

EU's Mogherini eyes Iran SPV for trade 'before November' **2**

Iran to host 11th OSJD conference next week **4**

Iran runners-up at Asian Beach Volleyball Championships **15**

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U.S. isolated at UN

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Leader asks cultural organizations to increase productions on Sacred Defense

ART **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has asked relevant organizations to initiate a massive increase in cultural productions on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is called the "Sacred Defense" in Iran. Speaking in a meeting with a group

of literati, filmmakers and managers of cultural organizations on Wednesday, he said, "The relevant organizations must persistently pursue a hundredfold increase in literary and art productions about the Sacred Defense." "If this is done properly, all plans from the arrogant to defeat the revolution will be in vain," he noted. **-16**

IRGC warns UAE, Saudis to 'stop malice'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on Friday warned the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia against venturing to create insecurity in Iran, advising them to "stop malice and conspiracy" against Iran. "To the regimes of the UAE and Saudi Arabia, which are the main directors of wicked anti-security acts in our country, we say 'you will gain no success in creating tension and conflict with the Islamic re-

public of Iran. You are too small to count as a rival for a great country like Iran," Brigadier General Hossein Salami, the IRGC's deputy commander, said on Friday. "If you cross our red lines, we will surely cross yours," Salami asserted. Tehran holds Saudi Arabia and the UAE mainly responsible for the September 22 terror attacks on a military parade in Ahvaz, capital of the southwestern province of Khuzestan, which resulted in the death of 24 people including civilians and servicemen. **-2**

'The world will laugh at Netanyahu's anti-Iran show'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The world will laugh at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claims about a secret atomic warehouse in Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has said. "The occupying regime [of Israel] should know that in the modern age, the whole world, as he [Netanyahu] himself saw, will just laugh out loud at such untrue,

injudicious and hollow remarks and false shows," Qassemi said, Foreign Ministry website reported on Friday. Addressing the UN, the hawkish Israeli prime minister showed an aerial photograph of the Iranian capital marked with a red arrow and pointed to what he claimed was a previously secret warehouse holding nuclear-related material, Reuters reported. **-2**

IRGC dismantles terror group on border with Pakistan

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps announced on Friday that it had dismantled a terrorist group in the Saravan border region, an area bordering Pakistan.

In a statement released by the Quds unit of the IRGC, it is said that security forces killed four terrorist and wounded two of them. It said the rest of the terrorists fled to Pakistan.

The statement noted that the terrorists failed to cause any casualties among security forces. It added weapons and ammunition were seized from terrorists.

"As it has been announced for several times, the Quds Base of the IRGC's Ground Forces and



other security and intelligence forces are vigilant and counter any move by terrorist groups and forces affiliated to the foreign intelligence organizations who seek to endanger Iran's security,"

the statement read.

Located in the volatile region, Iran once in a while foils terrorist attacks. Terrorists mainly try to enter Iran from neighboring Iraq and Pakistan.

On September 22, a terrorist attack occurred in the southwestern city of Ahvaz, capital of Khuzestan province, which left 24 people killed and 69 others injured. A four-year-old child was among the killed ones.

The Intelligence Ministry released a report on Monday announcing that 22 people have been arrested in connection with the attack.

The ministry said "weapons, exclusive material and communication equipment were seized" from the people involved in the attack.

Suicide rate rises among young U.S. veterans: report

Suicide rates have jumped substantially among young United States military veterans, despite efforts by the Pentagon to curb the problem, according to new data from the U.S. government.

Military veterans aged 18 to 34 have higher rates of suicide than any other age group, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) said in its National Suicide Data Report released on Wednesday.

In total, 6,079 veterans killed themselves in 2016, down from 6,281 in 2015, the report said.

The suicide rate for young veterans increased to 45 deaths per 100,000 population in 2016, up from 40.4 in 2015, even as the overall veteran suicide rate decreased slightly.

Many veterans in that age group fought in the U.S. wars against Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This isn't just alarming. It's a national emergency that requires immediate action. We've spent

the last decade trying to improve the transitioning process for our veterans, but we're clearly failing, and people are dying," said Joe Chenelly, the executive director of the national veterans group Amvets.

More than 6,000 veterans have killed themselves each year since 2008, according to the VA data.

Veteran suicide rates increased 26 percent between 2005 and 2016, as suicide rates in the overall U.S. population also increased.

The suicide rate was 1.5 times greater for veterans than for civilians who never served in the military, even after adjusting for age and gender. The gap was even greater for female veterans: after adjusting for age, their suicide rate was 1.8 times greater than the rate for non-veteran women in 2016.

"The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to veteran suicide prevention," the

EDITORIAL
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Macron and Trump: From controversy to bargain

French President Emmanuel Macron has recently had lots of ups and downs! On the one hand, he had secret dealings with Trump's government over current issues in the region (especially over Syria and Iran), and on the other hand, he is trying to enter international equations as an independent leader.

At this point, Macron tried to challenge Trump's speech at the United Nations General Assembly, and expressed regret that the U.S. president introduced "nationalism" as a basis for his actions towards the international community. It remains unclear, however, whether other European players would be willing to accept him as their leader in today's complicated conflicts.

The CNN has recently reported that "French President Emmanuel Macron delivered a fiery rebuke of U.S. policies under President Donald Trump at the UN General Assembly Tuesday, signaling that he is ready to take up the mantle of global leadership usually assumed by a U.S. leader."

It continues; "At times directly referring to the U.S., Macron rapped the Trump administration for its policies on Iran, climate change, the UN, migration and Mideast peace, among others."

The report adds on that the 40-year-old French leader also took direct aim at the central theme of Trump's speech earlier in the day, in which the U.S. President focused on sovereignty and emphasized his administration's intent to distance itself from international agreements and groups.

"I shall never stop upholding the principal of sovereignty," Macron told the General Assembly, which draws more than 120 world leaders each year. "Even in the face of certain nationalism which we're seeing today, brandishing sovereignty as a way of attacking others."

But unlike Trump's emphasis on the importance of countries' independence, Macron offered a different vision, one that earned him sustained applause when he was done.

"Only collective action allows for the upholding of the sovereignty and equality of the people in whose name we take action," Macron said. "This is the reason we must take action against climate, demographic and digital challenges. No one alone can tackle these." **-7**

ARTICLE
Seyed Hossein Mousavian
 Princeton University
 Researcher

Iran will wait for Trump to lose power

Before his speech at the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted: "Despite requests, I have no plans to meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. Maybe someday in the future. I am sure he is an absolutely lovely man!"

The tweet came after weeks of speculations that a meeting between Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani might take place on the sidelines of the UNGA sessions.

Indeed, such a meeting did not happen, not because the U.S. president tweeted his refusal, but because the Iranian side is simply not interested. Last year, the Iranian government had to turn down requests from the White House for such a meeting eight times and this year President Rouhani again emphasized that his government is not interested in holding direct talks with the present U.S. administration.

There are several reasons why Iran really doesn't want to talk to Trump.

First, it sees no reason to abandon the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which took many years of hard negotiations to conclude. Former U.S. President Barack Obama also saw the JCPOA as the "most robust and intrusive inspections and transparency regime, ever negotiated for any nuclear programme in history," based on "unprecedented verification."

The provisions of the deal addressed the main concern of the international community: that Iran's nuclear programme remains compliant with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and limits its work to civilian projects. It was ratified by all governments involved and endorsed by the United Nation's Security Council in Resolution 2231.

Over the past three years, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has reported that Iran remains in full compliance with the provisions of the JCPOA deal. Given that Iran has stuck to its end of the deal and all sides have recognized it as a comprehensive and rigorous agreement, it does not see a reason to negotiate a different one. **-13**



Women's National Classic Wrestling League held

TEHRAN — The second season of the Iran's Women's National Classic Wrestling League was held on Friday in Tehran.

Moshaver-e Amlak Noor claimed the title, followed by Shahrdari Mashhad and Refahi Bisotun Kermanshah.

The competition was held at the Shohaday-e Haftom-e Tir Indoor Stadium and brought eight teams together.

The Iran's Women's National Classic Wrestling League will be held in four seasons.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Cleric warns U.S., Israel against 'doing anything wrong'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Tehran Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammadali Movahedi Kermani says U.S. regional bases would not remain secure if America and Israel do anything wrong.

The remark comes amid threats against Iran by U.S. national security advisor John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The arrogant powers are in a deep sleep and will wake up when slapped hard, Movahedi Kermani said, addressing worshippers in Tehran on Friday.

The cleric also thanked President Hassan Rouhani for his "clever, dignified and decisive speech" at the UN General Assembly, saying such stances should emerge in all areas.



Minimum 7 European central banks ready to work with Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that at least seven European central banks have agreed to create a special financial mechanism to have relations with Iran.

Hailing Europeans' efforts to provide Iran with a financial mechanism to save the Iran nuclear deal, Zarif said the proposed "Special Purpose Vehicle" will come into effect in the near future, IRIB news reported.

He stated that the financial mechanism aimed at easing trade with the Islamic Republic will come into force in the near future "but what they want is an institution that can work beyond Iran, which may take longer."



Zarif attends Qatar-International Crisis Group forum

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday attended a joint Qatar-International Crisis Group forum on the challenges facing the Middle East.

The forum was held on the sidelines of the UN summit in New York. Zarif was welcomed by Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and the country's Permanent Representative at the UN Alya bint Ahmed Al Thani, as well as the International Crisis Group President Robert Malley. IRNA reported.

Foreign ministers of Iraq, Oman, Qatar and Norway also attended the meeting and discussed the latest international developments.

The Iran nuclear deal, the visit of Iran's President Hassan Rouhani to New York, and regional developments were also discussed during the meeting.



'Someone must be playing a prank on Netanyahu'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi on Friday mocked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks at the UN General Assembly, saying some people must have been playing a prank on him.

"I think some people are playing a prank on Netanyahu, and this time, they have directed him to Turqz-abad," Araqchi stated, responding to the Israeli ruler's claim that Israel had identified a "secret atomic warehouse" in Tehran.

Earlier, Netanyahu had said, "In May, we exposed the site of Iran's secret atomic archive, right here, in the Shor-abad District of Tehran. Today I'm revealing the site of a second facility, Iran's secret atomic warehouse."



Iraqi FM urges Arab states to dialogue with Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Iraq's foreign minister, said on Friday the world has no option but to start negotiation with Iran to resolve regional disputes.

"We must be clear in identifying the problems and presenting solutions to them; to achieve stability in the region," Jaafari told a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in New York, according to the Baghdad Post.

He called for resorting to peaceful options in settling the region's problems, instead of war specter.

Iraq's chief diplomat also said maintaining the unity of the Arab nations and solving the common Arab problems, especially the Palestinian issue, should be on top of Arabs' priorities.



Nikki Haley lashes out at Mogherini over Iran deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — During her appearance on "Fox & Friends," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley strongly criticized the approach of the European Union, namely that of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, towards the preservation of the Iran nuclear deal, Sputnik reported.

"The European Union has this so wrong, and it's all because of their ego and their pride. You've got Miss Mogherini... she's trying to hold the deal together because she did it, but she's not looking out for the best interest of the European countries who, number one, don't want to do business with Iran, and you can have that proof by the fact that the companies are dropping deals with Iran," Haley said.

Rouhani meets world leaders at UN



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L)

POLITICS TEHRAN — During his visit to New York, President Hassan Rouhani met with a number of top world leaders and discussed a range of issues including bilateral relations and the nuclear deal Iran and six world powers struck in 2015.

Meeting with the Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir Bin Mohamad on Wednesday, Rouhani referred to the friendly and brotherly relations between Iran and Malaysia and stressed deepening relations to serve the interests of the two nations, the president's website reported.

He hailed the steps taken to cement relations between the two countries in different fields such as energy, joint ventures, and scientific cooperation.

Also on Wednesday, Rouhani met with Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte of Italy, and

described Iran-Italy relations long-standing and strong. "Iran welcomes deepening Tehran-Rome relations in all fields of mutual interest," Rouhani noted.

The president also held a meeting with Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres, during which he underscored the need for the global community to work hard in protecting the nuclear pact as an important international agreement and complying with Resolution 2231 of UN Security Council.

In a separate meeting with President Alain Berset of Switzerland on Wednesday, Rouhani said countries around the world supporting and protecting the nuclear deal, are not just supporting Iran, but supporting an agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council and peace and security in the Middle East.

Meeting with President Nicolas Ma-



Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir Bin Mohamad (R)

duro of Venezuela, he stressed, "Today, the greatest responsibility of Iranian and Venezuelan officials is to work harder to develop relations and cooperation to serve the interests of the people and strengthen economies of the two countries."

Japan, Iran agree to uphold Iran nuke deal despite U.S. pullout

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Rouhani agreed Wednesday to uphold the 2015 nuclear deal even after President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the agreement in May, The Mainichi reported.

Abe and Rouhani discussed the reinstatement of sanctions by the United States against Iran and a U.S. demand that countries halt oil imports from Tehran by Nov. 4, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

The official declined to reveal details of

the talks, especially when Japan has been asking for a waiver during negotiations with the United States.

Tehran accounts for about 5 percent of Tokyo's total crude oil imports.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, Rouhani sought Japan's cooperation in ensuring the implementation of the nuclear agreement, and Abe responded that Japan continues to support it, according to the official.

Abe was quoted as telling Rouhani that Iran's constructive role is indispensable for ensuring stability in the Middle East.

Abe and Rouhani, meanwhile, agreed to cooperate in denuclearizing North Korea, according to the Japanese official.

Abe said Japan will continue to extend assistance to Iran in the fields of the environment, medicine and disaster risk reduction.

Israel will regret if it does not stop attacks on Syria: Iran

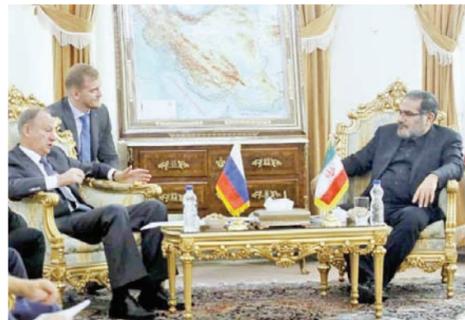
POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said on Thursday that Israel is seeking to perpetuate crisis in Syria by "directly" supporting terrorists and launching attacks on the Syrian and army and resistance forces fighting terrorism, warning that the Tel Aviv regime will "regret if it goes on with its attacks."

Shamkhani said during a meeting with Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev in Tehran.

Russia recently announced that it will arm the Syrian government with S-300 air defense missiles.

Iran-Russia cooperation to fight terror
Shamkhani also said Tehran attaches great importance to expansion of cooperation with Russian in area of security and fight against terrorism.

Elsewhere, he thanked Russia for its position in supporting the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, after the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement on May 8.



"Using sanctions as weapon by the U.S. against Iran, China and Russia is because of this country's [the U.S.] frustration in countering progress and rising power of these countries."

The top security chief added, "The U.S. can be easily countered through boosting economic cooperation."

For his part, Patrushev urged the international community to counter the U.S. unilateralism.

There will be a crisis in Afghanistan like what happened in Iraq and Syria in the near future if the U.S. unilateral and dangerous actions are not stopped, Patrushev said.

He added, "Today, our region is in danger of transfer of defeated terrorists from Iraq and Syria by the U.S. and its allies."

The Russian official suggested "regional cooperation to prevent such worrisome thing is unavoidable."

He also attached great importance to the role of Iran, Russia and Turkey in settling crisis in Syria.

Patrushev was in Iran to participate in the Regional Security Dialogue conference.

Top security officials from Russia, Afghanistan, India, and China attended the conference.

U.S. isolated at UN, Rouhani says

international deal backed by the UN Security Council resolution 2231.

"The meeting turned into a meeting to support the JCPOA and Trump was left alone which was a second isolation for the U.S.," Rouhani remarked.

He added, "Today, the U.S. is in a historic political isolation."

In a tweet immediately after Trump chaired the Security Council, Foreign Minister Zarif said the U.S. found itself "further isolated" as other countries criticized the U.S. action for violating the UN Security Council resolution confirming the nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Once again, the U.S. abused the UNSC only to find itself further isolated in its violation of JCPOA and SC resolution 2231. When will it learn its lesson?" Zarif tweeted.

It is a 'legal obligation' for all countries to ignore U.S. sanctions

In a press conference in New York on Wednesday, Rouhani said it is a "legal ob-

ligation" for all countries to bypass U.S. sanctions against Iran.

"I think it would be a great source of pride for any country to trample American sanctions, because these American sanctions are illegal and violate a Security Council resolution. So, as a legal obligation, all the countries of the world should try to bring this unlawful U.S. move to failure," Rouhani stated.

"So far we have stayed within the JCPOA and [honored] all the commitments we have made. And we will stay in the JCPOA so far as staying in the JCPOA meets our national interests. And whenever we notice our interests are not being met, procedures have been devised within the JCPOA itself and we will start with those very procedures."

Regarding a recent joint statement by the remaining parties to the Iran nuclear deal, he said, "So this statement was a very good step forward regarding Iran's cooperation with the five countries to save the JCPOA. But, yes, we expect much more than this. The expectations have been clearly discussed in

our meetings with the other side, that is, the five countries. They are completely aware of our viewpoints. And they have promised us to push this process forward step by step."

On prospect of de-escalation with the U.S., he said "If America goes back to the law we will not have any problem. Of course, there have been differences between Iran and America from the past, which have to be resolved gradually in their own turn."

On John Bolton's threats against any move against U.S. forces, the Iranian president said, "America is now there in Syria, against international rules. The Syrian government rejects and condemns this. So the presence of America in Syria is unlawful, and it does not concern us if it suffers damages or not. We do not intend to engage in war with American forces anywhere in the region. We do not want to attack U.S. forces. We do not want to escalate tension with America. None of these. But we ask America to act according to the law and to respect countries' national sovereignty."

'The world will laugh at Netanyahu's anti-Iran show'

1 -> Zarif says 'craft show' cannot hide Israel's secret nuclear arms program

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said "no arts and craft show" can hide this reality that Israel has "secret" and "undeclared" nuclear weapons program. "No arts & craft show will ever obfuscate that Israel is only regime in our region with a *secret* and *undeclared* nuclear weapons program - including an *actual atomic

arsenal*. Time for Israel to fess up and open its illegal nuclear weapons program to international inspectors," Zarif tweeted.

Netanyahu has previously made similar allegations about Iran's nuclear activities. In a similar show at the UN General Assembly in 2012, he presented a cartoon bomb warning of how close Tehran was to producing a nuclear device.

'Israel has isolated U.S. at UN'

Zarif also said Israel has pushed the United States toward isolation, IRNA reported. "In recent days we've seen how much the policies that Netanyahu has imposed on America has isolated them in the General Assembly and Security Council," Zarif said, according to IRNA. "Now see when they can pull America to this level of isolation how isolated they are themselves."

IRGC warns UAE, Saudis to 'stop malice'

1 -> The attack took place on the day that Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980.

Salami was referring to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman who back in May 2017 said his country would bring insecurity into Iran.

Also this week, the Saudi foreign minister and the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Washington joined ranks in pushing for regime change in Iran.

Speaking at the United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI) conference in New York City on Wednesday, Adel al-Jubeir called for the overthrow of the Iranian government.

Yousef al-Otaiba, the UAE's ambassador to the U.S., also said external pressure was needed and would be key in changing Iran's course.

"You feel powerful [only] when standing beside America. You are not invincible, sitting in glass castles. You cannot withstand the

blade of vengeance of the Iranian nation. We have been showing self-restraint."

The top commander also referred to Washington's mounting pressure on Iran, saying, "And we warn America, too, to stop supporting terrorists. This would be harmful to them as well."

"You feel powerful [only] when standing beside America. You are not invincible, sitting in glass castles. You cannot withstand the blade of vengeance of the Iranian nation. We have been showing self-restraint."

In response to U.S. claims having isolated Iran, Salami said, "Iran is not isolable. Revolving political and security equations of the region and some parts of the world depends on us."

"We have reached a point of saturation with America's threats. America has already done every damn thing it could, and gained no result other than failure."

He went on to say, "You planned to isolate us, but isolated yourselves. And today there is no other option before you. Do not waste your time by saying worthless and insignificant things."

Boris Johnson demands British PM May scrap her Brexit proposals

Brexit (withdrawal of Britain from the European Union) campaigner Boris Johnson called on Prime Minister Theresa May to rip up her proposal for Britain's exit from the European Union (EU), ratcheting up the pressure on May as she prepares to face her divided party at its annual conference next week.

Just six months before Britain is due to leave the European Union on March 29, 2019, little is clear: May has yet to clinch a Brexit divorce deal with the EU and rebels in her party have threatened to vote down any deal she makes.

Adding to the uncertainty, a poll of polls published on Friday showed voters would now vote 52 to 48 percent in favor of remaining in the EU were there to be another Brexit referendum. May has repeatedly ruled out another referendum.

Johnson, the bookmakers' favorite to succeed May, said her Brexit plans would leave Britain half in and half out of the club it joined in 1973 and in effective "enforced vassalage".

"This is the moment to change the course of the negotiations and do justice to the ambitions and potential of Brexit," Johnson, who resigned in July as foreign secretary over May's Brexit proposals, wrote in Friday's Daily Telegraph.

Under the headline, "My plan for a better Brexit", Johnson, called for a "SuperCanada-type free trade agreement". He said the EU's "backstop" proposals for Northern Ireland, under which the British-ruled province would remain within the EU customs union even if the rest of Britain left, amounted to the economic annexation of part of the United Kingdom. The plan outlined by Johnson gained support from other rebels such as Conservative lawmaker Jacob Rees-Mogg who are pushing for a deeper break with the EU.

"This is an opportunity for the UK to become more dynamic and more successful, and we should not be shy of saying that — and



we should recognize that it is exactly this potential our EU partners seek to constrain," Johnson wrote.

May, who voted to stay in the EU, is trying to clinch a divorce deal with the EU while grappling with an open rebellion in her Conservative Party, which convenes in the English city of Birmingham on Sunday for its annual party conference.

May has repeatedly said her Brexit proposals are the only viable ones. The 30-year schism inside her party over Europe helped sink the premierships of her Conservative predecessors Margaret Thatcher, John Major and David Cameron.

■ Brexit obsession

More than two years since the 2016 Brexit referendum, Britain, its politicians and its business leaders remain deeply divided over Brexit, considered to be one of the most important decisions in post-World War Two British history. In the June 23, 2016 referendum, 17.4 million voters, or 51.9 percent, backed leaving the EU, while 16.1 million voters, or 48.1 percent, backed staying. Some recent surveys have shown a swing toward support for staying in the EU.

