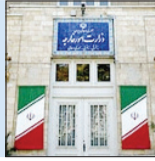


'Leader has agreed to allocate \$500m for pharmaceuticals' 2



Iran denies meddling in U.S. mid-term elections 2



Iran collect three medals at Manchester Taekwondo Grand Prix 15



Iran, Germany discuss loan of TMCA Western collection to Berlin show again 16

Four new ministers nominated



Mohammad Shariatmadari

Reza Rahmani

Mohammad Eslami

Farhad Dejpasand

See page 2

Tehran says still can't understand why Canada cut ties

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Mehdi Sepahvand

TEHRAN — Tehran still cannot understand why Canada unilaterally severed diplomatic ties with Iran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told the Tehran Times on Sunday after a former Canadian diplomat had criticized Ottawa for the current diplomatic blackout.

"This still remains an unanswered question for us," Qassemi said, adding

Tehran has already held several meetings with the current Canadian administration with the hope to resume relations.

Dennis Horak, the former Canadian diplomat, recently criticized the country's legal system for the current state of affairs between Ottawa and Tehran.

The real reason the Liberal government hasn't been able to re-establish relations with Iran is due to its adherence to a "stupid" Canadian law allowing the seizure of Iranian assets, Horak said last week. →2

'Humanitarian situation in Yemen is catastrophic'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, said on Saturday that the humanitarian situation in Yemen is catastrophic.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks

during a meeting with Fabrizio Carboni, a top official from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The advisor to the parliament speaker said "The Iranian Red Crescent Society is ready to help alleviate the sufferings of the oppressed people of Yemen." →2

Afghans shut out by polling station chaos return to vote

Afghans unable to vote in Saturday's parliamentary election because hundreds of polling stations failed to open were given another chance to cast their ballot on Sunday after the authorities extended voting for another day.

With the Taliban operating freely across much of the country and heavy pressure from international partners for

the vote to be held, the election was seen as a major test of the credibility of the Western-backed government.

Around three million Afghans voted on Saturday, a larger-than-expected turnout, but across the country serious technical problems were reported and large numbers of polling stations remained closed, often because staff failed to turn up. →13



ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Germany and the puzzle of JCPOA

The current dispute raised between senior German officials over Iran nuclear deal can be analyzed in different dimensions. As reported by Handensblatt, the German business newspaper, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas recently mentioned that Europe and the U.S. "have been drifting apart for years" and urged Europe to "assume our equal share of responsibility" in order to "form a counterweight when the U.S. crosses the line," pull "our weight when America retreats ... [and] start a new conversation." Among his bolder suggestions on how to do this, he came with the suggestion of an independent system of financial transactions that would protect European companies seeking to do business with Iran.

A simple review on Mass' remarks reveals the importance of his argument about the necessity of creating an "independent system of financial transactions", which would provide the European companies with a risk-free environment for holding business ties with Iran. Such an independent payroll system is one of the most important prerequisites for EU authorities to remain committed to the content of the nuclear deal. However, it seems that Merkel wasn't really happy with this rational suggestion by Heiko Maas.

Right after her Foreign Minister statements, Merkel reacted to his words and said that Mass those were his "personal article," rather than the government's position. She also emphasized that security cooperation with the U.S. was an important element of trans-Atlantic relations.

"On the question of independent payment systems, we have some problems in our dealings with Iran, no question," she said. "On the other hand, we know that on questions of terrorist financing, for example, SWIFT is very important."

The emergence of behavioral and verbal paradoxes between German officials over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action indicates that they aren't determined about being committed to the nuclear deal. At the end of her April visit to Trump (shortly before the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA), Merkel stated controversial words about Iran nuclear deal. →13

No theory explains everything: Prof. Nicholas Onuf

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Nicholas Onuf, a primary figure among constructivists in international relations, tells the Tehran Times that "No theory explains everything."

Onuf says "Different issues and problems call for different theories; given the varieties of religious experience and complexities of international relations, we should hope for a variety of theories."

Professor of the Florida International University, adds that "Some issues and problems are intractable in practice, even when we have formulated theories that plausibly explain what is going on."

He adds that "I specifically distinguish between faith and ways of thinking."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ When did the religious issues has been a

matter of great interest in Theorizing of International Relations?

A: To answer this question, it would help to distinguish the impact of institutionalized religion on the affairs of states from the challenge that faith—profound, inalterable belief—presents to modern social theory and therefore theorizing in International Relations as a field of study. It would also help to distinguish international thought over several centuries from the field of International Relations, which came into being only after World War II.

As a theorist, I am not especially qualified to address the contentious issues that animate contemporary world politics, including issues that come to the fore when religion is integral to national or ethnic solidarity, contributes significantly to the definition of states' interests, occupies an institutionalized place in the apparatus of state, or provides an ethical standard for public conduct. As someone born in the great American

melting pot with a (somewhat unconventional) religious background, a scholar with an Enlightenment sensibility, and a troubled beneficiary of modernity's globalization, I have opinions on most of these issues, but I would be hard pressed to provide an adequately theoretical justification for them.

The large reason for this is the way scholars like me carve up the world of human experience—as philosophers say, at its joints. Any such undertaking presupposes that the world consists of things. Once we carve the world's social relations into ostensibly autonomous things, they resist change: society, culture, economy, religion, politics are the things that we study, and the study of these things become things in their own right. Even if that world had no joints to start with, it ends up with the joints we have given it. In my world, this process goes back to Aristotle and was codified by scholars in modern universities 150 years ago. →7

Jordan wants Israel to return lands leased under 1994 peace deal

King Abdullah II announced Sunday that Jordan has notified Israel that it wants to reclaim two small plots of territory leased under their 1994 peace deal.

"We have informed Israel [that we are putting] an end to the application of the peace treaty annexes regarding Baqura and Ghumar," said the king, quoted by official news agency Petra.

The land was leased for a 25-year renewable period under annexes of the 1994 accord that lay down a one-year notice period, with Jordan retaining sovereignty.

"Israel was informed today of the Jordanian decision," the monarch said, stressing that "Baqura and Ghumar are Jordanian land and



will remain Jordanian."
"Baqura and Ghumar have always been at the top of our priorities, and we have decided

to put an end to the application of the peace treaty annexes regarding Baqura and Ghumar," the king said.

Under the treaty signed by the two countries on Oct. 26, 1994, Israel has the right to use the land for a 25-year period.

The agreement on Baqura and Ghumar is automatically renewable unless either side gives a year's notice to terminate the deal, "in which case, at the request of either party, consultations shall be entered into."

Baqura is a border area of six square kilometers in Jordan's northern Irbid province, while Ghumar covers four square kilometers in the southern Aqaba province.

(Source: Reuters)



REPORT

Ramin Hossein Abadian
Mehr News Agency
Journalist

Riyadh's childish narrative of Khashoggi's demise

Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist, political activist and critic, disappeared about three weeks ago after arriving at the Consulate of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul, Turkey, and no sign of him has been discovered since then. The Saudi activist never got out of the Saudi consulate alive.

Since then, different media outlets such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, reported that he was killed by Saudi senior security officials sent by crown prince Mohammed bin Salman.

During this period, Saudi officials have not had constructive cooperation with the Turkish authorities to investigate the fate of Khashoggi. The Riyadh authorities have not cooperated in the search for clues about the fate of Riyadh's critical journalist. This has merely reinforced the perception of Riyadh's involvement in the killing. To this day, no one doubts the engagement of Riyadh's senior officials in the crime.

Childish narrative of Riyadh
After the passage of nearly three weeks since the disappearance of Khashoggi, the Saudi authorities finally had to admit his death, but they still refuse to take responsibility for the crime. To cover up their horrific crime, the Saudis presented a childish and ridiculous narrative to the public, so that they could overcome criticism.

Saudi Attorney General Sheikh Saud al-Mojeb announced that Khashoggi was killed in Saudi's consulate in Istanbul. In a statement, Saud al-Mojeb confirmed the killing and said that on October 2 the journalist died in brawl. "Discussions that took place between him and the persons who met him ... at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul led to a brawl and a fist fight with the citizen, Jamal Khashoggi, which led to his death, may his soul rest in peace," the attorney general said in a statement.

The Attorney General noted that the suspects went to Saudi Consulate in Turkey to bring Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia. A Saudi state-run news agency, in a statement, quoted Saudi Attorney General saying that 18 suspects were arrested in connection with the case. According to Saudi sources, bin Salman's adviser, Saud al-Qahtani, and Major General Ahmed al-Asiri are among the intelligence officials dismissed by Riyadh for involvement in the killing of Khashoggi. →7

Iran-Iraq war front-line musicians honored in Tehran

TEHRAN — Members of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra who went to the front lines during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war to give performances for Iranian troops were honored during a ceremony held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Saturday.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi and Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini were among the participating guests.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra organized the performances during the war to boost the spirits of the soldiers. Vocalists Mohammad Golriz, Rashid Vatandoost and Mehrdad Kazemi were among the honorees. The ceremony came to an end with a performance by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra.



© Tehran Times/ Ashfar Khamseh

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



'Leader has agreed to allocate \$500m for pharmaceuticals'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Sunday that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has agreed to the allocation of \$500 million from the National Development Fund for pharmaceutical companies.

"The Leader approved the measure last week, and there's no problem," Jahangiri said at a ceremony marking National Export Day, Mehr reported.

He also pointed to U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal and the re-imposition of economic sanctions, saying the second batch of sanctions, although not due until November 4, seems to have already affected the oil, banking and transport indicators, which make the country's main sources of revenue.



'Those committing terror acts are Saudi mercenaries'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Commander of the IRGC Ground Force has said enemies were after infiltrating the country through the recent abduction of the border guards in the Mirjavah border region with Pakistan, Tasnim reported on Sunday.

Speaking at a gathering in Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour said the people of Sistan-Baluchestan have sacrificed a lot in the path of unifying the country. He added the plot to drive a wedge between the IRGC and the people of Sistan-Baluchestan would fail miserably.

He further said those who commit acts of terror in the region are the mercenaries of the Saudis.



General warns of possible virus attacks

POLITICS TEHRAN — Head of the Civil Defense Organization on Sunday warned of possible computer virus attacks by the enemy to harm the country's infrastructure.

"With such tools, the enemy can remotely take control of Iran's facilities and commit damaging acts," said Brigadier General Gholam Reza Jalali, Tasnim reported.

He also said necessary arrangements have been made to counter the U.S. hostile strategies and its potential move to block Iran's access to the Internet.

The Americans have the required tools to cut off Iran's access to the Internet, but have not made any announcement for such a move, the general stated.



IRGC able to accommodate 110,000 Arbaeen pilgrims

POLITICS TEHRAN — The IRGC Arbaeen headquarters is able to accommodate as many as 110,000 pilgrims in the shrine cities of Najaf, Karbala and Samarra in Iraq during the Arbaeen pilgrimage, a military official said on Sunday.

As many as 650 buses (coaches) and 2 trains have been assigned to carry Arbaeen pilgrims from Iran to Iraq, Yaghoob Soleimani said, Mehr reported.

Soleimani also said the number of foreign pilgrims who cross Iran to reach Iraq has risen by 100%.

He added that 1,320,000 pilgrims are expected to be dispatched to Iraq by the end of this year's Arbaeen.



'Govt. didn't consult Hope faction on new ministers'

POLITICS TEHRAN — A member of the presiding board of the Hope parliamentary faction has criticized the Rouhani administration for not seeking the faction's advice before proposing new ministers to the parliament for approval.

"We have grievances against the administration because it has not turned to the Hope faction and the reformists for advice before naming the new ministers," said Mohammad-Reza Tabesh, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Tabesh said the faction will soon announce its final take on the ministerial nominees.

He added that the administration is in serious need of competent ministers to save the country from the current "critical" conditions.



Goods intended for smuggling detected in northwest Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's investigation police officers have detected 6,986 household items intended for smuggling in the Bileh Savar County in the northwestern province of Ardabil.

Bileh Savar police chief Colonel Hadi Mousavi said the household items were found in a warehouse, Trend reported, citing IRNA.

"Based on the information obtained, a team of courthouse officials and investigators has been sent to the venue," he said.

"During the investigation, household goods worth about \$31,000 intended for smuggling were detected."

'Humanitarian situation in Yemen is catastrophic'

1 -> Amir Abdollahian added, "Saudi Arabia's military attack against Yemen, which have been continuing with the U.S. logistical support, should be stopped and there is no military solution to the Yemeni conflict."

For his part, Carboni expressed concerns over the humanitarian situation in Yemen and said Iran can play a "fundamental role" in helping establish peace in the Middle East region.

He also said that the crisis in Yemen should be settled politically.

Since the beginning of the Saudi-led aggression against Yemen in March 2015, the country has been grappling with a humanitarian disaster.

The Saudi-led coalition backed by the U.S. started the war on Yemen with the aim of reinstating ousted president Mansour Hadi. The war has led to famine and spread of cholera in the poor country. The UN is calling it "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

Earlier this month the United Nations warned that Yemen could be facing the worst famine in 100 years if airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition are not halted.



If war continues, famine could engulf the country in the next three months, with 12 to 13 million civilians at risk of starvation, according to Lise Grande, the agency's hu-

manitarian coordinator for Yemen. She told the BBC: "I think many of us felt as we went into the 21st century that it was unthinkable that we could see a famine like we saw in Ethiopia, that we saw in Bengal,

that we saw in parts of the Soviet Union — that was just unacceptable.

"Many of us had the confidence that would never happen again and yet the reality is that in Yemen that is precisely what we are looking at."

In April 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif submitted a letter to then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon outlining a four-point peace plan for Yemen.

The plan called for an immediate ceasefire and end of all foreign military attacks, humanitarian assistance, a resumption of broad national dialogue and "establishment of an inclusive national unity government."

"It is imperative for the international community to get more effectively involved in ending the senseless aerial attacks and establishing a ceasefire, ensuring delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance to the people of Yemen and restoring peace and stability to this country through dialogue and national reconciliation without pre-conditions," said Zarif's letter.

Tehran says still can't understand why Canada unilaterally cut ties

1 -> Qassemi said Tehran considers as "a bizarre precedent" the ruling by the Canadian parliament that forbids the government from pursuing talks with Iran. "Iran has on many occasions decried this law, recognizing it as a flawed innovation in international law, violating governments' immunity."

"Notwithstanding that, however, with the coming of the Liberal government and through bilateral consent, we pursued negotiations with the incumbent Canadian government in multiple stages in Tehran and a third country. We announced our readiness for opening the consular sections of the two countries. But it seems the Canadian government, for domestic concerns, is not fully ready and cannot take a firm step to develop relations."

The Iranian diplomat concluded by saying that Tehran is ready for "any measures and negotiations" that could facilitate services to Iranian nationals in Canada. "The Canadian government is aware of this issue."



© Tehran Times/Bahman Vakhshoor
Six years ago, the previous Conservative government of Canada abruptly severed its diplomatic relations with

Iran, shuttering its embassy in Tehran and expelling Iranian diplomats from Canada.

The current Liberal government campaigned in 2015 on re-establishing diplomatic relations with Iran but it has been unable to deliver on that foreign policy promise. Canadian media on Saturday pointed the finger at Iran for not following efforts to resume ties.

Among other things, the Canadian law paved the way for last year's Ontario Court of Appeal ruling that upheld the seizure of USD1.7 billion in private Iranian assets by a group of American plaintiffs whose loved ones were killed in attacks which the court claimed were sponsored by the Iran.

"It was a stupid law. And it's still a stupid law," Horak told a meeting of the Canadian International Council in Ottawa.

"But we're stuck with it." Horak, who was the Canadian foreign ministry's director of Middle East relations in 2012, said the three major federal parties supported the law.

Iran to use artificial intelligence in legislation

POLITICS TEHRAN — Yunes Adiani, an official at the research center of the parliament, has said that Iran will use artificial intelligence in legislation.

In an interview with IRNA published on Sunday, he said that Iran is the second country that has taken step in applying artificial intelligence in legislation.

"It has been six months that we have started this project. In this project we follow the issues of human intelligence and legislation, artificial intelligence and legislation and artificial intelligence and legislation in the world to see what other countries have used by applying artificial intelligence," Adiani stated.

Adiani added, "We are considering the kind of intelligence which receives data and helps us solve problems."

The artificial intelligence will be used as a complementary to the human intelligence, he said.

"It is happening while many countries have not entered the issue of using artificial intelligence in legislation."



Four new ministers named

POLITICS TEHRAN — Finally on Sunday President Hassan Rouhani officially released the names of four nominees to the parliament for the post of Labor, economy, industry, and transport ministers.

The names were released to the media after many speculations that who will fill these posts.

Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri said that Rouhani will attend the Majlis when the MPs start confirmation hearings on the nominees on October 28.

"In a letter to the parliament, Rouhani proposed to appoint Farhad Dejpasand as the minister of economy; Mohammad Eslami as minister of transport and urban development; Mohammad Shariatmadari as minister of cooperatives, labor, and social welfare; and Reza Rahmani as minister of industry, mine and trade," MP Assadollah Abbasi told reporters on the sidelines of an open session of parliament.

Labor Minister Ali Rabiee and Economy Minister Masoud Karbasian were voted out by parliament on August 8 and 26 respectively. However, Transport Minister Abbas Akhondi reportedly resigned in protest to differences with some key allies of President Rouhani.

The unemployment rate and devaluation of national currency and price hikes were cited as the main reasons for impeaching the ministers of labor and economy.

Shariatmadari, who led the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Mine until Saturday, is being nominated for labor minister. Shariatmadari, also trade minister in the Khatami administration, is a graduate of electrical engineering from University of Kerman.

Mohammad Eslami has studied civil engineering at University of Detroit Mercy. He has held various jobs including governor of Mazandaran province.

Dejpasand is an economics professor at Beheshti Uni-

versity; he has also worked as deputy head of the Planning and Budget Organization among other jobs.

Rahmani has a degree in DBA (doctor of business administration) and has served as deputy minister of industry, mine and trade.

Abbas Akhondi released his resignation letter on Saturday. The letter dated back to September 1. He cited disagreements on urban redevelopment as the main reason behind his decision.

In the letter, Akhondi criticized the Rouhani administration's handling of U.S. sanctions for violating the essential rights of ownership and fair competition.

He added that he had resigned on three previous occasions and asked Rouhani to accept his resignation this time.

On Saturday as he attended the unveiling ceremony of smartification projects at Imam Khomeini Airport, Akhondi said it was his last day as minister.

Iran denies meddling in U.S. mid-term elections



POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry has denied allegations of interference in the United States' mid-term congressional elections, saying the Islamic Republic's principled policy is not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies on Friday claimed that foreign governments continued to try to influence U.S. elections, including the upcoming mid-term congressional vote in November.

"We are concerned about ongoing campaigns by Russia, China and other foreign actors, including Iran, to undermine confidence in democratic institutions and

influence public sentiment and government policies," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Justice Department, FBI and Department of Homeland Security said in a joint statement.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi, in a statement published on the ministry's website on Sunday, saying attempts made by U.S. officials to say that Iran has been involved in the U.S. mid-term polls are a "false" allegation, possibly caused by an "unknown illusion".

"The White House has for some time been trying to raise allegations against other countries for specific political reasons, and every day adds a country to its fictional list," Qassemi said.

Mnuchin heads to Riyadh to stoke anti-Iran agenda amid Khashoggi scandal



POLITICS TEHRAN — U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said he would travel to Saudi Arabia on Monday to solidify a pressure campaign against Iran.

The trip shows the fine line the U.S. treasury secretary is trying to tread as the Trump administration cultivates a strategic relationship with Saudi Arabia to support its objectives in the Middle East, even as Riyadh is facing a taxing crisis with many of the world's top finance leaders and government officials shunning the kingdom and its crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, over the murder of government critic Jamal Khashoggi.

Critics believe the Khashoggi scandal has marginalized the House of Saud's anti-Iran plans over the past weeks.

Striking a note of relief for the Saudis, Mnuchin responded to expectations around U.S. sanctions on the Saudi kingdom for its role in the death of Khashoggi by saying it was "too early" to discuss that possibility, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

Last week, Mnuchin canceled his plans to speak at the Future Investment Initiative, a conference critical to promoting Prince Mohammed's plans to restructure the economy, as details of the killing of Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul pointed to Riyadh's involvement.

Trump accuses Saudi of 'lies' over Khashoggi killing

U.S. President Donald Trump has accused Saudi Arabia of lying about the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, his strongest comments to date on the affair as pressure builds on the administration to strike a tougher line.

In an interview with the Washington Post published late Saturday, Trump stepped back from his stance that Saudi Arabia's latest explanation for the death of the journalist inside their consulate in Istanbul was credible, but said he remained confident in the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

"Obviously there's been deception and there's been lies," he said on the shifting accounts offered by Riyadh.

Saudi officials originally said Khashoggi, who entered the diplomatic mission on Oct. 2, had left unharmed, before announcing Friday he was killed inside the building in what they said was an altercation.

"Their stories are all over the place," added Trump.

But Trump stopped far short of calling for Prince Mohammad, the kingdom's de facto ruler, to be replaced, emphasizing as he has before how important the U.S.-Saudi relationship is to Washington's regional strategic goals.

He described the 33-year-old prince, widely known as MBS, as a "strong person; he has very good control."

"He's seen as a person who can keep things under check," added Trump. "I mean that in a positive way."

Trump added that he has yet to be shown any evidence by intelligence officials that would make him believe MBS had any direct role.

"Nobody has told me he's responsible. Nobody has told me he's not responsible. We haven't reached that point. I haven't heard either way," the president said.

"There is a possibility he found out about it afterward. It could be something in the building went badly awry. It could be that's when he found out about it. He could have known they were bringing him back to Saudi Arabia."

Despite Trump's apparent equivocations, pressure has been building within his Republican Party to take a harsher stance.

Speaking on ABC on Sunday, Republican Congressman Peter King said: "There's no way that one person, an overweight civilian, has to be killed. They could have brought him down with no trouble at all," adding he believed there was "an intent to kill."

Asked if he thought Prince Mohammad was behind the killing, a fellow Republican, Senator Bob Corker, who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, told CNN: "Yes, I think he did it. Let's finish this investigation."

Turkey to quiz more witnesses in Khashoggi probe

Turkish prosecutors have summoned more witnesses to testify as part of the investigation into the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, local television reported Sunday.

Twenty-five more people will be quizzed as witnesses, the private NTV broadcaster said, without providing any further details.

On Friday, prosecutors questioned staff members of the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul inside Istanbul's main



courthouse, including the consulate driver, technicians and accountants.

Early on Saturday Saudi Arabia finally admitted that Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi leadership and a Washington Post contributor, was killed inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate.

For more than two weeks they had insisted that he left the building alive.

Turkish police and prosecutors this week searched both the consulate and the consul's residence in Istanbul, as well as a large forest in the city, hunting for his body.

Turkish media outlets have reported that the authorities here have audio tapes in which Khashoggi's alleged killers tortured him by cutting his fingers off before his decapitation.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and top government figures have remained cautious in their public statements, stopping short of pinning the blame on Saudi Arabia and referring instead to the prosecutors' investigation.

After the Saudi admission on Saturday, Omer Celik, spokesman for Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), said Ankara was not putting the blame on anyone in advance.

But they would not accept any cover-up, he added. "Turkey will reveal whatever had happened. Nobody should ever doubt it," he said.

Saudi explanation of Khashoggi death not credible: UK

Britain Sunday said Saudi Arabia's account of the death of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside its Istanbul consulate was not credible and the culprits must be "held to account."

