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EDITORIAL
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Macron tries to complete Trump's project

The Elysee Palace continues its direct play on the U.S. ground. The evidences suggest that French President, Emmanuel Macron, is once again planning to get involved in a "predetermined game" over bringing up the issue of making a "complementary agreement" regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action at the United Nations General Assembly, and then ask Washington to return to the nuclear deal if Iran agrees to restrain its missile and regional capabilities!

Wall Street Journal writes accordingly: "France's President Emmanuel Macron plans to resurrect his proposal for "JCPOA Plus," a plan that referred to as for the U.S. to stay dedicated to the accord as world powers work out a parallel understanding on restrict Iran's missile program and press Tehran on its regional insurance policies."

It continues; "Iran and Europe level out that the deal was restricted to the nuclear program and that UN displays repeatedly have licensed that Iran has been abiding by the phrases of the pact."

As the Wall Street Journal has emphasized, the issue of "complementing the nuclear deal" has long been raised by the French, and this trend has continued after the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. While some of our statesmen are pleased with the agreement between the European and the Trump's government (regarding the JCPOA), secret deals were made between the United States and Europe.

Although our statesmen focus on the words of Donald Trump at the Security Council meeting, and are awaiting the analysis of his speeches, Macron is now the one person responsible for directing this game in the form of a joint synergy between the White House and the Elysee Palace! Here are some points that need to be taken into consideration:

It has been repeatedly reported that since the beginning of 2017, the French have started a dangerous project on "limiting Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities" along with Trump's government. **→7**

Trump is a bully: ex-White House official

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Frank N. von Hippel, former assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology, says that Trump is a bully and thinks that the United States as the strongest country should be free to bully other countries.

"The Trump Administration is so extreme in so many ways that the opposition is more united than I have ever seen it and is gaining ground," Frank N. von Hippel tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Due to the trump's speech at the United



Nations General Assembly that he pointing to Opposition to Iran, how are you evaluated his speech?

I did not like his speech in general or with

'Impart Islamic knowledge in a way that is relatable, enlightening and entertaining'

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — Sheikh Azhar Nasser is a Canada-based, globally-renowned Islamic scholar, lecturer, orator and a social media sensation. He is the founder and head instructor of Tasneem Institute, which offers on-site, weekend crash courses on Islamic sciences to Muslim communities worldwide. He also serves as the religious director of CBE Academy, which specializes in the production of short spiritually uplifting videos.

Sheikh, who has a degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Michigan and has studied under the tutelage of Islamic luminaries like Ayatollah Sistani and Ayatollah Hakim, has been hailed as the 'best thing to happen to Twitter'.

In an interview with Tehran Times, Sheikh talks about his foray into the virtual world, the

power of social media, issues facing Muslims today, the need for unity, growing Islamophobia in the West, and the significance of annual Muharram commemorations.

Following are the excerpts:

■ You have got massive following on social media, especially Twitter, and your posts generate lot of enthusiasm among youth. How did this journey into the virtual world begin?

A. I have always been active on social media but recently I decided to share a more satirical outlook on the challenges and struggles of the Muslim community. Life can be overwhelming and stressful at times so why not impart Islamic knowledge in a way that is relatable, enlightening and entertaining?

■ A lot of us underestimate the power of social media. Do you think it can be a powerful tool to

regard to its treatment of Iran.

At the general level, it denigrated the level of global governance that has reduced the level of war since the end of World War II in favor of a return to a dog-eat-dog world where the strongest dog – presumably the United States – would win.

With regard to the treatment of Iran, it picked out Iran as a cause of all the problems in the Middle East. That is a very one-sided view.

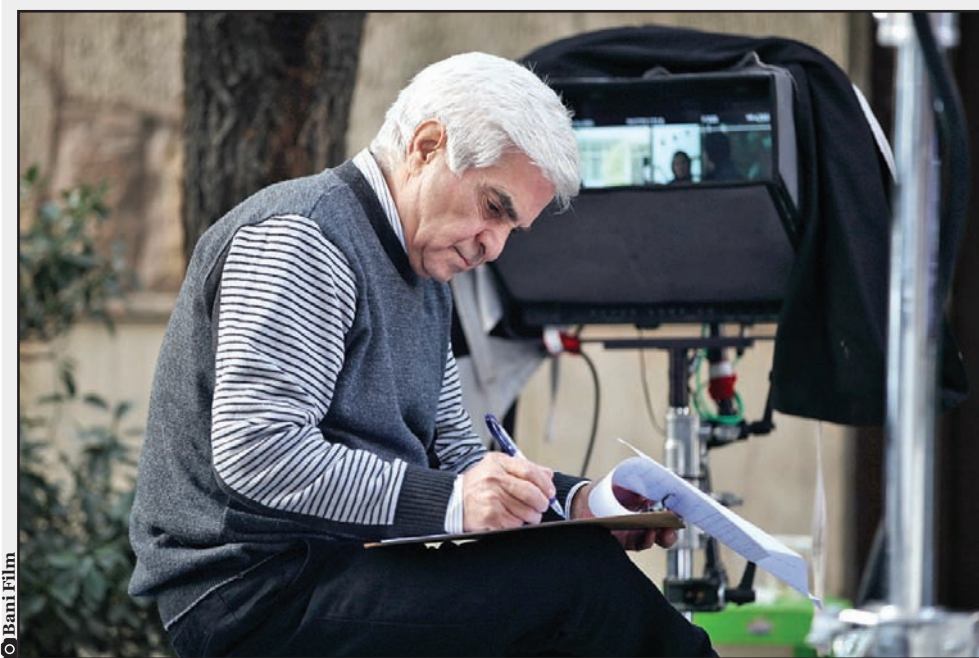
The discussion of the "horrible" JCPOA made no sense next to the claim that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons. If Iran leaves the JCPOA, which the Trump Administration seems to hope it will, the worry about an Iranian nuclear-weapon program will increase, not decrease. **→7**

bring Islamic awakening and social reformation?

A. Absolutely. We live in an era where I can reach a wider audience with a single tweet than a traditional lecture. Whether it's a theological discussion or a social justice issue, there is no doubt that a single post on any social media platform has a significantly greater impact than the more conventional methods of spreading knowledge and awareness.

■ What according to you are the most significant issues facing Muslims today?

A. There are too many to list but perhaps the most disheartening issue facing Muslims today is our lack of unity. We promote inter-faith dialogue but I believe that we must begin with intra-faith dialogue. As an Ummah, we have yet to learn how to co-exist and respect each other's differences. **→6**



© Bani Film

"Desire to Fly" director Yadollah Samadi dies at 66

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Yadollah Samadi, most famous for his epic TV series "Desire to Fly" on Iranian war hero Abbas Babai, died of heart failure at a Shiraz hospital on Tuesday. He was 66.

He was at the hospital waiting for a liver transplant, Persian news agencies announced on Tuesday.

Born in Maragheh, Samadi began his career in cinema as an assistant director in movies such as Hossein Zandbaf's 1981 spy thriller "Hand of Satan" and Habib Kavosh's 1983 thriller "Dadshah". **→16**

Rouhani discusses nuclear deal with May and Macron

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani met separately on Tuesday with British Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the of the UN General Assembly conference in New York to discuss the 2015 nuclear deal and other issues.

In his meeting with May, Rouhani said that preserving the nuclear deal, known as

the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is the most important issue in Iran-Europe relations.

"Fortunately, the sides are determined to preserve this international agreement and have adopted firm political position in this line," he said.

He noted that efforts should be made to find ways to implement the deal, especially in economic area. **→2**

Tehran to bring digital marketing into focus on World Tourism Day

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Tehran province's tourism department is set to put digital marketing on the spotlight during the World Tourism Day (WTD), which is annually marked on September 27.

"The department is scheduled to honor a select of top experts and directors of tourism startups." ISNA

quoted Delavar Bozorgnia, the provincial tourism chief, as saying on Sunday.

It will also hold an educational workshop titled "Digital Marketing in Tourism Businesses", the official stated, adding that the lineup is oriented towards this year's WTD theme; "Tourism and the Digital Transformation." **→10**

U.S. removing some missile systems from Middle East

The United States is pulling some of its anti-aircraft and missile batteries out of the Middle East, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday, citing the U.S. military officials.

A U.S. decision to remove anti-missile systems from several Arab allies was an "internal and routine procedure", Kuwait

said on Wednesday, adding that its defenses would not be affected.

"Kuwait's Patriot missile system, independently, protects and covers all its geographical borders," said a statement from the Persian Gulf Arab state's chief of staff. It added that the U.S. decision had been coordinated with Kuwait's military. **→13**



ARTICLE
Syed Zafar Mehdi
Journalist
from New Delhi

How Trump became laughing stock at UN

U.S. President Donald Trump took the podium of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday and delivered a bombastic speech that drew mocking laughter from the world leaders. In his characteristic foolhardy manner, Trump rejected the ideology of globalism and denounced multilateralism, forgetting that he was speaking from the stage of the global body that endorses both globalism and multilateralism. But, we can expect that from the man with foot-in-mouth syndrome.

Trump began his speech with unabashed self-praise, talking about the "extraordinary progress" his administration has made in less than two years, "more than almost any administration in the history of our country". With these words, the jam-packed assembly broke out in spontaneous derisive laughter. "Didn't expect that reaction, but that's okay," he reacted, drawing more laughter. The world's greatest summit briefly appeared like a comedy show.

Lot of participants could be seen suppressing their laughter while Trump was quite pompously hailing his government's 'accomplishments', citing fictitious data like \$10 trillion wealth added in his tenure, jobless claims at 50-year low, 4 million new jobs, half a million manufacturing jobs. Perhaps he thought he was speaking at a kindergarten to a bunch of nursery students, who would accept his figments of imagination as gospel truth. **→6**

Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Energy
Khuzestan Water and Power Authority

Re-Invitation to International Bid

Request for Qualification

EPC+F Bid for Development

Project of Dez Dam Power Plant

Extension Project

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Zarif calls for immediate halt to new nuclear arms race

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday called for an immediate cessation of “new nuclear arms race” in the world and elimination of all nuclear weapons, Tasnim reported.

Speaking at a meeting on the occasion of International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Zarif urged the world to unconditionally adopt the obligations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

“This is the right of the future generations, and we must strive responsibly to achieve it,” he stated.



IRGC chief censures Trump for ‘cheap remarks’

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Wednesday censured U.S. President Donald Trump for his “cheap comments” against Iran at the UN General Assembly, saying the current approach leads to more U.S. isolation.

Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari took a swipe at Trump, saying the ones who sow chaos, death, and destruction are the U.S. government and the reactionary regimes in the region, Tasnim reported.

“The direct and indirect crimes committed in Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Iran by the U.S. and the governments supporting the hegemonic system will remain in the memory of Muslim and non-Muslim people of these countries,” Jafari added.



‘Parliament, Expediency Council regard FATF off the subject’

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Mohsen Rezaee, secretary of the Expediency Council, has said the issue of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is no more a subject of discussion in the parliament and the Expediency Council.

“But the Majlis (parliament) and the Expediency Council have been holding discussions regarding the government-proposed bills on money laundering and Palermo [Convention],” Dana quoted Rezaee as saying.

He further added that joining this international organization is an issue that must be decided by the country’s top leaders.



Army unveils homegrown military gears

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Army Ground Force on Wednesday unveiled a number of homegrown, state-of-the-art military gears, including a jamming device that can be installed on drones.

The latest military achievements were unveiled in a ceremony in Tehran. It was attended by Army Ground Force Chief Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, Tasnim reported.

Among the military gears unveiled was the Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), which is capable of imaging at night and day and in cloudy and dusty weather and can be mounted on drones.



Vienna to continue efforts to deal with sanctions

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Vice-Speaker of the Austrian Federal Parliament Magnus Brunner has said that his country, as the rotating president of the European Union (EU), will do its best to preserve the Iran nuclear deal in the face of U.S. sanctions.

Brunner made the remarks in a meeting with the chairman and members of the Iran-Austria parliamentary friendship in Vienna, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Brunner also said that the development of cooperation between small- and medium-sized enterprises as well as provincial partnerships could be a well-suited solution to preserve the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



110 members of National Trust Party resign

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — 110 members of the National Trust Party submitted their resignation to the party’s secretary general on Wednesday, two days before it holds a congress.

The members said in a letter that the congress that the party plans to hold is in contrast with its statute and its results are “clear to the signatories in advance,” Mehr reported.

They also said any conference must be held by Rasoul Montajabnia, the current deputy secretary general of the party, and “not anyone else.”

According to Mehr, the first meeting of the general council of “New Way, Trust Again”, a party split up from the National Trust Party will be held next Monday with the chairmanship of Montajabnia.

Mogherini: Iran should benefit from ‘legitimate’ economic relations



“What I am saying is that the United States cannot think of imposing its own policy decisions on sovereign countries and organizations, so Europeans have the legitimate rights to decide with whom to do business and trade and this is what we are doing.”

“Is there a better way than diplomacy and dialogue? Is it the military option the alternative that works? Isn’t it more dangerous?”

Mogherini went on to assert that “engaging is not being soft.” She added, “You can be very strong and talk but do you have better

alternatives than talking in times of conflict and crisis are causing around the world.”

Elsewhere in the interview, the EU chief diplomat said that Iran is still complying with its nuclear-related commitments, noting that the IAEA just came out with another report saying Iran is complying with commitments.

She defended the international diplomacy that led to the Iran deal in 2015, saying, “I’m not saying it’s easy and the confidence I have has a limit because it is indeed a difficult environment in which it will pay in but I’m convinced of the value of what we have done, and I’m convinced because I see the results.”

“And what I am saying is that the United States cannot think of imposing its own policy decisions on sovereign countries and organizations, so Europeans have the legitimate rights to decide with whom to do business and trade and this is what we are doing, not also to the Europeans but also to the rest of the world.”

“This idea that the world is in the hands of a strong men sitting around the table and deciding by themselves over the heads of the people I simply think that doesn’t work. That belongs to a different kind of era that is the past; another thing fits for this century. I don’t think this is what people of the world think and want to see.”

Araqchi: UN Security Council meeting to isolate U.S. more

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi is of the opinion that the Wednesday’s UN Security Council meeting will isolate the U.S. further.

“I am confident that Wednesday’s meeting will proceed against Mr. Trump’s wishes, and this will only isolate the U.S. more,” Sputnik quoted Araqchi as saying.

Araqchi made the remarks hours before Trump’s anti-Iran remarks at the UN Security Council meeting.

Donald Trump, who chaired the council meeting, repeated his charges against Iran. The session was on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

“I ask all members of the Security Council to work with the United States to ensure the Iranian regime changes its

behavior and never acquires a nuclear bomb,” Trump said.

He told the council that anyone who failed to comply with U.S. sanctions on Iran would “face severe consequences”.

The U.S. holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council.

“We have been informed that all European members of [the] Security Council intend to support the nuclear deal and stress the need for remaining committed to its implementation,” Araqchi said.

On Tuesday, President Hassan Rouhani stated at the UN General Assembly session that if the U.S. wants to return to the JCPOA and cooperate, it should know that “it would be much easier to return to six months ago than six years back.”

Pointing to the president’s remarks, Araqchi said the

U.S. “should note that if it returns to the JCPOA, this time it will be Iran’s turn to set conditions, and one of which is the complete implementation of commitments under the deal.”

Of course, he continued, there is no prospect for that happening because the U.S. has not yet reached “maturity”.

He also mentioned the results of a ministerial meeting of the E3/EU+2 in which the other signatories to the deal and the EU foreign policy chief proposed some mechanisms to facilitate trade with Iran, saying the meeting was a “major step forward”.

He added that European countries are seriously seeking ways to continue their legitimate trade with Iran without having to face repercussions from U.S. sanctions.

Ahvaz attack reveals ‘true face’ of terror supporters: Shamkhani

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said on Wednesday that the terrorist attack in Ahvaz in southwest Iran on September 22 revealed the “true face” of those countries who support terrorism and refrain to condemn it.

“This incident once again showed double standards being adopted by those who claim fight against terrorism and revealed the true face of supporters of terrorists who did not even condemn this crime,” Shamkhani told the Regional Security Dialogue conference in Tehran attended by top security officials from Russia, Afghanistan, India, and China.

Shamkhani said that supporting terrorists financially, using terrorism as a tool, promoting the Takfiri ideology and interfering in other countries’ affairs under the pretext of fighting terrorism are examples of double standards in campaign against terrorism.

The security chief also said it is necessary to cut the financial lifeline of terrorists through intelligence and security cooperation.

Shamkhani suggested that the security structure in the region should be drafted in accordance to the common interests of regional countries in order to end interference by foreigners and counter unilateralism.

■ **‘Common enemy’**

Speaking at the conference, Rus-



The Afghan security delegation to the tehran conference

sian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev called terrorism the “common enemy” and suggested that all should join hands to counter it.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Patrushev said the military presence of the U.S. in Afghanistan has only complicated the security crisis in the country.

After the September 11 attacks in 2001 the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to unseat the Taliban regime. However, after 17 years Taliban has emerged more violent.

■ **‘No Afghan stability as long as terrorist are armed and funded’**

Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib, whose country is

in the midst of war against terrorism, said so long as terrorists in Afghanistan receive money and arms any campaign against them will not prove effective.

India’s national security adviser, Ajit Doval, also said drug money is making terrorists in Central Asia stronger and it is necessary to devise a mechanism to cut the source of their money.

The Chinese security official present in the conference also called for intelligence sharing in struggle against terrorists and extremism.

He said his country is ready to activate the capacities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to counter threats of

terrorism and violent extremist groups.

■ **‘Terrorists in Syria endanger the entire region’**

Shamkhani, chairman of the conference, also referred to the crisis in Syria, saying there are thousands of terrorists in Syria who pose a serious threat to the region in future.

Iran’s top security official also said there are credible evidence that the U.S. is transferring top ISIL militants to other parts of the world.

Participants to the conference in Tehran also condemned the terrorist attack in Ahvaz which left 24 people, including a 4-year-old child, dead and many others wounded.

Terrorists opened fire on people watching a military parade held to mark the invasion of Iran by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during the 1980s.

Al-Ahvaziya terror group which is backed by certain Arab countries and is based in Europe claimed responsibility for the attack.

■ **‘Economic terrorism has targeted lives of Iranian people’**

In a separate meeting with Doval, Shamkhani said the United States’ “economic terrorism” against Iran is targeting the livelihood of the people.

“Today, along with threats of Takfiri terrorism, we are facing economic terrorism by the U.S. which has targeted the livelihood of (Iranian) people,” Shamkhani lamented.

Rouhani discusses nuclear deal with May and Macron

1 → For her part, May said that it is essential to preserve the JCPOA and said that Tehran-London cooperation in this respect will be continued.

She also said that the UK welcomes expansion of ties with Iran.

Rouhani and Macron exchanged views on preserving the JCPOA and expanding economic and banking relations.

The European Union said on Monday its members would set up a payment system to allow oil companies and businesses to continue trading with Iran in a bid to evade sanctions after the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear agreement.

“In practical terms, this will mean that EU member states will set up a legal entity to facilitate legitimate financial transactions with Iran and this will allow European companies to continue to trade with Iran in accordance with European Union law and could be open to other partners in the world,” EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told reporters in New York.

She said that the remaining members of the JCPOA—Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia—would also maintain their commitments to support Iran on civilian nuclear energy.

■ **‘We will remain in a deal which is beneficial to us’**

In a separate meeting with Norwegian Prime



Minister Erna Solberg, Rouhani said that Iran will remain in the nuclear accord as long as it benefits the country.

“Iran is totally committed to its obligations, however, any deal is two-sided and we will remain in an agreement which meet our benefits,” he stated.

Rouhani also called for expanding ties with Norway.

For her part, Solberg said that Norway is determined to expand relations with Iran.

As a European country, Norway seeks to expand ties with Iran in spite of the U.S. sanctions, she said.

■ **Rouhani calls for European practical actions to save JCPOA**

Rouhani also met with Belgian Prime Minister



Charles Michel and called for practical actions by Europe to preserve the JCPOA.

Michel said that Europe is seeking to find new financial mechanisms to boost economic ties with Iran in spite of the U.S. economic and political pressure.

■ **‘Iran seeks friendly ties with neighbors’**

During a meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Rouhani said that Iran seeks to have friendly ties with its neighbors.

Rouhani said that the two countries have many capacities to expand relations in various spheres.

Pashinyan invited Rouhani to visit neighboring Armenia.

Trump is a laughing stock. But if we weren't laughing, we'd be crying

By Michael H Fuchs

For the rest of the world, the United States President Donald Trump's America is a laughing stock, not a leader.

That was the takeaway from Trump's speech to the 2018 Nations general assembly. Trump opened his speech the same way he opens his campaign rallies, TV interviews, and probably conversations with every visitor he meets: "In less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country."

The response from the leaders assembled in the room? Laughter. The entire world literally laughed at the U.S. president – and they weren't laughing with him.

Even Trump himself was taken aback: "I did not expect that reaction ..."

And while reporters and foreign policy experts could not recall another leader ever before drawing derisive laughter at a United Nations speech, it did not end there. When Trump made another claim – "Germany will become totally dependent on Russian energy ..." – the cameras revealed the German delegation laughing and snickering to one another.

With Trump's own behavior and policies as a backdrop, the substance of Trump's speech merited laughter – it was an incomprehensible joke.

The main theme of Trump's speech was protecting the U.S. "sovereignty" and he said that all countries should do likewise. He claimed: "The United States will not tell you how to live, work or worship. We only ask that you honor our sovereignty in return." But shortly thereafter Trump spent portions of his speech telling Iran and Venezuela what to do at home.

In the Middle East, Trump claims his "new approach is yielding great strides and very historic change" as he announced that the United States is working with Persian Gulf countries, Jordan and Egypt to establish a strategic alliance. Moments later, Trump reversed course and launched a broadside against OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries of which the Persian Gulf states are the key members) for "ripping off the rest of the world".

Unfortunately, the consequences of the policies embedded within Trump's speech are no joke. They can inflict lasting damage.

On Iran, Trump outlined policies that portend only more conflict. As America's



allies France, Germany and Britain work with Russia, China and Iran to preserve the restrictions on Iran's nuclear program that are now in jeopardy because of America's withdrawal and sanctions. Trump is stoking a regional Sunni-Shia conflict and imposing more sanctions on Iran. The nuclear deal made conflict with Iran less likely; Trump's actions are making violence and war more likely.

Trump portrayed "uncontrolled migration" as a threat in a meandering tirade that conflated migration with immigration, human trafficking and illegal immigration. Deriding the Global Compact on Migration intended to foster cooperation on migration issues – which only the United States and Hungary, a country swept up in its own anti-immigrant fervor, refuse to sign – Trump made clear his dark view of the flow of all people across borders.

It's why Trump closes America's doors to refugees, rips children from their parents when crossing the U.S. border and attempts to restrict legal immigration. It's why, even as the world grapples with the worst crisis

of displaced people since the second world war, Trump repeatedly attempts to slash the U.S. funding for humanitarian assistance and withdraws America's role as a leader in trying to address crises from Syria to Myanmar. And it's why Trump ignored the warnings of his own state department that ending Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for hundreds of thousands of people from countries like Honduras and El Salvador would destabilize those countries and actually exacerbate unauthorized migration towards the United States.

The list of Trump's foreign policies and the ways they can wreak havoc can go on and on. Trump didn't even once mention climate change – which his administration refuses to believe even exists – the greatest existential threat facing the world today.

Perhaps most telling was the list of countries that Trump highlighted at the end of his speech as those embodying the "dreams" of the kind of nations our children will inherit. Trump praised the House of Saud regime, a brutally repressive dictatorship where women

have few rights, and which is fighting a war in Yemen that is creating a humanitarian catastrophe. He praised Poland, a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) ally where democratic institutions are under assault from its own government. And he praised Israel, a U.S. ally that runs a military occupation of the Palestinian people in the West Bank. If these countries are Trump's idea of the future we want to leave for our children, Trump's vision of the world he wants to build is quite dark.

Perhaps the laughter in the room during Trump's speech was a tinged with a sense of anxiety and dread. Perhaps it was the response that comes from those who recognize they are listening to a reckless, dangerous vision from the leader of the world's most powerful country. And all one can do is muster is a despondent chuckle.

Michael H Fuchs is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, and a former deputy assistant secretary of state for east Asian and Pacific affairs.

(Source: The Guardian)

Trump says he wants two-state solution for Mideast conflict

The United States President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he wanted a two-state solution to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the clearest expression yet of his administration's support for such an outcome.

The Trump administration has in the past said it would support a two-state solution if both sides agreed to it.

Trump, in a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations, also said he wanted to unveil a peace plan in the next two to three months.

"I like a two-state solution. That's what I think works best ... That's my feeling," said Trump, who is attending the annual United Nations gathering of world leaders.

Netanyahu has said that any future Palestinian state must be demilitarized and must recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people - conditions that Palestinians say show he is not sincere about peacemaking.

The United States' Arab allies are strong proponents of a two state solution.

"I really believe something will happen. They say it's the toughest of all deals," Trump said.

He added that Israel will have to do something good for the other side without elaborating.

Doubts have mounted over whether Trump's administra-



tion can secure what he has called the "ultimate deal" since December, when the U.S. recognized al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's capital and then moved the U.S. Embassy there.

"It is a dream of mine to get that done prior to the end of my first term," Trump said of an agreement on the conflict.

"I don't want to do it in my second term. We'll do other

things in my second term," he said. "I think a lot of progress has been made. I think that Israel wants to do something and I think that the Palestinians actually want to do something."

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

The Palestinians want to establish a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and East al-Quds (Jerusalem). Israel captured those territories in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed East al-Quds (Jerusalem) in a move not recognized internationally. It regards all of the city as its eternal and indivisible capital.

Asked what Israel might have to give up in return for the embassy's move to al-Quds (Jerusalem), Trump replied: What will Israel have to give up after the U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem (al-Quds)? "I took probably the biggest chip off the table."

"And so obviously we have to make a fair deal, we have to do something. Deals have to be good for both parties ... Israel got the first chip and it's a big one."

(Source: Reuters)

Facebook, Google agree to tackle fake news: EU

Facebook, Google and other tech firms have agreed a code of conduct to do more to tackle the spread of fake news, due to concerns it can influence elections, the European Commission said ON Wednesday.

Intended to stave off more heavy-handed legislation, the voluntary code covers closer scrutiny of advertising on accounts and websites where fake news appears, and working with fact checkers to filter it out, the Commission said.

But a group of media advisors criticized

the companies, also including Twitter and lobby groups for the advertising industry, for failing to present more concrete measures.

With the EU parliamentary elections scheduled for May, Brussels is anxious to address the threat of foreign interference during campaigning. Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Ukraine are also all due to hold national elections next year.

Russia has faced allegations – which it denies – of disseminating false information

to influence the United States presidential election and Britain's referendum on European Union membership in 2016, as well as Germany's national election last year.

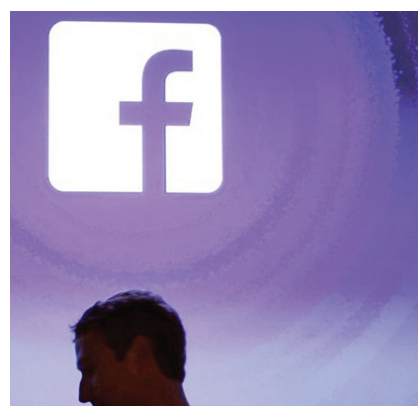
The Commission told the firms in April to draft a code of practice, or face regulatory action over what it said was their failure to do enough to remove misleading or illegal content. European Digital Commissioner Mariya Gabriel said on Wednesday that Facebook, Google, Twitter, Mozilla and advertising groups – which she did not name – had responded with several measures.

"The industry is committing to a wide range of actions, from transparency in political advertising to the closure of fake accounts and ... we welcome this," she said in a statement.

The steps also include rejecting payment from sites that spread fake news, helping users understand why they have been targeted by specific ads, and distinguishing ads from editorial content.

But the advisory group criticized the code, saying the companies had not offered measurable objectives to monitor its implementation.

"The platforms, despite their best efforts, have not been able to deliver a code of practice



within the accepted meaning of effective and accountable self-regulation," the group said, giving no further details.

Its members include the Association of Commercial Television in Europe, the European Broadcasting Union, the European Federation of Journalists and International Fact-Checking Network, and several academics.

(Source: Reuters)

Labor will recognize Palestinian state if we win General Election: Corbyn

Britain's Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn said his party would recognize a Palestinian state as soon as it takes office, during his speech to the party's conference in Liverpool.

To widespread applause, Corbyn said the party would recognize a state of Palestine in order to implement the United Nations-brokered two-state solution.

"But a quarter of a century on from the Oslo Accords we are no closer to justice or peace and the Palestinian tragedy continues, while the outside world stands by," stated Corbyn.

As my great Israeli friend Uri Avnery who died this year put it: "What is the alternative to peace? A catastrophe for both peoples."

"And in order to help make that two-state settlement a reality we will recognize a Palestinian state as soon as we take office."

The Labor leader also condemned the killing of largely unarmed Palestinian protesters in Gaza during the Great Return March at the hands of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers since the six-week demonstration kicked off on March 30.

Taking aim at the "ongoing denial of justice and rights to the Palestinian people," he said: "Our Party is united in condemning the shooting of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators in Gaza by Israeli forces and the passing of Israel's discriminatory Nation-State Law."

Tensions have heightened between Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine after the United States President Donald Trump effectively recognized al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the country's capital. The decision was widely protested in Palestine and abroad.

The British government is avowedly committed to a two-state solution. Prime Minister Theresa May said she disagreed with Trump's controversial decision to move the U.S. embassy and said Britain had no intention to follow suit.

Britain was one among the 128 countries who voted in favor of a UN resolution condemning Trump's decision.

(Source: RT)

World Bank approves first grants to Somalia in 30 years

The World Bank has approved \$80 million in grants to Somalia to fund public finance reforms, marking the first disbursement to the government of the conflict-ridden country in 30 years, the bank said. The Washington-based lender, which suspended ties with the country when war broke out in 1991, resumed support for Somalia in 2003, at the time saying it would focus on HIV/AIDS and livestock programs with other organizations, but it has not approved any direct lending to the government to date.

It reopened direct ties with Somalia's federal government in early 2013. Its board had approved financing of \$60 million for the Recurrent Cost and Reform Financing Project and \$20 million for the Domestic Revenue and Public Financial Management Capacity Strengthening Project, it said in a statement late on Tuesday. "They represent a milestone in Somalia's development and reconstruction," the bank said.

The bank said it would also work with the government in Mogadishu to improve services like education and healthcare, access to clean water, energy and finance for its citizens - under a program called Country Partnership Framework.

Somalia's economy was forecast to grow by an average of between 3.5 and 4.5 percent annually in 2019-2022, when the partnership on social services will run, the bank said.

"While agriculture is key to the economy, it remains vulnerable to shocks. As such, services will continue to be a main driver of growth, especially in the financial, transport and communication and trade sectors," the lender said. Hit by decades of conflict at the hands of clan militias, Somalia has over the past several years also been pummeled by an insurgency by al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab, famines and maritime piracy.

Parts of the country are still plagued by militant violence, but a degree of stability in the capital in recent years has begun to draw investment from locals and Somalis living abroad.

Last week, the International Monetary Fund said it expected the economy to grow by 3.1 percent this year from 2.3 percent in 2017, as it recovers from drought last year.

(Source: Daily Star)

Pompeo: Trump-Kim summit more likely after October

The United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday that officials were laying the groundwork for the next summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, but any meeting would likely occur after October.

"We're working diligently to make sure we get the conditions right so that we can accomplish as much as possible during the summit. But we hope it will be soon," Pompeo said in an interview with "CBS This Morning."

"It may happen in October but more likely sometime after that." Trump held an unprecedented summit with Kim in Singapore in June that yielded a broad pledge by Kim to "work toward" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Kim's commitments and actions, however, have fallen far short of Washington's demands for a complete inventory of North Korea's weapons programs and irreversible steps to give up a nuclear arsenal that potentially threatens the United States.

"It will take a while; there will be a process to this," Pompeo said. "President Trump's been clear about that and clear-eyed about that since the very beginning."

Asked if Kim had agreed to allow international inspectors into nuclear sights, Pompeo said, "Yes."

He did not, though, comment on whether any U.S. or international inspectors had been allowed into nuclear sites in the reclusive communist country but said verification was important in any nuclear agreement.

"We've talked about this verification from the beginning," he told CBS. "We're not going to buy a pig in a poke. We're going to get this right. We're going to deliver on this commitment [to denuclearize] that Chairman Kim has made to the world."

Pompeo said he would be going to Pyongyang soon but did not give a date.

(Source: Reuters)

Condolences

Dear Mr. Mohammad-Reza Hariri Moghaddam

We express our heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of your beloved father. We pray the Almighty God to bestow forbearance to you and your bereaved family on this irreparable loss. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Advertising Department of Tehran Times English Daily

STOCK MARKET

| | |
|--------|----------|
| TEDPIX | 180635.6 |
| IFX | 2071.02 |

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

| | |
|-----|--------------|
| USD | 42,000 rials |
| EUR | 49,420 rials |
| GBP | 55,340 rials |
| AED | 11,430 rials |

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| WTI | \$71.98/b |
| Brent | \$81.07/b |
| OPEC Basket | \$80.44/b |
| Gold | \$1,195.10/oz |
| Silver | \$14.44/oz |
| Platinum | \$827.20/oz |

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian trade delegation to visit Kazakhstan in late October

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Chamber of Commerce plans to dispatch an Iranian trade delegation to Kazakhstan in late October, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) published.

The delegates' visit will be concurrent with holding the first permanent exhibition of Iranian premium products in Almaty, the capital city of Kazakhstan, and a meeting is also scheduled to be held between the traders and businessmen of the two countries.



TEDPIX gains 6,000 points in a day

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) gained 6,017 points to stand at 180,635 points on Wednesday, registering a new record again, up 3.45 percent from Tuesday's record, Tasnim news agency reported.

Also, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), rose 58 points to 2,071 on Wednesday, as 1.276 billion securities worth 6.86 trillion rials (about \$163.3 million) were traded through 117,000 deals.



Exports to Iraq up 31% in H1

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's exports to Iraq rose 31 percent during the first half of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), according to the Chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-e Es'haq.

He put the value of Iran's exports to the neighboring country at \$4.165 billion in the first six-month period of this year, IRIB reported.

There are many potentials for the expansion of trade between the two countries, Al-e Es'haq said, saying that now is the best time for presence in the Iraqi market.

Although, as he said previously, there is a long way for Tehran and Baghdad to go and there are several barriers including some bureaucratic difficulties.



Iran's H1 oil revenues 16% more than budget estimates

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's oil incomes during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22) exceeded the estimations in the country's budget plans by 16 percent, IRNA reported on Wednesday quoting the head of Budget and Planning Organization.

According to Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht, the country's H1 oil revenues increased 61 percent compared to the figure for the last year's same period.

Iran's revenues from crude oil and oil products exports reached 419 trillion rials (about \$9.98 billion) in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22, 2018) up 60.7 percent compared to its preceding year's same period.

The crude oil exports increased by a record high of 84.2 percent in the mentioned four months compared to the same period last year.

As reported, the recent increases in oil prices was one of the main drivers of this jump in the country's oil revenues added up by incomes from tax and duties.

Saffron export rises 33% in 5 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's saffron exports increased 33 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the latest data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The IRICA data show that the country exported \$123.73 million of saffron in the five-month period of this year, while the figure was \$92.904 million in the same time span of the previous year. Mehr news agency reported on Wednesday.

Spain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Italy, U.S., India, France, Canada, Britain, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Australia, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain, Austria, South Africa, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Vietnam, Taiwan, Qatar and Kuwait were among the buyers of Iranian saffron during the first five months of the current year.

Iran's exports of saffron increased about 55 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) compared to its preceding year, breaking the record of exports in the past ten years.



According to Kaveh Zargaran, the chairman of the Agricultural Committee at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), some 236 tons of saffron worth over \$326 million were exported to the destination markets

in the mentioned period.

UAE, Hong Kong, Spain, Afghanistan and China were the top importers of Iranian saffron while the top three namely UAE, Hong Kong and Spain accounted for over 77 percent of the total exports.

SP platforms 13B, 13D loaded at Bushehr yard

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Platform 13B and 13D of Iran's South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) was loaded at Sadra yard in the southwestern province of Bushehr on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Payam Motamed, the operator of phase 13 of developing South Pars, said the 2,200-ton structures have been designed and built totally by the Iranian experts and the major parts and equipment have been supplied by domestic producers as well, the Public Relations Department of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of the gas field development, announced.

The operator of phase 13 put the daily capacity of each platform at 500 million cubic feet of sour gas and said that they will be installed on their offshore spots by the end



India's government not tell refiners to halt Iranian oil imports

India's government has not told the country's oil refiners to halt their imports of Iranian crude, a government source said on Wednesday, even as most Indian refiners have cut down their imports

ahead of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"We have good relations with Iran and the U.S. and our decision is not hinged on energy," said the government source.

India has close diplomatic ties with

Iran and is also building the strategic Chabahar port in the Middle Eastern country. It is expected to be operational by 2019.

However, at the same time, India is

closely working with U.S. to further its strategic interests and recently signed a military communications agreement with the United States.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil eases, but Iran sanctions keep prices near late 2014 highs

Oil prices eased on Wednesday but were still set for a fifth consecutive monthly quarter of gains, driven by an impending drop in Iranian exports in the last three months of the year when global demand heats up.

Brent crude futures were last down 21 cents on the day at \$81.66 a barrel by 0923 GMT, having risen to \$82.55 on Tuesday, its highest since November 2014.

U.S. crude futures were down 19 cents at \$72.09 a barrel.

The United States will apply sanctions to halt oil exports from Iran, the third-largest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), from Nov. 4. The pending loss of Iranian

supply has been a major factor in the recent surge in crude prices.

Several big buyers of Iranian crude, such as a number of Indian refiners, have signaled they will wind down their purchases, yet the exact impact of the loss of Iranian barrels on the global market balance is not clear.

"Iran has the opportunity to channel oil through Iraq and they will still have some buyers in Asia. I'm not totally confident that exports are going to decline by 1 million barrels per day.

"It is quite a big unknown how big the impact will be but we've been cautious in calling for a very, very deep cut in exports. We think it might be more like 500,000 bpd, rather than 1 million bpd, like in the

last round of sanctions," he said.

Even so, U.S. officials, including President Donald Trump, are trying to assure consumers and investors that enough supply will remain in the oil market and have pushed the likes of OPEC to raise output.

"We will ensure prior to the re-imposition of our sanctions that we have a well supplied oil market," Washington's special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, told a news conference at the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday evening.

In an earlier speech at the UN, Trump reiterated calls on OPEC to pump more oil and stop raising prices. He also accused Iran of sowing chaos and promised further sanctions on the country.

The so-called 'OPEC+' group, which includes the world's biggest producer Russia, met over the weekend but did not see the need to add new output as the market is well-supplied currently.

As a result, Brent is on course for its fifth consecutive quarterly increase, the longest such stretch for the global benchmark since early 2007, when a six-quarter run led to a record-high of \$147.50 a barrel.

On the supply front, U.S. crude inventories rose by 2.9 million barrels in the week to Sept. 21 to 400 million, compared with analyst expectations for a decrease of 1.3 million barrels, the American Petroleum Institute said.

(Source: Reuters)

Beijing pushes ahead with opening up its financial sector despite trade tensions

China is moving ahead with planned financial reform, despite pressure from a slowing economy and rising tensions with its largest trading partner.

"Our goal going forward is to further open up the financial services sector," Premier Li Keqiang told a group of business leaders Thursday at a World Economic Forum conference in Tianjin, China, according to a transcript from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"Just as we have removed foreign ownership caps in the banking sector, we plan to take similar steps in the insurance and securities sectors in the next few years and phase in full-license, full-ownership operation in an orderly way," Li said.

"I hope in three years' time, there will be a number of foreign ventures qualified for full-license, full-ownership operation in the financial sector," Li added.

Beijing has taken numerous steps to increase overseas participation in domestic markets and financial businesses. The Shanghai composite has dropped into a bear market — more than 20 percent from a recent high. That comes amid concerns about China's economic slowdown and renewed pressure from the trade dispute with the U.S.

"The government is encouraging more foreign investment in light of trade war tensions by making its markets more accessible," Eileen Li, research department manager and senior analyst at Shanghai-based Red Pulse, said in an email.

Beijing is "strengthening cross-border ties, and showing good faith that China is taking initiative in working with other countries, in contrast to the U.S.'s protectionist stance," she continued.

The trade tensions between the two countries escalated Monday as U.S. tariffs of 10 percent on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports took effect. Beijing countered with duties of 5 percent and 10 percent on \$60 billion worth of U.S. goods.

The U.S. and China have already imposed tariffs on \$50 billion worth of each other's



goods so far this year. It's unclear when the two sides will meet again to restart negotiations.

Trade frictions aren't having a major impact right now, Liu Shijin, vice chairman of the state-directed China Development Research Foundation, said in Mandarin during a panel on Sept. 18 at the World Economic Forum conference last week. Although the tensions may have a greater effect in the future, he said, the pace of opening up and reform should not stop.

Allowing individual foreign investors in the country to buy mainland-traded stocks, known as A shares.

Removing limits of foreign holdings in banks. Previously, individual foreign institutions were limited to a 20 percent stake, and groups to 25 percent.

Announcing the removal of limits to majority foreign ownership of life insurers by 2021.

"The opening of the Chinese financial markets in the last 18 months is unprecedented," Mark Leung, chief executive of J.P. Morgan Chase's China business, said Sept. 18 at a World Economic Forum panel.

While exports and a population roughly four times the size of the U.S. have helped spur China to become the second largest economy in the world, the local stock and bond markets are relatively undeveloped and isolated from global capital.

Beijing would like to boost the prominence of the yuan internationally, attract more foreign capital and manage the hot money flows of its increasingly wealthy population who have limited investment options.

(Source: Reuters)



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NEWS IN BRIEF



India, China
military
exchanges
grow

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The military exchanges between the two regional giants and economic powers India and China have grown rapidly following this year's meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping at Wuhan, Indian envoy to China said.

