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Suu Kyi is a 'cruel' woman



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HRW: Saudi-led air raids in Yemen are 'war crimes'

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has denounced the air raids conducted by Saudi Arabia and its allies in Yemen as "war crimes," calling on the United Nations to launch an investigation into the fatal strikes.

The rights organization cited on Tuesday five "apparently unlawful" Saudi aerial assaults in Yemen between June 9

and August 4, which killed 39 civilians, among them 26 children.

"The Saudi-led coalition's repeated promises to conduct its airstrikes lawfully are not sparing Yemeni children from unlawful attacks," said Sarah Leah Whitson, the Middle East director at HRW, adding that the attacks "are still wiping out entire families" in Yemen. **→13**

Iraqi parliament votes against Kurdish independence referendum

By staff & agencies

The Iraqi parliament has voted to oppose a referendum on the independence of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

The majority of lawmakers voted against the referendum — planned by the Kurdistan Regional Government — during a parliament session

on Tuesday.

The vote prompted Kurdish lawmakers to quit the parliament floor.

Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri said the vote made it incumbent on the government to "take all steps to protect the unity of Iraq and open a serious dialog" with Kurdish officials. **→13**

Iran opposed to pressure, threats against neighbors: Zarif

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that the Islamic Republic is opposed to the application of any form of pressure and threat against its neighbors.

Zarif made the remarks during a meeting with Qatar's Ambassador to Iran Ali bin Ahmed Ali al-Sulaiti.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's pol-

icy in the region is clear. The region's issues have to be resolved through dialog, and we are opposed to any pressure or threat, by whatever party, against [our] neighbors," the top Iranian diplomat said.

The two also addressed the expansion of the ties between Iran and Qatar, especially in the areas of economy and commerce. **→2**

'Trump to weigh more aggressive U.S. strategy on Iran'

President Donald Trump is weighing a strategy that could allow more aggressive U.S. responses to Iran's forces, according to six current and former U.S. officials.

The proposal was prepared by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, national security adviser H.R. McMaster and other top officials, and presented to Trump at a National Security Council meeting on Friday, the sources said, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

It could be agreed and made public before the end of September, two of the sources said. All of the sources are familiar with the draft and requested anonymity because Trump has yet to act on it.

In contrast to detailed instructions handed down by President Barack Obama and some of his predecessors, Trump is expected to set broad strategic objectives and goals for U.S. policy but leave it to U.S. military commanders, diplomats and other U.S. officials to implement the plan, said a senior administration official.

"Whatever we end up with, we want to implement with allies to the greatest extent possible," the official added.

The White House declined to comment.

The plan is intended to increase the pressure on Tehran to curb its ballistic missile programs and support for what they called militants, several sources said.

The proposal also targets cyber espionage and other activity and potentially nuclear proliferation, the official said.

Shamkhani: U.S. seeking to manage, not eradicate Daesh

POLITICS TEHRAN — Secretary of Defense James Mattis dismissed U.S. claims that it is fighting Daesh, saying Washington is only seeking to manipulate the terrorist group to serve its own interests in the region.

"We have repeatedly received documented reports proving that the U.S.-led coalition had been trying to manage Daesh instead of fighting against it and in cases that the terrorist group's suppression was possible, America has shown no reaction and even helped it to flee the battlefield," Shamkhani told the Arabic-language al-Vefagh newspaper in an interview published on Tuesday.

He added that the U.S. today has taken the gesture of fight against Daesh to cover its supports for the terrorist group and prevent implementation of an agreement Hezbollah

made to evacuate the families of the terrorists from Syria.

"What we have so far seen from America and its allies is bombing the residential areas, massacre of women and children, targeting the positions of the Syrian army and Iraqi popular forces and some limited ineffective operations which have covered dispatch of logistical aid to the terrorists," Shamkhani said.

In relevant remarks in July, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larjani blasted the U.S. and its allies for supporting the terrorist groups, saying that Washington is only pretending to be combating Daesh.

"At the time when Iraq was being overrun by Daesh, did the United States make the slightest move in defense of it? Or was it the Iranian nation that rendered aid to the Iraqi nation and Iraqi government?" Larjani asked.

He reiterated that if Iran had not assisted the Iraqi government and nation, Baghdad would have been occupied by ISIL by now. "It is with the help of Iran that the Daesh is taking its last breath in Iraq and Syria."

Also in the same month, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif urged the U.S. to stop supporting the terrorist groups in the region, noting that Washington's recent approach in Syria will only make the Daesh stronger.

"Another dangerous U.S. escalation in Syria on fake pretext will only serve ISIS, precisely when it's being wiped out by Iraqi and Syrian people," Zarif wrote on his Twitter page.

The Iranian foreign minister underlined that the U.S. should join the real war against terrorist groups instead of pursuing policies that strengthen the terrorists.

Iran signs deals to reconstruct power lines in Syria

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran has signed a number of agreements with Syria to reconstruct power plants and electricity transmission lines in the war-torn neighboring country, the caretaker of the Iranian energy ministry Sattar Mahmoodi said on Tuesday.

The Syrian government signed a contract to import Iranian power plants for the

city of Aleppo, Syrian state news says SANA reported, an early sign of the major role Tehran is expected to play in Syria's reconstruction.

The contract was signed Tuesday with the Iranian company Mapna during a visit by Syrian Electricity Minister Zuhair Kharboutli, AP reported.

Kharboutli was quoted by SANA on Sun-

day as valuing the deal at 130 million Euros. The five gas-powered plants will provide 125 megawatts of electricity to Aleppo, Syria's largest city before the war.

Kharboutli also signed memorandums of understanding to import five plants to the coastal region of Latakia and restore electrical infrastructure nationwide. The new plants would generate 540 megawatts.



Royal stamps in limelight at National Museum of Iran

A collection of governmental and royal rubber stamps, dating back to Qajar dynasty (1785-1925), are on show at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran. The elegant seals are parts of a four-day major exhibition titled "Eternal Sparks" that turns the spotlight on ancient and modern art of gold jewelry in the country. The exhibit will be running through September 15.

Hariri calls on Russia to support Lebanese Army

During an official visit to Russia, Prime Minister Saad Hariri called for greater economic and military cooperation with Moscow.

During a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Hariri said that Russia plays an important role in the region and that Lebanon is looking forward to developing on existing cooperation.

"We want greater economic and political Lebanese-Russian cooperation. This is my first visit to Russia as a Prime Minister and I am determined to develop the economic and military relations," Hariri told Lavrov during a live media conference before the pair sat down for talks. "And to discuss the purchase of some weapons from Russia to strengthen the Lebanese Army, which is very important to Lebanon."

The PM added that, like many countries around the world, Lebanon was actively engaged in the fight against terrorism. He added that the Lebanese Army had been victorious in its offensive against Daesh (ISIL) terrorists on the northeastern Lebanese border and hence, there was a need to help strengthen its capabilities and that of its security agencies.

Lavrov praised the role that Lebanon has been playing in fighting terrorism and said that efforts regarding this matter should be unified.

"We congratulate [Lebanon] for the [operation] combating Daesh," he told Hariri.

"We appreciate your efforts in developing cooperation between Russia and Lebanon and your personal contribution in developing these relations on all levels."

Touching on the Syrian refugee crisis, Hariri told Lavrov that Lebanon was looking at ways to include a settlement for displaced people in any future political settlement reached with Syrian groups.

"We know that a peace solution regarding Syria is being worked on and we hope that this political solution will include the return of the displaced Syrians in Lebanon and [the entire] region to Syria within the political solution," the premier said.

Following his meeting with Lavrov, Hariri met with his Russian counterpart Dimitri Medvedev.

(Source: Daily Star)

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran faults Myanmar government, army for Rohingya killings

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian government spokesman on Tuesday blamed the Myanmar government and army for the "sorrowful and inhumane event" against the minority Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

Speaking to the press, Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said President Hassan Rouhani's trip to Kazakhstan was a chance for the Islamic world to deal with the killings in Myanmar, IRNA reported.

Nobakht also said, "Beyond expressing sorrow, Iran will use all its capacity to defend the suppressed through diplomacy."



Zarif to visit Russia's Sochi on Wednesday

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will visit Russia's southwestern city of Sochi on Wednesday for talks with Russian officials, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday.

Iran and Russia enjoy close diplomatic ties. The two countries support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria.

Also, since the Iran nuclear deal went into force in January 2016, Tehran and Moscow have ramped up efforts to further expand bilateral ties.



No outsider allowed to visit Iran's military sites: Velayati

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Supreme Leader, said on Tuesday that no outsider, including Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Yukiya Amano, is allowed to visit Iran's military sites.

"In [our] agreements with the agency, there's no mention of accessing [Iran's] military sites," Velayati told reporters after meeting with former French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine in Tehran.

He added that Iran's military sites are not open to any outsider because the country regards its military activities as top secret information.



Iran seeking to take legal action against Rohingya massacre

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry is pursuing legal action over the massacre of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour said on Tuesday.

Rahimpour said the conflict in Myanmar is nothing new and has recurred several times in recent years, adding that the Islamic Republic has taken measures to defend the oppressed in Myanmar.

He also expressed regret over the Muslim world's lack of energy to respond to such atrocities, saying such inaction is due to the ongoing conflicts in the Muslim world.



Iraqi president lauds Iran for help against terrorism

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iraqi President Fuad Masum on Tuesday lauded Iran for supporting the Iraqi nation in the fight against terrorism, IRNA reported.

In a meeting with Iran's ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi, Masum appreciated Iran's efforts in fighting Daesh and called for expansion of cooperation between the two countries.

Masjedi, for his part, highlighted Tehran's firm stance on supporting Iraqi people and government, saying it is in the two countries' interests to open new horizons of cooperation.



Top officials urges more co-op with Pakistan

POLITICS TEHRAN — Mohammad Nahavandian, the vice president for economic affairs, on Monday called for more cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in areas of security and economy.

Military confrontation against extremism is necessary but a full-scale encounter against this phenomenon needs cooperation in both cultural and economic fields, Nahavandian told Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khawja Muhammad Asif in a meeting in Tehran.

He also said both sides should take the necessary measures to develop Tehran-Islamabad cooperation in various spheres including banking, transportation and trade.

Guarding nuclear deal a litmus test for EU, Kharrazi says

POLITICS TEHRAN — The nuclear deal is a litmus test for the European Union to show its real stance toward the U.S., the head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations said on Tuesday.

Kamal Kharrazi made the remarks on Monday in a meeting of the council with former French foreign minister Ubert Vedrine as guest of honor.

However, Kharrazi said, "European countries' stance has been clear so far in supporting the nuclear deal."

The nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed in July 2015 between Iran, the European Union, France, Germany, Britain, the U.S., Russia and China. The deal went into effect early 2016. However, there are strong indications that new U.S. President Donald Trump intends to withdraw his country from the agreement.

On a question whether Iran will remain loyal to the JCPOA, even after a U.S. withdrawal, he said it depends on other parties' stances.

Kharrazi also expressed dismay over French stance on the launch of the Simorgh satellite carrier by Iran on July 27, saying it was not capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

France's decision to sign the statement



Kamal Kharrazi and former French foreign minister Ubert Vedrine (R) speaking at a meeting of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations.

against the launch of the satellite carrier raised a question in Iranians' mind since it was not contrary to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 which endorsed the nuclear deal, he added.

He also criticized France for hosting the terrorist People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK) that has killed 13,000 Iranians.

Kharrazi went on to say that Iran is a stable and influential country in the region and it would be good for France to establish better relation with Tehran.

The former foreign minister also said, "Iran and Europe are developing relations, and Iran has expressed its readiness in promoting stability in the region."

"Iran has indicated its peace-making role by supporting Syrian and Iraqi governments (in fight against Daesh)," he added.

'Iran nuclear deal to benefit all parties'

Vedrine also said the implementation of the nuclear deal has offered a strategic moment for all to benefit from, expressing satisfaction over the conditions created after the nuclear deal.

A new chapter has been opened in Iran's foreign relations, he said. "However the main problem is the United States."

"Many strong circles tried to disrupt the nuclear talks and its implementation at any price. Today U.S. President Donald Trump is also against the JCPOA, and he remains to be unpredictable."

Iran will benefit from implementation of the nuclear agreement and the country has stayed committed to it, Vedrine said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly announced that Iran is committed to the nuclear deal, he said.

The former top French diplomat also said Iran's approach toward regional issues, its relations with Arab countries and its stance toward Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Russia are important for Paris.

Ayatollah Khamenei calls Aung San Suu Kyi a 'cruel' woman

POLITICS TEHRAN — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Tuesday called Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace prize winner, a "cruel woman" in which crimes against Rohingya Muslims are taking place with her approval.

The Leader who was speaking to his theology students said events in Myanmar also sounded the death knell for Nobel Peace prize.

Stressing the need for "practical" measures against Myanmar by Islamic countries, the Leader said such practical actions would not entail a military campaign, but the Muslim countries "should

mount political, economic, and trade pressure on the government of Myanmar and cry out against such crimes in international circles."

The catastrophe in Myanmar should not be downgraded to a sectarian conflict between Muslims and Buddhists, Ayatollah Khamenei underscored, describing the crisis as a political issue that might have been affected by some degree of "religious bigotry."

The "cruel" government of Myanmar

is committing crimes against Muslims before the eyes of Islamic countries, the international organizations, and the hypocritical governments which falsely claim to be advocating human rights, the Leader deplored.

He also criticized the UN secretary general for only a verbal condemnation of the crimes against Muslims in Myanmar, saying the self-proclaimed advocates of human rights that sometimes "raise hue and cry for the punishment of

a criminal in a country" have surprisingly remained silent about the killing and displacement of tens of thousands of people in Myanmar.

Ayatollah Khamenei finally stressed that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation should convene a conference on the catastrophe in Myanmar.

"Today's world is the world of tyranny," Ayatollah Khamenei noted, saying the Islamic Republic will remain honor-bound to rise against tyranny and express its stances "explicitly and courageously" against oppression anywhere in world, either in the occupied Palestinian territories, in Yemen, in Bahrain, or in Myanmar.

The Leader said events in Myanmar sounded the death knell for Nobel Peace prize.

Iran: Safety issues should not affect peaceful use of nuclear technology

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Group of 77 (G-77) believes that the states member to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have the main responsibility of ensuring nuclear safety but it should not affect efforts for peaceful uses of nuclear technology, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based IAEA said on Monday.

Reza Najafi, also the chair of G-77 at the IAEA, made the remarks in a speech on boosting international cooperation on transfer and safety of nuclear waste, IRNA reported.

The G-77 is the largest intergovernmental organi-

zation of developing countries in the United Nations. It was established on 15 June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries to promote their collective economic interests.

Appreciating the IAEA's contribution to making nuclear plans operational, creating or enhancing nuclear safety infrastructures, and making safety capacities in developing countries, Najafi said, "G-77 encourages the Agency to keep helping countries to develop their technical capacities and skills in nuclear safety."

The G-77 also appreciated IAEA's measures on nuclear radiations and protecting the environment by



holding regional training workshops and also promoting protection against atomic radiations in nuclear medicine.

Washington will be isolated if it quits nuclear deal: Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht on Tuesday warned the U.S. government of the consequences of quitting the nuclear deal, saying by doing so, Washington would isolate itself.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Nobakht emphasized that the nuclear agreement, also known as the JCPOA, was a multilateral deal signed between Iran and six countries, with the U.S. being

only one of those parties. Quitting the JCPOA would only harm Washington, he said.

He noted that in the event Washington quits the deal, the Islamic Republic would make a decision based on its national interests, adding such decision would require consultation with other government branches.

In reference to recent remarks by Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Yukiya Amano, Nobakht

said Amano's words are so clear and straightforward that there's no doubt Iran has been committed to the deal.

On Monday, Amano said Iran has been fulfilling its commitments under the nuclear accord after Washington suggested it was not adhering to the deal.

"The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the (deal) are being implemented," Amano said in the text of a speech to a quarterly meeting of the IAEA's 35-member Board of Gov-

ernors. Nobakht also rejected Washington's calls for inspection of Iran's military sites, saying such demands are "unlawful".

Last month, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, traveled to Vienna to speak with Amano about Iran and asked if the IAEA planned to inspect the country's military sites.

Since then, a number of senior Iranian officials have dismissed the U.S. demand as "merely a dream".

Iran opposed to pressure, threats against neighbors: Zarif

1 → Replicating Saudi Arabia, Qatar recalled its envoy to Iran in January 2016. Riyadh had withdrawn its own ambassador over demonstrations in front of the Saudi Arabian diplomatic premises in Tehran and Mashhad.

But Qatar later found itself in a dispute of its own with Saudi Arabia. On June 5, Riyadh led three other Arab states in severing ties with Doha and laying a par-

tial siege to it earlier this year in part because of what the Saudi government believed was better relations with Iran.

The four boycotting countries later demanded that Doha downgrade its ties with Iran even as Doha had already recalled its ambassador.

Iran has taken a neutral stance on the Arab dispute

and has called for dialog. Qatar recently decided to return its ambassador to the Iranian capital. The United Arab Emirates, one of the countries boycotting Doha, publicly criticized the move.

In separate meetings in Tehran on Monday, Zarif received ambassadors of Switzerland, Qatar, Norway, and Greece.

Ex-U.S. diplomat: Trump administration's approach to Iran is dangerous

Thomas Countryman, a career diplomat who served as United States assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation from 2011-2017, in a commentary published on the CNN website on Sept. 11 said Donald Trump is taking a "dangerous approach" toward Iran.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

Last week, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) once again reported that all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- including Iran -- are in full compliance with the agreement. This marks the 8th time the agency, in its regular reports mandated by the JCPOA, has confirmed that the nuclear deal is working -- and it must be noted that since the implementation of the JCPOA, not once has the agency found Iran to be out

of compliance.

But President Donald Trump seems ready to ignore the evidence and declare Iran out of compliance in defiance of all the experts. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley even made the case for the withdrawal from the Iran deal on Tuesday.

But the Trump administration's approach to Iran is dangerous. Good American foreign policy is not made with alternative facts, but that is all they offer when it comes to rationalizing their approach to Iran -- as we heard Tuesday from Ambassador Haley, who tried to build a case against staying in the deal by citing violations that didn't happen, claiming that there are hundreds of suspicious sites left uninspected when there aren't, and brushing off the security

concerns of our allies.

The IAEA is not a political organization, but rather the independent agency tasked with overseeing the most invasive inspection regime ever acceded to under a nonproliferation agreement. The IAEA has access to the most detailed information about Iran's nuclear program, benefiting from the intelligence apparatus of the United States as well as the other deal signatories like the United Kingdom and France. The IAEA continuously monitors every element of Iran's nuclear program to ensure that Iran is adhering to all aspects of the agreement.

Additionally, if the IAEA suspects that covert efforts are underway to produce fissile material, such as enriched uranium, or advance Iran's nuclear program in a way

not permitted under the deal, it is their prerogative to request additional information and inspections until they are satisfied that no violation of the JCPOA is taking place.

The IAEA knows the ins and outs of the Iranian nuclear program better than any other entity so it makes sense that its reports that Iran is in compliance with its commitments are accepted across the board, other than perhaps by the Trump administration.

The President campaigned on rash promises, including plans to tear up the deal, and he made it clear this summer that he still expects to pull out of "the worst deal ever."

Sadly, he may do so even without any evidence to justify such an extreme course of action.

UN Security Council to discuss Rohingya situation

Myanmar faces mounting pressure over refugee exodus

The UN Security Council will hold an urgent meeting on Myanmar's Rohingya crisis, following warnings by the organization's human rights chief that "ethnic cleansing" is taking place.

Britain and Sweden requested Wednesday's meeting against the backdrop of a growing humanitarian crisis.

Pressure mounted on Myanmar on Tuesday to end violence, with the United States calling for protection of civilians and Bangladesh urging safe zones to enable refugees to go home.

Around 370,000 of Myanmar's minority Rohingya population have fled the country's western state of Rakhine into neighboring Bangladesh in recent weeks, according to the UN, since the violence began on August 25, after Rohingya fighters attacked police posts, prompting a military crackdown.

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN's high commissioner for human rights, accused Myanmar authorities of acting in a "clearly disproportionate" manner, "without regards for basic principles of international law", on Monday.

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The Bangladeshi parliament approved a motion on Monday urging the international community to increase pressure on Myanmar to resolve the crisis.



Officials in Buddhist-majority Myanmar claim its security forces are fighting Rohingya combatants.

"The government of Myanmar fully shares the concern of the international community regarding the displacement and suffering of all communities affected by the latest escalation of violence ignited by the acts of terrorism," said a foreign ministry spokesperson on Tuesday.

A number of nongovernmental organizations have expressed concern at the escalating humanitarian cost of the crisis, with Save the Children claiming the situation is becoming increasingly desperate.

