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Chronology of Mossad program to kill JCPOA

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has outlined what he calls the chronology of a Mossad program to kill the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"2018
4/30: Netanyahu claims MOSSAD "Iran nuke file discovery";

5/08: Trump withdraws from the JCPOA.
6/03: President Rouhani begins state visits to Switzerland and Austria;
6/03: MOSSAD assists in "foiling Iranian bomb plot" in France.
9/26: Trump chairs disastrous anti-Iran show at UN Security Council.
9/27: Netanyahu claims MOSSAD "Iran nuclear site discovery." **→2**

Europe should work with Iran to counter U.S. unilateralism

By Hassan Rouhani
The world faces a myriad of challenges, including economic issues, social crises, the predicament of refugees, xenophobia, terrorism and extremism.

Europe has not been exempt, and has been confronted by these problems almost daily. Over the past two years, U.S. foreign policy has emerged as a new and complicated problem, as America creates new challenges on a variety of fronts in

international relations.

We see U.S. complicity in the daily atrocities in Yemen and in the humiliation and gradual perishing of the great nation of Palestine, which has daily inflamed the emotions of one-and-a-half billion Muslims.

We believe the American government has explicitly supported criminal groups like Isis, who value no human principles, exacerbating the problems of our region. **→2**

Saudi regime response to peace calls: Heavy bombing of Sana'a

The House of Saud regime has responded to calls for a ceasefire in its war on Yemen with a heavy bombing of the capital Sana'a with more than 30 airstrikes.

Yemen's al-Masirah TV said the airstrikes early on Friday targeted al-Dulaimi Air Base in Sana'a and the surrounding areas as the Saudi regime-backed troops launched new attacks further west in the country's main port city of Hudaydah.

The House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Wednesday massed thousands of additional troops near the city which is a gateway to the capital, and the lifeline for imports and relief supplies into Yemen. Witnesses in Hudaydah said fighting was heard in areas near the airport and the university, and Apache helicopters were spotted in the sky. **→13**



EDITORIAL
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West and Saudi's Petro Dollars

Although Western countries have condemned the murder of Jamal Khashoggi by Mohammad bin Salman, they are simultaneously trying to cover the unimaginable crime of the Saudis.

Khashoggi, the Saudi Arabian journalist and author, entered the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul on 2 October 2018, but did not leave the building. Amid news reports claiming that he had been killed and dismembered inside, an inspection of the consulate, by Saudi Arabian and Turkish officials, took place on 15 October. Initially the Saudi Arabian government denied the death, claiming Khashoggi had left the consulate alive, but on 20 October admitted that Khashoggi was killed inside the consulate, claiming he had been strangled to death after a fight had broken out. This was later contradicted when, on 25 October, Saudi Arabia's attorney general stated that the murder was premeditated.

Although Western governments tried to show that they're severely against this brutal act by bin Salman, sending signals about Saudi petrodollars by countries such as Germany, Britain and France have once again uncovered the true face of the European troika in the international system. Britain and France (along with the United States of America), as the three permanent members of the Security Council, who have veto power due to the unfair structure of the world today, prefer their "commercial interests" to any other factor, including the lives of innocent people. However, this time it's no more about Western governments; people all around the world raised to protest the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

No doubt, in this equation, Theresa May, Merkel, and Macron are no more than mere losers, and even Saudis' billions of petrodollars can't stop this process. Here are some points that should be accordingly taken into consideration:

The projection of the European authorities towards the murder of Khashoggi is quite noticeable. For example, as the Spiegel and other German sources reported, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that she'll stop exporting arms to Riyadh until all the aspects of Jamal Khashoggi case is brightened. **→7**

Iran's joint oil fields could resolve regional tensions

By Omid Shokri Kalehsar

It is common for oil and gas fields to be joint-owned by two or more countries, which often presents various challenges. There is a particular fervour over the need to focus on extracting from such fields, with international energy companies often invited to vie for generous extraction contracts.

Iran shares 26 oil and gas fields with its neighbours yet, due to a lack of technological and financial investment over the past years, Iran has been unable to extract a competitive amount of oil from such fields. This has led to their exploitation by Iran's neighbours. Studies show that around 20 per cent of Iran's recognised oil reserves and 30 per cent of its natural gas reserves are in joint fields.

So far, Iran has only been able to procure from ten of these 26 fields. Despite an increase in productivity in these fields – most notably in

the South Pars, in the Persian Gulf – the Rouhani Administration has failed to acquire the capital and foreign technology needed to compete with, let alone acquire an edge over, neighbours in terms of procurements.

