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76 figures ask U.S., EU leaders to sustain Iran nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — Today 76 senior political, diplomatic and military figures from across Europe in a statement, arguing that any unilateral US action that jeopardizes the Iran nuclear deal would trigger a crisis in US-Europe relations, damaging the US's international standing and credibility in Europe.

Next month the US Administration concludes its review of relations with Iran and addresses its next requirement to report to the US Congress on whether Tehran continues to comply with the Iran nuclear deal. Credible reports suggest that President Trump is seeking a way to justify declaring that Iran is no longer compliant with the deal.

Today 76 senior political, diplomatic and military figures from across Europe have published a statement which a copy of it sent to Tehran Times news paper, arguing that any unilateral

Oil Ministry announces priorities

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Developing joint oil and gas fields while paying especial attention to environmental protection are among the main priorities of the Iranian Oil Ministry for the next four years.

President Hassan Rouhani in a decree on Monday outlined the Oil Ministry's priorities which also puts other issues into spotlight, Tasnim reported.

Taking advantage of young and skilled workforce, boosting cooperation with the private sector and attracting more foreign investment especially for petrochemical projects, and reducing gas flaring have been put atop agenda.

Saudi prince purging dissent before rise to throne

With a crackdown on dissenters and a charm offensive to woo the kingdom's swelling youth population, the House of Saud regime's king-in-waiting Mohammed bin Salman is cementing his grip on power, analysts say.

The 32-year-old crown prince, often known as MBS, is set to be the first millennial to occupy the throne in a

country where half the population is under 25, though the timing of his ascension remains unknown.

Already viewed as the de facto ruler controlling all the major levers of government, from defense to economy, MBS is seen as stamping out traces of internal dissent before any formal transfer of power from his 81-year-old father King Salman.

Human Rights 'no imported commodity' in Iran

MNA — Head of Iran's High Council of Human Rights Mohammad Javad Larjani said human rights is not an "imported commodity" in Iran, rather it is founded on "Islamic rationality".

Head of High Council of Human Rights Mohammad Javad Larjani made the remarks in a meeting with visiting Belgian Chamber chairman Siegfried Bracke and his accompanied delegation on Sunday in Tehran.

During the course of the meeting, the two sides discussed democracy in secular liberal governments and democracy based on Islamic rationality.

Other matters such as freedom of speech, egalitarianism, the right to have a lawyer, the issues of death penalty, drugs and 'retaliation in kind' were discussed and compared between the two government systems.

The Iranian official pointed out that the HR council adheres to and improves on human rights and it is tasked with supporting and empowering non-profit organizations related to human rights.

Larjani further expressed his concern over Islamophobia in the West and said this approach is not inconsistent with the fundamentals of Western democracy.

Belgian Chamber chairman, for his part, said his country needs to get better acquainted with Iran's experiences, and went on to describe the meeting as a positive turning point. He expressed optimism that these talks could paint a better picture of the judicial system of Iran.

Stressing that some political inclinations promote Islamophobia, Siegfried Bracke added "people are not interested in such propaganda; for instance, an anti-Islam party in the parliament with more than 150 members managed to secure only three seats."

"We believe that different religions can coexist peacefully in one country and our government fully respects Islam and Muslims," he added.

'Ridiculous' if Trump doesn't back 2-state solution: Palestinian official

A senior Palestinian official said Monday it would be "utterly ridiculous" if Donald Trump did not commit to the two-state solution, ahead of a meeting between the U.S. president and Mahmoud Abbas.

Trump is due to meet Abbas on Wednesday before the Palestinian president's address to the United Nations General Assembly the same day.

The U.S. leader has been seeking to restart peace talks between Israel and the

Palestinians, in search of what he has labelled the "ultimate deal".

But Palestinian officials have grown increasingly frustrated at the failure of Trump's team to commit to the two-state solution, the focus of international diplomacy since at least the early 1990s.

Members of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government openly oppose a two-state solution, while the premier himself has indicated in recent months that he plans no "uprooting" of settlements in the

occupied West Bank.

"It would be utterly ridiculous if Trump doesn't eventually say that," Nabil Shaath, a senior Abbas adviser, told journalists in Ramallah when asked about the two-state solution.

"What the hell are we negotiating? We are negotiating a diplomatic accord between Abu Mazen and Netanyahu where they can meet each other? No," he added, referring to Abbas by his Arabic nickname.

(Source: AFP)

Spanish police confiscate Catalan referendum material

Spanish police have seized more than a million pro-referendum posters and pamphlets in Catalonia, according to government officials.

Authorities claimed the 1.3 million prints, which included about 700,000 leaflets promoting a "yes" vote in the region's planned vote on independence, from a warehouse near Barcelona on Sunday.

"The proceedings were carried out during the morning of today [Sunday] and are the result of investigations carried out by the Civil Guard of Catalonia for the localization of materials that promote the referendum suspended by the Constitutional Court," the interior ministry said in a statement.

"This is the largest intervention of this illegal material made so far. Altogether, almost one and a half million materials to promote

the illegal referendum, as well as printing plates, have been used so far," it added.

Catalonia's regional government plans to hold a vote on independence on October 1, despite Spain's Constitutional Court having ruled the ballot illegal on the basis it defies the nation's constitutional decree declaring Spain indivisible.

Ada Colau, Barcelona's mayor, criticized Madrid's response to the crisis during a pro-referendum meeting, attended by more than 700 mayors from across Catalonia, on Saturday.

"It's a disgrace that we have a government that is incapable of dialogue and instead dedicates itself to pursuing and intimidating mayors and the media," he said.

Spain's state prosecutor ordered a criminal investigation into the 712 Catalan mayors

who have agreed to help stage the referendum on September 14.

Mariano Rajoy, Spain's prime minister, has urged people not to participate in the vote.

"If anyone urges you to go to a polling station, don't go because the referendum can't take place, it would be an absolutely illegal act," he said on September 13.

Catalonia, a region of 7.5 million people with its own language and culture, accounts for about 20 percent of Spain's economic output and has significant powers over matters such as education, healthcare and welfare.

About 49.4 percent of Catalans are against independence, while 41.1 percent are in favor, according to a poll commissioned by the Catalan government in July.

(Source: agencies)

Iraq top court rules to suspend Kurdish referendum

Iraq's top court has ordered the suspension of the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) planned referendum on independence.

The Supreme Court declared on Monday the ruling, which calls for all preparations for the September 25 vote to be halted, following a review of multiple "requests to stop the referendum".

"The supreme court has issued the order to suspend organizing the referendum set for September 25 ... until it examines the complaints it has received over this plebiscite being unconstitutional," it said in a statement.

Haider al-Abadi, Iraq's prime minister, had previously demanded the suspension of the referendum.

At least three legislators have filed complaints against the planned vote, a parliamentary source told Reuters News Agency.

"We have received several complaints and this is why we decided to suspend the referendum," said Ayas al-Samouk, a court spokesman.

The KRG, which governs the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq, has said a pro-independence vote would not trigger an immediate secession.

Massoud Barzani, president of the KRG, said a "yes" result would instead kick-start "serious discussions" with Baghdad.

Iraqi PM demands suspension of Kurdish independence referendum

Meantime, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has formally demanded suspension of the upcoming Kurdish independence referendum amid the central government's strong opposition to the planned vote.

UN's Guterres urges Kurds in Iraq to scrap referendum

The development follows as the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has also urged Kurds in Iraq to scrap plans to hold a referendum on independence later this month, arguing it would detract from the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit.



Christians in Tehran celebrate the rite of Exaltation of Holy Cross

A multitude of Armenians celebrated on Sunday, September 17, the rite of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross held in Tehran's Holy Cross Chapel, at the Ararat Sports Complex.

In the Christian liturgical calendar, there are several different rituals of the cross, all of which commemorate the cross used in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran Air Force ready to airlift more aid to Rohingya refugees

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) on Monday announced readiness to airlift another humanitarian consignment to Bangladesh for the displaced Rohingya people, ISNA reported.

In a statement, the IRIAF said its Boeing 747 will deliver another shipment containing food, medical and sanitary items to the Rohingya Muslims.

On Saturday, Iran sent a 40-ton humanitarian aid to Bangladesh, where tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims are stranded after fleeing the ongoing violence and ethnic cleansing in Myanmar.



France: All signs show Iran respecting nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has said his country is "vigilant" about Iran's compliance with its nuclear agreement, adding "all signs are that it's respecting its commitments," Bloomberg reported on Monday.

Tearing up the accord would be a blow to efforts to limit nuclear proliferation, and "we are trying to convince President (Donald) Trump of the pertinence of this view," Le Drian said at a press conference in New York.

Iran and six world powers signed the nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, on July 14, 2015. It went into effect on January 16, 2016.



Explosive device discovered in Najafabad

POLITICS TEHRAN — On Sunday night Iranian security forces defused a bomb that was found in a central city, Mehr news agency reported.

The explosive device was found planted underneath a vehicle in the city of Najafabad, near the central city of Isfahan.

Seifollah Rashidzadeh, a commander with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said the IRGC bomb disposal squad removed the bomb from the area because of security risks.

The city is secure and everything is under control, he added.



Iranian, French ambassadors discuss Kurdistan vote

POLITICS TEHRAN — Top Iranian and French diplomats to Baghdad met on Monday to exchange views about the issue of Iraqi Kurdistan region's independence referendum.

In their meeting at Tehran's embassy in Baghdad, Iranian Ambassador Iraj Masjedi and his French counterpart Bruno Aubert also held talks about other regional issues, IRNA reported.

Iran and France have voiced opposition to the independence referendum, saying it could lead to new conflicts in the Middle East.

Masjedi also met with Turkey's ambassador to Baghdad late on Sunday to discuss the referendum.



Iranian officials to meet on Washington's nuclear non-compliance

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Supreme Leader, said on Monday the supervisory board of BARJAM (the Persian acronym for the nuclear deal) will hold a session on U.S. government's non-compliance with the deal after President Rouhani returns home from New York.

Velayati said Iran will make an appropriate response to any measure that Washington takes against the nuclear accord.

He also rejected the possibility of any bilateral meeting between Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his American counterpart Rex Tillerson on the sidelines of the annual UN summit in New York.



Resistance front on verge of final victory over terrorism: envoy

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian ambassador to Damascus said on Sunday that the resistance front and the armed forces of regional states are on the verge of final victory against terrorism.

"The only goal of Iran and the resistance front is victory, we just think about victory," Javad Torkabadi said in a TV interview.

He emphasized that those who are supporting the rightful will finally emerge victorious even if they are in minority.

"We proved to the world that we are persistent, strong and righteous," the diplomat added.

Violation of nuclear deal will be detrimental to the world, Salehi warns

Ali Akbar Salehi, the director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, warned on Monday that a violation of the 2015 nuclear deal will be detrimental to not only its signatories but the entire international community.

"Any action or measure to weaken or nullify the provisions of the nuclear deal, under any pretext or politically-motivated and self-serving excuses, will certainly undermine and jeopardize this historic achievement, not only to the detriment of its participants, but in fact to that of the entire international community," he said during his speech at the seasonal International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference in Vienna, Austria.

Following is full text of his speech published by IRNA:

It is a distinct pleasure to join all of you for the 61st Session of the General Conference, this year, a Green Meeting, a great, timely, and future-looking practical idea. At the outset, I would like to seize the opportunity to congratulate you, Excellency Mrs. Maria Collinson, for your deserved election to the presidency of the Conference.

It is also a pleasure to see H.E. Mr. Yukiya Amano re-elected for another term to lead the Agency. We wish him every success and as always assure him of full cooperation, to effectively discharge his quite heavy, difficult, and challenging responsibilities.

I would also like to welcome Grenada as a new member of the IAEA.

Madam President, The General Conference as a highest policy making body provides an opportune annual occasion to direct the agency to "accelerate and enlarge the contribution of the atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". It is within the framework of this brief, overall picture of the Agency's Major Programme and Work that I would like to present to you and the General Conference our outlook and activities in a number of selected areas.

Within the framework of pursuing a peaceful nuclear program, Iran has relied on its developing infrastructure and technology as well as on its young and highly-talented manpower, both for power generation and other peaceful applications, including health and agriculture. Having introduced nuclear energy in the country's energy mix with the full utilization of the first unit of the Bushehr Power Plant, plans are already underway to increase the share through the construction of second and third units — also an important step towards reduction of greenhouse gas emissions at the national level. In addition, our radiopharmaceutical products are being exported to the neighboring and remote countries in recent years. Also as a result of a serious campaign against the plight of cancer, thanks to the technical cooperation with the Agency, Iran has made great valuable achievements. My country is looking forward for an extended cooperation in this field.

Moreover, the achievement of significant advances of my country in various fields of fission and fusion technology has



"The necessity for creating a nuclear weapon-free-zone in the Middle East ties well into the global and regional campaign ever since in exerting pressure on the Israeli Regime to put an end to its illegitimate nuclear weapons program and adhere to the NPT."

created the necessary basis for actual engagement in mutual and trilateral fruitful cooperation with both developed and developing international partners, and in the framework of IAEA technical cooperation programs.

Excellencies, One of the most important aspects of all our activities relates to the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) since it went into effect in early 2016. As confirmed by the Agency's periodic reports, Iran has honestly and in good faith fulfilled all its commitments under the deal. It is worth mentioning that the nuclear activities of my country are carried out under utmost transparency, including numerous inspections and complementary access to its nuclear sites. Having no time to delve into an in-depth analysis of the unacceptable difficulties and obstacles created by one of the participants on the full implementation of JCPOA, I merely suffice to draw your attention to the fact that, the integrity of the nuclear deal must be adhered to and preserved by all its participants. All participants, without any exception, must be held accountable in this regard; each and every party must faithfully comply with its commitments in order to keep it intact, on track, and operational.

Any action or measure to weaken or nullify the provisions of the nuclear deal, under any pretext or politically-motivated

and self-serving excuses, will certainly undermine and jeopardize this historic achievement, not only to the detriment of its participants, but in fact to that of the entire international community. I would also find it necessary to allude, though very briefly, to the recent American demarche at the Agency with a host of unjustifiable peculiar demands with regard to the verification of our strictly peaceful nuclear programme far beyond the purview of JCPOA and its collectively negotiated and well-defined provisions. The American administration's overtly hostile attitude and actual foot-dragging policies and measures aimed at undermining the nuclear deal and blocking Iran's legitimate benefits from its full and unimpeded implementation are contrary to the letter and spirit of JCPOA. We remain confident that the Agency, and for that matter, the Director-General, will resist such unacceptable demands and continue to execute the Agency's irreplaceable technical supervisory role with strict objectivity, fairness and impartiality, including protection of sensitive, technical and industrial information attained through inspections. The Agency's success in this important and critical challenge will benefit everybody and enhance its international credibility. Serious and active cooperation of other participants to the deal, and in a larger sense, the members of the IAEA, will indeed make a positive contribution to this end.

"The American administration's overtly hostile attitude and actual foot-dragging policies and measures aimed at undermining the nuclear deal and blocking Iran's legitimate benefits from its full and unimpeded implementation are contrary to the letter and spirit of JCPOA."

Amano: Iran subject to most robust nuclear verification regime

POLITICS TEHRAN — Yukiya Amano, chief of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency, reconfirmed on Monday that Iran is implementing its commitments under the July 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented. Iran is now subject to the world's most robust nuclear verification regime," he said in his statement to sixty-first regular session of IAEA general conference.

"Since the last General Conference, we have continued to verify and monitor the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-

related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action."

He also said, "The Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement. Evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran continue."

Also, speaking at the seasonal meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna on September 11, Amano said that Iran is honoring its nuclear commitments.

He said the body under his leadership is continuing to "implement the Additional Protocol in Iran" which allows surprise inspection of nuclear sites.

'New U.S. sanctions in line with Iranophobia project'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Sunday that the U.S. Treasury move in imposing new sanctions on a number of Iranian individuals is in line with the Iranophobia project.

Qassemi's comments referred to new cyber-related sanctions on seven Iranian individuals and two entities by the U.S. Treasury on Thursday.

"The recent action of the U.S. is simply in line with continuation of the anti-Iran policy of Iranophobia by the officials of the White House," he explained.

The official described the U.S. act as contrary to international law and regulations.

"Wrong and unfounded accusations of cyber-attacks against the Iranian citizens are contrary to the individuals' basic rights to access the cyber area," he added.

Warning Washington about its continued hostile policies against Iran, the Foreign Ministry official advised U.S. officials to be aware of the "wrong" and "defeated" policies and avoid behaving "unwisely".

The new U.S. sanctions freeze any assets of the sanctioned individuals and companies and prohibit American citizens and residents and U.S. companies from doing business with them.

The sanctions were imposed at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump must decide in October whether to certify that Iran is complying with the agreement.

Rouhani: U.S. will pay high price if Trump scraps nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that America would pay a high price if U.S. President Donald Trump makes good on his threats to scrap the Iran nuclear deal.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour in New York, Rouhani said: "Exiting such an agreement would carry a high cost for the United States of America, and I do not believe Americans would be willing to pay such a high cost for something that will be useless for them."

Rouhani said such an action by the Trump administration "will yield no results for the United States



but at the same time it will generally decrease and cut away and chip away at international trust placed in the United States of America."

The U.S. extended sanctions relief for Iran last week as part of the 2015 nuclear agreement, which Trump has described as "the worst deal ever," but this is mainly procedural.

The real test comes in October when Trump will decide whether to certify that Iran is complying with the agreement. If he does not, Congress has 60 days to decide whether to reimpose sanctions waived under the deal.

Rohingya refugees tell of new violence; call for Myanmar sanctions

Rohingya Muslims fleeing a Myanmar military offensive arrived in Bangladesh on Monday with fresh accounts of violence and arson as a rights group called for sanctions and an arms embargo to stop what the United Nations has branded ethnic cleansing.

The latest wave of violence in western Myanmar's Rakhine State began on Aug. 25, when Rohingya insurgents attacked police posts and an army camp, killing about 12 people.

The Myanmar military response has sent more than 410,000 Rohingya Muslims fleeing to Bangladesh, escaping what they and rights monitors say is a campaign aimed at driving out the Muslim population.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar rejects that, saying its forces are carrying out clearance operations against the insurgents of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, which claimed responsibility for the August attacks and smaller raids in October.

Hundreds of refugees travelled by small boats to an island on the southern-most point of Bangladesh late on Sunday and on Monday, telling of persecution and destruction.

Many of the refugees have spoken of ethnic Rakhine Buddhist civilians joining the Myanmar army in its attacks. Myanmar denies that and has blamed Muslim insurgents for the violence.

Myanmar has largely sealed the area off to aid workers and reporters.

Rights groups say satellite images show about 80 smoldering Muslim villages. They have seen evidence of arson attacks on Buddhist villagers, but on a much smaller scale.

Most of the new arrivals said their villages had been torched on Friday, when huge clouds of smoke were clearly seen over Myanmar.

About a million Rohingya lived in Rakhine State until the recent violence. Most face draconian travel restrictions and are denied citizenship in a country where many Buddhists regard them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Myanmar government leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has faced a barrage of criticism from abroad for not stopping the violence.

The military remains in charge of se-



curity and there is little sympathy for the Rohingya in a country where the end of army rule has unleashed old animosities. The military campaign in Rakhine State has wide support.

Suu Kyi is due to speak to the nation on Tuesday about a crisis the United States has called a "defining moment" for her country.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Patrick Murphy is due in Myanmar this week.

He will travel to Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, to meet government officials and representatives of different communities, including Rohingya, but he is not seeking to travel to the conflict zone in northern Rakhine State.

Human Rights Watch said Myanmar security forces were disregarding world condemnation and the time had come to impose tougher measures that the generals could not ignore.

It called for governments to "impose travel bans and asset freezes on security officials implicated in serious abuses; expand existing arms embargoes to include all military sales, assistance, and cooperation; and place a ban on financial transactions with key ... military-owned enterprises".

For years, the United States and Western allies imposed sanctions on Myanmar

in support of Suu Kyi's campaign for democracy. Its response was to forge closer ties with China.

U.S.-Myanmar ties have been improving since the military began withdrawing from government in 2011, and paved the way for a 2015 election won by Suu Kyi's party.

A Trump administration official said the violence made it harder to build warmer ties, and there would likely be some "easing" in the short term, but he did not expect a return to sanctions.

In a rare expression of support for the Rohingya from within Myanmar, a group from the Karen ethnic minority, called for the military to halt its operations and for economic sanctions to be considered.

For decades of army battled autonomy-seeking Karen insurgents that sent more than 100,000 villagers fleeing to Thailand. The insurgents have now made peace.

Bangladesh is struggling to cope with the refugees and aid workers fear people could die due to a lack of food, shelter and water, given the numbers.

Bangladesh has said all refugees must go home. Myanmar has said it will take back those who can verify their citizenship.

Several thousand protesters tried to march on the Myanmar embassy in the

Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, but police kept them well back.

Two Rohingya children, woman killed in aid stampede

Meantime, at least two children and one woman were killed in a stampede as clothes were being handed out to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, according to aid agencies.

"Two children and one woman were killed in a stampede during an unauthorized clothing distribution on the road in Balukhali Pan Bazar area. Despite local regulations and the control room established, private distributions of relief items continue," said a September 15 report by the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG).

Meanwhile, though several well-meaning Bangladeshi citizens have offered their support to the Rohingya, the ISCG said at least six people from the local community who identified themselves as camp managers at another location had been charging refugees for land and shelter.

The perpetrators were arrested and jailed for 15 days, the report said.

ISCG, which comprises various humanitarian agencies, said 326,700 people in makeshift and spontaneous settlements in Bangladesh were in need of emergency shelter.

(Source: agencies)

Korean peninsula draws range of military drills in show of force against N. Korea



The United States military staged bombing drills with South Korea over the Korean peninsula and Russia and China began naval exercises ahead of a United Nations General Assembly meeting on Tuesday where North Korea's nuclear threat is likely to loom large.

The flurry of military drills came after Pyongyang fired another mid-range ballistic missile over Japan on Friday and the reclusive North conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3 in defiance of United Nations sanctions and other international pressure.

A pair of U.S. B-1B bombers and four F-35 jets flew from Guam and Japan and joined four South Korean F-15K fighters in the latest drill, South Korea's defense ministry said.

The joint drills were being conducted "two to three times a month these days", Defense Minister Song Young-moo told a parliamentary hearing on Monday.