"I don't think it's credible," Brexit Secretary Dominic

Raab told the BBC, adding there was a "serious question mark over the account that has been given."

"We support the Turkish investigation into it and the British government wants to see people held to account for that death."

After initially saying Khashoggi left the consulate unharmed, and then that they were investigating his disappearance, Saudi authorities conceded the 60-year-old was killed inside the diplomatic compound.

But many questions have remained unanswered following the admission.

Turkish officials have accused Riyadh of carrying out a state-sponsored killing and dismembering the body, with pro-government media in Turkey reporting the existence of video and audio evidence to back those claims.

Police have searched a forest in Istanbul where they believe his body may have been disposed of.

Ankara has vowed to reveal all the details of a two-week inquiry.

Separately, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Saudi Arabia's admission that dissident Jamal Khashoggi was killed at its Istanbul consulate was welcome "progress," but urged the kingdom to follow through with a full and transparent investigation.

"I note that the Saudi authorities have changed tack, admitted the facts and accepted some responsibility, so we're making progress," Le Maire said on France 3 television Sunday. "But full light needs to be shed."

How bilateral relations develop from here will "depend on the way the truth is aired, the investigation conducted and the results established," Le Maire said.

(Source: agencies)

Taiwan train crash kills at least 18, injures 160

At least 18 people died and 160 were injured when a train derailed in northeastern Taiwan Sunday, authorities said.

Several carriages were overturned in the crash, which occurred in Yilan County near the coast on a line popular among tourists.

The government said the train had been carrying 366 people, and the Central News

Agency said more than 30 were still trapped on board.

Footage on local TV showed rescuers and dozens of military personnel working through the wreckage on Sunday night in search of survivors, with ambulances stationed nearby.

The toll at 7:45 pm was 18 dead and 160 injured, the fire department said in a statement.

"We will use all our strength and efforts for the rescue," President Tsai Ing-wen wrote on her Facebook page.

An investigation was under way to find out the cause of the accident, Taiwan Railways Administration said. "The train was in pretty good condition," its Deputy Chief Lu Chieh-Shen told a news conference.

The authority was also checking to see if any foreigners were on board.

The derailment came weeks ahead of island-wide local elections that are being seen as a bellwether for Tsai's ruling party's performance in presidential elections due in 2020.

(Source: AP)

Syria writes to UN about U.S. 'war crime' after airstrike in Dayr al-Zawr

Syria has written to the United Nations, urging a transparent and impartial probe into the recent massacre of scores of civilians in a United States airstrike in the country's east.

Two separate letters were sent to the UN chief and president of the UN Security Council by Syria's Foreign Ministry, calling the massacre "a war crime and a crime against humanity," the official SANA news agency said.

The Friday attacks targeted the villages of al-Sousa and al-Bubadran in Dayr al-Zawr, killing 62 civilians, mostly women and children. The airstrikes also injured an unidentified number of others, some of whom are in critical condition.

The bloodshed "proves once again the coalition's disregard for international law and the international humanitarian law," a part of the letter read.

It "belies the coalition's claims of fighting ISIS (Islamic State) in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorism while in reality it is supporting its continuity in Syria."

The letters demanded that the UN Security Council take "a prompt action to end these crimes."

The U.S. and its allies invaded Syria in 2014 under the pretext of fighting ISIL. They forwent Syria's consent in launching the invasion which still continues even though Washington claimed victory over the Takfiri group last year.

Airstrikes by the U.S. and its allies across the country have killed more than 3,300 civilians, according to the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) which is based in London.

The letters reminded the world body of Syria's earlier complaints about escalating U.S. attacks on innocent civilians and Washington's use of weapons of mass destruction, including white phosphorus, in bombing residential areas in Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah, Aleppo, and Hasakah provinces.

"The very fact that the U.S. military is operating inside Syria is an act of war," Ken Stone of Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War told Press TV on Sunday.

"Unlike Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, the U.S. does not have a permission of the Syrian government to do so. So, they are operating illegally in terms of international law and in terms of even U.S. domestic law. This is a war crime," he added.

Stone said the U.S. and its allies created ISIL terrorists and brought them to Syria to cause havoc in the country.



There is overwhelming evidence now that the U.S. and its coalition partners, including Canada, "routinely help... fund, advise ISIS and the other terrorist groups," he said.

"So, the Syrian government has every right to go to the United Nations," he said.

Russian officials discuss 'finally destroying' terrorists with Assad

A senior delegation representing Russia's foreign and defense ministries has met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to discuss the country's situation, specifically the "final destruction" of terrorists.

A Russian Foreign Ministry statement was released on Saturday, detailing the talks which included Russian special presidential envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentyev, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin and a number of Defense Ministry officials.

The discussions come amid recently heightened diplomatic activity over the fate of Syria as a delegation from the Syrian People's Assembly met with Russian officials in Moscow earlier today. Furthermore, a high-level Russian delegation met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to discuss the matter four days earlier while Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is set to host Russian, German and French heads of state seeking to find a "long-lasting solution" for the war-torn country in a week.

Six Druze civilian hostages freed 3 months after abduction by ISIL in Syria

Two women and four children of the Druze minority have been freed from the grips of the ISIL terrorist group some three months after they were kidnapped by the terror outfit in Syria's southern province of Sweida.

Syria's official SANA news agency, citing Sweida Governor Amer al-Ashi, reported on Saturday that a woman and a mother with her four children, all from Druze al-Shabki village, had been freed from the clutches of Takfiri terrorists thanks to the efforts exerted by the authorities concerned.

The governor also said that "upon directives of President Bashar al-Assad on hunting down terrorist organizations, our armed forces and the affiliated security apparatus tracked the remnants of terrorists in the depth of Sweida, in eastern Badiya."

Badiya refers to the vast desert stretching from central parts of the country to its eastern border with Iraq, and where ISIL terrorists still hold some small and isolated territory.

On July 15, ISIL terrorists, who lost all of their urban bastions in the country late last year, launched a brutal attack on the rural areas of the province, killing more than 250 people, who were members of the Druze minority. The attacks were the bloodiest ever seen in the province, as well as some of the deadliest launched by ISIL in the war-torn country.

Terrorists also abducted 36 women and children during the raid. Four of the abductees managed to escape from the grips of terrorists, but two of them lost their lives. Furthermore, one woman died in ISIL custody while another was shot dead.

Sweida, which is largely under the control of the Syrian government troops, is home to the Druze minority. The province has been relatively insulated from Syria's seven-year bloody war launched by foreign-backed militants and terror group against Damascus.

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

(Source: Press TV)

Trump: U.S. to exit nuclear treaty, Russia warns of retaliation

The United States President Donald Trump said Washington will exit the Cold-War era treaty that eliminated a class of nuclear weapons due to Russian violations, triggering a warning of retaliatory measures from Moscow.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty, formally Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles), negotiated by then-President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987, required elimination of short-range and intermediate-range nuclear and conventional missiles by both countries.

"Russia has not, unfortunately, honored the agreement so we're going to terminate the agreement and we're going to pull out," Trump told reporters on Saturday after a rally in Nevada.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Sunday that a unilateral U.S. withdrawal would be "very dangerous" and lead to a "military-technical" retaliation.

The U.S. authorities believe Moscow is developing and has deployed a ground-launched system in breach of the INF treaty that could allow it to launch a nuclear strike on Europe at short notice. Russia has consistently denied any such violation.

Trump said the United States will develop the weapons unless Russia and China agree to a halt on development.

China is not a party to the treaty and has invested heavily in conventional missiles, while the INF has banned U.S. possession of ground-launched ballistic missiles or cruise missiles of ranges between 500 and 5,500 km (311 and 3,418 miles).

Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, will visit Moscow next week. Ryabkov, in comments reported by state-controlled RIA news agency, said if the United States withdrew, Russia would have no choice but to retaliate, including taking unspecified measures of a "military-technical nature."

"But we would rather things did not get that far," RIA quoted him as saying. TASS news agency quoted him as saying withdrawal "would be a very dangerous step", and it was Washington and not Moscow that was failing to comply with the treaty.

He said the Trump administration was using the treaty in an attempt to blackmail the Kremlin, putting global security at risk. "...We will, of course, accept no ultimatums or blackmail methods," Interfax quoted him as saying.

British defense minister Gavin Williamson, in comments reported by the Financial Times, said London stood "resolute" behind Washington over the issue, and that the Kremlin was making a mockery of the agreement.

(Source: Reuters)

Six civilians killed in Kashmir blast



Protests have erupted in India-administered Kashmir after six civilians were killed when an unexploded shell went off at the site of a gunfight in the southern district of Kulgam in Indian-administered Kashmir, officials said.

Senior superintendent of police in Kulgam, Harmeet Singh, told Al Jazeera on Sunday that the forces had laid a midnight cordon around a dozen houses in Laroo village of the district on a specific information about the presence of rebels.

"By morning, three militants were killed who were hiding in one of the houses. There was an exchange of gunfire and grenades from both sides," the official said.

The official said the rebels were locals and belonged to the south Kashmir villages of Shopian, Kulgam and Anantnag.

"When the fight was over, the forces cleared the area and left. There was stone-throwing from all sides by the people even during the encounter. Despite requests not to visit the site, locals approached the gunfight site and a shell exploded," he said.

Deputy commissioner of the district, Shamim Ahmad, told Al Jazeera that six civilians died in the blast and 30 others were wounded, some of them in the clashes.

"The situation is under control and curfew has been imposed. Phone and internet services have been suspended," the official said.

After the news of the killings spread, the residents in large numbers in the villages of south Kashmir took to the streets, raising anti-India slogans.

Thousands of troopers were rushed to guard the streets as curfew was imposed in the volatile villages of the district, according to officials.

At many places, stone-throwing youth clashed with the security forces.

Call for Monday shutdown

The districts of southern Kashmir have emerged as the epicenter of anti-India protests in the last two years after the killing of young rebel commander Burhan Wani in July 2016. Wani's killing sparked civilian uprising for five long months.

The rebels enjoy an overwhelming support in the region as people often march towards gunfight sites to help them escape. To protest the killing, Kashmiri separatist leaders, who demand an independent state or merger with Pakistan, have called for a complete shutdown in the region on Monday.

The violence in the region, meanwhile, continues since Friday when a six-month pregnant woman was killed in crossfire in Pulwama village.

Last week, two rebels and a civilian were killed in an early morning gunfight in the main city of Srinagar, which had triggered massive clashes.

Human rights activists demanded a "credible" investigation by the United Nations into the latest incident.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among the Muslim-majority residents of the disputed territory. The gunfights are often followed by civilian protests leading to casualties.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	189438.0
IFX	2111.1

Sources: tse.ir, ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,494 rials
GBP	55,053 rials
AED	11,430 rials

Source: iribnews.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$69.28/b
Brent	\$78.79/b
OPEC Basket	\$78.25/b
Gold	\$1,227.55/oz
Silver	\$14.69/oz
Platinum	\$836.00/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Bank loans to economic sector rise 12% in H1

ECONOMY TEHRAN — According to the latest report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the granted banking facilities to domestic economic sectors witnessed 12.1 percent growth during the first half of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported. More than 3.032 quadrillion rials (about \$72.19 billion) of loans were paid to Iranian economic sectors in the said period, showing 327.9 trillion rials (about \$7.807 billion) increase, i.e. 12.1 percent growth, from the same time span in the preceding year.

NDF pays \$766m of facilities to different sectors in 6.5 months



ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) has paid 32.2 trillion rials (about \$766.6 million) of facilities to different sectors during the 6.5-month period started on the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018). Industry and mining sector accounts for the highest amount of received facilities during the mentioned period of time, receiving 15.7 trillion rials (about \$373.8 million) of loans, Mehr news agency reported on Sunday.



Iran, Oman willing to set up a joint fund for trade

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran and Oman are willing to set up a joint fund for bilateral trade, Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce Chairman Mohsen Zarrabi told ILNA on Sunday. Referring to the recent trip of an Iranian delegation led by the advisor to Iranian industry, mining and trade minister and also the deputy head of Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) to Oman, Zarrabi said during this visit the two sides explored the ways for establishment of such fund.

China's Xi says acts to deny or weaken private economy is wrong

China's President Xi Jinping said any comment or behaviour that seeks to deny or weaken the private economy is wrong and that the ruling Communist Party will always support private firms' development, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday. The report quoted a letter by Xi to private entrepreneurs, which also said the role of the private economy is unquestionable. (Source: Reuters)

MUFG says bank's CEO will not attend Saudi conference

The CEO of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group's banking arm will not attend the Future Investment Initiative conference in Saudi Arabia, the group said on Sunday, joining a growing list of business executives to withdraw over concern about the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. A spokesman for the Japanese company said that MUFG Bank Deputy President Eiichi Yoshikawa will attend the Saudi event in place of CEO Kanetsugu Mike. MUFG said the decision was made after "evaluating factors in a comprehensive manner". Khashoggi, a U.S. resident and Washington Post columnist critical of Riyadh's policies, disappeared on Oct. 2 after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Saudi Arabia on Saturday said he had died in a fight there. Two Saudi officials have since attributed the death to a chokehold. More than two dozen top officials and executives from the United States and Europe, including U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and the chief executives of JP Morgan Chase and HSBC, have canceled plans to attend the Future Investment Initiative. (Source: Reuters)

TSE head reveals new plans

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The recently appointed Head of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) Ali Sahraie revealed the state-run body's new plans to develop Iranian capital market, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday. "Improvement of listing procedures as well as IT environment besides adopting an international approach stand among the main future programs of TSE," he said. "We have also reinforcement of executive and technical infrastructure, development of taskforce ability, systematic and intellectual monitoring over the market and the trades on the agenda." Sahraie underlined that creating an environment for economic firms to increase their earned profit is the best way for increasing profitability and having access to cheap financial resources and the capital market plays a key role in financing at the lowest cost. Sahraie replaced Hassan Qalibaf Asl, who held the position for almost a decade, in mid-



September and will run TSE for two years. Capital market indices in Iran have generally experienced a positive trend since mid-June under the conditions that domestic markets are awaiting the new wave of U.S.-led sanctions in November,

following being hit by the first round of sanctions posed in early August. Although Iran's economy is experiencing a series of problems including stagnation, high inflation and unemployment rates, but capital market indices open in green and hit record high. The growth can be explained regarding the dominant recession on other domestic markets, which has guided a big sum of liquidity from other markets such as auto, foreign currency, housing and coin to the capital market. The government's recent focus on supporting and expanding the capital market, can also explain the recent jump in indices. The low tax rate, liquidity transparency, and other provided instruments by the government has presently given the investors in the capital market the confidence about low liquidity risk in the stock market and has led to attraction of a large volume of capital and expansion of trade and cooperation among private companies.

Nominal electricity generation capacity reaches 79.665GW

ENERGY TEHRAN — Nominal electricity generation capacity in Iran increased by 340 megawatts (MW) compared to the H1 (March 21-September 22) figure which was 79,325 MW, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday. The mentioned figure for the added capacity was supplied from the newly operational distributed generation power plants, hydroelectric power plants, gas-fueled power plants, combined cycle power plants as well as renewable plants. The country increased its electricity generation capacity by 1005 MW since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2018).

Iran's total power generation capacity stood at 78,484 MW in the past Iranian calendar year (1396), up from the 76,302 MW of its preceding year. Currently, of the total nominal capacity of the country's power plants, the share of hydroelectric power plants is 19.87 percent while gas power plants generate 31.41 percent of the country's total electricity, the share of combined cycle power plants is 29.48 percent, hydroelectric power plants account for 15 percent of the total capacity, while the share of dispersed generation units is 1.62 percent and finally the renewable power plants account only for 0.79 percent of Iran's total power generation capacity.

'Railroad expansion in need of €20b investments'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Some €20 billion is needed to supply the required infrastructure for development of national railway network by March 2021, the Managing Director of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Saeed Mohammadzadeh announced in a meeting on Sunday, IRNA reported. "According to the set programs, 54 percent of the needed investments will be made by the private sector and the rest will be supplied by the government," he added. "RAI intends to have a 20 percent stake in Iran's freight transport and a 30 percent one in passenger transport by 2021," Mohammadzadeh underlined. As the official announced earlier, trans-



porting loads via railway can save up to \$600 million in comparison with road transportation per year. Iran will inaugurate 530 kilometers of railroads by the end of the present Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019), Deputy Transport Minister Kheirollah Khademi announced in early September.

China's GDP growth hits 6.7% in first three quarters in 2018

China's GDP growth reached 6.7 percent year-on-year in the first three quarters of this year, according to official data released on Friday. Growth in the third quarter was 6.5 percent, down from 6.8 percent in the first quarter and 6.7 percent in the second quarter, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Retail sales increased by 9.3 percent year-on-year in the

first three quarters of this year, down from 9.4 percent in the first two quarters combined, the data showed. The industrial output growth was 6.4 percent year-on-year in the January-September period, 0.3 percentage point lower than the first half of this year, the data showed. Fixed-asset investment growth was 5.4 percent in the first three quarters of this year, 0.6 percentage point lower than the first two quarters as a whole but 0.1 percentage

point higher than in the first eight months. Despite the easing in growth, surveyed urban unemployment rate nationwide was 4.9 percent in September, down from 5 percent a year before. Mao Shengyong, spokesman of the bureau, said the data showed that the country's economic growth remained on track but faces heavier downward pressure. (Source: China Daily)

EU's Barnier plays down 'backstop' checks on Northern Irish trade

The EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier stood firm on the need for checks on goods shipped from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland after Brexit, while insisting this would not amount to a new border, in an interview published on Sunday. Negotiations on Britain's departure from the European Union are stalled on several issues, but primarily an Irish 'backstop' both sides agree is needed to avoid a hard border between the UK province of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, an EU state. Brussels insists that this in turn requires controls on goods shipped from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland, and is trying to overcome objections from among UK Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservatives and the Northern Ireland Unionists crucial to her government's parliamentary majority. "Contrary to what some are saying, this is not a border we are creating in the

Irish Sea to undermine the integrity of the United Kingdom," Barnier told Le Journal du Dimanche. Veterinary checks are already conducted on 10 percent of livestock transported to Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK, Barnier said. This would increase to 100 percent under the backstop, he added, but a later animal-health agreement could reduce the proportion inspected to 40 percent. Barnier said other backstop measures were needed to prevent unauthorised Irish imports of goods such as chlorinated chicken, produced in the U.S. but outlawed by EU food standards. He said other issues still preventing a deal include the demand by Brussels that the European Court of Justice should have jurisdiction over its implementation - as well as Britain's reluctance to address registered designations of origin for foodstuffs, such as champagne or Roquefort cheese. (Source: Reuters)

Bolsonaro to back central bank independence, estado says

Brazil presidential front-runner Jair Bolsonaro plans to propose formal central bank independence as part of a series of "high impact" economic plans if he wins the Oct. 28 runoff vote, newspaper Estado de S. Paulo reported on Saturday without saying how it obtained the information. Bolsonaro's team would signal intentions to start negotiating economic reforms during the transition period from the current administration. While Bolsonaro's team has indicated it would like to keep Ilan Goldfajn as the head of the monetary authority, former central bank director Luiz Fernando Figueiredo is being considered if that option isn't possible, Estado de S. Paulo reported. Investors in Latin America's largest economy are increasingly focusing on Bolsonaro's economic proposals given his commanding lead in all polls for the runoff. The future of Brazil's central bank was thrust into the spotlight this week

after Bloomberg reported that Goldfajn, who has won praise for taming inflation and lowering borrowing costs, is prepared to exit the institution by the end of this year. Under current law, any of the bank's nine directors, including its governor, can be fired by the president at any time. Enshrining the central bank's formal independence into law would make it less susceptible to political interference and boost confidence among investors. Figueiredo said he has been in talks with Bolsonaro's top adviser Paulo Guedes about "economic guidelines" but has not received any formal invitation, Estado de S. Paulo reported. Figueiredo added that it would be good for the country if Goldfajn remained at the helm of the central bank. Bolsonaro told reporters in Rio de Janeiro later on Saturday that he didn't rule out the possibility of Goldfajn remaining as central bank president. (Source: Bloomberg)

Italy's rising deficits, 'no-deal' Brexit to cause new debt crisis in Eurozone

Economists across the EU are sounding an alarm over Italy's rising debt burden, which could potentially trigger yet another debt crisis in the single currency area. Italy's budget problems have been exacerbated over the past 18 months as the government in Rome has been gradually increasing its spending amid a lengthy political struggle, the ongoing influx of African migrants, and structural setbacks in the national economy. A recent report from the European Commission found that Italy's budget had deviated from Brussels' joint budget rules that mandate budget deficits should be below 3 percent of each member-state's GDP, while total debt burden should not exceed 60 percent of the GDP. However, Italy's debt-to-GDP ratio has ballooned to over 130 percent. This comes after Italy's government announced its budget for the next fiscal year, with a projected deficit of 2.4 percent of GDP - exceeding that of the previous budget threefold. The Commission gave Rome until this coming Monday to provide an explanation for its fiscal policies. "The general tone of the letter sent by the EC sounds tougher than what we had anticipated," Fabio Fois of the British bank Barclays Plc said. Barclays' analysts also said the EU is likely to make a substantial effort to bring Italy in line with the Eurozone's fiscal rules in the coming weeks. It appears that Brussels has become increasingly anxious about fiscal deficits across the single currency area in the face of looming Brexit. Additionally, officials from Germany and France have been pushing for a fiscal union within the Eurozone over the past few months. However, such a union would require



a higher degree of uniformity in Eurozone member states' fiscal policies in order to succeed. Meanwhile, market participants say the recent euro devaluation against the pound sterling could be connected to Italy's budget woes. "It could be a matter of time before the euro falls through the bottom of its range after the EU signaled a thumbs-down to Rome's budget for the coming year," Joe Manimbo of Western Union said. Italy is the Eurozone's third-largest economy, and its budget problems are felt across the bloc to a far greater extent than, for example, the debt problems in Greece back in 2015. However, economists also say the EU debt crisis of the early 2010s started over fiscal problems in several member-states at once - Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain. Even a

default on Italy's debt alone might not be enough to capsize the entire Eurozone - but coupled with a possible 'no-deal' Brexit, Italy's brewing crisis could deal significant damage to the euro area. "The combination of the tax-cutting right-wing populists and happy-to-spend left-wing populists in Rome has provided Italian bonds with a momentum that very much reminds of 2011," Ulrich Leuchtmann of Commerzbank said. For its part, the international credit rating agency Moody's downgraded Italy's sovereign debt rating Friday to just one notch above junk. Moody's said the Italian government's budget plans are raising concern over the sustainability of its national debt. However, the Italian government said its fiscal policies would boost economic growth in the country, while the nation's debt-to-GDP ratio would remain at 130 percent. Additionally, Italian right-wing parties League of the North and Five Star Movement said expansionary fiscal policies mark a pivot to supply-side economics in Italy - which would reinvigorate the nation's manufacturing, agriculture, and encourage exports. But Moody's analysts disagree. "That makes Italy vulnerable to future domestic or externally-sourced shocks, in particular to weaker economic growth," they said in a statement. The European Commission is now expecting a more in-depth review of the Italian budget for next year, with officials saying Rome must make a solid case for its rising fiscal deficits. (Source: Sputnik)

BP CEO: \$80 oil is unhealthy for the world

Oil prices at \$80 a barrel are too high and unhealthy for the world today, Bob Dudley, the chief executive of UK supermajor BP, said on the sidelines of an event on Friday.

