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Iran's renewable power plants to export electricity

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's renewable power plants are going to be granted necessary licenses and facilities to be able to export electricity to the neighboring countries, IRNA reported quoting Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

"The instructions for electricity exports through the private sector's renewable

providers has been discussed and the ministry will provide the capable plants the necessary infrastructure," the minister said on Tuesday on the sidelines of Iran's 3rd Renewable Energy Conference in Tehran.

"The Ministry will charge the private sector for power transit through its networks," Ardakanian asserted. **→4**

'Suicide cars found on the roads to Tehran during Muharram'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Morteza Miran, director of the IRGC Ground Force Operations, has said more than a thousand conspiracies aimed at disturbing Tehran's security in the month of Muharram (Sept. 11-Oct. 9) were foiled.

During the Muharram rituals, which reach their climax on Sept. 11-12, millions of Muslims commemorate martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the

grandson of Prophet Muhammad.

Mirian said the conspiracies included suicide car bombs trying to enter the capital from eastern and western Iran, adding that all of the attempts were foiled, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

He further said the enemy is desperately seeking to create insecurity in regional countries, especially the Islamic Republic.

210 top managers subject to retirees' employment ban

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization (ARAO) has said 210 top government managers, excluding those working in the Intelligence Ministry and the Armed Forces, are subject to the newly passed law on prohibition of the employment of retirees.

Jamshid Ansari said those subject to

the law must be replaced by November 17. He said the law includes mayors who are elected by city councilors as well.

He further said that under the law the retirees can work in the Armed Forces with permission from the commander-in-chief, ILNA reported on Wednesday. He added managers in the Intelligence Ministry only account for one percent of the individuals.

Police hosts foreign diplomats



EDITORIAL

Mohammad Ghaderi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief
@ghaderi62

Saudi looking horrific given the Khashoggi affair

Saudi Arabia has seen large-scale domestic developments since King Salman came to power, and then along came Mohammad bin Salman with his radical views. Since then there has been slaughter and arrests and imprisonment of dissident opponents. Riyadh rulers don't tolerate the slightest criticisms.

Critics are seen as traitors by Saudi media and usually the international community does not pay attention to their fate considering Saudi's financial influence, and while Donald Trump continues humiliate Saudi rulers, Mohammed bin Salman still speaks of friendship with the U.S. president.

Regarding remarks by Trump in which the U.S. president said he had warned the king he would not last in power "for two weeks" without U.S. military support, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince said in a Bloomberg interview published on Friday: "I love working with him. You know, you have to accept that any friend will say good things and bad things. You cannot have friends always saying good things about you, even in your own family. You will have some misunderstandings. We put criticisms in that category."

One critic has been Jamal Khashoggi. Born in Medina in 1958, Khashoggi is one of the most prominent Saudi and Arab journalists and political commentators of his generation. He began his career as a correspondent for the Saudi Gazette and as an adviser to a powerful Saudi prince, Faisal bin Turki (the former chief of Saudi Arabia's intelligence services).

The young Khashoggi studied journalism at Indiana University in the United States. Since September 2017, he has been gone from Saudi Arabia with the beginning of the crackdown on civil and political activists. He is a nationalist. From 1987 until 1990, he reported for a London-based Saudi-owned paper and is best known for coverage of events in Afghanistan, Algeria, Kuwait and elsewhere in the Middle East.

In 1999, Khashoggi became the deputy editor for the Saudi-run newspaper Arab News. His next position as the editor-in-chief of the Al-Watan paper barely lasted two months before he was dismissed from the post without explanation in 2003. His reformist views made him one of the top Saudi journalists. **→7**

Hezbollah legend's mother, Imad Mughniyeh, laid to rest

By staff & agencies

The mother of martyrs, who has been widely known for her patience and power, died Monday and laid to rest on Tuesday (October 9), near Hajj Radwan (Imad Mughniyeh)'s grave in the Rawdat al-Shahidain cemetery in Beirut's southern suburb, Dahiyeh.

Hajjeh Amina Salemeleh is the mother of late Hezbollah senior commander who was assassinated in February 12, 2008 in a car bomb attack orchestrated by Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad.

Mughniyeh, whose nom de guerre was Radwan, was one of the main founders of Hezbollah in the 1980s. He has been described as "a brilliant military tactician and very elusive".

Hezbollah Secretary General, Seyed Hassan Nasrollah, often calls Hajj Radwan as the "Commander of the Two Victories," referring to victories achieved by the Lebanese resistance: liberation of Lebanon's south in 2000 and July war in 2006.



Hajjeh Amina Salemeleh is not only the mother of Hajj Radwan. She is a mother of two other martyrs Fuad and Jihad Mughniyeh who were martyred among the ranks of Lebanese resistance against Israeli occupation. Salemeleh is also the grandmother of Jihad Imad Mughniyeh, son of Hajj Radwan who was martyred during an Israeli

raid on Syria's Quneitra in January 2015.

Gen. Soleimani offers condolences
Iranian Quds Force's Commander Ghasem Soleimani has expressed sympathy and condolences to the Secretary General of Hezbollah Seyed Hassan Nasrollah over passing of the late Imad Mughniyeh's mother. In a letter to Nasrollah, Soleimani wrote that Hajjeh Amina Salemeleh, who was the mother of Mughniyah brothers should be remembered as "the mother of Hezbollah".

"Martyr Mughniyah's mother was a legendary woman who defended Islam, Lebanon and the Resistance axis," he said, adding that Hajjeh Amina Salemeleh was not just the mother of Mughniyah brothers, but she was the mother of all Lebanese martyrs.

Hajjeh Amina Salemeleh passed away on Monday at the age of 80.

Nikki Haley calls it quits, Twitter says 'good riddance'

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — The 'smart and cunning' U.S. envoy to the UN Nikki Haley announced on Tuesday that she will be stepping down from her chair at the end of the year, a decision that has generated palpable buzz in the political circles and over social media.

While political pundits believe the daughter of Indian immigrants and the former governor of South Carolina had 'timed' her decision perfectly, according to reports, Haley had a clash with national security advisor John Bolton before calling it quits.

Interestingly, her resignation came a day after an ethics watchdog called for an investigation into her acceptance of free flights on private jets.

Although she refuted reports that she has set

her eyes on the Oval office, observers believe there is still time till 2020 and circumstances might force her to change her mind and run for the top office. Some reports even suggest that Haley was behind the New York Times 'anonymous column' that shook the White House and exposed the dirty underbelly of American politics.

Meanwhile, her resignation has generated tremendous buzz on Twitter, with Twitterati weighing the pros and cons of her decision. While some Twitter users saw her challenging Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential polls, some others believe that her 'horrible' stint as the US envoy to UN has left a deep stain on her political career.

While a Twitter user Laura Guerrero called

her a "fraud", another Twitter user Betsy Hoffman said she "lost all credibility" when she praised Jared and Ivanka, adding that the Trump-Haley duo had "ruined our standing in the world". Pertinently, after resigning from her UN post, Haley called Jared Kushner "Trump's hidden genius", which drew scornful laughter from Twitter users.

A Twitter user Ras Mubarak termed her "one of the hawks in Trump administration", and said her place was not in the UN. "Good riddance. Embarrassment to public diplomacy," he wrote. Another Twitter user Kamesha Williams said Haley wasn't "the golden woman". "She stood by as Trump put babies in cages. She is an opportunist," she tweeted. **→6**

200 tons of medicine, medical equipment sent for Arbaeen pilgrimage

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has dispatched some 200 tons of life-saving medicine and medical supplies to Iraq for Arbaeen pilgrimage, Ali Mar'ashi, an official with the IRCS has said.

Arbaeen pilgrimage also known as Arbaeen trek, a distinctively Shia spiritual exercise, is an epic journey gathering Shias as well as Sunnis, even Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. from various nationalities altogether walking towards the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) commemorating the 40th day of his martyrdom in the battle of Karbala, in 680 AD. **→12**



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ARTICLE

Syed Zafar Mehdi
Journalist
from New Delhi

Global media and Muslims: Selective coverage, selective outrage

"If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? William Shakespeare's lines in The Merchant of Venice hold true today.

On the gloomy morning of March 22 2016, Brussels, the capital city of Belgium and a major European tourist attraction, experienced a series of bombings, killing at least 31 people. Like the devastating November 2015 Paris attacks, which claimed 130 lives, Brussels attack provoked unprecedented levels of public outrage and media coverage that went well beyond the tragic event.

Lengthy newspaper editorials were dedicated to Paris and Brussels and 'security analysts' appeared on prime news TV shows to discuss state security and perceived threat of Syrian and Afghan refugees.

This is not to suggest that the mindless bloodletting in Paris or Brussels or Manchester or Madrid should not provoke outrage or it should not be discussed in the mainstream corporate media. But, why does the media — in the west or east — focus so heavily on these attacks when equally deadly, equally ghastly attacks occur in places like Kabul, Baghdad, Beirut, Ankara, Quetta, Tehran, Kenya, Yemen? What does this selective coverage and selective outrage say about the corporate news media?

While attacks by 'Muslims' against non-Muslims in Europe have grabbed headlines recently, a study conducted by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), a research center at the University of Maryland, states that Muslims are most victimized by the global terrorism.

But, the attacks in Paris, Brussels, Manchester or Madrid — and the global response to them — amply highlight the selective outrage towards global terrorism and biased coverage of the corporate news media.

When Paris attacks took place, social media was bombarded with evocative hashtags, candle light vigils were held, popular news sites carried live blogs, world leaders rushed to send out messages of solidarity with the French people. **→6**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Soleimani offers condolences over passing of Imad Mughniyeh's mother

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force, has expressed condolences to the Hezbollah Secretary General Seyed Hassan Nasrallah over the demise of the martyred Imad Mughniyeh's mother.

In a letter to Nasrallah, Soleimani wrote that Hajjeh Amina Saleh should be remembered as "the mother of Hezbollah", Mehr reported on Wednesday.

"Martyr Mughniyah's mother was a legendary woman who defended Islam, Lebanon and the resistance axis," he said, adding that Hajjeh Amina Saleh was not just the mother of Mughniyeh brothers but the mother of all Lebanese martyrs.



Ambassador Masjedi lauds Fuad Masum

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Tehran's Ambassador to Iraq, Iraj Masjedi, has lauded former Iraqi president Fuad Masum for making efforts to strengthen relationship between Iran and Iraq during his four year in office.

Masjedi attended Masum's residence late on Tuesday to thank his incessant endeavors and also reiterating Iran's resolve to promote relations, especially in reconstructing Iraq, IRNA reported.

He also described Masum's stances vis-a-vis regional developments and ties with Iran during his presidential tenure as valuable and effective.

Iraq's parliament elected the veteran Kurdish politician Barham Salih as the country's new president last week, a step toward forming a new government nearly five months after national elections.



Iran wins another legal battle against U.S.

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — An Italian appeal court has rejected a lawsuit by the U.S. that called for the seizure of \$5 billion worth of Iranian assets in Italy, in a second win for Tehran in its legal battle against the U.S. this month, IFP news reported.

"Following continuous efforts by the lawyer of the Central Bank of Iran in Italy, an order to [temporarily] freeze the CBI assets in Rome was canceled," said Mohsen Mohebbi, head of the Iranian Presidential Center for International Legal Affairs.

An Italian court had in June 2018 ordered the CBI assets to be temporarily frozen upon a request by American citizens seeking compensation for damages that Iran was found liable for by U.S. courts.



Iran summons German ambassador over extradition of diplomat

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Lamenting Germany's extradition of an Iranian diplomat to Belgium, months after he was arrested on suspicion of plotting a bomb attack on a meeting of Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) in Paris, the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday summoned the German ambassador to Tehran.

"The diplomat has become the victim of conspiracies of the enemies and ill-wishers whose intention was to harm the constructive relations of Iran with Germany and other European countries," ISNA on Wednesday quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi as saying.

It came after German security officials said the 46-year-old diplomat based in Austria has been extradited from Germany to Belgium.



Austria backs JCPOA full implementation: envoy

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Austrian Ambassador to Tehran Stefan Scholz has reiterated his country's support for the full implementation of the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Scholz made the remarks during a Tuesday visit to Qazvin province. He also met with CEOs of companies in Qazvin, ILNA reported on Wednesday.

"Moving beyond the megaregion of Teheran into resourceful #Qazvin province, a hidden champion in a strategic location, ready to jointly identify sectoral priorities with #Austria that will support the transformation of Iran's economic base," he said in a tweet on Tuesday.



Iran dismisses U.S. objections at ICJ hearings on frozen assets

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The legal team of the Islamic Republic of Iran moved to reject U.S. objections in its preliminary statements at a hearing regarding Iran's frozen assets, which was held at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague on Wednesday, Al Masdar news reported.

Speaking of provisional measures imposed by the U.S. on Iranian entities and companies, specifically its Central Bank [Bank Markazi], Iran's lawyer Mohsen Mohebbi said "the case we discussed this week does not concern the so-called nuclear-related sanctions."

"It is related to the treatment by different branches of the United States government through a range of legislative, executive, and in particular judicial measures," he explained.

Khoshroo urges intl. community to respond to U.S. unilateralism

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Gholamali Khoshroo, Iran's ambassador to the UN, said on Tuesday the U.S. unilateralism is a "serious threat" to the world and suggested that a "swift" and "robust" reaction is needed by the international community to counter this policy.

Khoshroo made the remarks during a speech at the 6th Committee of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly on "The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels".

Following is an excerpt of his speech published by ISNA:

Unilateralism, as a pressing challenge for the rule of law at the international level, has been crystalized either in the form of withdrawal from international treaties and protocols, withdrawing from a number of important agencies, waging trade wars against countries, imposition of extraterritorial illegal sanctions or any other wrongful act which put into question the foundations of international law and international legal order.

Today, I want to draw the attention of the Sixth Committee to a serious threat to the UN Charter and international relations, which needs the swift and robust reaction of the international community.



For the first time in the history of the UN, the United States — a permanent member of the Security Council with the veto power — is engaging in penalizing nations across the entire world; not for violating a Security Council resolution, rather, for abiding by it.

Let me repeat myself again. In total disregard to Article 25 of the UN Charter, the US is penalizing the Member States who implement and abide by a Security Council

resolution. This is a new and at the same time, a dangerous phenomenon which endangers the essential foundation of rule of law at the international level.

On 8 May 2018 the current US administration withdrew from the JCPOA, the agreement that was the culmination of more than a decade of negotiations and diplomacy and is a part of Security Council resolution 2231. The Security Council resolution 2231

underlines "promoting and facilitating the development of normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran" and calls upon all Member States to support the implementation of the JCPOA, including to ensure Iran's access in areas of trade, technology, finance and energy, and refrain from actions that undermine it.

The US, however, now is targeting the countries that continue their economic ties with Iran in accordance with their obligations under the Security Council resolution 2231. What The US does by threatening revenge against countries is weaponizing its economy and currency thereby abusing the international financial system which drastically depends on the US dollar. Needless to say, these acts run counter to well-established principles of international law, including equal sovereignty of States, independence and non-intervention in other States' internal affairs.

It is our true belief that each and every member of the community of nations has a duty to stand up against the US wrongful act and contempt for the rule of law in international relations; in particular, by refusing to give effect to irresponsible acts. The international community must act in the face of this international intimidation and affront towards the international legal order.

Tehran calls on OPCW not to politicize Syrian issue

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has called on the organization not to politicize the Syrian issue.

Addressing the 89th summit of the OPCW's executive council on Tuesday, Alireza Jahangiri said that given the Syrian government's cooperation with the OPCW, the organization should not politicize the Syrian issue.

He said that certain countries which are members to the OPCW seek to divert the organization from its technical nature.

According to SANA, Syria reaffirmed willingness to fully cooperate with the OPCW and deliver on the obligations consequent to

its joining the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in April.

The Syrian government invited the OPCW to send fact-finding team to sites where it was claimed that chemical attack had been carried out by the government.

Police hosts foreign diplomats

Police Chief Hossein Ashtari said officials in Iran consider the security of people as the red line.

He pointed to a recent terrorist attack on military staff and civilians in Ahvaz, saying it "was a plot devised by America and the terrorists created by it."

He described the missile strike by the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on ISIL positions in Syria as a "devastating response" to the terrorist attack in Ahvaz.

The September 22 terrorist attack in Ahvaz, capital of the southwestern province of

Khuzestan, left 24 people killed and over 60 others injured.

In retaliation for the terrorist attack, the IRGC launched several surface-to-surface ballistic missiles onto the ISIL positions in the Bukamal region, eastern Euphrates in Syria.

Takht-Ravanchi warns about U.S. 'dangerous behavior'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, deputy director of the presidential chief of staff for political affairs, has warned about the consequences of the U.S. "dangerous behavior" and the silence of other countries in the face of such attitude.

Speaking at a conference on Iran-Europe cooperation and future of the nuclear deal in Brussels on Wednesday, Takht-Ravanchi criticized the U.S. for its "illegal" and "irresponsible" act in withdrawing from the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement.

The U.S. "violated international law" by pulling out of the agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution 2231, noted Takht-Ravanchi who was a member of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team with the European Union and the 5+1 nations (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plug Germany).

He said preservation of the JCPOA will be beneficial

to all sides.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear deal in May and ordered re-imposition of sanctions against Iran.

To circumvent renewed U.S. sanctions, the European Union announced plans during the UN General Assembly to create a new financial entity to facilitate transactions with Iran, a move that could also challenge U.S. domination of the international financial system.

Iran widens an already huge rift between Europe and U.S.

BRUSSELS — Of all the issues dividing Europe and the Trump administration, Iran has become the sharpest, with the Europeans actively working against United States policy, placing them in league with Russia, China and Iran.

Since earlier this year, when it pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal that was a centerpiece of former President Barack Obama's diplomacy, the Trump administration has pressed ahead with punishing sanctions against Tehran.

The leading countries of Europe, meanwhile, trying to preserve the nuclear accord, are looking to set up an alternative payment mechanism that would sidestep the American-dominated banking system, and Washington's new sanctions.

As they do so, they are pressing Iran to adhere strictly to the terms of the nuclear agreement, to avoid giving the United States and Israel a pretext for starting a war — an increasing concern.

And they are counseling Tehran to keep calm and wait out President Trump's term, in the hope that he will not be re-elected, senior European diplomats say.

That, of course, could be wishful thinking, but the divergent policies toward Iran are leading to deeper tensions between the European Union and the Trump administration.

Last month, the national security adviser, John R. Bolton, mocked the European Union for being "strong on rhetoric and weak on follow-through," adding: "We do not intend to allow our sanctions to be evaded by Europe or anyone else."

Mr. Trump's decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal "opened a rift between the U.S. and its European allies that is unlikely to close again as long as he is in office," wrote Volker Perthes, director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin.

"Europe and the U.S. are not simply taking different approaches to Iran, but are actively working against one another in a policy field which is of significant strategic interest to both sides," he said.

The dispute over the Iran deal, he continued, "is a major driver of European debates about a form of 'strategic autonomy'" from the United States and represents a more serious cleavage in the Western alliance than

did the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The latest American sanctions against Iran, scheduled to take effect Nov. 4, will be the toughest so far, hitting the country's oil industry and central bank. The sale of Iranian oil and petrochemical products will be restricted, and foreign financial institutions will face sanctions for transactions with the Iranian central bank of other financial institutions designated under legislation Congress passed in 2012.

To get around the penalties, the Europeans are hoping to create a "special purpose vehicle" to allow payments related to Iranian exports, including oil, and Iranian imports, "to assist and reassure economic operators pursuing legitimate business with Iran," according to the European Union.

The mechanism could use a form of barter, offsetting values of imports and exports priced in euros while avoiding banking transactions. The main objective is to allow Iran to keep selling its oil, on which much of its economy depends — exactly the reason Washington is trying to restrict that commerce.

But it remains unclear if the European efforts will succeed. Big multinational firms like Total, Peugeot, Renault, Eni, Siemens and Daimler are already pulling out of Iran, saying they cannot risk being shut out of the American financial system.

Iran's oil exports have declined significantly since August, putting pressure on supporters of the nuclear deal in Tehran and strengthening more hard-line elements that want to break the deal and start enriching uranium again, in greater quality as well as quantity.

Volker Perthes, director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, says the dispute over the Iran nuclear deal "is a major driver of European debates about a form of 'strategic autonomy'" from the United States and represents a more serious cleavage in the Western alliance than did the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

"The primary objective of the European Union is to provide a face-saving way for Iran to stay in the" nuclear deal, said Ellie Geranmayeh of the European Council on Foreign Relations. "The Europeans are trying with Russia and China to create an economic package for Iran, but also some political steps to keep Iran in the deal, especially after Nov. 4."

The Europeans are also trying to help small and medium enterprises with little exposure in the United States to continue trading with Iran.

The question is how far the Trump administration will go to enforce sanctions, and whether it will allow waivers, as it has in the past, for work with Iran's civilian nuclear program, Ms. Geranmayeh said.

"But if the deal collapses altogether, you can bet Iran will expand its nuclear program," she said, "and that would put everyone back in the pre-2013 condition, and Europe especially does not want to be there."

Given the existing tensions between Iran and Sunni Arab states like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, not to speak of those with Israel, a war is not inconceivable.

A conflict over Syria, especially with Iranian and Iranian-backed forces near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, could create a pretext for Israel to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, as it wanted to do before the nuclear deal was signed. And while Mr. Obama restrained Israel, Mr. Trump might not.

The Europeans are telling Tehran that the nuclear pact is not just an economic deal, "but has important political and security dimensions for Iran, and so far Iran is listening,"

Ms. Geranmayeh said. Europe is emphasizing its efforts at de-escalating tensions, and has already had three meetings as part of a new security dialogue with Iran.

Washington has said that the nuclear deal was faulty, in part because it did not restrain Iranian actions in the region, like its support for states and groups the Americans consider troublemakers: the Syrian government; Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite group; and Hamas, the militant group in Gaza.

But European governments say the Americans have done little to roll back Iranian influence. It is the Europeans who are trying to create a platform for dialogue with Iran and other regional actors, and who are pushing Iran to discuss its activities in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

There is one other important difference, Ms. Geranmayeh said. While Washington now "sees no shades of gray in the Iranian leadership," she added, "the European Union countries, on the ground in Iran, see competitive factions inside the regime."

The Europeans are trying to support those in Iran, like Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and President Hassan Rouhani, whom they regard as more moderate, and whose political standing has been weakened by Mr. Trump's actions.

Joseph Cirincione, a nuclear expert and the president of the Ploughshares Fund, which is committed to nonproliferation, wrote recently that the Trump administration seems to be heading toward a war in the Middle East.

He accused both Mr. Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of "cherry-picking intelligence and inflating threats," adding: "They're making specious connections between Iran and terrorists, including Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. And they're ratcheting up their rhetoric."

These tensions are about to get worse, Mr. Cirincione said, with the imposition of the stiff new sanctions. The likelihood that this pressure will explode into military conflict is rising dramatically," he said.

His dark view is precisely what European officials fear, and precisely why they are trying to persuade Iran to adhere to the nuclear deal, to modify its behavior in the region, and to wait out the Trump presidency.

(Source: The New York Times)

Saudi regime planned Jamal Khashoggi hit: NY Times

Apple Watch, hired jet, mystery vehicle figure in search for missing Saudi dissident

by staff & agencies

Top House of Saud regime leaders deployed a 15-man hit squad to lie in wait for dissident writer Jamal Khashoggi inside Riyadh's consulate in Istanbul, The New York Times said in an explosive story.

Among the assassination team was a forensic expert who brought a bone-saw to dismember Khashoggi's body after killing him, the Times reported on Tuesday, citing an unidentified "senior official" as saying.

Al Jazeera could not immediately verify the news report.

The hit squad finished the murder operation within two hours and departed Turkey for various countries, said the Times' source, citing information from "top Turkish officials".

Accusations that the House of Saud regime leadership directly ordered the alleged assassination of Khashoggi will put further pressure on the United States and other allies to demand a transparent investigation, with possible serious repercussions to bilateral relations if it does not come to fruition.

