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# Guardian Council studying CFT at presence of Zarif, Jahangiri, Hemati

**POLITICS TEHRAN** – The Guardian Council has held a meeting regarding the CFT, a legislation to combat financing of terrorism with three figures defending the ratification, council's spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said on Wednesday

Kadkhodaei said the meeting was attended by Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Valiollah Seif, Al-Alam reported.

"Questions were raised by members of the council, which were answered, and then it was decided to use other experts' comments in future meetings," he added.

Earlier this month, Iranian lawmakers voted in favor of the CFT, passing it to the Guardian Council to vet the bill for compliance with the Constitution.

# U.S. 'zero Iranian oil' plan a political bluff: NIOC head

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** – Head of <sup>s</sup> <sup>k</sup> National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) called the U.S.'s efforts for reducing Iranian oil exports to zero a "political bluff" saying, Trump had been trying to reduce Iran's oil exports for months.

Speaking to Tasnim news agency on Wednesday, Ali Kardor noted that

Trump has done whatever he could to pressure Iran and he knows very well that getting Iran's oil exports to zero was a political bluff.

The U.S. has been pressuring Iranian oil customers to cut their imports, encouraging Saudi Arabia, other OPEC states and Russia to pump more oil to meet any shortfall.  $\rightarrow 4$ 

# Israel rains down bombs on Gaza again

Israeli warplanes have carried out fresh aerial assaults on Gaza in yet another act of aggression against the blockaded coastal enclave, killing a Palestinian youth.

Gaza residents said Israeli jets targeted three locations throughout the Gaza Strip on Wednesday.

The Health Ministry in Gaza identified the victim as Naji al-Za'aneen, 25.

Several Gazans were also wounded in the Israeli strikes, said the Gazaalan news website. Separately on Wednesday, Israel closed both border crossings with Gaza amid rising tensions.

The Israeli army claimed in a statement that its fresh air raids came "in response to the rockets fired from Gaza" onto occupied territories overnight. →13



# Nikki Haley left the UN

ikki Haley has resigned as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and will leave her post in January. Since Trump's first weeks in office, the White House has been plagued with high-profile departures of people who are fired or resign, often after being stung by scandal or caught up in some controversy: National Security Adviser Mike Flynn, FBI Director James Comey and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, to name a few.

Many critics believe that the presence of Nikki Haley besides people such

# U.S. has buried its moral compass in the Trump-Kushner-MBS disaster: Askari

#### **EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW By Javad Heirannia**

TEHRAN - Professor Hossein Askari, an expert on Saudi Arabia who also teaches international business at the George Washington University, believes that Jamal Khashoggi was tortured and murdered.

"U.S. intelligence services knew about the danger that Khashoggi faced, maybe not the details, but that MBS was trying to capture or even kill him," Hossein Askari, who served as special advisor to Saudi finance minister, tells the Tehran Times

Following is the text of the interview:

Where are we in the Khashoggi-MBS-Salman-Trump-Kushner disaster gripping the world?

A: We have a pile of lies. Let's face facts. Jamal Khashoggi was tortured and murdered. U.S. intelligence services knew about the danger that Khashoggi faced, maybe not the details, but that MBS was trying to capture or even kill him. Given this fact, the U.S. was complicit in his murder. This is a black mark on America's credentials. The U.S. should have warned Khashoggi. The Saudis have lied and lied with Trump as their agent. He has suggested that 'rogue killers' are to blame! What a lie. Fifteen Saudis come on two private planes to Istanbul; they are welcomed in the embassy; they torture and kill Khashoggi inside the consulate; the Saudi Consul and the staff say nothing; and the fifteen assailants leave Turkey on their two planes. Rogue agents do

not get away with murder in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has always been micro-managed from the top-today by MBS. Now the Saudis are caught naked and they will go along with a Trumpian fairytale. A fairytale that no one outside of Trump's magical base will believe. For some reason Trump is trying to protect MBS and Saudi Arabia but unfortunately, when you lie, you need a bigger lie to cover the first lie and on it goes. After each lie, they became less believable. This situation will have repercussions in the Muslim World, in the Middle East and in how the United States will be viewed in the world for years to come.

What are the facts behind Trump's support for Saudi Arabia-military sales, oil, regional policies in the Middle East?  $\rightarrow$  7

#### REPORT Syed Zafar Mehdi Journalist from New Delhi

# Journalists in war-ravaged Afghanistan continue to walk a tightrope

s violence against journalists surges in Afghanistan and government faces The heat for failing to safeguard their rights, President Ashraf Ghani says his government is not at odds with the media and that government and the media should work together and be committed to implementing the law.

# 'India may be willing to decide in a more strategic manner on oil purchases from Iran'

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

Excerpts from the interview:

think it is because of the fear of U.S. sanctions? India and Iran share deep historical cultural A. If the Indian government's decision to bu

as John Bolton and Mike Pompeo has led to the formation of the Subotage triangle in the U.S. foreign policy, and as a result expanded the costs of Washington's defeat in the international system. Haley stepped aside while her poor and dark performance in the UN Security Council is known to everyone.

The important point to be considered in this regard is the truth behind Nikki Haley's resignation from her post. Haley's unexpected resignation fueled rumors, and accordingly different sources came up with different ideas. The Iuvm Press, for example, writes;

"When Mike Pompeo came to the State Department, she (Ĥaley) was virtually unable to act as an independent unit like the past, and was forced to carry on her activities within the framework of the Department of State and align with Mike Pompeo, and even to say that with the coming of Pompeo, her close relationship with the White House was narrowed over a year and no longer had the freedom of the past."

It continues; "Some speculation suggests that the pressures of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton, after she failed at the recent General Assembly, led to her resignation. In a resignation speech, Haley did not mentioned to Mike Pompeo and John Bolton to reinforce this speculation that her resignation was the result of a sharp gap between Donald Trump's cabinet.

But it seems that this hypothesis can't be true. Given the violent and aggressive behavior of Nikki Haley, and her particular attachment to the Zionist regime, the truth is probably something else.  $\rightarrow$ 7

— Iran and India have shared ag e-010 historical, commercial and cultural ties. The two countries have inked many bilateral agreements in recent years. Iran has been the main supplier of crude oil to India even at the peak of Western sanctions between 2012 and 2016. Now, with sanctions imposed against Iran by the Trump administration, it remains to be seen which course of action New Delhi takes.

Rezaul Hasan Laskar is a New Delhi-based journalist and foreign editor at Hindustan Times. In an interview to Tehran Times, he talks about India-Iran ties in the light of recent developments, and says it is unlikely that energy hungry countries such as China and India will totally cut off oil purchases from Iran.

and economic ties. What makes their relationship so enduring and why is Iran important for India?

A. The deep historic ties in terms of culture, language, food, trade and people-to-people exchanges is something that has underpinned the relationship between the two sides. In more modern times, Iran has been an important source of energy - it has been among the top three suppliers of crude to India in recent years - and cooperation on Chabahar port with an eye on markets in Afghanistan and Central Asia has given impetus to the bilateral relationship.

India has been one of the biggest importers of Iranian crude oil. But, lately New Delhi has been under pressure to cut Iranian oil imports. Do you

the S-400 air defense system from Russia despite threats of U.S. sanctions is any indication, India may be willing to decide in a more strategic manner on oil purchases from Iran.

As things stand, it is hard to replace a key supplier which provides millions of barrels of crude within a space of weeks and months. It is true that the total number of barrels that India buys from Iran has fallen in recent months but New Delhi could use this to argue with Washington that it has reduced its dependence on Tehran for energy. However, it seems unlikely to me that energy hungry countries such as China and India will totally cut off oil purchases from Iran.  $\rightarrow 6$ 



# 1st national conference on importance of family opens in Tehran

**TEHRAN** — The first national conference on importance of family kicked off in Tehran on Wednesday with repre $sentatives of 700 \, non-governmental \, groups \, in \, Attendance.$ Hojjatoleslam Sheikh Mohammad Qomi, the chief of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, also attended the event. According to Mehr news agency the conference is aiming to increase knowledge exchange among NGOs active in such fields in order to investigate and assess vulnerabilities in families. Hassan Mousavi Chelak, head of Iran's Association of Social Workers, also said on Tuesday that the event opens up an ample opportunity to exchange views on the status of families in the country from various

aspects. "In one of the panels we will assess the responsible organizations accomplishment as well as failures in managing family affairs," he concluded.

President Ghani made the remarks on Tuesday in Kabul at the re-launch of the Journalists Support Fund in Kabul – a fund that will help members of the Afghan media fraternity including families of those killed while covering war. He announced the donation of five million AFs from his personal end to the fund and the Ministry of Finance pledged to donate 10 million AFs.

He said government and the media needs to work together, because they have "shared goals" -- which is the strengthening of peoples' rights. He urged media companies to introduce insurance policies for journalists. "Now is the time to take an active part in establishing insurance (policies) for journalists. It is not acceptable that media steps on the law. When you do not pay tax, it is another issue, but when the rights of journalists are not respected, the law should be implemented against media owners," said Ghani.

Journalists in the war-ravaged country continue to walk a tightrope, reporting daily incidents of violence under dangerous and life-threatening conditions. Over the years, many journalists have suffered casualties in the war that has now stretched into its 18th year. But, despite ominous threats and heavy odds, they have upheld the highest ideals of journalism under extremely trying conditions.

Security is the biggest challenge for journalists who have to report from highly volatile areas. They face threats from armed rebels, government officials, power lords and criminals. With 14 journalists and two media workers killed since January, 2018 has been the deadliest year for the Afghan media since 2001, when the U.S.-led alliance invaded Afghanistan. →6

**OCTOBER 18, 2018** 

### MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

TEHRANTIMES



👅 Jafari: 'Tough response' awaits abductors of **Iranian forces** 

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolue s k tion Guards Corps (IRGC) on Wednesday vowed a "tough response" against the terrorists who abducted a number of Iranian border guards near the Pakistani border on Monday night.

Speaking at a ceremony in province of Semnan, Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari said the abductors, knowing they could not achieve their goal as long as the forces were conscious, kidnapped them after making them unconscious, Tasnim reported.

Jafari added the goal of Iran's enemies, especially the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia, is to bring chaos in Iran, but Iranian forces foil most of their plans.



## Sanctions originate from U.S. 'blind hostility': Iran

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The new U.S. sanctions against Iran are part of a psychological war, "a clear insult to legal and international mechanisms" and a result of "blind hostility toward the Iranian nation", Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday.

In a statement, Qassemi said despite its hypocritical remarks in support of the Iranian nation, the U.S. government is threatening Iranian people's interests.

He added that such efforts, which show the spitefulness of the U.S. government toward the Iranian people, are doomed to failure.

The spokesman's remarks came a day after the U.S. Treasury announced that twenty Iranian entities, including four banks, would be targeted by new sanctions.



**Never proxy** war with Saudis: Envoy

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran has never entered a proxy war with Saudi Arabia in Syria, Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad has said, reiterating Tehran's long-held policy that Iran just helped the legitimate government in Syria to fight Daesh (ISIL).

Unlike the U.S., Iran entered Syria with invitation and permission, Baeidinejad told the Oxford Union late on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

He also pointed to the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), describing it as an "unimaginable achievement".

Let's compare the JCPOA with Trump's agreement with North Korea which is just a two-page document, he added.



#### **Aref never was** reformists' candidate: journalist

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Reformist journalist Abbas Abdi has said former presidential candidate Mohammad Reza Aref has never been and will probably never be the candidate of the reformists.

"Mr. Aref ran for president in 1392 (2013) at his own discretion, and he was never the proposed and approved candidate of the reformists," Abdi said in an interview with Tasnim published on Wednesday.

On the reformists' support for President Hassan Rouhani, he said although they criticize the president more than before, the reformists still support the Rouhani administration.

"Criticisms have increased because there are more prob-

# **Enemy portraying false image of Iran: Leader**

#### **POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic

Revolution said on Wednesday that the enemy is representing a "false, negative, and disappointing" image of Iran.

"Today, misrepresentation is the prominent activity of the enemy, aimed at deceiving the public minds in the world and Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told hundreds of academics, directors of knowledge-based companies, researchers, highly talented students, etc

He likened the enemy's harsh "media and propaganda war" against Iran to the Iraqi imposed war in the 1980s, saying Iran will emerge victorious in this battle too. The Leader described precious human

resources and active minds as a "great asset" to the Islamic Republic, saying the enemies and the hegemonic system are trying to plunder such an asset and monopolize the resources that produce wealth and power. The ideas of the young, considerate,

energetic and resolved elites must be taken into account in various fields, includ-



ing Iran's oil industry, and in turning the oil-dependent economy to an independent, knowledge-based and resistance economy, Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

Highlighting the need for scientific progress in the country, he said tapping the talents of brilliant minds will boost the country's power and minimize its vulnerabilities.

"If we make scientific progress, the threats from our civilizational, political, and economic enemies will not be permanent and will diminish," the Leader remarked.

Underlining Iran's 2-percent share in the global scientific production, Ayatollah Khamenei said Iranian universities have greatly contributed to the country's advances in aerospace, biological sciences, dam construction, nuclear industry, stem cell research, biotechnology, and recombinant drugs.

Stressing the need for scientific research in various fields, the Leader called for closer interaction between universities and industry sector and for scientific cooperation with the countries that are making rapid scientific advances.

"Such countries are mainly located in Asia, therefore, we must be oriented to the East, not the West," Ayatollah Khamenei underlined, warning that orientation towards the West will make the country stranded and humiliated.

He added Washington's unilateral and warlike measures

The ambassador said Tehran has proven its goodwill

U.S. President Donald Trump announced Washington's

The nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive

exit from the nuclear deal on May 8 and ordered restoration of sanctions. The first batch of sanctions was snapped back

on August 6 and the second wave of sanctions will return

Plan of Action (JCPOA), was struck between Iran and six

world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France,

is the real cause of trouble for the world.

Britain and Germany on July 14, 2015.

with regard to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

# Sanctions can be turned into opportunity: diplomat

**POLITICS** d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei said on Wednesday that although sanctions have big negative effects, countries under sanctions can turn them into opportunities, IRNA reported.

He also predicted that removing Iran from the world oil market could raise the oil price beyond \$100 per barrel. "However, it is impossible to remove Iran from this market," Ambassador Sanaei added.

Iran's top diplomat to Moscow also suggested that in the current situation countries such as Iran, Russia and China should rely on cooperation within the framework of regional mechanisms.

#### Zarif urges Pakistan to help immediately release Iranian abductees

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif telephoned his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Wednesday to follow up on conditions of Iranian border guards who were abducted and transferred to Pakistan by terrorists late on Monday.

Zarif stressed the need for strengthening security at Iran-Pakistan borders based on previous agreements, the Foreign Ministry said on its website.

He urged the Pakistani government to take immediate and serious measures to ensure safety and health of the abductees.

Zarif also called for measures to identify and arrest those behind the terrorist attack and secure the release of the hostages. Qureshi, in turn, condemned the move

by the terrorist group and expressed deep regret over the incident.

"Pakistan will use all its capacities



to take necessary measures to find and arrest the perpetrators and protect and release the Iranian guards," he said. "These terrorist groups are com-

mon enemies of the two governments and nations who seek to disrupt close and friendly relations between the two neighbors," he added.

# **Mastermind of Ahvaz terror** attack killed

on November 4.

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iraq's k Badr Organization chief Hadi Al-Ameri says that a militant who orchestrated the terrorist attack in the Iranian city of Ahvaz on September 22 has been killed in Iraq's Diyala province, Fars reported on Tuesday

'The Daesh terrorist, Abu Zhuha, who engineered the Ahvaz terrorist attack was killed by Badr forces in Diyala in eastern Iraq," Ål-Ameri said.

He added that cleansing operations will continue until full establishment of security and stability in in the province.

Earlier, the Public Relations Department of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) named Abu Zhuha as the main perpetrator of the attack in Ahvaz, confirming that he was killed along with four other terrorists during a surprise operation by the Iraqi resistance forces in Diyala

The attack in Ahvaz, capital of the



southwestern province of Khuzestan, left 24 people dead and over 60 others injured. A four-year-old son was among the dead.

In retaliation for the terrorist attack, the IRGC launched several surface-to-surface ballistic missiles at terrorists' positions in the Bukamal region, East of Euphrates in Syria.

# 'Victory in The Hague shows power of Iran's diplomacy'

lems now," he stressed



#### Ararat governor meets Iranian ambassador

**TICS TEHRAN** — Armenia's Ararat governor, S K Garik Sargsian, has met Iranian Ambassador to Yerevan Kazem Sajjadi to discuss cooperation between provinces from Armenia and Iran.

Pointing to Sargsian's recent visit to Golestan Province in Iran, Sajjadi asked the governor to pursue the agreements struck between the two sides in that trip, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

He also said cooperation between Gilan and Ararat could help strengthen ties between Iran and Armenia.

Sargsian, for his part, voiced readiness to host a delegation from Gilan Province and implement the signed agreements.



## **'Reformers might** endorse Larijani for president in **2021'**

**TICS TEHRAN** — Yadollah Tahernejad, a reformist politician, has said should the

reformists come to the conclusion that Iranian people's livelihood would be better off under a President Ali Larijani, they would endorse him for the post in 2021 election.

"Anyone who can run the country properly, we'll be at his service," Tahernejad said in an interview with Tasnim published on Wednesday.

"We were under a great deal of pressure in the first round of the Majlis speaker election, because of our support for Mr. Larijani [vs. reformist Mohammad Reza Aref]. But we were later proven right, and now everyone acknowledges that Mr. Larijani acts very tactfully in running the Majlis," he added.

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Mohammad Ali Hosseini, d e s k a former Foreign Ministry spokesman, said on Wednesday that Iran's victory in The Hague-based International Court of Justice showed the power of Iran's diplomacy.

'What we witnessed at The Hague's court was in fact victory and capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran's diplomatic apparatus," he told IRNA in an interview published on ....

On October 3, the International Court of Justice ordered the U.S. to lift sanctions on "humanitarian" goods to Iran.

The ICJ unanimously ruled that 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, said judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf.

Hosseini praised the Iranian lawyers and diplomats who pursued the case at the ICJ.

"This valuable achievement will make the U.S. bullying regime more isolated," he said.



# UN human rights mechanisms are based on double standards, Iran says

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The UN d e s k mechanisms on human rights are politicized and based on double standards, Iran's representative to the Third Committee of the UN said on Tuesday.

'Producing annually four nearly identical reports on the situation of human rights in Iran should solely be attributed to the adoption of a harmful selective approach based on double standards," Mohammad Hosni Nejad remarked.

Following is the full text of his speech posted on the IRNA website:

The report A/73/299 yet again brings to light manipulation and politicization that exists in the UN human rights mechanisms. Producing annually four nearly identical reports on the situation of human rights in Iran should solely be attribut-

ed to the adoption of a harmful selective approach based on double standards. An approach that further erodes the integrity and credibility of the United Nations' human rights mechanisms. Beyond political considerations, there is no credible ground for the duplication of allegations against Iran four times a year. The report under question is the result of a counter-productive mandate, which makes it objectionable in its entirety, notwithstanding its attempt to reflect, though partially and with reluctance, the provided comments on the report by Iran.

2- The report's adoption of a selective approach on the human rights of Iranians is disturbing. It is expected that reports of this nature be all-inclusive and address all of the human rights of the entire population without distinction. However, the report sounds as selective as the mandate itself. The re-imposition of illegal and illegitimate sanctions against Iran after the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Iran nuclear deal. which was unanimously adopted by the Security Council with the support of the U.S. itself, was barely touched upon by the authors of the report. The genocidal sanctions indiscriminately violate the basic economic and social rights of ordinary Iranians, and yet the report choose not to even mention it.

3- Specific cases have been raised in the report that have been separately and extensively responded to in detail. However, the gravity of such cases, which are regrettable in their own place, do not warrant a country-specific report. No

nd has started its project through a "psychological warfare".

"They started their work by a psychological war and economic war is their mid-term objective. War against efficiency of the system is their third objective and delegitimization of the system is their final objective. The regime change that they talk about is being sought through delegitimization which is being followed through psychological and economic wars," Rouhani said in a ceremony marking the beginning of the academic year.

#### 'Victory in economic war is not unlikely'

Hosseini also said that victory of Iran in the economic war which has been launched by the U.S. is not unlikely.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker, said on Tuesday that the look on U.S. President Trump's face will be "priceless" after the new and "hopeless" U.S. sanctions on Iran go into effect on November 4.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its path of progress, improving people's livelihood, and thriving the national economy, in the same way it boosted its missile, scientific and nuclear capabilities, Amir-Abdollahian tweeted.

to citizens.

country can claim to be perfect; neither does Iran. There is always room and the possibility to improve practices as well as laws to the extent that they do not contradict the social norms acceptable

4- Mutual respect and dialogue serve as the right path to address any genuine concern regarding human rights. To enhance the credibility of human rights discourse, we seek respectful dialogue without recrimination or blame game and welcome meaningful engagement with all serious partners. President Rouhani's policy of constructive engagement with the world promises new horizons for dialogue-based cooperation, understanding and mutual respect in all fields, including the human rights.



the Islamic Republic.

"The truth is that the U.S. regime is in crisis of legitimacy and international acceptance and it is politically on the wane more than ever." he noted.

President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that the U.S. been seeking to delegitimize the Islamic Republic system

# **Pompeo meets Erdogan after talks** with Saudis on missing journalist

Saudi Arabia delivers \$100 million pledged to U.S. as **Pompeo Lands in Riyadh** 

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met Turkey's President and Foreign Minister on Wednesday to discuss the disappearance of a Saudi journalist as pressure mounted on the kingdom to provide answers following Turkish allegations he was killed.

U.S. President Donald Trump gave Saudi Arabia the benefit of the doubt on Tuesday even as U.S. lawmakers pointed the finger at the Saudi leadership and Pompeo, sent by Trump to address the crisis, discussed the affair with Saudi King Salman and his Crown Prince on a visit to Riyadh.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has said Pompeo would provide information about the case after Khashoggi, a U.S. resident, vanished during a visit to the consulate on Oct. 2 to collect marriage documents.

Cavusoglu provided no details following Pompeo's two 40-minute meetings at the airport with Cavusoglu and President Tayyip Erdogan, describing them only as "beneficial and fruitful". Cavusolgu did say that Turkey hoped to enter the Saudi consul's residence on Wednesday.

Pompeo did not address reporters.

Turkish officials have said they believe Khashoggi - a prominent critic of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman - was murdered and his body removed. Turkish sources have told Reuters the authorities have an audio recording indicating Khashoggi was killed inside the consulate.

summer, Saudi Arabia promised the Trump The Saudis have strongly denied those allegations, but U.S. media outlets have readministration \$100 million for American ported they will acknowledge he was killed in a botched interrogation. Trump has speculated without providing evidence that "rogue killers" could be responsible.

Saudi Arabia delivers \$100 million pledged to U.S.

Saudi dissident.

Securing the funding is a win for President Trump, who has complained about how much the United States spends abroad and has tried to get allies to foot more of the bill. But the timing of the money's arrival raised eyebrows even among some of the bureaucrats whose programs will benefit from the influx of cash.

The timing of this is no coincidence," said an American official involved in Syria policy who spoke on condition of anonymity because this person was not authorized to speak to journalists. The official confirmed that the money arrived on Tuesday.

The disappearance of the Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, has battered the image of Saudi Arabia and of its powerful crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, a key player in many of the Trump administration's ambitions for the Middle East. Turkish officials say that Mr. Khashoggi was slain inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by Saudi agents on Oct. 2 while he was trying to secure a document he needed to get married.