The majority of Iran's joint oil fields are located on the Iraqi border – Iran shares at least five oil fields with Iraq. Iraq, for its part, has a seven-year plan to increase oil production capacity and reach 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd). Its focus has been on those fields it shares with Iran and, in 2010, the Iraqi government invited Iran to invest in joint fields with the aim of increasing production and developing an equal production capacity.

However, Iran was unable to invest more in these joint fields due to a lack of financial resources. During the period in which heavy sanctions were placed on the Iranian energy sector, Iraq produced 295,000 bpd from joint fields with Iran, yet Iran

was able to produce a mere 130,000 bpd in the same period. Iraq also managed to sign agreements with major international oil companies to increase its share from joint fields with Iran. Iraq revised oil contracts and added new conditions in order to attract oil companies, offering increased benefits in return for technological know-how and investment. Iraq's new contracts are more attractive for oil companies, while the fields themselves are geologically favourable for procurement. Iraq has a program to increase oil production from joint areas shared with Iran.

Iran has no production capacity in its fields in the Caspian Sea, where it has two oil fields shared with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Both countries plan to increase production from these fields and Iran will be not able to attract the foreign technology and capital needed to benefit due to US sanctions. **→7**

Assad scolds Europe as Polish delegation visits Syria

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has urged European countries to come and take a closer look at the developments in his country as their approaches to Syria are totally "divorced from reality."

"One of the biggest mistakes made by many European countries is separation from reality," Assad said in a Thursday meeting with a Polish delegation visiting the country.

He hailed the European delegation's visit to Damascus and said making such visits to gain a closer knowledge is the most important step for foreign governments to build a correct and realistic policy.

According to Assad, such visits help foreign states adopt positions and stances, which serve

the interests of their people and contribute to their protection, the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported.

He briefed the Polish delegation on the war, which Syrians have been facing for more than seven years, and explained that the tools of the conflict have ranged from terrorism, direct aggression, and economic sanctions to attempts to intervene in the country's internal affairs and imposing isolation and siege.

The Syrian president also welcomed the Polish delegation's idea of establishing a joint parliamentary committee and expansion of bilateral cultural exchanges, stressing that Damascus is open to any efforts that will build good relations between people.



REPORT
Ramin Hossein Abadian
Mehr News Agency
Journalist

Probing Erdogan's threat against Kurds amid Khashoggi's case

The east of Euphrates has the largest oil fields in terms of area and production. It is about one-third of Syria's land and is regarded as the food and economy source of Syria. It accounts for 90% of Syria's oil and gas revenues and more than half of Syria's wheat and cotton.

The east of the Euphrates River in Syria has become the focal point of the parties involved in Syria, including Turkey. The area is controlled by Kurdish fighters which Turkey regards as a threat to its national security. Turkey emphasizes the overcoming of Kurdish threat, but it knows that this will lead to a confrontation with the Americans that Ankara will not be able to withstand.

But in this region, apart from the Washington-backed Kurdish fighters and American's forces, there are also Takfiri terrorists (ISIS/Daesh), which have started new moves.

Recent speeches by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his last warning to those who endanger the Turkish border and its security have once again shown that Ankara looks to the Kurds in eastern Euphrates as a serious threat and is determined to eliminate this danger.

But Turkey's concern could be in the interest of Damascus and Moscow, so that Russia can exploit it over the Kurdish ambitions in favor of the Syrian government. In particular, the warm ties between Moscow and Ankara have been created after the agreement on a weapons-free zone in Idlib. Turkey, which has reassured the Idlib deal, is now looking at a more dangerous threat, the Kurdish-dominated areas in northern Syria and its northeast.

Ankara now feels that it has been fooled by the United States because the deal has not apparently been implemented by the Americans, and the Kurds are still in the Syrian city of Manbij. Turkey believes that Washington deliberately keeps Ankara's attention over Manbij in order to beef up Kurdish power in north and northeast Syria through more military support. **→7**

Dear readers

Due to an incoordination in the printing house, pages 2 and 15 of the Thursday's issue were incorrectly printed. The mistake is regretted.



© Tehran Times / Aref Fathi

Asian Canoe Slalom held in Karaj

TEHRAN — The first edition of the Asian Junior and U23 Canoe Slalom Championships took place in Karaj, Alborz province from Oct. 31 to Nov. 3.

Athletes from different Asian countries including Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Vietnam, Chinese Taipei, Lebanon and India partook in the four-day competitions.

