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© File photo

Iran tests new 2000km-range missile

POLITICS TEHRAN — On Friday night Iran released footage of the successful test-launch of its new ballistic missile, called Khorramshahr, with a range of 2,000 kilometers.

The footage was released a few hours after Khorramshahr was unveiled during a military parade in the

capital city of Tehran.

Khorramshahr is the name of a city in southern Iran which was occupied by the invading Saddam Hussein Army in the autumn of 1980.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force, said the missile can carry multiple warheads. **→2**

Trump's UN speech sign of 'weakness', 'frustration': top cleric

POLITICS TEHRAN — Chairman of Iran's Expediency Council Seyed Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi said on Saturday that U.S. President Donald Trump's speech at the UN General Assembly originated from his "weakness, frustration and anger".

"Unfortunately, the U.S. president has shown a paradoxical and unbal-

anced personality so far," he said in a meeting of the Expediency Council.

He added Trump accused Iran of supporting terrorism while Tehran has been a victim of terrorism and has been fighting it in the region.

The ayatollah also praised President Hassan Rouhani's speech at the UN on Wednesday, describing it as "firm" and "very appropriate". **→2**

'Iran able to attract \$3.5t of investments in 20 years'

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Valiollah Seif has said the country is able to attract \$3.5 trillion of investments within the next two decades.

He made the remarks in an address to the Meeting of the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of the Member Countries of the Or-

ganization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Turkey on Friday, IRNA reported.

Seif referred to oil and gas, petrochemicals, mining, transportation, urbanism, industrial production, agriculture, and information technology as among the fields of interest for Iran to absorb investments within the next 20 years. **→4**

Sanders: U.S. backs anti-democratic S. Arabia but 'puts down' Iran

By staff and agency

Senator Bernie Sanders has criticized Washington's support for "incredibly anti-democratic" Saudi Arabia while pursuing a destructive policy toward Iran which just held elections in May.

Sanders also defended Barack Obama's key foreign affairs legacy in an interview with The Intercept published on Friday.

The senator, who competed with Hillary Clinton in the Democratic Party presidential primaries in 2016, said that the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the 5+1 group must be protected

"I think that one of the areas that we have got to rethink, in terms of American foreign

policy, is our position vis-a-vis Iran and Saudi Arabia," he said.

He said, "For whatever reason — and I think we know some of the reasons having to do with a three-letter word called oil — the United States has kind of looked aside at the fact that Saudi Arabia is an incredibly anti-democratic country and has played a very bad role internationally, but we have sided with them time and time and time again, and yet Iran, which just held elections, we are ... continuing to put them down."

In his speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump said that the 2015 nuclear deal signed by Iran, the

European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council was an "embarrassment" and hinted that he may not recertify the agreement when it comes up for a mid-October deadline.

In response Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a tweet saying, "Trump's ignorant hate speech belongs in medieval times-not the 21st Century UN -. Fake empathy for Iranians fools no one."

French President Emmanuel Macron defended the nuclear deal in his speech at the UN, warning "renouncing it would be a grave error".

Elsewhere, Sanders said that the U.S. should rethink its foreign policy.

China imposes limits on oil supply to North Korea

China is limiting its oil exports to North Korea to comply with new sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council last week, which include fuel import restrictions.

China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on its website on Saturday that China would limit exports of refined petroleum products from October 1, and ban condensates and liquefied natural gas immediately.

China will also ban textile imports from the North Korea, the ministry said.

Textiles are one of North Korea's last major sources of foreign revenue following repeated rounds of UN sanctions under which Beijing cut off purchases of coal, iron ore, seafood and other goods.

China accounts for about 90 percent of North Korea's trade, making its cooperation critical to any efforts to derail Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

Chinese leaders were long North Korea's diplomatic protectors but express increasing frustration with the government of Kim Jong-un.

They supported the latest rounds of UN Security Council sanctions but are reluctant to push Pyongyang too hard for fear the government might collapse.

They also argue against doing anything that might hurt ordinary North Koreans.

On Friday, the United States President Donald Trump praised China for increasing

financial restrictions, and has been pushing Beijing to apply more pressure to North Korea over its nuclear program.

His comments came a day after he signed an executive order allowing Washington to ramp up sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear missile program.

Trump said the measure would allow sanctions against "individuals and companies that finance and facilitate trade" with Pyongyang.

Also on Friday, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho said his country could consider a hydrogen bomb test on an unprecedented scale on the Pacific Ocean - a threat, Japan labelled as "totally unacceptable". (Source: agencies)



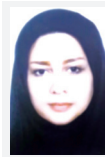
ARTICLE
Harun Yahya
political analyst

Is the Syrian war about to end?

September 15th marked an important accord between Turkey, Iran and Russia in the 6th round of the Astana talks that first started on January 6th of this year. The nexus agreed to add a fourth region to the establishment of de-escalation zones, which they decided in the May meeting of Astana for a period of six months. The target in Astana was to give security for civilians by creating these de-escalation zones, which Turkey had been demanding for a long time. However, the de-escalation zone is not the same as the previous safe zone proposals but rather a "new concept" according to President Erdogan.

This decision proved to serve the purpose since hostilities diminished sharply in the first three agreed zones with the help of some of the associated states. The three guarantors decided to send 500 observers each to support the ceasefire and monitor the violations. The Foreign Minister made a written statement concerning the aim of forming this zone by saying that the observers' mission will be to prevent clashes between "the (Syrian) regime and the opposition forces, and any violations of the truce".

Reaching a consensus is unquestionably a positive progress for the long-established conflict in Syria and is considered as a unity against the radical groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Creating the fourth de-escalation zone is particularly important in the eyes of the affiliated countries due to various factors. First of all, Idlib has a border with Turkey and is close to the city of Hatay. Since armed radical groups are dominant in Idlib, including the ones transferred from Aleppo, Turkey was concerned there would be a wave of influx of these groups in case there was an escalation in conflict there. However, as a result of the negotiations in Astana, the armed radical groups are to be retreated in a region in the midway of Idlib, which would prevent them to advance to the Turkish border. **→13**



PERSPECTIVE
By Maryam Qarehgozlou
Tehran Times journalist

What do you want to be in the future?

In a general sense education is what prepares people for their future jobs. But does it?

The 12-year compulsory schooling followed by the optional academic education is believed to prepare the future generation to build a civilized society.

More than 14 million students attend schools nationwide in Iran for the 2017-18 school year, but is education the only means for a better future for these 14 million? The answer is absolutely a big fat no.

Unfortunately, for many parents going to school is merely a means of getting admitted to the university and finally finding a job. Many parents are worried about their children's future and since the day they go to school they keep wondering if they manage to get admission to a good university.

And that's why many students are obliged to participate in extracurricular activities after school or even during summer and New Year holidays.

On the other hand, for many students the start of the school year is the beginning of getting up early, doing long tedious homework, and memorizing long lessons they never figure out how they are going to prepare them for the future.

The long textbooks, especially the ones designed for high school, barely leaves any time for the teachers to come up with new ideas to make school a more appealing place for the learners.

And after 12 years, the 18-year-old teenagers must prepare themselves for passing an entrance exam they have been warned off since they started school. Some are fully ready for the exam and get the best results and their parents would be proud of them and some fail to get their ideal result and either decide to study for another year for the exam or get disappointed and try to find a job which proves to be the hardest part as they don't have any skills or experience after 12 years of schooling. **→2**



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Rouhani rings back-to-school bell

SOCIETY TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani officially marked the beginning of 2017-18 school year by ringing the bell of a school in Tehran on Saturday.

Annually and prior to the opening of schools, which falls on the first day of the 7th Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 23), the president raises a question dubbed "The Mehr Question" and asks students nationwide for sending replies to him.

"Here is this year's Mehr Question: How can we turn schools into places for tolerating other people's opinions and respecting them and how to practice to prevail morality, politeness and patience?" Rouhani said. **→2**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran reiterates strong opposition to Iraqi Kurdistan referendum

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi on Friday insisted on Tehran's strong opposition against independence referendum in Iraq's Kurdistan region.

During the annual coordination meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states, held on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he said that Iran supports Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity.

President of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani tweeted on June 7 that an independence referendum is scheduled to be held on September 25.



Trump's understanding of Mideast limited to petrodollars, sword dance: diplomat

POLITICS TEHRAN — The only things U.S. President Donald Trump knows about the Middle East are "petrodollars and sword dance", Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told Etemad newspaper in an interview published on Saturday.

Answering a question about Washington's commitment to the Iran nuclear deal, Qassemi said the world realizes that today's America is not trustworthy. "Trump's America is not faithful to any international treaty or agreement."

"To him, everything, including terrorism, peace, international agreements, humanity, etc., is a product to be sold," he added.



U.S. fearful of confrontation with IRGC in Persian Gulf, commander says

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy commander on Saturday boasted his forces' military capabilities, saying even U.S. commanders fear any confrontation with the IRGC forces in the Persian Gulf.

"Their commanders and military experts have acknowledged the power and dominance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in recent years," Tasnim quoted Ali Fadaei as saying.

The rear admiral added that Donald Trump's recent anti-Tehran remarks show Washington's frustration and anger over the growing power of the Islamic Republic.



Iraq's Hakim calls for closer regional cooperation

POLITICS TEHRAN — Leader of Iraq's National Alliance Ammar al-Hakim on Saturday called on a number of Middle Eastern countries, including Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to hold talks on regional issues, ISNA reported.

"Iraq is the heart of this region and a successful Iraq will lead to the success of all regional countries," Hakim said, adding that Iraq wants to act as a bridge for closer ties between the countries of the region.

He also warned against heightened tension between Middle Eastern countries, saying cutting off relations would lead nowhere.



Military attaché: Iran's missile power serves regional stability

POLITICS TEHRAN — Colonel Ali Seify, Iran's military attaché in Azerbaijan, says Tehran's missile program is merely based on deterrence doctrine, Trend news agency reported on Saturday.

"Our military capabilities - including missile power - are merely defensive and deterrent. They do not make any threats to other countries," he said.

"Iran's missile power serves creating stability in the region," the attaché added.

Iran unveiled and successfully test-launched its latest ballistic missile dubbed Khorramshahr on Friday.



Iran seizes trespassing fishing boat

POLITICS TEHRAN — Rahim Jahanbakhsh, the coastguard commander for Iran's southern Kish Island, said on Saturday that Iran has seized a trespassing fishing boat in the Persian Gulf and detained its seven crew members.

Jahanbakhsh said the boat belonged to an Arab state of the Persian Gulf.

The vessel's crew members were fishing rare and endangered species, particularly blacktip and whitetip sharks, he remarked.

He added that Kish maritime forces have seized seven trespassing boats and arrested some 50 crew members since March.

Larijani: Trump's anti-Iran accusations 'ridiculous'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani on Saturday denounced United States President Donald Trump's recent bombast against the Islamic Republic at the United Nations.

Larijani said Trump's accusations that Iran destabilizes the region because of what he called Tehran's interventionist foreign policy are "ridiculous".

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, the U.S. president accused Iran of "supporting terrorists." He said, "The Iranian regime's support for terror is in stark contrast to the recent commitments of many of its neighbors to fight terrorism and halt its financing."

"Are you blind and can you not see that it is only Iran that is standing against Daesh in Iraq and Syria? How can Iran be supporting Daesh and terrorists on the one hand and be standing against them on the other? Does that make sense?" Larijani



asked empathically in response to Trump. Iran says it has been providing advisory military support to the militaries of Iraq and Syria in their counter-

terrorism operations on the request of the governments in Baghdad and Damascus.

Many analysts say Washington's regional allies are the ideological and financial backers of extremists in the Middle East and beyond.

Referring to U.S. officials' anti-Iran rhetoric, Larijani said, "They, themselves, know that they only talk nonsense hoping to change the world's public opinion."

That publicity stunt will, however, fail, the Iranian parliament speaker said.

"Iran has wisely chosen a path which it continues to tread," Larijani asserted.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Thursday said the educated class in America are "ashamed of their president".

President Rouhani, in his UN speech, also described Trump's remarks as "ignorant, absurd and hateful rhetoric, filled with ridiculously baseless allegations".

Trump's UN speech sign of 'weakness', 'frustration': top cleric

1→ In his speech, Trump accused Iran of engaging in "destabilizing activities" in the region. Trump claimed that Iran's "support for terror is in stark contrast to the recent commitments of many of its neighbors to fight terrorism and halt its financing."

He also said that the 2015 nuclear deal signed by Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council was an "embarrassment" and hinted that he may not recertify the agreement when it comes up for a mid-

October deadline.

Rouhani, in his UN speech, described Trump's speech as "ignorant, absurd and hateful rhetoric, filled with ridiculously baseless allegations".

He added that Trump's comments "was not only unfit to be heard at the United Nations - which was established to promote peace and respect between nations - but indeed contradicted the demands of our nations from this world body to bring governments together to combat war and terror."



What do you want to be in the future?

1→ Unfortunately, the education system, which indubitably enabled many students to notch up remarkable successes, has proved to be ineffective in providing many other students with what's necessary to guarantee a promising future, thus failed to fulfill its primary purpose which is a better future for all.

The main problem lies both in parents and education system in that none have

ever considered students as individuals with distinguishing characteristics. By failing to recognizing students' natural abilities, grading them based on what they can or cannot memorize and not teaching them any real life skills both parents and education system are only wasting 12 precious years of the youngsters who are at the best ages of optimal learning.

As it is not possible to revolutionize the

education system within a short space of time parents are definitely playing a key role in recognizing and appreciating their children's abilities and skills and improving them. Encourage them to learn a new language, a new sport, take acting lessons, learn to play a musical instrument or learn to sing.

Not everyone is supposed to be a doctor or lawyer; not everyone is able to

solve complex math problems, one can be a successful writer, editor, or musician and enjoy their lives without any regrets when they look back at those 12 years.

Try to recognize your children's abilities nurture them and allow them enhance from childhood, stop pushing your children too hard to make them hate school. There lies great energies and potentials for future success in every child.

Rouhani rings back-to-school bell

1→ Outdated education system needs reform

The education system must be reformed; Rouhani said, adding, students must have at least learnt a skill after graduating from school and it's a job for all the teachers, authors of the school textbooks, and other officials.

Commenting on outdated education system and old textbooks Rouhani lamented that "We should prepare the students for 12 years from now not even today, while the education system and textbooks educate students for yesterday."

"If we consider 12 years of schooling as 12 steps for making progress it means that after taking the final step one should demonstrate a level of ability and knowledge to find a proper job and start working," the president highlighted.

"If we take a look at student textbooks in (13)30s and (13)40s [falling on 1950s and 60s] except for some pictures and the cover the content has not changed much," Rouhani regretted.

The president noted that insisting on memorizing long textbooks instead of stimulating and facilitating innovation and helping student to broaden their skills is a great setback in the education system and what have hold students back.

"If we laugh at someone's ideas and tease them it means that we are not tolerant of others' opinion while being tolerant and respectful of others' opinion paves the way for creativity and help students to work up the courage to be creative and get encouraged."

"We must let students to ask questions and answer them patiently and if we succeed in creating such an environment at schools more skillful, creative, thoughtful, knowledgeable and interested people will be brought up," he concluded.

Iran successfully tests new 2000km-range missile

1→ "The peculiarities of this missile is that instead of carrying one warhead it can hit several targets with several warheads," Hajizadeh told reporters on the sidelines of the parade marking the start of Iraq's invasion of Iran on September 22, 1980.

"The missile is able to carry warheads up to 1,800 kilometers," Hajizadeh added.

He also said the missile is "more tactical" and smaller in comparison to other ballistic missiles developed by the Defense Ministry.



Central Bank Of Iran

INTERNATIONAL TENDER

First Announcement

No. : 96 - K/166

■ **Tender Holder:** Security Paper Mill of Central Bank of I.R.Of Iran.

■ **Tender Subject:** Purchase of 42 Spare Parts for Vacuumatic Counter Machines.

■ **Tender Deposit:** an unconditional and extendable Bank guarantee from Iranian Bank for the amount of 3,200 Euro or 150,000,000 Iranian Rials.

■ **Deadline for receiving tender documents:**

Maximum ten days after second advertisement

■ **How to get document:** Bidder can receive the tender documents by sending their written inquiry to Fax: +981143132566 or sending letter to email address Info@takab-cbi.ir or refer to national_database portal of Iran Tenders Information [http:// lets. Mporg.ir](http://lets.mporg.ir)

■ **Deadline for submitting offers:**

Maximum until dated 2017 October 06(96/08/15)

■ **Time period of financial offers:**

Maximum Three week after deadline submitting offer

■ **Validity period of financial offers:**

The offers must be valid for ninety days after 2017 October 06(96/08/15)

■ The offers no sign, conditional, altered and the offers that submit after the expiration of the period of bid submission will be considered as null and void.

■ Tender Holder reserves the rights to reject some or all of the offers.

The winner of tender must be submitting an unconditional and irrevocable performance bond guarantee equal to 10% of value of the contract.

■ All the cost of published advertisement must be paid by winner of tender

■ **Place for receiving and submitting tender documents:**

7th km Chamestan Road, Amol, Mazandaran, Iran, Security paper Mill-

Department of the commercial department building

■ **Delivery time:** 4 month after signing the contract for further information, prospective bidder may contact us via the following

Tel: +98 11 43 13 26 30 , 43 13 37 51 - Fax: +981143132588

Web site: [http:// www.takab-cbi.ir](http://www.takab-cbi.ir) - E-mail: info@takab-cbi.ir

Barzani: Kurdish region poll to occur despite opposition

The president of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region has vowed to go ahead with an independence referendum set for next week despite intense opposition by the Iraqi government and international powers.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) plans to hold the referendum on support for independence on September 25 in three governorates that make up the region, and in some disputed areas, including the oil-rich province of Kirkuk and parts of the northern province of Nineveh.

"Referendum is no longer in our hands or political parties, it is in the hands of people," KRG head Masoud Barzani said on Friday to thousands of cheering supporters who packed the Franso Hariri Stadium in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdish region.

"The same people who are threatening us have not come to ask why we are holding a referendum," Barzani said, according to a report from Kurdish news portal Rudaw.

Baghdad is vehemently opposed to the vote, which has also alarmed neighboring Turkey, which has a large Kurdish minority. Iran and Syria also worry that the vote will encourage secessionist ideas among their own Kurdish minorities.

"We are being pressured day and night to postpone the poll, but we



won't repeat the mistakes of the past," Barzani said.

"We are open to holding serious dialogue [with Baghdad] after the poll, but now it's too late to postpone the referendum," he added.

Earlier this week, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned Ankara will consider imposing sanctions on the Kurdish region of northern Iraq over the referendum, and the United States has urged Kurdish leaders to call off the vote, fearing it could inflame regional

unrest and distract attention from campaigns to rout the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit. After a late-night session by Turkey's National Security Council, Turkey's government called the plans for a vote "illegal and unacceptable."

Should the vote go ahead, Ankara said it would keep "all options" open.

"It is strongly emphasized that this attempt [Kurdish referendum] is a grave mistake which directly threatens the security of Turkey and the peace, secu-

rity and stability of the region as well as Iraq's territorial unity and territorial integrity," Turkey's National Security Council said in a statement.

But Barzani said he was unbowed. "If Washington had done to Texas what Baghdad has committed against Kurds, Texas would never go back to Washington," he said.

Barzani accused Baghdad of failing to build a partnership with the semi-autonomous region.

"Since the day Iraq was created, the Kurds have sought partnership time and time again, but they have told us to go to hell!" Barzani said.

As he was delivering his televised speech, many members of the audience waved the flag of the Kurdish region - red, white and green colors.

Barzani took advantage of the rally to push for a yes-vote for independence.

"On the 25th of September, I urge you all to go to the polling stations," he told the crowd on the final day of campaigning for the Monday referendum.

Hundreds of Iraqis rallied on Friday in Nineveh in protest at the referendum.

The demonstrators waved the national Iraqi flag and carried placards backing the country's territorial integrity.

(Source: agencies)

International journalists, activists urge UN to stop 'Muslim holocaust' in Myanmar

A group of international journalists and activists have called on the United Nations to put an end to the "Muslim holocaust" in Myanmar, warning that the "worst bloodshed" after the World War II looms ahead as a result of the ongoing atrocities against the Rohingya Muslim minority group.

"Hereby, we, as the international journalists, photographers and media activists condemn in the strongest terms the Muslims' holocaust in Myanmar, and call for an emergency meeting of the UN Human Rights Council on this issue, before the world faces the worst bloodshed after the WWII," the journalists said in an open letter to the UN Human Rights Council.