Gautam Bambawale hailed it as a "good development" and said it will help solve issues between the two neighboring countries. "Strategic communication is important not merely between the top leadership of our countries but also between our diplomats, our military officers and our trade negotiators," he said at the fifth dialogue between the Indian Council of World Affairs and the Chinese People's Institute for Foreign Affairs.

He said India has recently launched the International Solar Alliance with a view to expand the use of solar energy by providing developing countries with technology, expertise and finance.

India is making a pitch for tourists as only 300,000 of over 144 million Chinese tourists who travelled abroad visited India last year whereas over 1.4 million Indians travelled to China, the report stated.



Indo-Pakistan
trade
potential
at \$37 billion

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Highlighting the tremendous potential of trade between the two South Asian estranged neighbors — India and Pakistan — World Bank says the figure stands at \$37 billion compared to the actual \$2 billion.

In a report released this week, the world body said "without artificial barriers, Pakistan and Indian potential trade should be \$37 billion," which goes to show what the mutual cooperation can produce for the two countries.

Gravity models show that total goods trade within South Asia could be worth \$67 billion rather than the actual trade of only \$23 billion. Formal trade between India and Pakistan could, for instance, be 15-fold more than current levels, according to the report.

It further said that Pakistan has a list of 936 items and almost 18 percent of tariff lines that apply to imports from SAFRA, South Asian Free Trade countries while India maintains list of 25 items. The report highlighted the factors behind lack of trade.

The report further stated that Pakistan allows only 138 items to be imported from India over the Attari-Wagah land route. Currently the bilateral trade between Pakistan and India stands \$2 billion.



'Plots to disrupt
China-Pakistan
ties won't
work'

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRN** — In a veiled attack on the U.S., China has warned against any attempts to sow discord in Beijing's relations with Islamabad, saying any plots to create fissures will not prevail.

China's State Councillor Wang Yi, during his meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York said China welcomes the good start made in its "all-weather" partnership with Pakistan after the new government took over in Islamabad.

But, he hastened to add that "any conspiracies attempting to incite disharmony or interfere in China-Pakistan relations will not prevail," according to a statement released by China's foreign ministry on Wednesday.

China and Pakistan should continue to make "all-out" efforts to promote the economic corridor, expand trade and reduce poverty to bring more benefits to the ordinary people of Pakistan, Wang said.

The growing proximity between Pakistan and China has distanced U.S. from Islamabad as U.S. and China are embroiled in a bitter trade war.

In July, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned that any move by Pakistan to seek International Monetary Fund will be opposed by the U.S. as the money could be used to pay off Chinese lenders.



Rohingyas
with
disabilities
face perils

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The overcrowded, hilly, and rain-soaked camps for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are precarious for everyone, but especially for people with disabilities, Human Rights Watch said on Wednesday.

More than 90,000 people reside in the camps after fleeing the Myanmar military's campaign of ethnic cleansing more than a year ago.

Despite efforts by the United Nations, humanitarian organizations, and the refugees themselves to build hand-rails, many walkways are impassable for people who have difficulty walking.

It has been one year since Rohingya Muslims were forced to leave Myanmar following brutal crackdown by Myanmar military. As per conservative estimates, there are around 905,000 Rohingya refugees presently in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, although some human rights bodies have put the figure higher.

The savagery in Rakhine was described by the United Nations as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

The atrocities were widely documented by human rights bodies, including gang rapes, cold-blooded killings, torture and destruction of properties belonging to Rohingya Muslims.

Deadly U.S. air raids continue to claim civilian lives in war-torn Afghanistan

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The deadly air raids by the U.S.-led coalition forces continue unabated in war-torn Afghanistan. In the latest, at least 25 civilians, including women and children, were killed in two separate aerial operations in Kapisa and Maidan Wardak provinces, according to officials.

While, 13 civilians were killed in the Kapisa air strike on Saturday, at least 12 were killed after a U.S. forces' bomber targeted a civilian house in central Maidan Wardak late on Monday, local provincial council officials said.

According to reports, the air raid in Kapisa claimed nine members of a family, which has invoked anger and outrage across the country. Taking note of the incident, the United Nations said it was investigating "multiple, credible allegations" that nine members of a family were killed in the Kapisa aerial operation.

In a statement on Tuesday, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said it was concerned over increasing numbers of civilian casualties, even as the U.S.' air force denied the victims were civilians.

Women and children were among those reportedly killed in the Saturday airstrike that hit the home of a teacher in Tagab district of eastern province of Kapisa. Six others were



wounded. "All the victims from the attack were from the same family, including grandparents and children aged between two and 12," the statement said. "UNAMA reminds all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations to protect civilians from harm."

Mohammad Radmanish, a spokesman in Afghan defense ministry, confirmed civilian

casualties in the air raid conducted jointly by the U.S. and Afghan forces, but stopped short of giving further details.

The U.S. air raids have spiked steeply this year, resulting in a number of civilian casualties across the country. The U.S. forces in Afghanistan. UNAMA's data in July shows a jump of 52 percent in the number of civilians

killed or wounded in U.S.-led air attacks in the first half of the year.

The data shows 149 civilians killed and 204 wounded during the period, almost half of them women and children. Since July, the figure has gone further up.

The U.S., which is fighting its longest war in history, is the only international force known to conduct air raids in Afghanistan. Despite widespread criticism and outrage from human rights organizations, the air raids and civilian casualties continue.

The Military Times on Wednesday reported that U.S. airstrikes are pounding Taliban targets in a bid to "convince the insurgent force that negotiating with the Afghan government is their only option."

And on the other hand, the U.S. government officials are secretly holding parleys with the insurgent group. There have been reports about the U.S. officials and Taliban representatives meeting and holding talks in Qatar recently.

"The policy of U.S. in Afghanistan has always been shrouded in ambiguity and confusion. They want to talk to the Taliban and they also want to eliminate them, and in the process innocent Afghans have to pay the price," said Abdullah Hotak, a strategic affairs analyst.

'Impart Islamic knowledge in a way that is relatable, enlightening and entertaining'

1 → ■ We just commemorated the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussain (as) and his companions in the desert plains of Karbala 1400 years ago. What, in your opinion, makes these annual commemorations significant and relevant today?

A. These annual commemorations are significant because the values and ideals that were upheld by Imam Hussain (as) on that day transcend time. The battle of Karbala was not simply a military conflict that took place in the barren deserts of Iraq 14 centuries ago, but it is a heart-wrenching saga that represents the two extremes of the human soul.

Imam Hussain (as) and his companions attained the highest stations of spiritual enlightenment and represent what the Quran calls "the tranquil soul". His enemies, on the other, fell prey to their lower animalistic tendencies and therefore exemplified what the Quran calls "the commanding soul".

The question is: where is your soul on this spectrum?

■ Some days ago, a group of Shia Muslims was attacked in London during a Muharram commemoration. There have been such incidents in other countries as well. How do you see this wave of Islamophobia and hate crimes in Europe, especially in London?

A. Any attack on innocent civilians is an abhorrent act and deserves the strongest condemnation. Unfortunately, there seems to be a concerted effort by Islamophobes to use fear, intimidation and violence to send a message to Muslims that they are not welcome here. Muslims must remain steadfast, hold onto their values and pressure public officials to condemn acts of violence, irrespective of race, religion, gender, etc.

■ In times like these, how important has it become for Muslims to forge unity and collectively fight forces that seek to sow discord between them?

A. Unity was important when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) first began his prophetic mission in Mecca and it will continue to be the source of our strength until the Day of Judgment. Almighty Allah says, "And hold on to the rope of God and do not be disunited." This verse applies to Muslims of all times.



■ There was a massive attack in Iran few days ago yet we didn't see global outrage, condemnations, or hashtags. On the contrary, the whole world erupts when there is a similar attack in any part of Europe or the U.S. How would you define these double standards?

A. There is definitely a double standard. Without a doubt, greater attention is given to victims of violence in certain parts of the world far more than others. The Holy Quran is explicit in highlighting the sanctity of all human life stating, "whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land — it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one — it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." (Quran 5:32)

■ In your lectures and social media posts, you extensively talk about issues like mental health and depression. Why such issues are considered a taboo in Muslim community? A. There is a dangerous misconception in the Muslim community

that mental health and depression are indicators of weak faith. People who suffer from depression in our communities hesitate to seek help because they are afraid of being perceived as abnormal or spiritually deficient.

As Muslims, we need to show more compassion, empathy and actively try to help those who are suffering before they reach their breaking points. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) famously said, "Have mercy upon those on earth, so the One in the heavens will have mercy on you."

■ What's the connection between religion and science?

A. From an Islamic perspective, religion and science are largely complimentary. Religion invites people to explore the natural world and marvel at its beauty and complexity. Allah says in the Quran, "Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created? And at the sky - how it is raised? And at the mountains - how they are erected? And at the earth - how it is spread out? (Quran 17-20)

How Trump became laughing stock at UN

1 → He went on to say that his administration was "standing up for America" and "standing up for the world", adding that America would always choose "independence and cooperation over global governance, control, and domination". He needs to be reminded of what his country's founding father Abraham Lincoln famously said. "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

The history of U.S. imperialism is replete with stories of violent invasions, unilateral military strikes, gory massacres and socio-cultural aggression. Trump is only following on the footsteps of his predecessors by trying to impose the writ of U.S. on other countries, aiding and abetting global terrorism, imposing draconian economic sanctions, announcing trade and tariff wars, and issuing vile threats to countries that refuse to pledge allegiance to the 'Big Satan'.

He further talked about his "highly productive conversations" with Chairman Kim of North Korea to pursue the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and said the nuclear testing has stopped and military facilities are being dismantled there. It is very naive of Trump and his speech-writers to even think that North Korea would pursue denuclearization under the U.S. pressure. But, it certainly goes to show how desperately the Trump administration wants the world to be its colony.

Then he referred to the Middle East, and his visit to Saudi Arabia last year, where he famously did that sword dance with King Salman. He said the Gulf countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) are working with



the U.S. to "fight terrorism and extremism in their own region", and are "pursuing multiple avenues" to end Yemen war. What he really meant was that these Gulf countries are collaborating with the U.S. government to fuel global terrorism and carry out more massacres in Yemen.

Then he came to his favorite topic: Iran. While he thinks Iran has "fueled and financed" the crisis in Syria, he quite brazenly maintains that Saudi Arabia is pursuing avenues to end the Yemen war. His love affair with the King and Crown Prince has truly turned him blind.

He accused Iranian leaders of "sowing chaos, death, and destruction" and said they do not respect their neighbors or borders, or the sovereign rights of nations. Either he needs to change his advisors and speech writ-

ers or he should revisit history to know that Iran has never attacked any foreign country while the U.S. has a history of unprovoked attacks and invasions, most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He said the U.S. government has launched a "campaign of economic pressure" to deny Iran the funds it needs to advance its agenda. Clearly he is taken aback by the unflinching and indomitable resistance put up by Iran against the American policy of global hegemony. For Bush, it was 'with us or against us'. For Trump, it seems to be 'my way or the highway'.

By imposing the crippling economic sanctions, he thinks Iran is North Korea that will be forced to bend and work out a compromise formula. He is wrong. As Foreign Minister

Javad Zarif said recently, Iranians have been around for millennia and seen fall of empires, including their own, which lasted more than the life of some countries. The bluster clearly doesn't work here.

Labeling Iran as the "world's leading sponsor of terrorism" is not only hilarious but preposterous. It is educative to recollect what George Orwell said in his classic 1946 essay 'Politics and the English Language'. "Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different."

To cut the long story short, the "agenda of aggression and expansion" belongs to Washington, not Tehran, and it's illustrated by the way America's allies are slowly turning away from it, including some European countries. The unilateral withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal was a gamble that backfired and exposed the duplicity and hypocrisy of Trump and his cohorts.

One of the main goals of pulling out from the deal was to please the powerful, influence-peddling, pro-Israel lobby in Washington. Interestingly, in his UN speech, Trump mentioned three countries before signing off: India, Saudi Arabia and Israel. He said India was "a free society with over a billion people", in Saudi King Salman and MBS were "pursuing bold new reforms" and Israel was "proudly celebrating its 70th anniversary as a thriving democracy".

India is a free story? Saudi will have bold reforms? Israel is a thriving country? This speech deserves award for the best fiction of the year.

Saudi, UAE, U.S. behind recent terrorist attack in Iran: U.S. analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An American political analyst said the triangle of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the U.S. was behind the recent terrorist attack in Iran's southwestern city of Ahvaz, adding that Saudi Arabia has been consistently involved in providing support for terrorist activities across the region.

"It is quite likely that the perpetrators of the attack have received support from Saudi Arabia. This would certainly be in keeping with Saudi Arabia's past history in the region," Keith Preston, the chief editor and director of attackthesystem.com, told Tasnim in an interview.

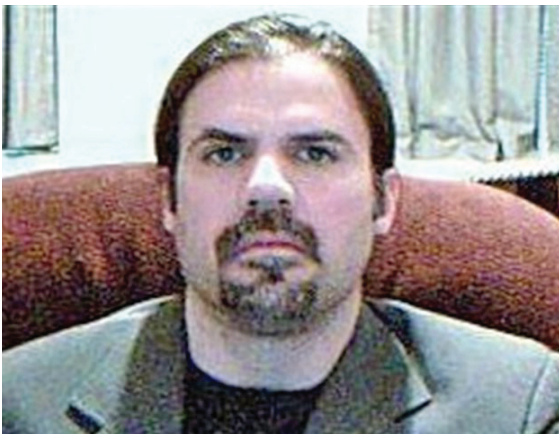
He added, "A likely strategy that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are pursuing is to increase the hostilities toward Iran to the point that the United States will engage in military intervention against Iran, and on behalf of the (Persian) Gulf states."

Keith Preston was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, United States. He received degrees in Religious Studies, History, and Sociology from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the founder and director of American Revolutionary Vanguard and the chief editor of AttacktheSystem.Com. He has also been a contributor to LevRockwell.Com, Antiwar.Com, Anti-State.Com, Taki's Magazine, Radix Journal, and AlternativeRight.Com. He is the author of six books, and was awarded the 2008 Chris R. Tame Memorial Prize by the United Kingdom's Libertarian Alliance. Keith has been a featured speaker at conferences of the National Policy Institute, H. L. Mencken Club, and Anarchapulco. He has been interviewed on numerous radio programs and internet broadcasts, and appeared as a guest analyst on Russia Today, Press TV and the BBC.

The following is the full text of the interview:

■ As you know, 25 people were killed and dozens of others injured after unknown terrorists opened fire at a military parade in Iran's southwestern city of Ahvaz on Saturday. What are your thoughts on the attack?

A: The first question that emerges as a result of the attack obviously involves the matter of what party is responsible. So far, multiple groups have claimed responsibility. Daesh posted an online video claiming responsibility for the attack. However, Daesh has a history of claiming responsibility for terror attacks in which they were actually not involved, so their credibility is strained at this point. The al-Ahvaiziya group has also claimed responsibility as has the Ahvaz National Resistance and both of these are plausible suspects. At present, it has yet to be determined which party is actually responsible. However, the government of Iran has said to have arrested multiple individuals that are suspected of involvement in the attack, and more information may be forthcoming in the future. Meanwhile, the leadership of the (Islamic) Revolutionary Guards (Corps) has suggested that international enemies of Iran may have been complicit in the



attack, which is also certainly plausible, but the evidence for this claim has yet to be revealed on a level where complicity can be fully substantiated. It is most likely that one of the terror groups that claim to represent separatist tendencies in Ahvaz is responsible, and it is also likely the responsible party was receiving support from international forces as well.

■ According to media reports and as you mentioned, the al-Ahvaiziya terror group, whose recruits are believed to be scattered in several European countries, including in the Netherlands and in Denmark, claimed responsibility for the attack in Ahvaz. The terror outfit, which is backed by Saudi Arabia, has a record of carrying out sabotage acts in Iran's Khuzestan province, which encompasses Ahvaz and some other Arab-dominated towns. How do you see the role of Riyadh in the attack?

A: It is quite likely that the perpetrators of the attack have received support from Saudi Arabia. This would certainly be in keeping with Saudi Arabia's past history in the region. Saudi Arabia has been consistently involved in providing support for terrorist activities in various locations in the Middle East, and (it) is well known that many of the Sunni jihadi groups receive substantial support from Saudi Arabia and other (Persian) Gulf States. Given the present conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and Saudi Arabia's war against Yemen, and against the Shiite people of the Eastern Province, it is quite likely that Saudi Arabia would be motivated to back a terror attack in Iran in order to create domestic instability and chaos inside Iran. While Saudi involvement in the attack has yet to be fully substantiated, in all probability the responsible parties have likely received support from Saudi Arabia at some point.

■ Following the attack on Saturday, Abdolkhaleq Abdulla, an adviser to the Abu Dhabi government, justified the

attack on Twitter, claiming that it was not a terrorist attack and that "moving the battle to the Iranian side is a declared option". "Attacks of this kind will increase during the next phase," he said. What do you think?

A: The statement from Abdolkhaleq Abdulla could be interpreted in two ways. On one hand, it is possible that he was simply expressing his own personal sympathies for those who carried out the attack, and that there is no specific context to his statement of a wider nature. However, the statement is very suspicious as it seems to indicate that Abdolkhaleq Abdulla is aware of organized efforts to continue to carry out such attacks against Iranian targets in the future. If the latter is true, it would essentially mean two things. First, that the government of the United Arab Emirates was involved in the attacks, which would also mean that Saudi Arabia was involved as well. Second, it would mean that the Saudi/UAE-led coalition that is currently waging war in Yemen wishes to escalate the war by engaging in direct attacks against Iranian targets for the purpose of attempting to destabilize Iran, and lure Iran into a wider regional conflict that might also include the intervention of the United States on behalf of the (Persian) Gulf nations.

■ Reports suggest that U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as well as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman were behind the attacks. Do you believe so?

A: Mohammed bin Salman has in the past expressed his intention of escalating the conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia by taking the conflict "inside Iran," as he has previously stated. Given this past statement, it is certainly likely that Saudi Arabia was involved in the attack. Similar statements coming from the UAE indicate the involvement of Abu Dhabi as well. A likely strategy that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are pursuing is to increase the hostilities toward Iran to the point that the United States will engage in military intervention against Iran, and on behalf of the (Persian) Gulf states.

It is also interesting that the attack in Ahvaz has occurred now that Mike Pompeo, the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States has become the Secretary of State, and John Bolton has become National Security Adviser.

Both Pompeo and Bolton have been closely associated with America's "neoconservative" foreign policy faction, which has long advocated for "regime change," or a war of aggression against Iran. Therefore, it is certainly possible that Pompeo and Bolton have signaled their support for Saudi and UAE efforts to escalation hostilities with Iran, including the backing of terror attacks such as Ahvaz, for the purpose of creating a pretext for U.S. military intervention in the region against Iran.

5 reasons why Washington was the main culprit in Ahvaz terror attack



TEHRAN (FNA) — On Sunday, September 23, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani couldn't be more accurate when he said the United States is a "bully" that wants to create insecurity in the Islamic Republic, following an attack on a military parade that killed 26 people, including members of the country's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.

Rouhani further accused the U.S.-backed Persian Gulf Arab states of providing financial and military support for anti-government terrorist groups inside Iran.

This is not out of the ordinary. President Trump's last year visit to Saudi Arabia, during which he loudly pushed for general hostility toward Iran, can't help but also be noted for being followed so quickly by virtually unheard of terror attacks and unrest in Iran. On balance, the Trump administration isn't eyeing America's safety as much as a regime change:

1) Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, while addressing a recent rally staged by the anti-Iran terrorist group of Mojahedin-e Khalgh Organization (MKO) in Paris, called for regime change in Tehran. MKO or MEK was once listed as a terrorist organization in the U.S. and Europe and is still widely viewed as a death cult built around the personality of its leader, Maryam Rajavi. During the gathering, Giuliani said, "We are now realistically being able to see an end to the regime in Iran... which must be replaced by a democratic government which Rajavi represents. Next year I want to have this convention in Tehran!"

2) In May, Trump abrogated the 2015 international nuclear deal and ordered a campaign of intense economic pressure, threatening sanctions against any foreign company doing business with Iran and calling for an end to trade in Iranian oil by November. In the Paris convention, Giuliani said the recent wave of protests in Iran was being orchestrated from outside. "Those protests are not happening spontaneously," Giuliani said. "They are happening because of many of our people in Albania [which hosts an MKO compound] and many of our people here and throughout the world." "Our people" means the U.S. and the MKO and other terrorist groups, which have no support in Iran and are widely hated for their use of violence and close links to Saudi-Israeli intelligence services.

3) The policy of the Trump administration is not officially to call for regime change, but top officials have often made that clear in public. Outlining his approach in May, Pompeo said it was up to the Iranian people to relieve the pressure on the country by changing their government. However, regime change is on the agenda, as it involves waging economic war against Iran and backing terror attacks within the country, like the one that was carried out in Ahvaz, for which the terrorist groups of ISIL and Al-Ahvazieh with links to the U.S. and Saudi Arabia claimed responsibility.