"The humanitarian situation is distressing, and the

needs are enormous. The international community needs to recognize this, step up and urgently meet the needs of incredibly vulnerable people, especially children," said George Graham, the charity's director of humanitarian policy, on Tuesday.

"Thousands of Rohingya families including children, are sleeping out in the open or by a roadside because they don't have anywhere else to go. Some don't have enough food or clean drinking water, and this state of uncertainty increases the risk of children being exploited, abused or even trafficked."

Bangladeshi officials are due to begin registering the refugees on Tuesday.

(Source: Agencies)

Iraq urged to sue U.S. coalition over Mosul deaths

Iraq's official High Commission for Human Rights has urged the Iraqi government to sue a U.S.-led coalition operating in the Arab country over the death of civilians in the northern city of Mosul.

Wahda al-Jumaili, a member of the parliament-affiliated commission, said U.S.-led airstrikes had destroyed "numerous buildings in western Mosul — residential and commercial," and that "nearly 2,000 bodies" had been recovered from under the rubble.

She said that more bodies were expected to be found.

"We are therefore calling on Iraqi prosecution authorities to file an official lawsuit against coalition commanders for these violations of humanitarian law and a failure to discriminate between Daesh (ISIL) criminals and civilians," she said.

Jumaili also urged Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to launch an investigation "to determine who is responsible for the loss of innocent lives" in Mosul.

In July, Iraqi forces liberated the city of Mosul, the



provincial capital of Nineveh, from the control of the Takfiri Daesh terrorists.

Separately, Hussam Eddin al-Abbar, a member of the provincial council of Nineveh, said that the coalition's fierce airstrikes had caused "widespread destruction" in the district of Old City in western Mosul

in particular.

■ **'2,650 bodies recovered from Mosul so far'**

Health officials in Nineveh said on Monday that 2,650 bodies had been recovered from Mosul since the city's liberation two months ago.

"Local medical facilities have received some 2,650 bodies," Laith Hababah, head of the Nineveh Health Department, said.

He said most of the bodies had been pulled from the rubble of destroyed buildings in the Old City district.

The United States and its allies launched a campaign of airstrikes against what they say are Daesh positions in August 2014 after the terrorist group overran parts of Iraq's north and west, including Mosul.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

(Source: Press TV)

UK MPs back Brexit bill critics call 'power grab'

Britain's parliament has backed a second reading of legislation to sever ties with the European Union.

After more than 13 hours of speeches for and against the legislation early on Tuesday, MPs voted 326 to 290 in favor of moving the EU withdrawal bill, or repeal bill, to the next stage of a lengthy legislative process.

Theresa May, UK prime minister, will now face demands by MPs for concessions before the bill - branded a power grab by the opposition - becomes law.

A key plank in the Conservative government's Brexit plans, the bill aims to convert thousands of EU laws and regulations into UK domestic laws on the day Britain leaves the bloc in March 2019.

The bill was seen as the first big Brexit hurdle.

Many fell into step with the government which said a vote against the legislation would force Britain into a chaotic exit from the EU, rather than a smooth departure, as the country would lack laws and a regulatory framework to steer the process.

May, weakened by the loss of her majority in a June election, now faces a battle against politicians who want to force amendments to the bill, first in the lower house of parliament and then in Britain's unelected upper chamber.

"Earlier this morning parliament took a historic decision to back the will of the British people and vote for a bill which gives certainty and clarity ahead of our withdrawal from the European Union," May said in a statement.

"Although there is more to do, this



decision means we can move on with negotiations with solid foundations, and we continue to encourage MPs from all parts of the UK to work together in support of this vital piece of legislation."

May's justice minister urged MPs to back the bill and signaled that the government would listen to the concerns of politicians despite describing some of their criticism as being "exaggerated up to and beyond the point of hyperbole."

The bill seeks largely to "copy and paste" EU law into British legislation to ensure Britain has functioning laws and the same regulatory framework as the bloc at the moment of Brexit, to offer some reassurance for companies.

■ **Referendum rift**

The often impassioned debate in the

650-seat parliament underlined the rifts exposed by last year's EU referendum, not only in Britain's main parties but also in the country.

The opposition Labor Party had called on its MPs to vote against the bill if the government failed to make concessions. But seven rebelled, with some saying they had to respect the demands of their pro-Brexit voters.

"This is a deeply disappointing result," said Keir Starmer, Labor's Brexit spokesman.

"This bill is an affront to parliamentary democracy and a naked power grab by government ministers ... It will make the Brexit process more uncertain, and lead to division and chaos when we need unity and clarity."

(Source: Guardian)

U.S. allies in Asia welcome new sanctions on defiant North Korea

The UN Security Council unanimously voted to step up sanctions on North Korea, with its profitable textile exports now banned and fuel supplies capped, prompting a traditionally defiant threat of retaliation against the United States.

Monday's decision, triggered by the North's sixth and largest nuclear test this month, was the ninth such resolution unanimously adopted by the 15-member Security Council since 2006 over North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear programs.

Japan and South Korea said after the passage of the U.S.-drafted Security Council resolution they were prepared to apply more pressure if North Korea refused to end its aggressive development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

A tougher initial U.S. draft was weakened to win the support of China, Pyongyang's main ally and trading partner, and Russia, both of which hold veto power in the council.

"We don't take pleasure in further strengthening sanctions today. We are not looking for war," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told the council after the vote. "The North Korean regime has not yet passed the point of no return."

"If it agrees to stop its nuclear program, it can reclaim its future ... If North Korea continues its dangerous path, we will continue with further pressure," said Haley, who credited a "strong relationship" between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping for the successful resolution negotiations.

North Korea's ambassador, Han Tae Song, told the UN-sponsored Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on Tuesday the United States was "fired up for political, economic, and military confrontation".

The North regularly threatens to destroy the South and its main ally, the United States, which it accuses of continual preparation for invasion.

"My delegation condemns in the strongest terms, and categorically rejects, the latest illegal and unlawful UN Security Council resolution," he said.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was



"ready to use a form of ultimate means", Han said, without elaborating.

"The forthcoming measures by DPRK will make the U.S. suffer the greatest pain it ever experienced in its history."

U.S. disarmament ambassador Robert Wood took the floor to say the Security Council resolution "frankly sent a very clear and unambiguous message to the regime that the international community is tired, is no longer willing to put up with provocative behavior from this regime."

UN member states are now required to halt imports of textiles from North Korea, its second largest export after coal and other minerals in 2016 that totaled \$752 million and accounted for a quarter of its income from trade, according to South Korean data. Nearly 80 percent went to China.

"This resolution also puts an end to the regime making money from the 93,000 North Korean citizens it sends overseas to work and heavily taxes," Haley said.

"This ban will eventually starve the regime of an additional \$500 million or more in annual revenues," she said.

■ **Resume dialogue**

South Korea's presidential Blue House said the only way for Pyongyang to end diplomatic isolation and free itself of economic pressure was to end its nuclear program and resume dialogue.

"North Korea needs to realize that a reckless challenge against international peace will only bring about even stronger international sanctions against it," the Blue House said.

However, China's official Xinhua news agency said in a commentary that the Trump administration was making a mistake by rejecting diplomatic engagement with the North.

"The U.S. needs to switch from isolation to communication in order to end an 'endless loop' on the Korean peninsula, where 'nuclear and missile tests trigger tougher sanctions and tougher sanctions invite further tests,' Xinhua said.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe quickly welcomed the resolution and said after the vote it was important to change North Korea's policy by stepping up pressure.

The resolution imposes a ban on condensates and natural gas liquids, a cap of 2 million barrels a year on refined petroleum products, and a cap on crude oil exports to North Korea at current levels. China supplies most of North Korea's crude.

A U.S. official, familiar with the council negotiations and speaking on condition of anonymity, said North Korea imported about 4.5 million barrels of refined petroleum products annually and 4 million barrels of crude oil.

Chinese officials have privately expressed fears that an oil embargo could risk causing massive instability in their neighbor. Russia and China have also expressed concern about the humanitarian impact of stiffer sanctions on North Korea.

Haley said the resolution aimed to hit "North Korea's ability to fuel and fund its weapons program". Trump has vowed not to allow North Korea to develop a nuclear missile capable of hitting the mainland United States.

South Korean officials said after the North's sixth nuclear test that Pyongyang could soon launch another intercontinental ballistic missile in defiance of international pressure. North Korea said its Sept. 3 test was of an advanced hydrogen bomb and was its most powerful by far.

The latest resolution contained new political language urging "further work to reduce tensions, so as to advance the prospects for a comprehensive settlement."

The resolution also calls on countries to inspect vessels on the high seas, with the consent of the flag state, if they have reasonable grounds to believe the ships are carrying prohibited cargo.

It also bans joint ventures with North Korean entities, except for non-profit public utility infrastructure projects.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Rastad appointed PMO's new managing director

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Mohammad Rastaad was appointed as the new managing director of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhoundi appointed Rastad to the position replacing Mohammad Saeidnejad.

Saeidnejad was the managing director of Ports and Maritime Organization since Iranian calendar year of 1392 (March 2013- March 2014).



Shell presents Kish gas field's study results to NIOC

ENERGY TEHRAN — The Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell PLC presented the results of studies on Iranian Kish gas field to National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) on Tuesday, Shana reported.

The parties discussed the results during a meeting attended by senior officials including NIOC Deputy Director for Engineering and Development Gholamreza Manouchehri and the Managing Director of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) Noreddin Shahnazi-Zadeh as well as Hans Nijkamp, the head of the department for Iran affairs at Royal Dutch Shell.



Iran appoints first female operator for gas field development

ENERGY TEHRAN — For the first time in Iran, a female was appointed as the operator of a gas field development, Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

In a decree on Sunday, Mohammad Meshkinfam, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company, which is in charge of developing Farzad gas field, appointed Dr. Shabnam Shahbazi to the post.

Farzad is a gas field Iran shares with Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf. As it is a joint field, its development is a top agenda for POGC.

UK inflation rate rises to 2.9%

The UK's inflation rate climbed to its joint highest in more than five years in August as the price of petrol and clothing rose.

UK inflation measured by the Consumer Prices Index rose to 2.9% in August, up from 2.6% in July, figures show.

The fall in the value of sterling since the EU referendum continued to be a major impetus for rising prices, the Office for National Statistics said.

But a rebound in the price of oil also had an impact, pushing up fuel prices.

The bigger-than-expected rise in inflation comes ahead of the Bank of England's next announcement on interest rates on Thursday.

However, economists said the Bank was still highly unlikely to raise rates at the meeting. (Source: BBC)

Russian economy out of crisis: Putin

MOSCOW (Sputnik) — Russia's economy has emerged from the crisis, is gaining momentum, and this dynamic should be maintained. Positive factors will be gradually felt by the population and the country's business sector, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday at a meeting with government members.

The key report at the meeting, dedicated to the current economic dynamics and its forecast until 2020, was made by Economic Development Minister Maxim Oreshkin, who in particular said that the pessimistic view of the economic development was not justified, and cited a number of macroeconomic indicators confirming this.

«All that you said undoubtedly means that the Russian economy has emerged from the crisis, is gaining momentum, and we need to do everything in order to keep these dynamics in these conditions,» Putin said.

Putin added that both businesses and citizens would gradually feel the «positive factors that are taking place in the economy.»

Putin is not the first top Russian politician who has spoken about the recovery of the country's economy. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said Sunday that Russia's economy was growing, adding that positive trends would be reflected in the federal budget.

Last week, the Research and Forecasting Department of the Central Bank of Russia has improved the forecast for GDP growth in 2017 to 2 percent from 1.5-1.6 percent.

The Russian economy suffered a setback in 2014, as the ruble lost about half of its value against the US dollar amid low global oil prices and Western economic sanctions imposed against Russia over the situation in eastern Ukraine.

Iranian, Ukrainian chambers of commerce sign co-op MOU

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (UCCI) and Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) signed a cooperation MOU during an Iran-Ukraine business forum in Ukraine, the portal of ICCIMA reported on Monday.

The MOU was signed by President of UCCI Gennady Chijikov and the Chairman of ICCIMA Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, who led a delegation to the eastern European country. During the signing ceremony both sides underscored the significance of developing mutual economic cooperation.

Addressing the held business forum, ICCIMA chairman underlined the importance of expanding economic bonds as well as banking ties between the two countries, saying that "the first step should be taken on tightening banking relations, since banking ties will ease joint investments and economic cooperation."

"Iran can use its booming economy, available work force, and its suitable political condition in the region to pave the way for presence of Ukrainian companies in the regional markets," he added.

Chijikov, for his turn, expressed hope that bilateral trade relations between Iran and Ukraine will continue its positive trend in future as it did during the past two years.

Ukraine intends to increase agricultural trade with Iran up to \$1 billion this year, said Vasyl Antonenko, the chief specialist of the bilateral trade and economic cooperation department of the International Cooperation Department of the Agrarian Policy and



Chairman of ICCIMA Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (R) and President of UCCI Gennady Chijikov exchanging co-op MOU documents

Food Ministry of Ukraine, in the mentioned forum. "Upon seven months of 2017, Iran ranks 8th among the importers of Ukrainian agricultural products. It is ex-

pected that we will be able to reach \$1 billion agricultural products turnover by the end of this year due to joint efforts of the businesses of both countries," he noted.

Brazilian market open to high-quality Iranian products

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Brazilian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Eumar Novacki said his country's market welcomes high quality Iranian products, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s portal reported.

The official made the remarks in an Iran-Brazil business forum held in ICCIMA building in Tehran on Monday.

Emphasizing his government's all-out efforts regarding development of bilateral trade ties with Iran, Novacki mentioned banking issues as a major hurdle in the way of expansion of trade relations.

"The first Iran-Brazil agriculture advisory committee is going to be held on November 21 and 22 in Brazil and we invite all Iranian firms and companies active in this area to attend," he added.

During the meeting, ICCIMA Vice Chairman Pedram Soltani noted that the trade between Iran and



Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce Chairman Kaveh Zargaran (1st R), ICCIMA Vice Chairman Pedram Soltani (2nd R), Brazilian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Eumar Novacki (2nd L), Brazilian Ambassador to Iran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos (1st L)

Brazil is tipped noticeably in favor of Iran so Iran needs to take necessary measures for increasing exports to Brazil to reach an ideal trade balance.

Stressing the need for joint investment, Soltani said Iran expects to benefit from Brazil's knowledge in agriculture, adding "Iran eyes joint investment with Brazil's agriculture sector."

Further in the event, Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce Chairman Kaveh Zargaran mentioned the great potentials of Iran and Brazil for cooperation in agriculture saying, "The main issue in this regard will be removing financial and banking hurdles."

Brazilian Ambassador to Iran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos also emphasized banking problems as the main issue for Iran-Brazil trade.

"Some positive steps have been taken in this regard and a banking delegation from Iran visited Brazil in August to further discuss the matter," he noted.

Zurich to host Europe-Iran Forum in early Oct.

The 4th Europe-Iran Forum (EIF4) will be held in Zurich on October 3 and 4.

The Europe-Iran Forum has been a milestone event in the course of Iran's economic opening, establishing itself as an annual event of particular influence and foresight.

EIF1, held in 2014, saw the first international business conference with a post-

sanctions focus. EIF2, held in 2015, saw the largest ever Iran business conference. EIF3, held in 2016, was the first business conference to bring American and European policymakers into direct dialogue with Iranian business leaders.

EIF4 will help launch the "second phase" of Iran's post-sanctions growth and development. At the event, a high-

profile network will gather to debate strategy, forge valuable relationships, and set the agenda for robust growth in Iran.

With broad sanctions relief delivered in January 2016, Iran's economic opening is now firmly underway. Major multinationals are establishing new or expanded operations in the country across sectors.

The re-election of President Hassan

Rouhani has renewed a popular mandate for international engagement and economic reform.

Iran's global business partners will have a period of domestic political stability during which the efforts for economic reform and liberalization will find a new momentum.

(Source: europeiranforum4.com)

Can Macron and Merkel agree on how to fix the eurozone?

By Barry Eichengreen

With Emmanuel Macron's victory in the French presidential election and Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union enjoying a comfortable lead in opinion polls ahead of Germany's federal election on 24 September, a window has opened for eurozone reform. The euro has always been a Franco-German project. With a dynamic new leader in one country and a fresh popular mandate in the other, there would be an opportunity for France and Germany to correct their creation's worst flaws.

But the two sides remain deeply divided. Macron, in longstanding French tradition, insists that the monetary union suffers from too little centralisation. The eurozone, he argues, needs its own finance minister and parliament. It requires a budget in the hundreds of billions of euros to underwrite investment projects and augment spending in countries with high unemployment, Macron insists.

Merkel, on the other hand, views the monetary union's problem as too much centralisation and too little national responsibility. She worries that a large eurozone budget wouldn't be spent responsibly. While not opposed to a eurozone finance minister, she does not envision such an official possessing expansive powers.

But there is a narrow path forward that should be acceptable to both sides. It starts with completing the banking union. Europe has a single supervisor in the European Central Bank (ECB), but it lacks a common deposit insurance scheme, which German officials oppose on the grounds that there has been inadequate risk reduction in the European banking system. In other words,



they worry that the fees levied on German banks will be used to pay off depositors in other countries.

The solution lies in bulletproofing the banks by strictly applying the demanding capital standards of Basel III and limiting concentrated holdings of government bonds. The paradox here is that European regulators, including German ones, have in fact been arguing for looser application of those regulations in negotiations with the US. In doing so, they have been arguing against their best interests.

Next, Europe needs to transform the European stability mechanism, its proto-rescue fund, into a true European monetary fund. The fund's resources could be augmented by increasing governments' capital subscriptions and expanding its ability to borrow. Decision making could be streamlined by moving from the current unanimity rule to qualified majority voting.

The EMF could then take the place of the ECB and the European commission in negotiating the terms of financing programmes with governments. The final

decision of whether to extend an emergency loan would no longer fall to heads of state in all-night talks. Rather, it would be taken by a board made up of eurozone representatives, including from civil society, nominated by the European council and confirmed by the European parliament, giving the process a legitimacy it lacks.

But Germany will agree only if it sees steps limiting the likelihood of expensive intervention. This brings us to the vexed question of fiscal policy. It is past time to abandon the fiction that the ultimate source of fiscal discipline is a set of strictly enforced EU rules. Taxation and public spending remain sensitive national prerogatives, rendering outside oversight ineffectual. Assigning oversight to the European commission in Brussels promises, inevitably, not discipline but a dangerous populist backlash.

The alternative is to return control of fiscal policy to national governments, abandoning the pretence that policy can be regimented by EU rules. Governments could then make their own decisions; if

they made bad decisions, they would have to restructure their debts. Adopting a European debt-restructuring mechanism would help to avoid the worst fallout. Any adverse consequences would no longer spread to other countries, because their banks would no longer hold concentrations of government bonds. They would not bankrupt the EMF, which would be able to lend only in cases of illiquidity, not insolvency.

These ideas will horrify dedicated euro-federalists. One bone they can be thrown is a pilot unemployment insurance fund amounting to, say, 1% of eurozone GDP. This would be analogous to US arrangements under which the federal government provides partial funding for state-administered unemployment insurance. And it would give the eurozone finance minister something to do. If the initial modest programme were shown to work, it could be scaled up.

But German politicians are aware that unemployment is 2.5 times higher in France than at home, raising the danger that transfers would all go one way. That's why such proposals are contingent on structural reforms that reduce unemployment where it is high and increase the flexibility of labour and product markets.

This is essentially the bargain Macron has offered Merkel. To paraphrase: "I'll undertake deep structural reforms if you agree to modest steps in the direction of fiscal federalism, completing the banking union, and creating a European monetary fund."

No one on either side of the Rhine will regard this bargain as perfect. But with the euro in the balance, the perfect should not be allowed to become the enemy of the good. (Source: The Guardian)

How OPEC was hurt by the hurricanes

Hurricane Irma was downgraded to a tropical storm early Monday, although it is still bringing floods and damage to much of Florida as it makes its way north, leaving millions without power. As for the oil market, the impact of the storm will be felt almost exclusively on demand, with little to no effect on crude oil production or refining.

Goldman Sachs estimates that Hurricanes Harvey and Irma will leave a huge dent in oil demand, an effect that will be felt across the world. The two storms will lead to a reduction in global oil consumption by about 600,000 bpd for the month of September.

The investment bank says that Hurricane Harvey alone will lead to a plunge in oil demand by about 600,000 bpd in September, while Irma will cause demand to decline by 300,000 bpd. That decline is somewhat mitigated by the fact that Texas shale fields also were impacted by Harvey, leading to a production loss of 300,000 bpd. As a result, the net effect of the two storms is projected to be a decline of 600,000 bpd in consumption this month.