On Monday, a person with knowledge of Saudi Arabia's plans said the kingdom was planning to blame the killing on rogue elements who did not act on official orders - a scenario that could allow the monarchy to acknowledge Mr. Khashoggi's death while protecting its leaders from culpability. (Source: agencies)

# Formation of new Lebanese government is 'very close': Hariri

Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri has raised hopes about the formation of a new unity government in Lebanon, stating that statesmen are "very close" to the establishment of such an administration in the Arab country.

'I know that the formation of the government has taken too long, but we will be able to form it, God willing. We are very close to that," Hariri said during a speech at the Grand Serail in Beirut on Tuesday.

He further noted that "there is progress" in the formation process.

Hariri's comments came days after the parliamentary bloc of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement cast doubt over the Prime Minister-designate's prediction that a new unity government will be formed in Lebanon soon.

"In light of the internal difficulties and obstacles hampering the formation, it is unlikely for the government to be formed within the ten-day time limit set by Hariri," an unnamed source close to the movement told Lebanon's Arabic-language daily newspaper al-Joumhouria on Friday.

Hariri said on October 9 that all political sides had made concessions on their demands for posts in the next Cabinet, expressing hope that a new government would be formed after President Michel Aoun returns from a trip abroad.

Aoun traveled to Armenia on October 10, and was back in Lebanon two days later.



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 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 Future Movement parliamentary bloc.

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

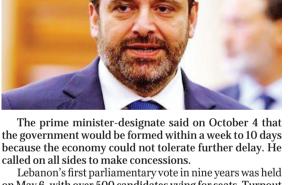
Political rivalry led to years of governmental paralysis in Lebanon, and the country did not produce a state budget from 2005 until last year.

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: Press TV)

# Salvini, Macron clash after France caught migrant dumping

Italy's far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini Tuesday hit at President Emmanuel Macron after French police were caught



saw French police dropping off migrants in front of Bardonecchia train station, in Italy. A source close to Macron slammed Salvini's essentially individual political exploitation' of the incident.

## **Eighteen people killed in** armed attack on Crimean college



Eighteen people were killed and dozens injured at a college in the Black Sea region of Crimea on Wednesday when at least one attacker set off a bomb in the cafeteria and went through the building shooting at random, officials said.

Law enforcement officials said they were treating the incident, in which many of the victims were teenage pupils, as a terrorist attack

Sergei Aksyonov, the head of the Russian-backed administration in Crimea, a region Moscow annexed from Ukraine four years ago, said the main suspect was a male student a the college and that he had killed himself.

Video footage from the scene showed armored personnel carriers and military trucks lined up on the approach to the college, in the Crimean city of Kerch. Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said the military was sending forces and supplies to help the victims.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, prompting international condemnation and Western sanctions. Since the operation to annex the peninsula, there have been no outbreaks of violence there

Aksyonov, the regional head, told Russian state television the death toll from the attack now stood at 18, up from a previous estimate of 13.

Olga Grebennikova, the college's director, described a scene of bloodshed at the college, which provides vocational training. Its pupils are mostly teenagers.

Children's bodies everywhere"

'There are bodies everywhere, children's bodies everywhere. It was a real act of terrorism. They burst in five or 10 minutes after I'd left. They blew up everything in the hall, glass was flying,' Grebennikova told Crimean media outlets.

They then ran about throwing some kind of explosives around, and then ran around the second floor with guns, opened the office doors, and killed anyone they could find

The Investigative Committee, the law enforcement body that investigates major crimes, said initial information was that an explosive device packed with metal objects had gone off in the cafeteria of the college.

It said in a statement that there were around 50 people wounded in the attack.

Russian news agencies quoted a senior official with Russia's National Guard, a law enforcement agency, as saying that the attack was being treated as terrorism. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

An employee at a hospital in Kerch was quoted as saying that 18 people had already been admitted with injuries from the available in the state of th the explosion, and that doctors were expecting around 50 more wounded people to be brought in.

There are already lots of people in the emergency room, and in the operating theater," the TASS news agency quoted the employee as saying.

Anastasia Yenshina, a 15-year-old student at the college, said she was in a toilet on the ground floor of the building with some friends when she heard the sound of an explosion.

"I came out and there was dust and smoke, I couldn't understand, I'd been deafened," she told Reuters. "Everyone started running. I did not know what to do. Then they told us to leave the building through the gymnasium.<sup>3</sup>

'Everyone ran there... I saw a girl lying there. There was a child who was being helped to walk because he could not move on his own. The wall was covered in blood. Then everyone started to climb over the fence, and we could still hear explosions. Everyone was scared. People were crying.' Photographs from the scene of the blast posted by local media outlet Kerch.FM showed that the ground floor windows of the two-story building had been blown out, and that debris was lying on the floor outside.



#### efforts to stabilize areas in Syria liberated from the Islamic State. That money landed in American accounts on Tuesday, the same day that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo landed in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, for discussions with the king-Meanwhile, New York reported that this dom's leaders about the fate of a missing

committing the "unprecedented offense" of dumping migrants in Italian woods.

Salvini, who is also deputy prime minister and head of the anti-immigrant League Party, demanded Monday a "clear response' after French authorities admitted to returning migrants to Italy in "error."

A French police van was seen Friday driving into Italy to return recently arrived migrants to the town of Claviere.

"It was an error to enter Italian territory without the authorization of the Italian police," said Cecile Bigot-Dekeyzer, the top official in the Hautes-Alpes region.

"The police had no right to enter Italian territory," the prefect said.

An outraged Salvini batted away that explanation, while France said the incident should be "kept in perspective."

"Abandoning migrants in an Italian wood can't be just a mistake or an incident," Salvini said on social media. "What happened in Claviere is an unprecedented offence towards our country.



"Does Paris, which claims to be civil, find it normal to throw people into the woods? ... We're dealing with an international shame, and Mr. Macron can't pretend he doesn't know. We won't accept any excuses," Salvini wrote.

"Let's keep this in perspective," an official in the French president's office told journalists Tuesdav

"It was a mistake, the authorities have admitted that. There was an incursion, not planned or according to procedure, into Italian territory, where two people were dropped off.'

Thousands of migrants are caught each year trying to enter France and returned to the Italian border. Last year, AFP journalists

Italian Prime Minister "Giuseppe Conte hasn't turned this incident into proof of a crisis," the French presidency said.

'We manage our shared border together, and there are occasional small regrettable incidents on both sides."

**Relations between Rome and Paris have** been increasingly tense in recent months, with Italy's populist government accusing France and others of failing to share the burden of the 700,000 migrants and asylum seekers who have crossed the Mediterranean to come to Italy since 2013.

French police in March sparked outrage by carrying out identity checks at Bardonecchia station, with the Italian Foreign Ministry summoning the French ambassador to protest.

In June, Macron criticized Salvini for closing Italian ports to the Aquarius migrant rescue boat, prompting a fresh summoning of the ambassador.

(Source: AFP)

Emergency services teams could be seen in the photographs carrying wounded people from the building on makeshift stretchers and loading them on to buses and ambulances. (Source: Reuters)

# **Armenian PM resigns**, paving way for snap elections

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Tuesday that he was resigning from his post so that parliament could be dissolved and an early election held.

The former opposition leader was put in power by a parliamentary vote in May after weeks of mass protests against corruption and cronyism, but no parliamentary elections have been since the revolution last spring. Pashinyan has said the composition of parliament does not

reflect the country's new political reality. "The aim of my resignation is not to shirk the responsibility I

took on myself before you, but on the contrary to take the velvet revolution to the end through early elections and fully return power to the people," he said Tuesday.

Early parliamentary elections can be called in the ex-Soviet republic of 3 million people if parliament fails twice to choose a new prime minister and the legislature is dissolved.

Public support for parties not affiliated with Pashinyan is very low - not only for the former ruling Republican Party but also for others including Prosperous Armenia and Dashnaktsutyun.

The My Step Alliance, which includes Pashinyan's Civil Contract Party, won 81 percent of the mayoral vote in the capital of Yerevan last month.

Pashinyan, whose popularity rating is high, said he would remain acting prime minister until a new one is elected by a new parliament. He said earlier this month that he wanted parliamentary elections to be held in the first half of December. (Source: Daily Star)

# Mattis to meet Chinese counterpart amid U.S.-China tensions

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis plans to meet on Thursday in Singapore with his Chinese counterpart amid escalating tensions over China's purchase of Russian fighter planes and missiles as well as ongoing friction in the South China Sea

Shortly after Mattis arrived in Singapore on Wednesday after a visit to Vietnam, a senior Mattis aide told reporters that the meeting is set to happen on Thursday. It comes just weeks after their talks planned for Beijing fell apart.

Mattis and Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe were in Singapore for a regional meeting of defense ministers. Mattis visited China in June, but since then a series of events have escalated tensions.

The assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, Randall Schriver, told reporters the Chinese had requested the Singapore meeting. In late September, China told the Pentagon that Wei would be unavailable to meet Mattis in Beijing, so that visit was canceled.

Schriver said the U.S. sees signs that the military-to-military relationship may be on the upswing.

"The fact that he's meeting with Minister Wei is some evidence that the Chinese are interested in keeping things normal and stable, as are we," Schriver said. "Our impression is that the (Chinese) military wants to keep things stable.'

Schriver said the trigger for recent tensions between the Pentagon and the Chinese military was the Trump administration's decision in September to sanction the Chinese military for buying Russian fighter planes and missiles. That action was taken under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act passed by

Congress in 2017.

China responded with strong criticism, followed in the military arena by a decision to cancel a planned visit to the Pentagon by the head of the Chinese navy and a confrontation in the South China Sea between a Chinese warship and a U.S. Navy destroyer, the USS Decatur.

"That may turn out to be a relatively short bump in the road," Schriver said, adding that Mattis is expected to convey to Wei U.S. interest in normal relations with the Chinese military

More broadly, relations between the U.S. and China have deteriorated in recent months as escalating trade disputes and tariff hikes have been exacerbated by a newly announced U.S. military equipment sale to Taiwan.



# STOCK MARKET

#### Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

# **CURRENCIES**

2020.44

USD	<b>42,000 rials</b>
EUR	<b>48,494</b> rials
GBP	55,053 rials
AED	11,430 rials

Source: iribnews.ir

# COMMODITIES

WTI	\$71.17/b
Brent	\$80.77/b
OPEC Basket	\$76.22/b
Gold	\$1,226.30/oz
Silver	\$14.72/oz
Platinium	\$841.05/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

#### IN BRIEF NEWS



NIGC exports 7.1m tons of LPG in 6 months

N E R G Y TEHRAN — National Iranian Gas Coms k pany (NIGC) exported 7.1 million tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), the managing director of company announced.

Iran's gas exports are being done based on the schedule, Hamidreza Araqi said, adding that LPG exports during the first six months of this year has been also conducted completely based on the schedule, IRIB reported.

The country earned \$250 million of income through exporting LPG in the first half of the present year, the official added.



**NIMA setting** port tariffs

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — A deputy from Iran Maritime s k and Port Organization (MPO) announced on Wednesday that port tariffs, regarding the rate of rial against dollar, are being calculated at domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), IRNA reported.

"Regarding the amendments and reviews, each dollar is calculated about 80,000 rilas and in case the rate increases at NIMA, PMO will keep the rates fixed to support economic prosperity," Mohammad-Ali Hassanzadeh said.

NIMA is an online system designed for absorption of the non-oil exports revenues from Iranian businessmen and providing it to importers. In better words, exporters should bring back export revenues to economy and importers, via selling hard currency to a bank or an exchange shop through NIMA. As reported, about 95 percent of forex market exchanges are done at the system. Due to the large number of exchange deals, the forex rates are much lower at NIMA in comparison to the free market.

#### ОМҮ Ε Ο Ν

# Iran to sign 3rd IPC-based deal within 2 weeks

**R G Y TEHRAN** – National <sup>s</sup> <sup>k</sup> Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is expected to sign the third IPCbased deal with a foreign company within two weeks, ISNA reported on Wednesday quoting NIOC's Managing Director Ali Kardor. The names of the foreign company, the field and details of the contract will be released after the signing", Kardor said when asked about the details of the deal.

According to the official the candid com-

pany is among the companies which have done primary studies on the country's oilfields. Iran inked its first contract under its new

model of oil contracts (known as IPC) with France's Total and China's state-owned National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) for development of phase 11 of its South Pars

that threatened to impose sanctions on

## Over \$580m of FDI approved for industry, mining, trade projects in 5 months

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Some \$580.7 million of foreign direct investment (FDI) has been approved by the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), IRNA reported on Wednesday.

As reported, the mentioned amount of FDI has been approved for the implementation of 32 industry, mining and trade projects.

Iranian industry, mining and trade sectors attracted \$3.5 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), which indicates a 75-percent growth from the figure of its preceding year, according to Afrouz Bahrami, the director general of Foreign Investment Office of the Ministry of Industry, Min-

#### **Turkey passes a crucial market test** after months of turmoil

Turkey made a comeback in the international bond markets after receiving bids worth \$6 billion for its five-year dollardenominated bond.

This means that companies and banks in the country now have better access to the international capital markets, allowing them to borrow at better rates.

The bond issuance Tuesday, expected to mature in December 2023, had a yield of 7.5 percent for the investor, and received bids of three times the amount that was on offer.

"60 percent of the bonds have been sold to investors in the U.S., 23 percent in the U.K., 11 percent in other Europe, 5 percent in Turkey, and 1 percent in other regions," the finance ministry said in an official statement.

"(It) should provide something of a benchmark for banks/corporates to reaccess international capital markets, helping with U.S. dollar liquidity," Timothy Ash, a senior emerging markets strategist at Bluebay Asset Management, said in a note to clients Tuesday, calling it a "positive development."

Ash said the Turkish government will

want to see this as a "turning point in the crisis and benchmark for corporates and banks to come to market to secure dollar liquidity.'

The country had appointed Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs and Societe Generale to advise on the sale of its five-year bond, its third bond sale this year. In January, Turkey tapped the global bond market with a \$2 billion bond that offered a 5.2 percent yield to investors. This was followed by another \$2 billion bond in April offering a 6.2 percent yield to investors.

The last few months have been nothing short of a roller-coaster ride for Turkish assets, which have seen a massive sell-off thanks to investor concerns over the central bank's independence and a diplomatic fight between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Washington.

Fears of contagion and a wider emerging markets shake-up culminated in Turkey's central bank increasing its benchmark interest rate to 24 percent last month. The move exceeded market expectations and helped to steady the lira against the dollar. (Source: CNBC) **OCTOBER 18, 2018** 

officially withdrew from South Pars gas deal in August 2018.

The second IPC deal was signed in March 2018 with Russia's Zarubezhneft for developing Aban and Paydar-e Gharb oilfields in west of Iran.

Kardor had earlier said three IPC-based deals will get ready for final signing by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

generation have significantly developed over

the past four decades, thus making the country

the top producer of electricity in the region.

hub in the region as it is playing a crucial role in supplying electricity to its neighbors

Iran aims to become an official power

The country has electricity trade with

almost all of its neighboring countries for

some of which like Iraq and Afghanistan Iran

## Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan hold meeting on synchronizing power grids

**E N E R G Y TEHRAN** — Atrilatere s k al taskforce between Iran,

Russia and Azerbaijan on synchronizing the power grids of the three countries held its first meeting in Russia, IRIB reported on Tuesday. Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Homayoon Haeri said the meeting was held in this week between him and his Russian and Azeri counterparts.

Details of the draft of an agreement on the joint feasibility study of the technical and financial aspects of the project were discussed in the meeting, the Iranian official announced.

Iran's nominal capacity for power generation currently stands at 78,421 megawatts (MW) following the connection of a number of power plants to the country's national grid. Iran plans to add 3,000 MW to its capacity over the current calendar year (ends on

March 20, 2019). Iran's capabilities in the area of power is the sole exporter of electricity.

# **Relief for UK consumers as inflation** drops more than expected

British inflation fell more than expected in September to a three-month low, offering some relief to consumers who have been squeezed financially since the Brexit vote.

Consumer prices rose at an annual rate of 2.4 percent, more than reversing August's jump to a six-month high of 2.7 percent, the Office for National Statistics said.

That was well below the consensus forecast of 2.6 percent in a Reuters poll of economists.

Sterling fell against the dollar and euro while British government bond prices rose

The figures are likely to reassure Bank of England officials who forecast in August that inflation would average around 2.5 percent over the July-September quarter.

'Coupled with the gradual up-tick in wages, the slowing rise in prices will deliver a boost to consumers' real takehome pay packets, which will also be welcome news for retailers," said Tej Parikh, senior economist at the Institute

of Directors. 'The Bank of England will be unruf-

fled by this week's data releases, and remains unlikely to budge on interest rates as it continues to monitor the impact of Brexit developments.

The BoE expects it will need to raise interest rates gradually in response to rising wages, assuming Britain manages to strike a deal with the European nion to smooth its exit from the bloc.

On Tuesday, the ONS said the basic wages of workers had risen at their fastest pace in nearly a decade over the summer months. But wage growth of 3.1 percent remains meagre by historical standards when adjusted for inflation.

The BoE expects inflation to drift down but stay just above its 2 percent target in two years' time as it gradually raises borrowing costs.

Consumer price inflation hit a fiveyear high of 3.1 percent in November, when the inflationary effect of the pound's tumble after the Brexit vote in June 2016 reached its peak.

(Source: Reuters)



ing and Trade.

As previously reported, Iran expects a 10-fold increase of FDI in industry and mining sectors by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2021).

Based on the latest report of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Iran has managed to rise its FDI 50 percent to \$5.019 billion in 2017.

# gas field in July 2017. Under pressures by the United States companies that do business in Iran, Total

and beyond.

#### U.S. 'zero Iranian oil' plan a political bluff: NIOC head

1 → Kardor further said Iran did not have any difficulties receiving its oil payments adding that the Islamic Republic could accept payments in euros or other currencies instead of dollars if necessary.

'With European support there will not be a problem." Kardor told ISNA the same day.

The European Union said last month it was considering setting up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to facilitate trade with Iran and said it could be in place before November.

## **China Treasury holdings at** their lowest in 14 months

China trimmed its holdings of U.S. Treasurys in August by about \$6 billion, to the lowest level since June 2017.

China's holdings of Treasury bills, notes and bonds fell to \$1.165 trillion, from \$1.171 trillion in July, according to U.S. Treasury data. It is the third month of decline, and well below the recent high of \$1.2 trillion a year earlier.

Bond traders have been watching to see if China is intentionally reducing its holdings of U.S. Treasurys because of friction over the trade spat with the U.S., but market pros do not believe the reduction is meaningful. It also came at a time of currency volatility this past summer.

"The fact you're seeing a slow downward drift is not surprising," said Jon Hill, U.S. rates strategist at BMO. He said Chinese holdings are now the lowest since June 2017, when they were at 1.147 trillion.

China is the largest holder of U.S. Treasurys followed by Japan, which also reduced its holdings in August. Japan's holdings fell to \$1.030 trillion from \$1.036 trillion in July.

"It's something a lot of people are paying attention to given its importance to the market," Hill said. "I would be hesitant to draw too direct a comparison to 2015 and 2016 just because the decline has been much more moderate and much slower than we saw in previous periods."

In July, China's holdings of U.S. Treasury bills, notes and bonds dropped to a six month low of \$1.171 trillion, from \$1.178 trillion in June (Source: CNBC)

## World stock recovery loses steam as European auto sector takes beating

A recovery by global stocks proved short-lived as warnings over a slowing European auto sector soured an upbeat mood, while Wall Street was set for a slightly lower open after enjoying its best session in eight months the previous day.

European stocks, having hit a one-week high in early trade, were back in the red by 1200 GMT, pulled lower by a 1.6 percent fall in an index of auto stocks.

This came after Goldman Sachs analysts said slowing car demand in China and new regulations on emissions testing were hurting investors' sentiment toward European autos stocks, and warned this results season could be challenging

Meanwhile, Wall Street futures were down about 0.3 percent, suggesting a lower open, with IBM shares down 4.4 percent in pre-market trading after a revenue miss. [.N]

"Not too surprisingly the effervescent bounce back in Asia equity sentiment has given way," Stephen Innes, a trader at OANDA, said in a note to clients.

"Let's not lose sight of the enormity of global risks which suggests the isolated US growth theme will come to a not so subtle end just like the synchronized global growth theme did, at least until US-China trade dispute is settled.

Earlier, Asian stocks shone after a forecast-beating set of U.S. company earnings improved the mood on world equity markets.

MSCI's ex-Japan share index added 0.6 percent while Japan's Nikkei jumped 1.3 percent.

The gains followed a scintillating New York session where the three major indexes tallied their biggest oneday percentage gains since March, rising more than 2 percent each.

But even that only marked a partial recovery from a recent pullback that saw the S&P 500 index post its biggest weekly drop since March.

While the dollar's mini-bounce off two-week lows checked emerging-market gains, they were supported by easing tensions between Saudi Arabia and the United States, as well as signs that Turkey's currency crisis had been laid to rest.

"There are negative risks in the short term, but on the



People walk past an electronic board showing Japan's Nikkei average outside a brokerage in Tokyo, Japan, October 12, 2018.

positive side we have good earnings and data from the United States," said Christoph Barraud, an economist at Paris-based brokerage Market Securities.

"Last week's correction was extreme, a lot of people became short (the market) so this is a bit of normalization.'

Overall, third-quarter earnings for S&P 500 companies are seen growing 21.8 percent, according to I/B/E/S Refinitiv.

Tuesday's gains were triggered by Netflix, which shot 12 percent higher after the close as its results beat market expectations. That sent shares of Alphabet Inc, Facebook Inc and Amazon.com Inc up about 1 percent in extended trade.

The four make up the so-called FANG group of highgrowth companies, which in recent months has lost some of its momentum following market-leading gains in recent years.

Banking giants Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley also posted better-than-expected quarterly profits. And on the data front, U.S. industrial production rose for a fourth straight month in September, soothing fears the economy may be running out of steam.

Barraud said the out-performance of U.S. equities was likely to continue.

"People want to put money where there is best visibility .. In the U.S., you have growth visibility, strong earnings (as well as) buybacks and dividends ... So the U.S. is still attractive compared to peers," he said.

MSCI's global equity index touched a one-week high .MIWD00000PUS, but was flat by 1200 GMT.

#### Dollar and emerging markets

A strengthening dollar meant that emerging-market currencies lost some steam as the session wore on.

Turkey's lira is came slightly off 2 1/2-month highs, having rallied 10 percent over the past week as the release of an imprisoned U.S. pastor fueled hopes of a rapprochement with Washington. Ankara said investors had put in \$6 billion in bids for \$2 billion of bonds it sold on Tuesday, though it had to pay a substantial new-issue premium.

Saudi Arabia's stocks and currency also stabilized after U.S. President Donald Trump gave Saudi Arabia the benefit of the doubt in the disappearance of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

MSCI's emerging currency index eased off 2 1/2-week highs, losing steam as the dollar firmed . Emerging equities also eased off earlier session-highs.

The dollar rose 0.4 percent against a basket of currencies after being undermined on Tuesday fresh criticism of the U.S. Federal Reserve from Trump. He told Fox Business Network: "My biggest threat is the Fed."

"While such name calling shouldn't mean anything in terms of what the Fed actually does, it is a factor which somewhat undermines sentiment towards the dollar, Ray Attrill, head of currency strategy at National Australia Bank, said.

