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## ARTICLE

**Hanif Ghaafari**  
Political analyst

### Europe's support for JCPOA: Actions speak louder than words

Iran is calling for keeping the European countries in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), including Germany, to save it, without the participation of the United States. But the Germans are reluctant to continue to cooperate with Iran due to U.S. secondary sanctions.

After the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, the Europeans have expressed their regret and announced their support for keeping JCPOA without the U.S.

Maya Kuchianchik, the spokesperson for the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, said recently that Europe should work with other international powers to keep the deal. However, some European companies, including German companies, have left Iran, which shows the lack of resolve some people in Europe.

The double standards of Europeans and their lack of trustworthiness were concerns that was posed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the very early days after the announcement of the departure of America from the JCPOA. "I do not trust these three (European) countries. If you want to sign an agreement, you first need to obtain a practical guarantee, otherwise they will do the same as the U.S. did," he said.

German officials promised to cooperate with Iran following the withdrawal of U.S. from JCPOA. In this regard, German Ambassador to Tehran Michael Klor-Berchtold, said: "German officials have always focused on the consolidation and strengthening of relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in various fields."

Germany's economy minister Peter Altmaier also said: "We will not let Washington dictate our trade relations with other countries and that's why we stand by the Vienna nuclear agreement to prevent Iran from producing atomic weapons. German companies should be allowed to continue to invest in Iran as much as they want and the German government is looking for ways together with its European allies to ensure that financial transactions can still take place." **→7**

### U.S. warns India of sanctions over defense deal with Russia

**INTERNATIONAL**  
**d e s k**

**TEHRAN** — Last week, Narendra Modi government in New Delhi cleared the way for a lucrative \$2.2-billion frigates deal with Russia, which came after India had signed a historic defense deal with the U.S.

Trump administration has imposed sanctions on Russia and declared that any country that engages in defense or intelligence sharing with Russia could also be subject to sanctions. So, there was lot of pressure on New Delhi to cancel the deal, but it still went ahead with it.

According to a report in India's state-owned news agency, the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) that imposes sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Russia, has the potential to affect India's defense purchases

as it is planning to buy five S-400 Triumf missile air defense systems from Russia for around \$4.5 billion.

The purchase of major military equipment like the multi-billion-dollar S-400 Triumf missile system from Russia would be considered as a "significant transaction" and has a potential for imposing tough US sanctions, the Trump administration said on Friday.

Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order, paving the way for slapping crippling sanctions on countries and foreign entities and individuals violating the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

A U.S. official, quoted in the report, said that the ultimate target of these sanctions was Russia. "CAATSA sanctions in this context are not

intended to undermine the defense capabilities of any particular country. They are instead aimed at imposing costs upon Russia in response to its malign activities," he said.

"Those malign activities are undertaken to compete with the U.S. and its allies and partners. This is for the first time that the US has sanctioned anyone under Section 231 of CAATSA, which focuses upon, those who engage in significant transactions with entities that appear on the LSP (List of Specified Persons)," the official added.

U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis, at the recent 2+2 Dialogue in New Delhi, had said that the sanctions aren't intended to adversely impact countries like India. "They are intended to have an impact the sanctioned country, which is Russia." **→6**

### Russia rejects Israeli findings on downed plane

Russia has rejected the findings of an Israeli investigation into the deadly crash of a Russian military aircraft in the Syrian province of Latakia, and called on Tel Aviv to launch a new probe into the matter.

The Israeli Haaretz newspaper said on Friday that the Russians had not accepted Israel's findings, which considered Russia and Syria responsible for the downing of a Russian Ilyushin 20 reconnaissance aircraft some 35 kilometers off the coast of Latakia as it was returning to a nearby Russian base earlier in the week. 15 Russian servicemen were killed in the incident.

Haaretz' report came after an Israeli delegation led by Amikam Norkin, the regime's air force commander, visited Moscow to brief Russian

officials on Tel Aviv's initial investigation of the incident.

The paper said the visit failed to defuse the crisis and the Kremlin rejected the Israeli conclusion that Syrian forces were to blame for the incident.

During their meetings in Moscow, Norkin's delegation claimed that the Syrian military had fired more than 20 missiles – including the missile that hit the Russian plane – "in an unprofessional manner."

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an Israeli military official said the Israeli warplanes were "nowhere near the Russian plane when it was shot down," adding that the aircraft had been fired upon at a point when Israel's aircraft were already landing in Israel.

The delegation claimed that the Russians

did have sufficient advance notice, but failed to divert the plane from harm's way after it had completed its surveillance mission.

Earlier, the Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv had censured 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 the deaths of 15 servicemen," it said in a tweet, adding that Russia would "take all necessary measures to eliminate the threat to life and security of our military fighting against terrorism." **→13**

### We treasure our missiles more than ever: Rouhani

**POLITICS**  
**d e s k**

**TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that under the shadow of threats Iran now values its missile power more than ever and compared U.S. President Donald Trump's abrogation of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran to the behavior of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein who violated the 1975 Algiers Agreement and launched a war against Iran in 1980.

Speaking at a military parade marking the anniversary of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran on September 22, 1980, Rouhani predicted as Saddam was isolated internationally "Mr. Trump" will also find himself in such a situation.

Rouhani said Trump has launched economic war against Iran but the end of this war will be "much sweeter and quicker" than Saddam's war against Iran. **→2**

### Armed forces can counter any threat: Larijani

**POLITICS**  
**d e s k**

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Saturday that the armed forces are ready to counter any threat.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces have reached a power that are able to counter any drunken bully," Larijani said during a speech at a military parade held in the port city of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

Larijani also said, "The armed forces are also ready to help any friendly and neighboring country in the region and help their friends to stand against the U.S. excessive demands."

Military parades were held across Iran on Saturday to mark the war that Saddam Hussein, the ill-fated Iraqi military adventurer, launched against Iran on Sept. 22, 1980.

### Saudi trying to stop Yemen war crimes probe: HRW

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has condemned attempts by the regime in Riyadh and its ally the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to stop an investigation into crimes committed in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are trying to shut down a UN-backed war crimes investigation in Yemen, HRW said on Friday.

The 47-member United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva is divided into two distinct groups.

One group made up of European countries and Canada calls for a one-year extension after investigators issued a damning report saying the conflicting governments of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE could be responsible for war crimes in Yemen.

The second group, led by Arab state Tunisia on behalf of the Saudi-led coalition, makes no mention of extending the probe but calls for Yemen's almost defunct National Commission of Inquiry to continue investigating the conflict. **→13**



## ARTICLE

**Syed Zafar Mehdi**  
Journalist  
from New Delhi

### Why Zainab's (SA) mandate is heavier than Hussain's (AS)

Ashura was marked across the world with tremendous religious fervor this weekend. Massive processions were taken out in different countries to pay glowing tribute to the martyrs of Karbala. Mourners wore black dresses, recited soul-stirring elegies and reaffirmed their pledge to uphold the sacrosanct principles exemplified by the grandson of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) on the desert plains of Karbala more than 1400 years ago.

Ashura is over but Muharram is not. The tragedy of Karbala does not culminate with the killing of Imam Hussain and his companions. It begins after that. Imam Hussain's (AS) mandate is over. The 'Master of the Martyrs' has returned to his Lord, well pleased, obliging the command of his creator in Surah Fajr.

Hussain (AS) chose death with dignity rather than life with humiliation, raising the slogan of 'Hayhaat mina Zilla' (never to humiliation). He gave blood to revive human values, to uproot despotism, to pave the ground for Islamic awakening and social reformation. He accomplished his task.

Zainab bint Ali's (SA) mandate has now begun. Her ordeal has also begun. She will be paraded through the crowded marketplaces of Kufa and Shaam, manacled and chained, along with other female members and children of the holy household. Yet, she sees beauty in her ordeal. The beauty of God.

Zainab (SA) is no ordinary woman. She is the daughter of Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS) and Fatima bint Mohammad (SA). She is Fasihah (skillfully fluent), Balighah (intensely eloquent) and Alimah Ghayr Mu'allamah (who has knowledge without being taught).

Her mission is equally important, to reveal the truth, to unmask the tyrants, to be an eloquent tongue of her brother's blood.

Martyrs gave blood and now survivors have to convey the message of that blood to future generations. Zainab's (SA) mandate is heavier than her brother's mandate. If blood has no message, it remains unspoken in history. She is well aware of her mandate and responsibilities. **→6**



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### Blossoms festival: First graders celebrate school year

**SOCIETY**  
**d e s k**

**TEHRAN** — "Jashn-e Shokufeha", literally meaning "blossoms festival", was held on Saturday nationwide in elementary schools, which were host to many students who celebrated their first school year.

Yesterday, many little students glowing in colorful uniforms were walking hand in hand with their parents down the streets to enter schools and classrooms for the first time, some of whom grinning cheerfully imagining themselves in white doctor uniforms in the future and some others with teary eyes and a bit of anxiety being parted from their parents. **→12**



## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



### Putin says ready to help Iran in terror fight

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that Russia is ready to help Iran fight terrorism.

In a phone conversation with President Rouhani, Putin expressed condolences over the terrorist attack in Iran's southwestern city of Ahvaz which left 25 people killed and over 60 wounded.

The Pakistani government also issued a statement condemning the attack. "Pakistan has strongly denounced the attack on Iranian military parade. In a statement, the foreign office said that Pakistan is against terrorism and in this hour of grief, it stands with families of victims."

Iraqi Parliament Deputy Speaker Hassan Karim al-Kaabi also condemned the attack and expressed sympathy with Iran.

Alistair Burt, the British minister of state for the Middle East and North Africa, also tweeted a message of condolence on the tragedy.



### Military chief: Armed forces more ready than ever to defend Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said on Saturday that the armed forces "are ready more than ever" to defend the country.

However, he said Iran will never initiate a war against any country.

Pointing to military parades held in various cities in Iran on Saturday, Baqeri said that the armed forces showed their power to the people.

The senior general also noted that the armed forces have been able to build defense equipment which is a "source of pride".



### Zarif, Larijani and Alavi discuss CFT: MP

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Behrouz Nemati, spokesman for the parliament presiding board, announced on Saturday that Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi were scheduled to discuss the Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) convention late on Saturday.

After the meeting, Larijani will decide upon discussing the issue at the parliament, he added.

Iran agreed in May to join the CFT conditionally.



### General urges U.S. to leave West Asia

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military adviser to the Leader, said on Saturday that Iran is seeking to establish security in the West Asia region and urged the U.S. to leave the region.

"Iran has taught the regional governments and people that it is possible to establish security in the Persian Gulf and the West Asia region without the presence of the U.S.," the major general said.

Iran has been able to help establish security and peace and in the region, the former IIRGC chief remarked, adding security will not last in the region without Iran's help.



### Iran to sue London-based Iran International channel

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to Britain Hamid Baeidinejad tweeted on Saturday that Iran will file a complaint against the London-based Iran International television network for airing an interview with Ahvaz National Resistance spokesman who claimed responsibility for the deadly terrorist attack in the southwestern city of Ahvaz on Saturday morning.

Ambassador Baeidinejad called the airing of the interview "shameful".

The Iranian embassy wants Ofcom as an oversight body to seriously counter this action which constitutes an example of spreading terrorism and violence, the ambassador said.



### Iran helping 30 countries in area of security

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, the deputy army chief for coordination affairs, said on Saturday that Iran has been helping 30 countries in the area of regional security.

"We have helped 30 countries in the area of regional security. We passed the Suez Canal for the first time and anchored in Lattakia which means we passed the Zionist regime's beaches without responding to the regime's stations," he said.

Elsewhere, he noted that based on international law, Iran is permitted to sail in international waters.

# We treasure our missiles more than ever: Rouhani

Iranian president likens Trump to Saddam Hussein



### Saddam Hussein abolished the 1975 Algiers Agreement and invaded Iran and Trump withdrew the 2015 nuclear agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

"With your threats we will treasure our missiles more than ever," Rouhani asserted in open reference

to threats of military attack against Iran by Israel and Trump's White House.

**1 →** "Saddam's invasion of Iran started under the pretext that the 1975 Agreement was not a good agreement for himself and for Iraq. Today, 38 years since the invasion of Saddam, violation of an agreement is being repeated once again (this time by Trump)," Rouhani told senior military officials.

The 1975 Algiers Agreement was an accord between Iran and Iraq to settle border disputes, however Saddam annulled the treaty on September 1980 and invaded Iran on September 22 of that year.

Also, on May 8, Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the international nuclear agreement backed by the UN Security Council resolution 2231. He did this despite the fact that the other parties to the accord, including the European Union, Germany, France, Britain, China and Russia, insisted that they will stick to the deal and warned the United States against such a move.

Only the Israeli prime minister and royal families in Saudi Arabia and the UAE have expressed happiness over Trump's exit from the nuclear agreement and the reimposition of sanctions on Iran.

Rouhani said as those who backed Saddam were forced to repent and the United Nations finally declared Saddam as the initiator of the war against Iran "such a thing will happen to Trump, and what happened to Saddam will happen to America".

Rouhani also reiterated Tehran's long-held position that Iran will not compromise on its deterrent missile program.

## Tehran: U.S. accusations aimed at psychological warfare on Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Tehran has dismissed the recent claims by U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert that Iran is responsible for any attack on the U.S. diplomatic sites in Iraq, saying such accusations are aimed at waging psychological warfare.

"American officials are rehashing groundless and unfounded remarks, leveling accusations and waging psychological warfare concerning its diplomatic sites in Iraq [and] currently engaging in such ridiculous and sus-

picious propaganda [efforts] and projectionism in order to escape the consequences of their own despicable and clumsy measures," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

It seems that American officials cannot quit making regular and baseless accusations against Iran, he added.

Speaking at a press briefing on Thursday, Nauert accused Iran of playing a "destabilizing" role in the region and claimed that Washington holds Tehran responsible for attacks on

U.S. facilities in Iraq.

"They [Iran] continue to try to attack other governments and individuals through their proxy militias. We will hold them responsible for any loss of American life. I just want to be clear about that," the spokeswoman claimed.

Qassemi rejected allegations, saying all evidence relating to a recent attack on Iran's consulate in the port city of Basra in southern Iraq showed a complex plot to destroy Tehran-Baghdad relations.

## Blind terrorism in Ahvaz



gunmen shot from a park near the parade. They were wearing military uniforms.

Fars said citizens watching the parade first thought that the shooting was inadvertent, however, after a while they realized that it is a terrorist attack.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif issued a statement holding sponsors of terrorism in the region and the United States

accountable for the deadly terrorist attack.

"Iran holds regional terror sponsors and their U.S. masters accountable for such attacks," Zarif tweeted.

Zarif said, "Terrorists recruited, trained, armed & paid by a foreign regime have attacked Ahvaz."

"Children and journos among casualties," Zarif regretted.

**AHVAZ/TEHRAN** — Scores of people were injured or martyred in a Saturday morning terrorist attack on a military parade in the southwestern city of Ahvaz in Khuzestan province.

By Saturday afternoon, the number of people martyred in the terror attack had reached 25. Ali Hossein Hosseinzadeh, the deputy governor of Khuzestan, said since some of the injured people are in a critical condition it is likely the number of martyrs to increase.

Children, women and a journalist were among the dead.

According to the Mehr news agency correspondent at the scene, the attack started at 09:00 local time (06:30 BST) and lasted about 10 minutes.

Local officials said the attack involved four gunmen.

Hosseinzadeh said that two of the gunmen were killed by security forces on the spot, while the other two died of injuries while in hospital.

The gunmen opened fire on people from behind the stand during the parade held to mark the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in September 1980. The

terrorists," once again proved the "cruelty" of the enemies of the Iranian nation.

"These cold-hearted mercenaries who fire at women, children and innocent people are affiliated to those lying and hypocrite pretenders who keep talking about human rights," the Leader remarked.

"Their crime is the continuation of the American-assigned governments in the region whose objective is to wreak insecurity in our dear country."

Ayatollah Khamenei also ordered intelligence services to pursue the case swiftly and thoroughly and bring the perpetrators to justice.

## Leader: Hard-hearted terrorists linked to hypocrites claiming human rights

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution issued a statement denouncing the Saturday terrorist attack in Ahvaz which took the lives of 25 people including women and children.

Expressing sympathy with the bereaved families, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the attack, carried out by "hiring

## Either all nuclear deal parties will benefit, or no one: Rouhani

Writing a commentary in the Washington Post on Friday, President Hassan Rouhani of Iran said all parties will "benefit" from the 2015 nuclear deal or no one.

"Our logic is simple and straightforward: Either all parties to the deal will benefit, or none will," Rouhani wrote.

Following is the text of the article headlined "Iran is keeping its nuclear commitments — despite Trump":

I faced two options on May 8, when President Trump announced the United States' official withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). I could have reciprocated and announced Iran's withdrawal, which was certain to throw the region into further insecurity and instability. Or I could have considered a short grace period for the remaining parties to compensate for the adverse effects of the United States' decision on the valuable accord that had been achieved after 12 years of tough, intensive negotiations. In keeping with our tradition of respect for the rule of law and norms of international law, and to safeguard peace and security in the region, I opted for the latter.

The United States expected a hasty Iranian withdrawal so that it could easily forge an international alliance against Iran and automatically revive previous sanctions. Our action, instead, thwarted such a move. The talks with the remaining JCPOA participants, and their reiteration of compliance with the accord, placed the United States in a lonely

position. Such a serious chasm between the United States and its European partners on a critical foreign policy matter was unique and unprecedented — which, I can say, proved that we were right in our approach to the nuclear deal and our proactive diplomacy.

Current U.S. foreign policy toward Iran is out of step with the realities on the ground — in Iran, in the region and around the world. I would argue that it is not even in line with U.S. national interests. Fed by disinformation and fake analysis from terrorist groups and Israel, the U.S. administration is under the illusion that resorting to sanctions will lead to concessions from Iran. Iranians, though, are known to close ranks and put up stiff resistance in the face of external pressure. The United States, through its pervasive sanctions regime, failed to force Iranians to yield during the pre-JCPOA period. It was the United States that changed tack and opted for negotiations.

In our current talks with the remaining JCPOA participants, we have emphasized that safeguarding the long-term interests of the Iranian people is paramount to us. If these interests can still be secured despite the United States' exit from the accord, we will remain in the deal; otherwise, we will pursue a different course of action. Our logic is simple and straightforward: Either all parties to the deal will benefit, or none will. Silence in the

face of open U.S. bullying of other countries to cut economic and trade relations with Iran, in blatant contravention of the established rules of international law, is simply not acceptable, and not an option for us.

Trump's offer of direct talks with Iran is not honest or genuine. How can we be convinced of his sincerity while his secretary of state has gone so far as to set a long list of openly insulting pre-conditions for talks? Worse still, how can we trust the U.S. government now that it has officially reneged on its international commitments, most notably U.N. Security Council resolution 2231? How can Iran, and others, trust the United States while it is threatening to punish other countries for the implementation of the same U.N. resolution it sponsored and voted for? The United States' resorting to sanctions against Iran and the Iranian people — including, in particular, making it harder for ordinary people to have access to medicine, or denying them safe travel on new airplanes purchased by Iranian carriers — is totally unjustified and unacceptable. Bent on hatred and seeking revenge, the U.S. government's pretensions of support for the Iranian people are hollow, hypocritical and unconvincing.