Goldman cautioned that its projection, particularly for Irma, is highly uncertain. Irma, at this point, is looking to be much less destructive than many had feared. But because Florida imports the vast majority of its fuel needs, the potential disruptions of major ports on the Florida coast will be pivotal.



Even if they reopen quickly, they "will potentially have draft restrictions that may hinder trade flows," Goldman says.

The hit to demand occurs at a time when seasonal factors also lead to a dip in consumption. End of peak summer driving should result in a seasonal decline of an additional 150,000 bpd.

Florida's power outages will probably be a bigger story going forward, affecting electricity markets and likely cutting into natural gas demand for quite some time. Florida's major utilities said it could take weeks to repair all the damage and restore power.

The lingering effects of the storm are

dynamic though. Disrupted refining capacity along the Gulf Coast, along with the impact on millions of motorists, took a large bite out of oil demand, leading to temporary losses for WTI. The flip side is the threat to drillers could rise if refineries remain offline. Even as a lot of facilities have come back online in Texas, the remaining outages could still force Texas shale drillers to take production offline at some point in the near future. Goldman Sachs says the refining recovery effort in Texas/Louisiana is taking longer than expected, and as of September 11, when it issued its report, the investment bank estimates refinery outages still stand at about 2.24 million

barrels per day.

Another caveat to the prospect of diminished demand from the hurricanes is that the recovery and reconstruction could boost demand, offsetting the initial negative effects. By October, the 900,000 bpd impact narrows to just 300,000 bpd. And based on past hurricanes, demand could actually rise "to a level higher than would have been the case had there been no hurricane, which would translate into a positive demand shock," Goldman says.

But for now, our working assumption is that global oil demand could be reduced by at least 600,000 bpd in September because of the two hurricanes. Put another way, global oil inventories could see a boost of 600,000 bpd from the storms.

That almost guarantees that OPEC will feel compelled to extend their production cuts beyond the March 2018 expiration date. There have been a series of comments coming from top OPEC officials and energy ministries from OPEC nations regarding the possible extension. Saudi Arabia's energy minister Khalid al-Falih said over the weekend that he and his counterparts from Venezuela, UAE and Kazakhstan were open to cuts "beyond the first quarter of 2018, if needed."

Well, the two hurricanes that just hit the U.S. increased the chances that the extension will indeed be needed.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Oil prices steady as traders assess U.S. hurricane impact

Oil prices were steady on Tuesday, as traders weighed up the dampening effect on demand of Hurricane Irma versus refinery restarts in the wake of Hurricane Harvey that should lead to more crude oil processing.

International benchmark Brent crude was down 4 cents, or 0.07 percent, at \$53.80 per barrel by 0655 GMT from the previous close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was down 3 cents, or 0.06 percent, at \$48.04 a barrel.

U.S. refineries, including the largest U.S. refinery Motiva Enterprises, have started to come back online. Motiva restarted production on Monday after being shut for about two weeks as Hurricane Harvey ripped through the U.S. Gulf coast.

On Harvey's heels, Hurricane Irma slammed into Florida on Sunday, leaving more than 7.4 million homes and businesses without power, but has since been downgraded to a tropical storm.

U.S. crude inventories likely rose last week following the hurricane impact, while refined product stockpiles were forecast to have declined, a preliminary Reuters poll showed.

Six analysts polled ahead of inventory reports from industry group the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimated, on average, that crude stocks likely rose 2.3 million barrels in the week ended Sept. 8.

The API is due to release its data for last week at 4:30 p.m. EDT (2030 GMT) on Tuesday and the EIA report is scheduled at 10:30 a.m. EDT on Wednesday.

"The market is looking for a significant build in oil inventories," said Ric Spooner, chief market analyst at CMC Markets in Sydney. "That's not surprising given the disruption of refineries as consequences of hurricanes, so I guess there's a bit of caution here."

As mixed market indicators kept oil prices in a range, RBC Capital Markets said in a note that it expected "WTI and Brent to average \$49.30 and \$52.50 per barrel this year before increasing to average \$53 and \$55.50 a barrel next year."

Amid persistent glut concerns, Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih had talks with his Venezuelan, Kazakh counterparts about the possibility of extending supply cuts beyond March 2018.

"Reports of an extension of the current production cut agreement continued to swirl around the market," ANZ bank said in a note.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other producers including Russia, have agreed to curb their output by around 1.8 million barrels per day until next March.

(Source: Reuters)

Shell retail looks to the future with car charging, clean fuels

Royal Dutch Shell Plc wants 20 percent of income from its retail forecourts to come from vehicles that don't burn diesel or gasoline, as the company anticipates an accelerating transition to clean energy over the coming decade.

Shell set up its first hydrogen refueling station in the U.K. earlier this year and will install its first electric car charging point later this month, said John Abbott, the top executive of its downstream business, which includes refining, marketing, retail, trading and chemicals. By 2025, he expects these new operations supplying cleaner fuels, including natural gas, to make up a fifth of retail earnings.

As major markets including France, the U.K. and China talk about phasing out the sale of fossil-fuel-powered cars in the coming decades, major energy companies are taking steps to prepare and adapt. The downstream businesses of Shell and its peers have been an important source of profit during the oil market's three-year downturn, but there are growing signs that demand for gasoline and diesel will start to wane as people switch to new forms of transport.

"We are talking to a lot of companies at the moment with a view to significantly extending the number of coun-

tries" where Shell has electric charging stations, Abbott said in an interview in London on Monday. "That's what the forecourt of the future looks like."

Shell and rivals including BP Plc have said that demand for oil could stop growing as early as the 2030s as the use of electric vehicles expands and more renewable sources of energy are used. As battery prices drop, the proportion of fully electric cars sold in the U.K. will rise to one in 12 by 2030, from one in 200 today, according Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

(Source: Bloomberg)

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Brexit could end with no deal -- but no one wants to admit it

By Carole Walker

It's been more than five months since the formal start of negotiations over Britain's departure from the EU -- and progress so far has been painfully slow.

Both sides admit there are significant differences to be overcome and are locked in a standoff over the structure of the talks.

Neither the UK nor the EU wants to talk about what will happen if there is no deal, but some British Members of Parliament believe it is time for the government to start talking seriously about what would happen in this scenario.

The UK's chief Brexit negotiator, David Davis, insists



EU Chief Brexit Negotiator Michel Barnier (R), and British Secretary of State David Davis (L)

that "concrete progress" has been made. He has received assurances on healthcare rights for British citizens living in the EU and on arrangements for sharing data. But he has admitted the talks are "tough and at times confrontational."

His EU counterpart, Michel Barnier, has said there has been "no decisive progress on any of the principle subjects" and he is "disappointed" at the British approach. He is insisting that there must be sufficient progress on the issue of whether or not there will be a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the rights of EU citizens in the UK and the Brexit bill before any discussion of a future trade deal.

Post-Brexit relationship

Davis says such matters can only be decided as part of the discussions on the post-Brexit relationship. He points out it is impossible to resolve questions such as the Irish border without considering future customs arrangements.

At next month's summit in Brussels, the EU is due to declare whether there is sufficient progress on what it calls "separation issues" to begin talking about post-Brexit trade.

But senior figures in the European Parliament are already suggesting the assessment should be delayed until December.

Sources close to the talks have suggested Prime Minister Theresa May could use the occasion to appeal directly to EU leaders to try to break the stalemate. But the remaining 27 EU states are clearly reluctant to unpick their carefully negotiated joint approach to the talks.

The EU does have a tradition of somehow finding a compromise at the eleventh -- or even the thirteenth -- hour, and it is in the interests of both sides to reach a deal. But we are constantly reminded that the clock is ticking and the gulf between the two sides on so many critical issues remains as deep as ever.

Both sides want a transition period so there is no "cliff-edge" for businesses and citizens. But that will only happen if there is at least an outline agreement on where that transition will lead.

Without a deal, the UK would suddenly find itself in the same position as any other non-EU country which does not have special arrangements in place with the EU. It would suddenly operate under World Trade Organization rules, which would mean tariffs and restrictions on trade with its biggest economic partner. And there would almost certainly be big problems at the borders.

There are real risks for the British government in talking up the prospect of leaving without a deal. It would face accusations of a disastrous failure. Businesses would warn of serious consequences and the pound would probably dive still further. Theresa May could struggle to retain her already precarious hold on power.

But if the negotiations continue at the snail's pace which we have seen over the past five months, we will reach a point when it becomes clear that an agreement is unlikely to be reached in time to achieve the smooth transition which the UK government is seeking.

If it has laid the ground for such a scenario, it is just possible that it may be able to contain the fallout. It could set out contingency plans, talk up the prospects of global free trade deals and lay the blame firmly at the door of an intransigent EU.

British ministers may need to demonstrate that they are seriously prepared to walk away without agreement if they are to win any real concessions from the EU.

The UK government has always said "no deal is better than a bad deal." It may need to make it clear this is not just a hollow threat if there is to be a breakthrough in the complex and tortuous Brexit negotiations.

(Source: CNN)

There are real risks for the British government in talking up the prospect of leaving without a deal.

Rex Tillerson has lost his primary reason for being the secretary of state

For Rex Tillerson, it is the worst of times.

By Daniel W. Drezner

Last month, the hard-working staff here at PostEverything called on Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to resign. So far, he has not taken my advice.

This is hardly surprising, as the power of Spoiler Alerts is minuscule. What is surprising, however, is that Tillerson even wants the job at this point.

Seriously, why does Tillerson want to be the secretary of state? We know that in early February he said he accepted the position because his wife told him to do it. We know that since then, he has been nostalgic about his days in the oil industry, and the opposite of that in his conversations about running the State Department.

Two things. First, as I already pointed out, Tillerson's neglect of some aspects of his job puts extra pressure on him to produce deliverables at the other aspects of his job. The problem is that there is meager evidence that Tillerson's private diplomacy has yielded anything. There is more evidence that Tillerson's relationship with the president is strained. That is, in fact, the precise moment when "Washington friends" are desperately needed. But the Secretary of State cannot even count on the support of the Foreign Service at this point.

Tillerson's theory

Second, Tillerson's theory of diplomacy is bananas. Sure, personal relationships matter, but it has become increasingly clear that China, Russia and the United States have different policy preferences on North Korea, as the watering down of the proposed United Nations sanctions reveals. Despite louder grumbling in Beijing, Xi will not take any risky action toward North Korea. Putin has even less skin in this game, and has soured on Tillerson. Giving either of them credit for a successful resolution to the crisis will not be enough to get them



to take the lead. Indeed, that's pretty much a basic lesson of international diplomacy, but it's one Tillerson has yet to learn.

If quiet diplomacy isn't really the thing that motivates Tillerson, what does motivate him? In my conversations with those at the State Department, as well as those covering it, the one idea that seems to animate the secretary of state is reorganizing and streamlining the department. But last week, Senate Appropriations Committee members decided that whatever Tillerson was planning to do to Foggy Bottom, they did not like it. According to Foreign Policy's Robbie Gramer:

In a stark repudiation of the Trump administration, lawmakers on Thursday passed a spending bill that overturned the president's steep proposed cuts to foreign aid and diplomacy. Folded into the

bill are management amendments that straitjacket some of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's efforts to redesign the State Department.

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved \$51 billion for the State Department, foreign operations, and related programs in its 2018 appropriations bill -- almost \$11 billion above President Trump's request. ...

Among other things, the bill provides over \$6 billion for humanitarian assistance -- almost \$1 billion above the administration's request. The panel is also restoring \$10 million in U.S. funding for the UN climate change agency, overruling Trump's call to end spending on it. In a surprising move, the committee also passed an amendment overturning Trump's policies limiting funding and access to women's

The constraints on Tillerson's ability to reorganize the department, such as restrictions on the size of the Policy Planning Staff, are equally surprising.

reproductive healthcare and family planning abroad.

The budget rebuff was surprising. Sure, budgets proposed by the president rarely get through Congress. And the legislative branch has been known to authorize greater spending in some areas than the executive branch would like. Still, Congress usually does not act like this toward the State Department. The constraints on Tillerson's ability to reorganize the department, such as restrictions on the size of the Policy Planning Staff, are equally surprising.

The rebuff was not just about the budget though. Reuters' Patricia Zengerle notes that the Appropriations Committee also authored a report about the State Department. It is pretty forthright:

In the report released on Friday accompanying the legislation, the committee criticized the administration's request to cut spending on such operations by 30 percent from the year ending on Sept. 30, 2017.

"The lessons learned since September 11, 2001, include the reality that defense alone does not provide for American strength and resolve abroad. Battlefield technology and firepower cannot replace diplomacy and development," it read.

"The administration's apparent doctrine of retreat, which also includes distancing the United States from collective and multilateral dispute resolution frameworks, serves only to weaken America's standing in the world," it said.

So, to sum up: Tillerson's efforts to convert the North Korean issue into a success in personal diplomacy will likely fail. His efforts to reorganize the State Department are likely to be thwarted by Congress.

There seems to be little reason that Tillerson is continuing as secretary of state. Maybe he should walk away now.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Redirecting Myanmar's dominant faith to peace

The military's persecution of minority Muslims comes out of fears among many Buddhists for their religion. Aung San Suu Kyi can help relieve those fears with a higher moral narrative.

According to a global ranking, Myanmar (Burma) is one of the most generous countries in terms of donating and volunteering, a result of a type of Buddhism practiced by a majority of Burmese. Yet this expression of outside giving is not the image of Myanmar lately portrayed by its military's harsh treatment of the minority Muslims. Is there a way that Buddhists in Myanmar can extend their compassion to the people of another faith?

The simple answer is yes, at least according to the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibet's Buddhists. On Sept. 8, he said those persecuting Muslims in Myanmar "should remember Buddha," who "would definitely give help to those poor Muslims."

Yet such advice is still not being widely heeded in Myanmar. On Sept. 11, the United Nations accused the military, which controls key parts of the civilian-led government, of carrying out "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" against Muslims, who call themselves Rohingya. Since late August, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled the country. The latest exodus is the result of an assault by the armed forces after a new militant



group, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, attacked government outposts, killing more than 100.

Many of Myanmar's Buddhists, who have long feared that their faith is in jeopardy, consider Muslims to be "terrorists" or a social threat. They make little distinction between the vast majority of Rohingya who espouse peace and the violent few who have lately turned to fighting discrimination and oppression.

A few monks as well as the military have fed off this prejudice to create a brand of "Buddhist nationalism" that mixes the country's religious and civic identities.

The solution, according to a new report by the International Crisis Group, is for Myanmar's civilian government to reframe the place of Buddhism in a democratic society and to set forth a "positive vision." This means that the civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and her National

League for Democracy party, must offer a higher moral alternative to young people than that promoted by Buddhist nationalists. These radicals gain support by providing youth with "a sense of belonging and direction in a context of rapid societal change and few jobs or other opportunities..." the ICG report states.

Many Buddhists in Myanmar see their faith as inherently peaceful and non-proselytizing. But they also then see it as susceptible to oppression by more aggressive faiths, the ICG points out.

While Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi commands respect and support, she is widely seen as backing liberal ideas promoting minority rights without doing enough to protect the Buddhist faith. Dealing with the historical fears of Buddhists -- even though they are more than 80 percent of the population -- might help reduce their fears of Muslims.

"In Myanmar's new, more democratic era, the debate over the proper place of Buddhism, and the role of political leadership in protecting it, is being recast," the report states.

The more the government can give people control over their economic destiny, in other words, the less they will look to Buddhist nationalists or cheer military suppression of the Rohingya.

(Source: The CSM)

Even in face of N. Korean threat, anti-nuke policy should remain

With Japan facing the challenge of responding to North Korea's continuing nuclear arms program, former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party has suggested a review of the nation's long-standing three non-nuclear principles.

Appearing in a TV Asahi program, Ishiba asked, "Is it a viable argument that we will not accept (nuclear weapons) in Japan while saying that the nation will be protected under the U.S. nuclear umbrella?" The simple answer to his question is, "Yes, it is a viable argument."

The three principles of not producing or possessing nuclear weapons and not allowing their entry into Japan were first announced in 1967, during the Cold War, by then Prime Minister Eisaku Sato. Since then, the principles have been followed by Japan's successive Cabinets.

This is a key national creed of postwar Japan and a product of its desperate attempt to come to terms with the reality that it relies on the U.S. nuclear deterrence for its security despite its strong desire to help eliminate nuclear arms from the world, driven by its experiences as the only country that has ever suffered nuclear attacks.

The United States doesn't disclose, in principle, where it deploys its nuclear weapons. It is therefore difficult to confirm that the U.S. forces have not brought nuclear arms into Japan.

Even so, Japan's commitment to the three non-nuclear principles has been a pillar of the nation's foreign policy even after the end of the Cold War.

Japan's move to reconsider the principles could prompt South Korea and Taiwan to seek their own nuclear arsenals, triggering a nuclear domino effect. In South Korea, there are already calls for the redeployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons to the country and even for its own nuclear armament.

What is more important than anything else for the efforts to deal with North Korea's nuclear program is solidarity among Japan, the United States and South Korea. The three countries should act on their united front to seek cooperation from China and Russia, which have significant influence over Pyongyang.

Japan's solid commitment to the three non-nuclear principles will underpin its diplomatic efforts for this goal.

Ishiba's remarks came as part of a recent series of arguments made by LDP lawmakers for enhancing Japan's military power in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations.

This kind of proposal, apparently designed to promote a hard-line security policy agenda by taking advantage of the current crisis, can never contribute to regional stability.

What is really needed is cool-headed debate that is



Former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba

firmly in line with Japan's basic foreign policy tenets, including the three non-nuclear principles and the strictly defensive security policy.

(Source: asahi.com)

Anthony Cartalucci: Saudi Arabia, Israel paving way for U.S. military presence in Myanmar

By: Payman Yazdani

Referring to the role of Saudi Arabia and Israel in ongoing massacre against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Anthony Cartalucci believes these Washington proxies are paving the way for the US military presence on the China borders.

Myanmar's population is overwhelmingly Buddhist and there is widespread hatred against the Rohingya Muslims, who are denied citizenship and labelled illegal "Bengali" immigrants.

The grievous situation of 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims in the wake of a new wave of violence that broke out on 25 August after decades of ethnic tensions in the Rakhine state of Myanmar has managed to make headlines all across the globe. The world's most persecuted people, Rohingya Muslims have been subjected to mass killings, systematic discrimination, and rigid restrictions, with their rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, access to medical aid, education and other basic services all denied.

According to the reports, at least 400 people were killed during the outbreak of violence two weeks ago. UN says during this time, 146,000 people have fled to Bangladesh due to widespread persecution by Myanmar security forces, and has estimated that the number of refugees would double.

To shed light on the real reasons of the recent violence against Rohingyas Muslims, Payman Yazdani from Tehran Times news paper reached out to Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Anthony Cartalucci.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Is ongoing massacre of Muslims in Myanmar an example of genocide based on international rules?

Whether or not, genocide as defined by international law is taking place in Rakhine state, Myanmar. Those groups perpetrating violence against the Rohingya minority maintain genocide as their primary objective. This is not specifically the national army carrying out the violence, but hard-line nationalist groups - many of whom support the current head of state, Aung San Suu Kyi - who have a long history of instigating violence and sectarian division in Myanmar. In many instances before Suu Kyi came to power, the military has attempted to quell the violence. Since nationalists made up a large bloc of Suu Kyi's supporters, it was



anticipated years ago that her ascension to power would be quickly followed by severe anti-Rohingya violence, even genocide.

■ It is said that Saudi Arabia and Israel are behind the story. What do you think of this?

Saudi Arabia is being implicated in funding a relatively recent militancy allegedly representing Myanmar's Rohingya. However, this group consists of a foreign-funded and led cadre and no more represents Myanmar's Rohingya than Al Qaeda or the ISIL represents Sunni Muslims in Syria or Iraq. Just as Saudi Arabia is assisting the United States in the Middle East - fuelling terrorism to divide and destroy states as well as serve as a pretext for a US military presence in the region - Saudi Arabia is attempting to create an artificial militancy in western Myanmar to likewise give the US a pretext for placing military assets in a nation that borders China.

Placing US troops in Southeast Asia has been a long-term goal of US policymakers for decades and the arrival of terrorism in the form of the Islamic State in the Philippines and this Saudi-backed militancy in Myanmar poses as the perfect engineered pretext for doing just that. With US forces in Southeast Asia, China will be further encircled and contained by US interests and power projection.

Israel always plays as a complimentary bookend to American strategies of tension across from nations like Saudi Arabia - posing as "arming" the Myanmar government to further inflame the Muslim World and heighten irrational, emotional division both inside Myanmar's borders and well beyond them.

In reality, Israel sells weapons all over the world and the Myanmar government receives a small fraction of its arms from Israel. The vast majority of its inventory consists of Russian and Chinese weapons, with Israeli arms a negligible contribution to its potential fighting capacity.