The Saudi regime officials have denied any involvement in Khashoggi's disappearance and alleged murder, saying he left the consulate on October 2. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has demanded that Riyadh prove his departure from the building.

The Turkish government hasn't provided formal evidence that could back up the spate of anonymous allegations that the Saudi writer was killed inside the Istanbul consulate.

Turkish daily reveals identities of Saudis suspected of killing Khashoggi

Meantime, Daily Sabah, a Turkish newspaper with close ties to the government, named and published photos on Tuesday of the alleged 15-member Saudi regime assassination team accused of travelling to Istanbul on the day Khashoggi disappeared. The suspects are wanted by Turkish authorities for questioning.

American Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said on Tuesday that "everything today points to" Khashoggi's murder last week inside the Saudi regime consulate.

Corker told The Daily Beast his view was reaffirmed after viewing classified intelligence about the disappearance.

"It points to the idea that whatever has happened to him, the Saudis - I mean, they've got some explaining to do," Corker was quoted as saying.

Lay hands on him

Elsewhere on Tuesday, the Washington Post - for whom Khashoggi wrote columns after fleeing Saudi Arabia over fears of retribution for his critical commentary - reported that U.S. intelligence had intercepted communications of Saudi regime officials planning to abduct the prominent journalist.

"Saudis wanted to lure Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia and lay hands on him there," the Post quoted a person familiar with the information as saying.

It was not clear whether the Saudis intended to arrest and interrogate Khashoggi or to kill him - or if the U.S. warned Khashoggi he was a target, the source told the newspaper.

Khashoggi entered the consulate on October 2 to handle a routine paperwork issue but he never came out, according to family and friends, as well as Turkish authorities.

The U.S. resident has written articles over the past year during his self-imposed exile that were critical of the House of Saud regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS).

Khashoggi, 59, has had a long career as a senior journalist in Saudi Arabia and also as an adviser to top officials.

But since the emergence of bin Salman, 33, as the center of power in the kingdom last year, Khashoggi has been openly critical of the monarchy.

He assailed the prince's reforms as hollow,



accusing him of introducing a new Saudi era of "fear, intimidation, arrests and public shaming".

Robert Pearson, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey, said the case could change the relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

He noted 47 U.S. senators recently voted to ban the U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia - four short of a majority.

Separately, the Washington Post reported that the 15-member Saudi regime team had lain in wait for Khashoggi the day he entered the consulate but never came out.

The American daily obtained a photograph taken from a Turkish police closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera outside the residence of the Saudi regime consul general, Mohammed al-Otaibi, located less than 500 meters from the consulate.

It shows a Mercedes Benz Vito van with tinted windows, which is believed to have transported some of the Saudi suspects from the consulate to Otaibi's residence about two hours after Khashoggi had entered the diplomatic mission.

According to flight tracking records and the people familiar with the investigation, the Saudi regime squad had departed from Istanbul on planes bound for Cairo and Dubai and later for Riyadh.

CCTV disappears from consulate
The developments followed as the Guardian reported that security camera footage had been removed from the Saudi regime consulate in Istanbul, and the Turkish staff had been abruptly told to take a holiday on the day Khashoggi vanished.

Turkish investigators believe the CCTV (closed-circuit television/video surveillance) footage from inside the consulate was onboard the two corporate jets that took the Saudi regime suspects back to Riyadh.

A reporter with the Yeni Safak daily said on Wednesday that Turkey's National Security Service had footage showing Khashoggi's entrance into the Saudi regime consulate and his murder.

These films, he added, would be released by the Anadolu news agency.

Khashoggi's fiancée urges release of CCTV footage

In an opinion piece published in The Washington Post, where Khashoggi was a contributing writer, Khashoggi's fiancée, Hatice Cengiz called on the House of Saud regime to release CCTV footage from the consulate.

Khashoggi's fiancée also expressed confidence in "the abilities of Turkish government officials" and asked the U.S. President Donald Trump to help uncover what had happened to the Riyadh critic whom she said had "been fighting for his principles."

Although Khashoggi knew that his opinions had angered certain people, he entered the

consulate "without doubting he would be safe there," Cengiz added, noting that after three hours of waiting outside the mission, "fear and concern" overcame her.

Britain demands 'urgent answers'

On Tuesday, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt summoned the House of Saud regime ambassador and demanded "urgent answers" about the disappearance of the journalist.

Later, Hunt phoned the Saudi regime Foreign Minister, Adel al-Jubeir, to warn Riyadh over the disappearance.

Saudi regime's dark history of abduction and killing dissidents

Jamal Khashoggi, has now joined the growing list of the Saudi dissidents who have mysteriously disappeared in recent years.

In the last few years, at least three other Saudi nationals, all outspoken critics of the House of Saud regime leadership and all living in Europe, have been kidnapped. Friends and allies say they were thrown into prison in Saudi Arabia - or worse.

"Despite the denials, the oil-rich Kingdom is an absolute monarchy and has a track record of refusing to tolerate dissent by its citizens - both domestically and abroad," according to a report by the Middle East Eye.

The Committee to Protect Journalists Deputy Executive Director Robert Mahoney said in a recent statement that the group was "alarmed" by the reports that Khashoggi may have been killed inside the consulate.

It is no mystery why the House of Saud regime might have wanted to silence Khashoggi, a critic of the leader-in-waiting, Crown Prince MBS.

The journalist wrote frequently in Arabic, penned a regular column for The Washington Post, and kept close ties with countless diplomats and journalists. For over a year, he used that platform to criticize growing repression in Saudi Arabia and urge an end to the war in Yemen.

Whatever his fate, Khashoggi's disappearance has sent a chilling message to critics of the crown prince.

In addition, the crown prince detained more than 100 royals and ministers in a purported corruption sweep last year. Dozens of activists still languish in jail; some may face the death penalty.

Astonishingly, the Saudis detained a sitting prime minister, Saad Hariri of Lebanon, for two weeks in November.

Even spitting Khashoggi out of Turkey would have had precedent. In March, a women's-rights activist, Loujain al-Hathloul, was detained in Abu Dhabi and whisked back to Saudi Arabia, where she remains in jail.

But murdering a critic abroad would be a chilling escalation, a tactic previously used by former dictators like Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi, who used their embassies

to terrorize exiles.

In October, a report by a Canadian academic lab found that the Saudi regime used Israeli-made Pegasus spyware to snoop on the phone of a prominent Saudi dissident living in Canada.

The rights group Prisoners of Conscience, which is an independent non-governmental organization advocating human rights in Saudi Arabia, announced in a post on its official Twitter page last month that Saudi authorities were reportedly keeping more than 2,500 anti-regime activists behind bars as part of a widening crackdown led by bin Salman against Muslim preachers.

Riyadh has suppressed pro-democracy rallies within the kingdom, but they have intensified since January 2016 when the Saudi regime executed respected Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr.

Last year, Awamiyah, mainly populated by Shia Muslims, witnessed angry protests against Riyadh over its controversial campaign to raze the historical Musawara neighborhood of the town, located in the Qatif region, under the pretext of "renovating" the area.

Riyadh responded to the protests with force, prompting heavy clashes with the locals.

Riyadh then deployed military forces with heavy weapons to the town, while bulldozers escorted by heavily armored military vehicles demolished several houses, businesses and historical sites across the Shia-majority region.

Dozens of civilians were killed in the weeks-long military crackdown, including a three-year-old boy who died after a Saudi armored vehicle fired on his family car, according to locals. Some 30,000 people also fled the town. Rights groups said in August that Saudi Arabia may for the first time execute a female human rights activist who was arrested some three years ago on charges of supporting anti-government protests and inciting people to disobey the regime.

Israa al-Ghomgham from the Qatif region in the kingdom's oil-rich Eastern Province came on government radars during 2011 protests in Qatif and demanded an end to discrimination against Shia Muslims and the release of political prisoners.

According to Britain-based international rights group Amnesty International, the House of Saud regime has one of the highest execution rates in the world.

Muslim clerics have also slammed Riyadh for indicting and then executing suspects without giving them a chance to defend themselves, describing the Saudi regime authorities as uncivilized.

The United States and Britain, close allies of Riyadh, have largely kept silent on the regime's suppression of dissent in the kingdom. They have been the major providers of arms to the House of Saud regime during its deadly war on Yemen.

Berri to call for second legislative session if govt not formed by October



Speaker Nabih Berri Wednesday said he would call for a second legislative session of Parliament if a government was not formed by the end of the month, in comments relayed by MPs who attended his weekly meeting.

Meanwhile, the head of the parliamentary bloc of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement has leveled strident criticism at foreign countries, primarily Saudi Arabia, over hindering the formation of a new government in the Arab world.

"Those who hinder the formation of our government are the same who previously held our prime minister captive," Mohammad Raad said during a ceremony in Lebanon's southern city of Nabatieh on Monday.

Saad Hariri stunned Lebanon and the world on November 4, 2017 by announcing his resignation in a live television broadcast from Saudi Arabia. He accused Iran and Hezbollah of sowing strife in the Arab world, an allegation rejected by both sides.

Senior sources close to Hariri and top Lebanese officials said Riyadh had coerced the Lebanese premier into stepping down and put him under house arrest.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun stressed back then that the prime minister was being detained in Saudi Arabia against his will.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's Secretary General, also noted that Saudi authorities had clearly and openly declared a war on Lebanon by holding Prime Minister Hariri hostage and forcing him to quit.

Raad added, "The time has come to shout and say that a government must be formed ... by the will of the nation's people and the will of political forces."

"How can we secure our sovereignty if we can't form our own government unless we can lift the veto of those disrupting the formation a new government from abroad?"

"Lebanese people are involved in the formation of government. They must block all obstacles ... [including] those obstructing the formation from abroad," he noted.

Lebanon's first parliamentary vote in nine years was held on May 6, with over 500 candidates vying for seats. Turnout was 49.2 percent, according to officials.

According to official results, Hezbollah and its political allies secured over half the seats.

Hezbollah as well as groups and individuals affiliated to it won at least 67 seats in Lebanon's parliament, according to the results cited by politicians and campaigns and reported in Lebanese media. Hezbollah's allies include the Amal Movement led by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and the Christian Free Patriotic Movement founded by President Michel Aoun.

The parliamentary seats are split evenly -- 64 for Christians and 64 for Muslims, including Druze, with the two halves further divided among 11 religious groups.

Hariri has called on political parties to "show modesty" in their demands regarding the new government, emphasizing that he is not responsible for the serious delay.

"They are blaming me for the delay whereas each party is clinging to its stances and demands," he told reporters on August 7 ahead of a meeting for the al-Mustaqbal parliamentary bloc.

"Everyone must display modesty and sacrifice for the sake of the country," Hariri pointed out.

Political rivalry led to years of governmental paralysis in Lebanon, and the country did not produce a state budget from 2005 until last year.

The International Monetary Fund has said that Lebanon must urgently address its fiscal policy in order to sustain its high levels of public debt.

(Source: agencies)

Bahraini clerics urge boycott of 'fake' elections

Bahraini clerics have denounced the planned parliamentary elections as "a sham," saying such a vote in a kingdom, which has stripped a majority of its people of their basic rights, will fail to deceive the world's public opinion.

In a statement carried by Arabic-language Lua Lua TV network, the clergymen highlighted Manama's oppressive policies against the entire Bahraini nation, including the majority Shia Muslims as well as the Sunnis.

They said the House of Khalifah regime "cannot fool anyone in the world" by holding "fake" and "unacceptable" elections.

The ruling system in Bahrain, the statement said, is based on denying people their rights, undermining the role of their lawmakers and suppressing the regime's political majority.

The clerics also called for a boycott of the elections slated for November 24.

Casting votes in next month's elections would amount to "oppression against the Muslim nation," the statement read, urging people to continue their resistance in the face of Manama's campaign of suppression against critical voices.

Bahrain's main Shia opposition group, the al-Wafaq National Islamic Society, which was dissolved by the ruling regime in 2016, has already announced a boycott of the polls.

Shia opposition parties similarly boycotted the 2014 elections and described them as a farce.

Since February 2011, Bahraini people have been holding peaceful protest rallies regularly, demanding that the House of Khalifah relinquish power and let a just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

They have also been complaining against widespread discrimination against the Shia majority in the kingdom.

Manama has responded to the demonstrations with an iron fist. The authorities have detained human rights campaigners, broken up major opposition political parties, revoked the nationality of several pro-democracy activists and deported those left stateless.

(Source: Press TV)

Around 1,500 bodies uncovered in Raqqa's largest mass grave to date

A mass grave containing 1,500 corpses has been uncovered in the Syrian city of Raqqa, which used to serve as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terror group's largest stronghold before its seizure by Kurdish militants.

On October 8, a film crew joined a medical team on the ground as they try to identify corpses found in a mass grave from clothes, fingerprints, documents or other special markers.

Over 1500 bodies were found in this grave alone, making it the largest one found in the city so far. Responders are still working to uncover and identify bodies at the site.

(Source: Ruptly)

UN tallies more than 8,000 Afghan civilian casualties so far this year

At least 8,050 Afghan civilians were killed or wounded in the first nine months of 2018, almost half of them targeted by suicide bomb attacks and other improvised devices that may amount to war crimes, the United Nations said on Wednesday.

The number of casualties was roughly in line with the same period a year earlier, when there were 8,084 casualties, with deaths this year rising five percent to 2,798 and injuries falling three percent to 5,252, the report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

said. "As there can be no military solution to the fighting in Afghanistan, the United Nations renews its call for an immediate and peaceful settlement to the conflict," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the top UN official in Afghanistan.

Seventeen years after U.S. forces led a campaign to overthrow the Taliban following the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington, the figures underline how dire the security situation remains.

While the figures show little change in the overall trend of violence, the UN high-

lighted the indiscriminate use of suicide and IED attacks, which killed 1,065 civilians and wounded 2,569 in the first nine months, a total of 3,634 casualties, compared with 3,007 casualties in the same period of 2017.

"UNAMA recalls that attacks deliberately targeting civilians and the murder of civilians are serious violations of international humanitarian law that amount to war crimes," it said in the report.

With parliamentary elections due on Oct. 20, security officials warn that attacks are

likely to pick up on polling stations and other election sites, many of which are located in schools, mosques or health clinics.

A wave of suicide attacks in the eastern province of Nangarhar and in the capital Kabul this year has hit students preparing for exams, spectators at sporting events, people waiting to register for elections as well as Shi'ite mosques. The mainly Shi'ite Hazara minority has been especially heavily targeted by attacks claimed by the local affiliate of ISIL.

(Source: Reuters)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	181015.7
IFX	2012.47

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,320 rials
GBP	55,025 rials
AED	11,430 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$74.56/b
Brent	\$84.52/b
OPEC Basket	\$81.88/b
Gold	\$1,189.35/oz
Silver	\$14.40/oz
Platinum	\$1,076.85/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Sponge iron production rises 19% in H1

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of sponge iron in Iran during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22) rose 19 percent compared to the figure of the same period of time in the past year, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), announced on Tuesday.

Mehdi Karbasian also said that steel ingot, iron pellet, and iron ore concentrate have experienced 14 percent, 38 percent, and 17 percent growth respectively, during the six-month period, IRNA reported.



Fish production to reach 400,000 tons by March 2019

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's production of different types of fish is planned to reach 400,000 tons by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019), according to Arsanal Qasemi, the managing director of Iranian Sea Creatures Production and Export Union.

In an interview with Tasnim news agency, Qasemi also said that shrimp production in the country is planned to hit 30,000 tons by the yearend.

Iran's renewable power plants to export electricity

1 → Currently, there are over 650 megawatts (MW) capacity of renewable power plants operating across Iran and according to Seyyed Mohammad Sadeqzadeh, the head of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), this figure is going to reach 1100 MW by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

Renewables, including hydropower, account for just six percent of energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

Germany plans rules for orphaned British-style companies post-Brexit

Germany plans to let thousands of small businesses that used European Union freedoms to register under British rules to convert to German companies after Britain leaves the bloc.

The law, a draft of which was seen by Reuters, illustrates the detailed preparations Berlin is making for Brexit.

Another law planned by Berlin will allow British citizens to keep their original citizenship when they become Germans for as long as a post-Brexit transition period may last, unlike non-EU citizens, who must surrender their original passport.

The law on company registrations affects about 10,000 small businesses in Germany which chose to register as British limited companies rather than their equivalents under German law because of the lower capital requirements.

Under current regulations, these businesses would have to become German limited liability companies (GmbH), forcing them to increase their capital stock to 25,000 euros. Under the new law, no more capital will be needed when the firms change to register as German companies.

"We want to help these companies make the necessary preparations," Justice Minister Katarina Barley said about the law, which is due to be adopted at a Wednesday cabinet meeting.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has often told audiences that the level of detailed preparation Brexit will require has taken everyone by surprise, giving as an example last year the difficulty of taking family pets on holiday after Britain's exit, when months of quarantine would become necessary.

At the same time, Germany's 16 regions must update legislation to allow English native-language teachers to keep their jobs. Under current law, civil servants must be EU citizens. This will no longer apply to schoolteachers from Britain after it leaves.

(Source: Reuters)

China receives a 2m-barrel cargo of Iranian oil ahead of sanctions

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — China has received the first of its October Iranian crude oil orders on Monday, Reuters reported citing Refinitiv Eikon data and a shipping agent with knowledge of the matter.

As reported, a vessel carrying two million barrels of Iranian oil discharged the crude into a bonded storage tank at the port of Dalian in northeast China on Monday.

According to the sources, the very large crude carrier Dune, operated by National

Iranian Tanker Co, offloaded oil into a bonded storage site at the Xingang section of the port.

The tanker left the Iranian oil port at Kharg Island on Sept. 12, according to ship-tracking data.

However according to Reuters, China office of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and also NIOC did not respond to an email request seeking comment if it is storing oil at Dalian.

Three other NITC tankers are set to arrive in Dalian in the next week or two, the ship-

SMEs account for 10% of exports in Iran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for just 10 percent of the country's exports, according to the managing director of Small Industries Investment Making Fund.

Mohammad-Hossein Moqiseh said it is while export by the SMEs is 60 percent in Japan, 70 percent in Taiwan, and 90 percent in Singapore, the portal of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)of Iran reported.

Although, Sadeq Najafi, the managing director of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), has announced that the value of exports from Iran's SMEs stood at \$7 billion during the first half of current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Septemehr 22), saying that the figure is considerable given the total non-oil exports from the country during the first half, which was \$19 billion.

Some 4,600 small and medium-sized



units are under construction in industrial estates of the country, Najafi announced in August and put the physical progress of constructing these units at over 70 percent.

The official further said that when these units start operation, 74,000 new jobs will be created in the industrial estates.

He also has announced that 36 Iranian SMEs attracted above \$2.3 billion of foreign investments during the previous Iranian calendar year.

China September exports seen slowing further as U.S. tariffs bite: Reuters poll

China's export growth is expected to have further slowed in September, weighed down by a faster decline in orders as an intensifying trade war with the United States starts to hurt Chinese shipments, a Reuters poll showed.

Import growth also likely came off recent highs, which would be a worrying sign for Chinese policymakers counting on domestic demand to shore up economic growth at a time of slower external demand.

Economists see any further slowing in China's growth pace could prompt Beijing to roll out more stimulus measures, particularly steps to bolster small and medium-sized firms, a major source of employment.

China's September export growth likely slowed to 8.9 percent from a year earlier from August's 9.8 percent gain, according to the median estimate of 32 economists in the Reuters poll.

Import growth is also expected to have slowed, to 15 percent versus a 19.9 percent gain in August.

"We expect export growth to slow further in September as rising trade protectionism bites. This September has one less working day than last year, which should also add downside pressure on exports," economists at Nomura said in a recent note.

"In the medium-to-long term, if China-U.S. trade tensions sustain, China's growth would likely be hit beyond the scale indicated by these trade data."

China's overall trade surplus is expected to have shrunk to \$19.4 billion in September from \$27.89 billion in the previous month.

■ Stalling factory growth

Growth in China's factory sector in September stalled after 15 months of expansion, with export orders falling the most in more than two years, a private business survey showed.

An official survey also confirmed a further manufacturing weakening.

In Guangdong, China's biggest province by gross domes-

tic product and one of the most export-oriented provinces, manufacturing activity barely expanded in September after contracting the previous month, the provincial government said.

The State Council, or cabinet, has pledged to raise tax rebates for exporters for the second time this year, and Chinese officials have promised additional steps to help struggling domestic firms.

While official export data has proved surprisingly resilient this year, many analysts believe companies have rushed out shipments to the United States to beat successive rounds of tariffs, raising the risk of a sharp drop-off after duties are actually imposed.

The world's two biggest economies last slapped tit-for-tat tariffs on each other's goods on Sept. 24. There is no specific date set for the next round of tariffs, even as U.S. President Donald Trump has made repeated threats to impose them on virtually all Chinese goods.

(Source: Reuters)

Italy's government digs in over budget plan as pressure rises

The leaders of Italy's ruling parties said on Wednesday they would not backtrack on plans to increase deficit spending, digging in against financial market and EU pressure and criticism from parliament's budgetary watchdog.

The comments came before Economy Minister Giovanni Tria returned to speak in parliament at 1000 a.m. about plans to fix next year's deficit at 2.4 percent of gross domestic product.

That is three times the forecast of the previous center-left administration, drawing criticism from the European Commission and triggering a sharp rise in yields on Italian government bonds.

Tria is returning parliament for a second day after Italy's fiscal watchdog, the par-

liamentary budget office (UPB), on Tuesday refused to validate the government's multi-year budget plan, saying its forecasts for economic growth were too optimistic.

The planning document projected growth targets of 1.5 percent next year, 1.6 percent in 2020 and 1.4 percent in 2021.

Both leaders of the ruling coalition said they would not give in to pressure.

On RAI state radio, anti-establishment 5-Star Movement leader Luigi Di Maio said he would not "betray" Italians by changing the budget plan.

Far-right League leader Matteo Salvini, speaking on RAI state TV, warned "speculators" against betting that the government would climb down.

(Source: Reuters)

IMF raises Russia's 2019 GDP growth projections to 1.8%

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised its projections for Russian economy growth in 2019 to 1.8 percent, according to its latest World Economic Outlook report.

The previous WEO, published in July, projected Russia's GDP growth at 1.7 percent in 2018 and 1.5 percent in 2019.

According to the report, the current changes in projections for Russia are largely supported by higher oil prices and recovering domestic demand.

Priority areas in Russia to ensure further economic growth "include improving property rights and governance, enhancing the institutional infrastructure, reforming labor markets, and investing in innovation and infrastructure," the report says.

The International Monetary Fund has

also slightly lowered its forecast for average oil prices in 2018 and 2019 to \$69.38 and \$68.76, respectively, according to its latest WEO report.

"Oil prices are expected to average \$69.38 a barrel in 2018 (higher than the April 2018 WEO projection of \$62.30 and the 2017 price of \$52.80 a barrel). Global oil supply is expected to gradually increase over the forecast horizon, lowering oil prices to \$68.76 a barrel in 2019, and further to about \$60 a barrel in 2023," the report says.

In July, the IMF projected an increase in the average price of oil, expecting them to amount to \$70.23 in 2018 and \$68.99 in 2019

(Source: Sputnik)

Asian shares subdued as global bond sell-off eases; sterling rises

Asian shares barely moved on Wednesday after world stocks hit eight-week lows the previous day on worries about global economic growth, although the British pound stayed firm on hopes for a Brexit deal.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS was flat, while Japan's Nikkei average .N225 fell 0.4 percent and the Australian benchmark was up just 0.1 percent.

In China, mainland's benchmark Shanghai Composite .SSEC shed 0.2 percent in choppy trade and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.3 percent.

"As uncertainty continues to prevail in financial markets across the world, many investors are staying on the sidelines until more clarity emerges in U.S. Treasury and Chinese markets," said Yasuo Sakuma, chief investment officer at Libra Investments.

Benchmark U.S. 10-year Treasury yields US10YT=RR touched a 7-1/2-year peak of 3.261 percent and those on 30-year bonds US30YT=RR hit their highest in more than four years, but later fell back.

Some traders say comments on Tuesday by U.S. President Donald Trump helped cool Treasuries yields. He said the Federal Reserve was going too fast in raising rates when inflation was minimal and government data pointed to a strong economy.

Italian government bond yields also fell from multi-year



highs after Economy Minister Giovanni Tria pledged to do whatever is necessary to restore calm if market turbulence turns into a financial crisis.

On stock markets, Wall Street showed a mixed picture, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average .DJJ falling 0.21 percent while the S&P 500 .SPX and the Nasdaq Composite .IXIC were little changed.

The MSCI All-Country World index .MIWD00000PUS, which tracks shares in 47 countries, hit the lowest level since August 16 overnight. It last traded up 0.1 percent on the day.

The International Monetary Fund cut global economic growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019, as well as its U.S. and China estimates for next year, saying the two countries would

feel the brunt of the impact of their trade war next year.

The dollar dipped due to a fall in U.S. bond yields after touching a seven-week peak against a basket of currencies. The dollar index .DXY last traded flat at 95.586.

Sterling GBP=D3 continued to gain after a report that rekindled hopes that Britain and the European Union are on the brink of a Brexit deal. It last traded up 0.1 percent at \$1.3158.

"We can't be too optimistic about the Brexit process, because even if a deal can be struck at an anticipated special EU summit in November, it has to get through the British Parliament," said Kengo Suzuki, chief FX strategist at Mizuho Securities.

The offshore yuan CNH=D4 rose 0.1 percent to 6.9236 after falling earlier this week to as low as 6.9371 to the dollar, its weakest since mid-August.

Oil prices edged lower on Wednesday after the IMF lowered its global growth forecasts but prices were somewhat supported as Hurricane Michael churned towards Florida, causing the shutdown of nearly 40 percent of U.S. Gulf of Mexico crude output.

U.S. crude CLCv1 oil futures dropped 0.5 percent to \$74.61 a barrel and Brent crude LCOc1 futures eased 0.2 percent to \$84.80 a barrel.

Gold prices XAU= stood flat as investors remained cautious after U.S. Treasury yields hit then retreated from multi-year highs.

(Source: Reuters)



tracking data shows. Some of those cargoes are also likely to end up in bonded storage as the refineries in the region, controlled by CNPC, are not equipped to process Iranian oil, said three sources at state-run Chinese refiners.

Keeping oil in bonded storage gives the shipment owner the option to sell into China or to other buyers in the region.

In early 2014, NIOC leased bonded tanks in Dalian and oil from there was shipped to South Korea and India, Reuters reported.

Oil prices dip as IMF lowers global growth outlook; eyes on U.S. hurricane

Oil prices edged down on Wednesday after the IMF lowered its global growth forecasts, but markets were supported as Hurricane Michael churned towards Florida causing the shutdown of nearly 40 percent of U.S. Gulf of Mexico crude output.

Brent crude futures were down 2 cents at \$84.98 a barrel by 0640 GMT, after a 1.3 percent gain on Tuesday.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was down by 12 cents, or 0.2 percent, at \$74.84 a barrel, after rising nearly 1 percent in the previous session.

The International Monetary Fund downgraded its global economic growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019 on Tuesday, raising concerns that demand for oil products may slump as well.

Trade tensions and rising import tariffs were taking a toll on commerce, while emerging markets struggle with tighter financial conditions and capital outflows, the IMF said.

"Prices are peaking at the most opportunistic time given the waning global growth narrative," said Stephen Innes, head of trading APAC at OANDA in Singapore.

In the United States, nearly 40 percent of daily crude oil production was lost from offshore U.S. Gulf of Mexico wells on Tuesday because of platform evacuations and shut-ins



ahead of Hurricane Michael.

Michael has strengthened into an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 hurricane, according to the latest advisory from the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

Oil producers evacuated personnel from 75 platforms as the storm made its way through the central Gulf on the way to landfall on Wednesday on the Florida Panhandle.

The country's largest privately owned

crude terminal, the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port LLC, said late on Tuesday it had halted operations at its marine terminal.

The facility is the only U.S. port able to fully load and unload tankers with a capacity of 2 million barrels of oil.

Companies turned off daily production of about 670,800 barrels of oil and 726 million cubic feet of natural gas by midday on Tuesday, according to offshore regulator the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement.

Iran's crude exports fell further in the first week of October, according to tanker data and an industry source, as buyers sought alternatives ahead of U.S. sanctions that take effect on Nov. 4.

Industry and government data on U.S. crude inventories will be delayed by one day this week because of a public holiday on Monday. The American Petroleum Institute is due to release data on Wednesday, while the U.S. Energy Information Administration is due to publish on Thursday.

"There seems to be more positive supply chatter in the equation this week, and although we know it's maintenance season, the markets are so long positioned that we could see an outsized move on a big build," Innes said.

(Source: Reuters)

Libya's crude oil output hit by Sharara security fears: sources

Libya's crude oil output has dipped again due to the deteriorating security situation around its largest oil field, Sharara, sources said Tuesday.

Sources with knowledge of Libya's production said an increase in local militia activity in the past week led to some oil workers evacuating fields. Crude output in Libya had recently touched five-year highs at a critical time for global markets ahead of the imposition of US sanctions on Iran.

By the end of last week, the Sharara field was producing around 250,000 b/d. However, output is expected to have dropped over the last two days because of security concerns. In September, Sharara was producing around 300,000 b/d.

Concerns over security around the field come as international oil companies BP and Eni alongside National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced their intention to resume exploration activities in the war-torn country.

Sharara -- a joint venture between state-owned NOC and a consortium of Total, Repsol, Statoil and OMV -- has seen several closures over the past few years due to worker protests and attacks on export pipelines.

Meanwhile, sources indicated to S&P Global Platts that the situation remains tense around Sharara and security issues



have hindered travel arrangements to and from the fields.

NOC shut Sharara mid-July after gunmen entered a substation and kidnapped four staff members. The state producer also declared force majeure on crude oil exports from Zawiya at the time.

Representatives at NOC were unavailable for comment.

Libya's oil output hit 1.05 million b/d in September, its highest level since June 2013, according to the latest S&P Global Platts OPEC production survey.

In an interview to S&P Global Platts last month, NOC chairman Mustafa Sanalla admitted security concerns and a lack of foreign investment would continue to weigh on attempts to increase output.

Sanalla was forced to flee NOC's headquarters in Tripoli after the building came under attack from gunmen.

(Source: Platts)

Spain scraps "sun tax," moves to boost solar self-consumption

Following through on a move that was first hinted at in June, the Spanish government has put an end to the much-reviled "sun tax" which had imposed a levy on solar self-consumption.

The change was approved by Spain's Council of Ministers early this week, after being submitted by the country's Ministry for the Ecological Transition, headed up by Teresa Ribera.

The legislation was first introduced -- by Royal decree -- back in 2015, by then-Spanish minister of industry, energy and tourism minister Jose Manuel Soria.

The move, which would tax the installation of self-consumption systems such as rooftop solar -- leading to its nom de guerre, the "sun tax" -- was opposed then, and has been opposed throughout the three years it has been in place.

However, with a new Spanish government comes a new Minister of the Ecological Transition, Teresa Ribera, who this week successfully introduced a package of measures to boost the country's transition to a low-carbon economy, including the elimination of the "sun tax" and other rules which have prevented renewable energy and electric vehicle adoption.

The move comes as part of a larger initiative to reduce the country's high electricity prices.

First floated in June in response to the



European Parliament's request for Spain to ban the "sun tax" and any obstacles to solar self-consumption -- and following the country's announced desire for a more ambitious 2030 European Union renewable energy target -- the new flotilla of legislative measures include a series of rules intended to smooth the development of solar.

Spain is known as a beautifully sunny country, but its solar industry has lagged behind its national peers due in part to the imposed legislation on self-consumption -- the ability to consume your own electricity as you produce it, ie, through solar panels.

The new rules include simplifying procedures for registering new power generators for self-consumption (those not exceeding 100 kW in size); the right to self-consume energy for community renewable energy projects; and removing all costs imposed for self-consumed power.

(Source: reneweconomy.com.au)

Michael shuts nearly 40 percent of U.S. Gulf of Mexico oil output

Nearly 40 percent of daily crude oil production was lost from offshore U.S. Gulf of Mexico wells on Tuesday because of platform evacuations and shut-ins ahead of Hurricane Michael.

Oil producers - including Anadarko Petroleum Corp, BHP Billiton, BP and Chevron Corp - have since Monday evacuated personnel from 75 platforms as the storm made its way through the central Gulf on the way to landfall on Wednesday on the Florida Panhandle.

The country's largest privately owned crude terminal, the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port LLC, said on Tuesday it had halted operations at its marine terminal. The facility is the only port in the United States capable of fully loading and unloading tankers with a capacity of 2 million barrels of oil.

Companies turned off daily production of about 670,800 barrels of oil and 726 million cubic feet of natural gas by midday on Tuesday, according to offshore regulator the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE).

The evacuations affected about 11 percent of the occupied platforms in the Gulf, it said.

U.S. crude futures settled up less than 1 percent at \$74.96 per barrel, reflecting the declining importance of the Gulf of Mexico in output because of the growth of production from



the nation's onshore shale fields.

Crude output lost in the two days of storm shut-ins represents about 9 percent of the U.S. production of 11.1 million barrels per day, according to data from the Energy Information Administration.

In addition to shutting in wells, oil producers also halted

most offshore drilling operations by evacuating three drilling rigs and moving eight others out of the storm area, BSEE said.

Coastal and onshore energy businesses also started preparations for what is expected to become a Category 3 storm packing winds of at least 111 miles per hour (178 km per hour).

Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspectors at Southern Co's Farley Plant near Dothan, Alabama, about 100 miles (160 km) from the coast, were observing final storm preparations at the 1,751 megawatt (MW) nuclear power station on Tuesday, NRC spokesman Joey Ledford said in an email. One megawatt can power about 1,000 U.S. homes on average.

The U.S. Coast Guard on Tuesday closed the ports of Panama City and Pensacola, Florida, and the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway east of Perdido Pass to vessel traffic, citing expectations for gale force winds within 12 hours.

Other ports further west were still operating normally. However, operations including rail car loadings will cease at 5 p.m. at the State of Alabama's Mobile port, spokeswoman Sheri Collins said. Pilots who bring vessels into the port's ship channel halted transport due to rough seas and will resume after the storm passes, she said.

(Source: Reuters)

Total chief executive says no shortage of supplies in oil market

The chief executive of French oil major Total said there is no shortage of supplies in the oil market, instead blaming the recent jump in prices to near \$85 a barrel on geopolitical fears.

Patrick Pouyanne, speaking at the Oil & Money conference in London, said that Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Russia were capable of meeting demand, despite the drop in supplies from Iran due to U.S. sanctions.

"I think the market is well supplied today," Pouyanne said on the sidelines of the conference. "Russia, Saudi Arabia, UAE even Libya [are all raising output]. Inventories are going up. The market is more afraid? . . . of geopolitical hiccups."

Pouyanne said that while Total had stopped buying oil from Iran in July -- ahead of the reimposition of U.S. sanctions -- they had not had any trouble finding replacement barrels.

He had joked earlier on stage at the



conference that "with every tweet the [oil] price goes up" -- in a thinly veiled reference

to U.S. President Donald Trump's habit of lambasting OPEC for not doing more to

lower prices, which drew laughs from the industry audience. But he said later he was "exaggerating" and would not be drawn on his view of U.S. sanctions.

In the medium-term he warned that prices may not fall back quickly, however, due to years of under-investment since 2014, when oil prices slumped. They have risen 50 percent in the past year, partly due to Iran but also concerns about longer term supplies.

He said Total was now looking at up to 25 projects it could give the green light to, having itself curbed investment during the price slump. While oil prices have risen, the cost of developing projects remained relatively low, Pouyanne said, as the oil services sector is still suffering from over capacity.

"Costs are still very low and I think they'll stay that way for some time."

(Source: Financial Times)

Oil producer Genel Energy sees 2018 output above target

Iraqi Kurdistan-focused oil producer Genel Energy expects 2018 output to be slightly above the prior target of 32,800 barrels of oil per day (bopd), as production ramps up at its cash generating Peshkabir field, it said on Wednesday.

Shares of the company rose 4.1 percent to 256.1 pence in early minutes of trade.

Genel, which has been operating in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for over a decade, has benefited from strong output at the Peshkabir oilfield operated by Norwegian oil firm DNO ASA and 25 percent owned by Genel.

DNO said earlier this week that production at Peshkabir had ramped up to 50,000 bopd, meeting the year-end target ahead of schedule and below budget.

Genel, looking to wipe out its net debt by year-end, also said it became net cash positive with a cash pile of \$281 million and net debt reduced to \$16 million as of Sept. 30.

Founded in 2011 by former BP boss Tony Hayward and billionaire financier Nathaniel Rothschild, Genel has been having a good run, as Kurdistan regional government makes regular payments to the company. This has helped the company's shares to more than double in value this year.

Its cash position was helped by the receipt of \$32 million after the end of third quarter, related to July exports.

Net production for the third quarter averaged slightly lower than last year, at 33,650 bopd, as the company recovers from a slowdown in production at its Taq Taq field, once considered its flagship.

The field has now stabilized and its five-well program, aimed at increasing production, is underway at the field, the company said.

Genel now expects 2018 capital expenditure to be towards the lower end of its prior guidance range of \$95 million-\$125 million, which was narrowed in August from \$95 million-\$145 million.

(Source: Reuters)

Turkmenistan says close to Russia gas deal, but Gazprom stays quiet

Turkmenistan said on Tuesday it was in talks about restarting natural gas exports to Russia as soon as next year, but Russian gas giant Gazprom did not corroborate the statement.

The decision by Russia, once the biggest buyer of Turkmen gas, to halt purchases in 2016, coupled with a decline in its price, triggered a currency crisis in the Central Asian nation whose economy depends heavily on energy exports.

Gazprom Chief Executive Alexei Miller visited Ashgabat on Tuesday as part of a Russian government delegation and met Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov.

Turkmen state news agency TDH said the sides discussed "the matter of resuming Turkmen gas supplies from Jan. 1 2019".

"Substantive negotiations on this topic are under way between Gazprom and the Turkmen partners and concrete agreements will be reached in the nearest future," TDH said without attributing the statement to either side.

But Gazprom's issued only a brief statement about the same meeting without indicating whether a gas deal was close.

"The meeting reviewed the prospects of Russian-Turkmen cooperation in the gas sector," it said.

Turkmenistan's manat currency trades at less than a fifth of its official value against the dollar on the black market, which has flourished because of restrictions on legal transactions.

Some foreign contractors in Turkmenistan have also complained that the state has failed to pay them for completed work, although Ashgabat has at the same time completed several large projects aimed at diversification, such as the construction of a fertilizer plant and a sea port.

(Source: Reuters)

Eni to acquire half of BP's Libya oil and gas license

Italian energy major Eni has agreed to acquire half of BP's oil and gas license in Libya, the companies said on Monday, aiming to resume exploration activities next year.

Eni will acquire 42.5 percent of BP's 85 percent stake and take on operatorship of the major exploration and production sharing agreement.

The two companies and the National Oil Corporation of Libya signed a letter of intent on Monday about the restarting of exploration work.

The Libyan Investment Authority holds the remaining 15 percent interest in the contract which oversees three areas -- two in the onshore Ghadames basin and one in the offshore Sirt basin -- originally awarded in 2007.

Eni, the most active of the major energy operators in Libya, already has existing exploration and production activities and infrastructure nearby in the Ghadames basin. The company's 2018 oil and gas output is estimated to stand at 250,000 barrels of oil equivalent a day, according to energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie.

BP withdrew personnel in 2011 and suspended exploration work in 2014 after security concerns following an uprising. The deal is expected to be completed by the end of 2018, with exploration estimated to restart next year.

Since 2011, when Muammer Gaddafi was toppled, the country's oil industry has been caught in the middle of rival factions who have made financial and political demands often holding energy infrastructure hostage.

With power split between east and west, oilfields and ports were used as bargaining chips -- production was disrupted, worker protests halted operations and blockades became commonplace in recent years.

A period of lower oil prices since 2014 only hindered further the industry that is the lifeblood of the Libyan economy.

Confidence in the war-torn country has since picked up and production has surpassed 1.2m barrels a day.

But the situation remains highly uncertain. Just last month gunmen stormed NOC's headquarters in Tripoli, killing two employees and injuring dozens.

Although NOC chairman Mustafa Sanalla hailed the deal as a sign of optimism about Libya's future and "further inward investment" to come, for BP the sale is a climb down after its high-profile re-entry into the country more than a decade ago.

The deal in 2007 was a sign of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the UK and Libya, with former prime minister Tony Blair present at a major signing that also intended to mark Mr Gaddafi's re-entry into the global community

(Source: Financial Times)

NEWS IN BRIEF



India ranks low on 'inequality index'

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — India ranks among the bottom ten countries in a new worldwide index released on Tuesday by UK-based charity Oxfam International on the commitment of different nations to reduce inequalities.

A report titled 'Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index' ranks India 147th among 157 countries, describing the country's commitment to reducing inequality as a "a very worrying situation" given that the population of India exceeds 1.3 billion, many of whom live in grinding poverty.

The second edition of the annual index finds that countries such as South Korea, Namibia and Uruguay are taking strong steps to reduce inequality. However, countries such as India and Nigeria "do very badly" overall, as does the U.S. among rich countries, showing what Oxfam describes as a lack of commitment to closing the inequality gap.

India also fares poorly on labour rights and respect for women in the workplace, reflecting the fact that the majority of the labour force is employed in the agricultural and informal sectors, which lack union organization and enforcement of gender rights.

The index is topped by Denmark, based on its high and progressive taxation, high social spending and good protection of workers.



Taliban warn to disrupt polls

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — Breaking their silence on the upcoming parliamentary polls, the Taliban on Monday issued a stern warning of disrupting the October 20 elections, adding to the anxiety of candidates and voters.

The campaigning for polls kicked off last week. Originally slated for 2015, the election has been repeatedly deferred due to the fragile security environment and government's lack of preparedness.

Taliban and its affiliate groups have always opposed the democratic processes in Afghanistan and have repeatedly issued threats against those participating in elections. This year, the warning was delayed, which coincides with a spate of attacks both by the Taliban ISIS in recent months, which have killed hundreds of people, including six nominees for the parliamentary elections.

In its statement, the Taliban described the elections as a "bogus" U.S. move to consolidate its invasion of Afghanistan and urged Afghans to avoid participation.

Meanwhile, a young Afghan parliamentary candidate was among eight people killed in a suicide attack in the southern province of Helmand on Tuesday.



Dhaka rejects new Pakistan envoy

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — In an unsavory development that is likely to worsen relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, Dhaka has refused to accept Islamabad's new envoy following allegations of Pakistan's diplomatic mission being misused to perpetrate activities of Pakistan's intelligence agency against Dhaka and Delhi.

The post of High Commissioner of Pakistan in Dhaka has been vacant since this March, and Pakistan's new government had now nominated Saqlain Syedah as a new envoy to Dhaka.

Sheikh Hasina government in Dhaka has refused to accept the new envoy, accusing the Pakistani High Commission of encouraging activities against the Bangladesh government.

A report in Economic Times newspaper, quoting Bangladesh government sources, said the Pakistani High Commission in Dhaka has emerged as a "center of anti-government activities as well as activities against India".

The report quoted sources alleging that Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka was misusing social media tools such as Facebook to spread disinformation campaign.

"It is no secret that Pak-Bangla ties are far from cordial and the Hasina government did not budge from executing the 1971 pro-Pak war criminals over the past 10 years despite Pakistan's plea," said the report.

Bangladesh and Pakistan, which were part of one entity following the partition of British India in 1947, were separated following the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Ever since, the two countries have shared bitter ties.



'Heatwave to affect people in India, Pakistan'

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — The climate change is real and it is illustrated by the heat wave conditions spreading like a plague in India and Pakistan. According to a new research, it can have dangerous consequences in these two countries in near future.

In 2015, India and Pakistan experienced heatwave conditions that ended up killing over 3,600 people in just three months. The history might repeat itself, says a new report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body set up in 1988.

The landmark report, released in South Korea on Monday, was compiled by a team of 91 authors from 40 countries following the 2015 Paris climate agreement, in which policymakers from around the world, including India and Pakistan, agreed to work towards limiting the global average temperature increase to 1.5°C.

The IPCC report reveals the widespread effects of global warming of 1.5°C and above, which includes increased coastal flooding and the salinization of river beds, besides increased heatwaves. And the south Asian region, where millions of vulnerable people live and work outdoors, is especially at risk for all of this, it says.

After India-Russia defense deal, Pakistan to import drones from China

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — In a new development that military observers believe can potentially lead to arms race in the region and lead to more tensions between the two estranged nuclear-armed neighbors — India and Pakistan — China is likely to export drones to Pakistan.

According to a report in China's state-controlled newspaper Global Times, Pakistan will import 48 Chinese drones in what is seen as the largest such arms deal of its kind.

An ambitious deal involving as many as 48 Wing Loong IIs, the report quotes military expert and TV commentator Song Zhongping sayin that it would be China's largest export deal for drones to date.

Wing Loong II, made by Chengdu Aircraft Industrial (Group) Company, is a high-end reconnaissance and strike multi-role endurance unmanned aircraft system. It made its maiden flight in February last year, China's Xinhua News Agency reported.

It makes sense the aerobatic team was closely involved with the deal, Song is quoted in the report, noting that the team is expected to train the drone operators. The deal is trust-worthy given the close military ties between the two countries and Pakistan's need for drones, he added.

U.S. drones like the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper are technologically more advanced,



but Washington limits their export, Song said, adding that the Chinese drones will enjoy more success in the international market in the future as they perform similarly at a lower cost.

The Pakistan Air Force's Sherdils Aerobatic Team did not reveal how much it was worth, when it was struck or when the Wing Loong IIs will be delivered, the report added.

But the air force academy aerobatics team announced that in the future the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex Kamra and the Aviation

Industry Corporation of China's Chengdu Aircraft Industrial (Group) Company will jointly manufacture the drones.

Pertinently, India sealed a \$5.43 billion (Rs 40,000 crore) deal with Russia for advanced S-400 Triumf air defense missile systems last week. The agreement to buy the world's most lethal surface-to-air missile system was reached during Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi, which Pakistani media said "affects the balance of power in

the South Asian region".

Indian military experts, quoted by Times of India newspaper, were unperturbed about the development. "They will be good targets for our air defense missile systems. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) like Wing Loong-IIs may be good over Chhattisgarh but will be dead meat in defended or hostile airspace along the Line of Control or for that matter, Doklam," a senior officer was quoted saying.

Pakistanis and Indians have traded hostilities since the partition of erstwhile British India in 1947. The two countries have gone to war on three occasions since the acrimonious divide and border clashes over the contested Kashmir region continue despite the ceasefire accord.

In recent years, Pakistan has inched closer to China, dumping the U.S. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under 'One belt one road' has given new direction to cooperation between the two new all-weather allies.

On Tuesday, the two countries also signed 8 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) worth \$100 million for mutual investment in seafood, agriculture, steel and pharmaceutical sectors. Around 14 private companies from both sides signed MoUs for mutual investment and joint ventures to expedite the trade and business between the two countries, said a report in The News International.

Nikki Hailey calls it quits, Twitter says 'good riddance'

1 → A Twitter user 'Vasperillio' questioned those who call Hailey a "moderate". "If Nikki Hailey is what passes for a moderate in Trumpland then America and Americans are screwed," he tweeted. Another user 'Einsjamneutron' called her a "poisonous person with appalling displays of arrogance and bullying."

Abby Martin, host of Empire Files, called her "neocon lapdog" that "treated the world with contempt, blamed the oppressed, pushed regime change for 'human rights' while endorsing Israeli massacres and Saudi genocide. Her beligerence made the U.S. less respected and more dangerous for everyone living under the boot of empire".

Ben Rhodes, the author of 'The World as it is: Memoir of the Obama', said Hailey's tenure at the UN was marked by "an assault on the UN and multilateralism, a historic collapse of



American standing, and a cruel disregard for human rights."

A Twitter user Shafique Uqaila said Hailey's departure from the UN is expected to "make this dear world of ours safer than it was during her presence in the UN". Pertinently, the U.S. withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council and made mockery of International Criminal Court during her tenure.

There was a bit of sarcasm as well. A Twitter user Jack Bahjat asked how many people were left in the Trump cabinet. "I think at the end Trump will resign too," he tweeted. A user by the name 'Danny' said there are many vacancies in the Trump cabinet now, with both Hailey and Sarah Huckabee Sanders done at the year's end. "No wonder Trump hires family. Only people who can tolerate him."

It remains to be seen who replaces Hailey. But, the damage is done.

Global media and Muslims: Selective coverage, selective outrage

1 → At the same time, Lebanese people were in a state of mourning, after 43 people were killed and 200 others wounded in multiple suicide bombings in Beirut. But the bombings in Beirut — for which ISIS claimed responsibility — drew no outrage from world leaders, no candle-light demonstrations from human rights defenders, no hashtags or live blogs from Western media.

Blatant double standards

On May 31 2017, a devastating truck bomb in the diplomatic enclave of Kabul claimed at least 100 lives and injured more than 450, mostly civilians. According to security officials, the intended target of 1500 kg explosives packed in a sewage tanker was the 'green zone' — housing foreign embassies — but Afghan policemen manning the main entrance stopped the vehicle from going inside, sacrificing their own lives to save foreign diplomats. It was the deadliest attack with unprecedented civilian casualties on the soil of Afghanistan since 2001 but the news media coverage made it look like just another terror attack, because the victims were poor Afghans.

If the truck packed with ammunition had managed to go past the main entrance and hit the intended target — foreign embassies and NATO headquarters — it would have been a different scenario altogether. But, since the Afghan policemen foiled the plan of attackers, the casualties were all Afghan civilians, which is not something Western readers and viewers are interested in. It was followed by two more deadly attacks in the same week.

The attacks continue as the protracted war stretches into its 18th year now. But these attacks are not 'news' anymore for the mainstream Western media, because the violence in Afghanistan has been normalized to the extent that lives of Afghans don't matter to them.

A day before the Kabul 'green zone' attack, more than 40 people were killed in a spate of explosions in central Baghdad's Karrada area, bringing back chilling memories of the truck bomb attack in which 320 people were killed in the same neighborhood. Less than two weeks after the Karrada attack, a suicide bomber blew himself up in the town of Musayyib, south of Baghdad, killing at least 30 people. These attacks elicited no angry reactions and no vigils were held. There were no banner headlines and no editorials. World leaders did not deem it important to send out messages of solidarity, unlike Paris attack or Brussels attack or London attack.

It is important to note that Iraq has been turned into a bedlam because of U.S. military intervention and the resurgence of militancy in the form of ISIS can be blamed on America's flawed Middle East policy. As Noam Chomsky once told me, Americans owe huge reparations to Iraqis and Afghans for destroying their lives and their homes.

Iranian capital city Tehran also had a brush with terror on June 7 2017, when two of the most important symbols of Iranian pride — parliament house and Ayatollah Khomeini's

mausoleum — came under attack. At least 17 people were killed in two simultaneous attacks. But, reportage in the Western media was in sync with President Trump's statement that Iran was "falling victim to the evil they promote". Tehran later denounced his reaction as "repugnant".

More recently, the deadly attack on a military parade in southwestern Iranian province of Ahvaz claimed almost 30 lives, including children. The attack was claimed by a group that traces links to Arab states, so obviously the Western media and Western leaders had reservations in condemning the attack.

The simple truth is: Muslims are far more likely to die at the hands of other 'Muslims', and they are also more likely to be killed by Westerners who seek to exterminate 'Islamic extremists'.

In Yemen, the carnage continues and the world unforgivably looks the other way. Thousands of people have been killed and injured, mostly in airstrikes. Saudi-led coalition has been committing horrendous war crimes in Yemen but the U.S., Britain, France and other 'allies' keep shipping bombs to Riyadh. Unfortunately, the coverage of Yemen war is pathetically erratic while we had wall-to-wall media coverage of the war in Syria. The answer is simple: most of the Western powers are complicit in the genocide of Yemenis, hence it is a forgotten war.

Muslim attackers, non-Muslim attackers

According to a study by a team of researchers from Georgia State University, attacks by people claiming to be Muslim received 449 percent more coverage on average in recent years than those perpetrated by virtually anyone else. "When attacks are perpetrated by a Muslim, they receive drastically more coverage," Erin Kearns, the lead author of the study, was quote saying. "Across every model that we looked at, we are still finding that Muslim perpetrators have at least 200 percent increase in coverage."

Why do Muslim perpetrators dominate headlines? Who is a terrorist? Apparently, a Muslim is a terrorist even if he is mentally ill, and a non-Muslim is mentally-ill even if he is a terrorist. It's terrorism only when Muslims do it. As George Orwell so succinctly put it, "Actions are held to be good or bad, not on their own merits, but according to who does them."

In November 2009, when a Muslim US army major fatally shot 13 people in Texas, the attack was quickly characterized as 'terrorism'. It was indeed an act of terrorism and American Muslim groups also strongly and unequivocally condemned the shooting.

But when a US military officer went on a rampage in southern Afghanistan in March 2012, mowing down 16 civilians — including nine children and three women — no Western media outlet called him a 'terrorist'. The media protected his identity and refrained from mentioning his faith, because the label

is strictly reserved for Muslim perpetrators. All major news outlets in the West reported that the soldier "was suffering from the stress of a fourth combat tour", had a "brain injury" and "marital problems".

Every time there is a terrorist attack, Muslims watch the news with uneasiness and alarm, not because every terrorist is a Muslim but because there is amplified media coverage and a deluge of Islamophobic rhetoric on social media whenever the perpetrator is identified as Muslim.

To put things into perspective, according to FBI, 94 percent of terrorist attacks carried out in the U.S. between 1980 and 2005 have been by non-Muslims, and less than two percent terrorist attacks in Europe in the past five years were carried out by Muslims.

Refugee crisis and vilification

When three men went on a rampage at London Bridge in June 2017, killing seven people, global media went berserk. The religion of perpetrators was repeatedly mentioned to emphasize that it was 'Islamic terrorism' by 'radical Islamists', even though clerics at London city's largest mosque clearly condemned the 'deranged and despicable' act. It was terrorism, but not 'Islamic terrorism'. They were terrorists but not 'Islamists'.

London Bridge attack, followed by Finsbury Park attack, and before that Westminster attack, dominated headlines for weeks. Seasoned 'commentators' spoke of how Islam was a 'part of problem' and why Muslim refugees cannot be trusted, without examining the cause and genesis of refugee crisis.

Why is the European Union facing unprecedented numbers of refugees? Why are Syrians and Afghans and Iraqis and Somalis risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe? No, they are not "seeking a better life" as some believe, they are setting off into the Mediterranean to seek refugee from war and persecution, for which U.S. and European governments are responsible. Those following their perilous journey will understand why the hashtag #SyrianRefugeeCrisis is just as devastating as #PrayForParis.

Three countries make up more than half of the world refugees: Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), Somalia (1.1 million) — all Muslim countries, devastated by unending war and grinding poverty, for which Western governments must share the blame.

In Afghanistan, as President Ghani has repeatedly said, it is an 'imposed war'. Most of the European countries are part of the U.S.-led coalition — or have been — that is fighting the war. In Syria, America and its allies have been financially and militarily supporting 'rebel forces' in their fight against Bashar al-Assad government. In Somalia, the intervention of U.S. has only intensified the civil war, forcing thousands to flee their homes.

Plight of Hazaras and Rohingyas

On August 7 2017, Taliban joined forces with ISIS to overrun Hazara-dominated Mirza

Olang village in northern Afghan province Sar e Pul, killing at least 50 civilians. On August 2 2017, a suicide attack at a packed Shia mosque in western Afghanistan killed at least 37 people and injured 60 others.

In the month of Ramadan last year, ISIS suicide bomber and gunmen forced their way into a popular mosque in Hazara-dominated Dasht e Barchi area of Kabul, killing four people and injuring at least a dozen. In the month of Muharram last year, there was an attack on Ziyarat e Sakhi, a popular Shia shrine in Kabul, in which 18 worshippers were killed and 54 others injured. On the day of Arb'een last year, terrorists struck again, killing at least 27 people and wounding hundreds at the Baqir ul Uloom mosque in central Kabul.

This year, the attacks targeting Hazara Shias, particularly in Kabul, have intensified. There was a deadly attack on a school in Shia-neighbourhood of Kabul in August, killing at least 34 school children. In the same neighbourhood, a month later, more than 30 people were killed when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives inside a wrestling club.

One thing common about all these attacks is that the victims were Hazara Shias. Afghanistan has a grim history of ethnic violence, especially when it comes to targeted killing of Hazara Shias. These attacks have brought back chilling memories of 1990s when the Taliban would raid houses, identify and kill Hazara Shias.

The attacks on Hazara Shias in Afghanistan and also in Pakistan have become so routine that many major news outlets do not consider it newsworthy anymore. Imagine the anger and outrage if ISIS terrorists had attacked a church or a synagogue in Paris or Manchester or Manhattan or even Mumbai? That explains the hypocrisy of mainstream news media.

Similarly heart wrenching is the plight of Rohingya Muslims in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. The communal violence fanned by the Burmese government led by Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has led to the killing of hundreds of Rohingyas and displaced thousands. Satellite images have shown how military burnt Rohingya villages. But there has been little international action so far. Aung San continues to be the darling of the Western leaders.

As per conservative estimates, there are around 905,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar presently, although some human rights bodies have put the figure higher. The exodus of persecuted Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar's Rakhine state started in October 2016, following the crackdown by Burmese security forces. However, things took nasty turn in August last year when more than 720,000 Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh en masse to escape persecution, murder, arson and rape. The savagery in Rakhine was described by the United Nations as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" →13

Cyberspace geopolitics, a look at Trump's first National Cyber Strategy

By Mehdi Pourhassani

TEHRAN — The U.S. administration has recently released the first national cyber-security strategy of the White House during Trump's presidency.

The strategy, which is Washington's most ambitious macro policy on cyberspace, has four pillars of priority and a number of low-key strategies or policies designed to fulfill these pillars.

Pillar I: Defend the homeland by protecting networks, system, functions and data;

Pillar II: Promote American prosperity by nurturing a secure, thriving digital economy and fostering strong domestic innovation;

Pillar III: Preserve peace and security by strengthening the ability of the United States—in concert with allies and partners—to deter and, if necessary, punish those who use cyber tools for malicious purposes;

Pillar IV: Expand American influence abroad to extend the key tenets of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet.

The strategies have taken protection of people, territory, and lifestyle of the Americans as the forefront of the U.S. National Security Strategy, and the preservation of the public and private information network and the fight against cybercrime are the highlights of the plan.

The low-profile strategies or policy plans include:

The responsibility to secure Federal networks - including security systems - falls squarely on the Federal Government. Strengthen Federal contractor cybersecurity.

Strengthen critical infrastructure of the state and the private sector, which includes energy, banking, finance, health, transportation and communications and information technology.



The document points out that information and communication technology (ICT) in the U.S. is the basis of all parts of the country, and the preservation of democracy requires cybersecurity as the electoral infrastructure and the maintenance of the electoral process fall on the same Technology.

Prioritize national research and development investments based on cybersecurity.

Improve cybersecurity of transportation and maritime cybersecurity like shipping and shipping lines because the country's economy is based on global trade and transportation.

Attend to the impact of spatial issues such as satellite communications, navigation and position systems on cyberspace and the threats in this area.

Combat cybercrime and improve incident reporting, in particular combat transnational crime, theft of data and black markets

Preserve U.S. influence in the technology and development of cyberspace as an engine for economic growth, innovation and performance. Foster a vibrant and resilient digital economy, because its economic security is dependent on national security and the basis of the country's economy falls on digital technology. Incentivize an adaptable and secure technology marketplace to strengthen and encourage innovation in security technologies.

Collaboration with other countries to promote the standard. Invest in the next generation infrastructure, such as the 5G mobile phone, artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Promote free flow of data across borders as the countries in the world are more likely to restrict and protect data under the name of national security, which has a negative impact on the interests of American companies.

Maintain U.S. leadership in emerging

technologies and strive to be on the edge of technology and reduce limitations on companies entering the market.

Maintain a strong and balanced intellectual property protection system, such as inventions, trademarks, and the avoid expenditure on research and development.

Build and sustain the talent pipeline, enhance the Federal cybersecurity workforce and use executive authority to highlight and reward talent. Perform policy research, such as the Special Warfare Edition released in 2009.

Develop U.S. influence through cooperation with partner's countries, industries, promote multi-stakeholder model against government-oriented framework.

The U.S. cybersecurity strategy seems to originate from the recent cyber-war developments in the country, the shift in power in the international system from military-security to economy and technology changes, and Trump's views.

The sets of actions in the U.S. national cybersecurity strategy have the following objectives: prevent similar actions like Edward Snowden, a former contractor for the National Security Agency (NSA), who exposed the organization's illegal activities such as the alleged Russia's involvement in the country's presidential election, and Chinese cyber-espionage on American industry, increased economic exploitation of the region Cybersecurity, combine U.S. economic and security benefits, makes use of changes in U.S. immigration laws and the elimination of the lottery system in order to take advantage of the intelligence capabilities of intellectuals, reduce the influence of other governments in international decision-making in the cyberspace by strengthening the multi-stakeholder process.

U.S. should seize on ICJ ruling to avert global energy insecurity: Canadian lawyer

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An international lawyer said U.S. officials, instead of rejecting an international court ruling against American sanctions on Iran, should be astute enough to seize on the decision and tone down their war rhetoric against Tehran to stop an inevitable "global energy insecurity".

"Indeed, in my view, if U.S. decision makers are even just half as astute as they tend to be given credit for, they will seize on this ICJ decision as a timely excuse for toning down U.S. attacks on Iran and, more particular, demands that all nations stop buying Iranian oil, so that the threat of a regional conflagration and the global energy insecurity that would inevitably bring, can be avoided," Barry Grossman, who is based on the Indonesian island of Bali, told Tasnim in an interview.

"...we all know that, like Israel and to a somewhat lesser extent, the UK and France, the USA considers itself far too special and exceptional to be in any way bound by the ICJ, by the United Nations more generally, or indeed, by the very same system of international laws, treaties, and conventions it so often invokes to hold other nations to account," he added.

Following is the full text of the interview:

Q: The UN's international court of justice on Wednesday reprimanded the U.S. over its re-imposition of sanctions on Iran and ordered Washington to lift restrictive measures linked to humanitarian trade, food, medicine and civil aviation. What is your take on the ruling?

A: It is important to understand that this decision was merely an interim ruling, with the final decision to follow a long and complicated process. That said, it was a pleasant and unexpected surprise that the court demonstrated its willingness to manifest the independence and courage needed to reject, for the time being, the various technical arguments made by the U.S., among other things, contesting jurisdiction, blaming Iran itself for the unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S., and claiming that those sanctions were somehow necessary to protect U.S. national Security interests.

That said, all those issues remain "live", bearing in mind that this was merely an interim decision providing some temporary relief fashioned with a view to maintaining the pre-sanctions status quo pending a final determination of the case.

In that regard, the same principles which typically apply in applications for interim relief in routine commercial disputes were for the most applied by the Court in this case. Specifically, the Court found that the Applicant, that is Iran, needed only to establish at this stage that there was an arguable case that the impugned U.S. measures may violate Iran's rights under the 1955 Treaty of Amity. The Court ruled that Iran had in fact established that it has an arguable case, notwithstanding U.S. objections on the grounds of jurisdiction, national security, and an argument which in effect claimed that the diplomatic negotiating process which accompanied the JCPOA somehow displaced provisions in the Treaty of Amity which prescribe that any dispute under that Treaty be referred to the ICJ for resolution.

That much decided, the court turned its attention to the question of interim relief and in doing so once again invoked the same principles which have long applied in commercial disputes, namely that the court ought to make orders to in effect maintain the status quo which existed prior to the alleged breach, with a view to preventing the aggrieved party from suffering irreparable harm prior to the court's final decision.

However, the ICJ at that point introduced a very disappointing twist in its interim judgment which, unlike the very broad approach to the kinds of apprehended loss or damage embraced by the concept of irreparable harm taken in ordinary commercial cases involving application for interim relief, saw the court inexplicably and without much discussion of the related legal principles, take the position in fashioning

interim relief, only harm to the physical health and safety of Iranians that may potentially arise from the impugned U.S. measures should be considered as irreparable harm and therefore appropriate for some kind of interim remedy. As a result, the court focused very narrowly on measures which might affect Iran ability to import foodstuffs, products needed for humanitarian aid, medicine and medical equipment and aviation spare parts, without so much as mentioning any impact the impugned U.S. measures will have on Iranian exports and its economy more generally. Indeed, as I was listening to the judgment being read, I was somewhat astounded that the words "exports" and "oil" were not even mentioned in the judgment.

Indeed, this part of the court's decision comes across to me as the ramblings of a less than competent lawyer who has had some experience with commercial litigation involving causes of action which do not provide for the recovery of damages for purely economic loss. Such distinctions, in my opinion, have absolutely no application in a case like this based on public international law.

In any case, you don't have to be very clever or knowledgeable to understand that the risks to public health and safety presented by obstacles to the importation of humanitarian aid, foodstuffs, medicine and aviation spare parts, pales into relative insignificance compared to the illness, loss of life, civil unrest and general suffering intended, according to various public statements made by U.S. officials like Mike Pompeo, Nikki Haley, John Bolton and even President Trump himself, as the inevitable consequences of the impugned U.S. measures, described by President Trump as the strongest sanctions in history and clearly conceived with the aim of wreaking havoc with Iran's economy and internal security.

Then there is the not so small matter of unilateral U.S. demands that all nations stop buying oil from Iran not later than November 4, and the very stark implications that has for regional security and global energy security and, of course, the very same rights under the 1955 Treaty of Amity which the court was ostensibly fashioning an interim remedy to protect.

That the court was able to find in Iran's favor pretty much on all points of substance at this interim stage but entirely failed to address itself to the pending doom and catastrophe openly promised to Iran by this U.S. administration is nothing less than scandalous and a cynical concession to the politics of power.

Q: According to the verdict, which was read out by Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, Washington "shall remove by means of its choosing any impediments arising from the measures announced on May 8 to the free exportation to Iran of medicines and medical devices, food and agricultural commodities" as well as airplane parts. Do you believe that Washington will abide by the ruling?

A: Well we all know that, like Israel and to a somewhat lesser extent, the UK and France, the USA considers itself far too special and exceptional to be in any way bound by the ICJ, by the United Nations more generally, or indeed, by the very same system of international laws, treaties, and conventions it so often invokes to hold other nations to account.

In that regard, we have already seen this administration abuse and threaten any nation which disagrees with it in the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

We have seen this administration withdraw the U.S. from participation in the United Nations Human Rights Council and, together with Israel, threaten the very existence of the International Criminal Court.

We have long witnessed the United States thumbing its nose at ICJ decisions and, more particularly, at ICJ decisions declaring various measures adopted by the occupying regime in Palestine to be unlawful, with this U.S. administration going so far as to disregard long-standing U.S. policy, international law, and the position embraced by pretty much



the entire civilized world regarding the status of Jerusalem, in favour of unilaterally and illegally recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Indeed, we have long witnessed the United States wage unlawful belligerent wars under false pretenses and in violation of both global opinion and international law, war crimes, and other clandestine military interventions, as often as not, targeting unidentified civilians in other sovereign nations. We watched the U.S. ignore the United Nations and wage belligerency invasions killing millions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as leading the way for the illegal invasion and destruction of both Libya and Iraq, not to mention U.S. involvement in the belligerent Saudi/UAE led war on Yemen.

So when you ask me if I expect the U.S. to abide by the ICJ interim decision in this case brought by Iran, no, I certainly do not.

That said, the current political dynamic which sees the EU squarely at odds with the U.S. on pretty much every issue arising, in this case, does give some hope that the U.S. will have to tread somewhat more lightly than usual in order to avoid fully alienating its European allies and thereby triggering a series of developments which can only further isolate the United States.

Indeed, in my view, if U.S. decision makers are even just half as astute as they tend to be given credit for, they will seize on this ICJ decision as a timely excuse for toning down U.S. attacks on Iran and, more particular, demands that all nations stop buying Iranian oil, so that the threat of a regional conflagration and the global energy insecurity that would inevitably bring, can be avoided.

Q: In response, the United States said it was terminating a 1955 treaty reached with then ally Iran after Tehran cited it in an international court ruling against Washington's sanctions policy. "I'm announcing that the U.S. is terminating the 1955 Treaty of Amity with Iran. This is a decision, frankly, that is 39 years overdue," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters, referring to the date of the 1979 Islamic revolution. Pompeo described the ruling as a "defeat for Iran." Do you think it was a defeat for Iran or the U.S.?

A: For a man reputed to be extremely clever, it was absurd of Pompeo to claim that the ICJ's interim ruling was a defeat for Iran. Every argument made by the U.S. was rejected by the court and pretty much every argument of substance made by Iran was accepted. Yes, the court seems to have lost its nerve in formulating an absurdly narrow set of interim orders but that can almost certainly be explained by the U.S. lobbying and threats directed at the court.

Let me put it this way: on listening to the reading of the court's decision in somewhat stunned disbelief, the first image of the United States that came to mind for me was of a boxer heavily favoured to win about, stumbling blindly to his corner dazed, bloodied and badly in need of smelling salts, after being knocked from pillar to post in the first round of a fight the challenger was expected to have no chance whatsoever of surviving.

Saudi looking horrific given the Khashoggi affair



1 → In 2010, Khashoggi was appointed general manager of the Al Arab news channel, which was owned by Prince Alwaleed bin Talal. The channel shut down barely one day after its launch in February 2015. Khashoggi also served as a political commentator, appearing on MBS, BBC and Al Jazeera channels.

He met and interviewed Osama bin Laden several times in the middle of the decade, before the latter went on to become the leader of the al-Qaeda group. Khashoggi was reinstated as the editor of Al-Watan in 2007, but had to resign again in 2010, for "pushing the boundaries of debate within Saudi society", according to his personal website.

It is thought that he was forced to resign due to official displeasure with articles published in the paper that were critical of the Kingdom's harsh Islamic postures. After this event, he went to the U.S. in voluntary exile.

A week before his apparent kidnapping, Khashoggi criticized the Arab states' silence in the face of Trump's own comments. He wrote: "Trump sometimes tries to support Arab countries, and we, Arabs, have to pay for it. The biggest threat to the Arab countries and its oil resources is the Trump itself, because he sees the Arabs only as an oil well."

He has been watched by the Western and Arab media, and he was always asked to express his opinion in light of the acute political issues inside Saudi Arabia. Khashoggi seemed to have double standards. Sometimes he criticized and sometimes praised Saudi politics. He was one of those who supported the fight against corruption in the government, and has been among those who challenged the Islamic awakening in Islamic countries, including Egypt. Khashoggi, known as a journalist opposed to bin Salman, disappeared last Tuesday when he went to register his marriage at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.

He went to the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul to marry Khadija Arzu and asked his fiancé if he did not return to inform Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Khadija never saw him leave the consulate building.

Turkish authorities have confirmed that Khoshoggi did not exit the consulate. The Saudi Ambassador Walid Bin Abdul Karim El Khreiji was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry to

If Jamal Khashoggi was in fact transferred from Turkey to Saudi Arabia, this is the second time that Riyadh has ignored the sovereignty of another country. In the first case the Saudis kidnapped the prime minister of Lebanon, Hariri, but later released him.

explain Khoshoggi's disappearance. According to eyewitnesses, the Saudi consulate closed doors on Wednesday, October 3rd.

A Turkish security source had previously told Reuters that a group of 15 Saudi nationals, including some officials, arrived in Istanbul and entered the consulate on Oct. 2, the same day Khashoggi was there, and later left the country.

Turkish sources said that authorities believed he was killed inside the consulate. His alleged murder was planned in advance, and the body may have been transferred outside the consulate.

Thomas Friedman, an American journalist, has written about Jamal

Khashoggi, criticizing Muhammad bin Salman: "He is the oppressive ruler of the age who does not pay attention to democracy. Around him is a bunch of thugs who give him bad advice."

Lebanon's Al-Akhbar newspaper, however, has reported that Khashoggi is in Riyadh. Al-Akhbar has also claimed that Khalid bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington and brother of Mohammed bin Salman, interfered in this matter. He has allegedly assured Khashoggi he will not be persecuted in Saudi Arabia.

The Lebanese media has claimed that Khashoggi entered one consulate building of Saudi Arabia while his fiancé awaited him outside the building, and that he left another building of the consulate through a corridor connecting the two buildings. Then, he was allegedly transferred to the airport. But all this is unclear.

Evidence points to the kidnapping of Khashoggi by professional kidnappers. It is also possible that he was unconscious and transferred directly to Saudi Arabia by land or sea to avoid Turkey's strict security measures at airports. Turkey, some have opined, did not imagine such an action from Saudi Arabia. The kidnapping is a dagger in Erdogan's back, claimed one newspaper.

The fate of Jamal Khashoggi, whatever it actually is, reveals much about the rulers of Riyadh. They apparently do not tolerate any criticism contrary to their claims of reform in Saudi Arabia. Freedom of expression is anathema to Saudi officials.

Saudi officials are railing against other countries that have said Saudi Arabia is little more than a prison for political dissidents. The incident suggests that the current rulers of Riyadh have kept the nation hungry and left thousands of people martyred and wounded. The country has become a threat to international relations.

If Jamal Khashoggi was in fact transferred from Turkey to Saudi Arabia, this is the second time that Riyadh has ignored the sovereignty of another country. In the first case the Saudis kidnapped the prime minister of Lebanon, Hariri, but later released him.

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Can apathy predict dementia?

Because there is no cure for dementia, accurately predicting who will go on to develop it is vital to minimize its impact. According to a new review, apathy may hold the key.

A new study investigates apathy and its role in dementia onset.

Dementia overwhelmingly impacts older adults. Although scientists know about some risk factors, predicting who will eventually develop dementia is challenging.

As people age, cognitive abilities tend to decline, and 5–20 percent of those over 65 years old will develop mild cognitive impairment.

Older adults with a mild cognitive impairment who visit memory clinics — which are centers dedicated to diagnosing memory problems — often fear that they will receive a dementia diagnosis.

In reality, most individuals' memories will either return to normal levels of functioning or not deteriorate any further.

However, while the person is in the clinic, doctors are keen to understand who is most at risk. There is no cure for dementia, so early detection is the best way to ensure the best care.

Observing changes in behavior might be a useful way to assess an individual who might otherwise fly under the radar.

■ Apathy as an early warning sign

One behavior of interest is apathy, which is defined as a loss of motivation, a lack of interest, and reduced emotional expression. If apathy is related to an increased chance of developing dementia, it might become a relatively easy way to identify increased risk — even in a short consultation.

Already, researchers have noted that apathy is a common feature of dementia, occurring in around half of the people with Alzheimer's disease. To date, studying the role of apathy before dementia develops has received little attention.

Recently, researchers set out to see whether apathy could become an early marker for dementia. To do this, they dipped into the findings from previous studies and carried out a fresh analysis of the pooled data. As the authors explain:

“We aimed to systematically review and meta-analyze the evidence from longitudinal cohorts for the association between apathy in older people and the risk of incident dementia.”

A recent study concludes that osteoporosis significantly raises the risk of developing dementia.

In total, the researchers assessed and collated data from 16 studies, including 7,365 participants. Their results were published earlier this month in JAMA Psychiatry.

The authors concluded that “[a]pathy was associated



Apathy is a relevant, noninvasive, cheap, and easily implementable prognostic factor prodromal to dementia. It has important clinical significance because patients are vulnerable and tend to withdraw from care, requiring an active caregiving approach from clinicians.

with an approximately twofold increased risk of dementia in memory clinic patients.”

Researchers saw a particularly pronounced effect in younger, healthier individuals because it was easier to detect apathy in them.

Older people tend to withdraw for a range of reasons, such as physical or cognitive constraints, rather than apathy. When a younger individual becomes withdrawn, it is perhaps more unexpected, making it more obvious.

■ A new marker?

Changes in apathy could be useful for doctors, helping them gauge the potential risk of developing dementia, alongside standard clinical tests; the authors explain further:

“Apathy is a relevant, noninvasive, cheap, and easily implementable prognostic factor prodromal to dementia.” They go on:

“It has important clinical significance because patients are vulnerable and tend to withdraw from care, requiring

an active caregiving approach from clinicians.”

Recent research has focused on developing biomarkers for dementia risk, including MRI and the analysis of cerebrospinal fluid. Compared with these high-tech options, assessing apathy would be much quicker and more cost-effective.

As ever, more research is required to gather more detail on this relationship. The authors also note that it is important to remember that not every older adult with apathy will go on to develop dementia.

However, they also write that older adults with apathy “represent a medically highly vulnerable group that tends to withdraw from care.”

As the United States population ages, the early detection of dementia is more important than ever. Assessing an individual's level of apathy might soon become a part of the clinician's range of predictive tools.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Anti-psychotic drug could treat aggressive breast cancer

A commonly-used anti-psychotic drug could also be effective against triple negative breast cancer, the form of the disease that is most difficult to treat, new research has found.

The study, led by the University of Bradford in the UK, also showed that the drug, Pimozide, has the potential to treat the most common type of lung cancer.

Anti-psychotic drugs are known to have anti-cancer properties, with some, albeit inconclusive, studies showing a reduced incidence of cancer amongst people with schizophrenia. The new research, published in Oncotarget, is the first to identify how one of these drugs acts against triple negative breast cancer, with the potential to be the first targeted treatment for the disease.

Lead researcher, Professor Mohamed El-Tanani from the University of Bradford, said: “Triple negative breast cancer has lower survival rates and increased risk of recurrence. It is the only type of breast cancer for which only limited targeted treatments are available. Our research has shown that Pimozide could potentially fill this gap. And because this drug is already in clinical use, it could move quickly into clinical trials.”

The researchers, from the University of Bradford, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Salamanca, tested Pimozide in the laboratory on triple negative breast cancer cells, non-small cell lung cancer cells and normal breast cells. They found that at the highest dosage used, up to 90 per cent of the cancer cells died following treatment with the drug, compared with only five per cent of the normal cells.

They then tested the drug on mice implanted with triple negative breast cancer. Tumours in mice treated with Pimozide were 65 per cent smaller than in untreated mice and the number of tumours reduced by up to 61 per cent. The drug also helped to prevent the cancer spreading: treated mice had up to 94 per cent fewer metastases in the lung than mice who didn't receive Pimozide.

The drug involved in the research wasn't chosen at random. Previous research by Professor El-Tanani has shown that a certain protein, called Ran-GTP, plays a significant role in enabling the growth and spread of a number of cancers, including triple negative breast cancer.

When Professor El-Tanani mapped thousands of existing drugs against this protein, to identify which would be most effective in blocking Ran-GTP, Pimozide came top of the table. He then worked with colleagues to test the drug in cells and mice and identify the mechanisms by which the drug, and the inhibition of Ran-GTP, were affecting the cancer.

The study found that, in addition to reducing proliferation of triple negative breast cancer cells and increasing the percentage of cells that died, the drug was able to reduce migration and invasion of these cancer cells. It suppressed production of a protein, called VEGFR2 that supports blood supply to tumours, prevented production of an enzyme that is linked to metastasis and prevented the production of cells called myofibroblasts that help promote tumour growth.

“There are many molecular pathways that are hyperactive in cancer,” explained Professor El-Tanani. “Our study shows that by acting as a Ran-GTP inhibitor, Pimozide was able to block a number of key pathways that contribute to triple negative breast cancer growing and spreading.”

(Source: medicalxpress.com)

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APARTMENT

Jordan
4 Bdrs,fully
furn,260sq.m,spj,\$3000

Jordan
3Bdrs,fully furn,2nd fl.,250
sq.m,spj.,\$2500

Darous
2Bdrs,fully furn,3rd fl.,brand
new,100 sqm,lobby
€1600

Zaferaniyeh-Yekta,
Apartment-villa
French-style
3Bdrs,fully furn 360 sq.m.sp,
€5000

Valiasre-Bagheferdos
3 Bdrs,fully furn,brand
new,5th fl., 150 sq.m ,indoor
spj,\$1900

Mirdamad-Naft
3 Bdrs,fully furn,5th fl.,200
sq.m, \$ 2000
Close to Paladium Shopping
center
3Bdrs,180 sq.m,fully
furn,lobby,sp,garden,\$2000

VILLA

Elahiyeh
Triplex-800 sq.m built up,1000
sq.m land,Semi-furn,7
Bdrs,spj,\$9000

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

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

Darous
1000 sq.m land,400 sq.m built
up area, flat.4 Bdrs,spj.\$7000

Jordan
850 sq.m land,500 sq.m
built up,5 Bdrs,spj,furn/
unfurn,duplex,\$7000



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areas

Jordan
100 sq.m,3
rooms,parking,brand new
3rd fl.,\$1700

Valiasre
150 sq.m brand new, all
facilities,5th fl.,\$2300

Vozara
250 sq.m,all facilities
8th fl.,,\$4000

Mirdamad-Naft
120 sq.m,6th fl., \$1700

vanak
shariati
pasdaran
shahrak gharb
saadatabad
4000-3000-5000-4000-1000
sq.m,full,reasonable price

FOR: EMBASSY/COMPANY

Jordan,
4-storey building,1000 sq.m,
all facilities,\$10000

Zaferaniyeh
Triplex villa,800 sq.m,built
up,1000 sq.m land,12
rooms,\$8500

Niavaran
Triplex villa,2000 sq.m
land,600 sq.m built up ,spj,all
facilities,\$15000

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

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

Tehran conference to discuss Arbaeen as spiritual heritage



Pilgrims gather around the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) to mark Arb'een in an undated photo.

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A number of cultural experts, academia and religious scholars have been invited to discuss Arb'een as a spiritual heritage in a conference, which will be held at Tehran's Iranology Foundation on October 15.

Arb'een marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, and his companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

Organizers say that the purpose of the event is to raise awareness of the human community about Arb'een as a "transnational heritage of spirituality that is a symbol of freedom", IRIB reported.

To mark the day, hundreds of thousands of Shia Muslims from different countries go on long treks towards Iraq's holy city of Karbala, where the Imam is laid to rest.

Foreign arrivals in Sistan-Baluchestan up 23% in 6 months



A view of the Burnt City, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Sistan-Baluchestan Province

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The number of international travelers to Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province grew by 23 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21) compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

"Sistan-Baluchestan received 105,139 foreign tourists in the mentioned period, which is 23 percent higher than last year's 85,000," said Alireza Jalalzaie, the provincial tourism chief.

Sistan-Baluchestan has played host to travelers from neighboring countries, Australia, and European states such as Germany, Hungary, Italy, Austria, Britain, and the Netherlands, he added.

Jalalzaie attached special importance to rituals and ethnic background of the region, saying "In addition to historical attractions of the province, customs and traditions of the residents have been very attractive and memorable for foreign tourists."

Sistan-Baluchestan is home to distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and the Lut Desert, which is shared between it and Kerman Province.

Another tourist destination of the province is its mangrove forests, which take refuge to seabird species such as flamingos and herons.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu

Embedded within a dramatic landscape at the meeting point between the Peruvian Andes and the Amazon Basin, the UNESCO-registered Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu is among the greatest artistic, architectural and land use achievements anywhere and the most significant tangible legacy of the Inca civilization. Recognized for outstanding cultural and natural values, the mixed World Heritage property covers 32,592 hectares of mountain slopes, peaks and valleys surrounding its heart, the spectacular archaeological monument of "La Ciudadela" (the



Citadel) at more than 2,400 meters above sea level.

The approximately 200 structures making up this outstanding religious, ceremonial, astronomical and agricultural center are set on a steep ridge, crisscrossed by stone terraces. Following a rigorous plan the city is divided into a lower and upper part, separating the farming from residential areas, with a large square between the two. To this day, many of Machu Picchu's mysteries remain unresolved, including the exact role it may have played in the Incas' sophisticated understanding of astronomy and domestication of wild plant species.

The massive yet refined architecture of Machu Picchu blends exceptionally well with the stunning natural environment, with which it is intricately linked. Numerous subsidiary centers, an extensive road and trail system, irrigation canals and agricultural terraces bear witness to longstanding, often on-going human use.

(Source: UNESCO)

Aban 7th can be turned into tourism event, Mounesan says

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The seventh day of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Aban - the anniversary of the entrance of Cyrus the Great (r. 559–530 BC) into Babylon - can be turned into a tourism event, Iran's tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Tuesday. The event, which falls on October 29, is celebrated by many Iranians who come together across the tomb of Cyrus, located in Pasargadae, which has caused some problems over the past couple of years.

"However, the Provincial Security Council will make the final decision in this regard and provincial tourism department is prepared to cooperate to implement the appropriate decision," said Mounesan who doubles as vice president. "It is important to resolve controversies surrounding this day so that some cannot abuse such a day."

Cyrus was the founder of Achaemenid Empire which at its greatest extent stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers.

The Persian king declared world's first charter of human rights, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder.



People visit tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, southern Iran.

Millennia-old coins excavated in western Iran



HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Tens of millennia-old coins and an earthen jar have recently been unearthed in the village of Sarab-e Kalan in Ilam Province, western Iran.

The objects are composed of 94 silver coins and a clay jar, which are estimated to date back to 1200 years ago.... all of which have been transferred to an anthropology museum in the province, IRNA quoted a local official as saying on Monday.

Javad Rahimi said, "The village of Sarab-e Kalan [partly] lies on the historical

city of Sirvan and people have built their homes above magnificent remnants, which date from the Sassanid era (224 CE to 651) and early Islamic era."

"It has caused many problems for the residents yet threatens to destroy historical relics [of the village]."

Recognized as an open-air museum by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, Sarab-e Kalan has been subjected to several excavation and survey projects, the official added.

The government aims to relocate the Sarab-e Kalan residents to another place.

Iran's five-month outbound tourism falls 11 percent



TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iran's outbound tourism fell 11 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) from a year earlier, a tourism official has said.

"3,092,759 Iranians traveled abroad in the first five months of the year that shows 11 percent decrease year on year," said Mohammad Khayatian, a deputy for the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

"Turkey, Iraq, the UAE, and Georgia were respectively the mostly visited

destinations in the mentioned period," he added.

CHHTO Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan said in September that foreign arrivals in the country surged 45 percent in the first five months.

Dramatic changes in the value of rial, the Iranian currency, have had a significant impact on the country's tourism sector.

Since the year started, the rial has lost more than half of its value against various foreign currencies as the country is bracing for U.S.-led economic sanctions.

Learn how to become travel savvy



Brush up on your travel literacy: understand how the travel industry works and be aware of other cultures and customs.

Travel literacy falls into two broad categories: understanding how the travel industry works with its often arcane rules and restrictions; and being aware of other cultures and customs.

A vast majority of misunderstandings with airlines, hotels and cruise lines end with travelers admitting they failed to review the terms of their purchase. That's how they ended up with, say, a non-refundable hotel room or a restrictive timeshare.

People who claim they can teach you the ins and outs of the travel industry, and make you more travel-literate with a simple course are probably exaggerating - there's nothing like being there. So let's talk about the second part of travel literacy, which is looking more like a citizen of the world than someone who's never crossed a county line. Read a book - the right travel book can educate, inspire and enlighten.

Find your affinity group on social media

Spend time on Facebook's travel groups connecting with new friends and learn new travel skills.

Watch a movie or documentary

While some movies can have gross misrepresentations of cultures and people, there are still an in-

credible amount of quality films and documentaries that give an authentic sense of place, context and history to wherever your travels may lead next," says Ashley Blake, founder of Traverse Journeys. She cites the 10-part documentary The Vietnam War by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick as an example. The series, she says, "took a deep dive into the complexities of a place to help you appreciate the culture and perspective you'll encounter while there".

Learn a language

An app like Duolingo is a great way to brush up on your language skills before you travel. "Phrases like 'please', 'thank you', counting and asking basic travel questions.

Take a virtual trip

Downloads maps of the destination on your phone, also download the top-rated transit apps of the destination. A competent tour operator can handle everything from hotel reservations to meals, so you can have a destination worry-free.

But there's no substitute for on-the-ground travel experience.

(Source: Independent Online)

China's smaller cities help drive 'Golden Week' tourism

Amid concerns about China's economic slowdown, data show tourism during a week-long national holiday grew and even saw sharp increases from relatively less affluent areas.

In the next five years, so-called tier-three and tier-four cities' pace of consumption growth will surpass that of tier-one and tier-two cities, Xin Chen, China tourism analyst at UBS Securities, said in an interview Tuesday with CNBC.

Chinese cities are divided into tiers, with Beijing and Shanghai falling into the "tier one" category. Although a lower-tier city can still be relatively large by Western standards, increased interest in tourism from those areas indicates that local economies are still faring well.

Chen attributed the greater increase in spending power to this year's Chinese tax reform — which raised the minimum on monthly taxable income — and improved living conditions that give locals more ability to spend on leisure activities.

This past Sunday marked the end of seven days of vacation to commemorate the founding of the People's Republic of China on Oct. 1, 1949. Also known as the "Golden Week," the "National Day" holiday is a popular time for Chinese to travel, since personal vacation days can be limited and the only other long holiday, the Spring Festival, is traditionally reserved for visiting family. As a result, Golden Week is notorious for hordes of visitors to popular tourist sites — more than 140,000 gathered in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to

watch the flag raising ceremony on Oct. 1.

Chinese tourist sites received 726 million visitors during the Golden Week holiday, and domestic tourism revenue increased to 599.08 billion yuan (\$86.66 billion), the Ministry of Culture and Tourism said Sunday. Although the 9.43 percent and 9.04 percent respective increases from last year marked a slower pace than in 2017, last year's holiday also coincided with the Mid-Autumn Festival, which likely contributed to higher figures overall.

Notably, the number of travelers from six smaller Chinese cities more than tripled during this year's Golden Week holiday, according to data from Ctrip, a Chinese travel services company. The report, released Monday, looked at bookings through the company for tour groups and individual travel.

Where China's travelers are going

Leading the growth was the southeastern city of Changzhou with an increase of 288 percent in residents traveling, followed by the southern city of Foshan at 244 percent, and Zhuhai — which borders Macau — at 237 percent. Other cities which saw triple the number of residents booking through Ctrip were the southeastern city of Wuxi and Zhengzhou in the east central part of China.

Chongqing in the central west saw bookings by residents increase by 225 percent, putting the region into fourth place overall, behind Shanghai, Beijing and Chengdu by number

of residents traveling, Ctrip data showed.

Residents of China's second and third-tier cities also saw significant increases in spending on overseas travel during National Day holidays, Ctrip said.

Spending by Chinese from Dalian, Suzhou, Shenyang, Chengdu, Fuzhou, Zhengzhou, Xian and Xiamen ranged from about 6,800 yuan to 7,800 yuan per person (\$982 to \$1,127), a "clear" increase from last year's Golden Week, Ctrip said.

Alipay, a leading mobile payments app run by Alibaba-affiliate Ant Financial, reported more than double the number of overseas in-store transactions, with average spend rising 30 percent to 1,979 yuan (\$286). Average spending by user was highest in Denmark at 8,764 yuan (\$1,266), Alipay said.

Overall, Thailand was the most popular overseas destination for Chinese during this year's Golden Week, followed by Japan, the Ctrip data showed. The United States, Russia, Italy and Turkey also ranked among the 20 most popular countries.

Ctrip noted that Chinese tourists are also no longer interested in just shopping. Museum ticket bookings through one of Ctrip's platforms doubled, with Spain's Prado Art museum the most popular, and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art ranking fifth.

(Source: CNBC)

Incredible 'lost world' of underwater volcanoes discovered deep in the ocean

Hidden below the waves off the east coast of Australia, scientists have discovered a 'lost world' of epic volcanic peaks buried under the Tasman Sea, never before seen with human eyes.

This range of volcanic seamounts - underwater mountains formed by ancient, extinct volcanoes - towers some 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) above the ocean floor. Despite the immense height, it has never been previously detected, since even the highest peaks are concealed 2 km (1.2 miles) below the surface of the South Pacific.

"Our multibeam mapping has revealed in vibrant detail, for the first time, a chain of volcanic seamounts rising up from an abyssal plain about 5,000 meters (16,400ft) deep," explains marine geoscientist Tara Martin from Australia's CSIRO.

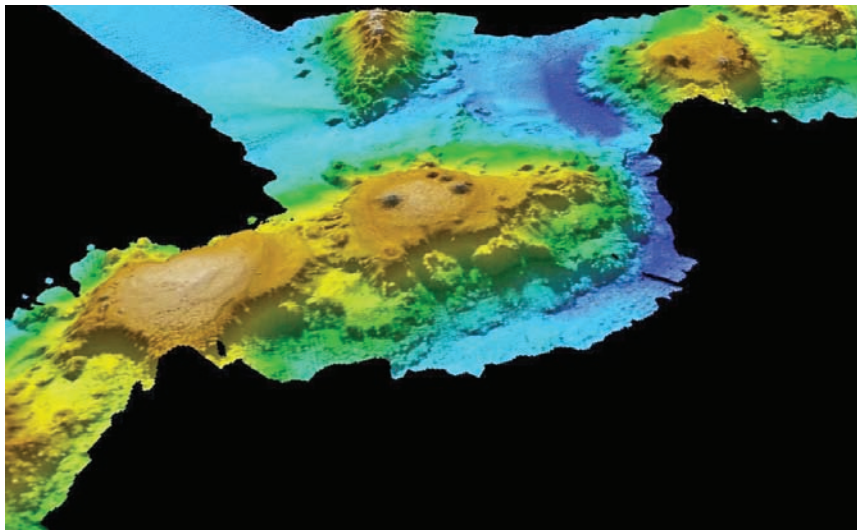
"This is a very diverse landscape and will undoubtedly be a biological hotspot that supports a dazzling array of marine life."

The researchers say the volcanic terrain varies in size and shape, including both sharp peaks and broad plateaus punctuated with smaller conical hills.

The discovery, made aboard the CSIRO research vessel Investigator, occurred during a voyage led by scientists from Australian National University.

■ Nutrient levels

The team was examining the relationship between nutrient levels and phytoplankton behavior in the East Australian Current when their seafloor mapping detected the dramatic, uncharted contours, produced in another era



of history.

"We're pretty sure that these seamounts were related to the breakup of Australia and Antarctica. It was about 30 million years ago,"

Martin explained to ABC News.

"As Australia and Antarctica and Tasmania all broke up, a big hotspot came in under the earth's crust, made these volcanoes, and then

Future research is already being planned to study the terrain and its marine life later in the Australian summer, but already the researchers think these volcanic valleys might serve as a kind of navigational hub for creatures who live in the deep.

helped the Earth's crust break so that all of those areas could start to drift apart."

Future research is already being planned to study the terrain and its marine life later in the Australian summer, but already the researchers think these volcanic valleys might serve as a kind of navigational hub for creatures who live in the deep.

■ Feeding grounds

"These seamounts may act as an important signpost on an underwater migratory highway for the humpback whales we saw moving from their winter breeding to summer feeding grounds," one of the team, zoologist and bird researcher Eric Woehler from the University of Tasmania, said in a statement.

"We expect that these seamounts will be a biological hotspot year round, and the summer visit will give us another opportunity to uncover the mysteries of the marine life they support."

In addition to the humpbacks, the researchers found increased ocean productivity over the seamounts, including spikes in phytoplankton activity, plus numerous sightings of other marine life, such as a giant pod of 60-80 pilot whales, and seabirds (four species each of albatross and petrels).

Given how new this discovery is, we don't fully understand yet how this lost world and its ocean-dwelling inhabitants interact.

But there's no doubting we've uncovered a vibrant and diverse ecosystem here - a convenient place to stop for food or directions, whether you've got scales, feathers, or mere plankton bits. (Source: sciencealert.com)

Polar bears gorged on whales to survive past warm periods: new study



Polar bears likely survived past warm periods in the Arctic, when sea ice cover was low, by scavenging on the carcasses of stranded large whales. This food source sustained the bears when they were largely restricted to land, unable to roam the ice in search of seals to hunt.

A new study led by the University of Washington found that although dead whales are still valuable sources of fat and protein for some polar bears, this resource will likely not be enough to sustain most bear populations in the future when the Arctic becomes ice-free in summers, which is likely to occur by 2040 due to climate change. The results were published online Oct. 9 in the journal Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment.

"If the rate of sea ice loss and warming continues unmitigated, what is going to happen to polar bear habitat will exceed anything documented over the last million years. The extremely rapid pace of this change makes it almost impossible for us to use history to predict the future," said lead author Kristin Laidre, a marine biologist at the UW's Polar Science Center and associate professor in the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences.

Polar bears need sea ice to survive because it is an essential platform for hunting seals, their main food source. They travel over the ice, searching for breathing holes or seal birth dens. When the ice breaks up in late spring, polar bears in some populations will fast on land, waiting for the ice to re-form so they can resume hunting.

■ Different polar bears

Still, polar bears are opportunistic feeders and have been observed in multiple locations eating the carcasses of whales that died at sea and washed ashore. The bears can quickly consume and store large amounts of fat, which works in their favor. In some cases, between 40 and 60 different polar bears have been observed feeding on large bowhead and gray whale carcasses and, in 2017, more than 180 bears were seen scavenging on a single dead bowhead whale. Individual bears frequently return to the same carcass over multiple years.

The authors drew upon years of observations in the field to assess the potential importance of whale carcasses and how they might help polar bears survive an ice-free Arctic. It is clear that polar bears persisted through low-ice interglacial periods in the past that resulted from naturally occurring climate cycles. The researchers hypothesized that, to a significant degree, the bears likely survived by scavenging on whale carcasses, storing large amounts of fats when hunting seals was not an option.

"I think this is likely one of the most probable explanations for how polar bears made it through previous warm interglacial periods," said co-author Ian Stirling, former research scientist with the Canadian Department of Environment and an adjunct professor at the University of Alberta, who has studied polar bears for 45 years.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Space Waste Lab pinpoints orbiting space debris with long-range LEDs



Dutch artist and designer Daan Roosegaarde has a knack for raising environmental awareness through spectacular and symbolic pieces of art, and his freshly launched Space Waste Lab might be his most impressive installation yet. The project uses real-time data and LEDs to call attention to the mounting problem of space debris, but his plans aren't limited to simply shining a light on its existence.

Like his studio's series of Smog Free Towers that suck up urban air pollution, its kites that generate energy as they bobble up and down, and its giant gateway that illuminates using the reflections of passing cars, the Space Waste Lab is a call to action. But instead of shining a light on renewable energy of the problem of city smog, Studio Roosegaarde is calling for a rethink on the problem of space junk.

Roosegaarde has described space debris as the "smog of the universe," and it's a fairly apt description. As we speak, there are around 29,000 chunks of manmade debris 10 cm (4 in) or larger whizzing around the Earth at up to 17,500 mph (28,000 km/h). These consist of things like busted up rocket parts, non-functional spacecraft and fragmented satellites.

■ Pieces of space debris

And that's just the larger pieces. According to NASA, there are as many as 500,000 pieces of space debris the size of a marble or larger, and millions more

that are too small to be tracked. Debris traveling at such speeds poses a real threat to orbiting spacecraft and satellites, further exacerbating the problem.

Studio Roosegaarde has teamed up with the European Space Agency's Clean Space team for Space Waste Lab, which began life as a live outdoor performance piece last week in the Netherlands. Relying on custom-built software and real-time tracking data on space debris, long LEDs were used to form arrows pinpointing individual pieces of junk as they shot across the sky.

An impressive spectacle, to be sure. But that's only step one of the plan. Roosegaarde wants to put some semblance of the technology found in his Smog Free Towers to work in space. They collect smog by releasing positively charged ions into the air, which cling to fine pollution particles and are then sucked back into the tower and snaffled by a negatively charged surface. This captured smog is then compressed into cubes for jewelry.

How exactly he plans to do adapt this technology to the task of cleaning up space debris isn't entirely clear, but then again, nor are numerous other plans floated to tackle the problem.

"That's going to be five to 10 years away, and a lot of prototypes," he told us earlier in the year. "That's going to be a lot of work still."

(Source: New Atlas)

Geological process of rock sinking into Earth's core has stalled, says researchers

Scientists say they might have figured out why the geological process of rocks rising and sinking in the Earth's molten core has suddenly stopped.

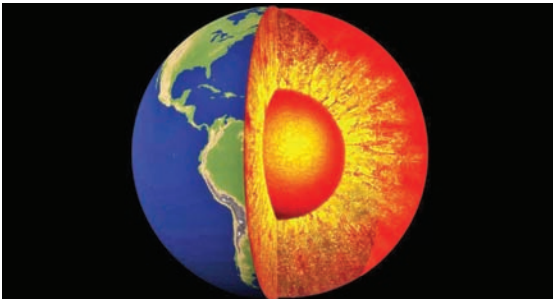
Using computer simulations, researchers examined the stagnant slabs of rocky tectonic plate in the Pacific Ocean and discovered a layer of obstructive material that is causing the phenomenon.

The existence of stagnant slabs has been puzzling scientists for about a decade now. A system called mantle convection in which hotter rocks rise up while colder rocks sink down in the planet's molten core has been in place for millions of billions of years. However, about a decade ago, scientists discovered that the process inexplicably and without warning stopped.

Giant slabs of subducted oceanic plates in the process of a slow descent into the molten core somehow got stuck. University of Colorado Boulder researchers Wei Mao and Shijie Zhong think they know why.

■ The stagnant slabs

In the study, the researchers suggested the existence of



a thin layer of less-viscous rock positioned in between of two halves of the mantle. They arrived at this conclusion by observing the stagnant slabs in the western Pacific Ocean, specifically off the east coast of Japan and below the Mariana Trench near the Philippines.

The slabs in Asia, according to the researchers, do not go down as normal. Instead, they spread out horizontally between the upper and lower mantle of the Earth.

"If you introduce a weak layer at that depth, somehow the reduced viscosity helps lubricate the region," explained Zhong. The "slabs get deflected and can keep going for a long distance horizontally."

This only happens in the slabs in Asia. Similar slabs in North and South America go about their normal process: they dive into the lower mantle where the core heats them up again.

■ Chunks of rocks

Zhong explains that there is more room in Asia for the chunks of rocks to slide, but not in the Americas.

The researchers, however, assured that the stagnant slabs will not cause any issues. However, it completely changes the way scientists study volcanism and tectonics on the surface of the Earth.

The researchers also think that the stagnant slab phenomenon is not permanent. Things will eventually go back to normal when the slabs break through and continue their descent to the planet's core. When it will happen, no one knows for now.

(Source: Tech Times)

Giant ice spikes on Europa could endanger future landers, say scientists

Jupiter's moon Europa has captured the attention of scientists with its likely subsurface ocean and cracked icy shell, but visiting the distant iceball might be even harder than we thought. A new analysis of the conditions on Europa says we could encounter pointy spears of ice on the surface up to 50 feet tall, which may skewer any lander unlucky enough to come down in the wrong place. We don't know how dangerous a landing would be yet, but the answers could present themselves in the next few years.

Europa is one of the most famous moons in the Solar System, even though it's relatively unexplored. The most recent mission to capture close-up images was Galileo more than 20 years ago. That mission helped scientists confirm there was a liquid body under the surface of Europa, but the nature of the ocean is unclear.



To know for certain, you'd have to land on the surface and conduct experiments. However, Daniel Hobley of Cardiff University and his team say Europa won't make that easy.

The same remodeling of the surface that helped confirm the presence of water may also make the surface vastly more dangerous.

According to the new study, Europa likely forms ice structures called penitentes seen in Antarctica here on Earth. It begins with ice and snow building up unevenly on a surface. Sublimation causes some ice to change phases from solid directly to gas, but it doesn't happen uniformly. Denser areas sublimate more slowly, eventually forming large spikes.

We'll have a better idea what the surface of Europa is like in a few years. NASA has plans to launch the Europa Clipper mission in the early 2020s to survey the planet. The ESA also has a Ganymede probe that will make a few passes over Europa around the same time.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Humans can recognize up to 10,000 faces, scientists find

People can identify up to 10,000 faces, scientists have discovered. In the first study of its kind, researchers quantified the number of faces an individual human can know—and findings showed people were able to recognize between 1,000 and 10,000, with the average being 5,000 faces.

Biological Sciences, was carried out by Rob Jenkins, from the Department of Psychology at the University of York, and colleagues.

The "vocabulary of facial identities is large given the context of our species history," he told Newsweek. "For most of that time, humans lived in groups of around a hundred people. These days, humans may live in cities of millions, and we're bombarded with faces from the media too."

For the study, the team asked participants to write down as many faces from their personal lives as they could within an hour. They then did the same for famous people. Researchers found the rate at which people would write down faces started fast then slowed down as they struggled to think of more. The team then worked out the pace at which people slowed down to estimate at what point they would run out of faces altogether.

The findings open up a wide range of research avenues — particularly those concerning facial recognition technology. Jenkins said psychological research shows big differences between faces we do know, and those we don't. We can reliably identify familiar faces — but how we do this is not known. A "better understanding of familiar face recognition in humans should inform better modelling of that process in machines," he said.

"We see faces in clouds, lattes, potato chips, and myriad other objects. This tendency to impose structure where there is none is called pareidolia, and shows the amusing power of our familiarity with face patterns."

(Source: Newsweek)

String theory: Is dark energy even allowed?

In string theory, a paradigm shift could be imminent. In June, a team of string theorists published a conjecture which sounded revolutionary: String theory is said to be fundamentally incompatible with our current understanding of 'dark energy'.

In string theory, a paradigm shift could be imminent. In June, a team of string theorists from Harvard and Caltech published a conjecture which sounded revolutionary: String theory is said to be fundamentally incompatible with our current understanding of "dark energy" -- but only with "dark energy" can we explain the accelerated expansion of our current universe.

Timm Wrase of the Vienna University of Technology quickly realized something odd about this conjecture: it seemed to be incompatible with the existence of the Higgs particle. His calculations, which he carried out together with theorists from Columbia University in New York and the University of Heidelberg, have now been published in Physical Review. At the moment, there are heated discussions about strings and dark energy all around the world.

Great hope is placed in string theory. It is supposed to explain how gravity is related to quantum physics and how we can understand the laws of nature, which describe the entire physical world, from the smallest particles to the largest structure of the cosmos.

Often, string theory has been accused of merely providing abstract mathematical results and making too few predictions that can actually be verified in an experiment. Now, however, the string theory community all around the world is discussing a question that is closely related to cosmic experiments measuring the expansion of the universe.

(Source: Science Daily)

Iran to preside at WHO’s 2020 Conference of the Parties

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran will preside at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP9) of World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2020, deputy health minister Alireza Raeisi said, Fars reported on Wednesday.

During the eighth session of Conference of the Parties (COP8), which was underway on 1-6 October 2018, in Geneva, Switzerland, Iran was elected as the head of COP9 to be held in October 2020, in The Hague, the Netherlands.

The member parties have lauded Iran for the systematic program of tobacco control legislation and raising taxes on tobacco, Raeisi added.



Majlis (Iranian Parliament) after the adoption of the FCTC acted to create a comprehensive and systematic program for tobacco control legislation as a first step towards comprehensive national tobacco control and combat.

As per the law and its guidelines, specific implementation is done to monitor tobacco use and prevention policies, protect people from tobacco smoke, offer help to quit tobacco use, warn about the dangers of tobacco, enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship and raise taxes on tobacco.

FCTC is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO. It was adopted by the World Health Assembly on May 21, 2003 and entered into force on February 27, 2005, with 168 Signatories, including the European Union, which made it one of the most widely embraced treaties in United Nations history. Currently, there are 181 Parties covering more than 90% of the world population.

The WHO FCTC was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic and is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. The Convention represents a milestone for the promotion of public health and provides new legal dimensions for international health cooperation.

It is also seeking “to protect present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke” by enacting a set of universal standards stating the dangers of tobacco and limiting its use in all forms worldwide.

Its provisions include rules that govern the production, sale, distribution, advertisement, and taxation of tobacco. FCTC standards are, however, minimum requirements, and signatories are encouraged to be even more stringent in regulating tobacco than the treaty requires them to be.

LEARN ENGLISH

Purchasing Manager

A: Good morning, Angela, how have you been lately?

B: Morning, Michael. I’ve been very busy lately. One of our other vendors is going out of business and I’ve been searching for a suitable replacement.

A: Well, rest assured that you can count on us to be here for the long run sit down. Coffee?

B: No, thanks. I’ve been trying to cut down on the caffeine.

A: Ha-ha, I could never do that. I’d be a zombie if I didn’t have my morning coffee fix. Let’s get down to business then.

B: Yes. I’ve come to talk with you about ordering the eight megapixel cameras for our new MePhone. The demand for phone cameras is growing, and Pear has been falling behind in the market.

A: That’s great! I’m glad to hear that Pear has finally jumped on the bandwagon. Right now our contract is for the five megapixel cameras. Is Pear still interested in having those?

B: No, we’re changing all the cameras to eight megapixels. We were hoping that by making your company our sole supplier for cameras we could negotiate a better deal.

A: Sure. Let’s get started by drafting a new contract.

■ Key Vocabulary

suitable: having the right qualities

assured: to be sure, certain

long run: a long period of time

contract: a formal written agreement between two or more people

sole: unique; one and only

supplier: person or company who sells you goods

negotiate: to reach an agreement on money, terms, etc.

■ Supplementary vocabulary

lead time: time needed to ship or manufacture goods

payment terms: terms or conditions for payment

backorder: order which cannot be taken or filled now

wholesale: sale of goods and services to retailers

buyer: professional purchaser specializing in a specific group of materials, goods, or services

Meteorological Organization predicts normal levels of precipitation

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — In its latest report, Iran’s Meteorological Organization (IMO) has forecast that precipitations will meet normal levels in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year, corresponding to autumn and winter.

Based on the weather maps as well as weather phenomena total amounts of the precipitations will reach normal level in the country over autumn and winter, with highest rainfalls expected to occur in northern half of the country and Zagros region, the report adds.

The report continues that precipitation amounts will exceed normal levels in the first month of autumn, particularly in western and northwestern areas. Over the second month of autumn precipitation will remain at normal levels except for some areas in southwestern Iran where precipitation will be below the normal level.

Precipitations will also remain at normal levels in last month of autumn. Over the first month of winter precipitation levels will plummet in western areas and in the one but last month of winter, precipitations will reach normal levels again, the report stated.

However, despite the projected rise in precipitation amount, the country is still facing water shortage and sustainable use of groundwater resources is a must, the report highlighted.

Temperature is forecasted to rise between 0.5 to 1 degree on the Celsius scale in the country during autumn, exclusive of eastern areas where temperature will soar between 1 and 2 degrees on the Celsius scale.

The IMO report also explained that precipitation levels in the last crop year (September



© Damun Purnemat/Mizan

Over the first half of the current year (beginning on March 21) the country’s precipitation totaled 70.8 millimeters, an increase of 23.2 percent compared to the corresponding period last year. However, the amount experienced a 6.2 percent decrease in contrast with long-term averages.

23, 2017 to September 23, 2018) reached 165.8 millimeters which indicate a 28.7 percent drop compared to the 232.4 millimeters of

long-term averages. The amount also has experienced a 21.9 percent drop in comparison with last year’s crop year precipitations.

Iran outlaws private ownership of wild animals

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Iran has outlawed the private ownership of wild animals, including cheetahs, lions and tigers, and will fine or imprison anyone parading the wild animals in public, YJC reported on Wednesday.

“If a person seen in public walking an exotic pet, will be fined up to 800 million rials (about \$20,000) and could face up to three-year term of imprisonment,” Department of Environment’s (DOE) director for hunting and fishing Ali Teymouri has said.

In this regard, the DOE has banned wildlife petting of lions, cheetahs and tigers and keeping them from their natural environment to prevent these endangered animals from being mistreated, he added.

The DOE never issues any permit or license for anyone to keep wild animals except for rehabilitation centers and zoos,



200 tons of medicine, medical equipment sent for Arbaeen pilgrimage

1 → “Some 14 trucks carrying 200 tons of medications and medical equipment are dispatched to Karbala,” Mar’ashi stated, YJC reported on Wednesday.

The shipments include 400 types of essential medicine, and 80 other medical supplies and equipment, he said, adding that this year, over 2,000 health practitioners and 40 mobile medical

clinics will offer medical treatments to the pilgrims.

He went on to say that the IRCS team will be accompanied by over 90 medical specialists, including orthopedist, cardiologist, gynecologist, pediatrician, neurologist and psychiatrist.

“Given that this year’s pilgrims have been registered prior to the trek, all are covered by

the health insurance coverage and can use medical services completely free of charge,” he further highlighted.

YJC reported on Tuesday that some 173,000 pilgrims have so far registered to participate in the Arbaeen trek. Last year about 22 million people including over 2.3 million Iranians took part in the ceremony.



Polar bears could face extinction as emergency food supply dries up

Polar bears will be robbed of the food supply that has kept them alive for thousands of years over the next few decades by climate change, a new study has warned.

When temperatures have risen in the past and melted Arctic sea ice, scientists believe the creatures survived by scavenging whale carcasses until the ice returned and they could hunt seals again.

However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that ice-free summers could begin occurring again within decades.

Polar bears more vulnerable to starvation due to climate change

“If the rate of sea-ice loss and warming continues unmitigated, what is going to happen to polar bear habitat will exceed anything documented over the last million years,” said Dr Kristin Laidre, a marine biologist at the University of Washington. “The extremely rapid pace of this change makes it almost impossible for us to use history to predict the future.”

Scientists expect there will be a summer in the Arctic without ice by 2040 if warming continues at its current rate.

Polar bears rely on ice because it provides them with a platform from which to hunt seals. If ice-free summers

become a regular occurrence – which is predicted in the IPCC report if warming exceeds 2C, then Dr Laidre and her colleagues said whale carcasses are unlikely to save the bears.

Firstly, they note that while the Earth has gone through natural cycles of cooling and warming, the current rate of ice loss outstrips anything the bears have experienced before.

This is exacerbated by human intrusion into the Arctic. Centuries of whaling, oil drilling and shipping in the region mean whales are nowhere near as abundant as they were during the last “interglacial” period when temperatures rose.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

\$1.1m earmarked for rehabilitation of buses in Tehran

Tehran Municipality has allocated a total budget of 50 billion rials (nearly \$1.1m) to rehabilitate Tehran’s bus transport fleet, Tehran bus operating company’s director general has said. A weekly meeting is organized to be held aiming at reducing emissions produced by buses in the capital, Mehr quoted Peyman Sanandaji as saying on Wednesday.

۵ میلیارد تومان برای ساماندهی اتوبوس ها

مدیرعامل شرکت واحد اتوبوسرانی گفت: ۵ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای بازسازی اتوبوس های فرسوده پیش بینی کرده ایم. به گزارش خبرنگار مهر، پیمان سنندجی اظهار داشت: پس از ابلاغ بخشنامه رفع دودزایی از اتوبوس های پایتخت هر هفته جلسه ای برای بررسی این موضوع برگزار می شود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“bacterio-, bacteri-, bacter-”

■ **Meaning:** bacteria

■ **For example:** Finish with a **bactericide** spray and wipe dry with disposable towel.

PHRASAL VERB

Latch onto something

■ **Meaning:** to become very interested in something

■ **For example:** Don’t just latch on to the latest man-agement fads.

IDIOM

Chicken out

■ **Explanation:** to decide not to do something because you are afraid

■ **For example:** He decided to join a karate class, but chickened out at the last minute.



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.

‘Yemenis target Saudi military boat in counter-strike’

Yemeni naval forces have targeted and destroyed a Saudi regime military boat off the war-torn country's northwestern coast, killing all aboard the vessel.

The al-Masirah television network reported that the retaliatory attack by Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement took place off the Midi coast on Wednesday.

The Saudi regime-led coalition has not yet commented on the counter-attack, which came amid a rise in its airstrikes on the port city of Hudaydah, a lifeline for millions of people.

Earlier reports suggested that 86 Yemenis had over the past two days fallen victim to the House of Saud regime-led air raids on the strategic Red Sea port city.

AFP cited military and medical sources as saying on Tuesday that the Saudi regime aerial assaults had pounded an area close to the Hudaydah port, two farms and two training camps for the Ansarullah movement in the past 48 hours.

Rescue personnel and medical sources said the airstrikes had killed 79 Ansarullah fighters and seven civilians.

Back in June, the Saudi regime-led coalition launched the Hudaydah offensive despite international warnings that it would compound the war-torn nation's humanitarian crisis.

It stepped up the Hudaydah campaign in September following the collapse of United Nations-backed talks between the warring sides.

Hudaydah is the entry point for most of Yemen's imports and aid supplies. The Saudi regime-led coalition claims that the Ansarullah are using the port city for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the fighters.

So far, the aggressors have been unable



to penetrate the defenses of the Ansarullah in Hudaydah.

Last week, the Saudi regime-led coalition announced that it had sent Sudanese reinforcements to the Hudaydah front.

“The aim of the arrived Sudanese servicemen will be to reinforce troops already deployed there” in order to occupy the territories under the Ansarullah’ control, the coalition said in a statement.

■ **Over 8,000 Yemeni dialysis patients on verge of death**

Meantime, Yemen's health minister has warned that more than eight thousand hemodialysis patients will lose their lives if the Saudi regime-imposed blockade on the country persists and medical supplies run out.

Dr. Taha al-Mutawakel told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network on

Tuesday that patients with chronic kidney diseases have to undergo three sessions of treatment weekly, but the crippling siege has resulted in the scarcity of dialysis solutions.

“Over the past four months, patients with renal failure were in need of a million sessions of dialysis; but we could not cover more than ten thousand sessions as we were in dire need of relevant solutions,” he pointed out.

Mutawakel further noted that Yemeni medical officials are doing their best to prevent the collapse of the health system in the crisis-hit country.

Also on Tuesday, scores of Saudi regime-sponsored militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi were killed and injured southwest of the al-Durayhimi district in Yemen's western

coastal province of Hudaydah, when Yemeni soldiers and allied fighters from Popular Committees repelled the former's assault.

Elsewhere in the Nihm district of Sana'a province, an unspecified number of the Saudi regime mercenaries were killed and injured when Yemeni troopers and their allies thwarted their offensive.

■ **Yemeni forces shoot down three Saudi regime spy drones in Jizan**

Yemeni air defense units shot down three Saudi regime reconnaissance drones in flight over a border area in the kingdom's southwestern province of Jizan.

Yemen's al-Masirah satellite television network, citing an unnamed military source, reported that the drones were shot down over the Wadi Jarrah area on Tuesday evening.

Yemeni army forces and Popular Committees fighters also managed to establish control over two observation outposts in the same Saudi region.

The House of Saud regime and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating military campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the aim of bringing the government of Hadi back to power and crushing the country's popular Ansarullah movement.

Some 15,000 Yemenis have been killed and thousands more injured since the onset of the Saudi-led aggression.

More than 2,200 others have died of cholera, and the crisis has triggered what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

The Western-backed war on Yemen, coupled with a naval blockade, has destroyed the country's infrastructure and led to famine as well as a cholera outbreak.

(Source: Press TV)

Moscow speaks of need for five-way international talks to end Korean tensions

S. Korea considers lifting some sanctions on North Korea

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday that Russia, China and North Korea had agreed on the need for five-way talks including the United States and South Korea to end tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Deputy foreign ministers from Russia, North Korea and China had met in Moscow Tuesday and expressed support for talks in such a format to normalize relations, the ministry said in a statement.

■ **China, Russia and N. Korea eye adjustment of UN sanctions in talks**

China, Russia and North Korea believe it is necessary to consider adjusting U.N. sanctions against North Korea at an appropriate time, China's foreign ministry said Wednesday.

It issued the statement with the three parties' positions on its website after they held talks in Moscow on Tuesday.

■ **South Korea considers lifting some sanctions on North Korea**

Meanwhile, Seoul is considering lifting some of its unilateral sanctions against Pyongyang to create more momentum for diplomacy aimed at improving relations and defusing the nuclear crisis, South Korea's foreign minister said Wednesday.

During a parliamentary audit of her ministry, Kang Kyung-wha said the government is reviewing whether to lift sanctions South Korea imposed on the North in 2010 following a deadly attack on a warship that killed 45 South Korean sailors.

Seoul then effectively shut down all cross-border economic cooperation except for a joint factory park in the

North Korean border town of Kaesong, which was shuttered in February 2016 after a North Korean nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.

Such a move by South Korea would have little immediate effect since U.S.-led international sanctions remain in place. But it's clear Seoul's liberal government is preparing to restart joint economic projects if the larger nuclear negotiations between the United States and North Korea begin yielding results.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has described inter-Korean engagement as crucial to resolving the nuclear standoff. A large number of South Korean CEOs accompanied Moon last month to Pyongyang, where he and Kim Jong Un agreed to normalize operations at the Kaesong factory park and resume joint tours to the North when possible, voicing optimism the international sanctions could end and allow such projects.

As part of inter-Korean agreements reached during Moon and Kim's engagement, a liaison office between the countries opened in Kaesong last month. Seoul's Unification Ministry said Tuesday the water being supplied to the office has been provided to the town's residents as well.

Using the facility that draws from a reservoir near the factory park, South Korea has been pumping 1,000 to 2,000 tons of water to the liaison office and about 15,000 tons to the rest of the city every day, ministry spokesman Baik Tae-hyun said. He said the resumption of water supply does not violate sanctions.

The closure of the factory park had also deprived Kae-



song residents of what had been a steady supply of water and electricity. South Korea is providing electricity to the liaison office, but not to the town's residents.

“There are also humanitarian considerations as the residents of Kaesong have to rely on the park's facility for water,” Baik said. “This has nothing to do with restarting the Kaesong factory park.”

Other moves by the Koreans to reduce tensions between them include temporary reunions between war-separated relatives and military agreements that called for reducing weaponry and guards at the border and demining sections of the Demilitarized Zone.

(Source: agencies)

Russia rejects Japan's protests over military build-up on disputed islands

Russia rejects protests from Japan over Russia's military deployments on a chain of disputed Pacific islands and reserves the right to bolster its security there as it sees fit, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday.

Moscow and Tokyo both claim sovereignty over the Pacific islands, known in Russia as the Kurile islands and in Japan as the

Northern Territories.

Russian military deployments on the islands were not aimed against neighboring countries, the ministry said in a statement, in which it also accused Tokyo of unhelpful “megaphone” diplomacy.

“We firmly reject such demarches since Russia has the sovereign right to [conduct] any activity on its territory, including meas-

ures to strengthen national defense,” it said.

Japan said in July it had asked Russia to reduce its military activity on the islands.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev approved the deployment of Russian warplanes on one of the islands in February, accelerating the area's militarization at a time when Moscow's ties with Tokyo are strained over the roll-out of the Aegis U.S. missile system.

Moscow has also deployed its newest missile defense systems to the islands and plans to build a naval base there even as it continues talks about the territorial dispute.

The Soviet Union seized the islands from Japan at the end of World War Two. The islands are the reason Moscow and Tokyo have not formally ended World War Two hostilities.

(Source: Daily Star)

Afghan officials get 20 years for handing secrets to Pakistan

Two Afghan military officials were jailed for 20 years after a two-year trial for sharing state secrets with Pakistan, a prosecutor said Wednesday.

The sentence highlights a long-standing belief between Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan that the other country does not adequately prevent cross-border militant attacks.

Shah Mohammad and Nazirullah were arrested in 2016 after travelling to Pakistan to hand over information to Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. They pleaded not guilty but eventually “confessed to their crime”

before the military court in the eastern city of Jalalabad, officials said.

“Each of them has been sentenced to 20 years in prison by the primary court,” said Najiburrahman Nadim, a military prosecutor.

Nadim said the accused had shared secret information about attacks and bomb blasts.

Afghanistan's Western-backed government has long accused Pakistan of harboring Afghan Taliban insurgents, a charge that Islamabad denies.

Islamabad, in turn, accuses Afghanistan of not doing enough to eradicate Pakistani Taliban militants, many of whom are based in Afghanistan and mostly carry out attacks inside Pakistan.

A defense lawyer representing the two army officials rejected the court's verdict, which was delivered on Tuesday.

“My clients were beaten during the investigations and they were forced to confess. We don't accept the decision and we will appeal,” said Toryalai Muqan.

(Source: Reuters)

Demilitarized zone around Syria's Idlib set up, Turkey says

Turkey's defense ministry said Wednesday the demilitarized zone in Syria's Idlib has been formed and heavy weapons have been withdrawn, following an agreement by Russian and Turkish leaders in Sochi last month.

The agreement dictated that heavy weapons, tanks, rocket systems and mortars of all opposition groups would be withdrawn by Oct. 10, and the zone will be monitored by coordinated Turkish and Russian patrols.

Under the deal agreed last month between Turkey and Syrian President Bashar al-As-

sad's ally Moscow, “radical” rebels will be required to withdraw by the middle of this month from the zone, and heavy weaponry must be withdrawn from the 15-20 km buffer zone by Oct. 10.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday over 1,000 militants had left the zone.

Asked about Turkish reports that all heavy weapons had been removed, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters that around 100 heavy weapon units had been withdrawn from the zone, but gave no further details.

The main militant group in the Idlib area, Tahrir al-Sham, has yet to comment publicly on the agreement.

Under a deal reached following a meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi on September 17, all militants in the demilitarized zone, which surrounds Idlib and also parts of the adjacent provinces of Aleppo and Hama, must pull out heavy arms by Wednesday, and Takfiri groups must withdraw by October 15.

The NLF is the main Turkish-backed militant alliance in the Idlib region, but the Takfiri Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorist group, which is a coalition of different factions of terror outfits, largely composed of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham Takfiri terrorist group formerly known as al-Nusra Front, holds a large part of the province and the zone.

HTS, which is said to be in control of some 60 percent of Idlib province, has yet to announce its stance on the buffer zone deal.

(Source: Reuters)

Religious leaders gather in Karbala to denounce spread of sectarian propaganda

Religious leaders from around the world have met in Iraq's holy city of Karbala to speak out against religious extremism and the spread of sectarian propaganda by the Western media.

Scholars, journalists and politicians attended the Fifth Tarateel Sajjadiya International Festival, organized by Imam Hussain Holy Shrine from October 5 to 7. The festival aimed at providing a platform for hearing anti-extremism voices, Press TV reports.

Sheikh Abdul Mahdi Karbalai, the representative of Iraq's top Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, was one of the keynote speakers at the conference, which included several plenary sessions.

He talked about the success of Iraqi forces in the fight against the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group and how Iraqis of all sects fought side by side against the terror outfit.

“As the Shia gave blood against Daesh, so did the Sunni,” said Sheikh Karbalai, adding, “We have been fighting Daesh since day one. All Iraqis stood together to fight, so we could all achieve victory together.”

Not long after Daesh overran Iraq in 2014, Grand Ayatollah Sistani issued a religious decree, calling on the Iraqi people to “defend the country, the honor of its citizens, and its sacred places.”

The ruling, known as a fatwa, led to the formation of the pro-government Popular Mobilization Forces, also known by their Arabic name the Hashd al-Sha'abi.

The Hashd al-Sha'abi recruited thousands of Iraqis from all sects and religious groups to support the Iraqi army in its fight against Daesh and to liberate captured cities from the grips of the Takfiri group.

Sheikh Karbalai also stressed that scholars must “fight the international media” that seek to divide the Muslim community.

Many Western media giants have regularly referred to the Hashd al-Sha'abi as a Shia militia group.

Another key speaker was Mohammad al-Nuri, a senior Sunni sheikh from the Iraqi city of Fallujah. He passionately defended the Hashd al-Sha'abi and lambasted the Western mainstream media's lies about the nature of Iraq's war against Daesh.

“The sectarian narrative is a lie,” he said, adding, “And whoever says Iraqis are sectarian is a liar.”

He went on to say that “the sons of Karbala (a Shia majority city) mixed with the blood of sons from Fallujah (a Sunni majority city). Victory happened because of this blood that we all gave.”

Fallujah was captured by Daesh in 2014 but was later liberated by a joint military operation by the Iraqi army and the Hashd al-Sha'abi.

Sheikh al-Nuri himself fought as a fighter for the Hashd al-Sha'abi during a battle that led to the liberation of his home city Fallujah.

“We gave 300 martyrs in the fight to liberate my city,” he added.

The conference organizers also hoped to educate the attendees about the written evidence which proves Islam is a religion of peace, centering on the Treatise of Rights, written by the fourth Shia Imam and great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali ibn Hussain Zayn al-Abidin.

Pearl Emmanuel, an adviser at the French Prime Ministry, also delivered a speech, saying that the rules of the Treatise of Rights correspond with some of the pacts of the United Nations.

Emmanuel also said that religious writings combat violence, noting that rules written as part of the Treatise of Rights ordain that religious minorities must be respected. He also called for religious tolerance.

The adviser of the president of the Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Abdullah Hassan, who was also at the conference, said that “as leaders of countries, missionaries, scientists and thinkers, we need this Treatise of Rights to combat extremism, terrorism and the Takfiri ideology that distorted the true image of Islam.”

(Source: Press TV)

Global media and Muslims: Selective coverage, selective outrage



■ **Lynch mobs in India and injustice in Kashmir**

In India, it has become difficult for Muslims to look Muslim, with paranoia and suspicion all around. The lynching of Muslims (and also Dalits) in last few years has created a sense of fear and desperation among Muslims.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was widely criticized for not speaking up on ‘cow politics’. He finally broke his criminal silence after the #NotInMyName protests rocked multiple cities across India. But, the big question is: with Sangh Parivar leading this hate campaign against Muslims in the name of ‘gaw raksha’, can the government stop these lynch mobs?

Unfortunately, the liberals have been unfairly attacked by run-of-the-mill TV channels and prime time ‘talking heads’ for giving voice to the voiceless. India's TV media, quite bizarrely, has been siding with the lynch mobs and their patronisers.

That brings us to the issue of Kashmir and how the Indian media vilifies Kashmiris. Any debate over Kashmir in TV news studios lacks nuance. The Kashmir narrative peddled by loud-mouthed TV anchors these days seeks to push the agenda of right-wing forces that thrive on hate-mongering and war-mongering. That is precisely why media becomes a devil's advocate when army men convicted in Machil fake encounter are given reprieve by a kangaroo military court and when a poor civilian is tied to a jeep and used as a human shield.

■ **Tailpiece**

To quote Aloe Blacc, “we all bleed the same blood”. Terrorism and extremism in all their forms and manifestations, irrespective of who the victim and perpetrator are, should be unequivocally condemned. Selective outrage is dangerous and cringe-worthy.

It is hypocrisy at its worst. It undermines the credibility of media, especially when they jump on the government's bandwagon. So it is important to talk about the selective outrage of world media when it comes to the atrocities perpetuated by the Western governments in Muslim countries.

Belgian football clubs raided in police inquiry into alleged fraud

Belgian police carried out a series of raids at soccer clubs and homes across the country on Wednesday and detained many people for questioning about financial fraud and possible match-fixing, Belgian prosecutors said. A total of 44 searches were carried out at top Belgian clubs and residences, federal prosecutors said in a statement. At the same time, searches of 13 houses also took place in France, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia.

Prosecutors did not name any clubs or people. Belgian broadcasters VRT and RTBF said searches had taken place at leading teams including Anderlecht, Club Bruges and Standard Liege.

Prosecutors said the searches were related to an investigation launched at the end of 2017 into suspect financial transactions in the top Belgian league, with possible charges of criminal organisation, money laundering and corruption. Some agents were suspected of hiding commissions on transfers, players' pay and other payments from the Belgian authorities, the prosecutors said. "During the investigation there were indications of possible influencing of matches in the 2017-2018 season," the prosecutors said. The searches come after Belgium reached the World Cup semi-finals. Most of the national team squad now play abroad but previously played in the Belgian premier league, which is a major feeder of players for top European club sides. Some of the house searches were carried out at the homes of club directors, soccer agents, referees, a former lawyer, a trainer, journalists and at an accountancy office.

"A large number of people have been deprived of their liberty and taken in for a thorough interrogation," the prosecutors said, adding that a judge would later decide who should be held in custody or formally arrested. The searches abroad were chiefly at offices and residences of people used to set up the suspect transactions, the prosecutors said.

(Source: Eurosport)

Kokorin, Mamaev face action for chair attack on man in cafe

Russia internationals Aleksandr Kokorin and Pavel Mamaev face action from their clubs and the country's interior ministry after they attacked a man with a chair during an altercation at a Moscow cafe on Monday. Zenit St Petersburg forward Kokorin and Krasnodar midfielder Mamaev were arrested on Tuesday after they struck ministry of industry and trade official Denis Pak with a chair, according to Russian media reports.

The incident was captured here by CCTV cameras. "We absolutely condemn the actions of those involved, it has caused outrage within our club and we are waiting for a legal assessment from the relevant authorities, but from a personal point of view, such behaviour is truly shocking," Zenit said.

"We are now considering what punishment the club will take against the player... the club and supporters are disappointed that one of the country's most talented footballers has behaved in such a manner," Krasnodar condemned Mamaev's behaviour and said they were exploring ways to terminate his contract.

The BBC quoted the Russian Premier League as calling the players 'hooligans' for their 'rowdy behaviour' and said they were being investigated by Russia's interior ministry.

Kokorin has 48 caps for Russia but missed this year's World Cup with a knee injury. Mamaev has represented the national team 15 times. Zenit beat Krasnodar 2-1 in the league on Sunday.

(Source: Reuters)

Henry on Monaco manager shortlist

Former Arsenal striker Thierry Henry is being considered as a replacement for manager Leonardo Jardim at Monaco.

The French club are expected to sack their Portuguese boss, 44, with the team third from bottom in Ligue 1 with six points from nine games. Henry, 41, who is on the shortlist for a similar role at Aston Villa, began his professional career at Monaco and helped them win Ligue 1 in 1997.

Jardim led the club to another French title in 2017, their first since 2000. The former Sporting Lisbon manager was appointed by Monaco in 2014 and helped develop players such as Paris St-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe, Atletico Madrid's Thomas Lemar, and Manchester City pair Bernardo Silva and Benjamin Mendy.

Jardim also guided the French side to the Champions League semi-finals during the 2016-17 campaign.

(Source: BBC)

Wales' Bale out of Spain game, '50-50' to face Ireland - Giggs

Wales forward Gareth Bale will miss the chance to face Spain and his Real Madrid team mates including Sergio Ramos and Nacho in an international friendly on Thursday after coach Ryan Giggs said he had been ruled out through injury.

Bale, who was forced off injured in Real's last two Liga games against Atletico Madrid and Alaves, is also a doubt for the UEFA Nations League match away to Ireland on Oct. 16.

"Gareth has got a little bit of muscle fatigue and he won't be involved against Spain," Giggs told a news conference on Wednesday ahead of the game at the Principality Stadium.

"We don't want to take any risks and we are monitoring it every day. Playing in Spain he wants to be a part of it but first and foremost health comes first. We want a fit and raring to go Gareth Bale."

Bale has had a bad run of injuries since he joined Real in 2013, although he has been fit for most of this year.

Giggs said it was touch and go whether Bale could play against Ireland, but predicted he would be ready for Real's game against Levante when La Liga resumes on Oct. 20.

"I'd say he's 50-50 at the minute for the Ireland game," said Giggs, whose side are second in Nations League B group four, level on three points with leaders Denmark and above bottom side Ireland on none but having played a game more.

"He had a scan last week, a couple of weeks ago with Real Madrid. We rescanned it and have done everything we can to get as much information," said Giggs.

(Source: Goal)

New all-female series aims to get women to Formula One

A new all-female racing series was launched on Wednesday, supported by former grand prix driver David Coulthard and top designer Adrian Newey, with the aim of helping women racers get to Formula One.

No woman has competed in Formula One since 1976 but organizers of the 'W Series' hope to provide a platform for them to develop skills before taking on the men further up the motorsport ladder.

With a planned start in May 2019, the series said it will offer a prize fund of \$1.5 million and free entry for 18-20 competitors who will be selected purely on merit after tests and appraisals.

The overall winner will collect \$500,000 (380,026 pounds), with prize money down to 18th place.

Organizers said they aimed to stage six 30 minute races at top circuits in Europe, most of which were past Formula One venues, with identical 1.8 litre Formula Three cars.

Future seasons would see the series expand to America, Asia and Australia.

"At the heart of W Series' DNA is the firm belief that women can compete equally with men in motorsport. However, an all-female series is essential in order to force greater female participation," organizers said in a statement.

Coulthard, winner of 13 grands prix between 1995 and 2003, is on the advisory board along with Red Bull's technical head Newey and both will be involved in the driver training programme.

Former McLaren team manager Dave Ryan has been appointed racing director, while the chief executive is lawyer and corporate finance banker Catherine Bond Muir.

The idea of an all-female series is not new but has been controversial in the past, with top women racers adamant they want to compete against the men rather than be separated.

Spaniard Carmen Jorda caused a storm last year when she advocated such a series



on the grounds that women had a physical disadvantage and could not compete equally with men at top level.

Claire Williams, deputy principal of the Williams Formula One team, said this year that an all-female championship would be a "regressive step".

British racer Pippa Mann, a winner in the U.S. Indy Lights series and who has competed six times in the Indianapolis 500, declared the latest move "a sad day for motorsport".

"Those with funding to help female racers are choosing to segregate them as opposed to supporting them," she said on Twitter on

Wednesday. "I am deeply disappointed to see such a historic step backwards take place in my lifetime."

Coulthard said, however, that women tended to reach a 'glass ceiling' at Formula Three level, often due to a lack of funding, and needed help.

Newey hoped W Series would create "a platform on which women drivers can improve by racing one another and from which they may then springboard their careers forward and ... ultimately race successfully in F1."

Some Formula One drivers, past and present, expressed support.

Damon Hill, the 1996 champion, saw "a great opportunity for female aspiring racing drivers" while Haas driver Kevin Magnussen hoped it would help progress their careers.

No woman has scored a point in Formula One, although Italian Lella Lombardi scored a half point in the shortened 1975 Spanish Grand Prix, and only two have started races since the championship began in 1950.

Lombardi started 12 races between 1974 and 1976. The last to attempt to enter a race was Italian Giovanna Amati, who failed to qualify in 1992.

(Source: Reuters)

Bolt ready to play for his footballing future



Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt is set to start up front for the Central Coast Mariners in a trial match on Friday and the Jamaican said his future as a soccer player could be on the line.

The 32-year-old eight-time Olympic gold medalist is trying to transform himself from global athletics superstar to professional football player and hopes to win a contract for the Mariners ahead of the 2018-19 Australian top flight campaign.

His previous appearance for the first team was against an amateur select side on Aug. 31 where he came on as a substitute in the 72nd minute and appeared to lack match sharpness and the touch and skill required for a professional.

"This will determine ... (what) the club want to do with my career, so it's a very important game," Bolt said on Wednesday.

"I have been improving but you won't know what level you're at until you play a competitive game so I just have to go out there and see what I need to do or whether I should continue or not.

"I'm just pushing myself and have put in the work so now I have to go out there and execute."

Bolt said that coach Mike Mulvey had told him he was likely to start the game on Friday against Macarthur South West United at Campbelltown Sports Stadium and that he would be deployed in a more forward role than on his initial appearance.

"He said he wants me to play me up top," Bolt said.

"He just told me to make sure that I'm focussed to push myself and just take my chances when I get them."

Bolt added that he had been playing a series of practice games with other players hoping to make the first team squad and he felt that his fitness and skills had improved.

"My movement and my touch is much better now. How to set my body, where to place the ball," Bolt said.

"There is a lot of things I have learned. I am much fitter now so I will have more time on the field and that's good."

Bolt, who put his efforts to carve out a football career on hold for a week to fulfil an overseas commitment last month, said he would thrive on the pressure.

(Source: Mirror)

Wimbledon to take firm line on treatment of ball boys and girls



Wimbledon is prepared to take action against players who behave badly towards ball boys and girls and plans to discuss the matter with representatives of men's and women's tennis, commercial director Mick Desmond said on Wednesday. The subject became a hot topic last week after Spaniard Fernando Verdasco was pilloried on social media for appearing to berate a ball boy for not bringing his towel quickly enough at the Shenzhen Open.

Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka also drew online criticism for shaking an empty water bottle in the direction of a ball boy in Beijing last week before tossing it to the floor.

Swiss tennis great and eight times Wimbledon winner Roger Federer, himself a ball boy in his youth, said on Tuesday that players needed to respect the kids, who are all unpaid volunteers at Wimbledon.

Desmond, speaking to reporters at the Leaders Sport Business Summit held at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge stadium, said Wimbledon expected mutual respect by everyone at the tournament, from players to cleaners.

"We'll talk to the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) and the WTA (Women's Tennis Association) about behaviour," he added. "There is a code of ethics at Wimbledon, I

think there is more respect shown because I think there's a sense of expectation of that.

"But a ball boy or ball girl getting shouted out for not throwing a towel back... the players clearly know what's expected of them and what's not and Wimbledon is not afraid to fine players, whatever their standing."

Desmond indicated, however, that Wimbledon was unlikely to break with tradition and replace the kids with back of court towel racks for players to help themselves.

Wimbledon winner Andy Murray's mother Judy asked on Twitter after the Verdasco incident: "What about a rule that makes players get their own towels? And the ball kids just look after the tennis balls."

Next month's Next Gen ATP Finals in Milan, the season-ending tournament for the best Under-21 male players, plans to do just that with players instructed to use a towel rack "to remove the onus on ball kids to handle towels".

"You never say never but I think there's still a sense to make sure that the match stays at speed, it's good to have that (service)," said Desmond. "But there needs to be mutual respect between the two entities."

(Source: Reuters)

Geraint Thomas's Tour de France trophy stolen from cycling show

The Tour de France trophy won by Geraint Thomas this summer has been stolen from a display at the NEC in Birmingham, Team Sky have confirmed.

The Coupe Omnisports, presented to the winner of the race on the Champs-Elysees since the 1970s, was one of three Grand Tour prizes being displayed around the UK and was loaned to Italian bicycle manufacturer Pinarello for The Cycle Show at the venue.

Police are investigating the theft, which Team Sky say occurred when the trophy was "momentarily left unattended" during the clear-up operation that followed the three-day event.

Geraint Thomas, who lifted the trophy for Team Sky in July, said: "It is incredibly unfortunate that this has happened. It goes without saying that the trophy is of pretty limited value to whoever took it, but means a lot to me and to the Team. Hopefully whoever took it will have the good grace to return it.



"A trophy is important, but clearly what matters most are the amazing memories from this incredible summer – and no-one can ever take those away."

Richard Hemington, managing director of Pinarello in

the UK, added: "We are obviously devastated about this. We accept full responsibility and have personally apologised to Geraint. Obviously we all hope that the trophy can be recovered."

Thomas claimed his first Tour de France general classification victory in July by a convincing margin of one minute and 51 seconds from Dutch rider Tom Dumoulin, with teammate Chris Froome - who had lifted the trophy in four of the previous five years - finishing third.

The triumph made Thomas the third Team Sky rider to win the Tour de France after Froome and Sir Bradley Wiggins, as well as ensuring that a Brit has won seven of the last eight editions of the race.

Thomas won the team's sixth Tour de France title in seven years in July. It was the fourth successive Grand Tour win for the team after Chris Froome won the Tour and the Vuelta a España last year before clinching this year's Giro d'Italia.

(Source: Independent)

Iran move up to 2018 Asian Para Games third place



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian sportspersons claimed 13 more gold medals on Wednesday and moved two places up to third at the 2018 Asian Para Games.

Iranian para athletes won five more gold medals.

■ Mahdi Olad took a gold at the men's discus throw F11 with a throw of 42.37m as well as setting an Asian record.

Indian Ghangas Monu came second with 35.89m and the bronze medal went to Iranian thrower Aria Lotfi with 34.14m.

■ Hashemiyeh Motaghian won a gold at the women's discus throw F56/57, throwing 21.17m and she set an Asian record.

Famini from Indonesia snatched the silver with a throw of 19.67.

The bronze medal went to Chinese Yuxin Tian who threw 26.92m.

■ Alireza Mokhtari Hamami earned a gold medal at the men's shot put F53. He seized the gold with 8.73m as well as setting an Asian record.

His countryman Asadollah Azimi won a silver with 8.35m. The bronze medal went to Iraqi Alaa Abdulsalam with 7.46m.

■ Aref Baharvand snatched a gold at the men's shot put F36, throwing 12.57m.

The silver medal went to Mohammed Al Kaabi from the UAE with 12.40m and Ivan Zaleznyak from Kazakhstan won a bronze medal, throwing 11.69m.

■ Mahnaz Amini took a gold at the women's javelin throw F57 with a throw of 25.68m as well as setting an Asian record.

Uzbekistan's Mokhligul Khamdamova seized the silver with 24.19m and Vietnamese Nguyen Hai Thi claimed the bronze with 23.06m.

■ Archer Mohammadreza Zandi won a gold at the men's individual - W1 Open after beating Ji Li from China 130-127 in the final match.

Iran's Majid Kakoosh defeated South Korean Hongjo Park from 141-140 and won the bronze medal.

Judo athletes Vahid Nouri and Ehsan Mousanezhad gained two gold medals.

■ Nouri defeated his Uzbek opponent Shukhrat Boboev in the final match of the men's up to 90.00 kg and snatched a gold.

■ Mousanezhad also beat Korean judoka Gwanggeun Choi in the final of the men's up to 100.00 kg.

Mohammadreza Kheirollahzadeh won a silver after being defeated by Uzbekistan's Shirin Sharipov in the final match of the men's over 100.00 kg.

Meysam Banitaba in the men's up to 60.00 kg, Reza Gholami in the men's up to 66.00 kg and Omid Jafari in the men's up to 81.00 kg won three bronze medals.

■ Shahin Izadyar won two more gold medals at swimming. He earned a gold at the men's 50M freestyle S10. Kazakh swimmers Sergey Kinakh (00:26.87) and Dmitriy Li (00:26.89) came second and third respectively.

Earlier on the day, he had won a gold medal at the men's 100M breaststroke SB9.

Izadyar had previously claimed three gold medals at the men's 100M butterfly S10, men's 100M freestyle S10 and men's 200M individual medley SM10.

Chess players Omid Karimi and Atefeh Naghavi Mandi took two gold medals in the Games.

■ Karimi finished in first place in the men's individual standard VI - B2/B3.

■ Naghavi Mandi also won a gold medal in the women's individual standard VI - B2/B3.

■ Iran's women's team standard VI - B2/B3 seized a gold as well.

Furthermore, Fariba Zendehboudi snatched a silver medal at the women's individual standard VI - B2/B3.

Leila Zarezadeh grabbed a bronze medal at the women's individual standard VI - B1.

Fatemeh Barghoul gained the bronze at the women's individual standard VI - B2/B3.

Iran's men's team standard VI - B1, men's team standard VI - B2/B3 and women's team standard VI - B1 won three silver medals.

Iran currently sit in third place with 30 gold, 23 silver and 27 bronze medals.

Chia lead the medal table winning 105 gold, 53 silver and 39 bronze medals.

South Korea are second with 38 gold, 31 silver and 26 bronze medals.

Iran know rivals at Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup 2018

HUAWEI INTERCONTINENTAL CUP DUBAI 2018			
GROUP A		GROUP B	
A1	UAE	B1	TAHITI
A2	EGYPT	B2	USA
A3	BRAZIL	B3	IRAN
A4	SPAIN	B4	RUSSIA

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national team have learned their opponents at Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup 2018.

Team Melli are pitted against the U.S., 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup runner-ups Tahiti and three-time champions Russia in Group B.

Hosts UAE were drawn in Group A, together with Egypt, defending champions Brazil, and newcomers Spain.

The official draw held Wednesday morning at the Dubai Sports Council headquarters.

The eighth edition of the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup will take place again in Dubai (UAE), between the 6th and 10th of November.

A state-of-the art stadium on Dubai's Kite Beach will host one of the most anticipated and prestigious beach soccer competitions in the world, one that features the globe's best teams in the beautiful and unique city of Dubai, beachsoccer.com reported.

During the ceremony, HE Saeed Hareb, General Secretary of the Dubai Sports Council, said that "we are really happy to have this competition landing again in Dubai. Beach Soccer is tightly related to a healthy lifestyle, something Dubai and the Dubai Sports Council firmly believe in. This competition has also become a national and international attraction, and this year we will have a new location on Kite Beach, by the sea."

Iran's men's sitting volleyball into Asian Para Games final



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's men's sitting volleyball team booked a place in the final match of the 2018 Asian Para Games on Wednesday.

Iran defeated Iraq in straight sets 25-8, 25-12, 25-19 in the semi-finals.

"We have many top world sitting volleyball players. Our country in fact produces a lot of athletes in this sports discipline," said Iran's coach Hadi Rezaei.

"We also wish to emerge as the 2020 Paralympics' champion after winning the world competition in the Netherlands this year," declared the coach.

China managed to go through to the final after defeating Kazakhstan 3-1 with

the scores of 25-23, 25-21, 15-25, 25-21 on Wednesday.

This year's final is a repeat of the final matches of the last two editions of the Asian Para Games in 2010 and 2014, when both teams also clashed in search for the gold.

The men's sitting volleyball final match will be held at Indoor Tennis Stadium, Gelora Bung Karno sports complex, on Thursday.

Iran's women's sitting volleyball team also advanced to the final match after beating Japan in straight sets 25-17, 25-14, 25-10.

The Iranian team will face powerhouse China on Thursday in the final match.

World champs Japan hope to bring wheelchair rugby to the masses

TOKYO (Reuters) — Japan, hosts of the next Paralympic Games in 2020 and reigning wheelchair rugby world champions, know they are in a unique position to promote the fast-paced, hard-hitting sport.

The Japanese team clinched their first ever World Championship in August, knocking out the reigning Paralympic champions Australia in a 62-61 nail-biter.

The match was typical of the frenetic sport, which sees quadriplegic athletes compete on a basketball-sized court and disrupt play by crashing their reinforced wheelchairs into opponents.

Originally called "murderball", the sport has been in the Paralympics since 1996 and the fierce competition and high skill levels on show have made it one of the showpiece's most popular events. Japan's head coach Kevin Orr, himself a winner of two Paralympic bronze medals in wheelchair racing, is full of enthusiasm that not only can his team improve on their bronze medal from Rio 2016 but also spread the sport to a wider audience.

"The idea of winning on home soil was very appealing to me," Orr told Reuters at a team training session in Tokyo on Wednesday.

"One of my goals as a coach is not just to win Paralympic gold medals and those things but it is really to see the Paralympic movement move forward."

Orr was himself inspired to become a para athlete by the 1984 Games in Los Angeles and is hopeful that the Tokyo Paralympics can have a similar impact on others.

"I think a lot of people look at it and go 'that is neat, they are crashing into each other' but they don't realize



that the players here have had significant injuries in their upper and lower extremities," added the American, who has also coached the U.S. and Canadian teams in the past.

"That makes them eligible to play but they have gone beyond that and become great athletes and, for me, that is the beauty of wheelchair rugby."

Japan has a strong connection with para sports and big crowds are expected at the 2020 Paralympics.

There has also been plenty of investment in recent years, including the opening of the Nippon Foundation Para Arena, where the wheelchair rugby team hold their training sessions.

The Japan Para Wheelchair Rugby Championship is also held every May, while Orr says Japanese media does a good job promoting the sport.

"To me, seeing the shows on NHK and some of the other TV stations where they are promoting Paralympic sport; explaining the rules, explaining the game, telling people what it is... It isn't just novelty," he said. "It is really trying to engage people in the sport itself and why we are so good."

"That is the thing that I really hope people see ... how good Japan is at wheelchair rugby, and really come to fall in love with us."

Iran, Singapore to boost sport cooperation

IRNA — Presidents of Iran and Singapore national Olympic committees on Wednesday underlined expansion of sport cooperation to create peace, friendship and social vibrancy.

President of Iran's National Olympic Committee Reza Salehi Amiri held meeting with his Singaporean counterpart Tan Chuan-Jin in Buenos Aires on Wednesday.

In the meeting, Salehi Amiri pointed to new approach of Iran's National Olympic Committee to develop bilateral ties with other countries and expressed readiness to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on sport cooperation between Iran and Singapore.

Tan Chuan-Jin appreciated Salehi Amiri for the meeting and supported signing MoU on exchanging experiences between coaches, holding training courses and camps in Iran and Singapore.

Also Head of the Human and Financial Resources Committee of the International Olympics Committee, he pointed to Iran's position in Asia and expressed satisfaction and support for Iran's planning to achieve position of 'IOC Member' in the IOC.

The two sides will study and sign the provisions of the MoU in the ANOC meeting in Japan in November, 2018.

Summer Youth Olympics-2018 is underway in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from October 6 to 18, 2018.

First Eurasian sports science congress begins in Tabriz

IRNA — The first two-day international Eurasian sports congress with the participation of domestic and foreign experts from 15 countries began at Tabriz University on Wednesday.

The Eurasian Sports Science Congress (ESSU) is an international non-profit organization were established in Ankara, Turkey, in 2017 with the participation of 15 Asian and European countries, including Turkey, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Romania, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Slovakia, Cyprus and Ukraine.

The first Eurasian Congress of Sport Sciences is held in Tabriz due to the selection of Tabriz as the capital of Islamic countries.

The Secretary of the International Eurasian Congress on Sport Sciences Saeed Nikokheslat called the goal of holding this congress for increasing international communications saying that the congress will be organized in four areas of sport physiology, sports management, exercise behavior and sports medicine.

Nikokheslat continued, 'This Congress, while promoting the scientific level of sport in the community and spreading it among the general public, brings many talents, including scientific communication and tourism, to the country.'

He announced the presence of prominent foreign and domestic professors and students from universities throughout the country, adding that 600 papers have been submitted to the secretariat of the Congress, with 80 other articles.

Nikokheslat added, 'Of these, 50 papers were accepted, some of which will be presented in five minutes.'

Real Madrid monitor Raheem Sterling contract talks



Real Madrid are monitoring Raheem Sterling's situation at Manchester City as the England forward's contract runs down, sources have told ESPN FC.

The 23-year-old is in the final two years of his contract with no sign of a new deal being agreed as yet. Sterling has also claimed he would be open to a move abroad at some point in his career.

"Definitely, it would be nice to play abroad. It would be a great experience. Spain's attractive. Anywhere the weather is nice really," Sterling said in December 2017.

However, ESPN FC has been told there is a willingness from both the club and the player for a new long-term contract at the Etihad as Madrid keep an eye on the situation.

While Madrid have yet to formally approach City, they are watching developments and there is a danger Sterling's value will diminish when he enters the final 18 months of his contract after the January transfer window closes.

Sterling signed a five-year deal following his £49 million move from Liverpool in July 2015 and has made 150 appearances for the club, winning the Premier League title last season.

City have agreed extensions with Kevin De Bruyne, Gabriel Jesus, Ederson and Sergio Aguerro over the past 12 months.

Pep Guardiola signed his own three-year contract extension in May and has made it clear he wants Sterling to remain at the club.

"We are delighted with him and would like Raheem to stay," Guardiola said in August.

"We'll do our effort to make him feel we count on him. And we count on him. We arrived after a difficult season [two years ago] and I told him I want to help him and would like him to be happy."

"In the end, the agents may not have agreements and that may not happen. But he knows and his agent knows we like him and want him a lot."

(Source: ESPN)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari

■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

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Zip Code: 1599814713

Iran to hold intl. conference on cinema in digital world

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian National School of Cinema (INSC) will be holding an international conference on cinema in the digital age opening in Tehran on November 12.

A number of scholars and experts on digital technology coming from various countries will be attending the three-day conference.



In a statement published by INSC Managing Director Ruhollah Hosseini said, “Iranian national school of cinema is a venue to recognize and introduce modern technologies such as digital technology to cineastes and those active in this field.”

“The conference also aims to recognize the potentials related to modern visual technology in the country and support them, while it also means to achieve a proper understanding of the digital phenomenon and study its relation with the cinema industry.”

He also said that several other scholars and experts on literature and communications have been invited to attend the conference to discuss the impacts of the new technologies on culture and society.

The Iranian National School of Cinema is an affiliate with the

Soldiers given a voice in century-old footage in Jackson’s new war film

LONDON (Reuters) — For his new World War One documentary film, “They Shall Not Grow Old”, director Peter Jackson was adamant the soldiers should tell their own stories.



To do that, the acclaimed New Zealand director hired forensic lip-readers to go through old silent film footage of the war and uncover the conversations that took place in the trenches and on the battlegrounds 100 years ago.

Those words were mixed with interviews with former soldiers from 600 hours of tape in the BBC archives to create a documentary that includes only the words of the soldiers themselves, in a full-color war as they would have seen it.

Director Peter Jackson attends the world premiere of “The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years” in London, Britain September 15, 2016. (Reuters/Neil Hall)

“There’s been lots of documentaries made on the First World War...and I just decided for this one to strictly just use the voices of the guys that fought there,” Jackson, director of the “Hobbit” and the “Lord of the Rings” series told Reuters on Tuesday. “So no historians, no narration, no nothing.”

Old film was meticulously restored. Computers were used, not only to add color to black and white footage, but to remove imperfections, fill splices and reconstruct missing frames from film that was shot with fewer frames per second than today.

Forensic lip readers, who usually work with the police determining what people say on silent security camera footage, were able to decipher the words spoken long ago on film. Actors were hired to give the soldiers on screen a voice.

The film will have its world premiere at the BFI London Film Festival next week.

“It’s not the story of the war,” said Jackson. “It’s the story of the human experience of fighting in the war.”

Taylor Swift sets new American Music Award record, urges people to vote

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Taylor Swift, straight off a controversial dive into U.S. politics, was the big winner at the American Music Awards on Tuesday where she used her platform to again urge her fans to get out and vote.

The 28-year-old pop singer won a record fourth artist of the year trophy at the fan-voted American Music Awards, beating rappers Drake and Post Malone, as well as Britain’s Ed Sheeran and rock band Imagine Dragons for the top prize.

She also picked up three other awards, for best female pop artist, best tour, and best pop album for “reputation,” the biggest seller of 2017.

On Sunday, Swift provoked a storm by breaking her silence on politics and announcing she would vote for two Democrats in Tennessee in the U.S. congressional midterm elections in November. Her comments drove a spike in voter registration.

On Tuesday, the “Fearless” singer told the American Music Awards audience in Los Angeles and millions watching at home to go and vote.

Portraits of war heroes showcased at Moon Headbands exhibit

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Portraits of a number on Iranian heroes who were martyred during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war are on display in Tehran in an exhibition titled “Moon Headbands”.

Painter Mohammad-Ali Naderi joined a large number of artists and cultural figure at the Abolfazl Aali Gallery of the Art Bureau on Tuesday evening to open the exhibit.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNA, Naderi said he has created 40 portraits for the exhibition and added that working on the paintings of chief commanders has always been one of his personal concerns and that he has chosen the portraits based on his own interest.

“The personal characters of each commander helped me choose a series of colors to portray each commander. For example, I used happy colors for some commanders to reflect their inner characters while I used the color red to highlight the issue of martyrdom for some others like martyrs Mehdi Bakeri and Mohammad-Ebrahim Hemmat,” he explained.

He also said that he likes to work on more paintings and display them on different art websites.

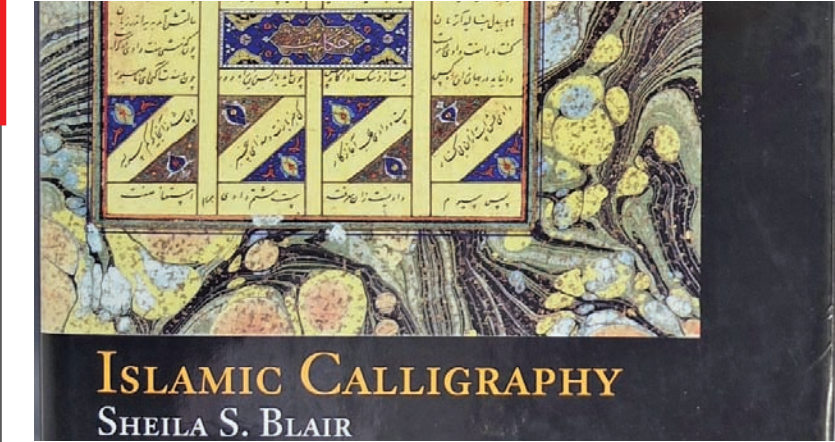
“My main goal is to represent the martyrs through art, though it has had its own difficulties, but I am happy with the results,” he concluded.

The exhibit will be running until October 28 at the gallery located on Somayyeh St., off Hafez Ave.



Portraits of martyrs Mehdi Bakeri (L) and Mohammad Ebrahim Hemmat (R) by Mohammad-Ali Naderi are on display in the Moon Headbands exhibition at Abolfazl Aali Gallery of in Tehran on October 9, 2018. (Mehr/Mohammadreza Abbasi)

Tehran institute to review Sheila Blair’s “Islamic Calligraphy”



Front cover of Canadian scholar Sheila S. Blair’s “Islamic Calligraphy”.

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** — “Islamic Calligraphy” written by the Canadian expert on Islamic and Asian art Sheila S. Blair is scheduled to be reviewed during a session at the Advanced Research Institute of Art in Tehran on October 14.

Translated by Valiollah Kavusi, the book was published by the Iranian Academy of Arts in 2017.

Kavusi and the Islamic art expert Amin Iranpur will deliver speeches during the session that will begin at 4 p.m., the organizers announced on Wednesday.

“The book introduces numerous unknown calligraphers of the Islamic world that we have never heard of them before,” Kavusi wrote in a preface to the book.

He also said that the book gives

information about the large cities’ roles of the Islamic world in calligraphic interactions.

Edinburgh University Press published “Islamic Calligraphy” in May 2006. It was the joint winner of the 2007 British-Kuwait Friendship Society Prize for Middle Eastern Studies.

The book was also selected as Iran’s Book of the Year in 2008 in the Islamic studies section.

It was also picked as a 2007 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title.

Blair, a Norma Jean Calderwood University professor of Islamic and Asian art, is also the author of “Text and Image in Medieval Persian Art”, “Islamic Inscriptions” and dozens of other publications about Islamic and Iranian art.

India’s #MeToo movement takes aim at alleged misconduct, triggering probes, departures

MUMBAI (Reuters) — The #MeToo movement in India has gathered momentum in recent days, with more than a dozen complaints of sexual harassment and other sexual misconduct leveled online against prominent journalists, actors, movie directors, comedians and other public figures.

On Monday, it triggered an investigation into a leading journalist and questions about the future of India’s top comedy collective.

The Hindustan Times, one of India’s major national papers, said that Prashant Jha, its political editor and chief of bureau, has been asked to step down from all his editorial roles pending an investigation. “This is a case of sexual harassment and an internal committee has been set up,” said the media group’s general counsel, Dinesh Mittal, in an announcement.

Jha was accused by a former female colleague, Avantika Mehta, of sending inappropriate messages. Mehta made her complaint on Saturday in an article on the Firstpost news site and then on her own Twitter account.

Jha did not answer calls or text messages seeking comment. He has not responded publicly to the allegations.

Separately, India’s biggest comedy group, All India Bakchod (AIB), said its future was in doubt following a series of allegations about sexual harassment.

Tanmay Bhat, the chief executive and co-founder of AIB, resigned after saying in a statement on Friday he made a “big mistake” by continuing to work with a stand-up comic even after Bhat knew of allegations of



Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta gestures as she talks to reporters in Mumbai, India, September 27, 2018. (Reuters/Stringer)

inappropriate behavior by the performer.

According to a statement from the comedy group, another AIB co-founder, Gursimran Khamba, was also placed on a temporary leave of absence by the collective after an anonymous woman on social media on Monday accused him of “emotional blackmail”. In a statement, Khamba denied any wrongdoing, saying there was no violation of consent.

The best-known group in India’s growing comedy scene, AIB has more than 3.4 million subscribers on its YouTube channel.

Hotstar, an internet platform owned by Twenty-First Century Fox’s Star India unit, said it was pulling “On Air with AIB”, a news and current affairs show that still had more than 20 episodes to air and that was hosted by the four founders of AIB. In a tweet on its official handle, Hotstar said the developments surrounding AIB ran contrary to the platform’s values and that it was taking the show off air with immediate effect.

Iranian games nominated for Intl. Mobile Gaming Awards



“Mr. Crow Don’t Open the Envelope” by Khashayar Mohebbi.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A selection of 12 games from Iranian developers have been nominated for the 3rd International Mobile Gaming Awards (IMGA) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the organizers have announced.

“Fisher Boy” by Sepehr Taqdisian, “Electron” by Majid Rahmani, “Harmony” by Mohammad Amin Raffieinia, “Mr. Crow Don’t Open the Envelope” by Khashayar Mohebbi, “41148” by Mahdi Fanaei, and “Irregular Mobile” by Benyamin Salari are among the games.

Also included are “Colimus!”, “Sweet Lemon” and “The Dark Wings 2” from Lexip Games, “King of Wealth” from Anashid Games, “Magnis” by Paezan

Game Studio and “Flipping Filip” by Deedema.

People can choose their best games by voting on this site. Winners will be announced on November 3.

Last year, three Iranian games won four out of a total of nine main awards at the IMGA MENA.

Winners were awarded during a ceremony in Amman, Jordan.

The IMGA is a worldwide competition that started in 2004, and it covers several different regions. In addition to the IMGA Global, which is open to all, there is also IMGA MENA, IMGA Southeast Asia and IMGA China.

The IMGA team is based in the center of Marseille, France’s second largest city.

Stevie Nicks, Def Leppard early favorites for Rock Hall of Fame

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Fleetwood Mac singer Stevie Nicks and glam metal band Def Leppard led voting among fans on Tuesday for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, outstripping the 13 other nominees eligible for a place in music history.

Nicks and British band Def Leppard were among 15 acts from a wide range of styles announced as nominees, including country singer-songwriter John Prine, Chicago funk group Rufus featuring Chaka Khan and leftist rockers Rage Against the Machine.

Janet Jackson, a five-time Grammy winner, will have a third chance to gain induction after failing to make it in her first two times on the ballot.

Nicks, a two-time Grammy winner known for her haunting vocal style, was inducted into the Hall 20 years ago as a member of the popular 1970s group Fleetwood Mac. She is nominated this time for her solo career.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame sends ballots to over 1,000 artists, historians and members of the music industry to select the inductees. They will be announced in December and inducted into the Hall of Fame at a ceremony in March in New York.

In previous years, between five and seven acts have typically made the cut.

The Cleveland-based Rock & Roll Hall of Fame also allows the general public to vote, with the top five vote-getters submitted as a single “fans’ ballot.” It counts



Def Leppard guitarists Vivian Campbell and Phil Collen perform during the VH1 Rock Honors concert at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, Nevada May 25, 2006. (Reuters/Steve Marcus)

as just one voice among the hundreds of other ballots.

Within hours of the nominees being named on Tuesday, Nicks led the fan ballot with more than 38,000 votes, followed by Def Leppard with some 33,000, according to the Hall of Fame website.

Among the acts receiving their first nomination this year were Devo, an avant garde group from Akron, Ohio, best known for its 1980 party favorite “Whip It”, as well as British group Roxy Music, and the American multi-instrumentalist Todd Rundgren.

Meanwhile, British bands Radiohead, The Cure, and The Zombies, along with American rapper LL Cool J, German experimental music group Kraftwerk, and 1960s rockers MC5 were among those bidding for induction once again.