Canoe slalom is a competitive sport with the aim to navigate a decked canoe or kayak through a course of hanging downstream or upstream gates on river rapids in the fastest time possible.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Thousands of students to meet Leader ahead of Students Day

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Thousands of students will meet with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ahead of the Students Day and the National Day of Fight against Global Arrogance.

The meeting will be held in Hosseiniyeh Imam Khomeini on Saturday, the YJC reported on Friday.

November 4 marks the Students Day and the National Day of Fight against Global Arrogance in Iran.

It was named after a group of university students took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979, which they believed had turned into a center of espionage aimed at overthrowing the Islamic Republic.



U.S. won't reach political goals through sanctions: cleric

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — It is very unlikely that the United States will reach its economic goals by imposing sanctions against Iran, but most certainly it won't reach its political goals by doing so, said Tehran Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammadali Movahedi Kermani.

Addressing worshippers, Movahedi Kermani said "this is the first time Europeans, in addition to releasing a statement against the policies of the U.S., create a mechanism to avoid sanctions and compensate for their consequences," Mehr reported.

He also warned U.S. President Donald Trump that the era of bullying is nearing its end and "even your European allies are tired [of your bullying]."



Zarif in Turkey to attend D-8 ministerial summit

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday that later in the day Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif would leave Tehran for Turkey to attend a ministerial meeting of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation.

The foreign minister will leave Tehran for Turkey later on Friday at the top of a delegation to take part in the D-8 ministerial meeting, Qassemi said.

The D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development co-operation among Bangladesh, Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Turkey.



'Tehran-Baghdad ties not based on tribalism'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to Iraq says Tehran-Baghdad relations are not based on tribalism, urging the two sides to act in the interest of their people and not that of the United States.

"Relations between two brotherly countries of Iran and Iraq are serious ones, because these two Muslim countries have strong historic, social, geographical and regional relations and need one another," Iraj Masjedi said, IRIB news reported on Friday.

Masjedi said certain countries do not want Iran and Iraq to have such close ties and see such ties as threats against themselves. "They try to create discord between Iran and Iraq," he warned.

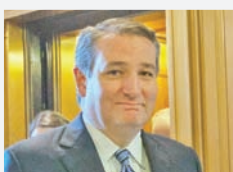


U.S. envoy pushes for EU co-op on Iran sanctions

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — U.S. Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell says he hopes "our European partners will join us in denying funds to ... [Iran], and force them to come back to the table."

"Working on a special purpose vehicle, or working on alternatives to SWIFT, are exactly what the [Islamic Republic]... wants, and their instability should give us pause," Grenell said in an interview with Ben Weingarten published on Thursday.

EU powers and Iran have been in talks over launching a financial mechanism for months, which would enable European companies to trade with Iran as part of efforts to defy U.S. sanctions and save the 2015 nuclear deal.



Republican hawks pressing Trump for harder approach on Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — U.S. Republican hawks are planning to introduce legislation later this month that would force President Trump to take a harder approach to Iran, out of fear that the president is "going soft" on Tehran, Politico's Eliana Johnson reported on Friday.

The legislation, which will reportedly be introduced by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and cosponsored by Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), would pressure Trump into cutting off Iranian banks' access to the global banking network, Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), according to the source.

Europe should work with Iran to counter U.S. unilateralism

1 → More broadly, U.S. president Donald Trump's approach to matters of trade, international treaties and the humiliating manner in which he treats even America's allies, illustrates how U.S. foreign policy has posed new challenges to the global order.

In brief, the U.S. administration's policies of unilateralism, racial discrimination, Islamophobia, and the undermining of important international treaties, including the Paris Climate Accord, are fundamentally incompatible with multilateralism and other socio-political norms valued by Europe.

There is another critical matter aggravating transatlantic relations: the Iran nuclear deal. Known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, it was the product of two years of intensive negotiations between Iran and six other countries, including three from Europe.

As an annex to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, this agreement enjoys the approval of the overwhelming majority of the international community and, as part and parcel of international law, imposes certain obligations on all the members of the UN.

Unfortunately, the U.S., through raising unfounded claims and in complete disregard for its international obligations, has abandoned the nuclear agreement and imposed extraterritorial and unilateral sanctions on Iran and, by extension, other countries.

The U.S. is, in effect, threatening states who seek to abide by resolution 2231 with punitive measures. This constitutes a mockery of international decisions and



the blackmailing of responsible parties who seek to uphold them.

The nuclear accord is recognized as a great victory for diplomacy in our time. That is why the EU is working with other nations around the world — with the exception of a very few — to save this great achievement.

Since the U.S. withdrew, we have held constructive talks with the remaining JCPOA participants. