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U.S. cannot zero out Iranian oil export: OPEC governor

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's OPEC governor Hossein Kazempour Ardebili has said the country's rival producers cannot make up for the shortfall resulted from a complete halt in Iranian oil exports, Reuters reported on Friday.

According to the official, U.S. cannot reach its zero export target since the oil market is already tight and "There is no spare capacity anywhere."

Washington is seeking to cut Iranian oil exports to zero by November as it reimposes sanctions, and is encouraging other producers such as Saudi Arabia, other OPEC members and Russia to pump more to meet the shortfall.

In his comments to Reuters, Kazempour noted that a "supply shortage" meant that the United States would not be able to cut Iranian oil exports completely. **→4**

Isfahan to run guesthouse for patients with cancer

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A guesthouse will be opened in the city of Isfahan to accommodate health tourists who are suffering from cancer, IRIB reported on Friday.

The lodging place is being built by the private sector next to Seyed-al-Shohada Hospital, Isfahan province's tourism chief Fereydoun Allahyari said.

"The guesthouse is set to have 30 rooms and accommodate some 70 people per

day who come from other regions of the country to use cancer treatment facilities of the hospital."

Isfahan is Iran's top tourist destination for good reason; its profusion of tree-lined boulevards, Persian gardens and important Islamic buildings give it an unmatched visual appeal while on the other hand Isfahan's many artisans underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.

Former Anbar governor elected Iraqi parliament speaker

Iraq's parliament has elected speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi, former governor of the western province of Anbar, marking the first step towards forming the new government four months after national elections.

Halbousi, who had previously served in Iraq's parliament from 2014 to 2017, tallied 169 votes to beat out former de-

fense minister Khalid al-Obaidi's 89 on Saturday, according to lawmaker Husham al-Suhail.

Current Iraqi Vice President Usama al-Nujaifi and former member of parliament Raad al-Dahlaki were also running for the post. A total of 251 lawmakers, out of 329, attended the session and took part in the vote. **→13**



ARTICLE
Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

Not an easy time at all and no thanks to the U.S.

The world waits to see what the Syrian Arab Army and allies are going to do now that the "West" has warned it will attack Syria if there's a full scale assault on the terrorists in Idlib. I would humbly suggest surrounding Idlib with a single exit corridor for civilians and starve al Qaeda and the rest of the terrorists into submission. Syria can appeal for support on the civilian question in Idlib.

Are the terrorists going to make hostages of the civilians there? And then what do you do with the terrorists? Where do they go if they ever are crushed and leave Syria? I suggest the U.S., which has coddled the morons, invite them to DC. I can't imagine Erdogan or Europe wants them, even though they were literally created and funded by both the U.S. and Turkey, and the Saudis especially. Best would be they lay down their arms and if any are actually Syrians, they submit and re-integrate into Syrian society as civilians. The rest must go.

At this point the real danger is whether the "West" can admit defeat in Syria and get out and let Syria recover. I for one cannot understand why Syria is a problem for the U.S., or Iran for that matter. Is ANY independent state in the Mideast that isn't comfortable with U.S. or Zionist imperialism at risk? It seems so. The Syrians are NOT going to attack the Zionists directly except with language and have not done so since 1973 during the Yom Kippur war.

The war almost toppled the Zionists, except that the U.S. stepped in and gave Israel massive backup and refreshed military equipment. It seems the U.S. and its allies and the Zionists never had any plan for the Mideast but chaos — aimed at making "Israel" indomitable. Not Iraq or Libya or Yemen or Syria or Iran have ever really presented any danger to the U.S. or Israel, except ideologically.

There are so many threats to U.S. hostility, perhaps including a fear that the integration of Eurasia based on Chinese initiatives will dethrone the hegemony of the U.S. economically if and when Eurasia prospers, and that includes Iran prospering, too. The U.S. refusal to accept and even integrate itself to a multipolar world does indeed risk sparking World War 3 where the primary actors would likely be Russia and China allied with its allies against the U.S. **→7**

Turkey to continue buying gas from Iran despite U.S. sanctions: expert

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Omid Shokri Kalehsar, a senior energy security analyst and PhD candidate in international relations, said in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency that Turkey is keen on buying natural gas from Iran with "reasonable price" in contrast to the price it pays for the gas imported from Russia and Azerbaijan.

He stressed that if Iran and Turkey can agree on a price and Iran is able to produce more natural gas, Turkey will be interested to consider buying gas from Iran instead of the other two rivals.

He went on to add, however, that while Turkey's private companies have enough financial resources to attract Iran's market, a legal framework, an efficient decision-making process, and political stability are also needed to make attracting foreign investment possible.

The following is the text of his interview with Mehr News:

■ Back in 2015, Iran had voiced willingness to pipe its natural gas to Europe through Turkey. Did that plan ever come to anything? And is the project still feasible after the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the re-instatement of economic sanctions on Tehran?

A: Iranian officials many times showed their interest to export natural gas to EU and play a role in EU energy security. Iran holds world's second natural gas reserve but at present has no major natural gas export. It should be noted that Iran has high domestic natural gas consumption and suffers lack of foreign investment and technology and capital capacities due to sanctions. Iran just exports annually 10 bcm to Turkey.

Major natural gas export needs more foreign investment, financial resources and decrease in domestic consumption.

In coming years there is no more demand in EU natural Gas Market. At present EU members states' LNG imports from U.S. and Russia plays a key role in EU natural gas market and is planning to export more natural gas to EU via new pipeline projects such as Turk Stream and Nord Stream 2. EU members also made more investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Iran needs about 4-6S billion to construct required infrastructure to deliver natural gas to Turkey borders. And at present Iran has no more capital capacities. And current natural gas price is not economical for Iran to export natural gas to EU via pipeline. **→7**

'Islamic revolution in Iran paved new course for Muharram commemorations in Kashmir'

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — We are again in the month of Muharram, the month in which blood triumphed over sword and truth prevailed over falsehood. In this month, the campaigners of truth and justice across the world reaffirm their pledge to the principles exemplified by Imam Hussain (as) and his companions in the desert plains of Karbala 1400 years ago.

Syed Mohammad Anis Kazmi is a Kashmir-based Islamic scholar, historian and author of many books. In this interview, he talks about the history and philosophy of annual Muharram commemorations, unique tradition of mourning in Kashmir, and impact of the Iranian revolution on the tradition of mourning in Kashmir.

The genesis of Muharram commemorations Muharram commemorations began soon after

the tragedy of Karbala in 61 AH. The members of the holy household (Ahlulbayt), including Sayyeda Zainab (sa), Sayyeda Umme Kulsoom (sa) and Imam Zainul Abideen (as), were taken as prisoners to Damascus. After their release from the dark dungeon of Yazid, they returned to Medina where proper commemorations were held for the martyrs of Karbala in which Zainab (sa) and Umme Kulsoom (sa) played a key role.

Bashir bin Jazlam (ra), a lover of Ahlulbayt, first addressed people and narrated the chain of events that culminated in the greatest tragedy recorded in human history. Then Umme Kulsoom (sa), who had a poetic aptitude, recited a marsiya (elegy), the first marsiya written on Karbala, which virtually shook people out of their slumber. That was the beginning.

Then there was Fatima alias Ummul Baneen (sa), the mother of Abbas ibn Ali (as), who composed and recited soul-stirring marsiyas on the tragedy of Karbala. When Yazid was informed by Marwan about these mourning gatherings in Madina, he feared public backlash and ordered the re-arrest of Imam Zainul Abideen (as). He was taken in chains back to Syria. That's how the tradition of azadari originated, first in Madina, followed by other places.

Muharram commemorations over the centuries The tradition of azadari (mourning for the martyrs of Karbala) was kept alive by Imam Zainul Abideen (as) and after him by other Imams during their time. They used to invite prominent poets to write and recite elegiac poetry in the memory of the martyrs of Karbala. **→6**

Israel suppresses 'Great March of Return' protests across Gaza

At least three Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces' live fire as hundreds of Palestinians protested across the eastern borders of the besieged Gaza Strip on the 25th Friday of "The Great March of Return."

The Palestinian Ministry of Health confirmed that three Palestinians were injured in eastern Jabaliya in the northern Gaza Strip.

Protests set off under the slogan "Resistance is our Choice," protesters burned tires alongside the Israeli security fence at the borders.

Dozens of motorcycles set off from central Rafah district in the southern Gaza Strip towards the eastern borders carrying tires to be burned during protests.



REPORT
Ramin Hossein Abadian
Mehr News Agency Journalist

Al-Khalifa stands against Shiites in Muharram; fear of Ashura's culture

The Al-Khalifa regime has taken a series of hostile actions against the Bahraini Shiites and the mourners of Abu Abdullah al-Hussein (AS), in the advent of the month of Muharram al-Haram. Al-Khalifa has imposed a lot of restrictions on Shia mourning events in order to put obstacles in the way of mourning rituals.

The Al-Khalifa has imposed limitations on even Shiites prisoners, where political prisoners are not allowed to practice religious procession that is also part of the mourning ceremony in Muharram al-Haram. Bahraini prisoners will face heavy calamities if they hold such rituals.

In the days leading up to Muharram al-Haram, al-Khalifa regime military intensified attacks on ?osayniya (a congregation hall for Shia commemoration ceremonies) and mosques for the mourning of Abu Abdullah al-Hussein (AS) to prevent the expansion of the Ashura in Bahrain as much as possible. Ashura can be a motivating factor for Bahraini revolutionaries to continue to fight against the regime of Al-Khalifa.

Al Khalifa leaders have called on security forces under their command to vigorously monitor various areas, including Al-Daraz district and the city of Manama, during the month of Muharram al-Haram, especially in the peak of the mourning which is the first 10 days. The Al Khalifa seeks to dismantle all the signs of mourning related to Imam Hussein in Bahrain during the month of Muharram.

That is precisely why the arrests in different parts of Bahrain have been accelerated and intensified over the past few days. Al-Khalifa's military recently launched massive attacks on various areas of Bahrain and arrested a number of citizens without charges. For example, they arrested a young man Ali Salman Ahmad for illegal political activities in Sanabis City on Monday.

The hostile act of Al-Khalifa against Bahraini Shiites is a clear example of insulting Islamic sanctities and preventing the practice of religious traditions. **→7**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran congratulates Iraq on electing new parliament speaker

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Saturday congratulated Mohammed Rikan Hadeed al-Halbousi on his election as the new speaker of Iraq's parliament, hoping for the immediate formation of new government in Iraq.

In a statement, Qassemi said the Islamic Republic "has been always a supporter of Iraq's democracy, territorial integrity and sovereignty, and supports the decisions made by the representatives of people," the Foreign Ministry website reported.

It came after Iraq's parliament elected al-Halbousi as speaker, paving the way for the establishment of a new government four months after the national election.



'Tehran, Seoul to boost ties despite U.S. pressure'

POLITICS TEHRAN — In a Saturday meeting, Asa-dollah Abbasi, the president of Iran-South Korea parliamentary friendship group, and Kang Seok-ho, a senior member of the South Korean National Assembly, agreed that bilateral relations must not be affected by U.S. pressure.

Pointing to U.S. policies against the Islamic Republic, Abbasi said Washington's irrational policies, which are in violation of international law, have led to the spread of instability in different regions of the world, Fars reported.

On Tehran-Seoul relations, he said, "There are numerous venues of cooperation in areas of politics, economy, culture and parliament in the two countries and the barriers should be removed and the ground should be paved for expanding and extending communications and interactions."



'Rouhani should throw the ball in Trump's court'

POLITICS TEHRAN — A senior political analyst believes President Hassan Rouhani should throw the ball in Donald Trump's court by attending the UN Security Council's meeting to denounce the U.S. government for violating international agreements.

"When a topic is raised about a country in the Security Council, the representative of that country can attend and explain the reasons," said Davoud Hermidas-Bavand, professor of political science and international law, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Trump's objective is to portray Iran as a regional threat, Hermidas-Bavand said, urging Rouhani to defend Iran's rights in the face of U.S. illegal withdrawal from the nuclear agreement and its restoration of sanctions against Tehran.



Ahed Tamimi family trying to visit Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — The family of Palestinian "hero" Ahed Tamimi, who became an icon after slapping an Israeli soldier and spending eight months in prison, are trying to travel to Iran, her father said.

Bassem Tamimi said his family had planned to travel to European and Arab countries to discuss Tamimi's time behind bars but the Israeli regime barred them from exiting the country, ISNA reported on Saturday.

He added that they are trying to visit Oman and then Iran in order to participate in events on the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

Tamimi, who was 16 when she was arrested in December for hitting and kicking soldiers in front of her house in the occupied West Bank, was released in July.



Kerry advises Trump to read his book to learn about nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Friday advised President Donald Trump to read his new book in order to "learn something" about the nuclear deal, which was struck between Iran and six world powers in July 2015.

"Mr. President, you should be more worried about Paul Manafort meeting with Robert Mueller than me meeting with Iran's FM. But if you want to learn something about the nuclear agreement that made the world safer, buy my new book, Every Day Is Extra," Kerry tweeted.

It came after the U.S. president accused Kerry of having had "illegal meetings with the very hostile" Iran, which he claimed can only be detrimental to the American people.



Sherman: 'I met Zarif but not with Kerry and Moniz'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Wendy Sherman, the former senior U.S. nuclear negotiator with Iran, said on Saturday she had met Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif alone, stressing such meetings are not aimed to undermine U.S. policy.

"Sec. Pompeo tried to distract from Manafort and gain points with president by attacking me today. Facts were wrong, message was wrong. I met Zarif in Munich but not with Kerry and Moniz. Met Zarif again in NY in April," Sherman tweeted.

She added, "Like John Kerry and Ernie Moniz, I have served my country for years and find it more than offensive to have a Secretary of State not understand we are all in this together to ensure American security."

Tehran says will boost enrichment if EU acts passively

POLITICS TEHRAN — Tehran desk says it could increase uranium enrichment if the European Union continues to act passively in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said so in an interview with the German news magazine Der Spiegel published on Saturday.

"The Europeans and the other signatories must act in order to compensate for the effects of the U.S. sanctions," he stressed.

The U.S. withdrew from the landmark agreement in May and began reimposing sanctions on Iran at the start of August, with further sanctions on the country's finance and energy sectors to follow on November 4.

Zarif said Tehran might act if "the balance of give and take were destroyed," adding that "oil and banks" are the litmus test.

This, however, did not necessarily mean that Iran would for its part withdraw from the nuclear agreement, the foreign minister said.

Partial or reduced implementation is



Zarif says "oil and banks" are the litmus test for keeping the nuclear deal alive.

Kerry strongly responds to criticism over talking with Zarif, says there's 'nothing unusual'

POLITICS TEHRAN — On Friday, the spokesman for former U.S. secretary of state John Kerry strongly defended dialogue between Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, saying "there's nothing unusual".

Matt Summers said Kerry stays in touch with former counterparts around the world just like every previous secretary of state.

Kerry and Zarif were the chief negotiators that produced the landmark nuclear agreement in 2015.

"Let's cut through the distraction and talk about real facts, not alternative facts. Secretary Kerry stays in touch with his foremr counterparts around the world just like every previous Secretary of State, and in a long phone conversation with Secretary Pompeo earlier this year he went into great detail about what he had learned about the Iranian's view," Summers wrote on his tweeter on Friday.

Summers, "No secret were kept from" the Trump administration.

He added, "Like America's closest allies, Kerry believes it is important that the commitments Iran made under the nuclear agreement, which took the world years to negotiate, remain effective."

Talking to reporters at the State Department on Friday,

Secretary of States Mike Pompeo said, "What Secretary Kerry has done is unseemly and unprecedented."

Pompeo also claimed, "You can't find precedent for this in U.S. history and the secretary ought not engage in this kind of behavior." He added, "It's beyond inappropriate."

In response, Summers said, "There's nothing unusual, let alone unseemly or inappropriate, about former diplomats meeting with foreign counterparts. Secretary Kissinger has done it for decades with Russia and China. What is unseemly and unprecedented is for the podium of the State Department to be hijacked for political theatrics."

During interviews to promote his new book, Kerry told an interviewer that he has met with Zarif three or four times since leaving office and that their talks touched on the international nuclear agreement, to which Iran, the EU, Russia and China still adhere.

"What is unseemly and unprecedented is for the podium of the State Department to be hijacked for political theatrics."

UN rapporteur: Unilateral sanctions infringe human rights

POLITICS TEHRAN — The UN's special rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights has strongly criticized unilateral sanctions, saying they lead to "human rights infringements".

Economic sanctions must not be allowed to degenerate into blockades which "expose people to the ravages of economic war in peacetime", said Idriss Jazairi on Thursday, according to the UN website.

He pointed out that civilians affected by blockades do not benefit from the protection of the Geneva Convention, which is aimed at safeguarding civilians during war time.

Briefing the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Jazairi said that people in Iran and Venezuela risk being badly affected, while the situation for those in Syria would have even worse consequences.

"There is a need for differences between states to be resolved through peaceful means as advocated by the UN Charter, while avoiding exposing innocent civilians to collective punishment," said Jazairi, expressing concern about the growing practice of unilateral sanctions, where a



particular country bans companies and corporations from doing business with a sanctioned state.

Referring to a recent meeting in Brussels with European officials, Jazairi told the council that he has urged the EU to limit "secondary sanctions", which go beyond targeted countries.

He said he would focus on making humanitarian exceptions to internationally imposed measures effective, until states lift all sanctions that lead to human rights infringements.

Europe should safeguard Iran's rights: Kharrazi

POLITICS TEHRAN — Kamal Kharrazi, head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said on Saturday that Europe's package to save the 2015 nuclear deal should safeguard Iran's rights.

"Various negotiations have been held with the Europeans which will be continued and we hope that Iran's rights would be safeguarded with the package that Europe is expected to offer," he said during a meeting with Yang Jiemian, the chairman of the Shanghai Institute for International Studies Academic Affairs Council, in Shanghai.

He also called on China to hold talks and present initiatives to help solve problems after the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear agreement and ordered sanctions against Iran. The first batch of sanctions took effect on August 6.

The European Union trio — Germany, France and Britain which are signatory to

another possibility, Zarif asserted.

The foreign minister said European parties to the nuclear deal with Iran must decide if they want to submit to U.S. pressure.

The Europeans needed to decide whether they are ready to let deeds follow their words, the chief diplomat added.

"The Europeans and the other signatories must act in order to compensate for the effects of the U.S. sanctions," he said.

The EU has invariably opposed the U.S. withdrawal, calling the deal a pillar of regional and international peace and security.

Tehran has tasked the European signatories - the UK, France, Russia, and Germany - to make their continued commitments to the deal worthwhile by guaranteeing that the country continued to benefit from the economic rewards of the deal.

Zarif also rejected direct talks with U.S. President Donald Trump. He said Iran would only think about talks with the United States if the U.S. returned to the nuclear deal.

On Thursday, Trump also claimed that Kerry's meetings were "illegal."

"John Kerry had illegal meetings with the very hostile Iranian Regime, which can only serve to undercut our great work to the detriment of the American people," Trump tweeted. "He told them to wait out the Trump Administration!"

Kerry responded on Friday, tweeting to Trump that he should be more concerned about the guilty plea of his former campaign manager Paul Manafort and cheekily including a link for Trump to buy his book online, CNN reported.

"Mr. President," Kerry tweeted, "you should be more worried about Paul Manafort meeting with Robert Mueller than me meeting with Iran's FM. But if you want to learn something about the nuclear agreement that made the world safer, buy my new book, Every Day Is Extra."

In a second tweet Kerry added, "PS - I recorded the audio version, not Omarosa."

In a Sept. 9 interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria, Kerry said the withdrawal was "a very dangerous and ill-advised move that is not based on any broad strategy that is drawing other countries to the table to be supportive of it. Rather, I think it represents a campaign promise made by the President ... which has no basis in achieving the goals the President has set out, if there are goals."



the nuclear deal - are expected to present their package of proposals to Iran before the second round of U.S. sanctions takes effect in early November.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in August that Iran will abandon the nuclear deal if it does not safeguard the country's interests.

He also criticized Europe's inappropriate behavior toward some issues such as the JCPOA and sanctions, saying that the officials should have "skeptical view" on the Europeans' promises.

Time to say goodbye to retired managers

POLITICS TEHRAN — The plan to ban employment of the retired managers is scheduled to be implemented in two months.

The plan falls within a parliamentary approval and endorsement by the Guardian Council.

Abbasali Kadhodaei, spokesman of the Guardian Council, has said that organizations and bodies to which the plan applies have two months to take action in line with the ratification, the Arman daily reported on Saturday.

He said the ban includes governors, ambassadors and deputy ministers but not Guardian Council members, vice president, heads of the three branches of government (president, judiciary chief, and parliament speaker), deputy parliament speaker, and presidential aides.



La police fail Iran embassy

POLITICS TEHRAN — The French police failed to act swiftly to protect Iran's diplomatic grounds when Komola terrorists assaulted the Iranian embassy in Paris on Friday.

"Unfortunately, the French police forces were not present when assailants affiliated to a terrorist group attacked the embassy. The issues of attack and the police force's

slow reaction are under investigation," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi complained on Saturday.

Police were slow to make it to the location following a call from the Iranian embassy reporting assailants had attacked the diplomatic ground, burning Iran's flag and throwing stones at the building and causing damage.

Qassemi said that the host country is responsible for security of the diplomatic missions and called for necessary actions to protect Iran's embassy in Paris.

He noted that after numerous attempts by the Iranian side to follow up the issue, a number of assailants were arrested by the police.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also

urged French authorities to prosecute and punish the perpetrators and declare the proceedings.

According to Press TV, Iran's embassy in Paris came under attack by Iraq-based anti-Iran terrorists after the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps fired missiles at terrorist commanders in the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

Yemeni army, allies target Aramco oil refinery in Saudi Arabia's Jizan border region

Elsewhere, Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from Popular Committees, have fired a domestically-designed and -developed ballistic missile at a strategic economic target in Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Jizan in retaliation for Riyadh devastating military aggression against their impoverished country.

A Yemeni military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that the short-range Badr-1 missile struck an oil refinery of the Saudi Arabian national petroleum and natural gas company, Aramco, in the region, located 967 kilometers southwest of the capital Riyadh, with great precision, on Friday evening.