The letter expressed deep concern over the murder and displacement of thousands of Muslims in Myanmar who are deprived of their citizenship rights and forced out of their homes while their farms and cottages are burnt. The journalists warned that while the international community, including the United States and European Union, have imposed an arms embargo against the government in Myanmar, Israel is "the main arm supplier of Myanmar and continues to arm Burma military amid ongoing violence against Rohingya Muslims."

"It is noteworthy that all these crimes are happening

before the Myanmar's Nobel Peace Prize winning Aung San Suu Kyi, who not only refrains from condemning these crimes against humanity, but also claimed that the situation is being twisted by a 'huge iceberg of misinformation'," the letter pointed out.

Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine state have been subject to systematic persecution and violence at the hands of the military and Buddhist mobs for decades.

The minority group has been facing an escalated campaign of horrific violence since late last year, when the military laid siege to Rakhine. There have been widespread reports and eyewitness accounts of killings, raping, indiscriminate shootings at fleeing civilians, and the burning down of houses.

The Myanmar government claims it is fighting militants in the area, but the UN says the situation is better described as the "ethnic cleansing" of the Rohingya Muslims, whom the government refuses to recognize as citizens despite the fact that the 1.1-million-strong population has been living in the country for generations.

Over the past month, nearly 430,000 Rohingya have fled from the brutal army-led crackdown across the border in Rakhine. The recent exodus of Rohingya has brought the

number of refugees from Rakhine living in Bangladesh to over 800,000.

Bangladesh state officials said on Saturday that the influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh has come to a virtual halt. The officials gave no reason for the dramatically reduced numbers.

However, Rohingya Muslim leaders said the influx of refugees has stopped probably because villages located near the border in Myanmar's Rakhine state are now empty. According to Human Right Watch, new satellite images show that 99 percent of the villages in Rakhine have been destroyed.

On Friday, Amnesty International said Myanmar's military and vigilante Buddhist mobs continue to set fire to Rohingya Muslim villages in Rakhine, despite the claims by Suu Kyi that army operations have ended there.

The government forces in Myanmar do not even spare the fleeing Rohingya refugees. Recent reports by Amnesty International and Bangladeshi officials say the military plants landmines on the path of those trying to cross into Bangladesh, causing them to sustain serious wounds or lose their limbs.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. training mission in Afghanistan failure from onset: SIGAR

An American government watchdog has found several serious flaws in the fifteen-year old United States training mission in Afghanistan that has ultimately designed a force unable to provide security in the Asian country.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) issued a 283-page report, which concluded that the mission was a failure from the onset.

The report outlined several key problems with the Pentagon mission, which was plagued by a failure to understand the full "complexities and scale of the mission."

The SIGAR report explained that Washington has failed to help Afghanistan in building proper security forces that could protect the country from "internal and external threats and prevent the country from becoming a terrorist safe haven."

"Providing advanced Western weapons and management systems to a largely illiterate and uneducated force without appropriate training and institutional infrastructure created long-term dependencies, required increased U.S. fiscal support, and extended sustainability timelines," it added.

Among other key problems listed in the report was that U.S. authorities had no initial plans to construct any security institutions.



The establishment of the national army and police was "ultimately undermined" by "partnerships with independent militias," it found.

The SIGAR report further said that American and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) instructors sent to the Afghanistan were themselves under-trained and undermanned. SIGAR inspector general John Sopko said that one U.S. officer watched TV shows "to learn what he should teach."

At one point, according to the report, training for police officials used Power

Point slides from U.S. and NATO operations in the Balkans.

"Such cut-and-paste activities, lifted from one country and slapped onto another like a decal, are not likely to boost the prospects for overall success," Sopko said.

"In eastern Afghanistan, we met a U.S. Army helicopter pilot assigned to teach policing," he said.

More than 100,000 Afghan police were trained by U.S. Army pilots, infantry officers, and civilian contractors, according to the report.

The mission, which still continue, has cost the U.S. some \$70 billion since 2002, according to SIGAR, which said Washington is still spending more than \$4 billion a year.

The report, however, warned that tens of billions of dollars could be wasted unless changes are made in the training of local security forces.

The U.S. started sending its troops to Afghanistan about 16 years ago to defeat the Taliban terrorists. The combat operations against the Taliban officially ended in 2014, but more than 8,000 U.S. Special Forces still remain in the country.

The U.S. President Donald Trump, who repeatedly called for the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan during the administration of former president Barack Obama, modified his stance during his 2016 presidential campaign.

Last month, he even decided to send more than 3,000 extra troops to the country.

Sixteen years after the U.S.-led invasion in to the country, which ousted the Taliban terrorist group, security is still deteriorating. While the Afghan government only controls half of the country, the Taliban has made significant gains and is said to control more territory now than at any other time.

(Source: Press TV)

Ex-Muslim Brotherhood Leader Mahdi Akef dies at 89

The former leader of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Mahdi Akef, has died in a Cairo hospital aged 89.

Akef, who headed the Brotherhood as the group's so-called "supreme guide" from 2004 to 2010, was diagnosed with cancer last year.

"My Father is in God's hands," his daughter, Alia, wrote on her Facebook page on Friday.

Akef was among hundreds of Brotherhood figures arrested in a heavy crackdown launched against the political organization following the military's 2013 overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi, a member of the group

and Egypt's first democratically elected president.

He was initially convicted on violence-related charges and was sentenced to life imprisonment. The verdict was overturned on appeal, and he was facing a retrial.

His family had recently launched an online campaign to demand his release for health reasons.

Akef was born on July 12, 1928, the same year the Muslim Brotherhood was founded.

He became aware of the organization's teachings in his early teenage years and joined the Brotherhood in 1940.

A failed assassination attempt on Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954 led to a wide-scale clampdown on the Brotherhood. Akef was imprisoned from 1954 until 1974.

For a large part of Hosni Mubarak's 40 years in power, which ended when he was overthrown as Egypt's president in the 2011 uprising, Akef was his main rival.

In 2005, under Akef's leadership, the Brotherhood won 20 percent of the seats in Egypt's parliamentary elections.

(Source: agencies)

Nuclear watchdog: North Korea tremors unlikely man-made



Nuclear proliferation watchdog CTBTO has said that the two seismic events detected in North Korea on Saturday were probably not deliberate explosions.

CTBTO said Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo said in a Twitter post that the group detected two seismic events on Saturday. He added that they were still analyzing the tremors, but they were "unlikely man-made".

Earlier on Saturday, China's earthquake administration said it had detected a magnitude 3.4 earthquake in North Korea, calling it a "suspected explosion".

The administration said in a statement on its website that the earthquake occurred around 08:30 GMT.

South Korea's weather agency said it was analyzing the nature of the quake, but its initial view was that it was a natural earthquake.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted a weather agency official who said that "a sound wave, which is usually generated in the event of an artificial earthquake, was not detected".

Previous quakes from North Korea have indicated nuclear tests by the state, the most recent earlier this month. Saturday's tremor was centered near North Korea's nuclear test site.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) said it had detected a magnitude 3.5 earthquake in the area of the previous North Korean nuclear tests, but it was unable to confirm whether the event was natural.

North Korea's weakest nuclear test, its first one, conducted in 2006, generated a magnitude 4.3 tremor.

According to USGS, this month's nuclear test generated a magnitude 6.3 earthquake.

(Source: agencies)

Russia tells U.S., N. Korea 'hot heads' to calm down



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has urged "hot heads" to calm down, calling an escalating war of words between the United States President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong-un "a kindergarten fight".

Trump called the North Korean leader a "madman" on Friday, a day after Kim dubbed him a "mentally deranged U.S. dotard" who would face the "highest level of hardline countermeasure in history" in retaliation for the U.S. president saying Washington would "totally destroy" North Korea if it threatened the U.S. or its allies.

"We have to calm down the hot heads," Lavrov told reporters at the United Nations on Friday, where world leaders gathered this week for the body's annual General Assembly.

"We continue to strive for the reasonable and not the emotional approach ... of the kindergarten fight between children."

North Korea's six nuclear tests to date have all been underground, and experts say an atmospheric test, which would be the first since one by China in 1980, would be proof of the success of its weapons program.

North Korea, a country of 26 million people, says it needs a strong nuclear deterrent to protect it from the U.S., and its government has made militarism a central part of its national ideology.

On Tuesday, Trump said in his first address to the United Nations that he would "totally destroy" North Korea if it threatened the U.S. and its allies, and called Kim a "rocket man" on a "suicide mission".

In a rare statement directly attributed to North Korea's Leader, Kim said Trump is "unfit to hold the prerogative of supreme command of a country".

He described the U.S. president as "a rogue and a gangster fond of playing with fire".

Trump on Friday tweeted: "Kim Jong-un of North Korea, who is obviously a madman who doesn't mind starving or killing his people, will be tested like never before".

The White House said on Friday that Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in had agreed to Seoul's "acquisition and development of highly advanced military assets" and to increased deployment of U.S. strategic assets in and around South Korea on a rotational basis. It did not name specific weapons systems.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Exclusive exhibition of Iranian goods kicks off in Yerevan

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — An exclusive exhibition of Iranian goods and services kicked off in Armenia's capital city on September 22, IRNA reported.

Some 50 Iranian private companies active in various areas are showcasing their products in the four-day exhibition on the way to expand trade ties with their Armenian counterparts.

Managing Director of Islamic Republic of Iran's International Exhibitions Company Hossein Esfahbodi and Armenian Minister of Economic Development and Investments Suren Karayan reportedly attended the opening ceremony.

Fitch upgrades Russia's issuer default ratings outlook to positive

Fitch upgraded Russia's long-term foreign and local currency issuer default ratings from stable to positive, citing progress in strengthening the country's policy framework, the global rating agency said in a statement on Friday.

"Fitch Ratings has revised the outlook on Russia's Long-Term Foreign- and Local-Currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) to Positive from Stable and affirmed the IDRs at 'BBB-,'" the statement said.

Russia's progress in strengthening its policy framework is underpinned by a more flexible exchange rate and a strong commitment to inflation targeting, Fitch said.

The rating agency added that Russia's recently approved budget rule reflects the country's commitment to fiscal prudence. "This policy mix will result in improved macroeconomic stability and, together with robust external and fiscal balance sheets, increases the economy's resilience to shocks," Fitch said.

Fitch cited some inflationary risks stemming from exchange rate volatility, domestic demand recovery and food price shocks.

Inflation is expected to average at 4.5 percent in 2018-2019, an unprecedented low for Russia, Fitch added.

Earlier, Standard & Poor's credit rating agency placed Russian sovereign debt rating on the borderline between "junk" and investment-grade status, affirming it at BB+/BBB-.

(Source: Sputnik)

Euro zone businesses end the third quarter on a high note

Euro zone private businesses ended the third quarter with much stronger growth than predicted, bolstered by manufacturers, who had their best month since early 2011, a survey showed.

That growth, alongside rising inflationary pressures, is likely to increase expectations the European Central Bank will announce plans next month to reduce its monthly spending on quantitative easing.

IHS Markit's euro zone Flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index for September, seen as a good guide to economic growth, bounced to 56.7 from August's 55.7, comfortably above the 50 level that separates growth from contraction.

September's reading was above all expectations in a Reuters poll, which had forecast a dip to 55.5.

"It was a super manufacturing performance. We are well-placed for a strong fourth quarter as well ... in this broad-based upswing," said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit.

Williamson said the PMI pointed to third-quarter growth of 0.7 percent, faster than the median forecast in a Reuters poll last week for 0.5 percent.

The upturn came despite businesses increasing prices at one of the fastest rates this year. The output price index rose to 52.6 from 52.1.

A PMI covering manufacturers soared to 58.2 from 57.4, confounding expectations for a fall to 57.1 and chalking up its highest reading since February 2011. An index measuring output rose to a 6 1/2-year high of 59.5 from 58.3.

Suggesting the solid pace would be maintained next month, factories built up a surplus of orders at the steepest rate in the sub-index's 15-year history. The backlogs of work index was 57.8, compared with August's 57.1.

(Source: Reuters)

Greece to stay on supervision post bailout, Eurogroup chief tells paper

Greece will remain under supervision after it exits its current bailout program next year, the head of the group of euro zone finance ministers told a Greek newspaper on Saturday.

Greece aims to exit its 86-billion-euro (£76.1 billion) bailout, its third since its debt crisis exploded in 2010, in August next year. By then, Athens hopes to have fully returned to market financing.

"In all cases we have applied supervision after the completion of support programs, as happened in Ireland, Spain, Cyprus," Jeroen Dijsselbloem told Ta Nea newspaper.

"We will have a supervision program for Greece as well, especially when there are outstanding loans with long maturities," he was quoted as saying.

Dijsselbloem is expected in Athens on Monday to meet Greek officials, including Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos.

Tsakalotos has said he does not expect Greece to need a precautionary credit line from its official lenders when it exits its bailout next year.

"The common goal of the Greek government and its European partners must be that August 2018 will be the end of the (bailout) program. We must ensure that Greece will be fully prepared," Dijsselbloem told the paper.

He said Greece's economy is faring better after a deep, multi-year recession but reforms should continue for the remainder of the bailout program and after August 2018. (Source: Reuters)

'Iran able to attract \$3.5t of investments in 20 years'

1 → Iran has decided to shift away from an oil-reliant economy to one that depends on other sources of revenue, including taxation as well as domestic and foreign investment to attain the goal of eight percent economic growth set by the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

As previously reported, the government plans to attract \$65 billion of foreign investment by March 2021, of which \$30 billion is about to come in finance, \$20 billion in economic partnership and \$15 billion in direct investment.

To hit the set target, great opportunities and special incentives have been created in Iran to attract foreign investors, for instance, foreigners are presently capable of making investments in projects up to 100 percent.

Simultaneously, according to Seif's Friday remarks, under the aegis of JCPOA, Iran could take significant steps to tighten its international financial relation such as initiating brokerage relations and signing finance agreements with some international banks. However, as he further explained, in a bid to optimize exploitation of its capacities as a 80-million-people country, Iran needs to improve its financial relations with the countries in the region and also OIC countries more that the current time to ease attraction of foreign investments, investments which will initially lead to



creating jobs for its young workforce and then in economic growth.

As a matter of fact, the major factor in attraction of investors, both foreign and domestic, in a country is the predictability and stability of its economic and political conditions besides legal and financial transparency. Investors should feel safe about making their investments. In post-sanction era, the Iranian government has tried to improve

business environment to smooth foreign investor's presence in Iran, Seif assured listeners on Friday.

The taken measures by the Iranian government have borne fruit to some extent. The country could endorse investment agreements in various economic sectors with international companies and has also been successful in securing credit lines for different projects in its mainland during the past 21

Iranian crude exports to Russia to commence shortly: Novak

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Friday that deal parameters for deliveries of Iranian oil to Russia under the "oil-for-goods" program have been finalized and the process can start shortly.

According to a report by Tass, the exchange is going to take place via Promsyrimport affiliate of the Russian Energy Ministry.

Earlier in February, Iran had announced signing an agreement with Russia to export 100,000 barrels of crude oil

per day to the country in the form of an oil-for-goods program.

According to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, 50 percent of the oil payment will be in cash and the other 50 percent will be in the form of products and services.



Iran's condensate exports to ease in October: source

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian exports of gas condensate are expected to fall to a five-month low in October, Reuters reported citing a source with knowledge of Iran's preliminary tanker schedule.

That comes after Reuters reported earlier this month that the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) plans to cut condensate exports to Asia due to maintenance at the South Pars gas field [shared with Qatar in the Persian Gulf].

According to the report, Iranian condensate exports to South Korea will fall by half from the month before to about

153,000 barrels per day (bpd) in October.

Supply cuts to South Korea are expected to continue in November, a second source with knowledge of the matter said.

Iran plans to load about 295,000 bpd of condensate for exports in October, down 31 percent from an estimated 429,000 bpd this month, said the source, who declined to be identified as he was not authorized to speak to media.

The expected drop in Iranian supplies has already boosted premiums for similar oil from Qatar to the highest in

10 months, while driving up prices for condensate produced in the Asia-Pacific such as Malaysia's Muda.

South Korean buyers SK Energy, Hyundai Oilbank and Hanwha Total Petrochemical were notified about the supply cuts early and have since found replacements, people familiar with the matter said.

"We are monitoring the situation to check how long this will last," said Kim Woo-kyung, a spokeswoman at SK Innovation, owner of South Korea's top refiner SK Energy.

Meanwhile, other regular buyers,

the United Arab Emirates and Japan, are expected to lift about 110,000 bpd and 14,000 bpd in October respectively, steady from the previous month.

China will resume Iranian condensate imports in October, after a two-month halt, loading about 17,000 bpd, the first source added.

Shipments of the ultra-light oil from Iran have eased since reaching a post-sanctions high of 601,000 bpd in February this year, more than double the level from January 2016 when Western sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program were lifted.

As they unwind QE, central banks must come clean about inflation

By Alan Beattie

The U.S. Federal Reserve this week did what central banks like doing best: the expected. In one of the most elaborately pre-signaled moves in recent history, the U.S. central bank announced it would start to scale back quantitative easing, the program of direct purchases of financial assets it adopted during the global financial crisis.

With the European Central Bank now actively talking about moderating its own QE program, and one Bank of England policymaker musing about similar, the long-forecast "great unwinding" of the crisis-related radical monetary policy measures is finally under way. But what remains peculiar is that those same central banks seem intent on denying the extent to which the normal has changed, even if the extraordinary has dissipated.

More noteworthy this week than the removal of QE was the Fed simultaneously revising down its forecast for inflation and reiterating its intention to raise interest rates later in the year. Last week the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee said it too expected to raise the cost of borrowing in the coming months. This despite persistent and inexplicably low inflation in the U.S. and weakness in the UK economy, where domestically-generated price rises remain small.

The U.S. and UK central banks both claim to be making decisions driven by the data. But rather than exercising judicial impartiality in the case for tighter policy, they seem to be acting more like trial lawyers, weaving together whatever strands of evidence they can find to fashion a case for a rise.

The world did not just suffer an extraordinary temporary shock in the form



BoE governor Mark Carney, Fed chair Janet Yellen and ECB president Mario Draghi. Central banks need to explain their reasons for unwinding quantitative easy, even if that means admitting their macroprudential tools do not work © AFP

of the crisis that began in 2008. Economies around the globe also appear to have shifted to a new and unwelcome state of lower trend growth and lower equilibrium long-term interest rates — a development that probably predated the crisis.

Yet the Fed has tightened policy and the BoE is now prefiguring a rise. Neither can point at serious signs of inflationary pressure in either prices or wages. Both are working on the idea that traditional relationships between inflation and measures such as growth and employment are still sufficiently predictable to base monetary policy on them.

In the Fed's case, it has already raised interest four times since December 2015, a cumulative increase of a percentage point, with two rises already this year. It is clearly signaling another increase in December. This is beginning to look rather

like the Fed has returned to its traditional cyclical mode of a long series of interest rate changes in one direction, rather than each move being as likely down as up.

This will only be worsened if, as rumored, the former Fed governor Kevin Warsh replaces Janet Yellen when her term as Fed chair comes up next year. Warsh, who served at the Fed between 2006-2011, was a notorious worrywart about the possibility of inflation re-emerging, a threat that spectacularly failed to materialize.

As for the BoE's warnings about rate rises in the near future, it has been here several times before and looked somewhat foolish each time. In 2013 the MPC gave unusually precise "forward guidance" that it would not raise interest rates until the unemployment rate had dropped below 7 per cent, a pledge it scrapped six months later as too inflex-

ible. In 2014 Mark Carney, the bank's governor, said a rise in the bank rate could come "sooner than markets currently expect"; in 2015 he said the decision on raising rates would "likely come into sharper relief" at the end of the year. Nonetheless, rates remained resolutely on hold before the Brexit-related cut in 2016.

As a Labor MP sardonically put it in 2014, the BoE has acted like an "unreliable boyfriend". Its new idea of remedying this situation seems to be committing itself to getting married, or at least co-habiting, even though the relationship is manifestly not ready for it.

To be fair, there is one decent argument for higher rates, and that is to restrain credit growth. But that runs at a tangent to central banks' inflation-targeting mandate. Short-term interest rates are a very blunt instrument with which to go after excessive credit growth or asset price bubbles.