In Beijing, the official Xinhua news agency said China and Russia began naval drills off the Russian far eastern port of Vladivostok, not far from the Russia-North Korea border.

Those drills were being conducted between Peter the Great Bay, near Vladivostok, and the southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk, to the north of Japan, it said.

The drills are the second part of China-Russian naval exercises this year, the first part of which was staged in the Baltic in July. Xinhua did not directly link the drills to current tension over North Korea.

China and Russia have repeatedly called for a peaceful solution and talks to resolve the issue.

On Sunday, however, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said the UN Security Council had run out of options on containing North Korea's nuclear program and the United States might have to turn the matter over to the Pentagon.

In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said the most pressing task was for all parties to enforce the latest UN resolutions on North Korea fully, rather than "deliberately complicating the issue".

Military threats from various parties have not promoted a resolution to the issue, he said.

"This is not beneficial to a final resolution to the peninsula nuclear issue," Lu told a daily news briefing.

U.S. President Donald Trump has vowed that North Korea will never be able to threaten the United States with a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile.

Asked about Trump's warning last month that the North Korean threat to the United States would be met with "fire and fury", Haley said: "It was not an empty threat."

Washington has also asked China to do more to rein in its neighbor and ally, while Beijing has urged the United States to refrain from making threats against the North.

Fuel prices surge

The UN Security Council unanimously passed a U.S.-drafted resolution a week ago mandating tougher sanctions against Pyongyang that included banning textile imports and capping crude and petrol supply.

North Korea on Monday called the resolution "the most vicious, unethical and inhumane act of hostility to physically exterminate" its people, system and government.

"The increased moves of the U.S. and its vassal forces to impose sanctions and pressure... will only increase our pace toward the ultimate completion of the state nuclear force," the North's foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement carried by its official KCNA news agency.

Gasoline and diesel prices in the North have surged since the latest nuclear test in anticipation of a possible oil ban, according to market data analyzed by Reuters on Monday.

The international community must remain united and enforce sanctions against North Korea after its repeated launch of ballistic missiles, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in an editorial in the New York Times on Sunday.

Such tests were in violation of Security Council resolutions and showed that North Korea could now target the United States or Europe, he wrote.

Abe also said diplomacy and dialogue would not work with North Korea and concerted pressure by the entire international community was essential to tackle the threats posed by the north and its leader, Kim Jong Un.

However, the official China Daily argued on Monday that sanctions should be given time to bite and that the door must be left open to talks.

Pyongyang has launched dozens of missiles as it accelerates a weapons program designed to provide the ability to target the United States with a powerful, nuclear-tipped missile.

It says such programs are needed as a deterrent against invasion by the United States, which has 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea. On Saturday, it said it aimed to reach an "equilibrium" of military force with the United States.

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

(Source: Reuters)

Certain Western states still back terror groups in Syria: Assad

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad says "certain Western countries" still support, directly or indirectly, terrorist organizations and groups in Syria despite the fact that this wrong policy has already backfired on their governments and people.

The Syrian president made the comments in a meeting with an Italian parliamentary delegation headed by Mario Romani, a member of the Senate of the Republic, in the capital Damascus on Sunday, Syria's official news agency, SANA, reported.

President Assad said such visits by the European delegations to Syria, with the aim of getting acquainted with the facts on the ground, could play a significant role in raising the awareness of the Western public opinion about the realities of the crisis in Syria and expose the lies told by the Western mass media in this regard.

The Italian delegation had visited a number of areas in Syria in an attempt to obtain firsthand experience of what the situation was like in the war-torn country before meeting with the Syrian president.

Assad said such awareness-raising steps taken by the international community could pave the way for lifting the economic siege that has increased the suffering of the Syrian nation and negatively affected their livelihood. The Syrian president also described the embargo imposed on his country by "certain superpowers," to be in



blatant violation of international and humanitarian laws.

The Italian delegation, for its part, expressed solidarity with the Syrian people in their war against foreign-sponsored terrorism, acknowledging that the militancy in the country had started to affect a number of European states by posing a real threat to the security, safety and future of their citizens.

Members of the visiting Italian delegation also asserted that they would spare no effort to convey the realities of the crisis in Syria back to the European country and to the rest of the continent.

Earlier in the day, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid

al-Muallem met with the Italian delegation, stressing that his country would continue fighting terrorism until the entire Syria was cleared of terrorists. The top diplomat also stated that his country supported all efforts to find a political solution to the crisis through dialogue among the Syrians without any external interference.

Different foreign-backed terrorist groups have been wreaking havoc in Syria since 2011. The Damascus government has repeatedly blamed certain foreign countries for the spread of the devastating militancy.

The government controls main urban centers in the west of the country and has recaptured much of the eastern parts of Syria from Takfiri terrorists in recent months.

Syrian forces managed to reach Dayr al-Zawr's provincial capital of the same name, which lies on the western bank of the Euphrates River, earlier this month, breaking a nearly three-year-old siege by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group on government-held parts of the city.

On September 12, Lieutenant General Aleksandr Lapin, the Russian chief of staff in Syria, announced that Damascus was in control of 85 percent of the country's territories. He added that Syrian forces must now purge terrorists from the country's remaining 15 percent, which amounts to 27,000 square kilometers.

(Source: SANA)

Turkey sends tanks near Iraqi and Syrian borders

Turkey has launched a military drill featuring tanks close to the Iraqi border and dispatched military vehicles to its southern border with Syria where several warring sides are jockeying for position in the face of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit losses.

The military exercises began in the Silopi-Habur region in the country's south, close to northern Iraq, a week before Iraq's Kurdish region holds a vote on possible secession.

Ankara has warned that the vote could risk "civil war" and "have a cost" if it goes ahead but Iraqi Kurds have said they would still hold the non-binding referendum on September 25.

Witnesses in the region, quoted by the French news agency AFP, said they saw around 100 military vehicles deployed close to the Iraqi border, including tanks, in the early hours of Monday.

A Turkish military statement said, "Simultaneously with this exercise, counter-terrorism operations in the border region continue."

Syria deployment

Turkey also sent about 80 military vehicles, including tanks, to the Iskenderun district of the southeastern province of Hatay as part of reinforcements for forces stationed along the border.

It is the second time the Turkish military deploys military reinforcements to the border with Syria where an expanding grip of the United States-backed Kurdish militants on nearby territories is raising alarms in Turkey.

The Turkish army sent first aid trucks and military vehicles as well as heavy equipment to the same location on Saturday, according to the agency said.

Anadolu noted that a third convoy of armored vehicles was heading to Hatay's Reyhanli district, where Turkey's Cilvegozu border gate with Syria is located.

The Syrian government is wary of the outside players carving out zones of influence through local proxies. The U.S. has already brought together a ragtag group of mostly Kurdish militants and equipped them with heavy weapons.

Turkey, on the other hand, is supporting another group of militants who have taken a number of towns in recent years.

Last week, Russia, Iran, and Turkey, which together act as guarantor states in peace talks for Syria, agreed on the details of a "de-escalation zone" in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib, which borders Turkey, during resolution talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said on Friday observers from the three countries will be deployed around

the de-escalation zone to prevent "clashes between the government and the opposition forces and any violations of the truce."

On Saturday, the Syrian government welcomed the agreement but stressed that it would not grant Turkish military forces authorization to stay in Syria.

Idlib Province is largely under the control of foreign-sponsored and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham militant group, which was formerly known as al-Nusra Front.

In August 2016, Turkey began a unilateral military intervention in northern Syria, code-named Operation Euphrates Shield, sending tanks and warplanes across the border, which Damascus denounced as a breach of its sovereignty.

In March, Turkey announced that the operation had ended "successfully," with the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/Yekineyên Parastina Gel) prevented from conjoining its territories.

The YPG is part of a larger coalition of militants — the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) — which has been engaged in operations to capture the Syrian city of Raqqa.

Ankara has on multiple occasions expressed its deep concern about the advance of YPG forces in northern Syria.

(Source: agencies)



Oil Ministry announces priorities

1 → Completion of loading and export facilities in the port city of Jask in the southern Hormozgan Province was another priority for the ministry.

Jask Oil Terminal will have the capacity of storing up to 30 million barrels and exporting 1 million barrels per day of crude oil once completed.

In August, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh put attraction of investment for development of Iran's shared oil and gas fields as the main priority of the ministry.

Completing development phases of South Pars (the huge gas field Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf), rebuilding and renovating oil installations, second leap in the petrochemical output, and no natural gas flaring were his next top priorities.

Ukraine taps market for \$2.5bn with 15-year bond issue

Ukraine is set to price its first dollar-denominated bond since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, with strong investor demand for high-yielding sovereign debt buoying the deal.

The nation is seeking around \$1bn of new money in addition to replacing \$1.6bn of debt set to mature in 2019 and 2020 with a new issue maturing in 15 years' time, according to those with knowledge of the deal.

The new paper will amortise over the final two years of its lifetime, in order to avoid a single bullet repayment.

Initial pricing indications have set the yield at around 7.75 per cent, and books are now open with final pricing set to take place later today.

One banker involved said that "market conditions are very positive for issuers lower down on the credit spectrum".

"Investors are being forced to search for pastures new, that has been the theme so far this year," he said.

Ukraine is one of a series of infrequent sovereign issuers that have sought to tap the markets recently.

Last week the Kingdom of Bahrain saw \$15bn of demand for \$3bn of bonds, including 12-year paper that priced at 6.75 per cent.

Iraq issued \$1bn of five-year debt last month at a yield of 6.75 per cent. Belarus raised \$1.4bn in a dual-maturity five- and 10-year tranche bond two months ago: the 10-year tranche was priced at 7.625 per cent.

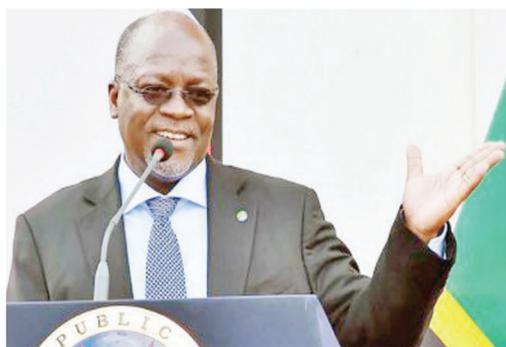
Earlier this month Tajikistan raised \$500m of 10-year money priced at 7.125 per cent.

Ukraine is rated B- by S&P and Fitch and Caa2 by Moody's.

BNP Paribas, JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs are acting as bookrunners on the deal. Rothschild is acting as financial adviser to the Ukraine ministry of finance.

(Source: The Financial Times)

Tanzanian leader's war for taxes puts economy in firing line



Tanzanian President John Magufuli's deepening dispute with companies he accuses of being tax cheats is rattling investors and dimming the allure of one of Africa's fastest-growing economies.

Since taking office in late 2015, Magufuli has been on a drive to increase revenue from natural resources to help fund his industrialization plans. His administration has passed laws enabling it to renegotiate contracts and ordered foreign mining firms to sell stakes on the local stock exchange to increase transparency. The authorities have hit Acacia Mining Plc with a \$190 billion tax bill, curbed its exports and detained a senior employee, and seized gems and questioned staff from Petra Diamonds Ltd., alleging it hadn't paid its dues.

"In his bid to do some good things like trying to reduce the level of corruption, President Magufuli has often taken steps that have actually gone outside of the formal rules," Nic Cheeseman, professor of democracy at the University of Birmingham in the U.K., said by phone. "Even people I think who have sympathy for his ends are starting to say that the means of achieving them might do more harm than good. It is a very worrying situation."

Acacia, whose tax bill and related penalties equate to 180 times its revenue last year, and Petra have denied wrongdoing and shuttered some of their operations in Tanzania until the disputes are resolved. With Magufuli showing no signs of backing down, the closures may have an effect on tax income, deter other investment and stifle an economy that the International Monetary Fund expects to expand an average of 6.7 percent a year until 2021.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Iran Plast foreign exhibitors' participation up 21%

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The number of foreign exhibitors has increased 21 percent in the 11th International Exhibition of Plastics, Rubber, Machinery and Equipment of Iran (Iran Plast 2017) from the previous edition of the event, Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Managing Director Marziyeh Shahdaei announced in a press conference on Monday.

She put the number of foreigners to attend this year's exhibition at 524 and the number of Iranian participants at 600 with 39 percent growth from the figure of past year.

The official also said that the number of Iran Plast foreign participants has risen 100 percent from the ninth edition, i.e. in the post-sanction era.

The event, which will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from September 24 to 27, is one of the most important industrial exhibitions in Iran and one of the most significant plastic exhibitions in the Middle East, the NPC managing director highlighted.

Companies from Germany, China, India, Cyprus, Taiwan, France, Italy, South Korea, Finland, Switzerland, Austria, Serbia, Luxembourg, Belgium, Thailand, Czech Republic, Greece, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Japan and Turkey will showcase their latest products and achievements in plastics and rubber industry during the four-day exhibit.

■ 'Post-sanction opportunity to boost foreign exhibitors'

Shahdaei said the NPC has taken the post-sanction opportunity to boost the number of foreign participants in Iran Plast and in this due the company has benefitted from a famous global organizer for organizing this exhibition to attract more foreign exhibitors.

She mentioned promoting exports of products and



services, creating a more variable market, attracting foreign investment, receiving modern technology and the most important one increasing job creation in the petrochemical industry as the main objectives of the exhibition.

As the petrochemical industry itself does not create many jobs, completing the chain of value and developing the downstream industries can pave the way for promotion of job creation in this industry, the official commented.

■ 'Developing downstream industries to be 1st in region'

Elsewhere in her remarks, the NPC managing director put the country's petrochemical capacity at 60 million tons and mentioned achieving the first place in the region in terms of the value of petrochemical products as the outlook plan of NPC.

"To reach this goal, we should develop our downstream sections and also set up the new units as some complementary chains", she remarked.

PwC to help Iranian companies invest in other countries

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Pricewaterhouse-d e s k Coopers' (PwC) Auditor and Tax Consultant Jens Rönberg, in a meeting at Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on Monday, announced that the multinational professional services network is ready to support Iranian companies to invest in different countries, TCCIMA Public Relations Department announced.

During the meeting, held between PwC's representatives and Iranian entrepreneurs and officials from banking, stock exchange, and international commerce sectors, Rönberg said that considering the fact that Iran is a large country with a significant market, the major point under the current circumstances is mak-

ing foreign investors feel confident about entering Iranian market, while it is vital for Iranian firms to boost financial transparency.

"In case of receiving the required permit, PwC will open an office in Tehran within three to six months to collaborate with Iranian companies on providing services," the PwC official announced.

As TCCIMA quoted its head Masoud Khansari addressing the same meeting, as of the implementation of nuclear deal with the six world powers in January 2016, 200 foreign trade delegations have visited Iran to investigate investing here. "Iran is a safe country with young and educated workforce and can be a good destination for foreign investors," he said.



France should vigorously defend its euro zone reform proposals

Anybody investing in euro-denominated assets should know that the currency's future, just as was the case with its origin, crucially depends on a French-German agreement — so far on Germany's terms.

The latest such bargain is falling apart. An implied deal around French economic and political (i.e., structural) reforms, demanded by Germany, and France's quest for eurozone insti-

tutional changes, was spurned by the EU Commission last Wednesday, Sept. 13, in a widely suspected, and highly probable, double act with Berlin.

Indeed, one could see a diligent rush by Germany's pro-government center-right media to highlight Berlin's full support of the EU Commission's reform program.

That is a serious blow to French efforts to even out the playing field

with Germany by establishing a legislative and executive control over the euro area, with common fiscal policy to run public debt, budget balances and the monetary union's investment projects.

Paris could have seen that coming. As soon as the French euro area reform proposals were announced last spring, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel issued a statement

that she would take a look at French ideas to see "whether the reforms were needed" and "what to do with them."

France now has Germany's answer, dutifully delivered, in German, by the president of the EU Commission so that Merkel does not have to bother with minutiae in the run-up to Sept. 24 elections.

(Source: cnbc)

World central banks cannot ignore Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, says BIS

The world's central banks can't sit back and ignore the growth in cryptocurrencies as it could pose a risk to the stability of the financial system, according to the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

It said central banks will need to figure out whether to issue a digital currency and what its attributes should be, though the decision is most pressing in countries like Sweden where cash use is dwindling.

Institutions need to take into account of not only privacy issues and efficiency gains in payment systems, but also economic, financial and monetary policy repercussions, the BIS said in its quarterly review.

The analysis comes at the end of a rough week for digital currencies, with JPMorgan chief executive Jamie Dimon calling bitcoin a "fraud" and China moving to crack down on domestic trading of cryptocurrencies.

But with bitcoin and others gaining in popularity as payment systems go mobile and investors pour in money, central banks are beginning to delve into them and their underlying blockchain technology, which promises to speed up clearing and settlements.

At the Bank of England, Mark Carney has cited cryptocurrencies as part of a potential "revolution" in



finance.

To better understand the system, the Dutch central bank has created its own cryptocurrency, albeit for internal use only.

US officials are exploring the matter too, though in March Federal Reserve Governor Jerome Powell said there were "significant policy issues" that needed further study, including vulnerability to cyber-attack, privacy and counterfeiting.

According to the BIS, one option for central banks might be a currency available to the public, with only the central bank able to issue units that would be directly convertible with cash and reserves.

There might be a greater risk of bank runs, however, and commercial lenders might face a shortage of deposits. Another question to be resolved would be the question of privacy.

(Source: Independent)

Gold slips as equities, dollar surge ahead of Fed meeting

LONDON (Reuters) — Gold hit a two and a half week low on Monday as the dollar rose ahead of a two-day Federal Reserve meeting and as global equities surged.

The dollar hit an eight-week high against the yen as data showing a pick up in U.S. consumer prices increased bets that the Fed could raise rates again in December.

Also, investors expect the Fed will announce plans to start trimming its balance sheet at its meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday, a move that should support the dollar.

World stocks hit a record high ahead of the Fed meeting, with investors favouring risky assets to perceived safe havens like gold. Spot gold was down 0.3 percent at \$1,314.41 an ounce by 1003 GMT. Earlier, gold hit \$1,312.03, its lowest since Aug 31.

U.S. gold futures for December delivery fell 0.5 percent to \$1,318.50.

"Gold could fall below \$1,300 in the short term but the question remains how people perceive the U.S. economy and the need for higher interest rates," said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

"At this stage there's still not a strong view the U.S. economy will accelerate. That should keep interest rates at a manageable level and provide some support for gold."

Investors currently put a December rate hike at less than a 50 percent probability in the futures market.



Gold is highly sensitive to rising U.S. interest rates, which increase the opportunity cost of holding the non-yielding asset, while boosting the dollar, in which it is priced.

On the political front, investors largely brushed aside concerns after a relatively quiet weekend in the Korean peninsula.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Sunday the U.N. Security Council has run out of options on containing North Korea's nuclear program and the U.S. may have to turn the matter over to the Pentagon.

Data showed speculators raised their net long position in COMEX gold contracts for the ninth straight week, bringing it to a one-year high in the week to Sept. 12 and leaving gold vulnerable to profit taking.

Silver slipped 0.4 percent to \$17.51 an ounce, after earlier hitting its lowest since Sept. 1.

Platinum dipped 0.1 percent to \$966.30, while palladium gained 1.1 percent to \$933.47.

Oil markets firm on rising refinery demand, falling U.S. rig count

Oil markets were firm on Monday and remained near multi-month highs reached late last week as the number of U.S. rigs drilling for new production fell and refineries continued to start up after getting knocked out by Hurricane Harvey.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$49.89 a barrel at 0232 GMT, unchanged from their settlement last Friday and still close to the more than three-month high of \$50.50 briefly reached on Thursday.

Thomson Reuters technical analyst Wang Tao said WTI was poised to break above \$50 per barrel.

"U.S. oil is poised to break resistance at \$50.43 per barrel, as suggested by an inverted head-and-shoulders, the wave pattern and a Fibonacci projection analysis," he said.

Brent crude futures, the benchmark for oil prices outside the United States, were at \$55.67 a barrel, up 5 cents and not far off the almost five-month high of \$55.99 on Thursday.

"Demand forecasts from OPEC and IEA... continued to improve sentiment in



the market. Refineries are also reporting a much better recovery from the recent hurricanes," ANZ bank said on Monday.

Oil refineries across the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean were restarting after being shut due to hurricanes Har-

vey and Irma, which battered the region in the past three weeks.

Royal Dutch Shell's Deer Park refinery in Texas was among the latest, beginning its restart on Sunday. The plant can process 325,700 barrels per day.

The refinery restarts are occurring "as signs emerge of stalling growth in the U.S. shale industry. The number of rigs drilling for oil in the U.S. fell sharply last week," ANZ said.

U.S. energy firms cut seven oil rigs in the week to Sept. 15, bringing the total count down to 749, the fewest since June, energy services company Baker Hughes said on Friday.

Despite these signs of a tightening market, analysts warned that the distortions of the recent hurricanes made it hard to identify more long-lasting supply and demand fundamentals.

"This week's crude inventories data will almost certainly still show the distortions of Harvey and Irma and significant increases may be looked at by traders as outlier data," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst at futures brokerage OANDA.

Hedge funds and other money managers cut their bullish bets on U.S. crude futures and options in the week to Sept. 12, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission reported on Friday.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia's Rosneft clinches gas pipeline deal with Iraq's Kurdistan



Russian oil major Rosneft will invest in gas pipelines in Iraq's Kurdistan, expanding its commitment to the region ahead of its independence vote to help it become a major exporter of gas to Turkey and Europe.

Kurdistan has been exporting oil independently from the central government in Baghdad since 2014 and Kremlin-controlled Rosneft joined the list of buyers this year, lending the semi-autonomous region hundreds of millions of dollars in loans guaranteed by future oil sales.

Now Rosneft is widening its investments to gas by agreeing to fund a natural gas pipeline in Kurdistan, Rosneft and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) said on Monday. Two sources close to the deal said the investments would amount to more than \$1 billion.

Kurdistan is holding an independence vote on Sept. 25 as it seeks to part ways from Baghdad after years of disputes over budget revenues and the sharing of oil exports.

Erbil, the seat of the KRG in northern Iraq, needs money to fund the fight against Islamic state and a budget crisis

caused by low oil prices.