Earlier in the day, Yemeni troopers and their allies had attacked a command center of Emirati military forces in the country's western coastal province of Hudaydah, using a domestically-built long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle.

There were no immediate reports about possible casualties and the extent of damage caused at the site. Separately, a Saudi regime-led Boeing AH-64 Apache attack helicopter crashed in Yemen's eastern province of Mahra. An official of Provincial Supreme Security Committee, who asked to remain anonymous, said, "The Saudi-led helicopter crashed while conducting a reconnaissance mission over Tanhala Mountains."

He confirmed that the Saudi regime pilot and his assistant died as a result of the crash.

Saudi media outlets later identified the pair as Captain Saud bin Nasser bin Jaris and First Lieutenant Ahmed bin Abdulaziz al-Dabian. Later in the day, Saudi fighter jets struck Yemeni fishing boats in waters off the Seven Brothers Islands, also known as the Sawabi Islands or Seba Islands, in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, killing two people and injuring another.

Yemeni sources say the fate of the fourth fisherman remains unknown after the airstrike.

■ Saudi regime airstrikes kill 15 on Hudaydah-Sana'a highway

At least 15 people have lost their lives in fresh air raids conducted by the House of Saud regime warplanes on a strategic road linking the Yemeni port city of Hudaydah



to the capital, Sana'a. More than 20 people were reported wounded. However, Al Jazeera could not independently verify the figures.

The al-Masirah television network affiliated to Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement reported that more than 20 people had also been injured in the aerial assaults on the Kilo 16 highway. Over the past few days, fighting has intensified between Ansarullah fighters and Saudi regime-backed militants loyal to former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi around the critical highway, through which humanitarian aid is delivered to the Yemeni people.

Amanda Brydon, humanitarian policy adviser at Save the Children NGO (non-governmental organizations), expressed concerns about fresh tensions in Yemen.

Hudaydah, she said, is a lifeline for the rest of the country, where over 80 percent of the country's commercial imports come through. Backed by the Saudi regime airstrikes, Emirati forces and pro-Hadi elements launched the Hudaydah offensive on June 13 despite international warnings that it would compound the impoverished nation's humanitarian crisis. The House of

Saud regime claims that the Ansarullah is using Hudaydah for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the movement. Mohammed al-Boukhaiti, a Hudaydah-based member of the Ansarullah political council, said Yemeni fighters were still in control of the Hudaydah-Sana'a highway.

"The Yemeni army confronted the attack of the coalition and today Kilo 16 is under the control of the army, but it is not safe for passengers because the airstrikes target them," he said.

The House of Saud regime and its allies launched a brutal war, code-named Operation Decisive Storm, against Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh, and crush the Ansarullah.

The Western-backed offensive initially consisted of a bombing campaign, but was later coupled with a naval blockade and the deployment of ground forces into Yemen.

■ UN envoy holds talks with Ansarullah

In another development, the United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths held talks with a Ansarullah delegation, led by spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam, in

the Omani capital, Muscat.

During the meeting, Griffiths was briefed on the Ansarullah reasons for their absence from the latest round of the peace talks in the Swiss city of Geneva, Yemen's official SABA news agency reported.

The Muscat discussions, the report said, also covered "necessary measures" needed for negotiations "as soon as possible" between Yemen's warring sides.

The Geneva peace talks failed after the House of Saud regime prevented the Houthi delegation from joining the Geneva talks, giving representatives of the Hadi administration to leave the Swiss city.

The last round of Yemen talks were held in Kuwait in 2016 but they collapsed after the Saudi-backed delegation also left them.

Fighting near Hudaydah - the main gateway for imports of relief supplies and commercial goods into the war-ravaged country - has escalated since June after the Saudi regime-United Arab Emirates (UAE) military alliance battling the Ansarullah launched a wide-ranging operation to retake the strategic seaport.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. calls UN meeting on undermining North Korea sanctions

The United States has called an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council for Monday in response to what it says are efforts by some countries "to undermine and obstruct" sanctions against North Korea.

The U.S. Mission announced Friday evening that the meeting will "discuss the implementation and enforcement of UN sanctions on North Korea."

The mission didn't name any countries, but U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley accused Russia on Thursday of pressuring an independent panel of UN experts to alter a report on North Korea sanctions that included alleged violations "implicating Russian actors."

Haley said the panel should release the original report, which cited "a massive increase in illicit ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum products" for North Korea in violation of UN sanctions. It said some products allegedly were off-loaded from Russian ships, which were identified in the report.

A summary of the experts report obtained in early August by The Associated Press also said North Korea has not stopped its nuclear and missile programs. And it said North Korea is violating sanctions by transferring coal at sea and flouting an arms embargo and financial sanctions.

The Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and has made them tougher and tougher in response to further nuclear tests and an increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile program.

Haley said earlier this year that successively tough Security Council sanctions resolutions adopted unanimously had cut off all North Korean exports, 90 percent of its trade, and disbanded its pool of workers send abroad to earn hard currency.

Many diplomats and analysts credit the sanctions with helping promote the thaw in relations between North Ko-



rea and South Korea as well as the June meeting between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at which they agreed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

But in July, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused North Korea of "illegally smuggling" in refined petroleum products beyond the annual quota of 500,000 barrels allowed under UN sanctions.

U.S. documents sent to the Security Council committee monitoring sanctions against North Korea and obtained by AP cited 89 instances between Jan. 1 and May 30 in which North Korean tankers likely delivered refined products "illicitly procured" via transfers from other ships at sea.

The U.S. said Russia and China both informed the sanctions committee that they were supplying refined products to North Korea. China, which is North Korea's closest ally, is responsible for more than 90 percent of the isolated country's

trade. Pompeo said North Korea is also evading sanctions by smuggling coal by sea and across borders, by using cyber thefts and other criminal activities, and by keeping workers in some countries that he didn't name.

All these activities are "generating significant revenues for the regime and they must be stopped," he said.

At the time, Haley criticized "some friends who want to go around the rules," and especially Russia and China for blocking the sanctions committee from demanding that all countries halt shipments of petroleum products to North Korea immediately. After the experts' report was released in August, Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said he put a hold on its official release to all UN member nations "because we disagree with certain elements" that he refused to disclose. Russia and China then blocked the UN from imposing sanctions on Russia-based entities and vessels sanctioned a week earlier by the U.S. Treasury Department. The Russian news agency TASS quoted Russia's UN Mission as saying the proposed sanctions were "unjustified."

The Security Council has remained united in imposing tougher and tougher sanctions on North Korea, though the differences over the experts' report mark a serious dent in that unity.

UN diplomats familiar with discussions said Russia was angered that the panel used a lot of U.S. intelligence in the initial report that Moscow claimed was incorrect. The diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity because talks were private.

Haley expressed disappointment in the panel "for caving to Russian pressure and making changes to what should have been an independent report." She called it "a stain" on the experts' important work.

(Source: AP)

OAS chief threatens military force against Venezuela

The head of the Organization of American States (OAS) has joined President Donald Trump in holding out the threat of a military intervention in Venezuela to restore democracy and ease the country's humanitarian crisis

OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro delivered the sharp warning in a visit on Friday to Colombia's border with Venezuela in which he also denounced President Nicolas Maduro's socialist "dictatorship" for spurring a region-wide migration crisis.

"With respect to a military intervention to overthrow Nicolas Maduro's regime, I don't think any option should be ruled out," Almagro said at a press conference in the Colombian city of Cucuta. "What Nicolas Maduro's regime is perpetrating are crimes against humanity, the violation of the human rights and the suffering of people that is inducing an exodus. Diplomatic actions should be the first priority but we shouldn't rule out any action."

Almagro has been Maduro's most outspoken critic in Latin America, but until Friday he hadn't been willing to go as far as Trump, who last year raised the possibility of a "military option" against Maduro. In several meetings with aides and Latin

American leaders last year, Trump also discussed the possibility of a U.S. invasion of the South American nation.

Still, for many in Latin America, the prospect of a military intervention is bound to revive memories of the Cold War, when the U.S. gave backing to coups and rebellions from countries including Chile, Cuba and Brazil.

For Almagro, the threat of military force is especially surprising given his condemnation of the region's support for a U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 to remove a democratically-elected but pro-Cuban president. The invasion, carried out in the OAS' name, left thousands dead and for decades stirred Latin American resentment against the idea of ever again using force against sovereign nation.

Almagro in 2015 apologized for the OAS' role in the invasion, saying such events should not be repeated.

While circumstances in Venezuela are far different, and many still see an invasion as a remote possibility, Maduro has nonetheless held out the threat to try and rally Venezuelans behind him at a time of mounting hardships.

Almagro in his visit on Friday said countries in the Western Hemisphere should work

together to provide relief to the droves of Venezuelans who every day are fleeing hyperinflation and food shortages in their homeland.

But, he added, the ultimate solution to the crisis is to restore democracy in Venezuela.

"The international community has to provide answers. We can't allow a dictatorship in Venezuela that affects the security of entire region through drug trafficking, organized crime and the deep humanitarian crisis it has created," Almagro said.

During Friday's visit to the border, Almagro met aid workers and government officials in the Colombian city of Cucuta, where schools and hospitals are struggling to cope with the influx of Venezuelan migrants.

The outspoken diplomat was stopped on the street and greeted by dozens of Venezuelan migrants who urged him to work for the "liberation" of Venezuela from tyranny.

He said while countries like his native Uruguay had weathered bloody dictatorships in the past, Maduro's government stands out for using shortages of food and medicine as "instruments of repression" to impose its political will.

"This is inadmissible. We've never never seen such an immoral government in the world that doesn't allow the entry of human-

itarian aid in the middle of a humanitarian crisis," he said.

According to the United Nations, more than 2.3 million Venezuelans have left their country in recent years.

Increasingly they are leaving with no money and are traveling on foot across South American countries like Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, in dangerous journeys that can take several weeks.

Almagro said the OAS has created a working group that will look at ways to help desperate migrants as well as their host countries.

OAS member states recently voted on a resolution that accuses Maduro of breaking his country's constitutional order when he got himself re-elected in May in a vote boycotted by opponents.

Colombia's foreign ministry, meanwhile, said Friday that it was investigating preliminary reports that 20 soldiers from Venezuela's National Guard illegally entered a remote Colombian river hamlet and captured three civilians.

Relations between both countries have been tense for years, but have not affected Colombia's policy towards Venezuelan migrants so far.

(Source: AP)

German troops face Russian 'hybrid war' in Lithuania: Merkel

Germany says it is boosting military cyber capabilities to respond to Russian "hybrid warfare" techniques, targeting "NATO forces deployed in Eastern Europe".

German Chancellor Angela Merkel accused Russia of targeting German troops in the United States-led NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) military alliance with hybrid warfare, including cyber warfare, subversion and propaganda.

She was speaking to German troops deployed in Lithuania as part of forces in NATO. The West has repeatedly accused Russia of using "hybrid warfare" to undermine the alliance. Moscow denies the allegation, saying this is a strategy by the U.S.-led alliance to provoke an arms race among its members.

"Here you are also confronted with a situation that represents another part of the Russian military doctrine: the idea of hybrid warfare," said the German Chancellor.

"Hybrid warfare is not something that we are very used to. You clearly experience this here in very specific ways," she added.

"It is not for nothing that we built in Germany a special cyber unit within the German military in order to build capabilities in this area," she told troops at their base in Rukla, northwest of the capital Vilnius. Germany deployed troops, tanks and other equipment to Lithuania last year, as part of a NATO mission in Eastern Europe near Russia's border. Over 500 German troops are deployed in Lithuania as part of a NATO mission to reassure eastern allies and deter Russia.

NATO, a 29-member military alliance, is dominated by the United States, has often held military maneuvers near Russia's western borders, stationing advanced military hardware. It has also been trying to co-opt more countries from near Russia.

The moves alarm Moscow, which takes its own measures to guarantee its security. Russia is holding week-long military maneuvers, which according to the country's Defense Ministry is the largest ever rehearsal since the fall of the Soviet Union.

The military drill, dubbed "Vostok-2018" (East-2018), started on Tuesday in Russia's Eastern Military District — a sparsely-populated area — close to its borders with China and Mongolia. It will run until September 17.

Almost 300,000 Russian troops, more than 1,000 planes, drones, and helicopters, and up to 36,000 armored vehicles took part in the drills.

Some 3,500 Chinese troops and a small contingent of Mongolian soldiers were also part of the military exercise that marked the start of stronger relations between the countries.

Pentagon said the U.S. would watch the drills closely, calling them "strategic messaging" by both China and Russia.

NATO has also condemned the drills as a rehearsal for "large-scale conflict".

(Source: agencies)

Refugees stranded in Bosnia report campaign of police brutality

Brutally beaten, mobile phones destroyed, strip-searched and money stolen.

These are some of the experiences refugees and migrants stranded in western Bosnia report as they describe encounters with Croatian police.

The abuse, they say, takes place during attempts to pass through Croatia, an EU member, with most headed for Germany.

Bosnia has emerged as a new route to Western Europe, since the EU tightened its borders. This year, more than 13,000 refugees and migrants have so far arrived in the country, compared to only 755 in 2017.

In Velika Kladusa, Bosnia's most western town beside the Croatian border, hundreds have been living in makeshift tents on a field next to a dog kennel for the past four months.

When night falls, "the game" begins, a term used by refugees and migrants for the challenging journey to the EU through Croatia and Slovenia, involving treks through forests and crossing rivers.

However, many are caught in Slovenia or Croatia and are forced to return to Bosnia by Croatian police, who heavily patrol its EU borders.

Then, they have to start the mission all over again.

Some told Al Jazeera that they have attempted to cross as many as 20 times.

All 17 refugees and migrants interviewed by Al Jazeera said that they have been beaten by Croatian police - some with police batons, others punched or kicked.

According to their testimonies, Croatian police have stolen valuables and money, cut passports, and destroyed mobile phones, hindering their communication and navigation towards the EU.

Croatia's Interior Ministry told Al Jazeera that it "strongly dismisses" allegations of police brutality.

In an emailed statement, it said those attempting to cross borders know they are acting outside of the law, and claimed that "no complaint so far has proved to be founded".

At a meeting in late August with Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, German Chancellor Angela Merkel praised Croatia for its control over its borders.

"You are doing a great job on the borders, and I wish to commend you for that," Merkel said.

But according to a new report, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) has received information of 1,500 refugees being denied access to asylum procedures, including over 100 children. More than 700 people reported violence and theft by Croatian police.

Al Jazeera was unable to independently verify all of the claims against police, because many of the refugees and migrants said their phones - which held evidence - were confiscated or smashed. However, the 17 people interviewed separately reported similar patterns of abuse.

In another instance, they said they were arrested in a forest with a group of refugees and migrants. All 15 of them were forced into a van for two hours, where it was difficult to breathe.

No Name Kitchen, a volunteer organization that provides assistance to refugees and migrants on the Balkan route, has been documenting serious injuries on Instagram.

In one post, the group alleges that Croatian police twice crushed a refugee's orthopedic leg.

Peter Van der Auweraert, the Western Balkans coordinator for the International Organization for Migration, says he has heard stories of police brutality, but called for an independent investigation to judge how alleged victims sustained injuries.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	158119.2
IFX	1805.58

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,840 rials
GBP	54,880 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$ 68.99/b
Brent	\$78.09/b
OPEC Basket	\$76.46/b
Gold	\$1,194.95/oz
Silver	\$14.11/oz
Platinum	\$799.80/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran Fara Bourse hits record high

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – IFX, the main index of Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market, known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), hit a record high of 1,771 points on Friday, gaining 62 percent since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), IRIB reported.

The IFB benchmark index has gained 14 percent since the beginning of the sixth Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (August 23), the report added.

During the week from September 8 to 12, 5.18 billion securities worth 30.98 trillion rials (about \$737 million) were traded, showing 29 percent in terms of volume and 54 percent in terms of value, compared to the preceding week.



\$1b allocated for creating, preserving jobs

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian government has prepared a protective plan worth one billion dollars aiming to create jobs, support the domestic production and preserve the existing jobs.

The government prepared a comprehensive plan to brace the country for the U.S.-led sanctions in late June, IRIB quoted head of the Budget and Planning Organization, Mohammad-Bagher Nobakht as saying.

As he said, the plan also includes programs for regulating domestic markets within the framework of a package of proposals.

On September 5, Nobakht said the government has prepared five new packages and 12 programs to tackle the current economic problems.

Some 300 trillion rials (about \$7.1 billion) has been allocated for implementing these strategic plans, Nobakht said.

“Some 175 trillion rials (about \$4.1 billion) of the sum is earmarked for supplying 25 different types of basic goods, medicine and agricultural inputs,” he added.

U.S. cannot zero out Iranian oil export: OPEC governor

1 → A long-time adviser at Saudi Arabia’s Energy Ministry also said last month that current U.S. sanctions on Iran were unlikely to stop Iranian oil exports completely.

Speaking to the oil ministry’s news agency Shana, Kazempour also slammed OPEC for its weak performance saying “Saudi Arabia and the UAE have turned OPEC into a U.S. instrument”.

Under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to lower oil prices, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies are trying to boost production to offset the shortage from Iranian oil cuts.

Eurozone labor costs climb at fastest pace since 2012

Eurozone labor costs climbed at the quickest pace in almost six years in the second quarter of 2018, as increases in social security and other employment taxes faced by businesses pushed up the cost of hiring.

Hourly labor costs in the single currency area rose 2.2 percent year-on-year for the three months to the end of June, the biggest increase since the third quarter of 2012. The rise was driven by a 1.9 percent increase in the cost of wages and salaries and a 2.9 percent increase in non-wage labor costs, according to data from Eurostat.

The Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania reported the largest jump in overall labor costs, up 11.7 percent and 9.8 percent respectively, followed by Slovakia, Greece and Estonia.

Construction firms faced the highest increase, with the cost of workers rising 2.7 percent compared to a 2.5 percent increase in services and a 2.2 percent climb in industry labor costs.

Wage and salary cost growth picked up slightly, pointing to the strength of the Eurozone labor market. But wage growth has bounced between 0.8 percent and 2.4 percent since the start of 2010 — looking only at wages and not at other non-wage costs, the pace of growth was only the fastest since the third quarter of last year.

(Source: Financial Times)

Over \$2.6b of mining projects operational by March 2019

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 110 trillion rials (nearly \$2.6 billion) worth of mining projects are scheduled to be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has already completed \$2.2 billion

worth of mining projects during the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2017-March 2018), IRIB reported.

Last month, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade announced that projects in the field of mining and related industries worth \$5.5 billion are planned to become operational by March 2019.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich



countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors.

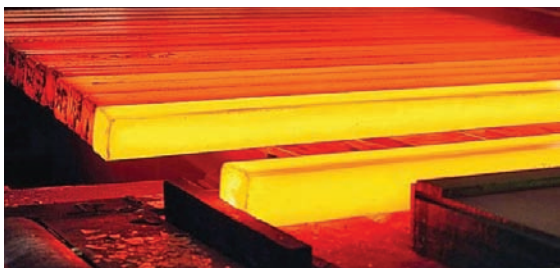
The value of Iran’s minerals and mining exports stood at \$9 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year, according to Mehdi Karbasian, the head of IMIDRO.

5-month steel ingot output up 15% on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s nine major steel companies produced over 7.85 million tons of steel ingots during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), up 15 percent from last year’s same period.

The country’s steel ingot output stood at 21.8 million tons, of which over 6 million tons were exported to the world markets, IRNA reported.

Manufacturing 55 million tons of steel is on the agenda by the end of the sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2021), however the country’s steel output is forecasted



ECB has no plan to issue digital currency: Draghi

The European Central bank has no plan to issue a digital currency because the underlying technology is still fragile and the use of physical cash still high in the euro zone, the ECB president said on Friday.

The sudden proliferation of cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, essentially a privately created online token, has sparked a global debate over whether central banks should also launch their own digital money.

This would give holders a direct claim on the central bank, bypassing the banking system and potentially revolutionizing the way monetary policy is carried out.

Sweden’s Riksbank is exploring whether to issue an electronic version of its currency, called e-krona, to respond to the dwindling use of banknotes and a rise in electronic payments in that country.

But ECB President Mario Draghi said the time was not ripe for such a change in the euro zone.

“The ECB and the Eurosystem currently have no plans to issue a central bank digital currency,” he said in a letter to a member of the European Parliament.

He added that technologies such as distributed ledgers “require substantial further development” and that he saw no “concrete need” to issue a digital euro.

Cash accounted for 79 percent of all payments at point of sale in the euro zone in 2016 and for 54 percent of the total value of those transactions, according to ECB research.

Separate ECB data published on Friday showed non-cash payments were growing, however, with a 7.9 percent annual increase in 2017 led by cards.

(Source: Reuters)



Beijing tightens rules for mortgages through housing provident funds

China’s capital of Beijing has unveiled new rules to raise the threshold for home buyers applying for mortgages through housing provident funds, in a bid to continue to step up property regulation.

According to the new rules announced Thursday by the Beijing Municipal Housing Provident Fund Management Center, those who have no home in Beijing but have a housing loan record will be classified as second home buyers.



For second home purchasers, the maximum amount they can borrow from the housing provident fund has been lowered to 600,000 yuan from 800,000 yuan.

The new rules, which go into effect next Monday, also said that the loans issued through the housing provident fund are connected to the individual’s deposits period. Home buyers can get a 100,000 yuan loan every year, with a maximum of 1.2 million yuan.

The new rules aim to adhere to the policy that “houses are for living, not for speculation,” said the Beijing Municipal Housing Provident Fund Management Center, adding that the government will lead Beijing citizens toward more rational housing consumption.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China’s property market remains generally stable, with new home prices in four first-tier cities -- Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou -- rising 0.2 percent in July from a month ago.

The new rules come as no surprise, showing Beijing’s property market is still under strict control, which is also in line with the overall planning of provident fund loans, said Yan Yuejin, research director with the E-house China R&D Institute.

During previous years, skyrocketing housing prices, especially in major cities, had fueled concerns about asset bubbles. To curb speculation, the government rolled out various control measures, including restrictions on purchases and increasing minimum down payments for mortgages.

Major cities announced 260 control measures during the first seven months this year, 80 percent more than the same period last year, according to the research center of the Centaline Group.