If central banks have decided to focus on an outcome other than inflation, they should say so. If this means admitting that their macro-prudential tools for control of credit and growth essentially do not work, so be it. Credibility and transparency do not come from clandestinely trying to achieve contradictory goals with one tool.

By being prepared to embrace the radical in the face of ill-informed criticism from politicians, investors and commentators — and from dissent in their own ranks — central banks have achieved extraordinary things since the global financial crisis. It would be most peculiar if now, when the pressure on them has abated, they mistakenly returned to a model of monetary policy rooted in the pre-crisis era. (Source: Financial Times)

OPEC says winning battle to end oil glut

OPEC and other oil producers are clearing a glut that has weighed on crude prices for three years and may wait until January before deciding whether to extend their output curbs beyond the first quarter of 2018, ministers said on Friday.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and several other producers have cut production by about 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) since the start of 2017, helping lift oil prices by 15 percent in the past three months.

OPEC and its allies have been considering extending the deal beyond the end of March when it is due to expire.

Russia's energy minister said no decision was expected before January, although other ministers suggested such a decision could be taken before the end of this year.

"I think we can return to this issue not earlier than January next year," Russia's Alexander Novak said when asked about a timeline for any decision on extending the pact to curb supplies.

Speaking after Friday's meeting of oil ministers in Vienna, he also said OPEC and the other producers needed to continue working closely together well into 2018.

"We need not only to keep up the pace but continue our coordinated joint actions in full, but also work out a strategy for the future, to which we will stick starting from April 2018," he said, adding oil demand was rising at a "high pace".

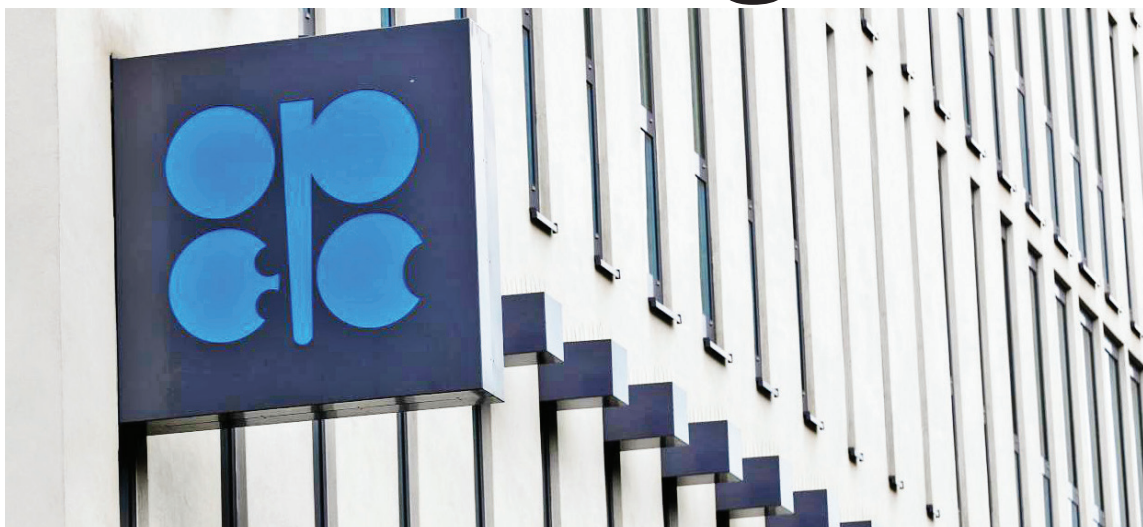
Other ministers said a decision on extending cuts could be taken in November when OPEC holds its next formal meeting.

"In November, we're going to take decisions," Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino told reporters, adding the group was "evaluating all the options" including an extension to the pact.

Benchmark Brent crude is now trading at more than \$56 a barrel, although it is still half the level it was in mid-2014.

■ Market rebalancing

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam al-Marzouq, who chaired



Friday's meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee, said supply cuts were helping cut global crude inventories to their five-year average, OPEC's stated target.

"Since our last meeting in July, the oil market has markedly improved," Marzouq said as he opened the Vienna gathering. "The market is now evidently well on its way toward rebalancing."

He said there were a "number of positives" in the market, including stock levels in industrialized OECD states in August that were 170 million barrels above the five-year average, down from 340 million barrels in January.

He also said oil in floating storage was falling and cited a shift of benchmark Brent prices into backwardation, a market condition in which it is more attractive to sell oil immediately rather than keeping it stored. This indicates tighter supplies.

The Kuwaiti minister also said the ministerial monitoring group would continue watching production data, but

would also propose a review of export data as well.

OPEC officials have said exports have a more direct impact on the international supply than production.

The supply pact sets production limits for participating OPEC and non-OPEC states but puts no restrictions on export levels, so some producers have been able to keep exports relatively high by dipping into their stored reserves.

In addition, rising crude prices have encouraged U.S. shale oil producers to ramp up output, a further reason why the drawdown on global inventories has taken longer than expected.

Ministers from Libya and Nigeria, both OPEC members but exempted from supply curbs as their oil industries recover from years of unrest, were invited to Friday's meeting.

The Kuwaiti minister said the two nations would contribute to supply cut deal once their production stabilizes.

(Source: Reuters)

China's recoverable shale gas reserves fell by 6% in 2016

China's technologically recoverable shale gas reserves dropped by 6 percent in 2016, the country's Ministry of Land and Resources said on Saturday, with no new finds of the unconventional resource recorded last year.

Reserves stood at 122.41 billion cubic meters at the end of 2016, down from 130.18 Bcm a year earlier, according to a re-

port released by the ministry.

Shale gas was the only one of 22 major minerals listed to add zero newly discovered reserves in 2016, although potash was assigned a negative figure, indicating that some previous reserves were written off.

The numbers suggest China's efforts to replicate the North American shale gas re-

volution and reduce a hefty reliance on energy imports are running out of steam.

Almost all of the country's shale output comes from Sinopec's Fuling project near Chongqing. Sinopec said in March it plans to boost Fuling's annual production capacity to 10 Bcm from 7 Bcm.

There was better news for coalbed meth-

ane, however, with remaining technological recoverable reserves jumping by 9.2 percent to 334.4 Bcm.

Conventional gas reserves were also up, by 4.7 percent to 5.44 trillion cubic meters, while oil reserves nudged up 0.1 percent to 3.501 billion tonnes (25.66 billion barrels), the ministry said.

(Source: Reuters)

Director General of Qazvin Province Economic Affairs and Finance Directorate General:

Qazvin Province Stands at 1st Rank in Attraction of Foreign Investment

Qazvin Province stood at the first rank in the country in terms of attraction of foreign investment in 2016.

Seyyed Mohammad-Ali Ghassemi Director General of Qazvin Province Economic Affairs and Finance Directorate General announced the above statement and said: "Giant steps have been taken in the country in the field of attraction of foreign investment."

Speaking on the occasion of Government Week, he said: "Over the past year, more than 30 consultation meetings were held in the presence of domestic and foreign investors and also representatives of executive organizations."

The department general will make its utmost efforts in the current year to materialize objectives of resistance economy as reiterated by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, he emphasized.

Officials and managers of the executive organizations made their utmost efforts in order to settle problems facing the noble people of this land and territory, he stated.

Security of investment and cultural concept is considered as the most important issue relating to investment that should be taken into consideration, he said.

Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, this province will be expected bright future ahead, he emphasized.

"Approx. \$1.503 million worth of investment made in this province since 1993 up to the current Iranian month of Mordad (August 22) he announced and He went on to say that \$401,368,000 foreign investment . (FDI) has been approved in this province within the framework of seven projects. He put the foreign investment rate invested in this



province in the first five months of the current year (from March 21 to August 22) for three projects at \$457,987,000 from the countries including Germany, Austria, Iranians residing in Canada and United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He also put the income rate approved in this province in the current Iranian calendar year in 2017 (started March 21, 2017) at 1,369 billion toman, showing a considerable nine percent hike as compared to the same period of last year.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the director general put the income rate approved in this province in the last Iranian calendar year in 2016 (ended March 19, 2017) at 1,252 billion toman.

The credit rate of wages and fringe benefits in this province in the last Iranian calendar year in 2016 (ended March 19, 2017) stood at 94 billion toman while the rate of provincial development credits in the same year reached to 115 billion toman.

■ Justice Shares for Over 61% of People in Qazvin Province

More than 61 percent (61%) of total

population of Qazvin Province are subject to receive justice shares, the director general ended.

The Economic Deputy of Qazvin Province Economic Affairs and Finance Directorate General Fahimeh Lezgi was the next speaker who said: "According to statistics, 765,513 people of this province are subject to receive justice shares who account for 61 percent of total population of this province."

Financial Supervision Deputy of the Directorate general and Head of Qazvin Province Treasury Department Farzin Behnamifar was the last speaker who pointed to launching SAMAD System in this province and said: "With the coordination made in this regard, information of debts and claims of executive organizations of the province will be registered in SAMAD System."


Eighty nine billion toman of credits has been allocated by the provincial Treasury Department in order to pay the debt of executive organizations, he said, adding: "4,717 counts of properties and real estates have been identified and registered in Qazvin Province."

By: A.Saeedi


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Second Announcement



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National Iranian Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First publish/Seconed Publish)						
Two-Stage(compressed)						
TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	DESCRIPTION	Tenders Portal Reg. No.on http://iets.mp.org.ir	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
168, 360	6,640,000,000	266,000,000,000	DOWNHOLE MOTORS	1/501/285	Indent No.: 43-22-9604748001 Tender No.: CGP/25-96/007	1

Brief discription of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Sqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through Two-stage public tender (semi-pressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (j) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documents. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.

Receiving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum 10 days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Sector Tenders, Foreign Procurement of Capital Goods dept., end of the workshop No. 8, Karoon Industrial Area, Ahwaz, IRAN.
Tel No.: 061-34142387

Notices:
1- Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date will be known as tenderer from tender committee.
2- The capacity of referrals in the field of supply tenders, according to the National Iranian Drilling Company Technical Committee, is equal to 4 current and active contracts.

C) Delivery of call quality evaluating :
Tenderers shall submit the completed documents including qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD/DVD and documentary within 14 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1th floor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel No.: 061-34148205~6

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A) Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranain Drilling Company.
Duration of credit guarantee:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR

Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۷/۱ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۷/۲

Why the Catalans should be free to vote to leave Spain

By Jennifer Maffessanti

In the past three years, we've seen two separate votes for the independence of one nation from another political body.

First, in 2014, was the vote for Scottish independence from Great Britain, which failed to pass. Then, in 2016, came Brexit where Great Britain voted to withdraw from the European Union.

We might yet see a third vote for independence on October 1 of this year.

Well, maybe.



Catalonia is a province in northeast Spain that has, historically, been its own principality and alternately conquered and claimed by both France and Spain. Despite efforts to eradicate it, it has its own language. It has its own national identity. It has its own government officials. According to the most recent Spanish constitution, it has a certain level of autonomy from the Spanish government. And now it wants it to be free.

Perhaps "now" is a bit misleading. Catalonia has been chafing under Spanish rule for a long time, and the political independence movement formally began in 1922. The movement quickly gained a lot of ground and even got so far as political autonomy within the Spanish state before the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 and the dictator General Francisco Franco promptly abolished that autonomy in 1939.

The modern Catalan independence movement began in 2006 with Catalonia regaining renewed autonomy within the Spanish state. Since then, many high-profile Catalan officials have been pushing for independent statehood, and several symbolic referendums have been held on the topic, all of them returning strongly in favor of yes.

Because of this strong support, the province of Catalonia has scheduled a formal referendum on independence for October 1 of this year. And the Spanish government is not happy about it.

■ Spain responds

Spain has declared the referendum to be illegal. On Wednesday, September 20, Spanish Guardia Civil officers raided a dozen Catalan government offices and arrested 14 pro-independence officials. Also on Wednesday, the Spanish interior minister announced the cancellation of all leave for members of the Guardia Civil and national police who were tasked with preventing the referendum.

In an interview with Bloomberg, Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis said, "These people actually are taking some Nazi attitudes because they are putting up posters with the faces of mayors who are resisting their call to participate in this charade."

He went on to say, "A referendum isn't the same as a democracy. Gen Franco organized two referendums."

I confess to a certain amount of bemusement that calling people you disagree with Nazis is not a strictly American tactic, but I must disagree with Sr. Dastis. A referendum is exactly the same as democracy. My doubts about majority-rule governance aside, the people of Catalonia are trying to decide whether or not they want to be an independent state, peacefully, and Spain is interfering with the making of that decision. That is anti-democratic, not the referendum itself.

■ A disaster in the making

I understand why Spain would want to keep Catalonia. It's highly industrialized and, despite its relatively small size, has the highest GDP of any of the Spanish provinces. I can see why they wouldn't want to let that go, especially considering how much the Spanish economy is struggling. But criminalizing self-determination is not the way to keep ahold of Catalonia.

A referendum on Catalan independence isn't even a guarantee of secession from Spain. Polls from two months ago showed 49.4 percent of Catalans were against independence. That said, the more tyrannical and oppressive the Spanish government behaves with the Catalans, the more likely they are to seek their independence from them.

Spain's actions have already led to violent protests in Barcelona, Catalonia's capital city. Carles Puigdemont, Catalonia's president, has called the crackdown a violation of human rights. Members of the Italian government have condemned the actions of Spain.

Indeed, this whole situation seems to be slipping entirely out of the Spanish government's control. The result of all of this remains to be seen. I'll be closely watching the situation to see how it all plays out.

A free and independent Catalonia would illustrate the point: it is possible for a territory to peacefully acquire independence and stay commercially integrated into the world economy. These bullying tactics by Spain are only pushing more and more Catalans toward wanting for independence.

Spain should take a lesson from Great Britain and let the Catalans have their referendum. The result might be surprising, and, even if it isn't, people should be allowed to choose how they are governed.

(Source: Newsweek)

Trump, Bibi disgraced themselves with ‘deplorable lies’ at UN: U.S. pundit

TEHRAN(Tasnim) — A senior political analyst from the U.S. State of Illinois described the Zionist regime of Israel and U.S. as the "real axis of evil", noting that both U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu disgraced themselves with "deplorable lies" against Iran at the UN.

"America and Israel are a real axis of evil, threatening humanity's survival by their rogue agendas, partnering in each other's high crimes," Chicago-based Stephen Lendman said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

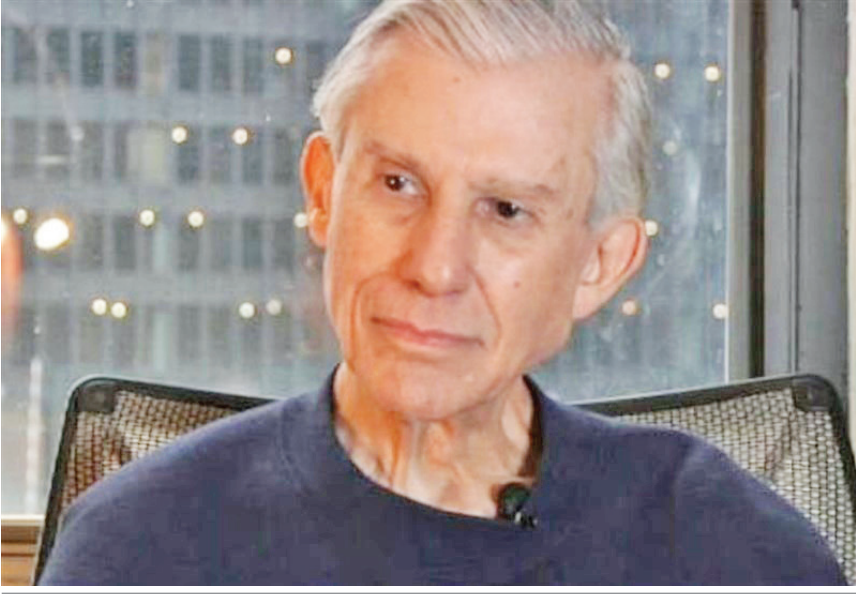
Stephen Lendman is a writer, syndicated columnist, activist, News TV personality, and radio show host. He currently writes for MoneyNewsNow.com and VeteransToday.com and hosts, since 2007, a progressive radio show at The Progressive Radio News Hour on The Progressive Radio Network.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ In his address the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. President Donald Trump accused the Iranian government of exporting "violence, bloodshed and chaos." "Iran must stop supporting terrorists, begin serving its own people and respect the sovereign rights of its neighbors." What do you think? Is it Iran that is exporting violence or is it the U.S.?

A: Trump and especially Netanyahu disgraced themselves commenting on Iran - deplorable lies, ignoring hard truths, revealing their rogue leadership to the whole world.

I wrote 3 articles on Trump's address,



America and Israel are a real axis of evil, threatening humanity's survival by their rogue agendas, partnering in each other's high crimes.

one yesterday [Monday] before he delivered it suggesting what's he say, 2 more today [Friday] and another on Netanyahu's demagoguery.

Iran is polar opposite America and Israel, supporting world peace and stability, wanting mutual cooperation among all nations.

America and Israel are a real axis of evil, threatening humanity's survival by their rogue agendas, partnering in each other's high crimes.

■ Elsewhere in his address, he said that the internationally-negotiated nuclear agreement with Iran is an "embarrassment" to the United States, raising question whether he intends to stay in the 2015 accord. Experts believe that Trump is just bluffing. Do you believe so?

A: I know Trump wants the Iran nuclear deal abolished. The other P5+1 countries support it, publicly against his aim. The IAEA said multiple times Iran fully

complies with JCPOA terms.

America alone breaches them, including by imposing illegal sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities.

I don't know what Trump will do. My best guess is he may try to invent a phony Iranian JCPOA violation, like refusing to allow inspections of its military bases, something most countries won't permit, then use it as a pretext to rescind U.S. involvement, falsely claiming Iran is at fault.

This is the underhanded way America operates, why it can never be trusted.

■ Trump also warned that he would "totally destroy" North Korea if the country threatened the United States or its allies. "The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea," he said. What do you think?

A: I doubt Trump will attack North Korea but it's possible. He knows China earlier said if this happens, it'll defend the DPRK.

For now, his UN comments appear to be bluster. North Korea threatens no one. It'll well known but not admitted publicly the way I do all the time.

I deplore nuclear weapons but defend the DPRK's right to defend itself against feared U.S. aggression.

■ Israeli PM Netanyahu praised Trump for most "courageous" UN speech in the past 30 years? What is your take on this?

A: Netanyahu disgraced himself praising Trump's address. The ones they both delivered were abominations.

The Kurdish referendum: A fair question

If not now, when? This is the obvious and reasonable question of Iraqi Kurds seeking to exercise the right to self-determination – enshrined by the UN charter, though often ignored – in a referendum on Monday. They already enjoy a high degree of autonomy. They believe their key role in the fight against Islamic State (ISIS) demands recognition, giving them leverage over western powers; and that the alternative is continued, subordinate membership of a broken and divided Iraq, a century after the Sykes-Picot carve-up.

The response has been overwhelmingly negative. The rest of Iraq, the U.S., Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the UK, the EU and the Arab League all oppose the vote thanks to concerns ranging from Kurdish secessionism within their own borders and the furthering of ethnic divisions to the immense dangers it poses in a perilously unstable region – particularly given that voting covers the disputed territories the Kurds have gained in the fight against ISIS. The U.S. and others want the vote postponed, understandably. But "later" is almost as unsatisfactory an answer as



The vote by Iraqi Kurds on their desire for independence, due to take place on Monday, poses real risks in an unstable region. But their case deserves to be heard.

"never" to Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani and his supporters – and that too is understandable.

The referendum is "not the end itself", Mr Barzani told the Guardian: the near-certain victory will declare the desire for independence. There is room for negotiation. But Erbil will not go back to the table with a Baghdad that has no incentive to compromise, armed only with vague expressions of international goodwill. The Kurds want a UN-mandated solution, with a clear agenda, putting them on a path to their end goal through measures such as an enforceable deal on sharing oil revenues – as agreed but not maintained after the Iraq war. And their arguments have merit.

The vote has strengthened Mr Barzani's position among his people; how much it will achieve for them is less clear. But denying their dream will come at a cost, too. There is still a little room and time for maneuver. It should be used, and with the utmost care.

(Source: The Guardian)

What would a hydrogen bomb do to the Pacific Ocean?

A North Korean official has hinted about conducting a nuclear test at sea, which would have severe environmental consequences.