4) The Trump camp itself is open to the dark arts. Trump has selected John Bolton as his national security adviser. Bolton's appointment, along with the nomination of Iran deal critic Pompeo as secretary of state, helped to kill and bury the nuclear agreement and pave the way for confrontation with Iran. Bolton has spent the better part of a decade calling for the U.S. to help overthrow the government in Tehran and hand power to the terrorist group of MKO.

Also speaking at the Paris convention, Bolton said the Trump administration should embrace the MKO's goal of immediate regime change in Iran and recognize the group as a "viable" alternative. "The outcome of the president's policy review should be to determine that the Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution will not last until its 40th birthday," Bolton said. The 40th anniversary of the Iranian revolution will be on February 11, 2019.

5) The Trump administration views terror attacks and protests as the best avenue for regime change in Tehran without a U.S. military intervention. To that end, Pompeo says the U.S. is stepping up its propaganda broadcasts to Iran with help from Persian-language TV channels based in Europe and the U.S., and portrays the sanctions as targeting the government, even though the unjustified economic pressure ultimately touches Iranians of all walks of life.

Overall, the notion that Iranians are clamoring for the fall of the Islamic Republic and welcome American assistance in precipitating that fall is the same kind of "we will be greeted as liberators" nonsense the Bush administration believed in the lead-up to the illegal Iraq War in 2003. Iranians want a better life, but the Syria-style collapse of their economy, society, and state is surely not the kind of change they have in mind. After all, we now know that their guild-related protests discouraged the U.S. since their numbers never went beyond a few thousand, which never lasted more than a week, despite what had been promised by the U.S. and its puppets. Picking up the MKO and the son of the deposed Shah has been the best service the U.S. could render to the government in Iran as it encouraged even those few thousands to go back home after they came to see the truth.

In addition, the fact that Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and of course Israel are influencing the Trump administration's anti-Iran strategy is further evidence that Washington didn't act alone in supporting the terrorists that carried out the September 22 attack in Ahvaz. The aim of their plan is not for Iran to pursue internal reform and external dialogue as Trump would like to claim, but for the Islamic Republic government to collapse entirely so that it can no longer stop their regime-change fantasies and undermine their illicit interests and designs in the region. Little wonder they hardly cared when the Southwestern city of Ahvaz was violently attacked.

Macron tries to complete Trump's project

➡ The report of the Wall Street Journal and dozens of similar reports show that the French would never act towards reviving the JCPOA, but they would rather pave the way for giving benefits to Europe (and subsequently the United States). It should be noted that there is a huge and significant gap between the French authorities' real and ideal face.

Elysee Palace officials have opened a special account on our optimism, and they

are fast trying to complete their joint game with U.S. officials against our country. Undoubtedly, we will witness the adoption of other anti-Iranian positions by the French during the United Nations General Assembly's meeting in New York.

In this political summit, without making a realistic effort to revive the JCPOA, Macron will urge Iran to make fundamental revisions on its missile, defense and regional

policies so that US can take more and more advantages. It should not be forgotten that Macron's commitments to Netanyahu and Trump remain strong.

As emphasized, even the Trump's government withdrawal from the nuclear deal couldn't affect the commitment of the French officials to Washington and Tel Aviv regarding their joint project of "Iran's full disarmament".

Here it is emphasized that the French have

taken the most dangerous game in opposition to our nation and the Iranian system, and they intend to keep on this game until they reach their goal (which is also the White House goal), namely, "Isolation of Iran in the region". In this equation, the passive and optimistic approach of our diplomacy apparatus towards France government is serving as a catalyst that has come to the aid of the French officials.

World shouldn't allow Saudis to impede war crimes probe in Yemen

TEHRAN (FNA) — The UN Human Rights Council is telling us what we already knew for years that Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and their cronies are committing war crimes in Yemen in breach of International Humanitarian Law.

According to the UN's top human rights body, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are responsible for war crimes including rape, torture, disappearances and "deprivation of the right to life" during three and a half years of war against Yemen. In their first report for the Human Rights Council, the experts have also chronicled the damages from U.S.-backed coalition air strikes, the single most lethal force in the fighting, over the last year.

They urge the international community to "refrain from providing arms that could be used in the conflict" — in a clear reference to countries like the United States and Britain that help arm the Saudi-led coalition.

Since March last year, the UN's humanitarian aid agency has called Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis - with three-fourths of its population of over 20 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

The war has devastated the country's health system and provided the breeding grounds for the world's largest cholera outbreak last year.

Meaning, even getting the expert probe up and running has to be an accomplishment for the UN-backed Human Rights Council, which passed a resolution creating the team last September. Sadly, due to the objections of Saudi Arabia and

its allies, the Council failed several times to authorize more intrusive investigation into possible war crimes in Yemen. The 47-member body only last fall reached a compromise to bring in the experts.

Although many people have died and the country is in ruins, it's never too late for the UN body to do the next best thing: Introduce a resolution that calls for an end to the war and bans and forces Western countries to stop arming Saudi Arabia and its coalition members. The world body should force Britain and the U.S. to stop backing the conflict and giving weapons to Saudi Arabia for its campaign in Yemen amid new evidence that Western bombs are being used in deliberate war crimes.

Even Amnesty International, UNICEF and Doctors without Borders agree that most of the civilian casualties are caused by deliberate airstrikes carried out by the Saudi-led military coalition.

Now that the UN experts and rights groups have concluded that some of the coalition strikes "may amount to war crimes," the UN should take further steps to create no-fly zone over the war-torn country. This way the world body can stop further air strikes by Saudi Arabia and the UAE that it says are in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

Both the UK and the U.S. are also complicit in these crimes because they supply Saudi Arabia with munitions that are used in Yemen. They even refuel Saudi coalition warplanes midair. For instance, according to the Pentagon regime, an

Trump is a bully: ex-White House official

➡ Also, there was no acknowledgement of Iran's unilateral moratorium on the development of ballistic missiles with a range greater than 2000 kilometers.

I worry that the advocates of regime change like John Bolton are trying to provoke Iran to leave the JCPOA in order to have an excuse to urge the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities.

I hope that the pragmatism prevails and that Iran does not fall into this trap. I understand that Iran's economy is suffering under the renewed U.S. sanctions but an over-reaction would make things worse. I hope that Iran will work with the other part-

ners in the JCPOA to minimize the damage until the U.S. recovers its political balance. The Trump Administration is so extreme in so many ways that the opposition is more united than I have ever seen it and is gaining ground. Unfortunately, political balance will not be fully restored by the coming election but hopefully it will be a first step.

■ Some believe that globalization means becoming a American, but Trump said in his speech that he is against globalization because globalization has been cause a abuse of the United States, why is Trump opposing globalization?

A: I think it is because Trump is a bully, he thinks that the United States as the strongest country should be free to bully other countries.

■ Trump said in his speech that U.S. will cut UN peacekeeping budget, This U.S. decision what impact will have on peace in different regions of the world?

A: I frankly don't know the impact. But we need better peacekeeping, not less, in troubled places like the Congo and South Sudan.

■ Trump's critique of OPEC and High oil prices, does it will cause the United States confronts with allied countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates?

A: On the one hand, Trump is trying to reduce Iran's oil exports, on the other, he seems to understand that will result in higher prices. The only countries that can easily increase their oil output are the other Gulf oil producers. They have their own economic needs to worry about, so I don't know how successful he can be if their production increase results in a net decrease in their income. So the question comes down to a technical one, a country's oil income is its (Output) times (Price - minus production cost). What will the net effect be if Output increases while Price decreases?

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Just 10 minutes of light activity can boost memory

According to a recent study, just a few minutes of light exercise can give your brain an immediate push in the right direction, helping to improve memory, among other things.

Even gentle exercise can enhance memory-associated brain activity.

As we age, our memory is likely to become less reliable.

Although this is considered to be an inevitable part of growing old, scientists are keen to understand how it might be curtailed.

As the population ages, understanding ways to reduce cognitive slowing are more important than ever.

The hippocampus, which is a brain structure that sits within the temporal lobe, is of particular interest to researchers trying to understand this problem.

Vital for learning and memory, the hippocampus is particularly sensitive to stress and, as we grow older, it is one of the first regions to suffer. In Alzheimer's disease, this deterioration is even more pronounced.

■ Exercise and the hippocampus

In the past, studies have revealed that exercise can enhance some aspects of cognitive ability and improve memory performance. Also, adults who are more physically active tend to have increased hippocampal volume.

In order to find out why exercise might benefit the hippocampus and memory performance, some scientists have asked whether physical activity stimulates the growth of new brain cells in the hippocampus (known as neurogenesis).

Noninvasive brain stimulation, activated while asleep, could potentially enhance our memory the next day.

This process would take some time, and, therefore, any benefits to brain health would take a while to become apparent.

Recently, however, a team from the University of California, Irvine and the University of Tsukuba in Japan ran some experiments to investigate whether exercise may enhance memory over a much shorter space of time: minutes, rather than days or weeks.

The study authors explain that it certainly is possible that brain cell growth could be stimulated by exercise, but there might also be a quicker mechanism involved that runs in parallel.

The authors wanted to chart any measurable improvements to memory-based brain activity in the first few minutes following light exercise. Their findings were published recently in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

So, to investigate, 36 healthy young adult participants carried out just 10 minutes of light exercise. The team then used high-resolution functional MRI to measure any changes in brain activity.



Clearly, there is tremendous value to understanding the exercise prescription that best works in the elderly so that we can make recommendations for staving off cognitive decline.

■ Instant brain benefits

The brain imaging showed improved connectivity between the dentate gyrus, which is part of the hippocampus that is thought to play a role in laying down new episodic memories, and cortical areas involved in detailed memory processing.

Also, when the researchers tested the participants using a memory recall test, the increased connectivity correlated with improved memory performance.

"What we observed is that these 10-minute periods of exercise showed results immediately afterward."

Yassa believes that it is "encouraging to see more people keeping track of their exercise habits — by monitoring the number of steps they're taking, for example," he explains. "Even short walking breaks throughout the day may have considerable effects on improving memory and cognition."

■ Future studies

Yassa and his team are keen to continue investigating. Next, they plan to run longer-term studies in older adults who have an increased risk of cognitive decline.

They want to understand if regular, brief, light exercise alters the brain's structure and function over time. He says:

"The hippocampus is critical for the creation of new memories; it's one of the first regions of the brain to deteriorate as we get older [...] Improving the function of the hippocampus holds much promise for improving memory in everyday settings."

Finding that light exercise could have a measurable impact on the parts of the brain responsible for memory is the first step; but next, we need to develop a clearer understanding of the ideal amount of activity necessary to make a real and lasting difference.

As Yassa says, "Clearly, there is tremendous value to understanding the exercise prescription that best works in the elderly so that we can make recommendations for staving off cognitive decline."

In conclusion, the next time you have misplaced something important, it might be worth trying 10 minutes of yoga; it certainly won't hurt.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Can fish oil cut danger of high-risk heart issues?

A prescription pill that contains large doses of an omega 3 fatty acid found in fish oil staved off heart attacks and strokes in folks with a history of heart disease or type 2 diabetes.

In the large clinical trial, the results were particularly potent for people with high triglycerides, a blood fat long linked to an increased risk of heart disease, the New York Times reported Monday.

The researchers focused on people whose cholesterol levels were controlled with statins, but whose triglyceride levels were still high. Because many smaller studies had not produced much evidence of any benefit in adding fish oil supplements to statin use, the hopes of heart experts were not high.

But the new trial, to be presented in November at the American Heart Association's annual meeting, showed that these patients saw a 25 percent drop in their relative risk of heart attacks, strokes and other cardiac events compared to a control group of patients who received a placebo.

"I'm very surprised by the magnitude of the results, which quite frankly are large. My expectations were very low. A lot of people are legitimately surprised by this," Dr. Michael Blaha, director of clinical research at the Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease at Johns Hopkins Medical School, told the Times.

"Fish oil has long been a popular supplement to protect against heart disease. It contains high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, primarily EPA and DHA, which reduce inflammation and lower triglyceride levels," explained Blaha, who was not involved in the trial. "Omega-3 fatty acids also have blood-thinning effects similar to those of aspirin."

The new trial differed from previous studies in two aspects, the newspaper reported. First, it focused on a specific group of high-risk patients: People with a history of heart disease, diabetes or heart risk factors. In addition, all of the patients were on statins, which lower cholesterol.

Secondly, Vascepa was not the typical fish oil supplement that can be bought in any drugstore or supermarket. Manufactured by Amarin, Vascepa is a prescription drug that contains highly purified EPA, according to the Times.

Fish oil supplements often contain a mixture of both EPA and DHA and, in some cases, other oils. Both EPA and DHA can lower triglycerides, but DHA also tends to raise "bad" LDL cholesterol, the newspaper said.

In the trial, more than 8,000 patients were followed for about five years, during which the drug was well tolerated and safe, the researchers noted.

Dr. Ethan Weiss, a cardiologist and associate professor at the University of California, San Francisco, told the Times that the findings carried a few caveats. All of the data remains to be seen, and the group of patients most likely to see a benefit is very specific, added Weiss, who was not involved in the study.

Vascepa is now only approved for certain patients who have very high triglyceride levels, the newspaper said.

"The worried well shouldn't run out and take fish oil," said Dr. Michael Shapiro, a site investigator for the trial and director of Oregon Health and Science University's Atherosclerosis Imaging Program.

(Source: WebMD)

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€5000

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spj,\$1900

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sq.m, \$ 2000
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furn,lobby,sp,garden,\$2000

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Elahiye
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sq.m land,Semi-furn,7
Bdrs,spj,\$9000

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

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

Darous
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Zaferaniyeh
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up,1000 sq.m land,12
rooms,\$8500

Niavaran
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land,600 sq.m built up ,spj,all
facilities,\$15000

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

Other areas:
Farmaniyeh
Aghdasiyeh
Shahrak Gharb
Shariati-Pasdaran

Valiasre
Tajrish
Jordan
Vanak
Arjantin
Zafar...
nice cases ready to move in.

Foreign tourist arrivals in East Azarbaijan up 17% in H1



A view of the centuries-old Kandovan village in in East Azarbaijan. The village is filled with troglodyte homes in the shape of stony ice-cream cones that are still inhabited.

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The number of international tourists visiting Iran's northwestern East Azarbaijan province surged 17 percent in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) from a year earlier, provincial tourism chief said on Tuesday.

Morteza Abdar didn't mention the number of arrivals in the 6-month period, CHTN reported.

"A total of 16,526,534 foreign travelers arrived in the province during the first five months, which shows 14 percent year-on-year growth," the official said.

Tabriz, the capital of East Azarbaijan, is currently holding the title of 2018 Islamic Tourism Capital. It used to be a world craft city for carpet weaving in 2016.

Jameh Mosque of Tabriz, Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, Kandovan village, Elgoli Park, Zahak citadel, and Arasbaran Forests that is a UNESCO reserved biosphere are amongst top destination for travelers to the province.

South Africa to relax visa rules to boost investment, tourism

PRETORIA (Reuters) — South Africa will ease some immigration rules, including agreeing visa waiver agreements with more countries, in an effort to boost investment and tourism, Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba said on Tuesday.

The changes are part of a broader economic turnaround programme announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa last week as his team seeks to drag Africa's most developed economy out of recession.

"We play a critical economic role in admitting over 10 million international visitors to South Africa annually, which includes tourists, business travellers, investors and neighbours," Gigaba told reporters.

"Millions of jobs are sustained by the economic activity generated by these travellers."

Visitors from India and China, highlighted by Ramaphosa as important investment growth areas, will have travel regulations relaxed from next month, including allowing applications for 5-year multiple entry visas.

Gigaba said negotiations were also being finalised to conclude visa waiver agreements with more than a dozen countries across Africa, the Middle East and eastern Europe, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Qatar and the UAE.

Much-criticized rules on travelling minors will be simplified, he said.

Tourism contributes more than 400 billion rand (\$28 billion) to South Africa's economy, or around 8 percent of GDP.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Rohtas Fort

Rohtas Fort, built in the 16th century at a strategic site in the north of Pakistan, province of Punjab, is an exceptional example of early Muslim military architecture in central and south Asia.

The main fortifications of this 70-hectare garrison consist of massive masonry walls more than four kilometers in circumference, lined with 68 bastions and pierced at strategic points by 12 monumental gateways.

A blend of architectural and artistic traditions from elsewhere in the Islamic world, the fort had a profound influence on the development of architectural style in the Mughal Empire.

Sher Sha Suri, founder of the Suri dynasty, commenced



construction of Rohtas Fort (also called Qila Rohtas) in 1541. Irregular in plan, this early example of Muslim military architecture follows the contours of its hilltop site.

An interior wall partitions the inner citadel from the remainder of the fort, and an internal water supply in the form of baolis (stepped wells) gave the fort's garrison self-sufficiency in water. A beautiful mosque known as Shahi Masjid is situated near the Kabuli Gate, and the Haveli (Palatial House) Man Singh was constructed later in the Mughal period.

Rohtas Fort represented a new form of fortification, based essentially on Turkish military architecture developed in reaction to the introduction of gunpowder and cannon, but transformed into a distinct style of its own.

The garrison complex was in continuous use until 1707, and then reoccupied under the Durrani and Sikh rulers of the 18th and 19th centuries respectively. A village grew within the walls, and exists day.

(Source: UNESCO)

Tehran to bring digital marketing into focus on World Tourism Day

1 → The department of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization has arranged some special sightseeing tours across the Iranian capital as well.

Like previous years, all CHHTO-affiliated museums and historical sites will allow free entry on September 27.

Embracing the lower slopes of the towering, snowcapped Alborz mountain range, Tehran has many to offer its visitors such as the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace, a historic grand bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Carpet Museum of Iran, just to name a few.

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) says the 2018 WTD presents an opportunity to raise awareness on the potential contribution of digital technologies to sustainable tourism development.

"A digitally-advanced tourism sector can improve entrepreneurship, inclusion, local community empowerment and efficient resource management, amongst other important development objectives," the UN body says.

The UNWTO expects tourism to grow an average of 3% annually until 2030, saying, "Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, and it has become one of the fastest growing and most important economic sectors in the world, benefiting destinations and communities worldwide."

International tourist arrivals worldwide have grown from 25 million in 1950 to nearly 1.3 billion today. Similarly, international tourism revenues earned by destinations around the world have grown from two billion U.S.



A view of the 19th-century Masoudieh Palace, a tourist destination in downtown Tehran.

dollars in 1950 to 1,260 trillion in 2015. The sector represents an estimated 10% of the world's GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally, data compiled by the UNWTO suggests.

In this regard, Iran is following extensive

plans to bolster its tourism sector. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million.

CHHTO Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan

announced earlier this month that the number of international tourists visiting the country surged 45 percent in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) from a year earlier.

Khorasan Razavi hosts 730,000 foreign tourists in 5 months



Pilgrims visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam in Mashhad

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Khorasan Razavi province's tourism chief has said 730,000 foreigners visited the northeastern province in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21).

Abolfazl Mokarramifar put the whole number of arrivals including domestic pilgrims at over 16.5 million during the same period, saying the figure shows 14 percent year-on-year growth, CHTN reported.

Earlier this year, the official said that

over 900 hotels, apartment hotels and guest houses are catering to travelers across the province, adding, "274 hotels are being constructed with an average completion of 60 percent."

The holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, in the province's capital city of Mashhad, attracts thousands of pilgrims each day.

The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces variety of cultural and historical sites which are generally crowded.

Iran approves visa-free travel for Omani nationals



Nouri Shahroudi, the Iranian ambassador to Oman, in an undated photo

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to Oman on Sunday said that the country has approved a visa waiver program for Omani nationals, IRNA reported.

"Considering facilities offered by Oman for the entry of Iranian nationals, the travel visa to Iran for Omani citizens was waived and will be operational by the next 10 days," Mohammadreza Nouri Shahroudi said in an interview with IRNA.

"Omani citizens can travel to Iran without a visa, according to the approval of the

Council of Ministers on September 26 and the first vice president's order," he added.

"With facilities provided by the Omani government, Iranian nationals can obtain electronic visas on arrival, and also get a 10-day visa renewable for up to one year," the ambassador explained, responding to a question about mutual visa facilitations.

For the time being, citizens of about 190 countries can obtain visa on arrival at Iran's international airports with one-month validation.

Five underrated things to pack for every trip

By Geoffrey Morrison

Skip the fancy travel gadgets. Here are five simple things that will save you stress, money and hassle so you just enjoy your much-deserved getaway.

I've spent the majority of the last five years as a digital nomad, living and working in over 40 countries. Because of this, I tend to travel fairly light. I've also tried countless travel gadgets, and found most are a waste of money and space. Instead, here are five universally useful, perhaps unexpected, items I never leave without.

■ A good pen

Pens are one of those things that only seem to be around when you don't need them. When you do, you can't find one. For example, most countries require you to fill out an immigration card before you enter. Your airline will give you this in-flight, but not a pen to fill it out.

Sure, you could wait until you're at immigration and try to find and use the ballpoint on a chain that's probably out of ink, but by the time you fill it out everyone on the plane is now in front of you in line to get through customs, through the terminal, and to baggage claim. Then there's filling out postcards or signing receipts. And who knows, maybe you'll meet someone who's desperately looking for a pen. It seems simple and obvious, but so handy, and so few people travel with one.