"There's a healthy price for oil and energy and I believe that balances producing countries and consuming countries," Quartz quoted Dudley as saying on the sidelines of the conference One Young World in The Hague.

"In my mind, it's somewhere between \$50 and \$65 a barrel. The world can live with this," Dudley noted.

Emerging and developing economies like India, South Africa, or Turkey are seeing their highest-ever prices of gasoline because their currencies have rapidly depreciated against the U.S. dollar and because oil prices in dollars are high, BP's chief executive said.

Currently, oil prices are "artificially high" due to Venezuela "defying gravity" and to the U.S. sanctions on Iran, according



to Dudley, who said that once those geopolitical events subside, fundamentals will return to rule the market and prices should return back to \$60-\$65 a barrel. (Source: oilprice.com)

BP won't be joining any EU special purpose vehicle designed to keep trade with Iran flowing, Dudley stressed, noting that "I think it's full of risk."

The concerns of BP's chief executive that \$80 oil is unhealthy for the world are shared by major international organizations such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Expensive energy is back and it is threatening global economic growth, the IEA said in its Oil Market Report last week.

Also last week, the IMF slightly downgraded its projection for global growth for this year and next—at 3.7 percent, growth is now expected 0.2 percentage point lower than IMF's forecast from April this year. The key reasons for the downgrade included trade disputes, geopolitical tensions, and a weaker outlook for emerging economies due to higher oil import bills, among other factors, according to the IMF. (Source: oilprice.com)

Iraq's Luaibi reverses INOC decree, says it aims to produce 7 million bpd

Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar al-Luaibi has reversed his decision to transfer the ownership of nine state-owned oil companies from the ministry to the newly formed National Oil Company, the ministry said on Saturday.

He later told state television in an interview that Iraq hopes to produce 7 million barrels of oil a day (bpd) through the National Oil Company and to export 4 million bpd in 2019.

The reversal of the transfer decision would enable the incoming government of Prime Minister-designate Adel Abdul Mahdi to make its own decisions in the oil sector, the ministry said in a statement. Luaibi is the oil minister in an outgoing government led by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

A senior Iraqi oil official told Reuters that Abdul Mahdi had been annoyed by the original transfer decision which had been "made in a rush and without his approval."

Luaibi had issued a decree on Thursday transferring ownership of the nine state-owned oil companies, including state oil marketer SOMO, to the National Oil Company.

On the same day, Abdul Mahdi, who has the task of forming a new government after months of political deadlock following a May election, called on officials in the outgoing government to refrain from signing urgent contracts, making non-essential hires, or other key decisions.



The Iraqi government last week named Luaibi as head of the new company, which is to serve as an umbrella organization for state oil firms. Luaibi currently holds both the position of minister and that of company chief.

Parliament voted in March to set up the company, which is meant to manage Iraq's upstream operations and free up the ministry to be able to set plans and strategies for developing the sector.

In an interview with state television on Saturday night, Luaibi said Iraq hoped to export 1 million bpd through Jordan's Akaba port, without specifying a timeline.

The burning of gas produced as a by-product of oil extraction would stop by 2021, he said. The northern refinery of Baiji was brought back online and is producing 70,000 bpd, Luaibi added.

(Source: Reuters)

Norway's upstream oil output continues steep plunge in September

Norway's crude oil production plunged by 13 percent on the month in September and was down 8 percent on the year in the first nine months as technical difficulties and maintenance took their toll ahead of expected field start-ups in the next few years, figures from the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate showed Friday.

The country produced 1.30 million b/d of crude and 1.61 million b/d of liquids overall in September, continuing to fall short of the NPD's forecasts, as has happened throughout the year.

Over the first nine months, crude production was 1.48 million b/d and overall liquids output was 1.85 million b/d.

The NPD attributed September's shortfall to maintenance not accounted for in its forecasts. However, state-controlled Equinor has suffered technical problems during the year at major fields such as Oseberg, Statfjord and Troll.

Its executive vice president for Norwegian development and production, Arne Sigve Ny-lund, told S&P Global Platts in late August that production was "back on track" after technical glitches, including problems with rotating equipment at several fields.

He stuck by company guidance of 5 percent annual decline rates for its Norwegian oil and gas fields, to be offset with new fields starting up, chiefly Johan Sverdrup, which is due on stream in November 2019.



Some in the industry suspect Norway's declines reflect a lack of investment in existing fields as Equinor focuses on its flagship projects, combined with a maximizing of production during the depths of the price downturn, a problem that may put pressure on Equinor to sell stakes in mature fields.

"What you often find is in times when the oil price is low all the taps are left open so production is blasting away but there's no underlying investment in the field itself," Faroe Petroleum CEO Graham Stewart told S&P Global Platts in late August. "If you're not investing in infill wells, or debottlenecking or whatever, because you're trying to save money, then you're storing up a problem."

UK oil output has been more stable by contrast; industry group Oil & Gas UK has forecast a 4 percent increase in the country's oil and gas production this year.

(Source: Platts)

Germany sees Russia as stable energy partner

Europe should stop backing a Russia-led project to deliver natural gas to the continent, according to US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell. However, not all the European nations agree.

Earlier this week, Mitchell urged the European countries not to "deepen the energy dependence" on Russia, saying that supporting projects such as the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is totally unacceptable for US allies. According to the official, Washington is doing its best to protect Europeans from their excessive reliance on Russian energy.

The Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project is set to deliver Russian natural gas to European

consumers. The pipeline, which is set to run from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, is expected to double the existing pipeline's capacity of 55 billion cubic meters annually. Nord Stream 2 is projected to provide transit of 70 percent of Russian gas sales to the EU via the German route when it is built in 2019.

The pipe will go through the territorial waters of Finland, Sweden and Denmark. The project, led by the subsidiary of Russian energy giant Gazprom, is being implemented in cooperation with German energy firms Wintershall and Uniper, French multinational Engie, British-Dutch oil and gas giant Royal Dutch Shell, and Austrian energy company

OMV.

The White House has repeatedly slammed the pipeline, threatening to impose sanctions on the European corporations that are participating in the project. Nord Stream 2 has also been opposed by some Eastern European nations, including Ukraine and Poland.

However, construction work is well underway with Nord Stream 2 AG, the company in charge of the project, receiving the final permits from Germany, Finland and Sweden.

Germany, which currently gets around 60 percent of its natural gas imports from Russia, is not planning to give up on the project, which is set to boost the country's energy security.

"Russia is a well-valued, sure and stable partner, and I think it's very important to stick up on gas and other forms of energy," Dr. Robby Schlund, a Bundestag member for Alternative for Germany (AfD) told RT's Ruptly video news agency during the meeting between a Russian delegation and members of the German federal parliament.

"At the moment, we have four out of five of the necessary permits in the Baltic Sea. We have the time frame, we started construction and have taken all the required steps," said Ulrich Lissek, the head of Communications of Nord Stream 2.

(Source: RT)

Oilfield service companies bet on full recovery

Growing Permian drilling and production started lifting last year the revenues and profits of the world's top oilfield service providers who were badly bruised by the 2014 oil price crash.

Schlumberger, Halliburton, and Baker Hughes saw their earnings in the past few quarters lifted by the return of frenzied drilling in North America, led by the Permian basin, while international operations lagged amid slower recovery in global investments in exploration and production.

In July this year, the mood at Schlumberger and Baker Hughes in Q2 earnings was an upbeat outlook for the immediate future, with signs that the international market outside the U.S. was also on the road to recovery.

But the top oilfield service providers started warning in September that the Permian constraints would temporarily slow down activity in the most-active U.S. shale region.

Luckily for all three of them, the international business looks increasingly positive as global spending on exploration and production is beginning to recover, rising this year—albeit slightly—for the first time since 2014.

Analysts expect all three top oilfield service companies to report higher earnings for the third quarter compared to last year, but they have been cutting their projections in recent weeks due to the takeaway capacity constraints in the Permian expected to reduce drilling activity.

"In North America, lack of additional pipeline capacity in the Permian Basin is becoming an increasing constraint to production growth," Schlumberger Chairman and CEO Paul Kibsgaard said as early as in July on the Q2 earnings release.

In September, Kibsgaard said at the Barclays CEO Energy-Power Conference that the market consensus that the Permian would continue to provide 1.5 million bpd of annual production growth for the foreseeable future "is now starting to be called into question."



"In fact, so far in the third quarter, the hydraulic fracturing market has already softened significantly more than we expected in spite of the overall rig count holding up relatively well," Schlumberger's head said, but added that international E&P spending has been picking up pace in the second half of the year.

At the same conference in early September, Jeff Miller, CEO at the leader on the U.S. fracking market, Halliburton, said that in order to overcome takeaway constraints in the Permian, "some operators will re-allocate capital to other basins, some will slowdown, other will build ducts."

As early as in Q2 earnings, Halliburton had warned about a downturn in activity in North America due to budget constraints and takeaway issues.

"There has been and it's more than we expected," Miller said last month, adding that weakness in pricing in several basins plus project delays in the Middle East would impact Halliburton's Q3 earnings by between \$0.08 to \$0.10 per share.

But international markets are recovering, and this is where the top three oilfield service providers would look

for more drilling and activity.

Baker Hughes CEO Lorenzo Simonelli said at the September Barclays conference that global E&P spending is expected to grow at a healthy pace over the next three to four years.

"We are also seeing the beginnings of a recovery in the international markets. We're expecting offshore activity to see a healthy rebound as well. It will likely remain significantly below prior-cycle peak levels but at the same time we see improving activity, and importantly, more stability as we look into the next few years," Simonelli noted.

Both Baker Hughes and Halliburton see the North Sea and the Middle East as the key growth areas internationally, although Halliburton's Miller warned in July that "How much improvement and how quickly it comes will depend in large part upon commodity prices and equipment absorption."

Higher oil prices and lowered development and project costs have led to cautious optimism and measured risk-taking within the industry that is set to see an uptick in global oil investment this year, energy consultants Wood Mackenzie say.

Rystad Energy expected in May that 100 new offshore projects are likely to be sanctioned this year, compared to just 60 projects in 2017 and fewer than 40 in 2016.

The world's top oilfield service providers will be betting on international E&P spending recovery, while they are waiting for the Permian constraints to abate, probably sometime at the end of 2019.

"...while the current Permian takeaway constraints in North America should be addressed within the next 12 to 18 months, a series of reservoir- and production-related challenges is emerging in the US shale basins that could dampen the most optimistic production growth projections," Schlumberger's CEO said today in its press release on its Q3 earnings.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Asian LNG spot prices fall for 4th week on new Australian supply

Asian spot prices for liquefied natural gas dropped for a fourth week in a row, trading at their lowest in two months, amid increased supply courtesy of a new project in Australia and expectations of more from the United States.

December spot LNG fell to \$10.40 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), the lowest since mid-August. November cargoes were valued at below \$10 per mmBtu, trade sources said.

Oil prices are set for a second weekly drop amid high inventory, weighing on LNG prices as many contracts are oil-linked.

Japan's Inpex offered four spot cargoes over the second half of October through November from its giant Ichthys project in northwestern Australia, in a sign that it may be ramping up production, two industry sources said.

It was not immediately clear if the cargoes were sold by Friday, but Inpex was due to load its first LNG cargo from the long-delayed project this week after earlier selling its first condensate cargoes, sources have said.

Angola LNG and Sakhalin LNG each offered a cargo for November though details of the buyers were not immediately known.

Australia's Woodside Petroleum has also resold some of its U.S. term cargoes, an industry source said. Woodside has an agreement to buy LNG from Cheniere's planned Corpus Christi export plant on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

China eyes longer deals

Chinese buyers were still largely absent from the spot market, traders said, as they look towards longer term supplies ahead of winter.

Unipek Asia, the trading arm of Chinese oil major Sinopec, is in talks to buy more LNG from the Exxon Mobil Corp-operated Papua New Guinea project, possibly for a period of three years, sources said.

"Everyone is worried about a winter shortage," said one major LNG buyer in China, adding this is driving Chinese companies to lock in term supply ahead of winter when demand typically surges.

Chinese gas distributor ENN Energy Holdings has begun operations on the first phase of its Zhoushan liquefied natural gas import terminal, aiming to ramp up winter supplies in eastern China.

Meanwhile, commodities trader Trafigura sold a cargo for late December delivery into Japan to trading house Vitol Asia during price agency Platts' trading process on Friday, sources said.

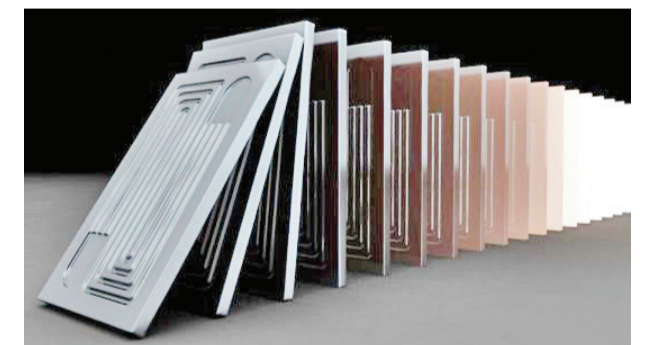
The cargo was sold on a price linked to Britain's National Balancing Point (NBP).

Oil major BP also sold a cargo for delivery into South Korea for mid-December to Vitol Asia.

(Source: Reuters)

New materials could make concentrated solar power cheaper than battery storage

Sunlight can do lots of useful things. It can make plants grow. It can allow solar panels to make electricity. And it can be used to heat stuff up to extremely high temperatures. That last one is what makes concentrated solar power possible. According to a report in Science Daily, "Concentrated solar power plants convert solar energy into electricity by using mirrors or lenses to concentrate a lot of light onto a small area, which generates heat that is transferred to a molten salt. Heat from the molten salt is then transferred to a "working" fluid, supercritical carbon dioxide, that expands and works to spin a turbine for generating electricity."



Heat exchanger for CSP

The critical elements in that process are the heat exchangers used to transfer the heat stored in the molten salt to the carbon dioxide working fluid. If the whole process could be made to operate at even higher temperatures, CSP systems could make more electricity from a given amount of sunlight.

"Storing solar energy as heat can already be cheaper than storing energy via batteries, so the next step is reducing the cost of generating electricity from the sun's heat with the added benefit of zero greenhouse gas emissions," says Kenneth Sandhage, a professor of materials engineering at Purdue University.

At the present time, those heat exchangers are made of stainless steel or nickel based alloys, but they get too soft at the desired higher temperatures and at the elevated pressure of supercritical carbon dioxide. Professor Sandhage has been collaborating with researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory to develop new materials that can be used in heat exchangers that operate at those higher temperatures. The results of their research have been published recently in the journal Nature.

The scientists looked at the materials used to make nozzles for solid fuel rocket engines and created new heat exchangers made from zirconium carbide and tungsten that can withstand the high temperature, high pressure supercritical carbon dioxide needed for generating electricity more efficiently. An economic analysis by Georgia Tech and Purdue researchers also showed that the scaled up manufacturing of these heat exchangers could be conducted at comparable or lower cost than for stainless steel or nickel alloy-based ones.

"Ultimately, with continued development, this technology would allow for large scale penetration of renewable solar energy into the electricity grid," Sandhage says. "This would mean dramatic reductions in human-made carbon dioxide emissions from electricity production." What a delicious irony that carbon dioxide—the molecule responsible for most global warming—could be used to help reduce carbon emissions from the energy generation sector. Check out the video below for more on this breakthrough research.

(Source: cleantechnica.com)

If Australia moves its embassy to Jerusalem, it could put an \$11 billion trade deal at risk



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison

By Adam Taylor

Australia's suggestion that it could follow in the footsteps of the United States and move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem has won plaudits from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But critics say the diplomatic move could have unintended consequences closer to home — risking not only the Australian government's fragile majority in Parliament but also potentially scuppering a proposed \$11 billion free trade agreement with Indonesia after years of talks.

The United States moved its embassy into a U.S. consulate building in Jerusalem in May, months after President Trump had said he would overturn decades of foreign policy and officially recognize the divided city as the capital of Israel. Trump's decision has angered many in the Muslim world. Palestinians consider east Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, as the capital of a future independent state.

Few other countries have followed the United States and moved their embassies: Guatemala and Paraguay relocated their embassies to Jerusalem, although the latter moved its embassy back to Tel Aviv in September, after the election of a new president.

But Australia may join that list: Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters that he is "open-minded" about such a move. "When sensible suggestions are put forward that are consistent with your policy positioning and in this case pursuing a two-state solution, Australia should be open-minded to this, and I am open-minded to this, and our government is open-minded to this," he said Tuesday.

In a phone call the day before, Morrison had told Netanyahu that he was considering moving the Australian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Israeli prime minister subsequently said that the move would strengthen ties between the two nations.

The White House has also told reporters that it would support Australia's move.

However, if a plan to relocate the Australian Embassy does go ahead, it may well damage relationships with other allies, including some countries far closer to Australia. Most notably, Canberra is working on a long-awaited free-trade agreement with Indonesia that has been valued at more than 16 billion Australian dollars (11 billion in U.S. dollars).

Indonesia is the world's most populated Muslim-majority nation, and it has long been supportive of the Palestinian cause. The country has no diplomatic relationship with Israel — it doesn't grant the Israeli national airline, El Al, use of its airspace, which meant that last year when Netanyahu flew to Sydney, his plane had to make a long detour.

At the same time, the country is also Australia's 13th-largest bilateral trading partner, with 2.3 percent of total trade in 2016. Negotiations for a free-trade deal — dubbed the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement — began in earnest in 2012 but have struggled for years.

Morrison, an evangelical Christian, took office in late August after a bitter party leadership battle. Like his predecessor Malcolm Turnbull, his first trip abroad was to Indonesia, where he met with President Joko Widodo and pledged to sign the free-trade deal before the end of the year.

However, the news that Australia is considering moving its embassy came as Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki visited Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, for solidarity events. At a joint news conference with Indonesia's foreign minister, Malki said that Australia is "risking trade and business relations with the rest of the world, particularly the Arab world and Muslim countries."

The Australian prime minister has played down the risks posed to the relationship with Indonesia, telling reporters Wednesday that the free-trade deal will still be signed before the year's end and that Indonesian officials had been clear that the suggestion is not of concern to them.

7 News Sydney later published accounts of WhatsApp messages from Indonesia's foreign minister to her Australian counterpart, Marise Payne, that suggested things were not so rosy. "It will slap Indonesia's face on the Palestine issue," Retno Marsudi wrote of a potential embassy move, according to the messages. "This will affect bilateral relations."

For Morrison, the controversy over the embassy comes at a tough moment domestically: His government is facing an important special election in the seat of Wentworth on Saturday. If Dave Sharma, the Liberal Party's candidate for the election, doesn't win, Morrison's governing coalition will lose its one-seat majority.

It's notable that Sharma, a former ambassador to Israel, is supporting moving the Australian Embassy to Jerusalem. About 12.5 percent of the Wentworth population is Jewish, although not all support the proposal to move the embassy. Polls suggest that Sharma is struggling in the contest for the Wentworth seat, even though it was previously considered safe.

How the embassy news has played into that is unclear, but a 2017 poll by Canberra-based Lowy Institute found that on the whole, Australians didn't feel especially warm about Israel, with an average ranking of 53 percent. That figure was the third-lowest in the poll, ahead of only Russia and North Korea — and two percentage points behind Indonesia.

(Source: The Washington Post)

What Turkey hopes to gain from Khashoggi's murder

U.S. intelligence agencies are reportedly convinced that the Saudi strongman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is ultimately responsible for Khashoggi's killing.

By Frida Ghitis

From the moment news emerged that the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi had disappeared after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, news reports have been fueled by increasingly grisly reports attributed to unnamed Turkish officials and Turkish media about how Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi regime, met his death.

By now, U.S. intelligence agencies are reportedly convinced that the Saudi strongman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, often called MBS, is ultimately responsible for Khashoggi's killing. But it is Turkey's government, through its officials and its loyal press, that has maintained an ominous, steady drip of information, each leak suggesting that ever-more-gruesome evidence of the murder — and of Saudi involvement — could pop up at any moment. Given that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has secured the loyalty of the security services (by firing or imprisoning anyone suspected of disloyalty) and of the media (by shutting down independent outlets and imprisoning critical journalists), it seems likely that he is personally overseeing Turkey's response to Khashoggi's murder. But what's he after?

For Erdogan, Khashoggi's assassination — a tragedy and an outrage by any measure — represents a perfectly timed opportunity. Turkey is facing a looming economic disaster at a time when relations are in crisis with the United States, Saudi Arabia and most other potential sources of help. In addition to contemplating a debt tsunami, Erdogan has also seen his aspirations to turn Turkey into a major regional powerhouse eroded by a series of developments in the Middle East.

Khashoggi's killing in Istanbul unexpectedly created a chance to turn around that misfortune, or to at least lessen its sting. Erdogan is not about to let it slip through his fingers. With his security services in possession of evidence that appears to link Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler to the crime, Erdogan is perfectly placed to extract concessions from the Saudis. And given that the Trump administration has built a foreign policy strategy that hinges on cooperation with MBS, and that Trump's behavior suggests he is invested in protecting the kingdom, Erdogan's leverage



Given that the Trump administration has built a foreign policy strategy that hinges on cooperation with MBS, and that Trump's behavior suggests he is invested in protecting the kingdom, Erdogan's leverage over the Saudis extends into leverage over the United States.

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Every drip of information, every report that Turkish police have a recording of the killing; that Khashoggi was tortured before he was killed; that 15 Saudis arrived and left on the day of the disappearance — every bit of news is a message to Riyadh and Washington. It says, We can cause very serious problems for you, or we can help.

Erdogan has to tread carefully. In Trump and MBS he is dealing with two powerful and vindictive leaders. That's why the information is not coming directly from Erdogan. That's why he has made conciliatory moves, publicly offering to hold a joint Turkish-Saudi investigation. In a curious coincidence, in the midst of the Khashoggi crisis, a Turkish court ordered the release of Andrew Brunson, the American pastor whose captivity in Turkey was one of the greatest irritants between Ankara and Washington. The release opens

the way to more changes in the U.S.-Turkey relationship. Trump insists the two cases are unrelated, but the timing suggests otherwise.

So what does Erdogan hope to gain from all this? The potential benefits are immense.

The most immediate matter is Turkey's economy. The lira has lost 40 percent of its value, inflation has soared to a 15-year high, and massive debt repayments are coming due in short order. In exchange for softening the tone of his criticism and going along with a diplomatic resolution to the Khashoggi crisis, Saudi Arabia might feel inclined to boost its investments in Turkey and perhaps help refinance the debt. The U.S. might help, as well. Qatar, with whom Erdogan sided in its rift with Riyadh, has agreed to help. But its \$15 billion offer amounts to less than 10 percent of the debt coming due.

By championing justice for Khashoggi, Erdogan can burnish his tarnished image. The man who crushed all dissent at home

can claim to fight for the rule of law; a country that leads the world in jailing journalists appear to spearhead the quest for justice in the killing of a journalist.

When this is all over, Erdogan, by helping MBS find a way out of the crisis, could improve his frayed ties with Saudi Arabia.

What about Washington? Ties with the U.S. are also tattered by a series of Erdogan decisions and bilateral disagreements, including the imprisonment of U.S. citizens and of Turkish employees at the U.S. Consulate; the tough behavior of Erdogan's bodyguards in Washington; and the continuing demands by Turkey that the U.S. extradite a Turkish cleric whom Erdogan blames for launching a failed coup against him. Now there's an opportunity to turn the page, improve relations and perhaps persuade the U.S. to behave differently, depending on just how much the Trump administration wants Erdogan's help on the Khashoggi matter.