I am confident that the U.S. government will have to change course once again. Re-

gardless, our talks with our trading partners are well underway, promising a bright future for our international interactions. It has now become crystal clear that most countries in the world oppose U.S. unilateralism and abhor being bullied. Even if in the short term we face difficulties in our economic relations, we, along with our partners, will try to resolve those problems, and these days will pass.

We are committed to talks and dialogue — that's why we entered the negotiations on the nuclear issue in the first place, and ultimately arrived at a solid and mutually beneficial deal. The proof of good intentions on the part of all parties to the deal, particularly the United States, lies in the honest and full compliance with its provisions. It is on the record that during the negotiations on the nuclear dossier, our supreme leader said that the other side's honesty would pave the way for further talks on issues of mutual interest. Washington's insincere approach toward the implementation of the deal, from day one all the way through its ultimate illegal exit, is indicative of the lack of honesty in the implementation of its international obligations.

Modern history attests to the fact that Iran has not engaged in any external aggression during the past 250 years. It has, however, fiercely resisted foreign aggression and intervention. Peace is our arsenal, and we are committed to reciprocate each and every genuine and honest peaceful gesture and measure. On this we are resolute and steadfast.

### Trump's offer of direct talks with Iran is not honest or genuine.



# China, Russia warn U.S. of consequences over sanctions

Moscow and Beijing lashed out at Washington's new anti-Russian sanctions that also target China for the first time, warning the United States could face consequences.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman accused Washington of playing unfairly and using new measures to squeeze Moscow out of the global arms market, after the U.S. slapped sanctions on China for buying Russian warplanes and missiles and threatened to target its other clients.

"This is unfair competition, dishonest competition, an attempt to use non-market methods that run counter to norms and principles of international trade to squeeze the main competitor of U.S. makers out of the markets," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Peskov said that "Washington's continued sanctions hysteresis" dealt a new blow to U.S.-Russia ties but could not immediately say if Moscow would retaliate, or how.

Washington Thursday placed financial sanctions on the Equipment Development Department of the Chinese Defense Ministry, the military branch responsible for weapons and equipment, and its director, Li Shang-fu, for engaging in "significant transactions" with Rosoboronexport, Russia's main arms exporter.

The sanctions are related to China's purchase of 10 SU-35 combat aircraft in 2017 and S-400 surface-to-air missile system-related equipment in 2018.

It was the first time a third country has been punished under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, legislation for dealing with Russia, signaling Donald Trump's readiness to risk relations with other countries over Moscow.

Beijing – which is locked in a trade war with the U.S. – urged Washington to withdraw sanctions or "bear the consequences."

"The U.S. actions have seriously violated the basic principles of international relations and seriously damaged the relations between



the two countries and the two militaries," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said.

"We strongly urge the U.S. to immediately correct their mistake and withdraw their so-called sanctions, otherwise the U.S. will have to bear the consequences."

United in their resentment of America's global influence, China and Russia have sought in recent years to tighten up their ties and this month conducted weeklong joint military drills, Moscow's largest-ever war games.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned that Russia would act to end its dependency on the U.S. dollar. "We will do everything to stop being dependent on the countries who behave toward their partners in this way," Lavrov said on a visit to Sarajevo.

His deputy, Sergei Ryabkov, earlier said that Washington was rocking global stability and said sarcastically that placing sanctions on Russia has become Washington's favorite "pastime."

"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," Ryabkov said.

"Playing with fire is silly, it can become dangerous," he said in a statement, noting the latest round of anti-Russian measures was the 60th since 2011.

Arms exports are an important source of revenue for the country and last year Russia sold more than \$14 billion worth of arms overseas.

Security analysts in Asia said the move was largely symbolic and would only push Moscow and Beijing closer together.

"The imposition of U.S. sanctions will have zero impact on Russian arms sales to China," Ian Storey of Singapore's ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute said.

"Both countries are opposed to what they see as U.S. bullying and these kind of actions will just push Beijing and Moscow even closer

together," he said. Collin Koh, a security analyst at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, said the sanctions would do little to counter the evolving research and development relationship between China and Russia.

The State Department also placed 33 Russian intelligence and military-linked actors on its sanctions blacklist. All of them – defense-related firms, officers of the GRU military intelligence agency and people associated with the Saint Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency disinformation group – have been on previous U.S. sanctions lists. Twenty-eight of them have already been indicted by Robert Mueller.

One U.S. administration official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity, said the sanctions imposed on the Chinese agency were aimed at Moscow, not Beijing or its military, despite an escalating trade war between the United States and China.

The U.S. official said Washington had spent "an enormous amount of time" seeking to discourage prospective buyers of Russian arms.

Administration officials said they hoped the action against EDD would send a message to others considering buying the S-400.

U.S. officials have been discussing the issue particularly with NATO ally Turkey, which wants to buy the Russian-made S-400 surface-to-air missile batteries. Washington has expressed concern that Turkey's planned deployment of the S-400s could pose a risk to the security of some U.S.-made weapons and other technology used by Turkey, including the F-35 fighter jet.

U.S. officials have warned that Turkey's purchase of the system could contravene CAATSA. "We hope that at least this step will send a signal of our seriousness and perhaps encourage others to think twice about their own engagement with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors," another U.S. official said.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Britain tells EU to engage seriously on Brexit, EU demurs

Britain said on Saturday it would not capitulate in Brexit talks and again urged its EU partners to engage with its proposals, as ministers in Paris and Berlin suggested the next move in the negotiations should come from London.

British Prime Minister Theresa May on Friday demanded new proposals and respect from European Union leaders, saying after a summit in Austria that talks had hit an impasse – a position her foreign minister reinforced on Saturday, even if that meant leaving the bloc next March without a deal.

"If the EU's view is that just by saying no to every proposal made by the United Kingdom, we will eventually capitulate and end up either with a Norway option or indeed staying in the EU... then they've profoundly misjudged he British people," Jeremy Hunt told BBC radio.

"We may be polite, but we have a bottom line. And so they need to engage with us now in seriousness."

May's defiant statement was welcomed on Saturday by many in the British press that had seen the Salzburg summit as a failure for her. The Daily Express said it was "May's finest hour".

### Digging in

But initial reactions from across the English Channel suggested France and Germany were digging in too.

EU leaders and May have said they want to get a deal agreed in October, to be finalized in November.

In Paris, Minister for European Affairs Nathalie Loiseau said that, while France still believed a good Brexit deal was

possible, it must also prepare for a 'no deal' outcome.

Britain's vote to leave "cannot lead to the EU going bust," she said on France Info radio. "...That's the message we have tried to send for several months now to our British counterparts, who may have thought we were going to say 'yes' to whatever deal they came up with."

In Berlin, German Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Roth said the other 27 EU states were striving to achieve reasonable solutions. "The blame game against the EU is therefore more than unfair. We can't solve the problems that are arising on the island (Britain) due to Brexit," he said on Twitter.

In London, the Telegraph reported that May faced the prospect of ministerial resignations next week if she failed to come up with an alternative to the "Chequers" Brexit plan that she presented in Austria.

After May's Friday statement, European Council President Donald Tusk said that the results of the EU's analysis of that plan had been known to Britain for many weeks. But Hunt said there was a difference between rhetoric and substance.

"On the substance of the Chequers proposals, we have not had a detailed response," he said, adding that EU proposals for the Irish border would mean that it was impossible "to leave the EU intact as one country".

May's Conservatives rely on a small pro-Brexit Northern Irish party, the Democratic Unionists (DUP), for their governing majority in parliament.

Ireland's Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said the DUP should not have a veto on a "backstop" insurance policy to keep the Irish border fully open for trade.

May has accepted the need for a backstop but says the EU's version of the proposal would see Northern Ireland carved off from the United Kingdom. The EU says May's proposal, keeping the province and mainland Britain in the same regulatory space, undermines the single market.

Despite the differences, Coveney told RTE radio an Irish backstop was "doable" by an October summit.

### Bumpy and difficult

Hunt said Britain's economy would be able to withstand a no-deal Brexit, saying it was "absolutely right" that many Britons were now content to leave the EU without a deal.

Around 52 percent of Britons voted to leave the EU in a referendum in 2016 and 48 percent to stay.

"Even in a situation where we aren't able to come to an agreement, we would be trading on World Trade Organization terms. It would be bumpy, it would be difficult, but we would find a way to survive and prosper as a country," Hunt said.

"We've had far bigger challenges in our history. But it's not our desired outcome."

In Berlin, magazine Der Spiegel said Germany's government expected the impact of a no-deal Brexit on its labor market to be "relatively small". It cited a government response to a request for information from the far-left Linke party.

(Source: Reuters)

## Ecuador attempted to give Assange diplomat post in Russia - document

Ecuador in 2017 gave Wikileaks founder Julian Assange a diplomatic post in Russia but rescinded it after Britain refused to give him diplomatic immunity, according to an Ecuadorean government document seen by Reuters.

The aborted effort suggests Ecuadorean President Lenin Moreno had engaged Moscow to resolve the situation of Assange, who has been holed up in the Ecuadorean embassy for six years to avoid arrest by British authorities on charges of skipping bail.

The incident was revealed in a letter by Ecuador's foreign ministry to a legislator who had asked for information about Ecuador's decision last year to grant Assange citizenship.

Ecuador last Dec. 19 approved a "special designation in favor of Mr. Julian Assange so that he can carry out functions at the Ecuadorean Embassy in Russia," according to the letter written to opposition legislator Paola Vintimilla.

"Special designation" refers to the Ecuadorean president's right to name political allies to a fixed number of diplomatic posts even if they are not career diplomats.

But Britain's Foreign Office in a Dec. 21 note said it did not accept Assange as a diplomat and that it did not "consider that Mr. Assange enjoys any type of privileges and immunities under the Vienna Convention," reads the letter, citing a British diplomatic note.

Ecuador abandoned its decision shortly after, according to the letter.

### SPONSORED

British authorities have said they will arrest



Assange if he leaves the embassy, meaning he would have needed to be recognized as a diplomat in order to travel to Moscow.

Lawyers for Assange in the United States and Britain did not respond to requests for comment. WikiLeaks website did not respond to an email seeking comment. The Ecuadorean foreign ministry could not be reached for comment.

The plan to make Assange an Ecuadorean diplomat was made public last year, but the effort to send him to Moscow has not been previously reported.

U.S. intelligence agencies in 2017 said they believed WikiLeaks was an intermediary used by Russia to publish emails hacked from top Democrats to embarrass 2016 Democratic

presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

U.S. President Donald Trump faces an investigation into whether his campaign colluded with Russia to win that election. Assange denies receiving the emails from Russia, but has not ruled out having obtained them from a third party. Trump and Russia deny collusion.

The Guardian newspaper on Friday reported that Russian diplomats held secret talks in London to help Assange flee Britain through an operation tentatively scheduled for Christmas Eve, 2017.

The story, which cited unidentified sources, said "details of the plan were sketchy" and that it was aborted because it was deemed too risky.

"The Embassy has never engaged either with Ecuadorean colleagues, or with anyone else, in discussions on any kind of Russia's participation in ending Mr Assange's stay within the diplomatic mission of Ecuador," Russia's embassy in London wrote on its web site in a response to The Guardian story.

It was not immediately evident if Ecuadorean officials had any contact with Russia as part of the Assange appointment.

Reuters was unable to obtain comment from Russia's foreign ministry on Ecuador's plan to make him a diplomat there.

The letter from Ecuador's foreign ministry was a summary of 28 documents that were sent to Vintimilla in response to her request.

Among those documents is a Dec. 4 letter from Assange in which he renounced his request for political asylum from Ecuador in preparation to become an Ecuadorean diplomat. The letter, which was seen by Reuters, said he ultimately planned to travel to Ecuador.

Vintimilla, who discussed some of the documents during a Thursday press conference, said Assange should lose his citizenship as a result of that letter.

Assange sought asylum in 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden to face questions about allegations of sex crimes, accusations that were later dropped.

Ecuador's president Moreno has said Assange's asylum cannot be eternal, but has also been reluctant to abruptly halt it on concerns that Assange's human rights could be at risk.

(Source: reuters)

## Tanzania ferry capsizes, 131 dead

Hundreds of solemn people watched as body after body was pulled from a capsized ferry that Tanzanian authorities said was badly overcrowded and upended in the final stretch before reaching shore. The official death toll was 131 but horrified witnesses feared that would rise as a second day of searching neared an end. President John Magufuli declared four days of national mourning and ordered the arrest of the ferry operator manning the ferry.

The MV Nyerere's capacity was 101 people but the ferry had been overloaded when it capsized Thursday afternoon, the government's Chief Secretary John Kijazi told reporters. He said those responsible would face charges.

At least 40 people had been rescued, he said, but the number Friday barely rose. Dozens of security forces and volunteers had resumed work at daybreak after suspending efforts overnight, hauling bodies into boats.

"More than 200 people are feared dead," based on accounts from fishermen and other witnesses, because passengers had been returning from a busy market day, Tanzania Red Cross spokeswoman Godfrida Jola told the Associated Press. "But no one knows" just how many people were on board.

Tanzanian ferries often carry hundreds of passengers and are overcrowded, and shifts in weight as people move to disembark can become deadly. Images from the scene showed the ferry's exposed underside not far from shore.

Bodies were lined up on plastic sheeting as hundreds of people pressed near the water's edge, watching the search efforts.

Accidents are often reported on the large lake surrounded by Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Some of the deadliest have occurred in Tanzania, where passenger boats are often said to be old and in poor condition.

In 1996, more than 800 people died when passenger and cargo ferry MV Bukoba sank on Lake Victoria.

Nearly 200 people died in 2011 when the MV Spice Islander I sank off Tanzania's Indian Ocean coast near Zanzibar.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Still work to do before second Trump-Kim summit: Pompeo

The United States is working to set up a second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, but there is still work to do "to make sure conditions are right," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday.

"We're working on it. But there's still a little bit of work to do left to make sure the conditions are right and that the two leaders are put in a position where we can make substantial progress," Pompeo told Fox News in an interview.



Pompeo told NBC News in a separate interview that he hoped the meeting could take place "before too long," and that he hoped he himself would get a chance to travel to Pyongyang again to negotiate before that.

But he said international sanctions would have to remain on North Korea until it gave up its nuclear weapons, which are a threat to the United States.

"Ultimately, that'll be a decision for the president," Pompeo said of a second summit between Kim and Trump to follow on from their unprecedented June 12 meeting in Singapore.

"I'm hopeful that I'll get a chance to travel again to Pyongyang to continue to negotiate before too long," Pompeo said. "And then before too long - and in relatively short order - I hope the two leaders get together again to continue to make progress on this incredible, important issue for the entire world."

Pompeo added to NBC that important steps had been taken at a summit between the two Koreas this week and that while much more work needed to be done, the United States had the "patience and determination" to achieve its aim.

Referring to sanctions, Pompeo said: "Those economic sanctions will remain in place until we get to the end, till we get to that final denuclearization, which Chairman Kim promised President Trump he would undertake."

South Korea President Moon Jae-in said after meeting Kim this week that the North Korean leader wanted a second summit with Trump to hasten denuclearization, but a key goal was declaring an end this year to the 1950-53 Korean War, which halted with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Pompeo said on Wednesday he had invited North Korea's foreign minister to meet on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York next week and other Pyongyang officials to Vienna for talks with U.S. nuclear envoy Stephen Biegun.

Asked on Thursday if those meetings would take place, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said invitations had been sent and added: "We certainly stand ready to meet if they are able to."

Moon said he and Kim spent most of a three-day summit discussing how to break an impasse and restart nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington, which are at odds over which should come first - denuclearization or ending the war and sanctions.

Kim, who recently proposed another summit with Trump, said after the summit that North Korea was willing to "permanently dismantle" key missile facilities in the presence of outside experts, and also its Yongbyon nuclear complex, if the United States took unspecified corresponding action.

Kim pledged to work toward the "complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" during two earlier meetings with Moon and his encounter with Trump, but follow-up negotiations on how to implement the vague commitments have since faltered.

Washington has called for concrete action and has demanded full disclosure of North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities before satisfying Pyongyang's key demands.

(Source: Reuters)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	160538.2
IFX	1878.98

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	49,330 rials
GBP	54,910 rials
AED	11,43 0 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$70.78/b
Brent	\$78.24/b
OPEC Basket	\$77.13/b
Gold	\$1,200.50/oz
Silver	\$14.33/oz
Platinum	\$833.70/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



PMO seeking to create new container capacity in ports

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) is seeking to create new container capacity in the country's ports to gain more share of container transportation in the region, according to the organization's head, Mohammad Radstad.

The official also referred to boosting railway transportation in the ports and said that some prominent measures have been taken in this due through proper cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, IRIB reported on Saturday.



Iran's thermal power plants under annual overhauling program

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Some 448 units in 91 of Iran's thermal power plants are going under a general overhauling program to get ready for the next year's demand peak period, IRIB reported citing the Energy Ministry's portal.

The annual overhaul program starts every year in early September and will continue until late May in the next year, the report said.

According to Bahman Mehran, head of Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH)'s planning, operation and marketing office, over 95,000 megawatts (MW) capacity of the country's thermal power plants will go through overhaul during this year's program.

"Since the total capacity of the country's thermal power plants stands at 57,600 MW, the mentioned figure indicates that some plants will go under more than one round of overhaul during the program," the official said.

Since the summer months constitute Iran's peak demand periods, most of the power plant overhaul programs are scheduled to take place during autumn, winter and spring seasons.

China cancels trade talks with U.S and won't send delegation to Washington

China canceled trade talks with the U.S. and will no longer send Vice-Premier Liu He to Washington next week, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing unidentified people briefed on the matter.

A mid-level delegation from China had been due to travel to the U.S. capital to pave the way for Liu's trip, and that visit has been scrapped as well, according to the newspaper's website. Beijing is leaving open the possibility of holding fresh negotiations next month, it said.

In his push for what he calls a level playing field in dealing with China, President Trump slapped tariffs on \$200 billion worth of imports and threatened more if Beijing retaliated. On Tuesday, China said it would impose levies on \$60 billion worth of U.S. goods effective Sept. 24.

The new tariffs brought "new uncertainties" to China-U.S. negotiations, Gao Feng, a spokesman of China's Ministry of Commerce said, when answering a question at a press conference on Thursday on whether the countries would have a new round of trade talks. He used exactly the same wording the ministry used in an earlier statement.

Phone inquiries to the Ministry of Commerce went unanswered Saturday.

Earlier, the Trump administration said it needs to confront China over its trading practices to defend U.S. long-term interests even as the escalation risks causing pain for American consumers. Inaction would leave the U.S. economy and consumers worse off over the longer run, a senior administration official told reporters on Friday, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

U.S. industry has widely pushed back against the Trump administration's use of tariffs to force changes to China's economy, and companies from Walmart Inc. to Gap Inc. and Samsonite International SA have said they're prepared to raise prices if the new tariffs bite into their business.