Kurdistan has relied on oil pre-finance deals to improve its fiscal position but has struggled to develop its large gas reserves, which can require more investment to develop on a longer-term scale.

The arrival of Rosneft will speed up gas development, which has so far largely been driven by mid-sized companies.

For Rosneft, the world's largest publicly listed oil company by production, the deal is a major boost to its international gas ambitions. Rosneft has long sought to challenge Gazprom, Russia's gas export monopoly, in supplying gas to Europe.

For Turkey, it means the arrival of new supplies for its energy-hungry economy and the potential to become a major center for gas supplies to Europe.

The pipeline's capacity is expected to handle up to 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas exports a year, in addition to supplying domestic users. Kurdistan sits on some of the largest untapped gas deposits on Europe's doorstep.

(Source: Reuters)

Saudis may raise domestic gasoline prices by 80%



Saudi Arabia is considering a plan to raise domestic prices for gasoline and jet fuel in November at the latest, as the world's biggest oil exporter pushes a program to curtail spending and reduce dependence on crude after a global slump in prices.

The government would boost gasoline to parity with international prices under the plan, according to a person with knowledge of the matter. At current price levels, this would result in a hike for octane-91 grade gasoline to about 1.35 riyals per liter (0.36 cents) from 0.75 riyals, or an increase of about 80 percent, the person said, asking not to be identified because the matter isn't public. The government plans to delay increases in other energy prices until early 2018, the person said.

Authorities are expected to make a final decision on the plan in September or October, the person said. The Saudi finance and economy ministries didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Energy-subsidy reform is a key part of Saudi Arabia's restructuring program, along with the sale of

stakes in state-owned entities, including the world's biggest crude exporter known as Saudi Aramco. A 0.5 percent shrinkage in gross domestic product in the first quarter revealed the scale of the challenges the government may face as it seeks to overhaul an economy still reliant on a struggling oil industry.

The neighboring United Arab Emirates, the second-biggest Arab economy in the region, became the first country in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region to remove subsidies on transport fuel when it began linking gasoline and diesel prices to global oil markets in August 2015.

Gasoline and jet fuel would undergo immediate, one-time increases under the plan, while the government would raise prices of other fuels gradually by 2021, the person said.

The government may put a ceiling on increases in diesel and heavy fuel oil to limit any negative impact on the economy, as both fuels are used for power generation and industrial activities, the person said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Sub-\$50 oil could kill shale

Oil prices are at their highest levels in months on the back of strong demand and some key supply outages around the world. But the next price movements are unclear, as is the response from U.S. shale.

As the International Energy Agency (IEA) noted last week, global oil supply fell in August by about 720,000 bpd—a large contraction after months of sizable gains. Much of that is probably temporary, particularly in the U.S. and Libya, two countries that saw unexpected outages. But the demand story is arguably more important: the IEA upgraded its demand forecast for the year, as consumption has surprised on the upside.

WTI is now back in the vicinity of \$50 per barrel, while Brent topped \$55 per barrel in recent days—its highest level since the beginning of 2017. But that doesn't mean that the price gains will continue. There are a few reasons to be skeptical that the momentum will carry crude prices higher than current levels.

CNBC notes that over the past three years, whenever WTI rose above \$50 per barrel, a ton of pressure quickly derailed the upward trend. CNBC found that WTI exceeded \$50 per barrel 18 times since December 2014, but after it crossed that threshold, the next week's price movement was positive only 28 percent of the time. Or, put another way, over the past three years, whenever WTI jumped above \$50 per barrel, three out of four times the price dropped a week later. Meanwhile, The United States Short Oil Fund, an exchange-traded fund that shorts WTI, was positive 67 percent of the time in the week following a \$50 price breach.

In other words, major investors quickly made bearish bets whenever it seemed that WTI was getting too



high, and in many cases \$50 per barrel was the threshold around which bullishness and bearishness pivoted.

That makes sense because \$50 also seems to be an important marker for the starting and stopping of U.S. shale. Drilling activity ramped up at the end of last year and earlier this year after the initial OPEC agreement pushed prices above \$50. But drilling activity came to a screeching halt and the rig count flat-lined a few months ago when WTI sank to the low \$40s.

Now, a few months after shale drillers dialed back their ambitions, the oil market seems much improved and WTI is back at \$50. While breakeven prices vary widely from driller to driller, \$50 per barrel appears to be a rough rule of thumb for an industry-wide average breakeven price. While imprecise, the past year or so has seen shale ramp up and down depending on which side of \$50 per barrel WTI finds itself on.

The next steps are important but also uncertain. If WTI does post some gains, it seems reasonable to ex-

pect U.S. shale companies to accelerate drilling activity.

But even if drillers feel confident with \$50 oil, not everyone thinks the industry is on sound financial footing. Jim Chanos, a short-seller with Kynikos Associates, spoke at a CNBC investor's conference last week and laid out his case for shorting the shale industry. "In our view, people have been looking at this industry through the rose-colored glasses of Wall Street," he said. "And this is the inherent problem with the North American shale business."

Chanos argued that shale drillers are using up all of their revenues to reinvest in capex, leaving them with little to nothing left over to pay off debt. Because companies have to keep drilling in order to maintain production, they find themselves stuck on a spending treadmill. "The way to think about it is that unlike other businesses, your assets literally get burned up," he stated. One of the companies Chanos singled out during his speech: Continental Resources, the North Dakota and Oklahoma shale driller.

Continental's CEO Harold Hamm was testy in a follow-up CNBC interview, responding to Chanos' claims. "Well, first of all, I can say almost, who is this guy? A short-seller," Hamm declared. He also suggested that Chanos might be getting burned as oil prices rise, and he is simply trying to talk down oil prices.

The exchange is fitting because Hamm has previously said that \$50 per barrel was the price needed to keep shale sustainable. If WTI stays at current levels or moves up from here, we'll find out if he is right over the next few quarters.

(Source: oilprice.com)

IEA sees risk of volatile oil prices on weak upstream investment

A dearth of new investment in oil production is stoking a risk of tighter crude supply and unstable prices, even as demand growth is expected to slow over the next five years, according to a senior International Energy Agency official.

The worldwide cushion of spare production capacity will shrink without further investment in exploration and output, Neil Atkinson, the head of the IEA's oil markets and industry division, said at a conference in Manama, Bahrain.

"There are still not enough signs of investment beginning to return, and that raises the risk of tightening of the market in the next five years and a risk to the stability of oil prices," he said Sunday. "There is at least a possibility of going back to the situation we had 10 years ago where oil prices were very, very high at a time when demand was growing."

The IEA, which advises most major economies on energy policy, increased its estimate for demand growth in 2017 by 1.7 percent, it said Wednesday in a report. Atkinson said the pace of growth will slow but possibly from a higher base than the agency thought a few months ago. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and suppliers including Russia and Bahrain agreed in December to curtail output to clear a global glut, led partly by U.S. shale production. They extended their accord through the first quarter and may consider prolonging the cuts further.

Supply challenge

Benchmark Brent crude, which has lost 2.1 percent this year, ended last week \$1.84 higher at \$55.62 a barrel in London trading, in its third consecutive weekly increase.

Oil prices at current levels are "better" but still not spurring investment, Mohamed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's oil minister, said at the conference. "There is a supply challenge coming up," Al-Khalifa said.

Atkinson said prices have "apparently bottomed out," though he questioned the speed at which U.S. shale output will rebound. "There are very wide divergences of views," he said.

"We underestimated the resilience of U.S. shale producers," Atkinson said. "We failed to understand the resilience. We failed to appreciate the technical ingenuity."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Here comes the sun: speedy growth of solar power signals global economic shift

As nations and economies signal their intention to move away from the widespread and indiscriminate use of fossil fuel, the solar power industry is leaping into the breach, growing exponentially while an old-guard oil industry studies how to jump on the bandwagon without impacting the bottom line of shareholders and investors.

The implementation of solar energy is rapidly spiraling upward, as current annual production estimates calculate some 305 gigawatt-hours produced globally, an enormous increase from 2010's 50 gigawatt-hour figure.

While current total global energy output is measured in the hundreds of thousands of terawatt hours, the small solar percentage is expected to fuel its rapid adoption as a global energy source, according to a CNBC report.

"Solar is growing exponentially, is what I don't think people realize," according to Norway-based energy executive Steve O'Neil.

"Every two years, the installation rates are doubling and so it's happening around the world now very quickly," he said, cited by CNBC.

Following economies of scale, a rapid rise in the use of solar power up from single-digit percentages in the global output is resulting in a concurrently rapid drop in the cost of producing the resource, another indicator fueling the speedy development and implementation of sun-based energy technologies around the globe.

"There's no doubt that costs are going to continue to come down," O'Neil observed, adding, "Now, around the world, solar energy costs about 8 cents a kilowatt hour. That's down 70 percent since 2010."

"Those costs are going to continue to come down," he asserted, cited by CNBC.

Significant improvements in battery technologies, driven in part by the electric automobile industry, are bringing the utility of solar power even to areas that do not experience reliable sunlight.

"Solar can be deployed anywhere. It's fully scalable, it's quick to deploy," said O'Neil.

"You can do it on a rooftop, you can do it on ground, on water," he added, pointing to its ability to be installed practically anywhere on the planet that gets sunlight. "It's just one of the advantages of solar," he remarked.

(Source: Sputnik)

Oil majors cut greenhouse gas pollution

The world's five biggest oil companies -- Exxon Mobil Corp., Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Chevron Corp., BP Plc and Total SA -- collectively curbed their pollution by an average of 13 percent between 2010 and 2015, according to a report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance released ahead of its conference in London on Monday. BP cut the most at 25.5 percent. Exxon, the largest emitter among listed companies, pushed it down by 14 percent.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Catalonia's referendum is no basis for statehood

Negotiations on improved self-government are the right way forward.

In an address to the Spanish parliament in 1932, José Ortega y Gasset, the renowned philosopher and essayist, described Catalonia as "a problem which cannot be solved, it can only be put up with?..?..?Other Spaniards must put up with Catalans [and] Catalans must put up with other Spaniards." Ortega was speaking in the turbulent era of Spain's Second Republic, just before the 1936-39 civil war, when Catalan secessionism briefly posed a challenge to Spain's unity. Eight decades on, political conditions are markedly different. However, a dose of Ortega's wisdom and common sense is much needed in the intensifying confrontation between Catalonia's separatists and Spain's central authorities.

Catalonia's regional government and its secessionist allies are pressing on with plans to stage a referendum on independence on October 1. They are doing so in defiance of Spain's constitutional court, the ultimate authority on such matters, which suspended the Catalan law providing for the vote. They are doing so despite the fact that Article 2 of Spain's 1978 constitution refers to "the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation" and "the common and indivisible homeland of all Spaniards".

Apart from the legal arguments, which favor Spain's central authorities, the political case of Catalonia's separatists is anything but watertight. In regional elections held in September 2015, pro-independence forces ranging from center-right nationalists to radical leftists won a narrow majority of seats, but fell short of a majority of all votes cast.

This was no basis for accelerating the secessionist program. Yet the regional government and legislature have gone ahead, anyway, and in a manner that skips airily over the democratic standards appropriate for an issue of such importance. Catalonia's referendum law, passed on September 6, does not set a minimum threshold of votes for the result to be valid. In theory, a small minority of the region's electorate could trigger a declaration of independence. In such circumstances, and keeping in mind the passionately contested legality of the vote, any proclamation of an independent Catalonia would be bereft of political legitimacy. Comparisons with referendums and acts of independence in other democracies are instructive.

Whether or not the referendum takes place, the essential step for both sides is to open serious negotiations on an updated version of autonomy for Catalonia. A 2006 statute, approved by the Spanish and Catalan legislatures and by Catalonia's voters in a referendum, but unwisely struck down in 2010 by the Spanish constitutional court, would be a good place to start.

(Source: FT)

The White House's new way to defend Trump: Smear James Comey

Faced with an ongoing special counsel investigation, the White House appears to have settled on a novel method of defending President Trump in the court of public opinion: smearing James B. Comey. Three times this past week, Trump's press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders accused the former FBI director of possible criminal wrongdoing. While leveling such charges in the absence of any evidence would have been inappropriate enough, Ms. Sanders went on each time to hint that the Justice Department should "look at" Comey's supposed transgressions — a wink and a nod that borders on a threat to use law enforcement as a political tool against the president's enemies.

Speaking from the White House lectern, Ms. Sanders suggested that Comey had violated the law both in giving false testimony before Congress and in sharing with the New York Times a memo documenting the president's request that the FBI drop its investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn. When asked why she believed Comey's conduct to have been illegal, Ms. Sanders presented a hodgepodge of legal arguments with little relevance to the former director's actions.

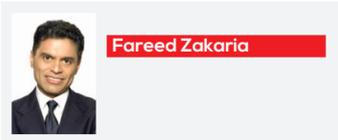
According to Comey's sworn testimony, the memo he provided to the Times did not contain classified information. This rules out his having violated his nondisclosure agreement with the FBI. Yet Sanders pointed to that agreement along with the Privacy Act, which governs disclosure of personal information contained in government files, such as medical records. There's nothing to suggest that Comey's memo contained any information that would be protected under the statute or that the memo was housed with FBI records. Ms. Sanders stated that the former director prepared the memo on a government computer. But even if that were enough to transform the document into a record covered by the Privacy Act — which is far from clear — there's no public evidence to support Sanders's claim that Comey used an FBI computer to draft that particular memo.

Sanders's strongest argument is that Comey may have transgressed the terms of his employment agreement with the FBI. But breach of that agreement would not be illegal. And Comey had already been fired when he passed the memo to the Times.

The legal reasoning behind Sanders's attacks on Comey may be risible, but the White House's willingness to groundlessly malign an adversary should be taken seriously. It's one thing for the president's legal defense team to try to persuade the public and the special counsel that Comey is not a credible witness. It's quite another to leverage the power of the presidency against a political adversary and hint at a Justice Department investigation on the basis of paper-thin claims. By now it may be naive to hope that Trump will come to respect the importance of independent law enforcement. But he would be wise to keep in mind the catastrophe that engulfed his administration when he assaulted that independence by firing Comey — and abandon this latest attack.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Kim Jong Un – unpredictable, crazy? Or smart, strategic?



Fareed Zakaria

I am sometimes asked what world figure I would most want to interview. For me, the answer is obvious: Kim Jong Un. The general impression around the globe continues to be that the North Korean leader is crazy, provocative and unpredictable, but I think that he might well be strategic, smart and utterly rational. Since I am unlikely to get that interview, I have decided to imagine it instead.

■ Marshal Kim, why do you keep building and testing nuclear weapons, even though they result in massive, crippling economic sanctions?

A: My nation faces a fundamental challenge — survival. The regime is more threatened than ever before. My forefathers had it easy. The Great Leader, my grandfather, ruled with the support of the world's other superpower at the time, the Soviet Union, as well as our gigantic neighbor, China. Dear leader, my father, still had Beijing's help for the most part. But today, the Soviet Union is history and China has become more integrated with the Western system. And the sole superpower, the United States, has made it clear that it seeks regime change in my country. And yet, we have survived with our ideology and system intact. How? Because we have built a protection for ourselves in the form of nuclear weapons.

■ But China still provides you with crucial supplies of food and fuel. Don't you see it as an ally?

A: China is ruthlessly pragmatic. It supports us for its own selfish interests.



It doesn't want millions of refugees — or a unified Korea on its border that is a larger version of what South Korea is now, with American troops and a treaty alliance.

But I believe that China no longer considers us an ally. It has voted to sanction us in the United Nations Security Council. The current president, Xi Jinping, cultivates close relations with South Korea. He has never met with me, the leader of North Korea, something that the leader of China has always done. Meanwhile, he has had about 10 meetings with the last two presidents of South Korea. At the grand celebrations in Beijing two years ago commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, he placed the president of Russia and

the president of South Korea at his side. In North Korea, we pay a lot of attention to ceremonies and what they signal.

■ Is that why you seem to go out of your way to embarrass China and Xi specifically?

A: We will not be pushed around. We heard that senior officials in China and the U.S. were discussing whether to encourage a coup in North Korea to get a more pliable ruler. So I've taken steps to ensure that this can't happen. The man in our government closest to the Chinese, who could have arranged such a coup attempt, was my uncle. The man who would have been my natural replacement was my half-brother. Both have been liquidated, as have more

than 100 disloyal high-level officials.

■ So will you come to the negotiating table? Will you agree to denuclearization in return for the lifting of sanctions?

A: Yes and no. We will readily come to the table. But we will never give up our arsenal. We're not stupid. It's all that is keeping us alive. Look at Saddam Hussein — and we never forget that North Korea was named as part of the "axis of evil" a year before the U.S. invaded Iraq. Look what happened to Moammar Gadhafi in Libya after he agreed to give up his nuclear weapons program. Look at what's happening to Iran right now. After Washington signed a deal and the Iranians have been certified to be adhering to it, President Donald Trump now says he's going to tear it up anyway. Do you think we would be stupid enough to believe American promises after all this? We are a nuclear power. That is not negotiable. We are willing to talk about limits, test bans, freezes — but we would need to be given something in return, and not just money. We need security, in the form of diplomatic recognition by Washington and guarantees of nonaggression from China, Japan and the U.S.

■ Many Americans worry that you will soon have the capacity and the intention to launch missiles at the U.S.

A: We will have the capacity. And it serves my purposes to keep you off guard. But why would I strike America and invite a retaliatory counterstrike that would put an end to my regime? Keep in mind, the whole point of this — my entire strategy, all our efforts and the hardships we have borne — is to ensure that my regime and I survive. Why would I risk that? I believe in assassination, not suicide.

(Source: The Daily Star)

Germany's election: Slow and steady



Angela Merkel is fighting a campaign almost entirely on domestic issues, but the results are vital to the rest of Europe.

Germans head to the ballot box next Sunday. If polls are anything to go by (in Germany they're deemed reliable), Angela Merkel is heading comfortably for a fourth term in office. The economy is doing well, confidence is high, and Merkel's main opponent, the Social Democrat Martin Schulz, has failed to land any damaging blows on her.

So the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) is steady in the polls at 37%, and the SPD (Social Democrats) can only muster 20%. Most of the suspense centers on what kind of coalition might emerge under Merkel this time. The CDU and the SPD have been in coalition since 2013; will that be renewed? Or will a different pattern emerge, perhaps one excluding the SPD but combining the CDU with the liberal, business-friendly Free Democrats (FDP), 9.5% in the latest polls, and the Greens, currently at 7.5%? Few now expect the kind of political upheaval which might produce a coalition between the SPD, the Greens, and the former communists of Die Linke.

■ Longest-serving chancellor

This placidity is a tribute to the resilience of Europe's most powerful leader. At the age of 63, Merkel, who was first elected in 2005, is on her way to reaching her mentor Helmut Kohl's record of being modern Germany's longest-serving chancellor. Just as she was underestimated when she first entered politics in 1990, as a young physicist from East Germany, Merkel's talent for political survival was somewhat overlooked in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis, which some thought would lead to her downfall. Two years on, Germany's "welcome culture" may have faded, but for most voters Merkel remains a safe pair of hands. She has always had an instinct for the center ground, where a majority of voter sympathies lie, and the slogan she is running under makes this clear: "For a Ger-

many where life is good and we enjoy it."

This may be dull to the point of smugness, but a Germany sticking to moderation, and not wading into rash, fringe or extremist politics, is good news for Europe and for liberal democracy at large. And after the defeat of Marine Le Pen in this year's French elections, it brings vital confirmation that there is nothing inevitable about a populist wave overtaking the continent. But there are ripples of that wave even in this election. The far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is set to enter parliament for the first time, with polls giving it between 10 and 12% of the vote. Originally created in 2013 by a small group of academics and intellectuals opposed to the EU single currency, the AfD later morphed into a xenophobic entity, feeding anti-immigrant sentiment. Most importantly, it has captured the malaise of eastern Germans who feel they were given the wrong end of the stick after German reunification in 1990 — their social woes left unaddressed, their identity disregarded. A country with substantial trade and budget surpluses still struggles to convince parts of its population that it won't be left on the sidelines.

Germany's role in Europe has grown spectacularly in recent years when a series of almost existential shocks threatened the European project — the financial crisis and the great influx of Syrian refugees. What comes out of this election matters greatly to the EU's future. German policies on Brexit are unlikely to change, whatever some leavers here may hope. But France plans to introduce a budget and a finance minister for the eurozone — which deserve support — may be obstructed if the next coalition includes the FDP, a party strongly hostile to anything that smacks of financial transfers. Merkel owes her likely re-election to German domestic factors, not least the strength of the economy. But she has also been a driving force for the EU, despite obstacles and in the face of criticism.

(Source: The Guardian)

Myanmar's leader needs to lead



The Nobel Peace Prize winner will have to answer for the ethnic cleansing of her country's Rohingya minority.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's iconic leader, is sacrificing her moral authority for political expediency. By failing to speak out against repression — and, more broadly, by not doing enough to help her country grow and prosper — she risks losing both her power and her reputation.

Suu Kyi, whose years leading the resistance to the Burmese junta earned her the Nobel Peace Prize, has dismayed former admirers by refusing to stop or even denounce what the United Nations calls "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" in her own country. Ever since militant members of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority attacked police stations and an army camp last month, security forces and local Buddhist vigilantes appear to have launched a brutal campaign against them. Hundreds of Rohingya have been killed, and nearly 300,000 refugees have fled across the border to makeshift camps in Bangladesh.

Suu Kyi, mindful of the near-universal loathing of the Rohingya among Myanmar's other communities, has blasted global criticism of this crisis as fake news; officials have accused Rohingya of setting fire to their own villages. Critics, some of whom have called on the Nobel committee to strip Suu Kyi of her prize, are right to take her to task.

Suu Kyi can't single-handedly eradicate anti-Rohingya prejudice, nor does she control the still-powerful Burmese military. But she could at least limit the army's depredations by demanding that civilians be protected and that journalists and UN monitors be allowed into the affected area. Her government could send aid for the refugees rather than simply allow countries like Turkey

to do so. And she could begin to lay out a narrative that sketches a path to integrating the Rohingya into Burmese society, while implementing the recommendations made by the Kofi Annan-led commission she herself appointed to look into their plight.

