



Amir Sarkhosh from Iran claimed a gold medal at the Snooker Single 15-Red event of ACBS 1st Asian Billiards Sports Championship.

Sarkhosh defeated Omar Alajlani of Saudi Arabia 5-3 in the final match and won the gold medal.

He had already defeated Pakistan's Muhammad Asif 5-0 in the semi-final.

Iran also finished in second place af

ter suffering defeat against Pakistan at the 1st Asian Confederation for Billiards Sports Championship team event.

The Iranian team consists of Amir Sarkhosh, Soheil Vahedi and Arman Dinarvand was defeated against the Pakistani team — Muhammad Bilal, Babar Masih and former IBSF World Champion Muhammad Asif — in the event.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iranian wushu practitioners finish runner-up in world championships

Iranian wushu practitioners have won five medals, including two gold ones, at the sixth edition of World Junior Wushu Championships in Bulgaria.

The Iranian team finished runner-up in the prestigious tournament.

On Friday, Iranian sportsman Yousef Sabri demonstrated a remarkable performance in the last contest of men's 70-kilogram weight category of the Sanda (sparring) discipline at Madost Sports Hall in the southeastern coastal city of Burgas, and overcame Turkish representative Yunus Emre Osmanoglu to clinch the gold medal.

Mohammad Mehdi Garshasbi prevailed over his Turkish rival Enes Gezer in men's 75-kilogram class of the Sanda, and collected another gold medal for Iran.



Hamid Reza Sahandi, though, conceded defeat against his Chinese opponent and received the silver medal of men's 60-kilogram weight category.

Earlier, Iran's female wushu artist Fatemeh Vaisi managed to win a bronze medal in women's 52-kilogram category.

Ramin Afraz participated in men's 65-kilogram category of the Sanda, and won a bronze medal for Iran.

Sanda, sometimes called Sanshou or Lei tai, has all the combat aspects of wushu, but includes many more grappling techniques.

The sixth edition of World Junior Wushu Championships started in Burgas on September 25 and will finish on October 3.

(Source: PressTV)

Luis Enrique praises Iniesta before 600th game

Barcelona coach Luis Enrique paid tribute to midfield magician Andres Iniesta as the Spain international prepares to make his 600th appearance for the La Liga champions.

Iniesta is Barca's second highest all-time appearance maker behind former midfielder partner Xavi Hernandez and has been the club captain since Xavi left in 2015.

The 32-year-old made his Barca debut in 2002 when Luis Enrique was still playing for the club. The Spain international recently marked 20 years since joining Barcelona's youth academy and will rack up 600 games if selected against Celta Vigo on Sunday.

"As a former team mate of his I am twice

as fortunate and the fact he has played 599 games, possibly 600 tomorrow, can only fill us with pride," Luis Enrique told a news conference on Saturday ahead of the visit to former club Celta.

"He has played all those games for a reason, he would never have reached that number if he had played badly. All we can do is enjoy watching him, because of what he has done, what he has won and the values he has shown while winning."

Barca head to Celta on the back of an emphatic 5-0 win at Sporting Gijon and a second-half turnaround to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach 2-1 in the Champions

League, winning both games without injured talisman Lionel Messi.

"I didn't expect anything else. To win trophies you need a big squad and that's what we have," said Luis Enrique, adding that the Argentinian maestro was recovering well from his groin problem.

The coach also backed his new striker Paco Alcacer, who he took off early in the second half against Moenchengladbach when Barca were losing 1-0.

The Spain international is yet to score since signing from Valencia late in the transfer window shut and was heavily criticised in the Spanish press for his dis-

play in Germany.

"He's doing marvellously, he's been almost perfect and is performing exactly how I want," the coach said.

"He arrived at the end of the pre-season, which makes things more difficult for him, but I'm delighted with him. I'm delighted with the displays of all my players and especially with Paco Alcacer"

Luis Enrique coached Celta in the 2013-14 season and has endured difficult games in his two visits to Balaídos stadium with Barca, scraping a 1-0 win in his first season and losing 4-1 last term.

(Source: Reuters)

Naderi wins Iran's sixth gold medal at Asian Beach Games

Wrestler Mohammad Naderi claimed Iran's sixth gold medal in the 5th Asian Beach Games on Saturday.

The Iranian athlete defeated Nazir from Pakistan in the Men's under 70kg final and claimed the gold medal.

It's Iran's sixth gold medal in the competition underway

in Vietnam. Ali Samari in shot put, Elyas Ali Akbari and Mohammadhossein Sheikholeslami in Kurash, Masoud Minaei and Kaveh Soleymani in Muay Thai have already won five gold medals in the competition.

The 5th Asian Beach Games started on September 24 in

the Vietnamese city of Danang and will finish on October 3.