Trump's biggest strike yet in a growing trade fight between the world's biggest economies will see a 10 percent duty applied to \$200 billion of Chinese imports on Monday, which could rise to 25 percent next year. He's threatened duties on a further \$267 billion of made-in-China goods, which would hit almost all other consumer products including mobile phones, shoes and clothes.

The latest round of duties comes on top of a 25 percent tariff already imposed on about \$50 billion in Chinese goods, which spurred counter-tariffs from Beijing. (Source: Bloomberg)

\$13b allocated to supply basic goods: CBI governor

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati announced that \$13 billion has been allocated to supply basic goods required in the country, Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

As the official has previously announced CBI has paid €3.2 billion to import basic goods during the past month.

"In the past month, €1.8 billion has been paid for importing basic goods including oil, meat, rice, medical equipment, etc., while €1.4 billion has been supplied by the

domestic Forex Management Integrated System [locally known as NIMA] for importing raw materials as well as capital and consumer goods," Hemmati wrote on his Instagram page.

According to the latest announcement of CBI, the bank has paid €5.5 billion for supplying basic goods since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21) till early September.

Such measures have been taken to encounter the recent unprecedented sharp depreciation of rial against the

A new record for TEDPIX in last day of summer

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) jumped 3,209 points to end trade at 160,538 points in the last day of summer, IRNA reported.

As reported, 4.628 billion shares worth 13.572 trillion rials (about \$323 million) were traded through 221,153 deals in the stock market.

The first market's index gained 2,341 points while the second market's index added 6,503 points on Saturday.

The rising trend of TEDPIX began on June 13, which was named 'Golden Wednesday of Stock Market', when TEDPIX gained 2,767 points to stand at 99,146 points.

Then on June 17, players in Iran's capital market witnessed a historical



record in growth of TEDPIX which gained 3,306 points to hit 102,452 points, something unprecedented in the 50-year history of the country's stock market.

Also, the number of trading codes issued in TSE has increased 45 percent since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21) compared to the same period of time in the previous year, TSE spokesman Hamid Rouhbakhsh has recently announced.

8GW of new power capacity needed to avoid outages: energy minister

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran is going to need 8000 megawatts (MW) of new electricity capacity to prevent outages in the next summer, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday quoting the energy minister.

"Our estimate is that, the peak demand for the summer of 1398 [next Iranian calendar year], will reach over 61,000 MW while our current operational capacity is

53,000 MW, so we need to provide the 8,000 MW deficit by the next summer," Reza Ardakanian said.

According to the official, of the mentioned 8,000 MW required capacity, some 4200 MW is going to be supplied through establishing new thermal power plants and the rest will be compensated by managing consumption and demand.

During the hot season in Iran, over-usage of air-

S. Korean companies willing to work with Iran despite U.S. sanctions: envoy

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — South Korean companies have not stopped their trade ties with Iran and are willing to work with Iran despite the U.S. reimposition of sanctions, South Korea's Ambassador to Iran Yu Chang Hwang stated.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Mohammadreza Bakhtiari, the vice chairman of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) for international affairs, at TCCIMA building on Friday, IRNA reported.

"The fact is that South Korean companies are interested in working in Iran and want to continue their trade and business cooperation with Iran. Of course, the problem of unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Iran



South Korea's Ambassador to Iran Yu Chang Hwang (L) met Mohammadreza Bakhtiari, the vice chairman of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) for international affairs, in Tehran on Friday.

Iranian letter reaffirms OPEC divisions

Iran has written to fellow OPEC members to complain that some countries are conducting oil production policy unilaterally, laying bare fissures in the group as officials prepare to meet in Algiers this weekend.

While Iran avoids naming names, the letter is clearly aimed at Saudi Arabia, the largest producer in the OPEC+ group, that joined forces in 2016 to end a global oil glut. Iran says some countries are acting alone, breaking policy making rules. Riyadh has raised production in recent months to

compensate for barrels lost by renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"We have noticed to our dismay, OPEC's spirit of solidarity, collective action, and accountability are being eroded with unilateral measures," two senior Iranian oil officials said in the letter, addressed to members of OPEC's board of governors and seen by Bloomberg News.

The letter echoes comments made by Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh earlier this week, threatening

to veto future Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries decisions on group-wide production.

Saudi Arabia and Russia chair the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee that oversees 2016's OPEC+ deal between OPEC and its allies outside the group. The Saudi minister made clear the kingdom intended to increase production to mitigate the impact of Iranian sanctions and the economic crisis in Venezuela, bringing the group's total output in line with its overall target.

Iran argues one member has no right to steal the quota of another and the current agreement merely commits members who are producing below their target to restore output to the agreed target.

The role of the JMMC is confined to monitoring the market and is not a policy making body, Iran's letter says. Zanganeh, who isn't a member of the committee, said this week he won't attend the meeting in Algiers.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Trump sets implied oil price target below \$80



It is not unusual for governments to try to run multiple policies and messages, addressed to different audiences and intended to achieve different objectives, though it risks creating confusion and disappointment.

The president has criticized OPEC for rising oil prices four times on Twitter this year as well as in an interview with Fox News.

The president's tweets have generally been prompted when Brent crude prices have recently risen sharply and are in the \$75-80 range.

From the president's behavior, it is possible to infer that he doesn't want prices to rise above \$80 per barrel and would prefer them closer to \$70 or even below.

The president's tweets are creating an implicit price

target, even if officials have been careful not to specify an explicit one.

So far, the president has been careful to blame "OPEC" and unspecified countries in the "Middle East" for rising oil prices, eschewing identifying individual countries by name.

As a practical matter, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait are the only OPEC members that have significant volumes of spare capacity and could raise output.

But all three are close allies of the United States, and Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates have been at the forefront pushing for tough sanctions on fellow OPEC member Iran.

The president has so far been careful to avoid embarrassing them by identifying them individually, though his tweets have left no ambiguity about their target.

For the time being, the president may be content to complain on Twitter but do little else, in order to avoid being blamed for the rise in oil prices that is a byproduct of his sanctions policy.

However, if oil prices continue rising and hit \$81-82 or even \$85, the president's tweets may become more pointed and the White House could take tougher action to raise the political pressure on Riyadh.

Oil prices are now hovering uncertainly amid dwindling exports from Iran, poor production from other OPEC members and Brazil, decelerating output growth in the United States, and an uncertain consumption outlook.

Into that already complicated mix, the president of the United States is now trying to enforce a political price target of \$80 or less.

(Source: Reuters)



U.S. dollar. The increase in prices of basic goods

outstrips people's income, i.e. purchasing power has decreased.

First VP calls for ease of releasing imported goods

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Addressing a meeting at the place of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) on Saturday, First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri underscored the vitality of facilitating releasing procedures of imported goods as one the major expectations of the private sector, IRNA reported.

Jahangiri urged IRICA, Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI) and other affiliated state-run organizations to prevent the existing bureaucratic procedures from hindering release of imported goods, in particular, the basic goods.

The meeting which was held to discuss and solve exports and imports problems was reportedly attended by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari,



the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati, Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh Hashemi and some other senior officials.

As IRIB quoted Head of IRICA Foroud Asgari as saying on the sidelines of the same event, presently from 4,700 to 6,000 trucks of goods are released per day.

According to him, thanks to some recent taken measures, releasing procedures are to be facilitated more in near future.



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Pakistan urges  
China to protect  
Uighurs

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — In a significant development, d e s k Pakistan has urged its all-weather ally China to relax restrictions on Chinese Muslims living in Xinjiang province, after reports about human rights violations in the province.

Pakistan's Federal Minister Pir Noorul Haq Qadri during his meeting with the Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing on Friday said that strict regulations and laws fuel extremism and in order to curb intolerance and promote religious harmony China should deal with patience, said a report in The Nation.

The minister proposed that Pakistani religious scholars be allowed to visit the province and play a role in ending extremist ideology and promoting moderate thinking.

The Chinese ambassador promised that his government will soon facilitate Pakistani delegation of religious scholars to visit Xinjiang province, said the report.

According to media reports, Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang are being subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, egregious restrictions on religious practice and culture.

The large Muslim Chinese community has resisted coercive "re-education" efforts by the authorities, which have progressively restricted religious minorities from observing the basic articles of their faith.



'India third  
largest victim of  
terrorism'

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — For second year on trot, India d e s k has emerged as the third largest victim of terror attacks across the world after Iraq and Afghanistan, according to a study report.

CPI-Maoists, which carried out 53 percent of the total attacks in India this year, is the fourth deadliest terror group after ISIS, Taliban and Al-Shabaab, says the report by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism.

The report states that that Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a 24 percent increase in terror attacks in 2017 and an 89 percent increase in the number of people killed in those attacks. Out of a total 860 terror attacks across India in 2017, 25 percent were reported from J&K alone.

"Here in India, most of the terror activities are either sponsored by or emanating from the soil of Pakistan and its agencies and military are allowing it. On the other hand, Pakistan is now facing the attacks from terror groups it harboured and raised for decades," an official said, quoted in a report on NDTV.

"The frequency of terrorist violence by Maoist extremists in India declined between 2016 and 2017 with respect to number of attacks (from 338 in 2016 to 295 in 2017); however, the number of people killed increased 16 percent, and the number of people injured increased 50 percent," it said.



ICC probe into  
Rohingya issue in  
progress

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — The probe into the atrocities d e s k unleashed on Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar state, including killings, sexual violence and forced deportations, is currently being probed by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has been tasked with investigating crimes against humanity.

It is the first step towards a full investigation of Myanmar's military crackdown which has seen close to one million Rohingyas fleeing the northern Rakhine state into neighboring Bangladesh.

The development comes nearly two weeks after ICC judges ruled that even though Myanmar is not the signatory of the court, the court still has jurisdiction over crimes against the Rohingya because Bangladesh is a member.

"I have decided to proceed to the next phase of the process and to carry out a full-fledged preliminary examination of the situation at hand," ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said in a statement.

Ms Bensouda said the initial probe "may take into account a number of alleged coercive acts having resulted in the forced displacement of the Rohingya people, including deprivation of fundamental rights, killing, sexual violence, enforced disappearance, destruction and looting."



Campaigning  
kicks off for  
Indonesia  
election

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — Ahead of next year's election, d e s k major political parties in Indonesia have kicked off their election campaign. President Joko Widodo, who is looking to retain his chair, launched his campaign on Friday, looking to win over big chunk of millennial and Muslim votes.

Widodo, who had defeated Prabowo Subianto by a narrow margin in 2014, will be looking to retain power.

Now each is pushing a nationalistic economic platform, but issues of race and religion loom large in the battle to run the world's largest Muslim-majority country, whose reputation for pluralism is threatened by growing conservatism, said a report in Channel News Asia.

"Differences in voting are fine, but don't forget our unity as a people, as a country," Widodo told reporters in downtown. "What's important is not to let there be divisions between people, friends, and communities."

Opinion polls have given Widodo a massive lead over Prabowo, but some show the gap narrowing as the campaign begins. Both sides are battling for the support of Indonesia's roughly 80 million millennials, who form more than 40 percent of voters.

Widodo's religion and ethnicity has been a subject of intense debate and speculation, some even accusing him of being a Christian. To counter such claims, Widodo picked a conservative cleric from Indonesia's largest Muslim group, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as his running mate.

# Major blow to peace efforts: India cancels FM-level talks with Pakistan

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

**TEHRAN** — The recent peace overtures between New Delhi and Islamabad, since the formation of new Pakistani government led by Imran Khan, had briefly rekindled hopes of peace and reconciliation between the two estranged neighbors. But the thaw didn't last too long. The hopes have been dashed again.

In the first major blow to the efforts made by leaders in the two countries to bury the hatchet and open a new chapter in their bilateral relations, New Delhi on Friday called off a much-anticipated meeting between the Pakistani and Indian foreign ministers on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), a day after confirming the meeting.

In a tweet, the spokesperson at India's Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh Kumar cited "unclean intentions" on Pakistan's side for cancellation of talks.

"It is obvious that behind Pakistan's proposal for talks to make a fresh beginning, the evil agenda of Pakistan stands exposed and the true face of the new Prime Minister Imran Khan has been revealed to the world in his first few months in office," he said, using very strong words. "Any conversation with Pakistan in such an environment would be meaningless."

The spokesperson referred to the abduction and killing of policemen in Kashmir by "Pakistani entities" and Islamabad's decision to release stamps allegedly "glorifying terrorists" as the reasons behind the annulment of talks.

Pakistan's postal department had issued 20 special postage stamps on July 24, according to The Nation, carrying photos of Burhan Wani, a Kashmiri militant who was killed by Indian forces in Kashmir in 2017.

Since Khan assumed power in Islamabad, after sweeping general elections, the two countries had shown inclination to work together for betterment of bilateral ties and regional peace. In his victory speech, Khan asserted that he would take two steps if India took one. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who didn't share particularly warm relationship with Khan's predecessor Nawaz Sharif, had congratulated him on his election.

Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria, less than a fortnight ago, said Khan's government had opened a political window and India was "filled with cautious



hope". Pakistan's foreign ministry, reacting to Bisara's statement, said it wanted to "utilize the same window and see how we can move forward." Things were sailing smoothly.

Last week, Pakistan's foreign ministry said it was ready for talks with India and was awaiting an official response from New Delhi on how to move forward on the issue. "We are ready for talks with India. We have also conveyed our position to the international community. It remains for India to respond," spokesman Dr. Mohammad Faisal said in Islamabad. "We are also saying since long that dialogue is the only way forward to settle all outstanding issues between Pakistan and India."

But, things seem to have come back to square one with the cancellation of talks and strongly-worded statement issued by India's foreign ministry, which has not gone down well with Islamabad. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi termed the development "unfortunate". "We had already told India that if they take one step towards us, we will take two. However, it seems that they

faltered after taking just one step."

In an interview with DawnNewsTv, Qureshi said the world should see that "Pakistan has held a positive outlook towards the situation while India's attitude has not been so forthcoming". When asked if Pakistan would still continue to extend an olive branch to India, Qureshi said Pakistan is in favor of dialogue, "but in a dignified manner."

Pakistan's newly-elected president Arif Alvi also expressed disappointment over the development, saying PM Khan's peace overtures were annulled by India in their "usual belligerent manner".

"Sad to see India backing off from FM level talks. Mutual reservations could have been placed on the table. Kashmiris face only disappointment on International Day of Peace. PM Imran Khan's outstanding peace overture negated in their usual belligerent manner," President Alvi tweeted.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator Sherry Rehman took to Twitter to denounce Indian government's decision. "Shame that on #InternationalPeaceDay India has refused

to talk peace with Pakistan in even a routine manner at the @UN on the sidelines of the General Assembly."

Pakistan's Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry, was quoted saying by GeoTV, that the whole world was watching and seeing what India did. "This shows that Pakistan stands for peace but there is a section of the Indian society that does not want this and that section holds a lot of influence there."

On Thursday, Raveesh Kumar had confirmed the meeting between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan on the sidelines of the UNGA. "I can confirm that on the request of the Pakistani side, a meeting between the external affairs minister and the Pakistani foreign minister will take place on the sidelines of the UNGA at a mutually convenient date and time," Kumar had stated.

But, in the last 48 hours, friendship turned into animosity again, as Indian media reported the issue of Pakistan releasing stamps in the name of Wani and his associates, which according to Pakistani media had been released before Khan was elected as the new premier.

## India's PM faces resignation calls over 'corruption' in French jet deal

India's opposition parties have called for the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his alleged role in a major military deal with France.

News outlet in France quoted former French President Francois Hollande as saying that New Delhi had influenced the choice of a local partner for the 2016 purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets from Dassault Aviation, worth around \$8.7 billion.

Opposition parties have challenged Modi's government in recent months over the choice of billionaire Indian businessman Anil Ambani's Reliance Defense as Dassault's local partner rather than a state-run manufacturer with decades of experience in the aviation industry, insisting that the prime minister



had overpaid for the warplanes and failed to be transparent.

Hollande, who inked the military deal during his presidential tenure, was quoted on Friday by French Mediapart news service as emphasizing that the New Delhi government had pressured Dassault to choose Reliance

Defense, saying: "We had no choice. We took the interlocutor that was given to us."

The report triggered a political storm in India with president of the main opposition Congress Party, Rahul Gandhi, alleging in a tweet: "The PM personally negotiated and changed the Rafale deal behind closed doors. Thanks to François Hollande, we now know he personally delivered a deal worth billions of dollars to ...Anil Ambani. The PM has betrayed India."

Under Indian defense procurement regulations, a foreign firm must invest at least 30 percent of the contract in India to help it build up its manufacturing base and avert imports.

Based on the rule, Dassault picked Reli-

ance and not Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, the huge state-run company that has been manufacturing aircraft for decades, most of them Russian under license.

While Modi's office did not respond to inquiries about the case, India's Defense Ministry said in a tweeted statement that neither the French nor Indian government were involved in the matter.

"The report referring to fmr French president Mr. Hollande's statement that GoI (government of India) insisted upon a particular firm as offset partner for the Dassault Aviation in Rafale is being verified," it read. "It is reiterated that neither GoI nor French Govt had any say in the commercial decision." (Source: Press TV)

## U.S. warns India of sanctions over defense deal with Russia

**1 →** India and Russia had signed an intergovernmental agreement to proceed with the deal in October 2016, but price negotiations and technical consultations, which also involved the Indian shipyard, delayed the final clearance,

which could be one of the big takeaways from the Modi-Putin summit that is scheduled to take place in New Delhi on October 5, a report in Economic Times stated.

The popular opinion in India is heavily tilted

in favor of Russia. Brahma Chellaney, a geo-strategic and commentator, told Tehran Times that the ties between Russia and India should not be affected by U.S. sanctions. "Russia is a tried and tested friend of India. Although the

U.S. has now become the largest seller of arms to India, Russia remains important to India's interests. India has made it clear to the U.S. that it will go ahead with the S-400 purchase and other defense deals with Russia," he said.

## Why Zainab's (SA) mandate is heavier than Hussain's (AS)

**1 →** As Dr. Ali Shariati reminds us, those who died committed a Hussainic act, those who remain must perform a Zainabic act. Hussain (AS) is the martyr of Karbala and Zainab (SA) is the messenger of Karbala. We have to choose either blood or the message, to be a martyr like Hussain (AS) or a messenger like Zainab (SA). Fence-sitters have no place in this revolutionary movement that has gripped hearts and minds of people for more than fourteen centuries.

The caravan Hussain (AS) led from Medina to Karbala was led by Zainab (SA) from Karbala to Syria. When the caravan halted in Kufa, Zainab (SA) courageously confronted the people of Kufa who had betrayed her brother after inviting him.

"O people of Kufa! Do you know whose heart you have burned, what blood you have shed, and what sanctity you have violated? You have done a monstrous deed, something for which the heavens are about to split asunder and so is the earth, and for which the mountains crumble. You have done something most defaced, duskiest, most horrible as much as the fill of the earth and of the sky," said the daughter of 'the leader of faithful'.