If there were to be another referendum, researchers said a narrow victory for those hoping to reverse Brexit would be heavily

contingent on getting those who did not vote last time to turn out.

"True, Remain enjoys a lead in the polls. But that lead remains a narrow one, and there is little sign of it growing," said John Curtice, Britain's most prominent polling expert.

Gina Miller, who took the British government to court over triggering Brexit, said it was "very likely" Britain will need to hold a second referendum on EU membership or a general election to break the deadlock over Brexit. But she said that if Britain did leave then the campaign to remain in the bloc should be abandoned.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia: Israel downing of military plane 'cowardly'

Russia says Israel's downing of a Russian military aircraft over the Syrian airspace earlier this month was a "cowardly" and "unprofessional" act in a yet fresh sign that shows tensions between Moscow and Tel Aviv over the incident remains strong.

"The tragedy occurred on September 17 following erroneous, unprofessional, and cowardly actions" by the Israeli military, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Italy's Panorama magazine on Thursday.

The remarks followed comments from Damascus warning that Israel should think twice before seeking to strike targets within the Syrian territory again.

Israel, "which is accustomed to launching many aggressions under different pretexts, will have to make accurate calculations if it thinks of attacking Syria again," Syria's Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Mekdad said on Tuesday, the Associated Press reported.

A day earlier, Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu had said that Moscow would provide Syria with a modern version of its S-300 missile defense system within two weeks. Shoigu also said Russia would be blocking satellite navigation, airborne radar, and communication systems of combat aviation in the eastern Mediterranean, which could prevent Israel from carrying out strikes off the Syrian coast.

Meanwhile, Vladimir Yevseyev, a Russian military expert, was quoted by Russia's Interfax news agency as saying that the state-of-the-art S-300 system would effectively make it impossible for the Israeli air force to operate over Syria.

If deployed near Damascus, the long-range defense systems would be capable of monitoring the entire airspace over Israel, he said.

The Russian Il-20 was mistakenly shot down by Syrian air defenses when it was preparing to land in Russia's Hmeimim airbase in Latakia Province in northwestern Syria. The Syrian S-200 missile defense system was responding to a wave of



strikes by four Israeli warplanes.

Moscow blamed Tel Aviv for the incident, which killed all the 15 people on board the plane, saying the Israeli military planes had deliberately "created a dangerous situation" that led to the crash. The Russian military also said the ill-fated plane was used as a cover by the Israeli air force, and that Moscow reserved the right to give a due response.

The Israeli regime has been providing various types of assistance to the foreign-backed terrorists, who have been fighting the Syrian government and people since 2011. Over the past years, it has carried out numerous strikes against Syrian army positions in what is widely viewed as an attempt to help foreign-backed terrorists survive in the face of successful Syrian army operations. The regime has also been providing generous medical treatment to the terrorists

fleeing the operations into Syria's Golan Heights, which is under the Israeli occupation.

In July, it helped evacuate hundreds of the White Helmets, a Western-backed so-called aid group, which is accused by Damascus and Moscow of staging chemical strikes and cooperating with Takfiri terrorists in Syria.

Mekdad said that the upgraded Russian weapon system would be used for defensive purposes, adding that "Syria will defend itself, as it always did."

The official was referring to several instances when the Syrian military had confronted Israeli aggression in the past. Back in February, the Syrian military shot down an intruding Israeli F-16 warplane that had attacked positions inside the Syrian territory, sending it down in flames and smoke.

(Source: agencies)

UN rights council renews Yemen war crimes probe

Saudi regime allies in Yemen cut cooperation with UN mission

The United Nations Human Rights Council voted by 21 votes to eight on Friday in favor of prolonging an inquiry into human rights in Yemen, overriding objections from Yemen and the House of Saud regime.

Supporters of the resolution, including Canada and the European Union (EU), had argued that an expert group mandated by the Council last year still had work to do, but opponents said it would exacerbate the crisis and increase regional instability.

In a report last month, the experts said airstrikes by the Saudi regime-led coalition in the war in Yemen had caused heavy civilian casualties and some may amount to war crimes. But the House of Saud regime and its allies in Yemen have strongly criticized a UN human rights mission as its mandate comes up for renewal over what they called a biased report on "war crimes" in the country.

Riyadh said on Friday any extension should be a matter for former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi whose side already announced on Thursday that it was ending cooperation with the UN investigation.

The Saudi regime again took strong issue with an August 28 report, by the panel, which said that the Saudi regime airstrikes had caused "most of the documented civil-



ian casualties" and voiced "serious concerns about the targeting process."

The Saudi regime Information Ministry criticized the "inaccuracy of the information in the report, which was derived from non-governmental organizations and the testimonies of some persons whose circumstances are

unknown." A statement carried by Yemen's Saba news agency on Friday said Hadi's side "refuses to extend the mission's mandate because its findings, outlined in the report, did not meet the standards of professionalism and impartiality or the basic principles of the United Nations."

(Source: agencies)

Canada strips Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi of honorary citizenship

The parliament of Canada has unanimously voted to strip Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi of her honorary citizenship over her handling of the Rohingya crisis.

Thursday's vote came a week after Canadian MPs (Member of Parliament) approved a motion recognizing the crimes committed against the Rohingya as genocide.

Aung San Suu Kyi received the honor from Ottawa in 2007, when she was a democracy advocate under long house arrest.

But the Myanmar leader has been under fire for her failure to condemn the military campaign that has driven more than 700,000 Rohingya into neighboring Bangladesh in what the United Nations human rights chief called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Canadian parliament's decision to revoke the symbolic honor was due to a "persistent refusal to denounce the Rohingya genocide", said Adam Austen, spokesman for Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland.

"We will continue to support the Rohingya by providing humanitarian assistance, imposing sanctions against Myanmar's generals and demanding that those responsible be held accountable before a competent international body," said Austen.

MP Gabriel Ste Marie, who proposed the motion, told reporters he thought the vote was "a great symbol".

MP Salma Zahid called Aung San Suu Kyi's "unwillingness to take any moral leadership ... inexcusable, and deeply disappointing".

Rights organizations have accused Myanmar military of committing extrajudicial killings, gang rape and arson during their bloody campaign launched in August last year after army posts came under attack from Rohingya fighters.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya now live in cramped refugee camps in Bangladesh, fearful of returning home despite a repatriation deal.

Andrew Leslie, Minister Freeland's parliamentary secretary, said "the machinery of government will chew over the details of what specifically is required to implement" the motion.

Only five other individuals have ever been given honorary citizenship in Canada, including the Dalai Lama, Malala Yousafzai and Nelson Mandela.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Israel working on excuses to attack Lebanon: FM

Lebanon's acting Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil says Israel is trying to create excuses to attack the country having forgotten its defeat versus the Lebanese forces.

"Here is Israel, again coming up with excuses to justify assault and preparing to violate the sovereignty of states using the platform of [the UN]," Bassil tweeted on Thursday. "It forgot that Lebanon drove [Israel] out, defeated its aggression and is oblivious that its arrogance and new friendships won't benefit it again," he added.

The comments came in response to a controversial speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Netanyahu, known for his dramatic addresses on the stage, used the speech to allege that the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah was using "hidden missile sites" near Rafik Hariri International Airport in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

He held up a picture, as he would during his previous speeches to the Assembly, claiming that it showed the location of the sites.

"In Lebanon, Iran is directing Hezbollah to build secret sites to convert inaccurate projectiles into precision-guided missiles, missiles that can target deep inside Israel within an accuracy of 10 meters," the Israeli premier purported, echoing numerous similar claims by Tel Aviv.

Lebanon and Israel are technically at war due to the latter's occupation of the country's Shebaa Farms since 1967.

Hezbollah was founded in the 1980s following the Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon.

Since its establishment, the movement has helped the army defend Lebanon both in the face of foreign aggression, including wholesale Israeli wars in 2000 and 2006, and against terrorism. The Israeli regime suffered a humiliating defeat during the second war.

(Source: Press TV)

Passengers safe after Air Niugini flight crashes into sea in Micronesia

A flotilla of small boats rescued all 47 passengers and crew from an Air Niugini flight that crashed into the sea short of the runway at an airport in the tiny South Pacific nation of Micronesia on Friday, the airport's manager said.

"It was supposed to land but instead of landing it was 150 yards short and she went down," Jimmy Emilio, general manager of Chuuk Airport at Weno in Micronesia, told Reuters by telephone.

"We don't really know what happened ... people were rescued by boats - 36 passengers and 11 crew were all rescued, only the plane is sinking right now," he said.

The Boeing 737-800 aircraft hit the lagoon surrounding the small island about 9.30 a.m. local time (2330 GMT Thursday), Emilio said.

The passengers and crew were taken to hospital, where eight remained, four in a serious condition with bone fractures and other injuries, according to a hospital spokesman.

Video published online by Radio New Zealand and pictures posted on Twitter showed the half-submerged aircraft surrounded by small speedboats.

Air Niugini said in a statement that "the weather was very poor with heavy rain and reduced visibility at the time of the incident".

A spokesman for Papua New Guinea's Accident Investigation Commission said investigators would fly to the scene as soon as possible to piece together what happened.

In 2013, all 101 passengers aboard a Lion Air flight that overshoot the runway at Denpasar in Indonesia and landed in shallow water were similarly rescued by boats without casualties.

(Source: Reuters)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	180635.6
IFX	2012.77

Sources: tse.ir, ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	49,330 rials
GBP	55,210 rials
AED	11,430 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$72.26/b
Brent	\$81.92/b
OPEC Basket	\$81.58/b
Gold	\$1,188.15/oz
Silver	\$14.62/oz
Platinum	\$820.10/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Exports from SMEs stands at \$7b in H1

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The value of exports from Iran's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) stood at \$7 billion during the first half of current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), according to Sadeq Najafi, the managing director of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO).

He said the figure is considerable given the total non-oil exports from the country during the first half, which was \$19 billion, IRNA reported.

Some 4,600 small and medium-sized units are under construction in industrial estates of the country, Najafi announced in August.



Nominal electricity generation capacity exceeds 79GW

ENERGY TEHRAN — Nominal electricity generation capacity in Iran has increased by 849 megawatts (MW) to 79,325 MW during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2018), Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

Of the mentioned figure for the added capacity, 144 MW was supplied from distributed generation power plants, 70 MW from hydroelectric power plants, 307 MW was generated by gas-fueled power plants and finally 320 MW was derived from new combined cycle power plants.

The country increased its electricity generation capacity to 78,484 MW in the past Iranian calendar year (1396) from the 76,302 MW of its preceding year.

Gas-fueled power plants account for near 75 percent of the country's power generation capacity.

Combined cycled power plants, hydroelectric power plants, distributed generation power plants, and renewable energy power plants are also other sources of power generation in Iran.



Iran's 8-month crude steel output rises 21.6% on year: WSA

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Production of crude steel in Iran stood at 16.437 million tons during the first eight months of 2018, indicating 21.6 percent rise from 13.513 million tons in the same period of time in 2017, according to World Steel Association (WSA).

It is while the world's steel production during January-August, 2018 rose just 4.7 percent.

The WSA also put Iran's crude steel output at 1.98 million tons in August of this year, with a nine-percent rise from 1.816 million tons in August of 2017.

Producing 617.398 million tons of crude steel, China stood at the first place in the eight-month period of this year, while India and Japan came next through producing 70.831 million tons and 70.195 million tons of the product, respectively.

Italy budget worries hit European markets

Italy's government bonds, European stock markets and the euro were hit hard on Friday after Rome agreed to set a higher than expected budget deficit target that could put it on a collision course with Brussels.

The Italian government on Thursday targeted a budget deficit of 2.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) for the next three years, marking a victory for party chiefs over economy minister Giovanni Tria, an unaffiliated technocrat.

The deficit, though within the prescribed EU limit of 3 percent of GDP, is a concern for investors who fear the anti-establishment government is not committed to tackling its huge debt load. Italy's debt-to-GDP ratio stands at about 130 percent, the highest in the euro zone behind Greece.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran to host 11th OSJD conference next week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) will host 11th OSJD International Freight Conference on October 2-3 in Tehran, IRIB reported.

The two-day event, which seeks solutions for developing and finalizing international rail freight transportation in Eurasia, will be attended by member states of Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD) including China, Russia, and East European countries.

The conference will also try to exchange ideas and experience on improving the efficiency of freight transport by rail, enhancing the transport services for customers, identifying perspectives for cooperation between railways and freight forwarders.

During the Conference, discussions are planned on the following topics:

- Cargo potential in the countries of Asia and Pacific region for the organization of railway traffic between Europe and Asia,
- Perspectives for the development of container transportation – experience in creating a railway product,



- Legal framework for railway freight transport and its improvement; tariff policy and marketing,

- Information technologies in the field of railway freight transport,
- Ways to increase the attractiveness

and competitiveness of railway transport, Modern logistic solutions; interaction with other modes of transport (combined, intermodal, multimodal transportations),

The current situation on the freight market shared by different modes of transport, and

Technological aspects for the organization of international freight traffic.

The Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) hopes that this conference will bring about tangible and fruitful results in increasing rail transportation between Europe and Asia and also increasing cooperation between RAI and other international organizations, railways and freight forwarders.

Creating and improving the coordination of international rail transport, OSJD focuses on the transports between Europe and Asia. It has helped develop cooperation between railway companies and with other international organizations. The 29 members of this organization created an international transport law.

Pakistan to cooperate with Russia on underwater gas pipeline from Iran

ENERGY TEHRAN — Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding with Russia for cooperation in building an underwater gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan and India, Xinhua reported citing a statement by the Russian Energy Ministry.

"The memorandum provides for the identification of authorized organizations through which the project will be supported, including during the development of a feasibility study, identification of the resource base, configuration and route of the gas pipeline," the statement said.

Russian Deputy Energy Minister Anatoly Yanovsky and Pakistan's Ministry of Energy Additional Secretary Sher Afgan Khan signed the document in Moscow.

In November 2017, Russia and Iran signed a memorandum that envisaged Russian support for gas supplies from Iran to India. Now Russia will have to inform Iran and



India about the signing, after which it expects to sign a similar document with India, Yanovsky said in the statement.

In March, a Russian-Iranian working group on the implementation of the project had its first meeting.

According to Yanovsky, Russia and Pakistan were holding consultations on another project of building the 1,100 kilometer North-South Gas Pipeline (NSGP) between Pakistan's Karachi and Lahore to transport 12.3 billion cubic meters of gas per year.

Inflation rate at 13.5%: CBI

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on September 22, which marks the end of the Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar, stood at 13.5 percent, IRIB reported.

The figure shows a two-percent increase from 11.5 percent inflation rate announced by the CBI for the twelve-month period ended on August 22, which marks the end of the previous calendar month.

As CBI reported, in the urban areas, the average goods and services Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 141.9 in Shahrivar, indicating 6.1 percent increase compared to the previous month and 31.4 percent rise compared to the same month of the past year.

In Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017), Iran could manage



to experience a single-digit inflation rate after 26 years.

The inflations rate stood at 9.8 percent in that year according to the Statistical Center of Iran and at nine percent according to the CBI.

But since the calendar month of Khordad (ended on June 22), when the inflation rate stood at 10.2 percent, as announced by the CBI, the country's experiencing a double-digit inflation rate again.

Cement, clinker exports from Iran up 17.3% in 5 months yr/yr

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran exported 5.819 million tons of cement and clinker in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20- August 22), Chairman of Cement Industry Employers Association Seyed Mohammad Atabak told IRNA on Friday.

He put the volume of cement and clinker exported from the country at 4.959 million tons in the first five months of the previous year.

Atabak put the cement exports at 2.935 million tons in the five-month period of this year, rising nine percent from the amount of past year's same time span and put the



clinker exports at 2.883 million tons, increasing 26.9 percent from the figure of the first five months of previous year.

He said among the 20 countries that bought cement and clinker from Iran in the five-month period, Afghanistan and Iraq stood at the first and second places, importing 30 percent and 26 percent of the exported products.

Meanwhile, according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the amount of cement chain products exported from Iran during the first five months of this year stood at 7.539 million tons, with eight percent growth from the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

'Possible' for Chinese yuan to fall another 10% if trade war escalates, economist says

It's possible for the Chinese yuan to depreciate by another 10 percent against the dollar if the United States continues to raise tariffs on China imports, independent economist Andy Xie told CNBC on Friday.

A "significant depreciation" of 10 percent is possible if the U.S. follows through with its threat to raise import duties on Chinese goods to 25 percent at the end of this year, said Xie, who was formerly with Morgan Stanley.

"The currency fluctuates reflecting the economic challenges, so when you have tariffs rising on you, the currency adjustment is inevitable," Xie said.

The trade conflict between the world's two largest economies escalated this week when the United States imposed 10 percent tariffs on another \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports on Sept. 24, with the duties set to rise to 25 percent on January 1, 2019.

President Donald Trump has frequently cited China's \$375 billion trade surplus with the U.S. as evidence of unfair trade practices, and is trying to use tariffs to narrow the trade gap.

China has referred to the levies as a "gun" to its head, and vowed to dig in its heels even while indicating a willingness to negotiate.

■ 'Make money'

A further 10 percent depreciation in the yuan would fly in the face of recent Chinese efforts to stabilize its currency.

In late August, China's central bank signaled that authorities have no intention of using the yuan as a weapon in the trade war.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said earlier this month that it was "simply not true" that the recent slide of the yuan against the U.S. dollar was an intentional policy decision from Beijing. He said that continued weakness in the yuan will do more harm than good for his country.



"China will never go down the path of stimulating exports by devaluing its currency, because that will not generate much profits and benefits to China," he said at a World Economic Forum gathering in Tianjin.

The "devaluation pressures" on the yuan exist, said Michael Taylor, managing director and chief credit officer for Asia Pacific at Moody's Investors Service. However, he stressed that Chinese authorities are well able to withstand them.

"We're not really expecting to see significant currency devaluation," he told CNBC's "Squawk Box" on Friday.

"Our view is that there is a fairly strong commitment to maintaining a stable renminbi," Taylor added, using another name for the Chinese currency.

He cited capital controls and other policy tools that China can use to stem currency weakness.

Xie, however, said that China needs to prevent exporters from moving out of the country to avoid the tariffs.

"You have to let exporters make money," he added. "If they lose money they shut down. So the exchange rate has to reflect the new reality."

Xie added that China should also take other measures to encourage exporters to remain in the country, such as cutting taxes.

(Source: CNBC)

UK current-account deficit widens ahead of Brexit

The UK current-account deficit widened more than economists forecast in the second quarter, raising fresh questions about the sustainability of the shortfall as Britain prepares for Brexit.

The gap between money leaving the UK and money coming in stood at 20.3 billion pounds (\$26.5 billion) between April and June, the equivalent of 3.9 percent of gross domestic product. A shortfall of 19.4 billion pounds was forecast by economists in a Bloomberg survey.

The Office for National Statistics left its estimate of GDP growth in the period at 0.4 percent, but business investment fell for a second straight quarter and inflation-pressured households once again spent more than they earned. Growth in the first quarter was revised back down to 0.1 percent, the weakest since the end of 2012.

The pound weakened following the figures and was at \$1.3059 as of 9:43 a.m. London time, down 0.2 percent on the day.

Brexit has put the current account back in the spotlight, with economists questioning the willingness of foreign investors to keep financing the deficit by buying British assets after Britain exits the European Union.

Britain has the highest deficit among Group of Seven countries and officials see it narrowing only slightly in coming years, despite the fall in sterling since the 2016 Brexit referendum. Fears were reignited by figures last month showing overseas investors reduced their holdings of UK government bonds by a record 17.2 billion pounds in July.

Britain saw a deterioration in both its trade balance, driven by higher imports, and in the gap between what investors earn on their foreign investments and



what foreigners earn on their investments in Britain. The overall deficit was up sharply from 15.7 billion pounds, or 3 percent of GDP, in the first quarter.

■ Trade drag

The widening of trade deficit meant that net trade acted as a drag on growth between April and June. Growth in the second quarter owed much to consumer spending, which grew a respectable 0.4 percent.

Business investment fell 0.7 percent instead of the 0.5 percent rise previously estimated. It followed a 0.5 percent decline in the previous three months, possibly reflecting Brexit uncertainty. On the output side, upward revisions to manufacturing and the dominant services industry were offset by a downward revision to construction.

"Although it has picked up a little from a slow start to the year, underlying economic growth remains persistently below the long-term average," said Rob Kent-Smith, head of national accounts at the ONS.

Disposable incomes after adjusting for inflation rose by 0.4 percent and households saved 3.9 percent of their incomes, up from 3.6 percent in the first quarter. Households were net borrowers for a seventh quarter.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil prices edge up amid uncertainty over fallout from Iran sanctions

Oil prices inched up on Friday, with investors trying to gauge the potential impact on supply from looming U.S. sanctions on Iran's crude exports.

The most-active Brent crude futures contract, for December, had risen 18 cents, or 0.22 percent, to \$81.56 per barrel by 0126 GMT. That was close to a four-year high of \$82.55 struck on Tuesday.

With the expiration of the Brent November futures contract later on Friday, the front-month contract will become the December contract.

U.S. futures were up 21 cents, or 0.29 percent, at \$72.33 per barrel, on track for a weekly gain.

"The market has been focusing on trading headlines on the Iran sanctions for a whole week. But views on how much OPEC and Russia can make up for the losses vary," said Chen Kai, head of commodity research at Shenda Futures.

The sanctions kick in on Nov. 4, with Washington asking buyers of Iranian oil to cut imports to zero to force Tehran to nego-



tiate a new nuclear agreement and to curb its influence in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia is expected to quietly add extra oil to the market over the next couple

of months to offset the drop in Iranian production, but is worried it might need to limit output next year to balance global supply and demand as the United States pumps more crude.

Two sources familiar with OPEC policy said Saudi Arabia and other producers discussed a possible production increase of about 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) among the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and non-OPEC allies.

However, ANZ said in a note on Friday that major suppliers were unlikely to offset losses due to the sanctions estimated at 1.5 million bpd.

At its 2018-peak in May, Iran exported 2.71 million bpd, nearly 3 percent of daily global crude consumption. The nation is OPEC's third-largest producer.

Meanwhile, looming supply from the United States and stable output from Libya were dragging on oil prices, said Stephen Innes, head of trading for Asia-Pacific at futures brokerage OANDA in Singapore.

(Source: Reuters)

Iraq targets ambitious output jump at Qayara oil field

Production from northern Iraq's Qayara oil field, which until last year was shut-in during the war with Islamic State, is gradually ramping up with the government targeting an ambitious 60,000 b/d by end-2018.

Iraq's oil ministry said in a statement late Thursday that production was currently 30,000 b/d and it was putting a plan in place to double it by year-end. The ministry also said crude from this field was being exported for the first time by Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization.

Previously the crude from this field would go solely to the nearby Qayara refinery operated by North Refineries Company, due to both proximity and a lack of viable alternatives.

Since the field came back online, a road has been built with a special loading platform for trucks, sources close to the matter told S&P Global Platts. The oil loaded on trucks is then marketed by SOMO, either inside Kurdistan or exported to Turkey or Iran, sources said.

Qayara, located south of the Ninewa province in northern Iraq, is one of the country's oldest oil fields. It has 1.52 billion barrels in proven reserves of very heavy oil of around 15-18 API degrees gravity.

The field was awarded in the second licensing round in late 2009 to Angola's Sonangol to achieve a plateau of 120,000 b/d in seven years, earning a remuneration



fee of \$5.00/b.

But the company declared a force majeure in 2010 because of the deteriorating security situation in the area.

The field was eventually occupied by IS insurgents in June 2014 for more than two years.

More than a dozen wells were set on fire by IS as it tried to reduce visibility to airplane bombers, and then as a scorched earth tactic upon retreat.

Since then Iraq's North Oil Company extinguished the burning wells, rehabilitated seven and abandoned the rest.

Sonangol resumed work late last year after making contractual arrangements with partners and local contractors, drilling more wells. A 10,000 b/d degassing unit was added, which raised the treatment capacity to 30,000 b/d.

(Source: Platts)

Renewables share in UK's power generation hits record high

The share of renewables in the UK's electricity generation hit a record high in second quarter of 2018, while the share of coal in the energy mix slumped to an all-time low, UK government figures showed on Thursday.

Between April and June this year, the share of renewables hit a record 31.7 percent, driven by a new record for solar generation, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said in its UK Energy Statistics for Q2 2018.

In recent years, the share of renewables in electricity generation has been rising, while fossil fuel-powered generation has been dropping, with coal plunging to a new record low in Q2 this year—just 1.6 percent, according to the department.

According to the MyGridGB tracker, so far this year as of September 27, Britain has spent 1,599 hours without coal-powered electricity, up from 233 hours without coal in 2016, and 624 hours without coal in 2017.

Government figures showed today that of the electricity generated in the UK in Q2 2018, gas accounted for 42.0 percent and nuclear generation accounted for 21.7 percent of total electricity generation.

Renewable electricity generation increased by 3 percent year on year to stand at 24.3 TWh in Q2. Renewable electricity capacity in the UK was 42.2 GW at end-



June 2018, up by 10 percent, or by 3.9 GW, compared to end-June last year, with more than half of the annual capacity increase coming from offshore wind.

This summer, the National Infrastructure Commission—an independent advisory group set up in 2015 to give recommendations to the UK government—said that the UK should back renewables and support only one more nuclear plant after Hinkley Point C before 2025, because renewable energy is the safest bet for a low-cost energy system for Britain in the long term.

"Britain has a 'golden opportunity' to switch to greener ways of providing energy to homes and businesses without increasing bills—but only if Ministers act now to make the most of it," the Commission said in its National Infrastructure Assessment.

(Source: oilprice.com)

OPEC will balance oil markets, but spare capacity limited: Nigerian official

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will act to balance the market after oil prices hit their highest in four years, but its options may be limited by available spare capacity, a Nigerian oil industry official said on Wednesday.

"It's obvious that if you have high prices it'll affect demand, so you have to do some market balance," Malam Mele Kyari, head of crude oil marketing at Nigeria's state oil firm NNPC and also the country's OPEC representative, told Reuters.

"OPEC will do everything to stabilize, to balance the market but I'm sure you're also aware that there's a limit to what they can do. You must have the spare capacity," Kyari said.

Oil prices surged this week on uncertainty over the global

supply outlook following U.S. sanctions on Iran's oil exports and also as Saudi Arabia and Russia ruled out any immediate boost to output.

Kyari said Nigeria planned to increase its crude oil, condensate output by 100,000 barrels per day by the end of the year, up from about 2 million bpd currently.

The country's current crude oil production is about 1.7 million bpd, he said.

In 2019, the African producer is aiming for an average output of 2.3 million bpd by boosting output from existing fields as well as starting new production from an ultra-deep-water field, Kyari said.

Located some 130 kilometers off Nigeria's coast at water depths of more than 1,500 meters, the Egina oilfield is expected to start production in December and its output could peak at 200,000 bpd.

Kyari was in Singapore to launch the new Egina crude grade with field operator French oil major Total at APPEC.

The crude has a API gravity of 27.3 degrees and has a sulfur content of 0.165 percent, a provisional crude assay from Total showed.

The grade has a higher yield of gasoil and vacuum distillates compared with other products, according to the assay.

(Source: Reuters)

Qatar to boost LNG capacity to seize market opportunities

Qatar, the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), has just announced plans to further increase its LNG production capacity.

The new export capacity, with projects to be completed in 2024, is expected to bring in billions of dollars more to the state coffers of the tiny gas-rich country, which is isolated by its Arab neighbors in a bitter feud in the Persian Gulf that has gone on for more than a year now.

Qatar's plans to expand even more the previously announced expansion come at a time in which competing LNG projects from the U.S. to Australia to Russia will add to the global LNG supply over the next few years.

The announcement for the expansion also coincides with a massive surge in LNG imports in China, which is pushing for a coal-to-natural gas switch across the country in efforts to fight air pollution. China and South Asia are expected to be the key drivers of LNG demand growth in the coming decade.

Qatar is geographically well-positioned, together with Australia, to further boost its LNG exports to the fast-growing Asian market. Qatar also has the advantage of low breakeven costs for its projects, analysts reckon.

Qatar Petroleum, the state energy giant, said on Wednesday that it would be increasing the capacity of its expansion project, adding a fourth train that would raise Qatar's LNG production capacity by 43 percent—from 77 million tons annually now to 110 million tons a year.

Last year, Qatar announced plans to boost LNG capacity to 100 million tons annually with three new LNG trains, after it lifted a self-imposed moratorium on the development of its part of the world's largest gas field that it shares with Iran.



"Based on the good results obtained through recent additional appraisal and testing, we have decided to add a fourth LNG mega train and include it in the ongoing front end engineering of the project," Qatar Petroleum's President and CEO Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi said in a statement.

"This new capacity increase will further strengthen our leading position as the world's largest LNG producer and exporter, and will further boost Qatar Petroleum's strategic growth plan. This production addition will have a great impact on Qatar's economic growth and will help stimulate our local economy," Al-Kaabi said.

According to a Reuters source familiar with the project's timeframe and execution, Qatar expects to reach the planned new capacity by 2023 or 2024.

Thanks to the new LNG production capacity,

Qatar's budget surplus will reach US\$44 billion (160 billion Qatari riyals) in 2024, which would more than cover the expected external debt, the source told Reuters.

The higher revenues will mean more funds for the country's sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority, to invest outside Qatar, according to the source.

Qatar Petroleum didn't disclose how it would finance the expansion of the expansion or how much it would cost, but its head, Al-Kaabi, said it has no plans to raise funds through an IPO in the plans.

According to Bloomberg NEF analyst Maggie Kuang, Qatar may find bringing all this new capacity online in five-six years "challenging," and smaller U.S. LNG trains are likely to be built quicker than the giant trains in Qatar.

(Source: oilprice.com)

U.S. gasoline prices hit seasonal 4-year high as oil rises, but demand falters

U.S. gasoline prices are at their seasonal four-year high amid the recent increase in international oil prices, and consumers at the pump are starting to feel the squeeze—despite rising crude oil production and refining in the U.S.

Meanwhile, now that the summer vacation and driving season is over, the demand for fuel is gradually easing, pointing to a likely stabilization in gasoline prices.

Analysts say the dynamics in gasoline prices have bucked the trend over the past few weeks, holding steady despite the lower demand, as higher U.S. production is insufficient to offset the gains in global fuel prices.

According to the American Automobile Association, national gas price average stands at \$2.867 a gallon (\$0.75/liter), its seasonal highest since autumn of 2014. This comes as the WTI oil price has increased to \$72.30/bbl, while Brent, another global benchmark, rose to \$81.99 in the face of the looming oil embargo against Iran.

The data also suggests U.S. oil prices are repeating the pattern in international, rather than domestic, oil prices, as Brent stands at its 4-year high as well, while U.S. oil has already been at its current levels this past July.

This partially explains President Donald Trump's concern with the rise in global oil prices; despite the recent gains, U.S. oil production could stave off possible further gains in U.S. fuel costs. Trump said OPEC is manipulating the oil price to increase the fiscal revenues of its member countries at the expense of the rest of the world.

"We want them to stop raising prices," Trump said at the UN General Assembly earlier this week. "We want them to start lowering prices."

However, higher oil prices are also stemming from a rise in international demand and the ongoing acceleration in global economic growth. According to OPEC data, Saudi Arabia's output is now only 320,000 barrels per day (bpd) below its 2016 high, while U.S. oil production has increased from roughly 9 mln bpd to the current 11 mln bpd.

Overall, the global oil supply is currently higher than it was back in 2016 when oil prices stood at \$30/bbl. In late 2015, world oil production stood at 79.8 mln bpd, while this past summer, the world hit its new supply record of 92.6 mln bpd. However, oil prices keep rising due to the rise in global consumption and changes in the use of energy and international trading routes.

Additionally, global fuel prices tend to be speculative and reactive with respect to certain political developments—such as the impending Iran oil embargo, even though Iran's supplies to the international markets have been subdued since the previous embargo was lifted back in 2015.

However, the rise in U.S. gasoline prices comes as quite disheartening for many U.S. consumers.

According to the data from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), traffic volumes eased by 0.3 percent year-on-year amid the rising oil and gasoline prices this summer. Typically, traffic volumes increase 2-3 percent annually; this figure was last recorded back in 2015 and 2016.

Officials say the demand for fuel is easing. Government data suggests U.S. gasoline consumption only rose 18,000 bpd in the first half of this year despite quicker economic growth, job creation, and lower unemployment.

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) expects gas consumption to decline by 10,000 bpd for this entire year. This comes as good news for the producers of biofuel—particularly in the wake of an expected decrease in U.S. crop prices, as well as renewables; hybrid vehicle manufacturers are expecting higher sales as well.

However, the rise in oil and fuel prices might turn out to be unsustainable over the coming 12 months, as U.S. oil output is expected to surpass 12 mln bpd next year. This, coupled with the ongoing expansion in U.S. refining and the construction of new pipelines, could contain further increases in oil prices.

While some analysts—including Mercuria Energy Group Ltd. and Trafigura Group—expect oil to surpass the \$100/bbl mark next year, others say such expectations might be unsubstantiated.

"Another supply catalyst beyond Iran would likely be needed for prices to meaningfully break to the upside," a team of Goldman Sachs researchers wrote in a note. "As a result, we expect Brent prices to stabilize back in their \$70-80/bbl range into year-end."

The lingering uncertainty in the international and domestic U.S. energy markets might also drive U.S. crude stockpiles up—which would eventually weigh on U.S. oil prices heading into the new year, and offset the possible gains associated with the disruptions in global supply.

(Source: Sputnik)

Mexico plans up to 100,000 barrels per day light crude imports, says CEO

Mexican state-run oil company Pemex expects to begin importing up to 100,000 barrels per day of light crude oil, likely from the United States, from late October and at least until the end of November, its chief executive said on Wednesday.

"A hundred thousand barrels (per day) more or less is what we're going to import to process and incorporate into our refineries, mostly at Salina Cruz," Pemex CEO Carlos Trevino said in an interview with Reuters on the sidelines of the Mexican Petroleum Congress in Acapulco.

The imports, planned to run through at least the end of President Enrique Pena Nieto's tenure in office on Nov. 30, mark a stark shift for historically major crude exporter Mexico, where decades of oil self-sufficiency are a badge of pride.

Years of under investment and declining crude output have severely hampered Mexico's refineries and helped necessitate the move.

Salina Cruz, like Pemex's other five refineries, has recently been producing far below capacity due to accidents and operational problems, as well as Pemex's focus on maximizing the value of its oil even if that means refining less domestically.

"We're going to mix it with Mexican crude, with some of our mix to be able to process at the levels we want to get back to in refining. We should be around 800,000 barrels (per day) of refining in the country's entire system) by the end of the year," he added.

Mexico's refining network can process up to 1.6 million bpd of crude. It has been working this year at around 40 percent.

Trevino said he expects auctions of oil exploration and production blocks scheduled for February, which include the selection of key partners for Pemex, will take place as planned.

"I think there is total certainty" that Mexico's oil regulator, the National Hydrocarbons Commission (CNH), will carry out the auctions.

(Source: Reuters)

Europe's critical election



By Ana Palacio

former Spanish foreign minister

Ahead of the European Parliament election in May 2019, nationalist parties across Europe are unifying behind a message that is clear, forceful, and, for many, compelling. If Europe's defenders are to win, they will need to offer a vision that is similarly powerful – and not hide behind French President Emmanuel Macron.

Discussions about Europe-wide elections are invariably infused with expectations of dramatic change that rarely, if ever, are met. But the upcoming European Parliament election in May 2019 may break the mold, as it could determine the outcome of an ongoing struggle between two visions for Europe's future: progress toward greater openness and interconnectedness or a reversion to divisive and blinkered nationalism.

Previous European Parliament elections have been preceded by promises that the vote would mean something to the electorate. But, whatever structural and institutional changes have occurred, from increasing the body's powers to introducing new campaigning procedures, the results have remained lackluster.

With voters unconvinced that European Parliament elections have any concrete impact, domestic political calculations dominate, with citizens using their votes – when they bother to vote at all – to send signals to national parties and punish incumbents. In fact, even as the European Parliament has gained more authority, voter turnout in European elections has steadily decreased since 1979, reaching a low of 42.5% in 2014.

But this year, the election really does matter. An increasingly organized coalition of nationalist forces that are hostile to European integration – and, indeed, to European values – has been gaining traction and cohesion. These forces include Fidesz in Hungary, the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland, Germany's Alternative für Deutschland, the Swedish Democrats, the League in Italy, Marine Le Pen's National Rally (formerly the National Front) in France, and Geert Wilders' Dutch Freedom Party.

Opposition to the EU is not new; nor are nationalist parties. But these parties have deepened their cooperation with one another since the last European elections in 2014, particularly on the issue of migration. In August, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini held a "summit" where they called for a united front against French President Emmanuel Macron's pro-integration vision of Europe.

Beyond the clear irony of the far right's internationalism, this unification of nationalist parties into a Europe-wide force is highly dangerous – not least because these forces have coalesced around a clear, forceful, and, for many, compelling message. To face the challenges of the future, they declare, Europe must return to a less uncertain time, when sovereign countries' closed borders kept foreigners out.

The nostalgia on which these leaders successfully campaign cannot serve as a basis for policy, because the world they describe never existed. But those who recognize the far-reaching benefits of an open and forward-looking EU are struggling to make their case in a persuasive way. They, too, are focusing on the past, often citing a laundry list of accomplishments; but their version comes across as technical and bloodless. In order to convince a skeptical public that Europe's strength lies in cooperation, European leaders need to focus on the future. They cannot simply rely on past successes. We have peace and prosperity and no more data roaming charges, but what's next?

"More unity" is not an adequate answer, even if some treat it as one. In general, abstract and lofty visions are not good enough to compete with the simple and potent message espoused by nationalists.

This does not, however, mean that Europe's defenders should attempt to hijack the nationalists' vocabulary to serve a pro-European agenda, as European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker did when he called for "European sovereignty" – whatever that is – in his recent state of the union address. Pro-European leaders cannot forge a new way forward by making themselves look more like nationalists; on the contrary, they must show just how different they are.

This means combining ideals with tangible proposals for Europe's development. It means showing why the EU is the most viable and appealing vehicle to take Europe into an ever-more prosperous future. It means proving that the EU is better equipped than individual states to address contemporary challenges, particularly in a world in which a critical mass of power (military, economic, demographic) is increasingly necessary to have any room for maneuver. And it means convincing citizens that the EU, as a community of nations, offers the best chance to strengthen economic resilience, foster innovation, and preserve Europe's cultures.

Macron has become the poster child for this approach. Too often, however, his is a lone voice; his fellow defenders of Europe nod quietly in agreement, but are unwilling to take political risks of their own. In the months leading up to the May election, all who believe in a European approach to European problems must step up.

The campaign is just beginning, so there is still time to change the narrative and put Europe on a path toward greater influence and increased prosperity. But the window of opportunity is closing fast. Unless those who understand the value of the EU wake up soon and respond effectively to their increasingly unified nationalist adversaries, it will be too late.

Europe faces a stark choice: Will its nation-states move forward together, building strength upon strength, or will they take separate paths, each leading to mediocrity? Believe it or not, the outcome of the upcoming election really does matter. For Europe, the stakes could not be higher.

(Source: Project Syndicate)

In order to convince a skeptical public that Europe's strength lies in cooperation, European leaders need to focus on the future. They cannot simply rely on past successes.

Trump can only go that far with his unilateralism

Trump's unilateral vision of the world will hurt the U.S., but it might also undermine his presidency

By Joe Macaron

Long gone are the days when authoritarian leaders of the Global South, like Muammar al-Gaddafi, was stealing the show at the United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York. Today, it is U.S. President Donald Trump, the leader of the "free world".

Within the first lines of his General Assembly speech, he managed to get an audience of diplomats and world leaders laughing at his haughty claim that his administration has done much more than any other in U.S. history. This reflected the unprecedented low global standing the U.S. leadership "enjoys" these days.

But despite the scorn which Trump's speech was met with at the General Assembly hall, the vision of the world he outlined is indeed disconcerting. Trump talked about a future in which unilateralism, militarism and the pursuit of one's self-interest are put above international cooperation, integration and trade. What he is suggesting is basically the end of the global liberal order which the U.S. has been leading since the end of the World War II and which it solidified after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Trump administration has already come after various international organizations and multilateral agreements. It has withdrawn from the climate change accords, UNESCO, the Human Rights Council, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, undermined the International Criminal Court (ICC) and cut funding for UNRWA.

It has also strained relations with its traditional allies, Canada and the EU, and picked up a trade war with China. It has pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) deal with Iran and rendered the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks even more ob-



solete. On Syria and Yemen, it has remained reluctant to play a role in advancing any viable solution to the two conflicts.

If Trump continues down this path, there are implications for both the United States and the international system. Burning bridges with traditional allies increases the isolation of the U.S. and undermines its global leadership.

A year and a half into his presidency, Trump struggled to name friends in his UN speech. He could think of just four: India, Israel, Poland and Saudi Arabia.

More importantly, his unilateral decisions, including trade wars and excessive sanctions, endanger the primacy of the U.S. dollar in the global financial system. Nations around the world increasingly believe they should be less dependent or even less integrated in the American financial system, which ultimately

would weaken the U.S. dollar. We are already seeing initial steps in that direction, most notably following U.S. sanctions on Iran and Turkey as well as the trade war with China.

On September 25, the EU's foreign affairs chief, Frederica Mogherini, unveiled a plan to set up a new financial entity to help companies seeking to do business with Iran evade U.S. sanctions. A day later, speaking at business event in New York, she said: "The dollar is not the only currency on earth - we have the euro, others have their own currency."

The EU's new financial vehicle will only be useful to businesses operating outside the U.S. banking system, but it reflects a global trend of abandoning the dollar as trade exchange currency.

Furthermore, when a dominant superpower like the U.S. challenges the principle of multilateralism and the international legal

order, it will be harder to convince rogue states not to follow suit.

For instance, Trump chose to engage with North Korea in bilateral talks sidelining international institutions and regional actors. He also encouraged other nations to act in the same way by welcoming the Sochi agreement between Turkey and Russia on Syria, which was neither negotiated nor endorsed by the UN.

This approach to international diplomacy increases the risk of miscalculations and is reminiscent of the post-9/11 mentality of the Bush administration which believed that the unilateral use of force and coercion is a better approach than diplomacy for achieving U.S. objectives.

But apart from outlining a vision of unrestrained unilateralism in U.S. foreign and economic policies, Trump also inadvertently showed signs of his own anxiety about the potential fallout of such a strategy. In his speech to the UN Security Council, he went on to accuse China of interfering in the upcoming midterm elections, a claim that is yet to be corroborated by the U.S. intelligence community.

What these claims show, however, is that Trump might be fearing that the U.S. farmers in Iowa and beyond who lost the Chinese market because of the trade war he started might vote against him and his Republican party in November.

While former U.S. allies are already building mechanisms to circumvent the need to deal with Trump, neither they, nor international institutions like the UN are likely to confront him. In the end, it is going to be up to the American voter to restrain Trump's unilateral adventurism.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Palestinians try to move peace process forward without Trump

By Laura Rozen

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas told the United Nations Thursday that he and his team tried for a year to engage the Donald Trump administration on the peace process only to have their views rejected in decision after decision. They now are looking to the international community to preserve a two-state solution, Abbas said, bypassing the Trump administration.

"We have always fully and positively engaged with the various initiatives of the international community that have aimed at achieving a peaceful solution between us and the Israelis," Abbas told the UN General Assembly. "We continued on this path with the administration of President Trump from the start of his tenure, with the same positive engagement, and I have met with him numerous times."

Abbas said, "We awaited his peace initiative with utmost patience, but were shocked by decisions and actions he undertook that completely contradict the role and commitment of the United States toward the peace process."

Abbas cited Trump's decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, close the PLO office in Washington, cut off U.S. assistance to the Palestinians and U.S. assistance to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

"With all of these decisions, this administration has reneged on all previous U.S. commitments, and has undermined the two-state solution, and has revealed its false claims of concern about the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people," Abbas said, adding, "It is ironic that the American administration still talks about what they call the 'deal of the century.' But what is left for this administration



to give to the Palestinian people? Humanitarian solutions?"

President Trump, meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the sidelines of the UN Wednesday, said he was inclined to favor a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "I like two-state solution," Trump said. "That's what I think works best."

Trump reasoned that cutting off aid to the Palestinians would eventually pressure them to come back to the table. And he seemingly offered to reconsider those aid cuts.

"As you know, we were paying them \$550 million a year," Trump said. "Now, we're paying them nothing a year."

"But that will start up again," Trump said. "So, yeah, they're absolutely coming back to the table. And they want to come back to the table."

But Palestinian officials said they were not impressed with Trump's apparent endorsement of the two-state solution.

"Every time he [Trump] meets Netanyahu, he repeats the same statement," Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said at a press conference here Wednesday night. "It is nothing new." Palestinian officials said they feel positive after a meeting on the sidelines of the UN to discuss how to advance a two-state solution that preserves Palestinian rights – a meeting that pointedly did not include the United States. Though representatives of some 40 countries and international organizations attended the meeting, including eight foreign ministers, the United States was not invited and did not attend, Maliki said.

"We are not interested to enter any war with the Americans," Maliki said. "We ask the Americans to comprehend we have a just cause. We want to achieve our basic rights. We are producing a diplomatic, legal track in order to achieve that."

Trump, for his part, said his administration might reveal its peace proposal in the next two to four months, but said he wanted to get Israeli and Palestinian support for negotiations before unveiling it. "I want to have a plan ... that is solid, understood by both sides – really, semi-agreed to by both sides before we start a negotiation," Trump said.

"I would say over the next two to three to four months ... that would be the time that I'd like to at least release the plan," Trump said. "Again, it has to be good for both parties."

But neither Israeli nor Palestinian leaders seemed to be counting on Trump's peace plan emerging soon.

Abbas, in his UN address, called on countries to recognize the state of Palestine. "I thus call upon all the countries of the world that have not yet recognized the state of Palestine to accelerate this long-overdue recognition," he said.

(Source: Al Monitor)

Be outraged by America's role in Yemen's misery

The United States supplies bombs and other support for the war that's killed civilians and is creating famine

By Nicholas Kristof

The news about Brett Kavanaugh and Rod Rosenstein is addictive, but spare just a moment for crimes against humanity that the United States is supporting in far-off Yemen.

President Trump didn't mention it at the United Nations, but America is helping to kill, maim and starve Yemeni children. At least eight million Yemenis are at risk of starvation from an approaching famine caused not by crop failures but by our actions and those of our allies. The United Nations has called it the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and we own it.

An American bomb made by Lockheed Martin struck a Yemen school bus last month, killing 51 people. Earlier, American bombs killed 155 mourners at a funeral and 97 people at a market.

Starving Yemeni children are reduced to eating a sour paste made of leaves. Even those who survive will often be stunted for the rest of their lives, physically and mentally.

Many global security issues involve complex trade-offs, but this is different: Our behavior is just unconscionable.

"Yemen's current crisis is man-made," said David Miliband, the former British foreign secretary and current president of

the International Rescue Committee, who recently returned from Yemen. "This is not a case where humanitarian suffering is the price of winning a war. No one is winning, except the extremist groups who thrive on chaos."

The United States is not directly bombing civilians in Yemen, but it is providing arms, intelligence and aerial refueling to assist Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as they hammer Yemen with airstrikes, destroy its economy and starve its people. The Saudi aim is to crush Houthis.

"The Trump administration has made itself complicit in systematic war crimes," said Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch.

Let's be clear, too: This is a bipartisan moral catastrophe. The policy started under President Barack Obama, with safeguards, and then Trump doubled down and removed the safeguards.

"The war in Yemen has prompted today's worst humanitarian catastrophe worldwide," said Robert Malley, a former Obama aide who acknowledges missteps by the administration in Yemen – which Trump has aggravated. Now president of the International Crisis Group, a nonprofit working to prevent conflict, Malley added, "By our actions and inaction, we inevitably are complicit in it."

I know, I know. All eyes are focused on the reality television show that is the Trump White House. But we can't let Trump suck all the oxygen away from life-or-death issues. Trump drama cannot be allowed to nullify global tragedy.

The carnage in Yemen hasn't stirred more outrage because the Saudis use their blockade to keep out journalists. I've been trying for two years to go, but the Saudis bar aid groups from taking me on relief flights.

Both sides in this civil war have at times behaved brutally, and the only way out is diplomacy. But Saudi Arabia's crown prince seems to prefer famine and a failed state in Yemen to compromise, and the more we provide him weapons the longer we extend the suffering. We should be using our influence to rein the Saudis in, not cheer them on.

To their credit, some members of Congress are trying to stop these atrocities. A bipartisan effort this year, led by Senators Mike Lee, Chris Murphy and Bernie Sanders, tried to limit U.S. support for the Yemen war, and it did surprisingly well, winning 44 votes. New efforts are underway as well.

World leaders are gathered for the United Nations General Assembly, making pious statements about global goals for a better world, but the Assembly is infused with hy-



pocrisy. That's pathetic: Four of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council are complicit in crimes against humanity.

Many Americans erupt in fury every time Trump lies, or tweets some inexcusable comment. Please do, but also save outrage for something even more monstrous – the way we are contributing to starvation of children and exacerbating the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

(Source: The NYT)

'Genuine' friendship with china can help end Rohingya Muslims' sufferings: Bangladeshi prof.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Maimul Ahsan Khan, professor of law at the University of Dhaka and a former specialist for Amnesty International, said by forging a closer "genuine" friendship with China through pro-active diplomacy, Bangladesh could help end Myanmar's persecution of Rohingya Muslims minority.

"Myanmar will not cooperate with Bangladesh, which is still friendless in many regions of the world. China is suspicious about many Muslim countries, including Bangladesh. We need to cultivate genuine friendship with China. Trust building process is the most difficult task to be accomplished. China should be amiable in responding our good gestures of peaceful diplomacy," Ahsan Khan told Tasnim.

Maimul Ahsan Khan (born 1954) is a professor of law currently teaching jurisprudence and international institutional law at the University of Dhaka. He is specialized in jurisprudence, Islamic law, Islam and Muslim culture, political science, human rights, Middle Eastern, South Asian and Oriental studies. He was awarded IIE-SRF fellowship for his academic contribution by the Institute of International Education (IIE). In 2012, the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund featured him as one of the persecuted academics in the world. Khan taught at the University of Illinois-UIC from 1998-2002, the University of California-Davis and Berkeley from 2002-2006, and the Technical University of Liberec-Czech Republic. He has served as a Fulbright Fellow at the College of Law in University of Illinois-UC and as a country specialist on Afghanistan at Amnesty International (2001-2006).

Following is the full text of the interview:
 ■ The Rohingya crisis has been described by UN officials as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing. In your view, is this designation



correct? If so, what specifically qualifies the human rights abuses in Myanmar as genocide?

A: Of course, it is an example or even established fact that the systematic persecution of Rohingya Muslims is a textbook example of ethnic cleansing and genocide. This process of physical elimination of more than one million Rohingya Muslims has started about half a century ago. In 1978, the big crisis had been orchestrated by pushing more than two hundred thousand Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh. It was settled by repatriating about 80% of Rohingya Muslims refugees after a prolonged negotiation. In 1992 more than a million Rohingya Muslims came under direct attack of Myanmar military and half a million of them took shelter in Bangladesh. With the help of China, Bangladesh could manage to repatriate about 70% of them in Myanmar. A huge number of Rohingya Muslim refugees fled to other countries, especially in the Middle Eastern countries. Myanmar armed forces with the help of their governmental agencies had been taking preparation to vacate all Muslims from Myanmar by inflicting wide-

spread atrocities upon Muslim population of that country. In 2017 has witnessed the most violent attacks on Rohingya Muslims and about a million Muslims from Myanmar had to escape to Bangladesh, which is now hosting 1.2 million Rohingya Muslims as refugees in very congested areas because of lack of facilities and necessary supplies. What had happened with Rohingya Muslims is just a massacre of a huge number of people by burning their ancestral homeland where they lived for centuries. No foreign or Muslim help was available for a long time and as a result, uncounted number of Rohingya Muslims, including children, women, and old people were brutally killed. Incidents of gang rapes of Rohingya women had occurred for a long time without any media assessing them.

■ What concrete steps the international community can or should take in order to address the humanitarian crisis and the plight of the Rohingya? What is a realistic way out of the situation?

A: We need to redouble our efforts to help Rohingya Muslims, especially the children

who constitute half of the Rohingya Muslim refugees. This time Bangladesh would not be able to negotiate successfully the repatriation of Rohingya Muslim refugees as China still is unwilling to show its gracious faces this time around because of our diplomatic failure. We need to take Rohingya Muslim refugees as good human resources and preparing them as good human beings to be settled in and around the Muslim World. There is no other alternative now in our hands. We need to conduct more pro-active diplomacy together without which Myanmar would not bow down to any legitimate demands of Rohingya Muslim in there or here in Bangladesh.

■ Outside humanitarian assistance, are there legal steps that can be taken, such as by the International Criminal Court?

A: Muslim countries need to act collectively. If necessary we can sever diplomatic relations with Myanmar collectively. We need to seek help from the Chinese government, which is now getting ready to offer more avenues for cooperation and collaboration with Muslims nations, many of whom were destroyed or greatly harmed by the Western evil empires.

■ Myanmar has been making an effort to reshape its image as a global pariah prior to the Rohingya crisis. Would being branded a rogue state once again put pressure on the government and make it cooperate with the international community to address the conflict?

A: Myanmar will not cooperate with Bangladesh, which is still friendless in many regions of the world. China is suspicious about many Muslim countries, including Bangladesh. We need to cultivate genuine friendship with China. Trust building process is the most difficult task to be accomplished. China should be amiable in responding to our good gestures of peaceful diplomacy.

Saudi Arabia 'most dedicated sponsor of terrorism': German analyst



TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A German political analyst described Saudi Arabia as one of the "most dedicated and dangerous sponsors" of terrorist groups both in the Middle East and the West.

"Saudi Arabia is one of the most dedicated and dangerous sponsors and supporters of terrorist groups not just in the region but also in the West," Manuel Ochsenreiter, the director of German Center for Eurasian Studies, told Tasnim.

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 is your take on the attack?

A: This terrorist operation shows very well that Iran is a country which is threatened by the same terrorist forces threatening Syria and many European countries. The political pattern of the terrorists opening fire in Ahvaz is the same as those killing civilians with a truck in Germany or France. It is a shame that Europe stays so silent about the Ahvaz attack.

■ According to media reports, the al-Ahvaziya 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: Saudi Arabia is one of the most dedicated and dangerous sponsors and supporters of terrorist groups not just in the region but also in the West. At the same time, Western countries declare Saudi Arabia an "important ally" in the war on terror. This is a twisted and dangerous stance towards Riyadh by the West. The fact that these terrorist organizations can recruit their "fighters" in Europe is a shame for the European security agencies. And it is a shame that Iran is still considered by many European governments as a "terrorist sponsor" while Tehran is fighting terrorism in Syria.

■ Following the attack on Saturday, Abdolkhalq 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: Some decades ago such a statement would have been considered as a type of "declaration of war". For a sovereign nation such as Iran such statements are unacceptable. And again: It would be now about Europe to teach Abu Dhabi a lesson. If the government of UAE doesn't immediately distance itself from Mr. Abdulla, it should be put under sanctions. This is not just in the interest of the inner security of Iran — but also of Europe. It is not just about Iran, it is about diplomatic and political principles. If the UAE neglects these principles for Iran, it will sooner or later neglect them also for Europe.

World rejects Trump's unilateralism

TEHRAN (FNA) — On Tuesday, September 25, the international civil society rejected US President Donald Trump's call for rejecting globalism and embracing patriotism at a speech to the United Nations General Assembly that was interrupted by derisive laughter from world leaders.

In the course of the bombastic address, Trump highlighted the achievements of his presidency, lashed out at enemies — Iran foremost among them — and railed against multilateralism in its spiritual home, the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

In one of the more remarkable moments in the history of the annual UN summit, the chamber broke out in spontaneous laughter at Trump's claim that "in less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country". Clearly taken aback, Trump said, "I didn't expect that reaction, but that's OK."

But he also didn't expect that Washington's traditional allies in Europe would also reject his one-man foreign policy and "nationalism". His damaging actions and obnoxious is the reason why the world is in turmoil now. World leaders laughed at him and didn't stand by idly in the face of his assault on globalism, multilateralism, human rights and international institutions.

What Trump and his one-man foreign policy has done

to the world is not a joke and certainly the UN General Assembly is not a comedy club for a thunderous recitation of his "America First" policies or go-it-alone views that have strained US relationships with the world and destabilized the planet.

While addressing the assembly, for instance, French President Emmanuel Macron discredited Trump after the US president urged the world to isolate Iran, accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and sowing "chaos, death and destruction" in the Middle East. This is while the country is still in the 2015 nuclear deal despite Trump's withdrawal from it, and 12 reports by the International Atomic Energy Organization have substantiated that.

Macron, nevertheless, called for "dialogue and multilateralism" on Iran, shortly after Trump promised hard-hitting sanctions against Tehran. Just like his Chinese, Russian, British and German counterparts, Macron credited the historic nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries in 2015.

Reality slapped Trump in the face again when Iranian President Hassan Rouhani took aim at him in yet another defiant speech. In a direct reference to the United States and its Middle Eastern allies, Rouhani condemned the "recklessness of some states for inter-

national values," and the fact that while most leaders use their time on the UN stage to list the international agreements they have made or helped to protect, Trump clearly delighted in telling the world how many such pieces of paper he had voided.

Trump may not fully understand why his second address at the General Assembly was met largely by silence from the "globalist" enemy and why world leaders laughed at him. As Rouhani made clear, they all care about facts, as "confronting multilateralism is not a sign of strength. Rather it is a symptom of the weakness of intellect - it betrays an inability in understanding a complex and interconnected world."

By most accounts, the law of the survival of the fittest, protectionism and isolationism that Trump advocated at the UN will only lead to heightened tensions and conflicts across the globe. It is up to world leaders, therefore, to say no to Trump's erosion of multilateralism.

World leaders have a duty to stand up for global peace and security. Under International Law and the UN Charter, they must safeguard multilateralism and collective action in international affairs, and reject Trump's "doctrine of patriotism" and "economic terrorism." They must reject the obsolete manifesto for 'nativism' and 'nationalism' that Trump advocates in the world.

Macron and Trump: From controversy to bargain

➔ Macron began by telling the assembly that the world order based on sovereignty and equality among nations that came into being in the 1600s was facing a "far-reaching crisis," and said the answer lay in cooperation and collaboration among nations.

"Nationalism always leads to defeat," said Macron, who couched his remarks in the historical context of Europe's world wars. "If courage is lacking in the defense of fundamental principles, international order becomes fragile and this can lead to what we have already seen twice, to global war. We saw that with our very own eyes."

According to the CNN report, Macron is trying to get away from Trump and his policies, an in this way, he's attempting to lead the European players (in the absence of the Trump government). But the truth is that Macron's play on the U.S. ground is proved by now, and it can't be easily overturned. Though Macron has criticized Trump's policies towards Iran, the Elysee Palace continues its direct play to the U.S. benefits.

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 Elysees

Palace! This is also the case with the United States and France's common regional policy.

An alliance with the White House against Syria and a military strike against this country is not something that can be easily ignored. This suggests that France has not yet been able to act as an independent player in the international system, let alone being introduced as an "international leader" to the rest of the world!

Undoubtedly, there is a huge gap between the French authorities' speeches and actions about the necessity to be committed to multilateralism. This same paradoxical approach has made it impossible to mention Emmanuel Macron as a powerful politician in the international system. Obviously, under such circumstances, attempts like that of CNN to change Macron's real face won't be able to affect the minds of the European citizens towards him.

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National Iranian Drilling Company	3.175.430	Tender No.:EP/17-97/028 Indent No.: 48-22-9622052	41,820,000,000

Qualitative evaluation of tenders

Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Based on minimum scoring (60) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
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Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day (18/7/97- 10, Oct 2018) thereof.			
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Distribution Place</td> <td>Hall No. 113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Submitting Method</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 52010004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. • Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents. </td> </tr> </table>	Distribution Place	Hall No. 113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN	Submitting Method
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Type of guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 35010004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
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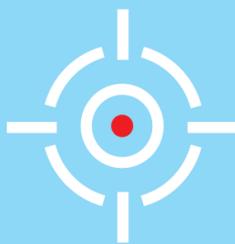
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'Not recognizing sign language a challenge for people with hearing loss'

HEALTH TEHRAN — One of the greatest challenges facing people with hearing loss is the fact that sign language is not recognized as an official language in Iran, head of Iran Society of Deaf People Family has said.

If the law recognizes sign language as an official language like other languages spoken in the country and the language is used in educating deaf people and hard of hearing people many of their problems would be solved, ISNA quoted Akram Salimi as saying on Friday.

Salimi made the remarks on the occasion of the first United Nations International Day of Sign Languages which is celebrated annually on September 23 as part of the International Week of the Deaf running between Monday September 24 and Sunday September 30, 2018.

International Day of Sign Languages took place under the theme of 'With Sign Language, Everyone is Included!'

One of the major problems confronting people with hearing loss is the limited use of sign language in educational settings which result in increasing dropout rate among this group of people, she lamented.

"In order to address this issue we have designed curriculums which suit people with hearing loss in association with literacy Movement Organization to help educate adult and youth dropouts with hearing loss," Salimi explained.

"We have also launched a campaign demanding recognition of sign language as an official language," she said, adding that so far some 8,000 students with hearing loss have joined the campaign.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in December 2006 recognizes and promotes the use of sign languages. It makes clear that sign languages are equal in status to spoken languages and obligates states parties to facilitate the learning of sign language and promote the linguistic identity of the deaf community.

According to the UN official website, the General Assembly has proclaimed September 23 as the International Day of Sign Languages in order to raise awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realization of the human rights of people who are deaf.

The resolution establishing the International Day of Sign Languages acknowledges that early access to sign language and services in sign language, including quality education available in sign language, is vital to the growth and development of the deaf individual and is critical to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. It recognizes the importance of preserving sign languages as part of linguistic and cultural diversity. It also emphasizes the principle of "nothing about us without us" in terms of working with deaf communities.



The WHO asserts that unaddressed hearing loss poses an annual global cost of U.S. \$750 billion. Interventions to prevent, identify and address hearing loss are cost-effective and can bring great benefit to individuals.

Hearing loss facts and figures

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), estimates over 5 percent of the world's population – or 466 million people – has disabling hearing loss (432 million adults and 34 million children). It is estimated that by 2050 over 900 million people – or one in every ten people – will have disabling hearing loss.

Disabling hearing loss refers to hearing loss greater than 40 decibels (dB) in the better hearing ear in adults and a hearing loss greater than 30 dB in the better hearing ear in children. The majority of people with disabling hearing loss live in low- and middle-income countries.

Based on the figures announced by the Ministry of Health in Iran congenital deafness occurs in 2.7 out of every 1,000 births. Moreover between 3 and 5 per 100 students attending school suffer deafness.

Hearing loss may result from genetic causes, complications at birth, certain infectious diseases, chronic ear infections, the use of particular drugs, exposure to excessive noise, and ageing. It is worth noting that 60 percent of childhood hearing loss is because of preventable causes.

Saeed Mahmoudian, director general for a hearing health program at the Ministry of Health, told ISNA news agency that in general hearing loss prevalence in Iran is equal to the global rate which is 5 percent.

However, he warned that inter-family marriages have given rise to congenital hearing loss in some provinces such as Fars, Sistan-Baluchestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, etc. three times above global

rate. Mahmoudian regretted that genetic counselling is being overlooked in these regions.

How people with hearing loss are being supported?

Pilot hearing screening programs are underway in at least one health center in all 31 provinces nationwide and almost 80 percent of the newborn infants are provided with screening tests in Iran, Mahmoudian highlighted.

"We are striving to provide all age groups with hearing screening programs," he added.

The WHO asserts that unaddressed hearing loss poses an annual global cost of U.S. \$750 billion. Interventions to prevent, identify and address hearing loss are cost-effective and can bring great benefit to individuals.

People with hearing loss can benefit from early identification; use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and other assistive devices; captioning and sign language; and other forms of educational and social support, to have better living conditions.

Mahmoudian also noted that Iran's Welfare Organization, Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad Ejraiye Farmane Hazrate Emam, charity foundations, and the Ministry of Health are collaboratively providing people with hearing loss with financial aids for cochlear implants.

Annually some 1,000 people are provided with cochlear implants which costs 600 million rials (nearly \$14,000) for each patient, he said, noting that so far some 10,000 people have received cochlear implants in Iran.

Antibiotics may cure appendicitis without surgery

If you're suffering from acute appendicitis, you might be successfully treated with antibiotics and never need an operation to remove your appendix, Finnish researchers report.

Most appendicitis cases are uncomplicated, which simply means the organ hasn't ruptured, so they can be treated with antibiotics. Only when the appendix looks like it may burst immediately is an operation necessary. And the difference is easily seen on a CT scan, said lead researcher Dr. Paulina Salminen, a surgeon at Turku University Hospital.

"There are no severe complications associated with the antibiotic therapy, so it's a safe option," she said.

About 20 to 30 percent of patients with appendicitis have a perforated appendix that needs to be removed, but 70 to 80 percent of patients may only need antibiotics, Salminen added.

A perforation is a small tear in the appendix, which lets its contents leak out into the stomach. This can cause a potentially fatal blood infection.

In a trial that compared 273 patients who had an appendectomy with 257 treated with antibiotics, researchers found that about 60 percent of those treated with antibiotics didn't need to have their appendix removed in the five years after treatment.

In all, 100 of 257 patients treated with antibiotics had to have an appendectomy over the five years of the study, including 15 patients operated on during the initial hospitalization, the researchers found.

The report was published Sept. 25 in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

One U.S. expert brought up the pros and cons of antibiotics instead of surgery.

"I think the big issue is this -- can physicians and patients accept the fact that there could be close to a 40 percent chance of recurrence in five years?" said Dr. Robert Glatter, an emergency physician at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

This might not be acceptable for many people, he said.

"It's a question of how risk-averse you truly want to be, given that once your appendix is removed with uncomplicated appendicitis, your risk of complications is quite minimal," Glatter said.

Patients need to understand that while antibiotics may effectively treat acute appendicitis 60 to 70 percent of the time, the treatment may also fail and require an operation, he said.

Although the antibiotics-only approach has been gaining increased attention and popularity, it requires further study in specific subgroups of patients who may be at higher risk, including patients with appendicolith, in which the appendix is obstructed with calcified deposits. These patients were excluded from this latest study, Glatter noted.

In addition, the study only looked at open appendectomy, not the less invasive laparoscopic appendectomy. The laparoscopic approach is associated with a shorter hospital stay and a lower risk of complications than open surgery, Glatter explained.

Antibiotic therapy required three days of intravenous antibiotics given in the hospital, plus seven days of oral antibiotics. The hospital stay after laparoscopic surgery was only one day, he noted.

(Source: WebMD)

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Driverless car makers could face jail if AI causes harm

AI technologies which harm workers could lead to their creators being prosecuted, according to the British government.

Makers of driverless vehicles and other artificial intelligence systems could face jail and multi-million pound fines if their creations harm workers, according to the Department of Work and Pensions.



Responding to a written parliamentary question, government spokesperson Baroness Buscombe confirmed that existing health and safety law “applies to artificial intelligence and machine learning software”.

This clarifies one aspect of the law around AI, a subject of considerable debate in academic, legal and governmental circles.

Under the Health and Safety Act of 1974, directors found guilty of “consent or connivance” or neglect can face up to two years in prison.

This provision of the Health and Safety Act is “hard to prosecute,” said Michael Appleby, a health and safety lawyer at Fisher Scoggins Waters, “because directors have to have their hands on the system.”

However, when AI systems are built by startups, it might be easier to establish a clear link between the director and the software product.

Companies can also be prosecuted under the Act, with fines relative to the firm’s turnover. If the company has a revenue greater than £50 million, the fines can be unlimited.

The Health and Safety Act has never been applied to a case of artificial intelligence and machine learning software, so these provisions will need to be tested in court.

Perhaps the true significance of the announcement is the responsibilities that ruling gives the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

HSE now becomes one of the numerous regulators of AI, a group that includes the Information Commissioner’s Office and the recently-opened Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation.

For some, this suggested that existing legal systems were well-equipped to cope with new technology.

“There is nothing magical about AI or machine learning, and someone building or deploying it needs to comply with the relevant regulatory framework,” said Neil Brown, director of legal technology firm decoded:Legal.

However, others questioned the Health and Safety Executive’s ability to understand the complex technology, which under the current regime is left to companies to test.

“I’m skeptical both that industry’s own tests will be deep and comprehensive enough to catch important issues, and that the regulator is expert enough to meaningfully scrutinize them for rigor,” said Michael Veale, researcher in responsible public sector machine learning at University College London.

(Source: news.sky.com)

Japanese space agency launches hopping probes to land on asteroid

A hopping space probe which will land on the surface of a large asteroid has been launched by the Japanese Space Agency.

The agency’s spacecraft released two small exploration robots in a research project to find clues to the origin of the solar system.

Both Minerva-II rovers were lowered from the unmanned Hayabusa2, on to the asteroid Ryugu.



The robots have been likened to biscuit tins

The rovers move around by hopping, because the gravity on the asteroid makes rolling difficult. Each hop lasts 15 minutes.

The space agency (JAXA) said it would know if the robots have landed on Saturday, when they will send confirmation data of touchdown.

If the mission is successful it will be the first moving, robotic observation of an asteroid surface.

The two robots will capture images of the asteroid and measure temperatures before the agency sends a larger rover in October.

Yuichi Tsuda, JAXA project manager said: “We are very much hopeful. We don’t have confirmation yet, but we are very, very hopeful.”

“I am looking forward to seeing pictures. I want to see images of space as seen from the surface of the asteroid.”

JAXA also revealed it had lost communication with the robots, writing: “Communication with MINERVA-II1 has currently stopped. This is probably due to the rotation to Ryugu, and MINERVA-II1 is now on the far side of the asteroid.”

“We are currently working to confirm if there are images capturing the MINERVA-II1 landing.”

Next month Hayabusa2 will deploy an impactor which will explode above the asteroid, to blast a crater into its surface.

The probe will then collect fresh materials from inside the crater which have not been exposed to wind and radiation.

Hayabusa2 launched in December 2014 and is due back to Earth in 2020.

JAXA tried to launch a probe in 2005, but it failed to land on its target asteroid.

(Source: news.sky.com)

Iranian startup designs S.A.Post as personal postal code

By Setareh Behroozi

TEHRAN — An Iranian startup has designed a virtual mail box, known as S.A.Post (a Persian acronym which stands for Iranians’ virtual mailbox), which would provide people with using an exclusive personal postal code, instead of postal address, for their parcels and letters across the country.

“Every individual can register on our website and receive a six-digit code and use it as a permanent address which is not changed for the lifetime,” the startup founder Alireza Jafari said in an interview with the Tehran Times on Wednesday.

In this way, the receiver is not obliged to give his or her detailed address in order to receive parcels or letters, he said.

“Besides, the service provides you a facility to change your address even through the month without changing the code,” he explained.

The receiver does not need to give address for receiving mails and via the code he or she receives the mail everywhere in Iran, Jafari said.

Unlike postal code, which is place-based, the virtual code is for each individual and is not changed with address change, he added.

■ A traveler in love with letters

“I do love travelling and besides I prefer to be connected with my friends through letter writing,” Jafari explained.

“Hence most of my letters were returned to sender since I was not at home,” he lamented.

“There I started to think about a system according to which, the address of receiver is dependent on an individual not his or her location,” he said.

■ S.A.Post in other countries

“As an Iranian, if you have the virtual code and sojourn in any other country, you can receive parcels and letters sending from Iran at your new destination via the code,” he explained.

As the parcel and letter per capita is much higher in many other countries like the U.S. and Canada, the S.A.Post plans to expand its services in many other countries as well.

“We welcome people in other countries who can help us to boost this system globally,” he said.

The first virtual code was verified for Information and Communication Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi while he visited the startup office in Isfahan on September 24.



As an Iranian, if you have the virtual code and sojourn in any other country, you can receive parcels and letters sending from Iran at your new destination via the code. S.A.Post also plans to expand its services in many other countries as well.

New early warning tech emerges for volcanoes

More than half a billion people on Earth live in the shadow of an active volcano. Growing up, I was one of them.

I spent my childhood in Tacoma, Washington, observing the gorgeous ticking time bomb that is Mount Rainier. From this vantage point 40 miles away, the mountain is pale blue and white, etched with the dark shadows of glaciers. Its silhouette sits in the foreground during sunrises throughout the year. In the summertime, the full moon rises right behind it.

Though Mount Rainier hasn’t shown any hint of activity for a century, and its last major eruption was about 1,000 years ago, scientists believe the magma beneath the mountain could rise again.

“At the most basic level, volcanoes are the inside of the Earth trying to get to the outside of the Earth,” says Dave Pieri, a volcanologist at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Volcanoes gave us jarring reminders this year of their power to kill and to damage communities. In May, Kilauea on Hawaii’s Big Island oozed lava and created volcanic smog in a slow, property-destroying crawl. The next month, Guatemala’s Volcan de Fuego (Spanish for “fire volcano”) exploded, burying villages with a fast-moving avalanche of ash, lava, rocks and mud. Official reports say 169 people died and 256 are still missing.

Fuego, Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens are stratovolcanoes, which emit miles-high clouds of white-hot debris and pour out high-speed flows of ash and lava. In contrast, Kilauea is a shield volcano, which typically produces slow-moving lava. When Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980, it shot a column of volcanic debris and ash more than 15 miles into the air, killing 57 people, primarily from asphyxiation.

With more than 3 million people living near Mount Rainier and 2 million annual visitors to Mount Rainier National Park, the volcano’s potential to kill with sudden ferocity is a major concern. But there’s some good news: The instruments scientists use to spot signs presaging an eruption are constantly improving.

New digital tools let them quickly collect data on the small earthquakes that hint at a volcanic event. With lidar, which uses pulsed light to measure distances, volcanologists can create precise, 3D maps that look past trees and other plant



life to reveal a volcano’s true topography. And advances in portable mass spectrometers are letting scientists “see” what’s happening inside a volcano and, you know, warn people before it blows.

■ Going digital

Lava, rocks and hot ash aren’t the only things Mount Rainier could throw at us. The nearly 80,000 people living in Mount Rainier’s river valleys, as well as the entire industrial Port of Tacoma, are in the path of one of the most dangerous by-products the mountain is capable of producing: the lahar.

A lahar is a fast-moving death sludge. It’s what happens when hot rock debris instantly melts a glacier. The lava and debris, which can reach 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit, mix with the melted glacial water, and the resulting lahar pours down the mountainside, sweeping away everything and everyone in its path.

Lahars can have the consistency of wet cement and move at 50 miles per hour. When they finally come to rest dozens of miles from where they started, they might still be as hot as a roasted chicken just out of the oven (that’s about 160 degrees Fahrenheit). When lahars come, you need to get to high ground — fast.

“They can be hot, they can be fast, and they’re thick and goopy and wreak havoc on structures,” Paul Bodin, interim director of the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network, tells me as we hike a ridge line facing Mount Rainier.

As I trudge up the hillside, I realize I’d be in trouble right

now if I had to outrun a lahar.

Bodin and software programmer Jon Connolly, who both work at the University of Washington, are leading me up and down mountain trails strewn with slippery shale stones in some places and edged with patches of tiny purple wildflowers in others. We’re headed to the seismology station at Mount Fremont Peak on the northern side of Mount Rainier National Park. After nearly 3 miles, we head down a steep meadow that might’ve given Heidi, the Swiss Alps orphan of children’s literature, some serious vertigo.

We’re here to scope out the isolated spot for a huge tech upgrade.

Once we arrive at the station, I see a very tall pole held up by guy wires, with an antenna and a solar panel at the top. Down the hill, a seismometer the size of a large soup can lies buried in the ground. Seismometers like this one emit electrical currents that change according to how hard they shake, producing data that scientists use to gauge a quake’s magnitude.

The information is beamed out about 55 miles via FM radio before the data gets digitized. The problem, Bodin tells me, is that traveling that distance allows lots of noise to distort the data before it gets turned into ones and zeroes. The result is similar to taking an ultrahigh-resolution photograph of a faded Polaroid snapshot.

The seismology team expects a new array of technology will be installed this month: Computerized data loggers, about the size of extra-thick external hard drives, will digitize the data much earlier in the process to keep it as noise-free as possible. A new seismometer can provide richer data by measuring motion that’s up and down, side to side and back and forth. That’s good, Bodin tells me, because that’s how the ground tends to move during an earthquake or an eruption.

Even better, the new seismometer can measure a much wider range of movement, from the small seismic wiggles that indicate shifting magma deep below the surface, to the larger shakes of earthquakes.

The higher-fidelity data will be a great boost to seismologists trying to predict eruptions, and the richer data set will help scientists distinguish when glaciers shift or ice falls.

(Source: cnet.com)

Japan to get flying cars off the ground



highway-safe automobile and more akin to a glorified drone — with helicopterlike rotors and room for only one or two people.

The ministry’s Japanese-language documents call it a flying kuruma, the Japanese word for car. But its English-language materials typically use a blander phrase: “future air mobility.”

“It is not actually a car,” ministry official Hiroyuki Ushijima said. “It is more of a mo-

bility service.”

Nonetheless, the idea is gripping imaginations worldwide, and Japan seems loath to be left out.

In Europe, aeronautical giant Airbus has partnered with Audi and Italdesign to create the Pop.Up concept, a vision of autonomous, electric urban air mobility. Luxury sports car maker Aston Martin has its own three-seat hybrid-electric personal podcraft concept.

Japan wants to commercialize flying vehicles as early as the 2020s through a government-backed campaign that already has recruited the likes of Subaru, Uber and Boeing.

The country’s powerful Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry launched the project last month with a meeting that pulled together public agencies and private industry.

The flight of fancy comes amid Japan’s concern that its auto industry was caught flat-footed in other emerging global technology trends such as autonomous driving and ride-hailing.

The government wants Japan to have a leading role when it comes to personal flying vehicles.

“Globally, there is a growing interest in what is called ‘flying cars’ that will enable such transportation services in the sky,” the trade ministry said in a statement after the first meeting. “Japan, too, aims to achieve speedier and more convenient transportation services for people and goods, while trying to create a new industry that can be competitive and profitable in world markets.”

While the proposal for flying cars has sent Japanese imagination fluttering, the concept envisioned by most hopefuls is less like a

Chinese carmaker Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, the parent company of Volvo, has bought the U.S. flying car startup Terrafugia. And Uber Technologies is floating the idea of launching its own flying taxi service, called UberAir. Uber has proposed starting demo flights in 2020.

The Japanese hope to flesh out a road map for flying cars in this country by the end of the year. Several of the private companies taking part want to commercialize such services in the 2020s, but the government hasn’t settled on a timeline, Ushijima said.

The government sees benefits in relieving traffic congestion, improving mobility for people living in remote, mountainous areas and isolated islands, and in aiding disaster relief.

Tokyo is organizing the push with an industry forum called the Public-Private Conference for Future Air Mobility. The goal is to brainstorm what kind of technology and regulations are needed.

In the mix are some familiar names such as Uber Japan, Airbus Japan, Boeing Japan and Subaru Corp., which is participating in its capacity as a maker of aircraft in addition to automobiles.

(Source: Automotive News)

Scientists discover genetic basis for how harmful algal blooms become toxic

A team led by scientists from Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego and the J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI) has uncovered the genetic basis for the production of domoic acid, a potent neurotoxin produced by harmful algal blooms.

Harmful algal blooms cause significant economic and environmental damage to coastal communities around the world.

These blooms occasionally produce toxins that can sicken marine mammals and can threaten human health when the toxins accumulate in seafood.

A high-dose exposure to domoic acid, produced by a type of phytoplankton known as diatoms in the genus *Pseudo-nitzschia*, can lead to amnesic shellfish poisoning, a potentially fatal condition characterized by seizures and short-term memory loss.

■ A cluster of genes

In a new study appearing in the Sept. 28 edition of *Science*, the team of UC San Diego and JCVI scientists identified a cluster of genes associated with production of the toxin domoic acid in the marine phytoplankton *Pseudo-nitzschia*.

This type of microalga is noteworthy because in the summer of 2015 it caused the largest harmful algal bloom ever recorded off the West Coast of North America, from Alaska to Santa Barbara, and resulted in the



closure of fisheries and crabbing seasons to protect consumers from potential shellfish poisoning.

Despite decades of research on *Pseudo-nitzschia*, the molecular basis for the toxicity of these phytoplankton was not known. Scientists found that these newly discovered genes contain the biological

instructions for making the toxin and are subsequently "turned on" when *Pseudo-nitzschia* is producing domoic acid.

"By identifying the genes that encode domoic acid production, we can now ask questions about various oceanic conditions that turn the genes on or off," said Scripps Institution of Oceanography and JCVI PhD

student Patrick Brunson, one of two lead authors on the study. "This knowledge will allow us to track the development of bloom toxicity at the genetic level."

By showing how the genes for domoic acid production are turned on in culture, the authors suggest a way to connect the oceanic conditions that drive algal bloom evolution to the development of toxin production.

■ Algae blooms become toxic

"Understanding how algae blooms become toxic and what conditions cause that is critically important," says Hedy Edmonds, a program director in the National Science Foundation's Division of Ocean Sciences, which partially funded the research. "This study offers a possible tool for monitoring algae blooms and predicting the production of toxin before it occurs."

Harmful algal blooms are difficult to predict, and the bloom-causing organisms typically possess very complex, large genomes.

Study authors say the biggest implication will be the ability to look at a bloom on the genetic level.

Knowledge of the genes involved in domoic acid production will allow for genetic monitoring of algal blooms and aid in identifying conditions that trigger toxin production.

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

By showing how the genes for domoic acid production are turned on in culture, the authors suggest a way to connect the oceanic conditions that drive algal bloom evolution to the development of toxin production.

Research suggests most of world's killer whales are threatened by pollution

More than half of the world's killer whales are threatened by a group of toxic industrial chemicals that accumulate in their blubber and can be passed on from mother to calf. That's according to a new study led by scientists in Denmark and published in the journal *Science*. Killer whale populations found in the most polluted seas around Japan, Brazil, the UK or in the northeast Pacific, the authors report, are "tending toward complete collapse".

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are a ghost from the past. These chemicals were produced in immense quantities from the 1930s onwards and were broadly phased out in the 1970s/1980s as environmental concerns grew.

As they were very stable and were unable to conduct an electrical current (and therefore excellent insulators), they were mainly used in the electrical supply industry. These same properties also saw them being used in a whole array of miscellaneous applications including as sealants and additives in construction.

It is this chemical stability that means PCBs stubbornly refuse to degrade in the environment and I have spent the past 25 years studying how these and other contaminants end up accumulating in the Arctic, for instance. However, there are two other properties that make these particular chemicals uniquely problematic, unlike, say, common air pollutants or most heavy metals.

■ Encountering cooler temperatures

The first is that PCBs are semi-volatile,



which means that over time they can evaporate into the atmosphere but then later deposit on surfaces when encountering cooler temperatures or with rainfall or attached to particles. Over decades this continued evaporation and deposition (termed "cycling") has ensured that they're smeared around the entire planet. PCBs are just as likely to be found deep in the ocean or in Arctic snow as they are in neighborhood soils, although the concentrations in soil close to "primary sources" such as cities may be orders of magnitude higher.

The second problem is that PCBs tend to work their way up the food web, accumulating in ever higher concentrations as tiny animals (and their unwanted chemicals) are eaten by small animals, who are eaten by larger animals (who take on those same chemicals), and so on. This process of "biomagnification" is most evident in marine food webs where fatty tissue like blubber (a home for PCBs) is an important feature of animals at the top of the food web such as killer whales.

(Source: Newsweek)

Researchers point to common weedkiller as cause for dying honeybees

One of the most widely used weedkillers in the United States might be indirectly causing the rapid decline of honeybee population.

Researchers from the University of Texas found that glyphosate, an active ingredient of the popular weedkiller brand Roundup, might be contributing to the widespread deaths of honeybees and native bees around the world.

Glyphosate is an effective weedkiller because it interferes with an enzyme found in plants, but has long been assumed to be nontoxic to humans and animals. However, researchers from the University of Texas exposed honeybees to glyphosate and found that the herbicide has significantly reduced healthy gut microbiota.

Snodgrassella alvi, a species of bacteria that process food and defend the bee against pathogen, was less abundant three days after exposure to glyphosate. Bees with impaired gut microbiomes are more likely to die when exposed to *Serratia marcescens*, an opportunistic pathogen known to kill bees around the world.

■ Opportunistic invaders

"Studies in humans, bees and other animals have shown that the gut microbiome is a stable community that resists infection by opportunistic invaders," explained Nancy Moran, a professor



at University of Texas and one of the authors of the study. "So if you disrupt the normal, stable community, you are more susceptible to this invasion of pathogens."

Native bumblebees also have the same species of gut bacteria as honeybees. Although not tested, Moran added that the herbicide might have the same effect on bumblebee populations.

The use of glyphosate in common households is not the sole reason why bees are dying at an alarming rate. However, the authors hope that their findings would guide farmers, landscapers, and homeowners into choosing a more environmentally friendly weedkiller.

"We need better guidelines for glyphosate use, especially regarding bee exposure, because right now the guidelines assume bees are not harmed by the herbicide," stated Erick Motta, a graduate student and a coauthor of the study.

(Source: Tech Times)

Concurrent with Reopening Schools on Sept. 22 (New School Year):

10th School of 'Omid-e Ayandeh' (Future Hope) Schools Goes on Stream in Tehran Prov.

Concurrent with the start of New School Year across the country, as of the first day of the current Iranian month of Mehr (Sept. 22), the tenth school of a series of schools dubbed 'Omid-e Ayandeh (Future Hope) became operational in the presence of director general of Tehran Province Education Organization, chairman of School Makers Benevolent Association, senior education officials in Chahardangeh of Eslamshahr, respected family of martyrs, members of the Board of Directors, deputies and CEO of Ayandeh Bank.

'Omid-e Ayandeh' School has been constructed in Chahardangeh of Eslamshahr on

a land area as large as 3,040 square meters with the following amenities: educational area equipped with 21 classrooms, training workshops for Physics, Chemistry and Computer, etc. with 2,929 sq.m built-up area, 113 sq.m built-up area for sanitary and hygienic services, 1,900 built-up area (site preparation), 56 sq.m built-up area for servant quarter (SQ), 224 sq.m built-up area for prayer's room, 50 sq.m built-up area for buffet, etc.

This school has totally been constructed on a land area totally 3,374 sq.m built-up area. Construction operation of this school started in Nov. 2017 and finished in 2018.

This school has been constructed with all internationally accepted standards, resistant against earthquake, observing requirements of international standards.

Dr. Abdolreza Fooladvand Director General of Tehran Province Education Organization was the first speaker in the inaugural ceremony of the newly-constructed school and thanked philanthropic and humanitarian move taken by Ayandeh Bank in construction of this equipped school in Chahardangeh of Eslamshahr.

Ahmad Meratnia Senior Adviser to the CEO of Ayandeh Bank was the next speaker who congratulated the advent of New School

Year and said, "this newly-constructed school was inaugurated in line with fulfilling role of social responsibility and helping materialization of objectives of higher education of children of this land and territory especially those in less advantaged and underprivileged regions of the country."

The bell of New School Year in Omid-e Ayandeh School in Chahardangeh of Eslamshahr was rung by the director general of Tehran Province Education Organization, senior managers of Ayandeh Bank and then, students of this school attended classrooms with high welcome of managers and educational packages given by the bank.

Open Currency Deposit Account to Receive Currency Profit: BMI

Currency deposit of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) has provided this possibility, moreover taking advantage of a safe and secured fund to keep their currency, to preserve and main their asset, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Currency deposit is a safe and secured method for maintaining value of asset and money with the possibility of taking advantage of maximum deposit profit in the form of currency and with the possibility of withdrawing money prior to its maturity date.

With opening this deposit, which is a safe and se-

cured method for being immunized from volatilities in FOREX Market, depositors can receive origin and profit of their deposit in bill at any time desired.

Presently, 360 foreign exchange branches of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) across the country are ready to accept currency of customers for depositing within the framework of currency rules and regulations in the country.

In the same direction, owners of various currencies including dollar, euro and dirham can refer to the selected FOREX branches of the bank in the nationwide for depositing their currency funds in the form of bill.

Foreign exchange depositing of the bank is a safe and secured investment for customers of the bank which is opened in one-, two-, three-, six- and nine-month periods to various currencies and the mentioned deposits will be extended after expiry date at the request of depositor.

The least amount for long-term currency deposit stands at \$1,000 and the general terms and conditions for opening these accounts are similar to the procedure of opening rials-based account, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank concluded.

Iran Insurance Co., Country's Most Competent, Powerful Enterprise

Iran Insurance Company is the most powerful and competent insurance firm in the country, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Deputy CEO of the company for Human Resources (HR) Department Mohammad-Mehdi A laei announced the above statement.

Speaking in the introduction ceremony of the new caretaker of International Exhibition

branch of Iran Insurance company (IIC), he said, "exertion of current formula for calculation of financial strength and solvency with regard to Iran Insurance Company and measurement of its executive and financial behaviors is appropriate bit its considerations should be taken into consideration."

Formula for calculation of financial strength (solvency) has been extracted from

a model and this is a practical principle, he said, adding, if it is imagined that financial strength (solvency) of Iran Insurance company and even Central Insurance of Iran (CII) is calculated with the current formula, it will bring about serious problems in insurance industry of the country and finally, insurance industry of the country will be jeopardized."

He once again threw its heavyweight on

salient performance and activities of his company in the field of offering high-quality insurance services to insured individuals in the country.

In this ceremony, Mostafa Rostami was appointed as new head of branch of international exhibition of Iran Insurance Company (IIC), the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

Scientists decode multiple frames from a single, scattered exposure

Engineers at Duke University have developed a way to extract a sequence of images from light scattered through a mostly opaque material -- or even off a wall -- from one long photographic exposure.

"When I explain to people what this algorithm can do, it sounds like magic," said Michael Gehm, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at Duke. "But it's really just statistics and a ton of data."

When light gets scattered as it passes through a translucent material, the emerging pattern of "speckle" looks as random as static on a television screen with no signal. But it isn't random. Because the light coming from one point of an object travels a path very similar to that of the light coming from an adjacent point, the speckle pattern from each looks very much the same, just shifted slightly.

With enough images, astronomers used to use this "memory effect" phenomenon to create clearer images of the heavens through a turbulent atmosphere, as long as the object being imaged is sufficiently compact.

The technique fell out of favor with the development of adaptive optics, which do the same job by using adjustable mirrors to compensate for the scattering.

A few years ago, however, the memory effect technique became popular with scientists again. Because modern cameras can record hundreds of millions of pixels at a time, only a single exposure is needed to make the statistics work.

While this approach can reconstruct a scattered image, it has its limitations. The object has to remain motionless and the scattering medium has to be constant.

Gehm's new approach to memory effect imaging breaks through these limitations by extracting a sequence of images from a single, long exposure.

(Source: Science Daily)

Cats are actually terrible at controlling some rat populations, study shows

You'd probably think that a city with a feral cat population and a feral rat population would end up with fewer rats due to the work of ... the feral cats. But it turns out that, just like humans, cats may prefer the path of least resistance - and that includes opting for easier prey.

On a study of cats performed in New York City, researchers found that the feline hunters, despite their famed hunting prowess, only rarely hunted rats - which could put a pin in the idea of using cats to deal with a growing rat problem, as has been proposed for Chicago.

Using microchipped members of a rat colony in a Brooklyn industrial waste recycling facility and field cameras, scientists from the US and Australia conducted research to determine the effect of cats on the colony.

From 27 December 2017 through 28 May 2018, they recorded 306 videos of cats and/or rats that shared the same space.

Of those videos, cats were seen in 259. Yet there were only 20 instances of cats stalking the rats; and only three instances show the cat actively pursuing a rat, with two resulting in a successful kill.

That likely has something to do with the rats themselves. Although cats in island populations have been known to prey heavily on rats, those rats are pretty small, coming in at around 150 grams.

Even in Australia, where cats have been found munching rats, their meals tend to be long-haired rats, which also weigh around 150 grams.

But the rats in New York (and Chicago, for that matter, and dominating across North America and Europe) are Norway rats. These are hefty fellows, over twice the size of island rats, at 300 grams.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

NASA sets new roadmap for moon base, crewed missions to Mars

Manned space missions have been confined to low-Earth orbit for decades, but NASA is looking to change that. After speaking in general terms about a return to the moon and missions to Mars, the agency has released a timeline of objectives to get us there. It starts with expanding commercial launch capabilities, continues on to a moon base, and finally end with crewed trips to Mars.



It all starts with changes to the way NASA and everyone else gets into space. The Commercial Crew Program is the first step -- SpaceX and Boeing are expected to begin carrying astronauts to the International Space Station in the next year or two. This is the first step in transitioning to a non-NASA operating model for all or part of the ISS by roughly 2025. NASA also sees a role for itself in facilitating the development of more public-private missions in orbit of Earth.

NASA does not plan to get out of the space station game. The most detailed part of the newly released timeline covers NASA's return to the moon. It has been almost 50 years since people walked on the moon, and we've only explored six sites over the course of 16 days. The new lunar explorations will be much different. NASA plans to start building a moon base by 2023.

The base is currently called "The Gateway" to signify its status as a gateway to the rest of the Solar System. It will consist of four parts: power and propulsion, habitation and utility, logistics and robot arm, and an airlock. The power and propulsion module is already under construction in facilities across the U.S. That will launch in 2022, and the habitation module will head up a year later.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Benzene 3.5 times above safe levels in Tehran: official

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Benzene, which is found in petroleum products and is a well-established cause of cancer in humans, is 3.5 times above safe levels in Tehran, an official with Tehran Air Quality Control Company has said.

Benzene is highly volatile, and exposure occurs mostly through inhalation. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified benzene as carcinogenic to humans.



Based on the latest surveys, benzene is 3.5 times above safe levels in more than 170 areas in the city, Mehr news agency quoted Farshid Babakhani as saying on Thursday.

According to World Health Organization, no specific guideline value has been developed for airborne benzene. Benzene is carcinogenic to humans, and no safe level of exposure can be recommended. For general guidance, the concentrations of airborne benzene associated with an excess lifetime risk of leukaemia of 1/10,000, 1/100,000 and 1/1,000,000 are 17, 1.7 and 0.17 microgram per cubic meter, respectively.

Unfortunately with the beginning of the school year in Iran (September 23) air pollution will worsen in the metropolis of Tehran. Heavy, slow-moving traffic builds up in the street of Tehran, especially in early mornings when parents are trying to take their children to school and many want to go to work or university.

On September 23, Mohsen Pourseyyed Aqaei, deputy mayor of Tehran for traffic and transport affairs, said that car use surges in the second half of the year by 40 percent in the capital.

In order to address the issue and curb traffic congestion as well as air pollution, governmental organizations give their employees the opportunity of a flexible working hour arrangement, so that instead of starting work at 7 a.m. or 8 a.m. employees can attend work at 9 a.m. for the next two weeks, Pourseyyed Aqaei explained.

Meanwhile, Vahid Hosseini, head of the national working group for reducing air pollution, said on Thursday that the working group has proposed to implement the scheme of flexible working hour arrangement for the employees over the second half of the year. In case the cabinet approve the proposal it will decrease air pollution to some extent.

LEARN ENGLISH

Big Bang Theory

A: **What's up?** You don't look too good.

B: Yeah, my head hurts, that's all. I've been in physics class all day. It's **killer!**

A: I liked physics. It's all math, really; arcs, curves, velocity, cool stuff.

B: Yeah, yeah, but today's lesson was all about the creation of the universe.

A: A physics class about the creation of the universe? That's some pretty unscientific language there. Sounds more religious to me. B: It's all religion. Take the **theory of the Big Bang**. How is it possible that all of the stuff in the universe comes from an explosion? That's no better than Atlas carrying the globe on his back or African myths about turtles and stuff.

A: Turtles? Whatever... Look, all that's required for the creation of **matter** an **imbalance of particles** and **anti-particles**. At least, that's what the math says.

B: Math, shmath. What's the evidence?

A: There is evidence! You know Edwin Hubble? He's the guy who in the early twentieth century was the first scientist to measure the drift of matter in the universe, thus advancing **notions** of an expanding universe. What would it be expanding from? Well, the Big Bang... DUH!

B: Anyway, it's just a theory. Why do people go around touting theories? Where's the scientific **rigor** in that?

A: Dude, don't **equivocate**. A theory only becomes a theory after withstanding rigorous testing. You slept through class, didn't you? B: Agh! You're making my head hurt again! Quit with the questions!

Key vocabulary

what's up: what is happening

killer: something that is extremely difficult to deal with or withstand

theory: a set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena

Big Bang: the theory that a cosmic explosion caused the origin of the universe

matter: the substance of which something, is made; material

imbalance: the situation where there is an unequal amount of different things

particle: any one tiny part of matter

anti-particle: a particle that has the same mass as another particle but has opposite values for its other properties

notion: ideas or concepts

rigor: the state of something being very exact

equivocate: use vague language so as to deceive someone without surviving a difficult experience or trouble

Supplementary vocabulary

astronomy: the scientific study of matter in outer space, especially the positions, dimensions, distribution, motion, composition, energy, and evolution of celestial bodies and phenomena

black hole: a region of space resulting from the collapse of a star with extremely high gravitational field

white dwarf: a small, faint, very dense star

entropy: the tendency for all matter and energy in the universe to evolve toward a state of inert uniformity

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Supreme National Security Council to weigh up agriculture around Lake Urmia

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The Lake Urmia restoration program has taken over the issue of agricultural development around the lake into the Supreme National Security Council, deputy environment chief Masoud Tajrishi has said.

Everywhere you looked, light was sparkling and sunlight glittering on the largest saltwater lake in the Middle East, which was once home to flamingos, pelicans and an abundance of fish and everything is almost gone now. Since the early 1970s nature and humanity have chipped away at this gem tucked in northwestern Iran, reducing its size by about 80 percent over the past 30 years.

"We have raised the issue of agricultural development in the catchment basin of Lake Urmia to the Supreme National Security Council," ISNA quoted Tajrishi as saying on Wednesday.

The Lake Urmia restoration program is not tasked with the restoration of the Lake, he said, adding "it is a supervisory body that should keep track on the performance of related organization assigned with restrung the lake."

Following the continuous drying process of Lake Urmia, a national committee for the restoration of the Lake, namely 'Lake Urmia Restoration Program' has been formed by President Hassan Rouhani's order in July 2013.

Lake Urmia restoration program committee is tasked with developing a roadmap and action plan for the Lake's restoration by establishing a Planning and Resource Mobilization Unit at Sharif University of Technology and in collaboration with Tabriz and Urmia universities and professionals from other universities.

Agricultural lands increased by 220,000 ha

Alireza Shari'at, head of monitoring and supervision department of the Lake Urmia restoration program, for his part said that currently, some 220,000 hectares have been added to the agricultural lands in the Lake's basin [increasing the pressure on water resources in the region], while the Ministry of Agriculture rejected the claims saying that some of them had already been agricultural lands before the Lake dryness.

So, a working group has been formed to investigate the issue in order to determine the amount of land seized illegally, Shari'at said.

He went on to say that "we also stated that no more than 1.5 million tons of beet [a water-intensive product] should be planted in the catchment basin of the Lake, however, currently over 2.5 million tons have been planted and harvested, and this is while Minister of Agriculture has been informed that cultivation of over 1.5 million tons of beet is illegal."

Cabinet allots \$120m to Lake Urmia restoration

"This year we submitted a 12 trillion rials (nearly \$285 million) budget for the lake restoration program but the cabinet allocated 5 trillion rials (nearly \$120 million) budget to revive the Lake," Shari'at said.

In order to maintain the Lake Urmia ecological balance of 14 billion cubic meters over the next 10 years, an annual amount of 3.3 billion cubic meters of water is required, while this year, 1.2 billion cubic meters of water have flown to the Lake, which indicates a lack of nearly 2 billion cubic meters of water, Shari'at stated.

"The volume of water was measured at 500 million cubic meters when we first started restoration programs in 2013, the first three years of the program was successful," he said, regretting, but the next phase which was aimed at increasing the surface water was not much successful.

He went on to explain that initially, the Lake was scheduled to reach its ecological balance of 14 billion cubic meters of water over the next 10 years, but regarding the current problems, it is planned to increase the water level to one meter, meaning that the water cover the whole Lake surface area, which requires an amount of 7 billion cubic meters of water.

Water transfer, dam water releasing, flow of wastewater as well as sustainable use of water in agriculture sector are among the alternative solutions to save the Lake, which have been underway so far, however, the lack of funding has slowed down the progress, he also added.

Meanwhile, failure to comply with some of the regulations imposed by the Lake Urmia restoration program also have been barriers on the way of its restoration, he stated.

Pointing to the dams leading to the current condition of the Lake, he noted that "we must admit our mistakes including building dams which have contributed to the Lake disappearance, and we are now trying to put right some of



This year we submitted a 12 trillion rials (nearly \$285 million) budget for the lake restoration program but the cabinet allocated 5 trillion rials (nearly \$120 million) budget to revive the Lake.

the mistakes we made."

Shari'at also said that in 1974 the Lake was filled with some 32 billion cubic meters of water, which gradually decreased since past 30 years.

Salt extraction

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the provincial department for the Lake Urmia restoration program at West Azarbaijan also said that "if we let go of the Lake, it will become a major sand and dust storm hotspot giving rise to salt, so that residents of the two provinces of East and West Azarbaijan must evacuate the area within two or three days due to the severity of the situation in which no living creature can breathe and live."

A working group has been set up by the Lake Urmia restoration program and the Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran, to identify areas of the Lake where extracting salt is possible without causing damages to the Lake, he explained.

Salt extraction from the Lake bed was banned since last year, but this year extraction permit will be issued by the Department of Environment and the working group confirmation, he said, adding, the reason behind banning salt extraction was that the we needed to identify spots were salt mining didn't pose any environmental threats by conducting studies to avoid further complications."

"Salt concentration varies in different parts of the Lake; in some parts it reaches 40 centimeters, and in other is 80 to 1 meter, while in the middle of the Lake has been measured at over 1 meter.

Referring to the permit issued on salt extraction being strictly limited to those approved by the aforesaid working group, Sarkhosh added that only parts of the Lake which are still moist could be mined.

As per the working group decision, the area is planned to be divided into areas of approximately 20 hectares, and investors will be able to mine salt under the supervision of the DOE and the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, he highlighted.

The Lake Urmia is naturally salty being located near the salt mountains. In April, when the surface water has been over 2.1 billion cubic meters, the analysis showed a salt content of 220-250 gram per liter, which has currently reached 380-400 grams per liter. If the Lake reaches its previous ecological balance of 14 billion cubic meters of water, its salt content will reach 150-160 gram per liter.

6 mcm of water saved through modern irrigation

A pressure sprinkler irrigation expert Ahmad Nabati also said that as per another article of the Lake Urmia restoration program, sustainable use of water in agriculture must increase by 40 percent, accordingly, projects such as pressure sprinkler irrigation are being implemented in the Lake Urmia basin.

The project covers an area of approximately 350 hectares, in case the project is fully implemented it leads to saving some 6 million cubic meters of water, Nabati said.

He also explained that "so far the project we have spent some 40 billion rials (nearly \$1 million) on the project, and another 4 billion rials is required."

"We are in the early stages of the project which will be completed by the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019 - March 2020).

A pressure irrigation system is a network installation consisting of pipes, fittings and other devices properly designed and installed to supply water under pressure from the source of the water to the irrigable area. The water is delivered in the form of raindrops precipitated over the entire area.

Saving 25 mcm of water through micro-irrigation

Eskandar Alizadeh, head of the agricultural department of Urmia county also explained that since the beginning of micro-irrigation projects, some 5,600 hectares of the lands have been irrigated by this method, which will save 25 million cubic meters of water per year.

Also, 900 hectares of the lands are undergoing micro-irrigation, which will save about 4 million cubic meters per year, and some 2,000 hectares are under study to be irrigated by the same method in case of receiving the required budget, he further explained.

The total land area under cultivation in Urmia county is about 97,000 hectares, he said.

In micro-irrigation (localized irrigation) by drippers, sprayers, bubblers, microjets, etc. water is delivered to the plants without being spread over the entire area but by being applied in low rates to a limited soil surface area around the plants.

Will the Lake go back to its former glory?

No one can answer that with any degree of certainty, but it is crystal clear that the Lake's disappearance is largely blamed on unsustainable agricultural practices and shoestring budget which are both interfering with Lake's full restoration.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

IRCS domestically produces dialysis equipment, supplies

Helal Iran Medical Devices Company affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society has succeeded in producing homegrown equipment and supplies for dialysis patients, Farzad Salaraddini, Helal Iran Medical Devices Company CEO said on Friday.

Fistula needles, dialysis solution, dialysis set, and dialysis filters are included in the package of newly homegrown medical supplies and equipment which will soon hit the market, IRNA news agency quoted Salaraddini as saying. The main objectives of manufacturing such devices domestically are to prevent currency flow out of the country, transfer of technical know-how, creating job opportunities as well as alleviating the pains of patients suffering kidney diseases, he explained.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"-cracy"

■ **Meaning:** rule, government, power

■ **For example:** Daughters of rich merchants would often marry into the **aristocracy**.

PHRASAL VERB

Space out

■ **Meaning:** to arrange objects or events so that they have equal spaces or periods of time between them

■ **For example:** Try to space out your classes and study in between.

IDIOM

Up in the air

■ **Explanation:** (of a plan or issue) still to be settled; unresolved

■ **For example:** The fate of the power station is up in the air.



Without earth no birth!

5 Palestinians killed, nearly 300 injured in clashes with Israeli soldiers in Gaza

Abbas: Jerusalem is not for sale

At least five Palestinians have lost their lives and nearly three hundred more sustained injuries when Israeli military forces opened fire on a group of protesters participating in an anti-occupation rallies along the border between the besieged Gaza Strip and Israeli-occupied territories.

The Gaza Ministry of Health said in a statement that 14-year-old Mohammed Nayef al-Houm was fatally shot in the chest during "The Great March of Return" protests east of Bureij refugee camp on Friday evening.

The statement added that 18-year-old Iyad Khalil Ahmed al-Shaar and Mohammed Bassam Shakshah, 24, were shot dead east of Gaza City. The identities of the two remaining ones were not immediately available.

Another 290 protesters were also injured. A total of 135 demonstrators were admitted to hospitals and medical centers across Gaza Strip to receive medical treatment. Eighty-three people were struck with live bullets.

Twenty-two children, three medics and three journalists were among the injured Palestinians.

A minor and a young man were taken to hospital in critical condition. Both had suffered Israeli-inflicted gunshot wounds in the chest.

More than 190 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in the Gaza Strip on March 30. Approximately 20,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

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

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

The resolution, which had been put forward on behalf of Arab and Muslim countries, garnered a strong majority of 120 votes in the 193-member assembly, with 8 votes against and 45 abstentions.

The resolution called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to make proposals within 60 days "on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation," including "recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism."

It also called for "immediate steps towards ending the closure and the restrictions



imposed by Israel on movement and access into and out of the Gaza Strip."

■ **Abbas: Jerusalem is not for sale**

Meantime, Palestine's president has taken the podium at the United Nations to harshly condemn the United States administration's policy shift on al-Quds (Jerusalem), saying there will be no peace with Israel without the eastern part of the occupied city as the capital of the future Palestinian state.

Mahmoud Abbas opened his speech to the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) with the sentence "Jerusalem (al-Quds) is not for sale," drawing the applause of the audience.

The Palestinian leader slammed the U.S.'s growing pro-Israel bias under President Donald Trump, which has seen Washington recognize al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the "capital" of Israel, cut aid to Palestinians and close the diplomatic office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on the U.S. soil.

"With all of these decisions, this administration has reneged on all previous U.S. commitments and has undermined the two-state solution," Abbas said, adding, "I renew my call to President Trump to rescind his decisions and decrees regarding Jerusalem, refugees and settlements."

Trump's action, he added, has "shocked" the Palestinian nation, stressing that no peace will come about with Israel as long as the regime fails to end its occupation of East al-Quds (Jerusalem), which the Palestinians want as the capital of their future state.

The Trump administration waged a diplomatic war against Palestine in December

2017, when it first announced that the U.S. would recognize al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the "capital" of Israel.

Months later, Washington moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied city in defiance of international criticisms.

The move angered Palestinians, who said they would no longer accept Washington's mediation role in their conflict with Israel.

The Trump administration has also cut aid to Palestinians and slashed its contributions to UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East – the UN agency that supports more than five million Palestinian refugees across the Middle East.

Trump also closed the Palestinian Liberation Organization's office in Washington last month.

Abbas further said there will be no peace without "an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem (al-Quds) as its capital, and not some place in East Jerusalem (al-Quds) as its capital, and with all of its holy sites."

The Palestinian president also stressed that Palestinians will not recognize Israel unless the entity recognizes the Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders.

He once again rejected the U.S. as the sole mediator in any future Israeli-Palestinian talks, stressing that Washington can play a part in the so-called peace process in the format of the Quartet on the Middle East -- the EU, Russia, UN and the U.S. itself.

"We will not accept sole American mediation in the peace process because the U.S. has lost its eligibility -- they are too

biased toward Israel," he stated.

■ **Israel's racist law crossed all red lines**

Elsewhere in his speech, the Palestinian president blasted Israel for adopting the so-called "Jewish nation-state" law, saying the racist law "legalizes discrimination" against the Arab population in Israel.

The law, he added, "crossed all the red line," and will lead to a single "racist, apartheid state."

The president called on the world body to act as it did in the case of the apartheid regime in South Africa and reject the discriminatory Israeli law.

■ **Palestine's Islamic Jihad selects new leader**

In another event, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement, which is based in the besieged Gaza Strip, has selected a new leader for the first time in over 20 years.

Syria-based Ziad al-Nakhala would replace Ramadan Abdullah Shalah as the movement's secretary general, an unnamed senior official told AFP on Thursday, claiming that the latter had been suffering from serious health issues for months.

Sixty-year-old Shalah, who has led the Islamic Jihad since 1995, is reported to be in a coma following an unknown illness.

Nakhala, 65, has been serving as Shalah's deputy since the 1990s.

The movement, which was founded in 1981 to realize the Palestinian cause in establishing an independent Palestinian state, has not publicly confirmed the report yet.

Alongside the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement, a Gaza-based ally, the Islamic Jihad has defended Gazans against the Israeli regime during three deadly imposed wars since 2008.

The Gaza Strip has been under a crippling Israeli siege since 2007, which has prevented some two million Palestinians from having free access to the remainder of Palestine and the outside world. The blockade has also undermined living conditions in the coastal enclave and fragmented its economic and social fabric.

Tel Aviv carries out regular attacks on its inhabitants under the pretext of hitting positions belonging to Hamas, which governs the territory.

The coastal sliver has also witnessed a fresh wave of deadly tensions since March 30, which marked the start of a series of protests demanding the right to return for the Palestinians driven out of their homeland.

(Source: agencies)

Saudi regime forces kill 3 anti-regime activists in Shia-populated Qatif

Three anti-regime activists were reportedly killed in a Wednesday raid by the House of Saud regime forces on a house in the Shia-populated Qatif region in the east of the kingdom, as Riyadh continues its brutal crackdown on political dissidents.

The three activists, all nationals of Saudi Arabia, were identified as Mohamed Hassan Ahmad al-Zayed, Moufeed Hamza Ali al-Alwan and Khalil Ibrahim Hassan al-Muslim, Saudi regime-owned Al Arabiya TV reported on Thursday.

During the operation in the oil-rich Eastern Province, three regime forces also sustained injuries, according to a Saudi regime security spokesman.

The raid came shortly after another operation in Qatif, during which at least seven people were injured.

Riyadh has recently stepped up politically-motivated arrests, prosecution, and conviction of peaceful dissident writers and human rights campaigners. The regime's forces have also intensified security measures in Qatif.

Qatif, a region in the country's Eastern Province, has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the region.

The Saudi regime is reportedly keeping more than 2,500 anti-regime activists behind bars as part of a widening crackdown led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman against Muslim preachers, members of the press and intellectuals in the country.

(Source: Press TV)

EU offers an extra \$46M to Palestinian refugee agency

The European Union (EU) says it's offering an extra 40 million euros (\$46 million) to the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency to help educate children and provide health care in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The EU move announced on Tuesday effectively ended its \$350 million contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

The deficit led to the elimination of 113 jobs and 584 staff positions being converted to part-time. UNRWA's Gaza employees went on strike on Monday to protest pay cuts and dismissals.

The agency serves millions of Palestinians who fled or were forced from homes in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, and their descendants.

Israel accuses UNRWA of perpetuating the refugee crisis.

(Source: AP)

Iran will wait for Trump to lose power

Iran has no reason to talk

to a hostile, war-mongering administration which may lose power very soon.

➔ Second, the current U.S. administration has been employing hawkish policies, war-mongering and constant threats as a strategy to bring Iran to the negotiating table. Under the influence of Israel, it is seeking to establish an anti-Iranian military alliance in the Middle East.

While such an approach might have worked with North Korea, it is highly unlikely that it would yield a positive result with Iran. This behavior has left Tehran doubting the readiness of the Trump administration to negotiate in earnest. Furthermore, by withdrawing from a deal approved by a previous U.S. administration and the UN Security Council, the world's top rule-enforcing entity, the Trump White House casts doubt on its own commitment to observing agreements and being a reliable negotiating partner.

Third, the present U.S. administration has been seemingly pushing for regime change in Iran. Top officials such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton have been at the forefront of such efforts. What government on earth would engage with a partner that is publicly pushing for its violent overthrow?

Fourth, Iran would not negotiate with a hostile government which might itself soon lose power. The possibility of Trump getting impeached is growing by the day. The process of impeachment could soon be triggered over violations of the emoluments clauses of the U.S. Constitution or over alleged complicity with Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. And if the Democrats gain control of Congress in the November midterm vote, that possibility would get that much higher.

But even if Trump does not get impeached, he is likely to lose his bid for re-election in 2020. His current approval rating is lower than that of any of the nine presidents who preceded him. The fact that leaders of the whole world burst out laughing when he claimed in his General Assembly speech that his administration has accomplished more than any other in U.S. history is highly indicative of where he stands in the eyes of the world and his own people.

Given these unfavorable circumstances, Iran may wait for Trump to lose power and seek to engage with his successor who in all likelihood would be a better negotiating partner. And the Iranian government is not in a hurry at all. Its European partners, who stood by the JCPOA and their commitments despite pressure from the Trump administration, just offered to establish a legal entity that will process payments to Iran and effectively circumvent the U.S. sanctions. China and Russia are also likely to join this new arrangement.

In other words, Iran can easily wait another two years for a new administration to be elected in the U.S. In the meantime, if Trump somehow decides to drastically change his rhetoric and approach, the Iranian government might reconsider and talk to him.

Germany and Turkey aim for four-way talks on Syria

Germany, Turkey, Russia and France will hold a meeting on the situation in Syria's war-torn Idlib province in October.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Friday she discussed the plan in a meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and they agreed on the four-way talks.

The chancellor's comments came amid a rare official visit by Erdogan to Germany with a busy agenda ranging from the war in Syria to the arrest of German citizens and Turkey's currency crisis in the European Union candidate country.

■ **Iran, Russia, Turkey discuss Idlib at UN**

Top diplomats of Iran, Russia and Turkey – which serve as guarantors of the Syria peace process – have sat down for talks in New York on the latest developments in the country's Idlib Province, amid efforts to peacefully rid the area of terrorists.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian and Turkish counterparts, Sergei Lavrov and Mevlut Cavusoglu, held a trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said the trio had hailed a recent Moscow-Ankara agreement to set up a buffer zone in Idlib, the last major terrorist-held bastion in Syria.

"The sides discussed in detail the situation on the ground, first of all in the Idlib de-escalation zone, and prospects for the launch of a really sustainable process of political settlement of the Syrian crisis," the ministry said in a statement.

"Participants in the meeting highly assessed the agreements on the stabilization of the situation in Idlib that were reached in Sochi on September 17. These agreements make it possible to protect civilian populations while continuing



uncompromised fight against terrorists," it added.

Earlier this month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin met in the Black Sea resort of Sochi and announced an agreement on Idlib.

The deal stipulates a demilitarized zone of 15-20 kilometers in Idlib along the contact line between the armed opposition and Syrian government troops by October 15. It also involves the withdrawal of "radically-minded" militants, including the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra/Jabhat Fatah al-Sham), from the region.

Elsewhere in its statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Zarif, Lavrov and Cavusoglu had, during the meeting, reiterated their commitment to the formation of a constitutional committee aimed at enabling "Syrians to decide about the future of their country by themselves."

Iran, Russia and Turkey are operating as guarantors of the Astana process, a track of negotiations which have resulted in the return of a succession of militant strongholds to the government fold and movement of civilians to safe zones.

The latest Turkey-Russia deal has suspended a Syrian military operation to liberate the city.

Tehran and Damascus have both welcomed the agreement.

■ **Takfiris 'unlikely to resist buffer zone withdrawal'**

On Thursday, militant sources in Syria expressed confidence that their Takfiri rivals would leave the Idlib demilitarized zone, Reuters reported.

A senior militant official said Tahrir al-Sham (Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham/Organization for the Liberation of the Levant/Levant Liberation Committee/HTS/al-Qaeda in Syria), the most powerful Takfiri terrorist group in Idlib, had sent secret feelers to the Turkish army in the last few days signaling they would comply with the buffer zone deal.

"Matters are moving well and Tahrir al-Sham has pledged it is going to implement but without announcing its agreement," the source added.

Ahmed Toma, another militant figure, said that he expected Tahrir al-Sham to honor the Idlib deal and dismissed risks of a showdown.

"I foresee it will be implemented within the time set," he said.

Moreover, Abdul Salam Abdul Razzak, a leading figure in the so-called National Liberation Front (NLF), an alliance of militant factions supported by Ankara, stressed that he did not expect "any hurdles in implementation" of the Idlib agreement.

(Source: agencies)

Haley joins protesters in NY, calling for Maduro ouster

The United States ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, has called for the ouster of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro only a day after the U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to take strong action against Venezuela.

In an unexpected move by a senior diplomat, Haley took up a megaphone and addressed anti-Maduro protesters outside the UN headquarters in New York on Thursday.

"We are going to fight for Venezuela and we are going to continue doing it until Maduro is gone!" she shouted from the megaphone. "We need your voices to be loud, and I will tell you, the U.S. voice is going to be loud."

A group of demonstrators gathered in a sealed-off plaza outside the United Nations, holding up banners including "SOS

Venezuela" and chanted "What do we want? Freedom!"

This was after Venezuelan president showed up unexpectedly at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on Wednesday to "defend his country," though he said earlier that he would skip the 73rd session of the UNGA gathering for the fears for his personal safety.

During his speech, Maduro rejected the U.S. interventionism in the Latin American country, saying Washington opposes Venezuelan independence and determined to stop it at all costs.

He said the U.S. wants to continue giving orders to the world as though the world were its own property.

The Venezuelan president also condemned the "illegal unilateral sanctions."

On Tuesday, the Trump administration imposed financial sanctions on four members of Maduro's inner circle, including his wife and Venezuela's vice president, over allegations of corruption.

Maduro also referred to the assassination attempt against him in August, during which two drones laden with explosives went off as he was speaking at a military parade in the capital Caracas. He said the perpetrators had links to the U.S. allies.

Trump said on the sidelines of the assembly on Tuesday that his administration was "looking very strong at Venezuela," adding that "all options are on the table, every one."

In his address to the assembly, the U.S. president said a military coup could topple Maduro, describing his government as "a

repressive regime responsible for a human tragedy."

Earlier this month, The New York Times reported that the Trump administration held secret meetings with some military officers from Venezuela to discuss their plans to oust Maduro, several months ago.

The U.S. and Venezuela have had strained ties for years. They have not exchanged ambassadors for some eight years. Since Trump took office in January 2017, pressure has even been increased on Venezuela, which has been battling with political and economic crises in recent years.

Caracas has accused the United States for being behind the ailing economy, saying Washington is plotting to hobble Venezuela's economy and topple its socialist government.

(Source: Press TV)

NHL investigating Flyers' Lehtera after cocaine ring report

The NHL is investigating Philadelphia Flyers forward Jori Lehtera after a Finnish news outlet reported he was questioned by police in his native Finland about his involvement in a cocaine ring.

According to an online translation of the report, Lehtera is among 23 suspects from a group accused of distributing two kilos of cocaine since January of 2017, and seven people are currently in jail relating to the case. The report adds that a house Lehtera owns was raided, but he has denied involvement and has not been charged.

"We will be investigating the situation and will have no further comment pending the completion of that process," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement to the Courier-Post.

Said Flyers general manager Ron Hextall said: "We have spoken with Jori Lehtera and the league office regarding the reports out of Finland and will reserve any further comment on the matter at this time."

Lehtera, 30, had three goals and five assists in 62 games with the Flyers last season after arriving via trade from the St. Louis Blues. His best season was his first in the NHL, when he had 14 goals and 30 assists in 2014-15.

Lehtera is set to make \$5 million this season in the final year of his contract.

(Source: Reuters)

FIFA moves closer to restricting loans, limiting agents fees

FIFA has moved closer to a reform of the transfer system after a key committee backed proposals to restrict loans and limit agents' fees, the global soccer body said on Tuesday.

The stakeholders committee, featuring representatives from clubs, leagues, players and national associations, also approved a plan to create a clearing house to process transfers, following a meeting in London.

However, it did not mention a proposal in a white paper produced by its transfer system task force — which was seen by Reuters earlier this month — to create an algorithm to calculate transfer fees.

FIFA said it was agreed that loans should be used for the "purpose of youth development as opposed to commercial exploitation" and there should be a limit on the number of loans each club could make in a given season.

The committee also supported "new and stronger regulations for agents" including limits on how much they could earn and on how many different parties they could represent in a given transaction.

FIFA said the clearing house would be to "process transfers with the aim of protecting the integrity of football and avoiding fraudulent conduct."

"We have brought everyone to the table and all key actors of the industry have understood that we need to take action, leading today to this reform proposal," said FIFA president Gianni Infantino in the statement.

"This is a significant first step toward achieving greater transparency... and developing a consensus on how to tackle the issue of agents, loans and other key aspects of the transfer system."

(Source: Eurosport)

Ronaldo cleared to face United in Champions League

Cristiano Ronaldo will be suspended for only one game after his dismissal in the Champions League, paving the way for his return for Juventus against his former club Manchester United, European soccer's governing body UEFA said on Thursday.

Ronaldo's Champions League debut for Juventus against Valencia last week lasted only 29 minutes before he was shown a straight red card for clashing with Jeison Murillo in a 2-0 win. He faced the prospect of missing a return to Old Trafford if his ban was extended.

However, UEFA's Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body (CEDB) decided the 33-year-old's punishment will not exceed a one-game suspension which means he will only be unavailable for next week's Group H clash at Swiss side Young Boys.

"The CEDB has decided to suspend the Juventus Football Club player Cristiano Ronaldo for one UEFA competition match for which he would be otherwise eligible," UEFA said.

Italian giants Juventus travel to Manchester for their third group fixture on Oct. 23.

Ronaldo played for United from 2003 to 2009 and helped them win Europe's elite club competition in 2008. He then moved to Real Madrid, winning two La Liga titles and four Champions League trophies in nine years.

(Source: Goal)

U.S. stay top of FIFA women's rankings, England climb to third

World champions the United States women's soccer team have held on to the top spot in the latest FIFA rankings released on Friday, while England have moved up to third spot behind Germany.

England, coached by former Manchester United defender Phil Neville, secured qualification for next year's World Cup in France after a 3-0 victory over Wales last month. They pushed France down to fourth in the table.

Australia climbed two spots to sixth on the back of victories over Brazil and Japan in the Tournament of Nations in the United States.

Sweden also rose two places to ninth after their World Cup qualifying win against Denmark.

(Source: Reuters)

'No-one is bigger than the club...: Jose Mourinho issues warning to Paul Pogba

Paul Pogba will play for Manchester United at West Ham on Saturday but manager Jose Mourinho says "no player is bigger than the club".

A clip of the midfielder and the United boss having a tense exchange on the training ground emerged on Wednesday.

Mourinho said they have a good relationship despite telling the 25-year-old France international he will not captain the team again.

"Tomorrow he plays. He is a player like the others," said Mourinho on Friday.

"No player is bigger than the club. If I am happy with his work he plays, if I am not he doesn't play. I am really happy with his work this week. He trained really well. The team needs good players. He is a good player."

Asked if this week's events could potentially have an impact on United's reputation, he replied: "Manchester United is bigger than anyone. I have to defend that."

The Portuguese was commenting for the first time since pictures emerged of a dispute between the pair at the Premier League club's Carrington training complex.

That came a day after Mourinho told Pogba he is no longer United's vice-captain.

"I explained in detail to the people that have to know, which is the squad and especially Paul," he said.

"After weeks of analyzing and changing opinions with my coaching staff, we made the decision that from now Paul is just a player and not a captain."

'Nobody trained better' than Pogba

When it was suggested at Friday's news conference that he did not need to rebuke his £89m record signing in front of the cameras, which were present for the training session, Mourinho said: "I don't care about



the cameras. What confrontation? It's not a confrontation."

He added: "Nobody trained better than Paul Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Some trained as well as, nobody better."

Wednesday's exchange took place after Mourinho was told a social media post had been uploaded by Pogba in which he was laughing and joking with team-mate Andreas Pereira shortly after the end of Tuesday's Carabao Cup penalty shootout defeat by Derby.

The United manager summoned Pogba to him as the pair made their way onto the

training pitch and made a press officer explain the allegation.

Pogba reacted with incredulity.

He denied responding to the defeat in the way it appeared and said - accurately - that the mobile reception on a match night at Old Trafford is so bad the post, which he had sent much earlier in the evening, had only gone live when he got a decent signal, which was as he was leaving the stadium.

Mourinho, who has accepted this explanation, said: "You made a story - an incredible story - out of 15 minutes of training."

"Conversations with players I have many, many, many times. It was not the case but loud criticism, loud instruction happens every day."

"Coaching is about that, but you make stories out of it, so I'm happy that the rules are only 15 minutes [of open training] once a month, and with situations like that it is not going to change."

"There is no chance I am going to open the training session and let you watch a training session. No chance."

(Source: BBC)

Costa: Conte behaviour at Chelsea reason for Atletico Madrid return



Diego Costa has criticised his former Chelsea boss Antonio Conte, saying he left Stamford Bridge because of the Italian's behaviour.

Costa was unveiled as an Atletico Madrid player for the second time in December, three months after it was agreed that he would leave Chelsea in a £57 million transfer.

The Spain international, who had to wait because of a ban on the La Liga side registering new players, had been told by Conte in a text message that he was no longer part of his plans at Chelsea.

"I left Chelsea poorly because of his behaviour," Costa told Marca. "Diego Simeone is a very direct manager, and when he doesn't love you, it's obvious and he helps you out. There, it was the opposite."

"We made him [Conte] champion and then, after everything, he sent me a message saying he didn't want me."

"People said things, but time puts everything in its place -- look where the coach is, look at Conte."

"I was clear that I was going to Atletico even though there were other offers. If not, I

would have stayed with my family in Brazil. I have other values that money can't buy."

Costa's first spell at Atletico ended after their 2013-14 La Liga title win, and the Brazil-born striker went on to help Chelsea lift two Premier League titles and a League Cup but said he had jumped at the chance to work with Simeone again.

"I have a lot of love for him," he said. "Life there [at Chelsea] wasn't like it is here. Here, I have everything, a big club as well as a big city -- the people are very similar to Brazilians."

Star Atletico forward Antoine Griezmann opted to stay in the summer despite an offer from Barcelona, and Costa said his decision showed the club's strength.

"I knew from the start that he would stay," he said. "Obviously, an offer from Barca is important. [Lionel] Messi, the club... it's normal to be excited by it."

"It's a sign of the strength of Atletico and he chose with his heart that he wanted to stay."

(Source: ESPN)

Liverpool out to 'strike back' against Hazard and Chelsea



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp says his side are itching to "strike back" at Chelsea following their League Cup defeat against the Blues as they seek the ideal response by extending their perfect start to the Premier League season on Saturday.

Yet the Reds' manager also acknowledged on Friday that they would have to defend better in the visit to Stamford Bridge to stop Eden Hazard reprising the sort of solo brilliance that propelled Chelsea to victory at Anfield on Wednesday. "It's not cool, it's not what you want because it's not what we're going for, but I don't think it's impacted the mood," said Klopp, reflecting on Chelsea's 2-1 win which was secured with Hazard's late virtuoso effort. "We've had two days to fight back on track and I'd say that's worked. For sure, there's added motivation. We want to strike back, it's sport. Fighting back is a duty in sport. It will be tough, it will be intense. It's a big one, Chelsea v Liverpool, but our best preparation was the Wednesday game. We'll try to use our information from that match to do better."

Wednesday's loss was Liverpool's first blemish after a spotless start to the season which had seen them open up a two-point lead over unbeaten Chelsea at the top of the league after six straight wins. They also beat Paris St Germain in the Champions League.

Liverpool had been on top and leading Chelsea 1-0 when undone by an Emerson equaliser and then one of the goals of the season from Hazard, who cut inside from the right flank, sliced through Liverpool's defence and fired in from a narrow angle.

"It was a great goal but one which Klopp felt should have been cut out at source by Liverpool's rearguard."

"We all know we could have defended that goal he scored. Yes, he did well but we had three challenges. We have to make sure we close the right spaces... No player is not defendable." Yet Hazard, in current form, can make their life a torment again. "A couple of years ago, we played Chelsea when they had [Diego] Costa and Hazard and it felt like 'wow, we can defend all of them -- but not him.'"

(Source: Goal)

Germany wins right to host UEFA Euro 2024 football championship

Germany has won the right to host the 2024 European Championship, beating Turkey in a vote by UEFA's Executive Committee. This is to be the first time Germany will host the tournament since 1988.

Thursday's announcement was delayed by several minutes, but when UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin finally stepped onto the stage at UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, it came as little surprise that it was Germany's name that he pulled out of the envelope.

"The procedure was transparent, the vote was democratic. Every democratic decision is the right decision," Ceferin said.

The announcement was met with broad smiles and cheers from German Football Association (DFB) President Reinhard Grindel and the rest of his delegation.

"I would like to thank the UEFA Executive Committee for the unbelievable trust," Grindel said. "I feel a sense of responsibility. We know what this tournament means. We will do everything in our power to live up to the expectations."

Grindel was also quoted as saying Germany had won by a vote of 12-4 with one invalid ballot cast.

Evaluation report

While the DFB's bid had long been seen as the favorite to win the right to host Euro 2024, it was given a major boost last Friday with the release of UEFA's evaluation report on the two competing bids.

The 40-page report said there were no major reservations

about Germany's bid to host its first European Championship since 1988.

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

But the report outlined concerns about the bid submitted by Turkey, the only other country on Thursday's ballot, particularly in the areas of human rights, infrastructure and the economy.

At the same time, though, the report noted the full support of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the general public for the project.

Former Germany captain to head committee
Now that Germany has won the right to host Euro 2024, Philipp Lahm, the ambassador for the DFB's bid, is to take on the role of head of the organizing committee for the tournament.

"We have amazing stadiums, fans who love football, first and foremost we have people who love celebrating with other Europeans," said Lahm, a former Germany captain.

Turkish disappointment

This was the fourth time that Turkey has been unsuccessful in a bid to host a European Championship, having sought to win the right to host the 2008, 2012 and 2016

tournaments.

"This is saddening for UEFA and for Euro 2024. Our strength, quality in terms of (this) organization is obvious. It is clear that we have new facilities and stadiums," Turkey's sports minister, Mehmet Kasapoglu, told Turkish television. "There is nothing we have lost as a country."

Good news for DFB after a difficult summer

As for Grindel and the DFB, winning the right to host the tournament comes as a welcome piece of good news following a summer that saw the national team crash out of the World Cup in Russia — as well as the controversy over a meeting between Germany players Mesut Özil and Ilkay Gundogan and the Turkish President.

Grindel in particular was also criticized for the way he handled the aftermath of the photo op, which took place just weeks before the start of the World Cup. The affair culminated in Özil resigning from international football in a series of tweets, in one of which he said he would never play for Germany as long as he had "this feeling of racism and disrespect."

Euro 2024 is to mark the return of the European Championship to a single-host format, after the pan-European tournament in 2020, which is intended as a celebration of its 60th anniversary. The German city of Munich is to be among the venues to host Euro 2020 matches.

(Source: DW)

Ali Daei nominated for best ever AFC Asian Cup forward



With 100 days to go to AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019, the-AFC.com kicks off a series of articles to determine the all-time best AFC Asian Cup side.

We begin with nine candidates for the two spots up front. Review the nominees and then choose your favorite targetmen to lead the line for this all-star XI in the poll.

- **Ali Daei - IR Iran**
- **Top Scorer - 1996 AFC Asian Cup**
No player in the history of football has scored more international goals than Ali Daei's 109 for Islamic Republic of Iran.
Eight of those strikes came at the 1996 AFC Asian Cup, earning him the top scorer award.
Daei added three more in Lebanon 2000 and two more in China four years later to become the competition's all-time top goalscorer.
- **Lee Dong-gook - Korea Republic**
- **Top Scorer - 2000 AFC Asian Cup**
Korea Republic's top scorer amongst active players, Lee won the top scorer award of the 2000 AFC Asian Cup.
He bagged six goals before adding four more in 2004 to take his AFC Asian Cup total to 10 goals, second only to Daei in the overall scorers list.
- **Naohiro Takahara - Japan**
- **Top Scorer: 2007 AFC Asian Cup (joint); AFC Asian Cup Winner: 2000**
It can be argued that Japan's Takahara could have topped the all-time scoring charts had he not missed the 2004 edition when the Samurai Blue went all the way and lifted the trophy.

In his two appearances in the competition, Takahara scored nine goals and was the top scorer in 2007 with five.

