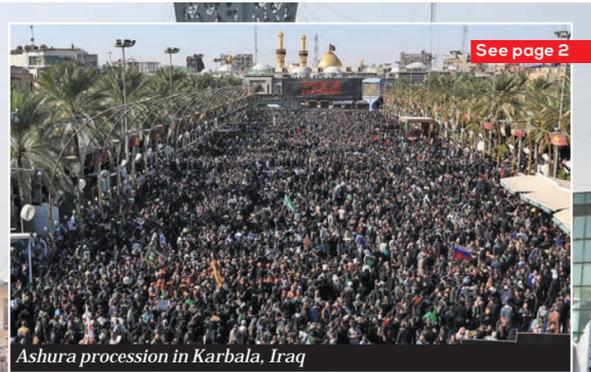


Love of Hussein(AS) unites us



EDITORIAL
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The last breath of Al-Saud in Yemen

Today, many global media spoke of Saudi defeat in Yemen. This issue comes as Saudi Arabia continues to kill the Yemeni people. The killing of the Yemeni people is not only not condemned by the United States and its European allies (especially Britain and France), but we are witnessing the continuation of this trend.

Undoubtedly, one of the main losers of the Yemeni war was the United Nations. At present, the crimes of Saudi and Emirati authorities in Yemen are rising day by day. Despite the brutal killing of tens of thousands of Yemeni people by Riyadh, the United Nations still refuses to condemn the Saudis.

It even refuses to introduce these crimes as a war crime (which deserve punishment). The world public opinion, and especially people of the region, are angry about the continuation of this war, strongly against the reverse role played by the United Nations in the Yemeni war, and the direct support of the permanent members of the Security Council (U.S., Britain and France). Since the start of the Yemeni war, people have been tens of thousands have been killed or injured.

According to UN data in Yemen, about 8.4 million people are at risk of hunger, and there have been many victims of cholera in the country. But Saudi Arabia and its allies continue their bloodshed, and bombard the country's defenseless people. The main question, however, is that despite knowing the terrible conditions of the Yemeni people, why does the UN avoid confronting Saudi Arabia's crimes? Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as the two countries that invaded the Yemeni people, have a bad time! Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have both failed in the Yemeni war and in the future they will also become big detainees.

Analysts at international affairs acknowledge that the Al Saud family and its entourage have no chance of winning Yemen, and they must formally declare their defeat in this war soon and officially.

The UK-based newspaper, The Times, had published an article written by Michael Burleigh arguing that the Saudi controversial Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has only few days left in power. →7

Iran will veto any decision against its interests: Zanganeh

ECONOMY TEHRAN — OPEC meetings in the presence of all OPEC members and by consensus of members", he noted. Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said Iran will definitely veto any decision which threatens its interests.

The minister made the remarks in an interview in his office with reporters from S&P Global Platts and Bloomberg News on Thursday. Speaking to Bloomberg, Zanganeh warned that some oil producers are trying to create an alternative suppliers' forum that supports U.S. policies hostile to the government in Tehran.

The official further underlined the fact that OPEC's Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) which set to meet on Sunday in Algiers has no authority to impose a new supply arrangement.

"Decisions can only be made at

OPEC meetings in the presence of all OPEC members and by consensus of members", he noted.

The Iranian oil minister warned that OPEC's authority is being jeopardized by the U.S. shadow effect on the allies in the region.

"They are sacrificing OPEC, they are destroying OPEC and slowly, without directly saying so, they want to gather some names together to create a forum to replace OPEC and manage the market," Zanganeh told Platts.

"You mustn't just sacrifice OPEC out of fear," he said.

"OPEC is one of the third world's biggest accomplishments in my view, not just in terms of oil producers, but it's an organization that can be effective in the world's economy and it's a good, strong foundation", he underlined.

Iran defeat Australia in rematch at AVC Cup for Women

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iran struggled to repeatedly beat Australia in dramatic four sets 22-25 25-23 25-22 25-20 in the 5th-10th play-offs round of the 6th AVC Cup for Women on Friday.

Mona Ashofteh led Iran with 16 points including 12 attacks and a team-leading 3 blocks, while Neda Chamlanian contributed 12 points including 10 attacks. Strongly-built Rachel Rourke scored a team-high 19 points for Australia.

Australia, saddened by the straight-set loss to the same rivals in the pool round-robin preliminaries earlier, made a confident start in the opening set to lead initially 8-7 and increased it to 15-12, thanks to their intensified defense and exceptional attacks

from the 192cm Rachel Rourke and Beth Carey. Iran gradually pulled their game together and fought back hard to level at 17-17 and 19-19. Australia maintained their good show to advance with a two-point clear at 23-21 before Iran called a timeout to improve their luck. Unfortunately, their efforts were in vain. A nice touch by Agnieszka Kudziela handed Australia an impressive 25-22 win, asianvolleyball.com reported.

Holding a 1-0 advantage, Australia remained in good form in the second set as Rourke let loose her fine shots in the Iran area to put her team in front with a 3-point clear at 10-7 before Iran, led by Mahsa Saberi, hit back to level at 20-20. Iran played better after that to take the hard-fought set 25-23. →15

Zarif dismisses U.S. talks offer, says U.S. broke nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — On Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif hit back at a U.S. offer of negotiations, saying the United States had violated the terms of the 2015 nuclear accord.

In May, President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of that nuclear accord - which put limits on Iran's nuclear work in return for termination of financial and economic sanctions.

The U.S. special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, said on Wednesday that the U.S. now wanted to negotiate a "treaty" that included

Tehran's ballistic missile program and its regional role.

According to Reuters, Hook said the new deal that Washington hoped to sign with Iran, would not be a "personal agreement between two governments like the last one, we seek a treaty."

Zarif took to Twitter to dismiss the characterization of last deal as a "personal agreement", saying it was "an int'l accord enshrined in a UN (Security Council resolution)".

"U.S. has violated its treaty obligations too... Apparently, U.S. only mocks calls for peace," Zarif added.

The European Union and the five other world powers that signed the 2015 accord with Iran - France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia - have been trying to keep the agreement alive.

In his speech before the conservative Hudson Institute, Hook reiterated that "sanctions" is the Trump administration's only policy on Iran.

The Trump administration has said that it is willing to talk to Iran, a gesture deemed as inauthentic by Tehran. →2

Iran's Air Force, IRGC start joint military drills over Persian Gulf

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on Friday started joint military drills over the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

The drills started on the occasion of the Sacred Defense Week.

The Sacred Defense Week honors eight years of resistance against former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein who launched war against Iran on September 22, 1980.

Colonel Yousuf Safipour from the Army's Information and Public Relations Office told reporters that twenty-six military aircraft, including F-4s, Sukhoi-22s, and Tucanos, as well as five helicopter gunships, including Chinooks, are flown during the drills.

"In addition to show of power, this



ceremony sends message of peace and friendship to the neighboring countries," Safipour said.

He added, "If the enemies and global arrogance covet the Islamic country's territory, they would be served with a crushing response within a fraction of a second."

The second stage of military exercise is scheduled to be held on Saturday.

Claim of request for talks with Trump is 'farcical', Iran says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday that Iran has never requested meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Reportedly, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has claimed that Iran had requested a meeting with Trump during the United Nations General Assembly which is scheduled to be held from September 18 to October 5.

Qassemi described the claim as "farcical" and in line with a psychological warfare against Iran.

In a press conference on Monday, Qassemi confirmed that President Hassan Rouhani will attend the annual UN meeting but said Iran does not even think about holding talks with the "naïve" Trump administration.



"Given the naïve and uncivilized act of the current U.S. administration in withdrawing from the JCPAO [the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal] and also the country's policies against Iran, we do not even think about negotiating with the U.S. let alone talking about the preconditions," Qassemi stated.

ARTICLE
Maryam Qarehgozlou
Head of the Tehran Times
Social Desk

Imam Hussein's (AS) message for the human

The days that have passed were the anniversary of the bitter events of the Battle of Karbala on the day of Ashura (tenth of Muharram) in the year 61 AH of the Islamic calendar (October 10, 680 AD).

There are many lessons to be learnt from the painful events of the Battle of Karbala.

Every year Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide commemorate this major, landmark event and grieve the unfair bloodshed in the desert of Karbala. Muslims, most importantly Shia Muslims, believe that the events of Ashura and Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal followers' martyrdom by the tyrants are what have kept Islam as the last and most comprehensive religion alive so far.

The events is so significant in the history that even after 1,300 years it still profoundly moves both Muslims and non-Muslims alike and the oppressed and those who fight against tyranny deeply believe in it. The events of Ashura are one of a kind throughout the history of the mankind.

But what is the true message of Imam Hussein (AS) and the events of Ashura?

Maybe, if we want to explain Imam Hussein's message in short it is being a true servant of God and serving no one but God. A search through the history would indicate that Imam Hussein's true purpose for travelling to Karbala was fundamentally to purify the society from the evil and wickedness and promoting goodness and righteousness which is only possible when people are free of the tyrants and only serve God.

In fact what saves human beings from the serving anyone else but God and leads to salvation both in this world and the afterlife is believing in Tawhid (the indivisible oneness concept of monotheism in Islam) and the endeavor to fight tyranny and arrogance of those who serve the Satan and act against the innate human nature.

And that's what Imam Hussein lost his life for, so that people throughout the history comprehend that fighting for freedom, resisting oppression and combating the evil are the only ways which help human beings to fulfill their primary purpose.

Dear readers,
Starting Mehr 1 (September 23),
The Tehran Times cover price will
be updated to 20,000 rials / \$1.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



'U.S. has lost Middle East'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Mohammad-Hassan Dehghani, interim Friday prayer leader of Tehran, has said that the U.S. has lost the Middle East.

President Donald Trump says that Washington will lose the Middle East if it does not counter Iran but the U.S. has already lost the Middle East, Aboutorabi Fard told worshippers.

He also addressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying the time to say goodbye has arrived.

He also said that Iran has stood against the hegemony by resorting to the school of Ashura which is a path that should be continually followed.



'Lesson from Imam Hussein: Standing up for justice yields victory'

POLITICS TEHRAN — On Wednesday, the day marking the 9th of the calendar month of Muharram, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his twitter page that Imam Hussein's resistance against injustice sends the unwavering message that "standing up for justice yields victory".

"14 centuries have passed since Karbala saw epic martyrdom of Imam Hussein in his seemingly unequal resistance against tyranny. His sacrifice carries unwavering & ever relevant message: standing up for justice yields victory. 'Every day is Ashura, every land is Karbala' #YaHussein," Zarif wrote.

Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (S), stood against Yazid, a tyrant from the Umayyad dynasty. Imam Hussein, along with 72 loyalists, were martyred in the battle of Karbala in 680 CE.



Tehran says world must press Israel to join NPT

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran has called on the international community to pressure the Israeli regime into joining and abiding by the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), describing it as the only way to bring peace to the Middle East.

The remarks were made by Kazem Gharibabadi, the Iranian ambassador and permanent representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in a Thursday address to the 62nd Annual Session of the IAEA General Conference in Vienna, Press TV reported.

The international community must press the regime to sign the NPT as an urgent necessity, the diplomat added.



U.S. cannot undermine Iran-Iraq ties: politician

POLITICS TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker, has said that political and parliamentary ties between Iran and Iraq cannot be damaged by the U.S. pressure.

Iraq's newly-elected Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi and Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani held a phone conversation on Sunday. Reportedly, Halbousi denied a part of the conversation in another phone call with a U.S. official.

Amir Abdollahian said the U.S. will not be permitted to affect Iran-Iraq ties negatively.



Iran raps UK for travel warning

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to the UK has slammed London for warning Iranians living in Britain against visiting Iran, stating that no one is prosecuted by the Islamic Republic merely for dual citizenship.

"Iranian authorities have repeatedly given assurances that dual citizenship per se is not considered a crime or violation of law, and no one is prosecuted [in Iran] for that reason," Hamid Baeidinejad said in a Thursday tweet.

"Hundreds of Iranian people living in the UK, including those with dual citizenship, travel to Iran every day in full security," he noted, adding, "Any move to politicize the visit of Iranian people to their homeland is doomed to failure."

His comments came in reaction to the UK Foreign Office's rare warning to all Iranian-British dual nationals against traveling to Iran unless they have an urgent reason to do so.



Pakistan seeks good relations with Iran: Imran Khan

POLITICS TEHRAN — Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that his country seeks to have good relations with its neighbors, especially Iran.

"Islamabad seeks to have good relations with its neighbors especially Iran, India and Afghanistan," Khan said in an interview with Al Arabiya, IRNA reported on Friday.

During a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in August, Imran Khan said that Pakistan and Iran are connected by inseparable bonds of historical, religious and cultural affinities.

Zarif dismisses U.S. talks offer, says U.S. broke nuclear deal

FM Zarif dismisses characterization of nuclear deal as 'personal agreement', says it is "an int'l accord enshrined in a UN Security Council resolution"

1 → "I suspect the Iranians are going to try and wait out the Trump administration," said Micheal Elleman, senior fellow for Missile Defense at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The threat of Iran's ballistic missiles, he said, is "more of a straw man — everyone is scared of missiles... but I don't know what the administration is offering. I've heard nothing new from Hook this morning."

The current sanctions approach fails to address Iran's security concerns — its neighbors, Iraq and Afghanistan, are occupied by U.S. forces, and nearby Persian Gulf Arab countries host U.S. military bases.

"I just don't see where this more aggressive strategy is headed. If I'm Iran, I look at it as a prelude to regime change."

Hook repeated Trump's rhetoric, blaming Iran for everything that is going wrong in the Middle East — from Iraq, which the U.S. invaded in 2003, to Yemen, where the U.S. is supporting the Saudi Arabia-led campaign that has led to the slaughter of thousands of civilians.

He described essentially all of Iran's weapons capabilities as a threat — short-range missiles and long-range missiles alike. But even Iran has said that it doesn't need all of those weapons.

"Iran said it doesn't need missiles that fly beyond 2,000 km [1242 miles]... Let's take up on that offer and create an agreement that's verifiable that prevents Iran from developing ICBM's [Intercontinental Ballistic



Missiles], which Hook kept talking about, which I don't know what evidence he has that they're even developing," said Elleman, according to thinkprogress.

Missiles, though, play a big part in Iran's "defense and deterrence" strategy, he said.

It's worth noting that Iran has been found to be in full compliance with the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal — the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — which has seen Iran subjected to repeated inspections by the UN nuclear watchdog agency in exchange for

sanctions relief.

As is often the case in these sorts of events, the audience — including the press — had to submit written questions, which were vetted by the moderator before being issued to Hook.

Somehow, no one had any critical questions.

The sole voice of dissent belonged to CodePink, who managed to get on stage after Hook's speech and before the Q&A, to accuse Hook of "making the case for war with Iran." U.S. sanctions do not enjoy the support

of the Iranian people living inside the country. However, the Trump administration has reached out to a select diaspora, including the former terrorist group MEK, which is wildly unpopular among Iranians, and others sympathetic to their perspective, such as the individuals invited to Secretary Pompeo's speech in July (members of media, from whom Pompeo did not take questions on the record, notwithstanding).

The former director of policy planning, Hook first started work on Iran during George W. Bush's second term in office in 2006. He was adviser to then UN Ambassador (now National Security Adviser) John Bolton, who has advocated for bombing Iran and was a vocal critic of 2015 nuclear deal.

Trump has threatened other countries, including other parties to the JCPOA, with sanctions should they do business in Iran or purchase Iranian oil after the oil sanctions hit in November.

Other sanctions on Iran have already been re-imposed.

All of the other countries in the deal support the agreement and are trying to find a means of staying in it and protecting their companies from U.S. sanctions.

"I can't imagine why the Iranians would come to the table and trust the United States at this point," said Elleman, a former weapons inspector who worked in Iraq. "I think getting out of the JCPOA will go down as one of the greatest unforced blunders outside of the Iraq invasion in the last 25 years."

Love of Hussein unites us

POLITICS TEHRAN — Muslims around the globe held massive mourning ceremonies on Thursday, the day of Ashura, to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions.

Iraq, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon in particular witnessed large gatherings of the lovers of Imam Hussein mourning his martyrdom.

Ashura, the 10th day of the lunar month of Muharram,

marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and his 72 faithful companions in the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD.

In Iraq, devotees in all cities and villages performed the religious ritual of wearing black clothes, listening to elegies recounting the tragic events in the Battle of Karbala, slapping their chests and chanting in commemoration of their beloved Imam.

On social media, users trended the Arabic phrase

for "love of Hussein unites us".

Every year on Ashura, millions of Muslims and even many non-Muslims around the world, dressed in black, take to the streets and mosques to mourn the sad occasion.

Muharram ceremonies represent the never-ending and unswerving stance of the truth against falsehood and the humanity's struggle against tyranny, the cause for which Imam Hussein sacrificed his life.

Iraq appoints new ambassador to Tehran



POLITICS TEHRAN — Baghdad has appointed a new ambassador to Tehran, according to Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad Mahjoub.

Mahjoub announced in a statement on Friday that Sa'ad Jawad Qandeel will replace Rajeh al-Mousavi as Iraq's ambassador to Iran, according to IRNA.

Al-Mousavi was recalled by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry following the circulation of a video in which he was quarrelling with a number of Iraqi citizens a few days earlier.

Jawad Qandeel has formerly served as Iraqi ambassador in some other countries.

Saudi Arabia was involved in embassy attack: Amir Abdollahian

POLITICS TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker, has said that Iran's Foreign Ministry has documents which reveal that Saudi Arabia was involved in attacks on its diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad.

"My evaluation is that those who threw Molotov cocktail at the Saudi Arabia embassy were not members of Basij forces. They were infiltrators who were totally guided to do the job. A week before the incident, Saudi Arabia's embassy had announced to all the embassies in Tehran that it intended to sell its cars and the Iranian Foreign Ministry has the relevant documents," he told Tasnim news agency in an interview published on Friday.

He said that an ambassador of one of the countries showed him the announcement.

Amir Abdollahian who acted as Iran's point man for Arab affairs at the Foreign Ministry added that the majority of diplomats who visited the Saudi diplomatic missions were security agents.

Second Announcement



Alumina Iran Co

International Call For Identification and Prequalification Assessment
of Eligible Producers/Suppliers
For Procurement of 20000 metric tons Pre Baked Anode via One Stage
International Tender

Alumina Iran Co. intends to launch an international call for identification and prequalification of qualified eligible suppliers for procurement of high quality Pre Baked Anode Block for using in its Primary Aluminum Reduction Smelter Plant.

1-Subject: Purchasing 20000 mt Pre Baked Anode Block for using in the Primary Aluminum Reduction Smelter Plant

2-The Employer's Name and Address:
Name: Alumina Iran Company affiliated with Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development & Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)
Address: Km 7 of Sankhast Road ,city of JAJARM,Northern Khorasan Province,IRAN,P.O.Box:1135-94415 , website:WWW.IranAlumina.ir
E-mail: info@iranalumina.ir

Contact telephones for more information : **009858-32604230** and **009858-32605344**

3-Delivery time duration : about twelve (12) calendarial months

4-Delivery Port / Final Destination : CIF Bandar Abbas port , Iran and shipped to the Primary Aluminum Reduction Smelter Plant Located in JAJARM city , Northern Khorasan Province, IRAN.

5-Method of payment : Via Internal Resources of Alumina Iran Company

6-Required Conditions ,Verifications & Certifications:
All of the bidders/Tenderers should submit their RFQ reports and related supporting documents to the Employer from the date of this call till
OCTOBER 23, 2018.The relevant documents should include the following items:
It is mandatory that the eligible bidders should justify its Ability to present the required export licence issued by official authorities related to the subject of the Tender .
The bidders should have the required technical and engineering and managerial facilities , ability to produce or supply the goods as mentioned in the subject of the Tender, financial ability , sufficient and related experience , Good performance history & awards by the former clients and regarding the relevant production and quality assurance standards capabilities.
The bidders should represent its abilities to procure the the mentioned goods just in time.
The bidders should have sufficient and right experience for supplying the mentioned goods of the valid international producers. It is mandatory that the bidders should be able to present the valid authority letter and the main supplier or producer supporting documents for its commitments and obligations .

7-Deadline of Documents Submission :
In the last time after one month of the second publication time of this call (September 22, 2018), The bidders can submit the required documents to the Central Secretariat Office in Alumina Iran Company.

8- Other Conditions and information :
The bidders should submit its letter of interest in writing to the client via telefax No.: 058-32272487 .
After receiving and evaluating the above mentioned documents of each bidder,the acceptable eligible bidders are invited to receive the relevant Tender documents.
The bidders should insert and stamp its name and the subject of the Tender on the submitted envelope of related RFQ report documents.
Submission of the letter of interest and readiness to this call does not constitute any rights for bidders/applicants.
The applicant will accept the expenses related to completion and submission of the prequalification documents.
The applicant will accept all of legal responsibilities for the rightness and justifications of issued supporting documents attached to its interest letter and if any deviations have been observed during this stage and the other relevant stages, the applicant should accept the relevant legal impacts and compensate related probable damages.
This call and the contents therein do not constitute any obligation for ALUMINA IRAN CO. to invite any company for tendering, and so the final decision will be exclusively made by the ALUMINA IRAN CO.

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Spain to push for European recognition of Palestine

Spain says it will try to bring about a "European recognition" of an independent Palestinian state, saying the country may itself go ahead and recognize Palestine if a consensus evades the continent.

On Thursday, Spain's Foreign Minister Josep Borrell said he would launch an "intensive" consultation process with his counterparts to set a timetable for achieving a common position on the subject, Ha'aretz reported.

If "the EU is not able to reach unanimous decision," the option of individual recognition of Palestine is "on the table," he added.

Riyad al-Maliki, the foreign minister of Palestinian Authority (PA), welcomed the prospect of a Spanish recognition, the Palestinian Ma'an News Agency reported. He called the Spanish foreign minister's remarks a result of his trip to the European country earlier in September, during which he had proposed the recognition to his counterpart.

So far, 139 countries have recognized Palestine.

In Spain, some parties have reportedly been trying to convince the government to follow in their footsteps. Opponents say Tel Aviv might react by recognizing Catalonia, where an independence drive has been hassling Madrid. Spain has urged Israel against recognizing the Spanish region.

Last year, Tel Aviv threw its support behind a controversial independence vote, which went underway in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. The regime was alone in supporting the drive, while the international community was unanimously warning about its consequences.

In January, the PA President Mahmoud Abbas called on the European Union to recognize a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.

The Israeli regime occupied the Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank that year during a war. It withdrew from Gaza in 2005, but has been keeping the enclave under draconian pressures.

There are disagreements within the EU on whether the bloc should recognize Palestine.

■ **Saudi regime bans more than 600,000 Palestinians from Hajj**

Meantime, more than 600,000 Palestinians have effectively been banned from participating in the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages in Saudi Arabia after the regime announced it will no longer provide visas to Palestinians



holders of temporary Jordanian passports, according to local travel agencies.

Travel agencies in Jordan and the Israeli occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem) were informed of the Saudi regime decision in early September without any further explanations on the reason of the ban.

"They will refuse to issue visas for any temporary passport that has no national (citizenship) number," Abu Khaled al-Jimzawi, an East al-Quds-based tourism office director, told the Middle East Eye.

The new Saudi regime policy will deny the Palestinians the chance to participate in the Hajj pilgrimage, a religious ritual that has to be completed by Muslims at least once in their lifetime. Many Palestinians fled to Jordan between 1947 and 1967 as a result of Israeli occupation. Today, more than 600,000 Palestinians live in Jordan without any citizenship but are given temporary Jordanian passports for travel. Moreover, the Saudi regime's decision will also affect most Palestinian residents of the Israeli occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as they also rely on the temporary Jordanian passports.

Observers believe the passport ban seeks to induce Palestinian refugees to apply for Jordanian citizenship. East al-Quds (Jerusalem) residents will have to apply for Israeli citizenship or request travel documents from the PA, a move that is known to be used by

Israel to revoke resident status from Palestinians on the basis of numerous pretexts, such as a newly passed "breach of loyalty" law.