(Source: China Daily)

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING
INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97-06/170

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
Purchasing Amplifiers Required for Satellite Signaling according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Sunday September 23, 2018.**

Place of Receiving Documents:
Secretariat of Tenders' Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 37,484** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m.** on **Tuesday October 23, 2018** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m.** on **Saturday October 27, 2018** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

For more information, please contact the following phone numbers: **0098-21-22166313**
It is obvious that cost of publishing two advertisements shall be borne by the winner of tender.

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB

Brent bulls split from U.S. oil optimists

For oil investors, this is both the best of times and the worst of times, depending on which crude benchmark you trade.

While money managers pile up on bets that Brent futures will rise as supplies from Iran shrink, even Hurricane Florence wasn't enough to get investors excited in the U.S. Bullish wagers on West Texas Intermediate fell for the eighth time in 10 weeks, and its discount to Brent is near the biggest gap in more than three years. The two markets are drifting apart as a pipeline crunch in the Permian Basin erodes profits for shale explorers.

"You've got these Iranian sanctions that are looming. They're coming sooner than later. Global oil prices are likely to move higher," said Rob Thummel, managing director at Tortoise, which manages \$16 billion in energy-related assets. At the same time, "the ability to export oil in general is limited in the U.S. and it's going to be for a while."

While Hurricane Florence had traders initially worried about gasoline shortages, focus quickly reverted to how difficult it's become to ship crude from the Permian to the Gulf Coast for refining and export. That's forcing producers to sell their crude for less. At the same time, weekly U.S. crude production remains near a record 11 million



barrels a day, and the oil rig count rose by the most in five weeks as explorers boost drilling in other plays like the Bakken of North Dakota.

Meanwhile, Iranian sanctions are already seen crimping global supply levels, with France and South Korea reducing imports. HSBC Holdings Plc said a Brent surge above

\$100 a barrel can't be ruled out because scarce spare production capacity worldwide makes the market highly vulnerable to any further major outage.

"This market was in the process of getting all bulled up again over the concrete signs we're seeing that countries are pulling back already from buying Iranian barrels," said

John Kilduff, a partner at New York-based hedge fund Again Capital LLC.

Hedge funds' net-long position -- the difference between bets on higher prices and wagers on a drop -- in Brent rose 5.6 percent to 440,074 contracts, ICE Futures Europe data show for the week ended Sept. 11. That's the highest level in two months. Longs rose, while shorts slid to the lowest since May.

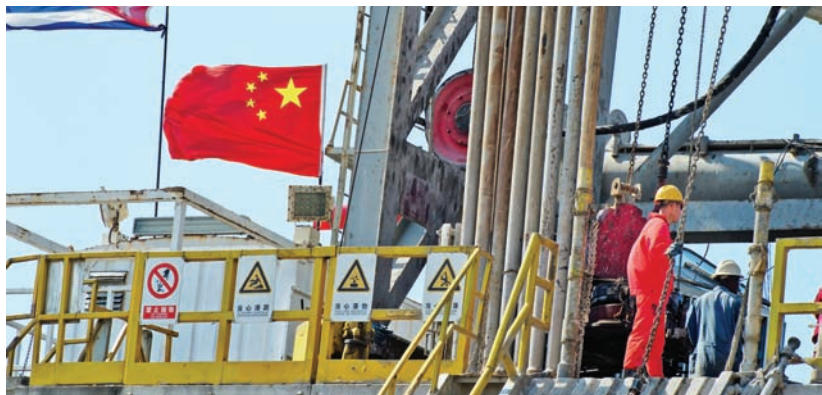
Meanwhile, the net-long position in WTI crude declined 5.1 percent to 346,327 futures and options, according to the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Longs slid 5 percent, while shorts dipped 3.2 percent.

A pipeline bottleneck in the Permian Basin of West Texas and New Mexico is restricting frack work and forcing producers to sell their crude at a large discount. Plans to build new lines and expand existing ones won't bring any reprieve until at least the second half of next year.

The lingering question is "how much U.S. oil production can ramp up given the struggles of transportation coming out of the Permian," said Rob Haworth, who helps oversee \$151 billion at U.S. Bank Wealth Management in Seattle.

(Source: Bloomberg)

China's crude oil output climbs for first time in nearly three years



China's crude oil output rose in August for the first time in nearly three years, data showed, climbing after President Xi Jinping called for a boost to national energy security amid trade tensions with the United States.

Monthly crude oil output hit 16 million tons, or 3.77 million bpd, up 0.2 percent from August last year and marking the first year-on-year increase in tons and barrels per day (bpd) since October 2015, according to the data from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Year-to-date output was 125.95 million tons, down 1.8 percent from a year earlier. That equates to 3.78 million bpd.

National energy majors raised output in August as international oil prices approached \$80 a barrel and after the state call to ramp up local oil and gas output amid the escalating trade war with the United States, experts said.

"The state oil companies need to show some sort of support for President Xi's call to boost domestic supplies," said Seng-Yick Tee at consultancy SIA Energy.

Most Chinese oilfields can break even with oil at \$70 per barrel, he added. Bench-

mark global prices stood at around \$78 on Friday.

The data also showed China's crude processing rate fell in August to its lowest since December, with independent refiners prolonging maintenance shutdowns as higher oil prices and a new tax regime ate into margins.

China refined 50.31 million tons of crude oil in August, or 11.85 million barrels per day (bpd), up 5.6 from a year ago. The pace of processing fell from 11.95 million bpd in July and compared with a record-high of 12.13 million bpd in March.

For the first eight months, crude runs were up 8.7 percent at 400.41 million tons, or 12.03 million bpd.

Meanwhile, China's natural gas production rose 9.7 percent in August over the same year-ago level to 12.9 billion cubic meters (bcm). That was down from 12.96 bcm in July.

Output for the year-to-date was 104 bcm, up 5.9 percent as producers gear up for peak-demand over winter, with the country continuing its drive to switch households and businesses to gas for heating.

(Source: Reuters)

Venezuela looks to China for help but gets few promises



China agreed to several small oil deals with Venezuela this week but gave no public confirmation that it would extend more loans to the cash-strapped country during a rare visit by President Nicolás Maduro to Beijing.

Venezuela faces a stiff payments schedule over the next two months of about \$2bn to bondholders, some of whom have debt secured against U.S.-based refiner Citgo, and in compensation to western oil companies for past nationalizations in Venezuela.

Simon Zerpa, Venezuelan finance minister, said earlier this week that Beijing would extend a \$5bn loan to Caracas. But Premier Li Keqiang, while saying that China would help Venezuela, made no mention of that money and urged Caracas to provide more "policy support and legal guarantees", according to official statements released on Friday.

Maduro visited China with a high-level delegation this week, declaring on arrival that the Asian giant was Venezuela's "big sister", after China lent the country more than \$50bn over the past 10 years, mostly backed by oil deliveries. The largest loan, from the China Development Bank in 2010, was worth more than \$20bn. Typically, terms

are not made public.

Venezuela has a pressing need to boost oil production, which has fallen by half a million barrels a day this year to about 1.2m b/d -- about a third of output levels when former president Hugo Chávez came to power in 1999.

Venezuela's information ministry said it signed 28 deals in Beijing, including \$184m in financing for an oil joint venture and the transfer of almost 10 percent in another oil project to China.

Beijing's initial enthusiasm for Venezuela has ebbed during Maduro's five years in power since Chávez died in 2013. As the economy has imploded, hyperinflation has set in and the country has defaulted on much of its traded debt.

The potential loss to Beijing of billions of dollars loaned to Venezuela, should the South American nation default, is a sensitive one in China, where citizens are already resentful of loans to Africa.

Chinese media cited Maduro telling President Xi Jinping that Venezuela was willing to "explore effective financing methods" and energy co-operation.

(Source: Financial Times)

U.S. department of energy authorizes Freeport LNG exports

Last week, the U.S. Department of Energy authorized Freeport LNG to export up to 2.14 billion cubic feet of LNG from the same-name facility in Texas "to any country not prohibited by U.S. law or policy" beginning in the third quarter of 2019 when the Freeport facility will begin exports.

The Energy Department release explained that the short-term order for Freeport LNG "allows for additional flexibilities to export LNG pursuant to short-term contracts and

for the initial commissioning volumes from the project. Freeport will also still be able to export LNG pursuant to its long-term authorizations from DOE."

Last week, Freeport LNG said it had sealed a long-term deal with a U.S. division of Japan's Sumitomo Corp for the delivery of 2.2 million tons of liquefied natural gas annually over a 20-year period, Reuters reported.

The deal, to enter into effect in 2023 when the fourth liquefaction train at the Freeport

facility is due to be completed, will be instrumental in providing the funds for the completion of the unit, which will have an annual capacity of 3.5 million tons of LNG. Now Freeport LNG needs to find long-term commitments for another 1.3 million tons of LNG to guarantee the construction of the fourth train. The first train should begin operating by the end of June 2019.

Liquefied natural gas exports from the United States began in 2016, and since then,

the Department of Energy reports, total production has reached the equivalent of more than 1.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The only two operating LNG export facilities in the country are Sabine Pass and Dominion Cove Point, with a combined capacity of 3.5 billion cubic feet of gas daily. So far, the government has approved long-term LNG export contracts to the tune of 21.35 billion cubic feet of gas daily.

(Source: oilprice.com)

U.S. crude is about to enter its toughest seasonal stretch, oil analyst says

The threat of Hurricane Florence sent U.S. crude oil prices to four-month highs earlier this week.

Any price bump fueled by higher demand and oil transport disruptions could prove temporary as benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude faces pricing pressure later in the fall, says one energy expert.

"The next six to seven weeks we're going to see demand for crude drop by about 1 to 1.5 million barrels a day. It's refinery maintenance season," Tom Kloza, co-founder of the Oil Price Information Service, told CNBC's "Futures Now" on Thursday.

Any hit to refinery demand would cause inventories to balloon, particularly as the U.S. ramps up production. The Energy Information Administration estimated on Wednesday that the U.S. surpassed Russia and Saudi Arabia as the world's largest producer of crude oil.

A seasonal disruption to the U.S. oil market could be even worse than in previous years, Kloza said.

"This is the last chance for a number of refineries to perform some of the maintenance they need to do to get their units



in business for the tail end of 2019 where there's a major shift in marine vessels needing to use a more diesel-like fuel," he said. "There's more maintenance than normal."

The International Maritime Organization's new emissions guidelines are set to go into effect in January 2020,

putting the pressure on refineries to expand their plants' diesel operations.

As weaker refinery demand in the U.S. puts pressure on WTI, geopolitical threats could send the global benchmark, Brent crude, even higher.

"The world oil price we believe is going to be closer to \$80 for the rest of the year and particularly in November and December for Brent, and maybe even a little bit more upside if the handcuffs on Iran are tightened just a bit and Libya slips into more chaos," said Kloza.

The U.S. is set to re-impose sanctions on Iran, hampering Tehran's oil exports, beginning on Nov. 4. Unrest in Libya could also take that country's oil out of global circulation.

Kloza sees Brent crude moving as high as \$80, while he anticipates West Texas crude to fall to as low as \$65 a barrel.

He said the upside effect on Brent will not carry over to West Texas Intermediate as it might in other years, given the lower post-summer demand for U.S. crude during the fall maintenance season.

(Source: CNBC)

Japan buyer loads Iranian oil cargoes as U.S. sanctions deadline nears

A Japanese buyer has loaded what appears to be the last Iranian oil cargoes for arrival in early October, ahead of U.S. sanctions, market sources say.

VLCC Yufusan is scheduled to arrive Japan on October 3 after loading oil at Assaluyeh and Kharg Island in Iran and Mina Al Ahmadi in Kuwait, according to S&P Global Platts trade flow software cFlow.

A Shipping source said that the VLCC is arriving Japan in early October after having loaded Iranian oil.

Japan's imports of Iranian oil in October will come at the time when the government is still pressing the U.S. to allow Japan continue to import Iranian oil, while leaving refiners to make their own decisions over their imports as U.S. sanctions loom on the horizon.

Japanese refiners are expected to settle all of Iranian oil transactions by the end of November 2 (Japanese time) because U.S. sanctions snap back on November 5, a source familiar with the matter said.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on May 8 the US would withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and re-impose sanctions that have been frozen since January 2016 as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Japan's Iranian oil imports increased year on year for the third consecutive month in July as refiners rush to take cargoes before U.S. sanctions come into effect in November.

The surge in Iran exports during May, June and July cut Japan's year-to-date decrease in Iranian oil imports to just 1 percent from a year earlier, compared with a cumulative 13 percent drop over January-April.

Over January-July, Japan imported an average of 165,343 b/d of Iranian oil, compared with 153,074 b/d imported over January-April.

(Source: Platts)

China's Sinopec plans to build Canadian oil refinery

China's Sinopec Corp has joined a group planning to build an oil refinery in Alberta, an enterprise that would strengthen demand for the Canadian province's heavily discounted crude.

State-owned Sinopec, formally known as China Petroleum & Chemical Corp, along with an Alberta indigenous group, China State Construction Engineering Corp and Alberta management company Teedrum, plan to build a refinery to process 167,000 barrels per day of crude into gasoline and other products, the project's consulting firm Stantec Inc said in a statement on Thursday.

The SinoCan Global refinery would cost C\$8.5 billion, with a financing plan still to be worked out, said Teedrum President Ken Horn, who is leading the effort. Ownership has not been determined.

The group hopes to receive regulatory approval from the Alberta and Canadian governments within two years, he said in an interview on Friday. Most of the refined products will be exported.

"It helps create value for the bitumen," Horn said, referring to the tarry, semi-solid form of Alberta's heavy crude. "Right now we ship most of that (crude) out of the province. We should do a lot more to maximize the value of that asset."

Most of Canada's crude is produced in landlocked Alberta, where pipeline capacity has not expanded as rapidly as production. Resulting bottlenecks have hindered transportation to U.S. refineries, steepening an already deep price discount for the province's crude, which grew to a multi-year high this week.

Sinopec's interest is encouraging news for a Canadian sector that has seen foreign oil majors retreat over concerns about high production costs and the oil sands' environmental toll.

China's involvement would complement its existing Alberta investments, Horn said. State-owned CNOOC Ltd bought energy producer Nexen in 2013.

If Sinopec plans to ship refined products from Canada to China, it would likely move them by rail to the Pacific Coast, since pipeline space is limited, said GMP FirstEnergy analyst Michael Dunn. It may make more sense for China to import Canadian crude and refine it domestically, he said.

Alberta's previous government declined to support the aboriginal-led refinery proposal in 2012, after deciding the project did not make economic sense. This time, the project involves China and is not soliciting government help, Horn said.

A spokesman for Alberta Energy Minister Margaret McCuaig-Boyd said on Friday that building a refinery is "ambitious", and positive for the economy if the project can competitively move refined products offshore.

Sinopec could not be reached.

(Source: Reuters)

Colonial Pipeline says operating normally amid Hurricane Florence landfall

As Hurricane Florence makes landfall on the North Carolina Coast, Colonial Pipeline continues to operate normally, the company said in a Friday morning note to shippers.

"Colonial's mainlines and tank farms are currently operating as normal," the company said.

The note also notified shippers that, due to Hurricane Florence, the company is "experiencing temporary communications issues with delivery facilities" in eastern North Carolina.

The latest modeling from the US National Hurricane Center shows Florence above the Carolinas. According to the NHC, "a life-threatening storm surge is already occurring along portions of the North Carolina coast and will continue through today and tonight. This surge is also likely along portions of the South Carolina coast."

The NHC says those storms surges are accompanied by potentially "catastrophic flash flooding" and "damaging hurricane-force winds."

Along with the Plantation Pipeline, the Colonial Pipeline is one of the Carolinas' two most important sources of fuel supplies.

The gasoline-only Line 1 of the Colonial Pipeline runs from Houston to Greensboro, North Carolina, with a capacity of 1.37 million b/d.

(Source: Platts)



NEWS IN BRIEF



India above
Bangladesh,
Pakistan
in HDI

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — India jumped one place to 130 among 189 countries in the latest human development index (HDI) released by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on Friday. India's human development index value is above the average of 0.638 for the South Asia region, with Bangladesh and Pakistan ranked 136 and 150 respectively.

The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Ireland and Germany led the ranking, while Niger, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Chad and Burundi have the lowest scores in the HDI's measurement of national achievements in health, education and income.

The overall trend globally is toward continued human development improvements, with many countries moving up through the human development categories: out of the 189 countries for which the HDI is calculated, 59 countries are today in the very high human development group and only 38 countries fall in the low HDI group, the report said.



Pakistan's FM
visits
Kabul, holds
talks

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — In a bid to improve bilateral ties, Pakistan's newly-elected foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Saturday arrived in Kabul on his first foreign visit.

Qureshi-led delegation held talks with senior Afghan officials in the first bilateral engagement between the two estranged neighbors since December 2015. The relations between Kabul and Islamabad have frayed in recent years, with Kabul accusing Pakistan of sheltering militant groups that launch attacks on Afghanistan. Pakistan has rejected the accusations.

According to Pakistan's Geo News, Qureshi held one-on-one meeting with the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the presidential palace in Kabul and discussed issues of mutual concern.

Earlier, foreign office spokesman Dr Muhammad Faisal tweeted that the foreign minister's visit underlines the importance Islamabad attaches to working closely with Afghanistan for regional peace and stability.

He said the successful outcome of the visit will lead future efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation under bilateral frameworks of cooperation including APAPPS (Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity), APTTCA (Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority and JEC (Joint Economic Commission)



India floods
world's
worst disaster
of 2018

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — The unprecedented monsoon floods that wreaked havoc in the southern Indian state of Kerala beginning July this year caused more internal displacement than any other disaster around the world in 2018, according to a report.

The devastating deluge, worst in more than a century, left nearly 500 dead and around 1.5 million displaced. According to Geneva-based non-profit Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's (IDMC) half-yearly report, India is highly exposed to a range of natural hazards, which was proved by Kerala floods.

In 2017, India had recorded the seventh-highest levels of internal displacement associated with both conflict and disasters. By June this year, the country was already at the sixth spot, with 539,000 displacements—a number that has more than doubled since then, a report in Quartz said.

However, since the report covers only the first six months of 2018, it does not account for the major flood damage in Kerala, Karnataka, and Nagaland since July.

In the first half of this year, India also ranked among the top 10 countries for internal displacement due to conflict and violence, alongside insurgency-prone, low-income African countries and the war-ravaged nations of Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen.



Indonesia's
Lombok declares
health emergency
over malaria

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Indonesia's tourist island of Lombok is battling malaria, authorities say, declaring a health emergency after a series of earthquakes in July and August forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

The quakes and aftershocks that killed nearly 500 people are estimated to have caused damage of 5 trillion rupiah (\$337.84 million) to hospitals and public infrastructure, among other buildings, on the island's northern coast.

Lombok is less developed than its neighboring island of Bali, which is Indonesia's top tourist destination.

After the quake, aid groups said many of the hundreds of thousands left homeless were camping in open fields, refusing to seek shelter indoors as tremors continued.

Women and children are among the 128 people found to have been infected with malaria, Rahman Sahnan Putra, the chief of the West Lombok Health Agency, told Reuters by telephone. The local government was seeking 3.4 billion rupiah (\$230,000) from the central and regional governments to help fund mosquito nets, test kits and the emergency response effort, he added.

Although malaria is endemic in West Lombok, recent tests revealed a spurt in infections, another regional official said.

CPEC violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Indian envoy tells UN

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is grabbing headlines for all the good and bad reasons. U.S. opposition to it is known to all and sundry because of the escalating trade war between Washington and Beijing. Now India has also raised concerns over the ambitious project, asserting that it violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

India raised the issue over China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at the 39th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, underlining that the CPEC project ignored New Delhi's core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity, ANI reported.

India's deputy permanent representative to UN, Virander Paul, presented a statement on the report of the working group on the right to development, stressing that India understands that right to development, remains extremely important for an overwhelming majority of the global population.

"But it was regrettable that, even after three decades of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, and after 19 sessions of the working group on this subject, this right still remains a distant reality," he said. Paul further said that progress in the working group is possible only if participating member states demonstrate the necessary political will for seeking common ground with a result oriented approach.

"We agree that the process of development



needs to be nationally owned and driven by national needs and priorities. However, what it needs to be complemented by is equitable economic relations and a favourable environment at the international level. It is high time that we recognise the right to development is central to the realisation of all other human rights," he said.

He further apprised the council about a reference in the report of the working group of an intervention by a member state which goes against the principles enshrined in UNGA

Resolution 41/128.

The envoy asserted that India shares international community's desire for enhancing physical connectivity and believes that it should bring greater economic benefits to all in an equitable and balanced manner.

"Regarding the so-called 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor', which is being projected as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, the international community is well aware of India's position. No country can accept a project that ignores its core concerns

'Islamic revolution in Iran paved new course for Muharram commemorations in Kashmir'

1 → Once Imam Zainul Abideen (as) went to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage. Hasham bin Abdulmalik bin Marwan, the Khalifa of that time, was also present there. Khalifa tried hard to touch Hajrul Aswad but was unable to do so. In the meantime, a young man, shining like a full moon, walked in. When he approached Hajrul Aswad, the crowd immediately dispersed. The Khalifa, who was watching the spectacle, was astonished.

He knew Imam Zainul Abideen (as) well but when someone asked him about the young man, he feigned ignorance. A poet named Furuzduq, who was hearing the conversation, said he knew the man. He stood up and recited a beautiful poem, eulogizing the Imam and his holy household. The poet was soon arrested.

After Imam Zainul Abideen (as), Imam Mohammad Baqir (as) during his time kept alive the tradition of azadari. After him came Imam Jafar Sadiq, who invited the famous poet and the lover of Ahlulbayt, Jafar Affan (ra) to recite marsiyas. During this time, Umayyads and Abbasis were fighting for power, so Imam Jafar Sadiq (as) had ample opportunities to propagate the message of Islam and popularize the Karbala movement started by his great grandfather in the desert plains of Karbala. During the time of Imam Musa Kazim (as), some changes were introduced in the practice of marsiya nigaari (writing of Muharram elegies). He asked the poets of that time to write in their respective languages as per their own linguistic and cultural traditions. The practice continued till the last Imam's (as) occultation and continues till date, although some innovations have been introduced over the centuries.

History of Muharram commemorations in Kashmir

In Kashmir, the tradition of azadari was popularized by three Sufi saints who came to Kashmir from Iran in the 14th century. First of them was Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (ra), who was a staunch lover of Ahlulbayt. He brought many taburrukaat from Karbala, which have become quite popular in Kashmir over the years. Then came Syed Sharafuddin Mosvi aka Bulbul Shah (ra), who also professed Shia faith according to historical accounts, although Shias and Sunnis were not segregated so much that time so his identity remained largely concealed.

The third and most important missionary who played an instrumental role in the dissemination of the message of Ahlulbayt and Karbala was Mir Shamsuddin Araqi (ra).



During his time, the practice of azadari became widespread. He took the message of Imam Hussain (as) to every Shia household in Kashmir.

The first marsiya, recorded in the history of Kashmir, was recited in 822. During that time, Muharram commemorations were not held publicly. There were no azadari processions that time. Mourning ceremonies were organized inside packed halls, mainly at night time. It used to be a quiet affair and it continued that way until the time of former Chief Minister of Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

He said all religious communities have the right to practice and preach their religious rituals, including azadari. During his time, a Muharram procession used to be taken in Srinagar city at night, led by Mirza Mohammad Ali. Later, during the time of Chief Minister Gul Shah, these processions were banned and the ban remains in place till date.

The tradition of Kashmiri marsiya nigaari

From the historical point of view, the first marsiya nigaar (elegy writer) in Kashmir was Mir Syed Hassan during the Shahmiri dynasty rule. His marsiyas were a blend of Kashmiri and Sanskrit, which was the language of Kashmir's erstwhile chief priest Nooruddin Noorani. He passed away in 822 hijri. After the Shahmiri dynasty came Chaks. During the Chak rule, Kashmiri marsiyas gained unprecedented prominence, since Chaks were Shias. After Chaks came Mughals, who imposed imperial diktats against marsiya nigaars, forcing them to write and recite marsiyas clandestinely.

U.S. is roadblock to peace between India, Pakistan

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — The inaugural 2+2 ministerial dialogue between India and the U.S. held in New Delhi last week has again threatened to jeopardize recent efforts made by New Delhi and Islamabad to bury the hatchet and open a new chapter in their bilateral ties. The joint statement issued at the summit has drawn sharp reaction from Islamabad, making it amply clear that the Americans don't want India and Pakistan to be friends and they don't want peace and stability to prevail in this region.

In the joint statement, India and the U.S. called on Pakistan to ensure that the territory under its control is not used to launch terrorist attacks on other countries, adding that Pakistan should expeditiously bring to justice perpetrators of the Mumbai, Pathankot, Uri, and other cross-border terrorist attacks. Without going into the merits of this statement, the timing is suspect.

U.S., which recently cancelled \$300 million military aid to Pakistan, has been chagrined with the growing proximity between Islamabad and Beijing and the new Pakistani government's hand of friendship towards Iran. Americans are known to unceremoniously dump friends and allies, and the recent developments indicate that the Trump administration has embarked on a mission to dump Pakistan now. Not just that, it seeks to hijack any efforts to improve ties



between Pakistan and India.

Reacting sharply to the Indo-U.S. joint statement, Pakistan's foreign ministry said it takes "strong exception to the unwarranted references" against it in the statement, adding that Pakistan has conveyed its position to the U.S. on the issue. The spokesperson said the ministry is of the view that mentioning of a third country with "unsubstantiated accusations" in a formal document is "inconsistent with the established diplomatic norms".

The statement has reopened old wounds that have prevented the two South Asian estranged neighbors from demolishing the giant wall of hatred and animosity between

them. This regional disintegration, it must be noted, serves the regional policy of the U.S. well. We have seen in Afghanistan how the U.S. imposed a war and forced peoples and nations to fight against each other. The war has entered its 17th year now, and the U.S. war machinery is busy fanning the flames of war.

Since the new government assumed power in Pakistan, Islamabad and New Delhi have shown signs of a thaw, expressing desire to work with each other and resolve the contentious issues, including Kashmir. Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan, in his victory speech, asserted that he would take two steps if India took one step. Indian

on sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said. "India reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the right to development."

Earlier, the representative of Pakistan spoke of the country's multifaceted approach towards development, including structural reforms, investment-friendly policies and social safety nets for the vulnerable, India Today reported.

CPEC, according to the Pakistani representative, is a key regional initiative for connectivity and the shared prosperity of nations and was a practical example of the realization of the right to development by fuelling economic growth in the region.

The representative tried to highlight that similar regional projects could promote international cooperation for development and operationalize the right to development, the report said. China's foreign minister Wang Yi during his three-day visit to Islamabad last week underscored the significance of CPEC and conveyed the desire of Chinese government to further enhance the strategic partnership between the two allies.

In February this year, Pakistan government had expressed fears that India may attack the installations of CPEC in a bid to sabotage the multi-billion mega project. A report in Dawn said Ministry of Interior Affairs had issued directives to Gilgit-Baltistan home department to ensure foolproof security measures around CPEC installations.

Then in 1180 hijri, Khwaja Hussain Mir of a village called Gund broke a new ground in marsiya nigaari. He divided a Kashmiri marsiya into five parts: hamud, dumbaal, gath, kreakh, nishast. Before he emerged on the scene, Shias were persecuted and used to observe taqiyya (seclusion). He gave a fresh impetus to the tradition of marsiya nigaari and azadari in Kashmir.

Persecution of Kashmiri Shias for observing Muharram The role of clergy, right since the time of Mir Shamsuddin Araqi (ra), has been greatly significant in promoting the message of Karbala through marsiyas, sermons and various other means. They had to face myriad hardships though. For example, Kashmiri marsiyas were construed by some people in Ahle Sunnat community in a wrong way. They alleged that these marsiya nigaars showed 'sahaba e kiraaam' (companions of Holy Prophet) in a poor light. They apparently considered Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan a 'subaha' too.

That was primarily why Shias were attacked and looted almost 21 times and the shrine of Mir Shamsuddin Araqi (ra) was set ablaze at least nine times. At one time, streets in Srinagar city were flooded with the blood of Shias.

Impact of Iranian revolution on azadari in Kashmir

Until the Islamic revolution in Iran, Kashmiri Shias had a different perception of Iran. Imam Khomeini's (ra) Islamic revolution had a deep impact on Shia youth in Kashmir. It gave a whole new direction to the practice of azadari in Kashmir. And it brought some fundamental changes in the way we studied the history of Karbala, as the culture of research became common.

Why Muslims do azadari to commemorate Karbala

The tyrant always seeks to hide his tyranny. It has happened throughout the history. We commemorate Karbala through azadari to keep the memory of martyrs alive, so that people know who was killed, who killed him and why.

Hussain, the son of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and Fatima bint Mohammad (sa), was killed by Yazid, the son of Muawiya. Who was Muawiya? The son of Abu Sufyan and Hinda. Who was Hinda? The woman who chopped the liver of Hazrat Hamza (as) in the Battle of Ohad.

When people know these facts, they will obviously hate the tyrant and his tyranny. That's precisely why the sympathizers of these tyrants oppose the practice of azadari, to hide the oppression unleashed on the oppressed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a letter to Khan, congratulating him on his election. These developments rekindled hopes of a breakthrough in India-Pakistan relations and brought cheer to peaceniks on both sides of the border.

Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria last week said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's government has opened a political window and India is "filled with cautious hope". Bisaria had met the cricketer-turned-PM earlier this month and presented him a cricket bat signed by the members of present Indian cricket team. It was hailed as a sign of cricket diplomacy, which works when the political diplomacy fails.

Pakistan's foreign ministry, reacting to Bisaria's statement, said it wants to "utilise the same window and see how we can move forward." So, it's apparent both sides have been making indefatigable efforts to break the status quo and make substantial progress on improving their relations.

On Thursday, Pakistan's foreign ministry said it was ready for talks with India and was awaiting an official response from New Delhi on how to move forward on the issue. "We are ready for talks with India. We have also conveyed our position to the international community. It remains for India to respond," spokesman Dr Mohammad Faisal said during the weekly media briefing, corroborating reports that Pakistan had approached India for peace talks. →13

Turkey to continue Iran gas exports despite U.S. sanctions: expert

1 → ■ Ankara has pledged to boost imports of Iranian gas despite U.S. sanctions. Is that request still on the table?

A: U.S. sanctions targeted Iran oil sector and Turkey will continue natural gas import from Iran. Turkey has some domestic pipelines project and at present natural gas system is not integrated, Turkey needs Iran natural gas to use it in Southern part of Turkey which has cold winters. Ankara is interested in importing more natural gas from Iran. Turkey begins to import natural gas from Azerbaijan via TANAP project and by next year Turkey will import natural gas from Russia through Turk Stream project. By 2026 and at the end of Iran-Turkey natural gas agreement, Turkey is interested in importing more natural gas from Iran and extend the natural gas agreement with Iran. Turkey's officials have repeatedly stated that they want to buy natural gas from Iran with reasonable price in contrast to the gas price which Turkey imports from Russia and Azerbaijan. If Iran and Turkey agree on price and Iran is able to produce more natural gas, Turkey will import more natural gas from Iran. It should be noted that more natural gas production needs more investment in oil and gas fields and requires infrastructure and giving priority to energy efficiency in Iran. Turkey told U.S. officials that it will continue importing oil and gas from Iran but during last month Turkey decreased oil import from Iran.

■ Turkey has stressed that it does not approve of U.S. sanctions against Iran, call-



ing them 'unilateral'. Meanwhile, Turkish energy company Unit International has a strong presence in Iran, with a \$4.2 billion worth of contract with Iran's energy ministry to build seven natural gas power plants here. How much progress has the company achieved with the project so far? Has Unit International decided to remain in Iran or abandon its investment projects under U.S. pressure?

A: Post-JCPOA Iran expected to have more

foreign investment in its energy sector. Unit International was one of the foreign firms which signed an agreement with Iran to build seven natural gas power plants. According to the agreement, Iran will provide the natural gas which Unit International need for these power plants. Iran has also pledged to guarantee purchase generated electricity from these power plants at a predetermined agreed price over a period of 6 years. By September 2018, there was no major

development in this agreement. There were challenges and debates between government and parliament over this agreement. Asadollah Gharakhani, spokesman of Iranian Parliament Commission on Energy announced that in attraction of foreign investors for energy sector, government policy should include transferring of knowledge and technology, and also human resource training. He refers to the fact that Unit International has no history of construction of power plants and this company was not considered a power plant manufacturer, he claims that Unit International in Turkey occasionally organizes hotels and business activities.

U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA is a major problem for any foreign company interested in investing in Iran energy sector. It is expected that Unit International needs Turkish government's strong support to keep investing in Iran and to continue construction of natural gas power plants. I think it will not be easy for Unit International to maintain in Iran. The other problem in both Iran government and parliament is the support to this company and other foreign firms to be more active in Iran energy sector. Turkey's private companies have good experience and enough financial resources to attract the Iran market. The problem is that to attract foreign investment you need a legal framework, an efficient and fast decision process and political stability (especially in the international context). At the moment these variables are far from being achieved.

Al-Khalifa stands against Shiites in Muharram; fear of Ashura's culture

1 → Sheikh Ali al-Karabadi, a senior Bahraini cleric said, "Al Khalifa has brought down dozens of Shiite mosques in different parts of Bahrain over the past years, while some of these mosques date back to pre-Al-Khalifa's rein in Bahrain."

He also said that among other examples of insulting Al-Khalifa to the Shiite baptisms is the prohibition on religious practices of the Bahraini people. The people of Bahrain in their country, due to the rules of the Al-Khalifa, are deprived of their religious practices, including the morning ceremony in the months of Muharram al-Haram. The collection of Ashura manifestations from all over the country by al-Khalifa militaries has been keen on many years ago.

Al-Khalifa continues to take advantage of the silence of international and international human rights organizations in repression of Bahraini Shiites, and insists on its religious and sectarian discrimination policies.

Isa al-Mu'min, the Friday prayer Imam of the Bahrain's Al-Dir area said, "Al-Khalifa's regime needs to know that people are not willing to give up their religion and beliefs, which are their natural rights and won't allow the invasion of the sacred places."

The prominent Bahraini cleric also said, "The Al-Khalifa regime may not acknowledge any red line in dealing with nations, but people will consider the invasion of religious rites and sacred places red lines."

Sheikh Mohammed al-Mansi, a member of the Shiite Shari'a Council of Bahrain, describes the racial, religious and secular discrimination in Bahrain a historical matter. He said, "Al-Khalifa's policy and approach toward Shia Muslims are strictly condemned by followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUH).

The fact is Al-Khalifa regime fears to see the climate and culture of Ashura in Bahrain, which continues to be regarded as a roadmap for Shiites around the world.

Al-Khalifa's regime knows well that followers of Hussein, as well as adherence to the culture of Ashura, which



has caused the Shiite revolution in Bahrain, not only has not been turned off, but has rooted deeper and found more power in Bahrain over the past eight years.

This year, too, Bahrain's Shiites and revolutionaries more

enthusiastic than ever before will hold mourning in different parts of the country, relive the culture of Ashura, revolution and the struggle. Just like previous years, Al-Khalifa will not be able to prevent mourning ceremonies in Bahrain.

Not an easy time at all and no thanks to the U.S.

1 → The entire world is grappling with a situation in which the Neon coned Washington is so determined to overthrow Assad and leave Syria in the same chaos as Iraq and Libya, for examples, that the Trump administration seems willing to risk war with arguably the best equipped nuclear armed power, Russia. Never before in recent times have irrationality and even immorality had such a grip on any government.

And it's about the maintenance of the dollar, too, at a time when in the U.S. a \$1 trillion fiscal deficit has already arrived a year in advance of 2020 predictions. Indeed, the fate of the U.S. dollar is key and it has strengthened and laid waste to national currencies in Iran, Argentina, Venezuela, Turkey and in many other countries. The U.S. is burning down the world to defend the dollar, which is the source of its economic clout aside from military power.

But what kind of world, in all fairness, is it where the U.S. can buy real goods from other countries with fiat dollars and expect those dollars to be recycled in to U.S. Treasuries to support U.S. spending profligacy and debts that are so enormous the world has never seen such sums before?

Indeed, it has been argued that one of the most important events of the last century was the decoupling of the dollar from gold by Richard Nixon in 1971. Since then, the



world has seen the emergence of a financial empire that has largely brought the world to its financial system. America has grabbed (or

stolen) physical wealth from almost everywhere by simply printing green paper, and by creating economic colonies subservient

the U.S. empire.

And any country that refuses to go along with this scheme entirely becomes an enemy of the U.S. We are seeing this clearly now in the extreme weaponization of the dollar via sanctions and other nefarious moves that are crippling the economies of other countries, including Iran's economy. This economic empire is nonetheless unsustainable.

It is unsustainable because the primary rivals of the U.S., China and Russia, are slowly working towards a multipolar paradigm which in time will dethrone the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency. They are, for one thing, resurrecting gold as a currency of sorts and are not of late anyway buying U.S. paper, but rather many tons of gold.

If the U.S. does not spark a World War, which could well devastate the entire world and send it back to the Stone Age, the new paradigm of multipolarity both economically and monetarily and militarily will emerge and end, once and for all, the sickening aggressions of the U.S., especially since 9/11. It is a shift requiring extreme delicacy on the part of every nation disgusted with what the U.S. has done to harm others. So, we wait and hope for good outcomes not only in Syria, but in every other country suffering the lash of U.S. aggressions.

Finniest joke of the year: Saudi Arabia, UAE protecting civilians in Yemen War



TEHRAN (FNA) — At a time when the international civil society warns that civilian casualties are mounting and Yemen is the world's worst humanitarian crisis, the U.S. government still has the face to claim Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are doing enough to protect civilians in their military campaign against Yemen.

This funny joke, this silly claim is simply intended to justify Washington's criminal complicity and military-diplomatic support for the Saudi-led coalition in their illegal and indiscriminate airstrikes against Yemen that have been denounced by the world community as war crimes and crimes against humanity. To substantiate:

A- According to U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), the administration of President Donald Trump is denying the evident killing of Yemeni civilians by Saudi Arabia and its allies and for continuing to assist the Saudi-led coalition in the invasion of Yemen. How can the Trump administration deny what everyone can see with our own two eyes? It is as clear as day that the Saudi-led coalition is recklessly - and likely intentionally - killing innocent civilians and children and they are doing it with U.S. bombs and targeting assistance.

B- According to Amnesty International, the U.S.-backed war on Yemen is showing no real signs of abating. Horrific human rights abuses, as well as war crimes, are being committed throughout the country, causing unbearable suffering for civilians. Some 17,000 civilians have been killed and a humanitarian crisis has spiralled. Much of the world has ignored this raging conflict and heard little about its devastating consequences.

C- According to the United Nations, civilians bear the brunt of the Saudi war on Yemen. As well as causing the deaths and injuries of thousands of civilians, the conflict has exacerbated an already severe humanitarian crisis. This crisis is man-made, with the war deepening and exacerbating the humanitarian situation, and Saudis impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Saudi Arabia-led coalition has unlawfully tightened its sea and air blockade on Yemen. Despite claims by the Americans and Saudis, the coalition continues to impose restrictions on aid and commercial imports of essential goods, including food, medicine and fuel.

D- According to the UN humanitarian coordinator Lise Grande, Yemen's humanitarian situation has worsened rapidly since UN peace talks collapsed last week and fighting resumed in the port city of Hodeida, where hundreds of thousands of lives hang in the balance. The situation has deteriorated dramatically in the past few days. Families are absolutely terrified by the Saudi-led bombardment, shelling and airstrikes. The peace talks failed because the Saudis did not allow the plane carrying the Yemeni side to fly and leave Sana'a.

E- According to Oxfam's powerful report on the suffering of Yemen's people, this is no natural disaster but the result of a callous, calculated and cynical power play over the fate of the poorest country in the Middle East. Sadly, the UK government is an active party in this tragedy. Despite growing evidence of the human consequences, the UK government has allowed the export of a staggering £4.3bn worth of arms to Saudi Arabia to carry out its bombing campaign.

All this and more serves as further proof that the U.S. government and its NATO partners need to change track. They are on the wrong side of this historic human catastrophe. Instead of callously claiming that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are doing enough to protect civilians in their unlawful military campaign against Yemen, they can start by insisting that the illegal weapons sales, military support and blockade of all Yemen ports is ended, that there is the free flow of goods within the country, and that there is an immediate ceasefire and re-energised peace talks.

By callously trying to justify and maintain more sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the United States and its NATO business partners have become complicit in Saudi-UAE war crimes in Yemen. All of them are the reason why there is the dire state of the Yemeni women, men and children, now suffering a cholera outbreak without adequate food, water and medicines, mainly as a result of the bombing by the Saudi-UAE aircraft purchased from and refuelled by the U.S. and UK governments.

Regrettably, despite all these documented human rights violations and crimes, and despite the passionate rhetoric of human rights organizations, the United Nations and even Western legislators, halting the war that exacerbates the humanitarian crisis in Yemen seems to be an afterthought for the U.S. and Western associates.

In reality, these governments are openly defying and lying to the international community, signing the paperwork, and ensuring that Western aid shipments won't stop for even a moment, with no intention to act to end their complicity in this dirty war of aggression and deceit.

Despite the international outcry and well-documented reports by the UN, Amnesty International, UNICEF and even American-European legislators, Washington and cronies continue to bury their heads in the sand, in complete denial that there is enough evidence of International Law and International Humanitarian Law being breached as a direct consequence of American-NATO involvement in Saudi-UAE war crimes in Yemen.

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Osteoarthritis: Can an antioxidant offer protection?

In a recent series of experiments, scientists found that a specific antioxidant helps prevent the damage that osteoarthritis causes to cartilage. This may also have applications for bone and brain disorders.

Osteoarthritis commonly affects knee joints.

Osteoarthritis is the most common arthritis type, causing pain and stiffness in the joints as cartilage steadily breaks down.

It is often referred to as “wear and tear” arthritis, as opposed to rheumatoid arthritis, which is caused by an immune response.

Most commonly affecting a person’s hands, knees, hips, feet, and spine, osteoarthritis symptoms tend to get worse over time.

Symptoms of joint swelling and tenderness can come and go over time — or, in some people, they can be constant. The degree of severity varies a great deal between individuals.

As the most common joint disorder in the United States, osteoarthritis affects over 30 million adults.

Several interventions can help manage osteoarthritis, including physical therapy, medications, and surgery. To date, however, nothing halts the progression of this debilitating condition.

It is still not exactly clear why cartilage continues to break down, and what mechanisms underpin the changes.

Risk factors for osteoarthritis include advancing age and obesity, so as the global population becomes older and heavier, the condition is likely to become increasingly prevalent.

■ Delving deeper into osteoarthritis

Recently, researchers led by Frederique Cornelis — from KU Leuven in Belgium — looked into the cellular changes involved in osteoarthritis and the interactions between certain proteins. Their findings are published in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

Specifically, the team was interested in ANP32A, which is a protein involved in a number of roles within cells, including intracellular transport and cell differentiation.

The researchers noted that levels of ANP32A were significantly lower in tissue samples from both humans and mice with osteoarthritis. This piqued their interest — so, using gene expression profiling, they dug a little deeper into the protein’s function.

They used a mouse model that is incapable of producing ANP32A, which causes them to develop osteoarthritis and osteopenia, or bone loss. They also developed a condition similar to cerebellar ataxia, symptoms of which include stumbling and a lack of coordination.

The study authors summarize their initial findings:

“ANP32A protects against the development and progression of osteoarthritis by preventing oxidative stress in the articular cartilage.”



Several interventions can help manage osteoarthritis, including physical therapy, medications, and surgery. To date, however, nothing halts the progression of this debilitating condition.

■ Adding an antioxidant

Next, the researchers tested the effects of adding an antioxidant called N-acetyl-cysteine (NAC) to drinking water.

They found that adding NAC to the animals’ diet reduced symptoms of osteoarthritis, and cartilage damage seemed to be halted. Symptoms of cerebellar ataxia were also reduced.

To understand what mechanism might be behind ANP32A’s ability to reverse these symptoms, the researchers dug a little deeper. They found that ANP32A raises the levels of an enzyme known as ATM, which plays an important role in regulating cellular defensive responses against oxidative stress.

They explain, “ANP32A’s protective role can be attributed to promoting the expression of ATM in the articular cartilage, to preserve the cellular redox balance.”

In other words, if ANP32A is not present, there is less ATM available to mop up the free radicals that are causing damage to the cartilage.

The authors hope that understanding the role of ANP32A and ATM in more depth could lead to interventions for a number of difficult-to-treat and poorly understood conditions.

They believe that their findings “may have therapeutic implications not only in chronic joint disorders but also in bone and neurological diseases.”

However, there is much work still to do; as the authors make clear, this molecular interaction is unlikely to be the only mechanism involved in osteoarthritis. In the future, the team hopes to investigate other factors that might influence ANP32A production in cartilage.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Goosebumps could be a sign of a high-achieving and healthy life, study finds

Have you ever been to a live music gig that was so moving that your skin became covered in tingling goosebumps?

If so, it could be sign that you’re likely to live a high-achieving, healthy and happy life.

Over the summer, a study was conducted at Reading and Leeds music festivals to explore whether experiencing goosebumps can correlate with the state of a person’s health and their personality.

The research team discovered that those who experienced goosebumps are more likely to foster stronger relationships with others, to achieve more higher-level academic feats throughout their lives and to be in better health than those who didn’t.

The Barclaycard study, which was led by Harvard University researcher Matthew Sachs and University of Oxford professor Robin Murphy, assessed the responses of 100 people who were watching a live music performance while wearing a monitoring device.

The researchers analyzed the participants’ physiological responses to the music, while also carrying out a series of psychometric tests to determine what experiencing a “goosebump moment” says about an individual.

The study concluded that 55 per cent of Brits are likely to get goosebumps while watching a live performance, with goosebumps most likely to occur within the first minute.

Women are more likely to exhibit an emotional response to live music, with 55 per cent of the female participants experiencing goosebumps in comparison to 46 per cent of the men.

According to the researchers’ findings, those who had goosebumps at least once during the festival were more likely to describe themselves as “empathetic” and “agreeable” in relationships.

Furthermore, the individuals who noticed those familiar prickly bumps appearing on their skin were also more likely to state that they were in a positive mood and that their overall physical wellbeing was in tip-top shape.

66 per cent of those who had goosebumps during the live music performances said that they were in a more positive mood, in comparison to 46 per cent of their goosebump-free counterparts.

On top of that, those who felt shivers while taking in the music were 43 per cent more likely than those who didn’t to have a university degree qualification or above.

Robin Murphy, researcher at Oxford University, explains how the study gave the research team the opportunity to explore the “phenomenon of goosebumps” in fine detail.

“The results of the Barclaycard study are the first to show the different personality traits that characterize people who experience goosebumps,” he says.

“The evidence also suggests that being truly connected with live entertainment and getting goosebumps has an impact on our overall sense of wellbeing and mood.”

(Source: The Independent)

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Iran proposes having tourism exhibit in Japan



Tehran's ambassador to Tokyo Morteza Rahmani-Movahed (L) stands by JATA President Tadashi Shimura on September 15, 2018.

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran's ambassador to Tokyo on Saturday proposed holding an exhibit of Iran's handicrafts and tourism potential in Japan.

Morteza Rahmani-Movahed brought forward the suggestion in a meeting with Tadashi Shimura who presides over the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA), Mehr reported.

"Implementing this proposal depends on appropriate support from the JATA," the Iranian envoy said.

Shimura, for his part, welcomed the proposal, noting that introduction of Iran's tourist attractions to Japanese people opens up a great opportunity in which Japanese media and travel agencies can also take part.

"Japanese tourists are more interested in monumental and historical buildings yet prefer eco-lodges to hotels," Shimura noted.

Last week, Rahmani-Movahed submitted his credentials to Japanese Emperor Akihito.

Golestan province to add 200 eco-lodges to buttress tourism



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Golestan province's governor has said that 200 eco-lodges will be opened to the public during the next couple of months to cater to the hospitality industry in northern Iran.

Many of the eco-lodges will be prepared by renovating and repurposing of historical houses, CHTN reported.

"The architecture of the old houses in the area is unmatched by any others, which lays the ground for tourism development and attracting [more] travelers."

The lodging houses are expected to run by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019), the official stated.

Earlier in June, Iran tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan publicized that a total of 2,000 new eco-lodges are being made across the country.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Mount Huangshan

Mount Huangshan, often described as the "loveliest mountain of China", has played an important role in the history of art and literature in China since the Tang Dynasty around the 8th century, when a legend dated from the year 747 described the mountain as the place of discovery of the long-sought elixir of immortality.

This legend gave Mount Huangshan its name and assured its place in Chinese history.

Mount Huangshan became a magnet for hermits, poets and landscape artists, fascinated by its dramatic mountainous landscape consisting of numerous granitic peaks, many over 1,000 m high, emerging through a perpetual sea of clouds.



During the Ming Dynasty from around the 16th century, this landscape and its numerous grotesquely-shaped rocks and ancient, gnarled trees inspired the influential Shanshui ("Mountain and Water") school of landscape painting, providing a fundamental representation of the oriental landscape in the world's imagination and art.

The property, located in the humid subtropical monsoon climate zone of China's Anhui Province and covering an area of 15,400 ha with a buffer zone of 14,200 ha, is also of outstanding importance for its botanical richness and for the conservation of a number of locally or nationally endemic plant species, some of which are threatened with extinction.

(Source: UNESCO)

Ahvaz to offer fam tours for free

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Ahvaz tourism department is set to organize free familiarization tours on a weekly basis in a bid to promote traveling to the southwestern Iranian city.

"Free-of-charge tours are scheduled to start by the month of Mehr [starting Sep. 23] with the aim of promoting awareness about tourist attractions, historical sites and urban landscape in Ahvaz," Ahvaz tourism chief Gholamreza Jalilinia was quoted by the CHTN as saying on Thursday.

Ahvaz is capital of Khuzestan Province.

"The excursions will set off from the headquarters of the Ahvaz tourism department on Fridays with tour guides to provide necessary information... coffee, tea and local dishes will also be served to visitors," Jalilinia stated.

Khuzestan province is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could spend weeks exploring.

The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

Back in June, Alireza Izadi, the provincial tourism chief, announced that Khuzestan had set a goal to increase the value of handicraft exports per annum to \$7 million within the next three years from then around \$3 million.

Khuzestan exported \$3 million worth of handicrafts in the previous Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018).



People visit ruins of the UNESCO-registered Tchogha Zanbil in Khuzestan province, southwestern Iran.

Glassware complex under construction in Tehran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A vast complex dedicated to handcrafted glassware is being built in western Tehran, an official with the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization has said.

"The Tehran Municipality has recently broken the ground on a [shopping] complex in which glassware artisans would offer their products...; the complex will include a parking lot, production center, sales shops, and workshops," Mohammad Enshaei said, Mehr reported.

He expressed hope that the construction process to be completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar

year (March 2019).

"Visitors to the complex may take glassware by handing over waste glass and recyclable material... this is a policy that the municipality is pursuing to exercise glass recycling in the same area."

Iran exported \$280 million worth of handicrafts during the past Iranian year (March 2017-March 2018). Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, glassware, hand-woven textile, personal ornamentations, precious and semi-precious gemstones are among Iranian exports to Iraq, Afghanistan and Germany, the U.S., and the UK amongst others.

Iran's outbound passengers cut by 8.6 percent y/y

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The number of Iran's outbound passengers has slumped by 8.6 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) from a year earlier, Mehr reported.

Data compiled by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization shows the number of foreign tourists visiting the country surged 38 percent in the same period.

Over the past couple of months, the value of Iranian currency, the rial, has slumped sharply against foreign currencies due to U.S. sanctions, making it harder for Iranians to travel overseas.

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and ordered restoration of sanctions against the country.

The first batch of sanctions was snapped back in August while the second, targeting Iran's oil industry, is due to take effect in November.



Shiraz conference exploring Iran-Italy archeological co-op

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Shiraz University on Saturday began playing host to an international conference, which spotlights Iran-Italy cultural and archeological ties over the past couple of decades, CHTN reported.

Several experts, archaeologists and historians from both nationals are scheduled to attend the event running through September 22.

Titled "From Past to Future: Cultural Heritage as an Instrument for a Sustainable Development", the event also pays tribute to Pietro della Valle (1586 – 1652), an Italian composer, musicologist, and author who traveled throughout Asia during the Renaissance period.

The two countries have conducted various joint studies across Fars province particularly across Persepolis archaeology area, which is the main center for the Achaemenid Empire (6th-4th century BC), acknowledged as UNESCO World Heritage site.



Scotland's clock that's (almost) never on times



The clock atop The Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh, Scotland, is almost always three minutes fast (Credit: Francesco Dazzi/Alamy)

looks equally glorious when eyed from the commanding northern ramparts of Edinburgh Castle while peering out over the battlements. It is placed at the city's very center of gravity, between the Old Town and the New Town, at the confluence of all business and life. Except, of course, that the dial's big hand and little hand are out of sync with Greenwich Mean Time.

This bold irregularity is, in fact, a historical quirk first introduced in 1902 when the Edwardian-era building opened as the North British Station Hotel. Then, as now, it overlooked the platforms and signal boxes of Waverley Train Station, and just as porters in red jackets met guests off the train, whisking them from the station booking hall to the interconnected reception desk in the

hotel's basement, the North British Railway Company owners wanted to make sure their passengers – and Edinburgh's hurrying public – wouldn't miss their trains.

Given an extra three minutes, they reasoned, these travelers would have more time on the clock to collect their tickets, to reach their corridor carriages and to unload their luggage before the stationmaster's whistle blew. Still today, it is a calculated miscalculation that helps keep the city on time.

The sky was overcast and the air biting cold on the day I visited to learn this history, guided by the hotel's security manager Iain Davidson. After a quick briefing, I followed his echoing footsteps into the dimly lit brickwork turret, a transition from front of house to backstage. In between the sixth floor's suites, we entered a door that could well have led to a broom cupboard. Above that, beyond the water storage tanks, a black spiral staircase corkscrewed into the tower's crown through a series of wooden landings. Each step up was a step back in time.

(Source: BBC)

UNESCO launches new travel platform 'World Heritage Journeys'

Coinciding with the European Heritage Days celebrations, UNESCO has launched the first-ever web platform dedicated to World Heritage and sustainable travel.

Supported by the European Union, the platform features 34 selected World Heritage sites spread across 19 European Union countries, and it has been developed in collaboration with National Geographic. The launch took place when UNESCO Paris Headquarters opened its doors to the public for the European Heritage Days event on September 15.

World Heritage Journeys is co-funded by the European Union and promotes sustainable travel to some of the most

remarkable World Heritage sites in Europe. It encourages people to travel beyond the major tourist hubs, staying longer and experiencing more of what the local region has to offer. This initiative is part of a new alliance formed between UNESCO and National Geographic.

"Our goal is to change how people travel. Staying longer in destinations, experiencing the local culture and its environment, and gaining a deeper knowledge and appreciation of World Heritage values," said Mechthild Rossler, Director of the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO.

World Heritage Journeys invites travelers to travel along

four cultural heritage itineraries—Royal Europe, Ancient Europe, Romantic Europe and Underground Europe—which intertwine to tell fascinating stories of Europe's heritage and history. The website has practical information and tools to support travelers in planning their European holidays based on local knowledge about the destinations' cultural heritage.

"With this local knowledge, the website encourages travelers from North America, China and other major tourism markets to travel differently and travel deeper, and use the platform to inspire and plan their European trips."

(Source: UNESCO)

Team shows a quick simulation of Hurricane Florence done without climate change

In the last few years, teams of scientists have developed a consistent protocol for rapidly analyzing the influence of climate change on extreme weather events. Within a week of the disaster, reports have been available to inform the conversation about whether we can expect more events like it in the future.

But on Wednesday, we saw the first example of something new — an analysis published before the event even happened. A group led by Stony Brook University's Kevin Reed ran a very simple computer model experiment on Hurricane Florence — which isn't due to make landfall until Friday — and quickly released the top-line results.

The rapid studies we've been seeing are done by examining the historical weather record to estimate how rare and extreme a given storm or heat event would be in that area of the globe. From there, climate model simulations are used to see if climate change is expected to change the frequency of that type of event.

■ A warmer world

In this case, there's obviously no data available for a thing that hasn't happened yet. Instead, the researchers focused on a much more limited question that is faster to answer: how does a warmer world change this storm?

In the counterfactual world where global



warming never happened, it's impossible to say if Hurricane Florence would even have been born. Even small changes can have complex consequences on the atmosphere, such that events would play out completely

differently.

But that's not the point. Since Hurricane Florence is occurring in this warmer world, we can simply examine the effect of warmer temperatures.

In the counterfactual world where global warming never happened, it's impossible to say if Hurricane Florence would even have been born.

To do this, the researchers took the current state of the world on Tuesday, dropped that into their model as a starting point, and pressed play to simulate ahead to Sunday. For a comparison simulation, they took those starting conditions and essentially subtracted out global warming. In this counterfactual world, the storm looks significantly different.

■ Sea surface temperature

Hurricanes are fueled by energy from the evaporation of warm seawater, so it's no surprise that warmer sea surface temperatures should give the storm a boost. The size of the boost in this case is pretty remarkable, though. The model analysis showed the real-world Florence dumping 50 percent more rain near the coast than it would in a world without human-caused warming.

The basic scaling of rainfall with the increased moisture available in a warmer atmosphere means you expect to see at least a six-percent increase.

Studies have shown that add-on effects can put that number in the neighborhood of 15 percent for storms like hurricanes, and one study estimated a whopping 38 percent increase for Hurricane Harvey, for example. Still, 50 percent is even greater, and the team has not yet shown what factors caused such a large increase in the model simulation.

(Source: arstechnica.com)

Scientists explain how a lower maximum energy capacity helps turbines perform better



When it comes to wind power, you might think bigger is better. Taller structures, larger blades, and more powerful generators will produce more electricity, so of course it's best to build all of these as big as we possibly can. Except, according to the data and industry experts, that's not what's happening. Instead, wind turbine manufacturers are deliberately putting the brakes on the maximum generation capacity of their turbines — holding back the peak possible power. And the result is that turbines produce more electricity, not less.

The trend of decreasing "specific power" among turbines in the U.S. was highlighted in the 2017 Wind Technologies Market Report, which tracks a number of trends in wind power and was produced by a group of scientists at Lawrence Berkeley National Labs for the DOE.

"Specific power is the relationship between the maximum nameplate capacity — or the amount of total generation plausibly generated by a wind turbine — relative to the swept rotor area of the blades," report author Ryan Wiser told Popular Mechanics in an interview. "It's the ratio of those two factors."

■ The specific power

The larger a turbine's blades get, and the smaller its generator, the smaller its specific power is going to be. And in the case of the U.S., where rotor sizes are increasing but generator size increases aren't quite keeping pace, the ratio is dropping, very much on purpose.

At first glance, it might not make sense that wind turbine designers would be aiming for a lower specific power. After all, if you've

got a giant turbine with very large blades, you'd imagine that it would be wise to couple that with a powerful generator to wring every last drop of electricity from those giant blades. That might be true if your goal was to maximize the sheer amount of electricity generated, but what American utilities care most about is actually how stable their generators are.

One of the biggest downsides to renewable sources like wind and solar is that these sources can fluctuate wildly, producing zero energy one day and more energy than necessary the next. One solution to the problem is giant battery farms, but what utilities really want from a wind turbine is the ability to produce a certain amount of electricity continuously over a long period of time without fluctuations.

■ Capacity factor

In the energy business, this characteristic is called "capacity factor," and it tells operators how close a generator is to producing its maximum amount of energy 100 percent of the time. If a particular turbine can produce a maximum of, say, five megawatts — the turbine's nameplate capacity — and it does that 24/7, then it has a capacity factor of 100 percent.

But no real turbine could possibly go at full speed all the time. Sometimes the winds just don't blow, or aren't very strong, or maybe the turbine has to be shut down for maintenance. A few years ago, wind turbines in the U.S. averaged a capacity factor around 33 percent, says Wiser, meaning they were only generating about a third as much power as their hypothetical maximum over a given period of time.

(Source: popularmechanics.com)

Researchers design new metabolic technology to open scientific data for everyone



Now, scientists at Scripps Research have released a new technology designed to make these measurements easier to perform and more accessible to practitioners, scientists and the general public.

"This is really about data sharing and accelerating the process of discovery," says Gary Siuzdak, Ph.D., professor at Scripps Research and co-corresponding author of the new XCMS/METLIN open data analysis platform, published recently in Nature Methods.

XCMS-MRM and METLIN-MRM represent a cloud-based analysis platform that allows scientists to quantify molecules from biological samples and make their results publicly available.

"When we say 'publicly available,' we mean it. Anyone with a computer would have access," says Siuzdak.

Directed by Siuzdak, the Center for Metabolomics and Mass Spectrometry at Scripps Research specializes in using a technique called mass spectrometry to identify and quantify small molecules, whether they are drugs or naturally occurring metabolites. Metabolites are critical as they interact with every level of a person's physiology: the genome, transcriptome and the proteome. One could say metabolites are master manipulators of physiology and reflect an individual's health signature.

■ Generating data

Tens of thousands of labs around the world generate data using mass spectrometry, so the platform could be useful outside medicine as well, say study first authors Xavier Domingo-Almenara, Ph.D., and J. Rafael Montenegro-Burke, Ph.D., of Scripps Research. Any field using mass

spectrometry could benefit from these new resources, such as environmental sciences, pharmaceuticals, forensics, food control and sports medicine, they add.

Siuzdak and his colleagues have long aimed to keep their research tools free and open to the public. Paul Benton, Ph.D., bioinformatics analyst at Scripps Research and co-corresponding author of the study, explains that hosting their platform on the cloud allows anyone, from collaborators to patients, to check the validity of the mass spectrometry results. "In an age where scientific results are being constantly questioned, open data has become an essential part of the discovery process," Benton says.

The idea of open data sharing has caught on in recent years. Since its launch in 2004, the XCMS/METLIN platform has grown to over 25,000 users, and the molecules in its data repository have leapt from 14,000 to 150,000 in just the last year, partly thanks to a collaboration with Calibr, a division of Scripps Research.

The new resources take advantage of breakthroughs that let scientists speed up research—and increase precision—by identifying the key fragments of a molecule that set it apart.

"There's nothing else even close to this," Siuzdak says.

The study, "XCMS-MRM and METLIN-MRM: a cloud library and public resource for targeted analysis of small molecules," included additional authors from the University of Lausanne; Lausanne University Hospital; Geneva University Hospitals; Umea University and Imperial College London.

(Source: phys.org)

Light can create and destroy chemical bonds, researcher finds

This is one of six stories done in partnership with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Find out more about their amazing research and scientists.

Light could be the key to everything from pain-free braces removal to science fiction devices such as the replicator in Star Trek, according to photochemist Professor Christopher Barner-Kowollik from QUT.

But not using the light that you or I think of. Instead of light from the Sun or a lamp, the team uses very intense and very specific light, like the sort that comes out of a laser, to create and destroy chemical bonds.

"Perhaps a little bit contrary to popular opinion, when it comes to visible light, red light has the least energy, and blue light has the most energy," explains Barner-Kowollik in an interview with ScienceAlert.

"So we, as macromolecular photochemists, are trying to use much of the electromagnetic spectrum, but in a really precise fashion. When we say we are using a specific color of light, we'll say we're using this specific wavelength of 420 nanometers for example."

One of the ways this very specific light could be used for good is in dentistry. When braces or crowns need to be exchanged or removed, most of the time the removal is with a pair of pliers and brute force.

But Barner-Kowollik and his team want to take this even further and are working to create reversible adhesive technology for things like braces or crowns.

"If you had a glue that could become unglued by a simple trigger, something as harmless as light, that would be fantastic," he explains.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Elephant bird bones suggest early human activity in Madagascar: study

Early human settlers are believed to be the reason why the Madagascar elephant bird went extinct. Now, researchers found evidence that humans might have been on the island 6,000 years earlier than previously believed, suggesting that they possibly coexisted with the giants for thousands of years before they went extinct.

A team of scientists from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) discovered what appears to be chop marks on the bones of the already extinct elephant bird. The chop mark is said to likely have been made by a sharp tool, while the straightness of the cut and its lack of continuing cracks suggest that it was made on fresh bone.

The markings clearly suggest that the giant bird was hunted and butchered by prehistoric humans, but what's even more remarkable about the discovery is that radiocarbon dating revealed the bone to be about 10,500 years old, making it the oldest known evidence of human presence in Madagascar. This means that compared to the previous belief that humans settled on the island roughly 2,400 to 4,000 years ago, human presence on the island possibly occurred 6,000 years earlier.

What does the discovery mean for the hypothesis surrounding the extinction of the elephant bird? Many archaeologists accept the idea proposed four decades ago that the extinction of megafauna in northern continents was likely a result of a so-called blitzkrieg by early human hunters encroaching on their territory and not because of factors such as climate change. In fact,

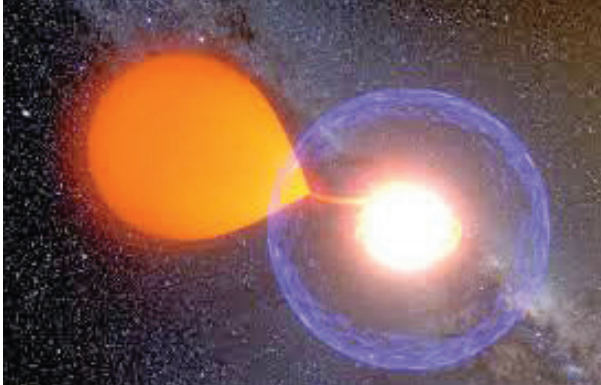
Madagascar is considered key in testing this theory.

However, the current discovery suggests that the humans possibly coexisted with the elephant birds and other massive creatures for thousands of years with limited negative impact on biodiversity.

(Source: Tech Times)

Astronomers witness birth of new star from stellar explosion

The explosions of stars, known as supernovae, can be so bright they outshine their host galaxies. They take months or years to fade away, and sometimes, the gaseous remains of the explosion slam into hydrogen-rich gas and temporarily get bright again — but could they remain luminous without any outside interference?



That's what Dan Milisavljevic, an assistant professor of physics and astronomy at Purdue University, believes he saw six years after "SN 2012au" exploded.

"We haven't seen an explosion of this type, at such a late timescale, remain visible unless it had some kind of interaction with hydrogen gas left behind by the star prior to explosion," he said. "But there's no spectral spike of hydrogen in the data -- something else was energizing this thing."

As large stars explode, their interiors collapse down to a point at which all their particles become neutrons. If the resulting neutron star has a magnetic field and rotates fast enough, it may develop into a pulsar wind nebula.

"We know that supernova explosions produce these types of rapidly rotating neutron stars, but we never saw direct evidence of it at this unique time frame," Milisavljevic said. "This a key moment when the pulsar wind nebula is bright enough to act like a lightbulb illuminating the explosion's outer ejecta."

SN 2012au was already known to be extraordinary -- and weird -- in many ways. Although the explosion wasn't bright enough to be termed a "superluminous" supernova, it was extremely energetic and long-lasting, and dimmed in a similarly slow light curve.

Milisavljevic predicts that if researchers continue to monitor the sites of extremely bright supernovae, they might see similar transformations.

(Source: Science Daily)

How cells handle a sticky, toxic, but absolutely essential molecule

Do you enjoy breathing air? You should spare a thought once in a while for heme, an iron-containing molecule essential to all organisms engaged in an air-breathing lifestyle. Heme molecules are most famously part of hemoglobin, the oxygen-transporting protein in blood, but they are also components of numerous other proteins involved in gas transport and fundamental chemistry in cells. On its own, heme is toxic and reactive, but when slotted correctly into certain proteins, it's absolutely essential.

Until recently, a basic mystery about heme remained unsolved: How does it get from mitochondria, where it is made, to the proteins in other parts of the cell where it is needed?

A team of researchers at the Lerner Research Institute of the Cleveland Clinic has now solved this long-standing puzzle by identifying the protein that "chaperones" free heme in cells by binding to it, keeping it from doing damage to the cell until it's delivered where it's needed. The findings are published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

Dennis Stuehr, the investigator at Cleveland Clinic who oversaw the new study, had been interested in the mystery of the unknown heme chaperone for years. "It was surprising that really almost nothing was known," Stuehr said. "In the



literature, it looks like everyone just turned the lights off and went home."

■ Getting its final destination

Bit by bit, Stuehr's team has been piecing together the biochemistry of free heme. The first step was finding out simply which proteins heme can bind to. Then, they needed to exper-

iment to see which of the proteins that heme sticks to actually help it get to its final destination.

"Heme's kind of sticky; it binds to many things," said Elizabeth Sweeny, the postdoctoral fellow who was one of the co-leaders of the new study. "This (study) was the first time we found a protein that not only binds heme, and binds a lot of it, but is also required for delivery to downstream heme protein targets."

The new study uses several lines of evidence to implicate an unexpected player as heme's chaperone: glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase, or GAPDH. GAPDH is an enzyme involved in breaking down sugar in cells. It's a commonplace, unglamorous component of the cell's basic metabolism, so much so that laboratory scientists mainly use it as a basic control in studies of other proteins.

"GAPDH is such a ridiculous candidate," Stuehr said. "But there's been this emerging story that GAPDH isn't just this boring glycolytic enzyme that's in every cell; it has these other roles in cell biology. And heme delivery is one of these new roles."

GAPDH may not be the only protein involved in chaperoning heme, Stuehr adds, and research on more details of how heme is delivered is ongoing.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

2 electric bus lines in Tehran to begin operation

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Two electric bus lines will become operational in Tehran in near future, Tehran bus operating company's director general Peyman Sanandaji has said.

The two lines, which are being set up in southern Tehran, will link Khorasan square to south terminal and Rah-Ahan square, ISNA news agency quoted Sanandaji as saying on Saturday.



Electric bus lines were operational in Tehran 24 years ago, but they went out of service for some time, he said, explaining that, there is one line already up and running in 17-Sharivar street, east-central Tehran.

Tehran bus operating company has allocated some 63 trolleybuses to the three aforesaid electric bus lines, he added.

Sanandaji also noted that the two lines were scheduled to become operational last year (March 2017-March 2018) but the completion of the projects were postponed.

Trolleybuses are actually electric buses that draws power from overhead wires, generally suspended from roadside posts, using spring-loaded trolley poles.

Considering persistent air pollution choking citizens of the capital using transit options that rely on electrical power generation which produce even less emissions— such as subways, light rail vehicles, trolleybuses and streetcars, seems economically justifiable.

Hundreds of ambulances to enter emergency fleet within a month

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some 700 ambulances will be added to the country's current emergency fleet by the next month, head of Iran's Emergency Medical Services Pir Hossein Kulivand, said on Friday.

“Over the past two years, 2,400 ambulances have been added to the organization's emergency fleet and 700 other will be added to different emergency centers of the country within a month,” he stated, ISNA reported.

He went on to say that today, the country's Emergency Medical Services organization has 2,800 ground medical bases, 39 air medical bases, 4,800 ambulances, 270 motorcycle ambulances and 65 ambulance buses.

Currently, 17,000 technicians and doctors are working in Iranian emergency centers, he concluded.

LEARN ENGLISH

Learning The Piano

Charles: Hi Cody, how did practicing go this week?
Cody: Well I had several tests and an oral presentation this week so I didn't get a chance to memorize the second page, but I think I mastered the **tricky** section.
Charles: Great! Warm up with some **scales** and arpeggios first. Good, good. This week, work on keeping the rhythm steady when you play the last part with the sixteenth note. Now let's take a look at this tricky section.
Cody: Charles? Before I start I was wondering if it was ok if I put a small crescendo in here and then decrescendo back to pianissimo again over here?
Charles: It might work. I'll have to hear it. Show me what you've done. Not bad, not bad.
Cody: It was horrible! I played play it much better at home!
Charles: It's just nerves. Just play the right hand for now. One two three four five six, ta ti tri-ple-ti. Good, good. Don't forget the accidentals! The **key** signature says that **note** should be a G-sharp but now it's a G-natural. Now add the bass clef. You're going too fast. Remember the **tempo** for this piece is andante.
Cody: Is that better?
Charles: Yes, much better. Watch where you lift your foot off the pedal. What was that?
Cody: Sorry! The stretch for that octave is always hard to make.
Charles: That's ok, keep going, you're moving ahead by leaps and bounds. Watch your **dynamics**! Keep your elbows lifted. Remember to stroke the keys, don't pound. That's better! Remember that as a pianist or any other musician, your technique will be what separates you from the pack just as much or more so as your **musicianship**.
■ **Key vocabulary**
tricky: requiring skill or caution
scale: a series of musical notes
tempo: the speed at which a musical piece is played by leaps and bounds very quickly
key: a button depressed with fingers to produce sounds
note: a specific musical tone
dynamics: changes in how loudly a piece of music is played
musicianship: the skill of performing music
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
hammer: a wooden piece which strikes the strings
string: wires that when hit by the hammer produces sounds
plate: the iron frame which holds the strings in place
hitch pin: a metal screw that holds one end of the string
grand piano: a specific type of piano



Limited impact of El Niño on autumn rainfall in Iran

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The El Niño, will have a little impact on Iran's autumn rainfall this year, head of climatological research institute affiliated to the Iran's Meteorological Organization has said.

Iman Babaiean made the remarks regarding the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) latest update announced on September 10, demonstrating a 70 percent chance of El Niño developing by the end of this year, which intensity is currently uncertain, but a strong event appears unlikely.

“When El Nino occurs, the probability of increase in rainfall gets high, which can affect Iran, provided that other phenomena such as the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), the Arctic Oscillation (AO) and Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) pattern coincide with it,” he said.

The aforesaid phenomenon occurs only on a part of the planet but affects the entire earth, he added.

He went on to say that this year, due to El Niño phenomena, the Tropical Eastern Pacific will experience at most 1 Celsius degree increase in temperature, so, El Niño might have a positive impact on precipitation amounts but it is weak and not very significant.

However, it will increase Iran's precipitation rate during autumn, as long as the other aforesaid phenomenon are in line with it, he highlighted.

Iran is one of the Middle East regions that El Nino indirectly affects, in fact, its direct impact is mainly on the countries including the western coasts of South America and the eastern shores of Asia, such as Japan, Korea, Australia and Indonesia, he said, adding that the greatest impact will be on Australia and Indonesia and the rest of the regions farther away of El Nino, such as Iran, will be indirectly affected.

Babaiean further explained that most of the climatic prediction models predict a weak El Nino formation at the beginning autumn, the impact of El Nino will be in late amount and then it will gradually weaken by the beginning of winter.

If the other phenomena are not accompanying El Nino, even a strong one does not necessarily lead to the rise of precipitation in Iran, since the frequency of the ENSO is between 3 and 7 years and the frequency of regional phenomena such as the MJO (about 45 days) are different, so that their occurrence at the same time only can increase the precipitation.



El Niño and La Niña episodes typically last nine to 12 months, but some prolonged events may last for years. While their frequency can be quite irregular, El Niño and La Niña events occur on average every two to seven years.

■ **The three phases of ENSO**
The three phases of the ENSO cycle are called the neutral phase, El Niño and La Niña. The ENSO cycle is a scientific term that describes the fluctuations in temperature between the ocean and atmosphere in the east-central Equatorial Pacific (approximately between the International Date Line and 120 degrees West).

In the neutral state (neither El Niño nor La Niña) trade winds blow east to west across the surface of the tropical Pacific Ocean, bringing warm moist air and warmer surface waters towards the western Pacific and keeping the central Pacific Ocean relatively cool. The thermocline is deeper in the west than the east.

The term El Niño refers to the large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate interaction linked to a periodic warming in sea surface temperatures across the central and east-central

Equatorial Pacific.

La Niña is mainly referred to as the cold phase of ENSO and El Niño as the warm phase of ENSO. These deviations from normal surface temperatures can have large-scale impacts not only on ocean processes, but also on global weather and climate.

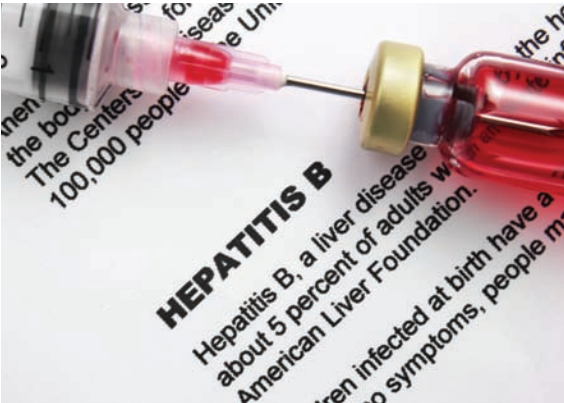
El Niño and La Niña episodes typically last nine to 12 months, but some prolonged events may last for years. While their frequency can be quite irregular, El Niño and La Niña events occur on average every two to seven years. Typically, El Niño occurs more frequently than La Niña.

■ **The regional phenomena**
The NAO is a large-scale seesaw in atmospheric mass between the subtropical high-pressure system over the Azores Islands and the subpolar low-pressure system over Iceland. It is one of the most important modes

of atmospheric variability in the northern hemisphere, which has a larger amplitude in winter than in summer.

The Arctic Oscillation has a global scale, more zonally symmetric, also called the Northern Annular Mode (NAM), which has a connection to stratosphere, the NAO can be regarded as a local representation of the AO in the North Atlantic.

The MJO is the largest element of the intraseasonal (30-90 day) variability in the tropical atmosphere. It is a large-scale coupling between atmospheric circulation and tropical deep convection. Unlike a standing pattern like the ENSO, the Madden-Julian oscillation is a traveling pattern that propagates eastward, through the atmosphere above the warm parts of the Indian and Pacific oceans, which manifests itself most clearly as anomalous rainfall.



Hepatitis B is a potentially life-threatening liver infection and is a major global health problem. It can cause chronic infection and puts people at high risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), hepatitis B virus is transmitted through contact with the blood or other body fluids of an infected person.

Earlier in July, head of Iran's Hepatitis Network Moayyed Alavian said that some 1.4 million are infected with hepatitis B in Iran.

An estimated 257 million people are living with hepatitis B virus infection (defined as hepatitis B surface antigen positive) worldwide.

In 2015, hepatitis B resulted in 887,000 deaths, mostly from complications (including cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma).

National Hepatitis B prevention plan to start next month

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — A national plan for the prevention of Hepatitis B transmission through blood transfusion, will be implemented by the beginning of [the Iranian calendar month of] Mehr (September 23) nationwide, Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization spokesman has said.

Frequent blood donors who were born before the Iranian calendar year of 1386 (March 1989- March 1990), will have an opportunity to receive the 3-shot Hepatitis B vaccine free of charge, referring to the nearest blood donation center in their city of residence, Tasnim quoted Bashir Haji Beigi as saying on Friday.

“The target population of the national plan is those blood donors aging 29 and more,” he added.

According to an agreement reached between the Blood Transfusion Organization and the Ministry of Health's center for communicable diseases management, to completely eliminate the risk of diseases transmitting through blood transfusion, the blood donors will receive vaccination against hepatitis B, he further explained.

He went on to say that in the first phase of the plan, it is stipulated that vaccination services will be provided by blood donation centers over the next five months staring on September 23.

The production of recombinant hepatitis B vaccine in Iran is a good opportunity for community vaccination, which can provide an opportunity for eradicating the disease in the

country, he highlighted adding that in case of community vaccination, the transmission of blood-borne hepatitis B can be reduced to zero percent in the country.

Referring to vaccination programs for newborns and giving them immunization at birth since 1373 (March 1994-March 1995), he noted that individuals aging under 24 are immunized against hepatitis B who can be the best blood donors.

There are over 500,000 blood donors in the country who donate blood twice a year, he said, adding, Therefore, in the first phase, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, it is scheduled to vaccinate some 100,000 blood donors with HBV.

Of course, the plan has begun in some provinces of the country, and continues to the point where all the blood donors received the blood-borne hepatitis B vaccine, he also added.

Given that the first time donors test and screening program is also planned to be implemented, the program can also reduce the risk of hepatitis through blood transfusions, Haji Beigi also said.

At the end, the efficiency of the vaccines will also be monitored and analyzed, he concluded.

Head of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Beiglari said in August that domestic production of hepatitis B vaccine over the past 15 years, has reduced the virus prevalence from 3.5 percent to 1.5 percent, so, this year, as per the Ministry of Health order, Pasteur Institute has produced 11 million dose of HBV vaccine.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

Working group set up to tackle medicine imports problem

Although medicines are exempted from sanctions, the disruption of the banking system makes the importing processes difficult, so, Health Minister [Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi] has set up a special working group to address the issue, deputy health minister for international affairs has said.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-plast, -plasty, -plastic”

■ **Meaning:** living cell or particle
■ **For example:** The next approach is **angioplasty**, in which a catheter is used to balloon open the arrowed part of the artery.

PHRASAL VERB

Knuckle under

■ **Meaning:** to accept someone's authority or orders although you do not want to
■ **For example:** Bombing does not always make the victims knuckle under.

وزیر بهداشت کارگروه رفع مشکل واردات دارو تشکیل داد

قائم مقام وزیر بهداشت در امور بین الملل گفت: هرچند می‌گویند دارو شامل تحریم نمی‌شود، اما اختلال در نظام بانکی، ورود این اقلام را با مشکل مواجه می‌کند به همین علت وزیر بهداشت کارگروه رفع مشکل واردات تشکیل داد.

IDIOM

Chance in a million

■ **Explanation:** very small chance, or no chance at all
■ **For example:** There's a chance in a million of finding the key I lost on the golf course.

Afghan conflict could be deadliest: analysts

The Afghan conflict could overtake Syria as the deadliest conflict in the world this year, analysts say, as violence surges 17 years after the U.S.-led invasion. The grim assessment contrasts sharply with the consistently upbeat public view of the conflict from NATO's Resolute Support mission in Kabul, and underscores the growing sense of hopelessness in the war-torn country.

It suggests that U.S. President Donald Trump's much-vaunted strategy for Afghanistan is, like those of his predecessors, failing to move the needle on the battlefield, observers said, as a generation of Americans born after 9/11 become old enough to enlist. "The soaring casualties in Afghanistan and the potential endgame in sight in Syria ... could leave Afghanistan as the world's deadliest conflict," said Johnny Walsh, an Afghanistan expert at the United States Institute of Peace.

"Most years have become the new 'most violent year.' This is continually getting worse."

The Syrian conflict – which began a decade after Afghanistan's – has claimed the lives of more than 15,000 people so far this year, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Graeme Smith, a consultant for the International Crisis Group, told AFP some indications "suggest the Afghan war is on track to inflict more than 20,000 battle deaths in 2018" – including civilians and combatants.

"That could exceed the toll of any other conflict, possibly even the war in Syria," he added.

It would be a record high for Afghanistan, according to the respected Uppsala Conflict Data Program in Sweden, which put the total number of deaths on all sides of the conflict at 19,694 in 2017.

Afghan civilian deaths have already hit a record 1,692 in the first six months of 2018,



a recent U.N. report showed.

Interior Ministry deputy spokesman Nasrat Rahimi estimated 300-400 "enemy fighters" were killed every week, but would not provide figures for civilians or government forces.

Data for casualties suffered by Afghan security forces are not available to the public after Washington last year agreed to Kabul's request to classify the numbers.

Before the blackout, according to figures published by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, there were more than 5,000 each year.

Most analysts believe that number understates the reality on the ground. This year's death toll for government forces could be "horrific," Smith said.

More troops, more fighting The total death toll has been rising steeply since 2014, UCDP figures show, the

year NATO combat troops pulled out, leaving Afghan forces with the responsibility for holding back the resurgent Taliban.

This year, the violence has been fanned by long-delayed parliamentary elections scheduled for Oct. 20 and renewed efforts to engage the Taliban, Afghanistan's largest militant group, in peace talks.

The Taliban have made significant battlefield gains, and the smaller but potent Daesh (ISIL), which first emerged in the region in 2014, has also ramped up attacks.

The conflict has been further fuelled by other countries in the region, particularly neighboring Pakistan, said retired Afghan general Atiqullah Amarkhil, who warned the U.S. had failed to rein in its wayward ally, which is widely accused of providing safe haven to Taliban leaders.

Despite the bloodshed, Gen. John Nicholson, who until recently was the top U.S. and

NATO commander in the country, insisted last month that Trump's strategy, which includes the deployment of thousands of additional U.S. forces and increased air-strikes, was working.

More troops means more fighting and therefore more casualties, Walsh told AFP – but otherwise the military situation "remains generally a stalemate."

SIGAR data also suggests Trump's plan has made little progress on the battlefield.

The Taliban and other insurgents control or influence 14 percent of Afghanistan's 407 districts, the watchdog said in July – unchanged from last year, when Trump unveiled his strategy.

The government, meanwhile, controls or influences 56 percent – down from 57 percent in August 2017.

The rest of the country is considered "contested."

'A background of violence' Despite the growing violence, an unprecedented cease-fire between the government and Taliban in June ignited fresh hopes of peace.

Efforts to convince the militants to negotiate an end to the war would continue, analysts said.

"The Afghan and U.S. governments realize that a peace process is the only way to bring an end to all the violence and the broader war," said Michael Kugelman of the Wilson Center.

U.S. officials had met with Taliban representatives in Qatar in July, and another meeting could be held this month.

"That's how most talks happen – against a background of violence and fighting," a Western official told AFP.

Cold comfort for Afghans worn down by decades of war.

(Source: AFP)

Former Anbar governor elected Iraqi parliament speaker

➔ Announcing the vote, the temporary leader of the assembly Mohammed Ali Zaini said Halbousi, 37, had become the youngest parliament speaker in Iraq's history.



The Iraqi parliament was due to elect a speaker and two deputies during its first meeting on September 3, but failed to do so as parliamentarians were still trying to determine which competing bloc had the most seats.

Lawmakers must next elect a new president and task the leader of the largest bloc to form a government as prime minister.

The country's main political alliances led by Muqtada Sadr's Sairoon bloc and the Fatah Alliance led by commander Hadi al-Amiri are expected to cooperate to form a new government.

Incumbent Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has also announced that he is not seeking to serve a second term in office.

Millions of Iraqis voted on May 12 in their first parliamentary election since the defeat of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group, but a contentious recount process delayed the announcement of final results until last month.

The Iraqi politics has long been vulnerable to the differences lying along the country's major ethnic and sectarian fault lines.

Any new government has to move quickly to address the country's chronic woes, including the poor quality of basic services as well as political and economic mismanagement. It would also have to face the mammoth task of rebuilding the country following three years of struggle against Daesh (ISIL).

(Source: Press TV)

Trump ex-campaign head Manafort changes mind, cooperates in Russia probe

The United States President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort will cooperate with the federal investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election, a dramatic turnaround in a probe that the U.S. president derides as a political witch hunt.

After months of refusing to assist Special Counsel Robert Mueller's inquiry into Russian interference and possible coordination between Trump campaign members and Moscow, Manafort finally took a plea deal on Friday and agreed to cooperate in return for reduced charges. Trump had previously praised Manafort in an Aug. 22 Twitter post as "a brave man" for his refusal to cooperate with the inquiry.

It is unclear what information Manafort, a longtime Republican political consultant who ran the campaign as it took off in mid-2016, could offer prosecutors but his cooperation might bring Trump, his family and associates under closer scrutiny.

The White House distanced Trump from the man who helped get him elected in November 2016 against the odds in a bitterly contested campaign in which he defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"This had absolutely nothing to do with the president or his victorious 2016 presidential campaign," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said in a statement. "It is totally unrelated."

Manafort is the fifth person linked to Trump to plead guilty to criminal charges. The others are his former longtime personal lawyer Michael Cohen, former campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos, Trump's first national security adviser Michael Flynn and Manafort's business protégé Rick Gates, who also worked on the 2016 campaign.