- **Younis Mahmoud - Iraq**
- **MVP: 2007 AFC Asian Cup; Top Scorer: 2007 AFC Asian Cup (joint); AFC Asian Cup Winner: 2007**
If any AFC Asian Cup edition was to be named after one player, the 2007 tournament would certainly bear Mahmoud's name.
The striker led Iraq to a historic triumph while being chosen the most valuable player and joint top scorer with four goals.
Mahmoud's longevity and consistency is highlighted by the fact he scored in four editions, netting in 2004, 2007, 2011 and 2015.
- **Yasser Al Qahtani - Saudi Arabia**
- **Top Scorer: 2007 AFC Asian Cup (joint)**
After their 1996 AFC Asian Cup winning side retired, Saudi Arabia struggled to compete for top honours, until Al Qahtani and co emerged, leading the Green Falcons to the 2007 final and only losing narrowly to Iraq.
Al Qahtani was the 2007 joint top scorer with four goals and his impressive displays earned him that year's AFC Player of the Year award.
- **Ali Mabkhout - United Arab Emirates**
- **Top Scorer: 2015 AFC Asian Cup**
Spearheading the attack for a young UAE side that took the continent by storm in 2015 was Mabkhout.
The pacy forward netted five times as the Whites finished third in Australia.
His goal against Bahrain after just 14 seconds is the

fastest ever in AFC Asian Cup history.

- **Jassem Al Houwaidi - Kuwait**
- **Fourth-highest AFC Asian Cup Goalscorer**
Only one player in Kuwait's history scored more goals than Al Houwaidi's 63.
The iconic number 20 scored six goals as Kuwait finished fourth in the UAE in 1996, he added two in Lebanon 2000, overcoming Kuwait legend Faisal Al Dakhil as the country's all-time AFC Asian Cup top scorer.
- **Tim Cahill - Australia**
- **AFC Asian Cup Winner: 2015; Australia's leading scorer at the AFC Asian Cup**
Widely considered the finest footballer Australia has produced, Cahill scored the Socceroos' first-ever AFC Asian Cup goal in 2007 against Oman.
After the disappointment of losing the 2011 final to Japan, Cahill led Australia to their first-ever continental triumph on home soil in 2015.
No Australian has scored more than Cahill's six AFC Asian Cup goals.
- **Alexander Geynrikh - Uzbekistan**
- **Uzbekistan's leading scorer at the AFC Asian Cup**
Geynrikh featured and scored in three consecutive editions of the AFC Asian Cup, tallying six goals across 2004, 2007 and 2011, more than any other Uzbek player has managed.
His efforts in 2011 helped Uzbekistan secure their best result in the competition's history, finishing fourth.
(Source: the-afc)

Persepolis defender Hossein Mahini has possible torn ACL

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Persepolis defender Hossein Mahini will miss the rest of the Iran Professional League season after he injured the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee in Thursday's match against Esteghlal.
Mahini was hurt in the 37th minute and was forced to leave the field.
His absence will be a big blow for Persepolis since the Reds will have to play Qatari giants Al Sadd on Tuesday in Doha in the first leg of the AFC Champions League semi-finals.
"He will receive an MRI to determine the extent of the injury," Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic said.
"On Tuesday, we will have a big task



against powerful Al Sadd since Mohamad Ansari and Kamal Kamyabini are suspended and Mahini's absence will put our team under more pressure," the Croat added.

Iran runners-up at Asian Beach Volleyball Championships

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran beat runners-up at the 2018 Asian Senior Beach Volleyball Championships on Friday.
Iranian team Bahman Salemi/Arash Vakili lost to Ahmed Janko/Cherif Samba from Qatar 2-0 (21-18, 21-11) in the final match in Satun, Thailand on Friday.
Most recently, the Qatari team defeated the Indonesian pair of Mohammad Ashfiya/Ade Rachmawan in the Men's beach Volleyball final in the 2018 Asian Games.
In the women's category, Australian Clancy/Artacho Del Solar beat Chinese Wang/Xue 2-1 (21-17, 19-21, 15-9) to win the title.
Iran had won the title of the previous edition, beating Indonesia in the final match.



The Asian Beach Volleyball Championships is an international beach volleyball competition in Asia and Oceania contested by the double-gender beach volleyball of the members of Asian Volleyball Confederation.

Iran miss out on AFC U-16 Championship quarters

Islamic Republic of Iran were at their best as they beat Vietnam 5-0 in their final Group C tie at the UM Arena on Thursday but it was not enough to advance to the quarter-finals of the AFC U-16 Championship Malaysia 2018.
With Indonesia and India playing to a draw to finish with five points, Iran had to be satisfied with third place in the group.
Iran, who opened their campaign with a 2-0 loss to Indonesia and then were held 0-0 by India, showed their intent within the first minute through Amir Shabani's volley that forced Vietnamese goalkeeper Nguyen Duy Dung into making his first save of the night.
Vietnam, who also only had one point to their name after a 1-0 defeat to India and a 1-1 draw with Indonesia, had some early chances but lacked finishing.
Iran, however, began to exert control and the Vietnamese defence cracked under pressure in the 17th minute when a counter-attack saw Aria Barzegar dashing down the middle before sending the ball to Amirhosseini Azizi to score Iran's

first goal of the tournament with his close range effort.
Boosted by the goal, the young Team Melli began to move with a spring in their step and doubled their advantage four minutes later with Barzegar's strike to the bottom right corner of the net, courtesy of skipper Yasin Salmani's through pass.
The young Golden Dragons suffered a further setback at the half-hour mark when captain Vu Tien Long was shown the red card for tugging on Salmani's jersey at the edge of the box, and Mohammad Amin Doustali then calmly converted the free-kick with a sublime shot to the top right corner a minute later.
Vietnam fell to the Iranian counter-attack once again in the 36th minute when Salmani launched a cross over the Southeast Asian side's backline to set up a one-on-one between Azizi and Duy Dung, and the defender calmly beat the custodian for his second of the night.
Iran continued to dominate proceedings in the second half as they held onto possession, forcing the 10-man Vietnamese side into their own half.

In the 65th minute, Salmani came close to etching his name on the scoresheet following a corner-kick, but as the Vietnamese defenders failed to properly clear his effort, Amin Doustali pounced and let loose a crackling strike to double his tally.
● **Abbas Chamanian: Iran head coach**
"First of all, I want to pay my respect for Vietnam for their fair play. We knew this tournament is a place to gain more experience. The most important thing for these young players, is the opportunity to learn and progress to the next level.
"We had a good start, and took the lead early. It made us relaxed. Scoring five goals shows that we are really good in offence. I'm very glad for such a result but sad at the same time because our team couldn't reach the next stage. In such an age group, technical aspect is not everything, but it's also about the players' mentality. After the first game, we tried to focus on the mental preparation to fix that problem and today was the result of fixing that problem."
(Source: the-afc)

Ukrainian Nordic skier suspended for anti-doping violation

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has suspended Ukrainian Nordic skier Natalia Rubanovska for two years for committing an anti-doping violation.
The 29-year-old returned an adverse analytical finding for Furosemide in a urine sample provided on 19 January 2018 during an out-of-competition test prior to the World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup which began in Oberried, Germany, on 20 January.
This substance is included on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) 2018 Prohibited List under the category S5: Diuretics and Masking Agents. It is prohibited at all times both in and out of competition.

As a result of her violation, Rubanovska — an athlete with a vision impairment — will be ineligible for competition for two years from 27 February 2018, the date of the provisional suspension, until 26 February 2020. All her results, including those of her guide, obtained from 19 January 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 she won in the women's biathlon 10km vision impaired at the World Cup in Oberried. This medal will now be awarded to Neutral Para Athlete Marina Galitsyna and guide Maksim Pirogov.

Rubanovska's two bronze medals from the following World Cup in Vuokatti, Finland, on 3 and 4 February — the women's biathlon 6km vision impaired and biathlon 12.5km vision impaired — have also been disqualified.
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.
(Source: Paralympic.org)

Esteghlal, Persepolis share the spoils in Tehran derby

S P O R T S TEHRAN — During a lackluster match here at the packed Azadi Stadium, Esteghlal and Persepolis football teams played out a goalless draw on Thursday.
Persepolis are second in Iran Professional League table, behind Sepahan.
Padideh are second with a match in hands.
Esteghlal sit eighth in the table, eight points behind Persepolis.
Despite Tehran derby is the most important match for Iran football between Iran's most popular teams, neither team played well and they were unable to capitalize on their chances.
Persepolis will have to play Al Sadd of Qatar in the first leg of the AFC Champions League semis in Doha on Tuesday.

Louis Van Gaal linked with Tractor Sazi: report

TASNIM — Iranian media reports suggest that former Manchester United manager Louis Van Gaal has been linked with a move to Tractor Sazi.
In a video published by the Iranian media, the Ex-Bayern Munich coach says he is going to visit Iran.
"Hello Iran. I'm sitting in the car of my friend Salar. I will come to Iran because I am invited by Salar. I am very proud also to visit your country. I am curious and maybe I will see you. Bye."
The Dutchman spent two seasons at Old Trafford but was sacked the day after winning the FA Cup in 2016, with Jose Mourinho replacing him.
The 66-year-old has not managed since.
Tractor Sazi has most recently parted company with John Toshack and the Iranian media reports suggest that Van Gaal will replace the Welshman.

Slaven Bilic named new coach of Al-Ittihad in Saudi Arabia

Former West Ham manager Slaven Bilic has been named as the new coach of Saudi Arabian side Al-Ittihad.
The Croatian, who was sacked by West Ham in November last year, signed the deal with Al-Ittihad in New York on Thursday.
"Bilic will train Ittihad throughout the upcoming phase of the sports season," a club statement read.
"The board wished Bilic all success in his new mission to help Ittihad regain its outstanding performances."
Al-Ittihad currently play in the Saudi Professional League, and have opened their 2018-19 campaign with three losses and one draw in four games.
The club sacked former Argentina international Ramon Diaz - who managed Oxford United in 2004-05 - after their poor start.
Al-Ittihad won their last of eight league titles back in 2009. They have won the Asian Champions League twice, in 2004 and 2005.
(Source: Sky Sports)

Iran's Petrochimi earn second win at FIBA Asia Champions Cup

TASNIM — Petrochimi of Iran earned the second successive win at the 2018 FIBA Asia Champions Cup on Friday.
Mehran Hatami's team, who had started the competition with a 77-62 win over South Korean Seoul SK Knights, beat Pauian Archiland 96-63 in Pool A.
Petrochimi will play China's Liaoning Flying Leopards on Saturday.
Pool B consists of Lebanese Sporting Al Riyadi Beirut, Alvarc Tokyo from Japan, Meralco Bolts of the Philippines and Thailand's Mono Vampire.
The 2018 FIBA Asia Champions Cup is the 27th staging of the FIBA Asia Champions Cup, the international basketball club tournament of FIBA Asia.
The tournament, which was originally scheduled to be hosted by China, takes place in Nonthaburi, Thailand from 27 September to 2 October 2018.

VAR to be used at 2019 Asian Cup

MUMBAI (Reuters) — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) plans to introduce the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system at next year's Asian Cup finals, the regional governing body said on Thursday.
Top flight leagues in Spain, Italy and Germany have implemented the system, which allows key incidents to be reviewed with the use of video replays, and the technology was used at the World Cup in Russia this year.
The AFC said it has received approval from world governing body FIFA and the rule-making International Football Association Board (IFAB), and will use VAR at the tournament, which kicks off in the United Arab Emirates on Jan. 5.
"Asian football is determined to embrace technology for the good of the game and we are looking into the introduction of VAR at some stage during the AFC's pinnacle competition -- the AFC Asian Cup in the United Arab Emirates," AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said in a statement.
"We saw VAR first hand during the 2018 World Cup and it was clear to everyone that there needed to be a great deal of training of officials and investment in facilities to make sure the system was effective and a positive addition to the game."
"We are grateful for the support of FIFA and IFAB and now I have asked the Administration to ensure all the logistical elements and practical arrangements are in place so that we can introduce VAR to enhance the AFC Asian Cup."
The VAR system uses a trained referee with access to a video monitor, and in constant communication with the main match official, who checks decisions considered "match-changing" and is considered an efficient support tool for referees.
It was hailed as a success at the 2018 World Cup but there has been complaints about the system disrupting the flow of the game while decisions are reached and confusing spectators in the stadium.
The extended 2019 Asian Cup will see 24 teams taking part for the first time, up from the 16 that competed in the last four editions.

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“Whole to Part” to compete in Turkish festival

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Vahid Hosseini-Nami will be competing in the International KisaKes Short Film Festival in Istanbul, Turkey with his latest film “Whole to Part”.



“Whole to Part” by Iranian filmmaker Vahid Hosseini-Nami.

The film is about the gigantic iron statue of a despot that is removed from the town square. The statue is smelted and the steel enters people’s life in a different form.

The film will be screened in the Experimental Shorts category that also features eleven films from Poland, Switzerland, the U.S., Germany and several other countries.

The festival will be held from October 12 to 17.

WHAT’S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ Paintings by Kamelia Safai are currently on display in an exhibition entitled “Euphoria” at Shalman Gallery.



The exhibit runs until October 3 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Shahbaz Salmani is underway at Golestan Gallery.



The exhibit will continue until October 3 at the gallery located at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

■ Shokuh Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group Alireza Musavi, Narges Khaleqi, Fatemeh Heidarpur, Elaheh Mazaheri, Barana Saadat and Hamed Noruzi.



The paintings will be on view until October 3 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.

■ Elaheh Heidari is displaying her latest paintings in an exhibition at Asar Gallery.



The exhibit will run until October 19 at the gallery located at No. 16 Barforushan St., Iranshahr St.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Sahar Hajali is currently underway at Atbin Gallery.



The exhibit titled “That’s How I Reckon” will run until October 10 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

Drawing

■ Amin Sarabandi is hanging a collection of his drawings in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery.



The collection named “61 Years of Cinema” focuses on the recently-deceased actor Ezzatollah Entezami.

The exhibition will run until October 10 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

Photo

■ A large group of photographers, including Maedeh Hadizadeh, Ali Kasiri, Hutan Babapur, Shima Sadra and Hamed Kavusi, is displaying their works in an exhibition titled “Landscapes of Iran 3” at Idea Gallery.



The exhibition, which is being curated by Sara Mofatteh, will run until October 3 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

Leader asks cultural organizations to increase productions on Sacred Defense

▶ “We should launch a translation movement to export our books and films on the Sacred Defense in order to convey the message about Iranians’ invincibility and faith for the world,” he stated.

He said, “The Western festivals screen some Iranian movies that are of low quality in comparison to the Sacred Defense films. They are afraid to screen the Sacred Defense films, because these films are full of scenes revealing power struggles in the world of imperialism.”

The meeting was organized to commemorate the anniversary of the Sacred Defense. A number of authors presented their latest offerings on the war to Ayatollah Khamenei.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei takes a glance at a book he received during a meeting with literati and filmmakers on September 16, 2019. (Khamenei.ir)

Iranian photographer Maryam Firuzi wins Alfred Fried Peace Medal

ART TEHRAN — Maryam Firuzi from Iran is among the five photographers who won the Alfred Fried Peace Medal last week, the organizers announced.

She received the medal for her collection titled “Reading for Tehran Streets” at the Alfred Fried Photography Award in Vienna, Austria on September 20.

“Reading for Tehran Streets” is a collection of staged photographs depicting a woman (Firuzi) reading a book at various urban locations in Tehran.

Firuzi, who is also a filmmaker and a painter, told the Persian service of Honaronline on Thursday, “Photography fills the empty place of painting in my life and the times I’m not engaged in any film project.”

“This collection was gradually built up. I didn’t know, for example, how the ninth photo of the collection would turn out. I spent a year finding appropriate locations for my photos, and afterwards the story of each photo began to take shape, and each photo showed the path for the next.”

The woman featured in the photos is Firuzi herself. “The main subject of the collection reflects my concerns. Therefore,



A photo from Maryam Firuzi’s series “Reading for Tehran Streets” that won an Alfred Fried Peace Medal in Vienna, Austria.

I saw it was necessary to play the role of the woman in my photos. Otherwise, I would have had to search for a woman to play the role, and I had no specific criteria for selecting the woman.”

Other winners of the Alfred Fried Peace Medal are Constanza Portnoy from Argentina for “Angeles”, Anna Boyiazis from the USA for “Finding Freedom in the Water”, Selma van der Bijl from the

Netherlands for “Lucky” and Nora Lorek from Sweden for “Milaya - Patterns of Home”.

Boyiazis also won the Alfred Fried Photography Award for best picture on the theme of peace, worth € 10000, for her work “Finding Freedom in the Water”.

“Pikin and Appolinaire” by Canadian photographer Jo-Anne McArthur won the Special Award of the Jury for the best single picture entry.

“Daydreaming” by Macedonian photographer Kaja Tasevska was selected as the Children’s Peace Image of the Year.

The Alfred Fried Photography Award is organized by UNESCO, the Austrian Parliament, the Austrian Parliamentary Reporting Association, the International Press Institute (IPI) and the German Youth Photography Award, with the support of World Press Photo.

The award “aims to present human efforts to live together in peace and the quest for beauty and goodness in our lives,” the organizers have said.

It has been named after Alfred Hermann Fried (1864-1921), an Austrian pacifist and author who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1911.

Actor Ezzatollah Entezami remembered at Sangalaj

ART TEHRAN — Actor Ezzatollah Entezami was remembered on Wednesday evening forty days after his death at Tehran’s Sangalaj Theater, where he began his acting career.

A large number of friends and colleagues joined his family for a memorial event that began with a speech by his lifelong friend, actor Ali Nasirian.

He divided his collaborating with Entezami into three periods and said, “Entezami and I were very different from each other. He was funny and full of zeal and I was introverted, however, he changed into a serious person at work.”

“I’m really sad that we have lost this dear friend and colleague... I will never forget him,” he added.

Actors Parviz Parastui, Amin Tarokh, Golab Adineh and Iraj Raad, and producers Harun Yashayai and Fereshteh Taerpur and Entezami Museum House director Shokrehkoda Godarzi also delivered short speeches at the meeting.



A picture of Ezzatollah Entezami is seen at a service in remembrance of the 94-year-old actor at Tehran’s Sangalaj Theater on September 26, 2018. (ILNA/Alireza Ramezani)

“O God, we sent a traveler toward you that was very dear to a nation, and being dear will never occur but by Your will,” Taerpur said.

“Certainly, God will receive him in a better way than we did,” she added.

The occasion came to an end with the donation of Entezami’s cane by his son, Majid, to the Entezami Museum House.

Entezami, the veteran actor of stage and screen who was named “master actor” in his memoirs written by Hushang Golmakani, died in August at the age of 94.

He was one of Iran’s golden generation of actors such as Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Ali Nasirian and Jamshid Mashyekhi and Davud Rashidi, who began his career with acting in traditional Iranian performances at theaters located on Tehran’s Lalezar Street, which was considered as Iran’s Broadway during 1950s and 1960s.

From the trenches comes Peter Jackson’s World War One film

LONDON (Reuters) — Featuring voice-overs from veteran soldiers and transformed 100-year-old archive footage from the battlefield, Peter Jackson offered a first look at his upcoming World War One film “They Shall Not Grow Old”.

The short trailer, released on Friday, shows original black and white footage of soldiers eating, riding on horse back and firing weaponry.

Some of the clips then switch into color, having been converted to 3D and enhanced with modern production techniques.

Jackson, the “Lord of the Rings” and “Hobbit” director, has worked with London’s Imperial War Museums and used



A scene from Peter Jackson’s upcoming World War One film “They Shall Not Grow Old”.

BBC film and audio archive to create the movie, which will have its world premiere at the BFI London Film Festival on Oct. 16.

Netflix to double investment in France, produce more local shows

PARIS (Reuters) — U.S. video streaming company Netflix Inc (NFLX.O) plans to double its investment in France and produce 14 local shows, twice as many as first planned, Chief Executive Officer Reed Hastings said on Friday.

Hastings did not disclose how much Netflix would invest, though it would be “many millions of euros”, he told French radio station BFM Business.

Netflix plans to set up an office in Paris, the CEO told French business newspaper Les Echos in a separate report.

The number of Netflix subscribers has expanded quickly in France and now stands “in the region” of 3.5 million, Les

Echos said.

Netflix has clashed in the past with French authorities over local regulations that force broadcasters to pay taxes to finance locally made movies and series.

Separately on Friday, Netflix said here it was on track to exceed an investment of C\$500 million (\$385 million) in Canada over the next five years.

The Los Gatos, California-based firm has been seeing a rise in popularity in international markets.

At least three Wall Street analysts have in recent months indicated that user interest in Netflix is growing, especially in overseas markets such as the United Kingdom and India.

Mortensen thought twice about bouncer role in “Green Book”

ZURICH (Reuters) — Danish-American actor Viggo Mortensen says he was nervous at first about playing a burly Italian-American bouncer from the Bronx in comedy-drama “Green Book”, unsure whether he could portray the character convincingly.

The 59-year-old, best known for “The Lord of the Rings” and “Captain Fantastic”, also had to gain weight for the role of Tony Lip, who is hired to drive black pianist Don Shirley, played by Oscar winner Mahershala Ali, on a concert tour of the segregated U.S. Deep South in the early 1960s.

“I was a little nervous about taking the role,” Mortensen said at the opening of the Zurich Film Festival on Thursday.

“For one thing, I’m not Italian-American. And there’s a lot of good Italian-American actors,” he said.

“I asked (director) Pete (Farrelly) whether he was sure and he said yes and I said ‘Well, let me think about it’. So, it took me a little bit to commit, but I’m glad I did. It’s a beautiful movie.”

Inspired by a true story, the movie has garnered early talk of

an Oscar nomination since winning the Toronto International Film Festival’s People’s Choice Award this month.

While Tony and Don appear to have little in common at first, friendship blossoms as they encounter prejudice as well as threats on their journey.

“The movie says to me we all have similar needs. We all have a desire, a need to be respected for who we are, wherever we’re from, whatever we look like, whatever our education level is,” Mortensen said. “Everybody deserves a hearing.”

“Green Book” is directed by Peter Farrelly, who with his brother Bobby is best known for the comedies “There’s Something About Mary” and “Dumb and Dumber”.

“I’ve been asked over the years ‘Do you think you’ll ever make a drama?’ and I said ‘Yeah, when it comes’. I never planned, OK, now I’m going to make a drama,” Farrelly said at the festival opening.

“This happened to be the one... It was a no-brainer when it came. It just felt right.”



Actor Viggo Mortensen talks during a news conference to discuss the movie “Green Book” at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada September 12, 2018. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)