When the caravan reached Yazid's court in Damascus, Zainab (SA) stood up and spoke with the valor and eloquence of her father and the indomitable spirit of her brother. Her sermon shook the foundation of Yazid's mighty empire.

"O Yazid! I swear by Allah that I do not fear anyone except Him and do not complain to anyone but Him. You may employ your deceit and trickery, but I swear by Allah the shame and disgrace you have earned by the treatment meted out to us cannot be eradicated," she said. The people present in the court were astonished, some were crying and



some others were feeling remorseful.

Zainab (SA) carried out many responsibilities in the aftermath of Karbala. She protected the ailing son of her brother when the tents were set ablaze by the marauding soldiers of Yazid. She consoled little children like Roqayya and Sukaina when everything that belonged to them was forcibly snatched away. She led the caravan that was accompanied with the severed head of her brother perched atop a spear.

Zainab was crestfallen with grief but she stood firm because the mandate given to her was heavy. She wrote and recited marsiyas (poetic elegies) that jolted people out of their slumber and eventually led to the decline and fall of Yazidi empire. Today, nobody remembers Yazid, Ibn Ziyad, Umar Saad or Shimr. And everyone remembers Hussain, Abulfazl Abbas, Ali Akbar, Qasim, Asghar. Zainab is the

savior of Karbala, who redefined patience and resilience in the face of insurmountable odds.

Zainab (SA) kept alive the movement of Karbala and inspired future generations to unmask Yazids and Ibn Ziyads of their time.

Her courage, steadfastness and resilience gives sense of hope and optimism to those who believe in the righteousness of their cause, like the women in Kashmir, women in Yemen, women in Palestine, women in Syria, women in Afghanistan. They are the flagbearers of Zainab (SA).

Last week, on Muharram 8, pictures of police personnel beating women during a Muharram procession in Indian controlled Kashmir, leading made it to newspapers and news channels across the world. Muharram processions remain banned in Kashmir since 1990, which human rights defenders have termed 'blatant mockery of religious freedom'.

These women, part of a peaceful Muharram procession, carried banners of 'Ya Hussain', when they were confronted by a battalion of policemen carrying guns and sticks. The women stood their ground even when the shameless policemen started to smash them with big sticks. They reminded one of Zainab's (SA) struggle in carrying the same flag through Kufa and Shaam.

As Dr. Shariati reminds us, it was Zainab (SA) who stood against and confronted the ruling oppressive power and who destroyed all resistance, and it was Zainab (SA) who spread the thoughts and ideas of Hussain's (AS) school of revolution and martyrdom everywhere. She took the drops of the blood of Karbala as a symbol of courage and justice to all places and all times.



# The conflict between White House and NATO

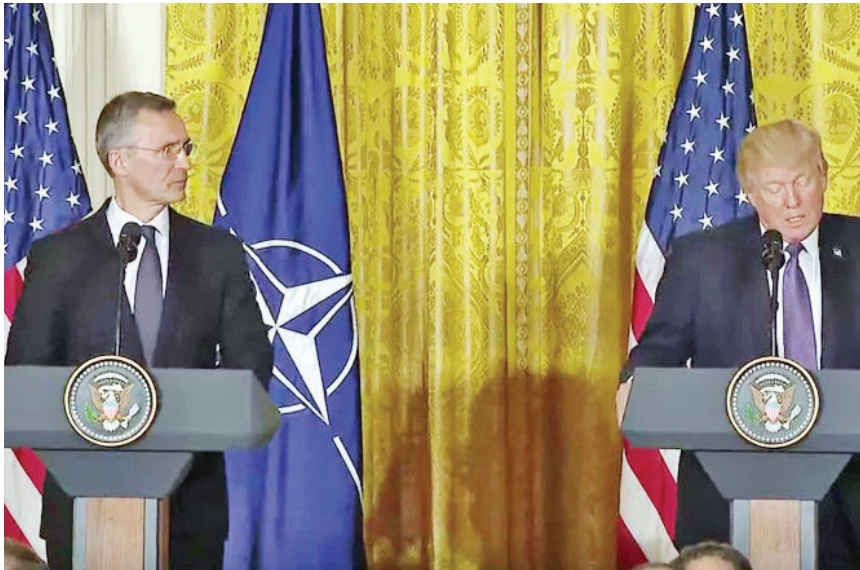
By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — The president of the United States continues to struggle with NATO. Many NATO members believe the conflict will continue in the future.

As Politico reported, So far, the defense-centered core of the Western alliance has proven strikingly sturdy, even as U.S.-European collaboration has collapsed on other issues, such as climate change, trade and Iran. The Trump administration pleasantly surprised many across the Atlantic by nearly doubling the Obama-era program to fund U.S. military presence in Europe. Almost 1,000 Americans in uniform are now deployed in Poland. By most accounts, the alliance's ability to discourage Moscow from testing NATO's resolve has never been better.

But not all is well. For the past decade, U.S. officials have been warning the Europeans to start spending more on their own defense. The U.S. now spends \$3 for each \$1 that the remaining 28 European members plus Canada spend together. This prompted the former American secretary of defense, Robert Gates, to warn back in 2011 that when Congress wakes up to that reality, NATO will face a "dim if not dismal future."

This crisis, however, was on its way to a resolution of sorts in recent years. Europe is now the region with the fastest growing real-term defense spending, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. The countries of Central and Northern Europe in particular were spooked by Russia's aggression into raising budgets as much as 40 percent year-



on-year. Not all allies will be spending 2 percent of their GDP on defense, as agreed in 2014, but then again all governments have a habit of making promises they do not intend to keep.

This one has actually proven more consequential than other such "commitments" made in the past — most notably on development aid and climate change. Of course, none of this is guaranteed to make a difference to the White House. Trump brings two new uncertainties into NATO politics. He doesn't appear to share Europe's sense of urgency on keeping Russia in check through a significant allied military presence. And even if he did, it's

unlikely that he would consider it to be America's problem.

An overview of an analysis of the latest trip by Trump to Europe and his presence at the NATO summit is invaluable. Shortly before Trump left for Europe, Thomas Wright of the Brookings Institution, who is one of the most incisive interpreters of Trump's views of the world, reflected on this tendency of the president's to view allies not merely as burdens or anachronisms but as direct threats. It's instructive, he argued, in understanding why Trump might treat Russian President Vladimir Putin, differently than he is treating European leaders this week in Belgium. And

it speaks to just how dramatically Trump could transform U.S. foreign policy and international affairs more broadly.

"Since 1987, Trump's worldview has been motivated much more by anger toward allies and partners than enemies," Wright wrote on Twitter. "This is because he sees alliance security commitments and free trade as existential threats to U.S. interests. He has never really been bothered about geopolitical stability, etc. so when he looks at Russia/[the] Soviet Union, he sees a country that the U.S. has no security commitments to and no trade with. So no problem! By contrast, Japan, [South] Korea, Germany, etc. all tick the threat box. Add to the mix that ... he truly couldn't care less about a Russian threat to Europe—other [people's] business in his view. The net effect is he genuinely thinks allies and partners are a greater problem for U.S. interests than the Russians."

"No one else agrees with him so he has struggled to turn this into policy," Wright added. "But he's really trying now."

Or, as Wright told me on the eve of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, if Trump "was to go to the Germans or the Japanese and demand hundreds of billions of dollars a year, they would not be able or willing to do that. And that would give him a pretext to unilaterally suspend [America's security] guarantees or simply say he wouldn't uphold them".....

Ultimately, the serious challenges between Trump and its European allies are still ongoing. These challenges will appear in the future and at NATO summits.

## Europe's support of Iran's JCPOA: Actions speak louder than words

**1 →** Despite the fact that the Germans have seemed supportive in their talks and statements, in practice such support has not been observed. For instance, Altmaier noted that Germany has no legal means of protecting German companies that do business in the United States. German Chancellor Angela Merkel also considered her secretary's statement calling for a review of German-U.S. relations as his personal viewpoint.

Such contradictory positions of the German authorities have caused many European companies to unilaterally withdraw from the contracts and leave Iran after the start of the new round of U.S. sanctions against Iran. However, the justification of European governments was the privatization of these companies. But the departure of the German railways company proves that Europeans, and in particular the Germans, have no intention of protecting the interests of Iran.

Evidence suggests that the Germans are an unreliable partner in keeping up a firm commitment to the JCPOA. They have complied with U.S. sanctions policies against Iran in their relationship with Iran because of their dependence on the U.S. dollar.

Iranian ambassador to Berlin Ali Majidi has noted: "The head of the central bank of Germany or Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (BaFin) are actually

afraid of having a financial relationship with Iran. The dollar's share in the banks will not allow them to cooperate with Iran."

In this way, there cannot be any hope for economic openings from trust in Germany and other European countries because Europe cannot or will not continue its own banking relations with Iran. Although the Europeans have raised the issue of enforcing the 1996 blocking law, this claim is merely word-of-fact and in practice cannot be effective.

The root of all these problems comes from the role of the dollar in advancing U.S. goals and surrendering other countries to the demands of the U.S.

Paul Craig Roberts, former assistant secretary to the U.S. Treasury has highlighted the dollar's role in U.S. policy and said: "The only thing that has made the United States so powerful is the surrender and stupidity of other countries to the imperialist mechanisms of the U.S. dollar."

The existence of such mechanisms has prevented U.S. officials from reacting to the European blocking law because they know that it is essentially impossible to enforce such a law. A senior U.S. administration official said the United States is "not particularly concerned by EU efforts to protect European firms from



re-imposed sanctions against Iran."

On this basis, instead of hoping for Germany and other European countries to do the right things, it is better for Iran to pursue more operational solutions. A foreign policy orientation toward non-European countries as well as neighbors are required at this time.

## Why is Syria passive about Israeli attacks?

By Farzad Farhadi

**TEHRAN** — The Zionist regime has so far carried out numerous raids against Syria and continues to make threats.



Last weekend, the regime again targeted Damascus airport with its own missiles. According to Zionist officials, Tel Aviv launched more than 200 attacks on Syria over the past 18 months.

Israel's moves during the years of the Syrian crisis indicate that Tel Aviv's goal is Syria without an Iranian presence and instability in Syria. The Zionists don't want Syria to have a unified integrity and wants terrorists groups to remain.

The proof was in an article in the Jerusalem Post recently, stating that the Israeli army has been supporting and providing light weapons to insurgents in Syria. Of course, this article was immediately removed, but with Google it can be found. The Zionist regime has admitted that it gives money and weapons and ammunition to armed groups close to the regime's border with Syria.

The Zionist regime, in the current situation where other armed groups are not in Deraa, benefits from moves to support the terrorists in Idlib and the al-Tanf region as well as the ISIL survivors in Syria. Tel Aviv, along with the United States, is now seeking to curb Syria and push it internationally to stop the operation on Idlib. The controversy over the possible use of chemical weapons by the Syrian army is also noted in this regard.

The official Israeli confession to the attacks on Syria comes at a time when the regime in the past was often silent. On this basis, it is believed that the official announcement on this subject and the current situation seems to be aimed at provoking the terrorists in Idlib to resist the Syrian army. The Syrian government and the Syrian army are basing themselves on the fringes of the Israel border and can easily respond to attacks but for now the Syrian priority is the liberation of Idlib and based on the specific logic of war, they insist on not opening new fronts. The United States and some Western countries and their regional allies are pushing for Iran's withdrawal from Syria.

The regime's attacks on targets in Syria have not had effective results for Tel Aviv. The purpose of these attacks is to rally the armed and terrorist groups that are in both Idlib and some other areas. However, the lack of Syria's response to these attacks should also be seen in the overall strategy of the Syrian government to focus on the terrorists. In fact, the destruction of these terrorists is a painful blow to Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv's goal is to prevent the Syrian army from dominating all of Syria's geography, but Damascus, with the support of its allies, continues to reduce these groups.

## Save the children international: U.S. is starving Yemen

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — The on-going war on Yemen was never about Saudi Arabia and its bogus Iran concerns; it was always about the United States and its illicit interests and designs in the region.

After the United Nations and a host of international aid agencies and human rights organizations, it is now the turn for the Save the Children International to also warn the world that the United States is indeed behind the deliberate starvation, famine and humanitarian crisis in the poorest country in the Arab world.

"This war," warns Save the Children International, "risks killing an entire generation of Yemen's children who face multiple threats, from bombs to hunger to preventable diseases like cholera."

This is tragically true for Hodeida right now, as the deliberate disruption to food and fuel supplies coming through Hodeida port has caused "starvation on an unprecedented scale." The ongoing U.S.-backed assault by the Saudi-led coalition on the poverty-stricken country is also threatening to provoke a famine that risks the lives of more than 5 million children.

"This war risks killing an entire generation of Yemen's children who face multiple threats, from bombs to hunger to preventable diseases like cholera," Helle Thorning-Schmidt, CEO of Save the Children International, has declared in a new statement released on Wednesday.

The charity group says the total

number of children in Yemen at risk of famine is now 5.2 million and that currently more than two-thirds of the country's population does not know where their next meal is coming from.

With the Saudi-led coalition - which receives both political and military backing from the Trump administration and the Pentagon regime - hampering the flow of vital supplies into the country by attacking the port city of Hodeida, a vital lifeline for goods and aid for 80 percent of Yemen's population, the unlawful war threatens the lives of millions across the country as well.

Make no mistake, this criminal campaign, this deliberate starvation gambit in Hodeida has had a direct impact on children and families right across Yemen. In the long run, this disruption to food, fuel and aid supplies through this vital port means death for hundreds of thousands of malnourished children unable to get the food they need to stay alive. It has already driven up the price of fuel — and as a result transport — to such an extent that families can't even afford to take their sick children to hospital.

Further still, a full closure of the port, would put the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in immediate danger while pushing millions more into famine and "could result in one of the worst hunger crises in living history," the charity group warns.

Under International Law and International Humanitarian Law,



the Trump administration is directly complicit in the violence and resulting humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The American people and their representatives at Congress have it within their country to help end the unnecessary suffering in Yemen.

For this brutal war to end, the international civil society must hold the war profiteers to account in The Hague. The five largest U.S. arms makers - Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, and General Dynamics - are also directly involved in the Yemen war. They are dealing directly with two countries: Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It couldn't be a grimmer tale, because they gave many and continue to sell weapons worth billions of dollars. Saudi Arabia and the UAE cannot continue this

war of hell on Yemen without the much-needed support of the American war profiteers.

The best way to bring the suffering in Yemen to an end is for Congress to reassert its war powers and end U.S. refueling of Saudi aircraft and other arms support for this brutal war, and to block further sales of guided bombs to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Saudi Arabia and its American partners are attacking Yemeni civilians, a charge UN Human Rights Watch has validated. They have no right to continue their relentless bombing of non-military sites. When it comes to the destruction of civilian lives and livelihoods, that may be the least of it. They should also be held to account in The Hague for their illegal naval blockade of Yemen.

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National Iranian Drilling Company	3,174,608	97/S M-33/06-5206	IRR 135,000,000,000

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method	<input type="checkbox"/> based on minimum scoring (minimum quality score is 60) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
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	Submitting method	Submitting one original bank fund receipt in the amount of 990,000 Iranian rials under account number 4001114004020491 in name of "NIDC incomes centralized fund" issued by Central Bank of Islamic Republic of Iran. (Shaba No.: IR 520100004001114004020491)  Submitting formal request for the purpose of receiving of tender documents.
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# The Mediterranean diet reduces stroke risk, too

In the largest study of its type, scientists conclude that adhering to the Mediterranean diet might reduce the risk of stroke. The benefits are particularly pronounced for women over 40.

Is reducing stroke risk another benefit of the Mediterranean diet?

When it comes to alleged health benefits, the Mediterranean diet fares incredibly well.

Increasing one's intake of fresh fish, nuts, fruits, cereals, and potatoes while reducing dairy and meat seems to be a veritable panacea.

In recent years, the diet has grown in popularity, and a body of research has now developed to support many of the varied health claims.

Potential health benefits include extending lifespan, minimizing diabetes risk, reducing body mass index (BMI), and slowing cognitive decline.

Studying the impact of dietary choices on a population is notoriously challenging, but the amount of evidence supporting the benefits of the Mediterranean diet is close to overwhelming.

Recently, the Universities of East Anglia, Aberdeen, and Cambridge — all in the United Kingdom — joined forces to discover whether everyone's favorite diet might also reduce the risk of stroke. Earlier this week, their findings were published in the journal Stroke.

## ■ Mediterranean diet and stroke risk

In all, the study used information from 23,232 white people, aged 40–77, over a 17-year period. The data were taken from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer study, a project initially set up to investigate "the connection between diet, lifestyle factors, and cancer."

To gauge the participants' diets, the scientists asked them to use 7-day diaries; everything that they consumed was noted down for a 1-week period. This method is more reliable than the often-used food-frequency questionnaires, which ask participants how frequently they tend to eat certain items.

A trial including over 1,000 people concludes that the Mediterranean diet benefits bone health.

The authors say that this is the first time



**When looking at people already at risk of cardiovascular disease, the data revealed that, across all four groups of Mediterranean diet scores, there was a 13 percent reduction in stroke risk. This effect was, again, predominant among women, who saw a 20 percent reduction in risk.**

that 7-day diaries have been used on such a large group of people.

Next, they assessed how closely each participant followed the Mediterranean diet and sorted them into four groups depending on how closely they adhered to it.

The team concluded that a Mediterranean-style diet reduced the risk of stroke by 17 percent.

When they split the data into men and women, the effect was much more pronounced in women; those who followed the diet most closely had a 22 percent reduction in stroke risk. However, among men, there was only a 6 percent reduction, which was not statistically significant.

"It is unclear why we found differences between women and men, but it could be that components of the diet may influence men differently than women."

## ■ Benefits for those at risk

There are other potential variables that might help explain the sex differences in stroke risk. Welch explains, "We are also aware that different subtypes of stroke may differ between genders. Our study was too small to test for this, but both possibilities deserve further study in the future."

When looking at people already at risk of cardiovascular disease, the data revealed that, across all four groups of Mediterranean

diet scores, there was a 13 percent reduction in stroke risk.

This effect was, again, predominant among women, who saw a 20 percent reduction in risk.

"Our findings provide clinicians and the public with information regarding the potential benefit of eating a Mediterranean-style diet for stroke prevention, regardless of cardiovascular risk."

The health benefits of the Mediterranean diet appear to know no bounds. However, it is important to note that this is an observational study, and, therefore, cannot prove cause and effect. More studies will be sure to follow.

(Source: Medical News Today)

## 'Eating for two' during pregnancy is a dangerous myth, study suggests

While it's easy to believe that pregnancy warrants an extra slice of cake at tea time, the old adage that women can "eat for two" when they're expecting poses health risks to the child and mother-to-be, new research suggests.

Published in the journal Diabetologia, the study shows that if a woman gains too much or too little weight during pregnancy, it can have adverse effects on their child.

According to the analysis of 905 mother-child pairs, which was conducted in Hong Kong, gaining too much weight could put your offspring at an increased risk of insulin resistance and high blood pressure.

The child may also be more predisposed to macrosomia, whereby a newborn is significantly larger than average.