One of the key strategic differences between Ankara and Washington is their view of the Syria war. Among other areas of disagreement, Turkey wants the U.S. to cut off support for Syrian Kurds. Turkey also wants the Kurds to leave the strategically important Syrian town of Manbij.

It was fascinating, then, that when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled from Riyadh to Ankara this week to discuss the Khashoggi case, Syria came up in the conversation. After Pompeo's short meeting with Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, along with Erdogan's national intelligence chief and a top presidential adviser, Cavusoglu told reporters, "We conveyed to the U.S. the importance of applying the Manbij road map." The Turks seemed happy with what they heard. "Although it was a brief meeting," Cavusoglu said, "it was useful and efficient."

In the end, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. will find a way to salvage the relationship. Turkey knows it. Erdogan knows that is a key objective in Washington's response. Because of that, he knows he is holding valuable cards. In the midst of this gruesome moment of high-stakes global intrigue and maneuvering, Turkey is positioned to emerge as one of the big winners from what remains, unquestionably, a great tragedy and an appalling misdeed.

(Source: Politico)

However, if a plan to relocate the Australian Embassy does go ahead, it may well damage relationships with other allies, including some countries far closer to Australia.

Can Libya's tribes help solve crisis?

By George Mikhail

In September, Libya's capital Tripoli was the scene of violent clashes between rival militias that killed 96 people and injured 306 others. The clashes pitted forces from the 7th Brigade against a coalition of armed brigades in Tripoli, which include the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade and the Deterrent and Intervention Joint Force of Abu Salim.

The 7th Brigade, which is mainly made up of Tarhuna tribal men, announced its affiliation with the Government of National Accord (GNA), even though the head of the GNA's Presidential Council denied this affiliation. The brigade's main goal is to put an end to the spread of armed militias in Tripoli.

During the clashes, Libya's tribes announced their support for the 7th Brigade. During the General Gathering of Libyan Cities and Tribes held in the city of Tarhuna Sept. 15, the tribes expressed their intention to eliminate armed militias and expel them from Libya, specifically from Tripoli.

The clashes came to an end Sept. 26 when a cease-fire was signed by the rival militias. However, Libyans remain concerned that such events would recur in light of the presence of armed militias and in the absence of security and stability in the country.

On Sept. 24, Al-Monitor interviewed over the phone Mawlay Qudeidi, head of the Supreme Council of the Tuareg Tribes, who represents the Tuareg tribe based in southern Libya. Around 150,000 people in the south belong to the tribe, as well as 100,000 who live across different regions of Libya. The Tuareg tribe controls the southern borders with Algeria and western Niger.

During the interview, Qudeidi talked about the situation in southern Libya, plagued by chaos and where armed militias and foreign fighters are spread, as well as illegal immigration. The interview also focused on the tribes' stance regarding the recent clashes in Tripoli and the reaction of these tribes in case new clashes recur.

The text of the interview follows:

■ What is the position of the Libyan tribes in general and the Tuareg in particular in regard to the clashes in Tripoli that ended with a cease-fire?

A: The clashes in Tripoli between armed militias are a matter of concern to all Libyans irrespective of their different backgrounds and not just those living in the city. Tripoli at the end of the day is Libya's capital, so as Libyan tribes, especially as Tuareg, we value all efforts being made in order to spare Libyans more instability. Maintaining stability in Libya starts with stability in Tripoli.

■ During the General Gathering of Libyan Cities and Tribes held on Sept. 15, you announced several steps like disbanding militias. You also gave a period of three days for that to happen, yet as soon as that period was over clashes broke out again — before they later ended. In case clashes return, will tribes have a military role in countering those militias?

A: Speaking on behalf of the Tuareg, I could tell you that



most Libyans are against militias, and this is why tribes have called for disbanding militias and confiscating their weapons. Yet it is not for tribes to play a military role. Tribes primarily have a social role in most regions, which is far from being of military nature.

■ Do tribes in Libya have the power to resolve the Libyan crisis and disband militias?

A: The different tribes and regions in Libya communicate and the spread of militias in Tripoli will be discussed. As Libyan social components, we will specify the best way to resolve this issue [eliminate the spread of armed militias in Tripoli].

Everyone should know that the issue of militias concerns all Libyans, not just one tribe. Libyans must unite against militias present in all of Libya, and specifically in Tripoli. The international community must be held accountable for the crisis because of its involvement in the events on Feb. 11, 2011, and its participation in toppling the regime of former President Moammar Gadhafi are what got Libya to where it is today. After the crisis escalated and civil war started, the international community has reduced its intervention. In other words, they are managing the crisis, but they do not want to solve it.

■ Why did the tribes express during the Sept. 15 General Gathering of Libyan Cities and Tribes their support to the 7th Brigade whose spokesman, Saad Hamali, had announced their affiliation with the GNA and whose forces fought armed militias in Tripoli in order to disband them?

A: Actually, the Tuareg sent a group of representatives to participate in that gathering. I believe that the support to the 7th Brigade resulted from learning about the details of its motives, history and battle goals. This is a very sensitive battle, and one cannot support any side without running enough background checks.

■ What role does the Supreme Council of the Tuareg Tribes have in re-establishing security in the south?

A: No one is denying the extent to which the south is suffering from lack of security. The different governments and armies in Libya have failed to impose authority and establish security in the south. This is why tribal social com-

ponents in the south play a major role in unifying positions. The Tuareg tribe has been communicating with the tribes of the south and its cities so that the south has one unified position. We will therefore be holding several meetings with tribes of the south to solve different crises, especially the security issue. We will suggest that tribes take on security and replace the government in providing security given the absence of official efforts in the south.

■ The south is suffering from the presence of foreign mercenaries. How will the tribes contribute to solving this crisis?

A: We confirm that there are armed forces from Chad, Sudanese and other rebel groups in the south of Libya. Members of Libyan tribes are suffering from the presence of such mercenaries who commit crimes such as kidnapping, theft and robbery. At first we thought that some tribes are supporting them, so we got in touch with those tribes that denied controlling such forces and giving them any support. Those mercenaries do not need any tribal support because they have heavy weapons and target all southern tribes. As tribes, we do not play any role in fighting such groups. This is the government's responsibility, but, in reality, we do not see any governmental efforts to drive those groups out of the south. Once they are out, stability would be restored. Tribes of the south are meeting in order to discuss any solutions for this crisis.

■ One of the issues faced by Tuareg members is the fact that they do not have identity cards. What is the base of this crisis and how is the council dealing with it?

A: It is true that 17,000 Tuareg families do not have identity cards, and since 2011, all procedures have been taken to submit papers proving their identity and their being of Libyan descent in order to grant them nationality. Yet governments have repeatedly delayed solving this issue. We do not understand the cause of this stalling, but it confirms the sentiment that the Tuareg tribe is being targeted because of fears of its potentially strong political representation.

The Supreme Council of the Tuareg Tribes has been fighting for this right. We have taken all measures, resorted to different official instances and formed a group to meet with Agula Saleh Issa, president of the Libyan House of Representatives, in April 2015. We explained the problem to him, and he promised to solve it. We also submitted a memorandum to Issa detailing the issue, but we haven't heard from him yet.

■ The south has been witnessing inconsistent positions from different political and military elements in Libya like the GNA based in Tripoli, the Interim Government in Bayda, the House of Representatives based in Tobruk and the Libyan National Army under Gen. Khalifa Hifter. What is the position of the Tuareg tribes on these entities?

A: Libya has many political and military entities, but they do not treat us as Libyans with rights. Our requests and services are ignored and we are marginalized on different levels, namely when it comes to lack of services in the south. ➔13

No theory explains everything: Prof. Nicholas Onuf

1 → If I study the political relations of states, which was the first thing giving the field of International Relations its status as a thing, then I am not going to study those other things—society, culture, economy, religion—to which other scholars devote their attention. At least not directly. If I am persuaded that my thing gives too little attention to those things or indeed other things happening in the world, then I and like-minded scholar will go about making a new thing—for example, international political economy, or religion in international relations, or international environmental relations, or technology and international relations. Only then will anyone begin to worry about the theoretical justification for any one of these new things.

In my view, the formation of an autonomous domain of study devoted to the central place of religion in the relations of states is now well underway. A number of scholars for whom I have great respect have turned their attention to this new, self-evidently important thing. Of course, they are responding to what they see happening in the world—they see the 'jointness' of religion and politics in society, including international society, and so they also see that the old way of carving up the world effectively denies the importance of religion and politics as conjoined phenomena and thus a thing about which to theorize anew. This latter undertaking is exceedingly challenging. It will take time and much discussion, not least because of the many 'varieties of religious experience' (recall William James' lectures under this title, delivered in 1901-2 and central to the formation of religion as a field of study in modern universities).

Some argue that if the theory of International Relations means a constitutive and critical theory, then bringing religion into International Relations is possible, but if the theory of International Relations is an explanatory-empirical theory, then theorizing religion in International Relations is not possible and, in fact, there is no theological positivist theory in International Relations. What is your opinion?

A: Exponents of conventional International Relations theory come in two varieties. Those who are known as realists limit their studies to the political relations of states and define politics in a narrow sense; they work within a domain of inquiry they allege to have been carved out by Machiavelli and Hobbes, in which issues of security are paramount and conflict pervasive. Many but not all realists are also convinced that within the field's well-defined boundaries, theory is well-settled and the task at hand is empirical assessment of the way states actually relate to each other in the kinds of situations in which they are likely to find themselves. These situations have typically been defined in geographical terms (again, through a process of carving things up), more recently further

defined in technological terms, and most recently in ideological terms. This last move by realists enables them to bring religion into the world as they see it.

The second variety of conventional theorists in the field of International Relations are liberals. They define politics in a wider sense than realists do, emphasizing well-being as an antidote to insecurity, draw on Locke, Kant and Mill for inspiration, and are less concerned with a single, powerful theory by which to limit their substantive concerns and investigative procedures. They are less likely than realists to include all possible situations within a single frame of reference, and they are drawn to situate themselves at the conjunction of fields of study, such as international political economy, or in what they see as emergent 'issue areas' such as universal human rights. Many of the scholars who have recently 'discovered' religion in international relations are liberals.

Among unconventional theorists with constitutive and critical sensibilities, the situation is more complicated. These scholars come in several widely divergent varieties, even if conventional theorists treat them as a whole and refuse to take them seriously. Insofar as we can generalize, they tend to define politics broadly—so broadly as to suggest that everything social is political. They tend to be normatively engaged and highly critical of the modern world as they see it to have become; Marx looms in the background. They take philosophical premises seriously and draw on diverse, even irreconcilable intellectual resources—Nietzsche, Freud, Weber, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Derrida, Habermas and Bourdieu, among many others—to repudiate positivist social science and the way the social sciences have carved up the world. They recognize that the range of religious experience throughout the world is itself an immanent critique of modernity's premises, at least some of which reflect Christian attitudes about the way the world should be understood.

In my own case, I have adopted a constitutive, critical stance, for which I garnered support, not just by selectively plundering social theory as it has developed in the last 150 years, but also by reaching back to antiquity and especially to Aristotle, for inspiration. In doing so, I have come to think that theorizing in the field of International Relations is unduly self-limiting, that the field itself is an artificial, historically contingent construct that has long since outlived its usefulness, and that the most appropriate frame of reference for the study of states and their relations is the unfolding of what we (in the modern world) call the modern world—a distinctive social experience originating in Europe five centuries ago and now affecting the entire globe.

I develop the last of these claims in my recent book called *The Mightie Frame: Epochal Change and the Modern World*. In this book, I start where



Michel Foucault did in his magnificent book, now fifty years old, called, in its English translation, *The Order of Things*, by asking, what is it possible to think? Foucault held that shifting conditions of thought mark epochal change in the modern world, and I argue that the relation between conditions of possible thought and what I call conditions of rule constitute a 'mightie frame' (in the words of John Milton, a 17th century English poet) for modernity's trajectory over several centuries. In my book, I specifically distinguish between faith and ways of thinking, and I devote myself only to the latter.

people think, and these epochal waves have had significant effects on conditions of rule (and the some extent, the other way around). By contrast, the mighty frame linking faith and rule is subject to large, enduring differences in the way people have interpreted articles of faith. Interpretive castes emerge, and so do procedures for dealing with deviants. As rival interpretations consolidate, they show a strong tendency to reinforce rival centers of rule.

In today's world, where an international society superintends and reproduces conditions of modern rule, these rival centers of authoritative interpretation

religion is not conflict with the International Relations theory stemming from modernity?

A: Gillespie takes issue with what he calls 'the conventional wisdom,' 'the self-congratulatory story,' that modernity 'is a secular realm in which man replaces God as the center of existence.' This is indeed the impression most readers carry away from reading Foucault's *The Order of Things*. Gillespie's important book seeks to put religion back into the story. In my opinion, however, scholars typically do acknowledge the importance of Christianity in the rise of the modern world. They document the relentless

are framed only and fully by tradition. Although this is rarely said, tradition is modernity's 'other': to be celebrated on ritualized occasions, ignored, mocked, feared, stigmatized, or turned into kitsch and commercialized. In short, faith nurtures tradition; modernity makes faith mildly embarrassing; we moderns are enjoined to keep faith private and tradition in check. When we do, so we open our minds to new possibilities—new ways to think, new ways to make things and make them desirable, new ways to live, new and better ways to rule and be ruled.

The flaw in this way of thinking is obvious. What is celebrated as new soon becomes old news and then is either forgotten or turned into an ersatz tradition. As Marx and Engels put it in *The Communist Manifesto*, 'All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned.' Nothing is certain. Resources are mobilized, dispensed, turned into trash. No one seems to be in control, though some people are benefiting far more than others. Anxiety reigns. Lacking faith, all too reliant on machines, people are feckless in their personal relations. No wonder they revert to the old ways, express discredited attitudes, look for something to believe in. Religion for some, nostalgia for others. Most of all, they seek a stable position in society such as tradition always offered—a status order denominated in the secular signs and symbols of modern life and indemnified by faith in a profane order somehow made sacred. Their dignity assured, they do what they can.

Some argue that the current International Relations theory cannot explain some of the current phenomena of international relations and we need a religious theory of International Relations, especially with regard to religious issues. What is your opinion? In general, is theorizing Religion in International Relations feasible?

A: As I have been saying, religion is not the issue. At least it is not the most compelling issue if we make modern world, and not international relations, our frame of reference. Then faith in its relation to rule is a more feasible way to theorize about the predicaments of our time. Secular modernity does not scorn religion as such, but it scorns tradition, from which it can never escape. Faith comes in many varieties and many of these are profane.

If theorizing Religion in International Relations is possible, can this religious theory in International Relations explain all the unresolved issues and problems?

A: No theory explains everything. Different issues and problems call for different theories; given the varieties of religious experience and complexities of international relations, we should hope for a variety of theories. Some issues and problems are intractable in practice, even when we have formulated theories that plausibly explain what is going on.

I have come to think that theorizing in the field of International Relations is unduly self-limiting, that the field itself is an artificial, historically contingent construct that has long since outlived its usefulness, and that the most appropriate frame of reference for the study of states and their relations is the unfolding of what we (in the modern world) call the modern world—a distinctive social experience originating in Europe five centuries ago and now affecting the entire globe.

On reflection, I might concede that this is a shortcoming of my book, not to mention Foucault's book and most of the scholarly literature on the rise of the modern world. If I were now to write a sequel or addendum to my book, I might ask: What is it impossible not to think? This question would enable me to formulate another, perhaps even mightier frame. On the one hand, it would point to the necessary conditions of faith manifest in any society, including today's international society of states. On the other hand, it would link those conditions to the conditions of rule also operating in any given society.

As I have already intimated, modernity's might frame has been subject to massive, episodic changes in the way

dominate some states and divide others, prompt a good deal of posturing and some measure of violence, and provoke the contempt of states and peoples waving the banners of modernity. The latter would be well-advised to remember the extent to which the same dynamics afflicted early modern societies and still operate not very far below the surface of these same societies.

Some scholars such as Michael Allen Gillespie in the book *The Theological Origins of Modernity* believe that modernity was not initially against religion, and in later years, as a result of social, cultural and political conditions, it has led to secularism. So based on this conception, religion is not conflict with modernity, so can it be said that

effort to prevail over other faiths. They emphasize recurring struggles over interpretation. They consider the unplanned consequences of contested authority and the abuse of privilege. Not least they show how rival centers for interpreting Christian faith effectively precipitated the emergence of a society of states. The Thirty Years' War, settled in Westphalia in 1648, is but one chapter in that story.

There is, however, another way to look at what makes the modern world so distinctive and perhaps so dynamic—one that brings faith back in the picture. To the extent that modern thinkers separate knowledge (as broadly provisional) and beliefs (as deeply certain), they relegate the latter to tradition in their own world, or they assume that all other worlds

Riyadh's childish narrative of Khashoggi's demise

1 → To keep media attention away from Mohammed bin Salman, the House of Saud has created fabricated and the childish narratives, and the Saudi prosecutor's remark is nothing more than a ridiculous ruse to mislead the public.

The overall content and ambiguity of the statement

A number of questions have been raised regarding the statement issued by the Saudi Arabian prosecutor's office, most notably its ambiguous content, with no details. The statement doesn't point out why Khashoggi was going to the Saudi consulate, as well as the cause of the conflict in the building.

In addition, the statement also does not say why 15 Saudi intelligence officials were at the consulate building at the time Khashoggi was there. Of course, it is obvious that the team had gone to the consulate to execute the MBS's order against Khashoggi.

The story behind the 15 security member team Saudi Arabia's prosecutor's office also did not address what happened to Khashoggi after his murder, or where his body is. This untold fact can also suggest that the reports of mutilation of the body and its placement in various pieces of luggage was true. The body was taken out of the embassy by the team afterwards, in pieces.

The other issue here is why after three weeks Saudi officials decided to reveal the secret behind the killing of Khashoggi? How could the Saudi Consulate officials, including the Saudi Consul General who was at the time of the incident in the building, have been unaware of such a problem? No one in his right mind can believe such lies.

Wasting time to win alliance support Saudi Arabia is a country with high level of tyranny and dictatorship and is governed by the power of the Saudi family. But no one believes that a crime at this level also takes



place in the consulate in Istanbul without the knowledge of senior officials. The upshot could be regime change.

Undoubtedly, the main reason behind the failure of the Saudis to reveal the secret of the killing for weeks was the necessity of making up a false narrative about the incident.

Naturally, Saudi officials need the support of their allies in their narrative of Khashoggi's murder, especially the United States. Thus, they took three weeks to receive support from their allies prior to presenting this narrative to the public. U.S. President Donald Trump has fully supported the childish and ridiculous statement of the Saudi Attorney General. Receiving \$100 million from Riyadh can shut the mouth of the US president.

Public opinion against Saudi Arabia The House of Saud is now left in a new crisis. The ridiculous narrative of Riyadh has not been received well by the public and the media in various parts of the world and they have described the narrative as highly questionable and dubious.

In line with that, the New York Times wrote: "Saudi Arabia lies about the killing of the Khashoggi are quite obvious and unbelievable. If Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman fails to take responsibility for the killing

of Khashoggi, this will be a green light for him. Bin Salman had already denied responsibility for the abduction of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri and keeping eight million Yemeni people hungry."

The Washington Post also wrote: "Audio tapes released on Khashoggi's murder would make it difficult for the White House to accept Saudi Arabia's statement in pretending that the killing of Khashoggi was a mere incident. The CIA officials have listened to recordings of Turkish officials saying they have reasons to believe that Khashoggi's body has been mutilated."

Fake narratives in Riyadh's foreign policy Amnesty International announced on Saturday that Saudi neutrality is a matter of inquiry into the killing of Jamal Khashoggi. The non-governmental organization said in a statement that Amnesty International and other human rights institutions are calling for is the UN's impartial investigations to reveal the truth and enforce justice.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on illegal executions stated that Saudi Arabia's explanations for the arbitrary murder of Saudi journalist Khashoggi are not logical and rational. He added that no government should accept Saudi Arabia's statements or believe that they are conducting research in this regard. "We need a credible and transparent investigation to identify the killers of Khashoggi," the United Nations official said.

To wrap up, experience has illustrated that Riyadh authorities always ignore the wisdom of the public, creating childish and ridiculous narratives to cover up their crimes. The Saudi prosecutor's statement on the murder of Khashoggi is even a reminder of the false narrative of the Riyadh authorities about the shooting around the Al-Khazami Royal Palace; an incident that Riyadh alleges involved a toy drone over the palace.

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Documents Receiving Method	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">Closing date</th> <th style="width: 70%;">Days after the last time of Purchasing 14</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="font-weight: bold;">Address</td> <td>Hall No. 107, 1st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Closing date	Days after the last time of Purchasing 14	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569
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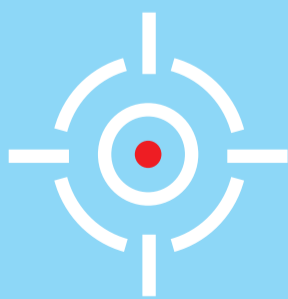
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Herpes may account for 50 percent of Alzheimer's cases

The herpes virus could account for at least half of Alzheimer's cases, according to a new review of the findings of three recent studies examining links between Alzheimer's and herpes.

Infection with the herpes simplex virus may boost the likelihood of developing Alzheimer's, researchers suggest.

The new paper, published in the *Frontiers in Ageing Neuroscience* journal, also suggests that antiviral drugs may reduce the risk of senile dementia — which is mostly caused by Alzheimer's disease — among people who have severe cases of herpes.

Herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV1) is the type of herpes that results in cold sores.

HSV1 is a common virus, and the majority of people will have contracted it by the time they reach old age.

However, the virus remains permanently in the body and cannot be decisively removed either by the body's natural defense mechanisms or by drugs.

The virus is inactive most of the time, but when a person has HSV1, they may find that flare-ups occur when they are stressed or sick, resulting in characteristic blisters.

Medical News Today have reported on several studies this year alone that have provided evidence of a connection between Alzheimer's and herpes.

In June, we looked at a study in which postmortem tests on brain tissue support a mechanistic link between Alzheimer's and the herpes viruses HHV-6A and HHV-7.

And in July, we brought you news on a study that found the use of antiherpetic medication may dramatically reduce dementia risk.

■ 'Strong evidence' links herpes with dementia

Study author Professor Ruth Itzhaki, from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, found in previous studies that cold sores caused by HSV1 are more prevalent among people that carry a gene variant called APOE-e4, which may increase a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's.