■ An unlocked phone, for internet everywhere

Traveling with a phone that works everywhere is a game changer. Being able to post to social media and talk with friends and family at home is great, but having fast access to Google Maps and Translate will transform your travel experience. Being able to book a new flight or hotel if something happens could save a vacation.

For example, I was on a tiny island in Fiji when the call came in that an oncoming cyclone had intensified overnight to a category 3, and we would all have to evacuate. I was able to use my phone to immediately book one of the last hotel rooms on the main island. Nearly everyone else had to wait in line at the resort's office for one of the few computers



and slow internet.

The key is having internet access at all, and ideally, fast access. If you get your phone "unlocked" by your cellular provider, you can buy a local SIM card in whatever country you're visiting. This lets your phone work just like you bought it new in that country, with high-speed data and free local calls, depending on the SIM you buy. These are usually around \$20, and available at airport vending machines and kiosks, although a cellphone store in town might be cheaper.

If you have T-Mobile or Sprint, your phone should work in most other countries, though it will be very slow, so a local SIM might still be worth it. Verizon and AT&T have very expensive international data plans that offer just a couple of days worth of internet for the same price as a local SIM that will work for your whole trip. If you're with one of them, definitely check if you can unlock your phone and that it will work outside the United States (Verizon's phones should already be unlocked). Google Fi has 4G international data included, no local SIM needed.

■ Your digital downloads (and uploads)

I mentioned Google Maps and Translate, but making the most of them requires some preparation before you leave. Let's say you're going to Paris. Type "Paris" into Google Maps. Make sure you see all the parts of the city you need (the arrondissement where your hotel is, for example) and

the parts you want to explore, then hit "save" at the bottom of the screen. This does exactly that, saving everything on the visible map. Now you can walk around without internet and still see a map of your surroundings. This includes street names, Metro stops and so on.

Google Translate has the same feature, letting you download language packs for use offline. This speeds up translations, including the futuristic camera feature that lets you point your phone at a sign to translate what you're seeing in real time.

It's also worth looking into a photo backup service. Something like iCloud or Google Photos, if you're not using them already, will save your phone's photos to the cloud as you take them (or when you get back to Wi-Fi), so if your phone gets lost or stolen, you'll still have all your pictures.

■ A portable USB battery

No matter where you go or how expensive the accommodation, you're almost always going to struggle to find enough power outlets. The easiest way to recharge all your gear is with a USB multi-charger that trades one wall socket for several USB ports. Then just plug in your phone, tablet, USB battery pack and so on, all at the same time. Like the battery pack, this is helpful on the road and at home. Wirecutter has several picks depending what size you need.

■ A USB multi-charger (and some long cables)

In the same vein, a few longer USB cables are a good idea too. A longer cable lets you use your phone in bed while it's plugged in that faraway outlet. Wirecutter has picks for micro USB, USB-C, and Lightning, depending what you need.

(Source: The New York Times)

Liquid metal discovery to make toxic water safe and drinkable



UNSW and RMIT researchers have discovered a revolutionary and cheap way to make filters that can turn water contaminated with heavy metals into safe drinking water in a matter of minutes.

Recent UNSW SHARP hire Professor Kourosh Kalantar-zadeh and his former colleagues at RMIT showed that nano-filters made of aluminum oxide could be cheaply produced using virtually no energy from a fixed amount of liquid metal gallium.

In a paper published in Advanced Functional Materials, lead author Dr. Ali Zavabeti (RMIT) and Professor Kalantar-zadeh explained that when a chunk of aluminum

is added to the core of liquid gallium at room temperature, layers of aluminum oxide are quickly produced at the surface of the gallium.

The authors discovered that these alumi-

num oxide nano-sheets were highly porous and went on to prove they were suitable for filtering both heavy metal ions and oil contamination at unprecedented, ultra-fast rates.

■ Portable filters

Professor Kalantar-zadeh, who was recently awarded an ARC Australian Laureate Fellowship soon after joining UNSW's School of Chemical Engineering, said that low-cost and portable filters produced by this new liquid metal based manufacturing process could be used by people without access to clean drinking water to remove substances like lead and other toxic metals in a matter of minutes.

"Because it's super porous, water passes through very rapidly," Professor Kalantar-zadeh said.

"Lead and other heavy metals have a very high affinity to aluminum oxide. As the water passes through billions of layers, each one of these lead ions get attracted to one of these aluminum oxide sheets.

"But at the same time, it's very safe because with repeated use, the water flow cannot detach the heavy metal ions from the aluminum oxide."

Professor Kalantar-zadeh believes the technology could be put to good use in Af-



Professor Kalantar-zadeh

rica and Asia in places where heavy metal ions in the water are at levels well beyond safe human consumption. It is estimated that 790 million people, or one in 10 of the Earth's population, do not have access to clean water.

"If you've got bad quality water, you just take a gadget with one of these filters with you," he said.

■ Contaminated water

"You pour the contaminated water in the top of a flask with the aluminum oxide filter. Wait two minutes and the water that passes through the filter is now very clean water, completely drinkable.

There are portable filtration products available that do remove heavy metals from water, but they are comparatively expensive, often costing more than \$100.

By contrast, aluminum oxide filters produced from liquid gallium could be produced for as little as 10 cents, making them attractive to prospective manufacturers.

"Up until now, to produce aluminum oxide, you need to process aluminum at above 1000 degrees or use other energy intensive processes," Professor Kalantar-zadeh said.

(Source: Science Daily)

Professor Kalantar-zadeh says that low-cost and portable filters produced by this new liquid metal based manufacturing process could be used by people without access to clean drinking water to remove substances like lead and other toxic metals in a matter of minutes.

Climate change not main driver of amphibian decline, researchers say

While a warming climate in recent decades may be a factor in the waning of some local populations of frogs, toads, newts and salamanders, it cannot explain the overall steep decline of amphibians, according to researchers.

After analyzing many years of data for 81 North American amphibian species including more than 500,000 observations collected at more than 5,000 sites in 86 study areas by a broad coalition of herpetologists, it is clear a warming climate is not the primary driver in their disappearance, according to lead researcher David Miller, associate professor of wildlife population ecology in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

The researchers focused on how colonization and persistence of local populations were related to annual variation in five climate variables thought to affect key components of amphibian life cycles: winter severity, snowfall, breeding water availability, summer soil moisture and maximum temperature.

■ Amphibian populations

The "influence of climate on amphibian populations is complex," Miller said. "In the last 30 years, we have seen increases in temperature, while some spots have gotten drier and others have gotten wetter. In the big picture, those developments seem to counteract each other. As a result, the impact of climate



change for the measures we focused on cannot explain the sharp decline we have seen and continue to see across amphibian populations."

The study showed that, on average, 3.4 percent of amphibian species are disappearing from local amphibian habitats each year. That is the equivalent of losing half the species in any wetland, stream reach or forest site every 20 years. Miller believes these declines are a continuation of losses of amphibian populations that have been occurring since the 19th century when human land-use began destroying their habitats.

"It is an alarming trend," he said. "Across species, on average, we lose more than three in 100 of the sites where they occur each year. Whether the sites are ponds, short stretches of streams or, if we're talking about salamanders, forest plots -- they're gone. Our research took place in the United States and Canada, but it's a trend worldwide."

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

The Ocean Cleanup picks out marine plastics using infrared from air: study

Though we know millions of metric tons of plastic flow into the ocean each year, there is plenty of room for improvement in how we track its distribution throughout the seas. The Ocean Cleanup project has been experimenting with a new technique to fill in some of the blanks and has, what it says, is the first proof of concept for using a form of infrared imagery to quantify marine plastic pollution.

Around two years ago, the Ocean Cleanup Project conducted an aerial research expedition of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch to better understand the magnitude of the problem. This involved two slow flyers at a speed of 140 knots and altitude of 400 m (1,312 ft) in a C130 Hercules aircraft, scanning the surface with LiDAR sensors, human eyes and a Short-Wave Infrared (SWIR) imaging system.

Where earlier research expeditions involving large fleets of vessels had given some insights into the problem, the goal of the aerial expedition was to survey larger chunks of plastic trash that couldn't be measured from the ocean surface.

■ Different elements

But there were still some unknowns around how enlightening different elements of the survey would be. For example, the aerial photography taken aboard the C130 Hercules revealed larger chunks, but the team found it difficult to distinguish some pieces of plastic from the glistening sun, chips of wood and other pieces of marine debris.



Now the team has published scientific results concerning the effectiveness of the SWIR imaging technology. Plastic had previously been found to offer distinctive features when viewed in infrared in the lab, but how it would present in the vast, swirling ocean from that height and at that speed was still unknown.

The team picked out the 30 largest plastic items identified in its aerial photos and then examined those items through the lens of the SWIR imagery.

■ Spectral features

It was able to glean certain spectral features common to the plastic pieces and not to the other debris, opening up some exciting new possibilities in efforts to better understand and tackle this huge problem.

"We have just published the first study exploring the SWIR spectra of ocean plastics in-situ," tweeted Julia Reisser, Oceanographer at the Australian Institute of Marine Science and author on the paper. "Our research highlights the potential of hyperspectral sensors to remotely quantify marine plastic pollution."

(Source: New Atlas)

China Reported Iran's Major Oil Export Destination: Official

China will remain as Iran's major oil export destination after US pullout from Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Spokesperson for Oil Products Exporters Union Seyed Hamid Hosseini announced the above statement and said, "since Iran's major oil is exported to the Asian markets, suitable ways have been paved for the country to settle rials and currency in financial system of the country."

Turning to the capability of private sector for selling crude oil via Oil Stock Market,

he said, "Iran's private sector enjoys high potential and capability. Since India and China are Iran's major buyer of oil in Asia, transferring currency is not facing limitation."

In response to the price of oil supplied in Oil Stock Market for beign sold by the private sector, he reiterated, "certainly, private sector cannot sell its oil with the different price as set by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). In this case, private sector should determine price of its oil according to the price determined

by NIOC. Generally speaking, Iranian oil will be supplied to the aforementioned target markets between \$5-\$6 discounts in sanctions period."

He put the exports value of products exported to neighboring Iraq at \$4.165 billion in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Sept.21) and added, "about \$3.1 billion worth of products were exported to Iraq in the first half of the past Iranian calendar year (from March 20 to Sept. 20, 2017)."

Iraq from March 21 to Sept. 21, 2018 showed 31 percent as compared to the same period of last year, he maintained.

He also pointed to the prediction of oil price in international arena and said, "it is predicted that Iran's oil per barrel will be transacted at \$100."

Like previous sanctions period, Iran's oil export volume experienced considerable decline but it was gradually increased, he concluded.

Jam Petrochemical Co.'s Products Highly Welcomed in Intl. Markets

Products of JAM Petrochemical Company are highly welcomed in the international markets, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

For his part, Hossein Saffari Noushabadi Manager of Public Relations and Intl. Affairs Dept. of JAM Petrochemical Company revealed the active presence of great family of JAM Petrochemical Company in Iran Plast 2018 Exhibition for showcasing and introducing high capabilities and potentials of this industrial and production unit.

In line with its presence in international foreign exhibitions such as China Plast Exhibition, Milan Plast Exhibition, German Plast Exhibition and India Plast Exhibition, Jam Petrochemical Company obliges itself to participate in the domestic exhibition, because, participating in domestic exhibitions, moreover showcasing capabilities and potentials, will be

a trump card for audiences of petrochemical industry and shareholders of this company.

He pointed to the salient achievements gained by Jam Petrochemical Company and said, "the great family of Jam Petrochemical Company broke the production record."

He pointed to the record-breaking production and sales rate in all-time history of the company in the last Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018) and said, "with the development of its portfolio along with high added value, JAM Petrochemical Company played an important role in promoting long-term value among its shareholders. In this line, the current year can be termed as a turning point in all-time history of this company."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the latest and unique products of the company and said, "Tape Ribbon is the new product of the company, so that every five grades of this

product has been manufactured by the expert engineers of JAM Petrochemical Company. The tape has already been produced only by American and Italian producers."

It should be noted that 'Tape Ribbon' is the popular and new generation of drip irrigation systems which is most popular in the market of agricultural products (both inside and outside the country).

Jam Petrochemical Company is the third producer of such sophisticated product in the world which has attained the technology for producing this product.

In response to this question why Jam Petrochemical Company has participated in IRAN PLAST 2018 with its five subsidiary companies, he said, "these five subsidiary companies are integral and inseparable part of the great family of JAM Petrochemical Company, each of which has had specific and unique performance."

Polymer PAAD JAM Company is one of the newly-established subsidiary companies which is the main producer of strategic product 'ABS/RUBBER', he said, adding, "it was envisioned that this company will be put into operation by yearend."

Of the other products of the company, it should be referred to 'SBS', 'SB' and 'LCBR' in seven grades which are highly consumed according to the market requirements.

Also, ABS Production Factory of PAAD JAM Petrochemical Complex is the sole producer of ABS product, benefitted from Continuous Mass technology in nine grades, he added.

In the end, Hossein Saffari Noushabadi Public Relations and Intl. Affairs Manager of JAM Petrochemical Company said that his company will adopt necessary measures for materialization of most objectives of the company by the yearend.

NASA is about to announce new efforts in searching for intelligent alien life

Here in the Solar System, the search for extraterrestrial life is focused on microbes. But in recent years, projects such as Kepler and HARPS have done something incredible, exploding our awareness and knowledge of planets beyond the Solar System.

To date, 3,779 planets have been confirmed from a variety of observatories, with thousands more candidates, most from the last 10 years. And with that catalogue comes a renewed fervor for answering the question: has some other planet out there in the Universe managed to give rise to life?

With a new generation of instruments poised for a new discovery boom - including NASA's TESS and James Webb Space Telescope, and the European Space Agency's CHEOPS and PLATO - the search is heating up; not just for life, but for intelligent life that may have entered the stage of an advanced civilization.

Technosignatures can also consist of laser emissions, artificial light and heat from an exoplanet, or chemicals in the atmosphere that could be pollutants - these are all examples of signatures that could indicate an advanced civilization.

"In April 2018, new interest arose in Congress for NASA to begin supporting the scientific search for technosignatures as part of the agency's search for life," NASA explained in a statement.

"As part of that effort, the agency is hosting the NASA Technosignatures Workshop in Houston on 26 - 28 September 2018, with the purpose of assessing the current state of the field, the most promising avenues of research in technosignatures and where investments could be made to advance the science."

There are organizations out there searching for alien intelligence, including the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) Institute, founded by astronomers Carl Sagan and Jill Tarter, and the Breakthrough Initiatives, founded by physicist Yuri Milner with the support of Stephen Hawking.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Human activity partly responsible for wobble detected as planet Earth spins

Based on measurements from the 20th Century, scientists were able to discover that the planet's spin axis has drifted to about 4 inches or 10 centimeters per year. Over the past century, the Earth has drifted more than 10 meters or 11 yards.

Part of the reason why the planet wobbles as it spins on its axis is the uneven distribution of weight on the surface. Earth is not a perfect sphere; it is actually an oblate spheroid.

However, researchers from NASA believe that there are three factors that are primarily responsible for the wobble: glacial rebound, mantle convection, and melting of ice.

The "traditional explanation is that one process, glacial rebound, is responsible for this motion of Earth's spin axis," explained Surendra Adhikari of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "But recently, many researchers have speculated that other processes could have potentially large effects on it as well."

The redistribution of mass on Earth in the past century, particularly the melting of ice sheets into the ocean in Greenland, has affected the planet's natural rotation. While ice melts in different locations around the world due to rising temperatures caused by climate change, Greenland is believed to be a primary suspect because of its location.

The two other causes, however, naturally occurs. During the last ice age about 26 thousand years ago, vast expanse of land was covered with heavy glacier, causing the depressed land underneath to bulge upward and around the perimeter of the glacier.

However, when the glaciers melted, the land slowly rebounded or regained its original position. This is what scientists call glacial rebound and, because it is a very slow process, the land is still trying to rebound from the last ice age.

(Source: Tech Times)

Study names world's largest-ever bird

Scientists have argued for decades about the identity of the largest-ever bird in the world. Now, a new study published in the journal Royal Society Open Science may put the debate to rest.

Researchers awarded the title to a creature it calls the Vorombe titan — an extinct bird that once roamed the African island of Madagascar. It was a giant, weighing up to 1,800 pounds and growing to nearly 10 feet tall.



V. titan belonged to a group known as "elephant birds" that lived on the island sometime in the most recent 500,000 to 1 million years, according to the study's lead author, James Hansford, from the Zoological Society of London.

"Elephant birds are a radiation of extinct, giant, flightless birds unique to the island of Madagascar," he told Newsweek. "They are part of a group of birds which are called ratites, which include ostriches, emu, rhea, cassowaries and kiwi. Remarkably, it is the kiwi that are the closest living relatives to elephant birds today."

The study named V. titan as the largest-ever bird after the researchers revealed unexpected diversity in elephant birds. Until now, there were thought to be only up to 15 different species of the Madagascan creatures, split between two different genera—the plural of genus, which means a group of species.

"For over 80 years, there has been serious confusion over the number of elephant bird species due to exceptionally competitive scientists throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries," Hansford said.

"This is the first rigorous study of elephant birds in over 80 years and the first to incorporate the global collections of their skeletal remains in a quantitative framework, allowing the interpretation of their diversity," Hansford said.

(Source: Newsweek)

Tehran to play host to international police exhibition

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The 17th International Police, d e s k Safety, and Security Equipment Exhibition (IPAS 2018), will open in Tehran on October 1, Mehr news agency reported on Tuesday.

With the theme of “security and safety support domestic production”, the event will run until October 4 at Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

Increasing the quality and upgrading police equipment in order to reduce accidents and minimize the loss they incur and supporting inventors active in field of designing and devising police equipment are of the objectives of the exhibition, IPAS secretary, Alireza Aliabadi said.

Companies from 20 countries worldwide will showcase their products in 350 pavilions on a land area of 35,000 square meters, Aliabadi explained.

Charity foundation inaugurates 110 schools in underprivileged areas

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Barekat Charity Foundation d e s k inaugurated 110 schools in underprivileged areas nationwide on Wednesday, IRNA news agency reported.

The schools are constructed in East and West Azarbajjan, Isfahan, Ilam, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, and North Khorasan provinces, the report stated.

The number of schools constructed by the Barekat foundation has so far reached 1,110, the report added.



The charity foundation construct the schools in close collaboration with Ministry of Education.

Barekat Charity Foundation and the Ministry of Education have signed a memorandum of understanding to build 1,000 schools nationwide, within 4 years, IRIB reported in February.

Commenting on lack of sufficient education space Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei said in early September that currently per capita education space per student is 5 square meters while the standard space must be 8 square meters.

He explained that unfortunately the per capita education space is 3 square meters in some provinces and called on philanthropists to join hands with the government to increase educational facilities.

Iranian inventor Rastegar re-elected as IFIA president

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iranian talented inventor d e s k and multiple-winner of national and international awards Alireza Rastegar was re-elected as the president of the International Federation of Inventors Associations (IFIA) for the next four-year mandate of 2018-2022.

Rastegar was re-appointed as IFIA president during the 35th session of IFIA General Assembly, hosted by China Association of Inventions on September 14 in Foshan, China.

“I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the voters of the 35th General Assembly for re-electing me as the IFIA President. I am honored and humbled that you have placed your trust in me,” he said upon the occasion of his re-election.

“With your trust, I will work tirelessly to help address challenges the inventors face and to secure lasting and meaningful improvements in the situation of inventors,” he noted.

Born in 1978, Rastegar is a graduate of product technology from University of Tehran. He holds master's degree in business management, College of Alameda, California, and also Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA).

He received the outstanding award at the 3rd and 5th Khwarizmi Festival in 2001 and 2003. He won ISESCO Educational, scientific and cultural Organization gold medal in 2003. Moreover in 2004 he secured a gold medal at Geneva International Inventions festival. The young inventor also received World Intellectual Property Organization gold medal in 2006. And in 2012 he earned the genius medal at Budapest International Inventions Exhibition.

Rastegar is committee member of World Women Inventors and Entrepreneur's Association since 2008 and has been editor of International Journal of Scientific Research in Inventions four 4 year.

The International Federation of Inventors Associa-



tions is a nonprofit organization aiming to disseminate the culture of invention and innovation support inventors transfer technology and establish cooperation with the related organizations. IFIA cooperates closely with inter-

national organizations of importance in the realization of its objectives. Established in 1968, IFIA is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and recognized as a public utility organization by Republic and Canton of Geneva.

Bill to protect rangers to come before parliament

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A bill to uphold the rights of d e s k rangers will come before the Majlis [Iranian parliament], Mehr news agency reported on Tuesday.

The bill was drafted in July 2016 by the Department of Environment (DOE) following the death of two rangers, Mohammad Dehqani and Parviz Hormozi, who were killed in June 2016 during an armed conflict with poachers in Hormozgan province.

According to the report, the bill was hammered out and approved on Tuesday and will be brought before parliament.