Plus, they may have a higher than normal BMI - all of which researchers say could lead to further cardiometabolic risks down the line.

Participants' weight gain was measured against the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) guidelines and researchers found that pregnant women who'd gained more weight than the IOM recommended amount had children with higher blood pressure and poorer blood sugar control than those who gained weight within the recommended range.

Interestingly, the same adverse effects were true for women who actually gained less weight than the recommended amount.

On average, the weight change from pre-pregnancy to delivery was 15kg for women taking part in the study, with 41 per cent having gained weight exceeding the recommended range and 17 per cent having gained weight below, with those in the former group more likely to be young and have a higher BMI.

Meanwhile, 42 per cent gained weight within the recommended levels.

While lead researcher Professor Wing Hung Tam doesn't think the results mean we should revert back to the practice of regular weigh-ins for pregnant women - which the NHS stopped doing in the early 1990s - he said it's crucial to educate them about the implications of pregnancy weight gain and to dismiss the "eating for two" theory.

"What's more important is that 'eating for two' could be harmful," he tells The Independent.

"A pregnancy requires an extra 300 kcal per day. What a pregnant mother needs is a balanced diet meeting such requirements with adequate micronutrients.

"They also need to have moderate exercise to avoid putting up excessive weight gain."

Though the study focused on highlighting the adverse effects that excess pregnancy weight gain can have on children, Hung Tam explains that it also poses a series of health risks to the mother, such as a higher risk of gestational diabetes mellitus - a condition where the mother has higher than normal glucose levels.

"These findings have important implications for both prevention and treatment," the study's authors conclude.

(Source: The Independent)

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## Museums to open doors for free on World Tourism Day

**HERITAGE d e s k** TEHRAN — All museums across Iran will offer free entry on September 27, concurrent with World Tourism Day, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to a statement released by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (CHHTO) all museums and historical sites affiliated to the organization will allow free entry o September 27, the report added.



### ■ World Tourism Day 2018

As the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has announced “Tourism and the Digital Transformation” is the theme of this year’s World Tourism Day (WTD).

Digital advances are transforming how we connect and inform ourselves, transforming our behavior, and encouraging innovation and sustainable, responsible growth strategies.

Understanding the growing economic, societal and environmental impacts of technology and innovation in tourism will help to sustain continuous and inclusive growth in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

A digitally advanced tourism sector can improve entrepreneurship, inclusion, local community empowerment and efficient resource management, amongst other important development objectives.

This year’s WTD will help us to further explore the opportunities provided to tourism by technological advances including big data, artificial intelligence and digital platforms.

World Tourism Day 2018 is a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the potential contribution of digital technologies to sustainable tourism development, while providing a platform for investment, partnerships and collaboration towards a more responsible and inclusive tourism sector.



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Monte San Giorgio

The pyramid-shaped, wooded mountain of Monte San Giorgio beside Lake Lugano is regarded as the best fossil record of marine life from the Triassic Period (245 – 230 million years ago).

The sequence records life in a tropical lagoon environment, sheltered and partially separated from the open sea by an offshore reef. Diverse marine life flourished within this lagoon, including reptiles, fish, bivalves, ammonites, echinoderms and crustaceans.



Because the lagoon was near to land, the fossil remains also include some land-based fossils including reptiles, insects and plants. The result is a fossil resource of great richness.

Criterion (viii): Monte San Giorgio is the single best known record of marine life in the Triassic period, and records important remains of life on land as well. The property has produced diverse and numerous fossils, many of which show exceptional completeness and detailed preservation.

The long history of study of the property and the disciplined management of the resource have created a well-documented and catalogued body of specimens of exceptional quality, and are the basis for a rich associated geological literature. As a result, Monte San Giorgio provides the principal point of reference, relevant to future discoveries of marine Triassic remains throughout the world.

The property encompasses the complete Middle Triassic outcrop of Monte San Giorgio including all of the main fossil bearing areas. The Italian portion of the property included is an extension in 2010 of the originally inscribed area in Switzerland, which was added to the World Heritage List in 2003.

The resulting extended property fully meets the integrity requirements for a fossil site. The main attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are the accessible fossiliferous rock exposures, with intact strata which occur in many parts of the property.

The property benefits from legal protection in both Italy and Switzerland that provides an effective basis for the protection of its geological resources. Site protection also focuses on landscape protection and has resulted in appropriate legislative controls and existing management procedures that are effectively enforced at the local level and which are underwritten by National, Regional and Provincial government support.

Strong transboundary collaboration between the States Parties of Italy and Switzerland is in place, including mechanisms that are agreed by all of the local municipalities in both countries, through common signed accords and declarations.

A joint management plan is also in place for the property, and the States Parties and local authorities are committed to providing adequate ongoing staffing and management resources to the property. Maintenance of the effectiveness of the transboundary cooperation and the related management plan is a key ongoing requirement for the protection of the property.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iran seeking UNESCO inscription for Hyrcanian Forest



Golestan National Park



Jahan-Nama Forest

**HERITAGE d e s k** TEHRAN — Iran is seeking to inscribe Hyrcanian Forest (also known as Caspian Forest), in northern parts of the country, on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

According to Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization’s (CHHTO) deputy director Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, UNESCO experts will travel to Iran to evaluate the site for possible inscription on UNESCO’s World Heritage List as a natural site in [the Iranian calendar month of] Mehr (September 23-October 22).

A site goes through a nomination process before being considered for inscription by the World Heritage Committee. A site can be proposed for inscription only by the country in which the property is located, UNESCO official website writes.

Talebian also mentioned the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from June 30 to July 10, 2019, saying that they should do their best to convince the experts to agree with the inscription of the property in 2019.

Once a country signs the World Heritage Convention, and has sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, the resulting prestige often helps increase awareness among



Abr Forest

citizens and governments for heritage preservation. Increased awareness result in a general rise in the level of the protection and conservation given to heritage properties. A country may also receive financial assistance and expert advice from the World Heritage Committee to support activities for the preservation of its sites.

The World Heritage Committee, on its 40th session inscribed the Lut Desert, or Dasht-e Lut, located in the south-east of the country, as a natural site and now in a collaborative effort between Department of Environment (DOE), Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Organization (FRWO), and Germany Michael Succow Foundation as well as CHHTO for about two years Iran is planning on

inscribing Hyrcanian Forest on the list, Tasnim quoted Talebian as saying.

The Michael Succow Foundation was established in 1999 as the first charitable conservation foundation in Germany. The Michael Succow Foundation is an operational foundation on the national and international level. It is engaged in the development and protection of national parks and biosphere reserves.

Michael Succow Foundation project ‘Supporting the creation of a nomination dossier for Iran’s Hyrcanian forests as World Heritage Site’ supported capacity building and preparation of a nomination dossier for the Hyrcanian forest by the Iranian side through providing technical support, holding training workshops and giving expert advice.

The project was financed by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety of Germany.

### ■ Hyrcanian Forest

The Hyrcanian Forest, as described by Succow Foundation, extends from the south of Azerbaijan to about 900 km to the east to the Iranian northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan. This forest forms the outermost boundary of the west-Eurasian nemoral



Alimestan Forest

**The 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from June 30 to July 10, 2019 and the Iranian team should do their best to convince the UNESCO experts to agree with the inscription of the property in 2019.**

## Tokyo to subsidize hotel discounts in Hokkaido to help tourism recover from quake

To offset the damage to Hokkaido’s tourism, the central government is planning to offer discounts to all travelers who visit the quake-hit prefecture.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at a tourism-related meeting Friday that the plan involves subsidizing discounts on hotel stays.

Some details — including the initiative’s budget, the timing of its rollout and how to apply the special rates — are still being worked out, but the government plans to act fast, an official at the Japan Tourism Agency said.

Abe brought up the discount plan during his final days of campaigning for the Liberal Democratic Party’s presidential election Thursday, which he won by a comfortable margin.

The central government spent ¥18 billion to support Kyushu after a string of deadly earthquakes rocked Kumamoto Prefecture in 2016. The JTA official said the measures for Hokkaido will likely be similar and target both domestic and foreign tourists.

In 2016 it subsidized Kyushu tour packages sold by travel agencies, with discounts of up to 70 percent applied to those based in Kumamoto and adjacent Oita, and discounts of 50 percent applied to the island’s other prefectures.

The Hokkaido Prefectural Government estimated last week that the level 7 quake on Sept. 6 caused hotel cancellations involving about 942,000 people and about ¥29.2 billion in tourism-related losses.

Efforts to promote safety and reinvigorate tourism are already underway.

In the Jozankei Onsen hot spring district on the outskirts of Hokkaido’s capital Sapporo, which saw roughly 27,000 hotel cancellations after the magnitude 6.7 quake, nine facilities halved fees for single-day travelers.

A Sapporo-based tour bus company has sent guides to about 50 tourist spots to post photos on social media showing the spots are safe.

Further south in Hakodate, the city has posted a YouTube video showing that business is back to usual since the quake.

“There is no problem with transportation and accommodation to accept tourists in most areas (of Hokkaido), except for the

epicenter, so Hokkaido is safe now,” Hokkaido Gov. Harumi Takahashi said at a news conference Tuesday.

Tokyo is also financially supporting tourism in 13 prefectures in western Japan, most notably Hiroshima, Okayama and Ehime, which were hit by deadly torrential rain in July.

If travelers visit and stay in the three prefectures for more than two days, they can receive up to ¥6,000 in discounts on their accommodations and discounts of up to ¥4,000 for staying in the other 10 prefectures in the region — Gifu, Kyoto, Hyogo, Tottori, Shimane, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Kochi and Fukuoka.

(Source: The Japan Times)

## A night in a cottage made entirely of chocolate? Yours for just €50

Houses made of sugar might seem like the stuff of fairy tales, but come October cocoa enthusiasts can live out their fantasy with a stay in a cottage made entirely of chocolate.

Designed and manufactured by Jean-Luc Decluzeau, the renowned artisan chocolatier who specializes in chocolate sculptures, this unique, 18-square-metre chocolate cottage will be crafted out of approximately 1.5 tons of confectionery. Those lucky enough to secure the cottage, which sleeps four, can look forward to a delicious night of decadence.

Sweet-toothed guests won’t know where to begin, with treats available to eat in every corner. The cottage walls, roof, dresser, clock, cups, books, chandelier — and even fireplace — will all be immortalized in chocolate. Outside, a white chocolate duck pond and chocolate flowerbed are also on display.

And the good news? Many of the chocolate fittings and fixtures are fully edible.

Located in the glass house L’Orangerie Ephémère in the



gardens of the Cité de la Céramique in Paris, guests will also have the opportunity to attend a workshop where they’ll

learn to craft personalized mini chocolate chalets.

Those seeking their own Willy Wonka experience must act quickly - the cottage is only available to book for two nights through Booking.com. Booking opens from 9am on Wednesday 19 September for the night of 5 October, and from 9am on Wednesday 26 September for the night of 6 October. The one-of-a-kind creation costs just €50 (\$90 AU) per night.

Chocolate is known to cure mood swings and satiate cravings, but who knew this world favorite sweet can also make a fashion statement. Take a look at, or should we say, savor, these stunning dresses done in pure chocolate.

Snacks will be replenished for the following night’s guests, meaning no one misses out on what should be a chocolate lover’s dream.

After the final guests have vacated the cottage, this scrumptious structure will go on display in the Parisian chocolate museum, Choco Story.

(Source: The Independent)



# Ice volcanoes on Ceres are still actively blasting out material, scientists say

In science, one discovery often leads to more questions and mysteries. That's certainly true of the ice volcanoes on the dwarf planet Ceres. When the Dawn spacecraft discovered the massive cryovolcano called Ahuna Mons on the surface of Ceres, it led to more questions: How cryovolcanically active is Ceres? And, why do we only see one?

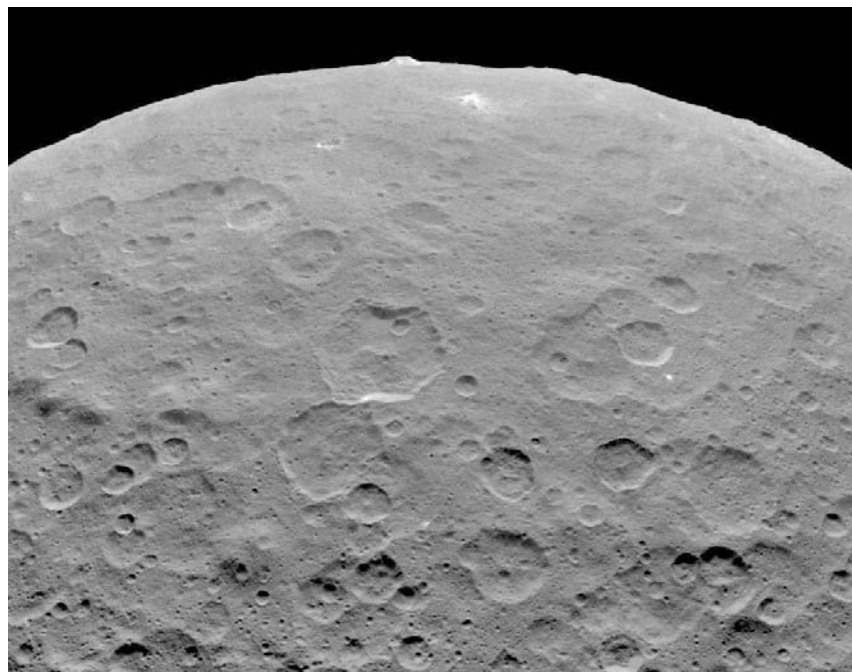
The Dwarf planet Ceres is something special. It's the only dwarf planet to be examined closely by a spacecraft, and the only cryovolcanically active body to be studied this closely. NASA's Dawn spacecraft arrived at Ceres in 2015 after visiting the asteroid Vesta. In 2016, NASA scientists revealed the existence of a massive cryovolcano on Ceres called Ahuna Mons.

Observations by Dawn revealed something interesting about the 4-kilometer high Ahuna Mons: it's very young, geologically speaking. It's only about 200 million years old, whereas Ceres itself is 4.5 billion years old. Though Ahuna Mons is not active anymore, it was active in the recent past. Ahuna Mons' youthfulness, and the fact that it's the only ice volcano visible, was a mystery to scientists. It would be very strange for a planet to be dormant for 4.3 billion years, then suddenly erupt in only one place.

## Other cryovolcanoes

There must have been other cryovolcanoes, but where were they?

A study from the University of Arizona (UA), led by UA scientist Michael Sori, helps explain the Ceres ice volcano mystery. Sori and his co-authors from UA, Ali Bramson and Shayne Byrne, discovered that ice volcanoes



**Ice content, and temperature, would determine how quickly they would succumb to viscous relaxation. The higher the ice content, and the higher the temperature, the sooner the ice volcano would disappear.**

on Ceres are still actively blasting out enough material to fill a movie theater each year. Their study also explains why we can't see any remnants of older volcanoes on the surface of Ceres.

According to the paper, any visible evidence of older ice volcanoes is erased by a process known as 'viscous relaxation.' A viscous material is something that flows, like water. Thicker fluids like honey and ketchup are also viscous, they just take longer to flow. Ice is also viscous, and here on Earth glaciers are proof of that.

Ceres is mainly rock and ice, so Sori and his team theorized that older volcanoes simply relax into a non-shape, due to the viscosity of their ice/rock makeup.

## Ice content

Ice content, and temperature, would determine how quickly they would succumb to viscous relaxation. The higher the ice content, and the higher the temperature, the sooner the ice volcano would disappear.

There are temperature fluctuations on the surface of Ceres, although it never gets warmer than -30 F. The poles stay cold, but temperatures at the equator are more changeable. "Ceres' poles are cold enough that if you start with a mountain of ice, it doesn't relax," Sori said. "But the equator is warm enough that a mountain of ice might relax over geological timescales."

Sori created simulations to test the viscous relaxation theory. In these models, ice volcanoes near the poles stayed frozen forever.

(Source: universetoday.com)

## A method for type synthesis of non-holonomic underactuated parallel mechanisms

Researchers at Shanghai University have developed a new method to achieve type synthesis of non-holonomic underactuated parallel mechanisms. Their method, presented in a paper published in Acta Astronautica, could aid the development of space robots for on-orbit servicing operations.

Every year, approximately 100 satellites are launched into space to monitor activity on Earth and enable services such as communications or GPS systems. The term "on-orbit servicing" refers to a variety of operations aimed at maintaining space systems in orbit, which can entail repairs, assembly, refueling and upgrading spacecraft after their deployment.

In future, space robots could help to complete on-orbit servicing missions quickly and effectively, without the need for human assistance. Non-holonomic parallel robotics is a particularly promising approach in space robotics, based on specific mechanical and physical principles.

In physics and mathematics, a non-holonomic system is a system whose state depends on the path taken to achieve it. In robotics, non-holonomic systems have gained particular relevance in the context of motion planning and feedback linearization for mobile robots.

The "underactuated non-holonomic parallel mechanism is a new direction of parallel space robotics, with small volume, light weight, low cost, low energy consumption, and high flexibility," the researchers wrote in their paper.

## Parallel mechanisms

One key issue in the development of parallel mechanisms is type synthesis, which involves finding all possible types of parallel mechanisms generating a motion of the moving platform with a specified degree of freedom (DOF) or motion pattern. Systematic approaches to the type synthesis of parallel mechanisms can be classified in two



main groups: approaches with a specified number of DOF and those with a specified motion pattern.

The "existing methods on type synthesis could not generate underactuated non-holonomic parallel mechanisms with the introduction of the non-holonomic spherical pairs in parallel mechanisms," the researchers explained. "This paper is devoted to type synthesis of underactuated parallel mechanisms with spherical motion pattern accompanied by the generation of the non-holonomic spherical pairs in parallel mechanisms with spherical motion pattern."

In their study, the researchers proposed a new roller-sphere contact method, as well as a generation method of non-holonomic spherical pairs in parallel underactuated mechanisms with spherical motion pattern. The non-holonomic spherical constraint mechanism they developed simplifies the spatial structure and improves the accuracy of the spherical non-holonomic constraint structure.

The researchers demonstrated how their method could be applied in real-life scenarios, using the example of a non-holonomic underactuated joint mechanism of a space robot for on-orbit servicing operations. In future, this technique could be used to develop lightweight, flexible and cheaper space robots with lower energy consumption.

(Source: phys.org)

## Synthetic organelle shows how tiny puddle-organs in our cells work

Imagine your liver being just a big puddle. Some organelles in your cells are exactly that including prominent ones like the nucleolus. Now a synthetic organelle engineered in a lab shows how such puddle organs can carry out complex life-sustaining reaction chains.

A couple of sugars, a dash of enzymes, a pinch of salt, a splash of polyethylene glycol, carefully arranged in watery baths. And researchers had made a synthetic organelle, which they used in a new study to explore some odd cellular biochemistry.

The researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology made the chemical medley in the lab to closely mimic membraneless organelles, mini-organs in cells that are not contained in a membrane but exist as pools of watery solutions. And their model demonstrated how, with just a few ingredients, the organelles could carry out fine-tuned biological processes.