Minutes of the last Fed meeting are due out later Wednesday and should show it committed to further tightening.

On oil markets, Brent crude futures rose 0.4 percent for a fourth day of gains after data showed falling U.S. crude inventories. There are also risks of supply disruptions caused by sanctions on Iran and tensions with Saudi Arabia.

# INTERNATIONAL DAILY **TEHRANTIMES**

rising, now higher oil prices and

Asia's liquefied natural gas prices are set to go up on the back of surging oil prices and tightening supplies, according to analysts.

in Asia, driven by China's appetite for natural gas as it seeks to

It comes at a time when demand for LNG is set to shoot up

If China – the world's number 2 importer of natural gas

Asia's natural gas prices are

tariffs could cause more pain

# **Oil steadies after surprise** draw in U.S. crude stocks

Oil prices steadied after three days of gains on Wednesday after industry data showed a surprise decline in U.S. crude inventories and tension over the disappearance of a prominent Saudi journalist stoked supply worries.

Brent crude was down 10 cents at \$81.31 a barrel by 0945 GMT, after gaining \$1.15 in the previous three sessions. The global benchmark, which hit a two-week low last week as equity markets dropped, is trading around \$5 below a four-year high of \$86.74 reached on Oct. 3.

U.S. light crude oil was down 20 cents at \$72.02

"Numbers from the American Petroleum Institute surprised the market (on Tuesday), with U.S. crude oil inventories declining by 2.13 million barrels over the last week, compared to expectations of a stock build," said ING commodities strategist Warren Patterson.

A Reuters survey ahead of the API data had estimated crude stocks rose about 2.2 million barrels.

U.S. gasoline stocks dropped by a larger-than-expected 3.4 million barrels, while distillate fuel stockpiles declined by a smaller-than-expected 246,000 barrels,



the API data showed.

Inventory data from the U.S. Energy Department's Energy Information Administration is due at 1430 GMT on Wednesday

Also underpinning sentiment is the scandal

even as U.S. lawmakers pointed the finger at the Saudi leadership and Western pressure mounted on Riyadh to provide answers.

Saudi Arabia has said it will conduct an investigation into the disappearance, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said before departing the kingdom for Turkey.

Investors are concerned that Saudi Arabia could use oil supply to retaliate against its critics.

Jim Ritterbusch, president of Ritterbusch and Associates, said Saudi Arabia could cut as much as 500,000 barrels per day of crude production "as a warning shot should the U.S. opt to impose any type of sanction in response to the Khashoggi developments".

A claim by the United States that it aims to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero is a "political bluff", the head of the state-run National Iranian Oil Company was quoted as saying on Wednesday.

New U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil exports start on Nov. 4, while Iran has accused Saudi Arabia and Russia of breaking an OPECled agreement on output cuts by producing more crude.

(Source: Reuters)

## Amazon invests in solar power and recycling programs to cut carbon footprint

Amazon announced two new initiatives today that are aimed at reducing its environmental impact. The first is a \$10 million investment in the Closed Loop Fund, an effort to pool corporate resources to help the US improve its municipal recycling programs. The other is a solar energy project in the United Kingdom that will see Amazon install 20 megawatts worth of solar panels to help power fulfillment centers across the region. Amazon also signed a deal saying it will purchase enough green energy certificates to ensure 100 percent of all buildings in the UK are offset by renewable sources like solar and wind.

It makes sense why, at least domestically, Amazon would be focusing its efforts on recycling: the company's largest retail sector is North America, particularly the US, and it ships a massive amount of cardboard across the country every day. With the Closed Loop Fund, Amazon wants to contribute to the financing of recycling infrastructures for cities. The company notes in its press release that nearly half of all Americans do not have access to curbside recycling pickup, resulting in countless tons of cardboard and other reusable material getting thrown in the trash and inevitably filling up landfills.

"This investment will help build the local capabilities needed to make it easier



for our customers and their communities to recycle and to increase the amount of material recycled across the country," Dave Clark, Amazon's senior vice president of Worldwide Operations, said in a statement. "We are investing in Closed Loop Fund's work because we think everyone should have access to easy, convenient curbside recycling. The more we are all able to recycle, the more we can reduce our collective energy, carbon, and water footprint."

In London, which is a European fulfillment hub for getting packages shipped to the rest of the UK, Amazon will work over the course of the next 18 months on deploying rooftop solar panel systems. The company says it will generate the equivalent of 4,500 UK homes in electricity from solar energy, and in the process, it says it will reduce its carbon footprint by 6,000 metric tons of CO2 per year.

(Source: The Verge)

## Sony shifts 100% renewable energy goal forward by a decade

Only a month after it announced that it was joining the RE100 initiative and committing to sourcing 100 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2040, entertainment and electronics giant Sony Corporation has announced this week it is bringing forward its U.S. goal by a decade.

over the disappearance of prominent Saudi

critic and journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who

disappeared two weeks ago after entering

Arabia the benefit of the doubt in the case

U.S. President Donald Trump gave Saudi

the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

In the lead-up to the Global Climate Action Summit held in San Francisco in September, global corporate leadership initiative RE100 - which is led by The Climate Group in partnership with CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project)

- announced what it described as "the global entertainment industry's biggest move on renewable electricity yet," with one of the world's largest electronics and entertainment companies, Sony Corporation, joining the RE100 initiative alongside other big names such as management consulting leader McKinsey & Company, global coworking and community company WeWork, and one of the oldest banks in Europe, the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS).

Sony's laid out its commitment to use 100 percent renewable electricity for all its business sites by 2040, with an interim goal of 30 percent by 2030.

However, a month later almost to the day, Sony has announced that it is bringing forward its U.S. target by 10 years, intending to increase its renewable energy sourcing



from its current levels of 25 percent to 100 percent through a combination of on-site solar, renewable energy certificates, and other methods. This builds on the company's existing achievement of 100 percent in Europe, and following the U.S. the company will focus on China and Japan.

"While the Sony Group continues to work on the energy efficiency of our operations and products, we are increasing our efforts toward renewable electricity usage," said Mark Khalil, Executive Vice President, Sony Corporation of America. "Our commitment to achieve 100 percent renewable electricity usage in the North American region by 2030 is a step toward our global goal. By joining RE100 and establishing global and regional targets, we hope to accelerate the usage of renewable electricity at Sony and inspire other companies to do the same.

(Source: cleantechnica.com)

#### - imposes tariffs on LNG exports from the U.S., it may cause Chinese buyers further pain in the short run, the experts said. But that could also alter supply chains in Asia and benefit other producers, they added. Asia's natural gas prices to rise

replace coal.

Prices of Asia's natural gas jumped this year — in tandem with crude - as most of the region's long-term LNG contracts are linked to oil prices, Rajiv Biswas, Asia-Pacific chief economist at HIS Markit, told CNBC in an email.

With world oil prices having moved higher in recent weeks as U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil exports will be implemented in November, this is contributing to further upward pressure on Asian LNG contract prices," he added. Average Chinese gas import prices jumped 23 percent compared to a year ago in the second quarter, while Japanese contract prices were up 17 percent in the same period.

When U.S. sanctions on Iran kick in next month, they could push oil prices to above \$90 per barrel, some analysts predicted. During Asian trade on Tuesday afternoon, Brent crude was at \$81.04 per barrel, and U.S. crude futures at \$71.84 a barrel – up from above \$60 per barrel at the start of this year.

Asia's spot LNG market - which has been growing steadily will also be hit in the short term. Biswas expects Asian spot prices to move even higher to \$11.85 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) by January 2019. Spot prices for the October delivery in Asia were at \$11.40 per mmBtu, up 30 cents in a week, according to an Aug. 24 Reuters report.

Meanwhile, supply from Australia, the world's largest exporter of LNG, is tightening as domestic demand is fighting for a share of the pie with Asia. That situation will remain until 2028, according to Nicholas Browne, director of gas and LNG research at Wood Mackenzie.

The bulk of growth in Asian demand is coming from China, as it switches from coal to gas.

Chinese demand has jumped 150 percent between 2017 and 2018 - making up half of the global demand growth, according to Wood Mackenzie in a report. China is expected to import record amounts of LNG again this winter, Browne added.

But Wood Mackenzie's supply forecast for Australia shows that "from 2028 there is not enough gas to meet both LNG contracts and demand," Browne said. "More gas will need to be developed and commercialized, or LNG imported, to meet the needs of both the domestic market and to fulfil LNG contracts.

"However, no new easy and economical sources of supply are currently available to the market," he concluded.

That could hit major buyers of Australian LNG, such as China's Sinopec and Malaysia's Petronas, Browne said.

According to a Wood Mackenzie report this week, some decisions surrounding future new LNG projects in Russia, the U.S. and Qatar might be coming up, while producers in Southeast Asia may expand their facilities to meet the demand.

#### Impact of China tariffs

The U.S is a growing major exporter of LNG, and about 15 percent of its exports went to China last year.

However, the ongoing trade war between Washington and Bei jing is set to hit LNG supplies from the U.S. further, analysts said.

If both economic superpowers fail to reach a trade deal, the current 10 percent tariff will most likely be increased to 25 percent by the start of 2019, said Hugo Brennan, senior Asia analyst at risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft.

That'll likely have an impact on prices and supply chains in Asia. "Beijing's decision to impose tariffs on US LNG sends a clear political signal to Chinese buyers to priorities alternative sources of natural gas," said Brennan, who pointed to PetroChina's move to sign its largest-ever LNG supply deal with Doha-based Qatargas.

For as long as trade tensions with the U.S. remain, Brennan said he expects Beijing to get its supply from countries like Qatar, Australia, Papua New Guinea. Eventually, Russia will also become a major source, he said.

"Beijing is extremely wary of becoming reliant on a strategic rival to supply its energy needs, suggesting that geopolitical dynamics will prevent the US (from) becoming a major source of LNG supply," Brennan said. In the short term, however, higher costs are likely to hit Chinese buyers as they are still reliant on American imports, said Browne from Wood Mackenzie.

# Don't mention the oil price - U.S. legal threat prompts change at OPEC

OPEC has urged its members not to mention oil prices when discussing policy in a break from the past, as the oil producing group seeks to avoid the risk of U.S. legal action for manipulating the market, sources close to OPEC said.



to a desire to maximize revenues and raise the valuation of state energy giant Saudi Aramco ahead of a planned IPO, a key part

of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's reforms aimed at diversifying the economy. The share float, expected by some to be

Proposed U.S. legislation known as "NOPEC", which could open the group up to anti-trust lawsuits, has long lain dormant, with previous American presidents signaling that they would veto any move to make it law.

But U.S. President Donald Trump has been a vocal critic of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, blaming it for high oil prices and urging it to increase output to relieve pressure on a market hovering around four-year highs. That has made OPEC, nervous about what it might mean for NOPEC, or No Oil

Producing and Exporting Cartels Act. The decision to refrain from discussing a

preferred oil price level - one way the group can guide market expectations – underlines how Trump's aggressive stance on the oil market is unsettling OPEC and testing ties between allies Riyadh and Washington.

In July, senior OPEC officials attended a workshop in Vienna with international law firm White & Case to discuss the NOPEC bill, and the lawyers advised avoiding public discussion of oil prices and rather talk about the stability of the oil market, two sources familiar with the matter said.

OPEC officials were also advised to explore diplomatic lobbying channels to try and prevent the NOPEC bill from becoming law, one of the sources said.

On Aug. 1, the OPEC secretariat sent a letter to the ministers making a similar recommendation.

'We solemnly believe that market stability, and not prices, is the common objective of our actions," UAE Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazroui, who holds the rotating OPEC presidency this year, wrote in the letter, seen by Reuters.

"I would like to call upon OPEC Member Countries, as well as our participating Non-OPEC colleagues, to refrain from any reference to prices in their commentary about our collective efforts or oil market condition," he added.

White & Case did not respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Specifying oil prices is not the only way OPEC tries to guide the market. By cutting production it can support prices and by raising supplies it can do the opposite, for example.

But the private coordination of how to communicate OPEC's message to the market represents a departure from past practice, when Saudi Arabia would often signal a preferred price level when speaking about OPEC policy and seek to push through actions to achieve that.

#### **Ties strained**

While chances of the law passing this year appear slim, concerns among OPEC members and other oil producers are growing that it may ultimately get the support of Trump, given his open criticism of OPEC and high oil prices.

The OPEC letter came two months before

U.S.-Saudi relations were further strained when a Saudi journalist disappeared during a visit to the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul

Turkish officials say they believe Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of Saudi policies, was murdered and his body removed. Saudi Arabia has strongly denied killing Khashoggi. Some members of the U.S. Congress, which has long had a testy relationship with Saudi Arabia, have criticized the kingdom over the case.

A Senate source familiar with the bill said renewed interest in NOPEC was likely, as lawmakers weigh any actions in response to Khashoggi's disappearance.

The source, who declined to be named, said that with lawmakers out of town for the next several weeks, it was difficult to measure current sentiment.

#### Litigation risks may be behind **IPO** delay

Over much of the last year, Saudi Arabia irked Washington by pushing OPEC to adopt measures to boost oil prices in a shift from its previous, more moderate stance.

Industry sources have linked that shift

worth up to \$100 billion, has been put on hold, sources have told Reuters.

Prince Mohammed said this month the float was postponed to 2021, and several industry sources say the delay was partly because of litigation risks if Aramco was listed in New York, a preferred venue by the Saudi crown prince.

"There is a major fear NOPEC could turn into another JASTA," one of the sources familiar with Aramco IPO preparations said, referring to the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act which allows victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to sue Riyadh.

Saudi Arabia, which denies involvement in the attacks, had long had broad immunity from the lawsuits. That changed in 2016, when the U.S. Congress overrode then-President Barack Obama's veto of JASTA.

With close to \$1 trillion in investments in the United States, including assets owned by Aramco, Riyadh has a lot to lose if the NOPEC bill was passed into law.

It would revoke the sovereign immunity which oil producers, including OPEC members, currently enjoy from U.S. legal action

Washington-based legal firm Gibson Dunn and the Saudi embassy there signed a contract in late August, according to a copy of the contract filed to the U.S. Department of Justice.

The contract outlines that among its other responsibilities, Gibson Dunn would oe "opposing NOPEC"

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih has also raised concerns over NOPEC with senior U.S. officials including U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry during private meetings, two sources familiar with the talks told Reuters, on condition of anonymity. (Source: Reuters) (Source: CNBC)

## Saudi Arabia calls the end of **Russia's oil prowess**

Saudi Arabia has not only called the end of Russia's prominence as a global oil behemoth, but anticipates that Russia's oil exports "will have declined heavily if not disappeared" within the next 19 years, Mohammed bin Salman said in a recent interview with Bloomberg.

When asked whether Russia and Saudi Arabia had made a backroom deal to increase oil production, MbS was more tightlipped, saying only that Saudi Arabia was "ready to supply any demand and any disappearing from Iran." With Russia out of the game, Saudi Arabia would have plenty of oil demand to service, according to MbS.

MbS did not comment on his rationale for Russia's exit as a major oil producer.

Russia's oil production in August of 11.21 million barrels per day, near the post-Soviet era high reached the month prior to signing the OPEC+ deal that curbed its production. The 11.21 million barrels places the country in second place of the most prolific oil producers in the world, behind the United States, who overtook both Saudi Arabia and Russia earlier this year, according to EIA data as cited by CNN.

While America managed to rise from its third place seating in 2018, it did so unencumbered by the production-curbing agreement that both Saudi Arabia and Russia agreed to. Gazpromneft earlier today said it was no longer restricting its oil output, although it doubtful that either Russia or Saudi Arabia can reclaim their top spots.

Saudi Arabia has been at the forefront of oil news in recent weeks-almost neck and neck with Iran-as traders try to anticipate just how much spare oil production capacity Saudi Arabia has-if any—and if that spare capacity, whether it's zero or a million barrels per day, will be sufficient to offset any losses sustained from Iran and Venezuela. (Source: oilprice.com)

#### BRIEF Ν

INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRANTIME



Pakistan, **Russia to hold** joint military exercises

ATIONAL TEHRAN — The Pakistani and Russian k militaries will conduct a joint military exercise, termed Friendship 2018, involving over 200 troops from both countries in Pakistan's northern highlands from October 21 to November 4, the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced in a statement on Tuesday.

This marks the third iteration of the annually-held Friendship exercise between Pakistan and Russia. The first-ever joint military drill was held in the fall of 2016 at Cherat in Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa involving 200 military personnel from Pakistan and Russia. In 2017, the exercise took place in Russia's North Caucasus Republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia including a similar number of Pakistani and Russian troops.

The exact composition of the Pakistan Army contingent has not been announced. "The joint exercises are aimed at strengthening and developing military cooperation of the two countries," the statement added.

While Pakistan has come closer to China in recent years and Russia has signed ambitious defense deal with India, Islamabad's relations with Moscow continue to be strong, which is evident from these joint military exercises.



UN calls for women's participation in **Afghan polls** 

**INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN** — United Nations mission in k Afghanistan has called for peaceful parliamentary elections with women's full participation – as candidates, electoral workers, observers and voters - terming it "the civil and political right of all women".

In a meeting on Monday with Afghan women from civil society organizations, academia and advocacy groups, Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, said that the full participation of women in Afghanistan's electoral process is vital to ensure that upcoming parliamentary elections are inclusive and credible.

UNAMA said that 16 percent of candidates are women, a marginal increase on previous elections, and that women make up approximately 32 percent of total registered voters, according to current statistics from the Independent Election Commission (IEC).

Meanwhile, IEC Chief Abdul Badi Sayad on Monday said at a press conference that election is an "Islamic principle" and those who call the election process a "western phenomenon" are in fact unaware of Islam, in a veiled reference to the Taliban.

Afghanistan will hold elections for parliament on October 20. In the run up to elections, many incidents of violence have been reported, which have created a sense of fear and anxiety among candidates and voters. Despite large contingents of police personnel protecting polling booths, observers fear violence and fraud.



working to locate kidnapped **Iranian guards** 

**INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN** — A day after 14 Iranian guards were kidnapped by militants in the border region with Pakistan, Pakistan on Tuesday said its military forces were working closely their counterparts in Iran to trace them.

The abductees were stationed at a border post in Iran's Mirjaveh area when they came under attack from "counter-revolutionary groups," said Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in a statement. Tehran had urged

Islamabad to cooperate in securing freedom for Iranian guards. He added that Iranian foreign minister's assistant in West

# 'India 'worst sufferer' of declining global trade and slow economic growth'

**INTERNATIONAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** — With global economy going through a difficult phase, India's commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu says the country is the 'worst sufferer" of declining trade and slow global economic growth as its share in world trade is rising.

"No country can benefit from the decline in the world trade, and the slowing global economy is a concern for all nations, including India," the minister said at an event in New Delhi on Tuesday, suggesting that all was not well with the world economy.

India's exports declined for the first time in the current fiscal, with shipments contracting 2.15% in September to \$27.95 billion. Prabhu said there was predictability in doing business globally in the past six-seven decades, but "we are seeing a dramatic change in global trade" in the past few months.

A day before, India's commerce secretary Anup Wadhawan had said that global recovery was fragile and there was some element of risk from threats such as confrontational trade stances that major countries had taken.

Commenting on the World Bank's ease of doing business report, which is scheduled to be released soon, Prabhu said, "You will have a good news when World Bank will release its report." Last year, India broke into top 100 in the World Bank rankings on the back of sustained business reforms over the past several years.

Meanwhile, India has been ranked 58th most competitive economy on the World Economic Forum's global competitiveness index for 2018. India's rank rose by five places from 2017, the largest gain among G20 economies, the WEF said in a statement on Tuesday.

India was ranked 58th with a score of 62.0 in the latest Global Competitiveness Report. "This is the largest gain among all G20 economies," WEF said. Meanwhile, neighboring China was ranked 28th, much higher than India.

According to the report, the top performers in the "upper and lower middle-income brackets", such as China and India, are catching up with or even outperforming the average among high-income economies. "China is already



more advanced when it comes to investing in research and development sub-pillar than the average high-income economy, while India is not far behind and let down only by its less-efficient bureaucracy for business creation and insolvency," the report stated.

As per the report, India leads the region in all other areas of competitiveness except for health, education and skills, where Sri Lanka boasts the highest healthy life expectancy (67.8 years) and the workforce with the highest amount of schooling (9.8 years).

Speaking at an event in New Delhi on Tuesday, India's Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the country needs a strong and decisive leadership to continue its high growth path and take swift decisions. Outlining the challenges for India, Jaitley said being a net buyer of oil, a rise in global crude prices adversely impacts the country and hence the

economy has to be resilient to deal with it.

"If this path of high growth trajectory is to continue...if these higher growth, higher revenues and higher resources have to continue, better infrastructure objective has to be achieved, India needs a strong and decisive leadership at the Centre

He said India today needs a government and leadership with "absolute clarity about the direction so that this unique position which IMF refers to as a sweet spot in the world, this sweet spot we continue to occupy for next two decades,' he said. Jaitley said if India continues on high growth path, then the country can get rid of poverty and can become a developed country.

Meanwhile, Indian economy grew at 8.2 per cent in the April-June quarter of current fiscal. It grew at 6.7 per cent in 2017-18 fiscal.

# 'India may be willing to decide in a more strategic manner on oil purchases from Iran'

1 → In a veiled warning to India, U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday said U.S. will "take care" of countries which defy its directives to bring their oil imports from Iran to zero by November 4. Does that put India in a difficult situation, since India and U.S. recently signed a major defense deal?

A. India finds itself in the delicate position of having to balance its relatively new strategic relationship with the U.S., a supplier of hi-tech weapons systems and dual use technology and a key partner of issues such as terrorism, with its old and time-tested ties with countries such as Russia and Iran.

Indian leaders, while referring to energy purchases from Iran and defense deals with Russia, have indicated that they will go by UN sanctions and not unilateral actions. My personal opinion is that if India is in a difficult situation, it is largely due to the uncertainty created by the current U.S. leadership.

What is the general opinion in India as far as the relations between India and Iran are concerned?

A. Unfortunately, my personal feeling



is that a lot of young Indians are not really aware of the ties between India and Iran. It is quite possible that many young Indians aren't even aware that Iran is among the top three suppliers of energy. There is a need for

more people-to-people exchanges. India's former vice president Hamid Ansari recently said government of India should take into consideration 'totality' of India's ties with Iran while responding to U.S. sanctions against Iran, because Iran provides alternate route to Afghanistan for Îndia. What's your take on it.

A. Again, the uncertainty created by the U.S. leadership comes into play here. The Americans say they are willing to allow India's work at Chabahar to go on, with an eye on Afghanistan, even as they threaten sanctions on Indian oil purchases from Iran. Mr Ansari's remarks make a lot of sense in such circumstances.

Of course, to continue oil purchases from Iran, both countries will have to work out some form of payments, including payments in rupees, though this will be a fairly complicated matter.

During President Rouhani's visit to India earlier this year, the two countries reaffirmed commitment to jointly develop Chabahar Port in Iran's Sistan Baluchistan province. How important is the project from India's perspective?

A. It is a very important and strategic project that has ramifications for India's long-term plans to help stabilize and secure Afghanistan.

# Journalists in war-ravaged Afghanistan continue to walk a tightrope

Asia affairs had spoke to Pakistani envoy to Tehran to help secure the release of abductees "within the framework of mutual relations, the principle of good neighborliness and commitments under mutual agreements and regulations of the international law."