We can recall how in 2011 Israel posed as "backing" every government under siege by US-backed "protesters" and militants from Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, to Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. In hindsight such notions of Israel genuinely supporting any of these governments is ridiculous. In 2011, such rumours spread like wildfire, creating automatic hysteria across the Muslim World and poisoning good will toward governments the US and its Israeli proxies actually sought to topple. Similar deception and emotional hysteria is apparently being used to deepen the confusion and crisis surrounding Myanmar today.

■ What is the responsibility of international bodies, specifically the UN, to stop the massacre?

Observing how international institutions have handled other crises including Libya and Syria, or even in regards to US aggression and subversion targeting Iran, it is clear that the smaller the role these institutions play in Myanmar the better. They serve only as a vector for the special interests that dominate discourse within their halls - particularly the United States and its European allies.

Any involvement by the UN beyond providing the most basic relief and shelter for victims will likely compound the conflict.

Al-Khalifa don't respect to holies

By Ramin Hosein Abadian

The Bahraini people rose in 2014 in order to meet the legitimate demands that Al-Khalifa had abandoned. Throughout the days, months, and years of the popular uprising in Bahrain, revolutionaries have never been out of the path of pacifism in expressing their rightful desires.

Meanwhile, during this period, the regime of Al-Khalifa resorted to a variety of ways and means of exerting pressure on revolutionaries with the aim of dissuading them from their desires.

The use of various forms of torturing the aristocracy, arrests without charge, the attack on the houses of revolutionaries and their destruction, the denial of a large number of Shiites and the granting of citizenship to foreigners are just a corner of a series of massive pressure imposed by Al-Khalifa rulers on Bahraini revolutionaries; The pressures that have recently been aggravated by a series of unclear measures taken by Al-Khalifa's family decision-makers.

The cause or causes of the escalation of the Al Khalifa regime's pressure on the Bahraini revolutionaries can be somehow searched for in the success of the country's revolution. Undoubtedly, if the popular revolution in Bahrain was weak and fragile, Al-Khalifa did not take such tight measures to deal with it.

Therefore, the continuation of the Bahraini revolution peacefully over the past years has led to a sort of panic in the ranks of the Al-Khalifa family, which is now the result of the intensification of the pressure on the revolutionaries. Al-Khalifa seeks to prevent further widening of the scope of the popular revolution in Bahrain.

In the same vein, the correspondent of the stamp had a conversation with Abbas Bowsufwan, chairman of the Bahrain Institute for Research in London, which is being discussed in detail.

■ Still, with more than three years of compulsory stay against the top Shiite leader of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Qassem, we are witnessing the continuation of this policy. In your opinion, what if the consequences of the Al-Khalifa regime could not be broken if Shaikh Isa Qassem was compelled to remain in office?

In the absence of compulsory residence of Shaykh Isa Qassem, the immediate consequences of the Al Khalifa regime are threatened. The Al-Khalifa regime does not intend to end the Sheikh Isaiah's mandatory stay, in which he sends a message to the revolution-



aries, which is that no one, in any way, respects this regime, as well as sanctities of no value. Al-Khalifa has had many slanders against Sheikh Isa Qassem. What does this mean? Al Khalifa wants to send the message to the revolutionaries that nobody is immune from this regime?

In spite of all this, I believe that the Al-Khalifa regime is well in the hands of the Bahraini people in support of the Sheikh Isa. Al-Khalifa did not easily reach Sheikh Isa Qassem. The arrival of Al-Khalifa to Sheikh Isa was accomplished after the martyrdom of five Bahraini youths. Hundreds were also arrested by al-Khalifa, which allowed the regime to reach Sheikh Isaiah and force him to stay.

■ The Al Khalifa regime has long exacerbated its repressive actions against Bahraini revolutionaries. What do you know the main cause of this problem? What is your assessment of the latest security situation in Bahrain, given the intensification of repressive measures against revolutionaries?

The security situation in Bahrain is undoubtedly bad. Since the start of the popular uprising in Bahrain in 2011, there has been a deteriorating security situation in the country. Perhaps at some point in time, the wave of suppressions will somewhat decline, but eventually it will again return to its former intensity. In recent months, we also see that many legal and political parties were closed down by the Khalifa regime.

During the past years, religious scholars and, in particular, Sheikh Isa Qassem, had had many protests against the human rights situation in Bahrain. Since

the implementation of the compulsory stay plan against Sheikh Isa Qassem, more than three months ago, lawyers in Bahrain have also been added to the scholars of the country to meet the demands of the people.

On the other hand, foreign interference in the affairs of Bahrain has not been affected by the deteriorating security situation in the country. Saudi Arabia is one of the intervening countries that has worsened the situation with military presence in Bahrain.

■ Has al-Khalifa's hostile actions against the Bahraini revolutionaries as well as the scholars have stopped the Bahraini revolution, or is this 7-year revolution still going on with power?

The Bahraini people's revolution continues. Al-Khalifa's regime continues to widespread repression of revolutionaries. Meanwhile, the Arab countries also support the regime altogether.

The military victory is not the least significant until it is accompanied by political victory. That al-Khalifa continues to emphasize his militaristic approach, he continues the trial of the revolutionaries, emphasizes mass arrests and continues to target the Bahraini youth, all of which means the continuation of the Bahraini revolution and its continuation. There can be no other meaning.

■ How do you assess the role of Western countries and the United States in Bahrain's security developments? Do you basically believe in the involvement of Americans and the West in Bahrain and their support for the Al Khalifa regime?

As I said earlier, the security situation in Bahrain is dire, and unfortunately, in the current situation there is no indication that the Khalifa regime intends to change this situation. Indeed, Western countries, as well as the United States, support the Al Khalifa regime in its hostile acts against revolutionaries, and this issue can no longer be overlooked.

We do not mention hypotheses when we speak of US support for the Al-Khalifa regime. It is a fact. Al-Khalifa's regime is signing billions of dollars worth of arms deals with the United States today.

What does this mean? Is there a concept other than Washington's support of Manama? Therefore, it must be said that Americans are totally dual to the Bahraini developments. Americans are not seeking to resolve issues not only in Bahrain, but also in any other country in the region.

Velayati: Tensions on Korean Peninsula benefit no one

TEHRAN — MNA — Ali Akbar Velayati, Head of Strategic Research Center of the Expediency Council, made the remarks in a meeting with Gareth Evans, former Australian Foreign Minister and current Chancellor of The Australian National University, on Tuesday in Tehran, adding "Iran and Australia have positive and long term relations and they must strive for further developing constructive cooperation."



Velayati went on to say that Iran has an influential role on regional and international issues, stressing cooperation between Iran and Australia to settle regional problems, fight against terrorism and establish security and stability across the region. He described the fight against terrorism as "an undeniable obligation" of all countries.

"All countries must employ their diplomatic capacities in order to bring stability and sustainable peace to the world," Velayati specified and maintained that Iran has adopted fight against all facets of terrorism as its fundamental policy.

Concerning the recent Korean Peninsula crisis he held that the tensions between North Korea and other countries has no positive outcomes and conducting tests with weapons of mass destruction will not be beneficial to either party. He suggested that all parties should be called on to adopt continence and to reduce tensions in a diplomatic way.

Amir-Abdollahian: Iran, S Africa hold excellent parliamentary ties

TEHRAN — MNA - South African Ambassador to Iran William Max Whitehead met and talked with Iranian Parliament's General Director for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Tuesday morning.



The Iranian side, early into the session, referred to the significant position held by South Africa as well as good relations between the two countries adding "fortunately, political and parliamentary relations of the two countries are in a favorable situation. The recent visit of the South African Parliament Speaker to Tehran indicated that the two parliaments enjoy high-level relations."

"Parliaments of the two countries can rely on existing capacities to help tackle existing obstacles in line with development of bilateral cooperation in political, economic and cultural spheres," stressed Amir-Abdollahian underscoring capabilities of Iran's Parliament and the significant role played by its commissions and friendship groups.

He referred to the process of cooperation between Iran and South Africa in various sectors adding "political and parliamentary relations are in a very good shape though greater efforts need to be made to bolster economic and trade transactions."

At the end of his remarks, Amir-Abdollahian appreciated the efforts of the South African ambassador during his mission in the country.

Also at the meeting, South Africa's William Max Whitehead pointed to completion of his mission in Iran and said development of relations with Iran in various fields has always been pursued by the parliament and government of South Africa.

Ambassador of South Africa to Iran, while calling to deeper economic ties between the two countries, said "exploiting capacity of parliamentary ties between the two countries plays an important role in growth of communications between Iran and South Africa especially in economic and trade arenas." He also emphasized the need to develop private-sector partnerships.

Whitehead enumerated the main measures taken during his five-year mission in Tehran explaining "attempts to bolster cooperation between the two countries are not restricted to a particular person or government, and will continue uninterruptedly."

At the end of his remarks, Amir-Abdollahian appreciated the efforts of the South African ambassador during his mission in the country.

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An overview of autism

By Lisa Jo Rudy

Autism, also called "autism spectrum disorder (ASD)," is a developmental disorder. Developmental disorders are diagnosed in childhood but usually result in lifelong disabilities. There are many myths about autism and plenty of misinformation available on the internet. As a result, it can be hard to find reliable information about what autism really is—and isn't.

What is autism?

Autism is a disorder that includes differences and/or challenges in social communication skills, fine and gross motor skills, speech, and intellectual ability.

People with autism also have atypical responses to sensory input, like unusual sensitivity to light, sound, smell, taste, and/or sensory cravings.

Other common symptoms include "stims" (hand flapping, toe walking, rocking), a need for sameness and repetition, anxiety, and—in some cases—amazing "savant" abilities in certain areas (often music and math).

Because autism is a spectrum disorder, it is possible to be mildly, moderately, or severely autistic.

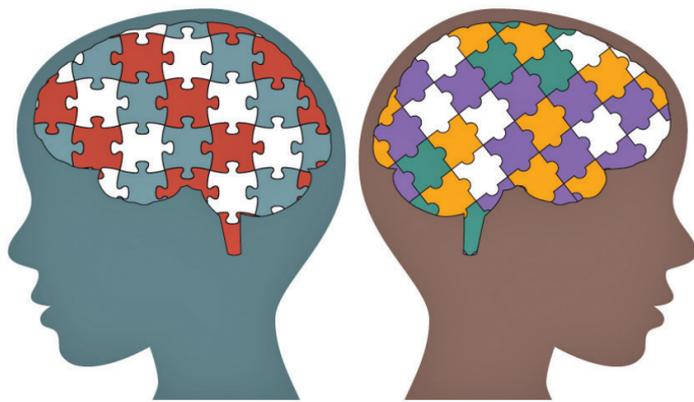
Confusingly, you can also have a combination of mild and severe symptoms. For example, it is possible to be very intelligent and verbal but also have severe symptoms of anxiety and sensory dysfunction.

It is important to know that autism is neither a mental illness nor a condition that gets worse over time. In fact, almost every autistic person grows and matures over time, particularly with intensive treatment.

By the same token, however, there is no established cure for autism. This means that a child diagnosed with autism will almost certainly grow up to be an adult with autism—with the challenges and strengths that come along with the diagnosis.

How autism has changed

Autism was first described as a distinct



disorder during the 1930's. The definition, however, has changed radically over the years. Perhaps most significantly, Asperger syndrome was added to the autism spectrum in 1994.

Since autism was first described, the number of people diagnosed has risen radically. This can be attributed, at least to a large extent, to changes in the definition of the disorder.

Between 1994 and May 2013, there were five different autism spectrum diagnoses. At one end of the spectrum was Asperger syndrome, sometimes called "The Little Professor syndrome." At the other end of the spectrum was autistic disorder, known for profound developmental delays and challenges. In between were a variety of pervasive developmental disorders including Rett syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS).

Today, with the publication of the DSM-5 (Diagnostic Manual Version 5) there is

only one diagnostic category for people with autism: autism spectrum disorder.

Anyone with symptoms consistent with autism will receive an ASD diagnosis, along with a functional level (1 (high functioning), 2 (moderately severe), or 3 (severe)) and, if appropriate, specifiers. Some common specifiers include cognitive disabilities, seizure disorders, and so forth.

This change means that many people who were diagnosed with Asperger syndrome have "officially" lost that label. But because the term Asperger syndrome was so commonly used, and described such a specific diagnostic category, the name has stuck. As a result, many people with high functioning autism still describe themselves as having Asperger syndrome.

5 Things to Know About Autism

1. In most cases, we don't know what causes autism. We know that a few drugs, taken during pregnancy, can increase the risk of autism. Outside of that, however,

our knowledge is limited.

For example, we know that boys are at much higher risk than girls, but we don't know why. Similarly, we know that older parents are more likely to have autistic children—but again, we don't know why.

We do know that autism seems to run in families, but short of deciding not to have children at all, there is no way to know if a baby will or will not be autistic.

2. There are many effective autism treatments but no known cure. Autism treatments are rarely medical, but instead include intensive behavioral, developmental, speech, and occupational therapy. In many cases, therapies can have a significantly positive impact.

Because many children with autism have gastrointestinal issues, it is often important to avoid certain foods while ensuring your child has proper nutrition. At present, however, there is no drug, treatment, or special diet that will actually cure autism.

3. Autism can be a source of strengths as well as challenges. There are, of course, many challenges associated with autism. But at the same time, many people on the spectrum have moderate to extreme strengths.

4. There are many myths about autism. It is difficult for most non-autistic people to imagine what it is like to be autistic. In addition, most developmental and IQ tests are developed for non-autistic people. As a result, myths have arisen around autism.

For example, some people believe that autistic people are incapable of love, have no imagination, or are emotionless. These beliefs arise from misunderstanding and not from reality.

5. All forms of autism can be challenging. Severe forms of autism can be very difficult to manage because they can come along with aggressive behaviors and extreme communication challenges. But high functioning autism is often accompanied by mental health issues such as anxiety, obsessive behaviors, serious sensory dysfunction, and even depression. (Source: [verywell.com](http://www.verywell.com))

Because many children with autism have gastrointestinal issues, it is often important to avoid certain foods while ensuring your child has proper nutrition.

Women in midlife aren't sleeping enough, study says

By Ashley Strickland

Women going through midlife aren't getting enough sleep, according to a new government report.

More than one in four middle-aged women reported experiencing difficulty falling and staying asleep four or more times during the week. More than one in three women reported getting fewer than seven hours of sleep per night, on average. Of those premenopausal women those who were no longer menstruating and on the verge of menopause -- were the least likely to sleep seven or more hours a night. This was followed closely by postmenopausal women.

"I was surprised to learn that nearly one in two women (in the report) did not wake up feeling well rested four times or more in the past week," said Anjel Vahratian, author of the report and chief of data analysis for the National Center for Health Statistics.

Sleep experts suggest that women within this age range should receive seven to nine hours per night on a regular basis. It can prevent the increased risk for chronic conditions and other adverse health outcomes.

More than 2,800 female participants between ages 40 and 59 were asked questions about the duration and quality of their sleep in a 2015 National Health Interview Survey. The questions included how rested they felt upon waking, how short their sleep was and if they had trouble falling or staying asleep.

The report acknowledged that sleep



duration changes with age, but that sleep duration and quality are both impacted by shifts in reproductive hormone levels.

"Also quite striking is that postmenopausal women (in the report) were more likely to experience disruptions in sleep quality compared with premenopausal women in the same age group," Vahratian said in an email.

Vahratian was motivated to conduct the study because the amount and quality of sleep people get can affect their health, including the increased risk for cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Her research also focuses on women's health, aging and transitioning from childbearing age.

But sleep is also a modifiable behavior.

Insufficient sleep will exacerbate other issues associated with menopause including mood disturbance and weight gain.

"As sleep is critical for optimal health and wellbeing, the findings in this report highlight areas for further research and targeted health promotion for women in midlife," Vahratian said.

Hormones and sleep

Sleep experts agree that the findings are consistent with other studies on the topic, particularly data in the perimenopausal women who complain of difficulties with insomnia, said Dr. Alon Avidan, professor and vice chair of the UCLA Department of Neurology at UCLA and director of the UCLA Sleep Disorders Center. Avidan was not affiliated with this study.

Poor sleep can worsen menopausal symptoms, which can worsen sleep,

Avidan said in an email.

Insufficient sleep will exacerbate other issues associated with menopause including mood disturbance and weight gain, said Natalie Dautovich, assistant professor of counseling psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University and Environmental Fellow at the National Sleep Foundation.

"These findings support previous research that indicates that difficulty sleeping is a major symptom of the menopausal transition," Dautovich said in an email. "In fact, according to the findings, more than half of women undergoing the transition are not meeting the recommended sleep requirements of 7 to 9 hours per night."

"Poor sleep during the menopausal transition is due to a combination of biological, psychological and social factors. Vasomotor and hormonal fluctuations, increased stress, greater caregiving burden, and mood disturbance can all lead to disrupted sleep during this period." Vasomotor symptoms include hot flashes and night sweats.

"During this period, there is marked decrease of estrogen and progesterone secretion by the ovaries, associated with several other physical, physiological and psychological changes that directly influences sleep," Avidan said. "Progesterone protects younger women from sleep apnea and snoring and this is lost after menopause. Decreases in progesterone levels can cause disturbed sleep as progesterone has both hypnotic and stress-relieving effects."

(Source: [CNN](http://www.cnn.com))

8 non-invasive pain relief techniques that really work

Sometimes pain has a purpose — it can alert us that we've sprained an ankle, for example. But for many people, pain can linger for weeks or even months, causing needless suffering and interfering with quality of life.

If your pain has overstayed its welcome, you should know that you have more treatment options today than ever before. Here, we've listed eight techniques to control and reduce your pain that don't require an invasive procedure — or even taking a pill.

1. **Cold and heat.** These two tried-and-true methods are still the cornerstone of relieving pain for certain kinds of injuries. If a homemade hot or cold pack doesn't do the trick, try asking a physical therapist or chiropractor for their versions of these treatments, which can penetrate deeper into the muscle and tissue.

2. **Exercise.** Physical activity plays a crucial role in interrupting the "vicious cycle" of pain and reduced mobility found in some chronic conditions such as arthritis and fibromyalgia. Try gentle aerobic activities such as walking,

swimming, or cycling.

3. **Physical therapy and occupational therapy.** These two specialties can be among your staunchest allies in the fight against pain. Physical therapists guide you through a series of exercises designed to preserve or improve your strength and mobility. Occupational therapists help you learn to perform a range of daily activities in a way that doesn't aggravate your pain.

4. **Mind-body techniques.** These techniques, which include meditation, mindfulness, and breathing exercises (among many others), help you restore a sense of control over your body and turn down the "fight or flight" response, which can worsen chronic muscle tension and pain.

5. **Yoga and tai chi.** These two exercise practices incorporate breath control, meditation, and gentle movements to stretch and strengthen muscles. Many studies have shown that they can help people manage pain caused by a host of conditions, from headaches to arthritis to lingering injuries.

6. **Biofeedback.** This technique involves learning relaxation and breathing exercises with the help of a biofeedback machine, which turns data on physiological functions (such as heart rate and blood pressure) into visual cues such as a graph, a blinking light, or even an animation. Watching and modifying the visualizations gives you a degree of control over your body's response to pain.

7. **Music therapy.** Studies have shown that music can help relieve pain during and after surgery and childbirth. Classical music has proven to work especially well, but there's no harm in trying your favorite genre — listening to any kind of music can distract you from pain or discomfort.

8. **Therapeutic massage.** Not just an indulgence, massage can ease pain by working tension out of muscles and joints, relieving stress and anxiety, and possibly helping to distract you from pain by introducing a "competing" sensation that overrides pain signals.

(Source: [health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu))

Life lessons grad school teaches you that you won't learn in the classroom

By Francesca Marinaro

"Better you than me," they said. "You'll burn out," they said.

I can't count the number of times I heard this when I announced in late 2007 that I'd planned to go straight on for my Ph.D. after finishing my Master's. Eight years later, with both degrees in hand as well as a number of gray hairs that I'm pretty sure I didn't have when I embarked on this mad journey into Middle Earth to battle a dragon disguised as a dissertation, I sometimes think the only skill I've learned involves crafting twitter-length poems about wine, coffee, and sleep that would make Lord Byron weep. However, reflecting on the experience, I realize that I've emerged with a set of transferable life skills that definitely didn't appear in the course objectives of any of my syllabi.

When I entered grad school on the cusp of what would transpire to be a seemingly endless economic recession, a Master's and a Ph.D. still spelled job security; now many of my colleagues and I sometimes feel like our degrees are worthless slips of paper, but as I've spent much of this past year finding increasingly innovative ways to market my skills both inside and outside of the academy, I've realized how much I've grown both as a scholar and as a person. If you're contemplating grad school, currently working toward a graduate degree, or in a transitional phase of job-seeking or career changing, take a few minutes to reflect on these life lessons that grad school teaches you that you don't learn in the classroom.