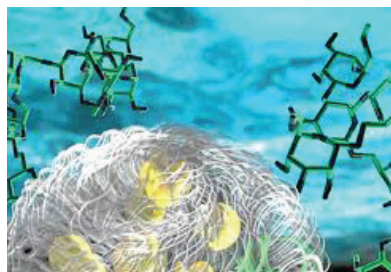
The researchers published the results of their study in the journal ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces for the September 26, 2018 issue. The research was funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of General Medical Science and by the National Science Foundation.

## The discovery of organelle

The discovery of organelles that are pools of watery solutions and not objects with membranes is fairly recent. A prime example is the nucleolus. It resides inside of the cell's nucleus, which is an organelle that does have a membrane.

In the past, researchers thought the nucleolus disappeared during cell division and reappeared later. In the meantime, researchers have realized that the nucleolus has no membrane and that during cell division it gets diffused the way water bubbles do in vinaigrette dressing that has been shaken up.

"After cell division, the nucleolus comes back together as a single compartment of



fluid," said Shuichi Takayama, the study's principal investigator and a professor in the Wallace E. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering at Georgia Tech and Emory University.

Membraneless organelles can be made up of a few different aqueous solutions, each with different solutes like proteins or sugar or RNA or salt. Differences in the thermodynamics of the solutions, that is, how their molecules bounce around, keep them from merging into a single solution.

Instead, they phase separate the way oil and water do, even after intermingling. But there's no oil in this case.

During intermingling, important things happen. The nucleolus, for example, is vital to DNA transcription. But the synthetic set-up, a collection of watery solutions made by the study's first author, Taisuke Kojima, carried out a simpler series of reactions that demonstrated how the membraneless organelles could drive sugar processing.

"We had three phases of solutions that each held different reactants," Kojima said. "It was like a ball with three layers: an outer solution, an intermediate solution, and a core solution. Glucose was in the outer layer; an enzyme, glucose oxidase, was in the second layer, and horseradish peroxidase was in the core along with a colorimetric substrate that gave us a visible signal when the last reaction we were looking for occurred."

(Source: Science Daily)

## The melting permafrost is leaking acid in the Arctic

The Arctic permafrost is melting and acid is leaking out as a result.

The permafrost's slow but sure thawing throughout the planet is bad enough, but now, scientists have revealed that there's also acid spilling out from the Earth — and it could be a dangerous prospect for the future.

In a paper researchers explained that acid from the permafrost is dissolving rocks as it runs downhill, which could lead to even greater strain on the climate.

As temperatures increase in the Arctic and the ice melts away, these minerals are let loose. Sulfide minerals that were released go on to form sulfuric acid, which researchers say have been eating away the rocks that were once blanketed in permafrost in the western Canadian Arctic.

This process of chemical weathering erodes the rocks and unleashes the carbon dioxide that is locked inside, adding even more of the gas to the atmosphere. The amount of sulfides in the permafrost to cause the acid and the erosion is still unknown.

"We can control many sources of CO2 to the atmosphere, caused by human activities, like fossil fuels and land-use change," Scott Zolkos, lead study author from the University of Alberta, explains to New Scientist via Brinkwire. "But once permafrost starts to thaw and release CO2 and methane, that's beyond our control. It's not like we can put a giant thermal blanket on the Arctic."

One of the main concerns over the thawing permafrost is that it is adding even more greenhouse gases to the already astronomical emissions. Just like the minerals that are causing the acid, as the ancient ice melts, gases such as methane and carbon dioxide that have long been trapped underground get released into the atmosphere.

(Source: natureworldnews.com)

## Ecstasy makes octopuses more social and touchy: study

Octopuses are very mysterious and complex creatures, but how different are they really from humans? According to a new study, when it comes to social behaviors in response to ecstasy, octopuses are not so different from humans after all.

Humans and octopuses are separated by 500 million years on the evolutionary tree and octopus brains are far more similar to those of snails' than humans', but how different can the two species really be? In a new study, evidence shows of genomic links between octopuses and humans when it comes to social behaviors in response to methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) or more commonly known as ecstasy, a popular mood-enhancing drug.

Researchers Eric Edsinger, Ph.D., and Gül Dölen, M.D., Ph.D. had a closer look at the genomic sequence of the California two-spot octopus and found that they and humans have nearly identical genomic codes for the transporter that binds serotonin, a mood regulator, to the neuron's membrane. As it happens, it is also the transporter where ecstasy binds to the brain cells and alters mood.

In humans and other vertebrates, ecstasy tends produce prosocial behavior, and the study authors conducted an experiment to see whether octopuses are also susceptible to the same effects given the discovery in regard to their genomic code.

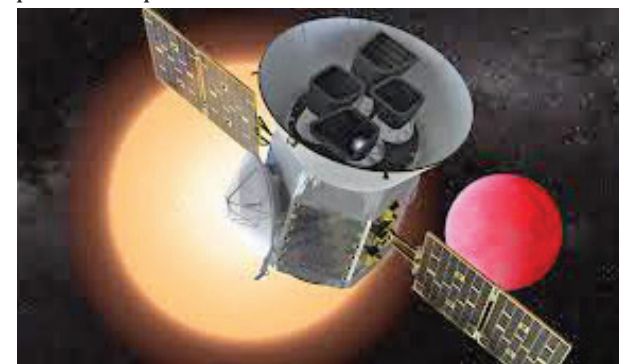
Four male and female octopuses were placed in a tank that contained a liquefied version of ecstasy, and then transferred individually onto three-chambered tanks. One of the tanks was empty, another contained a plastic action figure that could possibly get the octopuses' attention, while another contained a male or female laboratory-bred octopus under a cage.

Typically, octopuses are non-social creatures that tend to avoid or shy away from other creatures including other octopuses unless it is mating season.

(Source: Tech Times)

## Planet-hunting TESS spacecraft has already spotted 2 exoplanets

In the last few decades, we've gone from knowing of exactly zero exoplanets to several thousand. That's largely thanks to the Kepler Space Telescope, but that mission is nearing its end. Luckily, NASA launched a successor several months ago. The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) only started operating over the summer, but NASA reports it has already spotted two potential exoplanets.



Like Kepler, TESS uses the transit method to detect distant exoplanets. It has a quartet of 16.8-megapixel cameras, each once covering a square of the sky 24 degrees across. Together, the cameras let TESS scan a narrow strip of the sky stretching from the polar region to the equator. It watches all the stars in the observational area for small dips in brightness. If the drops occur at predictable intervals, it can indicate there's an exoplanet passing in front of the star.

The crucial difference between Kepler and TESS is the regions of space they observe. Kepler could scan stars up to 3,000 light years away, but it covered very small parts of the sky. TESS will focus on stars 300 light years away or less, but it will eventually scan 85 percent of the sky over its two-year mission. It's starting with the southern hemisphere before moving on to the northern half next year.

The newly detected exoplanets orbit stars in the southern hemisphere and both are vaguely Earth-like. Don't go booking passage yet, though. They don't seem like pleasant vacation spots. There's Pi Mensae c, which orbits a yellow dwarf star (like the sun) about 60 light years away. It's roughly twice the size of Earth, and it orbits very close to the star. A year on Pi Mensae c is 6.27 Earth days. Researchers believe the planet has a rocky iron core with lighter materials like water, methane, and hydrogen.

(Source: extremetech.com)

## BSI Starts Paying Loans at 6% Interest Rate

Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) started paying loans and facilities with six percent (6%) interest rate within the framework of 'short-term deposit investment', the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

In line with meeting demands of its dear customers in terms of paying loans and facilities, the bank eased receiving facilities in all economic sectors through the implementation of 'Short-Term Deposit, Plan No. 67'.

Accordingly, customers and fellow countrymen can embark on opening 'Short-Term Deposit, Plan No. 67' and deposit their resources with seven percent (7%) interest rate annually in various branches of the bank, the report added.

If needed, deposit holders can receive 80 percent of facilities with 6 percent interest rate maximum within 48 hours.

The minimum amount for opening this type of account is set 50 million rials in a

way that deposit holders can receive facilities up to two billion rials. The on-account interest rate in this plan has been set seven percent (7%).

Given the above issue, there is no need any collateral, so that that plan will be implemented within the framework of Murabaha contract with 36-month installments.

So far, Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) has launched projects including 'Zarrin Sepahr Treasury', 'Short-Term Investment Deposit

Plan No. 67', etc.

Moreover, the management of the bank has made all its utmost efforts to receive facilities according to the diversified demands of customers, facilitation and collection of demands with valuable incentives, creation of added value for assets of customers and optimal use of banking resources, total of which have been highly welcomed by customers, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

## EDBI Financial Statement for Last Year Approved

Financial statements of the Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) for the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2018 were approved, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Given the above issue, the bank's financial statements for last year in 1396 (March 20, 2017 to March 20, 2018) were approved in the presence of majority of shareholders of the bank, caretaker of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance (MEAF) as head of the meeting, members of the Board of Directors of the bank and representatives of the concerned organizations.

Dr. Seyed Rahmatollah Ekrami in the annual ordinary general assembly of the bank expressed his special thanks to the unsparring and unflinching efforts of industrious staff and personnel of the bank due to the positive performance



of the bank achieved in the past year (ended March 20, 2018) and added, "this bank is the salient achievements of the Islamic Revolution which has thus far presented

high-quality banking services to exporters in line with supporting and financing export of nonoil commodities in the country."

In this session, Dr. Ali Salehabadi CEO of the bank presented a brief report on the situation of his bank both in national and international levels and said, "the bank managed to take giant strides in the past year (ended March 20, 2018) under the auspices of all industrious personnel and staff of the bank."

Turning to the promotion of international credit rating of the bank in two stages and said, "in 2016 after the implementation of JCPOA, the bank's credit rating was promoted considerably, the rate of which remained in place without any change in last year (BB-) and then from B+ to B."







# Israeli forces kill Palestinian, injure scores of others

IRIB correspondent wounded in Israeli attack in West Bank

Israeli forces have killed a young Palestinian man taking part in anti-occupation protests at the fence separating the besieged Gaza Strip from the occupied territories.

The Gaza Health Ministry said 25-year-old Karim Muhammad was killed by Israeli fire in the eastern Gaza Strip on Friday.

Israeli forces also left 312 people wounded, four of whom are in a critical condition.

Tensions have been running high near the fence since March 30, which marked the start of a series of protests dubbed "The Great March of Return." Palestinian protesters demand the right to return for those driven out of their homeland.

The clashes in Gaza reached their peak on May 14, the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day, or the Day of Catastrophe, which coincided this year with Washington's relocation of the United States embassy from Tel Aviv to occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Ashraf al-Qedra, the spokesman for the ministry, said Israeli fire had taken the lives of more than 180 Palestinians since March 30. Over 20,100 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

On June 13, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution, sponsored by Turkey and Algeria, condemning Israel for Palestinian civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza has been under Israeli siege since June 2007, causing a decline in living standards as well as unprecedented unemployment and poverty.

Israel has also launched several wars on the Palestinian sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014 and ended in late August the same year. The Israeli military aggression killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians and injured over 11,100 others.

**■ IRIB correspondent wounded in Israeli attack in West Bank**

Separately, a field correspondent working for the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has been wounded by rubber bullets fired by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, says the Press TV reporter.



Mona Kandil, Press TV's correspondent, said on Saturday that "12 Palestinians were wounded, including a journalist," during a protest rally in the city of Ramallah.

Kandil added that the correspondent was shot in his leg and sustained minor injury

**■ Israel begins constructing 310 new settler units in occupied Old City**

Meantime, Israeli officials have started building hundreds of new settler units in the occupied Old City of al-Quds (Jerusalem), despite the international outcry against the Israeli regime's land expropriation and settlement expansion policies in Palestinian territories.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa, citing Hebrew-language media outlets, reported that the so-called Jerusalem Local Planning and Building Committee will hold discussions on constructing two settlements in the eastern sector of the occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem), one of which will be erected in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, located 2 kilometers north of the Old City. Israeli authorities allege that the construction projects will be carried out on two pieces of land owned by settlers living abroad.

The report added that 15 settler units will be built in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, while 75 others will be constructed in Beit Hanina neighborhood. The remaining 220 units will be built in the Yeshiva Neveh Zion district on the outskirts of Jerusalem al-Quds.

Less than a month before the U.S. President Donald Trump took office, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2334, calling on Israel to "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem" al-Quds.

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

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state, with East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was Israel's continued settlement expansion on Palestinian territories.

Trump backtracked on Washington's support for a "two-state solution" earlier this year, saying he would support any solution favored by both sides.

"Looking at two-state or one-state, I like the one that both parties like. I'm very happy with the one both parties like. I can live with either one," Trump said during a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on February 15.

**■ Palestinian boy injured after being struck by settler car**

Elsewhere, a Palestinian teenage boy has sustained injuries after an Israeli settler ran him over in the southern part of the occupied West Bank.

Local sources, requesting anonymity, told Arabic-language Ma'an news agency that the 16-year-old victim, identified as Munir Abdullah Gharib, was struck on a road in the Tel Rumeida neighborhood of al-Khalil (Hebron), located 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of al-Quds (Jerusalem), on Friday afternoon.

The sources added that the settler fled the scene after the incident.

Gharib was quickly transferred to the Governmental Hospital in al-Khalil to receive medical treatment.

There have been scores of "hit and run" incidents targeting Palestinians in different parts of the occupied West Bank, with most of them largely going uninvestigated by Israeli authorities. Some of such events have resulted in fatalities.

Palestinian teenager Rushdi Yasser al-Khatib, was struck on the road linking the towns of Hizma and Anata northeast of the occupied Old City of al-Quds (Jerusalem) on March 11.

(Source: Press TV)

## Khan disappointed by 'arrogant' India after talks cancellation

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has lashed out at India's decision to cancel talks between the two countries at next week's United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), calling the reversal "arrogant" and "negative".

Officials from the two countries were scheduled to meet in New York.

However, India backed out of the talks on Friday, blaming "latest brutal killings of our security personnel by Pakistan-based entities and the recent release of a series of twenty postage stamps by Pakistan glorifying a terrorist and terrorism".

On Saturday, Khan took to Twitter to express his disappointment.

"Disappointed at the arrogant & negative response by India to my call for resumption of the peace dialogue," Khan said on Twitter.

"However, all my life I have come across small men occupying big offices who do not have the vision to see the larger picture."

India has long accused Pakistan of arming rebel groups in Kashmir, a Himalayan territory divided between the two countries but claimed in full by both.

Pakistan recently issued postage stamps of Burhan Wani,

a young Kashmiri rebel commander killed by Indian troops in July 2016, whose death sparked a wave of violent protests in India-administered Kashmir.

A statement issued by India's foreign ministry on Friday said: "It is obvious that behind Pakistan's proposal for talks to make a fresh beginning, the evil agenda of Pakistan stands exposed and the true face of [the] new Prime Minister of Pakistan has been revealed to [the] world in his first few months in the office".

India's decision prompted sharp criticism from Islamabad. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, in a statement released on Friday, said the government was "deeply disappointed" at the decision and called the reasons cited by India "entirely unconvincing".

Rejecting allegations of killing and mutilating the Indian border guard, Pakistan called it a "motivated and malicious propaganda".

"By falsely raising the canard of 'terrorism', India can neither hide its unspeakable crimes against the Kashmiri people nor can it delegitimize their indigenous struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination," the statement added.

On Saturday, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood



Qureshi said he was "deeply saddened" by India's reversal.

"It was an opportunity [for progress in bilateral ties], which I think India's domestic circumstances did not allow to materialize," said Qureshi. "There is no precedent of how diplomatic norms were trampled."

Soon after taking office last month, Imran Khan, 65, publicly advocated an easing of Pakistan-India relations.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Death toll from clashes in Libya's Tripoli climbs to 96

Fighting between rival groups in Libya's capital has killed at least 96 people since August 26, with civilians among the casualties, authorities have said.

Libya's Tripoli-based Ministry of Health, in a statement on Friday, said 11 people, including five civilians, were killed on Thursday night as battles raged between militias aligned to the United Nations-backed government and from two nearby towns.

A resident told the DPA news agency

that some families were trapped in their homes due to the heavy exchange of fire while some refused to leave due to fears of looting.

Fighting has mainly taken place in the southern Salah al-Din district and along the road leading to Tripoli airport, which has been closed for years.

The fighting violated a September 4 UN-brokered ceasefire deal and underscores Libya's lingering lawlessness

since the 2011 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)-backed uprising that toppled longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has described the situation in the north African country as "desperate", with the fighting, collapsed economy and destruction of infrastructure leaving hundreds of thousands of people "increasingly vulnerable".

"Seven years of war in Libya has driven over 500,000 people to flee their homes," the ICRC said in a tweet.

"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.

(Source: agencies)

## Abe to visit Darwin in first since World War II: media

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit Darwin in November in a first for a Japanese leader since the Japanese imperial army bombed the Australian city during World War II, Australian media reported on Saturday.

Abe will tour a \$40 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) project run by Japanese company Inpex Corp, according

to media reports from Sky News and ABC News.

Abe will also use the visit to cement military ties with Australia following an agreement between the two countries to conduct joint training exercises and increase defense cooperation, the reports said.

Abe's visit to Darwin would be the first by a Japanese

leader since the Japanese military struck its key military port, killing more than 250 people across multiple bombings in 1942 and 1943, media said.

Abe will make the visit to Darwin before attending an APEC leaders' summit in Port Moresby, ABC News said.

(Source: reuters)

## Saudi trying to stop Yemen war crimes probe: HRW

**➡** The two sides could bridge differences before the council session ends on September 28.

"By definition, there are differences," council spokesman Rolando Gomez said Friday. "One speaks to technical assistance. One is slightly more of a condemnatory nature. There are informal consultations that are under way. There are always efforts to meet in the middle."

Mona Sabella, an international advocacy officer at the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, said independent investigations like those led by experts were important for the

credibility of the council.

She said failure to renew or strengthen such mandates would "empower repressive governments that want to destroy the UN human rights system."

"The choice is clear for UN member states: Support the renewal of independent and international investigations into war crimes in Yemen, or bow to Saudi threats and allow these investigations to be quashed," she wrote in an e-mail. "Nothing would make Saudi Arabia and the UAE happier than to do away with independent investigations into war crimes in Yemen."

HRW described the Saudi attempt to kill the investigation as a "blatant attempt to avoid scrutiny."

"The Saudi-led coalition's campaign to discredit and undermine a UN investigation into abuses by all Yemen's warring parties is yet another blatant attempt to avoid scrutiny of the coalition's own actions in Yemen," John Fisher, HRW's Geneva director, said in a statement.

"The Human Rights Council cannot afford to fail Yemeni civilians. States should renew the mandate of the (probe) or risk the Council's credibility," he added.

Saudi-led forces are accused of numerous war crimes in Yemen including the bombing of civilian targets such as a school bus and hospitals.

The Saudi-led aggression on its southern neighbor Yemen has turned the impoverished Arab country into what the UN has described as "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

Since the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen started in March 2015, some 15,000 Yemenis have been killed and thousands more injured. Millions risk disease and starvation.

(Source: Press TV)

## Russia rejects Israeli findings on downed plane

**➡** The Israel regime has over the past years carried out numerous strikes against the 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 the Russian forces.

**■ U.S.-led aircraft evacuate ISIL commanders from eastern Syria**

Meantime, the United States-led coalition purportedly fighting the the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group has airlifted to a safe sanctuary several commanders of the foreign-sponsored terror outfit from a region in Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr, where government forces and fighters from popular defense groups are tightening the noose around the extremists.

Local sources, requesting anonymity, told Syria's official news agency SANA that two U.S.-led military aircraft conducted the operation on the outskirts of al-Marashida village, and transported the Takfiris to an unknown location.

SANA, citing information received from local residents, reported on December 29 last year that American helicopters had evacuated ISIL commanders from several districts of Dayr al-Zawr province two days earlier.

Earlier that month, the Syrian government had sent a message to the United Nations, accusing the U.S.-led coalition of reaching deals with ISIL and coordinating its actions with the terror group's commanders.

On September 10, 2017, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem said the U.S.-led coalition was trying to destroy the country and prolong the armed conflict there.

Muallem said that Damascus would demand the dissolution of the military contingent, stressing that thousands of Syrian women and children had been killed by coalition airstrikes in Raqqa and Dayr al-Zawr provinces.

The top Syrian diplomat further noted that the Pentagon was using the coalition to cover up its destruction campaign in Syria. He added that the U.S.-backed militiamen from the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were fighting Syrian army forces to gain control over the oil-rich areas of the country.

Damascus would not allow any external force to violate its sovereignty, Muallem pointed out.

Last August, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that the U.S.-led choppers had transported four ISIL terrorists and a civilian from a house used as an arms depot in Beqes, a suburban area east of Dayr al-Zawr, to a safe area.

According to the report, the five people included a European bomb expert, three Egyptian ISIL members and a local resident of Beqes.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be ISIL targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of achieving its declared goal of destroying ISIL.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

**■ Russia, Turkey agree on borders of buffer zone in Syria's Idlib province**

Elsewhere, Russia and Turkey have reached a consensus on borders of a demilitarized zone in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib, which is the last major stronghold of anti-Damascus militants, in an attempt to avert a possible full-scale offensive by the Syrian government against terrorists in the militant-held region.

"Just yesterday or the day before, the militaries of Russia and Turkey agreed the concrete frontiers of the demilitarized zone," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday.

His comments came four 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 between 10,000 and 15,000 members of different factions of armed groups, which Syria, Russia and Turkey consider terrorists, are active in the volatile province, which is home to around three million inhabitants.

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

Moscow believes that a 15-20 kilometer buffer zone would help stop attacks from Idlib-based militants on Syrian army positions and Russia's military bases in the flashpoint region.

Security in the demilitarized area, which includes parts of Idlib and neighboring provinces, including the city of Aleppo, will be overseen by Turkish contingents and Russian military police.

Lavrov further said that the agreement would forestall military action against the city of Idlib, adding, "It's an intermediate step... but a necessary step." He also stressed that by mid-October all members of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham terrorist group "must leave this demilitarized zone, and all heavy military equipment must be pulled out of there."

Meanwhile, Turkey's Defense Ministry also said in a statement that Ankara had achieved an agreement with Moscow on the borders of the buffer zone.

"Meetings with the Russians delegation were held at the ministry on September 19-21 to discuss the main elements of the execution of the Sochi agreement," it said, adding, "During the meetings, the borders were determined after considering the geographical structure and settlements in Idlib."

Earlier on Friday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that "it is now time to fully maintain ceasefire and focus on political process." He added that he would meet with his Russian and Iranian counterparts in New York later this month to discuss the status quo of the country.

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. Ankara also fears an all-out offensive could cause a large number of Idlib residents to seek refuge in neighboring Turkey.

(Source: Press TV)



## Luka Modric accepts suspended eight month prison sentence for tax fraud

An agreement has been reached between the Spanish state prosecutor and Luka Modric over alleged tax fraud, with the player accepting a suspended eight month sentence.

It refers to two crimes of defrauding the treasury of a total of 870,728 euros and the player pleaded guilty.

According to El Mundo, the agreement has been reached after defrauding the treasury of 290,990 euros in 2013 and a further 579,738 euros from image rights by using a company called Ivano SARL.

That company was based in Luxembourg, named in honour of his son and managed through his wife Vanja Bosnic.

During the investigation, stated El Mundo, the Treasury detected that Modric could have undeclared funds in the Isle of Man.

They have concluded that there is no need to increase the fine for Modric and the agreement signed with the tax office seeks a payment amounting to 40 percent of the fee that was defrauded.

That is 348,291 euros as well as the possibility of replacing the sentence, as other footballers have done, for a fine at the rate of 250 euros per day.

Modric, who already paid one million euros at the beginning of legal proceedings, must pay a little over 400,000 euros to settle the case.

(Source: Marca)

## Arsenal's Emery says club can cope without Gazidis

Arsenal manager Unai Emery has said he would have preferred if Chief Executive Ivan Gazidis had not opted to join AC Milan, but is confident the north London club can cope with his departure.

Gazidis led the process to hire Emery as Arsene Wenger's replacement earlier this year, but announced this week he would be leaving the Premier League side.

"I arrived here with Ivan Gazidis and all the conversations we had were important for me to find the best impression of Arsenal and it's future," Emery told Sky Sports.

"He had this chance to leave for Milan - I respect it, it's a very personal decision. We would prefer for him to continue working with us but I respect him a lot as a friend and I want to keep a good relationship with him.

"We are still working to improve with the very good professionals we have at the club. I still have a lot of confidence with the club and the people who are still here."

Emery began his reign at Arsenal with consecutive defeats in the league by Manchester City and Chelsea, but has since managed to win four games in a row in all competitions.

His side host Everton in the Premier League on Sunday and the Spaniard believes the team are gradually adapting to his desired style of play.

"Little by little we are making progress," he said. "We have won two matches away, which is a small but important thing for our confidence. We are finding balance but need to continue working on the details."

(Source: Reuters)

## Malcom, Pablo get first call-ups for Brazil

Barcelona forward Malcom got his first Brazil call-up on Friday in a largely familiar squad to face Saudi Arabia and Argentina in October friendlies.

The 21-year-old right-sided attacker was one of three new names alongside Pablo, the centre half who followed Malcom from Corinthians to Bordeaux earlier this year, and 19-year-old Gremio goalkeeper Felipe.

"Pablo, who won the championship recently with Corinthians, is a powerful centre back, who heads well," head coach Tite said. "It's time for him to get a chance.

"Malcom went to Barcelona after a great year with Bordeaux. Opportunities arise for players who are playing well. The matches he played in the pre-season were good, with goals."

The only other surprise was a recall for Wallace, the Hannover 96 midfielder who has only two caps, the last of which came in January 2017.

Gabriel Jesus and Marcelo, both of whom were rested for September wins over the United States and El Salvador, returned to the squad, as did Miranda and Renato Augusto.

Brazil will face the Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on Oct. 12 and then play Argentina near Jeddah four days later.

(Source: Mirror)

## Cahill considers leaving Chelsea over lack of playing time

Chelsea defender Gary Cahill is considering leaving the Premier League club in January as he is frustrated with the lack of game time he is getting under new coach Maurizio Sarri.

The centre back has not played since Sarri took over from Antonio Conte at the start of the season, and says he could call time on his career at Stamford Bridge when the transfer window reopens if his situation does not improve.

"I don't want to jump the gun, but as things stand at this time, probably, yes," he told British media when asked if he could leave the club. "I'm not a guy who is willing to accept not playing. It's all about playing.

"Your career's short enough as it is. I've got maximum respect for everybody here at the football club, for the fans and all the players. But sometimes you have to make tough decisions to keep your career going forward.

"As it is now, I'm not really enjoying things. Having been a big part of things for seven years and played a huge part, not just a squad player, I'm definitely finding it difficult this year to deal with that situation."

Cahill, who has won two Premier League titles, the Champions League and the FA Cup since joining Chelsea in 2012, is out of contract at the end of the season and is hoping the club does not stand in his way if he decides to move on in January.

(Source: Goal)

# Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic suffer doubles defeat

Team Europe took a commanding 3-1 lead over Team World in the Laver Cup on Friday, despite seeing their high-profile doubles pairing of Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic suffer the defending champions' only defeat of the first day in Chicago on Friday.

Jack Sock and Kevin Anderson combined to deliver the sole triumph for their side, overcoming the world's second and third ranked singles players 6-7(5) 6-3 (10-6) to prevent an opening day shutout for Team Europe.

All eyes were fixed on longtime rivals Federer and Djokovic as they took the court for the final match, combining forces to play together for the first time after Team Europe had swept the first three singles matches.

The early chemistry took time to develop for both players, and Djokovic accidentally hit Federer on the back of the head during the third game, but the star-studded duo proved strong enough to claim the first set in a tiebreak.

Sock and Anderson found their rhythm in the second set, blasting five of their eight aces to level the contest, before the pair took advantage of a Federer double fault at 4-4 in the 10-point match tiebreaker and held on for a critical triumph.

Europe had earlier built their advantage on singles victories for Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov, Briton Kyle Edmund and Belgian David Goffin.

Dimitrov rolled through the opener with a 6-1 6-4 victory over American Frances Tiafoe before his team mates were required to dig deeper for their wins.

## UEFA evaluation puts Germany ahead of Turkey for Euro 2024



A UEFA evaluation report has given Germany the edge over Turkey in the two countries' bids to host Euro 2024. It named human rights and accommodation among the problematic issues for Turkey.

The 40-page report published this Friday on the home page of UEFA, European football's governing body, found no major reservations about Germany's bid to host what would be its fourth major international football tournament.

It noted that all of the stadiums that the German bid foresees using in 2024 already existed, although some upgrades would be required before the tournament kicks off. Germany also got points for its transportation infrastructure and human rights record.

"The DFB (German Football Association) bid is of high quality and comfortably meets overall expectations when it comes to political aspects, social responsibility, sustainability and human rights," the report stated.

The Turkish bid didn't come off as well in the report, which highlighted concerns in the areas of infrastructure, finance and human rights.

Of Turkey's bid, the evaluation found that: "The lack of an action plan in the area

of human rights is a matter of concern."

It also expressed concern that "recent economic developments in the country may put planned public investments under pressure."

It also said that "limited hotel capacity in many cities is a matter of concern" and that overall "the scale of works to be undertaken ... constitutes a risk."

Unlike the German bid, the Turkish Football Association (TFF) is planning to rebuild two of the existing stadiums that it foresees using in 2024, while renovating a third.

On the positive side for the Turkish bid, it noted that it had the full backing of the population and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while there was "widespread support" in Germany for the DFB's bid.

"The report shows that we have taken our work of the past several months seriously and UEFA has taken note of our strengths," said the ambassador for the German bid, former national team captain Philipp Lahm. If Germany gets the nod, he stands to become the head of the organizing committee for 2024.

(Source: DW)

## Cristiano Ronaldo feels persecuted by UEFA after dismissal

Juventus striker Cristiano Ronaldo wept with rage at the Estadio Mestalla after his red card for clashing with Valencia defender Jeison Murillo and now blames UEFA for feeling like a victim.

The Portuguese rushed to the German referee to understand his send-off, an action that he considered did not deserve such a harsh punishment.

At the time, his Juventus teammates also reacted to the referee's decision.

This just goes to show how much things have changed since he departed Real Madrid.

The change, of course, began in Monaco when Ronaldo discovered three hours before the start of the UEFA gala that he was not chosen as the best player by UEFA.

He considered it strange because he believed he was the winner.

The send-off in Juventus' debut Champions League match



this season has brought some suspicions to the Juventus players, who have yet to understand the referee's decision.

## Badminton star Lee has cancer, in Taiwan for treatment

Malaysian badminton star Lee Chong Wei has early-stage nose cancer and is being treated in Taiwan, sports officials said Saturday, after weeks of speculation about his health.

The country's most successful Olympian ever, who enjoys superstar status in his homeland, was responding well to treatment, they said.

But the illness will nevertheless be a devastating blow for the 35-year-old, coming

after he clawed his way back up the rankings following a doping ban to play some of the best badminton of his life.

Speculation had been swirling about his health since he stopped turning up for training in July, and the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) announced that he was pulling out of the World Championships and Asian Games.

Subsequent reports said the three-time

Olympic silver medallist had travelled to Taiwan for treatment but officials remained tight-lipped about what he was suffering from.

In a statement Saturday, BAM president Norza Zakaria said "that the player has been diagnosed with early-stage nose cancer.

"(Lee) is currently in Taiwan seeking treatment and I am pleased to inform you that he is responding well to his treatment and is currently resting and recuperating

amongst family and close friends.

"BAM is in constant contact with (Lee) and we will offer any support we can to our legend."

Missing the World Championships in July and August was a particular blow for the former world number one as the tournament's top honour is one of the major awards missing from his trophy cabinet.

(Source: AFP)



Goffin staved off a late rally on his way to a 6-4 4-6 (11-9) triumph over Argentine Diego Schwartzman.

Schwartzman battled back from a 5-1 deficit in the deciding tiebreaker to level at 7-7 before Goffin pulled clear.

"It was an amazing atmosphere," Goffin said. "I had to stay focused." Day Two will feature three more singles clashes, including

Federer v Nick Kyrgios, and an additional doubles match, with two points on offer for any victory.

Sunday's four matches are worth three points apiece with the first team to reach 13 points crowned champions after Europe claimed last year's inaugural event by a 15-9 margin in Prague.

(Source: Reuters)

## Zlatan Ibrahimovic unsure about returning to LA Galaxy



Zlatan Ibrahimovic admitted his future is uncertain and declined Friday to commit to another season with the LA Galaxy.

Ibrahimovic has had a remarkable debut season in MLS, scoring 17 goals in 22 games, and is under contract for next year, but the 36-year-old told reporters he's not ready to make a decision about spending a second year in Southern California.

"I don't know. This I have to discuss," he said, according to the Los Angeles Times. "This is not the moment to talk about that. It's something I'll discuss with the club. What they want, what I want. So let's see."

The Swedish striker is coming off a major knee injury he suffered with Manchester United a year ago, but he said he would be fine as the season winds down with the Galaxy chasing a Western Conference playoff spot.

"I have five games," he said. "I'm happy. Physically I feel strong, I feel good. I'm producing. So I just need to win games and then everything is perfect."

Ibrahimovic has previously voiced

frustration with the fortunes of the Galaxy, who are in the midst of a seven-game winless streak and sacked coach Sigi Schmid earlier this month, and said it was a new experience to play for a struggling club.

"It's a different challenge," he said. "The team I played for [before], I had that feeling like we were unbeatable. Nobody can destroy us. We will destroy everybody."

His wages may also be an issue, as he is making just \$1.5 million this year --the fourth-highest paid player on the Galaxy -- in part because of the uncertainty over his knee.

Meanwhile, Giovanni dos Santos is making \$6m, the fifth-highest compensation in MLS, but the Mexico international has been criticized during an injury-plagued season in which he has scored just three goals in 13 games.

Ibrahimovic's pocketbook was made a little lighter earlier on Friday as MLS fined him an undisclosed amount for the second time in a month for putting his hands on an opponent's head.

(Source: Soccernet)



# Iran fall short in five-set thriller against Canada in World Championship

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran lost to Canada in five-set thriller against Canada in Pool G of the FIVB Volleyball World Championship on Saturday.

Team Melli lost to Canada 3-2 (20-25, 25-20, 15-25, 25-23, 12-15) in Sofia.

John Gordon Perrin led Canada with 29 points while Amir Ghfour scored 24 points for the Iranian team.

“We could have won the match against Canada but we made some mistakes. Canada had good serve and it made difficult for us. I hope we can defeat the U.S. in our next match,” Iran head coach Igor Kolakovic said.

Iran, who lost to Bulgaria on Friday, will play the U.S. on Sunday.

The 2018 championship is the 19th staging of the FIVB Volleyball Men’s World Championship, contested by the senior men’s national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport’s global governing body.

The final tournament is being held in Italy and Bulgaria from September 9 to 30. For the first time the tournament is jointly-hosted by more than one country.

The final six will be hosted by Italy at the Pala Alpitour in Turin.



## Iran’s Youth Olympic Games team flag bearer announced



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammad Ghorbanali Nosrati has been announced as flag bearer for Iran at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The announcement was made by executive board of Iran’s National Olympic Committee (NOC) on Saturday.

Nosrati claimed a gold medal at the 2018 Cadet Wrestling World Championships held in Croatia in July.

The 2018 Summer Youth Olympic

Games, officially known as the III Summer Youth Olympic Games, and commonly known as Buenos Aires 2018, is a forthcoming international sports, cultural, and educational event that will be hosted in Buenos Aires, Argentina between 6 and 18 October 2018.

It will be the first Summer Youth Olympic Games to be held outside of Asia (also first in the Southern and Western Hemispheres), and the first Youth Games for either summer or winter to be held outside Eurasia.

## Persepolis captain Hosseini winner of ACL Goal of the Week



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini’s goal has been voted Goal of the Week for the second leg of the 2018 AFC Champions League Quarter-finals.

Hosseini’s goal was voted as the best goal with 45,000 votes (61%).

The Iranian giants defeated Al Duhail of Qatar 3-1 Monday night and booked a place in the AFC Champions League semi-finals.

Hosseini scored the first goal of the

match and Persepolis Nigerian striker Godwin Mensha scored the winner.

Mensha’s goal was also a candidate but it came second with 28,000 votes (38%).

Shoma Doi from Kashima Antlers and Kim Shin-wook of Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors also were candidates.

Persepolis will face Al Sadd of Qatar in the AFC Champions League semi-finals.

The Iranian giants will face Al Sadd on Oct. 2 in Doha and host the Qatari club on Oct. 23 in Tehran.

## Iran lose to S. Korea at AVC Cup for Women

Korea overcame their dismal start to beat Iran in pulsating four sets 12-25 26-24 25-16 25-19 to next take on Vietnam in the 5th-6th playoff match at the 6th AVC Cup for Women at Chartchai Hall here on Saturday.

Ha Hyejin chipped in with 17 points from 16 attacks and one ace, while Hwang Minkyung added 9 points including 8 attacks. Mahsa Saberi led Iran with 18 points from 16 attacks, one block and one ace.

Korea fielded a young, potential team with one veteran Han Sooji, 29, at the helm, while Iran sent a strong squad led by Maedeh Borhani Esfahan.

Iran came from nowhere to make a solid start for an initial 14-9 lead, thanks to Mahsa Kadkhoda’s great serves and Maedeh’s exceptional attacks. As Korea’s nerves began to fray since the beginning of the first set, Iran stormed on with their incredible form to win the lopsided set 25-12.