In a statement issued on Tuesday, IRGC said terrorists have kidnapped the Iranian forces, including local Basij volunteer forces and border guards, near the town of Mirjaveh on the Pakistani border.

The so-called Jaish ul-Adl terrorist group – which is based in Pakistan -claimed responsibility on its Twitter account.



**IONAL TEHRAN** — A day after India's Prime s k Minister Narendra Modi voiced concerns about high crude prices, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on Tuesday said it has not failed India and other major consuming countries as it restored stability in the market after four years of downturn.

Sanusi Barkindo, Secretary General of OPEC, an intergovernmental organization of 15 nations, said the stability achieved in past month is being threatened by headwinds from extraneous factors like frictions between leading trading partners of the world, revival of monetary stimuli and upward movement in interest rates.

On October 15, Modi had voice concerns about high oil prices killing global growth at a meeting where Saudi and UAE oil ministers as also industry captains were present.

Barkindo said the stability achieved over the past months is under threat from a combination of factors that are beyond the control of oil producers. "In the short term we are also beginning to see a rise in volatility," he said. "Yes at the moment the market is well supplied. However, these extraneous factors are beginning to make this balance look fragile. These factors are completely outside the control of OPEC and non-OPEC (oil producers)."

 $1 \rightarrow$  When Sardar Ahmad, senior reporter in AFP's Kabul bureau, and his family were killed in an attack a day before the Afghan New Year, on March 20, 2014, it made international headlines. His youngest son Abuzar, barely 3 year old that time was the only member of the family to survive the attack. Following his killing, journalists in Kabul announced the temporary boycott of Taliban coverage. But that did not deter them and the juggernaut rolled on.

The deaths of two Tolo News journalists Samim Faramarz and Ramiz Ahmadi on September 5 took the number of journalists and media workers killed in Afghanistan this vear to 14. Clearly, more journalists have been killed in Afghanistan this year than in any other country, including Svria or Yemen.

Nine journalists, including senior photojournalist Shah Marai, were killed in twin blasts last month -- the most deadly attack on the media in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban 17 years ago.

The beleaguered Afghan government has come under sharp criticism for failing to protect journalists. NAI, an organizations supporting open media in Afghanistan, says government has not delivered its commitments to journalists. NAI statistics show that so far 1,194 cases of violence against journalists have been registered, of which government has addressed and investigated only 40 cases.

"When government signs national and international orders, the important thing is that to what extent the orders will be implemented. Right now, we have Article 34 of the Constitution on supporting freedom of expression and Article 52 of the Constitution on access to information, but these articles have not been implemented by government," Mujib Khelwatgar, head of NAI, was quoted saying in media.

And media outlets have been criticized for putting their staff in harm's way while reporting war. "Losing journalists in similar events one after another and not learning from the mistakes is bad management both on the part of the media organizations and the government," Sayed Ikram Afzali, executive director of Afghan advocacy group Integrity Watch, was quoted saying by AFP recently.

Lotfullah Najafizada, head of Tolo News, which has lost many of its staff members in 17 years of war, believes



it is important to keep a longer distance while covering incidents like a suicide attack, demonstration and natural disaster. "It's also important that our journalists should have all the protection gear that is required, and for them to stay in touch with our security personnel," he was quoted by BBC.

The war imposed by the Taliban and ISIS, and facilitated by Western powers led by U.S., have had ominous consequences for media freedom in Afghanistan. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a total of 60 journalists and media workers have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001 -- an average of around three a year. Afghan media support group NAI puts the figure at 95.

Last week, Afghanistan Journalists Center (AJC) announced that the Afghan government has declared its support to the new United Nations General Assembly resolution on the

safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. "The pressures are ongoing on journalists from different channels or they are under secret follow ups. According to the new resolution, these acts should end by countries which are supporting the resolution,"Ahmad Hunaish, an advisor to AFJC, was quoted in media.

As Afghanistan prepares to hold parliamentary elections on 20 October, RSF has called for more protection for journalists, who are the guarantors of free, transparent and democratic elections, according to a statement issued on Monday.

"The increase in targeted attacks on the media and the deterioration in the security situation for women journalists in the run-up to the elections threaten the Afghan people's sovereignty and democratic choice," said Reza Moini, the head of RSF's Afghanistan-Iran desk.

# U.S. has buried its moral compass in the Trump-Kushner-MBS disaster: Askari

1 → A: Trump says it is all about money and U.S. jobs, \$110 billion in military sales and the jobs that go along with the sales because Saudi Arabia will now buy arms from China and Russia. This justification for supporting Saudi Arabia and the policies of MBS is a series of blatant lies and distortions that Trump wants his 'base' to buy. The \$110 billion is a distorted figure. All he has are signed letters of intent and the time limit approved by Congress on some of these hoped-for purchases has come and gone. At most we may be talking about \$60-70 billion stretched out over a number of years with most agreed upon during the Obama era.

Equally important is the fact that Saudi Arabia cannot just turn a switch and buy all its arms from China and Russia. Its past arms purchases and military systems are mainly American, with a small quantity of arms and munitions from the UK. Arms have to be compatible. This is more obviously the case for spare parts. All Saudi advisors and training are from the U.S. It would take years, if not a decade or two, to transition to Chinese or Russian systems. Saudi Arabia is a captive buyer of U.S. arms and of U.S. military training and political support. The Saudi ruling family would not last without U.S. support. It cannot afford to offend the United States.

This fact is especially the case for MBS. He has tried to establish himself as a reformer to the outside world, something that he is not when it comes to practicing governance in Saudi Arabia. He is oppressive. His internal security apparatus abducts, tortures and kills those who oppose him. He abducts people and extracts money without judicial process. He and his family live a life of opulence, an opulence that is derived from oil, which is the heritage of all Saudis of this and future generations. He kills innocent women and children by indiscriminate bombing in Yemen. These are not the attributes of a reformer.

A word of warning. Saudi Arabia is using U.S. arms to kill civilians in Yemen and elsewhere. Trump should not be so boastful of U.S. arms going to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. is knowingly complicit in his atrocities and is not winning friends.

Is Saudi support only from Trump-Kushner? Are members of Congress behind Saudi Arabia? What about U.S. corporations? Who else supports Saudi Arabia in Washington and why?

A: Sadly, everything in the U.S. centers on money these days. Morality, decency and doing the right thing have little or no traction in the United States. Trump and Kushner think first and foremost of their own business empires. Saudis have done business and do business as we speak with Trump and Kushner. Moreover, knowing what I know about Saudi Arabia, I believe that MBS has made financial promises to Kushner-he and Trump will be taken care of given their support for his policies. The Republican Congress follows Trump like little puppy dogs to get votes from his base, to get campaign donations from rich Republicans and to secure lucrative contracts when they leave office. They have no love for an arrogant MBS or for Saudi Arabia, they are thinking just of themselves. U.S. companies and financial institutions are just looking for business. And last but not least are the lobbyists. There are literally dozens of ex-U.S. officials and influential corporate leaders on the Saudi payroll. They are guns for hire and Saudi Arabia has the money. What does Trump's support for Saudi Arabia say about the United States? A: Nothing good, I am sorry to say. The U.S. espouses support for human rights and freedom and yet supports the worst dictators in the world. How can these two polar opposite positions be reconciled? They cannot. The United States has lost its moral compass. It is focused on personal interests and financial rewards. Moreover, after the U.S. withdrew



from the JCPOA-an agreement that it had signed along with five other countries and that was endorsed by the UN Security Council-who can believe the U.S. on anything? Furthermore, after Trump denied the reality

its soft power and it will be eroded in just a few years. What does the Khashoggi tragedy and Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA

This fact is especially the case for MBS. He has tried to establish himself as a reformer to the outside world, something that he is not when it comes to practicing governance in Saudi Arabia. He is oppressive. His internal security apparatus abducts, tortures and kills those who oppose him.

of global warming and withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord, who believes that the U.S. is committed to the survival of humanity? I could go on, but the point is clear. The U.S. is losing its soft power. It has only its

say about the rule of law in global affairs? A: The rule of law is in reverse gear. It is a free for all world. We will see many more cross-border intimidations, abductions and assassinations. The reason is simple. If the



military as an instrument of foreign policy. All this is made worse by the fact that Trump and his government are acting as a publicity agent and advisor to King Salman and MBS. It will take the U.S. years to recover from this low point.

U.S. or its friends can do these things, so can any rogue actor, be they a sovereign state or ISIS or whoever. The world will lose every ounce of security that it has painfully built up since WWII. The world will become a veritable jungle.

oppressors, murderers and all forms of corruption. Do the Al-Sauds rule at the pleasure of the people and give them the freedom that Allah gave to all humans? Do MBS and his family access oil revenues equally with all their subjects? Is MBS and his tribe guilty of corruption? I will leave these three questions for the reader to answer for him or herself. Suffice it to say that MBS cannot claim to be the defender of Islam.

As for MBS, he is a murderer pure and simple. He ordered the death of Khashoggi. Why do I say this? Anyone who knows Saudi Arabia can tell you that such decisions have to be approved at the very top and he is at the top. He must be tried and if found guilty, he must be punished as required in Islam. If Al-Saud rule is to have any credibility, in a country that claims its legitimacy from Islam, MBS must be judged and punished as any other criminal.

Muslims and governments of Muslim countries around the world should condemn what has been done to Khashoggi. The world must know that what they see in King Salman's handling of this tragedy should not be associated with Islam. Saudi Arabia must not be supported in this act. Sadly, some Arab governments have already come to Saudi Arabia's rescue because of financial assistance or being comrade in arms as autocratic rulers. How can a government be credible when it applauds the murder of an innocent Muslim, followed by denials, and then false admissions? Truthfulness matters in Islam! Allah does not embrace liers, especially those who commit murder and lie to cover it up. Countries whose government profess Islam have a duty to condemn false pretensions to Islam by Saudi Arabia and its supporters.

A: No one knows. Little things can change the course of history. We could be at one of these points. The U.S. Congress should end its blind support of oppressive rule in Saudi Arabia and should withhold support for other dictators unless they have a firm schedule for restoring freedom for their people, begin to respect human and civil rights and move toward representative governance. If this tragedy nudges the U.S. in this humanitarian direction, it would benefit the world and the United States. Arms sales, financial benefits, and money for U.S. politicians and lobbyists hurt the United States in more ways than one can list.

One word of advice to the wise who make important foreign policy decisions. No one, I repeat no one, in this world can predict the full fallout of policy decisions. Did anyone predict the full fallout of the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadeq, a multidimensional fallout that we feel even today? Because of the limitations of the human mind, we need a minimum dose of morality so that when things take an unexpected turn, we don't plunge the world into total chaos where might makes right. Morality calls the world, and especially the entire Muslim World, to stand up to MBS and Saudi Arabia.

Out of this tragedy, we might still be able to extract something good for the world. U.S. senators and members of the House of Representatives should say enough is enough, denounce MBS and stand up for what we all thought were American values. Muslims and Muslim countries should stand up and condemn MBS and his father and state that what they have done is criminal and against everything that Islam preaches. Turkey has a special role here as it must tell the truth and not succumb to Saudi and U.S. bribes. Evangelicals should begin to put the teachings of Jesus Christ before the requests of hypocritical and self-serving politicians. This tragedy affords human rights activists an opportune moment to fight for human rights and to preach the importance of doingwhat is right to governments and peoples the world over. In the end, doing the right thing for the right reason says it all

# Nikki Haley left the UN

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

TEHRANTIMES



1 → It should not be forgotten that McMaster and Tillerson's resignations (due to their disagreement with Trump's policies regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) was much fueled by Nikki Haley's encouragements. In any case, during her presence at the UN Security Council, nobody ever mentioned her name as a moderate politician, and even some traditional Republicans have criticized her and her procedure in the Trump government.

It should not be forgotten that McMaster and Tillerson's resignations (due to their disagreement with Trump's policies regarding the Joint Comprehensive **Plan of Action)** was much fueled by Nikki Haley's encouragements.

Trump's main concern in the early months of his presence at the White House was the inclusion of Iran's missile power in the context of the nuclear deal. The result of this concern was Nikki Haley's ridiculous show on Iran's missile power. However, some of Trump's companions like the former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson believed that, given the certainty of the JCPOA document, there was virtually no possibility of adding the

issue of Iran's missile power to it, and it was necessary to do it in the form of a secondary agreement.

The three European countries of France, Britain and Germany also showed the green light to Washington in this regard. But the United States eventually left the nuclear deal. In any case, tying up Iran's missile capability to the nuclear deal was the goal that the U.S. president and Nikki Haley were both pursuing. But, as the Supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized, Iran's missile and defense capabilities are not negotiable. And at the end, we could see that the White House officials couldn't do anything about it.

At the same time, the Polittico reported that it was Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, who paved the way for the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in spite of the concerns of other cabinet members. Earlier in July, Trump reluctantly declared Tehran's commitment to the nuclear deal. The announcement of this commitment by the U.S. government was encouraged by Rex Tillerson and James Metis.

Tillerson and Metis, who were much more experienced than Nikki Haley in military and political affairs, were aware of the consequences of the disagreement of other international players with Washington in opposing the JCPOA. That made Tillersson to warn Trump on pulling out of the nuclear deal, despite his negative attitude towards the JCPOA.

#### At the same time,

Anyway, at a White House meet-

Does the U.S. appreciate the impor tance of its soft power?

A: Apparently not. To my mind, this was America's greatest asset. It is being dissipated at a rapid rate. People around the world, especially those living under oppressive regimes, will no longer see the United States as a country that stands for hope. The U.S. will be seen as a country that not only supports dictators but is complicit in the murder of innocent people, not just in the Khashoggi case but also in its military and intelligence support of Saudi Arabia in its war in Yemen. The growing negative perception of the United States is confirmed by the Pew Research

What can Muslim countries do to reign in Saudi excesses that give Muslims and Islam a bad name?

A: I am glad you asked this question. Saudi Arabia is giving Muslims and Islam a bad name. The governance of Saudi Arabia under the Al-Sauds has nothing to do with Islam. I could give you hundreds of reasons but let me give you three indisputable Islamic teachings. In Islam, Allah gave humans the freedom of choice, a freedom that no ruler can take away; Allah gave the world and all its depletable resources, such as oil, to all humanity and to all future generations to be shared equally; and Allah condemns

# New Iraqi cabinet ahead

#### By Ramin Hossein Abadian

TEHRAN — Adel Abdul Mahdi, the new prime minister of Iraq, is required by the Iraq's constitution to submit his cabinet appointees for parliamentary approval within 30 days of his election, which occurred on October 2, or else another person will be appointed for that task. But nothing has been done yet. Extensive and intensive consultations with parties and people of talent in Iraqi society have been underway, and this has been Abdul Mahdi's focus this month.

Some seek to end the time required by Abdul Mahdi for the presentation of the new. cabinet, and the parliament will have to decide on this. There is always the possibility anyway of political chaos in Iraq.

Although the Americans may pretend they were not annoyed by the election of Abdul Mahdi as prime minister, a look at Iraqi his positions suggests that he was by no means Washington's choice. The main reason for this is the return of political support for Abdul Mahdi by the vast majority of Iraqi parliamentarians and the major coalition parties in parliament. No one can deny that Abdul Mahdi's as prime minister emerged from a major political consensus between the great coalitions of Al-Aslah and Al-Banna.

This political backing is the biggest evidence of Abdul



Mahdi's success in his current direction to elect new cabinet members. He will appoint his cabinet in due time. His supporters have been formally noted by Abdul Mahdi at various occasions by major Shiite leaders and coalitions in Iraq, including Sayyed Ammar Hakim, who has repeatedly emphasized the need for the full support of all groups from Abdul Mahdi on the path to the formation of the cabinet.

The leader of the current nationalist wisdom emphasized the necessity of full support for the new Iraqi prime minister during his recent visit to the Kurdistan region and his meetings with the leaders of Kurdish groups.

Al-Fatah leader Hadi al-Ameri, also stands beside Abdul Mahdi and explicitly emphasizes that his alliance has left Abdul Mahdi a free hand to form a cabinet.

It should also be noted that other Shiite groups, such as the Saeroon Alliance and Islamic Resistance Movement in Iraq (al-Nojaba), support Abdul Mahdi and his mission.

Major political alliances within the Iraqi parliament have also taken measures to deal with some possible scenarios in the formation of the cabinet. The latest news indicates that the large parliamentary coalition will permit Abdul Mahdi to introduce half of its cabinet members in the first step and then the other half at a later date.

This act of parliamentarians, the vast majority of whom are Shiite, abolishes any attempt to oust Abdul Mahdi as the prime minister. Iraq appears to be moving closer to political stability.

the Polittico reported that it was Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the **United Nations**, who paved the way for the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in spite enna and her visit to of the concerns of other cabinet members. Earlier in July, Trump reluctantly declared Tehran's commitment to the nuclear deal.

ing held in late July with the presence of Herbert McMaster, former National Security Advisor, and Mike Pence, Nikki Haley called on Trump to give her a chance at to provide reasons for U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA. Nikki Haley's trip to Vi-Yukiya Amano, Director General of the IAEA, took place in the same direction. During this meeting, Haley tried to catch the perfect accompaniment of the agency in confrontation with the JCPOA, but failed in this regard.

In any case, Nik-

ki Haley stepped aside from her post as the U.S. Ambassador to the UN while there's no way she can be called on as a successful politician in Washington's foreign policy. Undoubtedly, her name will remain in the minds as the symbol of Trump's failure in the foreign policy. Today, few people in the United States speak of political intelligence and strategic understanding of Nikki Haley

It shouldn't be forgotten that the former United States Ambassador to the United Nations stepped aside with her disappointing results in grounds such as defending the illegal settlements of the Zionists in the West bank, and defending the killing of the Yemeni people by the Saudis, and defending the slaughter of Syrians by the American coalition. Undoubtedly, Nikki Haley should be hold responsible to the public and to the international society for the commitment of such crimes.

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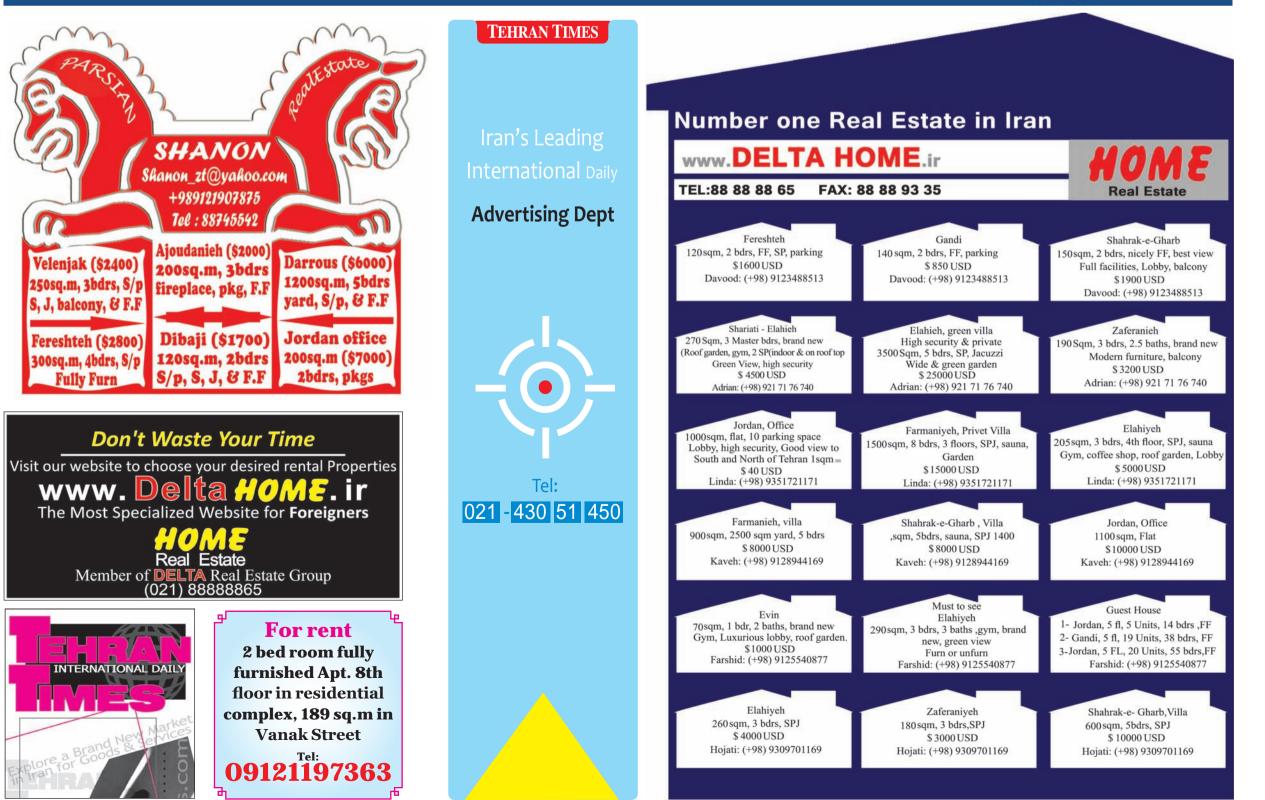
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Η Т Η Α

# **Tuberculosis in Iran 10 times below** global prevalence

**HEALTH TEHRAN** — The incidence e s k of tuberculosis (TB) in Iran is 14 cases per 100,000 population which is more than 10 times below global rate, said head of the department for prevention of leprosy and TB at the Ministry of Health.

Tuberculosis is caused by bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) that most often affect the lungs. Tuberculosis is curable and preventable.

According to the figures revealed by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2017, 10 million people fell ill with TB equivalent to 131 cases per 100,000 population worldwide.

Moreover, surveys indicate that over the past 50 years TB incidence has fallen 13 times, ISNA quoted Mahshid Nasehi as saying on Tuesday.

This is while Iran is adjacent to two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, with TB incidence of 189 and 267 cases per 100,000 population, Nasehi highlighted.

Last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2017-March 2018), Nasehi said, some 8,819 individuals were diagnosed with TB of whom 46 percent were women and 14 percent were foreign nationals- mostly Afghan nationals.

Additionally, TB is highly prevalent among people aging above 65 in Iran, which again signifies the fact that the disease is very well-controlled in the country, she suggested.

Province of Golestan, northern Iran, and southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, rank highest with peak TB incidence rate nationwide, she added.

TB is a leading killer of HIV-positive people. Unfortunately being infected with HIV virus will increase the chances of developing TB, Nasehi said, stating that, last year 3.3% of the patient diagnosed with TB were also suffering from HIV.

According to WHO risk of developing TB is estimated to be between 16-27 times greater in people living with HIV than among those without HIV infection as their immune system is weak. In 2015, there were an estimated 10.4 million cases of tuberculosis disease globally, including 1.2 million [11%] among people living with HIV. Almost 60% of tuberculosis cases among people living with HIV were not diagnosed or treated, resulting in 390, 000 tuberculosis-related deaths among people living with HIV.

Nasehi also explained that the Ministry of Health is also taking routine measures to control and prevent the disease.

Conducting screening tests among different groups, particularly those at risk of developing the disease such as prisoners, people who received organs, people with HIV, etc., as well as giving people free of charge treatment and BCG vaccine at birth are of the measures taken by the Ministry, she said.

Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine is a vaccine primarily used against TB. In countries where tuberculosis or leprosy is common, one dose is recommended in healthy babies as close to the time of birth as possible.

Despite the preventive programs carried out in the country there are still cases of TB in Iran, she regretted, saying that, TB is treatable and after receiving 6 months of treatment the patient can go back to their normal life, she concluded. WHO key facts about TB

TB is one the top 10 causes of death globally. In 2017, 10 million people came down with TB, and 1.6 million died from the disease (including 0.3 million among people with HIV). In the same year 1 million children became ill with TB and 230,000 children died of TB (including children with HIV associated TB).

In 2017, 87% of new TB cases occurred in the 30 high TB burden countries. Eight countries accounted for two thirds of the new TB cases: India, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh and South Africa.

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) remains a public health crisis and a health security threat. WHO estimates that there were 558 000 new cases with resistance to rifampicin – the most effective first-line drug, of which - 82% had MDR-TB.

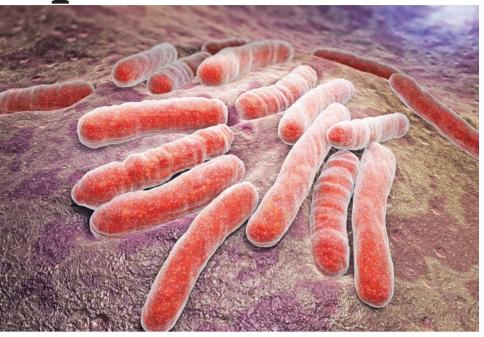
Worldwide TB incidence is falling at about 2% per annum which needs to increase to 4-5% yearly decline to achieve the 2020 milestones of the End TB Strategy. It is estimated that 54 million lives were saved

through TB diagnosis and treatment between 2000 and 2017. Ending the TB epidemic by 2030 is among the health targets of the Sustainable **Development Goals.** 

#### Latent TB and active TB

TB is spread from person to person through the air. When people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air. A person needs to inhale only a few of these germs to become infected.

Although your body may harbor the bacteria years later.



#### TB is a leading killer of HIV-positive people. Unfortunately being infected with HIV virus will increase the chances of developing TB and last year 3.3% of the patient diagnosed with TB in Iran were also suffering from HIV.

that cause tuberculosis, your immune system usually can prevent you from becoming sick. For this reason, doctors make a distinction between

latent TB an active TB. In case of latent TB you have a TB infection, but the bacteria remain in your body in an inactive state and cause no symptoms. Latent TB, also called inactive TB or TB infection, isn't contagious. It can turn into active TB, so treatment is important for the person with latent TB and to help control the spread of TB. About one-quarter of the world's population has latent TB.

Active TB makes you sick and can spread to others. It can occur in the first few weeks after infection with the TB bacteria, or it might occur

#### Those who are at risk

People infected with HIV as well as others who have conditions which compromise their immune system are most likely to develop TB.

Tobacco use greatly increases the risk of TB disease and death. 7.9% of TB cases worldwide are attributable to smoking.

Symptoms and treatment

Common symptoms of active lung TB are cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever and night sweats.

Active, drug-susceptible TB disease is treated with a standard 6 month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs that are provided with information, supervision and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer. Without such support, treatment adherence can be difficult and the disease can spread. The vast majority of TB cases can be cured when medicines are provided and taken properly.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

EHRANTIMES

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a form of TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to isoniazid and rifampicin, the 2 most powerful, first-line anti-TB drugs. MDR-TB is treatable and curable by using second-line drugs. However, second-line treatment options are limited and require extensive chemotherapy (up to 2 years of treatment) with medicines that are expensive and toxic.

In some cases, more severe drug resistance can develop. Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) is a more serious form of MDR-TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to the most effective second-line anti-TB drugs, often leaving patients without any further treatment options.

WHO estimates that there were 558 000 new cases with resistance to rifampicin – the most effective first-line drug – of which 82% had MDR-TB. The MDR-TB burden largely falls on 3 countries – India, China and the Russian Federation – which together account for nearly half of the global cases.

Worldwide, only 55% of MDR-TB patients are currently successfully treated.

Ending TB

Ending the TB epidemic by 2030 is among the health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. WHO has gone one step further and set a 2035 target of 95% reduction in deaths and a 90% decline in TB incidence - similar to current levels in low TB incidence countries today.

The Strategy outlines three strategic pillars that need to be put in place to effectively end the epidemic:

Pillar 1: integrated patient-centered care and prevention

Pillar 2: bold policies and supportive systems Pillar 3: intensified research and innovation

The success of the Strategy will depend on countries respecting the following 4 key principles as they implement the interventions outlined in each pillar: government stewardship and accountability, with monitoring and evaluation, strong coalition with civil society organizations and communities, protection and promotion of human rights, ethics and equity, and adaptation of the strategy and targets at country level, with global collaboration.

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**OCTOBER 18, 2018** 



## Iran ends visa-free travel for Serbians



**TOURISM CONTINUES OF CONTINU** 

Ministry's passport office announced in a statement. On October 10, Serbia announced it would terminate visa-free entries for Iranians out of concerns that some may "abuse the system" as an avenue to enter other European states.

In August 2017, Serbia abolished visas for Iranians in a move to boost tourism, improve growth and reach out to non-European markets.

Serbia received over 15,000 Iranian nationals since the visa-waiver program came into effect.

# Thai Sept. tourist arrivals up 2.13% y/y



**BANGKOK (Reuters)** — Thailand saw a 2.13 percent increase in tourist arrivals in September from a year earlier, the country's tourism ministry said on Tuesday, while the number of Chinese visitors declined for three consecutive months.

There were 2.66 million foreign tourists in September, the ministry said, which helped generate 140 billion baht (\$4.28 billion). Tourists from East Asia accounted for about 73 percent of all arrivals.

However, the number of Chinese tourists in September dropped by almost 15 percent from a year earlier. The number has been declining since a boat accident in July, which killed 47 Chinese visitors.

The ministry said tourists from China might be 669,000 fewer than initially expected for July-December.

Tourism receipts account for about 12 percent of Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, making it one of the most important drivers of Thailand's growth. (\$1 = 32.6800 baht)



#### · ·

#### The Mountain Railway of India consists of three railways:

# Tehran, Tokyo draw co-op roadmap for female crafters

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Iran's Cultural d e s k Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization and Japan's Sasakawa Peace Foundation have drafted a roadmap for conducting surveys to assist Iranian craftswomen, CHTN reported.

CHHTO deputy director Pouya Mahmoudian said on Tuesday that her organization has held talks with the Foundation's managers for the Middle East and Islam Program Department on ways to enhance collaboration in the cultural, scientific and educational arenas.

"Since females constitute over 75 percent of Iranian craftspeople, and we believe our artists are peace ambassadors, so that it was decided that our first joint project entitled 'Women and Handicrafts' to come into focus on Iranian women next year."

The project will be in an exploratory frame and its outcomes will be announced specifically, and it would be followed by several educational and arts workshops.

Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are among Iranian exports to Iraq, Afghanistan and Germany, the U.S., the UK and other countries.

As a private foundation, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation conducts research activities, policy recommendations, and international collaboration aimed at the formation of a new governance system of human society that is more sustainable for environment, oceans, and human welfare.

# Half a million visas issued for Arbaeen pilgrims



**TOURISM TEHRAN** — Over d e s k 500,000 visas have so far been issued for Iranian pilgrims who are to make their ways to the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala.

A total of 820,000 people have applied for the visas, of whom 500,000 have been granted the permits till the present, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Arbaeen pilgrimage, aka Arbaeen trek, is a characteristic spiritual exercise in which hundreds of thousands of Shia and Sunni Muslims, even Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. from various nationalities participate.

The long treks will be destined to Karbala, where Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is laid to rest.

The event marks an end to the 40-day mourning period following martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).



**Over 1,400 sites in Sistan-Baluchestan on national heritage list** 



**HERITAGE TEHRAN**—Over 1,400 d e s k historical and archaeological sites, scattered across Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, have been inscribed on the National Heritage List, provincial tourism chief has said.

So far some 3,000 archaeological sites have been identified across the province through excavations and surveys conducted by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, ISNA quoted Alireza Jalalzaie as saying on Wednesday. Earlier this month, Jalalzaie announced that the number of international travelers to the 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.

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.

# Iran: Meeting the nomads of Babak Castle

A hike to Babak Castle, in northwest Iran, proves fascinating, although the highlight is an encounter with a nomadic family. "It's hard living this way, but I have to because

of my husband," explains Leila, the mother of



drape from wooden sticks stuck in the ground. Everything in the tent is joined together like a patchwork quilt. A bit of crimson here, a spot of canary yellow there, with a flash of fiery orange.

the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway located in the foothills of the Himalayas in West Bengal (Northeast India) having an area of 5.34 ha., the Nilgiri Mountain Railways located in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu (South India) having an area of 4.59 ha. and the Kalka Shimla Railway located in the Himalayan foothills of Himachal Pradesh (Northwest India) having an area of 79.06 ha. All three railways are still fully functional and operational.

The Mountain Railways of India are outstanding examples of hill railways. Opened between 1881 and 1908 they applied bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problem of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great beauty.



They are still fully operational as living examples of the engineering enterprise of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway consists of 88.48 kilometers of 2 feet (0.610 meter) gauge track that connects New

Jalpaiguri with Darjeeling, passing through Ghoom at an altitude of 2258 meters. The innovative design includes six zigzag reverses and three loops with a ruling gradient of 1:31.

The construction of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, a 45.88 kilometer long meter-gauge single-track railway was first proposed in 1854, but due to the difficulty of the mountainous location the work only started in 1891 and was completed in 1908. This railway, scaling an elevation of 326 meters to 2,203 meters, represented the latest technology of the time and uses unique rack and pinion traction arrangement to negotiate steep gradient.

(Source: UNESCO)

a nomadic family here in Farsi.

I've stumbled across her following my blister-inducing yet rewarding hike up to Babak Castle. Thrusting up for 7,545ft through billowing mist in Kaleybar, northwest Iran, this Sasanid structure is a monument to Babak Khorramdin, a Persian leader who fought off the Arab invaders until 839 and is seen as a revolutionary leader and hero.

I've been fighting too, battling the burning in my legs and the urge to gasp like a beached fish. Leila is a beacon of light and succor after my sweaty hike.

My cousin, Hoda, had recommended Babak Castle, and after a three-hour drive from Tabriz, I rolled out of a dust-coated 4×4 car and started on the endless slope that sprawled before me. Grit rolled down the steep incline with my every lurch and the harsh ground tripped up the unwary.

A rugged pathway hugged the clifftop, protecting it, while mountains loomed all around us. I gripped onto jagged rocks for support, as I reached Babak Castle. Lines of murky grey and dirty brown bricks made up tall rectangular structures with narrow openings once used for firing arrows at enemies.

Leila's home, her tent, sits close to the crumbly trail leading to Babak Castle. As I staggered past her, we exchanged smiles and Leila beckoned me over — her face etched with wrinkles — and made an 'eating soup' gesture. She thrust open the sagging blanket that's her front door and ushered me inside.

Leila's husband was out for the day. He originates from a family of nomads and continues this way of life to support his own. He's searching for new herds of goats; he's already brought his existing herd to graze here among the cool pastures and chill air of the mountains. I breathe in deeply, smelling the earthy odor of the poppies — the flower of love according to Persian literature.

I can see why nomads choose this climate and setting for summer. "This is Zeinab," Leila gestures towards her daughter, who smiles at me, revealing gaps in her teeth. Zeinab is only eight years old, but she wears an immaculately positioned dainty floral headscarf, just like her mother.

Their home is constructed from long flowing pieces of ripped-up clothes and blankets, which

the tent, while metal pots hang from torn bits of cloth wrapped around the sticks. A single light bulb droops into the center. This life is only temporary. After summer, the family will move closer towards the city and Zeinab will go back to school.

A bulky generator stands in the entrance of

"Let's eat ash-e doogh (yoghurt soup)!" Leila enthuses. Cross-legged, I crack paper-thin bread, shards crumbling over the carpeted floor. Leila dishes up the soup with her metal ladle. The milky, slightly yellow, soup streams into my white plastic bowl with dashes of green and bursts of white. "This is all homemade, including the doogh." Leila is referring to the soup's main ingredient, a fizzy, minty yoghurt drink. The soup is warm and sour, leaving light bubbles in my mouth. It's weighed down by soaked spinach and soft rice. The pungent garlic sizzles on my tongue.

I start to say my goodbyes, but am blocked by the family's animals — chickens, goats and a large, friendly yapping dog. I meander through them, trailing a dusty cloud behind me. There's a flash of a welcome breeze and Leila's tent flaps in the wind as if it's waving farewell.

(Source: National Geographic Traveler)

# Ancient 'grand lady' skeleton uncovered in Chinese tomb

Archaeologists in China have uncovered the tomb of a 900-yearold preserved skeleton nicknamed the "Grand Lady." The remains of the body were uncovered in a water-filled coffin within a tomb at Tieguai Village in China.

The skeleton was buried with various other artifacts, such as a model house with miniature furniture inside and a silver pendant decorated with dragons. A sign found on the coffin said the tomb belonged to the "Grand Lady" who lived in "Ankang Commandery." While her actual name was difficult to read on the sign, the archaeologists believe it could be née Jian, LiveScience reports.

"The skeleton [of the Grand Lady] is essentially preserved, complete with fingernails and hair," the team wrote in the

Chinese Cultural Relics journal. One indication of the Grand Lady's age came from the 200 bronze coins located within her coffin produced between roughly 713 CE and 1100. The archaeologists said she probably died around A.D. 1100. This clue made sense since that time period marked the Song dynasty when culture and art prospered in the region.

The Grand Lady had ornate style as she was found wearing silver and gold hairpins on her head, silver bracelets on her arms, and a string of 83 bronzed coins on her abdomen. Beneath her right hand were the remains of two zongzi or what was left of two rice dumplings.

She was also buried with other grave goods and many small replicas of real-life objects. Within her tomb, there were 10 female figures wearing masks and playing musical instruments. Portraits were in her coffin which were likely of the Grand Lady wearing different clothes and accessories.

The discovery is fascinating because many artifacts were still housed within the tomb. Oftentimes, tombs are looted by robbers such as the one found next to the Gray Lady that was likely one of her family members, according to the archaeologists.

Both tombs were unearthed between June and September 2014 by an archaeological team from the Nanling County Cultural Relics Administration and Anhui Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.

(Source: Fox News)

# **Our Solar System is even stranger than** we thought, new research claims

How special is the Solar System? The history of astronomy has mostly been a one-way journey from a worldview in which our solar system is orderly (and divine) to a view in which we are not special. Our Solar System's planets, once thought to dance in god-ordained perfect circles in a "music of the spheres," deviate from circular orbits. Johannes Kepler, who demonstrated the non-circular orbits of the planets, tried to restore a sense of heavenliness by latching onto a new pattern for their orbits based on Plato's mathematical solids - but that notion was discredited many years later with the discovery of Uranus.

So when, on a sunny afternoon in California last year, I discovered a set of patterns that seem to rule planetary systems other than our own, I was skeptical. Were these patterns real, or were they an illusion? And if real, what did they mean about our Solar System's place in the cosmos?

In addition to our Solar System, we now know of over 400 multi-planet systems, thanks largely to the Kepler Mission. Kepler is a NASA spacecraft (named after the 17th century German astronomer) that was launched in 2009 for the sole purpose of discovering exoplanets — worlds orbiting other stars.

Brightnesses of stars It finds those exoplanets by continuously



measuring the brightnesses of about 100,000  $\,$ stars and waiting for the starlight from any of them dim ever so slightly due to the shadow of a planet in transit. The transit of each planet is unique, allowing the discovery of multiple planets orbiting the same star.

This is not at all what my colleagues and I expected. In our Solar System, planets range from the size of Mercury (less than half the radius of Earth) to Jupiter (more than ten times the radius of Earth). The whole population of exoplanets discovered by Kepler ranges

from one quarter the size of Earth to about twenty times the size of Earth. Yet, despite this wide range of possible sizes, planets tend to be about the same sizes as their neighbors. One of my collaborators decided they looked like "peas in a pod," and that moniker became our shorthand for the pattern.

To test whether the peas-in-a-pod pattern was real, I concocted (on my laptop) imaginary planetary systems in which the sizes of planets orbiting a given star were random. Could some sort of bias in Kepler's method of

The whole population of exoplanets discovered by Kepler ranges from one quarter the size of Earth to about twenty times the size of Earth.

finding planets - which favors the detection of large planets close to their stars - contrive to make the planets in each of my imaginary systems appear to fit the pattern?

The orbital distance

A representation of the planet sizes and spacings in each of the multi-planet systems with four or more planets from the California Kepler Survey, and our solar system (SOL). Each row represents a planetary system, with the star at the left (denoted by the Kepler Object-of-Interest name for the system), and planet orbital distance increasing to the right in astronomical units (AU).

In addition to having similar sizes, planets in these peas-in-a-pod-like systems also have regular orbital spacing. We found that the orbital distance between the first pair of planets is a good predictor of the orbital distance of the third planet, and the fourth, and so on.

Regular spacing also exists in our solar system out to Uranus and is called the Titius-Bode Law, but Neptune and Pluto do not follow the pattern. Furthermore, there is a link between the sizes of the planets and their spacing: the systems with the smallest planet sizes also have the closest orbital spacings.

(Source: scientificamerican.com)

# **NASA hopes Martian** winds could still revive **Opportunity rover**

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

**TEHRANTIMES** 

NASA has been pinging the Opportunity rover for the last several months, but the plucky little robot is still sleeping after its run-in with a massive Martian dust storm. There may still be hope for the mission, too. NASA engineers say that Opportunity has one last chance to save itself from oblivion thanks to an upcoming windy season on Mars



The Opportunity rover landed on Mars along with its sibling Spirit almost 15 years ago. NASA designed the rovers to last at least 90 days on the red planet, and they've lasted much longer. Spirit went offline several years ago after getting stuck in soft soil, which prevented it from directing its solar panels at the sun. Opportunity may suffer a similar fate as it loses power, but the cause is much more dramatic.

Last spring, Mars experienced a global dust storm. These monster storms form every few years, blotting out the sun for months at a time. This storm was particularly heavy, too. According to NASA, the opacity level or "tau" of the storm reached a value of more than 10. On average, the Martian atmosphere has a tau of about 1.5. With so little light, NASA placed Opportunity into hibernation mode, but even that wasn't enough to keep the rover powered.

It's impossible to know how much dust has covered the rover's solar panels --- the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) spotted Opportunity from orbit, but the image resolution isn't sufficient to make out details. However, we're approaching a time every year when Mars gets very windy between November and January (on Earth)

Opportunity last communicated with Earth on June 10th. NASA recently increased its communication rate with Opportunity in case it should come back online suddenly. If it does wake up, NASA will work to assess its condition and return the rover to full operation. (Source: extremetech.com)

# Scientists find missing piece in glacier melt predictions

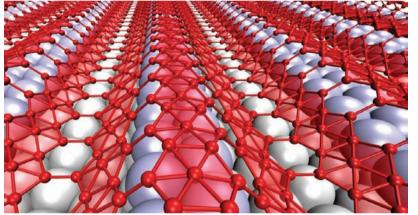
Stanford scientists have revealed the presence of water stored within a glacier in Greenland, where the rapidly changing ice sheet is a major contributor to the sea-level rise North America will experience in the next 100 years. This observation -- which came out of a new way of looking at existing data -- has been a missing component for models aiming to predict how melting glaciers will impact the planet.

The group made the discovery looking at data intended to reveal the changing shape of Store Glacier in West Greenland. But graduate student Alexander Kendrick figured out that the same data could measure something much more difficult to observe: its capacity to store water. The resulting study, published in Geophysical Research Letters, presents evidence of glacier meltwater from the surface being stored within damaged, solid ice. While ice melting at the surface has been well documented, little is known about what happens below glacier surfaces, and this observation of liquid water stored within solid ice may explain the complex flow behavior of some Greenland glaciers.

'Things like this don't always come along, but when they do, that is the real 'joy of the discovery' component of Earth science," said co-author Dustin Schroeder, an assistant professor of geophysics at Stanford University's School of Earth, Energy & Environmental Sciences (Stanford Earth). "This paper not only highlights this component's existence, but gives you a way to observe it in time."

Surface meltwater plays an important role in Greenland by lubricating the bottoms of ice sheets and impacting how retreating aciers are affected by the ocean. The process of how the glaciers melt and where the water flows contributes to their behavior in a changing climate, as these factors could alter glaciers' response to melting or impact the timeline for sea-level rise. (Source: Science Daily)

# **Exploring the challenges of exfoliating** novel two-dimensional materials



Ever since researchers at the University of Manchester used a piece of tape to isolate, or "exfoliate," a single layer of carbon, known as graphene, scientists have been investigating the creation of and applications for two-dimensional materials in order to advance technology in new ways.

Scientists have theorized about many different kinds of two-dimensional materials, but producing them, by isolating one layer at a time from a layered three dimensional source, often presents a challenge.

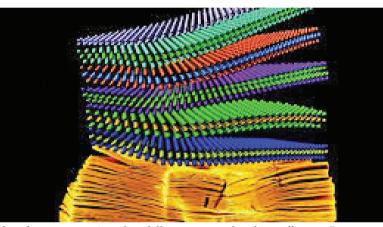
Salvador Barraza-Lopez, associate professor of physics, and his research group are studying 2-D materials called group IV monochalcogenides, which includes tin selenide, germanium sulfide, tin(II) sulfide, tin telluride and tin selenide, among others.

In 3-D form, these materials have many useful properties. For example, they are currently used in solar cells. Some group IV monochalcogenides are also ferroelectric which means that they contain pairs of positive and negative charges that create a macroscopic dipole moment. While some of these two-dimensional materials have been grown, no one has successfully peeled off a stable two-dimensional layer from a group IV monochalcogenide. In a recent manuscript titled "Water Splits to Degrade Two-Dimensional Group-IV Monochalcogenides in Nanoseconds" and published in the Journal ACS Central Science, Barraza-Lopez explained a possible reason for this.

Barraza-Lopez said that, even under the strictest experimental conditions, ambient water molecules can be found near these materials. And just like these materials, water carries an electric dipole too. Barraza Lopez explained that the interaction of dipoles can be observed in commonplace circumstances: "The pull of small pieces of paper with a comb that was recently used on dry hair can be explained as the effect of an inhomogeneous electric field in the comb accelerating macroscopic electric dipoles in that piece of paper nearby," he said.

Taneshwor Kaloni, a former postdoctoral associate in Barraza-Lopez's lab, performed computer calculations that emulate monolayers of these materials interacting with water molecules at room temperature and ambient pressure. The team demonstrated that when water molecules are close to these materials, they are attracted to them. This attraction creates an enormous build-up of kinetic energy, which leads to ting of the wat the s destabilizes the 2-D materials as a result of this chemical reaction. Barraza-Lopez explained that he was surprised to learn that this process created enough energy to split water molecules, because the kinetic energy required exceeds 70,000 degree Celsius. In a way, the difficulty in exfoliating these materials may lead to a new technology for hydrogen production off two dimensional materials, though many additional studies are required to achieve such goal. (Source: phus.org)

be the next 2D wonder material



Phosphorus comes in a few different forms (or allotropes), including white, red, violet, and black. For a few years scientists have predicted a fifth allotrope should be possible, but it had yet to be confirmed. Now, researchers in Germany have managed to show that this new allotrope, known as blue phosphorus, does exist, and mapped out its different properties.

Phosphorus is an abundant element and plays some pretty important roles in biology and technology. It's one of just six elements on the Must-Have list for life – which makes its rarity outside our Solar System troubling for those looking for alien life. Red phosphorus is probably best known for its use in the igniting strip on match boxes, while the volatile white phosphorus was once used in explosives.

Black phosphorus, meanwhile, is beginning to look useful in electronics new phosphorus allotrope. By evaporating the material onto a gold substrate, the team found that the phosphorus atoms line up in a honeycomb pattern, similar to that of graphene. But rather than lie flat, the lattice "buckles" as the atoms arrange themselves around the gold atoms underneath.

That changes the way electrons move through the material, which gives blue phosphorus different electronic properties to black. Using angle-resolved photoelectron spectroscopy, the team measured the distribution of electrons in the material's valence band, and found that it had a band gap of at least 2 electron volts - more than seven times larger than that of bulk black phosphorus. In electronics, wider band gaps allow semiconductors to operate at higher voltages and temperatures.

"So far, researchers have mainly used bulk black phosphorus to exfoliate

Newly-discovered blue phosphorus could

But that's not the whole family, apparently. In 2014 researchers calculated that a new form, dubbed blue phosphorus, should also be stable, and in theory could be an effective semiconductor like black phosphorus and graphene. In 2016, blue phosphorus was successfully created in the lab, but its identity remained uncertain.

The new phosphorus allotrope Now researchers from Helmholtz Zentrum Berlin (HZB) have studied the stuff and confirmed that it is the predicted

an author of the study. "These also show a large semiconducting band gap but do not possess the honeycomb structure of blue phosphorus and, above all, cannot be grown directly on a substrate. Our work not only reveals all the material properties of this novel two-dimensional phosphorus allotrope but highlights the impact of the supporting substrate on the behavior of electrons in blue phosphorus, an essential parameter for any optoelectronic application." (Source: New Atlas)

## The creepy singing' of this Antarctic ice shelf is the soundtrack of nightmares

The scientists liken it to 'singing', but to our ears the creepy dirge of Antarctic ice shelf vibrations sounds more like the sinister score of a horror movie

Researchers on Antarctica's Ross Ice Shelf have recorded the slow seismic hum generated by wind forces whipping across the ice sheet's frozen landscape.

The frequency detected is far too low for the human ear to hear naturally, but when it's sped up some 1,200 times, what emerges is an eerie soundtrack of restlessness hidden within the bleak polar isolation.

"It's kind of like you're blowing a flute, constantly, on the ice shelf," says geophysicist and mathematician Julien Chaput from Colorado State University.

Once it's rendered audible, here's what the creepy vibration phenomenon sounds like:

Of course, Chaput and his team weren't originally setting out to make the soundtrack to a horror movie.

The purpose of their research was to learn more about the physical properties of the Ross Ice Shelf, Antarctica's (and the world's) largest floating slab of ice, which is roughly the size of Spain.

As the world keeps getting catastrophically hotter, Antarctic ice shelves are beginning to dramatically collapse and break apart.

To better understand the forces at work, Chaput and fellow researchers buried 34 seismic sensors under the deep snow layer that sits atop the Ross Ice Shelf's underlying ice.

These seismic sensors monitored the ice shelf's structure from late 2014 to early 2017, and when the team analyzed the data, they realized this snowy cover - known as the firn layer, which insulates the ice below - undergoes constant movement from exposure to the wind above.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

# Penetrating the soil's surface with radar could have different uses: new study

Ground penetrating radar isn't something from the latest sci-fi movie. It's actually a tool used by soil scientists to measure the amount of moisture in soil quickly and easily.

As with most technologies, it is getting better and new ways to use it are being tested. Jonathan Algeo, a graduate student at Rutgers University, has spent his studies making ground penetrating radar better for different uses, such as measuring soil moisture.

"It's a very common tool in research, agriculture, engineering, and the military for looking at buried objects and measuring water content," Algeo explains. "One of its main benefits is that it is very fast. One example is a tool with a wheel that allows the radar to take measurements as you drag it along the ground. In this way, you can very quickly take measurements across a large field or a line that's miles in length. Radar can be used quickly over a large area to answer many different questions.

The technology can be used to find underground tunnels, bedrock, or cracks of metal in the supports of a bridge. In terms of soil, the questions can vary. How much water is near the surface? How does it vary throughout a field site? The near-surface water content can affect climate, so it's important for computer-based climate models as well.

#### Measuring soil moisture

Being able to measure soil moisture in a field can allow farmers to optimize water usage so they aren't using too



much or too little, especially in dry areas where water is limited. Looking at the very shallow subsurface allows farmers to test the efficiency of their irrigation systems.

How does it do this? "Ground penetrating radar uses two antennae. One puts out a signal and another receives it,' Algeo says. The "outgoing signal is similar to a microwave or cell phone signal. That signal travels in all directions, but most of the energy is directed into the ground. When there is a buried object or a change in material, the radar signal reflects back to the surface, where it is picked up by the other antenna.

He adds that when there is more water in the soil, the waves move slower. When there is less water, they move faster. A scientist can use information the antennae collect from the waves to estimate the water content of the soil.

The equations and methods researchers use to estimate water content come in many different forms. Algeo's recent research tested which ones were best at estimating water content. The equations analyze the early time signal. These are the first radar waves to get back to the receiving antenna after going through just the top of the soil. The strength of this signal changes based on the water content of the top of the soil. It can be measured even in clay-rich soils where radar wouldn't normally be helpful.

(Source: eurekalert.org)



## School for autistic girls opens in Tehran

**SOCIETY TEHRAN**—A school for autistic girls opened in Tehran district two on Tuesday, ILNA news agency reported.

Despite existing five schools special for autistic boy stu-dents in Tehran, there existed no school for girls suffering the disease in the capital. The first school for autistic girls was planned to be opened by the new school year (September 23) in Tehran, however, the project was delayed for almost three weeks.



The rationale behind the fact that there were no schools for autistic girls was that the prevalence of autism is higher in boys so that the greater number of special schools for autistic boys is logical, as the prevalence of autism in boys is four to one comparing with girls.

Mohsen Ghafourian, deputy director for educational planning department of the Special Education Organization, said in June that one of the best schools for children suffering autism, equipped with the standards facilities in Iran, has been set up in Ahvaz province, southwestern Iran, and the second one is under construction and some autism schools are under construction in other provinces, including Qazvin, Kermanshah, and Khorasan Razavi.

According to the latest statistics announced by World health Organization 1 in 160 children has an autism spectrum disorder. In Iran, out of every 150 births, one child suffers autism spectrum disorder.

Individuals with ASD often present other co-occurring conditions, including epilepsy, depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The level of intellectual functioning in individuals with ASDs is extremely variable, extending from profound impairment to superior levels.

Intervention during early childhood is important to promote the optimal development and well-being of people with an ASD. Monitoring of child development as part of routine maternal and child health care is recommended.

# LEARN ENGLISH **Opening a Bank Account**

A: Next, please. May I help you, sir?

B: Hello, yes, I'd like to open a bank account.

A: Certainly, I can help you with that. What type of account would you like to open? A chequing or a savings account? B: What **features** do they offer?

A: Well, if you just take a look here, see, with our chequing account, you can have unlimited daily transactions for a small monthly fee, and our savings account has a higher interest rate, but you must carry a minimum balance of \$ 10,000 dollars

B: I see, well, I think I'm more interested in a chequing account; I like to have easy **access** to my money.

A: Alright, then, with this chequing account you'll be issued a debit card and a cheque book. Will you require over draft protection? There is an extra fee for that. B: No, that won't be necessary.

A: In that case, I'll get you to fill out this paperwork; I'll need your social insurance number, and two pieces of government ID. If you could just sign here, and here, and here; we'll be all set. Would you like to make a **deposit** today?

#### S Т Υ Ε Ι

# Tehran city council to start electing new mayor by next week: chairman

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Tehran city council will e s k start the process for electing a new mayor for the capital by the next week, the council chairman Mohsen Hashemi has said.

Councilor Elham Fakhari said on Monday that Tehran Mayor Mohammad Ali Afshani is subjected to the newly adopted law banning the retired to be employed once again. The law to ban employment of the retired was passed in mid-September by the Majlis [Iranian parliament] and it will be implemented by November 15.

This is while Hashemi said on Tuesday that Interior Ministry has not announced its final decision about Tehran mayor and there is still a chance for Afshani to keep office.

"We will try for one more week for Afshani to stay in office," he said, adding that, "Interior Minister [Mohammadreza Rahmani Fazli] should make the final call and so far we haven't received any statements from the ministry regarding the mayor post."

Should Afshani be subjected to retirees' recruitment ban the process to choose a new mayor would be short, Mehr news agency quoted Hashemi as saying.

The city council election was held simultaneously with the presidential election on May 19, 2017. Reformists managed to secure all 21 seats at the council. The first session of the fifth Tehran City Council was held on August 23, 2017.

Since then the council had to elect two mayors. First Mohammad Ali Najafi was named as the mayor who kept the post for almost 7 months and then resigned due to his deteriorating health caused by prostate cancer.

After Najafi, Samiollah Hosseini Makarem became the caretaker and finally a month later in mid-May Afshani secured the seat as the mayor who is now is possibly banned from keeping office as he is retired.

And now the council should most probably start the process to elect a new mayor for the urban management

time in less than two years. City council has not elected any potential candidates for the position, however, there are speculations that Transport Minister Abbas Akhoundi, City council chairman

of one of the busiest metropolises of Iran for the third

Mohammad-Ebrahim Ansari-Lari, the managing director of Kish Free Zone Organization, Pirouz Hanachi, Secretary of Iran High Council of Urban Development and Architecture may run for the mayor.

# The Netherlands Bicycle Partnership to promote cycling in Iranian cities

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The Nether s k lands Bicycle Partnership (NBP) is planning on encouraging cycling in the capital of Iran, the group leader in Iran Mehdi Hassanzadeh has said. NBP initiated in 2015. The NBP is a Dutch

based international operating consortium including private parties, public institution (Municipalities The Hague and Amsterdam) and Knowledge institution (University of Amsterdam) in the field of sustainable mobility in large cities.

It has a focus on the bicycle as a relevant mode of transport in the urban environment. The NBP has developed an integrated strategy for a successful introduction of cycling as a daily mode of transport in cities. At the same time the NBP is working in a close cooperation with the relevant local stake holders (Municipalities, Private companies and knowledge institutions) aiming a transfer of knowledge and experience through a capacity building approach. The NBP partners are affiliated with the Dutch Cycling Embassy

"With the assistance from NBP we have so far run workshops on the importance of promoting cycling in cities of Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Karaj, Tabriz and Qazvin," ISNA quoted Hassanzadeh



as saying on Wednesday.

Currently Tehran municipality has taken some steps in order to implement the aforesaid document by developing necessary infrastructure, he added.

Hassanzadeh went on to say that on October 21 NBP will launch a gathering with the purpose of attracting financial support from international entities to develop cy-

Mohsen Hashemi, tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan,

Should Afshani be subjected to retirees' recruitment ban

the process to choose a new mayor would be short.

nian startup set out to provide a system based on Internet of Things (IoT) for its

cling in Iran.

bike sharing service in Tehran in coming months. Using an application very similar to that of ride-hailing apps citizens can find the nearest bikes to them and by paying a small fee they can cycle in different parts of the city and leave the bike wherever they wish for the next user.

In August, it was announced that an Ira-

But since other schemes designed to promote cycling in the city proved to be ineffective due to lack of necessary infrastructure, most importantly safe bike lanes, the new bike sharing scheme future seems to be uncertain for now. The project has not initiated yet and Tehraners are still waiting for a greener transport option to help curb messy air pollution.

A study by World Health Organization published in 2016 asserts that Tehran is one of the most air polluted cities in the world. Tehran is ranked 12th among 26 megacities in terms of ambient PM10 levels.

But while cars are the most abundant in the city, heavy-duty vehicles including buses and trucks the most polluting ones contributing to 85 percent of the air pollution in the city.

# Nature will need up to five million years to fill the gaps caused by man-made mass extinctions

Mankind has taken the world to the brink of a mass extinction that could wipe out vast swathes life on Earth for millions of years, scientists have warned in a new study.

Humans are killing off animal and plant species so rap idly that evolution is unable to keep up to fill the gaps left behind, the work suggests. Unless conservation efforts are stepped up, nature will extensive database that included living species as well as those which died out in the relatively recent past as humans spread across the globe.

Using advanced simulations, researchers estimated how long it would take for evolution to fill gaps in biodiversity following extinctions.Instead of simply counting lost or threatened species, the study considered the amount of time each had spent evolving to reflect. The extinction of sp with distinct lineages and few close relatives meant the loss of "unique ecological functions and the millions of years of evolutionary history they represented", researchers said. "Large mammals, or megafauna, such as giant sloths and sabre-toothed tigers, which became extinct about 10,000 years ago, were highly evolutionarily distinct," said Aarhus University palaeontologist Matt Davis, who led the study. 'Since they had few close relatives, their extinctions meant that entire branches of Earth's evolutionary tree were chopped off." Researchers suggested threatened mammals with long evolutionary histories should be prioritised for conversation.

They highlighted Asian elephants, one of only two existing species of a once mighty mammalian order that included mammoths and mastodon, and which are said to have just a 33-per-cent chance of surviving the century.

"There are hundreds of species of shrew, so they can weather a few extinctions," said Mr Davis. "There were only four species of sabre-toothed tiger; they all went extinct.' Professor Jens-Christian Svenning, also of Aarhus Un versity added: "Although we once lived in a world of giants - giant beavers, giant armadillos, giant deer, etc. - we now live in a world that is becoming increasingly impoverished of large wild mammalian species.

Urban managers, councilors and professional cyclist have joined the workshops, he

shops the budget allocated to promote cycling have tripled in some cities.

lead the way in encouraging cycling over the

highlighted, stating that owing to the work-

In the city of Tehran, for the first time, a comprehensive document is devised which

#### B: Yes, I'd like to deposit one billion dollars. Key vocabulary

feature: interesting or important quality **chequing account:** a regular account for daily transitions transaction: an occurrence in which money is transferred from one person, or one account, to another savings account: an account for people to keep their money, usually offers a higher interest rate

balance: the amount of money in a bank account **access:** a way to get to something

debit card: a card for you to take money out of your bank account overdraft: taking out more money than what is available in the account

I'll get you: a way to ask people to do things

**I'll need your:** a way to request people to provide something If you could just: a polite way of asking people to do things deposit: an amount of money that is put in a bank account

Supplementary vocabulary

**credit card:** a card to buy things and pay for them later online banking: a service that allows people to do transactions online

telephone banking: a service that allows people to do transactions by phone

cheque book: a book of cheques for use with a chequing account terms and conditions: an outline of the rules and company policies of a particular product or service

high interest account: savings account that offers higher than usual interest rate

teller: a person working in a bank, who helps customers with daily transactions

(Source: irlanguage.com)



# Be kind to me!

equire between three and five million years to recover the levels of biodiversity expected to be lost over the next 50 years, predicted researchers.

There have been five previous mass extinctions in the past 450 million years, and scientists have warned climate change, poaching, pollution and habitat destruction are bringing about a sixth.

More than 300 mammal species have been eradicated by human activity, according to researchers at Aarhus University in Denmark and the University of Gothenburg. More are likely to follow them into extinction in the next few decades. The team studied mankind's impact on nature using an

# **ENGLISH IN USE**



# Iran inaugurates school special for Afghan nationals

An elementary school opened in Varamin, southeastern Tehran, for Afghan nationals, Fars reported on Tuesday.

The school including 6 classes was opened during a ceremony with Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei in attendance.

The school was built in a collective attempt between Iranian philanthropists and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the report added.

مدرسه ويژه اتباع افغانستاني افتتاح شد

به گزارش خبر گزاری فارس مدرسه ابتدایی شهدای دانایی ویژه اتباع افغانستانی توسط وزیر آموزش و پرورش در روستای حصار قاضی ورامین افتتاح شد.

دبستان ۶ کلاسه واقع در شهرستان ورامین توسط سید محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و برورش افتتاح شد.

یـن مدرسـه بـا مشـارکت کمیسـاریای عالـی سـازمان ملـل متحـد در امـور پناهنـدگان و مشارکت خیرین ساخته شده است.

# PREFIX/SUFFIX

"-en"

Meaning: makes the word a verb **For example:** She was **awake***ned* by a noise at two in the morning.

# PHRASAL VERB

# **Pony up (something)**

**Meaning:** to find or produce a particular amount of money

**For example:** All investors had to pony up a minimum of \$5000

# IDIOM

# **Break the bank**

**Explanation:** to be very expensive For example: I don't have enough money to go on a vacation right now; I'm afraid it would break the bank

"The few remaining giants, such as rhinos and elephants, are in danger of being wiped out very rapidly.'

The world has lost 2.5 billion years' of unique evolutionary history in the past 130,000 years, according to the study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

(Source: The Independent)

# Trump spins cover-up for Saudi killing, signaling no 'turning-point' in U.S. relations

Senior congressional lawmakers are calling for a radical overhaul in U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia. But Trump's indulgence to let Saudi rulers off the hook shows the strategic alliance is too important for U.S.' power interests.

Some 22 U.S. senators have invoked the Global Magnitsky Act which could trigger economic sanctions against Saudi Arabia over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Current and former senators are saying the alleged murder in a Saudi consulate in Turkey on October 2 is a "turning point" for Washington's decades-old alliance with Riyadh.

Former Republican Senator Bob Graham told CNN's Christiane Amanpour the Saudi relationship is "perfidious" and harmful to America. He referred in particular to what he called was Saudi state complicity in the 9/11 terror incidents in 2001, when nearly 3,000 U.S. citizens were killed.

Graham said the U.S. must use Magnitsky laws to punish Saudi Arabia over the disappearance and murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and to not "capitulate to economic blackmail." The latter point was an implicit reference to President Trump saying earlier he was reluctant to cancel weapons sales to Saudi Arabia worth \$110 billion.

The original Magnitsky Act, signed into law in 2012, was designed to punish Russia with sanctions over alleged human rights abuses. In 2016, it was expanded to place the rest of the world under U.S. authority as well. Its targeting of Russia has been disputed as a controversial political weapon, not reflecting actual human rights abuses. Nevertheless, the law has international application against any foreign government or individual deemed by the U.S. congress as a violator of human rights.

In the case of Saudi Arabia and the missing journalist Jamal Khashoggi that would seem to be a clear incident meriting Magnitsky-type sanctions.

But whether U.S. legislators actually follow through with threats to punish Saudi Arabia and its rulers is a moot question. The pressure is certainly on Washington to do so. If Russia has been targeted with several rounds of sanctions under the Magnitsky Act, over questionable allegations of corruption, then surely the Saudis should be in the firing line for official U.S. censure.

The apparent murder of 59-year-old Khashoggi at a Saudi consulate is such a



shocking crime. All the more pressing is that he was a legal resident of the United States – having gone into self-imposed exile from his native Saudi Arabia last year – and he was a prominent columnist for the Washington Post.

Khashoggi was well-connected in Wash ington with various establishment thinktanks and other media circles. His critical writing on the Saudi rulers and in particular dubious reforms being carried out by heir to the throne Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had a receptive audience among lawmakers and policy makers who have been growing skeptical of Riyadh's value to the U.S.

Turkish criminal investigators gained access to the Saudi consulate this week -13 days after Khashoggi went missing. Media reports say the Turks have found forensic evidence to prove the journalist was killed in the building, consistent with what Turkish government sources had been leaking over the past two weeks.

The dramatic capitulation by the Saudi rulers is a sign that the game is up for their stonewalling tactics. Against all the evidence, the Saudis had been maintaining that Khashoggi left the consulate building unharmed the same day that he arrived on October 2. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman even stated this version in a high-profile interview with Bloomberg on October 5.

This week it was reported that the Saudis were preparing to admit that Khashoggi was murdered by an unauthorized team of Saudi interrogators who flew to Istanbul to intercept him. It is claimed that the interrogation "went wrong" and resulted in his death.

It's such a preposterous switch in the official narrative. After all the dissembling and lies up to now, Riyadh has no credibility. Also, why did the 15-man Saudi team reportedly arrive in Istanbul on two private jets connected to the Saudi monarchy, reportedly equipped with bone saws and forensic expertise, evidently for the purpose of disposing of Khashoggi's body?

Turkish investigators say they will release a full report at the end of this week. Already they are disclosing that evidence they gathered this week confirms audio and videotapes that Khashoggi was murdered.

The Washington Post has reported U.S. intelligence intercepts which show the Saudi leadership were involved in a plot to apprehend Khashoggi. In other words, the whole barbaric affair goes right to the top of the House of Saud.

Shamefully, however, what is emerging is a cover-up in spite of the graphic evidence. That cover-up began hours before the Turkish investigators arrived at the consulate on Monday evening, when Trump told U.S. media he had spoken with Saudi King Salman. Trump said he believed the king's denials of knowing anything about a premeditated crime. He also gave credence to the idea it could have been "rogue killers" who were responsible.

Saudi media are now reporting that the 15-man team that flew from Riyadh to Istanbul will be questioned over the death. What this means is the hit squad are being made scapegoats and the Saudi rulers will be whitewashed of culpability.

The cover-up may not be easy, however. There is a lot more evidence to come out from Turkish and American intelligence on communications leading up to the abduction and murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Because of his media and policy establishment connec-tions in the U.S., it can be expected that the whole affair will not be easily brushed aside. Also, U.S. political and media opponents of Trump will use the matter as another means of attacking his presidency - albeit in this case, arguably, rightly so.

Still, it is doubtful this is a "turning point" in the U.S.-Saudi alliance. Khashoggi has indeed strong advocates in Washington, and there is a growing movement among lawmakers disdainful of Saudi conduct with regard to the horrific war in Yemen.

But as the cover-up attempt by Trump shows there is a deep and inviolable strate-gic bond between the U.S. and the oil-rich kingdom, going all the way back to when former president Franklin D Roosevelt formed his historic pact with the Saudi state founder King Abdul Aziz Al Saud in 1945.

The alliance goes way beyond merely supplying oil to the U.S., which has in fact declined in importance. It involves vital interests of maintaining the dollar as the global exchange currency for oil trade, massive annual purchases of American weapons, the Saudis funding CIA clandestine operations around the world, and the projection of U.S. imperialist power across the geo-strategically critical Middle East.

Of course, the U.S. should move to sanction Saudi Arabia over the Khashoggi killing - and much else besides - if its rhetoric about human rights had any substance. But as Trump's unseemly spinning of Saudi cover-up indicates, the U.S.-Saudi relationship is unlikely to change. It is inviolable for American power interests, and Saudi despotism is too important to fail, no matter what crimes are committed. (Source: RT)

# 'UAE hired U.S. hit squad for assassinations in Yemen'

A report reveals the United Arab Emirates (UAE) hired a U.S. security contractor to start an Israeli-style targeted killing program in Yemen in 2015 against figures undesired by Abu Dhabi.

U.S. media outlet BuzzFeed carried the report on Tuesday, identifying the U.S. company as Delaware-headquartered Spear Operations Group.

"There was a targeted assassination program in Yem-en," said Abraham Golan, the Hungarian-Israeli founder of the group

"I was running it. We did it. It was sanctioned by the UAE within the coalition," he added, referring to a Saudi Arabian-led coalition, which has been attacking Yemen since March 2015.

The UAE named the group's first target as Anssaf Ali Mayo, a local leader of al-Islah, a political party branded by the emirates as a "terrorist group."

"It was the first attack," an al-Islah spokesperson told

It shows the mercenaries running into UAE military vehicles, which had been escorting them, to flee. The bomb

in the Yemeni port city of Aden.

goes off and then another one, "booby trapped" to their SUV "to disguise the source of the first explosion," is set off as the vehicles are seen speeding out of the area.

The attack, though, failed to kill the politician, who had left the building 10 minutes before, said a party official, who added that no one had died in the assault.

'The bombing was the first salvo in a string of unsolved assassinations that killed more than two dozen of the group's leaders," BuzzFeed said.

"As 2016 progressed, those watching the deteriorating situation in Yemen began to notice that members of al-Islah, and other clerics in Aden, were dropping dead at an alarming pace," the outlet reported.

"There have been 25 to 30 assassinations," said Gregory Johnsen, a former United Nations Yemen war investigator.



The UAE has been Saudi Arabia's main ally in the military campaign against Yemen



#### Israel rains down bombs on Gaza again

1→ The claim was, however, rejected in a joint statement by Gaza-based Palestinian resistance groups.

It further said that one of the Gaza rockets had hit the city of Beersheba in the Negev Desert and the second had landed in the sea

Meanwhile, a medical official told Israel Radio that three people had been taken to hospital with injuries after the alleged rocket attacks from Gaza.

The Israeli military ordered schools to remain closed in Beersheba on Wednesday. Studies were also delayed until 10 a.m. local time in areas near the Gaza Strip.

Resistance groups deny rocket fire claims

In a joint statement, however, Palestinian resistance groups denied any involvement in the alleged rocket fire from Gaza. The groups vowed to continue Gaza protests until the Israeli

siege on the Palestinian region would be terminated.

They also expressed their full preparedness to confront Israeli aggression against Palestinian s.

Palestinian Popular Resistance Committees Spokesman Abu Mujahid told al-Mayadeen TV channel that Israel is looking for pretexts to attack, and that resistance groups reserve the right to respond to the regime's assaults.

He also warned that there is a limit to the patience of Palestinian resistance groups.

The Tel Aviv regime carries out regular attacks on the blockaded coastal sliver under the pretext of hitting positions belonging to Hamas, the movement which runs the Palestinian territory.

The coastal strip has been under a crippling siege since 2007 and witnessed three wars since 2008. It has also witnessed a fresh wave of tensions since March 30, which marked the start of "The Great March of Return" protests.

More than 200 Palestinians have been killed and some 21,500 others wounded in renewed Gaza clashes, according to the latest figures released by the Gaza Health Ministry.

#### Israel threatens Hamas

On Tuesday, the Israeli minister of military affairs said that the regime must now decide if it is headed toward another war against Gaza

Speaking during a visit to the Israeli army's Gaza division headquarters, Avigdor Lieberman called on the so-called Israeli security cabinet to order a "strong blow" against Hamas "even at the price of moving to a wide-scale confrontation."

We have exhausted all other options in Gaza," he said. "Now is the time to make decisions."

"My opinion is very clear. We must land a strong blow against Hamas. That's the only way to lower the level of violence to zero or close to zero," he added.

Lieberman also claimed "persuasions and international cooperation" have failed to bring about a negotiated armistice in Gaza, leaving only the possibility of military action.

(Source: Press TV)

## **Putin discusses free-trade** zone with Sisi as Russia's trade with Egypt surges 62%

Economic ties between Russia and Egypt are developing successfully, according to President Vladimir Putin. He met with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fatah el-Sisi in Sochi on Wednesday.

The Russian president noted sharp 62-percent growth in trade turnover between the countries, adding that "in the first six months of this year the volume of trade increased 28 percent." Putin attributed this to diversification of bilateral ties,

which include "agriculture, industry, equipment and vehicles." The president also mentioned "a large contract worth €1 billion to supply passenger cars to Egypt together with Hungarian partners.

He said Moscow supports the idea of creating a freetrade zone between Egypt and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which would "open up additional opportunities for expanding economic cooperation and trade turnover.

Putin and Sisi discussed the construction of Russia's industrial zone in the Suez Canal area. According to Putin, around \$7 billion worth of investments will be attracted to the zone.

The decision to build a Russian industrial zone in Egypt was agreed in 2014. The industrial park will have a friendlier tax regime for resident Russian firms. It is expected to provide tens of thousands of jobs, and the companies expect revenues to reach more than \$11 billion. The tax rate for businesses in the project and personal income tax will be 10 percent. Sales tax will be abolished. Four years ago, Cairo announced the modernization of the Suez Canal, which is one of the world's major transportation routes. The new Suez Canal will include a vast range of services, as well as several industrial parks, including Russian, Chinese and Italian areas.

BuzzFeed, recalling the date it got underway as December 29, 2015.

Footage recorded by surveillance aircraft have shown the moment of the attack, which saw the squad attaching an explosive device to the door of the party's headquarters

Golan said he modeled his operations on Israel's targeted killing program, which has been underway since 1948.

"He argues there are some terrorist enemies so dangerous and implacable – and so difficult to arrest – that assassination is the best solution," the outlet cited him as saying.

More than 15,000 have died in the invasion, which seeks to restore Yemen's former Saudi-allied officials.

The Arab world's already most impoverished nation could become the scene of the world's worst famine in 100 years. (Source: Press TV)

# Afghan election candidate killed in Taliban attack

An Afghan election candidate is among four people killed by a bomb planted under his chair in the southern province of Helmand days before the parliamentary elections, officials said.

Abdul Jabar Qahraman, who was preparing to contest Saturday's elections, was killed in his office on Wednesday in the city of Lashkar Gah, a senior government official said.

Omar Zwak, a spokesman for the Helmand governor, said another seven people were wounded in the attack claimed by the Taliban armed group, which is boycotting the crucial elections.

"We are investigating the incident," Zwak said.

The Taliban, in a statement released earlier in the day, warned teachers and students not to participate in the parliamentary elections due on October 20, and not to allow schools to be used as polling centres.

"People who are trying to help in holding this process successfully by providing security should be targeted and no stone should be left unturned for the prevention and failure [of the election]," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in the statement.

Qahraman is the 10th candidate to be killed in the past two months. Another two have been abducted and four others were wounded in attacks.

More than 30 people have been killed in election-related violence over the past several weeks. The election for the 249-member parliament has been delayed by nearly three years.

Afghan has a presidential form of government but the parliament plays a crucial role in passing bills and ratifying international treaties.

Dozens of Afghan police were killed or wounded in heavy fighting in northern and central provinces overnight on Tuesday.

Helmand, bordering Pakistan, has long been one of the strongholds of the Taliban group, which has been waging an armed rebellion since they were removed from power in Afghanistan by US-led forces in 2001. (Source: Al Jazeera)

# Israeli, Saudi army chiefs meet in Washington

Israeli media reports suggest the regime's military chief Gadi Eizenkot has held talks with his Saudi counterpart, major General Fayyad bin Hamid Raqed al-Ruwaili, in Washington as Tel Aviv moves to make its secret ties with Persian Gulf Arab governments public.

Israel's Kan public broadcaster reported that the two sides had discussed several regional issues, including Iran, during their meeting that took place on the sidelines of the Counter-Violent Extremist Organizations conference for military commanders, in the U.S. on Tuesday. In addition to Ruwaili, Eizenkot also met with his counterparts from several Arab states on the sidelines of the same event without mentioning which countries they were, the report added.

The meeting between Eizenkot and Ruwaili was the first publicized talks between the two military chiefs.

After his first participation in the event, Eizenkot made a rare interview with the Saudi-owned Elaph online news-



paper last November, during which he expressed Tel Aviv's readiness to share intelligence with Riyadh to help boost their joint efforts to confront Tehran.

"We are ready to exchange experiences with Saudi Arabia and other moderate Arab countries and exchange intelligence to confront Iran," he said, adding, "There are many shared interests between us and Saudi Arabia.

Israel and Saudi Arabia have no diplomatic relations, but are widely believed to have secret liaisons. Based on latest reports, the two regimes are even working behind the scenes to establish formal contact. Critics say Saudi Arabia's flirtation with Israel would undermine global efforts to isolate Tel Aviv and harm the Palestinian cause.

They say Riyadh has gone too far in its cooperation with Tel Aviv as a way of deterring Tehran as a regional rival.

In April, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in an interview with the TIME magazine that the two regimes had "a common enemy" and that they could immediately normalize their relations once the Palestine issue was resolved. (Source: Press TV) (Source: RT)

#### **Berlin braced for all Brexit** scenarios, including no deal: Merkel

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said there was still a chance of concluding an agreement for an orderly exit for Britain from the European Union, but Berlin was preparing for all options, including the possibility of a no-deal departure.

Addressing the German parliament ahead of a Wednesday evening European summit on issues including Brexit, Merkel said agreement had yet to be reached on arrangements for the border between the north and south of Ireland.

Germany's preparations for the possibility of Britain leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement included looking at the status of the roughly 100,000 British citizens who lived in Germany and the status of those of them who were German state employees.

"I want Britain to be a close and trusting partner for Europe after leaving," she said. "Now, as before, there is a chance of reaching a good and solid withdrawal agreement.

"But it must be clear that in the end there will always be a difference between membership of the EU and being a partner," she added

(Source: Reuters)



# Barcelona set to distance themselves from Ronaldinho and Rivaldo

Barcelona will move to distance themselves from former legendary players Ronaldinho and Rivaldo after the duo's recent show of support for Brazil's controversial presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro. The pair have both backed Bolsonaro, whose wide array of offensive comments include misogynistic and racist language, to be the next president and he is likely to win the final round of voting which concludes on 28 October.

Barcelona have described Bolsonaro's views as "unacceptable" and will be moving to limit the ambassadorial roles which both Ronaldinho and Rivaldo play at the Camp Nou, after they backed his election campaign on social media. Tottenham's Lucas Moura has also defended the 63-year-old.

Bolsonaro has made a series of controversial remarks during his political career, including vowing to kill his own son if he was homosexual, and telling a female politician during a debate that he wouldn't rape her because she "didn't deserve it".

Ronaldinho and Rivaldo, who both won two Liga titles and the Ballon d'Or while at the Camp Nou, receive some financial rewards for their work with the club but will now see that work limited. (Source: Sport)

# **In-form Dutch target seeding** for Euro 2020 qualifiers

The Netherlands will aim to pick up more points from Nations League matches against France and Germany next month to secure one of the 10 seeds for the European Championship qualifying draw in December, coach Ronald Koeman has said. "The most important thing is to get a seeding for the draw and

"The most important thing is to get a seeding for the draw and that is possible if we get a few more points," Koeman said after his side battled to a 1-1 draw with FIFA world number one Belgium in a friendly international in Brussels on Tuesday.

It was another positive result for the Dutch, who beat Germany 3-0 in the Nations League in Amsterdam on Saturday after opening their campaign in that tournament with a 2-1 loss to France. The Netherlands will next host world champions France in

The Netherlands will next host world champions France in Rotterdam on Nov. 16 and complete Nations League A Group 1 play against the Germans in Gelsenkirchen three days later.

"I think we have laid a foundation," said Koeman, who took over as national team coach in February.

"A lot of people before we started the Nations League didn't give us much chance of getting any points off these two teams. But now we have three already and we want to get some more."

The leading 10 of 12 countries competing in the top tier of the Nations League will be seeded for the Euro 2020 qualifying draw in Dublin on Dec. 2.

There will be 10 groups of either five or six teams with the top two qualifying for the finals, which are being played across 12 countries.

(Source: Reuters)

# FA say Wembley sale off after Khan withdraws offer

England's Football Association says their plan to sell Wembley Stadium will not go ahead after potential purchaser, American Shahid Khan, withdrew his offer.

"At a recent meeting with Mr Khan he expressed to us that, without stronger support from within the game, his offer is being seen as more divisive than it was anticipated to be and has decided to withdraw his proposal," FA chief executive Martin Glenn said in a statement. The billionaire made his offer public in April and the FA had planned to invest £600 million from the sale into grassroots football projects and facilities.

The potential sale had been discussed by the FA's Board and the full FA Council was due to vote on the matter on Oct. 24.

Khan, who owns American football team the Jacksonville Jaguars of the NFL (National Football League) and English Premier League club Fulham, said his offer had not received the full

# WORLD SPORTS

# 'Just being able to play football is not enough,' says Chiellini

While strikers celebrate scoring goals, nobody celebrates a defensive challenge or block quite like Giorgio Chiellini.

That devotion to the art of defending has proved key to Italian club Juventus winning seven successive Serie A titles between 2012 and 2018.

But he's not only a student of defensive disciplines -- the 34-yearold recently graduated from the University of Turin with a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

"We have to encourage more football players to study and increase the number with university degrees. Because life is long," Chiellini told world players' union FIFPro, to help promote their"-Mind the Gap" campaign. "Life will be beautiful after the end of a player's career. But you

"Life will be beautiful after the end of a player's career. But you have to prepare first or there is a risk you will get to 35-years-old and not know what to do with your life. Only a few players manage to find a job in football."

**Risk of depression** 

Only 13% of current professional male football players in Europe have post-school vocational education -- that's compared to about 53% of the male population in the EU.

In addition, 45% of players earn less than \$1,000 a month during their careers, according to a FIFPro report in 2016.

That combination means many former players are left struggling to pay the bills with no education or relevant work experience to fall back on.

"There's also the risk of depression, and there are many former players with financial problems because they have not thought about what they are going to do, they have not opened their minds by studying," warned Chiellini.

"You then have the rest of your life in front of you and just being able to play football is not enough.

'I missed out'

Former Paris Saint-Germain, Liverpool and now Crystal Palace defender Mamadou Sakho is a footballer eager to get back to school once he hangs up his boots.

"I would love to start to study again," Sakho told CNN Sport. "I started professional football at 16. I think I missed out on something because I am really open-minded and I would love to see how the world is working, how business works, and how politicians are think-

# Real outlines opposition to La Liga's Miami game in letter to Fed



Real Madrid has written to Spain's football federation outlining its opposition to La Liga's plans to stage a match between Girona and Barcelona in Miami, delivering another blow to league hopes of playing one game a season in the United States.

A spokeswoman for the federation confirmed to Reuters that it had received the letter, which was widely quoted by local media on Wednesday. The Miami match, pencilled in for Jan. 26, would be the first game to take place as part of a 15-year deal struck between La Liga and entertainment company Relevent. "First of all we would like to declare that Real Madrid were never informed that La Liga had requested to play the game nor of the intention to make the request, and we were never asked our opinion on it," Real said in the letter, signed by the club's Director General Jose Angel Sanchez. "Nor, obviously, did La Liga obtain Real Madrid's agreement, despite the fact that this game affects a competition in which we participate." A spokesman for La Liga reiterated on Wednesday that no club would be forced to play in the United States and that it was entirely voluntary.

The Federation has told La Liga it cannot approve the proposal, which also requires the green light from UEFA, CONCACAF and the United States soccer federation, until it receives more information.

Federation President Luis Rubiales has expressed his opposition to the move while the Spanish footballers' union has also protested the plans.

Real Madrid President Florentino Perez has spoken out against it while the club's

ing. "I know with football, we are an example in sports. But I think we are in a closed world and I would like to open my mind with different work."

Manchester City and Belgium captain Vincent Kompany has also studied for a Master's in Business Administration, graduating after four years of part-time study at the Alliance Manchester Business School. "I've always felt education is very important and this was instilled into me by my late mother from an early age. It felt like a fitting tribute to my mother to pursue my academic career," he said.

Responsibility on families

Chiellini, who has 99 caps for Italy, believes a player's support network can help in preparing a youngster for a life away from football. "The family has the responsibility more than anyone to encourage and educate children to get on with their studies," he said.

"I remember when I was in primary school, between six and 10 years old, sometimes I would say 'Mum, I am not well, I don't want to go to school.'

"She always said: 'If you don't go to school, you don't go to football.' I always got better straight away. I managed to get up and go to school."

(Source: CNN)

# Usain Bolt turns down two-year contract with Valletta FC



Usain Bolt has turned down Valletta FC's two-year offer after deciding against a move to Malta. Bolt remains in Australia, still on trial for the Central Coast Mariners in the A-League but received an offer earlier in the week to play for Valletta FC and spearhead their Champions League aspirations. But Bolt's agent has confirmed he opted

against taking up their offer.

it would not raid a special fund set up to lure marquee players to the league if the Mariners decide Bolt, 32, is worth the risk, but it would likely be thrilled to have him in the league if only for his marketing value.

Football Federation Australia has said

The league's next registration period does not open until Jan. 3, which could leave Bolt on the sidelines for the first half of a season tipped to be one of the most open in years.



adida

99

backing he had hoped for. "At this moment, following last week's FA Council hearing, it appears there is no definitive mandate to sell Wembley and my current proposal, subsequently, would earn the backing of only a slim majority of the FA Council. (Source: Eurosport)

# Neymar 'plots stunning return to Barcelona' as he's unhappy at PSG

According to Mundo Deportivo, Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar is keen to make a return to Barcelona just over one year after leaving the Catalan giants and is regretting his decision to join PSG.

If the aforementioned report is to be believed, the Brazil international has already offered to rejoin La Blaugrana 'several times' and that a mega-deal is 'not impossible'.

Neymar departed from Barcelona in the summer of 2017 for a controversial £198 million move that saw him become the world's most expensive player of all-time.

However, the transfer was not very well taken by the club's hierarchy and fans as President Josep Maria Bartomeu stated that he was unhappy with the way Neymar handled his exit from the Camp Nou. Mundo Deportivo claims that Neymar has grown frustrated with the lack of competitiveness in Ligue 1. Besides, his plan to escape Lionel Messi's shadow has also backfired in the wake of the emergence of Kylian Mbappe.

It is also reported that the 26-year-old misses the Barcelona lifestyle and his former teammates, particularly Lionel Messi. Consequently, the former Santos ace is eyeing a return to La Liga.

Even though Neymar burned his bridges behind him in 2017 with the way he managed his departure from the club, Barcelona might be willing to pull off a reunion with him if Ernesto Valverde wishes to see him back. Nevertheless, the LaLiga champions will obviously have reservations with regard to this high-priority move.

Neymar's reunion with his former Spanish club largely depends on Barca's wherewithal to accomplish this deal and their need to secure a big-name signing having already spent big in the past few transfer windows.

(Source: Mirror)

coach Julen Lopetegui has said: "every team (in the league) should play at every ground". Real's letter addressed the same con-

Real s letter addressed the same concerns. "We cannot forget that the national league is a competition in which 20 teams participate, not two, and that it is fundamental that every team plays each other twice, home and away and at each stadium, as that guarantees the integrity and the availity of the competition " it said

equality of the competition," it said. "As a consequence, Real Madrid manifests its opposition to the request made to play the game at the Hard Rock stadium in Miami as it affects the integrity and equality of the competition."

(Source: Reuters)

football," Ricky Simms told ESPN. "We regularly receive similar approaches. I can confirm Usain does not wish to pursue this opportunity in Malta."

"There is a lot of interest in Usain playing

Valletta FC CEO and managing director Ghasston Slimen told ESPN: "We wish Usain Bolt all the best with his football career. The Valletta FC offer is always on the table."

Bolt's mission to win a professional football contract in Australia has dominated the A-League's preseasonand continues ahead of the season's start on Friday.

Bolt will not be able to turn out for the Mariners when they open their season at Brisbane Roar on Sunday -- and most probably not until January at the earliest. Central Coast CEO Shaun Mielekamp told ESPN that "it's too early to tell" whether Bolt, who is on a long-term trial, would earn a contract from the club.

Bolt scored twice in a trial match for Central Coast on Saturday, generating headlines around the world but failing to remove doubts about the eight-time Olympic gold medallist's chances of making the transition.

However, Bolt's presence has given the region north of Sydney its time in the limelight, drawing thousands to warm-up games that would normally struggle to lure a few hundred spectators.

(Source:ESPN)

# **Ex-Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger eyes January return to management**

Arsene Wenger wants to return to management in January, saying he has received "enquiries from all over the world" and does not know whether it will be with a club or a national side.

The former Arsenal manager said he could even be tempted to return to Japan, where he managed before moving to the Premier League in 1996.

However, Wenger dismissed the idea he would join Bayern Munich and said the club should stick with under-fire coach Niko Kovac.

"Yes, it looks like it," Wenger told Sport Bild when asked whether he is still planning to return to management. "I believe that [I'll] start again on Jan. 1. I don't know yet [where I'm headed]. I am rested, and I am ready to work again."

But Wenger said it's "not 100 percent" that he will return to club management.

"There are associations, national teams; it could be also [in] Japan," Wenger said. "Thanks to my 22 years at Arsenal, I have big experience on different levels. There are enquiries from all over the world."

Wenger also said Mesut Ozil's withdrawal from international football could be bad for his future.

Ozil decided to quit playing for Germany after the World



Cup, saying he was subjected to racism following the team's group-stage exit, and was widely criticised at home before the tournament over his decision to pose for a photo with Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"I did not love it that he withdrew from the Germany team [because] the Germans respect what he achieved," Wenger said. "A small bit of motivation disappears when you know that you don't have to be ready for a World Cup, a European Championship. I love it when the players are as good as possible. He loses a bit if he does not play at an international level."

Wenger, 68, also lamented the changing culture in football, saying individual players are gradually gaining more followers than the clubs.

"Footballers played for their club 20 years ago," Wenger said. "These days, clubs do everything for the players. In the past, [a player] felt guilty when he played bad. These days, clubs feel guilty towards their players and ask themselves what more can be done.

"The fans have become more international. Local fans might stay local fans, and those living in, say, Dortmund and the surroundings will always go to see BVB. But if Ronaldo leaves Real [Madrid] for Juve, the fans follow him to Juve. The international basis is more interested in players than in clubs. This hands a lot of power to the players. Neymar has some 170 million followers. He alone is stronger than the league."

He also predicted that fans will soon be allowed to determine which players should be substituted during games via social media.

# Gelareh Nazemi, Iran's refereeing pioneer

Sitting in a lounge on the 24th floor of a ho-tel in central Buenos Aires, Gelareh Nazemi conveys a certain shyness, which stands in contrast to the confidence she demonstrates when dealing with matters on a futsal court.

But, contrary to being interviewed, refereeing is a passion for Nazemi, who is the first Iranian to officiate at a FIFA-run futsal tournament

A veritable trailblazer in her homeland, the 34-year-old has exhibited proficiency on the court and officiated the final of the Youth Olympics Women's Futsal Tournament Buenos Aires 2018 between Portugal and Japan, which took place on Wednesday in the Main Futsal Hall.

At these Youth Olympic Games in Argentina, she, as well as her five female colleagues - six of the 24 referees appointed were women - have overseen women's and men's matches. In fact, Nazemi was the woman in the middle during the crucial men's Egypt-Slovakia group match which sealed the Africans' passage to the semi-finals.

FIFA.com chatted with the Iranian official to find out a little more about her career path, covering topics such as choosing futsal over football and her situation today, where she is one of many female referees working under the auspices of the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran.

FIFA.com: How are you enjoying your experience in Buenos Aires?

Gelareh Nazemi: It's a very important assignment: the best referees from each country are here and the level of competition is very high. I'm happy.

Why did you want to become a referee? About 15 years back, I was playing football in Iran when my brother, who was a referee in the SuperLiga, urged me to give it a try. He said, "You can do it, you can be one of the first". In Iran, the first group of female referees only got started 15 years ago.



Why did you choose futsal over football? Because futsal in Iran is played to a really high standard, higher than football. To start off with, I refereed football matches, but it wasn't enough for me. In futsal, we're the number one team in the AFC; it's a very good level. It was a way of improving – futsal enabled me to develop my refereeing.

How difficult was it to break through? At the beginning it was hard, but just like in any other country, if you want something enough, you can do it. People, especially men, have often said that women aren't good referees. But in order to stick with my decision, it was important to me to tell them and show them that I could do it. I used it as a motivating tool. And my brother and family were

very supportive. That was very important. Did you ever think about giving up?

Yes, it crossed my mind because I was worn out. I didn't have any support in my country, but it made me stronger. You can and should do what you want to do. And I wanted to demonstrate, particularly to men, that I was able to do it. I did it alone, but I tried and succeeded.

How did the careers of the women who started at the same time turn out?

There were seven or eight other female referees, but they all gave up because of how difficult it was. Their families or husbands didn't accept it, they didn't understand why they wanted to travel around just to referee. In Iran, if you want to referee as a woman,

you need your spouse's permission and so many of them got left behind. Today, things have changed, and there are three different futsal divisions just for women. There are 50 referees in the top division and about 100 across the whole country.

Do you feel like you're a pioneer?

I do see myself - and the other female referees back home - in that way, yes. There are a lot of them who are keen to develop. When I was called up to this tournament, perhaps at the beginning it wasn't looked upon as a positive thing, especially by men. But after this appointment, and others within the AFC, my countrymen saw the progress I was making and accepted it. Now they believe in me and trust me.

(Source: FIFA)

# Mahdavikia voted the best ever AFC Asian Cup defender

INTERNATIONAL DAILY **TEHRANTIMES** 

Iran football legend Mehdi Mahdavikia has been voted as the all-time best AFC Asian Cup defender.

Capable of playing at the right side of defense or midfield, Mahdavikia was one of the finest talents to come out the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He was vital for Iran in the last two times they reached the semi-finals of the AFC Asian Cup in 1996 and in 2004, earning a place in the 2004 Team of the Tournament.

The 2003 AFC Player of the Year spent the majority of his career playing in the German Bundesliga, and is Team Melli's fourth most capped player with 110 appearances, including two involvements in the FIFA World Cup.



He was chosen as the best defender by the fans, coming first with 79 percent.

Saleh Al Nuaimah from Saudi Arabia, Japan's Yuji Nakazawa, South Korean Hong Myung-bo, Zheng Zhi from China, Australia's Lucas Neill, Kuwaiti Jamal Mubarak and Malaysian Soh Chin Aun were the other candidates for the all-time best AFC Asian Cup defender.

(Source: the-afc)

#### Iran to host CISM archery games

**TASNIM** — Iran's Army is going to host the first edition of the International Military Sports Council (CISM) archery competitions in November, a top commander said.

In comments on Wednesday, Deputy Chief of Iran's Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said the CISM archery games will be held at Tehran's Azadi sports complex on November 11-16.

The competitions will be attended by 10 foreign teams, he noted. The International Military Sports Council is one of the largest multidisciplinary organizations in the world that organizes various sports events for the armed forces of its 138 member countries.

Each year, CISM organizes over 20 international events in around 30 different sports fields, according to its website.

## FIFA technical report on the World Cup

FIFA released its technical report on the World Cup Tuesday. Following are some of the key points:

Quarterfinalists Russia scored once for every 4.5 shots on goal, making them the tournament's most efficient team in this respect. They were followed by France (6), Colombia (6.5), Japan (6.7) and Belgium (6.7).

Germany were by far the most inefficient in this category, needing 36 shots to score a goal, well behind Mexico, the next lowest-ranked with 20 shots per goal.

Spain had the highest level of possession at an average 69 percent, even though they only reached the second round.

They were followed by Germany (67 percent), Argentina (64), Saudi Årabia and Switzerland (58). None of those teams went beyond the second round. France, the champions, were 19th in the possession ranking with 49 percent. Runners-up Croatia had 56 percent, while beaten semifinalists England and Belgium both had 53 percent.

Iran saw the least of the ball, controlling it just 33 percent of the time in their matches

One in every 29 corners led to a goal, a significant increase from previous tournaments the figure was one in 61 in 2010 and one in 36 in 2014.

Teams at the 2018 World Cup were more compact in defense. There was a tournament average of 26 meters between a side's deepest defender and highest attacker when out of possession. There was a 32 percent drop in shots from outside the penalty area compared with the 2010 World Cup, the report said, attributing the figure to "tight, compact defending." However, efficiency improved one out of 29 long-range shots produced a goal compared with one out of 42 in Brazil in 2014. Serbia ran the most, with their team covering an average of 113 kilometers per game, followed by Germany (111.9 km) and Russia (110.7km). France were 28th, averaging 101 kilometers per match. Argentina, Nigeria, Mexico and Panama were the only teams to complete less than 100 kilometers per match.

**Ex-Iran striker Hashemian lauds** performance against Bolivia



SPORTS TEHRAN — Former Iran national football team striker Vahid Hashemian has applauded the performance of Team Melli . against Bolivia

On Tuesday, Iran defeated Bolivia 2-1 in a friendly match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

"It was the first time I attended a football match at the Azadi Stadium after I quit international football. It was very joyful. Iran played better in the first half and showed an attacking football. The strikers made many chances in the first half and could have scored more goals," Hashemian said in an interview with Iran Students News Agency (ISNA).

"Carlos Queiroz is an experienced coach and I believe that he made the best decision in the 2018 World Cup to defend against Spain and Portugal. But in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup Team Melli have to play attacking football.

Ex-Bayern Munich striker said Iran and Japan are favorites to win the AFC Asian Cup.

"Iran have a chance to win the title but Japan also are capable of winning the title after their shining performance in Russia," Hashemian stated.

Iran football team edge Bolivia in friendly



TEHRAN - Iran national football team edged past Bolivia 2-1 in a friendly match in front of male and female fans on Tuesday

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, about 100 female fans - most of them family of players, federation employees and relatives - were allowed to attend the match.

Albion's record signing Alireza Jahanbakhsh was on target in the 17th minute after his header was initially blocked by Iraq and Vietnam. Bolivia goalkeeper. Rudy Cardozo levelled the match in Team Melli will meet Venezuela and the 51th minute with a long-range shot. Trinidad and Tobago.

Mehdi Torabi gave the lead Team Melli in the 63rd minute.

"I am satisfied with our performance but we could have won the match with four or five goal. Our strikers missed their scoring chances," Iran coach Carlos Queiroz said after the final whistle.

"We played well in both halves and took control of the match but lacked a cutting edge," he added.

Iran prepare for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup in the UAE, where they have been drawn In Group D along with Yemen,

Hashemian has made 50 appearances for Iran national football team from 1998 to 2009 and scored 15 goals.

# Martino, Queiroz remain favorites to take charge of Mexico

Mexico's comeback victory over Costa Rica last Thursday was highly entertaining and Tuesday's friendly in Queretaro against Chile promises to be equally enthralling.

The games give a glimpse into what Mexico's future could look like, but the issue overshadowing El Tri at present isn't the results or even the performances in these October games -- it is which head coach will be in charge of setting the direction of the Mexico national team heading towards Qatar 2022.

It's been almost three months since Juan Carlos Osorio confirmed he wouldn't be continuing in the job -- although it was an open secret even before the World Cup that the Colombian wasn't comfortable in the position -- and there's no sign of an imminent appointment.

Ricardo "Tuca" Ferretti's interim period in charge started in September with fervent speculation about whether the Tigres manager could be persuaded to take the job on a full-time basis.

Ferretti certainly kept the door open to the possibility, but Tigres eventually closed it on Sept. 25, when the Mexican Football Federation (FMF) confirmed in a statement that the Liga MX club hadn't given permission for Ferretti -- who made it clear he wouldn't force the issue -- to break his contractual obligations.

Another potential candidate, Matias Almeyda, was ruled out when he took over at San Jose Earthquakes, although he said the FMF never got in contact.

So where is the process at?

It's difficult to filter through the sometimes contradictory statements from the hermetic FMF, as well as the often varied reports in the media.

With Ferretti set to be in charge for the double header of friendlies against Argentina in November, the message is that there is no rush.

The net has been cast wide, with 24 potential coaches having been interviewed, according to FMF president Yon de Luisa. Reports have suggested the Mexican federation enquired about the likes of Andre Villas-Boas, Marcelo Bielsa and even Mauricio Pochettino with no success.

Cantu is leading the search for the new manager and, although the FMF has been mainly quiet since the World Cup, he has outlined what he is looking for.

A mature man with experience in clubs or national teams, I think both are valid," Cantu told reporters in September. "Knowing [World Cup] qualification helps, [and] he should like to attack and also show balance [in his teams.]"

Some of the old guard still believe that a Mexican should be chosen. That idea is being championed by former El Tri coach and Mexico legend Hugo Sanchez, who is adamant he should be the No. 1 candidate.

"Here in Mexico it is a shame that there isn't a coach as yet," Sanchez told ESPN last week. "The ideal [person] who should, logically, be the head coach of the Mexican national team is Mr. Hugo Sanchez, but malinchismo [preference for foreign over Mexican] is very strong in this country."

Sanchez hasn't coached since 2012, when he left Pachuca, and the argument that a domestic coach is best has been losing ground, with even Ferretti hinting that the pool of potential Mexican coaches isn't as deep as it once was.

Miguel Herrera would be the top Mexican contender -- and according to ESPN's Rene Tovar hasn't been totally discounted -- but it appears that a foreign coach will be hired.

"If they've interviewed 24 coaches, it says that they don't have an adequate profile," Vucetich complained to FOX last week. "It speaks to an uncertainty within the federation. That's a serious problem."

But there's surely a reason for the wait and that is likely Gerardo "Tata" Martino. The Atlanta coach's name has sounded most loudly in relation to a position Cantu described as the "electric chair." According to ESPN's Leon Lecanda and Tovar, Martino is the FMF's top target, although there has been no official statement.

The issue is that Martino -- who recently said he doesn't have an agent -- still has to decide his future with Atlanta United, while negotiating the upcoming MLS playoffs.

It's easy to see what attraction of Martino to the FMF. Tata did a superb job with Paraguay; his time with Argentina has gained value off the back of that national team's recent failures; he's been involved in pressure jobs such as Barcelona; his teams play a balanced brand of attacking football and has shown in Atlanta his ability to achieve in a different scenario in the CONCACAF region.

But for all those above reasons it's also likely that should Martino leave Atlanta there would be other interested parties, including Colombia, Argentina -- two teams more likely to win a World Cup in 2022 than Mexico -- and the United States. And then there is Europe, where Martino surely has some desire to make his mark after his one season with Barcelona.

Yet with ESPN's Hernan Pereyra reporting last month that Martino would be the next Mexico coach and TV Azteca's David Medrano hinting at the same on a TV program on Monday, there are signs that Mexico has a chance of achieving a major coup and capturing the Argentine.

Next in line appears to be Carlos Queiroz, who has regularly been linked with the position.

Queiroz doesn't have a history of consistently fielding attacking teams, but does have a wealth of experience around the world. The fact the Portuguese manager has only extended his contract with Iran until after January's AFC Asian Cup hints that the 65-year-old would be open to a new challenge. His situation buys the FMF time.

Jorge Sampaoli, Jose Pekerman and Quique Sanchez Flores -- out of work and in some ways natural candidates - don't appear to be prominently on the radar, according to one source close to the federation with knowledge of the situation.

(Source: Reuters)

## **Barcelona announce 2019** summer tour to Asia

Spanish Liga Santander Champions FC Barcelona confirmed on Tuesday that the club will tour China and Japan in the summer of 2019.

The club confirmed the news of its first Asian tour since playing a friendly in Qatar in December 2016 and visits to Thailand and Malaysia in the summer of 2013, on its official website.

Although there is still no news of the cities where they will play, the club highlights that it opened a permanent office in Hong Kong in September 2013 and that "China and Japan are two of the world's ten most strategically important countries and Barca is the most followed and beloved club among football fans in the region."

Barca says the tour "reaffirms the club's commitment to the Asian market, where it has 11 regional partners, three global partners (Konami, Oppo and Milo) and its main partner, Rakuten, the Japanese e-commerce company presided by Hiroshi Mikitani.'

However, they insist they are "not only looking to do business. but also to seek new fans and build their loyalty," and highlight that the club is "currently engaged in such projects as Mission Hills, in the Chinese city of Haikou on the island of Hainan, which includes a Barca Experience featuring an interactive museum, store and sports bar, as well as a Barca Academy Pro," while the club now has "fifteen schools around the Asia-Pacific region."

(Source: China Daily)



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# Iranian films scoop awards at Slemani festival

**TEHRAN** – Iranian films won awards in d e s k several categories at the 3rd edition of the Slemani International Film Festival in the Iraqi city of Sulaymaniyah, the organizers announced on Tuesday.



Navid Mohammadzadeh accepts the award for best actor for his role in Vahid Jalilvand's film "No Date, No Signature" at the Slemani International Film Festival in Sulaymaniyah, Iraqi on October 16, 2018.

"3 Faces" by Jafar Panahi won the award for best feature film and Navid Mohammadzadeh won the award for best actor feature film for his role in Vahid Jalilvand's acclaimed drama "No Date, No Signature".

"3 Faces" is about a relationship between popular Iranian actress Behnaz Jafari and a provincial girl who lives with a

dream of becoming an actress. "No Date, No Signature" is about Dr. Nariman, a forensic pathologist who has a car accident with a motorcyclist and injures his 8-year-old son.

In addition, "Blister" by Morteza Shams won the award for best short film. In "Blister" a man hides his job from his wife but she wants to find out the truth, and it creates bigger problem.

In addition, Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi was named best director for his latest movie "Beyond the Clouds", which was produced in India.

Several Iranian cineastes, including Hassan Naqqashi and Reza Dormishian, were on the jury panels of the various sections of the festival.

### **TISFF announces** international lineup

**TEHRAN** – The 35th edition of the Tehran e s k International Short Film Festival (TISFF) has announced its official international lineup.

Over 70 films from different countries will be competing the event, which will take place in the Iranian capital from

# Iranian cinema receives more nominations at APSA

TEHRAN – Iranian e s k films have received three more nominations at the 12th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), the organizers

announced on Wednesday. Director/writer Peyman Maadi's "Bomb, a Love Story" is competing for the award for best screenplay. The film previously received a nomination for the award for Best Original Score composed by the celebrated Greek musician Eléni Karaïndrou.

"Ava", a co-production from Iran, Qatar and Canada, was nominated in the Best Youth Feature Film category. Sadaf Forughi is the director of the film co-produced by Forughi and Kiarash Anvari.

Bahman Farmanara is contending for the best actor award for his role in "Tale of the Sea", which was also directed by Farmanara himself.

The nominees in the best feature film category are "Balangiga: Howling Wilderness" directed by Khavn De La Cruz from the Philippines, "Burning" directed by Lee Chang-dong from South Korea and "The Gentle Indifference of the World", co-production between Kazakhstan and France directed by Adilkhan Yerzhanov.

"Manta Ray", a co-production from Thailand, China and France directed by Phuttiphong Aroonpheng and "Shoplifters"



Bahman Farmanara acts in a scene from "Tale of the Sea".

by Japanese director Kore-eda Hirokazu are also competing in this section.

Winners are scheduled to be announced during the APSA ceremony, which will

take place in Brisbane, Australia on November 29.

## Docs from Iranian filmmakers to compete in IDFA



"Aleppo: The Silence of the War" by Iranian director Amir Osanlu will be screened the International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam in November.

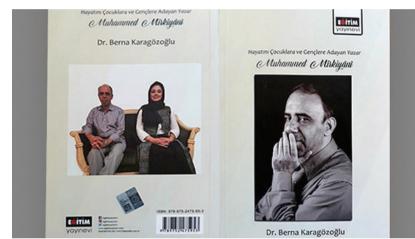
**A R T** d e s k The Silence of the War" and "Beloved" from Iranian filmmakers will be screened in various categories of the International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam (IDFA).

"Aleppo: The Silence of the War" directed by Amir Osanlu will go on screen in the IDFA Competition for Short Documentary.

The film is a powerful image of the devastation that occurred in the Syrian city of Aleppo in the war against the Daesh terrorists. 'Beloved" by Yaser Talebi is about Firuzeh,

an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder's existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people. The IDFA will be held in the Dutch capital from November 14 to 25.

# **Biography of Iranian author Mohammad** Mirkiani published in Turkish



Front cover of "Muhammed Mirkiyani" by Berna Karagozoglu.

**CULTURE** d e s k biography ( d e s k biography of Iranian children's book writer Mohammad Mirkiani has recently been published in Turkish.

Turkish scholar Berna Karagozoglu is the author of the book "Muhammed Mirkiyani", which was published by Egitim Yayinevi in the Turkish town of Konya. Karagozoglu calls Mirkiani a writer

who dedicated his life to children. He is the writer of "Uncle Rustam", "Tintin and Sinbad", "Uncle Sohrab", "Day of My Loneliness" and dozens of other books.

Karagozoglu teaches at the Persian Language and Literature Department of Agri Ibrahim Cecen University in Eastern Anatolia in Turkey.

"Iran Children and Youth Literature Writers" is among her other credits.

# Ask WW1 questions before it's too late, director Peter Jackson says

LONDON (Reuters) – Director Peter Jackson premiered his World War One documentary "They Shall Not Grow Old" on Tuesday, urging those whose family fought in the conflict to talk to their elderly relatives with knowledge of it before it is too late.

vinner, known for "The Lord of the Rings

which were deciphered by forensic lip-readers. "There's nobody alive that fought in the First World War

but some people have probably got grandparents that their parents were in the First World War so now is the last time that people can ask questions in their family," Jackson told Belgium. Around 1 million of those who died were from Britain and its then-empire.

Voiced by former soldiers, "They Shall Not Grow Old" shows how the men, some of them young teenagers, trained for fighting and survived or perished in the fighting.

What stood out for me once we

– A

November 9 to 14, the organizers announced on Wednesday.



The films will be screened in the four categories of animated, fiction, experimental and documentary movies.

"Late Afternoon" by Louise Bagnall from Ireland, "5 Euros" by Serge Élissalde from France, "Confino" by Nico Bonomolo from Italy, "Railment" by Shunsaku Hayashi from Japan, "Circuit" by Delia Hess from Switzerland and "Black Dog" by Joshua Tuthill from the U.S. are among the animated films competing.

About 30 movies, including "Fifteen" by Sameh Alaa from Egypt, "Counterfeit Kunkoo" by Reema Sengupta from India, "Ă Ĝentle Night" by Qiu Yang from China, "Harbor" by Stefanie Kolk from the Netherlands, "Aria" by Myrsini Aristidou from Cyprus, "Fauve" by Jérémy Comte from Canada and "Time Traveler" by Steve Kenny from Ireland, will be screened in the fiction competition.

Nine films, including "For Rest" by Shinys Isobe from Japan, "Interceptor" by Risto-Pekka Blom from Finland, "Erinnerungen aus Deutsch" by Christian Zipfel from Germany, "Edge of Alchemy" by Stacey Steers from the U.S. and "The Divine Way" by Ilaria Di Carlo from Germany, have been selected to be screened in the experimental section.

The documentary competition features 13 films, including "Return" by Pang-Chuan Huang and "Mon Amour Mon Ami by Adriano Valerio, both from France, "Mother and Baby" by Mia Mullarkey from Ireland, "Sub Terrae" by Nayra Sanz Fuentes from Spain and "Reminiscences" by Maki Satake from Japan.

A jury composed of Virgil Widrich from Austria, Per Fikse from Norway, Mick Hannigan from Ireland, Sari Volanen from Finland, Thom Palmen from Sweden, and Krzysztof Gierat from Poland will judge the films.

and "The Hobbit" movies, presented his edit of footage from the "Great War" at the BFI London Film Festival, where he was joined by Britain's Prince William on the red carpet.

The film takes the viewer to the frontlines, with archive video footage from the trenches brought to 3D life by colorists and actors voicing conversations between soldiers there, "If you have any grandparents that their parents were

in the First World War start to ask them questions because at some point in the future that opportunity won't be there. It'll be very hard to find out anything.'

An estimated 17 million people were killed in the war, many of them on the battlegrounds in northern France and that the men in the pictures were exactly like us," Jackson, whose grandfather fought in the conflict, said.

Supporting the director at the film's world premiere was actor Dominic Monaghan, who starred in "The Lord of the Rings" and visited Jackson in his native New Zealand when he was working on "They Shall Not Grow Old".

#### **Building a lifelong love of opera** in toddlers, one hop at a time

LONDON (Reuters) — Two-year-old Emily is already on her way to a lifetime love of Opera. She particularly likes the hopping.

Welcome to London's Royal Opera House, where Opera Dots, a workshop for toddlers, aims to build a future fan base, one hop at a time.

Beneath an elegant iron-and-glass ceiling, a group of young guests giggle on a multi-colored play mat as they mimic a costumed performer singing and dancing her way through 'Hansel and Gretel'. Some of the children do boisterous impressions of a scary witch, luring the innocent pair into her house of sweets

According to its annual reports, attendance at the Royal Opera House has fallen by 137,000 since 2013. The opera aims to turn the tide, by making the art more accessible to young people — even very young people.

"It was due to the growing evidence around the importance of early years education, so what we want to do as part of the Open Up program is have a really diverse range of programs and workshops so that all people of all ages can access the Royal Opera House," said the opera house's Head of National Programs, Amy McGann.

The course begins with babies as young



A performer sings for toddlers at the "Opera Dots" show at the Royal Opera House in London, Britain October 15, 2018. (Reuters/Simon Dawson)

as three months, and goes up to five years old. Early childhood music specialist Nicola Burke, who helped to create the course, said "it's about time" opera was opened up to very small fans.

"All people can engage in opera," she said. While the course is fun (and there is plenty of hopping), the opera is for real: "to ensure that that authentic art form is offered, and right from the beginning really," she said.

"Opera is just a really good habit to have in later life, I think it will really make their life really interesting," said Yiqi Zhou, from Surrey southwest of London, who brought three-year-old Alicia to build her confidence.

#### **Richard Branson recalls rock 'n roll** days as gets Hollywood star

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – Billionaire entrepreneur Richard Branson on Tuesday recalled an era of drugs, and rock'n roll as he added a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame to his list of accomplishments.

Branson, 68, the maverick British businessman behind Virgin Group ventures into airlines, record stores and space travel, unveiled his star with the help of singers Lance Bass and Ben Harper - two of the many musicians he signed to his Virgin Records label.

Running a record company can be a lot of fun, and yes, it did involve drugs and rock 'n roll," Branson said.

Branson, who was knighted by Britain's Queen Elizabeth in 2000, regaled crowds of well-wishers at the Hollywood ceremony with tales of taking Janet Jackson in a hot air balloon ride to entice her to sign with Virgin, giving British singer Boy George a refuge when he was trying to kick a heroin habit.

Branson said he was especially delighted to sign the Rolling Stones to Virgin Records in 1992.

"That night, I'm told, we had a party that none of us can remember," quipped Branson, wearing a black leather jacket, jeans and open necked white shirt.

Branson founded Virgin Records in



Richard Branson waits before unveiling his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, California, U.S., October 16, 2018. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

1972, choosing the name because he lacked business experience. It went on to sign some of the biggest names in music, including the Spice Girls, the Sex Pistols and Roy Orbison, before being sold in 1992 to fund Branson's Virgin Atlantic Airways venture.

Branson also opened Virgin Megastores, selling music, games and DVDs around the world, before most were closed about 10 years ago due to the rise of digital music.

"This man is such a dreamer and has inspired so many of us," said Bass, a member of former boy band NSYNC. "Please, never stop dreaming.'