1. Practice self-discipline in whatever you do

Okay, let's start with the hardest one before I lose your attention. Much of the research conducted in grad school is self-directed. Yes, you have advisers and colleagues, but no one is standing behind you, looking over your shoulder and reminding you of deadlines. This makes it easy to fall into the "it'll get done when it gets done" trap.

When I was working on my dissertation I adopted Erin Templeton's "rule of 200," the only way I ever managed to get any writing done. This technique, in which you commit to writing 200 words every day, has served me well both in my academic and professional writing, enabling me to juggle multiple projects and meet deadlines. Self-discipline is sometimes the only thing that stands between you and the completion of anything on your to-do list, whether it's meeting a professional deadline, kicking a bad habit, or reorganizing your closet. Long-term projects and goals can intimidate us because when we look at the "big picture," we feel overwhelmed by the breadth of what we have to accomplish, so forcing yourself to meet regular minimum benchmarks and doing your best to stick to them will help propel you forward.

2. Life is essentially one big juggling act

The further along you move in life, the more responsibilities you'll find heaped on your plate. Grad school will test your juggling skills in the proverbial fire better than anything else. When you have to balance coursework, teaching or other professional responsibilities, committee work, and your personal life, you find a way to keep your balls in the air, because you have to. That seminar paper won't write itself, the lawn won't mow itself either, nor will your car fix itself or that leaky bathtub magically stop dripping.

Many graduate students have to juggle school with other adult responsibilities like families and careers, and as overwhelmed and overtaxed as you sometimes feel, it's all essentially an endurance test that makes you much better prepared for whatever balls life throws at you when you learn sooner rather than later how to exercise your juggling reflex. Of course, part of mastering juggling is also knowing your limits, so don't overtax yourself either.

3. You can survive on very little when necessary

Grad students know better than anyone how it feels to run on empty. Whether it's too little sleep, too little caffeine, too little food, too little money, or too little patience (which is likely caused by some combination of the above deprivations), you eventually get used to the feeling and learn to cope. This can likely serve you well in other areas of your life too; when money is tight, you'll learned to stretch the budget. When you've been up all night with a sick child, you'll drag yourself to work on 2 hours of sleep and half a cup of coffee. You'll realize that just when you think the energy well has run dry, there's miraculously one drop left.

4. Cling to your friends like a life raft

Of all the things I'm grateful for having gained in my experience as a grad student, my deep, life-enriching friendships are the things I cherish most. When you spend six months co-authoring a paper with a colleague, spending every weekend pouring blood, sweat, tears, and vodka into a masterpiece, something happens. You become soulmates. Somewhere between the first drink and the fiftieth, you realize that you can no longer remember what life was like before you met each other.

5. You'll never stop learning

Just the other day, I had a conversation with a friend about a book she'd just read, and my immediate reaction was "Damn, why didn't I know about this book when I was writing my dissertation?" The truth is, one book probably wouldn't have upgraded my research from passable to earth-shattering, and I'm probably going to read the book anyway. Even if I never use it, it's more knowledge I get to squirrel away for a rainy day. My students know that I base my teaching philosophy on the belief that the most powerful learning occurs outside the classroom, because the "real world" is where the rubber hits the road, and you find yourself applying your skills. Life is one big classroom, and no matter how much you know, you can always stand to learn something new.

6. Confidence is less about what you know and more about how you present your knowledge

Anyone who has spent time in the academy knows that intellectual snobbery often makes the rounds with the regularity of the latest Lolcat pictures. Especially when you're new to higher ed, this can make you feel microscopically small and insecure in the midst of the huge ideas that everyone else seems to have. In the grip of your insecurities, you can easily forget that everyone else probably feels just as small and just as scared as you do. Someone once told me that talking about your dissertation is basically lying through your teeth about an argument you haven't developed until you realize you actually believe in the lie.

(Source: [lifehack.org](http://www.lifehack.org))

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

1 iPhone 10 Year Anniversary Edition revealed.
The iPhone X sounds like a remarkable device and is got A11 chip, 3 GB Ram, OLED screen, wireless charging, 3D sensor, Face ID and lots of features by iOS 11.

2 Mercedes-Benz just introduced the 1,000 horsepower AMG Project One ahead of the Frankfurt Auto Show. The vehicle was built with the cooperation of Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains and the Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport Formula 1 team.

3 Samsung's Gear watches will help with senior care and employee safety.
The company is also launching a VR system for fitness centers.

4 Facebook has apparently begun testing a feature that would make it easier to watch videos on the go. According to TechCrunch the social network has given a small number of Android users access to an experimental feature called "Instant Videos." It works by pre-loading videos while you're connected to WiFi, so they don't eat up your data if you need some entertainment while commuting or when going to places with no internet connection.

5 Stone Island likes to bring technology to its fashion lines, like the strangely compelling AirPod pockets sown into its Fall/Winter collection we saw last month. Now the fashion concern has a new sweater that changes color depending on the temperature. The garment is called Ice Knit.

6 In light of the Equifax breach that exposed personal information of over 143 million US citizens, a handful of senators have reintroduced legislation that would put more power in the hands of consumers when it comes to their credit reports.
The reintroduced SECURE Act aims to put more power in consumers' hands.

7 Adobe taps your car for targeted ad data.
Adobe has unveiled an extension of its Experience Cloud service that helps automakers and app developers interpret in-car data for the sake of personalization.

8 General Motors is about to reap the benefits of its \$581 million purchase of Cruise Automation.
Cruise said that it's ready to mass produce a self-driving car. For now, Cruise has built 50 cars that will give rides to its employees in San Francisco.

9 Nintendo president on Super Nintendo fiasco: It was "outside our control".
Nintendo's Super NES Classic Edition — an \$80 rerelease of the original Super Nintendo with 21 built-in games — will be impossible to find when it launches on September 29. It's an inexpensive, nostalgia-laced product that's being made for only a limited time.

10 Huawei launches demo smart city.
Huawei has announced the launch of a "demo city" in Weifang, China, to showcase its narrowband Internet of Things (NB-IoT) smart city applications and OceanConnect IoT platform.

Google appeals against huge EU anti-trust fine

Tech giant Google has lodged an appeal against the 2.4bn euro fine (£2bn / \$2.8bn) it was ordered to pay by the European Commission in June.



The regulator had ruled that positioning its own shopping comparison service at the top of Google search results was an abuse of power.

The fine was the largest penalty ever issued by the regulator, which also said the firm could face more fines if it continued its practices.

Google said it had no further comment.
At the time that the fine was imposed, Margrethe Vestager, the European Union's Competition Commissioner said that Google's activity was "illegal under EU antitrust rules".

A spokesman then said that Google "respectfully disagreed" with the ruling.

Google was also given 90 days to end the "anti-competitive" practices or face a further fine amounting to 5% of the average daily global earning of its parent company Alphabet.

The deadline for making the changes is 28 September.
It is hardly a surprise that Google is appealing against the record fine handed down to it by the EU.

When the Competition Commissioner Margarethe Vestager ruled against the search giant, the move was seen as just the first shot in a wider campaign.

(Source: BBC)

Is the flying car ready for takeoff?

By Tori Blakeman

A little white winged pod lifts itself off the ground and glides off into the distance. The whole movement looks effortless. It's like watching Luke Skywalker's Landspeeder — except we're in a nondescript airfield in Germany, not the planet Tatooine. Echoes of Star Wars perhaps help explain why last week the pod's maker, Lillium, secured \$90m (£69m) investment from, among others, Chinese tech giant Tencent — although the company states its aim has more to do with solving transport problems: "We have highly congested cities and we can do things to improve matters," said Lillium's Remo Gerber. "We're trying to move from a niche transport vehicle to a mass-transport one".

Lillium is not flying solo. Prototypes by rival ventures are also passing their test flights. So the prospect of flying cars may not be all that far away. Here are six projects working towards bringing Back to the Future into the present.

Lilium



This German aviation startup, founded in 2014, is working on a five-seater air taxi jet, with the aim of making the first manned test flight in 2019.

Top speed 186mph (300 kilometres per hour).

Power Electric.
Takeoff and landing Vertical.
They say Users will be able to access city centres by calling the air taxi at the push of a button.

We say Creating the large network of

landing pads on top of city buildings, as envisioned by Lillium, will take considerable time and money. With no advanced on-ground driving feature, can we even class this as a flying car?

Terrafugia: The Transition

Terrafugia's "roadable aircraft", in development since 2006, drives like a typical



car on the ground and fits in a standard single-car garage. It can be pre-ordered now for \$300,000.

Top speed 100mph.
Cruise range 400 miles.
Power Unleaded petrol.

They say To drive it you need a US sport pilot certificate that can be "earned in as few as 20 hours".

We say: OK, it can fit into a garage, but what if there's no runway next to the garage?

Kitty Hawk: The Flyer

Kitty Hawk, backed by Google co-founder Larry Page, has created this open-seated, propeller-driven machine for recreational



use. The retail version will be available by the end of this year. Power Electric.

Maximum flight time 22 minutes.
Takeoff and landing Vertical on water.

They say Anyone in the US can drive the Flyer as a pilot's licence isn't required.

We say The launch in April was anti-climactic: the Flyer looked more like a hovering jet-ski than a flying car. If you have a spare \$5,000-10,000, it might be a bit of fun during the summer but it's not a practical transport option.

Uber: Elevate



Uber has hired a long-serving Nasa researcher and plans to take its ride-sharing to a vertical level with Elevate, though it's tackling market feasibility barriers such as certification, battery technology and infrastructure first.

Power Electric.
Takeoff and landing Vertical.

They say Using distributive electric propulsion (DEP), ie, multiple small engines, the vehicle will be "barely audible", thus suitable for urban areas.

We say Uber seems to be taking a considered approach, working alongside regulators, Nasa, air traffic control and even governments before jumping in to the flying car market.

Airbus: Pop.Up



Best known for its double-decker A380 jet, Airbus premiered its solution for urban transit at Geneva international motor show in March. The Pop.Up consists of a carbon-fibre passenger capsule that functions as a two-seater electric car when attached to a chassis, or as an aircraft when a drone is summoned by smartphone to remove the capsule from the chassis.

Power Electric.
Travel distance per charge 62 miles.
Capsule dimensions 2.4 x 1.4 metres.

They say A "multi-modal vehicle", rather than a flying car, Pop.Up will enable passengers to select the fastest, cheapest route through advanced AI.

We say Pop.Up requires technologies such as electric propulsion that are not yet advanced enough — so it's unlikely we'll be seeing this project turn into reality soon.

Aeromobil



Converting from a car to a plane in three minutes, this is the closest we come to the sci-fi dream. Certified for use in the EU and US, Aeromobil's Slovakian makers are accepting pre-orders for \$1m, with plans to deliver the first models in 2020.

Power: Electric on road, conventional aircraft fuel in flight.

Top speed 99mph.
Takeoff and landing Vertical.

They say: It's a real flying car.

We say: It really is a real flying car! It might need a runway to take off and land, but the prospect of being able to fly somewhere and continue the journey in a viable, not-too-silly looking vehicle, is exciting.

(Source: Guardian)

Lawsuits against Equifax pile up after massive data breach

More than 30 lawsuits have been filed in the United States against Equifax Inc after the credit reporting company said thieves may have stolen personal information for 143 million Americans in one of the largest hackings ever.

At least 25 lawsuits had been filed in federal courts by Sunday, including at least one accusing the company of securities fraud, court records show.

Several more lawsuits were filed against Equifax on Monday. Many of those raising similar claims will likely be combined into a single, nationwide case.

Equifax disclosed the breach on Thursday, and said it learned of the hacking on July 29. It has set up procedures that it says are intended to help people protect their Social Security numbers and other identifying information. (www.equifaxsecurity2017.com/)

Some lawsuits criticized Equifax's offer of a year of

free credit monitoring with its TrustedID product.

One complaint filed in San Jose, California, suggested that Equifax might do this to lay a "foundation" to pitch costlier services. It cited a Feb. 22 regulatory filing in which Atlanta-based Equifax said more companies are offering free or low-cost services such as credit scores, reports and monitoring "as a means to introduce consumers to premium products and services."

In the securities fraud lawsuit, Equifax was accused of misleading shareholders about its ability to protect consumer data, inflating its financial statements and share price before the truth became known.

The case was filed on Friday in federal court in Atlanta by the law firm Levi & Korsinsky, which provided a copy of the complaint. A copy could not immediately be located in court records.

Equifax's share price closed down \$10.11, or 8.2 per-



cent, at \$113.12 on Monday. It has fallen 20.7 percent in the two trading days since the Sept. 7 disclosure of the breach, reducing Equifax's market value by more than \$3.5 billion.

(Source: Reuters)

Vodafone to spend 2 billion euros on German fiber network

Vodafone is to spend about 2 billion euros (\$2.4

billion) on providing new ultra fast fiber broadband connections to homes and businesses in Germany, throwing down the gauntlet to rivals, including former state-owned monopoly Deutsche Telekom.

The British company said on Monday it is to invest 1.4-1.6 billion euros in a so-called Giga-Business project to connect 100,000 companies in 2,000 business parks in Germany, teaming up with Deutsche Glasfaser and other specialist fiber and infrastructure players.

It aims to spend a further 200-400 million euros on partnering with municipalities to reach around 1 million rural households.

And it also plans to upgrade existing cable infrastructure to double maximum internet speeds to 1 gigabit per second across the 12.6 million



homes Vodafone serves by cable. Germany has been slow to expand its fiber-optic network, causing its vital export industry to fret that it will

lose competitiveness because slow internet speeds would hobble advances in computer-based "digital manufacturing".

China might shut down the country's bitcoin exchanges

China has never been a fan of digital currencies like bitcoin, and now the country appears bent on a major crackdown. In the wake of China's recent ban on initial coin offerings (where you raise funds for a new cryptocurrency), Wall Street Journal sources understand that Chinese officials are ordering the shutdown of domestic bitcoin exchanges. The timeline isn't clear -- one says the closure decision had already been made, while another heard the process would take "several months." If the scoop is accurate, however, the motivations are clear.

According to one of the tipsters, China is worried that virtual currencies are creating "too much disorder." That's not entirely without merit: people were buying up bitcoin and selling the yuan in 2016 on the belief that the conventional currency's value was going to tumble. And it's



no surprise that China would be nervous about money that it can't fully control. It's relatively easy to skip the bank system and trade money beyond China's borders, and that's nightmare-inducing for an authoritarian government.

If China does shut down the exchanges, it could be a severe blow to bitcoin at large, and would certainly cause anxiety for people holding other formats like Ethereum. As The Verge explains, three Chinese exchanges represented 45 percent of bitcoin's market share in the past month. It wouldn't be the end of bitcoin trading, even in China (informal trades can still take place), but it would cause chaos at time when confidence in the technology is otherwise at an all-time high.

(Source: theverge)

Cassini flies toward a fiery death on Saturn

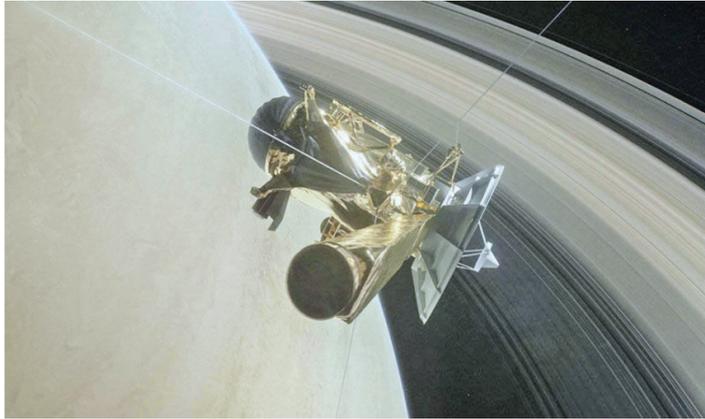
At the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, the scientists of the Cassini mission will figuratively ride their creation down into oblivion in the clouds of Saturn. They will be collecting data on the makeup of the planet's butterscotch clouds until the last bitter moment, when the spacecraft succumbs to the heat and pressure of atmospheric entry and becomes a meteor.

The Cassini-Huygens mission, as it is officially known, was hatched in the 1980s partly to strengthen ties between NASA and the European Space Agency and partly because, well, where else in the solar system would you want to go? With mysterious, mesmerizing rings and a panoply of strange moons (62 and counting), Saturn was the last outpost of the known planets before the discoveries of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

Launched in 1997

As launched in 1997, the spacecraft consisted of two parts: an orbiter, built by NASA, and a lander, the Huygens probe, built by the European Space Agency to explore Saturn's largest moon, Titan. The names were a testament to a golden age of European Renaissance astronomy.

The orbiter and lander arrived in July 2004 like wide-eyed tourists at Saturn, the realm of mystery and rings. Shortly thereafter, in December 2004, Huygens



departed the mother ship and made the first landing on an alien moon, touching down in the hydrocarbon slushes of Titan three weeks later.

A list of its greatest hits would include movies of the six-sided storm that hugs

the planet's north pole; detailed views of Saturn's spidery golden rings, woven into warps, braids and knots by the gravity of tiny moonlets; the discovery of plumes that look like snow-making machines shooting from the surface of the moon

Enceladus. Not to mention postcards of lakes and seas on Titan.

Data collected

NASA, not shy about sharing its accomplishments, recently released a blizzard of numbers summarizing the mission: 4.9 billion miles traveled, 294 orbits of Saturn completed, 2.5 million commands executed, 635 gigabytes of science data collected, 453,048 images taken, 3,948 science papers published, 27 nations participating and two oceans discovered.

To which must be added: \$2.5 billion to build and launch Cassini and Huygens, split between NASA, E.S.A. and the Italian Space Agency, and another \$1.4 billion to run them for 20 years in flight.

Like great scientific endeavors, Cassini raised as many questions as it answered. What, for example, is going on in those oceans on Titan and Enceladus?

Titan, the only moon in the Solar System to have a thick atmosphere — even thicker than the Earth's — is now the only other body in the universe known to have liquid on its surface. That liquid is not water, but methane and ethane — hydrocarbons. The air on Titan is almost pure nitrogen. In addition, there may be an ocean of water or some other liquid substance deep under the surface.

(Source: The NYT)

Like great scientific endeavors, Cassini raised as many questions as it answered. What, for example, is going on in those oceans on Titan and Enceladus?

New app detects concussions just by looking into your eyes

Concussions are difficult to detect because symptoms usually don't appear for hours, days, or even weeks after an injury. The lack of an official test to determine brain damage makes it a challenge to identify, which can often lead to underdiagnosis.

To solve that problem, researchers at the University of Washington developed a smartphone app that can spot traumatic brain injury instantly by analyzing the eyes of someone with possible head trauma.

In the study, to be presented September 13 at UbiComp 2017, the app "PupilScreen" diagnosed brain injuries with close to perfect accuracy. The researchers created a deep learning algorithm that can detect a telltale sign of brain injury: how pupils respond to light.

Healthy and injured brains

By using an iPhone camera flash to stimulate the eyes and recording the pupil response in a three-second video, the researchers charted which pixels belonged to the pupil in each video frame. The app measures the changes in pupil size across these frames, enabling it to differ between the usual response of a healthy person and that of a person with a brain injury.

Relying first on healthy volunteers to develop a base-



line of responses, the researchers then tried the app on six patients diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries. In short: it worked. The app correctly identified the patients as having these injuries.

"We want every parent, coach, caregiver or EMT who is concerned about a brain injury to be able to use it on the spot without needing extra hardware," said Alex Mariakakis, lead author of the study and a doctoral student in the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science &

Engineering, in a statement.

The app would help people to assess a patient's pupillary light reflex as well as a pupillometer, which is an expensive and rarely used machine found only in hospitals. Clinicians typically resort to a pen light that measures the pupil's diameter, but interpreting the response is up to each clinician, leaving room for subjective error.

Eye's pupil and iris

Mariakakis and his colleagues wanted to eliminate that subjectivity. They trained the machine learning tools to differentiate between the eye's pupil and iris by annotating about 4,000 images of eyes by hand.

This expansive work gave the computer the ability to measure the subtle changes in the pupillary light reflex without relying on individual interpretation.

PupilScreen may provide the "first capability to measure an objective biomarker of concussion in the field," said Dr. Lynn McGrath, a resident doctor with UW Medicine.

Currently, coaches and parents use the Sport Concussion Assessment Tool - 5th Edition (SCAT5), the standardized tool designed by physicians for evaluating concussions in less than 10 minutes.

(Source: Newsweek)

'Inspirational' robots to begin replacing teachers within 10 years

Robots will begin replacing teachers in the classroom within the next ten years as part of a revolution in one-to-one learning, a leading educationalist has predicted.