She has practical as well as moral cause to act. Unless the military plans somehow to kill or expel the roughly 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar, its scorched-earth campaign is guaranteed only to breed further resentment. Meanwhile, the indiscriminate response is embittering Myanmar's relations with Muslim nations from Turkey to Indonesia, and has made the Rohingya cause a rallying cry for extremists across Southeast Asia and beyond.

To fight back, Suu Kyi needs to do more than speak out; she needs to lead more effectively than she's done in the nearly year and a half since she took power. When it comes to the economy in particular, her administration has been plagued by inefficiency and indecisiveness. Though reforms to laws governing investments and companies have begun to move forward, the direction of economic policy remains too murky. Regulations are as stifling as ever; too many policy decisions are delayed by micromanagement. Foreign investment in the last fiscal year shrank more than 30 percent from the year before.

Unless Suu Kyi's government can reverse this situation and give young Burmese more hope in their economic prospects, they will provide all-too-ready fodder for extremists on both sides of the Rohingya divide. A message of tolerance might be a hard sell right now. But if anyone in Myanmar has the power and (still) the authority to make it, it's Aung San Suu Kyi.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Trump has no alternative for JCPOA

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A former assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology says the U.S. administration is “divided” on the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), yet President Trump has no “alternative” for it.

“President Trump, bent on wiping out all President Obama’s accomplishments, would like to bring it down as a ‘bad deal’ but has no alternative to offer,” Frank N. von Hippel tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ While the recent IAEA report reconfirms that Iran has met its obligations under the JCPOA, the U.S. seeks to withdraw from the nuclear deal and is pushing for inspection of Iran’s military sites. What is the U.S. in fact after?

A: The U.S. is divided on the JCPOA. President Trump, bent on wiping out all President Obama’s accomplishments, would like to bring it down as a “bad deal” but has no alternative to offer. Some more responsible Republicans, although they worry about Iran..., realize that the JCPOA has created, at least temporarily, an island of stability in the nuclear world — especially at the time of a new nuclear crisis with North Korea.

■ Recently Trump extended the Iran sanctions relief for another 120 days but and at the same time his Treasury imposed new sanctions on some Iranian companies and individuals. What do you think of this approach?

A: Trump’s advisors have urged him not



to isolate the United States from its allies by taking the U.S. out of the JCPOA. Instead, they would hope to provoke Iran to leave the agreement.

■ Iran has said it will not allow inspections of its military sites, and this is an internationally recognized principle. In view of this is it possible that the U.S. start to create fake documents against Iran as it did in the case of Iraq in the 1990s (some experts like

Tariq Rauf, ex-IAEA official believes in it)?

A: Although nothing is impossible, I have heard nothing about the possible creation of fake documents. I understand that the IAEA position is that it will not demand access to any Iranian military sites unless it is given a good reason to do so. If the IAEA Board is convinced that inspectors must be sent to some military base, I would hope that Iran would cooperate. My

“Much of the real opposition to the Nuclear Deal comes from unrelated concerns of U.S. allies in the Middle East relating to the balance of power in the region.”

experience is that, except for plans, there are few real military secrets. I don’t think that Iran would suffer any harm from such an inspection and its openness would be disarming to world opinion.

■ If the U.S. quits the nuclear deal, obviously European companies and banks won’t work with Iran even if their governments remain committed to the JCPOA. This won’t be pleasing for Iran. Shouldn’t European countries provide their companies and banks with necessary guarantees?

A: I agree that the European governments should support the JCPOA regardless of what the Trump Administration does. I am not an expert on financial sanctions and therefore cannot offer an opinion on the practicality and limits of possible financial guarantees.

■ Certain officials within the Trump administration including Nikki Haley claim that Iran is destabilizing the region and relate it to the nuclear deal. Why does the U.S. bring up such issues?

A: Much of the real opposition to the nuclear deal comes from unrelated concerns of U.S. allies in the Middle East relating to the balance of power in the region. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia fear Iran as a destabilizing force. The supporters of the Deal, like me, say, that, even if that is the case, it is better to take the nuclear factor out of the equation. The opponents seem to feel that, if Iran is seen as a nuclear threat, it will be easier to unite the world against Iran. I think that they are correct. It therefore would be in Iran’s interest to stick with the nuclear deal even if the Trump administration takes the United States out of it.

2017 Conference for the Implementation of the DPCW

By Hamid Gholamzadeh

3rd Annual Commemoration of the World Alliance of Religions’ Peace (WARP) Summit Discussed on the Practical Approaches to Peace-Building Based on the Declaration of the Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW)

A 3-day peace summit to discuss the implementation of peacebuilding projects at local and national levels began with 1,100 representatives of states, IGOs, NGOs, and experts in international law, education, and media from approximately 120 countries on September 17th in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Hosted by Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL), an international NGO under UN ECOSOC, the 3rd Annual Commemoration of the WARP Summit addressed global peace-building measures through the establishment of collaborative governance among governments, civil society,

and international organizations. Development in peace campaigns and projects was endorsed in many parts of the world through the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW) proclaimed in 2016 to advocate international cooperation to establish peace as a norm and culture.

To develop this agenda, four planning sessions: 2017 Conference for the Implementation of the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War, 5th HWPL International Law Peace Committee Meeting, Peace Education Development Forum for Spreading a Culture of Peace, and Conference for Global Peace Media Network were held on the first day of the event on 17th.

Mr. Man Hee Lee, Chairman of HWPL, emphasized strengthening the international law for peace advocated by the DPCW. “The most urgent need is cessation of war. The DPCW drafted by experts in international law offers practical approaches to preventing conflicts. If lead-

ers love their people, they should work together to implement peacebuilding measures.” He added, “A world without wars applies to every person in the globe, which means that every individual’s dedication as a messenger of peace to peacebuilding will make a peaceful world.”

At the ‘5th HWPL International Law Peace Committee Meeting’, Rt. Hon. Hrant Bagratyan, Former Prime Minister of Armenia, said, “Not only this declaration and HWPL’s peace work are beneficial to a specific level of society but are definite tool to bring peace to all of us. Without having the limit to one sector, more people raised their voice for urging what is necessary at our time”, calling for the cooperation of every sector of the society to implement the DPCW into a legally binding document.

In the Peace Education Development Forum for Spreading a Culture of Peace, Hon. Maria Eugenia Barrios Robles de Mejía, Vice Minister of Ministry of Edu-

cation in Guatemala, said, “We could contribute in the promotion of the culture of peace in the world. We would help the citizens of tomorrow be more tolerant of each other and that a dialogue or discussion is the way to accept their differences and solve their conflicts. You and I are responsible for promoting the culture of peace to the next generations.”

Also, the ‘Conference for Global Peace Media Network’ with 90 journalists from about 50 countries sought freedom of the press in relation to the role of journalism in the foundation of a global media network for peacebuilding. “Journalism plays a significant role in delivering the collective voice of the global community for the same, common goal of peace. Now is the time for connecting the local and the national by the governance of peace,” said Mr. Ian Seo, Chief Manager of International Press Department of HWPL HQ, introducing the initiative of the peace media network platform of HWPL.

Turkey to react to Kurdish referendum with violence: ex-CIA officer

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Robert David Steele, a former CIA clandestine operations officer, tells the Tehran Times that Turkey will probably react to Iraqi Kurdish referendum with violence.

“Turkey will probably react as it always has, with violence,” says Steele, a potential candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

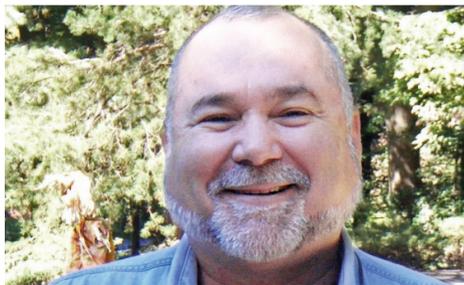
Following is the text of the interview:

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

The Kurdish referendum is long overdue and must be respected. Kurdistan is a cultural, ethnic, and economic reality even if the political powers controlled by the Deep State (Rothschilds, Vatican, City of London, Wall Street and their government puppets) do not wish it so. I anticipate the practical foundation of Kurdistan within five years — if the surrounding powers do not collaborate I anticipate all of them falling into a state of civil war; Turkey will not survive in its present state.

■ Concerning the objection of the central government in Baghdad and the prime minister himself to the referendum, who has described the referendum as “playing with fire”, is there a possibility of military conflict between Baghdad and Arbil if the referendum goes ahead?

A: Fire is the foundation of civilization. Fire is what you get when reality meets corruption. What Iraq and Syria should be doing is helping to form the provisional state of Kurdistan, in a practical alliance with Iran, while urging Turkey to create a provisional autonomous Kurdish region from which all Turkish police and military are withdrawn. Some sort of financial settlement could be made with Armenia, they can only benefit from a prosperous autonomous Kurdistan. The Middle East is in the mess; it is in because the British and French betrayed the Arabs; the U.S. is their out-of-control proxy, and Israel continues to be the most toxic power in the region seeking to destabilize everyone else for their own benefit. The Kurds are an educated disciplined people who have



maintained their coherence as a group, and earned the right to be free.

■ The U.S. and UK have objected to the referendum. Are these two countries against the separation of Kurdish Regional Government from Iraq or do they think that the timing isn’t quite appropriate? What is exactly their objection based on?

A: The U.S. and UK governments are totally subservient to the Deep State. Conflict in the Middle East is about profit for the 1% rather than peace and prosperity for the 99%. It is in the best interests of the larger public that peace be achieved in the Middle East, starting with the exclusion of the Western powers, and a massive global movement to boycott the U.S. and UK for so long as they provide financial subsidies and covert operations support to Saudi Arabia and Israel.

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

A: Turkey will probably react as it always has, with violence. As with the U.S. government leadership, the Turkish leadership does not yet understand that populist movements are now on the rise and will inevitably win.

The U.S. and UK governments are totally subservient to the Deep State. Conflict in the Middle East is about profit for the 1% rather than peace and prosperity for the 99%.

Crossing Abadi’s redline ‘Kirkuk’ would instigate bloody war: Sadegh Maleki

By Payman Yazdani

Senior political analyst Sadegh Maleki in an interview with MNA said Kirkuk is al-Abadi’s redline and crossing it by holding the Kurdish referendum on independence would instigate a widespread and bloody carnage in the Arab country.

Despite growing opposition from Baghdad and neighboring countries and pressure on KRG head Masoud Barzani to withdraw from the independence plan, Iraqi Kurdistan region is still insisting on going ahead with the referendum on September 25.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, political analyst and expert on regional affairs, Sadegh Maleki, said the current situation of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Iraq and the Middle East is not favorable for the referendum, which has no legal basis. He went on to stress that the split in Iraq could instigate war, since “neither Iraq is Czechoslovakia nor Middle East is Europe.” He also maintained that in case of Iraq’s split, the main culprit would be the US, as Washington would back



the emergence of a Kurdish government that could become a strategic ally to Tel Aviv.

The following is full text of the interview:

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

A Kurdish homeland is a dream to many Kurds, but dreams have no place on the political scene. Politics is the arena of feasible deeds. The current situation of the KRG, Iraq and the Middle East region is not favorable for the referendum. The independence plan may have created some fervor and enthusiasm on northern parts of Iraq, but nationalist sentiments are not usually guided by common sense, therefore they can cause unity and initial support among the parties at the beginning, but once the costly consequences reared their ugly heads, they would disperse the Kurds.

From one standpoint, the referendum may be an idealistic attempt at covering up Barzani’s lack of legitimacy as a leader and diverting Iraqi Kurds’ general public’s opinion from the widespread corruption all over Erbil. Holding of the referendum at a time when Barzani’s term in office has come to an end and the parliament has shut down, lacks any legal basis, not only from the viewpoint of Baghdad but Erbil as well. Except from Gorran movement and the KIG, almost all other Kurdish parties are in favor of the referendum, but a major part of this consensus stems from the social condition of the Kurds and the Kurdish region. Voting against the referendum means standing against the ideology that has formed the social context of Kurdish parties who do not want Barzani alone to become the embodiment of an ideology no matter how far-fetched or disastrous.

Given the strict opposition of Baghdad, and particularly Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who has called the Kurdish independence plan “playing with fire”, is there any possibility of Baghdad’s military confrontation with Erbil following the holding of the referendum?

The holding of the referendum can instigate war. Al-Abadi’s method of running the country is based on moderation. So when he talks of playing with fire, Erbil should worry about the position of leaders such as Muqtada al-Sadr and Nouri al-Maliki. If Kirkuk is considered as the heart of Kurdistan by Barzani and Taliban, it is the redline of war for Baghdad. If the referendum is held and Kirkuk and other conflict areas join the Kurdistan region, the KRG in particular, and Iraq in general, will have many days of war and bloodshed ahead. Neither Iraq is Czechoslovakia nor Middle East is Europe. The split in Iraq will be widespread, pervasive and a scene of absolute carnage.

The US and the UK have opposed the referendum. Are they fundamentally against the separation of the Kurdistan region or just don’t think the timing is right? What is the actual reason of their opposition?

The Middle East region with the Kurds in its focal point is passing through a fateful and uncertain period and one cannot make a definite prediction of the outcome of its developments. Generally speaking, the US has not yet become focused on the partitioning project in the region, but has toyed with it and uses it to regulate countries’ behaviors. If Iraq is one day divided, the main culprit is the US. The United States and Britain, as the main causes of the emergence of the cancer called Israel, are, in a major part of their covert diplomacy, definitely in favor of the emergence of a Kurdish government that could become a strategic ally to Tel Aviv. Note that Washington has only opposed to the timing of the referendum. While evaluating countries’ policies, one must distinguish between their announced policies and their adopted ones.

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

Turkey has gained a lot of distance from its traditional positions toward Erbil. Ankara used to deem KRG’s independence the beginning of war. But Turkey itself, with the expansion of its economic ties and signing oil deals with Erbil despite opposition from Baghdad, is one of the main reasons that the Kurdistan region is now going ahead with the referendum. At the moment, Ankara’s view has dropped from the height of opposition with the emergence of a Kurdish government to the low of observing the rights of Turkmen in Kirkuk, Tal Afar, etc. Turkish authorities’ remarks are not much trustworthy. Given the kind and extent of Ankara-Erbil relations, if Turkey starts to actually bring its remarks into action, Erbil’s withdrawal from the referendum will not be that far-fetched.

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What type of person you are according to your foot

The act of reading the face or the palm has been popular since ancient ages. But, did you know that even the shape of your feet can reveal exciting things about your personality? Yes, it's true. The shape, size, and position of your feet reveal a lot of things about you.

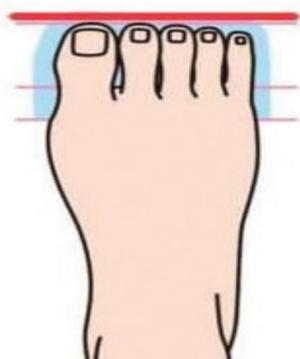
Have a look at your toe once and check if your second toe is shorter than your first toe. Or, do they cross over? If yes, then it has a special meaning. Let's investigate more about it. Mentioned below are 10 different foot types along with what they reveal about your personality. Check them out!

1. The square foot

A person is said to have a square foot when all the toes are almost identical in length, making your foot look rectangular in shape.

It is also called the Peasant Foot. People who have this type of foot are often considered to be very cautious. Before taking any action or making any decision, they analyze every small detail and only then come to a conclusion.

They tend to be very reasonable and practical. They also stay very calm in any situation and are considered to be very reliable.



2. The Greek Foot

The Greek Foot is also known as the Flame Foot. People with this type of foot, where the second toe is longer than the first toe, have a motivating personality and are considered to be very enthusiastic about things. People with this shape of foot possess leadership qualities. They are more creative and open to challenges and adventures. They can be impulsive and act bossy at times since they want things to go their way.

It is seen commonly in athletes, artists, or public speakers.



3. The roman foot

This is the most common type of foot where all the toes are proportionate, with the big toe being the longest of all the toes. People with this type of foot are very social and outgoing.

They have a sparkle in their personality that makes them very charismatic.

They are very friendly, well balanced, and well organized in their lives. They know what to say and how to behave in any situation, and this makes them very tactical.

They are adventurous and also very good listeners. They are very good

at expressing their opinions to others without being overpowering. They also make friends very easily.



4. The stretched foot

Since the toes are all squished together, a stretched foot often looks very thin. The big toe is the largest of all, and then the size decreases with each toe. People with this type of foot generally like to be on their own and enjoy their private space. They are very secretive and do not share things with others.

They are very impulsive and do not have control over their mood.



5. Little toe on the side of the foot

People who have their little toe on the side of the foot are often very rebellious, and they want things to be done their way.

6. Tilted third toe

People with such foot type prefer planning things ahead before implementing them. They are very well organized and have good control over themselves.

7. Unable to separate the little toe

People who are unable to separate their little toe prefer to stick to their routine and are very strict about it. They are very loyal and form great companions.

8. Able to separate the little toe

People who can separate their little toe constantly look for a change in their lives. They get bored very easily, and this mindset often makes them feel unhappy. They are often very moody.

9. A Gap between second and third toe

If you have a gap between your second and third toes, it means that you do not get emotionally attached to anything easily. You detach yourself from your day-to-day tasks very easily.

10. Narrow base on second toe

People with such feet are considered to be very expressive. They have a great influence on other people.

If they are happy, they make the entire atmosphere joyful, but if they are in a bad mood, it is best to leave them alone.

(Source: stylecraze.com)

Getting 'in shape': What does that really mean?

By Matt Johnston

It's a strange, vague goal that many of us strive for: getting "in shape."

But what does that actually mean? And how do you get there?

It may be the most popular phrase in the world of exercise, but it's hard to pin down a clear definition, or know how to reach that ideal in practice.



We spoke recently to Shawn Arent, an exercise scientist at Rutgers University, and asked him about this. He was pretty clear: The answer is different for everyone.

But that doesn't mean we don't have a number of common markers for people who consider themselves "in shape."

Here's what he told us: "There is no one definition. It can be everything from having low body fat to having good cardiovascular endurance to having muscular strength — to be pain free, to be stress free, all these things ... and I really think it depends on what the person's goals are.

"It depends on what you're trying to do. If you're trying to run a marathon, your version of in shape might be something very different than someone competing in a body building contest or someone that plays flag football on the weekend.

"Generally the way we define it is that your cardiovascular endurance — your cardiorespiratory endurance — is good enough that you don't easily get winded. So your VO2 max is above average, in terms of oxygen consumption.

"[Being in shape can also mean] having a good level of body fat — I don't want to say low — because obviously you don't want to go too low with body fat (there's other problems there), but a healthy [level of] body fat is probably the best way to look at it. Where you're considered lean, most people consider that "in shape." So like I said it really depends on what your goals are ...

"... It just depends on what you want your shape to be."

(Source: businessinsider.com)

Will experimental blood test be a game-changer for Alzheimer's disease?

By Susan Scutti

An experimental blood test can accurately diagnose Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, according to a study published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Though still in development, the test may someday be used to diagnose other degenerative brain disorders and even mild cognitive impairment resulting from head injuries.

The researchers say that using the test, they were able to identify Alzheimer's patients with up to 86% sensitivity and specificity. (Sensitivity refers to true positives identified by the test, while specificity refers to true negatives.) The test also differentiated Alzheimer's from dementia with Lewy bodies, a related condition, with 90% sensitivity and specificity.

The new test's "accuracy is markedly higher than other tests being developed," said senior study author Francis Martin, a professor in the School of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Central Lancashire in the United Kingdom. "For such a simple test to be so predictive is very exciting."

That said, he himself was surprised by the accuracy, given that other researchers have not achieved similar results using more sophisticated approaches, Martin wrote in an email.



Researchers say that using the experimental blood test, they were able to identify Alzheimer's patients with up to 86% sensitivity and specificity.

'Life-changing' diagnosis

Today, there's only one conclusive test for Alzheimer's diagnosis: a postmortem examination of a patient's brain.

Yet while a patient is alive, doctors diagnose the disease based on a careful evaluation that includes brain scans and in-depth mental testing, according to the website for the Alzheimer's Society, a registered UK charity that funds research.

"Current methods of diagnosing dementia can be slow and expensive, so finding a cheap, quick test that can accurately identify if someone has dementia is a top priority for researchers," said Doug Brown, director of research and development at Alzheimer's Society. The society did not fund the new study, and Brown did not participate as a researcher.

A diagnosis of dementia is life-changing. With early detection, medical interventions have the best chance of slowing the progress of disease, according to the society.

For the study, the researchers enlisted the help of 347 participants with neurodegenerative diseases, plus 202 healthy people serving as a comparison group. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 90. The researchers took blood samples from all the volunteers and analyzed the samples with infrared spectroscopy.

This is "a sensor-based technology that has at its core a diamond," Martin explained. "Light is passed through the diamond and bounces off the surface of the diamond. As it does so, the light interacts with chemical bonds in the sample and these vibrate at a frequency that is detected."

These frequencies reveal the chemical bonds in the blood, which indicate whether the blood contains traces of a neurodegenerative disease -- and, if so, which kind, he wrote.

Using this test, Martin and his colleagues correctly identified early cases of Alzheimer's disease with 80% sensitivity and 74% specificity and later stages of the disease with up to 86% sensitivity and specificity when using other patient data.

Beyond a clinic or laboratory's initial outlay for instrumentation, equating to about \$50,000 -- "not much really" -- recurrent costs for individual patient tests would be "negligible," Martin noted.

Everyday people and athletes, too

For people with signs of mild cognitive impairment, the test could help doctors "monitor disease progression, tailor treatment based on disease classification and predict progression," Martin said.

Not only would the general public benefit from this test, Martin said, it could be used as a post-injury diagnosis for athletes, including football players and boxers.

"We have now gone well beyond pilot studies," Martin said of the new test. "The appropriate validation studies are next -- these will take five to 10 years."

Brown agreed that more time and study are necessary before the new test can be used by doctors.

"The accuracy is not yet high enough and would currently lead to mis-diagnoses," he wrote in an email. "More development is needed to improve the accuracy before the test could reach the clinic." More study is also needed "to ensure these results can be reproduced and replicated."

"Along with detecting dementia early, this approach has the potential to differentiate between different types of dementia," he wrote, adding that the study is not unique.

"Blood tests are being widely investigated as a potential way to identify people with dementia," Brown wrote. "Alzheimer's Society is also funding studies that identify a wide range of biological signals through cerebrospinal fluid, brain scans and saliva to better detect who is at risk of developing dementia."