The event has brought around 3,000 Asian beach sports athletes competing in 14 sports, 22 disciplines and 172 events together.

(Source: Tasnim)

AFC U-16 Championship Final: IR Iran preview

Coach Abbas Chamanian has urged Islamic Republic of Iran to achieve what they set out to do and win the AFC U-16 Championship India 2016 title ahead of Sunday's final with Iraq at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

Iran sealed their place in a first final since winning the competition in 2008 after a 6-5 penalty shootout victory over defending champions DPR Korea in Thursday's semi-final followed a 1-1 draw.

Chamanian's side must now overcome neighbours Iraq, who ran out impressive 4-2 victors over Japan in Thursday's other last-four fixture, if they are to claim a second continental crown.

"Iraq are a very strong team that attacks very well. They have quality and dangerous players who are physical with good technique," said Chamanian, whose side also secured their place in the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup by seeing off Vietnam 5-0 in the quarter-finals. "We have analysed Iraq and we know it will be a very difficult match. If we want to achieve success the players will need to be at their best.

"But from the start of the tournament our top priority was to get to the final and win the competition. We've prepared the players only to think about winning the trophy."

Mohammad Sharifi's first-half goal saw Iran go into the interval a goal to the good against DPR Korea only for Kim Pom-hyok to equalise late on and take the semi-final to penalties.

With the shootout at 5-5 goalkeeper Ali Gholam Zadeh stepped up to score before returning to his line to save from Kim Kyong-sok as the Iranians progressed to their third final at the AFC youth event.

"From the start of the competition we have been very successful," added Chamanian. "Every game has been a new experience and every game has been successful.

"Against DPR Korea we controlled their players and that is what we must do against Iraq in order to win. We have a game plan to control the match."

But unable to call on injured captain Aref Alipour since Matchday Two, Chamanian now has fresh concerns over influential midfielder Mohammad Ghaderi and defender Saeid Ahani ahead of a first meeting with Iraq at the competition since a scoreless draw in the 2006 group stage.

"It was a very hard game against DPR Korea," said Chamanian. "We have had a good recovery but tomorrow there is a chance Alipour, Ghaderi and Ahani will miss the game through injury."

(Source: AFC)

Celina: I want to captain Kosovo at a World Cup

Friday 13 May 2016 is a date Bersant Celina will never forget. Not long after the exciting midfield prospect penned a contract extension until 2020 at English Premier League giants Manchester City, Celina's native Kosovo were admitted as a FIFA member association, enabling the country to compete for a place at major tournaments for the first time.

"It was an incredibly proud time for me," Celina told FIFA.com, reflecting on that day. "Being able to play in FIFA competitions was a massive thing for both me and the country and I was very happy that we are now able to take part in major tournaments. Signing a contract is reward for performing well and I think my family are really proud of me. I am proud as well."

International dreams

Currently on loan at Dutch side FC Twente, Prizren-born Celina moved to Norway with his family as an infant in 1998, escaping looming war in his homeland. After settling in Drammen, a city with a large Kosovar immigrant community, Celina developed his love of the beautiful game, signing for local heavyweights Stromsgodset IF as a schoolboy before representing Norway at a number of youth levels, including U-21.

When the decision came to choose between Norway and Kosovo, the 20-year-old opted for the latter, and has since featured in Kosovo's first official match, as well as the nation's first FIFA World Cup™ qualifier against Finland just last month. The starlet now harbours big international goals: to captain his country on the greatest stage of them all.

"To captain Kosovo at a World Cup is an ambition that I still hold. That is the ultimate aim," said Celina. "I am happy for all the players who will be able to take part and hopefully we will all be able to play in the World Cup one day. It means a lot to us after what the country has been through that we now may be able to compete in a major tournament. I think everyone is very happy about this and our supporters just want us to do well."

The full extent of Kosovo's FIFA admission was arguably felt most by players, staff and supporters on 3 June 2016 when they took on Faroe Islands in their first recognised international ahead of the country's maiden World Cup qualifying voyage. It was the first time the country's flag was displayed and anthem played before an international, an extremely proud sight for Kosovo before they ran out 2-0 winners in their first official game.

"There was an incredible amount of excitement around that first friendly against the Faroe Islands," recalls Celina. "It was a good game that we won – although not the best game for me as I got sent off! We showed then that we can win games and we played well. We all know what the country has been through, what our families have been through. We want to do well for them. It comes from the heart. The passion not just for football but for everyone in our country. I'm very proud to represent Kosovo."

World Cup ambitions

Kosovo face a baptism of fire on the road to Russia 2018, having been paired with no less than four teams in their maiden World Cup qualifying group who were at UEFA EURO 2016: Croatia, Iceland, Ukraine and Turkey. After an opening 1-1 draw at Finland, they face Croatia on 6 October 2016, before a trip to Ukraine three days later. Under the guidance of manager Albert Bunjaki – "a good friend, easy to work with and tactically excellent" – according to Celina, confidence remains high in the Kosovo camp despite the tough task that lies ahead.

"It's a very tough group. My aim is to qualify – it shouldn't be anything else," asserted Celina. "We should go into every single game and give everything. You never know what is going to happen. In football anything can happen and I believe we can do it."

(Source: FIFA)



Poem of the day

Last night the wind from out her village blew,
And wandered all the garden alleys through,
Oh rose, tearing thy bosom's robe in two;
'Twas not in vain!

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon: 11:54 Evening: 6:04 Dawn: 4:38 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:01 (tomorrow)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



"Immortality" to compete in Rome film festival

T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director **d e s k Mehdi Fard-Qaderi's** "Immortality" will go on screen at the 11th Rome Film Fest, which will be held in the Italian capital from October 13 to 23.

"Immortality", which is a one-shot feature film, tells the story of some strangers who have to spend a rainy night together in a train.

Iran's Cinema Verite to screen docs from CPH:DOX

T A R T TEHRAN — A selection of **d e s k** documentaries screened at the Copenhagen International Documentary Festival - CPH:DOX is scheduled to be screened in the Mirror of a Festival section at Cinema Verite, the Iranian international festival for documentary films.

CPH:DOX is the third largest documentary film festival in the world, which is held annually in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The 10th edition of Iran's Cinema Verite will be held in Tehran from December 4 to 11.



AnimArt festival honors Iranian director Zohreh Behruzinia

T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director **d e s k Zohreh Behruzinia** received the best director award for the puppet theater "And He Said: You Will See Today, Tomorrow and the Day After Tomorrow" at the AniAmrt World Puppet Carnival, the international festival of animation art, which was held in Lodz, Poland from September 24 to 30.

Written by Nima Dehqan, the play tells the life story of Iranian mystic Mansur Hallaj.

Tehran photo exhibit explores latest achievements of government

T A R T TEHRAN — An exhibition of photos, **d e s k** films and infographics highlighting the latest achievements of the government opened in Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Saturday.

Entitled "The Art of Prudence", the exhibit features the achievements of the government in different areas such as culture, agriculture, politics and several more, Persian media reported.



A number of officials and artists including Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Ali Jannati, stage director Qotbeddin Sadeghi, and actors Iraj Raad and Akbar Zanjani attended the event.

Speaking at the ceremony, Jannati said that the exhibit has been arranged in collaboration with the Presidential Office to put the spotlight on the government's activities over the past three years.

In his brief remarks, First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, who was also attending the opening ceremony, called art an expressive language reflecting different topics. "The issues that cannot be expressed in words can be institutionalized in the minds of people with the language of art."

"This is the first time that the achievements of the government have been put on display by means of the language of art," he added.

He hoped that positive reviews would help remove any weak points or obstacles.

The Institute for Promotion of Contemporary Visual Art is the facilitator of the project designed by stage and costume designer Siamak Ehsai.

"Standing in the Dust" crowned best at Resistance film festival

1 →

Lebanese director/writer Mai Masri received the award for best screenwriter for "3000 Nights", about a young Palestinian woman who fights to protect her newborn son, survive and keep hope alive in an Israeli prison.

In the international competition two filmmakers were honored with special jury prizes. Syrian director Basil Al-Khatib received that award for "Syrians" and Iranian director Hassan Barzideh won the prize for "Mazar-i-Sharif".

The best actress award was presented to Merila Zarei, the star of Majid Esmaili's directorial debut "The Little Black Fish". She received the award for her portrayal of Shahrzad, the wife of a member of an Iranian leftist group who is killed in a guerilla war in northern Iran during the 1980s.

Parviz Parastui won the award for best actor for his role in Ebrahim Hatamikia's political drama "Bodyguard".

The leader of Yemen's Houthi faction, Abdel-Malek al-Houthi, was also selected as the Resistance Person of the Year at the festival.

He received his award from IRGC chief Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari and Basij Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi.



Abdel-Malek al-Houthi (L), the leader of Yemen's Houthi faction, receives the award for the Resistance Person of the Year from IRGC chief Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari during the closing ceremony of the 14th International Resistance Film Festival at Tehran's Milad Tower. Basij Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi is also seen in the photo. (Mehr/Asghar Khamseh)

Portraits of world famous figures embellished with Persian calligraphy

T A R T TEHRAN — An **d e s k** exhibition of calligraphy works by Ahmad Tak bearing portraits of world famous figures such as singer Mohammadreza Shajarian, martyr Mostafa Chamran and actress Marilyn Monroe opened in Tehran's Vaali Gallery.