As per the proposed bill the rangers would not face

charges in case of involuntarily manslaughter while on duty and would be compensated for the losses they suffer while trying to protect the environment and the biodiversity, the government is required to allocate budget to help those rangers who might be obliged to pay out blood money or other sort of money-penalty compensation for murder or any injuries trespassers may suffer in armed conflicts with them, and the rangers will be provided with regular insurance coverage and are entitled to compensation for the losses they suffer while doing their job.

There are no more details on the articles of the bill.



Re-Invitation to International Bid

Request for Qualification

EPC+F Bid for Development Project of Dez Dam Power Plant Extension Project

Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Energy
Khuzestan Water and Power Authority

Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA) intends to entrust financing, engineering , procurement, construction, installation, commissioning and 1 year trial operation and maintenance of the Dez Dam power plant extension project as EPC+F basis contract to qualified eligible bidders considering the following criteria and information. The bid will be carried out in accordance with Article (12) of the National Law of Bids (2004) and its relative directives in compliance with the relevant regulations of the “Law for the Sixth Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran” and based on the issued licenses.

- Client Name and Address:** Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA), Golestan Blvd., Ahvaz City, Iran: Telephone No + (9861) 33331001, Fax + (9861) 33337001.
- Brief Scope of project:**
 - Financing, engineering, procurement, construction, installation, commissioning and 1 year trial operation and maintenance of:
 - Three 180 MW hydroelectric power units (as the 2nd Dez dam power plant)
 - Dam strengthening and rehabilitation.
 - Based on the Governmental approved financing structure, the Contractor shall be held responsible for financing 85 percent of the Contract Price (from foreign sources).
- Project Location:** The Dez Dam site, 22 km northwest of Andimeshk City, Khuzestan province, Iran.
- Estimated Cost for Execution:** 372 million Euros

Repayment of the financial facilities cost of money and related expenses will be guaranteed by the provision of the sovereign guarantee, in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance under Article 62 of National Audit Act.

- Execution and Operation Periods:** 72 months including 60 months for financing, engineering, procurement, construction, installation and commissioning along with 12 months of trial operation and maintenance.
- Eligibility Criteria of Bidders:**

Those consortium or joint venture of foreign and local contractors that have proven experience in dam and hydro power projects, can participate in bid considering the Law and Regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran particularly including the Law on Maximum Use of Iranian Technical, Engineering, Manufacturing Industrial and Executive Capabilities for Implementation of Projects and Provision of Facilities Required for Export of Services (2012) taking into account the terms and conditions below:

6-1- For Foreign contractors:

- Foreign contractors must be capable of financing, providing technical support and management regarding to the size, magnitude and specifications of the project.
- The foreign contractor must have similar project experiences in dam and hydro power projects in the role of EPC contractor or participate in the bid with a reputable foreign consultant in designing similar projects (as a sub-consultant in the technical office).

6-2-For local contractors:

The required grades for consortium or joint venture of local contractors approved by plan and budget organization (PBO) are as follows:

- Certificate of “grade 1 in EPC projects” in the field of “water” with the sub-category of “dam construction” and the grade 1 of the contractor in the field of “power” with the sub-category of “power generation”.
- Or
- Certificate of “grade 1 of the contractor” in the field of “dam construction and related facilities” and the grade 1 of the contractor in the field of “power” with the sub-category of the “power generation” along with first-rank local consultants in “water engineering” with the sub-category of “dam engineering”.

Remark: All stages of the financing Contract will be the commitment of the Joint Venture and in accordance with the Code of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CBI).

7.Date, Deadline and Address to receive documents:

The eligible bidders can receive the qualification documents from the date of 02/10/2018 to 09/10/2018 on office hours, from Moshanir - Power Engineering Consultants Co. at the following address: No. 1, Shadi 2 Alley, Khoddami St., Vanak Sq., Tehran, Iran Phone: + (9821) 88 88 91 21

The bidders can receive the document only by the authorized representative with the sign and sealed introduction letter including the bank-payment bill of 3,500,000 Rials deposited into the account number 1976800132508 of Moshanir Consulting Engineers Company in Sepah Bank, “Mirdamad Blvd.” Branch

8. Qualification Documents' Submission Date, Deadline and Address: After reviewing of the qualification documents, the bidders should complete the relevant documents up to the end of the office hours of 27/10/2018 and submit them in a signed and sealed envelope to the following address: Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA), Contracts Department, 2nd Floor, Five-Floor Building, Golestan Blvd., Ahvaz, Iran. Phone: + (9861) 33360278.

9. The bidders may contact the Moshanir Power Engineering Consultants Co. at the above mentioned address and number for any further questions/information.

Public Relations Dept. of Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA)

مناقصه بين المللی

فراخوان تجدید ارزیابی کیفی مناقصه‌گران و تامین کنندگان مالی طرح توسعه نیروگاه سد دز به روش EPC+F



جمهوری اسلامی ایران
وزارت نیرو
سازمان آب و برق خوزستان

شرکت سهامی سازمان آب و برق خوزستان در نظر دارد با رعایت ماده (۱۲) قانون برگزاری مناقصات مصوب سال ۱۳۸۳ مجلس شورای اسلامی و آیین نامه اجرایی ذریبست براساس **قانون برنامه ششم توسعه کشور** و براساس مجوزات اخذ شده، تأمین مالی، طراحی، تأمین کالا، اجرا و یک سال بهره‌برداری و نگهداری آزمایشی طرح توسعه نیروگاه سد دز به روش EPC+F را با اطلاعات مشروحه ذیل به متقاضیان واجد صلاحیت واگذار نماید.

- نام و نشانی دستگاه مناقصه‌گزار:** سازمان آب و برق استان خوزستان، اهواز، بلوار گلستان، تلفن ۳۳۳۳۷۰۰۱-۵+ (۹۸۶۱) و فکس ۳۳۳۳۱۰۰۱+ (۹۸۶۱)
- شرح مختصری از مشخصات و مقادیر کار:**

۱-۲- تأمین مالی، طراحی، تأمین کالا، اجرا و یک سال بهره‌برداری و نگهداری آزمایشی سه واحد ۱۸۰ مگاواتی نیروگاه برقایی و انجام کارهای سیویل ایمن سازی، پایداری و علاج بخشی در سد و ساختگاه موجود.

۲-۲- براساس مجوزات اخذ شده تأمین مالی (به صورت فایننس خارجی) معادل ۸۵٪ مبلغ پیمان به عهده پیمانکار می‌باشد.

۳- **محل اجرا:** استان خوزستان - ۲۲ کیلومتری شمال شرقی شهر اندیمشک، ساختگاه سد دز.

۴- **برآورد تقریبی هزینه اجرا:** ۳۷۲ میلیون یورو
بازپرداخت اصل و سود تسهیلات مالی و هزینه های تبعی مطابق قوانین وزارت اقتصاد و دارایی در چارچوب ماده ۶۲ قانون محاسبات عمومی کشور با ارائه ضمانت دولتی (Sovereign Guarantee) تضمین خواهد شد.

۵- **مدت اجرا و بهره برداری:** ۷۲ ماه ، شامل ۶۰ ماه برای تأمین مالی، طراحی، تأمین کالا و اجرا ، بعلاوه ۱۲ ماه بهره برداری و نگهداری آزمایشی.

۶- **شرایط متقاضیان شرکت در ارزیابی کیفی:**

پیمانکاران خارجی و داخلی که دارای سوابق کاری در اجرای پروژه‌های سد و نیروگاه برق آبی باشند باتوجه به ضوابط و مقررات جاری دولت جمهوری اسلامی ایران از جمله قانون حداکثر استفاده از توان تولیدی و خدماتی در تأمین نیازهای کشور (مصوب ۱۳۹۱) با رعایت شرایط زیر می‌توانند نسبت به ایجاد مشارکت (پیمانکاران خارجی و داخلی) و شرکت در ارزیابی کیفی اقدام نمایند.

۱-۶- پیمانکاران خارجی:

پیمانکاران خارجی باید دارای توان فنی، مالی و مدیریتی مناسب با توجه به ابعاد و مشخصات طرح باشند.

پیمانکار خارجی می بایست سابقه اجرای پروژه مشابه سد و نیروگاه برقایی را بصورت طرح و ساخت داشته باشد و یا با مشارکت با یک شرکت مشاور خارجی معتبر در طراحی پروژه های مشابه (به عنوان مشاور همکار در دفتر فنی) در مناقصه شرکت نماید.

۲-۶- پیمانکاران داخلی:

مشارکت پیمانکاران داخلی می بایست با لحاظ رتبه های تایید شده زیر از سازمان برنامه و بودجه باشد:

- پیمانکار رتبه ۱ طرح و ساخت رشته آب با زیرشاخه سد سازی به همراه پیمانکار رتبه یک رشته نیرو با زیر شاخه تولید نیرو.

و یا

- پیمانکار رتبه یک آب در زیر رشته سدسازی و تأسیسات مربوطه و رتبه یک رشته نیرو با زیر شاخه تولید نیرو و به همراه مشاور رتبه یک مهندسی آب با تخصص سد سازی.

تبصره: کلیه مراحل عقد قرار داد تأمین مالی در تعهد گروه مشارکت و مطابق با شرایط بانک مرکزی جمهوری اسلامی ایران خواهد بود.

۷- **تاریخ، مهلت و محل دریافت اسناد ارزیابی:** واجدین شرایط می‌توانند در ساعات اداری از تاریخ ۹۷/۰۷/۱۰ تا ۹۷/۰۷/۱۷ نسبت به دریافت اسناد ارزیابی از شرکت مهندسین مشاور مشانیر به نشانی: تهران، بالاتر از میدان ونک، خیابان شهید خدایی، کوچه شادی، پلاک ۱، تلفن ۸۸۸۸۹۱۲۱+ (۹۸۲۱) اقدام نمایند. دریافت اسناد ارزیابی تنها با همراه داشتن معرفی نامه کتبی و در قبال ارائه فیش بانکی به مبلغ -/۳۵۰۰۰۰۰۰ ریال واریزی به حساب به شماره ۱۳۲۵۰۸-۱۹۷۶۸۰۰ نزد بانک سپه شعبه بلوار میرداماد به نام شرکت سهامی خدمات مهندسی برق (مشانیر) امکان پذیر خواهد بود.

۸- **تاریخ، مهلت و محل تحویل اسناد ارزیابی:** مناقصه‌گران پس از دریافت و مطالعه اسناد ارزیابی، حداکثر تا آخر وقت اداری مورخ ۹۷/۰۸/۵ اسناد مربوطه را تکمیل و در پاکت لاک و مهر شده به نشانی: اهواز - بلوار گلستان، ساختمان ۵ طبقه سازمان آب و برق استان خوزستان، طبقه دوم، دفتر قراردادهای، تلفن ۳۳۳۶۰۲۷۸+ (۹۸۶۱) تحویل دهند .

۹- مناقصه گران می‌توانند برای کسب اطلاعات بیشتر و بیان سوالات احتمالی خود با شرکت سهامی خدمات مهندسی برق (مشانیر) به نشانی ذکر شده در بالا مکاتبه و یا با

روابط عمومی سازمان آب و برق خوزستان

شماره تلفن ۸۸۸۸۹۱۲۱+ (۹۸۲۱) تماس حاصل نمایند.

From Jupiter to jeers: France's Macron battles popularity slump

A little over a year ago, Emmanuel Macron was sitting pretty in the polls, a 39-year-old president in a hurry, with ambitious plans and the hopes of a nation riding on his shoulders.

In recent months his popularity has crumbled, even falling below his luckless predecessor Francois Hollande at the same point in his presidency. Last week, Macron's approval rating was just 29 percent, down from a high of 66.

As if to hammer home the shift in sentiment, consumer confidence has fallen to its lowest level in more than two years. The same measure had soared in the wake of Macron's May 2017 election victory.

The reasons for the volte-face are multiple and overlapping: voters on the center-left, many of whom took a chance on Macron, say his policies, particularly cutting a wealth tax, favor the rich. They often describe his manner as arrogant.

A scandal involving an Elysee Palace security official, caught on camera beating up May Day protesters, has tarnished the president. It raised questions about how the young official, Alexandre Benalla, was promoted so quickly, while the Elysee's foot-dragging in response prompted suggestions of a cover-up.

In quick succession two ministers resigned, the popular environment minister over delays in reducing nuclear dependence, and the sports minister, for personal reasons. A third, interior minister Gerard Collomb, a close Macron ally, will step down next year to run again as mayor of his home city Lyon.

It is Collomb's departure that has perhaps thrust the knife in deepest. Before he announced his plans, he spoke of how the Macron team "lacked humility," and lamented several mistakes, in particular the handling of the Benalla affair.

So what does the dramatic slump in popularity mean for Macron and his ability to



lead, at home and in Europe?

■ Onward and upward?

Close advisers are quick to say it means nothing. They acknowledge missteps, such as the Elysee's decision to release a video of Macron complaining about how much money was being spent on social benefits with little impact.

But they say he was elected on the promise of fundamental economic and social reforms and is determined to carry them out over the course of his five-year term, no matter what.

"The French people recognize two essential things: that the president sticks to his promises ... and that, while the pace of reform is extremely rapid, the impact is not yet visible on the ground and will take time to emerge," said a senior Elysee official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

There's an acknowledgment too that the macroeconomic picture is not as rosy as once predicted, with growth forecasts pared back and unemployment stuck at around

9 percent, both of which are hampering Macron's ability to deliver.

"French people are skeptical, this is the French culture," Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told reporters on Wednesday, urging voters to be patient.

"They are asking for concrete results and I think it takes time to get the full benefits of the reforms."

Some voters are unwilling to give the benefit of the doubt.

■ Popularity collapse

There are also signs that the collapse in popularity, and agitation in parliament over the Benalla affair, are having some impact on the government's agenda.

Constitutional reforms planned for the autumn, including cutting the number of lawmakers by a third and introducing some proportional representation, have been delayed.

Nonetheless, with a large, loyal majority in the Assembly, Macron will likely not need

to deviate too far off course.

Perhaps in an effort to combat the "president of the rich" tag, two policy announcements in the space of a week this month targeted the sick and the poor: 8 billion euros of extra spending for the lowest earners, and an additional 400 million euros on healthcare.

The headline promises in the 2019 budget, briefed to journalists this week, emphasize money being returned to taxpayers rather than more reforms: 6 billion euros of tax cuts for households and moves to boost purchasing power.

But advisers say the overall reform agenda, plotted in detail before taking office, remains on track, with changes to pensions and unemployment benefits coming up.

Yet will Macron himself be chastened by the poll slump, adapting his style to try raise his appeal?

The indications so far are no. Aides defend his straight-talking and sometimes punchy manner, which he mixes with "Jupiterian" speeches - lofty pronouncements as if handed down from the Roman god of gods.

He has been forthright about how he sees the European Union elections next May as a battle between leaders like himself - who he describes as progressive, pro-EU liberals - and populist, far-right nationalists.

The same sort of battle is likely to play out domestically in the next presidential election in 2022, with Macron already limbering up for a showdown with the far-right.

In a sign that the communications strategy is changing, the Elysee has drafted in a new smooth-talking spokesman, Sylvain Fort, who is cut from the same intellectual cloth as Macron.

Yet observers point out that while the tumbling polls make for good headlines, it's not out of the ordinary in France. Most presidents since World War Two have struggled to connect with voters 18 months into office.

(Source: Reuters)

Bahraini attorney general charges 169 anti-regime activists with terrorism

Bahrain's attorney general says officials have charged nearly 170 anti-regime protesters with terrorism offenses as the ruling House of Khalifah regime presses ahead with its heavy-handed clampdown on political dissidents and pro-democracy activists in the tiny Persian Gulf tiny state.

Ahmad al-Hamadi said 169 people, 111 of whom are in custody, will be tried for forming "Bahrain's Hezbollah" - a local offspring of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement, detonating a bomb, training on the use of firearms and explosives in addition to making and using explosives and firearms.

Hamadi added that the Public Prosecution had received a report from the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) regarding the formation of the group inside Bahrain.

He further noted that the defendants will be put on trial by the Fourth High Criminal Court on October 3.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demon-



strations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the House of Khalifah regime

relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from the House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of the House of Khalifah regime's crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3 last year.

(Source: Press TV)

Qatar's monarch slams Saudi regime-led blockade as flagrant violation of intl. law

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has censured the ongoing House of Saud regime-led diplomatic and trade boycott against his energy-rich Persian Gulf tiny state, describing the move as a flagrant violation of the international law.

Addressing world leaders at the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on Tuesday, Sheikh Tamim said the blockade is "paralyzing" Arab nations and has only caused "our region to remain hostage to marginal differences."

He pointed out that Doha remains open

to "unconditional dialogue."

"We hope that we will all transform the council's current plight into an opportunity to reforming it," Sheikh Tamim said.

The House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Egypt all cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5 last year, after officially accusing it of "sponsoring terrorism."

The administration of the Saudi regime-backed and former Yemeni president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Libya, the Maldives, Djibouti, Senegal and the Comoros

later joined the camp in ending diplomatic ties with Doha. Jordan downgraded its diplomatic relations as well.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry later announced that the decision to cut diplomatic ties was unjustified and based on false claims and assumptions.

On June 9, 2017, Qatar strongly dismissed allegations of supporting terrorism after the Saudi regime and its allies blacklisted dozens of individuals and entities purportedly associated with Doha.

Later that month, the Saudi regime and

its allies released a 13-point list of demands, including the closure of Al Jazeera television network and downgrade of relations with Iran, in return for the normalization of diplomatic relations with Doha.

The document containing the demands by the House of Saud regime, Egypt, the UAE and Bahrain also asked Qatar to sever all ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement. Qatar rejected the demands as "unreasonable."

(Source: Press TV)

At UN speech, Turkey's Erdogan slams use of economic sanctions as 'weapons'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has used his address to the United Nations General Assembly to criticize the use of sanctions as "weapons" against countries in an implicit reference to the United States.

"None of us can remain silent to the arbitrary cancellation of commercial agreements and the use of economic sanctions as weapons," Erdogan told the 73rd session of the General Assembly in New York on Tuesday.

The Turkish leader also warned of the repercussions of "unilateral decisions" for the entire world.

"The negative effects of these twisted developments will eventually affect all countries. We must all work together to prevent damage to the world trade regime as a result of such unilateral decisions," he said.

Erdogan further underlined the need for joint cooperation "to achieve the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals" and avoid a "new economic rupture."

The remarks come amid a widening rift between Turkey and the United States over Ankara's imprisonment of American pastor Andrew Brunson.

He has been accused of having links with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) and the movement of the U.S.-based opposition cleric Fetullah Gulen, which Turkey blames for the 2016 failed military coup.

The U.S. has called for Brunson's release and taken a series of punitive measures against Turkey over the continued detainment of the evangelical Christian pastor.

The U.S. measures, which include imposing sanctions on Turkish ministers and doubling of steel and aluminum tariffs, have led to a sharp decline in the Turkish currency. Turkey has retaliated by raising tariffs on certain U.S. imports.

"Today, some countries are persistently trying to create chaos. We are in favor of solving our problems through conducting a constructive dialogue on equal terms," Erdogan said.

■ Syria should become peaceful once again

Elsewhere in his address, the Turkish president pointed to his country's diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the crisis in Syria.

"By means of both our support to the Geneva and Astana Processes and the safe zones...we try to make Syria a peaceful country once again. By clearing the Jarabulus and al-Rai regions from Daesh (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/ISIL), and Afrin region from PKK-PYD (Democratic Union Party/Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat) - YPG (People's Protection Units/Yekineyen Parastina Gel) terrorist organizations, we have turned an area of 4 thousand kilometers into a safe and peaceful place for millions of Syrians," he said.

Turkey has been serving - along with Iran and Russia - as a mediator in the Astana process since January 2017. Erdogan also called on all the parties to the Syria crisis to support a just and sustainable political solution to the conflict gripping the country.

"Those who equip terrorists with tens of thousands of trucks and thousands of cargo planes loaded with arms for the sake of their tactical interests will most definitely feel sorrow in the future," he added.

The United States and Turkey have also been at odds over Washington's policy of backing Kurdish militants in Syria.

■ Turkey will continue to support Palestinians

Referring to the Palestine issue, Erdogan accused the UN Security Council (UNSC) of standing idle amid the



Israeli massacre of the Palestinian people.

"The massacres in Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, recently in Myanmar, and in Palestine as we speak have all taken place before the eyes of the United Nations Security Council," he said, vowing to stand by the Palestinians.

"Those who remain silent against the oppression of the Palestinians, who reduce the humanitarian assistance to them, are only increasing the courage of the oppressors," Erdogan pointed out. "Even if the whole world turns its back, we, Turkey, will continue to be on the side of the oppressed Palestinians and will protect the historical and legal status of... Jerusalem (al-Quds)," he added.

The U.S. President Donald Trump recognized al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the "capital" of Israel last December and relocated the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied city in May.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. removing some missile systems from Middle East

➔ An earlier Wall Street Journal report citing the U.S. military officials said Washington was pulling four Patriot missile systems from Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain next month in a shift away from long-lasting conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan in order to address tensions with China and Russia.

Two Patriot systems, which are used to shoot down missiles and planes, will be redeployed from Kuwait, and one each from Jordan and Bahrain, the report said.

There was no immediate comment from Jordan and Bahrain did not respond immediately to a Reuters' request for a comment.