(Source: CNN)

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex, a Gem in Northern Iran

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Iran's Hamadan to host World Tourism Organization 2018 GA

Hamadan's hosting of the General Assembly of the UNWTO in 2018 has been finalized following the efforts of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Iran, and Tourism Board of Alisadr Travel Company.

According to a Farsi report by the Mehr News Agency, the finalization that took place at the 22nd session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Chengdu, China, could be the beginning of a fruitful and important route for tourism in Iran and the province of Hamadan.



The process of Hamadan's hosting of the General Assembly began on October 1, 2016, at a meeting of the World Tourism Organization's affiliated members in Armenia.

The delegation from the Alisadr Travel Company at the meeting took the opportunity to screen a film introducing Iran, Hamadan and Alisadr cave, which was welcomed by the attendants.

After showing the film, the delegation met with Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization Taleb Rifai, and presented the official request for Hamadan's hosting of the General Assembly in 2018, which was welcomed by the Secretary-General and it was put on the agenda.

After sending Hamadan governor's letter to Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization, Hamadan's hosting of this international meeting was pursued at national level, and with the round-the-clock efforts and precise planning, the World Tourism Organization agreed to this proposal.

(Source: IFP News)

The world's fastest growing tourist destinations

In the United Nations World Tourism Organization's latest World Tourism Barometer, the most popular global destinations in the first four months of the year were revealed.

The data highlights strong tourism results between April and January of this year with 369 million international overnight visitors, 21 million more than the same period last year. Most major destinations recorded sustained growth and interestingly, some countries experiencing violence and political unrest managed to rebound spectacularly.

Destinations in the Middle East and North Africa recorded the highest growth rates. The Palestinian territories attracted 400,000 visitors in 2016 and that increased 57.8 percent in the first four months of 2017. After several years of unrest, Egypt's tourist industry is beginning to recover with its overnight visitors up an impressive 51 percent on the first four months of last year.

All of the hype surrounding Iceland as a stunning tourist destination is beginning to make things a little bit more crowded on the island. After 1.79 million visits in the first four months of 2016, despite the dark and gloomy weather, Iceland's growth rate for January to April of this year still increased 34.9 percent.

(Source: Forbes)

Russia, Iraq restore air travel after 13-year freeze

Russia and Iraq restored scheduled commercial airline services on Sunday for the first time since 2004, in what officials hailed as a sign of stability returning to the war-torn country.

An Iraqi Airways plane left Baghdad at 10:31 am (0731 GMT) and was expected to arrive at Moscow's Vnukovo airport at 2:19 pm (1119 GMT), according to the Russian airport's online departure and arrival timetables.



This file photo taken on August 5, 2014 shows an Iraqi Airways Boeing 747 sitting at Baghdad International Airport.

"The first commercial flight arrives today," Sergei Izvolsky, spokesman for Russia's civil aviation authority, told AFP.

"It is a signal on the part of the Iraqi authorities that Russian nationals can safely visit Iraq."

The two countries may also later agree on air travel to the Iraqi city of Basra, Izvolsky said.

Russia suspended regular flights to Iraq in 2004 after the US-led invasion in 2003 plunged the Arab country into war.

(Source: Press TV)

Historical decision: Approval of the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics

The member States of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) approved a historical document - the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics. The Convention, approved at the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly transforms the Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention, the first in the life of the Organization.

The Convention covers the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the development sustainable tourism, providing a framework that recommends an ethical and sustainable modus operandi, including the right to tourism, the freedom of movement for tourists and the rights of employees and professionals.

"In an interconnected world where the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles, it is important to set out a legal framework to ensure that growth is dealt with responsibly and that it can be sustained over time. Tourism is a power that must be harnessed for the benefit of all," said the Chairman of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE), Pascal Lamy. Appointed as Chairman of the WTCE in 2013, Pascal Lamy, together with his colleagues in the Committee, has been instrumental in the process of



presenting the Convention on Tourism Ethics to the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly.

The conversion of the Code, which was adopted in 1999, into a proper Convention represents a significant step towards ensuring that tourism development is done with full respect

for sustainable development, social issues, local community development, improves understanding between cultures and addresses labor issues.

"This is an historical moment for UNWTO, said the Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. "The approval of the Convention is a strong legacy of the Inter-

national Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development that we celebrate this year. It is also a strong sign that countries are committed to make tourism a force for a better future for all. It reinforces UNWTO institutional outreach in the UN system," he added.

(Source: traveldailynews.com)

Egypt pins hope on China to revive ailing tourism industry: official

LUXOR, Egypt (Xinhua) — Egypt is eager to tap into the Chinese market to revive its ailing tourism industry, Governor of Egypt's Luxor Governorate Mohamed Badr told Xinhua in a recent interview.

Badr noted that the number of Chinese tourists has already notably increased after the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Egypt in early 2016.

The Chinese president toured Luxor during his visit to Egypt, and the reports of this visit by major Chinese media outlets helped attract more Chinese tourists to visit Luxor, the governor said.

Badr said the inflow of Chinese tourists has somehow revived the tourism business in Luxor, which is a favorite attraction for tourists after the Pyramids.

Tourism in Egypt, a major source of its national income and foreign currency reserve, was dealt a further blow by the Russian airplane crash in North Sinai in October, 2015 after which several countries, including Britain and Russia, suspended their flights to Egypt.

This aggravated the recession in the country's already ailing tourism sector due to political instability.

Even before the Russian plane crash, Egypt suffered a sharp decline in tourists due to three years of political turmoil, including two mass uprisings that toppled two presidents, forcing several countries to ban their citizens from traveling to Egypt for safety reasons.

Luxor, once an ancient Egyptian capital, suffered similarly as other Egyptian tourist cities.

Amid the dire conditions, Egypt now pins big hope on China, a growing tourist market, to revive its tourism sector.

"We are focusing more on the Chinese market. I have given orders to add Chinese language to all direction signs on roads and tourist sites across Luxor," Badr said.

The governor said he has a general impression that the Chinese tourists, who are very well educated, come to Luxor because they want to learn more about the history of ancient Egypt.

Official figures from the Egyptian Embassy in Beijing show that the number of Chinese tourists who visited Egypt in the first five months this year nearly doubled from last year.

Why everyone should travel solo at least once

These days my news feed is filled with pictures of solo adventurers taking on the world, heading to one gorgeous destination after another. Even with a ton of positive press on setting out to see the world on your own, concerns still arise. Safety concerns, loneliness, and boredom can make solo travel scary or even unappealing. For women, traveling solo can be even more challenging with gender inequality issues around the globe. So, why is it a good idea to travel somewhere alone?

I've traveled for business, in groups, with family, friends and by myself. As someone who values experiences, I find each of these types of travel to be advantageous in different ways. That said, ever since my first solo adventure, I have always been an advocate of encouraging others to give it a whirl. It has hands down offered me the best experiences of my life. There is an endless list of benefits to jet setting alone and I want to help spread the inspiration that really anyone can and should try it. Below are just a few examples of the impact solo travel can have.

Independence & Empowerment
Travelers who go on solo adventures

often talk about how empowered they feel when they return from a trip. They usually come back a new person with a fresh perspective on life. Solo travel represents freedom, independence, and of course wanderlust. It also allows you to create your own schedule of everything you want to do, including when and how you want to do it!

Confidence

Some consider solo travel as a brave endeavor. I don't think of going solo as brave because if you plan properly, you will be ready for whatever comes your way. The more research you do on a destination (safety, cultural norms, language, etc.), the better prepared you will be to handle anything. Even if you're not fully prepared, stepping out of your comfort zone by traveling somewhere alone will help you gain confidence to take on the world. Given you're entering the unknown, it will offer opportunities to learn how to face various types of scenarios.

Self-discovery

Solo travel gives you a chance to listen to your gut and control what direction you want to head. It allows you to reflect

on your decisions and discover more about what makes you, you. Spending even a minimal time in solitude will allow you to embark on an inward journey of self-discovery.

Connections & new friendships

I think there is a misconception that solo travel means you're always alone. While some prefer to be alone, you can also make new friends on your journey. Travel can lead to exciting adventures and meaningful experiences with complete strangers that have a long-lasting impact. Nowadays, there are plenty of apps that offer opportunities to make connections with like-minded explorers. Beyond apps, solo travel will automatically throw you into social settings and opportunities to get to know others and other cultures.

Freedom

I know there are people out there who say they aren't interested in solo travel because they'd rather go with someone they know. There's nothing wrong with preferring group travel - I like traveling with friends too. However, I do find myself cringing any time I hear someone cancels a trip because a friend couldn't



go. The world is just too big to have to wait around for someone to go with you every time you want to go on an adventure. That coupled with knowing how amazing solo travel can be, it would just be a shame! Solo travel is the ultimate freedom as you can go when you want, where you want and at a budget you can afford. You and only you get to decide.

With solo travel, you need to know what you're getting yourself into. You have only yourself to rely on, which can seem scary but it is also invigorating. So, the next time you become inspired to go on a trip, and you can't find a friend to go with - do yourself a favor and book it! This time for you.

(Source: Forbes)

10 of the best small-scale cruises worldwide

Cruising needn't mean multi-storey ships with thousands of passengers. We pick low-key boat trips where companions are few but the sights are magnificent

Mekong, Vietnam-Cambodia

The first tourist ship to negotiate the river passage from the Vietnamese Mekong to the more tranquil Cambodian side in 2003, the RV Mekong Pandaw is still doing the trip today. The 24 teak-and-brass cabins have panoramic windows, and complimentary ice-cream is served from dawn to dusk on the sundeck.

Evia, Greece

Evia is Greece's second-largest island, and more popular with domestic tourists than foreigners. Take the kids and explore by caique, the region's traditional wooden fishing boat, stopping to scramble among ancient ruins, swim in the Aegean and load up on feta and filo in local tavernas.

Bodrum, Turkey

People have been building boats on this stretch of the Aegean coast since classical times, and from the outside, their traditional wooden, twin-masted gulets look much as they ever did. But inside, it's a different story. Passengers sleep in eight comfortable cabins, and swap fishing duties for swimming, sunbathing and some light sightseeing.

Kerala backwaters, India

Most people just spend a night in Kerala's palm-lined backwaters on a thatched houseboat, and stick to the busier channels. On this six-night trip, the crew will pilot your one-cabin boat through quiet canals to tourist-free



temples and villages, and serve coconut-laced curries under the stars.

Senegal to Gambia

Experience the wilder side of cruising on a voyage from Dakar down the coast of Senegal and up the Gambia river in a 25-cabin yacht. There's a stop in Banjul, but most of the time you're in pristine nature reserves, spotting hippos, crocodiles, chimpanzees, bushbabies, and countless birds.

Island hopping, Maldives

If over-water bungalows don't float your boat, it doesn't mean the Maldives are a no-go area. Island-hopping on a traditional wooden dhoni with just five cabins, passengers can sunbathe on uninhabited sands, snorkel over quiet

coral reefs and dine with a local community.

The Hebrides, Scotland

The other five guests, skipper and chef aren't the only companions on this refitted "tall ship" in the Hebrides. In most remote, tranquil bays, passengers will be joined by sea eagles, basking sharks, orcas and dolphins. Days can be spent swimming, hiking, and sinking a shot of whisky or three.

Nile temples, Egypt

Tutankhamun isn't the only Egyptian royal with history on the Nile. In 1938, Egypt's last king, Farouk, launched his steamship, the Misr, on the river. Restored to its former glory in 2006, it has 24 plush cabins packed with antiques, all with marble bathrooms.

Gota canal, Sweden

Cruise Sweden's "Blue Ribbon", part of a 614km waterway linking Gothenburg to the Baltic, on a steamer and watch castles, churches and villages float by. The 25-cabin, 1912-built Wilhelm Tham has period furnishings and white tablecloths, and guests don't have to help at any of the 44 locks for which the canal was nicknamed "divorce ditch".

Six island hop, Cape Verde

Explore the Cape Verde archipelago with its mixture of African and Portuguese heritage and welcoming locals on a three-masted Motorsailer that can accommodate up to 49 passengers in 24 cabins. It takes in coffee and sugar plantations, colonial towns and the Fogo volcano.

(Source: The Guardian)

Forest fires are not limited to hot or temperate climates

Forest fires and wildland fires are common in summer in the temperate boreal forest, rarer at high altitudes, and unheard of in an ice age at high altitudes - until now. Evidence of wildfires dating back 20,000 years was recently discovered in the Massif du Queyras, in the heart of the French Alps, 2,240 meters above sea level.

The news comes in a joint Canada-France study published in *New Phytologist* and co-authored by Olivier Blarquez, a geography professor at Université de Montréal, and Christopher Carcaillet, a professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, in Paris, and at the Laboratoire d'écologie des hydrosystèmes naturels et anthropisés (CNRS/Université Lyon 1/ENTPE).

"This discovery is not trivial," said Blarquez. "It echoes the recent wildfires in the Arctic tundra, where (the presence of) trees have become increasingly common. The situation has drawn the attention of the scientific community because of its significant impact on the (Earth's) carbon cycle."

Global warming

Changes in high mountain forest cover due to global warming, and especially the abandonment of agricultural land, risk exacerbating the spread of wildfires in the coming years.

In their study, Blarquez and Carcaillet reconstruct wildland fire frequency and forest composition over the past



20,000 years, including the Last Glacial Maximum, when ice sheets were at their greatest extension. The researchers' findings suggest there was a tree glacial refugium during this period, when wildfires were able to break out. The authors also consider the complex long-term in-

teractions between fires, vegetation and climate.

"Wildfires spread when fuel is available and the climate is dry," said Carcaillet, who is also co-director of the Laboratoire international associé franco-canadien MONTABOR.

It is therefore counterintuitive to imagine wildland fires in periglacial, subpolar or mountain areas. And yet (the discovery of) high mountain lacustrine sediments revealed just that.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

How humans are spreading germs all over the globe

Humans are transporting trillions of bacteria around the world via tourism, food and shipping, without stopping to think about the potential damage being caused to bacterial ecosystems.

When we think about endangered species, we typically think of charismatic mammals such as whales, tigers or pandas. But the roughly 5,500 mammal species on Earth is a relatively paltry number - and it pales in comparison with bacteria, of which there are at least a million different species.

Despite their vast numbers, little research has been done to understand the impact that modern human practices have on these tiny organisms, which have an important influence on many facets of our lives.

Human effects

Human effects on our planet are so profound that we have entered a new geological age, called the Anthropocene. One of the key features of this new world is the way we affect other organisms. We have altered the distribution of animals and plants, creating problems with feral animals, weeds and other invasive species. We have caused many species to decline so much that they have gone extinct.

There are also grounds for concern over the way humans are affecting bacterial species, and in many cases we are causing the same type of problems that affect larger organisms.

Bacterial population structures are definitely changing, and bacterial species are being transported to new locations, becoming the microbial equivalent of weeds or feral animals. Perhaps some bacteria are even on their way to extinction, although we don't really have enough information to be certain yet.

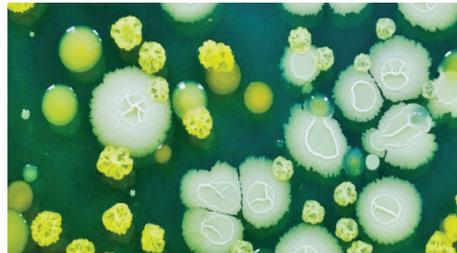
How do they get around?

Let's start by talking about sewage and manure. Animal and human feces release gut microorganisms back into the environment, and these organisms are vastly different from the organisms that would have been released 100 years ago. This is because humans and our domesticated animals - cows, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens - now comprise 35 times more biomass than all the wild mammals on land.

Human sewage and livestock manure contain very specific subsets of microbes, meaning those populations are enriched and replenished in the environment, at the expense of the native microbes.

Gut organisms

Waste water, sewage sludge and manure are used extensively in agriculture. So gut organisms from humans and agricultural animals go on to contaminate foodstuffs. These food products, along with their bacteria, are then shipped around the world.



Then there are the 1.2 billion international tourist movements per year, which also unintentionally transport gut microorganisms to exotic locations. For instance, tourism can rapidly spread antibiotic resistant pathogens between continents.

It's not just humans and their food that cause concern - there are also vast quantities of microbe-laden materials that move along with us. Each year, roughly 100 million tons of ballast water are discharged from ships in U.S. ports alone. This movement of microorganisms via shipping is changing the distribution of bacteria in the oceans. It also transports pathogens such as cholera. (Source: Cosmos Magazine)

Ayandeh Bank to Allocate 3,000b Rials to SMEs in 2nd Half of Current Year

Ayandeh Bank will earmark 3,000 billion rials worth of loans and facilities to Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the second six months of the current Iranian calendar year (to start Sept. 22) in order

to spur production, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Materializing objectives of resistance economy and actualizing the motto of "production and employment" have

been cited as the main aim behind offering loans to SMEs in the country.

For this purpose, respected applicants are first cordially requested to log on the portal of services introduced by the Ministry of Indus-

try, Mine and Trade at the following address: www.behinyab.ir and then refer to the selected branches of the bank in the nationwide in order to take advantage of services of the bank, Public Relations Dept. ended.

A Credit Line Worth \$10b Inks between China's CITIC Trust and Bank Pasargad

An agreement worth \$10 billion was signed and sealed between Bank Pasargad and China's CITIC Bank, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

The signing ceremony was held in the presence of Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Valiollah Seif, Iranian Ambassador to Beijing Ali-Asghar Khaji, Head of Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran Mohammad Khazaei, senior chief executives of the two banks, etc.

Accordingly, China's \$10 billion worth of investment in Iran will be earmarked as finance in industrial and production projects in the fields of management of water resources, energy, environment and transport, etc.



Also, taking advantage of China's midterm credit line in export and production projects and short-term financing before and after export will be put atop agenda out of currency resources of Bank Pasargad, the report added.

This contract will pave suitable ways for the two countries for broadening economic ties.

As a leading privately-funded bank in the country, Bank Pasargad offers quality currency services to its clients such as opening various types of letters of credit (L/Cs), currency transfer, transacting and opening currency accounts and also issuance of various types of currency guarantee letters, etc.

(Source: Mashable)

International Conference on 'MFCA' to Be Hosted by IRAN

The international conference on 'Material Flow Cost Accounting (MFCA)' will be hosted by I.R.IRAN, from 28th to 30th of Shahrivar [September, 19-21, 2017], with cooperation of the National Iranian Productivity Organization (NIPO) and the Asian Productivity Organization (APO).

As reported by the Public Relations of NIPO, well-known and distinguished professors and resource persons from Germany, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Japan, Republic of China, and Vietnam will

present their latest findings of successful experiences on the implementation of MFCA. Mr. Zinouri, from Malaysia, will represent the APO in the conference.

Also, 80 experts and practitioners of green productivity will attend the conference including experts from I.R.Iran, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

MFCA is known as one of the modern techniques of Green Productivity which has been practiced during recent

years in many industrial units in Germany, Japan, Malaysia, etc. and led to the compilation of ISO 14051. The method has led to promotion of productivity, reduction of final price, and protection of environment.

It is noteworthy that, the National Committee of MFCA has been formed by NIPO and with cooperation of relevant executive agencies including 'Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance', 'Department of Environment', 'Iranian National Standard Organization', 'Min-

istry of Industry, Mine and Trade', 'Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization', 'National Iranian Oil Company', 'Sahand University of Technology', and the 'Islamic Azad University, Science & Research Branch' and aims to educate, disseminate, and standardize the executive fundamentals of the technique.

It is notable that the book 'Manual on Material Flow Cost Accounting: ISO 14051' written by Hiroshi Tachikawa has been translated and published by NIPO for the use of experts in this field.

Public and Private Firms Can Take Advantage of China's New Finance Scheme: EDBI

China's new finance scheme is earmarked to Iranian public and private companies and now it is usable.

Dr. Ali Salehabadi Chief Executive of Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) announced the above statement and said: "Projects of applicants should enjoy economic and technical justifications."

Necessary criteria have been defined for applicants

of using Chinese finance scheme, the most important of which should be referred to the capability of repaying the loans received under finance scheme, he maintained.

Two banking docs were inked in the course of recent trip of Iranian banking delegation to China, he said, adding: "In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Iran and China,

valued at €15 billion in order to finance development and production projects in Iran."

In the end, Dr. Ali Salehabadi Chief Executive of Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) said that another contract was inked between five Iranian banks and China's CITING Trust Bank, the Public Relations Dept. ended.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Waze's ambitious plan to end traffic for good

In the mid-2000s, Waze Mobile co-founder Ehud Shabtai received a cutting-edge gift from his girlfriend: a GPS.

The expensive gadget was supposed to be a helpful device. But straight out of the box, it was already out-of-date and malfunctioning.

Shabtai, a longtime open-source coding enthusiast who graduated from Tel Aviv University with degrees in computer science and philosophy, had the immediate instinct to reinvent. He thought the GPS display should better reflect a region's changing infrastructure.

Shabtai's solution? To build an app, joining the elite ranks of innovative entrepreneurs with ideas that resonate at scale. With 80 million monthly active users globally and nearly 400,000 superusers who function much like Wikipedia volunteer editors (editing maps rather than words), Waze Mobile is no longer one coder's curious upstart startup, but a revolutionary approach to navigation that caught the eye of a tech giant.

Acquired by Google for more than \$1 billion in 2013, much of Waze's value stems from its high rate of user engagement. Unlike traditional navigation apps that simply dictate directions, Waze asks its users to report accidents, backups and other road conditions in real time so other users can dodge the traffic by using an alternate route.

Participation is incentivized through "gamification" — users can earn points, badges and other rewards while listening to playful variations on audio navigation (Morgan Freeman's voice, for example).

(Source: Sponsored)

How your morning cup of coffee can help save the world, says expert

Bambi Semroc is a senior strategic adviser in Conservation International's Center for Environmental Leadership in Business. In this role, she leads the Sustainable Coffee Challenge, an industry-wide effort to make coffee the first sustainable agricultural product in the world.



Coffee trees are picky, growing only in parts of the tropics with the right mix of temperatures, rainfall, and soil. As such, they're extremely vulnerable to climate change. Rising average temperatures and erratic rainfall will mean that coffee won't be able to thrive in many of the places it now grows, and coffee farmers will need to move their farms to new areas — mostly to higher altitudes, clearing tropical forests as they go — or switch to other crops to earn a living.