Manafort, 69, pleaded guilty in a federal court in Washington on Friday to conspiracy against the United States – a charge that includes a range of conduct from money laundering to unregistered lobbying – and conspiracy to obstruct justice for his attempts to tamper with witnesses in his case. The prosecution dropped five other counts.

The plea, coming on the heels of a conviction in a separate case last month, concludes a steep fall from grace for a multi-millionaire who was often at Trump's side as he took the U.S. politics by storm in 2016. The investigation has cast a shadow over the president as the leader of

the Republican Party going into the Nov. 6 congressional elections that will determine whether or not Republicans keep control of Congress.

Mueller's team told the court that Manafort had pre-viewed what information he could offer, leading to the deal. The plea agreement requires him to cooperate completely with the government, including giving interviews without his attorney present and testifying before any grand juries or at any trials.

Manafort is facing up to 10 years in prison on the two charges in Washington alone, and another eight to 10 years on a conviction in Virginia in August on tax and bank fraud charges.

Manafort was convicted last month in Virginia on charges that pre-dated his stint on the Trump campaign and involved his work with pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine. The jury found that he hid from the U.S. tax authorities \$16 million he earned as a political consultant in Ukraine to fund an opulent lifestyle and lied to banks to secure \$20 million in loans.

In court on Friday, Manafort stood stock still before the judge, answering her questions with single words in a low tone, or sat at the defense table. He sat straight or leaned his chin on his right hand throughout a lengthy recital of the charges to which he pleaded guilty.

Manafort made millions of dollars working in Ukraine before taking an unpaid position with Trump's campaign for five months.

Rudy Giuliani, the former New York City mayor who is representing Trump in the Russia probe, said Manafort cooperating with Mueller was not a problem for his client.

"He knows nothing harmful to the president and the plea is the best evidence of that," Giuliani told Reuters.

Manafort was present at a June 2016 Trump Tower meeting with a Russian lawyer at which his son expected to receive possibly damaging information about election opponent Clinton. Trump's critics have pointed to the meeting as evidence of the collusion with Russia that Trump denies.

Later in 2016, Manafort oversaw the Republican National Convention that nominated Trump for the presidency. During the convention, the party's platform on Ukraine was altered



in a way that made it more in line with Russian interests.

Trump has the power to issue a presidential pardon for Manafort on federal charges. The president has not said whether he would do so.

Senator Mark Warner, the leading Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said any attempt by Trump to pardon Manafort "would be a gross abuse of power and require immediate action by Congress."

Prosecutor Andrew Weissmann walked the court through Manafort's efforts over a decade to influence power brokers in Washington without acknowledging that he was being paid tens of millions of dollars from pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine, a disclosure required by law.

"Mr. Manafort engaged in a variety of criminal schemes. He did so knowingly, intentionally and willfully," Weissmann said.

The plea agreement requires Manafort to forfeit millions of dollars worth of real estate, including a mansion in the Hamptons, a Brooklyn brownstone and an apartment in Trump Tower in Manhattan.

"He's accepted responsibility," Manafort's lawyer Kevin Downing said outside the courthouse. "He wanted to make sure that his family was able to remain safe and live a good life."

(Source: Reuters)

Swiss probe Russian agents over WADA 'cyber-attack'

Two Russian spies arrested in the Netherlands on suspicion of targeting a Swiss laboratory are also being probed over an attempted cyber-attack on the World Anti-Doping Agency, an official said Saturday.

The agents, arrested by Dutch intelligence services earlier this year, were implicated in a planned attack on the Spiez laboratory in Bern, which was investigating the poisoning of Russian double agent Sergei Skripal in Britain, according to Swiss officials and media reports.

The Swiss attorney general's (OAG) office told AFP on Saturday that the same two individuals have separately been under criminal investigation since March 2017 "due to a cyber-attack against the World Anti-Doping Agency."

"The proceedings are being conducted on suspicion on political espionage," an OAG spokeswoman, Linda von Burg, told AFP in an email.

She confirmed that the individuals linked to the alleged hack at WADA's Swiss office "are those affected by the operation mentioned by the Federal Intelligence Service," in connection with the Spiez laboratory attack.

The attorney general has asked Switzerland's justice ministry for permission to prosecute the individuals over the WADA incident, von Burg said.

WADA declined to comment.

Tensions between Russian and WADA have been elevated for several years.

The Montreal-based watchdog suspended Russia's Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) in

2015 after declaring it to be non-compliant following evidence of a vast plan backed by Moscow to cheat at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

On Friday, WADA announced that its independent Compliance Review Committee had cleared RUSADA to be reinstated.

Russia has admitted shortcomings in its anti-doping program but has rejected the existence of a state-supported cheating program.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also condemned Friday's reports that Russian agents targeted the Spiez laboratory, saying he could not believe the arrests would have not been picked up at the time by the media.

The agents, believed to be working for Russia's GRU military intelligence, allegedly targeted the laboratory analyzing data

related to poison gas attacks in Syria, as well as the March 4 attack using the nerve agent Novichok on Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury in southern England.

The laboratory does analytical work for the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the global chemical arms watchdog.

Exact details of the alleged agents' arrest are unknown.

But on March 26, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced that his cabinet had decided to expel "two Russian intelligence workers from the Russian embassy" as a result of the Skripal attack, without giving further details.

(Source: AFP)

Palestinian official: U.S. will never present peace plan

The United States will not present its long-awaited plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace any time soon and is instead trying to unilaterally change the terms of reference for any future proposal, a senior Palestinian official said Saturday.

Echoing deep skepticism among the Palestinians, Arab countries and analysts, Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator, said that the Trump administration was siding with Israel on the core

issues of the decades-old conflict, burying all chances for Middle East peace. "I don't think they will ever introduce a plan," Erekat said in an interview with Reuters in Jericho. "The whole world is rejecting their ideas. They are already implementing their plan by changing the terms of reference," he said.

Doubts have mounted over whether Trump's administration can secure what he has called the "ultimate deal" since

December, when the U.S. President recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and then moved the U.S. Embassy there.

Jerusalem is one of the major issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both sides claim it as a capital. Trump's move outraged the Palestinians, who have since boycotted Washington's peace efforts, led by the U.S. president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

(Source: Reuters)

At least 13 dead in Indonesia ferry incident

At least 13 people have been killed and eight are still missing after a ferry caught fire and sank in central Indonesia, an official says.

The boat was believed to be carrying nearly 150 passengers off



the coast of Sulawesi province on Friday when the blaze started.

High waves hampered initial rescue efforts but 126 people had been saved by Saturday afternoon.

A search and rescue operation is underway for remaining passengers.

"Based on reports from the passengers' families there are still some people missing," transport ministry spokesman Wisnu Wardana told AFP.

Among the deaths were two toddlers. Most of the rescued passengers were found wearing life jackets.

The cause of the accident was unclear.

The Indonesian archipelago of more than 17,000 islands is heavily reliant on boat transport, but safety standards are often ignored and fatal maritime accidents are common.

In June, more than 160 people died when a ferry sank in Lake Toba, a popular tourist attraction in western Indonesia.

The boat was believed to be operating illegally without a passenger manifest and with a limited number of life jackets on board.

More than 300 people drowned in 2009 when a ferry sank between Sulawesi and Borneo islands.

(Source: AFP)

U.S. is roadblock to peace between India, Pakistan

➔ "We are also saying since long that dialogue is the only way forward to settle all outstanding issues between Pakistan and India. We are officially waiting for a response from India on how they want to move forward. We have a consistent position on this," he asserted, adding that there were few Track-II initiatives with India which were not official.

So, at a time when the two neighboring countries are trying to resurrect the peace process and open a new chapter of bilateral relations, it is important for the policy makers in both New Delhi and Islamabad to understand that there are forces that do not want them to shake hands. U.S. regional policy seeks to create wars and discords, not peace or agreements.

Unlike his predecessor, Prime Minister Imran Khan seems to have realized the futility of Pakistan's alliance with the U.S. At an event in Rawalpindi a few days ago to mark Pakistan's Defence Day, he said the country "won't fight the wars of others" anymore. "I was opposed to the war on terror. I didn't want Pakistan to get involved in someone else's war," Khan said. "I pledge today that Pakistan won't fight someone else's war. We stand for our people and we will have a foreign policy that works for the betterment of Pakistanis."

The BJP government in India, which signed important defense deals with the U.S. during 2+2 dialogue last week, would do well to remember the words of party patriarch Atal Bihari Vajpayee: you can change your friends, but you can't change your neighbors. Good relations between India and Pakistan are in the best interests of peace and stability in the region, something the hawks in Washington don't want to see.

Juventus sell more shirts in two months than in entire last season

The arrival of Cristiano Ronaldo in Turin has already had a major impact on the club's shirt sales, with the Serie A champions having sold more jerseys in the months of July and August than they did in the entire 2017/18 season.

Compared to July and August of 2017, the club's shirt sales are reportedly up 145 percent.

This is according to a report in Idealo Magazine, who also state that Ronaldo's is the most-sought-after shirt online in Italy.

In England and Spain, meanwhile, his is the seventh most popular shirt.

(Source: Marca)

Mourinho's 110-million-euro bid for Inter Milan's Icardi - Olé



According to Olé magazine, José Mourinho wants to throw a large sum of money at the Serie A side for their Argentinian striker Mauro Icardi. José Mourinho has a clear target in mind to strengthen his Manchester United frontline, according to Olé. And the Portuguese manager is hoping the club will back him as he looks to entice Inter Milan's Mauro Icardi to Old Trafford.

The captain of the Milan side is 25 years old and last season scored 29 goals in 34 games, so it would take a significant financial package to tempt the club into selling. Most likely, the release clause that is reportedly built into the striker's contract of 110 million euros would need to be paid assuming, of course, that the player is interested in the move.

Icardi recently returned to international duty with new manager Scaloni, after being left out of the Argentina World Cup squad by Sampaoli. Currently Romelu Lukaku is the main frontman at United but the famous club appears to be surrounded by doubts about how its future looks. Not least, where the manager himself will be...

What is for sure, however, is that if Mauro Icardi indicates a willingness to leave Inter, he will not be short of offers from Europe's biggest clubs.

(Source: AS)

Ronaldo will score first Juventus goal against Sassuolo - Allegri

Cristiano Ronaldo will break his Juventus duck when the Serie A giants face Sassuolo, according to Massimiliano Allegri, who also believes the Portugal star deserves to win FIFA's The Best Award.

Ronaldo is still searching for his first Juve goal, despite having had 23 attempts across the first three Serie A matches of the season.

The 33-year-old, who arrived from Real Madrid in the summer, has had more efforts on goal without finding the net than any other player in Europe's top five leagues, but Allegri is confident that Ronaldo - who he claims should edge out Mohamed Salah and Luka Modric for The Best award - will find his form against Sassuolo.

"Cristiano worked well and I think Sunday could be his day," Allegri told a press conference.

"I believe that Cristiano deserves to win the FIFA World Player award, even if Modric has had a phenomenal year as well."

Ronaldo is not the only Juve forward struggling for form so far this term with Paulo Dybala having failed to score or assist in his two appearances.

Allegri, though, has no concerns over the Argentine's ability, insisting that the clash with Sassuolo represents the start of Juve's season in earnest.

"There can be no questioning Paulo Dybala's qualities. I liked his performance against Parma. Like all the other players, he needs to reach peak condition," Allegri said.

(Source: Goal)

Pep backs Sane after Kroos' body language jibe

Pep Guardiola has backed Leroy Sane following criticism about his body language, despite dropping him for Manchester City's last game.

Germany teammate Toni Kroos praised Sane's quality following his shock omission from the World Cup squad, but claimed that his body language made it appear as if he didn't care if he won or lost.

Sane, who was named last season's Young Player of the Year, was left out of the squad for City's last game against Newcastle United but Guardiola said he will be a key player for him.

"His body language is the same as last season and he was the best young player in the league," the City boss told a news conference.

"Leroy was so important, is so important, and will be so important for the club. There's no doubt about that.

"It's a challenge for him -- not just for him, for everybody. There's a lot of nice strikers and midfield players and the season will be judged in 11 months, not just in three weeks or one month.

"He's a nice guy, so I don't have any bad words about him -- we are here to try to help, not just him, but everybody."

Sane, 22, has not started a game for City this season and has played just 75 minutes in their opening fixtures.

The winger also started just one of their first six matches last season with Guardiola saying he didn't have a good preseason, but the Catalan says he isn't concerned.

(Source: ESPN)

WADA committee recommends reinstatement of Russia's anti-doping agency

The World Anti-Doping Agency said on Friday that its compliance review committee (CRC) had recommended the reinstatement of Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA, which has been suspended since 2015 over alleged state-backed doping.

WADA said the committee had reviewed a letter from the Russian sports ministry it said had "sufficiently acknowledged the issues identified in Russia," thus fulfilling the first of two remaining criteria for its reinstatement.

"For the second outstanding criterion, the CRC accepted that the new commitment to provide access to the data and samples in the Moscow laboratory to WADA via an independent expert would be sufficient to justify reinstatement..." WADA added.

WADA's executive committee will meet on Sept. 20 to review RUSADA's efforts to bring about a reinstatement.

Russian officials welcomed the recommendation, but Travis Tygart, chief executive of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, was concerned about its transparency.

Russia's anti-doping agency has been suspended since 2015 after a WADA commissioned report revealed alleged widespread doping in the country, although Russia has repeatedly denied state involvement.

WADA President Craig Reedie said in March that Russia's refusal to acknowledge the systemic doping alleged in the McLaren report and its failure to allow access to Moscow's suspended anti-doping laboratory were blocking its return.

Huge work

Russian Sports minister Pavel Kolobkov told Russian news agencies on Friday: "I was certain that the compliance review committee would, sooner or later, recognise the huge work that has been done by Russia in the fight against doping.

"We have always strived toward cooperation, we did everything that depended on us... We are open to the maximum because we have nothing to hide. Only together were



we able to reach this result."

He added that Russia looked forward to returning to WADA.

"For us the reinstatement of RUSADA at the next WADA executive committee is important. We will wait for the September 20 decision with hope. Believe that we did everything that we could. And we are ready to cooperate with our foreign partners, to continue work in that direction, to follow uniform rules that are equal for all."

However, USADA's Tygart said in a statement to Reuters that he had mixed reactions.

"Frankly, it stinks to high heaven. WADA should stop the sleight of hand and release the new CRC recommendation as well as any information received from Russia now showing they are compliant," Tygart said.

"If they are compliant then great, we will get access to all the data and samples at the Moscow laboratory and finally justice can be served in the hundreds of cases that have been derailed up to now."

'Systematic manipulation'

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) reinstated Russia in late February after the remaining tests from this year's Pyeongchang Winter Games all returned negative.

The IOC had banned Russia from the Pyeongchang Olympics after it found evidence of an "unprecedented systematic manipulation" of the anti-doping system.

But it had allowed Russians to compete in the Winter Games as an "Olympic Athlete of Russia", as long as they satisfied strict conditions that showed they had a doping-free

background. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) has yet to reinstate the Russian athletics federation.

"The IAAF's Taskforce will prepare a report for the next Council meeting in Monaco in December, which is expected to cover any developments relevant to Russia's position in the sport," the sport's governing body said on Friday.

It suspended the Russian federation in 2015 and had allowed only one of its athletes to compete at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

A number of Russian athletes have been able to compete in international athletics competitions, including the world championships, as neutrals by passing a series of doping tests.

(Source: Reuters)

Hamilton likes the look of F1's future cars



Formula One showed off a vision of its car of the future on Friday and world champion Lewis Hamilton liked what he saw, even if Ferrari were less excited.

Ross Brawn, the former team boss who is now F1's managing director for sport, presented images created by a graphic artist showing how the next generation might look after a rules revolution post-2020.

The sleek and aggressive cars featured bigger wheels with a more integrated halo head-protection system and simpler front and rear wings.

Mercedes driver Hamilton, 30 points clear of Ferrari rival Sebastian Vettel ahead of Sunday's Singapore Grand Prix, had sounded positive already after images began to circulate on social media.

"I'm def (definitely) gonna be driving if cars look like this," the 33-year-old Briton said on his Instagram account. "Just please bring a V12 or V10 back."

Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene offered more of a verbal shrug, however.

"I was looking at the car presented a couple of days ago by Ross," he told reporters in a news conference after first practise.

"It's a good exercise. I was asking our engineers what they thought about this,

they said it's a bit underwhelming in their opinion and it looks like an old ChampCar. But it's an exercise."

Brawn said Formula One wanted drivers in cars that "young people want to stick up on their walls.

"I see no reason why we can't have exciting-looking cars. It frustrates me when a car in a video game looks better than a car that we're racing out on the track," he added.

"We're listening to what the fans want, we want to engage with their passion, we want them to feel that Formula One is listening to them."

Brawn said the main aim, however, was to have cars that could race more easily and overtake without losing performance at close quarters due to aerodynamic turbulence.

"The current cars lose up to 50 percent of their performance once they get to within one or two car lengths... which means they struggle to race each other," added the Briton.

"The prime purpose of what we are doing is to try and produce cars that are more raceable... at the moment we've got designs that only lose 20 percent of their performance."

(Source: Mirror)

Ferrari 'door open' for Schumacher's son Mick



Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene has said the "door at Maranello will always be open" for Michael Schumacher's son Mick should the German prospect follow in his father's footsteps and progress to Formula One.

The 19-year-old's father won five of his seven world titles with the Italian team from 2000-04, helping transform Ferrari into the most successful team in Formula One after more than two decades without a drivers' championship.

Mick Schumacher is currently second in the Formula Three European Championship and is being closely monitored by several F1 teams after winning six of his last 10 races.

"Concerning Mick Schumacher I think the most important thing is to let him grow, without giving pressure," Arrivabene told reporters at the Singapore Grand Prix on Friday.

"Recent results are very, very good and I wish him a great career. With a name like this, that wrote historical pages of Ferrari history, the door of Maranello is always open.

"(But)... that is a family decision, I mean a Schumacher family decision. Let the guy have fun. I always repeat this -- be focussed,

concentrated, but in the meantime have fun, and to grow slowly, but certainly, and then we'll see about the future.

"How can you can say 'no' at Maranello to a name like this?"

Haas team principal Guenther Steiner felt it was too early to make a call on the young driver without knowing what his future plans were, while Sauber's Frederic Vasseur added that it was a huge step up from Formula Three.

"With the small number of test days we have in the winter, I think it's -- I don't want to say impossible -- quite difficult to do the step and it will make sense probably for him to do Formula Two or something like this," Vasseur said.

"But he could have a link with a Formula One team, he could do some (race weekend practice sessions). There are many ways to prepare for F1."

McLaren sporting director Gil de Ferran said he had not had any contact with Schumacher but would like to be able to help talented drivers like him progress in the sport.

"We are always looking throughout the motor sport arena globally, in a way," De Ferran said.

(Source: Eurosport)

FIFA report proposes regulating transfer fees, limiting player loans

A FIFA task force has proposed the use of an algorithm to calculate transfer fees as well as a luxury tax and a limit on the number of players who can be loaned in a report on possible reforms to the soccer transfer system.

The report, which has been seen by Reuters, found multiple failings in the current system, saying among its many criticisms that it led to "various abuses at the expense of young players and the integrity of competitions."

It said that an inflated transfer market was driving "unsavory practices which may lead to the exploitation of players". In a section on the role of agents, the report added: "The transfer system appears to have turned into a speculative market. This is not fair to the football clubs or grassroots which are the foundation of the professional sport."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino said after being elected in 2016 that transfer system reform was one of his priorities and he has since voiced his concern at spiralling transfer fees.

The report said "mechanisms to achieve transparency and objectivity" in the calculation of transfer fees should be considered.

It raised several ideas for putting the brakes on fees, including the use of an algorithm, or set of mathematical rules, to calculate the value of players.

Transfer values

The task force, set up by Infantino in November, said the Swiss-based CIES Football Observatory had already developed an algorithm to "estimate transfer values and probabilities in a scientific way."

Another idea it put forward was to impose a luxury tax on excessive transfer spending and use the money raised to create a solidarity fund.

The report also recommended limiting the number of player loans a club could make in a season to between six and eight in and the same number out, with a maximum of

three to or from the same club. It also said the loan system needed to have a clearly-defined purpose.

The report said the current setup "sometimes prevents young players from fully developing their talent", adding that one unnamed club had loaned out 146 players between 2011 and 2017. A limit on squad sizes was also proposed, the report saying that "the stockpiling and subsequent loaning of players, particularly young players, can be detrimental to their development due to the unsettling nature of being 'on loan'."

Regarding agents, it proposed a cap on fees and an end to the practice where the same agent can act for both clubs and the player in a single transaction.

It proposed the creation of a clearing house to process transfers, pay agents and redistribute training compensation, saying this would help prevent "fraudulent conduct and money laundering."

(Source: Reuters)

Iran face high expectations in AFC Asian Cup: Karim Ansarifard

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran international striker Karim Ansarifard says they face high expectations in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup since Team Melli have not won the title for 42 years.

Iran will enter the Asian Cup with high expectations, boasting what is arguably their strongest roster in the recent years.

Iran have been drawn in Group D along with Yemen, Iraq and Vietnam.

The Asian Cup three-time champions had good performances in the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Iran picked up four points in their three games in Russia, including the country's second-ever World Cup win with a 1-0 victory over Morocco, to narrowly miss out on a place in the last 16, despite being in the same group as Spain and Portugal.

"We achieved the best results in our history at the 2018 World Cup. We could have qualified for the next stage with a little bit of luck," Ansarifard said.

"Now, the 2018 World Cup is finished and we are determined to get the best result in the competition. We are facing high expectations because Team Melli are the Asian first team in FIFA rankings and we must meet the fans' expectations," he added.

"Beyond that, under leadership of a great coach like Carlos Queiroz, I think it's available to win the AFC Asian Cup title," Ansarifard stated.

The 28-year-old striker has recently joined English Championship side Nottingham Forest from Olympiacos. Ansarifard is optimistic about his future in the team.

"I know that I have a difficult task ahead since Nottingham Forest are among the best teams in Championship but I will do my best and I'm happy and I hope to help the team to achieve our goals. I think so many football players dream of playing in England," Ansarifard said.



Persepolis Bashar Resan a doubt for Al Duhail match



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iconic Iraqi midfielder Bashar Resan is reportedly a doubt for Persepolis's match against Al Duhail of Qatar.

The Iranian giants will host Al Duhail in Tehran's Azadi Stadium at the second leg of the AFC Champions League quarter-finals.

The Qatari football club edged past Persepolis 1-0 in the first leg in Doha.

Almoez Ali scored the only goal of the match to maintain Al Duhail's 100 percent record.

Now, Resan is a doubt for the vital match after the player sustained an ankle injury during a friendly match between Iraq and Kuwait last week.

Resan missed Persepolis home match against Nassaji Mazandaran in Iran Professional League, where the Reds won the game 2-1.

Resan's absence would be a severe blow to their hopes of beating Al Duhail in Tehran as Persepolis are chasing a second consecutive semi-final.

Iranian GM Maghsoodloo wins World Junior Chess Championship



After 10 rounds, the Iranian chess phenom GM Maghsoodloo is nearly perfect! He only yielded one draw to his chess compatriot GM Firouzja. With just one round to go, he already won the 2018 World Junior Chess Championship by two points. His chess performance rating is nearly 3000!

The 2018 World Junior Chess Championship is an 11-round Swiss chess open taking place in Gebze, Kocaeli, Turkey from September 5-15, 2018.

The winner becomes the World Junior Chess Champion, receives 3,000 euros, and the GM title.

2nd and 3rd place chess players receive the IM title.

The time control is 90 minutes for 40 chess moves then 30 minutes to the end of the chess game, with a 30-second increment from move 1. No draw offers are allowed until move 30 so we can expect fighting chess.

(Source: Themaven.net)

Iran earn third successive win at FIVB World Championship

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national volleyball team defeated Cuba 3-1 (17-25, 25-18, 25-22, 25-19) in Pool D of the 2018 FIVB Men's World Championship on Saturday.

Iran have already defeated Puerto Rico and Bulgaria in the competition underway in Varna, Bulgaria.

Iran is in Pool D along with Bulgaria, Puerto Rico, Poland, Finland and Cuba.

Team Melli will face powerhouse Poland on Monday.

The 2018 championship is the 19th staging of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship, contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body.

The final tournament is being held in Italy and Bulgaria from September 9 to 30. For the first time the tournament is jointly-hosted by more than one country.

The final six will be hosted by Italy at the Pala Alpitour in Turin.



I hope Ezatolahi has a long future in Reading: Paul Clement

Reading coach Paul Clement hopes Iranian midfielder Saeid Ezatolahi has a long future in the Championship side.

Ezatolahi joined Reading on loan from Russian football team Rostov.

Ezatolahi played at the World Cup for his nation against Spain and Portugal in Group B, and has won 27 caps in total for Iran.

"I hope he has a long future here," said the Reading manager.

"The situation with the deal at the moment is he's on a loan for the season because when we signed him, it was obviously outside the period where we could do a permanent, so it's on an initial loan.

"Hopefully he does really well and it's a long-term thing. It was brought to my attention late in the window. We had a week. During that week it was about gathering as much intelligence as possible, speaking to

people he had worked with.

"Fortunately I was able to have a good conversation with Carlos Queiroz (Iran's national team boss), who spoke really highly of him.

"Then I spoke to the player and got a really good feel about him and we're really pleased to get it over the line. It was a little bit complicated. You're dealing with Russia, you've got the situation where he's Iranian so you've got the visa issues, international

clearance and those type of things.

"He had his medical in Belgium at Roselare because it was difficult to get him here to do the medical because of the visa, but in the end we got it over the line. A really complicated deal.

"We're looking forward to working with him. I think he's going to be a good addition to us," Clement concluded.

(Source: wokinghampaper)

Iran's Esteghlal, Persepolis look to come back against Qatari teams

Al Sadd and Al Duhail are well placed ahead of the fixtures, but there remains all to play for as Esteghlal and Persepolis look to come back from first-leg deficits.

■ Al Sadd v Esteghlal

The 2011 AFC Champions League winners Al Sadd go into the second leg against Esteghlal on Monday with a two-goal advantage after coming from behind to run out comfortable 3-1 winners in the first leg in Tehran.

The Qatari hosts remain the last team from West Asia to lift the continental title and are firm favourites to advance after second-half goals from Akram Afif and the competition's top scorer Baghdad Bounedjah silenced a packed Azadi Stadium.

Esteghlal's only semi-final appearance came in 2013 and, although they came back from a losing position in the Round of 16 against domestic rivals Zobahan, this time the



Iranian side will have to do so away from home and score at least three goals.

■ Persepolis v Al Duhail

Something has to give on Monday at Azadi Stadium, where Qatar's Al Duhail take a slender 1-0 lead into the return meeting with Persepolis of the Islamic Republic of Iran in what is the tightest of the four quarter-final clashes.

Almoez Ali scored the only goal of the game in Doha to maintain Al Duhail's 100 percent record as they matched Ulsan Hyundai's nine successive wins from the 2012 competition. One more victory would set a new record for a single campaign, although Ulsan did record 11 wins in a row between 2012 and 2014.

Persepolis, though, have won all four of their games in front of home support and recovered from a first-leg deficit against Al Jazira in the Round of 16. They have conceded just once at Azadi Stadium and are chasing a second consecutive semi-final.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran's NOC supports Iran athletes

IRNA — President of Iran's National Olympic Committee Reza Salehi Amiri in a meeting with International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials said that the committee now by managing expenses are running programs to support champions and athletes in line with priorities.



Salehi Amiri, in a meeting with the director of the International Olympic Committee's Games Committee (IOC), in the city of Lausanne, Switzerland, added, 'Due to its special economic conditions, Iran is implementing programs based on priorities and with the cost management strategy. In the environmental sector, we also support the goals of the International Olympic Committee.'

'This international sports organization intends to host Tokyo 2020 Olympics with a special focus on financial issues, which is economically feasible and preventing and costly waste,' the IOC official said referring to the new International Committee's plan.

He added, 'In terms of the environment, the continuation of its conservation as a legacy of the Olympic Games will be seriously on the agenda, which will be targeted in this regard in the 2020 Olympics'.

About the new program of the International Olympic Committee in support of athletes, Salehi Amiri stated, 'We held the Athletes' committee election to strengthen and support the athletes in accordance with the Statute of the International Olympic Committee and a commission formed to run the program in this regard.'

Singaporean Muhammad Taqi to officiate Al Sadd v Esteghlal

TASNIM — Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari Bin Jahari from Singapore has been chosen to officiate the match between Qatar's Al Sadd and Esteghlal of Iran.

Esteghlal suffered a 3-1 home loss against Al Sadd in the first leg of the AFC Champions League quarter-finals.

The second leg will be held in Doha's Jassim bin Hamad Stadium on Monday.

Muhammad Taqi is a 31-year-old Singaporean international football referee.

He has been a FIFA listed referee since 2012 and has also refereed a number of AFC Champions League matches.

Taqi Aljaafari has also refereed matches in the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup in India.

Ravshan Irmatov named Persepolis v Al Duhail referee

TASNIM — Uzbekistani well known referee Ravshan Irmatov will officiate the match between Iran's Persepolis and Al Duhail of Qatar.

The match will be held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Monday.

Al Duhail defeated Persepolis 1-0 in the first leg of the AFC Champions League quarter-finals.

Irmatov is a 41-year-old Uzbek professional football referee.

He has officiated in the Uzbek League since 2000, as well as at international level since 2003.

Irmatov holds the record for officiating the most FIFA World Cup matches.

Liverpool beat Tottenham at Wembley Stadium

Liverpool have beaten a rather underwhelming Spurs outfit 2-1 on the hallowed turf of Wembley Stadium., despite a late penalty claim being waved away in the 93rd minute.

Goals from Roberto Firmino and Georgino Wijnaldum put Jrgen Klopp's side in

Tottenham failed to challenge the Reds' title challenge credentials, with Jurgen Klopp's side now making it five wins from five.

Liverpool started the first half in sensational fashion, having a Roberto Firmino goal within the first 30 seconds chalked off for off-side.

It was nail-biting, end-to-end action from then on, as Spurs began to take control of the game, dominating the midfield and creating a variety of chances.

But their free-flowing football was short lived, with Georgino Wijnaldum heading Klopp's side into the lead five minutes before half time.

A big second half was needed from Pochettino's men, but they failed to deliver.

A dangerous cross from Sadio Mane in the 53rd minute caused absolute mayhem in Vorm's box, allowing Roberto Firmino to tap the ball into an empty net.

A well-taken volley from bright-looking substitute Eric Lamela put Spurs one step closer to drawing level, but it simply wasn't enough as Liverpool cruised to a comfortable win.

(Source: AFP)

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www.tehrantimes.com
■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.o. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713

Shorts from Iran compete in Batumi festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian movies “Umbra” and “Are You Volleyball?” will be screened in the short competition of the Batumi International Art-House Film Festival (BIAFF) in Georgia.



Mahsa Alafar acts in a scene from “Umbra” by Saeid Jafarian.

Directed by Saeid Jafarian, “Umbra” is about a young woman who realizes a few minutes after midnight that her partner has disappeared. She goes out worriedly to seek her partner in the darkness of the streets.

“Are You Volleyball?” by director Mohammad Bakhshi tells the story of a group of Arabic-speaking asylum seekers who arrive at the border of an English-speaking country and can go no further. There are scuffles with the border guards every day until volleyball becomes the catalyst that improves relations.

“Are You Volleyball?” won the award for best film at the 9th BCN Sports Film Festival in Spain in May.

Russian filmmaker Nikoloz Khomeriki will preside over the short competition jury, which also includes German actress Jale Arikan and Georgian scriptwriter Ketevan Devdariani.

The BIAFF will take place in Batumi from September 16 to 24.

NEWS IN BRIEF



A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Dang Show, an Iranian band that is famous for its fusion music, will perform a concert at the Grosvenor Theatre of the Kay Meek Centre in West Vancouver, Canada on October 19, the center has announced.

This is the second concert given by the band in the Canadian city. The first performance was held at the Centennial Theatre in North Vancouver in September 2017.

Netflix reaches for Emmys milestone, but can it outpace HBO?

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The next battle in the streaming TV wars will unfold on Monday’s Emmys stage, where Netflix Inc aims to end HBO’s 16-year streak as the night’s biggest winner and earn bragging rights for its marketing.

For the first time, Netflix will head to the ceremony with more nominations than any other network, with 112. AT&T-owned HBO, however, will bring its formidable “Game of Thrones”, which scored 22 of the premium cable network’s 108 nods.

The two will compete for the television industry’s highest honors with basic cable network FX, broadcast channel NBC and online services Hulu and Amazon.com Inc’s Amazon Prime Video, just part of the crowd fighting to shine a light on their shows in a large sea of programming.

“It means a lot to all of these players, all of whom are in hyper-competition right now to attract our attention,” said Peter Csathy, founder and chairman of consulting and business development firm Creatv Media.

HBO and Netflix have fought for viewers since 2013 when the streaming service launched “House of Cards”, a political thriller that established it as a home for top-quality TV programming. HBO had long dominated that space with acclaimed series such as “The Sopranos” and “Sex and the City”.

Netflix has since expanded into a wide range of genres, which helped boost its nominations count with shows such as reality series “Queer Eye”.

HBO has argued that its focus on a smaller, curated slate of programming ensures quality.

Randall Stephenson, chairman and chief executive of HBO owner AT&T Inc, on Wednesday called Netflix the WalMart of video subscription services, while he likened HBO to luxury jeweler Tiffany & Co.

“It’s a very premium, high-end brand for premium content,” Stephenson said at an investor conference.

So far, the race is neck and neck after dozens of this year’s Emmys were handed out at events in Los Angeles earlier this month. HBO won 17 trophies, including best documentary for “The Zen Diaries of Garry Shandling”. Netflix collected 16.

The major awards will be unveiled in a nationally televised show on Monday.

Iran sends “No Date” to Oscars despite calls for Academy Awards boycott

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN – Iran has submitted the acclaimed drama “No Date, No Signature” to the 91st Academy Awards in the best foreign language film category despite calls for the Farabi Cinema Foundation to boycott the prestigious cinematic competition over Washington’s withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Directed and written by Vahid Jalilvand, the movie is about Dr. Nariman, a forensic pathologist who has a car accident with a motorcyclist and injures his 8-year-old son. He offers to take the child to a clinic nearby, but the father refuses his help and money. The next morning, in the hospital where he works, Dr. Nariman finds out that the little boy has been brought for an autopsy after a suspicious death.

The film won Jalilvand the best director award and its star Navid Mohammadzadeh was selected as best actor in the Orizzonti section of the 74th Venice International Film Festival in September 2017.

In a statement published Friday evening, the Farabi Foundation, the organization that selects Iran’s submissions to the Oscars every year, said, “The Academy is a non-governmental institution and belongs to American cineastes.”

“In addition to the American cineastes, the Academy also enjoys filmmakers from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, as well as groups of honorable Iranian filmmakers. American cinema, in particular the Academy members, in their attitude of mind, alongside the absolute majority of the U.S. press and media, are the main centers for opposition, criticism and divergence against Trump’s populism and his racist and despotic policies.”

“Iranian cinema as part of the general diplomacy of the country, can use the Oscar competition as an opportunity to reinforce its ties with other nations, to influence public opinion in the world and, as a result, to increase the global pressure on the U.S. government.”

■ Iranian cinema, boycott on Oscars
Iran has a history of boycotting the Academy Awards to express its opposition to U.S. policies in various periods.



Navid Mohammadzadeh (L) and Zakieh Behbahani act in a scene from “No Date, No Signature”. (Photo by Amir-Hossein Shojaei)

In January 2017, Taraneh Alidoosti, the star of Asghar Farhadi’s Oscar-nominated drama “The Salesman”, said that she would boycott the Oscars ceremony in protest of President Donald Trump’s proposed ban on visas to citizens from seven countries, including Iran.

The popular actor’s decision to boycott the Oscars created a wider public expectation that Farhadi should do the same.

A few days later, Farhadi who once had won an Oscar for the best foreign-language film category for his “A Separation” in 2011 announced that he would not attend the Oscars ceremony. However, he did not specifically call his decision a boycott against Trump’s visa ban.

“I neither had the intention to not attend nor did I want to boycott the event as a show of objection, for I know that many in the American film industry and the Academy of

Motion Picture Arts and Sciences are opposed to the fanaticism and extremism, which are today taking place more than ever,” he wrote in a statement.

“It now seems that the possibility of this presence is being accompanied by ifs and buts that are in no way acceptable to me even if exceptions were to be made for my trip,” he added.

“The Salesman” won the Oscar for best foreign-language film at the 89th Academy Awards while Iranian-American engineer Anousheh Ansari, who was the first female space tourist, and Firouz Naderi, a former director of NASA’s Solar System Exploration program, represented Farhadi at the Oscars ceremony.

“My absence is out of respect for the people of my country, and those of the other six nations who have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants

to the U.S.,” Ansari read from a statement from Farhadi at the podium.

In 2012 Iran selected Reza Mirkarimi’s drama “A Cube of Sugar” to represent Iran at the 2013 Oscars. However, the film missed the race after the then culture minister decided to boycott the Academy Awards over the amateur American-made video “Innocence of Muslims”, which was released on the Internet at that time.

“I officially announce that we will avoid next year’s Oscars as a serious response to the intolerable insult to the Prophet of Islam (S),” Hosseini said at the time and added, “Since the insulting film has been made by an American in the United States and no comment has been made about the film by the officials of the Academy Awards, we have decided to boycott the event.”

He also asked all Islamic countries to join Iran in snubbing the 2013 Oscars.

Oscar Wilde’s plays translated into Persian



Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Five plays by Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde have been translated into Persian by Abolhassan Tahami, who is mostly famous for his voice acting career.

Negah Publication is scheduled to release the plays “Lady Windermere’s Fan”, “A Woman of No Importance”, “An Ideal Husband”, “The Importance of Being Earnest” and “Salome” in one book titled

“Five Plays”. Persian translations of William Shakespeare’s plays “Julius Caesar”, “Henry V” and “Hamlet” by Tahami have previously been published by Negah.

He is also the translator of “The Life of Cyrus the Great by Xenophon” and English popular historian John Julius Norwich’s “The Great Cities in History”, both published by Negah.

Red-hot book sales show Americans love to read about Trump

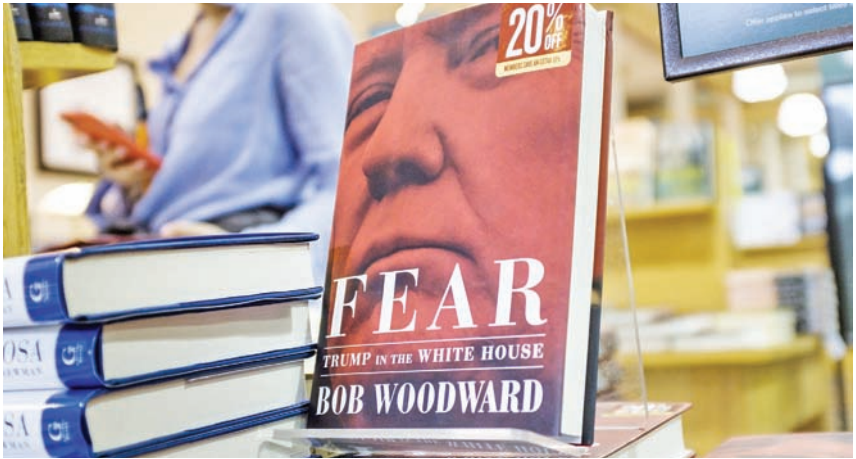
NEW YORK (NBC News) – Americans have found a book they just can’t put down — any book, as long as it’s about President Donald Trump.

Bob Woodward’s “Fear”, Michael Wolff’s “Fire and Fury”, James Comey’s “A Higher Loyalty”, and Omarosa Manigault Newman’s “Unhinged” have all topped the nonfiction bestseller charts this year — with Woodward’s title selling 750,000 copies through the end of its first day on sale, publisher Simon & Schuster reported.

“We haven’t seen an adult title sell this quickly in over three years,” said Liz Harwell, senior director of merchandising, trade books at Barnes & Noble, noting that the White House exposé has had the “fastest sales for an adult title since Harper Lee’s ‘Go Set a Watchman’ was released in July 2015.”

The soaring market in political titles is a stark contrast to 2008, the year President Barack Obama was elected, when the year’s best-sellers on Amazon included Eckhart Tolle’s self-help book, “A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose” and David Zinczenko’s latest volume of “Eat This, Not That.”

The pre-orders for Woodward’s book were “off the charts,” Jonathan Karp, president and publisher at Simon & Schuster, told NBC News. “The book is going to be No. 1 in the U.K., Canada, Australia and even India. We are reprinting in all these countries, it’s going



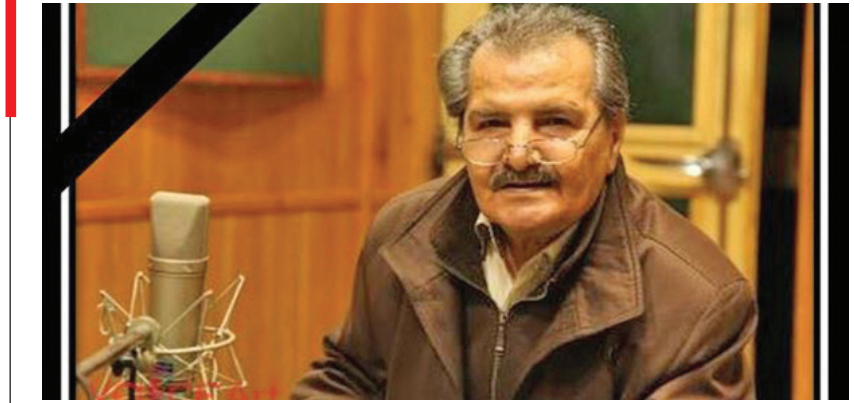
“Fear” by Bob Woodward at a bookstore in New York. (EPA/Justin Lane)

to be a global phenomenon.”

“This is a hinge in American history and a lot of readers and voters are trying to figure out how to turn the country in the direction they think it should go,” he said.

But it isn’t just books by critics of the Trump administration that are hot. Some titles defending the president have also been big sellers. “Liars, Leakers, and Liberals”, by Fox News Channel personality Jeanine Pirro, hit the No. 1 slot on Amazon when it was released in July. “The Russia Hoax”, by

Voice actor Mehdi Arian-nejad passes away at 79



Voice actor Mehdi Arian-nejad in an undated photo

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Iranian voice actor Mehdi Arian-nejad who gave the voice to the Aardvark in “The Ant and the Aardvark” series and many other characters in the world animated movies died of heart failure at his home in Tehran on Friday. He was 79.

He began his career in voice acting in 1962.

Inspector Clouseau, a fictional char-

acter in Blake Edwards’s farcical “The Pink Panther” series, was also voiced by Arian-nejad.

He also lent his voice to characters in “Lucky Luke”, a Western comic series created by Belgian cartoonist Morris in 1946.

Characters in Ali Hatami’s TV series “Hezar Dastan” and Nasser Taqvai’s comedy series “My Uncle Napoleon” were also among his credits.

ry: Audiobook sales are also soaring, up 20 percent in the first eight months of 2018, according to the Association of American Publishers. E-book sales — down 8 percent during the first quarter — saw sales of political e-books rocket by 106 percent, largely due to “Fire and Fury”, which was released in January.

Unsurprisingly, there’s a flood of new political books on the horizon, including “Mr. Trump’s Wild Ride”, from CBS News chief White House correspondent Major Garrett; “Them”, by Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., which comes out next month; and “Where We Go From Here”, by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., which will hit the shelves one week after the midterm elections.

Adam Bellow, editorial director of All Points Books, the political imprint at St. Martin’s Press, told NBC News: “Ever since Hurricane Trump made landfall in 2016, it’s been an unusually exciting time to be in political publishing. Both parties are in total disarray. Political identities are shifting. Familiar ideas are being challenged and many people are rethinking their assumptions. So even with increased competition from other media, interest in books is exploding.”

Trump has said that his presidency has been good for the economy, and “with regard to books, Trump’s claim is accurate,” said Simon & Schuster’s Karp.