Wealthy Persian Gulf states have stepped up their defense spending amid higher tensions in the region.

(Source: Reuters)

Japan's Abe open to meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong-un

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a longtime hardliner on North Korea, said he was willing to meet Kim Jong-un at a speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Abe, who one year ago warned at the United Nations that the window for diplomacy with North Korea was closing, took a more open but still cautious tone on Tuesday in his latest address to the world body.

But he said that any summit would be devoted to resolving a decades-old row over North Korea's abductions of Japanese civilians - a deeply emotive issue for much of the Japanese public on which Abe built his political career.

"In order to resolve the abduction issue, I am also ready to break the shell of mutual distrust with North Korea, get off to a new start and meet face to face with Chairman Kim Jong-un," Abe said in his UN address.

"But if we are to have one, then I am determined that it must contribute to the resolution of the abduction issue," Abe added.

He stressed that no summit was yet in the works - and appealed to Kim to show his own readiness.

"North Korea is now at a crossroads at which it will either seize or fail to seize the historic opportunity it was afforded," Abe said.

North Korea kidnapped scores of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s to train the regime's spies in Japanese language and culture.

Japan's then-prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, travelled to Pyongyang in 2002 and 2004 to seek a new relationship with the current leader's father Kim Jong-il and was told by North Korea that remaining abduction victims were dead - a stance adamantly rejected by Japanese family members and campaigners.

Speculation has been rising that Abe could meet Kim, who reportedly told Trump during their summit in June in Singapore that he was willing to talk to regional rival Japan.

With South Korea's dovish President Moon Jae-in also courting Kim, fears have risen in Japan that it could be shut out of any ultimate resolution on North Korea if it refuses dialogue.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Libya govt. declares ceasefire deal

Libya's internationally recognized government on Wednesday announced a new ceasefire deal to end a month of fighting between rival militias south of Tripoli that has left more than 100 dead.

The agreement was signed by representatives of the capital and the town of Tarhuna, southeast of Tripoli, the interior ministry said in a statement.

The deal ratified by interior minister Abdesslem Ashour calls for the rivals to implement a United Nations-brokered accord, signed on September 4, to form a joint security force of police from Tripoli and Tarhuna to patrol the capital's southern suburbs.

The Government of National Accord (GNA), in a statement, welcomed the halt to fighting that already took effect on Tuesday.

The clashes which erupted on the capital's southern outskirts on August 26 have left at least 117 dead and more than 400 injured, according to a fresh casualty toll issued by the GNA.

More than 25,000 people have been displaced by the violence.

The Libyan capital has been at the center of a battle for influence between armed groups ever since Dictator Muammar Gaddafi was ousted and killed in a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)-backed uprising in 2011.

The latest feud has pitted armed groups from Tarhuna and Libya's third city Misrata against militia forces from Tripoli under the nominal control of the GNA.

(Source: AFP)

Lebanese court sentences trio to hard labor for providing intelligence to Israel

Lebanon's Military Tribunal has sentenced three Lebanese nationals to three years in prison with hard labor on charges of espionage on Hezbollah resistance movement for Israel's Mossad spy agency and collaboration with Israeli authorities.

The tribunal, chaired by Brigadier General Hussein Abdallah, issued the verdicts against Hasan Saleme, Karam Idris and Kamal Hasan on Tuesday after they were found guilty of providing the Israeli regime with intelligence about Hezbollah's military arsenal and operations, and with photos of several strategic locations in Lebanon. The court also stripped them of their rights as Lebanese citizens.

The three were arrested last October and charged with communicating information to Israel. They reportedly possessed Israeli wireless communication devices at the time of their arrest. Two other defendants, identified as Lebanese nationals H.K. and N.Sh., were separately questioned on Tuesday after they allegedly contacted Israelis through Facebook.

On July 10, Lebanon's Military Tribunal sentenced seven Lebanese nationals in absentia to hard labor on charges of crossing into occupied Palestinian territories, working with Israeli officials and receiving permits to live there.

Back in January last year, Lebanese security forces arrested five people over working for Mossad.

The media office of Lebanon's General Security Directorate announced in a statement that the quintet had confessed to passing information to Mossad via Israeli embassies in Turkey, Jordan, Britain and Nepal.

(Source: Press TV)

‘Migrants working on construction of new city before 2022 World Cup left unpaid’

Dozens of migrants working on the city that will host the final of the 2022 Qatar World Cup have gone unpaid for months, Amnesty International says. An investigation by the human rights group found that a contractor in Lusail had “ruined lives”, with workers not paid due to “cash flow problems”.

Qatar beat rival bids from the United States, Australia, South Korea and Japan to host the tournament.

Fifa said the non-payments were not connected to the World Cup. Amnesty said contractor Mercury MENA “failed to pay its workers thousands of dollars in wages and work benefits, leaving them stranded and penniless” in the country.

The group alleged that at least 78 employees from Nepal, India and the Philippines who had not been paid were owed an average of \$2,000 (£1,520). The workers were helping to build Lusail city, which will include parks, marinas and a theme park as well as the 80,000 stadium, which will host the World Cup final and also the tournament’s opening match. Amnesty said it spoke to Mercury MENA’s chief executive, who acknowledged “cash flow problems”. But there has been no further response.

“We have no reason to believe the reported violations of workers’ rights are in fact linked to Fifa and the 2022 World Cup,” a Fifa spokesman said. A spokesman for the Qatari government said Mercury MENA were not directly involved in the building of the stadium but in the building of the city.

“Currently there are legal proceedings under way concerning Mercury MENA,” the spokesman said. “While Mercury MENA no longer operates in Qatar, legal matters will continue and we will conduct a full investigation. We will address any existing issues or violations and remedy any remaining matters.”

(Source: BBC)

Real Madrid’s Isco leaves hospital after surgery

Real Madrid playmaker Isco has left hospital after successfully undergoing an operation to treat appendicitis, the European champions said on Wednesday.

“Our player Isco has been discharged from hospital. He will start his recovery process now under the supervision of the Real Madrid medical services,” said a statement from the club which did not state how long Isco was expected to be out for.

Reports in the Spanish media, however, said that the Spain international will be unable to play for around a month and is targeting a return in time for Real’s crunch match away to arch-rivals Barcelona on Oct. 28 in La Liga.

Isco, who was taken to hospital on Tuesday after arriving at training complaining of stomach pains, is set to miss a total of six games for Real, including Wednesday’s testing league trip to Sevilla and Saturday’s city derby against Atletico Madrid.

He will also have to sit out Champions League games against CSKA Moscow and Viktoria Plzen, as well as Spain’s friendly against Wales and their UEFA Nations League game with England.

(Source: Goal)

Proud Lampard revels in win over mentor Mourinho

MANCHESTER, England (Reuters) — Derby County manager Frank Lampard picked up the biggest scalp so far in his young managerial career on Tuesday when his second tier Championship team knocked Manchester United, coached by his former boss Jose Mourinho, out of the League Cup.

Derby won 8-7 on penalties after the game had ended 2-2 after 90 minutes. It had taken a last-gasp header from United substitute Marouane Fellaini to take the contest into a shootout.

Lampard, who played under Mourinho at Chelsea, was rewarded for naming a full-strength side, in contrast to many managers in this competition, fielding the same team that beat Brentford 3-1 in the Championship on Saturday.

“It was the easiest selection I’ve had. They played so well against Brentford and I knew how much they all wanted to play. I wanted to come here and win,” Lampard told reporters.

It was a tense end to the game but Derby kept their cool, scoring all of their spotkicks in front of United’s fans in the Stretford End. “I’m a bit shell shocked (but) in a good way,” said Lampard. “What a performance from the team and in terms of personality... “To have the personality to step up and take penalties and perform the way they did, I’m just a proud manager, they were great,” he added. “I am trying to build a group to be successful and nights like this are incredible. To go against world-class players and play that way, it’s right up there.”

The highlight of the performance was Harry Wilson’s 59th-minute free kick, which was brilliantly driven home from 30 metres out by the 21-year-old Wales international, who is on loan from Liverpool. “I know we are a good team, we wanted to come here and go toe-to-toe with United,” said Wilson.

“The free kick was too far out to curl it so I put my laces through it and tried to get movement on the ball.”

Former Raiders LB, 26, in coma after aneurysm

Former Oakland Raiders linebacker Neiron Ball is in a medically induced coma after a brain aneurysm ruptured Sept. 16, the team said Tuesday.

Ball, 26, was diagnosed while at Florida with a rare, congenital condition called an arteriovenous malformation (AVM), in which the brain’s blood vessels get tangled and rupture. He underwent emergency surgery after physicians discovered a brain bleed prior to his sophomore year, and he sat out the 2011 season.

However, once he resumed playing football, he continued to excel for the Gators and was selected by the Raiders in the fifth round of the 2015 draft. He played six games for the Raiders in 2015 and rose to a starting role, before a knee injury derailed his career.

Doctors had told Ball and his family that it was unlikely his AVM would recur, and that football presented no specific danger in Ball’s case. The Aneurysm and AVM Foundation, which according to The Mercury News spoke to Ball’s family, tweeted: “We believed Neiron’s #AVM was obliterated, that doesn’t seem to be the case as he developed an aneurysm which burst. His family asks for continued prayers.”

(Source: ESPN)

Man Utd boss Mourinho ‘seems to be at war with his players’

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho “seems to be at war with his players”, said former Arsenal defender Martin Keown after the Red Devils were knocked out of the Carabao Cup by Derby.

United were beaten 8-7 on penalties by the Championship side after a 2-2 draw at Old Trafford on Tuesday. Earlier in the day, Mourinho told Paul Pogba he will not captain United again, but insisted they have not fallen out.

“He needs to start seeing the good in what they do,” Keown told the BBC.

“Is he pulling up the handbrake?”

Pogba watched from the stand as Derby, managed by former England midfielder Frank Lampard, knocked out United.

The defeat came three days after a draw at home to Wolves which left Mourinho’s side eight points behind leaders Liverpool in the Premier League table.

“Everyone in the media is quick to turn this into a massive crisis,” said Keown.

“Manchester United have had some good away results but suddenly they’re not able to win at home. I don’t enjoy seeing them not being competitive.

“Mourinho has said the pundits on the sofa have got too much to say. One of them, Frank Lampard, has proved him wrong. It’s a great scalp. “Jose seems to be at war with his players. “This was a really good United team and I can’t think of many bigger shocks in their history. Mourinho tried to go for it and he’ll be hurting in the dressing room.”

■ **‘When it gets to Jones we are in trouble’**

United made nine changes from the draw with Wolves but still fielded 10 internationals and took an early lead through Juan Mata. But they needed a stoppage-time equaliser



from Marouane Fellaini to take the tie to a shootout, which was lost when Phil Jones became the only player to miss.

Mourinho said: “Penalties come and someone has to miss, once you go to the sixth or seventh penalty I knew we were going to be in trouble with Jones, with Eric Bailly.

“I never blame a player for missing a penalty. When it goes to Jones, or Eric Bailly then we are in trouble.”

Lampard, who won two Premier League titles under Mourinho at Chelsea, has now

steered his side to eight wins in his opening 12 games in management.

“I’m shellshocked. What a performance,” he said. “To go down early at Old Trafford and play as well as they did was superb. We had the personality to take penalties and play the way we did. I am a proud manager.

“I am trying to build a group to be successful and nights like this are incredible. To go against world-class players and play that way, it’s right up there [with the best nights of my career].”

■ **What’s coming up for United?**

Mourinho’s side are up first in Premier League action at the weekend, travelling to London on Saturday to face an improving West Ham (kick-off 12:30 BST) side who have picked up a victory and a draw in their last two games after a shaky start. A tricky October sees Champions League fixtures at home to Valencia and Juventus, while they also travel to Mourinho’s old side Chelsea in the month, as well as Old Trafford visits from Newcastle and Everton.

(Source: BBC)

Russian federation challenges IAAF suspension in court



Russia’s athletics federation said on Wednesday it had filed an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the decision by global athletics body IAAF to prolong its suspension.

The federation was suspended in November 2015 following a report commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) that found evidence of systematic, state-sponsored doping in the sport.

Federation spokeswoman Natalia Yuhhareva told Reuters it had filed an appeal with CAS against the IAAF’s decision to extend the federation’s suspension at its last council meeting in July.

At the time the IAAF said that Russia had made “significant progress” in meeting criteria for reinstatement, but that its suspension would remain in place until the council convened again in December.

CAS did not immediately return a request for comment.

The move comes days after WADA conditionally reinstated Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA, angering sports bodies around the globe. The IAAF — which said on Wednesday it was set on “robustly defending any challenge” to the suspension of the Russian athletics federation — said last week that RUSADA’s reinstatement fulfilled one of three pre-conditions for the federation’s return to its fold.

For the federation to be reinstated, Russia must acknowledge that officials from the Sports Ministry were involved in doping cover-up schemes. Russian authorities must also provide access to data from testing samples at the Moscow lab,

which was also suspended in the wake of the 2015 scandal.

While Russia has pledged to cooperate with global sports bodies to curb the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs, the authorities have vehemently denied the existence of state-sponsored doping in the country.

“The IAAF has, from the very beginning, been clear on its reinstatement requirements and processes overseen by an independent Taskforce,” the IAAF said in a statement. “We stand behind the decisions we have made and are very confident of our legal position.”

The IAAF added it that the federation can only be reinstated “by satisfying the reinstatement conditions to the satisfaction of the IAAF Council.”

The Taskforce will report back at the next IAAF Council meeting in Monaco in December. The president of Russia’s athletics federation, Dmitry Shlyakhtin, said the appeal was aimed at having the requirements removed from its reinstatement criteria. “In our view it is unjustified (to require) compliance with these criteria and their presence on the roadmap for reinstating the federation is illegitimate because they lie beyond its competence,” Shlyakhtin said in a statement.

Despite the federation’s suspension, a string of Russian athletes, including 2015 world champion hurdler Sergey Shubenkov, have been cleared to compete internationally after demonstrating they are training in a doping-free environment.

(Source: Reuters)

Roman Abramovich’s lawyer denies money laundering claim



Roman Abramovich’s lawyer has said any suggestion that the Chelsea owner has been involved in money laundering or has contacts with criminal organisations is “entirely false” after it was reported that he was denied residency in Switzerland in 2016 amid allegations of both.

Abramovich applied to live near the ski resort of Verbier, but the country’s federal police (Fedpol) advised immigration officials to reject the application on the grounds that he represented a threat to public security and the country’s reputation, documents seen by media company Tamedia show.

The Zurich company fought an 18-month legal battle to publish the documents.

Abramovich -- who has never been indicted in Switzerland or anywhere else -- has denied the allegations, and lawyer Daniel Glasl indicated that he would file a criminal complaint.

“We are extremely disappointed by the release and publication of confidential information from Swiss government files regarding Mr Abramovich, which occurred in clear violation of Swiss criminal law and Swiss data protection laws,” Glasl said in a statement received by ESPN.

“We have received a request for correction of facts to the Swiss Federal Police and will be filing a criminal complaint against unknown persons responsible for dissemination of this confidential information.

“Any suggestion that Mr Abramovich has been involved in money-laundering or has contacts with criminal organisations is entirely false.”

Abramovich withdrew his residency

application in June last year when he was informed that it was due to be rejected. His legal team wrote to Fedpol in November to demand a correction but the request was turned down.

A tribunal in Zurich issued an order preventing the press from publishing any details in February, but the order was overturned on appeal and on Friday a federal court ruled in favour of Tamedia’s right to report on the background of the case.

The private Fedpol documents show that a “suspicion of money-laundering” and “contacts to criminal organisations” were at the centre of police objections to Abramovich’s application.

“Mr Abramovich has never been charged with participating in money-laundering and does not have a criminal record,” Glasl said.

“He has never had, or been alleged to have, connections with criminal organisations. Fedpol has failed to provide any evidence of criminality whatsoever.

“Mr Abramovich has submitted to numerous thorough background checks by governments and business partners over the years, and such unsubstantiated allegations have never been at issue.”

Fedpol declined to comment on the specifics of the case when contacted by ESPN.

Earlier this year, Abramovich found himself unable to visit the UK after the government declined to renew his Tier-1 investor visa amid heightened political tension with Russia.

(Source: ESPN)

Dominic Thiem moves ahead of Rafael Nadal and Alexander Zverev

The 25-year-old Austrian Dominic Thiem has won his first indoor hard title in St. Petersburg last week, scoring an easy win over Martin Klizan in the title match for his third crown in 2018 and the 11th overall in a career.

With these four wins in Russia, Thiem has become the leader on the Tour in the number of wins claimed in 2018, standing on 48 and leaving world number 1 Rafael Nadal and Alexander Zverev on 45! St. Petersburg was the 19th tournament of the season for Thiem (he played two Davis Cup ties for his country as well against Belarus and Australia) who is known for his brutal schedules during the entire season, entering no less than 127 tournaments since the start of 2014, including 30 in 2015 and 27 in 2016 and 2017! Thiem is often criticized for playing so many events and he finally decided to reduce the number of tournaments played,

signing to play Shanghai, Vienna and Paris by the end of the year, with a great possibility to qualify for the ATP Finals as well which would take him to 23 ATP tournaments in 2018, a nice progress compared to the previous three seasons.

After reaching the semi-final in Doha and the fourth round at the Australian Open, Thiem won the title in Buenos Aires before losing in the quarters in Rio de Janeiro and Acapulco. He lost early at Indian Wells and skipped Miami due to a right ankle injury to make a return on clay, losing in the last eight at Monte Carlo to Nadal and in Barcelona to Tsitsipas before reaching the final in Madrid where Alexander Zverev halted him in straight sets.

He didn’t play well in Rome but won the title in Lyon a week later to boost his confidence and reach the maiden Grand Slam final at the Roland Garros, losing to Rafael

Nadal in straight sets. Thiem couldn’t make the right switch to grass and he struggled to find form in Hamburg, Kitzbuhel and Toronto as well, almost dropping out from the Top 10.

Dominic skipped Cincinnati and he used that much-needed rest to charge his batteries and win 10 of the last 11 matches, losing in that epic US Open quarter-final to Nadal before leading his country in the Davis Cup and this title in St.

Petersburg that made him the Tour leader with 48 ATP wins so far in 2018. The old Thiem would have rushed to play in Shenzhen, Chengdu, Beijing or Tokyo in the next two weeks but he made a smart decision in taking 15 days off and he should be ready to play at his best in Shanghai where he won just two matches in the previous three appearances.

(Source: Tennis World)

Tehran derby more than just a game

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN — Despite all the economic pressures, most of Iranian people, especially the youth, will get absorbed in the moment and temporary leave behind difficulties as they watch the Tehran derby between Esteghlal and Persepolis.

Esteghlal and Persepolis, Tehran based giants, will battle it out together at the 80,000-capacity Azadi Stadium on Thursday.

Nine days ago, a win over Qatari giants Al Duhail put Persepolis in seventh heaven as they booked a place in the AFC Champions League semis, while Esteghlal were knocked out of the Championship at the hands of another Qatari club Al Sadd at the same day.

Persepolis, who have been banned from signing players in the last two transfer windows, sit in second place in Iran Professional League (IPL).

Esteghlal are 11th in the table. The Blues are still struggling to find replacements for their key players who left the club in the summer.

Under leadership of Branko Ivankovic, Persepolis have won back-to-back IPL title. The Reds also advanced to the 2018 AFC Champions League semis for the second year in a row.

On the other hand, Winfried Schaefer is under pressure after the German failed to meet the expectations of Esteghlal fans.

Esteghlal and Persepolis have played against each other 87 times, with Esteghlal winning 26 games, Persepolis taking 22 victories, and 39 matches ending in a draw.

Their last match was watched by FIFA president Gianni Infantino and former Dutch international Marco Van Basten at the Azadi Stadium.

Persepolis are second in Iran Professional League (IPL) table while Esteghlal sit 11th.

Anyhow, Tehran derby is an opportunity for the Iranians to leave behind difficulties for a while.

They're football mad and you will see what it means to them on Thursday.

It was sold out.



Esteghlal players are highly motivated for derby: Winfried Schaefer



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal German coach Winfried Schaefer says his players are highly motivated for match against Persepolis in Tehran derby.

Esteghlal, who sit 11th in the 16-team Iran Professional League, will host their arch rivals Persepolis at the 80,000-capacity Azadi Stadium on Thursday.

“Derby always bring a big excitement. I hope the match will be held in calmness as it was held in the last year. I ask the fans to respect the referee,” Schaefer said in the pre-match news conference.

International referee Alireza Faghani

will officiate the 88th derby at the Azadi Stadium.

“We watched Persepolis match against Qatar’s Al Duhail and we know how strong they are.

“We have signed several new players for the new season and need time. Pep Guardiola also needed time to build a strong team,” the German added.

Their last match was watched by FIFA president Gianni Infantino and former Dutch international Marco Van Basten at the Azadi Stadium.

Persepolis are second in Iran Professional League (IPL) table while Esteghlal sit 11th.

Beating Esteghlal is a priority for Persepolis: Branko Ivankovic



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic says defeating Esteghlal in Tehran derby is a priority for them and he is not going to protect his players from injury.