This affects a lot of people. There are more coffee lovers than ever: More than 2.25 billion cups of coffee are consumed every day, and global demand for coffee is expected to rise by up to 150 percent by 2050. Shrinking supplies, more demand: There is, quite literally, no time to lose to protect the coffee that you drink, the climate and ecosystems that coffee needs, and the tens of millions of small-scale farmers who make their living growing the crop.

I came to work in conservation through my love of trees. But in the past few years, it's the coffee tree — yes, a tree that produces a beverage I don't even drink — that has taken up much of my time and effort. I'm happy to report, then, that the coffee industry is waking up to the new climate reality, and is now taking serious steps to make coffee sustainable.

That's where the Sustainable Coffee Challenge comes in. The Challenge was born two years ago to bring together players from throughout the coffee sector, big and small, to make coffee the world's first sustainable agricultural product.

(Source: Mashable)

Cereal rye is effective at reducing Amaranthus spp. density in soybean crops

Fall-planted cover crops are often used as part of an integrated weed control program in herbicide-resistant soybean crops. But researchers writing in the journal *Weed Technology* say not all cover crops are equally effective against Palmer amaranth, waterhemp and other *Amaranthus* spp. weeds.

Their conclusions follow a two-year, multistate study to compare the impact of cereal rye, spring oat, forage radish and annual ryegrass on weed control and crop yields. The study was conducted in areas with known infestations of *Amaranthus* spp. weeds.

Two herbicide programs were used. The first involved a preemergence residual herbicide, followed by a postemergence application of a foliar and residual herbicide. The second program added a second postemergence application of residual herbicide.

Researchers found there were no variations in weed control or in crop yields among the various cover crops used as part of an integrated control program with herbicides. Cereal rye, though, consistently reduced the density of *Amaranthus* spp. weeds, even in the absence of herbicides.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Back-to-school season, a meaningful event for moms

By Naghmeh Mizanian

The smell of autumn is felt. The streets are all astir with the arrival of school days once again.

Children, holding hands of their mother walk toward stores buying school uniforms, bags, books and other supplies.

The children are happy yet worried. Moms are happier and more worried.

The children show their joy and anxiety. Moms show their joy but never reveal their worry. Mothers believe their children should never touch their anxiety.

What will they learn at school? Who would be their teacher? Who would be their classmates? Who would be their close friend? How will they deal with their lessons and homework? What happens on the route to school?

What should I prepare for my kids' school snacks and foods? How should I help my children in their homework? How can I make them aware about our family rules and its difference with others?

As a mother, I am happy that my child is experiencing what I have experienced many years ago. Maybe I am experiencing my own feeling once more. I am feeling my own emotions in my children's hearts.

When schools open, I am happy that my children will learn much lessons. They will be more experienced and mature.

For me the school season means more discipline for myself as well as my children. They are not bored anymore and I should not arrange different refreshment programs for them.

Although I should wake up early at the morning, when the sun has not risen yet, and I will be the first person to wake up acting as an alarming clock, I am happy that the daylight is short during the school season and the family will gather early in the evenings.

At school season, the family has its real meaning; the gathering of all members at a warm home in the cold autumn and winter.

Although, like any mother I wish my kids gain many success in their life and reach high educational levels, I promise myself not to make them a tool for compensating what I have not reached in my own life. I promise myself not to make them a tool for show off.

I promise myself to help my children to take pleasure of their childhood and make school days happy days for them instead of days full of stress for marks and grades.

I try my best to grow a happy, healthy, knowledgeable and responsible human being instead of a depressed, unhappy scientist.

Tehran hosts "women, the architects of peace" congress

WOMEN TEHRAN — An international congress with the theme of "women, the architects of peace" was held here on Sunday on the occasion of the World Peace Day, which is annually marked on September 21.

The congress was held with the cooperation of the Institute for Protection of Women's Rights (IPWR), The UNESCO Chair for Human Rights, Peace and Democracy (UNESCO CHRPD) of Shahid Beheshti University, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

■ **President Rouhani proposed a world free of violence: UNIC director**

Iran is one of the first countries to take steps in approving a resolution for a region free from nuclear weapons in 1960s, Director of United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Tehran Dr. Maria Dotsenko said referring to the rich history of Iran its peacekeeping stance.

One of the recent initiatives of



Dr. Maria Dotsenko

President Hassan Rouhani has been suggesting a world free of violence which have been approved in a resolution by the United Nations, she added.

BARJAM, the acronym for the Iran

nuclear deal, is a great achievement toward promoting peace and security in the region, Dotsenko stated.

■ **29% of UN peacekeepers are women**

Although at the first year of United Nations' activity, women made up only one percent of peacekeepers, today, after seven decades, women compose 29 percent of peacekeepers, Dotsenko announced.

Women play a vital role in peacekeeping, she said, emphasizing that women's presence in peacekeeping operations is protecting peace in the whole world.

Developing an approach to organizing peace in world is owing to women attempt on improving peace and women take responsibility of some part of peacekeeping operation.

The United Nations was created with the aim of removing war from the world and peace is the main priority of the UN, Dotsenko stated.

A number of 170 peace agreements have been signed during the long history of the UN and a number of 60 countries which were in war are currently in peace and security, she concluded.

Sculpture of Maryam Mirzakhani to be unveiled

WOMEN TEHRAN — An sculpture of renowned Iranian mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani is to be unveiled today at the National Library and Archive of the Islamic Republic of Iran (NLAI).

Mirzakhani, 40, fought with cancer for four years and died of breast cancer at a hospital in the U.S. on July 14.

The family of the late mathematician, the director of NLAI, Ashraf Boroujerdi, and other cultural and scientific personalities will participate in the unveiling ceremony.

Maryam Mirzakhani, was the first-ever female winner of the prestigious Fields Medal prize

The two times gold medal winner in the International



Mathematical Olympiad received her Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Iran's Sharif University of Technology in 1999 and earned a PhD degree in mathematics from Harvard University in 2004.

From 2004 to 2008 she was a Clay Mathematics Institute Research Fellow and an assistant professor at Princeton University. She was a professor at Stanford University. Her honors include the 2009 Blumenthal Award for the Advancement of Research in Pure Mathematics and the 2013 Satter Prize of the American Mathematical Society.

Mirzakhani also became the first woman and the first Iranian to be awarded a Fields Medal.

Tajikistan to ban hijab as restrictions on religious freedom continues

Tajik lawmakers have approved a law that obliges individuals and organizations "to adhere to traditional and national Tajik clothing and culture," a move widely seen as an effort to discourage people from wearing the hijab and Islamic clothing in the predominantly Muslim country. The Lower House of Parliament passed the bill on Aug. 23, and the bill is expected to be approved by the Upper House of Parliament and signed into law by Tajik President Emomoli Rahmon.

On Sept. 6, text message notifications were sent to some 6 million users from private mobile phone companies in Tajikistan, calling on them to obey the new law that was passed in a new bill that makes the wearing of Tajik national clothing obligatory at traditional gatherings. The text message, written by the State Committee, reads: "Observe Tajik traditional clothes... Respect traditional clothes and 'Let's make it a tradition to wear traditional clothes!'"

According to Tajik officials, in August more than 8,000 hijab-wearing women were stopped in public places across the Tajik capital of Dushanbe by state officials who pressured them to wear head scarves in the style of "traditional national clothing," which refers to tying the scarf in a knot behind the head in a way that leaves the front of the neck exposed. The new bill does not introduce a penalty for breaking the rule, but some have claimed that fines could be introduced at a later date.

Tajik Minister of Culture Shamsiddin Orumbekzoda said that Islamic dress is "really dangerous," indicating that everyone looks at women wearing hijabs in the country with concern, worried that they could be hiding something under their hijab, Radio Free Europe reported.

President Rahmon's first criticism was voiced over the issue in 2015 when a campaign was launched against the hijab. Heads

of institutions demanded that their employees not wear hijabs to work. "Wearing the hijab and blindly copying a culture that is foreign to us is not a sign of having high moral and ethical standards for women. We have many examples of women wearing the hijab who take illegal drugs, participate in human trafficking and other things that are far from Tajik culture and the honor of Tajik women. The hijab was a sign of poor education and incivility," he was quoted as saying in 2015. Since May 2016, officials have closed down scores of shops that sell women's religious clothing that does not conform to values that the Tajik government calls "national traditions."

Tajik Justice Minister Rustam Shohmurod said in June 2016, that "foreign" names, especially Arabic-sounding names, have caused divisions in Tajik society. Previously, in May 2015, representatives debated whether to ban Arabic names and Arabic words in Tajik as part of an ongoing campaign

against Islam. Names derived from prominent figures in Islam, such as Sumayyah, Aisha and Asiya, were once almost nonexistent in Tajikistan, a Muslim-majority country, but have become the most popular names for girls in recent years. Muhammad, Yusuf and Abu-Bakr are among the most popular names for boys. Some Tajik members of parliament were reportedly demanding that existing Arabic-sounding names should be changed to Tajik-Persian names.

In 2011, a law was approved that banned children under the age of 18 from attending Friday prayers in the predominantly Muslim country. Tajiks under the age of 35 were banned from attending Hajj in 2015 by the State Committee for Religious Affairs (SCRA). In June, Tajik officials announced that citizens under the age of 40 are banned from performing this year's annual Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

(Source: Daily Sabah)

Four U.S. women attacked with acid in France, officials say

Four young U.S. women were attacked with acid Sunday in the French city of Marseille by a woman who has been arrested, the Marseille prosecutor's office said.

Two of the tourists were injured in the face in the attack in the city's main Saint Charles train station, and one of them has a possible eye injury, a spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office told The Associated Press.

She said all four of the women, who are in their 20s, have been hospitalized, two of them for shock.

The young women are all juniors at Boston College, the university said in a statement Sunday afternoon. They were treated at a hospital but have since been released, it said.

"It appears that the students are fine, considering the circumstances, though they may require additional treatment for burns," said Nick Gozik, director of the college's Office of International Programs. "We have been in contact with the students and their parents and remain in touch with French officials and the U.S. Embassy regarding the incident."

Boston College identified the students as Courtney Siverling, Charlotte Kaufman and Michelle Krug, who are enrolled in the school's Paris program, and Kesley Korsten, who was studying at Copenhagen Business School in Denmark.

Jack Dunn, the school's vice president of communications, told NBC Boston that the students were friends and had gone to Marseilles for the weekend. They were waiting for a train back to Paris, Dunn said, when "they were somehow picked out by this woman who threw



Gare de Marseille Saint Charles, where U.S. tourists were targeted in an acid attack on Sunday

acid in their face for no apparent reason whatsoever."

Authorities had so far offered no motive, Dunn said, adding that the students would probably remain in Europe for the rest of the semester.

The Paris prosecutor's office said its counterterrorism division has decided for the time being not to assume jurisdiction for investigating the attack. The prosecutor's office in the capital, which has responsibility for all terrorism-related cases in France, did not explain its reasoning.

The spokeswoman for the Marseille prosecutor's office said the 41-year-old female suspect did not make any extremist threats or declarations during the attack. She said there were no obvious indications that the woman's actions were terrorism-related but added that

officials could not be 100 percent sure about ruling out terrorist links so early stage in the investigation.

The spokeswoman spoke on condition of anonymity, per the custom of the French judicial system. She released no further details.

The Marseille fire department was alerted just after 11 a.m. and dispatched four vehicles and 14 firefighters to the train station, a department spokeswoman said.

A spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Paris said the U.S. consulate in Marseille was in contact with French authorities about the investigation and the women's conditions.

U.S. authorities in France were not immediately commenting to protect the tourists' privacy, embassy spokesman Alex Daniels said.

In previous incidents in Marseille, a port city in southern France closer to Barcelona in Spain than to Paris, a driver deliberately rammed into two bus stops last month, killing a woman. Officials said the attack wasn't terrorism-related.

French police say that in April they thwarted an imminent "terror attack" and arrested two suspected radicals in Marseille just days before the first round of presidential election. Paris prosecutor Francois Molins told reporters that the two suspects "were getting ready to carry out an imminent, violent action" on French territory.

In January 2016, a 15-year-old Turkish Kurd was arrested after attacking a Jewish teacher on a Marseille street. He told police that he acted in the name of ISIS.

(Source: NBC News)

UN forum to 'creatively disrupt' status quo for women and girls in tech

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on Thursday launched the Global Innovation Coalition for Change with partners from the private sector, the academia and non-governmental organizations to encourage innovation and technology work better for young women and girls around the world.

"Innovation and technology provide unprecedented opportunities to reach those who are the most likely to be left out of the benefits of progress. They can break women out of isolation and create a market for their innovative ideas and products," said Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, in a news

release announcing the launch.

"Through the Global Innovation Coalition for Change and similar partnerships we can bring together the best of academic brain power and research, industry practical know-how, and civil society's drive and reach to creatively disrupt the status quo," she added.

According to UN Women, the partnership will focus on building market awareness of the potential for innovations that meet the needs of women through research and advocacy and will also identify the key industry-specific barriers that obstruct women's and girls' advancement in innovation, technology and entrepreneurship.

It will also work collaboratively to identify key actions that can help overcome these barriers through actions including sharing of good practices, developing capacity and investing in specific innovations through targeted support.

Additionally, underscoring the importance of partnership with the private sector to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through innovation and technology UN Women noted that the Global Innovation Coalition for Change is an important step to bring about transformative change in the lives of women and girls.

(Source: UN News Center)

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Life - Buying a Car

A: Hi there, can I help you folks?

B: I'm just **browsing**; seeing what's on the lot. My daughter wants a car for her birthday, you know how it is.

C: Dad! I'm sixteen already and I'm, like, the only one at school who doesn't have a car!

A: She is right, you know. Kids these days all have cars. Let me show you something we just got in: a 1996 **sedan**. Excellent **gas mileage**, it has **dual airbags** and anti-lock **brakes**; a perfect **vehicle** for a young driver.

C: Dad, I love it! It's awesome! Can we get this one please?

B: I see... What can you tell me about this one?

A: Oh, that's just an old World War Two tank that we use for TV commercials. Now about this sedan...

B: Whoa, whoa wait a minute. Tell me more about this tank.

A: Well, Sir, if you are looking for quality and safety then look no further! Three inches of **reinforced** steel protect your daughter from short range missile attacks.

B: Does the sedan protect her from missile attacks?

A: It does not.

B: Well, I don't know. Let me **sleep on it**.

A: Did I mention the tank is a tank?

B: I'll take it!

C: Dad!

■ Key Vocabulary

browse: look around to see if anything is interesting

sedan: a car with four doors

gas mileage: the amount of gas used per mile

dual airbags: two airbags, one for the driver and one for the passenger

brake: a device that slows down or stops something

vehicle: something that carries people from one place to another

reinforce: strengthen, make something stronger

sleep on it: think about something further and make a decision later (informal)

■ Supplementary Vocabulary

minivan: a vehicle that is larger than a car, has four doors and is shaped like a box

SUV: a large vehicle that is suitable to run on rough surfaces

sale: an event where goods or services are sold at a price lower than usual

promotion: something (usually advertising) that is done to increase sales

discount: the amount of reduction in price

bargain: something bought or sold at a price lower than its actual value

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Have an idea?
Be in touch!
lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

More than 80 arrested in third night of St. Louis protests in U.S.

Protesters angry over the acquittal of St. Louis police officer Jason Stockley, a white cop acquitted of murder in the shooting death of a black man, attacked police, broke windows and flipped over trash cans on Sunday night. More than 80 people were arrested, authorities said.

The demonstrations began peacefully, but erupted in violence after nightfall, officials said. Amid the melees that ensued, some protesters broke concrete flower pots and used the broken pieces as projectiles.



It was the third night of protests, which began on Friday after Stockley was acquitted in the killing of 24-year-old Anthony Lamar Smith. During a 2011 chase, which ensued after Stockley and his partner suspected Smith had been involved in a drug deal, Stockley was heard saying he was "going to kill this motherf***er".

Prosecutors alleged that Stockley also planted a gun at the scene, but the judge in the bench trial didn't buy it. Stockley had opted for a trial in which a judge would decide the verdict, with no jury.

Sunday's vandalism unfolded in a "concentrated area," said acting Police Commissioner Larry O'Toole. Police arrested demonstrators after the violence, which included assaults and chemical attacks on officers, police said.

"Some criminals assaulted law enforcement officers and threw chemicals and rocks at them. All of the officers' injuries were minor or moderate. All will be returned to duty soon," O'Toole said. "We're in control. This is our city, and we're going to protect it."

Police made the latter sentiment clear, according to multiple reports, including that of a St. Louis Post-Dispatch photographer, which said that officers began chanting, "Whose streets? Our streets!" after making arrests on Tucker Boulevard.

St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson said the majority of protesters were not violent and blamed the vandalism on agitators. "The days have been calm, but the

nights have been destructive. After the demonstrations, organizers announce that the daytime protests are over. But a group of agitators stay behind, apparently intent on breaking windows and destroying property. This is not acceptable," Krewson added.

While lending her support to law enforcement, Krewson conceded, "We have work to do here in the city. We need more and better opportunities for all our citizens." Still, the destruction can't be tolerated, she said.

The acquittal

Stockley shot and killed Smith in December 2011. The officer and his partner, Brian Bianchi, tried to stop Smith after witnessing a suspected drug transaction, according to an internal police department report the Post-Dispatch obtained.

Stockley said Smith backed into their police SUV (sport utility vehicle) twice in an apparent attempt to harm them. After Bianchi told Stockley that he believed Smith was armed, Stockley exited the SUV with his department-issued handgun. He also had a personal AK-47 pistol, a violation of department policy, according to the report.

Smith sped away, knocking Stockley

sideways, and Stockley fired at the vehicle, before Bianchi and Stockley pursued Smith at speeds up to 80 mph. The police vehicle crashed into Smith's Buick in an attempt to avoid hitting a truck, the report said. Before the crash, Stockley told Bianchi to "hit him right now," the report said.

Stockley approached with his weapon drawn. He said in the internal report he ordered Smith to show his hand and believed the suspect was reaching for a handgun, the report said.

"In fear for my safety and that of my partner," Stockley said in the report, "I discharged my department-issued firearm at the subject striking him in the chest."

Stockley then entered Smith's car "to locate the weapon and render it safe," the report said. He removed ammunition from the silver revolver, he said in the report.

Forensic analysis revealed that Stockley's was the only DNA present on the gun he said belonged to Smith, the criminal complaint said.

But in Friday's ruling, St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson said the prosecution's argument was "not supported by the evidence." The gun was too large,

Wilson said, for Stockley to hide it from the cameras at the scene.

St. Louis had been on edge for days during the trial, and demonstrations began soon after the acquittal was announced.

On Friday some protesters locked arms and prayed together, but within hours others smashed the windshield of a police vehicle and threw water bottles, rocks and bricks at law enforcement.

St. Louis police said the demonstrators later threw rocks at the mayor's home and that 11 law enforcement officers had been injured.

At least 33 people were arrested, according to a police tweet. Video footage showed officers using tear gas to disperse the crowds after police said the protests were considered an unlawful assembly. O'Toole said his officers used pepper balls.

On Saturday, peaceful protests also heated up with a group of protesters throwing bricks, rocks and projectiles with paint at police as officers tried to disperse the crowds. Nine people were arrested.

Some people vented about the court's decision to acquit Stockley, others called for some city leaders to step down.

Demonstrators briefly invaded two area malls over the weekend. Many chanted, "Black lives matter," video on social media shows.

Stockley left the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department in August 2013. Later that year, the St. Louis police board settled a wrongful death suit with Smith's survivors for \$900,000.

State and federal authorities did not initially prosecute Stockley. Then-St. Louis Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce later charged him with first-degree murder in May 2016, citing new evidence.

After Friday's ruling, Smith's family said they believed the judge had made the wrong decision and they would look at taking other legal steps.

(Source: CNN)

Saudi prince purging dissent before rise to throne

Authorities last week arrested around two dozen people, including influential clerics, in what activists decried as a coordinated crackdown.

Analysts say many of those detained are resistant to MBS's aggressive foreign policy that includes the boycott of Persian Gulf neighbor Qatar as well as some of his bold reforms, including privatizing state assets and cutting subsidies.

Saudi regime officials have instead suggested a foreign plot to overthrow the government, without disclosing details.

"In recent years we cannot recall a week in which so many prominent Saudi Arabian figures have been targeted in such a short space of time," said Samah Hadid, a director at Amnesty International.

Mohammed bin Salman became the Saudi regime's crown prince in a secretive push that had been planned out in advance, a report says.

To analysts, MBS's meteoric rise has seemed almost Shakespearean in its aggression and calculation. In June, he edged out a 58-year-old cousin, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, to become heir to the throne.

At the time, Saudi regime television channels showed the bearded MBS kissing the hand of the older prince and kneeling before him in a show of reverence. Western media reports later said that the deposed prince had been placed under house arrest, a claim strongly denied by Saudi regime authorities.



Foreign diplomats predict MBS could well be in control of Saudi Arabia for at least half a century.

With his youth a novelty in a country accustomed to ageing rulers, MBS has sought to woo young Saudis by putting sports and entertainment on the cutting edge of his reform effort, dubbed Vision 2030, at the risk of riling conservatives.

Public cinemas have long been banned inside the kingdom and there are few outlets for leisure activities.

MBS made a rare appearance this month in the football match that saw Saudi Arabia qualify for next year's World Cup. Alone in what appeared to be a bullet-proof royal box, the smiling prince flashed the victory sign -- an image embossed on a new government poster for

Vision 2030.

A slump in oil prices has prompted the House of Saud regime to take steps to reduce the kingdom's generous welfare system after decades of using its vast energy resources to pay generous salaries and benefits.

This direct outreach to youth amid Saudi regime's transition to a post-oil era marks a clear departure from the past, when previous rulers appeared more inclined to court society's elders out of a deference to age.

But sluggish economic growth and soaring youth unemployment could hinder MBS's outreach.

His reform plan seeks to reduce reliance on oil and develop the regime's industrial and investment base to generate more private-sector jobs for young Saudis.

MBS, who boasts of close ties to the White House, also appears to be empowering third-generation royals, with several younger princes holding deputy positions in various ministries and regional governments.

A series of full-page ads in Saudi regime newspapers recently extolled the virtues of the "charismatic" prince, tackling the unease in some quarters over his youth and perceived inexperience.