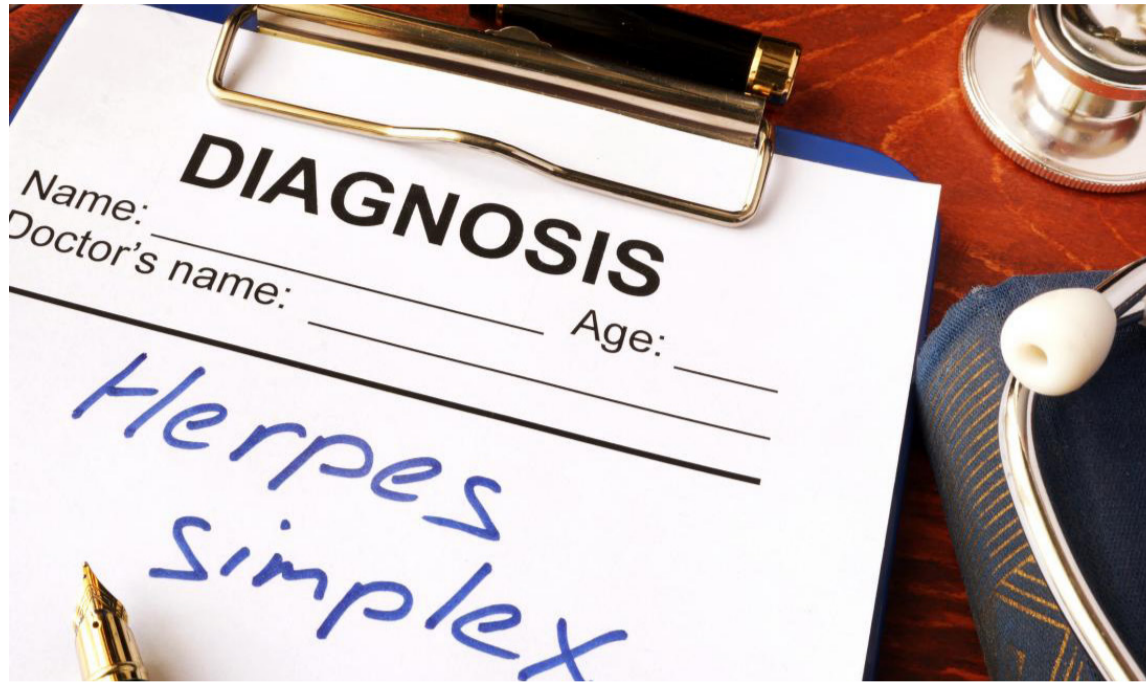
"HSV1 could account for 50 percent or more of Alzheimer's disease cases," she states.

"Our theory is that in APOE-e4 carriers, reactivation is more frequent or more harmful in HSV1-infected brain cells, which as a result accumulate damage that culminates in development of Alzheimer's."

For this review, she looked at three recent studies on the relationship between Alzheimer's and herpes or chickenpox that analyzed population data from Taiwan, a country which enrolls almost all citizens in the National Health Insurance Research Database.

New research pinpoints the psychiatric symptoms that may indicate early-stage Alzheimer's.

Because this database is so comprehensive in collecting health data from the Taiwanese population, it has become



Study author Professor Ruth Itzhaki, from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, found in previous studies that cold sores caused by HSV1 are more prevalent among people that carry a gene variant called APOE-e4, which may increase a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's.

an important resource for researchers who are interested in examining the relationships between microbial infections and diseases.

Itzhaki says that these studies provide "striking" evidence that people who have herpes viruses are at a much higher risk of developing senile dementia.

Also, the results of these studies suggest that the use of antiviral medication may result in "a dramatic decrease" in dementia risk.

■ 'Findings justify use' of herpes drugs

However, researchers need to conduct further studies to confirm that HSV1 causes Alzheimer's. So far, these studies can only show that there is a relationship between the two conditions.

Despite this, Itzhaki believes that the data so far supports

the case of using antiviral drugs to deter Alzheimer's.

"Considering that over 150 publications strongly support an HSV1 role in Alzheimer's," she says, "these Taiwan findings greatly justify usage of antiherpes antivirals — which are safe and well-tolerated — to treat Alzheimer's disease."

"They also incentivize the development of an HSV1 vaccine, which would likely be the most effective treatment," the researcher adds.

Itzhaki says she would like to now study dementia rates among people who have mild HSV1 or mild genital herpes because the findings from the studies based on the Taiwanese data only examine the link between dementia and severe HSV1 and chickenpox infections.

(Source: Medical News Today)

What's the right amount of sleep?

Seems that you can get too much -- as well as too little -- of a good thing when it comes to sleep.

In what's billed as the world's largest sleep study, too little or too much sleep can impair your brain, researchers report.

The study included more than 40,000 people worldwide who completed an online survey and a series of tests of mental abilities such as reasoning, memory and verbal skills.



Those who slept an average of seven to eight hours a night did better than those who got more or less sleep a night, preliminary results show. About half of the participants said they typically slept less than 6.3 hours a night.

The researchers noted a number of surprising findings. Most people who slept four hours or less performed as if they were almost nine years older, and the amount of sleep associated with the best test results was the same for all ages.

Reasoning and verbal abilities were two of the mental skills most strongly affected by sleep, while short-term memory was relatively unaffected by sleep patterns, the researchers said.

There was some evidence that even a single night's sleep can affect thinking abilities. Participants who slept more than usual the night before taking the tests did better than those who slept their usual amount or less.

The study was published Oct. 9 in the journal *Sleep*.

"We really wanted to capture the sleeping habits of people around the entire globe. Obviously, there have been many smaller sleep studies of people in laboratories, but we wanted to find out what sleep is like in the real world," said study co-author Adrian Owen, a researcher in Cognitive Neuroscience and Imaging at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

"People who logged in gave us a lot of information about themselves. We had a fairly extensive questionnaire and they told us things like which medications they were on, how old they were, where they were in the world and what kind of education they'd received because these are all factors that might have contributed to some of the results," Owen explained in a university news release.

Study lead author Conor Wild, a research associate in Owen's lab, said, "We found that the optimum amount of sleep to keep your brain performing its best is seven to eight hours every night, and that corresponds to what the doctors will tell you need to keep your body in tiptop shape, as well."

(Source: WebMD)

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4000-3000-5000-4000-1000
sq.m, full, reasonable price

FOR: EMBASSY/COMPANY

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

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

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

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

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

Iran provides telecom infrastructure during Arbaeen

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — Iran provides infrastructure for 8 million connections simultaneously per minute through cellphones for the Arbaeen pilgrims, Telecommunication Infrastructure Company announced, Mehr reported.



There is no problem for Iranian pilgrims for calling Iran's numbers in this way, an official with the company Sohrab Aqbayat announced. The Iran-Iraq borders of Mehran, Shalamchah and Chazabeh have already equipped with good infrastructure for services in telecom, data and internet, he said.

Due to high rate of foreign exchange in Iran, the talk tariff increases in recent months however Iran applied the previous talk tariff from October 12 to November 11 for Arbaeen pilgrims, he said.

Aqbayat also talked about two balloons provided by the company at the borders of Mehran and Khosravi, which offer free WiFi services to pilgrims.

Previous week, the Information and Communication Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi announced that Iranian internet companies also provides free WiFi for Arbaeen trekkers in ten spots from Najaf to Karbala.

Moreover, free WiFi will be provided at the Hazrat Zahra Courtyard at the Imam Hussein shrine in Karbala, he said.

The telecommunication capacity doubled between two countries in comparison to the past year, Azari Jahromi declared.

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).

SOCIALLY SAFE

Safety tips for call recording services

A number of websites have sprung up offering call recording services, whereby calls you make to an organization can be recorded and stored, so that you can prove what was said in the conversation in the event of disputes.

Always dial banks and other organizations you are having confidential conversations with from the authentic number on their correspondence, genuine website or banking apps.

Ask yourself why you would want a confidential call recorded. Write down the details of the call, and make a note of the person you are speaking to.



You dial a specific number allocated to a bank or other organization you wish to contact and are put through to that organization so that you can make the call in the normal way. However, the call is recorded by the call recording service. You can subsequently access the recording on request on the call recording company's website.

The numbers typically begin with 083 or 084, and appear high up in Google and other search engine lists because the call recording company has paid for an enhanced listing. This seems to be the case particularly when the number is searched from a mobile device (smartphone or tablet), although it also occurs when using your computer.

The risks

- The content of your recorded call could contain confidential information (for example, security questions) which could potentially be used to commit crimes including fraud, identity theft and/or impersonation.

- Your call could cost considerably more via the call recording service, than it would to contact the organization directly.

- You may think you are calling the organisation direct because the number appears high up in search engine results.

- The recording of your call may take up to 30 days for you to access – a long time if you are trying to recall the conversation or settle a dispute.

- The recording of your call may not be available at all.
- You could be using an unregulated service.

Avoiding issues

- Do not assume that an organization's contact phone number you find from a search engine is the correct one, even if you are in a hurry to get through.

- Always contact your bank or other organization via the number on their website or correspondence you know to be authentic. You will also find your bank's number on the back of your bank card.

- If you are using a mobile phone, you can easily get your bank's phone number from your bank's mobile banking app.

- Err on the side of caution when clicking on a phone number which pops up from using a search engine, as there is a chance it may be one of these call recording services or a completely fraudulent number.

(Source: getsafeonline.org)

ICT Ministry seeks academic network for digital transformation

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Ministry plans to boost network amongst the Iranian universities in order to develop digital transformation in the country, the ICT minister said on Saturday, Mehr reported.

He made the remarks in Tehran on Saturday during the inauguration ceremony of the Amir Kabir Tower, which houses 123 startups and knowledge-based companies at the Amirkabir University of Technology.

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said that many universities urge for Internet of Things (IoT) centers and the ministry is reviewing their requests.

"However we believe that the academic activities should be done as a network and all universities should cooperate with each other," he said.

There are different parameters in the field of digital economy and each university can offer services in a specific section, he explained.

The ICT Ministry eyes the digitalization in Iran in near future, he said.

Payam Satellite ready to launch

In his speech, Azari Jahromi pointed to the remote sensing satellite, Payam, which has already manufactured by the university.

The satellite, which will be used for agriculture management, is ready to launch by the ministry, he said.

According to an agreement with the agriculture ministry, the satellite capture images for crop area in order to efficient agriculture management, he explained.

In early October, the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) Director Morteza Barari announced that three Iranian domestically-made satellites will launch into space during the current Iranian calendar year (to be ended on March 20, 2019).

He named the Dousti satellite of the Sharif University of Technology, Payam of the Amirkabir University Payam, which will be placed into the orbit at 500 kilometers above the earth's surface.

The university also cooperate with the ICT Ministry in other fields of supercomputers, digital economy and cyber safety, he said.

He also announced that the ministry is providing Iran Digital Document, which is an official step to have a digitalized Iran.



ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi (R) and Amir Kabir University of Technology chancellor Seyyed Ahmad Motamedi attend the Amir Kabir Technology Tower inauguration ceremony on Saturday

IAU to establish schools on nanotech nationwide



TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — The Islamic Azadi University (IAU) is to establish schools for nanotechnology across the country, IAU caretaker Mohammad Mehdi Tehrani announced on Sunday, ISNA reported.

As the major non-governmental private university system in Iran, which is active in the field of education as well, the IAU tries to develop nanotechnology by establishment of the schools in near future, he said.

The IAU also has a school network in the country under the name of the Sama Organization of Iran.

The project is supported by the Iran Nanotechnology Initiative Council.

Early September, Tehrani announced that the IAU plans to establish 40 innovation centers in different branches across the country until the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2019).

Iran's first researches in the field of nanotechnology started in 2000 and with publishing 9 articles, the country achieved the rank of 52 in that year.

Recognizing the great importance of nanotechnology, Iranians have had boosted researches in the field year on year.

NLP system provided for passengers at IKA



TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — A smart service system for passengers was launched at the Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKA) during a ceremony on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The system, which provides 40 services, is based on the natural language processing (NLP), the Imam Khomeini Airport City Managing Director Shahram Adamnejad announced.

The NLP concerned with the interactions between computers and human (natural) languages, in particular how to program computers to process and analyze large amounts of natural language data.

The system provides answers for 90 percent of the questions proposed by the passengers in their own language, he elaborated.

The flight status, travel ban data, departure tax payment, foreign exchange rate, lost and found, hotel reservation, weather forecast and smart navigation and are some of the services provided by the system, he explained.

The system is developed by an Iranian startup, he explained.

All International flights in Tehran are currently served by Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport.

SEO tips for using https protocol on the site

As you know, Google does not usually disclose the factors that it uses to rank a site. That is why a lot of people were surprised when it announced that it was paying special attention to websites that use the https protocol.

You should be aware that the https protocol is not similar to other rating factors and its implementation has its own complexity and may even require some risk at times. Currently, sites and webmasters are increasingly using the https protocol because they are seeing different benefits.

Is using https only good for Google or it really has other benefits to your website? In this article, we are going to examine the impact of https on the SEO site to find out what benefits this protocol will bring to you.

Benefits of using https on-site SEO

In addition to the security provided by the https protocol, the use of the https protocol has many advantages that marketers can take advantage of.

More referral data

Each time traffic moves from a secure website with the https protocol to a non-secure website (ie, http), important referral data is eliminated. This traffic is displayed in the Google Analytics report as "Direct". This situation is not so interesting, because you do not know where this traffic came from.

For example, if you use the http protocol for your website and the traffic that you receive from sites with the https protocol is displayed in the Direct section.

Fortunately, there is a simple solution. Use the https protocol on your website to save your referrer information securely. Even if the referring website uses the http protocol, you will still have access to this information.

As day-by-day, more websites are implementing this change, the importance of moving from http to https is also increasing.

The impact of https on improving site rankings

On the other hand, Google has long said it considers the use of the https protocol as a positive rating in the ranking of websites, but on the other hand, we know that Google affects nearly 200 factors in ranking sites. Therefore, you probably will not feel the impact of https on the SEO site objectively, especially if your website is ranked well.

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Site use https protocol

Indeed, the latest research on the Search Metrics site

suggests that the use of the https protocol has no recognizable advantage in SEO and does not improve site rankings. This means that, like many ranking signals, there is no way to distinguish this effect.

Because of this, do not expect miracles from https. If you are considering improving your website ranking, there are dozens of other things that have a lot more impact on SEO.

Many people believe that https is only useful for websites that have passwords and sensitive content, but that is not all right. Even ordinary websites that have boring content can also benefit from SSL/https encryption.

The https protocol ensures your site security in many ways:

- The https protocol ensures that the website and server are exactly the ones the user is supposed to connect to.

- Because https prevents third-party access to user and server connectivity, it prevents hacker attacks and makes it easier for visitors to use the website.

- The https protocol encrypts all communications, including URLs. It protects information such as site visits and bank card numbers.

- Suggestion: If the transfer to the https protocol is logical for your business, be sure to make the change. Trust and security will have a small impact on the rating of your website. Therefore, the impact of https on SEO will be valuable to you.

Challenges to using https protocol

Moving the entire website from http to https means transferring a lot of items! There are, of course, many details that might be missing out on this process. Here are some of the things that might happen during this time:

- Did you block important URLs in your robots.txt file?
- Can you link your Canonical tags to wrong URLs?

- Does your website cause browser apps to warn users to escape from your site?

These problems, however rare, are still coming. It is better to do the job with great care!

Speed problems

Because https requires more server-to-server connectivity than http, it has the potential to reduce the speed of your website, especially if your site has already been slow. Keep in mind that speed alone is a determining factor in website rankings.

Fortunately, the good news is that if you adhere to important tips on building your website, your site will be fast enough to cope with https. New https-like technologies like SPDY give you the opportunity to speed up your site more than ever.

Many webmasters spend from \$8 to top a year for their SSL certificates. This amount may not be available for large websites, but for smaller sites, it may be significant.

With a little search on the Internet, you can see the cost of different SSLs.

Everything is not ready for https

Sometimes, all conditions for working with https are not provided. Old online apps may still be having problems with https. The fact is that the whole world is moving to SSL type encryption, but this process has some barriers. For example, if you use Google AdSense on your website, it is possible that your ads and your earnings will be in trouble.

The number of sites using https is increasing. Based on the 2014 BuiltWith research, among the top 10,000 top-ranked websites in the world, it is about 4.2%, and only 1.9% of the top-of-the-world sites are roaming users to SSL/HTTPS by default on all pages.

Which SSL certifications are the best?

Companies offer a variety of SSL services and certifications, but all of these types fall into two broad categories:

- In terms of ranking ratings, it is currently not very important what type of certificate you use. Google analyst John Mueller says the company does not care what kind of SSL your site uses, but this may change in the future.

- In terms of security and user experience, the type of certificate you use can be effective. If you put yourself in place of the user, you can imagine how the impact of having different types of https protocols in the site address bar can affect the user feelings.

SEO checklist to keep rating in search results

- Make sure all elements of your site use https, including widgets, javascript, CSS files, images, content provider networks and more.

- Use 301 redirect to redirect all http addresses to https. This is a trivial matter for many SEO experts, but it is very important. In many cases, temporary 302 redirect will accidentally lead to the site home page.

- Make sure all Canonical tags point to https URLs.

- Use Relative URLs whenever necessary. In the future, we will explain these categories of URLs.

- Rewrite the internal code links (whatever they are) to refer to https. This refers to the http version and the reliance on 301 redirect.

- Register your https site on Google Webmaster Tools and Bing Webmaster.

- Use the Fetch and Render function in webmaster tools to make sure Google crawler crawlers can log in and check your website well.

(Source: startupik.com)

New data on how magma builds up before a catastrophic supereruption occurs

Taupo is resting now, and for that we should all be very grateful.

The highly active Taupo Volcanic Zone, situated in New Zealand's North Island, produced history's most recent supereruption, unleashing some 530 cubic kilometers of fiery magma upon Earth's surface.

For context, what's widely regarded as the most destructive volcanic eruption in U.S. history – the Mount St. Helens eruption of 1980 – only produced about 1 cubic kilometer. There is no comparison.

But in the lead-up to the devastating Oruanui supereruption in New Zealand, the Taupo Volcanic Zone produced a series of lesser explosions, spewing out seven smaller (but still massively powerful) eruptions over a period between 350,000 and 240,000 years ago.

■ Lingering after-effects

By studying the lingering after-effects of these events many thousands of years later, scientists are closer to understanding what feeds a supervolcano's supereruption – or perhaps, more accurately, what doesn't.

The study, led by researchers from Vanderbilt University and Michigan Tech, shows how successive, frequent eruptions at volcanic calderas fundamentally change the magma activity hidden inside supervolcanoes.

"This massive outpouring of magma essentially drains the magmatic system over a relatively short period of time," says Michigan Tech volcanologist Chad Deering.

"However, following this activity, new magma rapidly ascends within the crust and



primes it at shallow depths only to feed more large eruptions."

Led by volcanologist Guilherme Gualda from Vanderbilt University, Deering and fellow researchers studied layers of pumice visible in road cuts and other outcrops throughout the Taupo Volcanic Zone, measuring the amount of crystals in the samples they extracted.

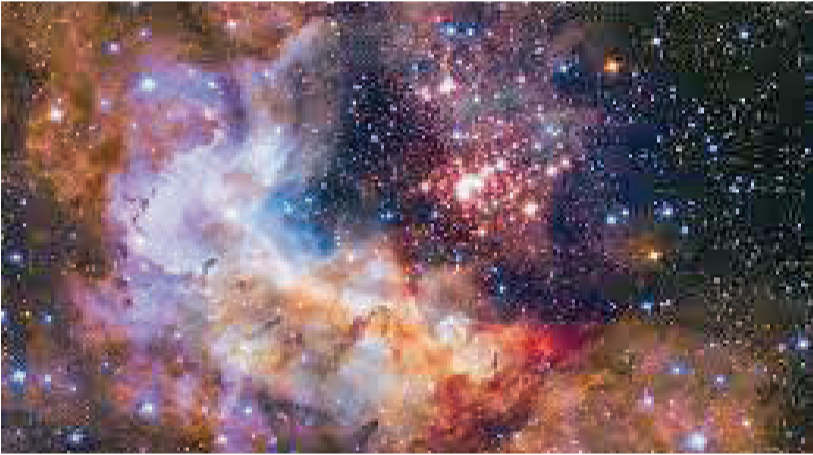
The results suggest that after each successive eruption in the series leading up until 240,000 years ago – which each produced 50 to 150 cubic kilometers of magma – new magma deposits actually moved closer to the surface, climbing what the researchers characterize as a "crustal ladder".

"As the system resets, the deposits become shallower," Gualda explains.

The "crust is getting warmer and weaker,

While these events occur only very, very rarely, they're considered global disasters waiting to happen – the kind of nightmare scenario NASA estimates could be worse than a giant asteroid hitting the planet.

How the Hubble unlocked the universe



As engineers and technicians work diligently to diagnose and develop a solution (at best) or work around (at worst) the recent gyroscope issues in the Hubble Space Telescope, it gives us a moment to check in and reflect on some of its greatest feats of science. Don't worry, that great observatory in the sky isn't going anywhere anytime soon (as much as we would like an upgrade or replacement), so we can confidently look forward to many more years of astronomical greatness.

But the Hubble has been running for almost three decades now; what has it contributed to the sum total of human knowledge of the universe?

Measuring far away distances to far away things in space is no easy task. It turns out that saying something pithy like the "Andromeda Galaxy is about 2.5 million light years away" is actually really hard to work out in the back end. Modern astronomical measurements rest on a set of overlapping, interlocking techniques that work steadily outwards to ever-greater distances all the way from the moon to the edge of the observable Universe.

One of the key anchors in this so-called "cosmic distance ladder" (because it's like a ladder of distances to the cosmos) is a strange astronomical object known as Cepheid variables. Named for the kingly constellation where they were first discovered, these stars have a very peculiar, and very useful property: they pulse.

Over the course of a few days, these stars

will steadily grow brighter and dimmer, cycling through in a regular, repeatable, reliable pattern. And in the early 1900's a wonderfully gifted astronomer by the name of Henrietta Swan Leavitt discovered that these Cepheid variables aren't just boringly variable – they're interestingly variable.

■ Known as the luminosity

There's a very curious relationship between how quickly these stars cycle brighter/dimmer and how intrinsically bright they are (in the astronomy jargon this is known as the luminosity).

And if you know how bright something is, you can calculate the distance. Think about it for just a little bit with me to realize just how awesome that is. Go out tonight and look at a random star. How far away is it? Take a random guess. Look for a brighter star. Is that brighter star brighter because it's closer? Or is it brighter because... it's just, you know, brighter? It's a tough puzzle that troubled even titans of thought like Newton.

But if you knew the luminosity (the actual brightness) of those stars, then you could know for sure which one was further and which one was closer.

Cepheid variable stars have a stupendously useful property: their rate of pulsation is directly correlated with their true brightness. That true brightness can be compared to their apparent brightness on the sky, giving us a way to estimate their distance.

(Source: universetoday.com)

Ticks are killing an alarming number of moose thanks to climate change: research



The horrifying effects of climate change are evident seemingly everywhere you look. Now, a report from researchers at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) suggests that climate change favorable to a parasite is impacting the moose population in New England.

According to their findings, winter ticks that gorge themselves on a moose's blood by the tens of thousands during the fall and winter were responsible for killing roughly seven in 10 moose calves over the course of the three-year study.

The researchers, who have been studying the calves in New Hampshire and western Maine since 2014, published their findings in the Canadian Journal of Zoology in September, with UNH publishing a press release on the research this week.

During each of those three years, the team examined 179 radio-marked young moose for parasites and their condition over the course of a four-month period. Of those calves they screened, 125 – or nearly 70 percent – of the moose calves died. The researchers suspect this is primarily because of the winter tick.

■ The poster child

The "iconic moose is rapidly becoming the new poster child for climate change in parts of the Northeast," Pete Pekins, a professor of wildlife ecology at UNH and a lead author on the study, said in a statement. "Normally anything over a 50 percent death rate would concern us, but at 70 percent, we are looking at a real

problem in the moose population."

The problem is that winter in the area seems to be increasingly delayed as the result climate change, making for longer falls and earlier springs. This is favorable for the tick, which attaches to the moose in the fall and feeds on its blood through the winter before detaching in the spring.

"Most people have heard of ticks and are concerned about Lyme disease," Pekins said last year in UNH video about the team's research.

The study reported that 88 percent of mortalities of the tagged calves were associated with "moderate to severe infestations" of the parasite, with the ticks causing emaciation, anemia, and blood loss. Each moose calf had roughly 47,371 ticks on average. But that's not even as bad as cases can get. In one case recounted to the New York Times, researchers observed a dead moose calf with about 100,000 ticks – though that number was likely even higher before parasites detached after it died. Pekins told the Times that tick numbers over 35,000 are "trouble for a calf moose."

While researchers observed that conditions were slightly better for adult moose, and most survived, they too showed signs of poor health with anemia and blood loss. The ticks may be affecting their breeding patterns, as well, by impacting their reproductive health.

While these events occur only very, very rarely, they're considered global disasters waiting to happen – the kind of nightmare scenario NASA estimates could be worse than a giant asteroid hitting the planet.

We could almost certainly never hope to stop something like this, but studying the magma buildup-and-release patterns over the course of smaller volcanic eruptions could at least give us a better idea of when to flee the planet.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

New fly species may indicate changing climate, says researcher

A new type of blow fly spotted in Indiana points to shifting species populations due to climate change. Researchers at IUPUI have observed the first evidence of *Lucilia cuprina* in Indiana, an insect previously known to populate southern states from Virginia to California.

Researchers recorded the *L. cuprina* species more than two dozen times from 2015 to 2017 in parks and other public places throughout Central Indiana. The fly was observed as far north as Michigan in the 1950s during a short period of warmer temperatures but had not been found in this region since then.

"As temperatures change and increase, the distributions of these insects will continue to change as well," said Christine J. Picard, an associate professor of biology. "There is definitely a northward movement of species -- not just insects, but all species -- as they try to find temperatures where they are more comfortable."

The movement of this species of fly into the Midwest could also have implications for forensic investigations involving decomposing remains. The growth and development of flies play an important role for scientists looking to learn how long a human or animal has been dead.

"With forensic science and forensic entomology, you should have an idea of which flies are present in your location in part because different species will have different development times," Picard said.

The *L. cuprina* blow fly's sister species *Lucilia sericata* is widely present in Indiana and is often used in forensic cases. Since the two species are so closely related, it's difficult to tell them apart. If investigators don't know they are dealing with an *L. cuprina* instead of the more typically seen *L. sericata*, their data could be inaccurate.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Astronomers find a cosmic Titan in the early universe

Astronomers have discovered a titanic structure in the early universe, just two billion years after the Big Bang. This galaxy proto-supercluster, nicknamed Hyperion, is the largest and most massive structure yet found at such a remote time and distance.

An international team of astronomers has discovered a titanic structure in the early Universe, just two billion years after the Big Bang. This galaxy proto-supercluster, nicknamed Hyperion, is the largest and most massive structure yet found at such a remote time and distance. It has a mass estimated at a million billion suns.

An international team of astronomers has discovered a titanic structure in the early Universe, just two billion years after the Big Bang. This galaxy proto-supercluster, nicknamed Hyperion, is the largest and most massive structure yet found at such a remote time and distance.

The team that made the discovery was led by Olga Cucciati of Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF) Bologna, Italy and project scientist Brian Lemaux in the Department of Physics, College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Davis, and included Lori Lubin, professor of physics at UC Davis.

Hyperion is the largest and most massive structure to be found so early in the formation of the Universe, with a calculated mass more than one million billion times that of the Sun. This enormous mass is similar to that of the largest structures observed in the Universe today, but finding such a massive object in the early Universe surprised astronomers.

"This is the first time that such a large structure has been identified at such a high redshift, just over 2 billion years after the Big Bang," Cucciati said.

(Source: Science Daily)

Scientists gather data by listening to eerie 'songs' produced by Antarctic ice shelf

Antarctica is singing. Scientists found that one of the world's biggest slabs of ice is producing an almost continuous series of tones.

The phenomenon was observed by accident at the Ross Ice Shelf. Scientists who were monitoring the vibrations of the largest ice shelf within the continent were "stunned" to discover the low hum caused by the wind blowing over its snow dunes.



A study that discusses the seismic noise created by the Ross Ice Shelf was published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters of the American Geophysical Union.

Unfortunately, the gentle song of the ice shelf is too low for the human ears to hear – the sound registers at about >5 Hz frequency. To "listen" to the seismic tones of the Ross Ice Shelf, scientists buried sensitive sensors beneath the ice surface.

"It's kind of like you're blowing a flute, constantly, on the ice shelf," described geophysicist Julien Chaput, the lead author of the study.

The low hum of the Ross Ice Shelf is produced when the wind blows across the snow dunes, causing the surface to vibrate and produce a seismic tone only sensitive machines can detect. Scientists were at the site to study the low-frequency vibrations caused by earthquakes and ocean waves. However, upon closer look, they discovered that the surface of the ice sheet is constantly vibrating.

They also found that the hum of the ice shelf changed according to weather conditions. When there is a strong storm blowing wind over the surface of the ice shelf and rearranging the snow layer over it, the ice vibrates at different frequencies.

(Source: techtimes.com)

Research gives new insight into the evolution of the nervous system

Pioneering research has given a fascinating fresh insight into how animal nervous systems evolved from simple structures to become the complex network transmitting signals between different parts of the body.

The new study used simple multicellular organisms called Placozoa to reveal the beginnings of the nervous systems found in more complex animals.

The international research team, including Professor Gáspár Jékely from the University of Exeter's Living Systems Institute, found that Placozoa can coordinate their movement and body shape, in the absence of a nervous system, by signaling with small peptides between cells.

He said: "Each peptide can be used individually as a different signal, but the peptides could also be used sequentially or together in different combinations which allows for very high numbers of unique signals between cells. This explains how Placozoa can coordinate sophisticated behavioral sequences such as feeding."

■ The simplest of all animals

Placozoa, the simplest of all animals, resemble a small, hairy disc about 1mm in size, with just three cell layers. Although they have no true nerve or muscle cells, they glide across surfaces in the ocean with apparent ease.

The new study explored how this multicellular animal with



no nervous system can coordinate all the cells in its body to perform complex behavior.

They found that Placozoa cells contain a variety of small peptides, made up of 4-20 amino acids that are secreted from one cell and detected by neighboring cells as a means of communication.

Crucially, this echoes how more complex organisms use similar peptides, known as neuropeptides, for signaling within the nervous system.

Associate Professor Dirk Faschauer, from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland and co-author of the study said: "These

new findings show that outer appearances can be deceiving, because cells that look the same are actually signaling with different molecules and are very likely to have different functions."

■ The role of each peptide

Using synthetically constructed versions of the Placozoa signaling peptides, the researchers could tap into this hidden signaling system to understand the role of each peptide in coordinating movement and body shape.

The experiments revealed that the peptides changed Placozoa behavior within seconds. Each peptide had a unique effect, which in some cases was very dramatic. The main behavioral changes caused by the peptides included crinkling, turning, flattening, and internal churning, a behavior associated with feeding.

Dr. Frédérique Varoqueaux, also from the University of Lausanne, added: "It might seem strange to use an animal with no neurons or synapses to study nervous system evolution, but although Placozoa are nerveless, you can still find within their cells the basic molecules needed for communication in complex nervous systems."

"So studying Placozoa can tell us more about the origins of neurons and how they became the body's control system."

(Source: phys.com)

Charity creates 34,000 jobs for the underprivileged within 6 months

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has generated over 34,000 job opportunities for the deprived individuals in the first six months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21- September 22), an official with the Foundation has said.



In the first half of the year, 28,700 business plans were implemented, which had opened 34,400 employment opportunities for the people under the foundation coverage. Tasnim quoted Hojatollah Abdolmaleki as saying on Sunday.

To generate this number of job opportunities, a total of 5.4 trillion rials (nearly \$130 million) have been paid, which is partially provided by loans and the Foundation fund amounted to 3.6 trillion rials (about \$88 million) and 1.7 trillion rials (\$41 million), respectively.

So far, numerous business plans worth of 2.7 billion rials (\$642 million) have been registered in the system, of which, some 1.5 billion rials (about \$357 million) have been referred to the banks to be granted loans, however, some 310 billion rials (about \$7 million) have been paid out.

Moreover, in the aforementioned period, 3,800 job opportunities provided to individuals under the Foundation coverage through employment agencies due to the high quality training courses offered by the Foundation, he concluded.

Iranian, Syrian universities sign MOU to expand engineering co-op

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and Syria University of Hama inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance cooperation in the fields of civil engineering and research projects, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Mohammad Kafi, chancellor of Ferdowsi University, announced readiness to participate in the construction and development activities in addition to scientific-research projects in Syria.

He further explained that countries of the region are considered to be the main priorities for development of academic cooperation and regarding the appropriate capacities of the University of Hama, it will open up good opportunities.

University of Hama chancellor Mohamed Ziad Mamdouh Sultan, also for his part, admired Iran's scientific and technological advances and expressed hope to expand cooperation between the two countries.

He also called for the implementation of the MOU in different areas.

LEARN ENGLISH

Capital Punishment

ProfeTsshoar: That's all for today's class. We will continue our lecture on crime and punishment tomorrow.

A: Do you think we should be tougher on crime?

B: Well, it depends on what you mean.

A: For example, we could bring back the **death penalty** for murder, give longer **prison sentences** for lesser offences and lock up **juvenile offenders**.

B: Those really sound like **Draconian** measures. Firstly, what do you do about **miscarriages of justice** if you've already put innocent people to death?

A: You'd only use **capital punishment** if you were absolutely sure that you'd convicted the right person.

B: But, there've been many cases of wrongful conviction where people have been imprisoned for many years. The authorities were sure at the time, but later it was shown that the evidence was unreliable. In some cases, it'd been **fabricated** by the police.

A: Well, no system of justice can be perfect, but surely there's a good case for longer prison sentences to deter serious crime. B: I doubt whether they could act as an effective **deterrent** while the detection rate is so low. The best way to prevent crime is to convince people who commit it that they're going to be caught. It doesn't make sense to **divert** all your resources into the prison system.

A: But if you detect more crimes, you'll still need prisons. In my reckoning, if we could lock up more juvenile criminals, they'd learn that they couldn't get away with it. Soft sentences will merely encourage them to do it again.

B: Yes, but remember that prisons are often schools for criminals. To remove crime from society, you really have to tackle its causes.

A: Well, if I were president, I would impose tougher laws and punishment. I would have a peaceful society based on fear of punishment, not consciousness of doing the right thing.

■ **Key vocabulary**
death penalty: the punishment of death
prison sentence: the amount of time to keep criminals in jail
juvenile offender: underage criminals
Draconian: very strict and severe
miscarriage of justice: an unjust legal decision
capital punishment: punishment of death
fabricate: to make something up to trick people
deterrent: something that prevents people from doing something
divert: to move resources from one thing to another
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
diversion: the act of changing the direction or use of something
authoritarian: expecting or requiring people to obey rules or laws
divisive topic: an issue that causes disagreement between people and causes them to separate into different groups
recidivist: a person who continues to commit crimes even after being caught and punished
rehabilitate: to teach (a criminal in prison) to live a normal and productive life
(Source: irlanguage.com)

Iranian, Russian universities to launch project on herbal medicine

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Sari Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources University of Iran and Volgograd State Agricultural University of Russia will produce herbal medicine through a joint project, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The Iranian university chancellor, Asadollah Teymouri explained that the joint cooperation is based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the governors of the cities of Sari and Volgograd in early August.

In line with the implementation of the MOU, the joint project on production of medicinal plants is defined by the universities of the two provinces, according to which, the researchers of the two universities initially carry out research on plants in the northern provinces of Iran and Volgograd.

As per the MOU, after the evaluation of medicinal plants in terms of medicinal properties and effects, best mass production methods will be introduced and then medicinal plants will enter the production phase.

Teymouri also stated that scientific research results and modern survey methods will also exchange between the two countries, adding that for the implementation of the joint research project, we have enrolled 10 master degree students in the field of herbal medicine in the following year's semester.

In addition to the students, a team of University faculties also will supervise the research on medicinal herbs in the northern provinces of the country, he also added.

He further predicted the duration of research studies on medicinal herbs production as lasting for 2 years, during which, research will be carried out on about 300 plant species in northern provinces of the country.

Eventually, produced herbal medicine will be delivered to consumer markets, in this manner, Sari Agricultural University will use the capacity of several related companies in private sector, he concluded.



As per the MOU, after the evaluation of medicinal plants in terms of medicinal properties and effects, best mass production methods will be introduced and then medicinal plants will enter the production phase.

Tehran Municipality to offer free plants, gardening courses

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Tehran Municipality is to implement a scheme offering free plants and gardening courses to citizens living in district 22, an official with the Municipality has announced.

Citizens will also receive free flower and plants to flourish their apartment balconies, YJC quoted Ehsan Safaei as saying on Saturday.

The scheme with a theme of "green balconies" aims at developing green spaces in houses by involving citizens in growing plants in their apartment balconies, and raising awareness in the maintenance of urban green spaces.

"Flower and plant clinic affiliated to the Municipality which is tasked to provide training courses and consulting services on gardening and planting to citizens, will implement the scheme," he added.

The courses will vary in different seasons due to seasonally changing environments, he said, adding that planting seedlings, maintenance of trees and shrubs, pruning, growing winter season flowers, pests and



plant diseases courses are among the subjects discussed in training courses in cold season, which, in addition to other courses, is provided to citizens completely free of charge.

Safaei further noted that providing training to children and women as family-affluent individuals is of great importance, which are the main targets of these courses.

Currently, three flower and plant clinics are providing practical training services to citizens, and by the end of this [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2019), these clinics will be expanded to each district of the capital, he concluded.

'Largest living thing' on Earth is dying after decades of human interference, scientists say

Scientists have warned that an ancient forest widely considered the largest single living thing in the world is dying, despite efforts to preserve it.

The Pando aspen is an enormous expanse of 40,000 trees, all of which are clones with identical genetic compositions, meaning they are classified together as one individual.

Thought to be up to 80,000 years old, the colony known as the "trembling giant" is a contender for the oldest organism as well as the heaviest and largest.

In total the trees, which originate from a single underground parent clone, cover 43 hectares of Utah's Fishlake National Forest. But in recent years a tragedy has been quietly unfolding. Despite their best efforts, scientists think this natural wonder that has lasted millennia may not survive a few decades of human interference.

"While Pando has likely existed for thousands of years — we have no method of firmly fixing its age — it is now collapsing on our watch," said Professor Paul Rogers, an ecologist at Utah State University.

After analysing Pando's condition comprehensively, Professor Rogers and his colleague Professor Darren McAvoy examined a 72-year aerial photo sequence that revealed its steady decline.

The forest has gradually thinned as humans expanded into it, cutting down areas that have never properly recovered.

Additional pressure over the years has come from drought, and the intrusion of hungry deer into the forest that have hampered efforts to restore it.

"After significant investment in protecting the iconic Pando clone, we were disappointed in this result," said Professor Rogers.

Early efforts to protect the forest from deer using fencing and allowing young shoots to grow showed some promise.

However, when these methods were expanded across a larger area they failed to prevent animals from getting in. Professor Rogers said deer appeared to be finding ways to either enter through weak points or somehow hopping the eight-foot barrier.

The results of the study were published in the journal PLOS ONE.

In his role as director of the Western Aspen Alliance, Professor Rogers has seen the trends recorded in Pando playing out across the aspen forests of the western states.

"In addition to ecological values, Pando serves as a symbol of nature-human connectedness and a harbinger of broader species losses. Here, regionally, and indeed internationally, aspen forests support great biodiversity," he said.
(Source: The Independent)

Rare hunter Caracal killed in car crash

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — A Caracal, also called the desert's black-ear, has lost life in a car accident on Shiraz-Kazeroun road, southern Fars province, YJC reported on Sunday.

The precious specie has been spotted for the first time in the area, the provincial department of environment (DOE) chief Saeed Mahmoudi said.

The reasons behind the presence of this rare species in the area near Kazeroun are being investigated and it is planned to install more camera traps to determine the exact distribution of the species in the area, he explained.

He further expressed regret that the male mature caracal has been struck by a car which has taken his life, and the carcass was delivered to the DOE by the region's environmentalists.

Caracal is a native species in Iran and some other countries of southwest Asia into India, which have a great capability for hunting. This species also has broadly distribution in Central Asia and Africa. The historical range of the Caracal mirrors that of the cheetah, and both coincide with the distribution of several small desert gazelles.
Caracals provisionally are present across most regions of eastern and central Iran, including Fars and northern Khuzestan but there are also some concerns over the status of populations not just in Iran but also in the Central Asian Republics and also in Pakistan.
Dry steppes and semi deserts of Kavir National Park, Tooran National Park, Bahram-e Goor Protected Area, Saghand Yazd, Abbasabad Naeen, Naybandan Wildlife Refuge, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khorasan, Masjedsoleyman and Ker-manshah are all listed as Caracal habitats in the country.



Second Announcement
call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One-Stage (semi-compressed) tender
Subject of Tender: : Hammer Plug Valve 1" & 2"
N.I.O.C 1397.3489 National Iranian Drilling Company

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,178,093	Tender No. :FP/09-97/031 Indent No.:01-22-9646012	69,683,215,000 (Rial)

Qualitative evaluation of tenders:

Method
 Based on minimum scoring(60) made in award criterion reflected in the tenders pre-qualification forms.

Purchasing & Submitting:

Tender Document Distribution by Company	Submitting Method	Closing date	Address
The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.	Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 40011400420491 (Shaba No. IR 520100040011400420491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.	Days after the last time of Purchasing 14	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

Tender Guarantee:

Value of guarantee	Type of guarantee	Duration of credit & quotation
59,917 Euro / 2,894,000,000 Rial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 400114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 3501000400114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on:
www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr
 تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۰۷/۲۹ نوبت دوم ۹۷/۰۷/۳۰

Israeli army strikes Palestinians who launched airborne firebombs

The Israel Air Force struck a group of Palestinians who launched incendiary balloons and flew them toward Israel from southern Gaza on Saturday, the Israeli army said.

According to Palestinian media, two members of the group were wounded in the strike, one of whom is in critical condition.

The Israeli military attacked a different group setting off incendiary balloons on Friday. There were no reports of any Palestinian casualties from that incident.

Belgian official: Israel steals organs of Palestinian kids

A Belgian official's remarks that Israel steals the organs of Palestinian children, whom it kills, have made headlines again after the news website which published them decided to stick to the story.

Robrecht Vanderbeeken, the cultural secretary of Belgium's ACOF trade union and a philosophy of science scholar, had made the comments back in August in a column published by Belgian website De Wereld Morgen. The population of the Gaza Strip is being "starved to death, poisoned, and children are kidnapped and murdered for their organs," he wrote then.

The website recently received a complaint by Belgian watchdog, the Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities, over the story.

De Wereld Morgen, however, stuck to the assertion that Israel "kidnapped" and "murdered" Palestinian children and used organs belonging to the Palestinians its forces killed.

In November 2015, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations said Israel harvested the organs of the Palestinians it killed.

In a letter to the UN secretary general, Riyad Mansour said the bodies of Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces "were returned with missing corneas and other organs, further confirming past reports about organ harvesting by the occupying power."

The New York Times also said in an August 2014 report that transplant brokers in Israel had pocketed enormous sums of money. Based on the newspaper's analysis



of major organ trafficking cases since 2000, Israelis had played a "disproportionate role" in organ trafficking.

The issue of organ theft by Israel was first brought to the fore in a report published by Sweden's most highly-circulated daily Aftonbladet in 2009.

Back in 2000, Dr. Yehuda Hiss, the former head of Israel's forensic institute, divulged that Israeli pathologists at the institute would harvest skin, corneas, heart valves, and bones from the bodies of Palestinians and others often without permission from relatives.

The interview was, however, released no later than 2009 by Nancy Scheper-Hughes, a professor of anthropology at the University of California-Berkeley, who had conducted it as part of her investigation into the institute, in response to a row created between Israel and Sweden over Aftonbladet's report.

Israel delays Palestinian village Khan al-Ahmar demolition order

Israel has announced it was putting on hold the demolition of a Palestinian Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank for a "short, fixed period of time."

In a statement made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday following a meeting with the United States Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, he said

Khan al-Ahmar will soon be "evacuated". "This is the decision of the court, this is our policy and it will be implemented," Netanyahu told reporters.

"I don't intend to postpone it until further notice contrary to what has been reported, but [make it happen] within a short, fixed period of time. The duration we will give to evacuate it in consent will be decided by the cabinet."

Khan al-Ahmar, located northeast of occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem), has been under threat of demolition for the past few months.

Netanyahu's remarks came a day after sources in the prime minister's office told Israeli daily Haaretz that the evacuation of Khan al-Ahmar will be delayed until further notice.

In a statement released by the office earlier on Sunday read: "The intention [of the postponement] is to give a chance to the negotiations and the offers we received from different bodies, including in recent days."

The fate of Khan al-Ahmar has captured international attention for its years-long legal battle with Israeli authorities over its survival.

Israeli authorities set October 1 as the deadline for the residents to dismantle their homes after the demolition was given a green light by an Israeli court last month, under the

pretext that it had been built without a permit.

But Palestinians say building permits are impossible to obtain, in contrast to the rapid expansion of Jewish-only Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law.

The village's location between two major Israeli settlements, Maale Adumim and Kfar Adumim, has been a thorn in the side of the Israeli government, which wants to expand the two in order to build a ring of settlements around East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Palestinian leaders see East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as their capital of a future Palestinian state.

Khan al-Ahmar's destruction would also enable the Israeli government to effectively bisect the West Bank.

Rights advocates had said the forcible transfer of the village's 180 residents would violate international law regarding occupied territory.

On Wednesday, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor warned that Israel's planned "evacuation by force" of the village could constitute a war crime. Israel is a signatory of the Rome Statute of the ICC but it has not ratified the agreement.

Residents and activists had been protesting against the planned demolition of the village for more than 100 days.

Walid Assaf, head of the commission against the wall and settlements, said on Saturday residents of the village are fighting to cancel the demolition order entirely, not just to freeze the order, local media reported.

Last week, Israeli forces entered Khan al-Ahmar with heavy equipment and at least three bulldozers, levelling ground in preparation for its demolition. Several activists were injured and were briefly detained after resisting Israeli soldiers who were at the scene.

The Israeli government plans to relocate those displaced to either the vicinity of a sewage treatment facility near the Dead Sea or about 12km away from their homes, near the village of Abu Dis, which is near a landfill.

(Source: agencies)

Can Libya's tribes help solve crisis?

6 → This is why the Tuareg formed a group to meet with the representatives of these entities like the GNA, the Interim Government and Gen. Khalifa Hifter. We will disclose our position on each entity after meeting with them.



1 The Libyan south is considered as a main gate for illegal immigration to Europe and neighboring countries. How would you answer such accusations against the tribes of the south and their participation in aggravating and feeding this crisis?

A: First, the accused is innocent until proven guilty. Whoever believes this to be true only needs to share evidence implicating the tribes in illegal immigration. We do not deny that the south is witnessing such a crisis and in great numbers due to the fact that the border is not secured. No one is controlling the border and the bodies that have it as their responsibility are not doing their job, so we now have mercenaries controlling the border and facilitating illegal immigration. Unemployment might have pushed a small number of the Tuareg people and other tribal members to work in illegal immigration. Their economic situation leaves them with a choice between illicit work and death. To protect Libya from the dangers of illegal immigration in the south, the government must provide security and social services.

2 Does the Supreme Council of the Tuareg Tribes intend to play a role in the reconciliation between the tribes in the south?