By Marina Koren

The latest fiery exchange between the United States and North Korea has produced a new kind of threat. On Tuesday, during his speech at the United Nations, President Trump said his government would "totally destroy North Korea" if necessary to defend the United States or its allies. On Friday, Kim Jong Un responded, saying North Korea "will consider with seriousness exercising of a corresponding, highest level of headline countermeasure in history."

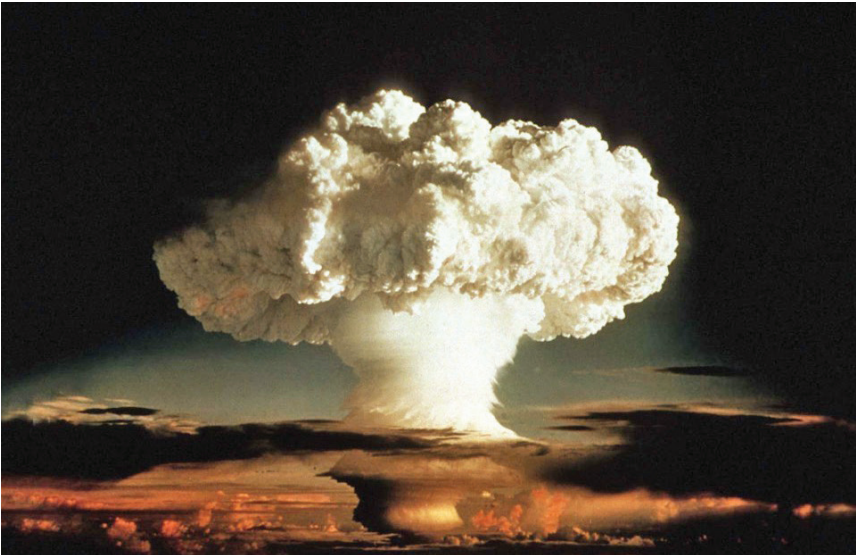
The North Korean leader didn't elaborate on the nature of this countermeasure, but his foreign minister provided a hint: North Korea might test a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific Ocean.

"It could be the most powerful detonation of an H-bomb in the Pacific," Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho told reporters at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. "We have no idea about what actions could be taken as it will be ordered by leader Kim Jong Un."

North Korea has so far conducted nuclear tests in underground chambers and ballistic-missile tests in the sky. Conducting a hydrogen-bomb test in the ocean could mean putting a nuclear warhead on top of a ballistic missile and launching them together toward the sea. If North Korea followed through, the test would be the first detonation of a nuclear weapon in the atmosphere in nearly 40 years. It would lead to — aside from untold geopolitical consequences — severe environmental impacts.

■ The immediate effects

Hydrogen bombs are far more powerful than atomic bombs, capable



of producing many times more explosive energy. If an H-bomb hits the Pacific, it will detonate with a blinding flash and produce the signature mushroom cloud. The immediate effects likely would depend on the height of the detonation above the water. The initial blast could kill most of the life in the strike zone — scores of fish and other marine life — instantly. When the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945, the entire population located within a radius of 1,600 feet (500 meters) perished.

The explosion would send radioactive dust and ash flying through the air and into the water. Wind could carry the dangerous particles over hundreds of miles.

The smoke from the blast site could block out sunlight and hinder life forms at sea that depend on photosynthesis to survive. The exposure to radiation

could cause severe health problems for nearby marine life. Radioactivity is known to damage cells in humans, animals, and plants by causing changes in their genes. The changes could lead to crippling mutations in future generations. The eggs and larvae of marine organisms are especially sensitive to radiation, according to experts. Affected animals could pass the exposure up the food chain.

■ Radioactive fallout

The test could also have damaging and long-lasting effects on humans and other wildlife if the radioactive fallout reaches land. The particles could contaminate air, soil, and water supply. More than 60 years after the United States tested a series of atomic bombs near Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, the island remains "unlivable," according to a report from The Guardian in 2014. Residents

relocated before the tests returned in the 1970s to find high levels of radiation in foods grown near the nuclear test site and were forced to leave again.

More than 2,000 nuclear tests — by various nations, in underground chambers, above ground, and underwater — were carried out between 1945 and 1996, according to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which was created when the 1996 treaty banning all nuclear tests went into effect. The United States tested a nuclear-tipped missile, like the one North Korea's foreign minister described, in the Pacific Ocean in 1962. The last aboveground test conducted by any nuclear power was in China in 1980.

This year alone, North Korea has conducted 19 ballistic-missile tests and one nuclear test, according to a database from the Nuclear-Threat Initiative. Earlier this month, North Korea said it conducted a successful underground test of a hydrogen bomb. The event created an artificial earthquake near the test site that was registered by seismic-activity stations around the world. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake measured magnitude 6.3. A week later, the United Nations passed a U.S.-drafted resolution that would impose new sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear provocations.

Pyeongyang's mention of a potential hydrogen-bomb test in the Pacific will likely increase political tensions and contribute to the ever-growing debate about the true capabilities of its nuclear-weapons program. An H-bomb in the ocean certainly would put any speculation to rest.

(Source: The Atlantic)

Only country now supporting Kurdish referendum is Israel: Mehran Kamrava

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Mehran Kamrava, Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University in Qatar The Iraqi Kurdish referendum is "likely to give a further, official dimension to the Kurdish nationalist movement."

Kamrava also adds "For many Kurds, it is the culmination of generations of their national hopes and aspirations."

Professor of the Middle East Studies in Georgetown University of Doha, tells the Tehran Times that "the only country that is now supporting the Kurdish referendum is Israel."

Following is the text of the interview:

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

A: The referendum is likely to give a further, official dimension to the Kurdish nationalist movement. For many Kurds, it is the culmination of generations of their national hopes and aspirations. If the referendum goes ahead, and as there are more rallies and speeches given, more Kurds across the region in other countries are likely to want to follow a similar path.

■ Concerning the objection of Baghdad and the Prime Minister himself to this referendum which described the referendum as "playing with fire", is there a possibility of military conflict between Baghdad and Arbil following the



independence referendum?

A: The possibility always exists, especially since Baghdad does not want to see the referendum take place. But I think it is unlikely because Baghdad does not want violence and instability in the country to escalate further. Baghdad is happy to see international support for its position, and will try to capitalize on that instead of on the threat of violence.

■ The US 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 exactly is their objection based on?

A: Initially, soon after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US and some in the UK wanted to see a break-up of

Iraq into three separate entities, with a Kurdish north-east, a Sunni center, and a Shia south. But the appearance of Daesh showed them that there is a need for a strong central government in Baghdad, and that a break-up of Iraq would not be in their interest. In fact, the only country that is now supporting the Kurdish referendum is Israel.

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

A: Turkey is very concerned about the referendum because of its own troubled history with the Kurdish issue. And, of all regional countries, Turkey is the one that in the past has shown a willingness to use military force against Iraqi and Syrian Kurds. It is difficult to predict exactly how Turkey would re-

act, but I doubt the reaction would be military. Instead, Baghdad, Ankara, and Tehran are likely to try to make the costs of an independent Kurdistan extremely high by imposing various forms of boycott on the trade of good and services.

■ Reportedly, the US and other western countries have proposed an alternative plan to Barzani based on which Kirkuk is handed to KRG and in return the referendum is delayed. How do you evaluate this proposal?

A: I don't know about this, but I would not be surprised if there is some concessions that are given in return for a delay on the referendum.

■ Considering the fact that conflicting regions like Kirkuk will take part in the referendum, how will non-Kurdish movements and residents like Turkmen take this referendum, will they accept its results?

A: A lot would depend on the reactions of Baghdad, other regional states, and the US and UK. If other communities see that the costs of business for the KRG are exponentially high, they will be dissuaded from agitating for similar things. Also, there is a sense that groups like Turkmen will have greater protection under Baghdad than a potentially Kurdish authority.

So my sense is that at this stage, at least, these groups want to see greater powers continue to be held by Baghdad. This may change in the future in case the KRG succeeds, thrives, and can provide for the economic needs of the citizens under its rule.

Dividing Iraq into mini-states make situation worse: John Limbert

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — John Limbert, the former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for Iran, says "Most Middle Eastern states have to find ways to exist as multi-ethnic and multi-religious entities."

Limbert, also tells the Tehran Times that "Iran never had much trouble in that respect, but when Iraq claimed an exclusive 'Arab' identity for itself it created trouble."

He adds that dividing Iraq into "mini-states, however, is not going to solve anything. It is likely to make the situation worse."

Following is the text of the interview:

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

A: The principle here is important. Most Middle



Eastern states have to find ways to exist as multi-ethnic and multi-religious entities. Iran never had much trouble in that respect, but when Iraq claimed an exclusive "Arab" identity for itself it created trouble.

The borders among Kurd, Arab, Turk, and Persian

are never fixed. Many places have mixed populations and there is frequent intermarriage. The same can be said for religious boundaries.

■ Concerning objections by the central government in Baghdad and the Iraqi prime minister himself to the referendum, who described the referendum as "playing with fire", is there a possibility of military conflict between Baghdad and Arbil after the independence referendum?

A: In Iraq, there is a heritage of mistreating non-Arabs and non-Sunnis. Now Iraq has to deal with that heritage. Dividing the country into mini-states, however, is not going to solve anything. It is likely to make the situation worse.

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

A: Of course the neighbors Turkey and Iran -- both with important Kurdish-speaking populations -- are not going to be happy.

The main message of the UN General Assembly

By Hanif Ghaffari

Note: Our country's President's visit to New York ended in attending the United Nations General Assembly. The visit was attended by many international affairs analysts. In this regard, there are some points that need to be addressed:

1. The recent visit of the president to New York took place at a time when tensions between Washington and other international actors over various issues were triggered by the presence of Donald Trump at the top of the political and executive equations of the United States. These tensions involve a variety of issues.

Since January 2016, the confrontation between the United States, the European Union, China and Russia has reached its peak. On the other hand, actions such as the departure of the United States from the Paris Pact and the insistence of Trump on increasing the military budgets of NATO countries have led to tensions between the United States and its partners in the international system. Thus, the United Nations General Assembly was held this year, when most international actors did not have a positive view of the presence of Trump at the White House.

Dissatisfaction with the presence of Trump at the White House is not only reserved for international system actors! Inside the United States, too, tensions have been created due to the presence of Trump in power. Even some Republican members do not tolerate the presence of Trump in the White House and warned against his policies.

2. Over the past months, Trump's attempts to lift the nuclear deal between Iran and members of the 1 + 5 have peaked. Niki Heli's trip to Vienna and her visit to IAEA Director-General Yukio Amano have been one of the examples of Washington's pressure on the Agency to inspect Iran's military sites. In recent months, Trump has also had frequent



meetings with Netanyahu.

A few weeks before the UN General Assembly, Western media believed that the main goal of the Trump in this forum was to align US, European, and Zionist positions against JCPOA. Trump, who plans to release his new report on a nuclear deal with Iran in October, tried to use the United Nations General Assembly to justify international system actors to abrogate the agreement. On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of the United States met with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and French President Macron on a nuclear deal.

The extension of the restrictions imposed on Iran (after 2025), the inclusion of Iranian missile power in the nuclear deal and the inspection of the Iranian military sites were three issues that Trump and Netanyahu emphasized. In the meeting with Trump and Netanyahu, the two sides stated that a nuclear deal would not be acceptable to the current situation and JCPOA should be amended or completely removed.

3- In his speech to the UN General

Assembly, Donald Trump insulted Iran and described our country as a threat to regional security! Of course, Trump did not mention Washington's support for ISIS and other terrorist groups in the West Asia region in his speech. America is the main source of violence in the international system. Also, the president of the United States named a nuclear deal as one of the worst agreements. Also, Trump explicitly threatened North Korea in his address to the UN General Assembly. These words were welcomed by Netanyahu and people like John Bolton, one of the most radical neo-conservatives in the United States.

However, European officials and even some US officials have regretted these words. Some Western media acknowledged that Trump has turned the UN General Assembly into a battlefield, which must be a symbol of global peace. In other words, Trump's speech at the United Nations General Assembly led to an increase in American isolation in the international system. America's isolation in the international system has been strengthened since the arrival of Trump at the top

of US political and executive equations.

The speeches of the President of our country at the United Nations General Assembly took place one day after Trump's speech. In this speech, Mr. Rouhani criticized Trump's remarks. Also, the president of our country, emphasizing that Iran is committed to a nuclear deal, warned that the new administration of US will isolate itself from violating its international obligations.

Iran's president at the UN noted that Iran's capabilities, including its missiles, are only for the defense and preservation of the region's stability and security. President Rouhani emphasized that the nuclear deal belongs to the entire international community, not just a few countries.

4- The meeting of the ministers of Iran and members of the 5 + 1 with the aim of reviewing the nuclear deal was among other issues that were considered by experts and analysts in international affairs. The meeting was held at a time when the US position was shadowed by the meeting. The outcome of the meeting was nothing but the insistence of the American side on its previous positions. However, the European Troika tried to adopt a two-pronged approach to Iran.

On the one hand, they emphasize their commitment to the JCPOA, and on the other hand, they are flexible against Washington's pressure on "the necessity of Iran's commitment to a nuclear deal"! This is despite the fact that the IAEA, in its most recent report, has confirmed Iran's commitment to a nuclear deal, according to the latest report.

Ultimately, the main message of the United Nations General Assembly was the isolation of the United States in the international system. However, the Trump government will use its full capacity to impose new restrictions on Iran's nuclear program. In such circumstances, it is imperative for the Iranian foreign policy officials to stand against the United States.

Washington and London Counter- JCPOA Game

By Saeed Sobhani

On a recent trip to London, the U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had met British Prime Minister Theresa May and discussed various issues, including Iran's nuclear case. During the meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in London, British Prime Minister Theresa May emphasized on the importance of the 2015 global deal with Iran.

According to news sources, although Iran's nuclear issue has not officially been on the agenda of the trip, it has been raised at a meeting between Tillerson, Theresa May and the British national security adviser. May's spokesman noted that Tillerson and the British Prime Minister were both concerned about Iran's nuclear deal, and May has emphasized the importance of a nuclear deal in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons!

Undoubtedly, these remarks by the British Prime Minister do



not mean her support for JCPOA. Over the past two years, the British authorities have repeatedly announced their general support for the Nuclear Deal, but in practice, they have failed to comply with the Nuclear Deal contents in line with the United States. For example in a recent anti-JCPOA statement, the British Foreign Ministry spoke of Iran as a challenging place for commercial transactions in a way that was completely out of place. The United Kingdom Foreign Minister Boris Johnson has stated at a news conference with his American counterpart that Iran must adhere to its commitments and not seek any adventures!

The reality is that Britain is pursuing a completely dual and paradoxical game with Iran on the Nuclear Deal. London, on the one hand, seeks to emphasize the preservation of JCPOA (as a dead body) and merely evaluate it if it leads to a change in our country's change of strategy in the region and in the international system. London, on the other hand, seeks to support Trump as he takes a counter-JCPOA action. In the course of the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the members of the 1 + 5, the British played a role not as an independent actor, but as a dependent variable on the United States. Now, with the arrival of Trump at the White House, London's main priority is its adjustment to the United States. Accordingly, London is ready to take any counter-JCPOA actions and pay any expenses in this route trying to please Trump.

The Bloomberg news agency has recently announced the cooperation of the three countries of U.S., France and Britain against JCPOA. Regardless of the veracity of this claim, the observation of the English game over the years and decades exposes its bad record in keeping its commitments. The United States and the United Kingdom share unwillingness to comply with international agreements on the one hand and follow up of the legal issues with a political approach on the other hand. This is also true of the nuclear deal. In such a situation, the statements of the British prime minister, Theresa May, on the importance of the whole issue of JCPOA, should not distract our minds about the real game of London in the face of the Nuclear Deal.

U.S. President Donald Trump has renewed the suspension of nuclear sanctions once again, after imposing new sanctions against our country. This dual game by Trump shows that he has not yet reached the final conclusion, in spite of the opposition to JCPOA, about the way to out of the "status quo". On the other hand, the House of Representatives also banned the sale of airplanes to our country in coordination with the White House. What exactly is happening here? Can the continuation of the suspension of sanctions on Iran by Trump be a sign of the commitment of the President of the United States? Of course, the answer to this question is negative!

In any case, the British approach in dealing with JCPOA must be vigorously monitored by our foreign policy apparatus. As already mentioned, Britain has not dropped any action in the past two years (after signing up the Nuclear Agreement) to prevent the normalization of trade and banking relations with Iran. Not long ago, the UK Foreign Office, in a controversial action which was absolutely against JCPOA, called Iran a disputed place for trade and investment, calling on the British investigators to consult British officials regarding business and trading with Iran! What is certain is that there is coordination between Britain and the United States on excluding Iran from JCPOA's benefits.

Recent statements by the British Foreign Secretary indicate that this game is still in place. The Western media has also reported the joint U.S., British and French efforts to resume talks with Iran regarding JCPOA. This collaborative effort is still ongoing. Accordingly, more coordination is expected between the American authorities and three European countries (Germany, Britain and France) at the UN General Assembly.

The most important expectation of the Iranian people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service of our country is the observation of the common American and European Troika dealing with JCPOA. Looking optimistically at the recent actions of Trump (on extending the suspension of sanctions) is the one pest the government needs to be aware of. The experience of the last two years shows that the Achilles heel of our diplomacy system is the optimistic analyze of the American politicians actions and words.

Obviously, right now there is no place for the slightest mistake, error, optimism, and any idealistic computational look at the statements and actions of American and English officials. A simple decoding of the US-UK joint play suggests that the two are going to put Iran in a much worse condition regarding the Nuclear Deal. What defends this game is our firmness and insistence on the principles of our foreign policy in the region and the international system.

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Yes, there’s such a thing as eating too healthy

By Kathryn Siegel

Going vegan, eating organic, or simply cutting sugar can all be healthy lifestyle choices. But if doing so gives you anxiety about hanging out with friends (what if there's nothing I can eat?!) or makes you fear certain foods, it can actually be quite dangerous. Yep, being too healthy can actually be unhealthy.

Orthorexia is an obsession with eating a “pure” diet, which can mean avoiding foods with unhealthy fats, added sugar or salt, genetic modifications, artificial colors, or flavors and preservatives. And it's becoming increasingly common.

■ When healthy eating becomes an obsession

While it's smart to care about what goes into your body, it can become a problem if the restrictions start taking over your life. “If a behavior is so disruptive that it interferes with work and personal relationships, it could be a sign of a psychological disorder,” says clinical psychologist Sherry Pagoto. “Social life is a huge factor in health because it's a buffer for stress.”

Extreme orthorexics will often turn down social invitations, fearing that “healthy” food won't be available. Or—if they opt to risk it—will refuse to touch even a morsel of “impure” food (anything processed, refined, or unhealthy), despite hunger pangs.

Some may even spend tons of time shopping for specific groceries and preparing meals, or hide their habits from friends and family to avoid criticism.

Though they sound similar, orthorexia is markedly different from anorexia: The goal is not necessarily to lose weight but instead to attain “perfect” physical health.

Someone who's anorexic might avoid healthy fats found in oils and nuts like the plague because they're afraid of the calories, while an orthorexic person is more likely to acknowledge fat's health benefits and carefully portion out their organic almonds and expeller-pressed



oils. They wouldn't fear weight gain so much as eating an imperfect diet.

Depending on the extremity of the diet, some health-food addicts can fall prey to chronic hunger and rapid weight loss as they blacklist “unhealthy” foods. Others don't lose any weight at all because they eat enough ultra-healthy foods to sustain themselves. So don't discount someone's disorder just because they're not stick thin.

■ Why it matters

Orthorexia isn't currently recognized as an official medical condition in the DSM-5, the statistical manual of mental disorders. And the term itself has only been around since the late 90s, so there's not a ton of research on it.

Since orthorexia has less to do with poor body image or self-esteem, and more to do with a fear of illness and bad health, some classify it as a

form of OCD, where a person satisfies unreasonable obsessions (like, say, eating a completely pure diet) with ritualistic behavior (meticulous calorie counting and nutrient tracking, refusal to eat certain foods, etc.).

In this case, someone with orthorexia might undergo cognitive behavioral therapy to address the unhealthy rituals attached to their grocery shopping, food prep, and eating habits.

Some psychologists think a combination of CBT and mindfulness (which increases the awareness and acceptance of uncomfortable sensations) can train orthorexic patients to overcome anxiety related to their health.

Others think orthorexia should be treated like any other eating disorder and involve physicians and dietitians—and sometimes even the use of drugs

that help to control mood by inhibiting serotonin receptors.