Sir Anthony Seldon, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham, said intelligent machines that adapt to suit the learning styles of individual children will soon render traditional academic teaching all but redundant.

The former Master of Wellington College said programs currently being developed in Silicon Valley will learn to read the brains and facial expressions of pupils, adapting the method of communication to what works best for them.

Robots and new material

The new era of automated teaching promises an end to grouping children

by year, as the personalized nature of the robots will enable pupils to learn new material at their own pace, rather than as part of a class.

"It will open up the possibility of an Eton or Wellington-style education for all," Sir Anthony said.

"Everyone can have the very best teacher and it's completely personalized; the software you're working with will be with you throughout your education journey."

He warned, however, that the new technology would have to be carefully introduced to avoid "infantilizing" pupils and teachers.

As part of robot-led learning, teachers would adopt the role of "overseers", monitoring the progress of individual pupils, leading non-academic activities and

providing pastoral support, Sir Anthony said.

The efficiency of automated teaching would also mean that only 30 per cent of school time will be spent in class.

A contemporary historian who has written biographies of David Cameron, Tony Blair, John Major and Gordon Brown, Sir Anthony heralds the new educational era in a book, *The Fourth Revolution*, due out next year.

"You'll still have the humans there walking around during school time, but in fact the inspiration in terms of intellectual excitement will come from the lighting-up of the brain which the machines will be superbly well-gearred for."

Level of challenge

The "machines will know what it is that most excites you and gives you a natural

level of challenge that is not too hard or too easy, but just right for you."

He expected the National Union of Teachers to be "very alarmed" by the prospect.

The "technology's already beginning to arrive," he said. "It's already there on the west coast of the U.S. and it's already beginning to transform schools."

"I'm expecting this to happen in the next 10 years."

The "great danger is that it takes jobs away, and for humans beings much of our fulfillment in life comes from the satisfaction of work."

"If we get the technology wrong it will end up doing everything for us in the same way that satnavs mean we no longer know how to read maps."

(Source: The Telegraph)

Houshmand Safaii Announces Candidacy for Bushehr Governor-Generalship

Dr. Houshmand Safaii Former Director General of Tehran and Khuzestan Province Labor Department General announces his name as an independent candidate for Bushehr Province Governor-Generalship.

According to the informed sources, the

Assembly of Representatives of Bushehr Province negotiated with the young and able manager with years of fruitful experiences and eventually, they voted unanimously to introduce him as candidate for Bushehr Province Governor-Generalship.

It should be noted that Rouhani Ad-

ministration is after seeking young, able and competent managers in the field of better administration of pertinent activities in line with materializing most objectives of resistance economy.

The Assembly of Representatives wished him success if appointed as the

upcoming Governor General of Bushehr Province, the report ended.

It is worth mentioning that 12th government under President Rouhani will take giant strides in line with materializing most economic objectives of the country deservedly.

BSI CEO Awarded with Strategic Management and Organizational Leadership Certificate

Following the granting golden statue and Noble Medal of Management of Iran to the Chief Executive of Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) Siyavosh Zera'ati in the World Assembly Forum and Noble Management Award, Organizational Leadership Certificate was awarded by the Italy's ANCCP Academy and Sweden AGR Academy to the senior executive official of the bank, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

It should be noted that European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) is a prestigious international organization based in Brussels.

As one of the largest management association, the Foundation cooperates with more than 800 organizations as member of universities, various business-

es and consultation groups from 81 countries in the world.

Given the above issue, the European Foundation organizes a Conference every year dubbed "The Most Reliable Management Award in Europe in UN Member States" in line with disseminating and encouraging business development coupled with paying due attention to the social responsibilities.

It is worth mentioning that Management Development Foundation Award known as "Management Nobel Prize" is awarded annually to the leaders and managers who played active and constructive role in the development of their business with considering social responsibilities, BSI ended.



Researchers develop self-destructing electronic device

An international team of researchers from the University of Houston and research institutes in China have developed a new type of self-destructing electronic device which can dissolve with nothing more than exposure to water molecules in the atmosphere — in other words, humidity. It could have potential applications in everything from Mission Impossible-style gadgets for holding sensitive information, to bio-medical devices which dissolve within the body after use, to eco-friendly disposable personal electronics.

The "concept of transient electronics is not new," Professor Hangxun Xu, from the University of Science and Technology of China, told Digital Trends.

"However, previous devices only work under aqueous solutions or biofluids — and sometimes aggressive chemicals such as acids or bases would be required to realize the transient process. An obvious drawback is lack of control over the degradation process."

Moreover, the materials that can be used to fabricate transient electronics are limited. Normal materials such as copper, nickel, or aluminum are not applicable in transient electronics."

In the team's unique approach, the dissolving mechanism occurs due to a reaction between the device's polymer substrate and water molecules in the atmosphere. No kind of immersion is necessary; instead, a chemical breakdown is triggered using ambient moisture which then digests the various electronic materials and components — which could include aluminum, copper, nickel indium-gallium, zinc and magnesium oxide, and more.

"In short, for the first time we introduce a novel chemical reaction into the transient electronics," Xu continued. "Through manipulating the kinetics of the chemical reaction, we are able to control the transient process, which is extremely challenging to achieve." (Source: Digital Trends)

Scientists find evidence for life beneath Antarctica's ice

Deep within Antarctica's ice, there are vast warm ice caves produced from the heat of an active volcano. Now, researchers believe these ice caves could host life, or at least had hosted life in the past.

Average temperatures on Ross Island hover around 1 degrees Fahrenheit and are covered with kilometers of ice, not conditions which are amenable to life.



However, in the cave systems melted out by an active volcano, the air temperature can reach up to 77 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition, at some places, the ice has become thin enough to let in faint amounts of light. Both conditions provide a promising environment to host life.

The culprit of these ice caves is Mount Erebus, an active volcano with a long history of shallow hot magma chambers. The volcano produces steam which travels through the open spaces and melts passageways through the network of caves.

The new study was conducted by a research team at the Australia National University. The team collected soil samples from the ice caves which revealed DNA from eukaryotic groups such as algae, moss, and small invertebrate animals.

There was no conclusive evidence of anything currently living in the caves, simply evidence that life once existed there. What's certain is that scientists have just scraped the surface of understanding these ice caves. There are vast systems of interconnected caves that no one has ever been in let alone studied.

There are over a dozen active volcanoes in Antarctica, all of which have varying degrees of ice caves. These ice caves can be mapped through radar techniques but are mostly inaccessible to humans. (Source: Forbes)

Climate change a buzzkill for coffee lovers: study

Global warming could reduce coffee growing areas in Latin America -- the world's largest coffee-producing region -- by as much as 88 percent by 2050.

That's a key takeaway of the first major study of climate change's projected impacts on coffee, and the bees that help coffee to grow. The findings appear in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

"Coffee is one of the most valuable commodities on earth, and needs a suitable climate and pollinating bees to produce well," says Taylor Ricketts, director of the University of Vermont's (UVM) Gund Institute for Environment and study co-author. "This is the first study to show how both will likely change under global warming - in ways that will hit coffee producers hard."

While other research has explored climate-coffee scenarios, no other study has explored the coupled effects of climate change on coffee and bees at the national or continental scale. The study forecasts much greater losses of coffee regions than previous global assessments, with the largest declines projected in Nicaragua, Honduras and Venezuela.

"Coffee provides the main income for millions of the rural poor, so yield declines would affect the livelihoods of those already vulnerable people," says Ricketts, who is also a professor in UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. (Source: EurekAlert)

11 dead as bus plunges into valley in northeast Tehran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Eleven were killed and 28 others injured after a bus rolled over into a valley in Jajrood, northeast Tehran.



The incident happened at 2:30 a.m local time Tuesday when the driver of the bus lost control and the vehicle plunged into a 50-meter deep valley, IRIB reported.

According to road police officials, initial investigations show mechanical failure was the main cause of the accident.

MPs to question transport minister

The development committee of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) is preparing a plan to question Transport Minister Abbas Akhoundi regarding the recent road accidents across the country, the committee's chairman Mohammadreza Kouchi announced.

Two weeks ago, a bus carrying 45 middle school and high school female students who were going on a science camp rolled over, killing seven students, their teacher, and the assistant driver, while 34 others were injured.

The incident happened on a road linking the city of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, to the city of Darab, Fars province, both in southern part of the country.

Alaska teens petition for statewide climate change policy

A group of Alaska teenagers has sent a petition to the state's environmental agency in hopes of tightening climate change policy.

The teens' petition calls for the state to reduce carbon emissions, monitor the greenhouse gasses it does emit and come up with a strategy for the future.

The group, named Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, hand-delivered the petition in August to the Department of Environmental Conservation's commissioner, Larry Hartig.

The petition follows a 2011 climate change lawsuit filed by a different group of Alaska teens, which made it all the way to the state Supreme Court before justices ruled that it was a matter for the executive or legislative branch.

(Source: Associated Press)

LEARN ENGLISH

Looking for an Apartment

A: Hi! We are the Christianson's! We are here to see the apartment.

B: Oh, hi! Sure, **come on in**! Well, as you can see, the place has just been **renovated**. The previous tenants left a huge **mess** here, so the **landlord** has redone everything.

A: It looks great. It's so bright and **airy**! What great light! I really like these hardwood floors. What's the **square footage** of this place?

B: Well, it's about 120 square meters, or 1300 square feet, more or less. Oh, the landlord has also installed new kitchen **appliances**. There's a new dishwasher, and a **professional-grade gas range**. Really, at this price, this place is an amazing deal!

A: I love it! But what are the payment terms?

B: First and last month rent as **deposit** and rent is **due** on the 1st of every month. Considering the amount of money invested into the apartment, it's a very good deal!

A: Yes, it is! Too good to be true...

B: The living room and dining room are quite **spacious** as you can see, and down this hall, here's the master bedroom. It has a huge **walk-in closet** and an **en suite bathroom**. We can't go in there yet as the police... I mean the cleanup crew hasn't finished.

A: What do you mean? What's in here?

Key vocabulary

come on in: please come in
renovate: to repair a building or old furniture so that it is in good condition again

tenant: the person that rents a house

mess: disorder, unorganized

landlord: the owner of the apartment

airy: spacious so that air moves freely

square footage: showing how big one space is measured in feet

appliance: electric equipment found in a house

professional grade: good enough to satisfy professional use

gas range: a stove that uses gas to cook

deposit: a part of the cost of something you are buying that you pay some time before you pay the rest of it

due: if an amount of money is due, it must be paid at a particular time

spacious: large; having lots of space

walk-in closet: a room contained in a bedroom for storing clothes

en suite bathroom: a bathroom within the main bedroom

Supplementary vocabulary

attic: a room or space that is just below the roof of a building and that is often used to store things

basement: the part of a building that is entirely or partly below the ground

lawn: an area of ground (such as the ground around a house or in a garden or park) that is covered with short grass

real estate: the business of selling land and buildings

lease: to allow someone to use(something) for a period of time in return for payment

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Iran, Japan discuss women's empowerment, civil rights

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A delegation from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation of Japan discussed cooperation with Iran in the field of women's empowerment and civil rights during a meeting in Tehran on Monday.

The delegation, led by Nobuo Tanaka, President of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, held talks with Iran's presidential aide for civil rights affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, the two parts explored ways to share experiences in the field of job creation and economic empowerment.

Molaverdi pointed out to the recent establishment of a joint strategic committee for civil rights affairs, saying that the issue of civil rights is very widespread.

She referred to the Citizenship Rights Charter drawn up by President Hassan Rouhani as an important document, which informs citizens of their civil rights.

An initial draft of the Citizenship Rights Charter was drawn up just months after President Rouhani took office for the first



time and made available to the public in November 2013, however during four years, it was revised for two times.

"Although the charter generally covers rights of all citizens, it has some parts

which directly point to domestic violence against women and children," she explained.

She said that the administration has introduced a bill on the elimination of violence against women, which is currently being studied by the judiciary.

"There is a close relationship between peace, security and establishment of civil right so everyone should yearn for sustainable peace," she said.

Tanaka, for his part, expressed hope that joint plans would be prepared for implementation in the near future.

Iran and Sasakawa Peace Foundation held a round of joint symposium entitled 'Women, Education, and Economic Empowerment' in Tehran and Tokyo in 2016 and 2017.

The event highlighted the importance of women's role in today's world as seen in the increasing number of women participating in social, political, and economic activities in most countries, including Iran and Japan.

The foundation, which was established in 1986 in Japan, aims to respond to changes in nature and the social environment, to contribute to the sound and sustainable development of human society and supporting international cooperation and exchange projects.

Pharmacy, medicine on display at Iran Pharma 2017

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The 3rd International Exhibition on Pharmaceuticals and Related Industries, Iran Pharma 2017, opened on Tuesday at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

The event is hosting 502 pharmaceutical companies, of which 164 have come from overseas, IRNA reported.

Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi, Food and Drug Administration's Director Gholamreza Asghari, the Bulgarian ambassador to Tehran Christo Polendakov, and the Danish ambassador to Tehran Danny Annan attended the opening ceremony.

The latest products and achievements regarding the pharmaceutical industry, raw materials, food supplements, natural and herbal medicine, cosmetics and

hygienic products, as well as related machinery and equipment are on show during the event which runs until September 14.

Meanwhile, the 2nd medical and pharmaceutical book fair, the 1st health-oriented media exhibition, and different workshops in the fields of packaging, marketing and export are also being held on the sidelines of Iran Pharma expo.

The 2nd medical and pharmaceutical book fair is hosting 33 publishers including participants from Britain and Australia.

The books are offered with 30 percent discount during the exhibition.

Moreover, the 1st health-oriented media exhibition introduces health-oriented newspapers, magazines and media.



International Day of Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on September 21. The General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

The theme for 2017 is "Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All."

The theme honors the spirit of together, a global initiative that promotes respect, safety and dignity for everyone forced to flee their homes in search of a better life. TOGETHER unites the organizations of the United Nations System, the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and individual citizens in a global partnership in support of diversity, non-discrimination and acceptance of refugees and migrants. It was initiated during the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016.

"In times of insecurity, communities that look different become convenient

scapegoats," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. "We must resist cynical efforts to divide communities and portray neighbors as 'the other'. Discrimination diminishes us all. It prevents people — and societies — from achieving their full potential." He added, "Together, let us stand up against bigotry and for human rights. Together, let us build bridges. Together, let us transform fear into hope."

This year, the International Day of Peace will focus on engaging and mobilizing people throughout the world to show support for refugees and migrants. Its messages will be shared with communities hosting refugees and migrants as well as people concerned that refugees and migrants may bring physical and economic insecurity to their lives.

The Day will highlight solidarity with refugees and migrants and showcase the shared benefits of migration to economies and nations, while also acknowledging legitimate concerns of host communities. Ultimately, it will be



Children in Zataari Camp in Jordan. Photo credit UN/Sahem Rababah

about bringing people together and reminding them of their common humanity.

Young people will have a vital role to play. For example, they can volunteer to welcome and help refugees and

migrants in their communities. They can also extend the hand of friendship to young refugees and migrants who they might meet in their classrooms and neighborhoods.

(Source: The United Nation)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

RoboCup Iran Open 2017 kicks off in Tehran

The 12th edition of the international Robocop competitions (RoboCup Iran Open 2017) started on Tuesday at the Tehran Permanent International Fair-ground.

Some 2,820 contestants from the United States, Germany, India, Japan, China, Singapore, South Korea, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Mexico, England, Turkey, Peru, and Iran will be competing during the 4-day event, Tasnim news agency reported.

The first RoboCup Iran Open took place in April 2006, Tasnim quoted Morteza Moosakhani, the chairman of the National Robocop Committee as saying. He went on to say that 139 Iranian teams and 21 foreign teams will be competing in the university students' league, 167 Iranian and foreign teams in the school students' league, and 39 Iranian teams as well as 15 foreign teams in the simulation league.

ENGLISH PROVERB

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

■ **Explanation**: compensation or retribution that is (or should be) of an equal amount or degree to the injury or offense that was originally dealt

■ **For example**: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; this I demand from all who have wronged me.

PHRASAL VERB

Double up with

■ **Meaning**: to share something, especially a bedroom

■ **For example**: You'll have to double up with Susie while your aunt is here.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Better late than never

■ **Explanation**: when someone does something late, this remark means that it is better to do it late than not do it at all

■ **For example**: Do you know what time it is? You promised you'd come early to help me - but better late than never I suppose!

دوازدهمین دوره مسابقات بین‌المللی ربوکاپ آزاد ایران آغاز شد

دوازدهمین دوره مسابقات بین‌المللی ربوکاپ آزاد ایران از روز سه شنبه در محل نمایشگاه بین‌المللی تهران آغاز شد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری تسنیم رویداد مذکور از ۱۶ تا ۱۸ فروردین خواهد بود که با حضور دو هزار و ۸۲۰ نفر شرکت کننده از کشورهای آمریکا، آلمان، هند، ژاپن، چین، سنگاپور، کره جنوبی، هلند، پاکستان، مکزیک، انگلستان، ترکیه، پرو و ایران برگزار خواهد شد.

مرتضی موسی‌خانی رئیس کمیته ملی ربوکاپ جمهوری اسلامی ایران گفت: مسابقات ربوکاپ آزاد ایران از سال ۸۵ آغاز شده است.

وی ادامه داد: ۱۳۹ تیم ایرانی و ۲۱ تیم خارجی در بخش لیگهای دانشجویی، ۱۶۷ تیم ایرانی و خارجی در بخش لیگهای دانش‌آموزی و نهایتاً ۲۶ تیم ایرانی و ۱۵ تیم خارجی در لیگهای شبیه‌سازی حضور خواهند داشت.

HRW: Saudi-led air raids in Yemen are 'war crimes'

→ "These latest airstrikes and their horrible toll on children should galvanize the Human Rights Council to denounce and act to investigate war crimes, and ensure that those responsible are held to account," she noted.

The period examined in the HRW report does not cover a deadly Saudi air raid on August 23 against a Sana'a hotel, which left some 60 civilians dead.

At least 14 Yemenis also lost their lives days later in similar Saudi strikes against the Faj Attan district on the outskirts of the capital.

Whitson further urged the UN Human Rights Council member states "to support a credible international inquiry" into civilian deaths in Yemen.

Elsewhere in its statement, the HRW accused Saudi Arabia of failing to impartially probe violations in Yemen, blocking access to parts of the Arabian Peninsula country for international media and rights organizations, and continuing to



undercut and undermine UN and other fact-finding efforts.

The UN, the rights group said, needs to immediately return Saudi Arabia to

its annual "list of shame" for violations against children.

The report came only a day after Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, the UN's human rights

chief, called for an urgent inquiry into Saudi airstrikes against civilians in Yemen.

Back in June, the world body blacklisted Riyadh after concluding in a report that the regime was responsible for many child deaths in Yemen.

A few days later, however, Saudi Arabia was removed from the blacklist, with then UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon acknowledging that he was forced to do so after the regime and its allies threatened to cut off funding to many UN programs.

Yemen has witnessed a deadly Saudi-led war since March 2015, which is meant to eliminate the Houthi Ansarullah movement and reinstall a former Riyadh-friendly regime.

The protracted Saudi war, which has been accompanied by a naval and aerial blockade on Yemen, has so far killed over 12,000 people and led to a humanitarian crisis and a cholera outbreak in the impoverished state.

(Source: agencies)

Turkey set to buy Russian missile defense system

Turkey is set to buy Russian-owned missile defense systems, marking the NATO member's first major weapons purchase from the country.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's president, announced on Tuesday that "signatures have been made" for the acquisition of the S-400 surface-to-air missile defense equipment.

Anticipating potential concern among Turkey's fellow NATO members over the deal, Erdogan said Turkey will continue to "make the decisions about our own independence ourselves."

"We are obliged to take safety and security measures in order to defend our country ... Nobody has the right to discuss the Turkish republic's independence principles or independent decisions about its defense industry," he said.

Russia confirmed the agreement, with Vladimir Kozhin, Russian President Vladimir Putin's adviser for military cooperation, saying: "The contract has been signed and is being prepared for implementation."

Kozhin told Russia's state-owned TASS news agency

that all aspects of the deal "strictly comply with our strategic interests".

"For this reason we fully understand the reactions of several Western countries which are trying to put pressure on Turkey," he said.

The deal is expected to cause anxiety for NATO's other 28 member countries, as the Russian-made equipment may not prove technically compatible with defense systems operated by the alliance.

A Pentagon spokesman criticized the procurement decision, saying it is "generally not a good idea" for members of NATO to buy inter-operable apparatus.

NATO's policy states that: "Interoperability does not necessarily require common military equipment", but instead, "what is important is that the equipment can share common facilities, and is able to interact, connect and communicate, exchange data and services with other equipment".