A: This is certain. Tuareg tribes do not have a problem with any other tribe or city. They are qualified to play a key role in the reconciliation in the south. We have formed a delegation to meet with all tribes in the south to achieve reconciliation and form a body uniting the south. The delegation will meet with all Libyan tribes to unite their stances and regain their role in Libya to participate in solving the Libyan crisis.

3 What is the take of the Tuareg tribes on the elections announced by the UN mission? Do they consider the elections and political solutions a way to detente in the Libyan crisis?

A: We are now convinced that the war between Libyans will not bear fruit, but will shed more blood and force thousands to migrate and flee their homeland for fear of bullets. We realize the elections will settle the conflict with the authority, and everyone should accept this solution. As Tuareg tribes, we announced our participation in the elections and welcomed them as a solution to the Libyan crisis. But we still have a problem, which is that 17,000 families from the Tuareg tribe cannot vote because they do not have identity cards. The goal is to dismiss them from the electoral process because their high numbers would affect the results. We hope the crisis will be solved and these citizens will participate in the elections.

(Source: Al Monitor)

Germany and the puzzle of JCPOA

1 → Pointing to Iran's missile capability, she noted that Iran continues to develop its missile program as it is not a part of the JCPOA, which is sharply criticized by the United States. She went on saying that the Europe stays besides the United States in restraining Iran's activities in the region, including Syria and Lebanon.



As we can see, in her statements, Angela Merkel emphasized that "limiting Iran's regional power and Iran's missile capability" should be included in the context of the JCPOA, and then it can be negotiable! And afterwards, at the very early days of Donald Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Angela Merkel explicitly insisted that Germany does not intend to confront with the United States (as the Europe's ally) on the nuclear deal and its fate.

On the other hand, "Iranophobia" is the common denominators of Western officials, and these politicians have sought to exacerbate this psychological game by forcing Iran to accept the West's conditions on limiting its regional and missile capabilities; a plan that the Islamic Republic of Iran has monitored and prevented from realization.

After the conclusion of the nuclear deal, the German government has repeatedly announced its full support for the JCPOA. However, like other European players, Berlin did not take any effective steps to resolve the issue of normalization of banking relations between Europe and Iran.

Regarding Merkel's confusion, we come to conclude that she has not yet made her final decision on the nuclear deal and how to deal with it, and that the mere repetition of "supporting" the JCPOA, doesn't solve any of the problems raised as a result of EU's passiveness in confronting the U.S. irrational demands.

Afghans shut out by polling station chaos return to vote

1 → "Turnout was above expectations and we should appreciate that, but unfortunately mismanagement and other problems with the commission gave us the worst election in our history," said Mohammad Arif Rahmani, a member in the last parliament, saying there were "obvious" signs of fraud.

"This extension of the election by a day and a half was in itself clearly something that opens the way to fraud," he said.

Facing a swell of complaints, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced it would extend voting at 401 polling stations, which had not opened, until Sunday, despite warnings that the extended opening would stretch security forces.

"It is not an ideal scenario," one international security official said.

In the event, fewer than two thirds of the polling stations meant to open on Sunday actually did so, with the remainder closed for security reasons, IEC chairman Abdul Bade Sayad said.

Preparations for the election had been marred by organizational problems, accusations of cheating and the threat of violence from Taliban militants.

More than 120 attacks involving grenades or improvised explosive devices were reported on Saturday and dozens of people were killed and wounded across the country on Saturday. In Kabul, 15 people were killed in one suicide attack.

Many independent election observers were reluctant to work fearing militant attacks but the threat came from other groups as well as the Taliban.

Armed men loyal to local power brokers in some provinces entered polling stations by force and broke election materials and on Sunday, the bodies of four observers were found in the northern province of Balkh after they had been abducted a day earlier and shot.

Ballot counting has begun but preliminary results of the election are not expected to be announced until next month.

The parliamentary vote was seen as a dry run for next year's more important presidential election which Afghanistan's international partners are desperately hoping will avoid the bitterness and cheating that tainted the last election in 2014.

More than a million people voted in the capital Kabul but turnout was very low in the provinces, said Naeem Ayubzada, director of Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan, a civic action body that has been monitoring the ballot.

He also said the decision to extend the vote opened the way for abuse, with half-filled ballot boxes left open all night in some polling centers.

"From a planning point of view, it's very difficult," he said. "It provides an opportunity for fraud."



Mariam Sulaimankhel, a candidate for the nomadic Kochi minority who have 10 reserved seats, said that along with many Kochis in Kabul, she had been unable to vote because officials did not have the lists with their names.

"We are a minority and the election commission does not care about fair representation," she said.

In addition, voting in the province of Kandahar was delayed by a week following the assassination of the powerful local police commander Gen. Abdul Razeq. The election in the central province of Ghazni was also postponed due to disagreements over the representation of different ethnic groups.

(Source: AP)

Germany sees Russia as stable energy partner as U.S. demands Europe dump Nord Stream 2 pipeline

Europe should stop backing a Russia-led project to deliver natural gas to the continent, according to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell. However, not all the European nations agree.

Earlier this week, Mitchell urged the European countries not to "deepen the energy dependence" on Russia, saying that supporting projects such as the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is totally unacceptable for U.S. allies. According to the official, Washington is doing its best to protect Europeans from their excessive reliance on Russian energy.

The Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project is set to deliver Russian natural gas to European consumers. The pipeline, which is set to run from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, is expected to double the existing pipeline's capacity of 55 billion cubic meters annually. Nord Stream 2 is projected to provide transit of 70 percent of Russian gas sales to the EU via the German route when it is built in 2019.

The pipe will go through the territorial waters of Finland, Sweden and Denmark. The project, led by the subsidiary of Russian energy giant Gazprom, is being implemented in cooperation with German energy firms Wintershall and Uniper, French multinational Engie, British-Dutch oil and gas giant Royal Dutch Shell, and Austrian energy company OMV.

The White House has repeatedly slammed the pipeline, threatening to impose sanctions on the European corporations that are participating in the project. Nord Stream 2 has also been opposed by some Eastern European

nations, including Ukraine and Poland. However, construction work is well underway with Nord Stream 2 AG, the company in charge of the project, receiving the final permits from Germany, Finland and Sweden. Germany, which currently gets around 60 percent of its natural gas imports from Russia, is not planning to give up on the project, which is set to boost the country's energy security.

"Russia is a well-valued, sure and stable partner, and I think it's very important to stock up on gas and other forms of energy," Dr. Robby Schlund, a Bundestag member for Alternative for Germany (AfD) told RT's Ruptly video news agency during the meeting between a Russian delegation and members of the German federal parliament.

"At the moment, we have four out of five

of the necessary permits in the Baltic Sea. We have the time frame, we started construction and have taken all the required steps," said Ulrich Lissek, the head of Communications of Nord Stream 2.

Russia's natural gas is more competitive, according to the chairman of the Energy Committee of the Russian parliament, Pavel Zavalny.

"Only Russia can provide Europe with flexible supplies of big volumes of gas both in winter and in summer," Zavalny said. "Talks on EU energy dependence on Russia are just an attempt to politicize the process, and employ unfair business practices aiming at imposing European consumers with U.S. liquefied natural gas on terms which are favorable for Washington."

(Source: RT)

Thousands of caravan migrants take shelter in southern Mexico

Thousands of Central American migrants traveling together to enter the United States have hunkered down in shelters in a southern Mexico city along its border with Guatemala, according to local officials.

The migrants pose a tough challenge to the Mexican government's pledge to stop the illegal travelers' plans to press ahead to the U.S. border.

More than 5,100 migrants have been registered in three shelters in the Mexican border town of Ciudad Hidalgo, while another 2,000 had camped out for the night in the town's central square, said Gerardo Hernandez, head of the local government's emergency services.

"It's really full. You can't even walk, there's just so many people," he said referring to the plaza. "So far, they're all peaceful, thank God."

In a statement on Saturday night, Mexico's federal government said "nearly 900 migrants" had arrived by

unauthorized means, while 640 had been processed after being allowed to cross into the country via the international border crossing on the Suchite River that divides Guatemala from Mexico.

Earlier in the day, the presidents of Honduras and Guatemala said about 2,500 migrants had either already been repatriated to Honduras or were in transit back home, many using free bus tickets doled out by Guatemalan police.

Thousands of people continued to wait on the bridge border crossing, where on Saturday morning many pressed for limited opportunities to plead their case to immigration officials, while many others opted to cross the river illegally, either on jury-rigged rafts or by swimming.

The migrant rights group Pueblos Sin Fronteras also counted thousands of mostly Honduran migrants nearby Ciudad Hidalgo, although the figures did not exactly match. Some 2,000 Honduran migrants were already back

home after giving up on continuing to Mexico, Guatemala's President Jimmy Morales said at a midday press conference in Guatemala City alongside his Honduran counterpart, President Juan Orlando Hernandez.

Hernandez said about 500 migrants were in transit back to Honduras, a roughly 12-hour trip by road.

"We are working to provide a peaceful and safe return trip and avoid that these movements keep happening in the future," said Morales.

The leaders of all three countries have come under intense pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, who for days has warned that the caravan must be stopped. Trump has made it a political issue in the Nov. 6 mid-term U.S. congressional election, threatened to cut off regional aid, close the U.S.-Mexico border and deploy troops there if Mexico failed to halt the migrants.

(Source: Reuters)

Messi ruled out for three weeks with fractured arm

Barcelona captain Lionel Messi will be out of action for three weeks after he fractured his right arm during Saturday's 4-2 La Liga win over Sevilla, a club statement said.

The injury ruled him out of the 'Clasico' against arch rivals Real Madrid on Oct. 28.

Ousmane Dembele replaced Messi in the 25th minute after the Argentine was examined by club doctors on the sidelines following a challenge by Sevilla's Franco Vazquez.

The Barca talisman, who had set up Philippe Coutinho's opening goal in the second minute and scored their second, looked in serious pain as he left the pitch with his right arm in a bandage.

"Obviously it's a considerable loss," said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde. "We know what he gives us and what we miss when he is not around. We have to deal with it and we will be prepared. It's clear that we will notice his absence, but we will cope and we have resources, even though we will be facing some very difficult teams." In addition to missing the 'Clasico', Barca's all-time top scorer will be unavailable in Wednesday's Champions League clash at home to Inter Milan and the return game in Milan on November 6.

Barca defender Gerard Pique admitted Messi's absence would have an impact on the team but backed his side to come through their next few games without dropping too many points.

"He gives us a lot of peace of mind when he is around but we don't have to suffer without him," he said.

"There's a big difference between having him on the pitch or not but we have a strong enough team to win games whether he plays or not."

(Source: Reuters)

Martial insists relationship with Jose Mourinho is good

Anthony Martial has played down talk of a rift with Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho after scoring twice against Chelsea.

The Frenchman's second half double put United on the brink of a first win at Stamford Bridge since 2012 before Ross Barkley's 96th-minute equaliser.

Martial, who is yet to sign a contract extension at Old Trafford, was criticised by Mourinho during the summer for going AWOL after leaving the preseason tour of the U.S. to attend the birth of his son. It resulted in the forward being hit with a two-week fine but after finding the net twice against Chelsea, Martial insisted his relationship with the Portuguese coach is good.

"Things were not tense between us to begin with [before the performance at Chelsea]," said Martial.

"We have a player-coach relationship and I hope that we will continue like that and bring Manchester United as much as possible."

Martial was also on the scoresheet against Newcastle as United came back from 2-0 down to win 3-2. It means Mourinho's team will face Juventus at Old Trafford on Tuesday on the back of two positive results and Martial is hopeful of building on the momentum against the Italian champions. The 22-year-old is likely to keep his place against Juventus after scoring three goals in his last two games. "We were not doing well," he said. "However, we worked hard and this sort of match enabled us to show that we are a good team."

"We want to continue with another good game against Juventus on Tuesday."

"[The goals] have done me the world of good. "However, ultimately, I am disappointed. We deserved to win but we shipped the goal in the last minute and it cost us."

(Source: Soccer.net)

Usain Bolt offered Central Coast Mariners contract - agent



Eight-time Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt has been offered a professional football contract by Australian side Central Coast Mariners, says his agent Ricky Simms.

The 32-year-old Jamaican, who retired from athletics in 2017, has been on trial with the A-League club.

"In response to the media stories, yes, Usain has been offered a contract," Simms told Fairfax Media.

The club told BBC Sport they would not comment on media speculation.

Bolt scored two goals on his first start for the club in a friendly but was not in the Mariners squad for the first game of their season on Sunday, which they drew 1-1 with Brisbane Roar.

Asked about whether the Mariners had offered Bolt a deal after the match, coach Mike Mulvey said: "You have a look at our front line today and you wonder whether he could get into any of those positions, wouldn't you?"

"I do appreciate how important this story is for the rest of the world. "You're just talking about speculation. I don't know anything about what you're talking about - and that's the honest truth."

Bolt, who is the 100m and 200m world record holder, was also offered a two-year deal by Maltese champions Valletta FC but turned it down.

He trained with German giants Borussia Dortmund, South African club Sundowns and Norway's Stromsgodset before joining the Mariners in August.

(Source: AFP)

Marquez clinches fifth MotoGP title with victory in Japan



Spain's Marc Marquez wrapped up his third straight MotoGP championship with victory at the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday after title rival Andrea Dovizioso fell on the penultimate lap while trying to find a way past the Honda rider.

The 25-year-old is now tied with Australian Mick Doohan on five premier class world titles, with only Italian's Valentino Rossi (seven) and Giacomo Agostini (eight) having won more.

Marquez, who had sealed two of his previous titles at Motegi, moved 102 points clear of Ducati's Dovizioso with three races remaining.

Dovizioso started on pole and led for most of the race before Marquez, who had started sixth on the grid, made his move with four laps left.

Marquez had been on the Italian's tail for much of the race and the pressure eventually told on the Ducati rider as he relinquished the lead.

Dovizioso attempted to move back past Marquez on the penultimate lap but pushed it too far and came off his bike. He recovered but eventually finished 18th.

That left Marquez knowing he was going to secure his fifth title as he completed his final lap, shaking his head in disbelief at the achievement.

"I feel really, really good," said Marquez after celebrating with the Honda team, who were joined by the company's CEO Takahiro Hachigo at the manufacturer's home race.

"After Aragon I already felt, I already imagined that it will be here, but the good thing is when you have the first chance (to win the title), then you do it."

In a bizarre turn of events, Marquez dislocated his shoulder while celebrating on the track with British rider Scott Redding. "I just lay there on the asphalt and my brother and Jose put it in again," motorsports website Crash reported the champion as saying.

"It was not the first time; maybe it was my weak point of the season because I dislocated it many times during training at home."

"In December I need to make a stop with the doctor and for next year it will be perfect."

Redding apologized for his role in the incident, adding: "Congratulations to Marquez with 7 titles on there my babbie. Once we were rivals 'big rivals' now we have nothing but respect and fun!!! Sorry for the dislocated shoulder...."

Marquez pipped Dovizioso on the final lap of the Thailand Grand Prix last time out and while he did leave it quite as late as Motegi the result was the same.

"I was able to follow Andrea, then I say okay, I will try to use the same strategy as Thailand, attack before the last lap because I felt like they had something," he said.

"I was pushing really hard and he did a mistake."

"I disappointed because he deserves to be here on the podium with us, but okay, the big boss will enjoy it."

Dovizioso, who was the championship runner-up to Marquez in 2017, will have to wait another year for a shot

at his first MotoGP premier class title.

"The battle (with Dovizioso) has been great all year," said an exuberant Marquez.

"Dovi had been a great opponent throughout the year and coming into this he was very, very fast."

LCR Honda's Cal Crutchlow was second after a brilliant performance that saw the Briton hang with Marquez and Dovizioso until the final stages.

Another Spaniard, Alex Rins, was third for Suzuki.

The next stop is the Australian Grand Prix next weekend.

(Source: Reuters)

Tense times for Julen Lopetegui at Real Madrid



The match against Levante ended with the whistles of the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu still ringing in the ears of Florentino Perez, Julen Lopetegui and the Real Madrid players, leading the president to make his way down to the dressing room.

It is normal to do so after each game and in fact, he always does it.

What isn't so normal is that the president sits down to talk with the heavyweights of the dressing room at a leisurely pace and, later, with the coach alone.

That is what happened at the Bernabeu yesterday, with the happiness and celebrations taking place in the visiting dressing room.

In the home dressing room, there was a crisis meeting taking place, with Perez and Lopetegui chatting for about 15 minutes.

It was a meeting in which the president demanded an immediate reaction and in which he let the coach know that he will only let this situation go on for so long.

Lopetegui left the stadium with the feeling, not the certainty, that he would continue to take charge of the team but also aware that he faces an uncertain and ugly future at the club.

He is now facing some tense hours, with the sword of Damocles on his head.

At the moment, Lopetegui continues because the calendar is conducive to that and because there is no relief on the horizon, as there was two-and-a-half years ago.

Zinedine Zidane is no longer there and there is no such figure currently within the club to step in and perform a similar role.

Santiago Solari is best placed to do so, and is a tactician who is well liked, but he doesn't have the charisma of the Frenchman, particularly for the fans.

That is something, at least for now, that is saving Lopetegui.

As we previously mentioned, the calendar and fixture list are influencing the decision.

In Madrid, they think that it is best to wait for El Clasico on Sunday before coming to a potential measure as drastic as firing a coach.

Sending a brand new coach into the lion's dens of a Clasico would be an unnecessary and foolish decision.

It could also be a turning point for Lopetegui and Lionel Messi's injury could be decisive but if Real are beaten in a resounding way, the decision to sack the coach would be even more justified.

Everything is being analysed closely and in great detail at Real Madrid, where there is great concern over the team's current form.

Madrid aren't used to suffering through moments like this, at least without making the decisions which can turn things around.

The first step is always a meeting between Florentino Perez and the coach, a last attempt to turn around a situation that is becoming ever more complicated.

(Source: Marca)

James plays peacemaker as his Lakers home debut is marred by brawl



"Laker fans, the wait is over." So said Ice Cube as he concluded the opening invocation that greeted fans on the video screen as they filed in from the buzzy concourse into the bowl at Staples Center.

Among the promises offered to those in attendance were "the dawn of a new kingdom" and the restoration of Showtime. The monarch in question, naturally, is LeBron Raymone James, Sr. And with his arrival in Los Angeles, basketball's most prominent star is now the face of the NBA's premier franchise.

For about two hours on Saturday, the electric current pulsating through the arena during James' regular-season premiere in a Lakers uniform appeared to be the NBA at the height of its cultural power. If the league could order up a custom product for the global masses, might it be a rapid-fire shootout featuring its global star on its global team, facing an opponent with a presence such as the Rockets, led by the reigning MVP?

Then, with just over four minutes remaining in a one-point game, the Lakers' welcome wagon was hijacked by fistcuffs.

In a league whose players reputedly never truly want to fight, this game was abruptly rattled by a melee that saw three players land close-fisted punches -- Brandon Ingram (who started the brawl with a shove of James Harden) and Rajon Rondo of the Lakers, as well as Chris Paul of the Rockets.

After players were separated multiple times as emotions continued to run hot,

officials took several minutes to adjudicate the incident. All three players were ejected and face certain suspensions.

If James started the night as the game's honoree, he ended it as its peacemaker. While tempers festered, James could be found with his arms around his close friend Paul in an effort to de-escalate the madness. LeBron has always thrived in chaos, but tonight's delirium was a little too much drama even for him.

As is so often the case in today's NBA, the scripted events on Saturday night were subsumed by the spontaneous and the absurd. No league in recent memory has generated more excitement from its unrehearsed, reality-show escapades. The Lakers tried to orchestrate a showcase of their showtime revival, but the garden party was crashed by vagrants. The Rockets pulled away in the moments following the fracas for a 124-115 win, dropping the Lakers to 0-2.

The skirmish reaffirmed that the league would be hard-pressed to find a pair of irritants more provocative than Harden and Paul. Both are first-ballot Hall of Famers, and both are fluent in the psychological warfare required of teams who have championship aspirations. Saturday's home opener against a 65-win team was always going to be a worthy measuring stick for a newly constituted Lakers team gauging its potential.

(Source: ESPN)

Manchester City have banked over £60m more than their top-six rivals

Manchester City's academy has produced £70million in player sales in just four years.

The Premier League champions have eclipsed their big six rivals in the amount made on young talent nurtured in their system.

Jadon Sancho, Pablo Maffeo, Marcos Lopes and Jason Denayer are just a few of the prospects who developed at the state-of-the-art Etihad complex before being sold.

And City, who spent £200m on building their academy, will soon have paid for the initial outlay, according research by the Mirror.

Given the rich level of world class players available to the first team, it has become increasingly difficult for the best youth prospects to make the cut.

These promising stars have often opted to pursue their career elsewhere, but City can command hefty fees for them.

England international Jadon Sancho is a recent example. He turned down a £30,000-a-week offer so that he could move to Borussia - Dortmund.



City are determined to squeeze as much as possible from the deals and routinely add huge sell-on clauses to the contracts.

Both Sancho and former left-back Maffeo, who joined

Stuttgart for £8.8m, have a 25 per cent sell-on clause inserted into their contracts.

Denayer joined Lyon for £12m in August this year and goalkeeper Angus Gunn moved to Southampton for £13.5m.

The amount of money pumped into the academy systems of England's big six clubs is significant and teams on the continent are routinely circling for the best young English talent.

For the players themselves, a clearer path to first-team football abroad is an attractive prospect.

Sancho has excelled for Dortmund and Everton's Ademola Lookman impressed on loan at RB Leipzig on loan, although the Toffees refused to sanction a permanent deal.

Since 2014, 42 academy players have been sold by City, Liverpool, Chelsea, Tottenham, Arsenal and Manchester United.

A staggering total of £113,714,252m has been raised from those sales and the trend shows no sign of slowing down.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Iran collect three medals at Manchester Taekwondo Grand Prix

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian taekwondo practitioners claimed three medals at the World Taekwondo Manchester Grand Prix.

Iran participated in the sixth edition of the event with five athletes.

Armin Hadipour Seighalani won the gold medal in the men's under-58kg final after defeating the top seed Tae-Hun Kim from South Korea.

The Iranian scored first with a head shot to lead by three points, but almost immediately Kim responded with a body shot to make the scores 3-2 at the end of the first round.

The two athletes exchanged the lead, with often only a point separating them.

Tae-Hun Kim had to settle for silver as the buzzer sounded the end of the contest and Hadipour Seighalani won by 16 points to 12.

Spain took both bronze medals as Adrian Vicente Yunta and Jesus Tortosa Cabrera lost out in the semi-finals.

Mirhashem Hosseini claimed a silver medal in the men's under-68 kg. He lost to South Korean Lee Dae-hoon 11-7 in the final match.

Bronze medals went to Si Mohamed Ketbi from Belgium and Briton Bradley Sindén.

Sajjad Mardani also won a bronze medal in the men's over-80kg event.

He lost to Russian Vladislav Larin 15-12 in the semi-final.

Gold medal was won by Russian Vladislav Larin who beat South Korean In Kyo-don.

Top competitors were awarded ranking points towards the World Taekwondo world ranking which could help them qualify for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The competition was the last event before next month's World Taekwondo Finals in Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.



Gabi targeting 'historic' achievement

Spanish midfielder Gabi believes Al Sadd will create history if they can reverse a one-goal deficit against Persepolis and advance to the 2018 AFC Champions League final as the sides get set to clash in the second leg of the semi-final on Tuesday.