Internal emails from the United States President's Senior Adviser Jared Kushner disclosed by the Foreign Policy Magazine in August revealed plans that sought to neutralize Palestinian refugees in Jordan, effectively ending their Palestine related status.

Furthermore, some Arab media outlets speculate the Saudi decision to be in line with what U.S. President Donald Trump has labeled as the "Deal of the Century", underlining the U.S. president's allegedly new Middle East road map. Trump has yet to officially publish the controversial proposal that has drawn condemnation from many Palestinian and regional figures.

■ **Palestinian poet released from Israeli prison after two months**

Elsewhere, Israeli authorities have released prominent Palestinian poet Darin Tatour, after she completed two months out of her original five-month jail term given to her for "inciting terrorism" on social networking platforms.

Israeli officials commuted Tatour's sentence by three months, and she was released from Damon Prison, near the Rimon Junction in the Carmel Forest of northern Israeli-occupied territories, on Thursday.

"After three years of suffering, imprison-

ment and house arrest, I finally feel happy," the Palestinian literary figure said upon her release.

On July 31, the Israeli magistrate's court in the northern city of Nazareth sentenced Tatour after convicting her of "inciting terrorism" in a poem she posted online.

Back in 2015, the 36-year-old Palestinian was arrested by Israeli authorities for her poem entitled, "Resist, My People, Resist."

Israel's central court in Nazareth released Tatour from custody in early 2016, but placed her under house arrest.

■ **Israeli forces detain al-Aqsa Mosque guard**

Separately, Israeli military forces arrested an al-Aqsa Mosque guard on Thursday morning as he was heading to his work at the compound in the Old City of the occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Firas al-Dibs, spokesperson of the Islamic Waqf (Endowment) organization, which manages the compound's affairs, told the Palestinian Safa news agency that Israeli troops detained Hamza al-Nabali, while he was walking towards the Hatta Gate to reach the mosque.

Palestinian sources, requesting anonymity, said Nabali was taken to an Israeli police station in the Old City for interrogation.

The occupied territories have witnessed new tensions ever since the U.S. on December 6, 2017 announced its recognition of al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's "capital" and said the U.S. would move its embassy to the city.

The dramatic decision triggered demonstrations in the occupied Palestinian territories and elsewhere in the world.

The status of al-Quds (Jerusalem) is the thorniest issue in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians see East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital of their future state.

Moreover, more than 185 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in the Gaza Strip on March 30. Nearly 20,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on May 14, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day (Day of Catastrophe), which coincided this year with the U.S. embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

(Source: Press TV)

Germany breaks Saudi regime arms ban promise

Germany has approved selling artillery positioning systems to the House of Saud regime, going back on a ban that the European country had ordered on the sale of weapons to the countries involved in the war on Yemen.

Economy Minister Peter Altmaier announced the permission in a letter to lawmakers, Reuters reported citing a German government document.

The positioning systems, four of which are bound for Saudi Arabia, enable spotting of "enemy fire," thus lending more precision to counterstrikes.

Germany, one of the world's biggest arms exporters, had ordered the ban on the weapons delivery in March in an apparent reaction to the Saudi-led invasion of Yemen.

The reversal came less than a week after Spain, which had earlier suspended the sale of 400 laser-guided bombs to the Saudi regime, said it would reauthorize the sale to "honor" a contract made with Riyadh by the previous government in 2015.

Last week, Spanish media outlets said that Riyadh was preparing to react to the freeze by cancelling a warship contract worth \$2.2 billion with Madrid. The outlets said that the warship deal would create 6,000 jobs in Spain.

The House of Saud regime led many of its allies in the invasion that started in 2015 to restore power to Yemen's



former Riyadh-friendly authorities. Around 15,000 have lost their lives ever since, and now, the United Nations says more than eight million Yemenis are on the brink of famine.

The regime and its allies are accused of committing war crimes against world's most impoverished Arab nation.

A report launched on August 28 by the Group of Eminent

Experts on Yemen (YemenGEE), which was established in 2017 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, concluded that individuals in the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Riyadh's key ally in the invasion, could be liable for acts that amounted to international crimes.

■ **Yemeni nation's struggle for liberty main reason behind Saudi regime-led aggression**

Elsewhere, the leader of Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement has described the ongoing struggle of his fellow countrymen and women for liberty and dignity as the main reason behind Riyadh's devastating military aggression against their homeland, which has claimed the lives of thousands of people and left the country's infrastructure in ruins.

"The Yemeni nation will never surrender, no matter how far the Saudi-led coalition would press its campaign of criminality and brutality. The problem of the Riyadh-based alliance with the Yemenis is rooted in the latter's fight to live a free and dignified life," Abdul-Malik Badreddin addressed his supporters via a televised speech broadcast live from the Yemeni capital Sana'a on Thursday evening.

He added that the main responsibility of the Yemeni nation is to fight relentlessly against the enemies at every front.

(Source: Press TV)

Russia asks Israel to give more explanation on plane downing in Syria

Russia's Foreign Ministry has urged Israel to provide further explanations on the deadly crash of a Russian military plane in the Syrian province of Latakia, which was shot down as a result of the Israeli pilots' unprofessional actions.

Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Thursday said Russian experts had confirmed the actions of Israeli pilots resulted in the downing of the aircraft by the Syrian air defenses and deaths of 15 Russian servicemen. She stressed that Israeli pilots were behaving in an unprofessional manner at the very least, saying that Russia still needed to hear more "explanations from Israel".

Her comments came after an Israeli delegation led by Amikam Norkin, the regime's air force commander, traveled to Moscow on Thursday with information about the crash. However, the delegation's explanations apparently failed to convince the Russian government.

On the same day, the Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv lashed out at Israel for its "irresponsible and unfriendly actions," and pinned the blame on Israel's Air Force, which was conducting aerial assaults against Syrian army positions when the incident happened.

"Moscow views as irresponsible and unfriendly actions of Israeli Air Force, which exposed Russian Il-20 aircraft to danger and led to death of 15 servicemen," the Russian embassy said in a tweet.

"Russia would take all necessary measures to eliminate threat to life and security of our military fighting against terrorism," it added.

The Israel regime has over the past years carried out numerous strikes against Syrian army positions in what is widely viewed as an attempt to help the terrorists survive in the face of successful Syrian army operations. It has defied criticisms of its unlawful military actions against Syrian soil. The regime's minister for military affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, said on Thursday that the regime would not stop such attacks, but would do more to "de-conflict" them with Russian forces.

■ **Russia, Turkey 'optimistic' about Syria's Idlib deal, working out details: UN official**

Meantime, Russia and Turkey say they are optimistic about but still working on a demilitarized buffer zone to separate Syrian government troops from Takfiri militant groups in the northwestern province of Idlib, says the United Nations humanitarian adviser, as

Ankara seeks to forestall a full-scale military operation by Damascus against terrorists in the militant-held region.

Jan Egeland, the chair of the United Nations task force on humanitarian access in Syria, said at a press conference in Geneva on Thursday that representatives of both countries had made the announcement at a weekly meeting of the taskforce in the Swiss city earlier in the day. "We invited Russia and Turkey to explain to us what's in the deal, the basic message was we're very optimistic that the two of us can work this out to avoid bloodshed, to avoid the big war," Egeland said.

"A lot of areas would not see war, hopefully, but there could be more clashes between armed opposition groups," Egeland added.

His comments came three days after Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in Russia's coastal city of Sochi, and agreed to divide Idlib into a demilitarized zone between militant-held and government-controlled areas.

It is estimated that an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 members of different factions of armed groups, which Russia and Turkey consider terrorists, are active in the volatile province, which is home to around three mil-

lion inhabitants.

Furthermore, Ankara supports tens of thousands of other militants, describing them as members of the so-called "moderate" armed factions fighting against the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Damascus and Moscow brand all of the armed factions in the region as terrorists.

Damascus has already said that it is preparing for a full-scale military operation against terrorists. The Turkish government has been trying to persuade its loyal armed groups to evacuate Idlib in a purported bid to avert the anti-terror operation. However, it has not said how it would persuade them to disarm. Previous attempts have failed and the upcoming offensive is causing frictions among militants.

Some 60 percent of the province is said to be controlled by members of the so-called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham Takfiri (Organization for the Liberation of the Levant/Levant Liberation Committee/Tahrir al-Sham/HTS/al-Qaeda in Syria) terrorist group, which is a coalition of different factions of terrorist outfits, largely composed of al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra/Jabhat Fatah al-Sham).

(Source: Press TV)

Saudi regime, UAE using Israel's Pegasus malware to spy on citizens

A recent report has revealed that the House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been among the countries that have been extensively using the spyware Pegasus to spy on their own people and track human rights advocates.

The report, published by Citizen Lab on Tuesday, said the usage of Pegasus - made by the Tel Aviv-based NSO Company - in both countries had significantly increased between August 2016 and August 2018. "Our findings paint a bleak picture of the human rights risks of NSO's global proliferation. At least six countries with significant Pegasus operations have previously been linked to abusive use of spyware to target civil society," the Citizen Lab said in its report, refusing to name all the countries.

Citizen Lab said it identified at least six operators with "significant operations" in the Persian Gulf region including at least two that appeared to predominantly focus on the UAE and one with a Saudi focus. One was also focused on Bahrain, it added, without elaborating whether it was affiliated to Saudi Arabia - which is helping Manama suppress dissent - or not.

"Three operators may be conducting surveillance beyond the MENA region, including in Canada, France, Greece, the United Kingdom, and the United States," the report added.

The UAE had earlier used the phone hacking spyware to spy on several Arab figures, including the Qatari emir, Lebanese prime minister, and a Saudi regime prince.

The New York Times reported on August 31 that the NSO Group and affiliates had actively participated in cyber-attacks on individuals sought by the UAE using the controversial Pegasus spyware to turn their smart phones into surveillance devices.

Two lawsuits have been filed against the company in Israel and Cyprus by a Qatari citizen as well as Mexican journalists and human rights activists who say they were targeted by the spyware.

Saudi national Yehia Assiri, one of the targets of the spyware, told the Middle East Eye recently that "governments that use these technologies have something to be scared of, and have no respect for human rights."

The Citizen Lab, an affiliate of the University of Toronto, added in its report that it had also found evidence that the software might have been deployed against victims in 45 countries.

In addition researchers found indications of possible political themes within targeting materials in several countries, which they said casts doubt on whether the technology is being used as part of "legitimate" criminal investigations.

Bill Marczak, senior research fellow at The Citizen Lab, was quoted as saying that the researchers had found that the spyware was used by governments to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, opposition politicians, lawyers, and anti-corruption advocates. "We identified in 45 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, the UAE, Uganda, the UK, the U.S., Uzbekistan, Yemen, and Zambia."

Pegasus is a modular malware. After scanning the target's device, it installs the necessary modules to read the user's messages and mail, listen to calls, capture screenshots, log pressed keys, exfiltrate browser history, contacts, and so on and so forth. Basically, it can spy on every aspect of the target's life.

The spyware has been around for at least three years, when it was first detailed in a report over the summer of 2016.

(Source: Press TV)

Nasrallah: Hezbollah in possession of precision rockets to Israel's dismay

Hezbollah's leader has warned Israel of a fate it "has never expected" if it chooses to wage a new war, reminding the regime that the Lebanese resistance movement is now in possession of precision rockets to Tel Aviv's dismay.

Sayed Hassan Nasrallah made the comments during a Thursday speech in Beirut to a large crowd of mourners marking Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, the third Shia Imam.

He further said the balance of power in the region has changed in favor of the anti-Israel axis of resistance, and that Tel Aviv has failed in all its attempts to prevent Lebanon's Hezbollah from achieving precision rockets. "No matter what you do to cut the route, the matter is over and the resistance possesses precision and non-precision rockets and weapons capabilities," Nasrallah said.

"All your attempts to prevent Hezbollah from possessing accurate missiles are foiled," he added. The Hezbollah chief further warned Israel against opting for yet another act of aggression against his country and said, "If Israel imposes a war on Lebanon, Israel will face a fate and a reality it has never expected on any day."

He also pointed to the growing power of the resistance front, stressing that the Israelis "had pinned their hopes on the course of developments in Syria and Iraq, but they know that the axis of resistance has returned stronger than ever, and new countries have now joined it."

Therefore, he added, the Israeli regime is afraid of any conflict in the region, especially against Lebanon, and is well informed that any war would have dire consequences.

Tel Aviv is well aware that its weaknesses have been revealed to Hezbollah, and is well aware of our strengths, he added. "Israel is aware that technology alone cannot be decisive in a war."

The Hezbollah chief further expressed the movement's support for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the face of "all kinds of economic and political pressure," saying that "it is our duty to stand by Iran" as a new wave of anti-Iran American sanctions is returning. Iran is being punished by the United States only because it refused to give in to Washington's demands, and because it is keeping up its support for the oppressed nations in the region, including Palestine and Syria.

He further reiterated the movement's support for the Palestinian cause, reiterating Hezbollah's objection to the so-called "deal of the century" which the U.S. administration is drawing up on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Nasrallah also noted that Hezbollah firmly stands by the Yemeni nation, which has been under attack by the Saudi regime and a coalition of its allies. "We reiterate our support to peaceful people of Bahrain whose scholars and youths have been jailed and suppressed by the Bahraini regime," he added.

(Source: Press TV)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	157328.7
IFX	1771.26

Sources: tse.ir, ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	49,110 rials
GBP	55,260 rials
AED	11,430 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$70.89/b
Brent	\$79.06/b
OPEC Basket	\$77.06/b
Gold	\$1,205.40/oz
Silver	\$14.40/oz
Platinum	\$839.75/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Processed iron ore output rises 19% in 5 months on year

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's output of processed iron ore increased 19 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

As reported, some 18.428 million tons of iron ore concentrate has been produced during the five-month period of this year, rising from 15.544 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Japan uneasy over Trump pressure on auto as summit, trade talks loom

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will meet U.S. President Donald Trump next week as fears grow in Tokyo that Washington could demand that Japan curb its car exports to the United States.

Japan is hoping to avert any import curbs and potentially steeper U.S. import tariffs on its cars, and fend off U.S. demands for a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA).

Abe and Trump will hold a summit meeting on Sept. 26 on the sidelines of a United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, Japan's top government spokesman said on Friday.

To lay the groundwork for the summit, top trade negotiators of the two countries - Japanese Economy Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer - will hold their second round of trade talks on Sept. 24.

Trump has made clear he is unhappy with Japan's \$69 billion trade surplus with the United States, nearly two-thirds from auto exports, and wants a two-way agreement to address it.

There is uncertainty on whether Abe, who won a third term as premier in Thursday's ruling party leadership race, can convince Trump through close ties he has forged with the president.



U.S. President Donald Trump arrives for a joint news conference with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, U.S., June 7, 2018.

The threat of trade friction between Tokyo and Washington has been present since Trump took office last year with a pledge to renegotiate trade deals he considers unfair to U.S. companies and workers.

Japanese government officials are growing increasingly worried that Trump will demand a reduction in the number of Japanese auto imports to lower the trade deficit.

They also fret that Trump could impose steep import tariffs on auto and auto parts, which would deal a severe blow to the export-reliant economy.

"Japan swallowed voluntary export curbs in the past, so Washington may find this as an attractive option," said Toshiro Muto, a former top finance ministry bureaucrat who retains close ties with incumbent policymakers and lawmakers.

"But this is something Japan must absolutely avoid," he told Reuters. "I can't think of any sector in Japan that can replace its giant auto industry as a key driver of growth."

The United States is Japan's second-largest trading partner, after China.

Some officials say Japan may have no choice but to lower the number of cars it ships to the world's top economy, because the United States is Japan's closet ally and guarantees its defense.

"Given our position (close diplomatic relationship), we would have to swallow their demands," said one government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Another official said Japan was trying to convince the United States to avoid imposing a numerical target on Japanese car exports.

Next week's meeting between Motegi and Lighthizer will follow one in August, where the two sides failed to narrow differences on whether to open up negotiations for a bilateral FTA.

(Source: Reuters)

\$476m of state-run shares divested since March

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO) has offered 20 trillion rials (about \$476 million) of state-run shares to the private sector since the beginning of the present Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 21, 2018), IRIB reported.

Privatization in Iran witnessed 100 percent growth during the first five months of the current calendar year (March 21-August 22) compared to the same period of time in the previous year, IPO Head Mir Ali Ashraf Abdollah Pouri-Hosseini has previously announced.

In late May, IPO published the list of the enterprises that their shares are planned to be transferred to the private sector by

the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

As previously reported, in its planned budget for 1397, the Iranian government expects to earn some 106 trillion rials (about \$2.5 billion) of income from divesting shares of state-run companies to the private sector.

Implementation of privatization plan aimed at more productivity, investment making, job creation, promotion of trade balance, more competition in domestic economy, and reducing financial and management burden on the government has been under the spotlight in Iran over the past decade.

The law on implementation of the

Iran's exports to U.S. grows 37.8% in 5 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — During the first five months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22, 2018), Iran's exports to the U.S. reached \$45.11 million, increasing by 37.8 percent in comparison with the same time span in the preceding year, according to the latest data released by the Islamic

Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The U.S. has been among the 100 major importers of Iranian goods in the said time importing 1,487 tons of goods, showing 60.8 percent boost, compared to the same period in the previous year, the report added.

Iran-U.S. trade balance from March 21



general policies of the Article 44 of Iran's Constitution on privatizing state-owned companies was declared in 2006 in a bid to downsize the government and promote the private sector's role in the national economy.

The government envisioned a large privatization program in the Fifth Five-Year

National Development Plan (2010-2015), aiming to privatize about 20 percent of the state-owned firms each year. Under the present interpretation of the Article 44, some state-owned companies have been privatized to reduce their financial burden on the country's budget and also increase their productivity.

to August 22, was \$3.8 million in favor of Iran, while the figure stood at -\$21.6 million in the first five months of the last Iranian year, the same report confirmed.

Yoghurt, barberry, caviar, kilim, rugs, and pistachio were among the exported good to the U.S. from Iran in the said period.

The U.S. exported \$41.27 million of goods

to Iran in the said time including seeds, some additives to animal feed, chemical and mineral fertilizers, and some medical equipment.

In terms of weight, Iran imported 12,980 tons of goods from the U.S. in the said time, registering 18.5 percent growth year-on-year.

British companies used Baltic banks for laundering, Browder says

British-registered shell companies routinely used Baltic banks to launder millions of dollars, American-born financier Bill Browder said a day after the U.K.'s role in Danske Bank A/S's Estonian scandal was revealed.

Browder, chief executive officer and co-founder of Hermitage Capital Management, made the claim Friday when the U.K.'s National Crime Agency said it would look into the role of British companies. The Danish bank said U.K.-based businesses and people accounted for the second-biggest source of foreign clients after Russia at its Estonian branch.

"These U.K. companies laundered tens of millions of dollars through Baltic banks, but reported zero balances and zero activity" in publicly filed documents, Browder said in emailed comments. "When we've reported this situation to the U.K. authorities, they've

taken no action in the past."

Browder lobbied U.S. Congress to pass the Magnitsky Act in 2012. The law, named for his Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, is intended to punish human rights offenders by freezing their assets and prohibit them from entering the U.S. Magnitsky died in a Moscow prison after opening an investigation into Russian tax fraud.

Estonian authorities opened a criminal probe in July after Browder filed criminal complaints.

Danske Bank says a large part of the Estonian branch's operations need to be treated as suspicious. CEO Thomas Borgen resigned in disgrace and criminal investigations are ongoing, with the Danish government saying it could yield a fine as big as 4 billion kroner, or about \$630 million. Only Russia

accounted for more of the \$234 billion that flowed through the Estonian branch between 2007 and 2015 than British entities, Danske Bank said. On Friday, the NCA acknowledged ongoing activity into the scandal.

"The threat posed by the use of U.K. company structures as a route for money-laundering is widely recognized and the NCA is working with partners across government to restrict the ability of criminals to use them in this way," the NCA said in a statement.

The British Serious Fraud Office said in statement it can neither confirm or deny any interest in Danske Bank. A spokesman for the Financial Conduct Authority, which regulates banks in the U.K., did not have any immediate comment and said he would look into the matter further.

According to an 87-page bank report into

the affair, customers came from 90 countries to use the Estonian branch, with people or businesses from Russia, the U.K. and the British Virgin Islands being the main clients outside Estonia.

Browder said in his email that in his company's investigation into Russian money laundering, "we found significant use of U.K. shell companies."

The NCA's comments come after the Financial Times reported that it had opened a criminal investigation into an unidentified U.K.-registered limited liability partnership with links to the Danske Bank branch at the center of the scandal. The NCA operates the U.K.'s Financial Intelligence Unit, which receives analysis and shares information gathered from reports of suspicious activity.

(Source: Bloomberg)

VW rejects Trump envoy's take on Iran pullout

Carmaker Volkswagen AG rejected on Thursday a report suggesting it had decided against doing business in Iran after coming under pressure from Donald Trump's ambassador to Germany, saying its position on the country had not changed.

U.S. sanctions against Iran, introduced by President Trump after his decision to pull the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal, have forced companies in Germany and across Europe to reconsider their investments there.

Ambassador Richard Grenell has appeared to take credit for this shift in a series of tweets and interviews over the past weeks, announcing the withdrawal of German blue chips like Siemens, BASF and now Volkswagen, to the surprise of the companies themselves.

A Bloomberg News story on Thursday, quoting Grenell, said he had led talks with Volkswagen over the past weeks, hammering out the final details of its new Iran stance on Tuesday.

However, a company source said there had been no talks with Grenell on Iran. And a VW spokesman told Reuters that the company's position had not changed in recent weeks.

Asked about the VW response, U.S. embassy spokeswoman Christina Higgins said: "The U.S. ambassador has been speaking for quite some time to CEOs and industry leaders urging that they comply with U.S. sanctions."

VW has no major investments in Iran, although it had been considering establishing a sales network for imported cars. Its Spanish division Seat announced



last year that it had abandoned exploratory plans to enter Iran.

Grenell, a former U.S. spokesman at the United Nations and outspoken defender of Trump, has ruffled feathers since arriving in Germany in May.

Within hours of landing he sent a tweet warning German firms to halt all activities in Iran. Weeks later he drew fire from German politicians for telling right-wing website Breitbart News that he wanted to empower "other conservatives" in Europe.

His remarks on Thursday about Volkswagen's Iran plans triggered more criticism.

Bijan Djir-Sarai, foreign policy spokesman for the business-friendly Free Democrats (FDP) in parliament, said it was ridiculous to think that German companies would make decisions based on pressure from the U.S. ambassador.

"The policies coming out of Washington are having an impact. But this has nothing to do with the ambassador," he said, urging Grenell to be more careful in his choice of words.

"The German and European economies are strong. We don't need to take orders as if we were an occupied zone."

(Source: Reuters)

India set to pay for Iranian oil using rupee from November: sources

India may revert to paying Iran in rupees for the oil it buys from its third largest supplier as U.S. sanctions will from November 4 block use of U.S. dollars to settle such trades, a top official said Thursday.

Oil refiners such as state-owned Indian Oil Corp (IOC) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) could use UCO Bank or IDBI Bank to route oil payments to Iran, the official added.

U.S. sanctions against Iran come into effect from November 4 and will block banking channels.

The official said refiners have booked oil cargoes from Iran for the current month as well as for October. Payment for oil bought in September would be due in November as Iran provides a 60 days credit period.

India had planned to import about 25 million tons of crude oil from Iran in the current fiscal, up from 22.6 million tons imported in 2017-18. But the actual volumes imported may be far less as companies like Reliance Industries have totally stopped buying oil from Iran and others too are scaling it down in hope of winning a sanction waiver from the U.S.

U.S. President Donald Trump had in May withdrawn from the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, re-imposing economic sanctions against the Persian Gulf nation. Some sanctions took effect from August 6 while those affecting the oil and banking sectors will start from November 4.

The official said Iran is open to accepting rupee payment for oil and may use the money to pay for equipment and food items it buys from India.

UCO Bank and IDBI Bank have been identified to route the payment as the two have no exposure to the U.S. financial system.



UCO Bank had in the previous round of sanctions handled rupee payments.

Currently, India pays its third largest oil supplier in euros using European banking channels. These channels would get blocked from November.

During the first round of sanctions when EU joined the U.S. in imposing financial restrictions, India initially used a Turkish bank to pay Iran for the oil it bought but beginning February 2013 paid nearly half of the oil import bill in rupees while keeping the remainder pending opening of payment routes. It began clearing the dues in 2015 when the when the restrictions were eased.

Besides, New Delhi sought to get around the restrictions by supplying goods including wheat, soybean meal and consumer products to Iran in exchange for oil.

The official said this time around the entire 100 percent of Iranian oil import bill can be paid in rupees.

Iran is India's third-largest oil supplier behind Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It was India's second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia till 2010-11 but Western sanctions relegated it to the seventh spot in the subsequent years. In 2013-14 and 2014-15, India bought 11 MT and 10.95 MT, respectively from it.

(Source: Economic Times)

JPMorgan: An economic cold war may be coming

The last several months of tit-for-tat tariffs between the U.S. and China may only be the beginning of a prolonged economic conflict.

Stock markets in both countries have climbed this week despite fresh tariff announcements.

Analysts said the duties were not as severe as traders expected, and there is still hope of reconciliation. But reality may prove otherwise as the world's two largest economies, each coming from a vastly different culture, pursue their own development.

"Now we need to think about whether this current trade war will turn into an economic cold war. We hope it doesn't," said Jing Ulrich, managing director and vice chairman of Asia Pacific at J.P. Morgan Chase.

"There is still a chance that two sides may come to the negotiation table," she said Thursday, during a panel discussion

at the World Economic Forum conference in Tianjin. "And there is still a chance that some sort of reconciliation may be reached — and we all know if the trade war goes on, it is going to be a lose-lose situation. No one in the world will be benefiting."

"China will not change its domestic policy because of external pressure," she said.

"The problem is in the technological sphere [where both] China and the U.S. want to lead. China, of course, is already a trailblazer in many areas," Ulrich said.

■ **'5 years ahead of the U.S.'**

Beijing is in the middle of a years-long effort to transition the country towards relying on consumption for growth, rather than manufacturing. The government has also launched a "Made in China 2025" program to encourage domestic technological innovation.

"I see China as five years ahead of the U.S. when it comes to the extent to which digitalization is integrated into this economy," Arun Sundararajan, professor at New York University's Stern School of Business, said during the same panel discussion Thursday.

However, he said, the U.S. is still ahead of China on research and development in artificial intelligence. He also noted that Japan surpasses both countries in industrial robotics.

The Trump administration has said it is targeting the "Made in China 2025" plan, among other complaints against the Asian giant. The latest round of tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports to the U.S. will initially take effect Sept. 24 at a 10 percent rate, before rising to 25 percent on Jan. 1. Beijing is planning counter-tariffs on \$60 billion worth of U.S. imports at 10 percent and 5 percent.

(Source: CNBC)

Oil edges up on supply worries, but Trump's call for lower prices drags

Oil futures inched up on Friday amid concerns over supply as U.S. sanctions on Iran's crude exports loom, although calls by U.S. President Donald Trump for lower oil prices dragged.

International benchmark Brent crude for November delivery was up 26 cents, or 0.33 percent, at \$78.96 a barrel by 0647 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude for October delivery was up 7 cents, or 0.10 percent, at \$70.39 a barrel.

Trump on Thursday called on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to lower prices, saying on Twitter "they would not be safe for very long without us, and yet they continue to push for higher and higher oil prices".

OPEC and its allies are scheduled to meet on Sunday in Algeria to discuss how to allocate supply increases to offset a shortage of Iran supplies due to U.S. sanctions. Trump's remarks just days before the



OPEC meeting put "a focus on the likely supply impacts of U.S.-led Iran sanctions", said Stephen Innes, head of trading for

Asia-Pacific at OANDA in Singapore. "The market had until that point been trading fluidly with the assumption that

Saudi Arabia is now comfortable with Brent at \$80 or even higher, which is challenging the market's long-held supposition that prompt Brent between \$70 and \$80 was OPEC's sweet spot," Innes said.

Brent has been trading just below \$80 a barrel, backed by concerns of supply shortages from looming U.S. sanctions against Iran, which are set to take effect in November.

"Iranian crude exports are coming earlier and bigger-than-expected, at a time seasonal demand is strong. With spare capacity also falling sharply, the market remains exposed to supply-induced price shocks," ANZ Bank analysts wrote in a report.

Although supply worries have pushed up oil prices, OPEC and its allies were not likely to agree to an official increase in crude output at this weekend's meeting, OPEC sources said.

(Source: Reuters)

Blockade at oil field in Libya could shut in production



Members of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) blocked on Wednesday the airfield of the Wafaa oil field in southwestern Libya, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) said on Thursday, noting that it could be forced to shut in all operations at the 40,000-bpd oil field should the blockade continue.

The airfield servicing the oil field was blocked on September 19, "in an attempt to blackmail Mellitah Oil and Gas Company into awarding an unwarranted catering contract," said the Libyan national oil firm, which is a joint venture partner in the Mellitah company together with Italy's oil and gas major Eni.

Mellitah Oil and Gas Company produces around 40,000 bpd of crude oil, and condensate, and 400 million cubic feet of natural gas, dedicated entirely to power plants, NOC said.

"If the blockade continues, the company will be forced to suspend all operations in the Al-Wafaa field and evacuate all employees. A shutdown in the afternoon of September 20th will

result in the cessation of gas supply from Al Wafaa to the Al Ruwais power plant," NOC said, adding that it "demands the immediate end to the blockade and the re-opening of the runway without precondition."

The PFG and other guards at Libyan oil fields are paid by the state to protect them, and regularly use blockades to extort more money and benefits from the Libyan authorities.

The latest incident at a Libyan oil field highlights the fragile state of the oil industry in the North African OPEC member, where attacks and blockades on oil facilities have frequently shut in oil production and exports.

Earlier this month, several gunmen stormed NOC's headquarters in Tripoli, killing two employees and injuring 25 others.

A port closure for more than two weeks in June-July blocked 850,000 bpd of Libya's oil (nearly all Libyan production) from being exported from four ports.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Ørsted divests 50% of 1,218 megawatt Hornsea 1 offshore wind farm



Danish wind power company Ørsted announced on Wednesday that it had agreed to divest 50 percent of its stake in the 1,218 megawatt (MW) Hornsea 1 Offshore Wind Farm to Global Infrastructure Partners.

The Hornsea 1 Offshore Wind Farm will, upon completion in 2020, be the world's largest offshore wind farm, coming in at 1,218 MW — but to be surpassed by the equally massive 1,386 MW Hornsea 2 Offshore Wind Farm. Ørsted's normal business practice is to build a project and to divest a portion of the project to a separate investor at some point during construction or operation.

Ørsted will thus divest 50 percent to New York City-based investment fund Global Infrastructure Partners — which has already made several big-name renewable energy investments over the past few years including 50 percent stakes in the 330 MW German Gode Wind 1 offshore wind farm, the 450 MW Borkum Riffgrund 2 Offshore Wind Farm, and more recently the acquisition of a 4.7 gigawatt (GW) pipeline of utility-scale solar development projects

from SunPower.

While Global Infrastructure Partners will own a 50 percent stake in Hornsea 1, Ørsted will continue to construct the project under a full scope EPC contract, as well as provide long-term operations and maintenance services. The total cost of the transaction amounts to approximately £4.46 billion (\$5.85 billion) which will be paid out between 2018 and 2020.

"This is our third partnership with GIP, and we are delighted to have one of the world's largest infrastructure funds as a partner, in what will be the world's largest offshore wind farm," said Ole Kjems Sorensen, Executive Vice President for M&A, Partnerships and Asset Management at Ørsted. "The Hornsea 1 farm down is a landmark transaction which will create substantial value for our shareholders and reduce single asset exposure."

Ørsted began construction of the project in January with the sinking of the first of 174 monopiles at the site, 120 kilometers off the coast of Yorkshire, England.

(Source: cleantechmedia.com)

French environment minister shakeup dampens renewable energy prospects

Observers are expecting France to stay true to nuclear power at the expense of renewables following a change in environment minister this month.

Francois de Rugy, a former Ecologist Party member, took up the post of Minister of Ecological and Solidary Transition at the beginning of September after the surprise resignation of his predecessor, Nicolas Hulot.

Despite de Rugy's green credentials, the minister's appointment was seen as a setback for plans to cut nuclear's portion of the French energy pie in favor of renewables.

"Nuclear is once again back as the solution to decarbonize France," Yamina Saheb, a senior energy policy analyst at OpenExp, a Paris-based sustainability network, told GTM. "At this stage, it's unclear what will be the future of renewables."

One of de Rugy's first moves following his appointment was to announce a review of France's energy mix. The review is due to be published at the end of October.

According to Saheb: "It seems like one of the reports commissioned by the government recommends investing in more nuclear plants."

Hulot, a TV personality who came to fame by making nature documentaries, quit in August after becoming frustrated with the slow progress of environmental policies in the face of powerful French lobbies.

Reuters described the resignation as "a major blow to President Emmanuel Macron's already tarnished green credentials."

One of Macron's campaign pledges in the elections last year was to uphold plans to cut the share of nuclear generation in France's electricity system to 50 percent by 2025, down

from around 75 percent today, according to World Nuclear Association figures.

But in December 2017, Macron appeared to backtrack on his promise. "Nuclear is not bad for carbon emissions," he conceded. "It's even the most carbon-free way to produce electricity with renewables."

State utility Electricité de France, which would have had to foot the bill in the event of a nuclear shutdown, saw shares climb the day after de Rugy's appointment. The value of the company was up by almost 7 percent a fortnight later.

Meanwhile, the renewable industry in France is enjoying mixed fortunes. France this month joined the race to commercialize floating offshore wind, putting a 2-megawatt demonstration machine called Floatgen into operation off the Loire-Atlantique coast.

At the same time, though, the country's latest onshore wind tender failed to secure bids for even a quarter of the capacity on offer.

The tender, France's second, saw 118 megawatts of a total 500-megawatt allocation go to five projects, owned by Boralex of Canada, Elicio of Belgium, Engie of France and Renewable Energy Systems of the UK. The average price of the bids was not disclosed.

The tender was part of plans for the procurement of 3 gigawatts of onshore wind across France.

The French paper Les Echos said the failure to allocate the full capacity was partly due to a change in the tendering process, whereby bidders had to have a project approval from regional authorities before being admitted to the auction.

(Source: greentechmedia.com)

Bullish oil outlook upends hedging universe

As Brent crude approaches \$80 a barrel, trading close to its highest level in four years, energy companies and major industrial buyers of oil are sending a clear signal: they expect or fear even stronger prices in the future.

Small- and medium-sized oil producers, which generally sell forward or hedge a proportion of their output to lock-in prices, have scaled back their hedging this year in anticipation oil could rise further once U.S. sanctions against Iran's oil sector kick in come November.

Big oil consumers such as airlines, on the other hand, have started aggressively hedging their fuel purchases one to two years in the future as they try to cap their exposure to the crude price.

That has had the effect of raising long-dated oil prices — for delivery next year or in 2020 — to their highest level in more than three years, with the Brent contract for December 2019 surpassing \$75 a barrel. That contract has gained more than 30 percent so far this year, compared to 20 percent for the main front-month Brent contract, or spot price.

"The major story for oil right now is not \$80 a barrel, but what's happening at the back end of the forward curve," said Thibaut Remondos, a former Morgan Stanley oil trader who co-founded the London-based Commodities Trading Corporation (CTC), a consultancy.

"Hedging by oil producers in Brent-linked contracts is drop-



ping off in expectation of higher prices in the future, while major consumers like airlines have been rushing to buy for the same reason. You would need to go back to 2007 to see this level of hedging from consumers."

A survey of Brent-linked producer hedging by CTC, compiled from company contacts and filings, showed that at the end of the second quarter this year producers were only 30 percent hedged for the next 12 months in aggregate, compared to 38 percent at the end of 2017.

For the same periods volumes for Brent contracts two years in the future were only 19 percent hedged versus 25 percent hedged previously, indicating that producers want to have more of their output exposed to the potential for further price gains.

Olivier Jakob at Petromatrix said the biggest fear in the market was the effect of U.S. sanctions on Iran, which are expected to remove at least 1m barrels a day of crude from the market at a time when supplies are relatively tight.

"I can understand why producers might want to wait to see if Iran has a short-term price impact they could sell into," Jakob said, although he warned that any gains from the Iranian sanctions could be shortlived.

"You see the resistance on the political side in the U.S. but I also think rising prices will have a negative impact on demand. So it could be difficult to sustain a strong rally as a result."

Donald Trump, the U.S. president, on Thursday tweeted at the Opec producer group, whose most powerful member is U.S. ally Saudi Arabia, to "get prices down now" in his latest broadside against a cartel he has been leaning on since June to compensate for the loss of Iranian exports.

Jakob's view was echoed by Mark MacLean, another former Morgan Stanley trader who co-founded CTC with Remondos two years ago. CTC advises and executes hedging programs on behalf of clients but it is not paid related to the volume of the trades it carries out, working on a retainer basis.

"The next four weeks are probably going to present some of the best opportunities [for producers] to hedge this year."

(Source: Financial Times)

OPEC's squabbles don't really matter for the oil market

OPEC and its allies seem poised for another contentious meeting in Algeria this weekend as Iran cries betrayal and threatens to veto decisions.

Yet none of this really matters for the oil market.

Squabbles over "violations" of the supply deal, or debates about how to measure compliance rates, are largely background noise. That's because Saudi Arabia and Russia — the group's two largest producers — have already moved beyond the 2016 deal to cut output, and U.S. President Donald Trump is pushing them to do even more.

"It's likely to be a meeting high on politics and low on decisions," said Ole Sloth Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank A/S. "The producers that count are producing at will" and Saudi Arabia and Russia are likely to boost output further, he said.

Back to the U.S.S.R.

This much is evident in daily oil flows. Both countries had already starting ramping up shipments in May, one month before the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies agreed to ease their cuts. The extra 1 million barrels a day of supply pledged in June was supposed to be allocated by the committee that meets this weekend in Algiers, but neither country has waited for the results of its deliberations.

Russia has fully rolled back its cuts then added some more oil, taking production to a new post-Soviet record. Saudi Arabia hasn't yet fulfilled its pledge to lift output to an all-time high, but the kingdom has still added almost half a million barrels to daily supply since May.

This is a violation of the agreement forged in June, according to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, who told reporters in Tehran this week that some members are "siding with the U.S." to carry out "anti-Iranian policies."

His protests rest on differing interpretations of the convoluted and confounding text that emerged from the group's last ministerial meeting in Vienna. Did that agreement allow other members to offset supply losses from Iran and Venezuela — as the Saudis argue — or did it merely reiterate that each country should pump in line with its individual target — Iran's position.

Such technical arguments may inflame passions inside OPEC delegations, but they're drowned out by Trump's Twitter bullhorn, which was blasting loud and clear on Thursday.

According to Iran, other countries can't boost output without breaching the OPEC deal, said Giovanni Staunovo, commodities analyst at UBS Group AG. But with Trump keeping up the pressure ahead of the November mid-term elections, "what should stop the Saudis and Russians producing more?"

Among the countries capable of increasing production beyond current levels, Saudi Arabia and Russia hold about three quarters of the spare capacity, according to Bloomberg calculations using data from the International Energy Agency.

Dominant producers

The extent to which these nations decide to tap their idle capacity is what really matters for the oil market. Russia could boost its production by about 300,000 barrels a day above the October 2016 level within a year, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said last week. Whether this actually happens will depend on talks with OPEC and its other allies about extending cooperation into 2019, which will also be on the agenda in Algiers.

For the Saudis, it's a question of balancing Trump's demands against the impact of American sanctions on Iran and the effect of emerging-market turmoil on oil demand growth, according to people familiar with the kingdom's thinking.

In recent conversations with investors, traders and other market participants in London, Houston and Washington, Saudi Oil Minister Khalid Al-Falih and other senior officials from the kingdom signaled caution about further boosting output, the people said. In the last two weeks, he has also met Novak and his U.S. counterpart Rick Perry.

This high-level diplomacy between the world's three largest oil producers is what's really driving things, said Olivier Jakob, managing director of consultant Petromatrix GmbH. "Russia was quick to announce after those meetings that their production has reached new post-Soviet high," Jakob said. "Novak has done what he could do to help Perry, Al-Falih not yet."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Trump wants OPEC to keep crude prices low, it can't do that, oil expert says

President Donald Trump has called on OPEC to keep oil prices low. In a tweet on Thursday, Trump said the "OPEC monopoly must get prices down now."

But according to one oil expert, the cartel and its allies are running out of ways to do that.

"He wants to keep pressure on his key OPEC allies like Saudi Arabia," said Helima Croft, global head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital, on CNBC's "Futures Now" on Thursday. "How much more can Saudi do? How much more can Russia do in the near term?"

Trump "needs Saudi Arabia, he needs Russia, he needs UAE to fill the looming supply gap which is coming on Nov. 4 when the oil sanctions kick back in," Croft said. "This is really pressure on the producers to do as much as they can, but again the question mark is how much more gas is left in the tank for OPEC?"

The cartel's spare capacity, a measure of its ability to cushion price swings, is below 3 percent of total global production, or around 1.84 million barrels per day, according to the Energy Information Administration. A lower percentage means it is less able to quickly raise production to counter spikes in crude prices.

The coming U.S. sanctions on Iran are already proving effective in blocking the country from global markets, producing a knock-on effect squeezing global oil supplies, said Croft.

"There's no signs that [Trump is] backing off at this point and they've signaled so strongly to producers that they're serious about enforcing the sanctions," she said. "Countries like South Korea have already essentially gone to zero at this point. European refineries are winding down their Iranian purchases."

Croft sees a supply squeeze taking Brent oil to the mid-\$80s through to the end of the year, an 8 percent increase from current levels. West Texas Intermediate crude should see a smaller rise to the low \$70s to mid-\$70s.

(Source: CNBC)

Fresh momentum for the Balkans



By Javier Solana

Former foreign minister of Spain

There can be little doubt that the last few decades have brought more frustration than progress to the Balkans. It would be ironic and deeply gratifying to see a region wracked by ethnic nationalism build bridges when so many others are building walls.

As autumn comes to Europe, it is time to reap the fruits of months of hard diplomatic work across the Balkan Peninsula. On September 30, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) will hold a consultative referendum that could lead the country to change its name to "Republic of North Macedonia."

This is no mere linguistic exercise. If the referendum passes, it could put an end to 27 years of bickering between the Macedonian and Greek governments. Greece vehemently opposes its northern neighbor's use of "Macedonia" without a qualifier, because a region in Greece bears the same name. Moreover, the ancient kingdom of Macedonia has great cultural and historical significance for modern-day Greeks.

If a large share of the Macedonian electorate turns out and votes in support of the name change and related matters, the required constitutional amendments will be more likely to pass in Macedonia's parliament. In that case, the last word would go to Greece's parliament, which would also have to vote on the change.

Owing to the name dispute, Greece has blocked the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (a provisional reference used since 1993) from joining the EU and NATO. But, three months ago, the Macedonian and Greek governments finally reached an agreement to resolve their bilateral disputes. The implications of what they agreed to are plainly visible in the wording of the Macedonian referendum question: "Do you support EU and NATO membership by accepting the agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece?"

Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Matthew Nimetz, the United Nations Secretary General's personal envoy on the name dispute, both played key roles in ensuring the success of the negotiations. Nimetz, who first started working on this issue in 1994, has warned that the diplomatic stars will not soon align so favorably again.

At a time of resurgent nationalism, the "Prespa Agreement" — named for the lake that spans the borders of Greece, FYROM, and Albania — is a breath of fresh air. Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev and his Greek counterpart Alexis Tsipras have displayed remarkable boldness and responsible leadership in order to conclude the agreement. Both have had to expend a great deal of political capital, confronting domestic nationalist forces and facing down no-confidence motions spearheaded by opposition parties.

The Prespa Agreement offers a viable model for addressing disputes elsewhere, because it embodies a holistic conflict-resolution approach based on the promise of mutually shared long-term benefits. For example, one of its articles states that, "In the age of the new industrial revolution [...] the deepening of cooperation amongst States and societies is necessary now more than ever, in particular with respect to social activities, technologies, and culture."

This statement by long-feuding parties is an inspiration for a region that remains entangled in stalemated disputes over ethnic and national identities. The Balkans — and not only the Balkans — are in need of a new narrative based on people's real priorities, which is precisely what the Prespa Agreement provides.

As it happens, another frozen dispute in the region could soon thaw enough to move toward a resolution. In 2011, the EU initiated a dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo that has since produced significant benefits in terms of freedom of movement, trade, economic opportunities, security, justice, connectivity, and much else.

Despite this gradual normalization of bilateral relations, the fundamental dispute between the two countries remains unresolved. Both sides are acutely aware that the status quo implies a high cost, by hampering their EU accession bids and imposing an unsustainable burden on their respective economies.

Working with Mogherini, Presidents Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia and Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo have accelerated their negotiations over the past few months, with the aim of reaching a definitive, comprehensive, and legally binding agreement. Of course, it is not the EU's prerogative to dictate the terms of the conflict's resolution, and it is clear that local ownership will be key to any deal that may emerge from the process. At this stage in the dialogue, it is essential that caution and moderation prevail. Vučić and Thaçi's legacies will largely depend on their willingness to formulate a realistic proposal that aligns with the foundational values of the EU. Both leaders have an opportunity to eschew maximalist positions and to emulate the sagacity of the Greek and Macedonian governments.

Less promising is the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), where a general election is set to take place on October 7, despite the fact that the country currently lacks an effective electoral law. Having been trapped in a territorial and administrative jumble since the end of the war in 1995, BiH is an exceedingly difficult country to govern. Ethnocentrism continues to dominate its politics, and the current electoral race is no exception.

Complicating matters further, the secessionist politician Milorad Dodik, who just served his final term as president of the Republika Srpska (one of the two largely autonomous entities into which the country is divided), has made the disquieting decision to run for BiH's tripartite presidency.

Let us hope that the more constructive spirit pervading the rest of the region finally seeps into BiH, and that inter-ethnic initiatives gain steam, as a large part of Bosnian civil society has long advocated.

There can be little doubt that the last few decades have brought more frustration than progress to the Balkans. But if the Prespa Agreement shows anything, it is that no conflict is unsolvable when diplomatic creativity and political will are brought to bear. If the coming crucial weeks end well, a region that was ravaged by nationalism at the end of the last century could now defy today's global lurch toward chauvinism. At a time when so many countries seem intent on building walls, it would be ironic and deeply gratifying to see the Balkans build bridges.

(Source: *The Project Syndicate*)

Does it matter that Trump is a liar?

World leaders have never really trusted each other — but the president's behavior undermines American foreign policy anyway

BY STEPHEN M. WALT

According to the Washington Post, as of Aug. 1, U.S. President Donald Trump had made more than 4,000 false or misleading claims since becoming president, an average of roughly 7.6 per day. What's even more remarkable about Trump is that his lies aren't even very creative, plausible, or hard to expose: He lies even when the lie is patently absurd and easy to expose. Just consider his latest big whopper: the bizarre claim that nearly 3,000 people didn't really die as a result of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. According to our self-absorbed and truth-challenged president, the death toll was a fabrication made up by Democrats solely to make him look bad. Poor baby.

But does it really matter if Trump lies as easily as you or I draw breath? In particular, does it really undermine his ability to conduct foreign policy? Until recently, I've thought (and written) that this simply had to be the case. And so have a number of other well-known scholars, such as Princeton University's Keren Yarhi-Milo. The obvious fear was that given Trump's proven track record of deceit, neither allies nor adversaries would believe a word he said. As a result, America's ability to craft favorable agreements with others — and especially deals that might involve some degree of trust — would be critically impaired.

But perhaps I was too hasty. As I thought back to one of the few books written on the broader subject of lying in international politics — my former colleague and sometime co-author John Mearsheimer's provocative *Why Leaders Lie: The Truth about Lying in International Politics* — I began to wonder if I was right. It's a fascinating little book, and it makes an intriguingly counterintuitive set of arguments that are directly relevant to understanding the impact of Trump's compulsive mendacity.

Mearsheimer argues that while international politics may be a nasty, competitive, dog-eat-dog struggle between self-interested states, there is surprisingly little deliberate lying between governments. He does not say that leaders never lie to each other, and he freely acknowledges that governments routinely spin the truth, offer favorable interpretations of it, omit inconvenient facts, and in general manipulate information in order to advance their aims. But leaders rarely tell each other bald faced lies; that is, they rarely make statements that they know to be untrue in order to mislead their interlocutors.

Why not? Because in the highly competitive world of international politics, no sensible leader will take another leader's statements or assurances at face value. Trust is scarce in foreign policy, and therefore most leaders will check up on what a foreign counterpart is telling them before they accept and act upon it. And the knowledge that others will be skeptical and look for independent verification removes most of the incentive to lie: If you know that everything you say is going to get checked out and that any lies you do tell will probably be detected and exposed, why bother?

By contrast, Mearsheimer finds that both democratic and authoritarian leaders routinely lie to their own publics. Indeed, they are much more likely to lie to their own people than they are to each other. Populations are far more trusting — a cynic would say "gullible" — and a leader's pronouncements can be amplified by the apparatus of the state, by tame media lapdogs, and by the awe and respect that many citizens feel for those in high places. In point of fact, leaders of all kinds enjoy impressive rhetorical advantages when it comes to hoodwinking the public, and as Trump is proving daily, some percentage of the population is likely to believe them no matter what they say.

Even in a fully functioning democracy with a free press and competitive politics, leaders can get away with lying (not to



When liars and cheaters get off scot-free, then you have to expect everyone to cheat, and lawmakers have to keep trying to corral bad behavior by codifying every type of misconduct.

mention "spinning" and other lesser forms of deception), because the people rarely have access to as much information as the government does. This asymmetry is especially pronounced in foreign and defense policy, where much of what the public knows stems directly from government sources or is based on classified information that leaders can leak, withhold, doctor, or misrepresent. Because hardly any ordinary citizens have access to the latest intelligence about the Taliban, know a lot about the inner workings of NAFTA, or keep tabs on conditions in Ukraine, it is easy for a president to paint a false version of reality and hard for others to challenge it.

This information asymmetry explains how President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and others could use lies about Saddam Hussein, his (fictitious) weapons of mass destruction, and his wholly imaginary links to al Qaeda to convince a majority of Americans that up was in fact down.

The bottom line is that leaders have little incentive to lie when dealing with foreign powers, because nobody will believe them anyway and lies will soon be exposed. But they have a big incentive to lie when dealing with their own publics — if only to stay popular — and they are much more likely to get away with it, especially when the subject is foreign policy.

These insights suggest a somewhat different take on how Trump's deceitful nature might affect his ability to conduct foreign policy. As noted above, no sensible leader will take Trump's assurances or even his factual statements at face value, given the long track record of lies he's piled up as a private citizen and now as president. But if Mearsheimer is right, most governments weren't going to take Trump's statements at face value anyway, even if he had shown himself to be as honest and principled as former Presidents Jimmy Carter or Barack Obama. (And no, I'm not saying that Carter and Obama told the whole truth 100 percent of the time either. But seriously: They were rank amateurs at deception when compared to Trump).

Moreover, for all of his mercurial, insulting, bombastic, and self-indulgent tweeting, it's not as if Trump hasn't acted pretty much as we should have expected. He was and is skeptical of NATO, even if he has reaffirmed the U.S. commitment there several times. He was and is opposed to the current trading system,

and he has retained his bizarre fixation on trade surpluses as a (the?) critical indicator of economic health. He was and is a xenophobe and possibly a racist who is committed to keeping foreigners out and keeping America as white as possible. He remains utterly indifferent to human rights issues save as a club to brandish at adversaries, and he has long been remarkably comfortable with dictators. And Trump hasn't wavered in his belief that the Iran nuclear agreement was "the worst deal ever," even if that belief is unfounded. So, while nobody should believe a word Trump says, it's not like he became president and suddenly changed his tune. Foreign leaders will therefore pay less attention to what he says and concentrate instead on what he does.

So, have I persuaded you that Trump's lies don't matter? Have I even persuaded myself? Alas, not really.

Nobody expects politicians to tell the truth all of the time, but having a compulsive fabulist in the White House damages U.S. foreign policy in at least four ways.

First, it makes all Americans look dumber in the eyes of the rest of the world. They see a country where nearly half of voters in 2016 bought his flimflam and didn't care a whit about his chronic deceptions and misdeeds. One of our two main political parties continues to tolerate his various misdeeds, and the Republican Party seems as rapturous about Trump as ever. Why should any country listen to advice from a society that could elect this man — even allowing for the fact that the popular vote favored his opponent — and could easily go on to elect him again in 2020?

Second, and following from the first point, Trump's behavior as liar-in-chief sacrifices the moral high ground. Even a good realist like me thinks there are important differences between countries where leaders are held accountable, the rule of law is robust, and foreign policy is (mostly) reality-based and countries where leaders act with impunity and define for their subjects what sorts of beliefs are permissible and what sort of knowledge constitutes "truth." I'd be the first to argue that the United States has often fallen short of its own ideals — especially in the hubristic "unipolar era" — but it is one thing to fall short and another to toss those ideals right out the window. Once you have a president who doesn't care about truth at all and who works overtime to discredit any individual, organization, or agency that disagrees with him, and once that sort of

behavior is normalized and legitimated within the body politic.

Third, once rampant dishonesty and the corruption of discourse is sufficiently advanced, public trust goes down and bad behavior (to include lying) is no longer deterred by the fear of public shame and subsequent discredit. If Trump can lie nonstop and get away with it, everyone else will start doing it too. Apart from the obvious dangers of trying to run a society where the very concept of "truth" is no longer accepted, this situation will force the country to adopt ever more restrictive laws and regulations to try to keep individual mendacity in check. When honesty is prized, liars are shunned, and corruption is less common, you don't need as many formal rules, because most people will be reluctant to risk shame and ostracism by violating the informal ones. But when liars and cheaters get off scot-free, then you have to expect everyone to cheat, and lawmakers have to keep trying to corral bad behavior by codifying every type of misconduct. Ironically, the thicket of government regulations that conservatives now decry is in part the result of the long-term decline in public morality here in the United States. It didn't start with Trump, but he has taken it to a new level.

Lastly, Trump's penchant for lying is still likely to damage his ability to conduct effective diplomacy. Leaders whom he has already lied to — such as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — are bound to resent it personally and therefore will be less inclined to do Trump (or the United States) any favors in the future. Citizens of other countries will resent it too, making it harder for their leaders to cooperate with the United States even when those leaders might like to. And even if all states tend to view one another's pledges with a certain skepticism, there will also be some cases where the United States gets help from others in part because a foreign leader believed that the president was telling the truth.

As Charles de Gaulle famously responded during the Cuban missile crisis, when former Secretary of State Dean Acheson offered to show him reconnaissance photos confirming the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, de Gaulle waved him away and said, "the word of the president of the United States is good enough for me."

Were he alive today, I rather doubt that de Gaulle would say the same thing.

(Source: *Foreign Policy*)

An African model for ethnic reconciliation?

Ethiopia's new leader has quickly begun democratic reforms but none will mean more than reconciling the country's ethnic groups. Recent violence shows the urgency to develop a civic identity that he says starts with forgiveness.

With its great diversity of ethnic groups, Africa has long needed models of governance that are inclusive, especially after conflicts driven by ethnic differences.

For nearly six months, Ethiopia has shown promise of being such a model.

A new prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, has so far achieved a whirlwind of reforms, such as releasing political prisoners and making peace with neighboring Eritrea.

But now he has begun to search for ways that Ethiopia, with its more than 80 ethnic groups in Africa's second-most-populous nation, can work together to form a civic identity that prevents violence.

With the new freedoms allowed under Abiy, ethnic fighting has picked up in recent months. Many groups are settling old scores, often over land rights. Hundreds have been killed.

More than 2 million have been displaced. The old authoritarian political structure in place since 1991 was able to suppress many of these ethnic-based resentments. But with its collapse earlier this year and the surprise ascent of the reformist Abiy, a new structure must be put in place



quickly — one that works against ethnic antagonisms.

"We need to create a society in which love and solidarity rule over cynicism and polarization," Abiy tells Ethiopians.

He hopes to build a democracy based more on individual rights and freedoms than on a balancing of ethnic interests.

But to achieve that he still needs to help Ethiopians come to terms with the past, such as government use of torture and other human rights abuses.

He is expected to set up an official inquiry to air the truth

about past misdeeds and seek justice while also allowing enough mercy to achieve national reconciliation. That is an essential path to prevent ethnic conflict.

Other African countries, from South Africa to Sierra Leone to Liberia, have used various types of "truth and reconciliation" processes in an attempt to reconstruct their societies after racial or ethnic conflict. Now it is Ethiopia's turn.

Abiy is also racing to create jobs in a country where the median age is 19 and many youths are unemployed. He is selling off state enterprises, winning international finance, and wooing Ethiopia's vast diaspora to return home.

"If reform succeeds, Ethiopia could become one of the world's few victories for democratic governance with significant implications for the entire continent," says Yoseph Badwaza at the Washington-based Freedom House.

Abiy, who has a PhD in conflict resolution, knows the key to reconciliation lies in changing people's thinking. "I call on us all to forgive each other from our hearts. To close the chapters from yesterday, and to forge ahead to the next bright future through national consensus," he said in his inaugural address.

Such a future could provide just the hope needed in many of Africa's ethnic-riven nations.

(Source: *The CSM*)

'Erdogan opposed to removal of armed groups in Syria's Idlib'

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A political commentator based in Moscow said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "traditionally" regards armed opposition groups in Syria's Idlib as legitimate fighters and it is difficult for him to agree to help remove them. "The armed opposition groups in Idlib traditionally were viewed by Turkey as legitimate 'fighters against Assad's regime', so it is difficult for Erdogan to agree to help in their removal," Dmitry Babich said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency. "We have seen this reflected in Erdogan's conduct during the summit," he added, referring to the recent summit between the presidents of Iran, Russia, and Turkey in Tehran.

Dmitry Babich, born in Moscow, has been an active journalist for over 25 years, focusing on Russian politics. Graduating from Moscow State University, Babich has had a successful career in Russian journalism. He has previously been a senior correspondent at the Komsomolskaya Pravda daily, RIA Novosti, and Russia Profile magazine. Between 1999 and 2003, Babich was a foreign editor at The Moscow News before returning to Russia Profile in 2009 as acting editor-in-chief. His core areas of focus include Russia's modern political history, international relations. Babich is currently working as a political analyst at Sputnik International and is a frequent guest on BBC, Al Jazeera, CNN commenting on international affairs and history.

The following is the full text of the interview:
Q: As you know, a trilateral summit was held recently in Tehran between Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian and Turkish counterparts, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, about the Syrian crisis. According to Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi, the summit was not expected to resolve all issues surrounding the prolonged crisis in Syria but it aimed to facilitate more steps to combat

terrorism and restore tranquility to the Arab country. What do you think about the success of the summit as well as Iran's regional role?

A: I think that the comments of the Western media about the "failure" of the trilateral summit because of president Erdogan's inflexible position — I think these comments are short-sighted and do not see the big picture of the developments. Yes, it is very difficult for president Erdogan to acknowledge his mistake of supporting the armed insurgency in Syria which started in 2011 and continues to this day. Yes, the armed opposition groups in Idlib traditionally were viewed by Turkey as legitimate "fighters against Assad's regime," so it is difficult for Erdogan to agree to help in their removal. We have seen this reflected in Erdogan's conduct during the summit.

But there are two factors which will work for a change in Erdogan's position and will push him towards accepting Iran's and Russia's anti-terrorist stand. First, the terrorists, including the groups present in Idlib, have already destabilized the situation in Turkey, we all remember the wave of terrorist acts against Turkey in 2015. Second, the modern West (U.S., EU, and their allies) is guided by a very rigid, radical ideology, which is unable to pardon leaders, which it at least once declared to be enemies. Erdogan in the years 2016-2017 was, in fact, declared an enemy of the West in both the EU and the U.S. So, the West will not thank him for Turkey's support for Idlib groups. And this means that there will be no incentive for Erdogan to continue that support. Instead, Erdogan will be forced by history to move towards Iran's and Russia's position.

Q: The tripartite talks came as Syrian forces continue to reclaim much of southern parts of the country and are poised to soon launch an offensive in Idlib, one of the last remaining

areas outside of Damascus' control. What is your assessment of the summit's impact on the military developments in Syria?

A: The summit can have only a limited effect on the general trend, which is determined by the developments inside Syria. The Syrian people are tired of war and the terrorist groups failed to produce a legitimate and popular alternative to President Assad. So, the war will gradually be ending, for the lack of "fuel" for it.

Q: In his remarks at the summit, President Rouhani deplored the Washington government's negative role in the ongoing crisis in Syria and said the "illegal" military presence of the U.S. will only "increase the problems that already exist in the country". What do you think about the U.S. military presence and its bonds with terror groups in Syria?

A: The U.S. presence in Syria is illegitimate, illegal, immoral and harmful. The example of Central Asia, where American bases were finally removed from Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan, — this example shows that if there is a consensus among the local nations that Americans should get out — they will get out back to the U.S. The Turkish, Iranian, Syrian and Kurdish peoples need to agree that Americans can't solve the problems of the region. When these nations agree on this, Americans will go. The links of the American policy in Syria and Libya to terrorist groups there are for all to see, but even terrorists cannot operate on a wholly hostile turf. So, the key is in a union of local nations against terrorism and U.S. interventionism.



The last breath of Al-Saud in Yemen



1 → Burleigh started his article saying: "Hopes that the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman would be a reformer who could heal the region have come to nothing."

In the article, the writer went to highlight how western media had widely-reported the prince's world tour last March drawing a picture of him as the Saudi strongman who is working for political and economic reforms.

However, several doubts have been raised as a result of recent decisions taken by his father, King Salman. Meanwhile, the Crown Prince's war on Yemen and the huge amount of money it is draining, in addition to the cold war he launched against Qatar, show clear signs of failure. The article created massive reactions in the Arab world. Many Saudis rushed into defending their 32-year-old Crown Prince.

The failure of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen is when the United States supported the war for Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. On the other hand, some European countries, such as Britain, Germany and France, were silenced by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for killing the Yemeni people, and even supported Saudi Arabia by sending weapons.

The United Nations, too, with its silence against the brutal killings of the Yemeni people, once again revealed its lack of credibility to the world's public opinion. It has been three years now that the defenseless people of Yemen are living under the aggression of al Saud and its allies.

These three years of Saudi aggression led to Riyadh's heavy defeat, the death of a large number of aggressive forces and, most importantly, the survival of the Yemeni revolution. Sanaa and Aden and Ma'rib have become the symbols of the defeat of Al Saud in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has even lost the power to regulate its relations with its allies in Yemen. The controversy that has formed between Riyadh and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen can be analyzed in the same vein. These conflicts are the result of the erosion of the Yemeni war and the joint defeat of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

U.S. removes freedom of the Press from its legal guidebook

TEHRAN (FNA) — The United States government which early this year unveiled sanctions against top Iranians and national bodies, including the communications minister and the culture ministry, hitting back for alleged media and Internet censorship, is itself one of the biggest violators of freedom of the press in the world.

It's all for distracting the attention of international civil society when the Trump administration imposes sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals for alleged human rights abuses and censorship. The United States engages in vast human rights abuses and injustice, and the evidence is plenty:

Journalists and free press advocates across the globe are responding with alarm to newly released documents revealing the U.S. government's secret rules for using Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court orders to spy on reporters and arrest them, calling the revelations "important" and "terrifying."

The documents — obtained and released by the Freedom of the Press Foundation and the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia

University through an ongoing Freedom of Information Act lawsuit — confirm long held suspicions that U.S. government officials have been "targeting known media entities or known members of the media" with FISA orders for years.

These rules "apply to media entities or journalists who are thought to be agents of a foreign government, or, in some cases, are of interest under the broader standard that they possess foreign intelligence information." This includes those running the WikiLeaks; the U.S. government says they are an intelligence operation too!

Additionally, even if not personally targeted by FISA orders, journalists merely by being contacted by an FISA target are subject to monitoring and abuse. The fact that these are kept secret under the Trump administration is cause for great concern. President Donald Trump has repeatedly stated his hatred for the media anyhow. As a consequence, press freedom is under threat from his administration, subjecting journalists to FISA court orders and more.

Indeed, no advocate of human rights, civil liberties and due process would defend the current surveillance regime in Washington — with its history of human rights abuses, police brutality and racism, wars and war crimes, clamping down on the press, persecuting black Americans, illegal immigrants, Muslim citizens and minorities, and of failing to offer legal protections and due process to those in detention.

The fact that the U.S. claims the moral high ground when it comes to human rights and civil liberties, including press freedom, is one of the reasons why Trump's own attacks on the media have been so horrifying. Indeed, the moral argument for sanctions against other countries, including Iran, similarly is not a tough one. For these illegal and unjustified measures to have any chance of achieving their aim, which is usually regime change, they inevitably result in the widespread suffering of ordinary people.

At the same time, these illegal sanctions are about U.S. interests and foreign policy goals in the Middle East rather than they are about promoting press freedom and democracy in Iran. This hardly comes as a surprise, but it

fails on its own logic.

The Trump administration has even removed language about freedom of the press from its own guidebook for U.S. attorneys. The U.S. Attorneys' Manual is a guide to Justice Department policies written for U.S. attorneys and other department employees. It has been with significant changes to the "Media Relations" section — changes that reflect a larger Trump administration hostility towards members of the press.

Gone from the handbook is a section specifically reminding attorneys of the public's right to know. Gone is a section on the need for free press and public trial. In other words, the freedom of the press in the United States has declined dramatically, and the Trump administration officials are not fit to preach others on the subject. They are dismissive of the important work done by the press, and they have shown an unprecedented level of hostility to the press and the international rule of law. So, for those who are probably worried about human rights and freedom in the world, you'd better preach your own government first.

Taking the right step in Syria's Idlib

TEHRAN (FNA) — On Monday, a deal on Syria's Idlib province was made, which aims to stop a military invasion of terror-held territory in return for a demilitarized zone.

The deal also says Qaeda-allied rebels must withdraw from that entire area, within a very fast time-frame, with Iranian, Russian and Turkish officials hoping to have it in place by mid-October.

Russia and Turkey are on board, while Iran and Syria are okay with the deal, but Al-Qaeda, specifically Tahrir al-Sham Hay'at (the Levant Liberation Board or the Al-Nusra Front) on Thursday refused to go along with the agreement and leave the state area. Past experiences suggest that's exactly what they have done in some other areas which led to military confrontations with Syria and its allies. Turkey has vowed to stay committed to this goal as it has no doubt that its failure would ruin the deal. But the question is if it is able to do what it has promised.

The buffer zone is around 15-25 km, with all heavy weapons to be withdrawn from the area, and Turkish and Russian forces policing the area. Though the exact location of the zone is not fully defined, it is believed to cut substantially through Al-Qaeda's territory. Turkey is sending troops into this area, preparing to try to enforce the buffer zone. This is while Syria's Foreign Ministry has welcomed the news, but vowed to continue to fight until the whole country is back under government control. Few points could be said in this respect.

- Iran has welcomed the agreement to create a buffer zone in Idlib province, the last major terrorist bastion in the Arab country. In fact, since the early days of the war, Tehran has always called for dialogue to end the unnecessary conflict. Intensive responsible diplomacy over the last few weeks, pursued in Ankara and Damascus, followed by the Iran-Russia-Turkey Summit in Tehran and the meeting in Sochi, has halted the pending major offensive on terrorists in Idlib, but all engaged actors have underlined their firm commitment to fight terrorist groups, of course. This is an important and major step towards cleansing Syria of the remaining terrorists because Turkey has now vowed to eventually take action against the al-Nusra and other al-Qaeda-affiliated militant groups, meaning that Ankara has now come more on board with the objectives of Iran and Russia.

- Ending the seven-year violence and bloodshed while ridding the region of terrorism is among the most basic and funda-



mental pillars of Iran's foreign policy. The hope is that the results of the Tehran and Sochi summits, which were held within the framework of the Astana peace process, could play an effective role in ending the Syrian people's suffering and speeding up the expulsion of violence-seeking forces from the country.

- In a joint statement issued at the end of the Tehran talks, the presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey said the Syria crisis could only be resolved through a negotiated political process, and has no military solution. It is now time for the international community to also step up their diplomatic efforts to resolve the Syria crisis. The three states serve as guarantors of the Astana process, a track of negotiations which have resulted in the return of a succession of militant bastions to the government fold and movement of civilians to safe zones. In these circumstances, there is no need for foreign occupying troops to stay in the country. This includes U.S. occupying troops.

- The strategic province of Idlib hosts several militant groups backed by Turkey and other foreign parties — especially Western states, Israel and their Arab regional allies. The fresh deal has a specific timeframe and is based on the "sovereignty and unity" of Syrian land. It is part of previous agreements which were based on the commitment to liberating all Syrian land, whether from terrorists or from any illegitimate foreign military presence. Under international law, Damascus has the right to go ahead in its war against terrorism until all the Syrian territories are liberated whether by military operations or by local reconciliations. This only means one thing. The days of terrorist groups in Idlib are numbered and their regional-international patrons have no

choice but to end their illicit support to these proxies.

- Under the Sochi deal, all heavy weapons should be removed from the demilitarized zone in Idlib. Civilians can stay, but all terrorist groups will be removed. The region must be cleared off from terrorists and a ceasefire shall be enforced. The M4 and M5 highways, which run East to West and North to South through Idlib, linking the strategic city of Aleppo with Damascus and the Mediterranean coast, will remain open to help implement the deal by the end of the year.

Now that Syria is moving towards the end of war on terrorism, it is approaching the start of reconstruction process fast, meaning that the United States is now required to remove Syria from the list of state sponsors of terrorism to allow international economic aid to flow to the country for the first time in decades and substantially increase assistance from international financial institutions to rebuild the post-war country.

In addition to Idlib, all of Syria suffers from problems in infrastructure, economic development, population growth, job creation, and the need to improve governance and reduce local corruption that led to the unrest in 2011, and which are key forces that encourage foreign-backed terrorism and extremism.

The international community's priorities should be on persuading the United States, Israel and their Arab partners to end their pointless war on Syria that give ISIL and Al-Qaeda terrorist groups so many opportunities to play a spoiler function. It should be to help Damascus and its allies achieve stability and remove the causes of terrorism, not weaponize terror proxy forces.

Golden Days of the Largest Steel Producer in Iran



Khouzestan Steel Company has a great place in Iran's steel industry and it is in one of its best periods. The company had ups and downs during the past 40 years but they put effort to do their best and move toward development and improvement.

This year is a golden time and hard working in Khouzestan Steel Co and completed half of its 2 million tons export plan in the first 4 months of Iranian year which is very fine due to Iran's current condition on exportation market. From other side, this is a result of production increment which happened because of the technical decisions, documents, reports and specialized plans and efforts to purchase important and strategic items needed in steel industry as graphite electrodes and all of them will continue till the end of the current year.

However, Khouzestan steel company has considered simultaneously the "localization of production processes" and "create a trusted chain" for supplying needed materials based on fine financial planning the self-reliance plans, necessary negotiations with the country's most powerful contractors have been made.

Khouzestan steel is a leader of production in the localizing the modern technology and made good achievements in this process. On the other hand, localization is happening to cut all dependence from importation of demand materials.

Meanwhile the company is supplying local producers' materials and working hard in the exportation market globally and in this process lowering the final price and increasing the production is the point of the company. There are also two current major development plans in the company. One is increasing the capacity of sub-ceiling production of more than 5 million tons, and the other is DRI Mega module which is about two million tons per year, and it's implementation operation will begin soon.

With support from almighty God, we think that completing all the above goals will happen with cooperation and non-stop effort. Everyone undertakes that by implementing all the requirements of the quality management system, we will provide the appropriate background and context more than ever for the continuous improvement of the company's activities.



Mohammad Keshani
CEO of Khouzestan Steel Co.

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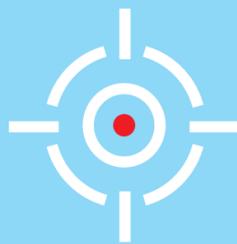
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Fighting brain cancer with the Zika virus

Glioblastoma, a form of brain cancer, is incredibly hard to treat. According to a recent series of experiments, it might soon be treated with the Zika virus vaccine.

Could the Zika virus (depicted here) help fight brain cancer? On the surface, the Zika virus appears to have little in common with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer.

However, they share more similarities than one might imagine. Researchers are currently attempting to exploit their common ground in the battle against this formidable type of cancer.

The study authors say that glioblastoma causes around 15,000 deaths in the United States per year.

Even if the tumor responds to therapy, it almost always returns, making it virtually incurable. It can keep coming back because, after treatment, it hides in nearby brain tissue in the form of glioblastoma stem cells (GSCs).

It was these stem cells that gave researchers pause for thought. Co-lead study author Pei-Yong Shi, Ph.D. — of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston — says, "During the Zika epidemic, we learned that the virus preferentially infects neural progenitor cells in the fetus, and causes the devastating microcephaly seen in babies born to infected mothers."

The other co-authors of the latest study were Jianghong Man, of the National Center of Biomedical Analysis, and Cheng-Feng Qin, of the Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences, both in Beijing, China. Their results were published recently in the journal mBio.

GSCs share some properties with neural progenitor cells — or cells capable of differentiating into different types of brain cells — and gave the researchers a clue.

Man explains, "We made the connection that perhaps Zika virus could also specifically infect the GSCs."

Common ground

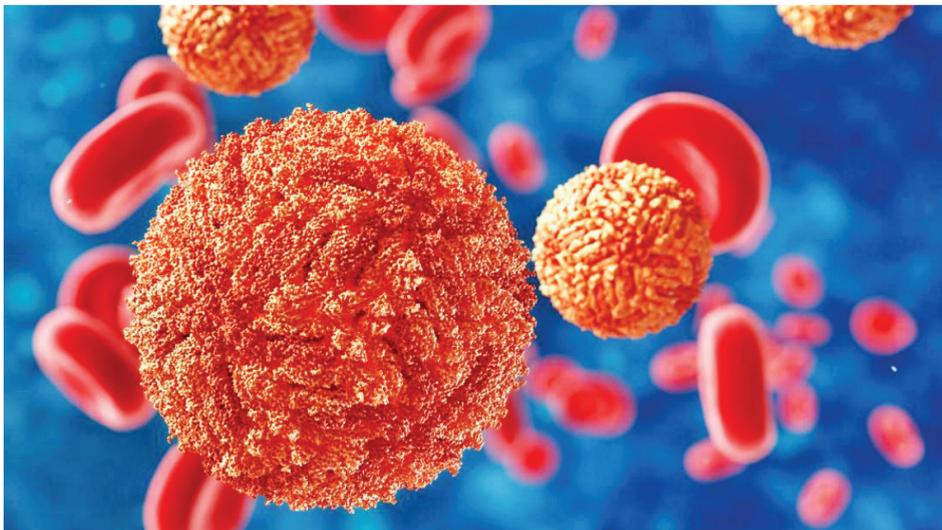
In earlier studies using a mouse model of glioblastoma, researchers showed that the Zika virus can attack GSCs in the laboratory. They also found that the Zika virus was less efficient at attacking brain tissue that had already differentiated into different cell types.

"If we could find a way to specifically target those GSCs that are the source of recurrence, then that might provide an option to prevent recurrence or even a cure."

The investigators' first priority was to ensure that they could find a safe way of introducing the Zika virus to patients. For this purpose, Shi's laboratory developed an attenuated Zika vaccine that they named ZIKV-LAV.

A recent study finds that a new, experimental compound might stop glioblastoma in its tracks.

An attenuated virus is still viable, or "live," but it has been altered to make it safer. In this case, they deleted a small section of the genome to prevent it from replicating as easily.



The researchers hope that, in the future, the Zika vaccine could be given to patients at the time of surgery; that way the viruses can hunt down the GSCs and eliminate them, thereby preventing recurrence of the tumor.

In tests, ZIKV-LAV was non-virulent and protected both mice and non-human primates against Zika infection. When the vaccine was injected into the brains of mice, there appeared to be no physical or behavioral side effects.

Testing the vaccine on human tissue

For their next step, the scientists tested whether the virus could kill GSCs in a mouse model. Half of the mice were injected with human-derived GSCs; the other half received the same GSCs with the addition of ZIKV-LAV.

The mice that only received GSCs developed tumors quickly, but the mice that received GSCs plus the vaccine showed delayed tumor growth. They also survived significantly longer.

The researchers hope that, in the future, the Zika vaccine could be given to patients at the time of surgery; that way, as Qin describes it, the viruses can "hunt down the GSCs and eliminate them," thereby preventing recurrence of the tumor.

In the final leg of the study, the scientists wanted to

delve a little deeper into the mechanisms that allow the Zika virus to destroy GSCs. To do this, they compared the RNA messages of standard GSCs with GSCs that had been treated with ZIKV-LAV.

From these data, they concluded that in cells treated with ZIKV-LAV, an antiviral response was sparked, leading to inflammation and eventual cell death.

Though the results are encouraging, this is just the start. Next, the researchers want to work with doctors to check the safety of ZIKV-LAV.

Also, now that they understand a little more about how the vaccine kills GSCs, they might tinker with ZIKV-LAV to make it more deadly to GSCs.

Shi is keen to make the most of virus's deadly capabilities, saying, "As a virologist, I see that we should take advantage of the 'bad' side of viruses. They should have a role to play in cancer treatment."

(Source: Medical News Today)

Stroke severity reduced in those who walk regularly

New research supports the idea that light to moderate physical activity, such as walking and swimming, could reduce the severity of strokes.

Activities such as walking and swimming can reduce stroke severity.

A study of nearly 1,000 individuals who had had a stroke found that those who had been doing 4 hours per week of light or 2-3 hours each week of moderate activity had less severe strokes than those who had not been exercising.

The researchers defined light activity as walking at normal pace and moderate activity as brisk walking, swimming, and running. "While exercise benefits health in many ways," says study author Katharina S. Sunnerhagen, of the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, "our research suggests that even simply getting in a small amount of physical activity each week may have a big impact later by possibly reducing the severity of a stroke."

She and her colleagues emphasize, however, that due to the nature of their study, their findings do not prove that physical activity actually reduces stroke severity — only that there is a significant link to it.

Commenting on the study, Nicole Spartano and Julie Bernhardt, both of Boston University School of Medicine in Massachusetts, say that while the underlying mechanisms are not fully understood, exercise likely helps maintain the brain's complex system of blood vessels.

A recent report on the study and an editorial article by Spartano and Bernhardt both feature in the journal Neurology.

Data came from registries and self-reports

The study data came from 925 people — aged 73 years, on average — in Sweden who had had a stroke. Sunnerhagen and colleagues identified them from stroke registries that gave information about the severity of the stroke.

Symptoms such as facial, arm, and eye movement, as well as language ability and consciousness level, determined the level of severity. Based on this, 80 percent of the cohort were classed as having had a "mild" stroke.

Walking for at least 4 hours each week was classed as light activity, while more intensive exercise, such as swimming, running, and brisk walking for 2-3 hours per week, was classed as moderate activity.

In this context, 52 percent of study participants were inactive in the period leading up to their stroke.

Exercise, younger age tied to milder strokes

The analysis revealed that those whose physical activity levels were light to moderate in the period leading up to their stroke had double the chance of having a mild stroke compared with those who were inactive. Of the 59 people whose physical activity levels in the period before their stroke were moderate, 53 (89 percent) had a mild stroke. Of the 384 people whose physical activity level was light, 330 (85 percent) had a mild stroke. Of the 481 who were inactive, 354 (73 percent) had a mild stroke.

When the researchers considered the effect of younger age on stroke severity, however, they saw that physical activity accounted for only 6.8 percent of the differences between the active and inactive groups.

(Source: sgtalk.org)

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€1600

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Apartment-villa
French-style
3Bdrs, fully furn 360 sq.m, sp,
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Valiasre-Bagheferdos
3 Bdrs, fully furn, brand
new, 5th fl., 150 sq.m, indoor
spj, \$1900

Mirdamad-Naft
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furn, lobby, sp, garden, \$2000

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Bdrs, spj, \$9000

Zaferaniyeh
Duplex, 4 Bdrs, unfurn, 350
sq.m, spj, \$8000

Niavaran
2000 sq.m land, green
garden, 500 sq.m built up
area, indoor spj, 4Bdrs, fully
furn, triplex, \$15000

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Mirdamad-Naft
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shariati
pasdaran
shahrak gharb
saadatabad
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Niavaran
Triplex villa, 2000 sq.m
land, 600 sq.m built up, spj, all
facilities, \$15000

Darous
Duplex villa, 600 sq.m built
up, 1000 sq.m land, all
facilities, \$8000

Other areas:
Farmaniyeh
Aghdasiyeh
Shahrak Gharb
Shariati-Pasdaran
Valiasre
Tajrish
Jordan
Vanak
Arjantin
Zafar...
nice cases ready to move in.

Startup event to be held on marine apps

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — A startup event on marine apps will be held on the sidelines of the 4th national exhibition of maritime technological achievements, IRNA reported.

The event will be held from October 23 to 25 at the Sacred Defense Garden Museum in Tehran.

Sponsored by the science and technology vice presidency, the event aims to attract capital for startups active in the field of marine innovation.

The investors will hold meetings with startups in order to support them during the event.

Startups can apply for registration through logging to website www.irandarya.com until October 11.

As Startup Wharf, the first Accelerator specific to the Maritime sector, wrote on its website, maritime was dubbed by TechCrunch as the hidden Trillion Dollar sector, with huge opportunities to improve and disrupt the current business models with digital technologies.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Safety tips for mobile banking

Mobile banking – using banking apps or mobile websites on smartphones and tablets – is growing rapidly in popularity as people realize the benefits of the convenience of checking accounts, transferring money and making payments from the comfort of their armchair or whilst out and about.

The major banks invest heavily in security to make your mobile banking experience safe and secure. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are using mobile banking responsibly to protect yourself and your finances.



Get started...

- Use only banking apps from authorized app stores, and make sure mobile banking sites are authentic and secure.

- Use only secure Wi-Fi when doing mobile or any online banking or other financial transactions.

- As with any online banking, choose and use strong passwords and keep them to yourself.

The Risks

- Unauthorized people – including criminals – gaining access to and using your bank accounts by finding or guessing your login details.

- Your confidential details and transactions being intercepted if the Wi-Fi you are using is not secured.

- 'Shoulder surfing' - people viewing what you are doing online, over your shoulder or via CCTV.

- Loss or theft of your mobile device, which could contain or provide easy access to bank accounts and confidential details.

- Being duped into visiting bogus banking websites, or downloading fake banking apps.

- Being persuaded to reveal confidential details to callers claiming to be from your bank or the police, telling you there is a problem on your account.

Safe mobile banking

- Make sure your smartphone or tablet is always protected with a PIN which is difficult to guess. Do not reveal your PIN to anybody, nor write it or store it where it can be found.

- Like online banking from a computer, choose, use and protect passwords and memorable words with great care.

- Take care not to leave your device unattended, or left or stored in an insecure place. Download a tracking app which allows you to erase your data remotely, or enable this feature if already on your device.

- Keep the banking and other apps on your device regularly updated.

- Always log out of your banking app or mobile website when you have finished using it. Closing the app or web page or turning off your device may not be sufficient.

- Do not use unsecured Wi-Fi networks for banking, purchases or checking your emails. In public places, it is very difficult to tell if a hotspot is secure or not, so it is always best not to use it. It is better to use a 3G or 4G internet connection, even if it is slower to do so.

- Take care when downloading apps: make sure that they are from an authorized store and check reviews and recommendations. There are thousands of malicious banking apps circulating, especially for Android devices, even downloadable from official app stores.

- Download, use and keep updated one of the many reputable internet security apps for your device.

- Check your device's security settings to ensure maximum protection.

- Check that your bank's mobile app has been validated for its security. Look on their website for their own published statement on how they have done this. Alternatively, check other app users' views by searching online.

- Read your bank's terms and conditions for mobile banking. Be sure you know what your responsibilities are, and those of your bank.

- On the app, find and use the option for a text message to be sent every time a transaction occurs on your account. This will notify you of fraudulent transactions as soon as they happen.

- Beware of emails, texts or phone calls claiming to be from your bank or the police claiming there is a problem with your account and requesting your login or other confidential details. Your bank or other authentic organization would never request these details.

(Source: getsafeonline.org)

Iran to show space tech progress at World Space Week

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Space Agency (ISA) plans to introduce its space technology and achievements during the World Space Week, October 4 to 10, Mehr reported on Friday.

World Space Week is annually observed in various parts of the world, including Europe and Asia. The event is officially defined as an international celebration of science and technology, and their contribution to the betterment of the human condition.

ISA plans to celebrate World Space Week with different programs, secretary of the World Space Week headquarters, Mohammad Jafar Mohammadi, announced.

The ISA provides educational plans to elaborate the notion of space science between people, he said.

Determining the role of space technology in development of sustainable economy in order to attract supports is high on the agenda for the ISA, he said.

Other organizations as well as the private sector also cooperate with the ISA to commemorate the event this year, he added. Over 60 state-run and private organizations associated with space issues will be cooperating to hold programs during the week, he highlighted.

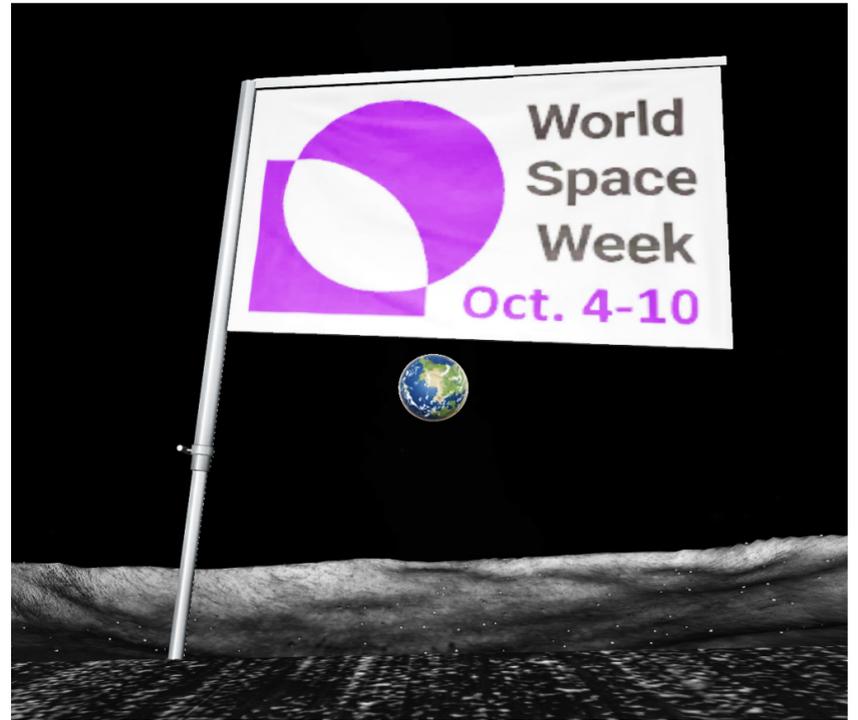
Mohammadi went on to explain that ISA plans to hold workshops for teacher and students in different fields of crisis management, natural resources and [space] technology development in different cities of Iran during the week.

He said that the agency holds essay writing competition in the field of space-based marketing and economy.

He further named Iran Meteorological Organization as one of the organizers, which will hold workshops for students and teachers in order to introduce them with techniques and space technologies related to meteorology.

The ISA also provides a program to promote space section according to which, the agency aims to boost international cooperation in space education, he noted.

The ISA aims to develop the international connections, space diplomacy, national and international conference on technical aspects of space, Mohammadi concluded.



SpaceX says it has a customer for its flight around the moon

The company said it would reveal the identity of the passenger at an event on Monday.

SpaceX's moon mission is back on.

The company announced on Thursday that it had signed a private passenger to take a trip around the moon, indicating that the company's delayed plans were back on track.

The company said it would reveal the identity of the passenger at an event on Monday.

"SpaceX has signed the world's first private passenger to fly around the Moon aboard our BFR launch vehicle—an important step toward enabling access for everyday people who dream of traveling to space," the company said in a Tweet.

SpaceX has signed the world's first private passenger to fly around the Moon aboard our BFR launch vehicle—an important step toward enabling access for everyday people who dream of traveling to space. Find out who's flying and why on Monday, September 17.

SpaceX has yet to launch a crewed mission into space, with its first planned to take place in 2019.

Titled the "Lunar BFR Mission," SpaceX's plan is to use its massive 350-foot "BFR," Big Falcon Rocket, for the company's first trip around the moon. The rocket is still under development. The spaceship, able to transport around 100



A Falcon 9 SpaceX heavy rocket lifts off from pad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida on Feb. 6, 2018 (John Raoux / AP file)

passengers, was previously touted by SpaceX as capable of traveling to and from Mars.

SpaceX originally announced a commercial lunar trip in Feb. 2017 using a Falcon Heavy rocket and Dragon crew capsule. SpaceX CEO and founder Elon Musk said at the time that the company had been approached by two people who had paid "significant deposits" for the trip. The company said it planned to launch the trip before the end of 2018.

Those plans were pushed back in June, according to the Wall Street Journal.

SpaceX said it will reveal further details about the mission at an event at its headquarters and rocket factory in Hawthorne, California, which will be livestreamed from the company's website on Sept. 17 at 9 p.m. ET.

Musk has said he created the company with the goal of aiding in the creation of a self-sustaining presence of human civilization on Mars. The company, founded in 2002, places a heavy focus on enabling private citizens to transport to and live on other planets outside of Earth.

Musk appeared to offer a hint on Twitter as to the passenger's identity, responding to a question about whether he would go on the trip with a Japanese flag emoji.

(Source: nbcnews.com)

What is a unicorn startup company?



The term unicorn was coined in the year 2013 by the founder of the Cowboy Ventures, Aileen Lee, when she referred to the 39 startups that had a valuation of more than \$1 billion as unicorns. The term was used to put an emphasis on the rarity of such startups.

The definition of a unicorn startup has remained the same since then. A unicorn is a startup company founded after 2003 which has a current valuation of more than \$1 billion. However, the number of unicorns has increased manifold.

How many unicorns are there in the world?

According to a report by CBInsights, there are a total of 197 unicorns in the world, the top 5 being:

- Uber, with the valuation of \$68 billion

- Didi Chuxing, with the valuation of \$56 billion

- Xiaomi, with the valuation of \$46 billion

- Meituan Dianping, with the valuation of \$30 billion

- Airbnb, with the valuation of \$29.3 billion

Characteristics of Unicorn Companies

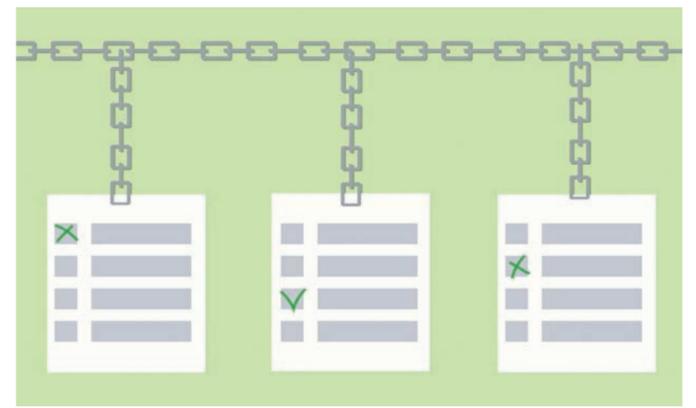
On an average, around four unicorns are born every year. But what makes them different from other startups?

Disruptive innovation

Nearly all of the unicorn startups have disrupted the industry they belong to. Uber changed the way people book cabs, Airbnb capitalized on the sharing economy, Snapchat disrupted the social networking sphere, etc.

(Source: feedough.com)

A beginner's guide to blockchain-Part two



Blockchain as Google Docs

As the venture advisor, 4x entrepreneur, marketer, strategist and blockchain specialist William Mougayar said, the traditional way of sharing documents with collaboration is to send a Microsoft Word document to another recipient, and ask them to make revisions to it. The problem with that scenario is that you need to wait until receiving a return copy before you can see or make other changes because you are locked out of editing it until the other person is done with it.

That's how databases work today. Two owners can't be messing with the same record at once. That's how banks maintain money balances and transfers; they briefly lock access (or decrease the balance) while they make a transfer, then update the other side, then re-open access (or update again). With Google

Docs (or Google Sheets), both parties have access to the same document at the same time, and the single version of that document is always visible to both of them. It is like a shared ledger, but it is a shared document. The distributed part comes into play when sharing involves a number of people.

Imagine the number of legal documents that should be used that way. Instead of passing them to each other, losing track of versions, and not being in sync with the other version, why can't *all* business documents become shared instead of transferred back and forth? So many types of legal contracts would be ideal for that kind of workflow. You don't need a blockchain to share documents, but the shared documents analogy is a powerful one.

(Source: blockgeeks.com)

Scientists make an app that diagnoses UTI in one hour

A new smartphone app and lab kit can identify urinary tract infections (UTI) in an hour, with remarkable detail. The app, from UCSB researcher Michael Mahan's and Stanford's Tom Soh's teams, can give surprising detail with which to guide therapy as well.

At least half of women will develop a urinary tract infection (UTI) during their life. UTIs account for 25% of the cases of sepsis, and sepsis is a major cause of death, higher than heart attacks, diabetes, or breast cancer.

Besides being speedy and easy to use, diagnosing a UTI accurately down to what the organism is, will be inexpensive. Formally called a smartphone-based real-time loop-mediated isothermal amplification (smART-LAMP) system, it is based on nucleic acid detection. The assay uses simple equipment and is designed for point-of-care testing in low-resource settings.

The test involves a reusable kit with a hot plate, LED lights and a cardboard box, costing less than \$100 for all

the necessary equipment, and a smartphone to measure the chemical reaction of the tests.

The chemical reagents cost \$1.13 per test, or \$10-15 for a panel that will identify the most common bacteria causing such infections. It will be able to provide clinically useful information in an hour, compared to 18-28 hours for results from a traditional clinical microbiology lab, which has to first grow the bacteria in cultures.

(Source: forbes.com)

Mosquitoes and other flying insects can spread microplastics, scientists study

A new research found that microplastic is eaten by mosquito larva and stay in the insect's body until adulthood. Scientists expressed concern that similar flying insects might be spreading microplastics.

Mosquitoes and other insects are spreading tiny fragments of plastics from the air, polluting the environment, and entering the food chain.

Several previous studies found microplastics are what scientists call small pieces of plastics, less than 5 millimeters long, that are increasingly becoming a major problem. They are found in the seas and oceans where underwater creatures accidentally swallow them. Often, microplastics are found in the food and water.

■ Nuisances entering the food chains

The microplastic problem continues on land. According to a study that was published in the journal of The Royal Society, these tiny nuisances are entering the food chain by way of insects, particularly mosquitoes.

Researchers from the University of Reading observed mosquitoes from birth to death in a laboratory. They introduced fluorescent polystyrene beads to track whether the microplastics consumed by the larva will stick inside the insect until it reaches adulthood.

That is exactly what Professor Amanda Callaghan, a biological scientist and lead author of the study, has found.

Mosquito larva ingests microscopic plastic



shards that continue to be in the insect's body until it reaches its adult form. From then on, its predators such as birds and bats eat the mosquito and accidentally also ingest the microplastic.

"This is eye-opening research, which has

Mosquitoes and other insects are spreading tiny fragments of plastics from the air, polluting the environment, and entering the food chain.

shown us for the first time that microplastics are able to navigate several life stages in flying insects, allowing them to contaminate all kinds of living creatures who would not normally be exposed to them," explained Callaghan. "It is a shocking reality that plastic is contaminating almost every corner of the environment and its ecosystems."

■ Similar flying insects

While the study was focused on mosquitoes, the researchers said that the discovery could also be true to other similar flying insects. They could also be ingesting microplastics that get retained until the end of their life cycles.

"They are going to be full of insects that will eat them," added Callaghan. "There's no doubt this is going to happen in the wild."

A previous study has found that mayfly and caddisfly larvae in Wales also ingested microplastics.

Further research is needed to find out exactly how microplastic is disrupting the eco-system. Matt Shardlow, an executive from a conservation charity and not involved in the study, said that researchers should look into the role that microplastics might be playing in the decline of aquatic life.

Microbeads, a type of microplastic, in cosmetics are already being banned in several places around the world including the United States.

(Source: Tech Times)

Fossil fat reveals weird creature is earliest animal, team finds

A 558-million-year-old fossil has been confirmed as the world's earliest known animal, scientists have announced.

The creature, Dickinsonia, has been the subject of scientific debate since it was first discovered 75 years ago, with researchers arguing over whether it was an animal, a type of fungi or a giant single-celled protist—an organism that doesn't fit into any other category.

However, after finding ancient fat molecules in a Dickinsonia, researchers have finally been able to confirm its position in Earth's history.

Dickinsonia could grow up to 1.4 meters in length. It was oval shaped with rib-like segments running along its body. It lived toward the end of the Ediacaran Period, about 20 million years before the Cambrian Explosion — a time when complex animal life all of a sudden appeared in the fossil record.

Dickinsonia, seen here as a fossil, is Earth's oldest confirmed animal. It was first discovered 75 years ago, with researchers arguing over whether it was an animal, a type of fungi or a giant single-celled protist — an organism that doesn't fit into any other category.

"These fossils were located in the middle of cliffs of the White Sea that are 60 to 100 meters high," Bobrovskiy said in a statement. "I had to hang over the edge of a cliff on ropes and dig out huge blocks of sandstone, throw them down, wash the sandstone and repeat this process until I found the fossils I was after."

Jochen Brocks, lead senior researcher, told Newsweek: "Ilya Bobrovskiy contacted me in 2013 and told me he had discovered organically preserved, or 'mummified,' fossils of the Ediacara Biota, 558 million years old. He said he wanted to try to extract fossil fat from these fossils to find out if, or not, they were animals. I thought it was the craziest idea that I had ever heard."

(Source: Newsweek)

This insane plan to 'prop up' Antarctica could help save the world: study

For the hundreds of millions of people who live alongside the world's coasts, the scariest sea-level rise scenario is the idea that ice sheets could collapse.

Seas are already rising rapidly, threatening to swamp cities like Miami within the lifetimes of people alive today.

If the sheets of ice that sit on top of Antarctica and Greenland were to collapse, the rate of sea level rise could skyrocket, making coastal cities uninhabitable and destroying trillions of dollars of property and infrastructure.

To prevent or slow these floods from washing over cities, humanity may need to embark on the biggest civil engineering project in human history, according to a study published Thursday in the European Geosciences Union journal The Cryosphere.

■ Changing the climate

It would be a geoengineering effort - a way of reworking our planet - that might buy time for coastal areas to adapt and for humanity to reverse some of the warming we've caused by burning fossil fuels and changing the climate.

"Doing geoengineering means often considering the unthinkable," said John Moore, one of two authors of the new study and a climate scientist at Beijing Normal University and Finland's University of Lapland Arctic Centre, in a statement.

The project is still theoretical. This sort of "ice sheet intervention today would be at the edge of human capabilities," the authors wrote in the study.

But it's possible that catastrophic ice sheet collapse could happen in the foreseeable future, and the processes that could trigger it at the Thwaites Glacier in West



Antarctica - one of the most vulnerable glaciers - could already be happening.

"Thwaites could easily trigger a runaway (West Antarctic) ice sheet collapse that would ultimately raise global sea level by about 3 meters (10 feet)," Michael Wolovick, a geosciences researcher at Princeton and the other author of the study, said in a statement.

■ The sea level rise

In the 20th century, sea levels around the globe rose about six inches on average, Michael Oppenheimer, a professor of geosciences at Princeton, said during a media briefing earlier this year on sea level rise. That was enough to narrow the typical East Coast beach by about 50 feet (15 meters).

Since the mid-1990s, places like Miami have seen an additional five inches (12 centimeters) of sea level rise. Seas rise faster in some places than others, due to ocean currents and the effects of gravity.

Several factors contribute to global sea level rise. As the world has warmed due to the burning of fossil fuels, oceans have absorbed the majority of the heat. Warmer water expands, which takes up more space.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Scientists seeking to determine the full extent of Milky Way

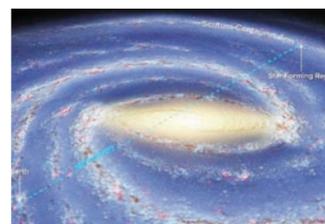
Since the birth of modern astronomy, scientists have sought to determine the full extent of the Milky Way galaxy and learn more about its structure, formation and evolution. At present, astronomers estimate that it is 100,000 to 180,000 light-years in diameter and consists of 100 to 400 billion stars — though some estimates say there could be as many as 1 trillion.

And yet, even after decades of research and observations, there is still much about our galaxy astronomers do not know. For example, they are still trying to determine how massive the Milky Way is, and estimates vary widely.

In a new study, a team of international scientists presents a new method for weighing the galaxy based the dynamics of the Milky Way's satellite galaxies.

The study, titled "The mass of the Milky Way from satellite dynamics", recently appeared in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society. The study was led by Thomas Callingham from the University of Durham's Institute of Computational Cosmology, and included members from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies, and multiple universities.

These include the intricacies of galaxy formation, discrepancies with the current Lambda Cold Dark Matter (Lambda CDM) model, alternative theories on the nature of dark matter, and the large-scale structure of the Universe. What's more, previous studies have been hampered by a number of factors, which include the fact that the Milky Way's dark matter halo (which makes



up most of its mass) cannot be observed directly.

■ The extent of Milky Way

Another major issue is the fact that it is difficult to measure the extent and mass of the Milky Way because we are within it. As a result, previous studies that have attempted to infer the mass of our galaxy resulted in mass estimates ranging from about 500 billion to 2.5 trillion times the mass of our Sun (Solar masses).

We infer its properties through observations of various dynamical tracers that feel the gravitational effects of the dark matter — such as stellar populations, globular clusters, streams and satellite galaxies. Most of these lie at the center of our galaxy in the galactic disc (within ~10kpc) and the stellar halo (~15kpc) which can give good mass estimates of the inner region. However the DM halo reaches ~200kpc, and for this reason we chose to focus on satellite galaxies, as one of the only tracers that probe these outer parts of the galaxy."

"We compare the orbital properties Energy and Angular Momentum of the MW's satellite galaxies to those found in simulations. (Source: universetoday.com)

Coastal wetlands will survive rising seas, researchers suggest

When Florence slogged ashore in North Carolina last week, coastal wetlands offered one of the best lines of defense against the hurricane's waves and surge.

A new study predicts such wetlands will survive rising seas to buffer the world's coastlines against future storms and provide their many other ecological and economic benefits, but only if humans preserve the room needed for the wetlands to migrate inland — what scientists call "accommodation space."

The study, published in Nature the day before Florence made landfall, addressed a major uncertainty in how salt-marshes and mangroves will respond to sea-level rise. It was authored by an international research team with members in the UK, U.S., Belgium, Germany, and Australia. Dr. Matt Kirwan of William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science was the sole U.S.-based contributor.

■ Large-scale wetland loss

The study's lead author, Dr. Mark Schuerch of the UK-based University of Lincoln, says "Rather than being an inevitable consequence of global rising sea levels, our findings indicate that large-scale coastal wetland loss might be avoidable if sufficient additional space can be created by increasing the



number of innovative 'nature-based adaptation' solutions to coastal management."

Adds Kirwan, "Whether coastal wetlands get bigger or smaller in the future depends on how much dry land is lost to sea-level rise, and how fast wetlands move into that submerged land."

The study was motivated by a history of conflicting predictions concerning the fate of coastal wetlands in a warming world.

Says Schuerch, "Recent global assessments have suggest-

ed that sea-level rise has already overwhelmed the ability of many marshes and mangroves to build up vertically, leading to widespread loss of coastal wetlands, while field measurements and localized models of salt-marsh accretion show that most large-scale assessments have overestimated wetland vulnerability."

Kirwan's previous work helps explain these discrepancies, and played a key role in motivating the current study. He says

■ Marshes become more flooded

"Global predictions of marsh loss appear alarming, but they stem from simple models that don't simulate the dynamic feedbacks that allow marsh soils to build faster as marshes become more flooded." That dynamic, says Kirwan, "will allow marshes to adapt not only to present rates of sea-level rise but the accelerated rates predicted for coming decades."

In their Nature study, the researchers integrated the previously independent approaches, using a novel modeling method that combined global simulations of sea-level rise, population growth, and other factors with localized measurements and simulations of saltmarsh accretion. The model was based on elevation profiles for 12,148 coastline segments worldwide.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

'Melli Plus', Revolution of Branches in Banking System

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) will unveil 'Melli Plus' which is the revolution of branches in banking system of the country, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, CEO of Bank Melli Iran Mohammad-Reza Hosseinzadeh said, "after presenting high-quality banking services such as 'BAAM' system, 'BALEH' messaging system and App. '60', Bank Melli Iran will unveil 'Melli Plus' as a super and giant banking services of the bank.

Now, 80 years have passed since the



establishment of the first branch of Bank Melli Iran, he said, adding, "however, trend

of development and progress has not been ceased in Bank Melli Iran and in this regard, a branch of this bank will be inaugurated which is unique and unprecedented both in national and international levels."

The new branch of the bank entitled 'Melli Plus' will be launched which new and modern banking services will be offered to its dear customers, he maintained.

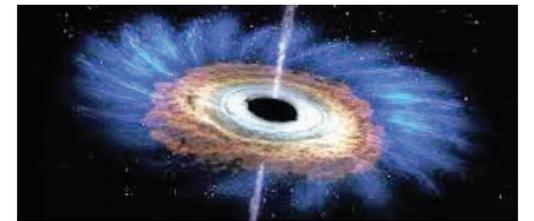
Elsewhere in his remarks, CEO of the bank said, "the new and modern branch of the bank dubbed 'Melli Plus' will be admin-

istered electronically without presence of banker in the branch, so that a robot has been installed in the branch which can establish direct relationship with the customer of the bank in Persian with the aim of offering quality banking services."

In the end, CEO of the Bank Hosseinzadeh said that customers of the bank will observe a constructive and dazzling transformation of services, the move that can even lead to a revolution in the banking system of the country.

Astronomers report the first detection of matter falling into a black hole at 30% of the speed of light, located in the center of the billion-light year distant galaxy PG211+143. The team used data from the European Space Agency's X-ray observatory XMM-Newton to observe the black hole.

A UK team of astronomers report the first detection of matter falling into a black hole at 30% of the speed of light, located in the center of the billion-light year distant galaxy PG211+143. The team, led by Professor Ken Pounds of the University of Leicester, used data from the European Space Agency's X-ray observatory XMM-Newton to observe the black hole. Their results appear in a new paper in Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.



Black holes are objects with such strong gravitational fields that not even light travels quickly enough to escape their grasp, hence the description 'black'. They are hugely important in astronomy because they offer the most efficient way of extracting energy from matter. As a direct result, gas in-fall -- accretion -- onto black holes must be powering the most energetic phenomena in the universe.

The center of almost every galaxy -- like our own Milky Way -- contains a so-called supermassive black hole, with masses of millions to billions of times the mass of our Sun. With sufficient matter falling into the hole, these can become extremely luminous, and are seen as a quasar or active galactic nucleus (AGN).

However black holes are so compact that gas is almost always rotating too much to fall in directly. Instead it orbits the hole, approaching gradually through an accretion disc -- a sequence of circular orbits of decreasing size. As gas spirals inwards, it moves faster and faster and becomes hot and luminous, turning gravitational energy into the radiation that astronomers observe.

(Source: Science Daily)

Leopard cub seized from smugglers

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — A three-month old leopard cub was seized from the smugglers on Wednesday and transferred to Pardisan Park rehabilitation center, Mehr news agency reported on Friday.



The leopard cub was seized in Khuzestan province from a group of animal traffickers who were trying to smuggle the animal to one the Persian Gulf states, Ramhormoz chief of department of environment said.

A group of rangers went undercover to catch the animal traffickers and finally managed to save the leopard cub from them, Mohsen Marhamati said.

Unfortunately the animal sustained injuries and was transferred to Pardisan Park rehabilitation center in Tehran.

The Persian leopard is listed as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List; the population is estimated at fewer than 871-1,290 mature individuals and considered declining.

According to the Department of Environment, 156 leopards have been killed in Iran from 2005 to 2014, nearly 20 leopards a year. Studies indicate that currently there are less than 500 leopards nationwide.

In Iran, primary threats are habitat disturbances followed by illegal hunting and excess of livestock in the leopard habitats. The leopards' chances for survival outside protected areas appear very slim.

Judge sentence poachers to plant trees

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — An Iranian judge has sentenced two poachers to plant 400 trees in Hamoun wildlife refuge, southeastern Iran, Mehr news agency reported on Friday.

Chief of Sistan-Baluchestan department of environment Vahid Pourmardani explained that the two poachers were arrested by the rangers due to carrying illegal hunting equipment.

The judge has sentenced the two poachers to plant 200 saplings in Hamoun wildlife refuge as well as 57 months of imprisonment, Pourmardani concluded.

LEARN ENGLISH

International Workers Day

A: Alright everyone settle down. Let's get started. As you know, an important **aspect** of becoming a good citizen is understanding the **genesis** of our legal system. It is not enough to simply memorize our laws, it is necessary that we **comprehend** why and how they were formed. This brings me to our topic for today. Does anyone know what we celebrate on May first?

B: Cinco de mayo?
A: No, that's May fifth in Spanish, James, no wonder you are failing my Spanish class. No, May first is International Workers' Day.
B: Do we get a day off from school then?
A: No! It is not considered to be a **national holiday** here in the US, but in other countries it is.
B: Aww, man!

A: In the nineteenth century, working conditions were **appalling**, with workers being forced to work ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day. Support for the eight-hour work day movement was growing rapidly, despite the **indifference** and **hostility** of many union leaders, and by April 1886, 250,000 workers were involved in the May Day movement. Previous **legislative** attempts to improve working conditions had failed, so labor organizers took **drastic** measures. They passed a **resolution** stating that eight hours would **constitute** a legal day's work. And, on May First 1886, the resolution took effect.

B: Cool! Is that why we only work eight hours now?
A: Yes! But the happy ending came at a high price. On May third, 1886, police **fired into** a crowd of **strikers** at the McCormick Reaper Works Factory, killing four and wounding many. A mass meeting was called for the next day to protest the **brutality**.
B: And then what happened?
A: Well, as we say, the rest is history...

■ **Key vocabulary**
aspect: part
comprehend: understand deeply settle down phrase relax, become calm
national holiday: the day that all people in a country will be on holiday
genesis: origin; beginning
appalling: terrible, horrible, shocking
indifference: showing no interest in
hostility: the attitude of treating something as enemy
legislative: relating to legal system
drastic: sudden and severe
resolution: a formal document stating the wishes of a group
constitute: consist
fire into: shoot guns into a place
striker: someone who is not working because they are on strike when a group of workers deliberately stop working because of a disagreement about pay, working conditions etc.
brutality: violent treatment or behavior
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
remembrance: describing an event that is done to honor and remember a person or event in history/ in commemoration of
proletariat: the lowest socioeconomic class; workers
rally: a public meeting of a large group of people to support or oppose something
proclamation: an official statement made by a person who has power
memorial: something like a statue, built to remember a person or event from history

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Like it or not, Daylight Saving Time ends, clocks move back

SOCIETY TEHRAN — With autumn setting in gradually Daylight Saving Time (DST) ends and clocks should move back one hour, whether you like it or not.

DST is a seasonal time change measure where clocks are set ahead of standard time with the beginning of spring, usually by 1 hour. As DST starts, the sun rises and sets later, on the clock, than the day before and it ends with the beginning of autumn.

In Iran the clock moves forward one hour on March 21 (the start of Iranian calendar year) and it will move back after 6 months on the first day of autumn.

DST was first practiced before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, but it was abolished for some years after the Revolution. Again in 1991 the cabinet of ministers approved a law to practice DST in order to save energy, however, in 2006 the then president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad overturned the law announcing that there is no conclusive proof that Daylight Saving Time is actually contributing to saving energy and that it would also be confusing for many people.

But again, in 2007 the Majlis [Iranian Parliament] adopted a law which mandated the practice of Daylight Saving Time in the country. Since then the law has remained unchanged.

■ **History of DST**
In general DST is used to save energy and make better use of daylight in about 40 percent of the countries worldwide. According to timeanddate.com it was first used in 1908 in Thunder Bay, Canada.

However, it was Germany that popularized DST. The idea did not catch on globally until Germany introduced DST in 1916. Clocks in the German Empire, and its ally Austria, were turned ahead by 1 hour on April 30, 1916, 2 years into World War I. The rationale was to reduce the use of artificial lighting to save fuel for the war effort.

And within a few weeks, the idea was followed by the UK, France, and many other countries. Most of them reverted to standard time after World War I, and it wasn't until World War II that DST made its return in most of Europe.

Benjamin Franklin is also credited with being the first to suggest seasonal time change. Nevertheless, the idea proposed by the American inventor and politician in 1784 can hardly be described as fundamental for the development of modern DST. In a letter to the editor of the Journal of Paris, which was entitled "An Economical Project for Diminishing the Cost of Light", Franklin simply suggested that Parisians could economize candle usage by getting people out of bed earlier in the morning. After all, it did not even involve turning the clocks.

Although modern DST has only been used for about 100 years, ancient civilizations are known to have engaged in the same practices thousands of years ago. For example, the Roman water clocks used different scales for different months of the year to adjust the daily schedules to the solar time.

Daylight Saving Time is now being used in over 70 countries worldwide and affects over 1 billion people every year. The beginning and end dates vary from one country to another.

■ **The never ending debate**
Those who are in favor of Daylight Saving Time believe that during spring and summer it adds one hour of natural daylight to the afternoon schedule and



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create more time of recreational activities and encourage people to get out of their houses.

Despite the fact that DST was introduced to decrease use of artificial lights, hence reduce energy consumption some believe that in recent years it doesn't actually result in less energy consumption. In modern society, with its computers, TV-screens, and air conditioning units uses more energy, no matter if the sun is up or not. Today, the amount of energy saved from DST is negligible.

Some also feel sick once the time changes. Changing the time, even if it is only by one hour, disrupts our body clocks or circadian rhythm. For most people, the resulting tiredness is an inconvenience.

For some people, however, the time change can bring about more serious consequences. Studies link the lack of sleep at the start of DST to car accidents, workplace injuries, suicide, and miscarriages. Moreover the early evening darkness after the end of the DST period is linked to depression.

The risk of suffering a heart attack is also increased when DST begins. However, the extra hour of sleep we get at the end of DST has in turn been linked to fewer heart attacks.

On the other hand DST make the evenings lighter and probably safer as it contributes to improved road safety by reducing pedestrian fatalities during dawn and dusk hours and it also results

in less robberies.

■ **EU plans to abolish daylight saving time and make summer last forever**

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has said that the European Union is to propose ending twice-yearly clock changes after a large-scale public survey, CNN reported on September 1.

According to Juncker, more than 80% of EU citizens want to abolish daylight saving time and instead remain on the time used during summer instead.

«Many people are contributing to this debate. We did a survey, a public survey. Millions responded and think that in the future we should have summertime all year round. So that's what will happen.»
«The people want this; we will do this,» he said.

For any change to go into effect, legislation must be drafted and win approval from the 28 member nations and the European Parliament.

One of the chief critics of daylight saving time has been Finland, which has one of the most northerly capital cities in the EU.

Over 70,000 Finns signed a petition last October to urge the government to move away from daylight saving time.

■ **Is DST unpleasant for you?**
At midnight we turned the clocks back an hour to make most of our dwindling exposure to sun as winter is getting closer. Whether you like it or not Daylight

Saving Time law is still being implemented in Iran. Some may feel frustrated by thinking how it's actually working by keep asking themselves are we losing an hour, or gaining one.

In order to adjust to the end of the daylight Saving Time you can use the extra hour you get to work out and exercise in the morning which will benefit your health as well.

When DST ends it might get harder to fall asleep, so you can choose to have a relaxing activity such as reading book to speed the process.

In order to perk up your mood and avoid depression linked with shorter daylight hours you can take a walk during lunch time and use the sunlight.

As it gets darker sooner you can take the chance to spend more family time indoors by cooking dinner and watching TV together or play games.

In order to block out the light which might interfere with your sleep early morning you can use thicker drapes during autumn and winter which may also help in keeping out the winter chill.

Avoid taking long naps in the afternoons which may hurt your sleep rhythm.

And last but not least make sure that dinner time and bedtime are far apart so that you can get a healthy sleep as sleeping on full stomach may interfere with sleep quality.

A be grateful, DST ended and you are gaining an hour, before you know DST will start again and you will lose an hour.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

1,887 prisoners of unintentional crimes freed during spring

As many as 1,887 prisoners jailed for unintentional financial crimes were released over the spring. Blood Money Organization's director Asadollah Joolaei has said. The total debt of the prisoners who were freed over the aforesaid period valued at some 1.93 trillion rials (nearly \$46 million), Mehr news agency quoted Joolaei as saying. However, he explained that 44 percent of the total debt was forgiven by the plaintiffs.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“omni-”

■ **Meaning**: all, every
■ **For example**: The story is told by an **omniscient** fictional narrator.

PHRASAL VERB

Walk out on

■ **Meaning**: abandon
■ **For example**: Her husband walked out on her and their three children.

IDIOM

Back to the drawing board

■ **Explanation**: revising something from the beginning, typically after it has failed
■ **For example**: We need to go back to the drawing board on this project. I think it had some fundamental flaws from the start.

آزادی هزار و ۸۸۷ زندانی غیرعمد در بهار امسال

اسدالله جولایی مدیرعامل ستاد دیده کشور از آزادی ۱۸۸۷ زندانی جرایم غیرعمد در فصل بهار خبر داد. به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر جولایی افزود: مبلغ بدهی این زندانیان بالغ بر ۱۹۳ میلیارد تومان بود. مدیرعامل ستاد دیده کشور اظهار کرد: در فرآیند آزادی این افراد نزدیک به ۴۴ درصد از بدهی ۱۹۳ میلیارد تومانی مورد تقاضای طلبکاران گذشت شده است.

ICRC warns of 'desperate' situation as fighting continues in Libya

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has called the deteriorating situation in Libya as desperate, citing constant fighting, the collapse of the economy, and the destruction of basic infrastructure.

In a series of tweets, the ICRC said these factors have caused a "severe protracted crisis" that has led to the increased vulnerability of hundreds of thousands of Libyans.

"Collapsed economy and infrastructure has made life impossible in Libya," the ICRC tweeted.

"Seven years of war in Libya has driven over 500,000 people to flee their homes," the organization continued.

-Constant fighting across the country.
-Half a million people forced from their homes.

-Destruction of basic infrastructure.
All these have created a severe protracted crisis in Libya.

The result? Hundreds of thousands of Libyans are increasingly vulnerable.

"For Libyans trying to return home, there's not always much to return to. Houses, schools are often destroyed completely."

The group also cited the sabotaging of health facilities, water and electricity supplies, as well as the dangers of unexploded remnants.

As one of the few humanitarian organi-



zations active in Libya, the ICRC has worked on distributing food and aid to internally displaced people across the country, which has been gripped by tribal and factional fighting nearly seven years after the overthrow of former leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The existence of two rival legislatures - the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the House

of Representatives (HOR) based in eastern city of Tobruk - each with its own central bank and national oil company - highlights another challenge in the country's plight to enact the necessary reforms and, ultimately, hold elections.

On September 10, armed men stormed the headquarters of Libya's National Oil Company in Tripoli, engaging guards in

a deadly gun battle that left at least four dead, including two National Oil Company employees.

Last month, rival armed groups clashed in the capital Tripoli, resulting in dozens of people being killed.

The fighting was initiated by the Seventh Brigade, an armed group based in Tarhouna, 65km southeast of the capital, which launched a surprise offensive against rival militias and went on to seize control of the capital's only functioning airport, Mitiga.

At least 63 people were killed and 159 others - mostly civilians - were wounded. A state of emergency was declared on September 2, before a United Nations-backed ceasefire was reached two days later.

However, fighting has since ensued and nine people including two civilians were killed on Thursday in the capital's southern outskirts, according to emergency services spokesperson Osama Ali.

Thirteen others, including four civilians, were also wounded. Last week the UN envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame, had already reported 14 ceasefire violations.

The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on Thursday issued an appeal on Twitter urging the armed groups to abide by the ceasefire.

(Source: agencies)

Tanzania ferry disaster: Hundreds feared drowned in Lake Victoria

Tanzanian rescue workers have resumed the search for survivors feared drowned after a passenger ferry capsized in the south of Lake Victoria killing nearly 100 people.

Dozens of bodies were recovered on Friday morning when the rescue operation resumed at the crack of dawn.

Thirty-seven people were rescued after the MV Nyerere sank on Thursday near Ukara island in Africa's largest lake.

However, hopes were fading for more people to be pulled out of the water alive.

"People are aware that the hopes of finding survivors are almost nil," state television reported broadcasting footage of onlookers.

The boat had a capacity of 100 but it is still unknown how many people were on board.

The Reuters news agency reported it was difficult to establish a number because the person dispensing tickets drowned in the incident.

George Nyamaha, head of Ukerewe district council, said "more than a 100 passengers" were on board when the ferry sank. Local media reported numbers as high as 400 to 500.

Accidents like these are not uncommon on Lake Victoria and overloading is often to blame.

In 1996, a ferry disaster on Lake Victoria in the same region killed more than 500 people. In 2012, 145 people died in a ferry disaster in Tanzania's semi-autonomous archipelago of Zanzibar, in the Indian Ocean, on a vessel that was overcrowded.

(Source: agencies)



French far-right leader Le Pen refuses court-ordered psych exam

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen is refusing to undergo a court-ordered psychiatric exam for tweeting brutal images of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group's violence, comparing the demand to methods used

in totalitarian regimes.

A preliminary charge of distribution of violent images was filed in March against Le Pen, a lawmaker, after her immunity was lifted.

On Thursday, she tweeted a decision or-

dering a psychiatric exam that was dated Sept. 12 and gives her 10 days to modify questions to be asked. She said on BFM TV that totalitarian regimes use such methods against opponents to "make them look like they're crazy."

Le Pen's December 2015 tweets showed executions by ISIL terrorists, including the killing of American reporter James Foley. She posted them after the November 2015 Paris attacks by the ISIL that killed 130 people.

(Source: Washington Post)

UKIP launches populist manifesto, demands clean Brexit

Britain's anti-European Union United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) launched a set of populist policies on Friday hoping to revive their dwindling political influence and capitalize on outrage over the government's handling of Brexit.

Prime Minister Theresa May is struggling to sell her plan for a Brexit that would continue to see Britain abide by many EU rules. Growing unrest among pro-Brexit groups could scupper her leadership and thrust Britain into political crisis.

UKIP played a defining role in recent British history as the force that pressured former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron to call a referendum on leaving the EU, and then stoked the anti-establishment uprising behind the 2016 'leave' vote.

But, since finding itself on the winning side of the Brexit vote UKIP has struggled to influence the exit process, seeing its voter support evaporate and undergoing two years of inner turmoil to find a leader to replace the talismanic Nigel Farage.

On Friday, current leader Gerard Batten published a manifesto document that sought to rediscover the everyman appeal that once made the party a threat to larger rivals from across the British political spectrum.



"These policies are aimed at helping the people who form the backbone of Britain: ordinary workers and taxpayers, the unemployed who would like to work, and small and medium-sized business owners," Batten, a member of the European Parliament, said in a statement launching the 17-page manifesto.

"Its purpose is to make UKIP a populist party in the real meaning of the word - one whose policies are popular with voters."

The policies included a "complete and total" withdrawal from the EU, arguing that Britain should end all payments to the EU and adherence to the bloc's rules - a much more radical break than May is proposing.

Batten has been criticized, including by some former UKIP members, for engaging with causes championed by far-right groups, and he has described Islam as a "death cult".

Other policies, much of which are similar to previous UKIP positions, include selective and limited immigration, scrapping overseas aid, lower domestic taxes and a tougher approach to taxing multinational companies.

UKIP currently has no elected representatives in parliament and it gathered only 600,000 votes in a 2017 general election, compared to 3.8 million in 2015 - a fall from more than 12 percent of the total vote to less than 2 percent.

Nevertheless, in many marginal seats it has the power to influence which major party can win and, with no party clearly ahead in opinion polls, has the potential to affect the outcome of any future national election. Although an election is not scheduled until 2022, May's government remains fragile.

(Source: Reuters)

Vietnam President Tran Dai Quang dies after 'serious illness'

Vietnam's President Tran Dai Quang has died aged 61 after prolonged serious illness, according to state media.

Quang died in a military hospital in Hanoi on Friday from a "serious illness despite efforts by domestic and international doctors and professors", Vietnam Television reported.

Quang, one of the country's top three leaders but with mostly ceremonial duties, hosted

President Donald Trump during his first state visit to the communist country last year.

He had appeared thin and pale in public and was unstable on his feet last week when he hosted a welcoming ceremony for Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Hanoi.

Quang's last public appearance was at a Politburo meeting of the ruling Communist Party and a reception for a Chinese delegation on Wednesday. Originally from a small farming com-

munity 115 km south of Hanoi, Quang rose through party ranks to become a police general and member of Vietnam's powerful decision-making Politburo.

Quang was elected president in April 2016 with a reputation of being a tough leader with little tolerance for dissent.

He often appeared uncomfortable in the public eye and lacked the charisma of some of his peers in the upper echelons of the party.

In an interview with the AFP news agency in 2016 before a visit by the former French leader Francois Hollande, Quang read from a prepared statement and was quickly escorted from the room by staff when a question went off-script.

Vietnam has no paramount ruler and is officially led by the president, prime minister and Communist Party chief.

(Source: agencies)

Canada declares Myanmar Rohingya killings 'genocide'

Canadian legislators have unanimously voted to declare crimes committed against Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar military to be genocide.

The House of Commons endorsed on Thursday the findings of a United Nations fact-finding mission on Myanmar that found "crimes against humanity have been committed against the Rohingya" and that these acts were sanctioned by top Myanmar military commanders.

In a motion, Canadian legislators said they "recognize that these crimes against the Rohingya constitute genocide".

Rights organizations have accused Myanmar military of committing extrajudicial killings, gang rape, and arson

during their bloody campaign launched in August last year after army posts came under attack from Rohingya rebels.

More than 700,000 Rohingya people have been forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh, where they now live in cramped refugee camps. They also urged the UN Security Council (UNSC) to refer the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC), while also calling for Myanmar's generals to be investigated and prosecuted "for the crime of genocide".

"I want to underscore how tragic, how horrific the crimes against the Rohingya are," Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said. "We are leading an international effort for justice and accountability for the Rohingya."

Human rights observers called the declaration as a significant milestone. The UN report published last month said military generals, including Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing, must face investigation and prosecution for "genocidal intent" in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State, as well as crimes against humanity and other war crimes in the states of Kachin and Shan.

Myanmar denies any organized abuses. Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an agreement last year to repatriate the Muslim minority - but it has stalled as the Rohingya fear to return to Myanmar's Rakhine State without their safety and rights guaranteed.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. playing with fire with imposing new sanctions: Russia

China urges U.S. to withdraw sanctions or face 'consequences'

Russia has warned the United States against "playing with fire" by imposing new sanctions against the country, saying Washington will never succeed in "dictating terms" to Moscow.



On Thursday, the U.S. State Department announced it has added the names of further 33 Russians to its sanctions blacklist, bringing the total number of sanctioned individuals to 72 people.

Russian Foreign Ministry issued a strongly worded statement on Friday, warning Washington not to play with fire since "it can become dangerous."

"It would be good for them to remember there is such a concept as global stability which they are thoughtlessly undermining by whipping up tensions in Russian-American ties," said deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov.

"We recommend that Washington's operators of the sanctions machine at least superficially acquaint themselves with our history to stop going round in circles," Ryabkov added.

Ryabkov said that none of the rounds of sanctions had so far managed to force Russia to change its course.

"The numerous American 'black lists' increasingly repeat each other. It is funny but it is so," he said. "It seems like this has turned into a kind of national entertainment, because yesterday's were already the 60th anti-Russian measures since 2011."

Separately on Friday, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow John Huntsman said that the relationship between the two countries was "stressed."

"The months ahead will be key in stabilizing our relationship and deepening trust," Huntsman told a US investment forum in Moscow. "We must work on replenishing the level of trust between our officials."

China urges US to withdraw sanctions or face 'consequences'

Elsewhere, China has urged the United States to withdraw punitive sanctions imposed on the Chinese military over its purchase of fighter jets and missiles from Russia or "bear the consequences".

On Thursday, the U.S. State Department said Chinese purchases of SU-35 aircraft and S-400 surface-to-air missiles breached a U.S. sanctions law targeting Russia over its alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. election and actions in Ukraine.

But Beijing, on Friday, warned of consequences for Washington if it does not cancel those sanctions.

"The Chinese side expresses strong indignation over the above-mentioned unreasonable practices of the U.S. side," foreign ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang told journalists.

"The US actions have seriously violated the basic principles of international relations and seriously damaged the relations between the two countries and the two militaries," Geng said.

Moscow also warned that the U.S. was "playing with fire" and that the measures aimed at Russia and China undermined global stability.

"It would be good for them to remember there is such a concept as global stability which they are thoughtlessly undermining by whipping up tensions in Russian-American ties," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said in a statement.

The sanctions target China's Equipment Development Department (EDD) and its director, Li Shangfu, and have increased tensions between Washington and Beijing amid an escalating trade dispute.

The Trump administration also blacklisted 33 people and entities associated with the Russian military and intelligence services, adding them to a list under the 2017 sanctions law known as the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

While being added to the blacklist does not trigger sanctions, anyone doing business with a blacklisted person or entity could face penalties like those imposed on China.

The U.S. officials said the imposition of penalties on China was the first time that a third-party country was punished under CAATSA and suggested the White House could use the law in the future against countries purchasing equipment from Russia.

"The ultimate target of these sanctions is Russia," a senior U.S. administration official told journalists, insisting on anonymity. "CAATSA sanctions in this context are not intended to undermine the defense capabilities of any particular country. They are aimed at imposing costs on Russia in response to its malign activities."

Turkey is in talks regarding the purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia and India has also expressed interest in purchasing S-400s, moves which the U.S. opposes.

"You can be confident that we have spent an enormous amount of time talking about prospective purchases of things such as S-400s and Sukhois with people all around the world who may have been interested in such things and some who may still be," the US official added.

"We have made it very clear to them that these - that systems like the S-400 are a system of key concern with potential CAATSA implications."

(Source: agencies)

Tennis champion King joins LA Dodgers ownership group

Tennis Hall of Famer and social activist Billie Jean King has joined the Los Angeles Dodgers as a minority owner, the Major League Baseball franchise announced on Thursday. King, born and raised in southern California, said she and her partner Ilana Kloss were delighted to join an organization she perceived to be socially progressive. "The entire Dodger organization are a first-class operation that have proven to be leaders in sports on and off the field of play," she said.

"We share a commitment to equality and inclusion, including the LGBTQ community, and we hope to further expand the team's efforts in those areas as we move forward together."

Team owner and chairman Mark Walter welcomed King. "Just like Billie Jean and Ilana, the Dodger franchise has a history of and commitment to breaking barriers, inclusion and winning, and we're looking forward to them continuing to promote these attributes within our organization," Walter said.

King, 74, won 12 grand slam titles, including Wimbledon six times. (Source: Reuters)

Nadal to skip Asian tournaments

Rafael Nadal announced he will skip the Asian swing of the ATP tour because of his injured right knee.

He said on Twitter he won't play in upcoming tournaments in Beijing and Shanghai. The top-ranked Nadal retired in the semi-finals of the U.S. Open earlier this month. He was down two sets to Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina when he stopped play.

Knee pain has plagued the 32-year-old Spaniard off and on since at least 2007. Last year, he won the China Open in Beijing and lost to Roger Federer in the final of the Shanghai Masters. Nadal has won 17 Grand Slam titles, including 11 French Opens. (Source: Reuters)

North and South Korea to bid for 2032 Summer Olympics

North and South Korea will bid jointly for the 2032 Olympics, they announced Wednesday, in an ambitious plan built on hopes of deepening a diplomatic thaw catalysed by this year's Winter Games in the South. The idea, which would require an unprecedented level of cooperation and mutual trust on the long-divided Korean peninsula, was included in a joint statement issued after a Pyongyang summit between the North's leader Kim Jong Un and the South's President Moon Jae-in.

"The South and North agreed to actively participate jointly in international competitions including the 2020 Summer Olympics and to cooperate in bidding for the South-North joint hosting of the 2032 Summer Olympics," the statement said.

No other details were given.

The North's decision to participate in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February triggered a dramatic diplomatic turnaround on the peninsula this year. It came after tensions mounted the previous year, with the North carrying out multiple missile launches and its most powerful nuclear test to date, and Kim trading personal insults and threats of war with US President Donald Trump. The February games saw athletes from the two Koreas march together at the opening ceremony behind a unification flag showing an undivided peninsula. The two countries also formed a unified women's ice hockey side — a move initially controversial in the South, with critics saying that Seoul was depriving its own citizens of a chance to play on the Olympic stage.

Kim sent his sister Kim Yo Jong to Pyeongchang as his personal envoy, and the two leaders have since met three times as part of an ongoing diplomatic rapprochement. The two Koreas have continued their sports diplomacy, forming joint teams for the ITTF world table tennis championships and several events at the Asian Games in Indonesia, securing one gold, one silver and two bronze medals. They have also held friendly basketball matches.

Olympics chief Thomas Bach said this month he was open to talks with the two Koreas about marching and competing together at the 2020 Tokyo Games. It is a marked contrast to the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics, which Pyongyang boycotted after it demanded co-hosting rights and negotiations fell apart over how to share the events. (Source: AFP)

Sergio Aguero signs Manchester City contract extension to 2021

Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero has signed a one-year contract extension that will keep him at the club until June 2021.

Aguero, City's all-time leading scorer with 204 goals in 299 appearances, moved from Atletico Madrid in 2011, and the new deal means he will be at the Etihad Stadium for 10 years.

He signed a five-year deal in 2014 and a one-year extension in summer 2016, and will be 33 when his contract expires.

"I am happy for this additional year," Aguero said. "My idea was being here for 10 years. I've been here for seven years [and] it's going to be 10 when the contract expires."

"This was the main reason I signed. I'm very happy because they have treated me very well since the first day I got here. I'm very happy with everything that involves the club, my teammates, the staff and the management team."

Aguero has been linked with moves away from the Etihad since the arrival of Pep Guardiola but finished last season with more than 20 Premier League goals for a fourth successive campaign.

He had a knee operation at the end of last season and said he is playing pain-free for the first time in years.

"He has been so important to this club since his arrival in 2011 and he remains at the forefront of what we are want to achieve in the coming years," director of football Txiki Begiristain said. "We are fortunate to have had one of the best strikers in the world at our club for so many years and I'm sure our supporters will be thrilled with this news."

City have tied down a number of key players to new contracts in recent months with Kevin De Bruyne, David Silva, Gabriel Jesus, Fernandinho and Ederson all signing new deals. (Source: ESPN)

WADA votes to reinstate RUSADA amid widespread protests

LONDON (Reuters) — The ban on Russia's anti-doping agency RUSADA was lifted by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Thursday, subject to various conditions, in a decision greeted with dismay by campaigners.

Although the change will have no immediate effect on current bans on the Russian federations for athletics, weightlifting and paralympics, it opens the door for their return, following the reinstatement of the Russian Olympic Committee after the country was banned from this year's Winter Games in South Korea.

RUSADA was suspended in November, 2015 after an independent WADA report carried out by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren outlined evidence of massive state-backed, systematic doping and cover-ups in Russian sport. WADA has repeatedly said since that RUSADA would not be reinstated until it satisfied key criteria on a "roadmap for return", including recognizing the findings of the McLaren Report and allowing access to stored urine samples at RUSADA's Moscow laboratory.

At Thursday's WADA executive committee meeting in the Seychelles, members approved a lesser version of the first point - an acceptance of the IOC's Schmid Report, which endorsed the core findings of the McLaren Report - and set another "clear timeline" for the implementation of the second.

That means, after remaining banned for refusing access to the Moscow lab, RUSADA is now approved, but could be banned again if access continues to be denied.

"Today, the great majority of the (12-person) WADA Executive Committee (EXCO) decided to reinstate RUSADA as compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code, subject to strict conditions," WADA President Craig Reddie said.

According to WADA, the chair of its compliance review committee said a letter received from the Russian Ministry of Sport last week amounted to an acceptance of all the findings of the Schmid Report.

RUSADA director general Yuri Ganus told Reuters that more work needed to be done to secure the reinstatement but said Thursday's decision was a positive sign for Russia's suspended track and field athletes, weightlifters and paralympians.

WADA Vice-President Linda Helleland,



the most senior member of the agency's leadership to express opposition to reinstatement, said the decision cast a dark shadow over the credibility of the anti-doping movement. "As an organization, WADA's number one job is to be true to our values of fair sport," Helleland said in a statement. "And today we made the wrong decision in protecting the integrity of sport and to maintain public trust in the anti-doping work."

"Today we failed the clean athletes of the world."

'CLEAR ROADMAP'

Although the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reinstated Russia in February, the International Association of Athletics Federations' (IAAF) suspension remains in place.

Some Russian athletes have competed as neutrals in international competition after proving their anti-doping credentials.

The IAAF set out its own criteria for the reinstatement of the Russian Athletics Federation (RusAF) and said the latest move by WADA fulfilled one of three pre-conditions.

According to the IAAF, Russian authorities must still acknowledge that Ministry of Sport officials were implicated in the scheme to cover up the doping of Russian athletes, as described in the McLaren and Schmid reports. They must also provide access to data from testing samples at the Moscow lab.

"The setting of our own criteria and the process of evaluating progress against these criteria has served the sport of athletics well over the last three years," IAAF President Sebastian Coe said in a statement.

"So we will continue to rely on the task-force and our clear roadmap for RusAF reinstatement until we are satisfied that the conditions have been met."

'DEVASTATING BLOW'

WADA's decision came despite fierce opposition from athletes and other anti-doping bodies after WADA's review committee last week recommended that the Russian agency be reinstated.

"Today marked the biggest decision in WADA's history, and it delivered a devastating blow to the world's clean athletes,"

Travis Tygart, head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, said in a statement.

"By ripping up the very 'Roadmap' it created, WADA's decision to reinstate Russia despite the nation not having met the two remaining Roadmap conditions is bewildering and inexplicable."

Grigory Rodchenkov, the former RUSADA official whose evidence did much to expose the extent of the problem, said reinstatement under the current conditions would be "a catastrophe for Olympic sport ideals, the fight against doping and the protection of clean athletes."

Reddie acknowledged that WADA's decision would be criticized.

"When cheating is as rampant and as organized as it was in Russia... it undermines so much of what sport stands for," he said.

"The pressure on WADA to ensure that Russian sport is genuinely clean now and in the future is one that we feel very keenly and we will maintain the highest levels of scrutiny on RUSADA's operations and independence."

Laker LeBron already in 'mid-season' form, says Magic

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Los Angeles Lakers president Magic Johnson on Thursday said newly-acquired forward LeBron James is in excellent shape ahead of next week's training camp and will lead an up-tempo offense as the franchise attempts to return to NBA relevancy.

Johnson said the three-time NBA champion, who parted ways with the Cleveland Cavaliers over the summer to make the move out west, is a player-coach who has already set an example for the team's young core with his relentless work ethic.

"LeBron is already in mid-season form," Johnson, who won five championships as a player with Lakers in the 1980s, said at a press conference.

"He's shooting fade aways and three pointers from almost half court," he said. "You're sitting there saying man, 'thank god we signed him'. It's just beautiful to watch."

Johnson said the Lakers, who have missed the playoffs for the last five seasons, will look to push the basketball up the court this season as they try to unseat the similarly



speedy reigning champion Golden State Warriors. "It's going to be exciting because the pace will never

stop," he said. "It's going to be running, running and more running." James, 33, will be surrounded by 20-year-old Lonzo Ball, 22-year-old Kyle Kuzma and 23-year-old Josh Hart.

He will also have the help of some savvy veterans including NBA champions Javale McGee and Rajon Rondo as well as the sharpshooting Kentavious Caldwell-Pope.

Johnson said he especially hoped James' influence would rub off on second-year point guard Ball.

The Lakers first pick in the 2017 draft was underwhelming in his rookie season but Johnson said he has been working hard during the offseason to improve his game and physique.

"He has been in the weight room because we asked him to get stronger," said Johnson.

"He's starting to understand that he has to be better. But he understood that right after the season," he said.

The Lakers kick off their season on Oct. 18 with a visit to the Portland Trail Blazers before playing their first home game at the Staples Center against the Houston Rockets on Oct. 20.

Hangzhou to host 2022 Asian Para Games

Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, China will host the fourth edition of the Asian Para Games in 2022. The announcement was made by the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) ahead of the third edition which will take place in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 6-13 October. The confirmation comes following a visit to Hangzhou in July by APC President, Majid Rashed, and CEO, Tarek Souei, where they met with Yuan Jiajun, Governor of Zhejiang, Xu Liyi, Mayor of Hangzhou, Chen Guomei, Vice Mayor, Wang Hong, Vice Mayor and Zhong Wenjing, Chairman of Hangzhou Disabled Federation.

During the visit, the APC delegation was briefed that about 5.5 per cent of the total population of nearly 9.5 million people in Hangzhou city had an impairment and were taken through plans to provide facilities to fully integrate them into the community by 2020. In addition, they visited the sports facilities and viewed the venue that will



stage the 2022 Games Opening Ceremony.

"I am delighted to confirm that Hangzhou will host the 2022 Asian Para Games. It was clear from our visit in July that the local authorities are well on their way to creating excellent venues and facilities for the Games," Rashed said.

"We were impressed with their commit-

ment and enthusiasm for hosting this important regional Games, which is the second largest para-sport event after the Paralympic Games. We look forward to working closely with them to build on the legacy that from Indonesia 2018," the APC President added.

Hangzhou will organize an official delegation to attend the Closing Ceremony of the

upcoming Indonesia 2018 Asian Para Games in Jakarta to receive the flag, marking the formal handover from Indonesia to China.

A spokesperson for Hangzhou said.

"With regard to the fourth Asian Para Games, Hangzhou shall spare no efforts, under the theme of 'sunshine, harmony, self-improvement and sharing', to showcase the characteristics of China, the elegance of Zhejiang and the appeal of Hangzhou, carrying forward the Paralympian and humanitarian spirit, and making it a wonderful, unique and memorable sports event."

Hangzhou last hosted a major sporting event in 2011 when it staged the National Para Games, dubbed as mini-Paralympics for China. Hangzhou, the most populous city in Zhejiang province, received more than 160 million visitors in 2017 and was selected as one of the 15 global best tourism practices sample cities by the UNWTO at the same time. (Source: Paralympic.org)

Romano Fenati has Moto2 racing licence withdrawn

MILAN (AFP) - Moto2 rider Romano Fenati has been banned for two races for grabbing Italian rival Stefano Manzi's brake during the San Marino motorcycling Grand Prix on Sunday (Sept 9).

Both were competing at high speed around the Misano track when 22-year-old Kalex rider Fenati leaned over and pressed Manzi's brake lever. Manzi briefly lost his balance before regaining control of his Suter bike.

Fenati's actions followed Manzi's attempt to overtake his compatriot a few laps earlier. The pair had made contact as Manzi overtook on the inside, with both riders running off the track, losing several positions and dropping out of the points.

Fenati - a Moto2 rookie this year aboard a Marinelli

Snipers-run Kalex bike - was black-flagged and disqualified after 23 laps for "irresponsible riding".

The FIM MotoGP stewards panel later announced that Fenati would miss the next two races in Aragon, Spain on September 23 and Thailand on October 7 for having "deliberately attempted to cause danger to another rider".

"Riders must ride in a responsible manner which does not cause danger to other competitors or participants, either on the track or in the pit lane," the FIM said in a statement.

It is not the first time the Italian rider has been embroiled in controversy. He was forced to apologise for kicking out at Finnish rider Niklas Ajo during the Moto3 warm-up at the 2015 Argentinian Grand Prix.

He was dropped for disciplinary reasons during the 2016

season by the Sky Racing Team VR46, owned by Italian motorcycling star Valentino Rossi.

Fenati, who can appeal the ban, is 19th in the Moto2 standings with 14 points.

"We had a contact two turns before, but nothing to justify such a reaction, his gesture speaks for itself," said Manzi.

Manzi was also penalised and will start six places back on the grid for the next Grand Prix, for forcing Fenati off the track, shortly before the latter's outburst, when both were fighting for 12th position.

Italy's Francesco Bagnaia, of Kalex, won the Moto2 category race in Misano on Sunday ahead of Miguel Oliveira of KTM, to extend his lead over the Portuguese rider to eight points in the overall standings.

Iran defeat Australia in rematch at AVC Cup for Women

1 → The third set turned out to be a see-saw battle when both sides traded blows, with Rourke attacking powerfully at the net for Australia and Maedeh Borhani Esfahani orchestrating the Iranian defense. After seeing Iran take a 7-4 lead, Australia stormed back to win five successive points to surge ahead the closest rivals to 9-7. From then on, both sides gave the best they had which saw the score tied at 20-20. Rourke steered the Australians to the vital 23-21 lead, but they played with more mistakes to go down 22-25 in the set.

Australia become more prone with serving and attacking mistakes. In the fourth set, which saw Iran in leading way with three points ahead at 11-8. As the Iranians remained in superb form with improved defense and consistent play, Australia suffered a sudden drop from their best. Iran widened the gap to 16-9 and 23-15. Aussies did not want to give up easily and they fought back bravely with sharp spikes from Jennifer Sadler and well-placed serves from Beth Carey to come closer at 19-23, but Iran had enough to hold them off, with Maedeh attacking the last point for the team. Iran snatched the 25-20 win in the set.

With the dramatic 3-1 triumph, Iran advanced to contest the 5th-8th playoffs round on Saturday, while Australia will play their last match against Kazakhstan in the 9th-10th playoff on the same day.



Resan: We channeled winning mentality in Al Duhail comeback



Persepolis midfielder Bashar Resan credited winning mentality for his side's 3-1 win over Al Duhail in the second leg of the 2018 AFC Champions League semi-final on Monday.

The Iranian side came from 2-0 down on aggregate to record a 3-2 victory, with goals from Jalal Hosseini, and Godwin Mensha either side of a Sultan Al Brake own goal helping them turn the tie around at Azadi Stadium.

Coming into the home second leg with a slim one-goal disadvantage, Persepolis found themselves another goal down after 33 minutes as Al Duhail captain Karim Boudiaf capitalized on a poor defensive clearance.

Branko Ivankovic's men went into the dressing room 2-0 down on aggregate, but with a critical 45 minutes ahead of them, they came back onto the pitch with renewed drive.

Skipper Hosseini halved the deficit on the night, paving the way for a memorable comeback, before Al Brake succumbed to pressure from Resan to convert into his own net and Mensha scored the goal that sealed semi-final qualification.

"In the first half, we made a mistake in defending a set-piece and conceded, so that put a lot of pressure on us", said the Iraqi international.

"But we are winners; Persepolis is a team with a winner mentality, and we channeled that out in the second half. We were all determined to get back into it, worked really hard and took the chances

that came our way."

Monday's result ended a nine-match winning run for Al Duhail, who had been aiming to register a record tenth win in a single AFC Champions League campaign.

Having dominated the group stage and put eight goals past Al Ain over the two Round-of-16 legs, Al Duhail could only score once against Persepolis in Doha and looked a far cry from the side that cruised through the earlier stages.

"You could see Al Duhail were not as dominant as they have been throughout the earlier stages of the competition. We were successful in stopping them.

"Fans were a source of strength for us, they pushed us forward even when we went behind and made Azadi a difficult place for opponents to come to. I would like to thank them."

Persepolis made it back-to-back AFC Champions League semi-finals despite losing some of their biggest stars, without being able to replace them, and Resan believes team effort made up for the talent shortage.

"It was difficult for us as we lost some players and were unable to replace them due to the transfer ban on the club. So, we had to rely on promoting players from within.

"I was playing through an injury I sustained with the national team and one of my teammates was playing through injury too, but with everyone's efforts and hard work we were able to make it through."

(Source: the-afc)

Iran lose to Indonesia at AFC U-16 Championship



Indonesia secured a hard-fought 2-0 win over Islamic Republic of Iran in their opening AFC U-16 Championship Malaysia 2018 Group C match at the National Stadium on Friday.

With the partisan crowd cheering their team on, Indonesia went ahead in the fourth minute when Mochammad Supriadi broke free on the left flank and laid off a square pass to Amiruddin Bagus Alfikri who had the easiest of finishes to put Indonesia in front.

A minute later IR Iran came close to equalising in the fifth minute when Mahdi Seyedi glanced his header but Indonesia goalkeeper Ernando Ari Sutaryadi kept a cool head.

IR Iran found it hard to break down their opponents as Indonesia operated as a tight unit and were collectively adept at defending.

Boosted by the advantage, Indonesia controlled the pace of the match and were comfortable keeping possession as they came close to doubling their advantage in the 24th minute but Amanar Abdillah pulled his shot just wide off the left post.

IR Iran took their time to settle into the match and in the 25th minute Abolfazl Alizadeh tested Sutaryadi with a left-footed effort which forced the Indonesian custodian into a diving save.

Unfazed by IR Iran's movement with the ball, Indonesia surged forward and was handed a golden opportunity in the 36th minute when Supriadi found himself in a one-on-one situation with IR Iran's shot-stopper Amirhossein Nikpour who

raced off his line to clear the danger.

Two minutes before the break, the young Team Melli pushed for an equaliser and Hossein Hajizadehkhorsani found space in the Indonesian penalty box before unleashing a powerful shot but his effort was parried to safety by Sutaryadi.

Indonesia showed off their attacking flair at the start of the second half as they kept up the pressure and almost scored their second goal in the 51st minute when Bagus broke free down the middle but with the goal gaping at his mercy, Bagus missed the sitter.

IR Iran played with more confidence as the Central Asians created more chances but they were still unable to break the deadlock as Indonesia's backline was rock solid.

In the 79th minute captain David Maulana broke free on the left but his surging run at the edge of the area was cut short by defender Amirhossein Azizi.

Shortly after, IR Iran was left exposed at the back and was caught by Indonesia on the counter as they made their way into the Iranian box but Bagus could not convert his effort after firing just wide off the right post.

IR Iran's best effort in the half came in the 85th minute through a set piece but Hossein Shaverdi's curling free kick missed its mark by a whisker.

With the referee signaling five minutes of additional time Indonesia pressured IR Iran at the back and doubled the lead through Amirussin Bagas Arizqi's effort in the 90th minute to send the crowd into raptures.

(Source: the-afc)

From Iran to the UK via Russia, Belgium & France – how Saied Ezatolahi came to sign for Reading

The Iranian international joined Royals on a season-long loan deal at the end of August.

Reading boss Paul Clement has revealed the complex story behind the loan signing of Iranian midfielder Saied Ezatolahi.

The 21-year-old joined Royals on Friday, August 31 - the final day of the loan transfer window from Russian outfit FC Rostov.

The midfielder, who represented his country at the World Cup, only linked up with his new teammates at Hogwood on Monday though after complications surrounding the deal.

Clement admitted issues regarding the player's work permit, Visa and international clearance led to his arrival in the UK being delayed by several weeks.

And the move saw the player spend time in four different countries over the past couple of months to finalize the transfer. "We were pleased to get it over the line – it was a bit complicated because you're dealing with Russia and he's Iranian so you have Visa and international clearance issues," said Clement.

"He had his medical in Belgium with KSV Roeselare (club owned by Reading co-owner Dai Xiu Li) because it was difficult to get him to the UK to do it because of the Visa.

"It was brought to my attention late in the transfer win-



down – it wasn't the last day [when we signed him].

"We had a week gathering as much intelligence as possible, watching him and speaking to those he had worked with.

"I was able to have a good conversation with Carlos Quieroz (Iran manager) who spoke really highly of him and then I spoke to the player and got a really good feel about him.

"So we got over the line a really complicated deal. I'm looking forward to working with him and I think he will be a really good addition for us."

Ezatolahi joined Rostov from Atletico Madrid in

January 2016.

His loan with Reading is the third time he has been sent out by the Russian club following spells with Anzhi Makhachkala and Amkar Perm.

The Iranian turned in a man-of-the-match display for his country in a 1-0 friendly win over Uzbekistan last Tuesday and he then had to travel to Paris to collect his Visa two days later to gain entry into the UK.

Clement added: "After the World Cup he had some rest time and he did go back to Rostov for a couple of weeks where he was training.

"Then there was a period when he wasn't there and was back in Iran.

"So he lost a bit of time but fortunately during that period when he was with the national team he was training.

"He played against Uzbekistan so he might need a bit of time [to get up to speed] but not that much."

Clement said: "I hope he has a long future here. The situation at the moment is that he is on loan for the season.

"When we signed him it was outside the permanent transfer window so it is an initial loan.

"But hopefully he does really well and it's a long-term thing."

(Source: football.london)

Former England coach Eriksson linked with Tractor Sazi: report

SPORTS TEHRAN — Former England and Manchester City coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has reportedly been lined up to coach Iranian football club Tractor Sazi.



The Tabriz based football team parted company with Welshman John Toshack after three months.

Under guidance of the former Real Madrid coach, Tractor Sazi snatched nine points from six games in Iran Professional League (IPL).

Tractor Sazi sacked Toshack after the star-studded outfit were knocked out of the Iran's Hazfi Cup in penalty shootout against Sanat Naft.

Now, Tractor Sazi, who are trying to win IPL title for the first time ever, have been reportedly linked with Eriksson.

Most recently, the Swede spent six months in China's second division with Shenzhen.

Local media reports suggest that former Werder Bremen coach Alexander Nouri is also a candidate to replace Toshack.

Persepolis duo nominated for ACL Goal of the Week

SPORTS TEHRAN — Two goals from Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini and striker Godwin Mensha have been nominated for the AFC Champions League Goal of the Week.

Persepolis defeated Al Duhail of Qatar 3-1 Monday night and booked a place in the AFC Champions League semi-finals thanks to two goals from Hosseini and Mensha.

Now, the two players are vying with Shoma Doi from Kashima Antlers and Kim Shin-wook of Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors to win the award.

Fans can vote for the player of their choosing on the link below: <http://www.the-afc.com/competitions/afc-champions-league/sponsor/goaloftheweek/vote-for-the-allianz-afc-champions-league-goal-of-the-week-6>

Iran move down one spot in FIFA ranking

SPORTS TEHRAN — Despite an away win over Uzbekistan, Iran national football team have moved one place down to 33rd in the latest FIFA World Ranking released on Thursday.

Australia, who had relinquished the top spot to Iran in the August rankings, remained as Asia's second best team at 43rd while Japan moved up one spot to 54th.

Korea Republic improved to 55th, up two places and are the continent's fourth best ranked team.

Saudi Arabia completed Asia's top five, moving down one spot to 71st. Belgium and World Cup winners France are the first teams to share top spot in the FIFA rankings in the classification's 25-year history.

Outside of the top ten, two Nations League wins for Ukraine (29th, up 6) over Czech Republic (47th, down 3) and Slovakia (26th, unchanged) means that they are the month's biggest movers, while Germany (12th, up 3) have started to edge back toward the upper reaches.

The biggest leap in terms of points is in Africa, however, with Kenya (107th, up 5) clinching 22 points – 17.9 of which thanks to a 1-0 win over Ghana (51st, down 6) in CAF Africa Cup of Nations qualifying. As a result of that defeat to Kenya, the Black Stars join Slovenia (61st, down 6), as the biggest fallers of the month.

Among the 154 matches played over the past month, the CONCACAF Nations League qualifiers have also resulted in some notable climbs, with Nicaragua (128th, up 4), St Lucia (166th, up 4), Belize (160th, up 3) and Aruba (185th, up 3) all moving up the table. Meanwhile, Lebanon (77th, up 2), Luxembourg (82nd, up 3) and Kosovo (138th, up 3) – the latter courtesy of their first competitive win – are all currently in their highest-ever ranking position.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 25 October 2018.

Iran Greco-Roman team crowned world champion

IRNA — Iran's national junior Greco-Roman wrestling team won four gold and two bronze medals to rank first in the 2018 Junior World Championships in Trnava, Slovakia.

Pouya Nasserpour, Amin Kavianinejad, Mohammad Hadi Saravi and Amin Mirzazadeh snatched the gold medals in 55, 72, 87 and 130 kg weight categories respectively while Alireza Nejati and Yousef Husseinvand won two bronze medals in the 60 and 67 kg weight classes.

Iran took the first place with 136 points followed by Russia with 131 points and Armenia with 83 points in the 2018 Junior World Championships underway in the Slovak city of Trnava from September 17-22.

In the 2017 Junior World Championships held in Finland, the Iranian junior Greco-Roman team took the first place by winning three gold, one silver and one bronze medals.

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Belarus festival hosts “Momma Yerma”

A R T TEHRAN — The Creative Theatre Company from Tehran is competing in the 15th Teatralny Kufar International Student and Youth Theater Festival in Minsk, Belarus with “Momma Yerma”.

Farzin Nobarani is the director of the troupe participating in the Professional Young category.



Bitia Azizaqli (L) and Melina Qadimi act in a scene from “Momma Yerma” at Tehran’s Entezami Theater on February 1, 2017. (Tehran Picture Agency/Milad Beheshti)

“Momma Yerma” has been written based on Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca’s “Yerma” that deals with the themes of isolation, passion and frustration but also the underlying themes of nature, marriage, jealousy and friendship.

Groups from Belarus, Great Britain, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Croatia, Uzbekistan and several other countries are participating in the festival, which opened on September last Wednesday and will run until September 28.

Iranian troupes are the frequent visitors to the Teatralny Kufar festival.

The Papion Theater Group from Tehran won the Grand Prix for “The Chairs” during the festival in 2014.

Che Guevara poster artist looks back on 50 revolutionary years

DUBLIN (Reuters) — Fifty years after creating the Che Guevara poster that still adorns student bedrooms around the world, Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick is delighted at its ubiquity, but concerned at its exploitation for commercial gain.



Artist Jim Fitzpatrick who has created an Irish postage stamp using the poster of Che Guevara he created in 1968 entitled ‘Viva Che!’ based on a photograph by Alberto Korda poses for a picture at his studio in Dublin, Ireland October 11, 2017. (Reuters/Clodagh Kilcoyne)

Fitzpatrick created the image in 1968 from a photograph of the Argentine Marxist revolutionary taken in 1960 by Cuban photographer Alberto Korda, and made it available for free to anyone who wanted to use it.

It was quickly adopted by left-wing movements, appearing on T-shirts, posters and leaflets, but has also been used by companies to brand products - something that annoyed Fitzpatrick and pushed him to reclaim the copyright in 2010.

“It didn’t bother me at first, I couldn’t give a hoot who was doing T-shirts,” he told Reuters.

“But when a big commercial company, like a cigarette company, who have literally stolen my image, produce cigarette packs with my image twisted around the other way, left to right, as though that solves the copyright problem, then I have severe problems, because I detest that kind of commercial exploitation.”

Speaking in his home studio in Sutton, north of the Irish capital Dublin, Fitzpatrick recounted how the image was created.

“I did a couple of posters of it, but the one that matters, the red and black one that everyone is familiar with, the more iconic one, that was done after (Guevara’s) murder and execution while a prisoner of war, for an exhibition in London called Viva Che,” he said, referring to Guevara’s death at the hands of Bolivian forces in 1967.

“The Che is very simple. It’s a black and white drawing that I added red to. The star was painted by hand in red,” he said, displaying a large print of the image.

“Graphically, it’s very intense and straightforward, it’s immediate, and that’s what I like about it.”

Fitzpatrick said he offered the copyright of the image to the Guevara family, who have not yet returned the documents necessary for him to turn it over to them, and that he may bequeath it to a local charity instead.

Doc by Mona Zandi reviews Gelmali tradition in Lorestan

A R T TEHRAN — Mona Zandi, the director of the acclaimed drama “Friday Evening”, has made a documentary named “Gloomy Moments” that studies Gelmali, a ritual tradition observed in the month of Muharram in Lorestan Province in western Iran.

The documentary film premiered at the Rosewood Café in Tehran last Monday during a special ceremony attended by Zandi, actor Alireza Shojanuri and film critic Maziar Fekri Ershad.

“Gloomy Moments” puts a spotlight on the Gelmali tradition, which is observed annually on Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala in 680 CE.

In this old tradition, the people of Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan Province mix clay with water in big ponds in major squares and streets for people to apply on their faces and clothes as a sign of mourning. Some people collect dry wood and light fires to warm mourners who have covered themselves with mud.

“I had not worked on religious topics before, and this project took me about 10 months to carry out research on Ashura rituals in 30 different provinces, which resulted in compiling a 200-page book,” Zandi said at the premiere of the documentary.

“I finally chose Khorramabad because of their religious and mystic rituals and traveled there with my crew,” she added.

“While doing research I saw a great number of photos about the religious ceremonies and rituals in this province



A man lies in the pond of mud practicing the Gelmali tradition in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province, on Ashura 2017. (AFP/Atta Kenare)

especially on the day of Ashura, which assured me I wanted to choose this location for the documentary,” she said.

Zandi said, “I actually believe that the Gelmali tradition is a type of cleansing of

the spirit. All walks of people take part in this tradition. They all plunge into the mud and try to release themselves from their egos. I think people reach the zero degree and then return back once again through

this tradition.”
“I can say this was a rare and unique experience for everyone, and can be a modern event despite being traditional,” she concluded.

Sitcom “Centipede” lifts Iran box office record



Reza Attaran (L) and Javad Ezzati act in a scene from “Centipede” by Abolhassan Davudi.

A R T TEHRAN — Director Abolhassan Davudi’s sitcom “Centipede” starring Reza Attaran, Iran’s Leading Film Figure of the Year, has hit a new record at Iranian box offices this summer by grossing over 350 billion rials (about \$8.5 million), the Persian service of ISNA reported on Friday.

Iran’s box office record was held by Saman Moqaddam’s comedy drama “Sperm Whale 2: Roya Selection”, which earned \$4.9 million last summer.

The story of “Centipede” is set in the 1980s and 1990s. It is about Reza, a delinquent who has lost one of his legs in an accident. Reza finds that Elham, a girl from a wealthy family, has vowed to marry a war

veteran. He begins making a great attempt to disguise himself as a war veteran due to his physical disability.

“The Lost Strait”, Bahram Tavakkoli’s war drama, is the second highest-grossing movie at Iran’s box offices this summer, earning over \$900,000. Comic movie “Woman’s Enemy” by Karim Amini stands next by grossing over \$700,000.

Iran’s box offices earned over \$14 million this summer. There has been no significant increase in box office receipts compared to the same period in the previous year.

Iranian analysts have said that the 2018 FIFA World Cup games and Muharram mourning season have caused a slump in Iranian box office receipts.

Artworks on Ashura on display in Tehran exhibit



A teahouse painting by Mohammad Farahani is on display in an exhibition at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran.

A R T TEHRAN — The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran is playing host to an exhibition titled “Sign” displaying artworks by veteran Iranian artists on the theme of Ashura, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala in 680 CE.

With the help of symbols and signs, the artists have reflected their love towards the third Imam of the Shia through their paintings, sculptures and photos.

“Elegy of Water”, a painting by Hossein Khosrojerdi, depicts Hazrat Abbas (AS), brother of Imam Hussein (AS) whose hands are filled with water but he refuses to drink.

A painting by Abdolhamid Qadirian depicts Zoljanah, the wounded horse of Imam Hussein (AS) walking through the burning tents.

The exhibition also showcases a huge painting by Nasser Palangi named “Shroud of Blood”. It illustrates a white shroud over a beheaded body, referring to Imam Hussein (AS) who was brutally beheaded at the battle of Karbala.

Other artworks belong to Zabihollah Mohammadi, Mojtaba Musavi, Kurosh Golnari and Alireza Adambaskan to name a few.

The exhibit will be running until September 25, at the Forum located on Musavi St., Taleqani Ave.

China looks to restrict imported current affairs TV content

HONG KONG (REUTERS) — China is looking to tighten regulation of overseas-produced content, especially blocking current affairs shows from being shown in the country.

Chinese regulators will restrict film, TV series and animation that will be aired on domestic television

stations or online video platforms, a draft guidance by the National Radio and Television Administration, showed on Thursday.

Current affairs-related content would be particularly targeted, with the administrations saying they would not allowed to be introduced to the country.

The move comes amid a broader clamp-down targeting online content from livestreams and blogs to mobile gaming.

In July, China’s version of U.S. broadcaster NBCUniversal’s satire show “Saturday Night Live” (SNL) was temporarily suspended from a domestic video site.

Female empowerment, 100 years ago, at heart of “Colette”

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — “Colette” is not your usual period drama.

Beneath the corsets and petticoats lies a turn-of-the-20th-century real life tale of feminism and gender politics that is just as relevant today, the film makers say.

“Colette”, opened in U.S. movie theaters on Friday, tells the story of French novelist Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (Keira Knightley) who marries charming older writer Henry “Willy” Gauthier-Villars (Dominic West) and moves from rural France to Paris.

Under pressure, she agrees to ghost-write for her husband what turns out to be a best-selling novel. She later fights him over creative ownership of the book, divorces him.

Knightley, whose previous historical movies include “Pride & Prejudice” and “The Duchess”, said she was taken aback by how current the “Colette” script felt.

“The conversations we are having in the film about gender politics and about



Actor Keira Knightley arrives for the Canadian premiere of the movie “Colette” at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada September 11, 2018. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

feminism are still exactly what we are having today,” the British actress told Reuters.

“There’s something kind of tragic that a hundred years later we’re still talking about this and we still haven’t figured it out,” she added.

As well as depicting Colette’s fight for independence, the movie portrays her as a pioneer of a new gender landscape.

With metal skulls and horns, Turkish artist re-interprets ancient stories

ISTANBUL (Reuters) — In a disused hangar in Istanbul, Turkish artist Ahmet Gunestekin uses thousands of metal human skulls and twisting, spiky animal horns to re-tell some ancient myths in a towering, fearsome installation.

Gunestekin says his work “Chamber of Immortality” draws on the Epic of Gilgamesh - the Sumerian king who tried in vain to find the secret of everlasting life, and on the closely related Biblical story of Noah, whose ark some believe landed on Mount Ararat, Turkey’s highest peak.

The centerpiece is an enormous metal skull with a twisting animal horn jutting from its mouth, made up of 11,000 smaller skulls, all crafted by hand. Around it sit two curved walls made of yet more skulls, some of which sprout animal horns from their ears, temples and mouths.

The large skull represents Noah, while the tongue-like horn that spills from its mouth represents animals, Gunestekin said. “In a way, it shows how the concepts



Turkish artist Ahmet Güne?tekin poses next to his artwork Chamber of Immortality in Istanbul, Turkey of human and animal are nested within one another,” he said.

The structure, which took 4-1/2 years and \$1 million to create, is inspired by Gobekli-tepe, a 12,000-year-old temple in Turkey that this year became a UNESCO World Heritage site.

A self-taught artist, he is known for unconventional techniques to depict oral narratives, myth and legends mainly from Anatolian and Greek civilizations.