Holding 1-0 advantage, Iran came up with confidence in the second set and they raced to an 8-5 lead. The on-going battle was incredibly close with neither side able to break clear. As Korea improved on their defensive work, with Ha Hyejin and An Hyejin producing impenetrable defence, Iran head coach Javad Mehregan made some clever rotations to



mix and match his lineup. His intention paid its dividends as both sides involved in a tight battle which saw the margin between them unable to get higher than two points. Leveling at 13-13, both teams battled it out in entertaining rallies for several moments and Korea went on their excellent teamwork to advance 24-23. Iran fought back to meet the speedy rivals at 24-24 before the Koreans held on to win two straight points for the hard-fought 26-24 win.

The third set was obviously dominated by Korea with a four-point clear at 5-1. Ha Hyejin and Go Yerim took turns puncturing the Iranian defence with their mighty attacks, while Iran played their best in blunting the Korean efforts. However, Korea started to produce the goods after that with Ha, Go and An looking increasingly dangerous from spike range as their team kept their noses in front at both technical timeouts before sealing the set 25-16.

The fourth set was also thrilling with both teams giving all-out and Korea led from the beginning 14-12. The well-organized offensive duo of Ha Hyejin and Go Yerim still worked on winning some more points for Korea, as Iran were expecting to catch up with the pace setter. However, the Koreans still had too much power with Ha a constant thorn in the rivals. Despite playing cool under pressure, Iran still found the Koreans a tough nut to crack. Leading 23-18, Korea allowed their opponents only one more point to win the set 25-19 and match.

Korea will next take on Vietnam in the 5th-6th playoff encounter, while losers Iran will battle it out for the 7th position with Australia.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

## Ferguson returns to Old Trafford to watch Man United vs. Wolves

Sir Alex Ferguson made an emotional return to Old Trafford to watch Manchester United play in their Premier League game against Wolverhampton Wanderers at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Ferguson, who was admitted to the Salford Royal Hospital in May for emergency surgery for a brain hemorrhage, was greeted by applause and cheers from the crowd as he attended his first match since the operation.

The 76-year-old former United manager released a statement in July to thank staff at Macclesfield, Salford Royal and Alexandra hospitals who treated him, and he revealed he hoped to be back at Old Trafford this season.

And on Saturday, United announced that the Scot would be back in the directors’ box to watch Jose Mourinho’s team take on Premier League new boys Wolves.

“It’s really good [to be back],” he told MUTV. “It’s obviously been a long journey, but I’m making steps forward, doing what my son tells me and what the doctors tell me, so, yeah, it’s really good.

“I’m a bit nervous, to be honest with you, maybe a bit tense, really, because the last

game was Arsenal back in April. It was a long time, but it’s great to be back, and I just hope we get a win today.”

Of doing interviews, Ferguson said: “I don’t miss this. This is the pressure, having these press guys with stupid questions. No, it’s great to go back to the stadium, and it’s going to be quite emotional for me when the game starts, things like that. It had to happen sometime, and I’ve been looking forward to it. It was important getting the right time and the right rest before coming to a game.

“It’s bound to be emotional. Particularly when I take my seat in the box. That will be something, you know. I’ll be glad when it gets over and the game starts and I can enjoy it.”

Ferguson thanked well-wishers for their kind words as he recovered and revealed he had invited some of the doctors who looked after him to the game as well.

“It’s unbelievable. There were thousands of cards, and they kept arriving at Salford Royal Hospital,” he said. “I’d left by that time, but they kept coming and kept coming. The number of emails, texts and personal cards to the house, it was just amazing. It really was.

“I’m overcome by it and overwhelmed by it. I think, if you remember, I did the message [through MUTV] to thank the people who had taken the time to send me messages. It was really important to do that. Some of the doctors are here [as special guests] who did the operation, and I thought it was the right thing to do. It’s great to be back!”

Meanwhile, Mourinho thanked the club’s supporters for their response to the defeat to Tottenham and credited them with the team’s upturn in form.

United and Mourinho were applauded off the pitch following the 3-0 defeat to Tottenham at Old Trafford and have since bounced back with wins over Burnley, Watford and Young Boys.

“Thank you Old Trafford for what you gave us after Tottenham,” Mourinho wrote in his programme notes ahead of the Premier League clash with Wolves, their first home game since defeat to Spurs.

“The credit of our positive spirit in the last three victories is yours.”

United face Wolves with the chance to win four consecutive games for the first time



since January and close the gap at the top with early leaders Liverpool and Chelsea.

“It has been almost four weeks since we last played at Old Trafford, but I cannot forget how amazing the atmosphere was in our last home game, even though it was a defeat against Tottenham,” Mourinho added.

“It was not normal to see the reaction of our supporters gave despite losing the game, but I think there was a recognition that the team had given everything.

“The boys had played well and were unfortunate. I think that was recognised, and in turn the players recognised the support they were given.”

(Source: soccernet)

## After Russia vote, anti-doping group criticizes WADA

A leading anti-doping group hinted at changing the structure of the World Anti-Doping Agency, saying the decision to reinstate Russia’s drug-fighting operation is a sign WADA leaders are saddled with “conflicting priorities.”

The Institute of National Anti-Doping Organizations said in a statement Friday that members of the WADA executive committee had pressures surrounding the decision that went beyond doping.

The committee voted 9-2 on Thursday to end RUSADA’s suspension after weakening the standards originally agreed upon for reinstatement.

WADA receives half its funding from international sports federations, and the other half from governments. The committee is headed by Craig Reedie, whose status as a member of the International Olympic Committee has long been viewed by people in the anti-doping community as a conflict of interest.

The other spots on the committee are divided among sports and government leaders.

Linda Helleland, the minister of children and equality in Norway who is in the running to replace Reedie as president next year, was among those voting “no,” and after the vote said, “Today, we failed the clean athletes of the world.”

The institute said WADA “surrendered to pressure from the IOC and the Russian government to substantially weaken the terms of the Road Map.”

“This is not good governance, nor does it reflect a good governance model,” the statement said. “WADA must be an effective and resolute global anti-doping regulator and governor — exclusively.”

The comments from a body that represents 67 anti-doping agencies around the world largely echoed what U.S. Anti-Doping Agency CEO Travis Tygart said in the hours following the decision, when he called for revamping WADA.

“It starts by removing the inherent conflict of interest that comes about from the IOC fox guarding the WADA henhouse,” Tygart said.

(Source: euronews)

## Alireza Faghani to officiate South Korea’s friendlies

**TASNIM** — Iranian international referee Alireza Faghani has been invited to South Korea to officiate the country’s two friendly matches against Uruguay and Panama.

South Korea will face Uruguay on October 12 and meet Panama four days later in another friendly.

Faghani was supposed to officiate a friendly match between Japan and Chile, scheduled for September 7 at the Sapporo Stadium but the match was canceled due to an earthquake in Japan.

Faghani officiated the third-place match between Belgium and England in the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

In his impressive career, the 40-year-old has officiated finals of the 2014 AFC Champions League, 2015 AFC Asian Cup, 2015 FIFA Club World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Football Tournament.

## Iran Judo athlete bags world bronze medal

**IRNA** — Mohammad Mohammadi Barimanlou Iranian Judo athlete bagged valuable bronze medal of world championship for Iran in -73kg category.

The adult judo championship campaign started on Thursday with 758 Judo athletes from 125 countries in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The national team of Iran has participated with, Mohammad Mohammadi Barimanlou, Saeed Molaie’ and Javad Mahjub and Mohammad Mansouri as the coach.

On Saturday, the competitions in -73 kg of men were held, with Mohammadi Barimanlou first defeated the rivals from North Korea and Kyrgyzstan.

He recently won the Asian Bronze medal in Jakarta by defeating Tomi Makias, the third in World from Sweden, and then by defeating Tetya Casgi from Moldova reached quarterfinals.

## Barcelona interest in Nicolas Pepe confirmed by Lille president

Lille president Gerard Lopez has confirmed that Barcelona are among several clubs tracking forward Nicolas Pepe.

Pepe, 23, has started the French season with four goals and three assists in only in five Ligue 1 appearances.

Mundo Deportivo reported earlier this week that the France-born Ivory Coast international had caught the eye of Barca sporting director Eric Abidal.

“It is true,” Lopez told RMC when asked about the reports of interest from Barcelona. “There are a few big clubs interested in him.

“Clubs contacted us directly after the transfer window to find out how to proceed. I wanted him to stay for at least one more season.”

Lopez said Lille would “definitely sell” players in January, although he stressed that midseason outgoings would be limited to players who were not playing regularly.

He said Pepe was “indispensable and will not move [in the winter]” but did not rule out a deal in the summer.

Lille signed Pepe, who predominantly plays wide on the right, from Angiers in 2017 and he has scored 18 goals in 43 appearances.

Sevilla, Lyon, and Southampton were linked with him in the summer, with the latter reported to have had a €14m bid turned down. Manchester United were also reported to be interested interest this week.

Barcelona signed winger Malcom from Bordeaux in the summer to provide competition for Ousmane Dembele.

As well as a central midfielder, they are looking to sign a new striker next season as they look to find a long-term replacement for Luis Suarez, who is 32 in January.

(Source: Soccernet)



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Shorts from Iran to compete in Uppsala festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian short films “Umbra” and “Maned & Macho” will be competing in the 37th Uppsala International Short Film Festival, which will be held in the Swedish city from October 22 to 28, the organizers have announced.



“Umbra” by Saeid Jafarian.

“Umbra” by Saeid Jafarian is about a young woman who realizes a few minutes after midnight that her partner has disappeared. She goes out worriedly to seek her partner in the darkness of streets.

“Maned & Macho” by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi is about a girl’s repressed emotions and instincts, which are embodied in some animals that come out of her dreams.

The two shorts will be competing in the international section with a great number of films and animated movies coming from Austria, Bangladesh, Germany, France, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Greece and dozens of other countries.

“Bernhardt/Hamlet” offers modern Broadway twist on French diva

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — The life of French actress Sarah Bernhardt arrives on Broadway in a new play that brings a contemporary twist to her career as a woman who broke the rules of male-dominated theater.



“Bernhardt/Hamlet,” a comedy starring British actress Janet McTeer, focuses on Bernhardt’s 1899 performance in Paris as the first woman to play Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

Bernhardt, a 19th century diva who ran her own theater company, slept in a coffin, and kept a lion and an alligator, was 55 years old at the time.

“She was incredibly bold and she just felt like an amazing person,” said McTeer.

American playwright Theresa Rebeck uses Bernhardt to look at issues like fame, love, aging, and the place of women in celebrity culture and wider society.

“She was somebody who knew how to rattle the culture. But it was such an extraordinarily intellectual, passionate and feminist way to rattle the culture 120 years ago,” said Rebeck.

“It became interesting to me to explore a person who was so fearlessly that,” she said.

Bernhardt died in Paris in 1923 at age 78.

“Bernhardt/Hamlet” has its opening night on Broadway on Sept. 25.

Tom Hardy says on-screen ‘Venom’ stays true to Marvel comics

**MOSCOW (Reuters)** — British actor Tom Hardy said on Friday he believes his new superhero movie “Venom” remains faithful to the Marvel Comics books in its portrayal of an investigative journalist whose body becomes the host for an alien with enhanced powers.

Hardy, who previously starred in “Dunkirk” and “Mad Max: Fury Road,” plays the sharp-toothed title character and his human alter-ego, reporter Eddie Brock.

“The depiction of Venom, I think, has been extremely faithful to the comics,” Hardy said at a press conference in Moscow to promote the movie.

“If we look at some of the images directly from comic book, they haven’t deviated in any,” he added. “If anything they’ve recreated certain elements accurately from comics book.”

“Venom” is scheduled to start rolling out in worldwide theaters on Oct. 3. It debuts in the United States and Canada on Oct. 5.

Aran Theater Troupe to restage Ashura opera puppet show in Tehran

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Director **d e s k** Behruz Gharibpur plans to restage the Ashura opera puppet show with his Aran Theater Troupe at Tehran’s Ferdowsi Hall during October, the group announced on Saturday.

The opera is about the battle of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions against the Umayyad dynasty during Ashura, the tenth day of the month of Muharram on the Islamic calendar.

The Ashura opera puppet show is a blend of music, puppetry, poetry and tazieh (Iranian passion play).

Three performances have been arranged for the play from October 3 to 5.

The puppet opera will be staged with music by Iranian composer Behzad Abdi, which will be performed live by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. Vladimir Sirenko is the conductor of the orchestra.

The Ashura puppet show premiered in Tehran in 2008. It has been staged in France, Italy, Poland and several other countries.

Different vocalists such as Mohammad Motamedi, Mehdi Emami and Reza Sadeqi will collaborate in this project.

The Ferdowsi Hall is located on Shahriar St., off Hafez Ave, across from Vahdat Hall.



The Aran Theater Troupe performs the Ashura opera puppet show at Tehran’s Ferdowsi Hall on December 18, 2013. (IRNA)

Iranian director to stage “Stools” in Italy



Jafar Mahyari in an undated photo.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Jafar **d e s k** Mahyari, the artistic director of the Zendegi Theater Company in Iran, is scheduled to stage “Stools” at Camere d’aria, a multipurpose space for art and culture in the Italian city of Bologna.

An Italian actress will accompany Mahyari in three performances arranged for October 9, 10 and 11, Mahyari told the Persian service of Honaronline on Saturday.

“The play centers on an Iranian man and an Italian woman each one standing on a stool. They accidentally meet each other and gradually get to know one another better, become interested in one another and begin to feel closer. However, they dare not step down since they are both afraid of falling off their stools. But a simple incident changes the process,” he explained.

He said that the play actually narrates the current situation of the contemporary man who is bound to restrictions and is unable to move forward and remove the obstacles.

Mahyari said that the play, which is the new production of Camere d’aria, will exclusively be staged in Italy. However, he added that he would like to stage it in Iran as well.

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Iran cancels Press Exhibition over adverse economic conditions



A view of the 22nd Press Exhibition at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Mosalla on November 4, 2016 (IRNA/Mojtaba Mohammadlu)

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has decided to cancel the Press Exhibition this year due to the current adverse economic conditions facing the country and print media, the Persian service of MNA reported on Saturday.

Mohammadreza Darbandi, the director of the Domestic Press and News Agencies Department of the culture ministry, refused to give further details about the decision.

Deputy Culture Minister for Press Affairs Mohammad Soltanifar previously said that the Press Exhibitions would likely be canceled due to the economic problems

facing the newspapers.

Over the past few months, the high price and shortage of newsprint paper and a reluctance by firms to advertise in the press have led to the closure of several newspapers, including Hambastegi.

In addition, many newspapers have downsized their workforce and reported a decrease in the number of their pages.

The cost of organizing the Press Exhibition has been estimated at 50 billion rials (over \$1 million). The culture ministry was seeking a sponsor to support the Press Exhibition this year. However, no firm agreed to support the event.

“Star Wars” fans applaud movie release slowdown

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Plans by Disney to slow down the release of future “Star Wars” projects are getting a thumbs up from fans, who also hope that new movies in the multi-billion dollar sci-fi franchise will be more creative.

In an unexpected admission that the slew of “Star Wars” films and spinoff projects may be causing fan fatigue, Walt Disney CO. Chief Executive Bob Iger said it had been a mistake to release a new movie every year.

“I think the mistake that I made - I take the blame - was a little too much, too fast,” Iger told The Hollywood Reporter in an interview published on Thursday. “You can expect some slowdown, but that doesn’t mean that we’re not going to make films.”

“I think we’re going to be a little more careful about volume and timing,” Iger added.

Scott Collura, executive editor of entertainment web-

site IGN, called the slowdown “a win for fans,” recalling the anticipation in the past when there were long gaps between movies.

“It won’t kill us to not have a new ‘Star Wars’ film in 2020,” Collura wrote in an opinion piece.

Since 2015, Disney has released two of three planned movies based around characters originated by director George Lucas in 1977, and two standalone films.

Iger’s comment followed a disappointing reception for May release “Solo: A Star Wars Story”, an origin story about smuggler Han Solo. The film took \$400 million at the global box office, well below the \$2 billion haul for 2015’s “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” and \$1.3 billion for 2017’s “Star Wars: The Last Jedi”.

In the past year, Disney has also announced a live-action series for its planned streaming service, a series of

feature films written by the creators of television show “Game of Thrones”, and another film trilogy bringing in new characters.

Many fans have failed to embrace the younger generation of characters, like Daisy Ridley’s feisty Rey and John Boyega’s rebel stormtrooper Finn in “The Force Awakens”.

“No one gives a flip about Rey, Poe or Finn”, commented user CMO175 on the Hollywood Reporter comments page, complaining about the fate of Luke Skywalker in “The Last Jedi”.

Others said the movies had become too politically correct, with more women and ethnic characters, while some complained that the plots had become stale.

“Maybe having film releases spaced out a little more will give authors and artists some creative breathing room,” wrote Darth Nobunaga on the starwarsnet.com fan forum.

The artist as an algorithm: robot-made Rembrandt for sale

**PARIS (Reuters)** — Robots can do many of the jobs previously performed by humans, but could they ever replace artists?

A team of French entrepreneurs who believe so have written a computer algorithm that can create original paintings with some resemblance to works by Old Masters such as Rembrandt.

The pictures of an imagined “Baron of Belamy” and his aristocratic relations have a smudgy, blurred finish that would not have impressed Rembrandt’s clients, but are good enough for the auction house Christie’s to put one of them on sale in New York in October with a price estimate of \$7,000 to \$10,000.

“We are artists with a different type of paintbrush. Our paintbrush is an algorithm developed on a computer,” said Hugo Caselles-Dupre, a computer engineer who founded the group with childhood friends Gauthier Vernier and Pierre Fautrel, who both have a business background.

The artworks are created by the Generative Adversarial Network (GAN), an algorithm that learns to generate new images by being fed a database of existing paintings - 15,000



Pierre Fautrel, of the team of French entrepreneurs called Obvious, poses in front of the artwork “La Comtesse de Belamy” (2018), created by the Generative Adversarial Network (GAN), an algorithm that learns to generate new images by being fed a database of existing paintings, during an interview with Reuters in Paris, France, September 21, 2018. (Reuters/Christian Hartmann)

portraits in the case of the “Belamy” pictures.

“The visual is not the only thing that comprises the final portrait,” said Fautrel. “All of the message, and the artistic process

to get to the visual, are also important, even more than the final product,” he said, admitting that GAN’s pictures — printed onto canvas and then framed — are fuzzy.

“The fact that it’s not yet perfect, I think is logical because it’s a technology that is still very new, and to have very good results, we need significant calculating power, that for now we don’t have in this small apartment.”

The trio sold “The Count of Belamy” for around \$10,000 to Paris-based collector Nicolas Laugero-Lasserre.

“What was astonishing was that they knew nothing about art, nothing at all,” Laugero-Lasserre said.

“In the beginning, I took them for crazy people. And finally, are they crazy, are they genius? We’ll see,”

Some artists are unconvinced that a machine can make real art.

“If there was no anger from Picasso, ‘Guernica’ would never have existed,” said painter Robert Prestigiacomo.

“There’s always a feeling behind a painting, always — whether it’s anger, yearning, desire. And artificial intelligence is — well, you have the word ‘artificial’ in it - there you have it!”