Persepolis will face their arch rivals Esteghlal on Thursday ahead of the key match against Al Sadd of Qatar in the first leg of the AFC Champions League semi-final scheduled for Oct. 2.

“You cannot predict the result of the derby with regard to teams’ positions in the table. Derby is a special match for both teams,” Ivankovic said.

“I want to transfer happiness to my players to enjoy the match. We have played good derbies with Esteghlal in the previous matches and it made me happy. I hope we will have a good performance in front of our fans on Thursday,” the Croat said.

“We have no injured and suspended players for this match. I think the players will decide the result of the match. I expect a full-packed stadium,” Ivankovic added.

“I don’t want to lose and I like to win but it’s not always possible. To attack is our philosophy and I will not change it,” Ivankovic went on to say.

AFC President announces intention to run for re-election

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) President, confirmed that he will run for re-election at the 29th AFC Congress on April 6, 2019. He has been AFC President since 2013.

At the AFC’s Executive Committee meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Shaikh Salman said that he was proud of the journey that the AFC had embarked on in the last five years and that ‘he wanted to continue with that work.’

He said: “The greater good of the Asian Football Confederation and its members is a priority and we have seen the progress that we have made in the last five years. Football has shown the power to bring nations together and to do good.

“I am proud of what we have achieved in that time and I am not ready to leave this organisation into a state of chaos. We have all seen what the AFC was before, and we have seen what it looks like now and I hope that we can continue that progress.

“My intention has always been to do the best for Asia and we have seen the strides we have made in the last five years

through our football and also through the record commercial rights deal and this has been because of the support and understanding we have achieved.”

AFC senior vice-president Praful Patel on behalf of the Executive Committee, urged the President to continue with his excellent work and pledged support for his candidacy. He added: “It has been an honour and a matter of great satisfaction to serve under your leadership.

“During your Presidency, we have seen the transformation of the AFC from what it was with its tarnished name and the financial issues it faced, to what we have become under your leadership.”

Shaikh Salman added that the objective of the AFC was not only to raise standards throughout the Continent but also to close the gap between the Inspiring and Developing nations and likewise, between the Aspiring and Developing countries.

The AFC President said: “If we are to raise standards we need to invest – in facilities, competitions and personnel. Together we have achieved more in the last few years through

unity and solidarity than at any stage in our history and this is something not only to be proud of but also to cherish.”

The Executive Committee congratulated Japan on their victory in the 2018 FIFA Women’s U-20 World Cup and they showed their commitment to the continued development of the women’s game by increasing the contribution to the Asian teams which have qualified for the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup – Australia, China PR, Japan, Korea Republic and Thailand – to US\$500,000.

Shaikh Salman thanked the Uzbekistan Football Association and the Uzbekistan Government for their support in holding the Executive meeting in Tashkent. Shaikh Salman said: “This was the first time that we have organised an Executive meeting in Tashkent and I thank the UFA and their staff for their assistance and congratulate the Government on their support for the game.

“This progress was perfectly demonstrated when Uzbekistan won the 2018 AFC U23 Championship in China PR in January.”

(Source: the-afc)

Vietnam’s Van Khang vows to keep fighting against Iran

Vietnam’s chances of advancing to the 2018 AFC U-16 Championship quarter-finals are minimal at best but Khuat Van Khang isn’t giving up.

With only one point to their name after two matches, Vietnam will need to defeat Islamic Republic of Iran by three clear goals on Thursday and hope India defeat Indonesia for the young Golden Dragons to seal knockout stage berth from Group C.

“I know that we have a slim chance, but we are not going to give up hope,” Van Khang told the-AFC.com.

“Even if we have one percent chance, we are still going to fight for it.

“The whole team will work very hard together. We will play compact, we will play according to the tactical plans prepared by the coach, and if we do that, we will definitely



get the three points,” added the forward.

Van Khang has been one of Vietnam’s star performers, finding the back of the net with his superb free-kick from 30

metres out against Indonesia, and the 16-year-old midfielder said he knew he would score, having put in the hours practicing the exact situation.

“I think it was a very aggressive match, both teams went on to the pitch with their best players.

“But for Indonesia, I think, they lacked a bit of concentration at the beginning, which is why they conceded the goal.

“That goal was kind of like emulating what we have been training very hard for during our sessions, and we knew we were going to score the goal because we always put extra effort on the pitch.”

Van Khang also paid tribute to the fans.

“I want to say a million thanks to the fans who are in the stadium and also the supporters back in Vietnam, who are watching us on TV.

“Whatever happens, we will continue to play attacking football, attractive football.”

(Source: the-afc)

Iran’s women’s U-19 beat Jordan in two friendlies

IRNA — Iran’s women’s U-19 football team defeated Jordan in two friendly matches as preparation for the AFC U-19 Women’s Championship.



In the match held in Tehran’s Ararat Stadium, Iran beat Jordan 4-2 on Wednesday.

Iran had also defeated Jordan 3-1 on Monday.

“Iran’s women’s football team has grown widely in the recent years. championship levels. Women’s football in Iran is now being supported even more than it was a couple of years ago and it will continue growing,” Iran coach Katayoun Khosrowyar said.

“I will promise you this team will make history in the future. Because they have learned more and experienced more,” she added.

Iran have been drawn in Group F along with Laos, Myanmar and Palestine.

Iran win Tabriz Futsal Tournament

TASNIM — Iran were crowned Tabriz 2018 Futsal Tournament on Wednesday.

The Iranian team defeated Ukraine 2-1 and finished in the first place.

Japan were held to a 2-2 draw against Belarus.

Team Melli, who had defeated Belarus and was held against Japan, won the four-a-side international tournament with seven points.

Ukraine came second with six points.

Japan and Belarus finished in third and fourth places respectively.

The international tournament was held in the northwest Iranian city of Tabriz from September 23 to 26.

Ukrainian powerlifter suspended for anti-doping violation

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has suspended Ukrainian powerlifter Anton Kriukov – a bronze medal winner at the 2017 World Championships – for two years for committing an anti-doping violation.

The two-time Paralympian returned an adverse analytical finding for Methylhexanamine in a urine sample provided on 2 December 2017 after competing in the 2017 World Para Powerlifting Championships in Mexico City.

This substance is included on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) 2017 Prohibited List under the category S6: Stimulants. It is prohibited in-competition.

As a result of his violation, Kriukov – who competes in the men’s up to 107kg class – will be ineligible for competition for two years from 22 January 2018, the date of the provisional suspension, until 21 January 2020.

All Kriukov’s results obtained from 2 December 2018, the date of the test and onwards will be disqualified including forfeiture of any medals, points, records and prizes. This includes the bronze medal he won at the 2018 World Para Powerlifting Championships. Due to his disqualification, Azerbaijan’s Elshan Huseynov - who originally finished fourth - will receive the bronze medal.

World Para Powerlifting continues to deliver the information and awareness programme “Raise The Bar” to educate athletes and their support personnel about anti-doping matters.

The IPC would like to remind all athletes about the risks associated with using supplements, and that the principle of strict liability applies to anti-doping matters. Therefore, each athlete is strictly liable for the substances found in his or her sample, and that an anti-doping rule violation occurs whenever a prohibited substance (or its metabolites or markers) is found in his or her bodily specimen, whether or not the athlete intentionally or unintentionally used a prohibited substance or was negligent or otherwise at fault.

As a signatory of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC), the IPC remains committed to a doping-free sporting environment at all levels. The IPC, together with the International Federations and the National Paralympic Committees, established the IPC Anti-Doping Code to prevent doping in sport for Paralympic athletes, in the spirit of fair play. The IPC Anti-Doping Code is in conformity with the general principles of the WADC.

Aubameyang fined for speeding

Arsenal striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has been fined for speeding in North London.

Gabon international Aubameyang was fined £1,250 at Willesden Magistrates’ Court but escaped a driving ban, officials confirmed to ESPN FC.

The Sun reported that Aubameyang had been clocked driving at 99 miles per hour in his Lamborghini.

It quoted his lawyer Robert Morris as telling the court: “He is very sorry he is in this position. He accepts he has no excuse.

“He uses his car to attend training and matches. It is the top of the bracket, but is not by any stretch of the imagination the worst case of speeding.”

Aubameyang joined Arsenal from Borussia Dortmund in January, becoming their record signing in a £56 million deal.

He has scored 12 goals in 19 Premier League appearances for the Gunners.

(Source: ESPN)

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Konya Mystic Music Festival hosts Iran’s Shams Ensemble

CULTURE **TEHRAN** – Shams Ensemble, the Iranian group that is most famous for its Sufi performances, gave a concert at the Konya Mystic Music Festival in the Turkish city on Tuesday, the organizers announced.



The ensemble led by veteran tambur virtuoso Keykhosro Purnazeri performed in company with vocalist Homayun Shajarian. Hossein Rezainia, Azad Mirzapur, Aiin Meshkatie, Kaveh Gerayeli, Kimia Jamshid, Donya Kamali and Sepehr Ramin were other members of the group.

Other ensembles are coming from Azerbaijan, Tunis, Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina.

The festival will be running until September 30 at the Mevlana Cultural Center in Konya, which is home to the mausoleum of the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

“Desire to Fly” director Yadollah Samadi dies at 66

1 → Shortly after, he made his debut with “The Man Who Knew Too Much” about a man who misused the power of a fortune teller to accumulate considerable wealth for himself.

His next movie, “The Bus”, about a clash between two groups in a western Iranian village, received great acclaim.

Also among his credits were the comedy drama “Apartment No. 13” starring Alireza Khamseh and “Two People and a Half”.

However, his fame rests on “Desire to Fly”, a TV series that he directed in 2010 about Abbas Babai, a fighter pilot who carried out numerous operations in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. He was killed in an operation on August 6, 1987.

Will Smith feels ‘absolute terror’ in Grand Canyon bungee jump

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Actor Will Smith took a bungee jump into the Grand Canyon on Tuesday to mark his 50th birthday and raise money for a global education campaign.



The “Men in Black” star leapt from a helicopter and bounced head first between the steep sides of a gorge at the Grand Canyon in Arizona in a jump streamed live on YouTube.

“This is gorgeous, beautiful,” Smith said as he swung upside down on the end of the bungee cord.

After landing back on solid ground the actor called the experience exhilarating.

“Nothing will ever be scarier than that. It goes from complete absolute terror to the most magnificent bliss you’ve ever felt,” he added.

Smith was raising funds for the charity Education Cannot Wait, which provides education to children around the world during conflicts, crises and natural disasters.

Intricate church vestments go on show in London exhibition

LONDON (Reuters) — Intricately embroidered and gold embossed textiles have gone on display in London in an exhibition looking at vestments worn in the Catholic Church between the 16th and 19th centuries.

“Apparel’d in Celestial Light”, at the Indar Pasricha Fine Arts gallery brings together vestments acquired in France, Germany and Italy.

The collection features silk, brocaded and opulent chasubles, chalice veils and copes among the items on display which are also for sale with prices ranging from 5,000 to 1 million pounds (\$6,584-\$1.32 million)

“The Church was told...that they must wear these wonderful vestments because they were representing God,” gallery owner Indar Pasricha told Reuters. “The local people, the illiterate people, were amazed.”

The exhibition runs until Nov. 3.

Iran’s “Fox” named best at Varna filmfest

A R T **TEHRAN** – “The Fox” **d e s k** by Iranian director Sadeq Javadi Nikkeh has been crowned best short film at the Varna World Festival of Animated Film, which was held in the Bulgarian capital last week.

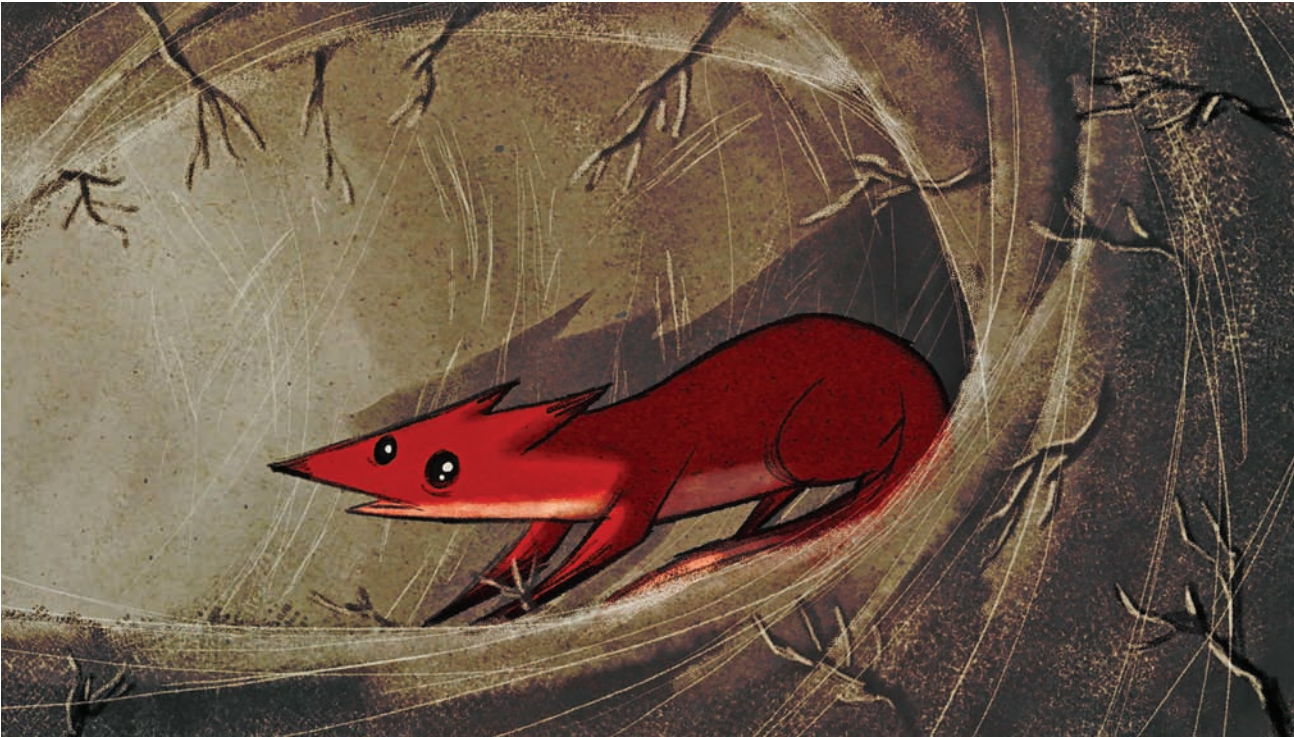
A jury composed of Mariusz Wilczynski, Vessela Dantcheva and Sergey Merinova called the animated movie “a powerful metaphor for deprivation of freedom, betrayal and loss of identity,” the organizers announced.

Produced at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center, “The Fox” tells the story of a young fox on the verge of experiencing the first love. Meanwhile, it gets trapped by a hunter. Thus begins the fox’s effort to survive and love, and seek revenge.

“This Magnificent Cake!”, a co-production from Belgium, France and the Netherlands by Marc James and Emma Roels-De Swaef, won the grand prix at the festival.

“Two Trams” by Russian director Svetlana Andrianova was selected as best children’s film while the award for best student film was presented to “Sigh of Sighs” by Kim Bo-seong from South Korea.

The award for best TV series went to “Bath”, the 11th episode of “George & Paul” by Joost van den Bosch and Erik Verkerk from Belgium and the Netherlands.



“The Fox” by Sadeq Javadi Nikkeh.

Director presents copy of “Are You Volleyball?” to Intl. Olympic Committee



A scene from “Are You Volleyball?” by Mohammad Bakhshi.

A R T **TEHRAN** – Mohammad Bakhshi, the director “Are You Volleyball?”, has sent an autographed poster and a copy of the acclaimed short movie on DVD to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Switzerland.

Bakhshi will be in Lausanne in November to present the poster and DVD to IOC President Thomas Bach during a special ceremony, a public relations team announced on Wednesday.

The IOC is scheduled to organize a

meeting in spring 2019 to honor Bakhshi and members of his cast and crew for their collaboration on the project

“Are You Volleyball?” tells the story of a group of Arabic-speaking asylum seekers who arrive at the border of an English-speaking country and can go no further. There are scuffles with the border guards every day until volleyball becomes the catalyst that improves relations.

Bakshi plans to make three sequels to the short film.

Culture minister attends performance of war drama in Tehran



Culture Minister Abbas Salehi (C) applauds as “Avantage” cast members acknowledge the audience after a performance at Hafez Hall on Sept. 25, 2018. (Honaronline/Ahmad Aqasiani)

A R T **TEHRAN** – Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi was in the audience to see “Avantage”, a play on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, at Tehran’s Hafez Hall on Tuesday evening.

Co-directed by Kamran Shahlai and Mohammad Larti, the play is about a football player in Andimeshk who is informed that he has been omitted from Iran’s national football team as the city is under a heavy bombardment by Iraqi warplanes.

“I watched the play ‘Avantage’. An honest narration of an incredible innocence. In the city of Andimeshk, 52 Iraqi warplanes bombarded the city for one hour and 45 minutes, and planted the nightmare of war in the heart of the city with lost corpses and the lasting worries. ‘Avantage’ masterfully depicts the life debris,” Salehi wrote on his Twitter account after watching the play.

Elham Nami, Amin Vahidipur, Reza Bahrami, Abuzar Saedi, Shadi Sayyadi and Arezu Karimi are the main members of the cast.

Marilyn Monroe’s 1956 roadster could fetch \$500,000 at auction

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — A two-seater convertible car owned by Marilyn Monroe is going up for auction in November and could fetch up to \$500,000, organizers said on Tuesday.

The 1956 raven black Ford Thunderbird, owned by the movie star for six years until shortly before her death in 1962, is being auctioned for the first time.

Monroe, one of the most collectible celebrities, was pictured driving in the car with her husband, playwright Arthur Miller, shortly after their June 1956 wedding.

Darren Julien, president of Julien’s Auctions, said the car was “not only part of automotive history but comes with an aura of glamor, romance and tragedy of a true Hollywood legend.”



Marilyn Monroe’s 1956 Ford Thunderbird convertible is seen in this Julien’s Auctions image released from Los Angeles, California, U.S., September 25, 2018. (Courtesy Julien’s Auctions/Handout via Reuters)

Monroe gifted the Thunderbird to the son of her acting coach, Lee Strasberg, in 1962. The current owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, tracked the vehicle down through registration and other documents that were sold in 2016 as part of Strasberg’s estate.

The car has undergone restoration but retains many original parts.

“Finding this car, a classic two-seater model, after 56 plus years of its unknown whereabouts, was a singular event. No other car has been located and documented as owned by the incomparable Marilyn Monroe,” the current owner said in a statement.

The car will be sold at Julien’s Auctions in Los Angeles on Nov. 17.

Bill Cosby, in cuffs, imprisoned for up to 10 years

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Reuters) — Bill Cosby was marched out of court in shackles on Tuesday after a judge branded him a “predator” and sentenced him to between three and 10 years in prison for sexual assault, capping the downfall of the once-beloved comedian known as “America’s Dad.”

Cosby, 81, was found guilty in April of three counts of aggravated indecent assault for the drugging and assault of his one-time friend Andrea Constand, a former Temple University administrator, at his Philadelphia home in 2004.

He is the first celebrity to be convicted of sexual abuse since the start of the #MeToo movement, the national reckoning with misconduct that has brought down dozens of powerful men in entertainment, politics and other fields.

Cosby must spend at least three years in a Pennsylvania prison before he becomes eligible for supervised release, though he could end up behind bars for up to a decade.

Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas Judge Steven O’Neill ordered Cosby to be jailed immediately, denying Cosby’s request for bail while lawyers appeal the conviction.

He was escorted out a back door of the courthouse with his hands and feet shackled and driven away in a black sport utility vehicle.

Minutes earlier, Constand left court with her arms folded,



Actor and comedian Bill Cosby is seen in this booking photo released by Montgomery County Correctional Facility, Pennsylvania, September 25, 2018. (Courtesy Montgomery County Correctional Facility/Handout via Reuters)

a smile spreading across her face as other women who have accused Cosby came to hug her. Several of those women spoke to reporters in the rain outside the courtroom.

O’Neill also fined Cosby \$25,000 and ordered him to pay the costs of the prosecution. There was no visible reaction

from the disgraced entertainer as he learned his fate.

“Equal justice under the law does not allow different treatment because of who he is or who he was,” O’Neill said.

Cosby cemented his family-friendly reputation playing the affable Dr. Cliff Huxtable in the 1980s television comedy “The Cosby Show.”

“He hid behind Dr. Cliff Huxtable,” Kevin Steele, the county district attorney who led the prosecution, told reporters afterwards. “Before he was taken away in handcuffs, a lot of people believed this was who he was. We know otherwise.”

Under that designation, Cosby will have to undergo monthly counseling and register as a sex offender with police for the rest of his life. Neighbors and schools will be notified of his address, certain movements and crimes, as will Constand.

Cosby has denied any wrongdoing. Asked if he wanted to address the court with a statement before sentencing, Cosby declined through his lawyers. His lawyers had asked that Cosby be placed under house arrest, citing his age and frailty.

More than 50 women have accused Cosby of sexual abuse going back decades, with most complaints too old to prosecute. The Constand case was the only allegation that led to criminal charges.