The Turkish-Russian contract is a new sign of better relations between the two countries since a reconciliation deal was signed last year following the 2015 shoot-



ing down by the Turkish military of a Russian fighter jet over the Syrian border.

Turkey was also pleased with Russia's response to the 2016 failed coup in Turkey and the two sides have been working together in search of a solution to the Syria conflict.

(Source: TRT)

Hundreds of Afghans demonstrate against 'offensive' U.S. leaflets

Hundreds of demonstrators rallied near the Afghan capital on Tuesday to denounce a propaganda leaflet drop by U.S. forces last week that caused widespread offense and forced American commanders to issue an apology.

The leaflet drop near Bagram Air Field, one of the biggest U.S. bases in Afghanistan, was intended to encourage people to report insurgents to the authorities and depicted a lion chasing a dog, symbolizing the Taliban.

However it prompted widespread outrage as the picture of the dog, considered an unclean animal in Islam, incorporated a profession of faith from the Quran that forms part of the Taliban flag.

"The Americans have insulted Muslims through this action and their beliefs and we will not sit quietly by," said Mir Rahman, a protester at the rally in Qarabagh district near Bagram. "If the Americans and NATO continue to insult Islam, they will face the same fate that the Russians faced in Afghanistan."

U.S. commanders apologized for the leaflet and promised to hold those responsible to account but the affair has caused severe embarrassment at a time of heightened sensitivity over the sepa-

rate issue of civilian casualties caused by air strikes.

While the NATO-led Resolute Support coalition has generally taken pains to avoid cultural insensitivities, there have been several other examples where international forces, most of which come from non-Muslim cultures, have caused offense.

In a previous incident in 2012, when copies of the Quran were mistakenly burned, a number of people died in the following protests. So far, demonstrations have been on a much smaller scale but some protesters said they might continue.

"Apologies on their own will never cure any wound," said Mehrabuddin, another protester, who like many Afghans, goes by one name. "If the Americans repeat such an insult in future we will keep up our demonstrations and, if needed, attack Bagram base," he said.

Last week, the Taliban, seeking to establish Islamic law after their 2001 ouster, claimed a suicide attack near the entrance to Bagram which it said had been launched in retaliation against the leaflets.

(Source: Reuters)

Israel forced to 'postpone' first Africa summit

Israel has had to indefinitely postpone a summit it had planned with African countries following a boycott by a number of those states.

The so-called Africa-Israel Summit, a first of its kind, had been due to take place in Togo's capital, Lome, on October 23-27. Israeli officials had reportedly planned to discuss with African leaders ways to enhance cooperation in the fields of "technology, development, and security."

In a statement released on Monday, Israel's Foreign Ministry announced the postponement of the event without providing an alternative date.

"At the request of the president of Togo [Faure Gnassingbe] and following a joint consultation with the prime minister (Benjamin Netanyahu), it was decided to postpone the convening of the Israel-Africa Summit, scheduled to take place in October in Lome," the statement read.

Shunning 'regime of occupation'

The delay came amid reports that Sudan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania had decided to boycott the gathering.

South African Ambassador to Lebanon and Syria Sean Benfeldt said last month that his country would not take part in the summit, which he said would be a



step by Israel to normalize ties between Africa and a regime of "occupation."

He also denounced "Israel's inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip, stressing the need for practical solutions to the humanitarian suffering of the population in the besieged [Palestinian] territory."

In an attempt to improve relations with African states, the Israeli premier went on a tour of East African countries — namely Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia — in July 2016.

He also attended a meeting of the Economic Com-

munity of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia in June 2017.

Moroccan King Mohammed VI did not participate in the event because Netanyahu had been invited.

Additionally on Monday, the Palestinian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the postponement of the first Africa-Israel Summit "was a result of sizable pressure" by the Palestinian government.

The gathering, it said, had been meant to "enhance Israel's influence in the African continent and to make the continent dependent" on the regime.

"The Arab League, along with the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and other Arab and Islamic groups and parliaments of Arab countries, have adopted several initiatives seeking to counter and thwart that summit," the statement said.

Last month, the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad wrote to African governments, calling for the boycott of the Togo summit and dissociation from "Israel's Apartheid regime."

"African countries, which fought colonialism for decades and became free after a long suffering, should never associate themselves with the only, longest, and most brutal colonial project in the world today," the letter read.

(Source: Press TV)

Thousands protest against Macron in France

Tens of thousands of French protesters marched against President Emmanuel Macron's flagship economic reforms on Tuesday in the first major demonstrations against his pro-business agenda.

The day of strikes and rallies are seen as a key test for the young French leader as he stakes his presidency on overhauling the sluggish economy, while protesters are eager to show they are able to mobilize in large numbers.

Some 4,000 strikes and 180 protests were called by France's biggest trade union,

the CGT, with rail workers, students and civil servants urged to join the protests against proposed changes to labor law.

"It's a first one and it looks like it's a success," the head of the CGT, Philippe Martinez, said at the start of a rally in Paris, claiming that 100,000 people had answered his union's call country-wide.

Police figures for the number of demonstrators are likely to be significantly lower, with turnout being scrutinized as a

measure of the strength of resistance to the reforms.

As well as Paris, crowds of a few thousand people gathered in the cities of Nice, Marseille, Saint Nazaire, Toulouse and Caen.

The disruption to rail networks, air traffic control and public services appeared limited, however.

The business-friendly Macron wants to make France more attractive for both French companies and foreign investors who have long complained about restric-

tive labor laws and the power of trade unions.

He has vowed to press ahead with the reforms which aim to give companies more flexibility in negotiating terms and conditions with their employees while reducing the costs of firing workers.

But the 39-year-old president antagonized his opponents with outspoken comments last week when he described critics of his government's efforts as "slackers" and "cynics".

(Source: AFP)

Iraqi parliament votes against Kurdish independence referendum

→ Speaking prior to the vote, MP Ammar Toma warned that the "unconstitutional" referendum would cause security and societal problems in Iraq and push the country into a state of chaos.

The Kurdish referendum is scheduled for September 25, but the central government in Baghdad is opposed to the vote.

Regional players like Iran and Turkey have also voiced concern about the planned referendum, arguing that it could create further instability in the region.

Meanwhile, members of the "No for Now" campaign, which calls for the postponement of the upcoming referendum on the independence of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, say they have repeatedly received death threats and been physically intimidated.

The movement was founded by Shaswar Abdulwahid Qadir, a Kurdish businessman and the owner of a media conglomerate which includes NRT TV, in the city of Sulaymaniyah in August.

Earlier this month, gunmen stormed the NRT TV office in the Kurdish capital city of Arbil, climbed onto the roof of the building, tore down the channel's logo and chanted slogans such as "Yes for referendum."

The assailants further raised the flag of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and threatened to burn the building down.

"The threats are still there and constant," Qadir told the Middle East Eye news portal, adding, "Me and my friends at the No For Now campaign are facing threats everyday."

"One of our campaign board members was kidnapped in Sulaymaniyah. Security forces raided the house of another member. The KRG has used the legal system as well to shut down NRT TV, especially local broadcasting, for one week," he noted.

The Kurdish referendum is scheduled for September 25, but the central government in Baghdad is opposed to the vote.

Six Iraqi unions to sue KRG over independence vote

Six Iraqi unions are set to take legal action against the government of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region over an independence referendum due this month.

The Lawyers' Union, Engineering Union, Union of Journalists, Doctors' Union, Teacher's Union and Workers' Union, in a joint statement released on Tuesday, announced that they would file a lawsuit against the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) over plans to hold the September 25 referendum.

They underlined that the forthcoming vote "lacks any legal or constitutional basis."

The report comes as the Iraqi parliament voted on Tuesday to reject a Kurdish independence referendum, requiring Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and the central government in Baghdad to "take all steps to protect the unity of Iraq and open a serious dialogue" with Kurdish leaders.

Pope Francis On Climate Change Denial: 'Man Is Stupid'

Climate change denials amid catastrophic hurricanes are a reminder that humans are not a particularly smart species, Pope Francis said Sunday while flying over areas in the Caribbean decimated by Hurricane Irma.

"Man is stupid," he said, referencing a passage in the Old Testament, according to The New York Times and The Associated Press. "When you don't want to see, you don't see."

The pope — who has sparred with President Donald Trump on several issues, including climate change — also urged the climate skeptics of the world to consult with a scientist.

"Those who deny climate change need to go to scientists and ask them," Francis said, according to Crux. He said the scientific community has been "clear and precise" in linking human activities to the ongoing crisis and that "each [person] has a moral responsibility, bigger or smaller." Climate change is a "serious matter over which we cannot make jokes," he said.

Pope Francis' comments came during a flight from Colombia to Rome, which passed over areas of the Caribbean left devastated by Hurricane Irma. According to Crux, journalists asked the pope about the moral responsibility world political leaders have to fight against climate change.

Francis warned that "history will judge those decisions," and that if humans fail to curb climate change we "will go down," according to reports.

When Trump met with Francis in May, the pope gave the president a copy of his 2015 encyclical on climate change and the environment, "Laudato Si'." In the 184-page document, Francis argues that climate change is inherently a moral and spiritual issue and criticizes local and national governments that refuse to address it.

Since taking office, Trump, a longtime climate change skeptic who has dismissed it as "bullshit" and a Chinese hoax, has worked swiftly to derail America's actions to combat the threat. In June, Trump announced he will pull the U.S. out of the historic Paris Agreement on climate change, in which nearly 200 countries committed to slashing carbon emissions.

Climate scientists say powerful back-to-back hurricanes Harvey and Irma — which battered the Gulf Coast, the Caribbean and the U.S. Southeast over the last two weeks — were made worse by climate change. The Trump administration, however, has said now is not the time to discuss the role climate change played in the extreme weather events.

"To have any kind of focus on the cause and effect of the storm, versus helping people, or actually facing the effect of the storm, is misplaced," Scott Pruitt, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, told CNN last week in an interview about Hurricane Irma.

(Source: HuffPost)

English FA fear threat of Russian hacking could derail 2018 World Cup campaign

The English Football Association has written to FIFA over concerns about the lack of action against recent hacking incidents in the sport - according to reports in The Telegraph.

The purportedly Russian-based hacking group 'Fancy Bears' turned their focus on football last month, releasing the medical files of a host of footballers who had used Therapeutic Use Exemptions, including Carlos Tevez, Dirk Kuyt and Gabriel Heinze.

And the FA is concerned that similar hacking incidents next summer could lead to crucial tactical information being stolen from computers of the travelling England party.

An FA ban on using public Wifi is expected to be enforced during the tournament, while England's players will also be advised on the safest way to use social media sites - following on from recent incidents where the Twitter accounts of Real Madrid and Barcelona were hacked.

Gareth Southgate and his coaching team reportedly store their strategic information on laptops and tablets, and the FA are concerned that the tactical masterplans could seriously undermine the country's tournament campaign if they were to fall into the wrong hands.

(source: Mirror)

Real Madrid think Lionel Messi blocked deal for Paulo Dybala

Real Madrid think Barcelona failed to sign Juventus striker Paulo Dybala because of Lionel Messi, according to reports.

Barcelona were heavily linked with a move for Dybala after they lost Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain last month.

However, the Catalan giants failed to follow up their interest in the Argentina international, instead focusing on Ousmane Dembele and Philippe Coutinho.

And, in news that will stun Barcelona fans, Diario Gol say Real Madrid think the deal was prevented because of Messi.

The 30-year-old is the Catalan giants' talisman and has been ever since Ronaldinho was sold to AC Milan in 2008.

It is said that Real were informed that Barcelona were sniffing around Dybala.

Los Blancos also want to sign the 23-year-old and wanted a heads up if the striker started negotiations with another team.

But Diario Gol say that Messi stopped the player signing. Real were supposedly informed that Barcelona will refuse to sign a player comparable to their talisman.

And Dybala, with his nationality, eye for goal and natural ability, draws obvious comparisons with his compatriot.

Meanwhile, speaking ahead of Juventus' clash with Barcelona tonight, Dybala refused to rule out a move to the Nou Camp.

"He (Messi) is already my team-mate for Argentina but I'm really good at Juventus, although I don't know what's going to happen in the future," he said.

"I'm very happy to wear an important shirt like the number 10.

"Nobody said anything to me (about a Barcelona bid). The club never came to me to say there was an offer on the table. "The only thing the club said to me is that they want me to be part of this project for a long time, and I'm happy about that."

(Source: Express)

Allardyce rules out Palace return after De Boer sacking



Former Crystal Palace manager Sam Allardyce has ruled himself out of a return to Selhurst Park, following Frank de Boer's sacking just four Premier League games into the season.

The South London side dismissed De Boer on Monday following their worst start to an English top-flight campaign for nearly 100 years.

Allardyce, who steered Palace away from relegation last season before resigning in May, confirmed he spoke to club chairman Steve Parish but said he was "not ready".

"I wouldn't feel comfortable taking a manager position, I am enjoying my life too much," Allardyce told Sky Sports on Monday.

"I spoke to Steve (Parish) late this afternoon and said that for me, I wouldn't be ready to come back.

"He didn't offer me the job, he just asked me, 'What are your thoughts?' I told him that at this moment in time, I wouldn't want to go back in."

According to British media, Former England boss Roy Hodgson is set to replace De Boer before they host Southampton in the league on Saturday.

Palace are rooted at the bottom of the league standings after suffering four straight defeats without scoring a goal.

(Source: Reuters)

Angry Ronaldo on a mission with Real Madrid to win third straight Champions League

Real Madrid have made a stuttering start to their La Liga campaign, dropping points in both of their first home games after an opening-day 3-0 win at Deportivo.

Their league start comes with mitigating circumstances - they're yet to be able to field either their first-choice defense, with Raphael Varane injured and Sergio Ramos missing one game through suspension, or their first-choice attack, due to Cristiano Ronaldo's five-game domestic ban.

Granted, Zinedine Zidane's side should be able to overcome such obstacles, and it should be said that they have been architects of their own downfall during the two draws.

Against both Valencia and Levante, Madrid dominated the game in terms of shots, chances created, and possession, and, put simply, they should have won, both times. They were denied by some inspired goalkeeping and some inept finishing.

There's no doubt that the two draws have raised concerns for the double European champions.

But what this also means is that so far, we've not seen the best of Real Madrid this season - and we know what their best is capable of. This is a superb side, arguably the best in Europe, and it's on the verge of making history yet again.

THE GREATEST EVER?

Only three teams have won Europe's premier club competition three times in a row: Bayern Munich and Ajax in the 1970s and Madrid themselves in the 1950s, when they won five in a row.

No one's done it in the Champions League era - indeed, nobody had won two in a row until Madrid achieved that feat last season. And a look at their squad, and their stats, suggests there's little to stop them from extending their run.

Dani Carvajal, Ramos, Varane, and Marcelo make up a formidable back line, and in Luka Modric, Toni Kroos, and Casemiro, they possess Europe's best midfield. Ahead of them they have any two of Isco, Marco Asensio, Karim Benzema, and Gareth Bale to set off in attack, and, of course, Ronaldo.



If ten goals in the Champions League quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals seemed like an awesome feat, consider this: Ronaldo is probably even more motivated this year.

RONALDO'S ON A MISSION

He's got a World Cup coming up and he wants to be in top form for that. His Ballon D'or window is closing, with Neymar and the rest of the young brigade poised to take over soon, but he'll likely draw level with Lionel Messi this year and thus could overtake his rival next year with one more devastating, end-of-season, Champions-League-winning run.

Oh, and thanks to a tax evasion case and that five-match ban for his red card in the Supercopa, he's angry - and Ronaldo imitates the Hulk in more ways than his

muscle-flexing goal celebrations.

And, more than any other competition he's played in, the Champions League is Ronaldo's stage.

Yet again, Madrid are in a position to prioritize the Champions League. Sure, they know they should defend their La Liga crown as well, but, as always, European success carries extra significance.

Two in a row was special. Three in a row will elevate this team to legendary status, a team that can be talked of as among the best ever. Add it to their 2014 success, and it would be four Champions League titles in five years - and that would make this, undoubtedly, the Real Madrid era.

Who can stop that from happening?

(Source: Sport 360)

IOC lawyers in touch with Brazil over Rio Games chief



Lawyers for the International Olympic Committee on Monday contacted Brazilian judicial authorities to request any evidence regarding the involvement of Rio de Janeiro Olympics chief in alleged corruption, IOC chief Thomas Bach said.

Brazilian investigators said last week politicians and IOC member Carlos Nuzman, the head of the national Olympic committee and subsequent Rio Games chief, had arranged a \$2 million bribe to bring the 2016 games to Rio de Janeiro, despite the city having the worst conditions to host the event.

Police in Rio raided the home of Nuzman after prosecutors accused him of conspiring with former state Governor Sergio Cabral, already convicted in a separate corruption case, to buy the games.

"Since this morning our lawyers have been in contact with Brazilian judicial authorities," Bach told reporters in Lima. "Once evidence is provided we will act."

The legacy of South America's first Olympics, which ended just over a year ago, has been muddied by allegations of graft.

Nearly every infrastructure project connected to the Games is under investigation and prosecutors allege major construction firms bribed politicians and others to win contracts worth bil-

ions of dollars for the event.

The alleged votes-for-cash affair was triggered by an ongoing French investigation with former international athletics chief Lamine Diack and his son Papa Massata Diack seen as leading figures in the affair.

Diack, a former IOC member, has already been stripped of his honorary IOC membership.

In a statement earlier on Monday the IOC repeated claims from French prosecutors investigating the affair that Diack was under suspicion of having run a votes-for cash scheme "over the designation of host cities for the biggest global sporting events."

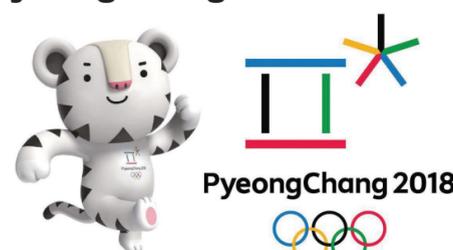
Both Diack and his son have rejected the allegations. Massata Diack told Reuters last week said the claims were "the biggest lie in the history of world sport."

Bach said there was "no collective responsibility" for the IOC and the Olympic body would act, as it had in the Diack case, once it had evidence.

"It was a couple of days after evidence was provided against Diack that the IOC executive board took action and he lost his IOC honorary position (in 2015)," Bach said

(Source: Eurosport)

North Korea crisis so far no threat to Pyeongchang 2018: IOC



The escalating North Korean crisis had so far raised "no hint" of a security threat for next year's Pyeongchang 2018 winter Olympics in South Korea, the International Olympic Committee said on Monday.

Hours after the United Nations Security Council unanimously stepped up sanctions against North Korea over the country's sixth and most powerful nuclear test conducted on Sept. 3, IOC President Thomas Bach said the Games next year were under no threat so far.

Earlier this month North Korea launched its biggest nuclear bomb test, prompting global condemnation as U.S. President Donald Trump said "appeasement" would not work.

North Korea has warned the United States that it would pay a "due price" for spearheading efforts on U.N. sanctions, which now include a ban on the country's textile exports and capping imports of crude oil.

"There is so far not even a hint that there is a threat for the security of the Games in the context of the tensions between North Korea and some other countries," Bach told reporters.

"We are in contact with governments concerned. In all these conver-

sations with the leading figures in the different governments we can see there is no doubt being raised about the winter Games of 2018."

Bach said he was hoping for a diplomatic solution before the Games start next February and said the door was open for the participation of North Korean athletes and the IOC was ready to support them in their effort to qualify.

"We are also keeping the door open for the athletes of the DPRK. The Games are open for all national Olympic committees. This contact continues," Bach said.

"We are following the North Korean athletes taking part in qualification events. We offered to the National Olympic committee to support these athletes when needed."

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said in July the North will be given until the last minute to decide whether it will take part in the Olympics. None of its athletes have yet met the qualification standards.

The Pyeongchang Games, the first Winter Olympics in Asia to be staged outside Japan, will run from Feb 9-25.

(Source: Reuters)

Nadal speaks out against Catalan independence



Spanish tennis champion Rafael Nadal has come out strongly against plans by Catalan nationalists to hold a banned independence referendum.

Catalonia's government is determined to hold the 1 October vote on breaking away from Spain, despite warnings that they are breaking Spanish laws.

"You can't skip the laws because you want to skip them," Nadal told a paper.

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola, who is from Catalonia, previously said he supports the right to vote.

At a rally in the Catalan capital Barcelona in June, the former Barcelona manager made an impassioned call for the region to be allowed to decide its future for itself.

"We will vote, even if the Spanish state doesn't want it," Guardiola told the crowd. "There is no other way."

■ 'Better with Spain'

In an interview for Spanish daily El Mundo (in Spanish), Rafal said: "I think what is happening on 1 October ought not to take place because, from my point

of view, everyone should respect the law...