Because it's not an accepted medical term, there's no definitive classification, diagnosis, or treatment for orthorexia. But before you start diagnosing every health-fanatic friend, know there's a fine line between health-conscious and health-obsessed. The term orthorexic does not apply to people with medical conditions that absolutely forbid certain food groups, such as those with celiac disease, lactose intolerance, or food allergies.

The distinguishing factor seems to be whether the behavior interferes with other obligations (especially social life). If your fear of unhealthy food is keeping you from grabbing a drink after work or taking a rest day, consider talking to a professional about those feelings.

One easy way to ward off unhealthy feelings is to take a break from social media—especially Instagram. A recent study found that heavy Instagram users, especially those who follow a lot of health-related accounts, are way more likely to have orthorexic tendencies than people who stay away from aspirational food accounts.

■ The takeaway

The most important question to ask yourself is: Am I happy? A health-conscious person cares about their body, but a health-obsessed person freaks out over it. Your diet and exercise shouldn't give you anxiety.

While some foods are healthier than others, there's no food that's going to kill you if you eat it once or even a few times.

Living a healthy life shouldn't require you to turn down people and experiences that make you happy. Even for the sake of “perfect” health, exclusively talking to your organic, homegrown tomato plant is not sufficient social interaction. Cutting down on junk food is great, but moderation is key to achieving both physical and mental health.

(Source: greatest.com)

Hypnic headache



A rare type of headache affecting people over 50

Hypnic headache syndrome is a rare primary headache disorder which usually affects people over 50, although it can start from the age of 40 onwards. There has been little research into the condition compared to some other headache and migraine disorders.

■ What are the symptoms?

Hypnic headaches occur exclusively at night, waking you from your sleep at the same time, usually between 1 and 3 am. Indeed this condition has the nick name “alarm clock headache”.

The pain can be unilateral (on one side of the head) or bilateral (on both sides of the head). Some people describe the pain as throbbing although not everyone experiences this. The pain begins abruptly and can last from 15 minutes to 6 hours, although typically it is about 30-60 minutes. It is more common amongst women than men. The pain in rare instances is associated with autonomic features (such as a blocked

Hypnic headaches occur exclusively at night, waking you from your sleep at the same time, usually between 1 and 3 am. Indeed this condition has the nick name “alarm clock headache”.

nose or watering eyes), photophobia (light sensitivity) and phonophobia (sound sensitivity).

If you have hypnic headache you should be able to go back to sleep when the pain subsides, although you may experience more than one attack per night. You may experience 15 or more attacks per month. In a study by DW Dodick, four patients were found to have experienced this condition when falling asleep during the day.

■ Study of hypnic headache

Hypnic headache was first described in 1988 in a journal article by N H Raskin who looked at patients aged between 67 and 84 years old. Some research has now been completed on the links between hypnic headache and REM sleep.

■ Diagnosis

Most of the patients described in the research literature are reported to have had other types of headaches before their diagnosis of hypnic headache was established.

To establish if you have hypnic headache, you will need to see your doctor who will need to take a full history of your sleep patterns and night time habits (including snoring and restlessness). This helps to exclude secondary causes of headaches which start at night. These causes include drug withdrawal, sleep apnoea, brain tumours and temporal arteritis (inflammation of the temporal artery). Other primary headaches (such as migraine, cluster headaches and chronic paroxysmal hemicrania) can also wake you at night so these need to be excluded before you can be sure that you have hypnic headache.

■ Treatment

For patients with hypnic headache, recommended initial treatment is caffeine (in the form of cups of coffee at bedtime) or indomethacin. Indomethacin would not be safe for patients with history of stomach ulcers. Lithium carbonate is an alternative, but may be poorly tolerated or contraindicated for older adult patients. Also, patients on lithium would need regular blood tests to check if the blood levels of lithium are within safe limits. If you cannot tolerate lithium, your doctor may suggest alternative treatments including flunarizine. These are taken prophylactically at bedtime.

(Source: migrainetrust.org)

Healthy eating

A healthy diet helps pave the way to a healthy heart and blood vessels, strong bones and muscles, a sharp mind, and so much more.

Confused about what constitutes a healthy diet? You aren't alone. Over the years, what seemed to be flip flops from medical research combined with the flood of diet books and diet plans based on little or no science have muddled the water. But a consensus has emerged about the basics, which are really pretty simple.

An important take-home message is to focus on the types of foods you eat and your overall dietary pattern, instead of on individual nutrients such as fat, dietary cholesterol, or specific vitamins. There are no single nutrients or vitamins that can make you healthy. Instead, there is a short list of key food types that together can dramatically reduce your risk for heart disease.

Eat more of these foods: fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish and seafood, vegetable oils, beans, nuts, and seeds.

Eat less of these foods: whole milk and other full-fat dairy foods, red meat, processed meats, highly refined and processed grains and sugars, and sugary drinks.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Insulin plays a key role in regulation of blood glucose levels

Insulin instructs cells to take in glucose from the blood

Insulin is a hormone which plays a key role in the regulation of blood glucose levels. A lack of insulin, or an inability to adequately respond to insulin, can each lead to the development of the symptoms of diabetes.

In addition to its role in controlling blood sugar levels, insulin is also involved in the storage of fat.

■ The role of insulin in the body

Insulin is a hormone which plays a number of roles in the body's metabolism. Insulin regulates how the body uses and stores glucose and fat. Many of the body's cells rely on insulin to take glucose from the blood for energy.

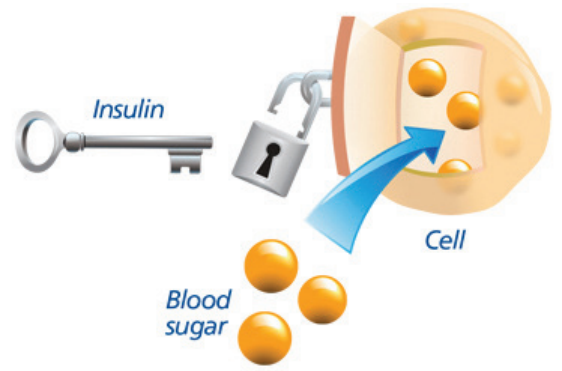
■ Insulin and blood glucose levels

Insulin helps control blood glucose levels by signaling the liver and muscle and fat cells to take in glucose from the blood. Insulin therefore helps cells to take in glucose to be used for energy. If the body has sufficient energy, insulin signals the liver to take up glucose and store it as glycogen.

The liver can store up to around 5% of its mass as glycogen. Some cells in the body can take glucose from the blood without insulin, but most cells do require insulin to be present.

■ Insulin and type 1 diabetes

In type 1 diabetes, the body produces insufficient insulin to regulate blood glucose levels.



Insulin regulates how the body uses and stores glucose and fat.

Without the presence of insulin, many of the body's cells cannot take glucose from the blood and therefore the body uses other sources of energy. Ketones are produced by the liver as an alternative source of energy, however, high levels of the ketones can lead to a dangerous condition called ketoacidosis. People with type 1 diabetes will need to inject insulin to compensate for their body's lack of insulin.

■ Insulin and type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is characterized by the body not responding effectively to insulin.

This is termed insulin resistance. As a result the body is less able to take up glucose from the blood. In the earlier stages of type 2 diabetes, the body responds by producing more insulin than it would normally need to.

If type 2 diabetes develops over a number of years, the extra demands on the pancreas to produce insulin can lead to a loss of insulin producing cells (known as pancreatic beta cells) as they wear out.

Depending on their level of insulin resistance, people with type 2 diabetes may also need to take insulin injections to manage their blood sugar levels.

(Source: diabetes.co.uk)

Too much homework can cause stress, lower grades

When the lesson is about to end and teacher announces the homework requirements, they might think that a three or four session stuck behind more books and writing after school has finished is going to further their education, but piling on the homework will not help children advance in school, in fact it could well have the reverse effect entirely.

A study by a group of Australian researchers found the average scores of relating to students' academic performances against the amount of homework dished out at the end of the school day, showed clearly that when more time was spent on homework students were getting lower scores. The research clearly suggested that placing too much homework can cause lower grades and even lead pupils to begin suffering from depression.

Can homework cause depression? Yes, if a pupil is inundated with too much homework their life balance is thrown out of all proportion. All children and adults too should adopt an 8-8-8 circadian rhythm to life where eight hours work, eight hours play and eight hours rest



(sleep) plays an important factor to how we all roll.

A typical school day might begin at 9 am and complete by 3.15pm, so piling on three hours of nightly

homework means schoolchildren must endure seven hours at school (including traveling time) and three hours of homework, thus robbing the child of two hours downtime.

Good quality homework practices have been adopted in Finland where schoolchildren were given just 30 minutes per night to spend on homework and none at weekends. The kids were stress-free and scored highly in their grades.

Often to make matters worse, teachers will give pupils homework that is both time-consuming and will undoubtedly keep them busy while being totally non-productive. Some examples include History teachers asking pupils to hand write (word for word) pages 113 to 139 of a textbook on The French Revolution. Such remedial homework will do nothing to improve pupil's scores in exams or up their grades.

There is certainly no advocacy for the abolishing of homework here; simply that the amount and quality of a child's extracurricular work after school be re-examined. Good quality homework practices have been adopted in Finland where schoolchildren were given just 30 minutes per night to spend on homework and none at weekends. The kids were stress-free and scored highly in their grades.

Many parents are even beginning to advocate time limits on a number of homework minutes dished out each night. Stress, depression and lower grades are the last things any parent wants for their child.

(Source: factualfacts.com)

Information sign unveiled for Tehran tourist cave

TOURISM TEHRAN — An information sign was unveiled on Thursday for Roodafshan, a cave located in Damavand, eastern Tehran, enlightening tourists about its geographical and historical characteristic as well as some safety rules for caving.



Roodafshan information sign was unveiled during a ceremony in Tehran

Designed by the Iranian Cave and Speleology Association, the sign is said to be the first of its kind in Iran, Mehr reported.

The unveiling ceremony was held on the occasion of the National Clean Cave Day, which is commemorated on September 23.

"We don't plan to damage caves with turning them into tourist places," Tehran tourism chief Rajab Ali Khosroabadi said on the sidelines of the ceremony.

He said that for development of tourism industry, the department of environment should announce methods for preservation of tourist attractions and natural resources in particular.

During the ceremony, the head of Iranian Cave and Speleology Association proposed temporary closing of the cave so that locals learn how to preserve the cave environment.

The National Clean Cave Day was registered on Iranian calendar in 2016 with the purpose of raising public awareness about the value of caves and creating a culture of protecting these ecosystems.

Terrorism rarely destroys tourism for good

A couple of weeks ago, The National reported that Egypt's tourism receipts had increased by 54 per cent during the first seven months of 2017, compared to the corresponding period in 2016.

The most populous Arab country has suffered greatly economically since the beginning of a political roller coaster in 2011, with much of the damage being reflected in shrinking tourism. Have acts of terrorism, such as the 2015 crash of a Russian plane in the Sinai Peninsula, played a role in hamstringing the Egyptian economy?

Many scholars have investigated the impact of terrorism on international tourism, with two recent contributions coming from the Hong Kong-based researchers Anyu Liu and Stephen Pratt in the 2017 volume of the academic journal Tourism Management; and Australian-based researchers Shrabani Saha and Ghialy Yap in the 2014 volume of the Journal of Travel Research.

Before discussing their findings, it is worth clarifying the theoretical link between terrorism and tourism. Part is obvious: when a terrorist attack occurs, prospective tourists may exhibit greater reluctance as they fear becoming victims of future terrorist attacks. Beyond this, there is the damage to important infrastructure and its downstream effects, as well as the adverse consequences for foreign direct investment, which often furnishes the tourism destination with critical capital.

Ostensibly, countries such as Egypt appear to have suffered according to these mechanisms; in particular, Russia - a historically important economic partner and source of tourists - still bans flights directly from its territory to Egypt, as a direct consequence of the loss of its civilian jet in 2015. But can terrorism account for the broader declines in tourism revenues experienced by Egypt throughout the last six years?

The above pairs of researchers have found that in general, tourism is not adversely affected by terrorism, especially when that terrorism comes in the form of infrequent attacks, such as those faced by Egypt. While terrorist attacks tend to cause an immediate, noticeable decline in tourism demand, revenues are typically quite resilient, recovering in a matter of months. Secular declines in tourism activity are much more likely to be the result of protracted periods of political instability, due to its crippling effect on all components of the economy.

Why does terrorism tend to have a modest effect, despite the frequently hysterical media coverage?

The simple answer is "rationality". A key goal for most terrorists is making the general public feel unsafe, through headline-grabbing acts of violence. They want you to feel that something which you regard as completely routine - such as going to the grocery store, or withdrawing money from an ATM - is a risky act.

The problem for terrorists is that, in many cases, this is an illusion. A cold hard look at the probabilities associated with being the victim of a terrorist attack suggests that it is tough to justify a need to change your daily habits in response to acts of terrorism. For example, in a recent article by CATO Institute's Alex Nowrasteh summarising findings on the issue, it turned out that the annual chance of dying in a terrorist attack in the UK in the period 2001-2017 was comparable to during the period 1975-2000. Most would be surprised to hear that salient terrorist attacks that have happened in the UK during the past 17 years, including the 2005 London Underground bombs, have not contributed to a statistically more hazardous life for UK residents.

(Source: The National)

Iran to host 7th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran will host the 7th edition of Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) Symposium in 2021.

The 5th edition of the event was wrapped up on Friday in the Zhijindong Cave UNESCO Global Geopark, China, and the next edition will be held in Indonesia in 2019.

The venue of the symposium will be either Qeshm Island - which has been registered by UNESCO - or other geoparks, which may be registered by 2020, Iran representative to APGN Advisory Committee Alireza Amrikazemi told Mehr on Saturday.

"In this way, the role of Iran in the geoparks network will be more highlighted," he explained.

The Qeshm Island has been granted the designation of UNESCO Global Geopark for a four-year period from May 5, 2017 to May 4, 2021.

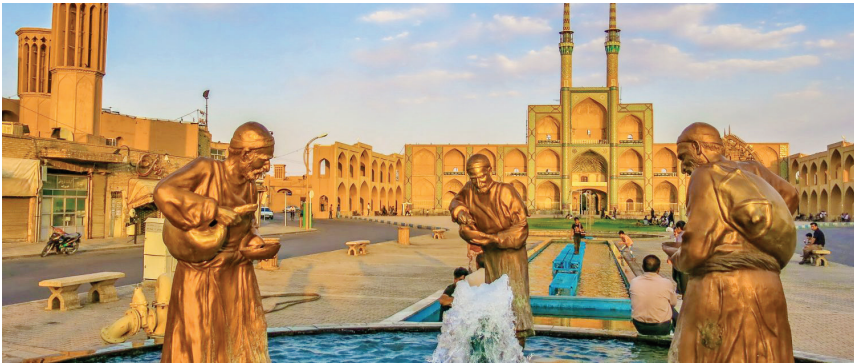
Qeshm embraces wide range of ecotourism attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island has an abundance of wildlife, including birds, reptiles, dolphins and turtles as well.

Regional Geopark Networks serve for the coordination of Global Geoparks Network activities at a regional or continental level and as fora for the exchange of information and co-operation between Global Geoparks and Global Geopark professionals in the region.



A boat on the shore of Qeshm Island in an undated photo. Qeshm Island was registered as UNESCO Global Geopark for a four-year period from May 5, 2017

Yazd, a city for tranquility



Amir Chakhmaq Complex and square, a prominent structure in Yazd, noted for its symmetrical sunken alcoves (Photo: Hadi Karimi/ panoramio)

visitors to the bridge have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

■ Beautiful doors

We wandered around the old town last night about 6.30 pm and it was a bit deserted. Quite a few hotels but not much else was open.

The best bit was all the beautiful old doors. (Jennifer R from Australia; visited September 2017) about Old Town Sydney,

■ Adobe walls, badgir, heat

According to locals, Yazd is the sec-

ond hottest city in Iran. If you come to Yazd, you will definitely walk around old town but be aware, it is very hot, you need to take bottles of water in summer when you wander around.

Even in heat, you will be fascinated by old town... continuous adobe walls which makes the whole town brown and dry, interesting badgir and so on.

(Hino from Japan; visited September 2017)

■ A place to literally but excitingly get lost

Tourism that's good for the planet and its inhabitants

The capital of Sichuan Province is famous for a tourist attraction that has become one of the main research centers attempting to save the endangered giant panda.

The city's breeding program has helped bring the species back from the brink of extinction, producing almost 50 newborns in the last three years alone.

Euronews' Seamus Kearney reported: "It's against the backdrop of a project like this that the UN World Tourism Organization is hoping to make progress on a key question: how can tourism be used as a tool for development, but also be good for the planet and its inhabitants?"

At the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly, delegates from more than 130 countries were given a strong message: tourism is a power that must be harnessed for the

benefit of all.

2017 has been designated the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

The Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organisation, Taleb Rifai, told Euronews: "Sustainability is about sustaining life for the future generations. No responsible society, no responsible community, must be left behind in this endeavor.

"At stake is life tomorrow. So if you don't do something about it today, then tomorrow is lost."

As well as tourism that respects the environment, many countries hope to use it to tackle poverty in vulnerable areas.

Peru's Deputy Minister of Tourism, Rogers Valencia Espinoza, told Euronews: "We have a program called Tourism in Rural

Communities. It's dedicated to sustainable tourism and there are three elements to it.

"These enterprises have to integrate the population and combat poverty. We have a big challenge ahead, with a 30% rate of poverty.

"That's why there has to be a good environmental aspect and a sound business that can deliver quality products to foreign visitors."

"This program includes a number of communities in the tourism sector around Lake Titicaca and around Cuzco and Puno."

Ghana's Minister of Tourism, Catherine Abelema Afeku, said: "For Ghana, tourism is centralized. It's a theme that links properly with sustainable development, so using tourism as a tool for development

I didn't know that getting lost in an old city could be so exciting until I literally got lost in old town of Yazd. Since it was Ramadan, very few people were around. So, when you're visiting this spot outside Ramadan, I could imagine it would be like Amazing Race in the Old Town of Yazd.

(Denpasar from Indonesia; visited August 2017)

■ Great atmosphere. Feels like going back in time

I started my walk just before the sun began to set. The golden light gave the place a wonderful glow. I made it to the Tourist Library when the sun was setting. I got to the rooftop for a good view and then resume my walk later. I think the sunset view would be better in the Art House Cafe, but there were a lot of people.

(Stephen C from Canada; June 2017)

■ Stunning desert city

It was truly love at first sight on our first visit to Yazd. Be it wandering around the old town, experiencing the famous Persian hospitality to late night koshti (Iranian wrestling).

(Harakan from United Kingdom; June 2017)

synchs with the sustainable development goals, especially for a developing nation.

"The key component is elimination of poverty, education, girl and child education, which are all encapsulated in the sustainable development goals."

"We as a nation are using tourism as a transformative agent to eliminate poverty."

Fighting poverty is also crucial in China, the world's fourth most popular holiday destination, and Chengdu has launched a development program called Tourism Plus.

The director of the Chengdu Municipal Tourism Administration, Duo Yang Na Mu, told Euronews: "For example, tourism plus healthcare and rehabilitation; tourism plus sports; tourism plus ecological construction; and tourism plus culture.

(Source: Euro News)

Isfahan, World Crafts City

TOURISM TEHRAN Over 18000 artists produce handicrafts in 196 types in Isfahan, which covers one third of handicraft products in Iran. The city was designated as World Crafts City by the World Crafts Council (WCC) in September 2015.

The crafts of Isfahan encompass textiles, carpets, metalwork, woodwork, ceramics, painting, and inlay works of various kind. The work is carried out in different settings including small industrial and bazaar workshops, in the homes of craftsmen and women, and in rural cottage industries.

Isfahan's crafts are clearly rooted in the city's royal past, but to suggest a direct and uninterrupted link to the Safavid era would be too simplistic an assumption.

The passing of skills from one generation to the next has been disrupted many times, beginning with the Afghan invasion of 1722, and by later wars, famines, plagues, tribal pillages and the resulting depopulation.



Sixth mass extinction will happen by 2100: study

Humans could be heading into a chain of events that could lead to Earth's next mass extinction, according to one scientist's calculations.

Daniel Rothman, a geophysicist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, says he has identified "thresholds of catastrophe" in the carbon cycle that, if exceeded, would cause the environment to be unstable, eventually leading to mass extinction.

How did he arrive at this conclusion? Well, Rothman looked at and analyzed major changes in the carbon cycle over the last 540 million years, including the five past mass extinction events that happened on Earth.

■ Significant change

In his paper, published in *Science Advances*, he begins by proposing that all mass extinctions could be characterized as a significant change in Earth's carbon cycle, but there was the matter of timescale. If previous mass extinctions stretched over long periods — think up to millions of years — he wanted to determine how long it would take before another one occurs.

"How can you really compare these great events in the geologic past, which occur over such vast timescales, to what's going on today, which is centuries at the longest?" he said.

He started by grouping events into two: either short- and long-occurring ones that changed the carbon cycle. Then he scoured through a plethora of



Rothman created a formula able to measure the total carbon mass added to Earth's oceans for each carbon cycle-shifting event. Ultimately, Rothman saw that a certain threshold needed to be crossed.

geochemical studies to find instances where major disruptions occurred in our planet's carbon cycle.

Ultimately, Rothman arrived at 31 events, which satisfied his criteria, the five

mass extinctions included. Then came a big challenge: how was he going to separate extinction events and carbon cycle changes that weren't disruptive or catastrophic?

Rothman created a formula able to measure the total carbon mass added to Earth's oceans for each carbon cycle-shifting event. Ultimately, Rothman saw that a certain threshold needed to be crossed.

Reading Rothman's study is a math and geophysics nerd's dream, and his paper goes into far more detail, so go ahead and view it for optimum clarity. But ultimately, he concludes that carbon changes cross the threshold if it occurred faster than the Earth's ability to adapt.

■ Mass extinction

But why does that suddenly mean a mass extinction will happen in 2100? Well, it's tricky. Rothman says our current conditions will lead to crossing the threshold suppose the carbon amount in Earth's oceans hits 310 gigatons.

What It Means If A Mass Extinction Happens In 2100?

So does that mean the world will end in 2100? Not exactly. In Rothman's calculations, a mass extinction may indeed occur by 2100, but actual ecological disasters might take 10,000 years to pan out. However, he says that by 2100, it's possible Earth will have entered "unknown territory."

So no, don't expect dramatic apocalypse-like events in 2100. Rothman is simply saying that Earth's carbon cycle would move into a territory where it's no longer stable, and in turn, the planet would behave in ways that are extremely difficult to predict. (Source: *Tech Times*)

Sleep deprivation is surprisingly effective as an antidepressant

For those who suffer from clinical depression, there could be an unexpected source of solace.

While long-term sleep deprivation and chronic insomnia can harm your mental and emotional health, in the short term, evidence suggests, going without sleep can help.

Previous studies since the 1970s have noted a correlation between reduced REM sleep and improved depression symptoms. A 2002 study found that one whole night of sleep deprivation resulted in an improvement in 40-60 percent of patients, as did another one in 2010.

A 2013 study attempted to find the mechanism, linking the effect to a type of brain cell that releases a protein important for sleep.

■ Independent studies

Now a meta-analysis of 66 independent studies conducted between 1974 and 2016 has found that sleep deprivation rapidly reduces the symptoms of depression in roughly half of patients, at least when conducted in controlled inpatient settings.

Not only does this meta-analysis, the first on the subject, refine the percentage, it helps narrow down which patients could attain relief from sleep deprivation.

"More than 30 years since the discovery of the antidepressant effects of sleep deprivation, we still do not have an effective grasp on precisely how effective the treatment is and how to achieve the best clinical results,"



says senior researcher Philip Gehrman from University of Pennsylvania.

"Our analysis precisely reports how effective sleep deprivation is and in which populations it should be administered."

The 66 studies included in the meta-analysis conducted experimental sleep deprivation, reported the percentage of the sample that responded to sleep deprivation, provided a priori definition of antidepressant response, and did not seamlessly combine sleep deprivation with other therapies, the study's abstract reports.

There were also different types of sleep deprivation represented, including total and partial, as well as short term and longer term.

The team found that partial sleep deprivation, in which the patient was only allowed to sleep for 3-4 hours for one night followed by forced wakefulness for 20-21 hours, was just as effective at reducing depression symptoms as total sleep deprivation for 36 hours.

The overall response rate was 45 percent for studies with a control group, and 50 percent for studies without a control group.

■ Sleep deprivation

"These studies in our analysis show that sleep deprivation is effective for many populations," says lead researcher Elaine Boland from The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center.

"Regardless of how the response was quantified, how the sleep deprivation was delivered, or the type of depression the subject was experiencing, we found a nearly equivalent response rate."

That there's a correlation between sleep deprivation and an improvement in symptoms doesn't mean that it can replace other treatments, though. Several studies have found that the effect only lasts as long as the patient stays awake following the sleep deprivation for up to 80 percent or more of respondents.

(Source: *sciencealert.com*)

Scientists explain challenges of space radiation to future Mars mission

A human mission to Mars has been a long-cherished objective of space scientists, and several proposals for manned mission to the red planet have been made since 2010, but none have taken off successfully.

However, NASA has been working to cross the hurdles that such a mission is likely to throw up. Isolating a group of scientists in a dome in Hawaii to simulate life on Mars for eight months was one of the many tests that the organization has been conducting to make sure that a mission to Mars becomes a reality in the future.

Another major concern of sending humans to Mars is the effect of space radiation on the astronauts of such a mission. These charged particles may be small and unseen but they can be fatal. And space is full of these particles.

■ Effects of radiation

To get around this problem, NASA's Human Research Program (HRP) has been trying to understand the effects of radiation on the human body and how to reduce it.

According to the team, people often mistake radiation on Earth to be the same as space radiation. This is far from true, as we are protected by the cozy blanket of our atmosphere that keeps out most of the Sun's harmful radiations.

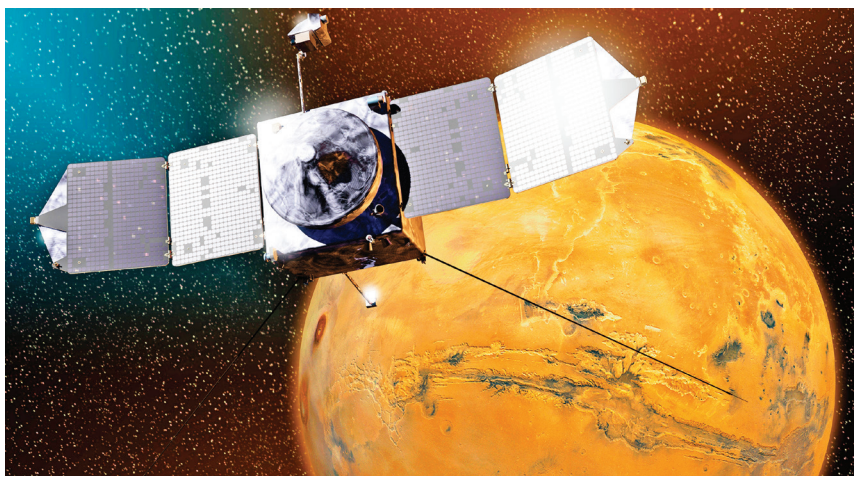
However, in space it's a whole different ballgame altogether. Radiations from the Sun and cosmic radiations are forever hurtling through the vacuum of space. Cosmic rays are emanated by a dying supernova. When this happens, the surrounding space is blasted with radiation.

The effect of the Galactic Cosmic Rays (GCR) on the human body has to be studied in depth to effectively counter it.

According to NASA research physicist John Norbury, "GCRs that come from exploding stars known as supernovae outside the solar system are the most harmful to the human body."

■ Huge wave of protons

Solar events like flares and solar storms often release a huge wave of photons and radiation into the space around the sun. Other sources of radiation include the Van Allen Belts where



radiation particles are trapped around the Earth.

"One of our biggest challenges on a mission to Mars is protecting astronauts from radiation," said NASA space radiation element scientist Lisa Simonsen, Ph.D. said in a video released by NASA. You cannot see or feel getting bombarded by radiation, she added.

(Source: *IBT*)

Official Expounds on Missions of Bank Maskan's Entrepreneurship Development Center

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Abbas Akhoundi elaborated on the missions of the Bank Maskan's Entrepreneurship Development Center, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony of the Center, he said: "Many challenges and problems lie in the housing, building and transport sectors as well."

Given the above issue, this Center

can help the said sectors solve relevant problems, he said, adding: "Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, the Center can take giant steps for solving pertinent problems."

He threw his heavyweight on the activities taken by the 11th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" and said: "For instance, most people have shown vehement interest in purchasing residential units with high square meters, ex-

pandable from 50 to 70 square meters."

In the end, the Roads minister pointed to the recurrence of construction operation of residential units from margin of cities to the cities within the framework of renovation of dilapidated urban structures as the other challenges in the housing sector and said: "This comprehensive plan requires modern projects caused by the creation of idea in this Center."



The Earth is still warming

Climate change is a big problem, and it's not an easy one to understand. Experts spend years building complex models of our planet and its atmosphere, in order to predict what average temperatures are going to be years or decades from now. Those models have been incredibly accurate in the past, and the picture they paint of the future is pretty grim.

That might be why a recent study published in the *Nature Geosciences* journal caught the eye of many right-wing tabloids. According to those tabloids, this new study upends those models that experts have spent years building, and instead suggests that the planet is warming much more slowly than previously thought.

"Fear of global warming is exaggerated," said the *Daily Mail*. "Climate alarmists have finally admitted that they've got it wrong on global warming," said *Breitbart*, calling it an "in-escapable conclusion."

There's only one problem: Not only is that conclusion is not even close to correct. *Breitbart* is to put it mildly-not an authority on climate change, or science in general.

The study in question examined the differences between temperature observations and temperatures predicted by some climate models. Examining how well models have predicted past temperatures can tell us how accurate those models are likely to be in the future, so this is a valuable exercise.

In this case, the researchers found that the models they examined predicted more warming than actually happened. This is the fact that those tabloid authors jumped on when claiming that climate change was exaggerated; if climate models are already shown to be wrong then surely climate change won't be as bad as the experts say, right?

(Source: *Popular Mechanics*)

No-tillage not sufficient alone to prevent water pollution from nitrate: study

Researchers have conducted a meta-analysis to compare runoff and leaching of nitrate from no-till and conventional tillage agricultural fields. Surface runoff and leaching are two major transportation pathways for nitrate to reach and pollute water.

Due to its mobility and water solubility, nitrate has long been recognized as a widespread water pollutant.

"What we found is that no-till is not sufficient to improve water quality," said Lixin Wang, an assistant professor and corresponding author of the paper. "In fact, we found that no-till increased nitrogen leaching."



The study suggests that no-till needs to be complemented with other techniques, such as cover cropping and intercropping or rotation with perennial crops, to improve nitrate retention and water-quality benefits.

After studying concentration of nitrate -- nitrate amount per water volume unit -- and nitrate load, or total amount of nitrate, researchers found surface runoff from no-till fields to contain a similar nitrate load to surface runoff from conventional tillage fields.

In contrast, nitrate load via leaching was greater with no-till fields than with conventional tillage fields.

No-till leaves crop residue on the soil surface and limits soil disturbance except for small slits to add fertilizer. An estimated 20 percent of all croplands in the U.S. are under no-till management. It reduces soil erosion by avoiding tilling year after year, which leads to soil getting washed away into lakes and rivers.

(Source: *EurekAlert*)

Giant sea snail plan to rescue Barrier Reef

Coral eating starfish are seen in Australia's Great Barrier Reef, which has lost more than half its coral cover in the past 27 years due to storms, poisonous starfish and bleaching linked to climate change

A giant starfish-eating snail could be unleashed to help save the Great Barrier Reef, officials said Monday, with a trial underway to breed thousands of the rare species.

Predatory crown-of-thorns starfish, which munch coral, are naturally-occurring but have proliferated due to pollution and agricultural run-off at the struggling World Heritage-listed ecosystem.

Their impact has been profound with a major study of the 2,300-kilometer (1,400-mile) long reef's health in 2012 showing coral cover halved over the past 27 years, with 42 percent of the damage attributed to the pest.

Now Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) research has shown they avoid areas where the Pacific triton sea snail — also known as the giant triton — is present.

The snails — which can grow to half a meter—have a well-developed sense of smell and can hunt their prey by scent alone.

Research showed they were particularly fond of crown-of-thorns, but only eat a few each week, and with the snail almost hunted to extinction for their shells, there are not many left.

This led the Australian government to on Monday announce funding to research breeding them.

The "possibilities the triton breeding project opens up are exciting," said Queensland federal MP Warren Entsch.

Giant tritons held at AIMS have laid numerous tear-drop-shaped egg capsules, with over 100,000 swimming larvae hatching in the last month. But they are so rare, almost nothing is known about their life cycle. (Source: *phys.org*)

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Hackers targeted 21 U.S. states during 2016 election

The United States officials have told election authorities in 21 states that hackers targeted their systems before last year's presidential election.

The notification came roughly a year after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) first said states were targeted by hacking efforts possibly connected to Russia, prompting criticism by some politicians for the delayed disclosure.

The states that told The Associated Press news agency that they had been targeted included some key political battlegrounds, such as Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.

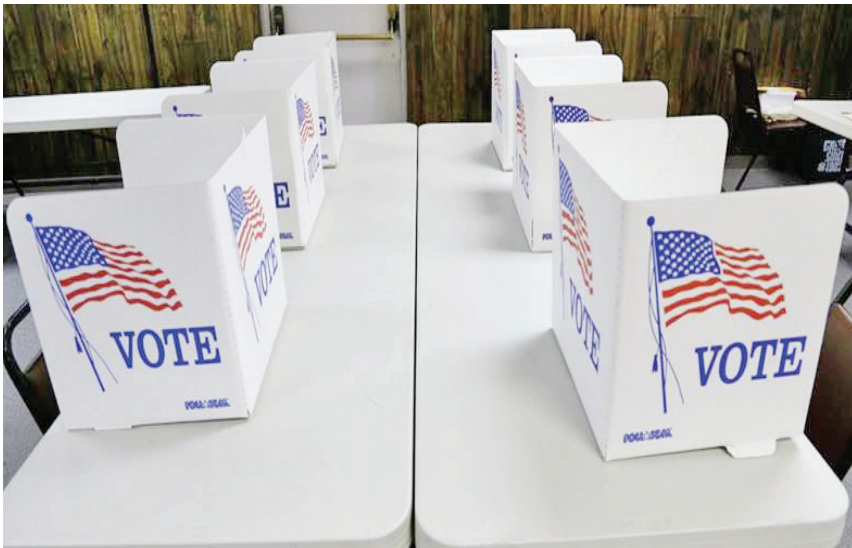
The other states that confirmed they were contacted were Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Washington.

Being targeted does not mean that sensitive voter data was manipulated or results were changed.

Even so, the widespread nature of the attempts and the year-long lag before the notification from Homeland Security raised concerns among some election officials and politicians.

For many states, Friday's phone calls were the first official confirmation of whether their states were on the list - even though state election officials across the country have been calling for months for the federal government to share information about any hacks, as have members of Congress.

"It is completely unacceptable that it has taken DHS over a year to inform our



office of Russian scanning of our systems, despite our repeated requests for information," California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, a Democrat, said in a statement. "The practice of withholding critical information from elections officials is a detriment to the security of our elections and our democracy."

Virginia Senator Mark Warner, the top Democrat on a committee that is investigating Russian meddling in last year's election, has been pushing the department for months to reveal the identities of the targeted states.

He said states need such information in real time so they can strengthen their cyber defences.

"We have to do better in the fu-

ture," he said.

Homeland Security said it recognizes that state and local officials should be kept informed about cybersecurity risks to election infrastructure.

"We are working with them to refine our processes for sharing this information while protecting the integrity of investigations and the confidentiality of system owners," it said in a statement.

■ Links to Russia

The government did not say who was behind the hacking attempts or provide details about what had been sought, though local media reported that some states were told by officials that they believe agents of the Russian government were behind the attempted hacks.

Election officials in several states told The Associated Press that the attempts were linked to Russia.

Federal officials said that in most of the 21 states the targeting was preparatory activity such as scanning computer systems.

The targets included voter registration systems but not vote tallying software. Officials said there were some attempts to compromise networks but most were unsuccessful.

Only Illinois reported that hackers had succeeded in breaching its voter systems.

Other states said their cybersecurity efforts turned back efforts to get to crucial information.

Earlier this year, a leaked National Security Agency report detailed that hackers obtained information from a company that provided software to manage voter registrations in eight states.

The May report said hackers sent phishing emails to 122 local election officials just before the November 2016 election in an attempt to break into their systems.

The latest disclosure to the states comes as a special council investigates whether there was any coordination during the 2016 presidential campaign between Russia and associates of Donald Trump.

Trump, a Republican who defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton in the presidential election, has called the Russia story a hoax.

He has said Russian President Vladimir Putin "vehemently denied" the conclusions of numerous American intelligence agencies.

(Source: AP)

Polls close in New Zealand neck-and-neck election

New Zealanders went to the polls on Saturday after the most hotly contested race in recent history, with changes to the country's openness to migration and trade and the central bank's approach to monetary policy among the possible outcomes.

The ruling National Party and opposition Labor Party had been neck-and-neck in opinion polls and will likely have to rely on minor parties to form a coalition in New Zealand's German-style proportional representation voting system.

Polls closed at 07:00 GMT and the day was eerily quiet until then, with the election hardly featuring in the domestic news due to stringent restrictions on campaigning on Election Day.

Early results on Saturday evening showed the National Party had 46.5 percent of the votes with 70 percent of the ballots counted. The Labor Party accounted for 35.5 percent and its possible coalition partner, the Green Party, had 5.9 percent of the vote.

A complete preliminary count was expected by 11:30 GMT, but the final result, which would also include ballots cast by New Zealanders overseas, would not be released until October 7.

A record 1.2 million votes were cast in advance, but neither major party was expected to win an outright majority. Negotiations with minor parties mean it could



be weeks before a new government emerges.

Prime Minister Bill English, who oversaw a disastrous election loss for the National Party in 2002, became leader last year after his predecessor John Key's shock resignation. His party has held power for almost a decade.

Jacinda Ardern, the charismatic 37-year-old who only became Labor Party leader in August, is vying to become New Zealand's third female prime minister and the youngest in modern history.

English and Ardern were expected to maintain fiscal prudence but will probably differ on monetary policy,

trade and immigration. That will likely have implications for the New Zealand dollar, the world's 11th-most traded currency in 2016.

Ardern wants to add employment to the central bank's inflation-targeting mandate, which could mean more stimulatory monetary policy.

She also wants to cut migration and renegotiate some trade deals, which some worry could hurt two key sources of growth for New Zealand's small, outward-looking economy.

"Special votes", which include ballots from New Zealanders overseas and those who vote outside their home constituencies, will be released on October 7.

These accounted for around 12 percent of the vote in the 2014 election and could have a considerable effect.

Ardern has called on New Zealanders to ditch "auto-pilot" governance, hoping to ride a global wave of change that most recently propelled France's Emmanuel Macron to become its youngest head of state since Napoleon.

She turned her flagging party's fortunes around in a matter of weeks but the National Party, which has pinned its re-election bid on the economy's strong performance, has regained ground in recent opinion polls.

(Source: agencies)

Iraqi forces retake 3 more villages from ISIL near Hawijah

Press TV — Iraqi government forces, backed by fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU/ Hashd al-Sha'abi), have retaken control over three villages from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists as part of a multi-pronged offensive to dislodge the terrorists from their stronghold in the northern city of Hawijah and surrounding areas.

The media bureau of the PMU, announced in a statement on Saturday that the pro-government volunteer fighters had freed al-Haliwah al-Wusta village west of Hawijah, located 45 kilometers

west of Kirkuk, on Saturday and were advancing towards the villages of Upper Haliwah, Lower Haliwah, Hatirah and al-Khaz.

Earlier in the day, fighters from the 11th Brigade of the PMU reclaimed control over the villages of Karroud and Jarbardan.

Elsewhere in the northern province of Salahuddin, Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters and Interior Ministry's elite rapid response forces managed to liberate Upper Subaih village on the outskirts of the town of Shirqat, located some 300 kilom-

eters north of the capital, Baghdad.

ISIL executes 27 members for fleeing Anbar clashes

Meanwhile, the ISIL Takfiri terrorist group has reportedly executed more than two dozen of its own members on charges of fleeing the battlefield in Iraq's embattled western province of Anbar.

A local source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said ISIL terrorists killed 27 members of the outfit, among them a high-ranking commander identified by the nom de guerre Abu Dajana, after accusing them of escaping clashes with

Iraqi government forces and their allies in the town of Anah, Arabic-language Baghdad Today news website reported.

The extremists were executed in the eastern Syrian city of Abu Kamal near the border with Iraq.

On Thursday, Iraqi security forces completely liberated Anah from the ISIL terrorist group.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced on September 19 the start of the operation to clear the entire western province of Anbar from last remaining ISIL terrorists.

Supporters of French far-left opposition hold anti-Macron rally in Paris

Supporters of France's far-left opposition party have staged a protest rally in Paris to voice their discontent with sweeping labor reforms by President Emmanuel Macron, who has suffered a sharp decline in popularity ratings.

The Saturday rallies, organized by Jean-Luc Melenchon, the leader of the radical leftist France Unbowed party, came a day after the French president signed into law his signature reforms that reportedly simplify employment rules and make hiring and firing easier.

The opposition party and other labor unions say Macron's changes give employers more flexibility to negotiate pay and conditions with their workers while reducing the costs of firing staff.

The French president, however, believes that the labor reforms, along with an overhaul of unemployment benefits and a training plan for jobless people

to be set up next year, will boost economy and bring the unemployment rate down from the current long-standing 9.5 percent.

The latest rally follows a series of demonstrations across the European country as the labor overhaul is the central pillar in Macron's promises to create jobs and boost economy.

Nationwide rallies against Macron's labor reforms last week ended with police firing tear gas in some cities.

The protests, backed by the powerful, hard-left CGT trade union, saw protesters take to the streets in the second round of public opposition to the long-touted changes in the much-revered labor code, which has protected the rights of employees in France.

Macron's critics see the changes to the labor code as a "social coup d'etat." (Source: agencis)

German protesters heckle Merkel at final campaign rally before polls open

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been booed and heckled by right-wing protesters while speaking at her final campaign rally in Munich two days before the polls that will likely put her in office for a fourth term.

"With whistling and yelling, one will surely not shape Germany's future," Merkel said at the Friday rally as the protesters began shouting and whistling even before she starts her address.

The loud noise, however, did not prevent the German leader from making her prepared 30-minute remarks.

The incident did not mark the first time Merkel was disrupted by right-wing protesters during her campaign trail for the September 24 election. Earlier in the month, the chancellor was grazed by a thrown tomato at a campaign rally in Heidelberg, though it did

not cause her to lose her composure.

Polls suggest that the 63-year-old Merkel will be re-elected as Germany's chancellor for the fourth time on Sunday, a post she has held since 2005, owing to what observers regard at her centrist policies.

Social Democrats Party (SPD) leader and candidate for Chancellor Martin Schulz

This is while the far-right and anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) appears set to win seats in the national parliament for the first time this year and may even emerge as the country's third-largest party.

Merkel's key rival, SPD's Martin Schulz, is campaigning on reforms, increased spending on schools and addressing gender disparities, which he accused Merkel of ignoring.

(Source: agencies)

Suicide soaring among U.S. female veterans: Government study

Press TV — American female veterans are committing suicide at more than twice the rate of civilian women, a United States government study has found.

The survey released by the U.S. Department for Veteran Affairs on Friday, showed that the ratio of women veterans who took their own lives increased from 1.88 in 2013 to 2.15 in 2014 compared to non-veteran females.

The report's findings were based on data gathered from 50 U.S. states along with Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia and analyzed more than 55 million people who left the U.S. military between 1970 and 2014.

"These findings are deeply concerning, which is why I made suicide prevention my top clinical priority," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin.

Critics blasted Shulkin's agency for attempting to throw the "suicide stats out the back door" by releasing the report at "the close of business" in late Friday, when it was likely to go unnoticed by most news outlets.

The new VA report confirmed previous studies that suicide rate among veteran women had been steadily rising over the past decade. The age-adjusted rate of suicide has shown a 24-percent increase for both men and women veterans between 1999 and 2014.

The number of sexual assault reports in the U.S. military hit a record high last year, the Pentagon says.

While in general more American men commit suicide than women, the rate of suicide among female veterans has outgrown that of male veterans during the same period.

■ Military sexual trauma

While all soldiers are deemed vulnerable to experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, financial constraints and injuries in warfare, female soldiers in the U.S. military face more serious challenges.

Female U.S. military personnel experience more instances of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and rape in the military compared to men, an issue that leads to mental health issues, or "military sexual trauma," to borrow the words of Letrice Titus, herself a veteran.

The systematic discrimination against women in the US military came to light in 2014, after groups of female veterans sued the VA for denying claims by thousands of women who said they had suffered PTSD after enduring harassment during their service.

Is the Syrian war about to end?

L→ Idlib is also important for the YPG because it was their target province to proceed to reach the Mediterranean Sea. It's quite interesting that the group announced this following the agreement of the de-escalation zones signed in May in Astana. However, by this final decision, Afrin is surrounded on the three sides and hence the YPG forces are unable to move down to the South. Through the Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkey had halted YPG to join the cantons of Afrin and Kobane by taking control of the region in between. Taking Idlib under the authority of the Turkish, Russian and Iranian observers, is certainly a big blow for this group. The primary reason for the U.S. to take Idlib seriously is that the region is Al-Qaeda's closest spot to the West. Moreover, the U.S. does not consider Al-Qaeda's existence as a temporary but rather a long-term struggle. Besides, Idlib is home to some U.S.-backed opposition groups that function along with them during clashes.

Given the significance for the involved parties, before the Astana agreement was finalized, there were rumors that some operations would take place in Idlib either by Turkey or the U.S. or Russia. Even analysts from Turkey were contemplating it would meet Turkey's best interests if it initiated simultaneous operations on Idlib and Afrin. Yet, this latest improvement led to different steps to be taken. While the Russian military and Chechen leader Kadyrov's police forces will be deployed on the eastern part of Idlib, Turkish troops will be stationed on the western parts to sustain stability in the province. Since the contract instructs "rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access", international humanitarian aid will continue to be delivered via the Turkish border of Cilvegözü to the estimated 2.5 million people who inhabit the four de-escalation zones. Additionally, within the same memorandum, parties also came to a conclusion concerning the need to take confidence building measures such as the exchange of prisoners and corpses as well as identification of missing people.

While this positive development takes place, a new project that would jeopardize the territorial integrity of Iraq is in effect. The Northern Iraq Regional Government insists on an independence poll to take place on September 25th despite strong rejections from the regional countries including Iran and Turkey. Given the current situation in the region, another national breakdown is the last thing anyone needs. Not pleased with this, the Iraqi Supreme Court declared the ruling concerning the preparations of the referendum to be halted after receiving several "requests to stop the referendum." This is definitely a sound decision for the well-being of the region because such fragmentations will generate new conflicts since the ultimate plan for the PKK and its affiliates is to form a communist state consisting of Kurdish minorities located in Turkey, Iran and Syria.

Only the regional players can provide the security in the Middle East. Powers participating from the outside give priority to their own interests. Therefore, it is essential for the three guarantors to be in consensus and harmony as much as possible. Stability can also be obtained via our own power, and sustaining the unitary structure of the states is of utmost importance. Therefore, the final memorandum of Astana beginning with the guarantors' determination to protect "the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic" is noteworthy. The PKK is playing with fire by trying to create an "autonomous Kurdish state" in Northern Syria alongside the Turkish border. Nevertheless, Turkey, Iran and Russia will never allow the region to be fragmented whatsoever similar to defeating the plots formulated inside Syria and succeeding by taking solid steps on the way to attain peace.

Trump’s son plays for D.C. United



Can Donald Trump’s son make American soccer great again?

Just when we thought Christian Pulisic was U.S. Soccer’s wonder boy, here comes the president’s youngest son Barron to steal the spotlight.

Barron is currently playing for D.C. United’s Under-12 team, where he is listed as a midfielder and has played in four matches so far.

A youth soccer reporter first noticed that Barron was on D.C. United’s youth roster, and texted out the information that was later tweeted.

The news was confirmed after seeing Barron’s profile on U.S. Soccer Development Academy site.

U.S. teenagers Pulisic and Weston McKennie may be playing in the Bundesliga, but Barron Trump is now officially the most famous player in the U.S. Soccer pipeline.

(Source: Fox Sports)

Leaked emails claim Liverpool told Barcelona to ‘stop harassing Philippe Coutinho’

Barcelona’s dogged summer pursuit of Philippe Coutinho has been revealed in a series of email exchanges by German publication Der Spiegel.

The Spanish giants were desperate to add the Brazilian to their ranks following the high-profile departure of Neymar to PSG, though Liverpool held firm in one of the longest running sagas of the summer.

In the leaked information, details reveal Barcelona had guaranteed the player €115million (£102m) for a five-year contract, with €10m (£8.9m) promised to his agent should a transfer fee for the player be negotiated under the £100m mar

The astronomical earnings promised to the player would have placed him within the elite bracket at the club, between former Liverpool team-mate Luis Suarez and the Spanish stalwarts of the team including Gerard Pique and Andres Iniesta.

Working out at around €23m (£20m) per year before tax, the weekly earnings of the player would have comfortably doubled his current £150,000 per week deal at Liverpool – a sum which makes him the club’s highest earner.

The information also shows Liverpool’s persistence in fending off the aggressive Spaniards, standing firm on their stance of not allowing their prized asset to leave.

In an email, Sporting Director Michael Edwards wrote to Oscar Grau, the Chairman of the Board of Management of FC Barcelona, stating clearly: ‘Unfortunately, Philippe can not be sold at any price and, as you know, he has recently extended his contract with us.’

Undeterred Barca returned with a significantly improved offer – a fixed up front bid of €90m (£79.7m) with €40m (£35.4m) in add-ons.

A further reply from Liverpool chief Edwards stated: ‘I would kindly ask you to refrain from showing Philippe both privately and publicly... no sum will lead us to reverse our decision.’

(Source: Daily Mail)

Ulreich shoulders blame as Bayern colleagues rally around stand-in keeper

Sven Ulreich has apologised for an error which cost Bayern Munich a win against Wolfsburg, with senior team-mates Thomas Muller and Mats Hummels offering the goalkeeper their support.

Manuel Neuer’s broken foot means Ulreich will deputise in the Bundesliga champions’ goal for the remainder of the year and, after keeping a clean sheet at Schalke, his efforts were less successful on Friday.

With Bayern 2-0 to the good, Ulreich allowed Max Arnold’s dipping free-kick through his grasp, with Wolfsburg snatching a point thanks to Daniel Didavi’s goal seven minutes from time.

The draw keeps Bayern in second place behind Borussia Dortmund and Ulreich held his hands up for the error.

“I made the wrong decision,” he told reporters. “The ball fluttered. I wanted to tip it over the crossbar as it looked like the ball would arrive a bit higher. Then I did not use my second hand.

“It was a clear goalkeeper mistake. I’m sorry for the lads and the team.”

Bayern face a tough trip to face Paris Saint-Germain in a blockbuster Champions League clash on Wednesday, and Muller backed Ulreich to bounce back against Neymar, Edinson Cavani, Kylian Mbappe and co.

Muller said: “Of course he’ll worry about it. But as I know Ulle, he won’t play with shaky hands in Paris.

“The team supports him. And if you see him in training, nobody has to be worried.”

Hummels added his support: “I’ve played against him since I was 12 years old. Everyone makes mistakes.

“Sven played superb at Schalke, as well before this season. It’s annoying but that happens.”

(Source: Four Four Two)

Life ban for winner of ‘dirtiest race in history’

Former Olympic 1500m champion Asli Cakir Alptekin has been banned for life after a third doping offence.

In 2015, the 32-year-old was stripped of her 2012 Olympic and European titles and suspended for eight years by the Turkish Athletics Federation.

She returned this year after the ban was halved and its start date backdated to 2013, but has since reoffended.

“We are never, ever going to allow doping,” said Turkish Athletics Federation chief Fatih Cintimar.

Six of the first nine finishers in the women’s 1500m final at the 2012 Olympics have been given drugs bans, leading some to refer to it as the “dirtiest race in history”.

Straight after the race, Britain’s Lisa Dobriskey, who finished 10th, told BBC Radio 5 live: “I don’t believe I’m competing on a level playing field.”

Cakir Alptekin previously served a two-year ban following a positive test at the 2004 World Junior Championships.

She finished 11th in the European Champion Clubs Cup Cross Country event in Portugal in February, helping Uskudar Belediyespor win the title.

The nature of her latest offence has not been made public.

‘The dirtiest race in history’ - how they finished

■ 1st Asli Cakir Alptekin, Turkey – four minutes 23.23 seconds

Had served a two-year ban prior to winning gold, and only finished a four-year suspension earlier this year. Now banned for life.

■ 2nd Gamze Bulut, Turkey – 4:10.40

Set a personal best of 4:01.18 in the semi-final. Prior to that year, her personal best was 4:18.23. Serving a four-year suspension until May 2020.

■ 3rd Maryam Yusuf Jamal, Bahrain – 4:10.74



Has never failed a drugs test. Prior to winning Olympic bronze in 2012, she was the world champion in 2007 and 2009.

■ 4th Tatyana Tomashova, Russia – 4:10.90

Prior to the 2012 Games, the 2003 and 2005 world champion had served a ban of more than two years for manipulating samples before a doping test.

■ 5th Abeba Aregawi, Ethiopia – 4:11.03

Former world champion, who has competed for Sweden since 2012, was provisionally suspended last year after she tested positive for meldonium, though that was later lifted.

■ 6th Shannon Rowbury, United States – 4:11.26

Has never failed a drugs test. Her most impressive performance to date came in July 2015, when she

broke the American record that had stood for nearly 32 years.

■ 7th Natallia Kareiva, Belarus – 4:11.58

Was banned in 2014 for a biological passport abnormality and her Olympic result was voided.

■ 8th Lucia Klocova, Slovakia – 4:12.64

Has never failed a drugs test. Competing in her third Olympics, she had run the 800m in the previous two.

■ 9th Ekaterina Kostetskaya, Russia – 4:12.90

Was given a two-year ban in 2014 for violating an IAAF rule against “use/attempted use of a prohibited substance/method” at the 2011 World Championships.

(Source: BBC)

French Olympic Committee chief ‘cannot imagine’ 2018 boycott



French Olympic Committee President Denis Masseglia “cannot imagine” a

situation that will lead to the country boycotting next year’s Winter Olympics in South Korea amid growing concerns over tensions in North Korea.

France Sports Minister Laura Flessel said on Thursday that if the crisis deepened and “our security cannot be assured, the French Olympics team will stay at home”, before adding “we’re not there yet”.

“If the Games take place, I cannot imagine that France would not be there,” Masseglia told Reuters by telephone on Saturday.

“If the Games take place it means that the IOC (International Olympic Committee) believes security conditions are met.”

North Korea leader Kim Jong Un said on Friday the North would consider the “highest level of headline countermeasures in history” against the United States in response to President Donald Trump’s threat to destroy the North.

The Games, scheduled for Feb. 9-25 next year in Pyeongchang, will take place just 80 km (50 miles) from the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, the world’s most-heavily

armed border.

The two countries remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended with a truce and not a peace treaty.

Masseglia, however, has no doubt that the IOC will provide a safe Games.

“It’s the biggest sport organization in the world, monitoring the biggest sport event in the world,” he added, before turning his attention to the 2024 Summer Olympics being hosted by France.

“If the IOC says that the Games are being held, we don’t have to doubt them. And let’s remember we are in a position where we have to deliver the 2024 Games.”

Masseglia added that in a worst case scenario, an “Olympic truce” would certainly prevail.

“Anyway, if there is a conflict, obviously we won’t be thinking about the Games,” he said. South Korea President Moon Jae-in said on Wednesday the country was pushing to ensure security at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

In a meeting with International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach, Moon said South Korea was well aware of the concerns.

(Source: Reuters)

Team Europe jumps ahead in inaugural Laver Cup



Team Europe swept the singles matches at the inaugural Laver Cup on Friday before Australian Nick Kyrgios and American Jack Sock took down top-ranked Rafael Nadal and Tomas Berdych in the doubles to salvage a point for Team World.

The Europeans, the clear favorites with five of the world’s top seven players, jumped ahead 3-1 on the opening day of the three-day competition that is aimed at injecting a new jolt of excitement into tennis but joins a crowded calendar.

Playing on a sleek black hardcourt at Prague’s O2 Arena, Croatia’s Marin Cilic, Austria’s Dominic Thiem and Germany’s Alexander Zverev got the European team off to an excellent start, winning all three of their matches.

That set Nadal and hometown Czech Berdych up for a clean sweep with the crowd behind them, but the pair started slowly and were eventually beaten 6-3 6-7(7) 1-0 (10-7) with the encounter decided in a 10-point match tie break.

“The first set they were better than us, but later it was close. We started to return more and be more aggressive,” Nadal said. “I am just happy the way the

day went... Happy to go to bed 3-1.”

Cilic beat American Frances Tiafoe 7-6 7-6 in the first match and Thiem swatted aside a challenge from another American John Isner 6-7(15) 7-6(2) 1-0(10-7).

Zverev then fought off Denis Shapovalov 7-6(3) 7-6(5), but all eyes on the first day were on Nadal.

The Spaniard headlines the event with his long-time rival and world number two Roger Federer, who helped conceive the competition with his sports management company Team8.

That raises the chance of the two greats playing together over the weekend with lineups announced each day.

Team Europe are overwhelming favorites against Team World, which has no player inside the top 15 and no grand slam titles, compared to a combined 36 for the European side.

The tournament, which will rotate between Europe and the rest of the world each year, features three singles and one doubles match each day. A win was worth one point on Friday and will count for two on Saturday and three on Sunday.

(Source: CNN)

Bayern legend rips James Rodriguez



“James has the advantage that he has a good connection with his coach.

“Carlo put him in a difficult situation because there was already criticism of him. For a player this is a big

Bayern Munich playmaker James Rodriguez is a “typical No. 10 who doesn’t like tracking back”, according to former midfielder Michael Ballack.

The Colombia international linked up with the Bundesliga champions over the summer in an initial loan move from Real Madrid which includes an option for a permanent switch.

He has faced criticism since his arrival at the Allianz Arena, with questions being asked of his ability to adapt his game to meet the demands of life in the German top-flight.

Ballack believes that is down to his mentality as a creative influence, but believes the 26-year-old will be given time to get things right as he has the full support of manager Carlo Ancelotti.

The former Bayern midfielder told Bild: “He is a giant footballer, but he still has problems with the pace of the game.

“Against Schalke his pace going backwards improved. He is just a typical No. 10 who doesn’t like tracking back.

advantage if you have a coach who is standing beside you when you’re being questioned.”

James was given just five minutes of action towards the end of Bayern’s 2-2 draw with Wolfsburg on Friday, as they squandered a two-goal lead to be held on home soil.

His next opportunity to impress could come against big-spending Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday, with Ancelotti’s side heading to the French capital to face his former club in Champions League competition.

Ballack believes that contest offers Bayern a chance to prove their strength against a formidable continental foe, with it up to the likes of Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery to show that they can mix it with PSG stars Neymar and Kylian Mbappe.

“For the Bavarians it is a chance to determine to where they stand”, added the ex-Germany international.

“Above all, the attacking unit of Paris will want to show that they can rightly play for the Champions League title.

(Source: Goal)

Taremi banned for four months by FIFA

S P O R T S Persepolis and Iran national football team striker Mehdi Taremi will serve a four-month ban after FIFA found he had breached his contract.

Taremi had been locked in a contract dispute with Turkish club Çaykur Rizespor dating back to June 2016, when the player reached an agreement to join the club and later returned to Persepolis.

Persepolis have been also banned from signing players for the next two transfer windows.

Moreover, Çaykur Rizespor are seeking 789,500 euros in compensation from Persepolis for breach of transfer rules.

FIFA ruled in favor of the Turkish club and imposed the ban.

It's a massive blow for Persepolis ahead of crucial match against Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia in the first leg of the AFC Champions League semifinals.

If Persepolis qualify for the final matches, Taremi will also miss them.

The Iranian giants will face Al Hilal on Tuesday in Abu Dhabi, the UAE.

Iran's Deputy Sports Minister Mohammad Reza Davarzani said they will stand alongside Persepolis and will help the team to solve the problem.

Persepolis can file an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).



FIBA Asia Champions Cup: Petrochimi beaten by BC Astana



BC Astana broke into the win column of the FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2017 after outlasting Petrochimi Iran on Day 2.

Petrochimi had a strong start in this game, scoring the first 11 points of the game, controlling the tempo and leading by 9 after the first half. They looked well on their way to an easy win, but the Kazakh side regained their wits in the second half. BC Astana leaned on foreign players Justin Carter and Anthony Clemmons to chip into their deficit and eventually take the lead in the fourth period after a three-pointer by Rustam Yargaliev.

Both squads traded baskets in the

final frame until a late 5-point bulge gave the Kazakhs some breathing room. A triple by Navide Niktash put Petrochimi right back in the game, but BC Astana outshot their foes from the free throw line to end the contest.

Carter hit 3 three-pointers to finish with 24 points for BC Astana, while Clemmons dropped a dozen points. Big man Alexandr Zhigulin also did well with 10 points off the bench.

Willie Warren paced Petrochimi with 17 points, but fellow foreign player Mirza Begic underplayed with only 2 points in 21 minutes.

(Source: FIBA)

Chess players win three gold medals at Asian Championship for Disabled



Press TV — Iranian visually-challenged and –impaired chess players have demonstrated impressive talents at the first edition of Asian Championship for Disabled, and managed to collect three gold medals at the continental sporting event.

Seddigheh Sargazi participated in the tournament C contests for adults, and lifted the trophy following seven compelling rounds, the Chess Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran website reported.

Amir Rabbi finished champion in the boys' under-12 section, and received the gold medal. Omid Karimi, another representative from the Islamic Republic of Iran, claimed the top position in the boys' under-18 division.

The first edition of Asian Champi-

onship for Disabled kicked off in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on September 14, and wrapped up on September 22, 2017.

The tournament brought together more than 100 male and female chess players from 10 Asian countries, namely Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and one oceanic nation Australia.

The Chess Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran had dispatched a six-member delegation, comprised of Seddigheh Sargazi, Amir Rabbi, Omid Karimi, Mohammad Dousti, Mohammad and Erfan Alizadeh, to the competitions.

Sadat Mansouri and Ma'soumeh Fallah Tafti managed the Iranian visually-challenged and –impaired chess players.

Iran, Japan book semi-final spots in Ashgabat

Ashgabat: Islamic Republic of Iran stormed into the last four of the Ashgabat 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games men's futsal after beating Thailand 10-4 in the quarter-finals on Saturday.

Shahzad Mozafar's men took their tally to 43 goals in the tournament as they swept past a Thailand side who couldn't reproduce their opening half performance.

IR Iran, who are unbeaten in the tournament, were down by a goal in the second minute as Thailand took the lead through Jirawat Sornwichian.

The defending champions equalised in the fifth from Mohammadreza Sangsefidi's strike. But Thailand responded four minutes later through Sorasak Phoonjungreed.

Abolghasem Orouji hit back in the 12th to level the score at 2-2 but both teams were left with a man down in the 13th minute after Thailand's Kritsada Wongkaeo and Sangsefidi picked up their second yellow cards.

IR Iran however, never looked back after that, scoring four more before halftime.

"We are really good at playing three-versus-three, and especially today, we showed our skills at dribbling, we were faster than them and we took advantage of it at the one-on-one occasions," said Ali Asghar Hassan



during the three-versus-three part of the match following a red card for each team.

Goals from Ahmad Esmaeilpour (14th), Ali Asghar Hassan (18th), Tayebibidgoli Hossein (18th) and Farhad Tavakoli (19th) gave Mozafar's men a 6-2 lead at the break.

In the second period, IR Iran were in cruise control, Hossein completed his hat-trick with strikes in the 24th and 29th minutes. Javid Mahdi took his tally to eight in the tournament with a goal in the 29th.

Moslem Oladghobad hit the 10th for IR Iran in the 28th minute while Sornwichian and Apiwat Chaemcharoen added to Thailand's tally late in the match as Mozafar's men ran away with the victory.

"For the first 12-14 minutes we played very well. Then we had chances. After the red card everything changed, said Thailand coach Jose Maria Pazos Mendez after Kritsada Wongkaeo received a 13th-minute red card.

"We lost our concentration in three to four minutes. The game was over. It's not an excuse but the referee allowed too much to them.

"They hit three or four of our players with elbows. They have cuts on their lips," he added.

Yuki Murota's brace steered Japan into the semi-finals after beating Jordan 4-1 in a one-sided match on Saturday.

Both teams were 1-1 at halftime. Murota finding the net first for Japan in the third minute. However, Jordan's Ali Alkhazaleh equalised in the 11th to even the score.

The 2013 runners-up, picked up the tempo in the second half knocking in three goals through, Koto Uematsu (28th), Murota (35th) and Masaya Hashimoto (38th) to seal the win for Bruno Jose Garcia Formoso's men.

(Source: the-AFC)

Wozniacki stuns Muguruza, advances to Tokyo final

Defending champion Caroline Wozniacki crushed new world number one Garbine Muguruza 6-2 6-0 on Saturday to advance to the final of the Pan Pacific Open as the Dane remained on course for a third title at the Tokyo tournament.

The third seed rallied from a set down to win her previous two matches but the 27-year-old wasted no time seizing control of her semi-final against Wimbledon champion Muguruza.

The Dane broke the top seeded Spaniard's opening service game and repeated the feat twice more to cruise through the first set.

A stunned Muguruza, who had not lost a set in the previous rounds, was unable to gain any momentum and was shut out for the remainder of a match that was wrapped up in exactly one hour.

"I thought I played a good match today and stayed aggressive and served well," Wozniacki told reporters, noting that playing tough opponents in her previous matches had helped toughen her up.

"They played very aggressive and went for their chance. So it was very difficult and today I just managed to start strong," added Wozniacki, who will contest her seventh final of the season after losing her previous six.

Muguruza, who was chasing her first title since being crowned world number one this month, said she was "very disappointed" but would not dwell on the loss and instead focus on upcoming tournaments.

"Today maybe my best tennis wasn't there. She played good and I'm not

going to think a lot about this," the 23-year-old said.

"That's it."

In Sunday's final, Wozniacki will face Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, who earlier withstood a furious rally to beat Angelique Kerber 6-0 6-7(4) 6-4 to advance.

The match appeared headed for a blowout after 26-year-old Pavlyuchenkova, seeking her third title this year, took the first eight games against the former world number one.

However, Kerber dug in and broke Pavlyuchenkova's serve in the third game of the second set before the 29-year-old German forced a tiebreaker and stole the second set.

A rattled Pavlyuchenkova dropped the first three games of the final set but

regained her composure to win six of the final seven and notch the victory.

"It was really a tough match today, another three setter," Pavlyuchenkova said. "Angelique is a former number one so you never expect an easy match with her. She's such a great fighter."

Kerber said she struggled to find her feet at the start of the match.

"In the first set I was completely not in my rhythm, not in my game, and she started very well," she said. "I tried to turn it around and I won the second set. So in the end, it was still a good match."

Wozniacki leads Pavlyuchenkova 5-1 in their head-to-head meetings, although the pair have not faced each other since 2012.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran's NPC sympathizes with Mexico quake victims

Paralympic.ir — Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) offered sympathy to the families of victims of a strong earthquake that struck central Mexico on Tuesday and killed about 200 people.

In a message on Saturday, Iran's NPC Secretary General Masoud Ashrafi expressed sympathy with the Mexican people affected by the earthquake.

According to the official announcement of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), due to the exception situation in Mexico City because of the disaster earthquake, the "Mexico City 2017 World Para Powerlifting Championships" has been postponed to a later date.

Regrettably, the sports delegation of I. R. Iran Para Powerlifting Team will not fly to Mexico.



Iran book AFC U-16 Championship 2018 ticket

Iran powered their way into the AFC U-16 Championship 2018 Malaysia after a 2-1 win over 10-man Afghanistan in a Group C tie at the Enghelab Stadium on Friday.

Iran went ahead in the 26th minute through Mahdi Seyed. Amir Jafari added the second for Iran in the 69th minute as Afghanistan struggled to find a breakthrough.

Afghanistan's Esmatullah Kazimi was sent off in the 85th minute for a second yellow card.

Mohammad Amin Nezami put a goal back for Afghanistan from the penalty spot in stoppage time.

The win means Iran – who are on nine points - are assured of top spot irrespective of what happens in its final match against Kyrgyz Republic on Sunday as only Afghanistan can achieve nine points, the-AFC.com wrote.

The 2018 AFC U-16 Championship will take place in Malaysia between 20 September and 7 October 2018.

A total of 16 teams will play in the tournament.

(Source: the-AFC)

Weightlifter grabs bronze in Ashgabat 2017 tournament

IRNA — Iranian weightlifter Ali Miri in the weight category of 85 kg snatched bronze medal in the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games which is underway in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Miri registering 160 kg record in snatch and 201 kg in clean-and-jerk section received bronze medal.

The 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games is underway with the attendance of 49 countries from Asia and Pacific in Ashgabat.

Iranian squad, including 214 athletes (115 male and 66 female) attended the event.

Iranian athletes participated in twenty fields namely, futsal, table tennis, kickboxing, Muay Thai, Sambo, Kurash, Jujutsu, bowling, billiards, cycling, track-and-field, swimming, weightlifting, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, Pahlavani wrestling, Alysh, basketball, taekwondo, horse-riding and chess.



Five times the money! Dembele's massive Barcelona contract reportedly leaked

The massive contract that Barcelona handed to 20-year-old Ousmane Dembele this summer has reportedly been seen by German outlet Spiegel, and the numbers involved in the deal make it easy to understand why the youngster decided to make the move, and why Borussia Dortmund were willing to sell.

According to the report, which claims that the outlet received the contract from Football Leaks, the youngster received a contract worth five times what he was earning with the Bundesliga outfit, a whopping €12 million per year, up from the €2.4m he earned per season with BVB.

Dembele's personal deal also reportedly includes the possibility of a €3.3m bonus should the Catalan side win a treble.

The report also alleges that Dembele cost €105m up front, with the possibility of €40m in add-ons. Among those add-ons is an obligation for the Spanish club to pay €5m when the forward reaches each of 25, 50, 75 and 100 matches played.

While the numbers are astounding, Dembele's injury will, at the very least, save Barcelona some money in the short run. With the forward expected to be out until January after tearing his hamstring, it will be difficult for him to reach any of those match numbers before the end of the season.

(Source: Eurosport)

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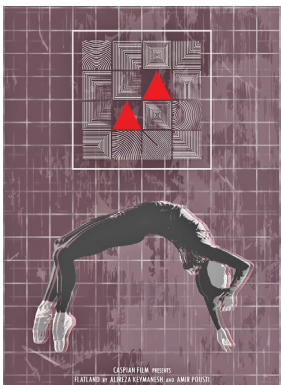
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“Flatland” honored at Russian festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian video art “Flatland”, co-directed by Alireza Keymanesh and Amir Pusti has won the Best Video Art Award at the European Film Festival Mainstream and Underground in Moscow.

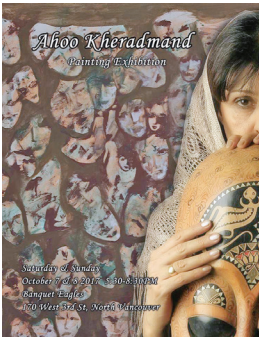


“The Darkest” by Robin Entreinger from France was picked as the best film, while “God Is in the Boat” by Bailey Tom Bailey from the UK was named the best documentary.

The winners of all sections of the festival, which is an online festival, will go on screen during the award ceremony in Moscow on October 7.

Actress Ahu Kheradmand to hang her paintings in Canada

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian actress Ahu Kheradmand will be showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at the Banquet Eagles Hall in Vancouver, Canada.



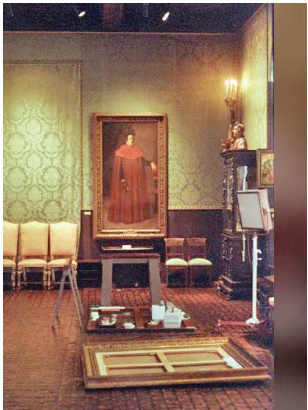
The exhibit, which will be held on October 7 and 8, will display artist's gouache paintings and digital paintings.

Kheradmand previously held painting exhibitions in Toronto, Canada in June 2015 and Rome, Italy in May 2016.

Accused mobster tied to Boston art heist to undergo psychiatric test

BOSTON (Reuters) — An octogenerian alleged mobster who police believe may be able to help solve the largest art heist in U.S. history will undergo a psychiatric evaluation before being sentenced on gun charges, a federal court judge in Connecticut ruled on Friday.

The decision came after Robert Gentile, 81, appeared in court earlier this month for sentencing on charges he pleaded guilty to in April, but claimed to have no memory of entering a plea or of the events involved.



The empty frame of Rembrandt's oil painting “A Lady and Gentleman in Black” lies on the floor and a space on the wall (left) remains bare where the “The Storm on the Sea of Galilee” once hung in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S. on March 21, 1990. (Reuters/Jim Bourg/File Photo)

and Vermeer's “The Concert,” was stolen from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in March 1990.

Gentile has repeatedly denied knowing the whereabouts of any of the art.

During a polygraph test performed amid the Gardner probe, Gentile had an intense reaction when he was shown images of the missing paintings, while he remained calm when shown unrelated artwork, according to a law enforcement source briefed on the test.

The Gardner heist was carried out by two men dressed in police uniforms who apparently overpowered a night security guard who had buzzed them in.

“The defendant's counsel has become increasingly concerned about the defendant's ability to understand the charges against him and assist in his defense,” defense attorney Ryan McGuigan wrote in a motion asking for the competency hearing. “Counsel has also observed that the defendant has been getting dates and facts significantly confused.”

U.S. District Judge Robert Chatigny granted the request without comment on Friday.

Gentile in April had pleaded guilty to charges of illegally selling guns to a felon. His attorney said the charges resulted from a sting operation aimed at pressuring him into providing details on 13 pieces of art stolen in one of the longest unsolved high-profile crimes in Boston's history.

Some \$500 million worth of art, including Rembrandt's “Storm on the Sea of Galilee”

Pictorial record of Arbaeen ritual published in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — A pictorial record of the religious ritual of Arbaeen, which is the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions on Ashura, has recently been published in a book in Tehran.

“The Fortieth” containing photos of the pilgrims flocking to the Iraqi city of Karbala during Arbaeen to visit the shrines of the Imam (AS) and his brother Hazrat Abbas (AS) was unveiled during a ceremony at the Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum on Friday.

The book published by the Shia Art and Culture Institute contains photos by 14 Iranian photographers who have covered the annual ritual from 2009 to 2016. The photos have been captioned by Mohammad-Taqi Ekhtiari.

Ekhtiari, who was attending the unveiling ceremony, said that he has tried to provide information about each photo to make them more attractive.

Jasem Ghazbanpur, Saeid Mahmudi, Mehdi Tirani, Ali Bayat and Masud Zendejruh Kermani are among the photographers whose works are published in the book.

Majid Majidi, the director of the acclaimed movie “Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God”, who was also present at the ceremony, expressed his happiness over the publication of the book.

An exhibition of a selection of the photos is underway at the museum.



Shia Art and Culture Institute director Seyyed Abbas Sohofi (1st L), master of Persian miniature Mahmud Farshchian (3rd R) and Ettelaat daily director Mahmud Doai (1st R) unveil “The Fortieth” at the Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum on September 22, 2017. (Mehr/Asghar Khamseh)

Iran, Mexico to open cultural exhibition in Germany

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iran and Mexico will open Kulturschrank, an exhibition of different cultures of the inhabitants of Braunschweig, at the House of Cultures in the German city on October 27.

A variety of different cultures live together in Braunschweig and the House of Cultures would like to provide a new insight into individual cultures of the inhabitants through the Kulturschrank project, which has been underway since last autumn, the house has announced on its website.

More than 30 people from 16 different cultures are participating in the project.

People from countries such as Iran, Mexico, Indonesia, Haiti, Italy, England, Russia, Poland, Syria, South Korea, China, Turkey and Germany will take part in the



artistic and aesthetic workshops, which are scheduled to be arranged by the organizers.

The results of the art workshops will end up as tactile objects, video material and images that will go on display at the exhibit.

The exhibit will last for one month.

Deemak to perform “The Suitcase and the Lapdog” at Serbian, Ukrainian events

A R T **TEHRAN** — Deemak, an Iranian theater troupe led by director Albert Beigjani, will perform “The Suitcase and the Lapdog” in two international festivals in Serbia and Ukraine.

The puppet show will first go on stage at the Subotica International Festival of Children's Theatre, which will be held in the Serbian city from September 24 to 29.

The theater troupe will then perform the puppet show at the 1st Kiev International Festival of Puppet Theater, Puppet Up, which will run in the Ukrainian capital from September 30 to October 4.

Puppeteers Ramin Kohan and Helen Morsali, who performed the play at the 14th High Fest International Performing



Arts Festival in Yerevan, Armenia in October 2016, will accompany Beigjani during the Serbian and Ukrainian events.

Veteran vocalist Nader Golchin dies at 81

A R T **TEHRAN** — Veteran Iranian vocalist Nader Golchin died at 81 after a long battle with lung cancer at Tehran's Gandhi Hospital on Friday.

He was hospitalized for about one month at the medical center, his daughter Nazanin told the Persian service of ISNA.

Born in the northern Iranian city of Rasht, Golchin collaborated with many distinguished musicians in the traditional Iranian music such as Faramarz Payvar, Farhang Sharif, Parviz Yahaqqi, Ali-Asghar Bahari, Jahangir Malek and Jilil Shahnaz.

The collaboration resulted in the production of many memorable albums, including “Escape” (Goriz) and “Violet's Ringle” (Zolfe Banafsheh), and numerous single songs such as “The



Nader Golchin attends a ceremony organized by the Rade No-Andish Cultural Institute at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on April 27, 2017 to commemorate the veteran Iranian vocalist. (Radiopari/Rojia Hushang)

London's National Gallery prevails in “stolen” Matisse lawsuit: New York judge

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The National Gallery in London on Thursday won the dismissal of a lawsuit in which three grandchildren of a muse of the artist Henri Matisse sought to recover a painting they said was stolen shortly after World War Two.

U.S. District Judge Valerie Caproni said the museum and Great Britain were shielded by sovereign immunity, and the grandchildren waited too long to sue for the return of “Portrait of Greta Moll.”

Oliver Williams and Margarete Green, both of Great Britain, and Iris Filmer, of Germany, had accused the National Gallery of ignoring signs that the 1908 painting might have been stolen, and should not profit from “war-related” theft.

David Rowland, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, declined to comment, saying he had yet to review the decision.

Margarete Moll, known as Greta, sat for 10 three-hour sessions for the painting, which Matisse reworked after seeing a work in Paris by the Italian Renaissance artist Paolo Veronese.

Moll's husband Oskar bought the painting, which was later taken to Germany.

It survived the war, but following Oskar's death in 1947, Greta Moll left it with one of his former art students for safekeeping from looters in Switzerland.

According to the grandchildren, the student absconded with the painting, which then passed through several hands, including the Knoedler gallery in Manhattan and Lefevre gallery in London, before the National Gallery bought it in 1979.

In a 28-page decision, Caproni said the federal Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act did not require the return of the painting.

She noted that a private individual had allegedly stolen it, and said it did not matter that the painting had been displayed and merchandise depicting it had been sold in New York.

Caproni also said the grandchildren “inexcusably delayed” their lawsuit, noting that many people familiar with the painting's history were likely dead, or if living likely suffer from faded memories.

“Plaintiffs have known for decades that the National Gallery possessed the painting,” and yet “took no steps to recover the painting until plaintiffs’ counsel began corresponding with

chise, suggested his feelings were hurt by the sock choice, tweeting a tearful emoji and message: “@JustinTrudeau I thought we were friends? Chewbacca socks?”

Trudeau is a well-known fan of Star Wars, having dressed as Han Solo - with

his wife Sophie Gregoire Trudeau as Princess Leia - in 2015 to trick-or-treat on Halloween with his children.

The Prime Minister's office declined to comment on whether Trudeau's sock choice was causing friction between Star Wars and Star Trek fans.



People shelter under umbrellas as they pass the National Gallery on a rainy day in London, Britain January 02, 2016. (Reuters/Neil Hall)

the National Gallery in 2011,” the judge wrote.

Sarah Andre, a lawyer for the museum, said in an interview: “We are very pleased with the opinion. We are particularly pleased with the district court's recognition that this case does not involve a taking in violation of international law.”