The portraits bearing nastaliq-style calligraphy in an immense type size highlight a new relation between classic calligraphy and graffiti art, Tak said in a press release published on Saturday.

He noted that his exhibit named "Third Line" covers portraits, as well as abstract human and animal figures, adding,

"Calligraphy has been accompanied by other components in my works leading to new productions."

About his calligraphy on the image of the animals he said, "I have found the lines on the skin of the animals. A zebra beautifully bears positive and negative spaces for inscriptions. And the form and shape of the skin of a giraffe is also good for calligraphy."

"I do not remember a single day that I have worked without listening to the heavenly voice of Shajarian; his voice gives credit to the music of this land," he remarked.

"Moreover, I don't think any Iranian individual has forgotten the image of martyr (Mostafa) Chamran and his bravery and the bravery of other martyrs," he added.

Tak said that he has created his collection on a new style of canvas that he made specifically for this combination. "The usual forms of canvas do not allow a calligrapher to inscribe the words easily so I spent several years developing this form of canvas," he concluded.

The exhibit will be running until October 7 at the gallery which can be found at 71 Khoddami St. off Vanak Square.



Works by calligrapher Ahmad Tak feature Iranian war hero Mostafa Chamran and U.S. actress Marilyn Monroe in an exhibition at Tehran's Vaali Gallery on September 30, 2016. (Honaronline/Marzieh Musavi)

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Ehsan Neqabat



Shahrdad Rohani conducts the Tehran Symphony Orchestra in performing pieces by South Korean composers at Vahdat Hall on September 30, 2016. The performance was organized as part of a South Korean cultural festival, which will run through autumn in Tehran.

Turaj Aslani selected for Slemani festival jury

T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** cinematographer Turaj Aslani has been selected for the jury of the first edition of the Slemani International Film Festival, which opened in the Iraqi city of Slemani (Sulaymaniyah) yesterday.

The jury also includes Iraqi director Sarbast Rasul and Iraqi screenwriter Shokat Amin Korki.

Aslani, who has been awarded in several Iranian and international festivals, is mostly known for his collaboration on "Rhino Season" by Bahman Ghobadi, "A Few Kilos of Dates for a Funeral" by Saman Salur and "Whisper with the Wind" by Shahram Alidi.

A number of Iranian films will also go on screen during the festival, which will run until October 4.

Boston Marathon bombing makes way to TV and movie screens

NEW YORK (Reuters) — More than three years after the Boston Marathon bombing, the story of the 2013 deadly attack on the race and its aftermath is making its way to both the big and small screens.

Cable channel HBO on Friday released the first trailer for its documentary "Marathon: The Patriots Day Bombing" which will be screened on Nov. 21.

The documentary uses surveillance footage, news clips and home movies to examine the bombing that killed three people and wounded more than 260 near the marathon route's finish line in central Boston in April 2013. It will also feature interviews with first responders and survivors, and the trial, conviction and death-

penalty sentencing of bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.

Tsarnaev's older brother, Tamerlan, died following a shootout with police in the suburb of Watertown, Massachusetts, after Dzhokhar Tsarnaev ran him over in a hijacked sport utility vehicle. The brothers, ethnic Chechens, had immigrated to the United States from Russia a decade before the attack.

The attack is also the subject of a Hollywood feature film called "Patriots Day", starring Mark Wahlberg and Kevin Bacon, that will be released in late December and is seen as a possible awards contender.

A third film, "Stronger", starring Jake Gyllenhaal, is expected to be released in 2017.

Daniel Craig still first choice for Bond, says producer

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The team behind the James Bond films wants Daniel Craig to return as 007, the spy series' executive producer said on Friday, even after the British actor said he would rather slash his wrists than appear again.

The 48-year-old star was "absolutely the first choice ... We would love Daniel to return as Bond," Callum McDougall told BBC radio.

Craig said last year he was "over" the role after filming wrapped up on the last installment "Spectre", which went on to gross \$880 million worldwide.

When asked if he could imagine doing another Bond movie, Craig told London's Time Out magazine: "Now? I'd rather break this glass and

slash my wrists."

His words triggered a flurry of speculation over who might appear next, with Idris Elba, Tom Hiddleston and Aidan Turner among the top contenders.

Craig was widely praised for bringing a fresh grittiness to the role of the suave secret agent over four films, starting with Casino Royale in 2006.

A report by RadarOnline earlier this month said Craig had already been offered \$150 million by studio Sony to return for two more films.

McDougall told the BBC that Bond producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael Wilson both shared his views. "I know they are hoping for him to come back," he said.