"I can't run a red light because that traffic light doesn't seem right to me."

The referendum, which was approved in the separatist-dominated regional parliament, has been suspended by Spain's constitutional court but Catalan leaders

have vowed to hold it regardless.

Fresh from his third US Open and 16th Grand Slam title, Nadal is one of Spain's best-known sports figures but he also has close connections to Catalonia.

Born and raised on Majorca, he speaks both Catalan and Spanish, and has long championed Spanish national unity.

As AFP news agency notes, the center court at Barcelona's Royal Tennis Club, which hosts the Barcelona Open, was renamed the Rafael Nadal Court this year.

"I feel very close to the Catalans and I feel very Spanish as well," Nadal told the newspaper.

"I don't understand Spain without Catalonia. I don't want to understand or see it... Spain is better with Catalonia and Catalonia is better with Spain from my point of view."

"Everyone has to respect the laws, and there are some laws that are there and they cannot be skipped because you want to skip them."

In his speech in June, Guardiola appealed to the international community and "democrats the world over" to support Catalans' "right of freedom of expression and the right to vote."

Barcelona saw a massive outpouring of support for independence on Monday when Catalans marked their national day, the Diada, with marches and rallies.

(Source: BBC)

Iran edge past Italy at FIVB Volleyball World Grand Champions Cup

S P O R T S Amir Ghafour and Milad Ebadipour's fiery performance sparked Iran's 3-2 (25-19, 23-25, 28-26, 29-31, 15-11) win over Italy in the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup at the Nippon Gaishi Hall on Tuesday.

Ebadipour and Ghafour registered 21 and 20 points to lead the Iranian offence, while Filippo Lanza and Oleg Antonov made 23 and 18 points to command the Italian side. Iran benefitted from the 42 turnovers of Italy, fivb.org wrote.

Iran prevailed once more in their second tie-break encounter with Italy. Four of Iran's five wins at the World Grand Champions Cup have come in five sets. Iran last beat Italy at world level was at the 2014 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship in Poland, where they claimed a 3-1 win.

Italy gave away many points to Iran on their turnovers, which helped the latter take the opening set win at 25-19. Italy bounced back to win 25-23, but Iran came up with good digs to counter-attack and secure the third set at 28-26. In the fourth set, Giulio Sabbi heroics in crucial moments led to an Italian win at 31-29. Iran's scoring spurts at the start of the tie-breaker, helped their side pull away and complete the victory.

Team Melli will face the U.S. on Wednesday.

The 2017 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup is the 7th staging of the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Champions Cup, a quadrennial international men's volleyball tournament organized by the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB).

The tournament is being held in Nagoya and Osaka, Japan from 12 to 17 September 2017. 6 national teams participated.



Iran suffer second loss at CFA International Women's Youth Football

S P O R T S Iran U-19 team lost to Japan 5-1 at the 2017 CFA International Women's Youth Football Tournament opener on Tuesday.

The Iranian team had started the campaign with an 8-0 loss to host China.

Iran will play the U.S. on Thursday.

The tournament is being held in in Duyun, China

from Sept. 10-14.

The tournament will mark just the second meeting between Iran and the U.S. in women's soccer.

The first was April 2016 when the countries met at the U-16 level. The U.S. won that historic match, 6-0 in Italy.

Japan are the most successful side in AFC Women's U-19 Championship history, having won the tournament four times in eight attempts, while China PR claimed their sole title in Malaysia in 2006.

Iran qualified for the continental U-19 Finals for the first time in 2015, while the United States have been crowned World Champions on three occasions at U-20 level, most recently in 2012.

Kolakovic: We have opportunity to make surprise

Iran edged Italy 3-2 on the first day of the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Champions Cup and coach Igor Kolakovic said that they have an opportunity to make surprises against the strong teams.

"We played against a great opponent, one of the best teams in Europe. At the start of the season, we lost 3-0 to them. We had the opportunity to win 3-1 but missed out on that, but I'm happy with the victory. We arrived here with some hopes and dreams and would like to make some surprises against stronger teams than us in the world. We made the first surprise. We have opportunities to make surprises in the coming days as we play USA, Brazil, France and Ja-



pan," Kolakovic said.

"The U.S. won the Olympic bronze medal, Brazil won gold, Japan are very strong when they play on home court, and France are World League champions, so every day we have an opportunity to make a surprise. The difference between our team and Italy was that they made a lot of errors - they took a lot of risks - but they also made a lot of blocks. But we have good defense and a good counter-attack. We didn't reach that level when we played in the World League. Every set was close. I'm so happy we finished with the victory, but we played a tough five sets and we need to be fresh for the match against the U.S.," he added.

(Source: FIVB)

Ederson returns to Manchester City training wearing protective helmet

ROTTERDAM — Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson Moraes is back in training after making a quick recovery from his kick to the face in Saturday's 5-0 win over Liverpool.

But captain Vincent Kompany missed training on Tuesday and is expected to miss the Champions League opener with Feyenoord with a calf strain that ruled him out of the game against Liverpool.

Ederson, 24, was given eight minutes of treatment and carried off on a stretcher after he was caught in the face by the studs of Saïdo Mane in an incident which saw the Liverpool striker sent off.

The Brazilian required eight stitches in a facial injury and was given oxygen on the pitch but did not break a bone or suffer concussion.

He returned to training, wearing a protective helmet similar to those used by Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech, and hopes to start their Group F opener against the Dutch champions in Rotterdam.

Ederson still has nasty cuts on his face and City's medical staff will assess how they are healing before making a final decision on whether to allow him to play or to go with Chilean international Claudio Bravo.

But Kompany is unlikely to travel to the Netherlands after suffering the injury to his calf on international duty with Belgium.

The 31-year-old has suffered from muscle injuries in recent seasons and City are unlikely to take any risks with his fitness.

(Source: ESPN)



Scott: I can already picture France 2019

Although 32-year-old Alex Scott retired from international football recently, the defender's status as an England icon had long been assured after winning 140 caps in a stellar 13-year career.

She appeared in a hat-trick of FIFA Women's World Cups and UEFA Women's EUROs, as well as an Olympic Games, and there is little reason to argue the claim of Scott's national team manager, Mark Sampson, when he called her "one of the greatest players to ever wear the England shirt".

The spry, driven full-back recently told FIFA.com of her excitement for the next Women's World Cup and her pride at England's emergence as a power in the women's game. Focus on France 2019

On 19 September, England kick-off their qualifying road for the Women's World Cup when they host Russia, who are in UEFA Group 1 along with Wales, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kazakhstan. After reaching the semi-final stage at the last World Cup and European Championship, the Three Lionesses are considered favourites to reach the next global finals.

What she says

"I can already picture the crowds and the atmosphere in France. Every World Cup is always bigger than the last, so the excitement building around 2019 is already huge. The expectation for England can't just be to be happy to qualify anymore and to simply take part, because we have worked so hard to get to this level. I suppose you always want to get a medal, and having tasted the bronze we should want to turn that into gold. That has to be the ultimate aim."



at the 2002 U-20 Women's World Cup in a period that was marked by the senior team failing to qualify for two successive Women's World Cups. The improvement in England's national sides over the period of Scott's international journey is a good marker of the nation's potential in women's football.

England rising

Scott's debut in a FIFA tournament came with a 5-1 defeat by USA

What she says

"The growth of the women's game has been phenomenal, and it has

been so rapid. Every tournament there is growth and a gain in confidence. England is not scared any more to play the best teams, and I see it always continuing to rise to new levels. It's great we're here, but we can't be happy. We want the sport to progress even more."

A surprising turning point

Scott says her most memorable Women's World Cup moment was defeating Canada in Vancouver as revenge for their having knocked England out as hosts of the Olympics three years before. The influence that the Class of 2015 had on the audience back home is still being measured.

What she says

"[In Vancouver] the atmosphere was electric, so for us to go on and win that game and progress while knocking the host nation out was a big turning point for us. And then of course there was another kind of turning point as we progressed. People stayed up late to watch us or went to the pub or were with their family members, and then when we went home people recognised us at the market. It has been happening for a while in England, gaining momentum off the back of tournaments, but our success in 2015 was significant for women's football back home."

(Source: FIFA)

NPC Secretary General Ashrafi meets Ambassador of Mexico to Tehran

TEHRAN — Secretary General of Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) Masoud Ashrafi met ambassador of Mexico to Tehran Jose Alfonso Zegbe Camarena on Tuesday.

The meeting was held ahead of the World Para Powerlifting Championships which will be held in Mexico City from 30 September to 6 October.

Over 360 powerlifters from 65 countries will gather in the Juan de la Barrera Olympic Gymnasium.

Zegbe Camarena talked about importance of Paralympic sports for his country and said the Mexican Paralympians overtook their Olympians in term of winning medals in the Games.

Jose Alfonso Zegbe Camarena also said he looks forward to seeing a great performance of the Iranian representatives in the World Para Powerlifting Championships in Mexico City.

At the end of the meeting, Masoud Ashrafi presented the ambassador a gift on behalf of Iran's National Paralympic Committee.

(Source: Paralympic.ir)

United World Wrestling names Iran's Ghasemi to its commission

The United World Wrestling (UWW) has elected Iranian wrestler Komeil Nemat Ghasemi as the new member of its Athletes Commission.

During the 2017 Senior World Wrestling Championships in the French capital city of Paris, the 29-year-old Iranian athlete was voted onto the commission along with six other wrestlers from Armenia, China, France, Nigeria, Switzerland and the United States.

Ghasemi won the silver medal in the men's freestyle 125-kilogram event at the 2016 Summer Olympics and clinched the bronze in the men's freestyle 120-kilogram class at the 2012 Summer Olympics.

American world and Olympic champion Jordan Burroughs was selected to chair the UWW Athletes Commission. He will be a voting member of the UWW bureau and replaces 2008 Olympic champion Carol Huynh, who has served in the post since the commission was first established in 2013.

The Athletes Commission is tasked with protecting the rights and interests of all United World Wrestling Olympic style athletes.

The commission members reportedly reach out and communicate with active athletes as peers to collect feedback.

(Source: Press TV)

Iran beats China in Asian School Football Championship, moves into semifinals

The Iranian students' national football A team has edged past China at the 45th edition of Asian School Football Championship, and progressed to the semifinal round of the continental tournament.

On Monday evening, junior Iranian footballers defeated the Chinese outfit 1-0 in a quarterfinal match played at Be'sat Stadium in the south-central Iranian city of Shiraz.

Arshia Abbasi netted the sole goal of the game in the 40th minute.

The Iranian students' national football A team is scheduled to meet Sri Lanka in its last showdown in the preliminary round on Tuesday evening.

In another Group B match of the day, the Malaysia students' national football team overcame the Sri Lankan side 2-1 at the multi-purpose Hafeziyeh Stadium.

Furthermore, the Group A game between South Korea and Thailand ended in a two-all draw.

The Iranian students' national football B team thrashed the Indian side 5-1.

The 45th edition of Asian School Football Championship began on September 6, and will finish on September 16, 2017.

The Iranian students' national football B team has been drawn in Group A along with India, Indonesia, South Korea, and Thailand.

Group B consists of the Iranian students' national football A team, China, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

(Source: Press TV)

Rahimi, Nemati among 10 archers to watch at Beijing 2017

Gholamreza Rahimi and Zahra Nemati from Iran are among 10 archers to watch in the 2017 World Archery Para Championships.

More than 150 archers from around the world are taking part in the Championships in Beijing, China, the first major competition since the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

Rahimi is the top ranked archer in the men's recurve open event and reigning Paralympic gold medalist is revered for his talent and poise. He finished third at the 2015 edition in Donaueschingen, Germany, Paralympic.org wrote.

Also, having focused on able-bodied competitions, Nemati returns to the World Archery Para Championships scene, which lead to a rematch with Wu. The Iranian two-time Paralympic champion and Olympian is perhaps the most popular archer in the world.

The 2017 World Archery Para Championships will be conducted in Beijing, China from the 12th September to 17th September.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Tehran projection-mapping show to promote peace

A R T TEHRAN — An Iranian artist plans to use projection-mapping technology to promote peace in shows, which will be performances projected upon Tehran's Azadi Tower for six nights starting on Saturday.



A poster for the Birds of Peace Light Symphony

Pictures of historical sites and monuments as well as designs on world peace will be beamed on the tower in the project titled "Birds of Peace Light Symphony", Amir-Reza Salari, the producer and director of the project, said during the press conference on Tuesday.

The project has been planned in a way to treat the subject of peace by featuring aspects of world literature, history and monotheistic religions, he added.

The projection-mapping show that has been organized in collaboration with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO will be documented in a film, a copy of which is scheduled to be sent to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Video mapping allows artists to use light and movement as mediums and buildings or other surfaces as a canvas for some huge, attention-grabbing statements, or just for fun.

"R, the Story of a Martyr" published in Bosnia

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian writer Maryam Baradaran's "R, the Story of a Martyr" has recently been published in Bosnian in Srebrenica.

The Association of the Movement of Mothers of Srebrenica and Zepa Enclaves Publications have released the book, which is biography of Rasul Heidari, an Iranian military advisor who was killed during the Bosnian War in 1993.

The book has been translated into Bosnian by scholar Sabahuddin Saric.

"R, The Story of a Martyr" was originally published by Arma Publications in Tehran in 2015.

Eric Clapton says 'not easy' watching his own documentary

TORONTO (Reuters) — A documentary about the life of renowned guitarist Eric Clapton does not attempt to whitewash over the darker side of the hard-drinking musician's life, even though it is directed by his longtime friend, filmmaker Lili Fini Zanuck said Monday.

Zanuck, who has known Clapton for 25 years, directed "Eric Clapton: Life in 12 Bars," following the life of the 72-year-old British guitarist from childhood to international stardom, through his struggle with drugs and alcohol and the 1991 death of his four-year-old son.

"To watch myself going through that was not easy," Clapton told reporters on Monday at the Toronto International Film Festival, where the film made its debut.

"Right up until the time I stopped drinking, everything I said was complete blather," he added, to laughter from the audience.

In his 2007 autobiography, Clapton described a 20-year drug and alcohol addiction that he said saw him spending about \$16,000 a week on heroin in the 1970s. The death of his son Conor, in a fall from a New York high-rise, was the trigger to sobriety.

The musician, who is a producer on the film, spoke about his struggles with having his life documented on screen and doing interviews with Zanuck in a film that does not shy away from examining his faults.

"I do not like having my picture taken, I do not like talking to journalists. I love to play music," Clapton said.

Zanuck, who won an Oscar for 1989's "Driving Miss Daisy," said Clapton did not second-guess the responsibility he gave her in telling his story.

"For me, the movie is about redemption — personal redemption, not necessarily what society thinks," Zanuck told Reuters.

Iranian animation celebration held with laments on recession

A R T TEHRAN — The Ninth Iranian Independent Animation Celebration was organized on Monday night in Tehran while laments on unemployment and recession in the field of animation dominated the gala.

Speaking at the beginning of the celebration at Eyvane Shams Hall, the secretary of the celebration Mohammad-Ali Safura said, "Unemployment and recession are the most important issues facing Iranian animators."

"Unemployment and recession have dashed hopes and wiped happiness away from the smiling face of Iranian animation," he added and asked cultural officials to solve the problems.

Veteran animator Mahin Javaherian who received a lifetime achievement award at the celebration also criticized the living conditions for animators and said, "Artists active in animation field lack a comfortable life."

Javaherian, the director of the acclaimed animation "Inventions and Discoveries of Archimedes" and "It's Raining Cats and Dogs", expressed her hope that some new contracts signed between Iranian and international animation studios can help change the situation.

She said that Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults invited many animators last year to work on some projects due to 30 agreements the institute inked with some international companies.

The organizers also paid tribute to Vahid Nasirian, a distinguished animator who died of heart failure at



Veteran animator Mahin Javaherian kisses an award she received for her lifetime achievements during the 9th Iran Independent Animation Celebration at Eyvane Shams Hall in Tehran on September 11, 2017. (Mehr/Shahab Qayyumi)

46 last July.

The award for best animation at the gala went to "Release from Heaven" by Ali Nuri-Oskui, while Hajar Mehrani won the best director award for "Dash Akol".

Iranian movies win awards at Moondance festival



Farhad Aslani (L) and Pantea Panahiha act in a scene from Arian Vazirdaftari's short drama "Not Yet".

A R T TEHRAN — Five Iranian films have won awards in various categories at the Moondance International Film Festival in the city of Boulder, in the northern part of the U.S. State of Colorado.

"Weavers of Imagination" co-directed by Sadeq Jafari and Marzieh Vaziri received one of the two awards in the short documentary film category, the

organizers announced last week.

"Niofar" by Hugo Lemant from France won another award in the section.

"Not Yet" by Arian Vazirdaftari was among the eight winners in the short film category.

Three of the eight awards in the animation film section went to "Light Sight" by Seyyed Moslem Tabatabai, "The Orangish Tree" by Amir-Hushang Moein and "The Servant" by Farnush Abedi.

Swedish festival honors Iranian films

A R T TEHRAN — Two Iranian films won awards at the 9th Afghan International Film Festival in Stockholm, Sweden, the organizers announced on Sunday.

"Parting", a joint production of Iran and Afghanistan by Navid Mahmudi was picked as the best film, while "Overruled" by codirected Farnaz and Mohammadreza Jurabchian from Iran won the award for best international documentary.

"Parting" tells the story of teenage lovers Nabi and Fereshteh who are separated by her family's flight from

Afghanistan. After years apart, Nabi decides to find Fereshteh and risk the hardships of flight and resettlement in Europe with a hope of a better life.

"Overruled" is about the lives of some young Afghan refugees in Iran. They work as ball boys in tennis clubs in Tehran, so they have learned how to play tennis. But the problem is they are not accepted in this society in any way and will always remain as outsiders.

Other Iranian film "The Shade" by Parham Keivani also went on screen during the festival.

From refugee camp to runway, hijab-wearing model breaks barriers

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Roughly one year ago, Denise Wallace, executive co-director of the Miss Minnesota USA pageant, received a phone call from 19-year-old Halima Aden asking if she could compete in the contest wearing her hijab.

"Her photo popped up and I remember distinctly going, 'Wow, she is beautiful,'" Wallace said.

The Somali-American teen made headlines as the first hijab- and burkini-sporting contestant in the history of the pageant. The bold move catapulted her career to new heights involving many "firsts," including being the first hijabi signed by a major modeling agency.

"I wear the hijab everyday," Aden, who was in New York for Fashion Week, told Reuters.

The hijab - one of the most visible signs of Islamic culture - is going mainstream, with advertisers, media giants and fashion firms promoting images of the traditional headscarf in ever more ways.

Nike Inc announced it is using its prowess in the sports and leisure market to launch a breathable mesh hijab in spring 2018, becoming the first major sports apparel maker to offer a traditional Islamic head scarf designed for competition. Teen apparel maker American Eagle



Fashion model and former refugee Halima Aden, who is breaking boundaries as the first hijab wearing model gracing magazine covers and walking in high profile runway shows poses during a shoot at a studio in New York City, U.S. August 28, 2017. (Reuters/Brendan McDermid)

Outfitters Inc created a denim hijab with Aden as its main model. The youthful headscarf sold out in less than a

week online.

Allure magazine's editor-in-chief, Michelle Lee, is also in the mix, describing Aden as a "normal American teenage girl" on the front cover of the magazine's July issue.

"She is someone who is so amazingly representative of who we are as America, as a melting pot it totally made sense for us," Lee said.

Aden, born in Kakuma, a United Nations refugee camp in Kenya, came to the United States at age 7 with her family, initially settling in St. Louis.

She fondly recalled her time at the refugee camp saying, "Different people, different refugees from all over Africa came together in Kakuma. Yet we still found a common ground."

In America, she was an A-student and homecoming queen. Now, her ultimate goal is to become a role model for American Muslim youth.

"I am doing me and I have no reason to think that other people are against me," Aden said. "So I just guess I'm oblivious."

Aden said she is content being a champion for diversity in the modeling industry, but in the future she hopes to return to Kakuma to work with refugee children.

AB Awards chairman impressed by Mikail Bayazidi's "Lake"



"Lake" by Iranian photographer Mikail Bayazidi won the Chairman Choice Award at the AB Awards in India.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian photographer Mikail Bayazidi's single photo entitled "Lake" won the Chairman Choice Award at the AB Awards, an international photography salon in India, on Saturday.

Photographers from the UK, Sweden, India, Belgium, Turkey, Italy, China, Poland

and the Netherlands also were honored at the contest.

The award winning photos will be showcased in an exhibition in Kolkata from November 6 to 8.

The contest was organized by the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP).



Director Navid Mahmudi (R) shakes hands with jury member Siddiq Barmak after receiving the best film award for "Parting" at the Afghan International Film Festival in Stockholm, Sweden on September 10, 2017.