The Qatari team, who won the competition in 2011, had the better of the first leg in Doha but lost at home for the first time in the current campaign after a late Ali Alipour penalty for their Iranian opponents ensured the game ended 1-0.

Al Sadd must now not only become the first team to stop Persepolis winning at Azadi Stadium in this year's competition, but they must also secure victory in arguably Asia's most daunting ground.

Gabi made his AFC Champions League debut against Persepolis' city rivals Esteghlal in the first leg of the quarter-finals when Al Sadd claimed a 3-1 victory to become the first team to win at Azadi Stadium on the continent since the United Arab Emirates' Al Ahli defeated Naft Tehran in 2015.

"It's up there with the biggest stadiums in Europe, and the atmosphere is so passionate, but the reality is today's footballers must prepare for the biggest occasions and this will be one of them," said Gabi, who reached two UEFA



Champions League finals with Atletico Madrid.

"Getting to the AFC Champions League final with Al Sadd would be historic for me and for the club. It would be a special moment and in football you always remember the most beautiful moments. Hopefully we can make it there."

After making almost 300 appearances for Atletico over

two spells, which included a La Liga title and two UEFA Europa League successes, Gabi departed the Spanish capital at the end of the 2017-18 season.

Just like his compatriot Xavi Hernandez, who signed a two-year extension to his contract after his initial three-year deal expired at the end of last season, the midfielder chose Doha as his next port of call, signing on for two years in the Qatari close season.

The former La Liga rivals are now chasing their own slice of history as they will become the first players to have appeared in both the UEFA and AFC Champions League finals should Al Sadd progress past Persepolis.

"[Xavi] was a key player in bringing me here as he told me they were a big club with the aim of winning the AFC Champions League," admitted Gabi.

"Winning the ACL is not just important for Al Sadd, but for the whole country, that's why I'm here."

"I've found everyone at Al Sadd to be really great and they all want to work hard. I'm delighted to be here and help the team with my experience."

(Source: the-afc)

Iran to celebrate National Paralympic Day



S P O R T S TEHRAN — The Iran National Paralympic Committee (NPC) will celebrate National Paralympic Day on Monday (22 October), promoting sport for people with an impairment, at the Milad Sport Complex in Tehran.

The event will be attended by approximately 3,000 children with impairments.

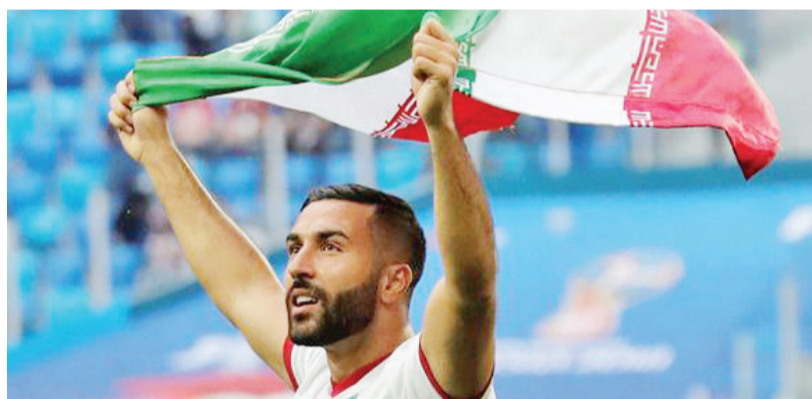
There will be a video message from Andrew Parsons, International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President,

to show the commitment of the IPC in supporting the event.

The 11th edition of Iran's National Paralympic Day will be celebrated in different parts of the country, with an estimated 60,000 total participants, including school children with their parents and teachers.

Iran NPC is a unique model for other Asian countries for the exchange of experiences and knowledge on how to develop para-sport in Asia.

Saman Ghoddos has no regret over choosing Iran



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran international midfielder Saman Ghoddos insists he has made the right decision in choosing to play for his country of birth over Sweden.

Ghoddos represented Iran in the 2018 World Cup, where Team Melli narrowly missed out on progression with their draw against Portugal in their last match.

"I almost selected Sweden to play in international level but the Iranian federation asked me to play for Team Melli," Ghoddos told Sportbladet.

"It's a great honor to choose Iran over Sweden and I am very pleased with it. I do not regret at all," he added.

"I'm just trying to play as good as possible for Iran," Amiens SC forward added.

Persepolis aiming AFC Champions League final: AFC

Persepolis and Kashima Antlers have the AFC Champions League final in their sights as they take one-goal leads into the second legs of their semi-finals against Al Sadd and Suwon Samsung Bluewings respectively.

Iranian side Persepolis host 2011 winners Al Sadd of Qatar on Tuesday, before Japan's Kashima travel to Korea Republic to face Suwon on Wednesday as the teams get set to square off for the fourth time in the current campaign.

Persepolis v Al Sadd

Persepolis are aiming to become the first team from the Islamic Republic of Iran to reach the final since Zob Ahan in 2010, while Sepahan, in 2007, remain the only other side from the country to have made it to the showpiece event – both ended up losing to East Asian opposition.

The Iranian club have won five from five at Azadi Stadium and need only to avoid defeat in order to eliminate Al Sadd after Ali Alipour's late penalty secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory in Doha in early October.

Al Sadd are the only side left in the AFC Champions League to have won the competition, while they also secured a 3-1 victory at Azadi Stadium over Persepolis' city rivals Esteghlal in the first leg of the quarter-finals.

But, after defeating Persepolis at home in the group stage, the Doha side lost the return meeting in the Iranian capital before also being defeated in the first leg of the last



four. To advance, they must score past Tuesday's opponents for the first time in more than 180 minutes and end their 100 percent home record.

Persepolis (IRN) v Al Sadd (QAT)

Venue: Azadi Stadium, Tehran

Kick-off: October 23, 18:30 UTC+3:30

Suwon Samsung Bluewings v Kashima Antlers

Kashima will start the second leg of their semi-final

against Suwon with a one-goal advantage after Atsuto Uchida scored in added time in the first leg to cap a come-from-behind 3-2 victory as the defender made amends for his earlier own goal.

Having never won a knockout round match prior to the current edition, Kashima have won four from five this time round and, bar a poor start in the first leg against Suwon, look in formidable form as the competition heads towards its finale.

Suwon will have been disappointed to surrender a two-goal lead in Japan and their home form has been poor. The K-League side have won just one from five at Suwon World Cup Stadium and lost 3-0 to domestic rivals Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors in the second leg of the quarter-finals before progressing on penalties.

Kashima were one of the sides to deal Suwon a home defeat when the J.League club claimed a 2-1 victory in the group stage. Regardless of the outcome on Wednesday, the AFC Champions League will see a new finalist from the East come November, with neither having previously advanced to the main event.

Suwon Samsung Bluewings (KOR) v Kashima Antlers (JAP)

Venue: Suwon World Cup Stadium, Suwon

Kick-off: October 24, 19:00 UTC+9

(Source: the-afc)

Alipour wins bronze at IFC Climbing World Cup

MNA — Iranian speed climber Reza Alipour snatched the bronze medal in men's category at 2018 IFSC Climbing World Cup held in Wujiang, China.

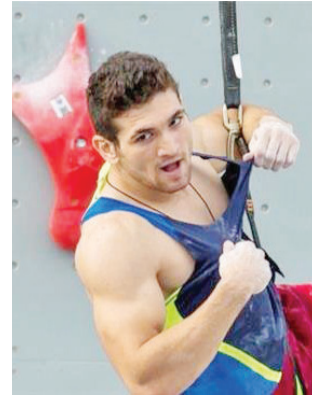
In the bronze medal contest on Sunday, Alipour clocked 5.660 seconds and defeated his Russian rival Aleksandr Shilov who had set a time of 5.990 in this level.

In the final bout, Indonesia's Aspar Jaelolo claimed the gold with 5.810 and the silver went to Italy's Ludovico Fossali with 5.940.

Alipour, also known as Persian Cheetah, is the world record holder of speed climbing with 5.48 and has also been titled as the 2017 International World Games Association (IWGA) Athlete of the Year.

IFSC Climbing Worldcup 2018 in Wujiang was a two-day event which wrapped up on Sunday.

The last IFC Climbing World cup of the year 2018 will be held from October 27 to 28 in Xiamen, China.



Persepolis midfielder Alishah misses Al Sadd match

TASNIM — Persepolis midfielder Omid Alishah has missed the return leg against Al Sadd of Qatar in the AFC Champions League semi-final.

Persepolis will host the Qatari football team on Tuesday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Alishah suffered a knee injury in the first leg against Al Sadd in Doha on October 2.

Persepolis face shortage of players due to the transfer bans in the last two windows.

Experienced defender Hossein Mahini has also suffered a season-ending ACL injury in a league match against city-rival Esteghlal in late September.

Persepolis have defeated Al Sadd 1-0 in the first leg and need only to avoid defeat to qualify for the final match.

Serginho: I hope I will keep scoring for Kashima

Prolific Kashima Antlers midfielder Serginho is banking on continuing his scoring run ahead of the AFC Champions League semi-final second leg against Suwon Samsung Bluewings on Wednesday.

Three AFC Champions League appearances, three goals scored, it's fair to say that Brazilian midfielder Serginho has found life in the continent's preeminent club competition very much to his liking.

The 23-year-old netted in both legs of the quarter-final against China PR's Tianjian Qianjian, and scored a vital equalizer in the 3-2 win semi-final first leg win over Suwon of Korea Republic at the end of last month.

"I always like to make a contribution to the team's victory, whether that's by scoring or by other play that maybe goes less noticed," said Serginho, who joined Kashima in July from Brazilian side Santos.

"If you ask me, 'Are you completely settled into the team now?', I would say I am not 100 percent settled in yet since I am still new to the team."

"However, I am looking forward to doing so and growing together with my teammates. Also, I hope I will keep scoring goals!"

However, the man from Monte Aprazível, a municipality in the state of São Paulo, admits that the semi-final first leg performance in Kashima did not go according to plan.

"The beginning of the game was not good at all," he said. "We started poorly and conceded two goals early on."

"But our play got better and we managed to level the scores. That we were able to complete the comeback and win 3-2 is really positive."

"We need to improve how we begin the game," added Serginho. "If we play in Suwon like we did in the first leg, it will be a very hard game - especially as this is an away tie. I would say I also have to improve my own performance as well."

"I hope we will get to the final of the 2018 AFC Champions League, all our supporters are expecting us to!"

(Source: the-afc)

Henry makes debut but Monaco's woes continue

New head coach Thierry Henry saw his AS Monaco side slump to a sixth Ligue 1 defeat in 10 games as they lost 2-1 away to Strasbourg in his first game in charge on Saturday, with Samuel Grandsir sent off in the second half.

Appointed a week ago following the sacking of Leonardo Jardim, Henry took over a side rooted in the relegation zone with six points from their opening nine league games, as well as two Champions League defeats.

As a player Henry spent five years at Monaco, winning the league in 1997, and though the 41-year-old took an assistant coaching role with the Belgian national team in 2016, Saturday's outing marked his first as a head coach.

Monaco were trying to cancel out an Adrien Thomasson header which goalkeeper Seydou Sy fumbled into his own net in the first half when winger Grandsir was shown a straight red for a dangerous challenge on Anthony Gonçalves in the 66th minute.

Henry had already had to replace striker Radamel Falcao, who limped off after 37 minutes.

Monaco had a number of chances from set pieces before Strasbourg's Lebo Mothiba chipped over the advancing Sy six minutes from time. Youri Tielemans pulled a consolation goal back for Monaco from the penalty spot in stoppage time.

(Source: Eurosport)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: Ali Asgari Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

Editorial Dept., Switchboard Operator, Advertisements Dept., Public Relations Office, Subscription & Distribution Dept., Webmaster, Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713



"I write because I want to visit Iran frequently": Alois Hotschnig

TEHRAN - Austrian writer Alois Hotschnig says he will not stop writing because he wants to visit Iran frequently.

The writer made the remarks in a session held at the Book City Institute in Tehran last week for reading one of his stories as part of Austria Reads, Austria's largest literary festival, the Book City Institute announced.



Austrian writer Alois Hotschnig attends a session at the Book City Institute in Tehran on October 16, 2018 to read one of his stories as part of Austria Reads, Austria's largest literary festival.

"While I was writing 'Ludwig's Room', I never thought it would take me to Tehran someday. Therefore I will never stop writing because I want to come to Iran more and more," he said. Hotschnig also said that as a writer he believes his duty is to recognize the situation in which people are living. He said that as a writer he considers himself a doctor who tries to find out the problem of a society, and find out what has caused the loneliness of a person. "I do not mean to say man is lonely and is condemned to death but, just like a doctor, I try to diagnose the illness and begin searching to find medicine for the loneliness as an illness," he stated. Translator Ali-Asghar Haddad accompanied the writer during the session.

Hotschnig is the winner of the Erich Fried Prize in 2008. "Ludwig's Room", "Maybe This Time", "Absolution" and "Leonardo's Hands" are among his noteworthy credits. The thirteenth edition of Austria's largest literary festival "Austria Reads" took place from October 15 to 21, during which reading and libraries were promoted throughout the country.

Sir John Malcolm's "Sketches of Persia" published in Persian

TEHRAN - British diplomat Sir John Malcolm's "Sketches of Persia" has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.



Qoqnus is the publisher of the book translated by Shahla Tahmasb from a copy published by the Cambridge University Press in 2011. Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833) was a British soldier, diplomat, linguist and historian. He was born in Scotland, and, through an uncle, secured a position in the East India Company. He became interested in foreign languages, became fluent in Persian and, over the years, served as an interpreter and British envoy to Persia in various capacities. Malcolm wrote a number of books while living in Persia and during several extended stays in England, including "Sketch of the Political History of India", "Sketch of the Sikhs", and his most famous work, "The History of Persia: From the Most Early Period to the Present Time" published in 1815.

Comic Amy Schumer backs Kaepernick, says she won't do Super Bowl ads

NEW YORK (Reuters) - U.S. comedian and actress Amy Schumer has said she will not appear in any commercials during the 2019 Super Bowl in support of National Football League quarterback Colin Kaepernick's protests against racial injustice.

"I personally told my reps I wouldn't do a Super Bowl commercial this year," Schumer wrote in an Instagram post on Friday. "Hitting the nfl with the advertisers is the only way to really hurt them." The "Trainwreck" star also urged members of the band Maroon 5, who are scheduled to play during the Super Bowl halftime show, to back out.

U.S. media reported on Friday that singer Rihanna had declined an offer to perform during the halftime show in support of Kaepernick, who in 2016 began kneeling to protest multiple police shootings of unarmed black men.

Farmer Mahmud Mansuri wins Emerging Talent Award at Wildscreen Festival

TEHRAN - Iranian farmer Mahmud Mansuri has won the Icon Films Emerging Talent Award at the Wildscreen Festival in Bristol in the southwest of England.

He won the award for his collaboration in "In the Realm of the Spider-tailed Viper", a documentary film directed by Iranian Pathollah Amiri about the spider-tailed viper that lives in the western Iranian province of Ilam.

Mansuri missed the awards ceremony held on Friday as the British Embassy in Tehran refused to grant him a visa, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Sunday.

The documentary was produced at the Wildlife Pictures Institute, a Tehran-based center producing films on wildlife.

"This revealing documentary explains the discovery of a rare and unique snake called the Spider-Tailed Horned Viper and the amazing man who made it happen," the Wildlife Pictures Institute wrote.

"On the journey to discover this snake, our production team met up with a farmer named Mahmud, and sought his help to find the rare viper. During the making of this documentary, some strange things happened, and the destiny of Mahmud has been changed," it added.

"Rise of the Warrior Apes" by Keo Films in the United Kingdom received the WWF Golden Panda Award. The film also won the Script Award and Films at 59 Sound Award.



Iranian farmer Mahmud Mansuri (R) is seen guiding the crew of "In the Realm of the Spider-tailed Viper" in a scene from the documentary film.

Iran, Germany discuss loan of TMCA Western collection to Berlin show again

TEHRAN - The plan to loan a collection of Western art from the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA) for a show at Berlin's National Gallery was discussed once again in a meeting held on Sunday between German Ambassador Michael Klor-Berchtold and Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, the culture ministry announced.

"A showcase of the TMCA art collection has great significance to Iran," Salehi said and added, "However, there have been some concerns about this issue."

He said that his art assistant has been assigned to hold meetings with German officials to allay "the public's concerns" to prepare the ground for loaning the art collection to Germany.

Klor-Berchtold expressed his hope that all obstacles to loaning the art collection will be removed, and proposed organizing an exhibition of an art collection from Germany in Iran in order to assure Iran that holding the German showing of the TMCA Western



German Ambassador Michael Klor-Berchtold (L) and Iranian Culture Minister Seyyed Abbas Salehi (2nd R), Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Mojtaba Hosseini (1st R) and an unidentified person are seen in a meeting in Tehran on October 21, 2018.

collection would be in complete safety. Based on agreements Iran signed separately with Germany and Italy, the TMCA was scheduled to loan a collection of 40 Western

works and a number of pieces from Iranian artists for shows at Berlin's New National Gallery and Rome's MAXXI Museum in late 2016 and early 2017.

The plan to loan the collection to Germany and Italy faced opposition from Iranian art experts and gallery owners.

The opponents said that the collection could be impounded by legal claims from the family of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last monarch of Iran, and relatives of the royals.

They also said that Italy and Germany may return copies of the artworks instead of the originals.

In a letter sent to his Iranian counterpart Mohammad-Javad Zarif in November 2016, former German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier promised the full and safe return of the collection.

However, former Iranian culture minister Reza Salehi-Amiri announced afterward that the plan to loan the art collection to Germany and Italy has been put on hold pending further investigation.

MTV reboots "The Real World" series on Facebook in studio push

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Viewers may finally be able to vote the next Puck, the notoriously obnoxious housemate of "MTV's The Real World", off the show.

The iconic MTV reality series, which ran for 32 seasons between 1992 and 2017, will return as three interactive series on Facebook in the United States, Mexico and Thailand early next year, MTV announced on Wednesday at Mipcom, the annual television industry trade show in Cannes, France.

The show will be shown exclusively on the Facebook Watch service, and will include interactive elements that let viewers shape the show. It will be co-produced by MTV and owned by Viacom Inc and Bunim/Murray Productions (BMP), the studio behind the original series.

The launch represents another investment by the world's largest social network to get its 2 billion users to spend more time on Facebook by watching professionally produced content.

Facebook has struggled to draw users to the year-old Watch service, which is anchored by much longer videos than the short clips popular in Facebook's news feed. Facebook has said viewership is growing.

"MTV's The Real World" helped to define a generation and created a new genre of television with a simple yet powerful idea of connecting people from wildly divergent backgrounds to find common ground on the issues that often divided them," MTV President Chris McCarthy said in a statement. "By partnering with Facebook Watch and BMP, we have the opportunity to impact culture and create a



Figurines are seen in front of the Facebook logo in this illustration taken March 20, 2018. (Reuters/Dado Ruvic)

new genre of television all over again, while engaging the next generation of content consumers around the world."

The relaunch is part of Viacom's push to launch new shows under its own brand across networks that it does not own, as well as streaming services and social platforms.

It has sold Nickelodeon shows to Netflix, including "Pinky Malinky" and "Avatar: The Last Airbender."

For the "Real World" reboot, Viacom decided Facebook's younger audiences would be a better fit than its flagship network.

Viacom's studio strategy is expected to generate about \$1 billion in revenue, Viacom Chief Executive Bob Bakish has said recently. The company's Paramount television studio, responsible for Amazon Video's "Jack Ryan" spy series, currently makes about \$400 million in revenue.

The company has notably avoided launching big aggregated streaming services such as those planned by rivals Walt Disney Co and AT&T Inc's WarnerMedia.

"A Private War" goes to frontline to tell reporter Marie Colvin's story

LONDON (Reuters) - Award-winning American war reporter Marie Colvin was known for her dispatches from some of the world's most brutal conflicts. Now a new film starring "Gone Girl" actress Rosamund Pike tells her story about being fearless on the battlefield.

Focusing on the last decade of her life, "A Private War" takes audiences to the frontlines of fighting in Sri Lanka, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Colvin, reporting for Britain's Sunday Times, was killed in Syria in 2012.

Based on an article about Colvin in Vanity Fair, the film for which Pike wears a patch to cover the eye the journalist lost in a blast in Sri Lanka in 2001, follows her evading gunfire and digging for the truth as well as the effects her war zone trips had on her personally.

"Just thought 'My gosh, this is a woman who would be a joy to kind of get people to see...' this complicated, ferocious, driven, ambitious, vulnerable, romantic soul and put that out on screen," Pike told Reuters. "Because... oh yes is she a role model, but a role model in a real way."

"Fifty Shades of Grey" star Jamie Dornan plays photographer Paul Conroy, who accompanied Colvin on trips and was with her when she died in Homs while covering the Syrian conflict.

"It gives you a far more sort of heightened respect for the people who go to these places and try to report the actual truth of what's happening," Dornan said.

Conroy, who worked as the set photographer for the film, said the actors had caught "the essence" of his relationship with Colvin.



Actor Rosamund Pike arrives at the European premiere of "A Private War" during the London Film Festival, in London, Britain October 20, 2018. REUTERS/Simon Dawson

"(Colvin) was a force of nature... It was like peeling an onion back, she just kept going further and further and further in... until we were at what she considered the heart of it," Conroy said.

The film is directed by Oscar-nominated documentary maker Matthew Heineman, whose past works include covering activists grouping together against ISIS in Syria.

"In this world of sort of fake news and with journalism under attack... I think it's both a homage to Marie (and also) a homage to journalism and the importance of journalism," he said.

Heineman said he wanted to make the film, shot in Jordan for the war zone scenes, as "authentic as possible" and cast Syrian refugees who tell their stories.

"We spent a tonne of time researching every single detail, looking at every image we could to try to recreate these war zones but a huge part of that were the people we put on screen," he said.

Spotify takes minor stake in music distributor DistroKid

NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Music streaming service Spotify said it had taken a stake in DistroKid, a distribution service that allows recording artists to upload music across online stores and streaming platforms including Spotify's biggest rival, Apple Music.

Spotify revealed the move in a blog post but did not give a dollar amount, saying only that it was "a passive minority investment." Spotify declined to comment on the size of the stake and other financial details of the deal when asked by Reuters.

The move is significant because DistroKid, along with other distributors such as TuneCore or CD Baby, is the main way independent artists who are not affiliated with a major record labels get music onto streaming platforms like Apple Inc's

Apple Music and Spotify.

Unlike SoundCloud and YouTube, Apple Music and Spotify did not allow independent artists to upload their music directly to the service and required them to work through a distributor.

That began to change last month when Spotify said it would let some independent artists upload directly to its service. Through the partnership announced Wednesday, artists who upload songs to Spotify will now be able to distribute those songs to "other platforms" through DistroKid, though Spotify did not say whether Apple Music would be included. Apple did not return a request for comment.

The investment paves the way for Spotify to test out services that were once offered by traditional record labels such

as distribution. If Spotify can charge artists money for those services, it could give the company an additional revenue stream beyond streaming music subscriptions. Spotify lost \$647 million during the first six months of 2018, mostly driven by the cost of licensing payouts to record labels and artists for music.

"They have an immense amount of pressure to get better margins. These (back-end services to artists) could turn into subscription services that could be new revenue sources for these platforms," said Jeff Ponchick, CEO of Repost Network, which focuses on distributing artists with followings on SoundCloud onto other music streaming services.

Spotify stock closed down 3.3 percent at \$159.28 on Wednesday.