"His teachers describe him: He has never been part of a problem," said the ad by a regional men's magazine that profiled MBS, splashed with pictures from his childhood.

"Takes initiative and acts older than his age." (Source: AFP)

Bahrain's king denounces boycott of Israel, says citizens free to visit Israel

Persian Gulf tiny state of Bahrain's king Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah has called for an end to the Arab boycott of Israel, days after the Israeli premier said relations with the Arab states were better than any other time.

According to Israeli media, King Hamad's made the remarks at an event hosted by pro-Israeli group Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, calling for diplomatic ties to be established with the Israeli regime.

King Hamad also told Simon Wiesenthal Center director Rabbi Abraham Cooper that Bahraini citizens are free to visit Israel as they please. His stance on Israel was welcomed by the Israeli center's director who hailed the monarch as "ahead of the pack and smart."

"If I had to predict, I would tell you that the Arab world's relationship with the state of Israel is going to dramatically change... This is a dinner tonight that's hosted by a Jewish organization that no one will say is not so pro-Israel," Cooper added.

Cooper and his partner Marvin Hier met with King Hamad at the center and discussed the opening of a museum for religious tolerance in Bahrain's capital Manama towards the end of the year.

The change of stance comes weeks after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Net-

anyahu described relations with the Arab world better than any other time.

"What's happening now with the Arab bloc states has never before happened in our history -- even when we signed agreements," said Netanyahu. "What we have now is greater than anything else during any other period in Israel's history."

Last week, reports emerged that a secret meeting was held between a leading Saudi royal and senior Israeli officials in Tel Aviv, and in June, leaked emails of the UAE's ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba's suggested that Abu Dhabi had established secret links with pro-Israel think-tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD).

Last year, a video of a ceremony to mark the Jewish Hanukkah holiday hosted by Bahrain circulated on social media, showing Bahraini men in local kaffiyeh attire attending the party and dancing with Orthodox Jews. The video prompted condemnation from the Palestinian movement Hamas that urged Bahrain to end the move towards normalizing ties with Israel.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds (Je-



rusalem). Tel Aviv has defied international calls to stop its construction activities on the occupied Palestinian territories.

The regime has accused rights groups of contributing to the worldwide anti-Israeli Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. The BDS was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations that were pushing for "various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law."

The boycott of Israel was adopted by the Arab League and its member states and bars all relations between Arab na-

tions and Israel.

Thousands of volunteers worldwide have joined the BDS to help promote the Palestinian cause of ending Israeli occupation and oppression. Those include international trade unions, NGOs, initiatives, academic and business societies, trade unions, and cultural figures.

Last year, the regime allocated \$32 million to fighting the high-profile movement. It has also banned anyone found to support the BDS from entering the Israeli-occupied territories.

(Source: Press TV)

76 figures ask U.S., EU leaders to sustain Iran nuclear deal

US action that jeopardizes the Iran nuclear deal would trigger a crisis in US-Europe relations, damaging the US's international standing and credibility in Europe.

The statement's signatories, who include Javier Solana, former EU High Representative and NATO Secretary General, George Robertson, former British Defence Secretary and former NATO Secretary General, Igor Ivanov former Russian Foreign Minister, and Wolfgang Ischinger, Chair of the Munich Security Conference, Osman Faruk Logoglu, former Turkish Ambassador to the United States, argue that unilateral US action to decertify Iran's compliance when the International Atomic Energy Agency confirms that Iran is compliant would damage not only US interests but also US international standing. They express their support for the nuclear deal, arguing that it has improved global and European security and that losing it would be particularly damaging to Europe.

Coordinated through the pan-European security think-tank, the European Leadership Network, the statement calls on:

-President Trump and the US Congress to address Iranian compliance on the terms of the deal, not on other points; understand that the deal cannot be expected to solve non-nuclear issues; and accept that the fastest path to an Iranian nuclear weapon would be to undermine this agreement.

-The deal's European signatories -- the European Union and the German, French, Russian and British governments -- to make clear publicly as well as privately that they would be unable to support the United States in the UN Security Council and would work to see the nuclear deal continued with Iran in the absence of US participation, including defending European companies and individuals from any re-introduced US sanctions.

The Director of the European Leadership Network, Sir Adam Thomson, said, "Unilateral US action against the Iran nuclear deal would be a fast route to a second nuclear crisis alongside that with North Korea and would trigger a deep US-Europe division. Iran's agreement is as much with Europe (and Russia and China) as with the United States. This statement underlines how much Europe's voice needs to be heard in Washington."

Iraq top court rules to suspend Kurdish referendum

Guterres said in a statement on Sunday that any dispute between the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government should be resolved through dialogue and "constructive compromise".

Guterres urged Iraqi leaders to "approach this matter with patience and restraint" and offered UN help to address the issue.

British minister to press Kurds to drop referendum

Elsewhere, Britain's Defense Secretary Michael Fallon has said he would try to persuade the KRG president to call off the controversial September 25 independence referendum.

"I will be this afternoon in Erbil to tell Massoud Barzani that we do not support the Kurdish referendum," he said at a press conference in the Iraqi capital city of Baghdad.

"We are committed to the integrity of Iraq. We are working with the UN on alternatives to this referendum," he added.

PMF deployed in Kirkuk

The People's Mobilization Units (PMU/Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi) has entered Kirkuk south of Erbil.

"It's chaotic there," Muhammad Mahdi al-Bayati, a senior leader of Iraq's the PMU, said, describing Kirkuk in the lead-up to the vote. Al-Bayati's forces are deployed around Kirkuk as well as other disputed territories in Iraq's north. "Everyone is under pressure," he said, explaining that he feared a rogue group of fighters could trigger larger clashes. "Anything could be the spark that burns it all down."

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq plans to hold the referendum on support for independence on September 25 in three governorates that make up the region, and in disputed areas controlled by Kurdish forces, but which are claimed by Baghdad.

The leaders of Iraq's Kurdish region have said they hope the referendum will push Baghdad to come to the negotiating table and create a path for independence.

The Iraqi government and several other countries, including the United States, Iran and Turkey, have opposed the referendum.

(Source: agencies)

Snapchat blocks Al Jazeera in Saudi Arabia

Snapchat has blocked access to Al Jazeera news articles and videos in Saudi Arabia following a request from the government, a spokesperson for Snap Inc. has said.

The House of Saud regime told the social media company that the Al Jazeera Discover Publisher Channel violated local laws.

"We make an effort to comply with local laws in the countries where we operate," a Snapchat spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday.

Morad Rayyan, head of Incubation and Innovation Research at Al Jazeera, said the move was "unprecedented".

"Snapchat is a U.S.-based company, publicly traded, and it stands for freedom of expression. We are working on contingency plans to ensure our content is available on other platforms," Rayyan said.

"We are urging them (Snapchat) to review the decision that was made. They were that ones who invited us to be one of their news partners for the region."

There are about eight million Snapchat users in Saudi Arabia, one of the largest audiences in the world for this social platform.

(Source: agencies)

Wayne Rooney pleads guilty to drink-driving charge, banned for 2 years

Wayne Rooney has been banned from driving for two years and ordered to perform 100 hours of unpaid work as part of a 12-month community order.

Rooney pleaded guilty to drink driving on a night out while his pregnant wife and their three sons were on holiday.

The Everton striker and former England captain was stopped by police when driving a woman's black Volkswagen Beetle in Wilmslow, Cheshire, at 2 a.m. on Sept. 1.

The 31-year-old was later arrested and bailed, and on Monday he entered his guilty plea at Stockport Magistrates' Court.

Rooney apologized for his actions in a statement issued to Press Association Sport.

The statement read: "Following today's court hearing I want publicly to apologize for my unforgivable lack of judgement in driving while over the legal limit. It was completely wrong.

"I have already said sorry to my family, my manager and chairman and everyone at Everton FC. Now I want to apologize to all the fans and everyone else who has followed and supported me throughout my career.

"Of course I accept the sentence of the court and hope that I can make some amends through my community service."

Rooney's legal team asked District Judge John Temperley to consider not imposing a community order because of his ongoing charitable work.

However, the judge said he was "not convinced" that imposing a large fine "would have the same effect."

Rooney was also told to pay £85 prosecution costs and a victim surcharge for the same amount.

The court heard Rooney was almost three times the legal limit.

A breathalyzer test showed his alcohol level was 104 micrograms in 100 milliliters of breath.

The drink-drive limit in England and Wales is 35 micrograms per 100 milliliters of breath.

(Source: ESPN)

Dembele flies to Finland for surgery

Ousmane Dembele has travelled to Finland to undergo surgery on his hamstring, Barcelona have confirmed.

The France international tore part of a tendon in his left thigh during the 2-1 LaLiga victory at Getafe on Saturday.

Barca announced the following day that Dembele would require an operation and will be out of action for up to four months.

"Ousmane Dembele traveled on Monday morning to Helsinki, Finland, where he will undergo surgery to repair a rupture of the biceps femoris tendon in his left thigh," the club said in a statement.

"Dembele was accompanied by team physician, Dr. Ricard Pruna.

"Dembele will be operated on Tuesday by Dr. Sakari Orava. Following the surgery, the club will provide a medical statement."

The 20-year-old joined from Borussia Dortmund for a club-record initial fee of €105million in August.

He has made only three appearances for the club this season.

(Source: Soccerway)

Slovenia tops Serbia for first EuroBasket title



Despite injuries to two of their starting players, Slovenia were able to hold off Serbia to cap off an unbeaten EuroBasket tournament. Slovenia captain Goran Dragic scored 35 points and won the tournament MVP award.

Dragic was to sit out the three and a half minutes of the 2017 FIBA EuroBasket final in Istanbul's Sinan Erdem Dome after experiencing cramps.

"He was cramping on the sidelines," Slovenia coach Igor Kokoskov told fiba.basketball, the official website for basketball's governing body, after the game. "Goran's body was quitting on him."

Kokoskov was already without Luka Doncic, Slovenia's star teenager who had to leave the game injured midway through third quarter. Slovenia prevailed nonetheless, going on a 12-0 run at the end of the game to beat Yugoslav neighbor Serbia 93-85.

The win makes Slovenia the smallest country to win a EuroBasket tournament, since Latvia in 1935. They won all nine of their games in the tournament and were the ones who knocked out defending champions Spain in the semifinals.

"We were chasing a medal for 25 years and now we have gold. It's incredible," said Klemen Prepelic, who scored 21 points in the game.

Dragic, who plays for the Miami Heat in America's National Basketball Association (NBA), won the tournament's Most Valuable Player award. He scored 35 points in the final, six shy of the all-time record of 41, set by Serbia's Aleksandar Djordjevic in 1995.

(Source: Deutsche Welle)

Maria Sharapova: Serena Williams 'owns me'

In the space of one hour and eighteen minutes, Maria Sharapova's life would change for ever.

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in July 2004, she stepped onto Wimbledon's Centre Court as an unknown 17-year-old and walked off a household name.

The precocious Russian teenager with the infectious, gleeful smile had beaten the world No. 1 and reigning champion Serena Williams.

With that victory in the final, Sharapova became the third-youngest woman in history to be crowned champion at the All England Club.

"I remember a moment with my coach after winning a quarterfinal at that Wimbledon," Sharapova tells CNN's Don Riddell as she reflects on her victorious run to a first grand slam title.

"I was having my food after the match and a lot of people were coming up to me and saying 'congratulations' and wanting to take a picture — people I've never met in my life.

"I just noticed this wave (of people) and so did my coach. He immediately came up to me and he was almost whispering in my ear."

Sharapova describes that victory as a pivotal moment in her career.

The endorsements and sponsorship deals began to rain in, kickstarting «Brand Sharapova».

That Sharapova had so much to gain from a single victory only served to emphasize the opposite for her beaten opponent.

"Look, I think Serena, in that particular match, had everything to lose compared to myself," she says. "I mean, I was the underdog. If I lost that match, I would be the happiest kid on the planet."

"Wimbledon finalist? Who would have thought? No one expected that from me. She's a two-time defending champion, there's a lot more on the line and I think I sensed that.

"That didn't scare me, it only wanted me to win more."

In her book, Sharapova lucidly describes the way she heard Williams sobbing in the locker room after the final.

Intruding in that most personal and painful of moments is something Sharapova believes Williams has never forgiv-



en her for.

"Obviously it was a disappointing loss to her because she was expected to win," she says. "I'm sure she expected to win that match, another Wimbledon final."

"So I think that disappointment really, it stirred something up. She didn't want to lose to me again."

Though that day belonged to Sharapova, their head-to-head since makes for grim reading for the Russian. Not since 2004 — a run stretching 13 years and 18 matches — has she tasted victory against Williams.

"Well, I say she's owned me," the 30-year-old admits bluntly. "Which she has."

Just a few years earlier, Sharapova recalls seeing Serena — and her sister Venus — for the first time while she was attending the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Florida.

The coaches suspended lessons so the students could watch the Williams sisters practice for the few days that they were there.

Sharapova's father insisted she go too, to "watch these incredible athletes," she recalls him telling her.

"I want you to watch, and I want you to just look in their eyes to see the desire and the passion, to see how they play the game," was Yuri Sharapova's advice.

Not wanting to give the sisters the "satisfaction" of seeing her in the stands, Sharapova found an unconventional hiding place from which she could observe.

"Okay, there's a wooden shed behind the court," she explains. "It was like a video shed, where they do video analysis."

"And so I went in that shed and I was like peeking through this little hole and just witnessing years of my life before me."

"They were already grand slam champions at the time and just a few years later it was really as if someone took me and put me in a television screen and put me up against Serena Williams."

(Source: CNN)

Ronaldo returns as Madrid aim to pressure leaders Barcelona

Real Madrid striker Cristiano Ronaldo will return to action against Real Betis on Wednesday after serving a five-match suspension, as the champions look to keep the pressure on La Liga leaders Barcelona.

Ronaldo was sent off during the Spanish Super Cup win over Barcelona on Aug. 13 and banned for five matches after pushing the referee, meaning he is yet to feature in the league this season.

The Portuguese hitman struck twice in his only appearance since the incident, a comfortable 3-0 win over Apoel Nicosia in the Champions League last Wednesday.

Youngster Borja Mayoral and Gareth Bale struck for a weakened Madrid on Sunday as they beat Real Sociedad 3-1, but as well as Ronaldo, Marcelo and Toni Kroos are expected to return after suspension and injury respectively.

Despite the impressive display against a previously unbeaten Real Sociedad, Ronaldo's return will be vital for Madrid as they look to take advantage of a soft fixture schedule over the next two months to push rivals Barcelona.

The Catalans, who face Eibar on Tuesday, sit top of the table and are four points ahead of Madrid, in fourth place.

Barcelona were rocked by Ousmane Dembele's injury during their 2-1 win at

Getafe on Saturday, with the French winger set to miss around four months with a ruptured hamstring.

Madrid's home clash with Betis marks the start of a run of league fixtures which, on paper, they should win, including home games against Espanyol, Eibar and Las Palmas.

"If we carry on like this we can do a lot of damage," said Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane after his side's win in the Basque Country.

"We're back on track but we've got to keep going because there's another game on Wednesday."

Mid-table Betis have not beaten Madrid in the league at the Bernabeu in 19 years and only five times in 51 attempts.

If they are to defeat them on Wednesday, they will need experienced winger Joaquin, 36, and summer signing Andres Guardado, 30, to continue their excellent form.

"They are like kids in a school yard, they give it back to the guy that gives it back to them," Betis coach Quique Setien said of the midfielders.

"(Guardado) is a footballer I can't describe, extraordinary. He has enormous quality and an enormous work rate. Just like Joaquin, they are reference points for the team."

(Source: Four Four Two)



Vettel's hopes of regaining title lead wrecked in Singapore GP crash

Sebastian Vettel may well come to rue the errant turn of the steering wheel that triggered the first-corner collision taking the German out of the Singapore Grand Prix and wrecking his hopes of regaining the overall championship lead.

Starting from pole with title-rival Hamilton only fifth, the Ferrari driver was ideally placed to re-take the overall lead he had conceded to the Briton at the last race at Italy's Monza.

Instead, he dropped to 28 points behind Mercedes' triple champion with six of the 20 races still to go.

Vettel made a clean, if slow, getaway off the rain-drenched grid.

He veered left to cover off Red Bull's Max Verstappen who had started alongside on the front row.

The Dutchman took evasive action but made contact with Kimi Raikkonen's fast-starting Ferrari, sending it spinning into the side of the other Ferrari.

Vettel continued with a damaged car but then spun into the wall after turn three in an impact that removed the front wing and nose.

Ferrari blamed Verstappen on their Twitter feed, but Red Bull boss Christian Horner rushed to his driver's defense.

"He unfortunately ended up retiring as the result of somebody else's accident,"

he said. The trio were summoned to the stewards after the race but found neither at fault.

"This is a normal race accident which can happen," said the Mercedes team's non-executive chairman and triple world champion Niki Lauda.

"If he (Vettel) would not have moved (across) he could have won the race, there's no question about it."

The crash ended a run of 18 consecutive points finishes for the four-times champion, whose last retirement came in Malaysia in October 2016, when Hamilton also failed to finish after leading.

The Briton cashed in on his rival's failure to take the maximum 25 points up for grabs with a third straight win and inflict significant damage to Vettel's championship hopes.

If Hamilton keeps the momentum going, the triple champion could soon work himself into a position where he wouldn't need another win to clinch the title.

Vettel may well come to see Singapore as the race that swung the balance.

"There is nothing we can do now and for sure it is bitter," said the 30-year-old.

"But we have other races ahead of us and I am sure there will be more opportunities for us."

(Source: Reuters)



Unai Emery tells Neymar and Edinson Cavani to 'Sort It Out' after penalty issues

Paris Saint-Germain manager Unai Emery has called on Neymar and Edinson Cavani to "sort it out" after their set-piece disagreements against Lyon on Sunday.

Cavani and Neymar were seemingly at odds over who should take a penalty in the Ligue 1 contest, with the former eventually taking the kick and seeing it saved by Anthony Lopes. Earlier in the game, the pair appeared to clash over who should take a free-kick, too.

Speaking about the incident afterwards, Emery urged the forwards to settle the matter themselves or he will make

the decision.

"I have told them to sort it out between themselves," the coach said, per Jonathan Johnson of ESPN FC. "I think that they are capable of doing that and that they will both be our kickers. If they cannot reach an agreement, I will decide for them. I do not want this to become a problem for us."

As noted by Johnson, Dani Alves also seemed to get involved in the skirmishes, hiding the ball from Cavani and handing it to Neymar at one point.

Despite Cavani's penalty miss, PSG won the game 2-0 after two late own goals from Marcelo and Jeremy Morel.

While this issue will concern some, PSG supporters will be delighted with the way in which Neymar, Cavani and Kylian Mbappe have linked up as a trio so far this season.

Though none of the trio were able to get on the scoresheet against a dogged Lyon side, they were all involved in the crucial goals. Cavani's effort was deflected for the opener, whereas Mbappe's strike—after being played in by a Neymar pass—struck Morel before flashing into the net.

It wasn't PSG's best performance of the campaign so far, but their record in Ligue 1 remains perfect six games into

the season. As noted by OptaJean, the spirit and fitness of the team makes them so dangerous late on in matches:

Cavani and Neymar are both big personalities, and each will be keen to take responsibility from set-piece situations.

Nevertheless, these types of decisions should be made prior to the game to prevent uncomfortable moments like the one mentioned.

Having seen Cavani's most recent effort stopped from 12 yards, world-record signing Neymar will surely take over set-piece duties for the immediate future.

(Source: Bleacher Report)

I will fight for my place with Ashkan Dejagah: Saman Ghoddos

S P O R T S Iranian-Swedish midfielder Saman Ghoddos says that he will fight for his place in Team Melli starting line up with Ashkan Dejagah.

Ghoddos was invited to Iran national football team in the match against South Korea in the 2018 World Cup qualifier but didn't play.

"The Iranian football federation asked me to join Team Melli's preparatory camp in late September but I have to play in Europa League match with Ostersunds FK. I will join the Iranian national team in Russia in October," Ghoddos said in an interview with SvenskaFans.com.

Ghoddos says he was treated well by everyone in Iran national football team.

"When I met them for the first time I saw so many talented players in Team Melli. Everything was professionally managed there. The players treated me well, I immediately felt like part of a big family," he added.

"Ashkan Dejagah was one of the players who took good care of me, and everyone treated me well. Ashkan is my main rival in Team Melli but I will fight for a place with him. It's normal in football. We are friends outside the pitch but we are competing for a place at the field," the 24-year-old stated.

"I want to be a member of main team in the 2018 World Cup but I am well aware I will have a difficult job ahead of me. It's a dream come true to play with the best teams in the world," Ghoddos concluded.



AFC Champions League Semi-final Flashback: Saudi Arabia vs Iran

After an enthralling set of quarter-finals, the 2017 AFC Champions League is now left with just four teams to fight it out for a spot in the continent's showpiece match.

The West region semi-final will see Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia face Persepolis of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Riyadh-based Al Hilal were also involved the last and only time Saudi and Iranian have sides met at this stage since the tournament revamp in 2002-2003, when they locked horns with Zob Ahan in 2010.

In the build-up to next week's tie, let's turn back the clock and refresh our memories of what happened back then.

Asian giants Al Hilal began their AFC Champions League campaign that year in Group D, going on to top the group ahead of Mes Kerman, Al Sadd and Al Ahli.

A 3-0 win over Bunyodkor followed in the Round of 16, which set up a clash with Qatar's Al Gharafa in the quarter-finals.

In a classic encounter that will live long in the fans' memories, Al Hilal cruised to a 3-0 win at home, before being stunned 3-0 in Doha by Al Gharafa, who then made it 4-0 in extra time.

Fortunately for Al Hilal, a thrilling climax saw late goals by Yasser Al Qahtani and Essa Al Mehyani take them through to the semi-finals.

As for Zob Ahan, their appearance in 2010 was only the second in their history after making their debut in 2004, where they were knocked out in the group stage.

The Isfahan-based side ended up topping a tough Group B, that featured Bunyodkor, Al Ittihad and Al Wahda - all of who had previously made semi-finals appearances.

Zob Ahan then pipped fellow Iranian side Mes Kerman 1-0 in the Round of 16 before stunning the continent with a 3-2 aggregate win over defending champions Pohang Steelers in the quarter-finals.

The Korean side had been leading the tie on away goals going into the last 10 minutes but a Mohammad



Reza Khalatbari goal in the 80th minute ensured Zob Ahan would face Al Hilal in the semi-finals.

Both sides had chances to go ahead early on at the Foolad Shahr Stadium, with Khalatbari and a 20-year old Nawaf Al Abed missing the target with their attempts.

Al Hilal had keeper Hassan Al Otaibi to thank in the 21st minute when he pulled off a stunning reflex save to deny Igor Castro.

With the first half edging towards a goalless end, Al Hilal came up with a fine passing move that released Al Qahtani but the Saudi star was brought down in the box, earning him a penalty.

However, it was Zob Ahan who celebrated after Christian Wilhelmsson's effort was saved by Gordan Shahabaldin.

Zob Ahan then made their opponents pay after the break, when Ghasem Haddadifar struck a low free-kick that went through the wall and into the goal, giving the home side a 1-0 lead.

Al Abed struck the post with a fierce left-footed shot and Al Hilal had more chances to equalise but failed to put them away.

A capacity crowd of around 68,000 expectant fans filled the King Fahd International Stadium for the second leg in Riyadh, watching with bated breath as Al Hilal tried to reach a first Asian final since 2002.

The hosts dominated the proceedings from the get go but they found Zob Ahan tough to crack.

The tension was palpable as chances came and went without the scoreline changing.

Thiago Neves, Mohammed Al Shalhoub and Mirel Radoi all had their opportunities to make the breakthrough but it just wasn't their day.

Instead, it was Zob Ahan who scored to silence the crowd. An uncharacteristic mistake from Al Hilal defender Osama Hawsawi gifted the ball to Castro, who controlled it before rifling home past Al Otaibi to make it 1-0 on the night and 2-0 on aggregate to the visitors.

To make matters worse for Al Hilal, their full-back Lee Young-pyo lost his cool and kicked out at Khalatbari, earning a straight red card from referee Ravshan Irmatov.

The final whistle confirmed a first ever continental final for Zob Ahan while Al Hilal were left to rue their wastefulness in front of goal.

The final of the 2010 AFC Champions League pitted Zob Ahan against Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma in Tokyo, with the Iranians coming up short as Seongnam registered a 3-1 win and lifted the title.

Since then, Zob Ahan's best result in Asia is the quarter-final place achieved in 2011. This year, they were unable to make it to the knockout stage, after finishing third in their group.

Al Hilal, on the other hand, have enjoyed success, successfully negotiating the group stage in the last seven consecutive seasons.

They also finished as runners-up in 2014 and semi-finalists in 2015.

Of the players who played against Zob Ahan in 2010, Osama Hawsawi, Abdullah Al Zori and Nawaf Al Abed will be available for selection for the semi-final first leg against Persepolis on September 26 while Salman Al Faraj and Yasser Al Qahtani are out injured.

(Source: the-AFC)

Iran fire warning to rivals in Ashgabat



Islamic Republic of Iran took no prisoners in their Group D opening match against Tahiti winning 16-1 and serving notice of their intent of adding a fifth crown in the Ashgabat 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games men's futsal on Monday.

The defending champions who have won all four editions since it was first held in 2005, showed their attacking prowess, knocking in eight goals in each half.

Hat-tricks from Farhad Tavakoli (4th, 13th, 14th) and Ahmad Esmaeilpour (8th, 10th, 18th) while Mahdi Javid (16th), Saied Ahmad Abbasi (11th) added one apiece as Iran took a 8-0 lead into the break.

Javid added three more in the second half in the 27th, 30th and 37th to take his tally to four as Iran swept their opponents with goals from Mohammad Shajari (31st, 33rd), Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh

(34th), Hossein Tayebidgoli (35th) and Hamid Ahmadidazaj 39th minute.

"It was a great honour to play against such a great team. It was tough to have them coming, coming and coming again at our team," said Tahiti goalkeeper Hiti Thierry Ariotima.

Tahiti finally got their consolation through Jacob Tutavae in the 27th minute. Tahiti coach Heitapu Hunter was optimistic of his team's debut against Iran said: "It's difficult for sure when you play champions like them, but we came here to learn a lot from them."

"It's the first time for Tahiti Futsal team to play at these levels, because every time we play a world cup qualification we lose and get always stopped by Solomon Islands (which are world No.46, while Tahiti are world No.83) and so we have never the chance to play these bigger teams," he added.

(Source: asghabat2017.com)

Wrestlers pocket three medals in Grand Prix Medved



Iranian freestyle wrestlers have featured praiseworthy performances at the International Grand Prix Tournament Medved 2017 in Belarus, and bagged three medals at the international tournament.

On Sunday, Ahmad Bazri overcame two representatives from the host nation in his first two contests of the 86-kilogram weight class at the Palace of Sports of the Belarusian capital city of Minsk.

He, however, conceded a defeat from Russian opponent Zaur Yurevich Makiev in the semi-final round.

Bazri bested a Ukrainian freestyle wrestler in his next bout, and advanced to the repechage round.

He defeated a contestant from Russia and took away the bronze medal.

Earlier, Mohammad Mottaqi had picked up a silver medal for the Iranian

team in the 74-kilogram division. Hamid Reza Zarrinpeykar bagged the bronze in the same weight section.

The 47th edition of International Grand Prix Tournament Medved started in Minsk, Belarus, on September 16 and finished the following day.

The tournament was held in the men's 57-, 61-, 65-, 70-, 74-, 86-, 97- and 125-kilogram weight categories.

Female freestyle wrestlers competed in the 48-, 53-, 55-, 58-, 60-, 63-, 69- and 75-kilogram classes.

Aleksandr Vasilievich Medved is a retired Soviet freestyle wrestler, who was named by the International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles (FILA) as "one of the greatest wrestlers in history".

He won three Olympic gold medals, seven world and three European titles between 1962 and 1972.

(Source: Press TV)

Wushu fighters take five medals in Asian Junior Championships

Iranian wushu practitioners have collected five medals at the ninth edition of Asian Junior Wushu Championships in South Korea.

On Sunday and the opening day of the continental sports event in Gumi City, Mohammad Reza Ja'fari tested his martial art skills and maneuvers in the boys' 9-12-year-old category of Daoshu form, and scored 9.18 points to sit in the second slot and pick up the silver medal.

A Chinese competitor grabbed the gold medal with 9.22 points. A wushu artist from the Philippines tallied 9.17 points to get the bronze.

Zahra Botshekan also pocketed a bronze in the girls' 9-12-year-old division of Daoshu form.

A Chinese wushu artist defeated a representative from Malaysia in the last contest, and collected the gold medal.

Furthermore, Niloufar Mokhtarpour garnered 9.19 points to claim the silver medal in the Chiangshu form of Taolu competitions, and followed a representative from Singapore with 9.20 points.

A contestant from South Korea notched up 9.19 points to collect the bronze.

Ali Shokravi also settled for the bronze medal with 9.20 points in the boys' 12-15-year-old category of Nangun form. A wushu contestant from China was awarded the gold medal, and the silver went to a competitor from Hong Kong.

Additionally, Nahid Pourshababan got 9.53 points to grab the silver in the girls' 15-18-year-old section of Nanquan form. The young Iranian female athlete trailed a Chinese wushu fighter with 9.62 points. A competitor from Uzbekistan racked up 9.50 points to stand behind Pourshababan.

Nanquan usually requires less flexibility and has fewer acrobatics than Changquan, but it also requires greater leg stability and power generation through leg and hip coordination.

The ninth edition of Asian Junior Wushu Championships kicked off on September 14, and will run through September 21, 2017.

(Source: Press TV)

Malaysia to host 2019 World Para Swimming Championships

World Para Swimming announced on Monday (18 September) that Kuching, Malaysia will host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships from 29 July - 4 August.

Around 600 swimmers from 70 countries are expected to compete in the capital of Sarawak state marking the 9th edition of the World Para Swimming Championships and the first time the competition will be held in Asia.

Elected the new International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President in the 2017 IPC General Assembly held last week in Abu Dhabi, UAE, Andrew Parsons said: "We are pleased to announce that Malaysia is going to host the first edition of the World Para Swimming Championships in Asia. The coming years are going to be an exciting time for Para sport in the continent and Kuching will see the world's best Para swimmers competing one year before the Paralympic Games in Tokyo."

"We would like to thank the Paralympic Council of Malaysia and the Sarawak State Government for their support and we look forward to working with them to organise an amazing event in Kuching in two years' time."

The president of the Paralympic Council of Malaysia (NPC Malaysia) Mr. SM Nasarudin Tan Sri Datuk Seri Utama SM Nasimuddin, said: "We would like to thank the IPC for the decision to award this Championships to Malaysia. This decision demonstrates the willingness of the IPC to develop NPCs worldwide by giving an opportunity to cultivate the organisational capabilities to host major international events."

"We have earned international reputation in hosting major sporting events in this country and the National Paralympic Council values this opportunity and shall endeavour to deliver the Championships to the best of our ability."

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Sacchi suggests Ancelotti should leave Bayern Munich

Bayern Munich could be better off if Carlo Ancelotti leaves the club, according to Arrigo Sacchi.

Speculation has mounted over the future of the 58-year-old amid reports of disharmony in the dressing room at Allianz Arena.

Ancelotti has rubbished rumours of a possible move to the Chinese Super League in January but his long-term prospects remain uncertain, with Hoffenheim's Julian Nagelsmann tipped as a possible replacement.

Former AC Milan boss Sacchi, who coached Ancelotti during the hugely successful final years of his playing career at San Siro, believes a change could benefit all parties.

"It does look like changes would be good for Bayern," he told Sport1. "You get older and lose passion and that total desire. That's life."

"To me, it seems like the team has lost its enthusiasm. He [Ancelotti] is nonetheless a great coach. Which other coach has won the Champions League three times? He has had success all over the world."

Bayern claimed a 4-0 Bundesliga win over Mainz on Saturday to ease some of the pressure on Ancelotti.

They won the title in his first season in charge in 2016-17 before claiming the DFL-Supercup last month, but lost in the semi-finals of last term's DFB-Pokal to Borussia Dortmund and exited the Champions League at the hands of Real Madrid.

(Source: Soccerbet)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian films line up for intl. event in Sept., Oct.

A R T TEHRAN — A number of Iranian movies will be competing in international events around the world during October and the remainder of September.

Narges Abyar's anti-war drama "Breath" and "Chocolate" by Soheil Movaffaq will be screened at the Canada Kids Film Festival, which is scheduled to be held from September 22 to 24. "The Rock", a documentary by Hamid Jafari, will compete in the 15th Matsalu Nature Film Festival that will be held in Estonia from September 20 to 24. The film is about a woman in southern Iran who goes to the mountain of the village every day, breaks up rocks, puts the stones on a truck and makes a living out of it for her family.

The animated movie "Release from Heaven" by Ali Nuri Oskui has received a nomination at the Fimucité - Tenerife International Film Music Festival in Spain. Mohammadreza Aliqoli is the composer of the music for the film. The festival will announce winners on September 30.

"SNL," "Big Little Lies," "Handmaid's Tale" rule at Trump-flavored Emmys

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — "The Handmaid's Tale" and political comedy "Veep" won the top prizes at the Emmy awards on Sunday, but satirical sketch show "Saturday Night Live" won the most Emmys overall on the back of a season of Donald Trump spoofs.

The new U.S. president, who never won an Emmy despite his reality show past, was also the butt of multiple jokes at the ceremony honoring the best of television.

"If he (Trump) had won an Emmy, I bet he wouldn't have run for president," host Stephen Colbert told the A-list audience.

"It's your fault! He never forgave you and he never will. But unlike the presidency, the Emmys go to the winners of the popular vote," Colbert quipped, referring to the 2016 election result.

Alec Baldwin won the comedy supporting actor Emmy for his withering impersonations of Trump for "Saturday Night Live" on the Comcast Corp's NBC.

After its most-watched season in 23 years, "Saturday Night Live" won nine Emmys, including best variety sketch series, for actress Kate McKinnon and for Melissa McCarthy's turn as former White House press secretary Sean Spicer.

With HBO's medieval series "Game of Thrones" out of the running this year because of a later airdate, there were a slew of new faces among Sunday's winners.

Many of them were for women, who scored with female-centric shows like "Big Little Lies," "A Handmaid's Tale" and "Veep," and rare wins for women directors, writers and producers.

In the first major awards wins for streaming service Hulu, "The Handmaid's Tale" star Elisabeth Moss was named best drama actress. The show also won awards for writing, directing and for supporting actress Ann Dowd for a total of 8.

Other new faces included Donald Glover, the best comedy actor and also director for his hip-hop themed show "Atlanta."

Julia Louis-Dreyfus won her sixth consecutive Emmy for playing a female egotistical presidential candidate on HBO's "Veep," one of the few repeat winners.

"We did have a whole storyline about impeachment but we abandoned that because we were worried that someone else might get to it first," said Louis-Dreyfus, accepting her trophy.

Sterling K. Brown won best dramatic actor for his role as an African-American who is adopted into a white family in heart-tugging NBC family drama "This Is Us."

In a crowded limited series category, HBO's murder mystery "Big Little Lies" came out on top, winning eight Emmys including for best series, for Nicole Kidman's abused wife character, for Laura Dern and Alexander Skarsgard, as well as for writing and directing.

Kidman said the show "was created out of frustration because women weren't getting great roles. So now, more roles for women, please!"

Britain's Riz Ahmed beat presumed front-runner Robert De Niro to take his first Emmy for his role as a man who falls foul of the U.S. judicial system in HBO's crime limited series "The Night Of."

Some of the night's biggest losers included two new Netflix shows. Fan favorite "Stranger Things" won just five of its 18 nominations, mostly in technical categories, and British royal series "The Crown" came away with three out of 16 nominations.

"Alan" picks Golden Leaf at Duhok festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Mostafa Gandomkar's "Alan" won the Golden Leaf for Best Kurdish Short Film at the 5th Duhok International Film Festival, which was held in the Iraqi city from September 9 to 16.

The film is about a Kurdish man in Syria who has lost his home and family in ISIS attacks.

Iranian cinematographer Turaj Aslani also won the special jury award for Turkish director Hasim Aydemir's movie "14 July".

Eight other Iranian movies, including "Gaze" by Farnush Samadi, "Achieve" by Mohammadreza Minapur, "Dada Saltaneh" by Hadi Ahmadi and "Darza" by Iraj Mohammadi Razini were also screened at the festival.



Iranian director Mostafa Gandomkar (L) kisses his award for best Kurdish short film during the closing ceremony of the Duhok International Film Festival on September 16, 2017. An unidentified person is also seen in the photo.

French official Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne visits Tehran museum



Visual Arts Office director Majid Mollanoruzi (L), France's Secretary of State to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (C) and French Ambassador François Sénémaud pose at the TMCA in Tehran. (TMCA)

A R T TEHRAN — France's Secretary of State to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne has recently paid a visit to the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA).

Ambassador François Sénémaud and several other French diplomats accompanied Lemoyne on the visit, the TMCA announced in a press release on Monday.

They also were able to glance at the works on display during the 7th Tehran National Sculpture Biennial at

the museum. In a meeting with Visual Arts Office director Majid Mollanoruzi at the museum, Lemoyne praised the dynamism of the Iranian art, which has been represented in the works being shown at the biennial.

He also announced the readiness of his country to arrange an exhibition by French artists at the museum.

Mollanoruzi warmly received the suggestion and express his hope that the exhibition would be organized in the near future.

"Imagine Peace" honored at Tehran art festival



Graphic designer Alireza Danafar (R) shakes hands with veteran artist Qobad Shiva after accepting the Shiva Peace Medal during the 5th Art for Peace Festival at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on September 17, 2017. (IAF)

A R T TEHRAN — "Imagine Peace", a poster by Iranian artist Alireza Danafar has been awarded the Shiva Peace Medal in the poster section of the 5th Art for Peace Festival.

The medal was presented to Danafar by veteran graphic designer Qobad Shiva during a ceremony at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Sunday.

"Imagine Peace" has also been selected as the official poster of the next edition of the festival, secretary of the festival Fereidun Farbud said.

Twenty-five posters by artists from ten countries including China, Russia, the U.S., Greece, Mexico, Turkey, Poland, Indonesia, Ecuador and Dominican are on display in the poster section of the festival.

The Art for Peace Festival is showcasing a variety of artworks by over 200 international artists in categories of painting, photography, sculpture, graphic design, installation and video art to promote the culture of peace and a world without violence.

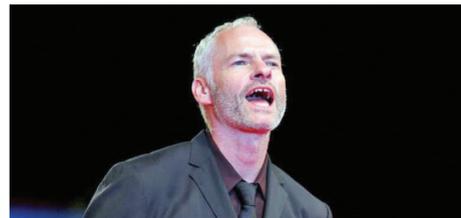
Organized by the IAF, the festival will run until September 21, which is the International Day of Peace.

"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing" wins at Toronto film festival

TORONTO (Reuters) — Director Martin McDonagh's comic drama, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," won the award for audience favorite at the Toronto International Film Festival on Sunday, giving the film a boost ahead of the upcoming awards season.

Frances McDormand plays a grieving mother frustrated with the police's lack of progress in finding her daughter's killer. The film, which screened in Venice earlier and is set for wide release later this year, won the Grolsch People's Choice Award.

Craig Gillespie's "I, Tonya," about U.S. figure skater Tonya Harding, and Luca Guadagnino's "Call Me By Your Name," a coming-of-age romance about



Director Martin McDonagh poses during red carpet event for the movie "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" at the 74th Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy September 4, 2017. (Reuters/Alessandro Bianchi)

forbidden love, were the runners-up.

Past audience winners and runners-up in Toronto have gone on to win or become best-picture Oscar nominees, solidifying the Toronto festival's reputation as a launching pad for films that go on to receive critical acclaim.

Past winners and runners-up include "Spotlight," "12 Years A Slave," "The King's Speech" and "La La Land."

Other winners at this year's festival included "Faces Places" for the audience's favorite documentary. Warwick Thornton's "Sweet Country" won the festival's Platform prize, selected by a panel of filmmakers.

"Mother!" crumbles with \$7.5 million, "It" repeats No. 1

LOS ANGELES (Variety.com) — "It" continues to post terrifyingly huge numbers, while "Mother!" opens with a thud.

"It" from Warner Bros. and New Line, expects to finish its second weekend with \$60 million from 4,103 locations. That would make its domestic gross so far \$218.7 million -- a record for the highest earning September release ever. The old record-holder was 1986's "Crocodile Dundee" with \$174.8 million. Broken down by day this weekend, "It" earned \$19.4 million on Friday and \$26.2 million on Saturday. Sunday's take is estimated to be about \$14.5 million. 389 Imax screens are expected to account for just over \$3 million of the film's take in North America this weekend.

Overseas, "It" is pulling in an additional \$60.3 million in 56 markets. That raises its international total to \$152.6 million and the worldwide tally to \$371.3 million.

Based on Stephen King's novel, "It" opened last weekend with an enormous domestic pull of \$123.4 million. The R-rated title, reportedly made for about \$35 million, stars Bill Skarsgard as an evil clown named Pennywise who terrorizes children.

The rest of the cast includes Jeremy Ray Taylor, Sophia Lillis, Finn Wolfhard, Wyatt Oleff, Chosen Jacobs, Jack Dylan Grazer, Nicholas Hamilton, Jaeden Lieberher, and Jackson Robert Scott.

Meanwhile "Mother!" is struggling. The Paramount release directed by Darren Aronofsky is expected to earn \$7.5 million from 2,368 locations. That's an all-time low for wide releases starring Jennifer Lawrence. One contributing factor to the movie's bottom line is that audiences entirely rejected it and bestowed an F CinemaScore. That's despite a critical split that landed the polarizing movie a generally positive 68% on Rotten Tomatoes.

Women made up the bulk of the audience (56%), and slightly more than half of the audience (52%) was over the age of 35. The launch was driven by a marketing campaign that shrouded the R-rated movie in mystery and didn't give much away regarding plot. In addition to Lawrence, Javier Bardem, Ed Harris, and Michelle Pfeiffer also star.

Another fresh R-rated launch, "American Assassin" -- a joint production between CBS Films and Lionsgate -- is expecting an opening

of \$14.8 million from 3,154 locations. The audience breakdown was 55% Male and 29% under the age of 35. The film is an adaptation of Vince Flynn's 2010 novel, and stars Dylan O'Brien as a CIA black ops recruit who is trained by a Cold War veteran (Michael Keaton). The film's opening is comparable to 2014's "John Wick," which opened to \$14.4 million on its way to launch a franchise with \$43 million in domestic earnings.

"We feel that we're off to a very solid start," Shaun Barber, Lionsgate's EVP and general sales manager of domestic theatrical distribution, said, pointing to the A CinemaScore the movie earned from the under 25 audience, and a strong September box office so far. As for plans to make the movie a franchise, he said "it's very early in the run" and "too soon to call."

Open Road's "Home Again" should land in fourth this weekend with \$5.3 million from 3,036 locations (only a 38% drop from last weekend). "The Hitman's Bodyguard," from Lionsgate, continues to stay in the top five with about \$3.6 million from 3,272 spots. The rest of the top ten is made up of "Annabelle: Creation" (\$2.6 million); Taylor Sheridan's "Wind

River" (\$2.6 million), which has now out-grossed "Hell of High Water" in North America; "Leap!" (\$2.1 million); "Spider-Man: Homecoming" (\$1.9 million); and "Dunkirk" (\$1.3 million).

In limited release, Annapurna and Amazon's "Brad's Status" is tracking to earn \$100,179 this weekend from four locations. Mike White wrote and directed the movie starring Ben Stiller as a man who is constantly comparing his life to those of his college friends. Austin Abrams, Jenna Fischer, Luke Wilson, and Michael Sheen also star in the flick, which has been generally well-reviewed (83% on Rotten Tomatoes). The film is expected to expand to 100 locations next weekend.

Amazon Studios' head of marketing and distribution Bob Berney noted that "fathers are really relating to the film" and Stiller's performance.

After a catastrophic summer of moviegoing, a strong September so far (39.4% better than last year, powered by "It") is leading a gradual recovery. The year to date box office is now 4.9% behind last year -- up from 6.5% behind at the end of the summer. The domestic box office so far this year has earned \$7.9 billion.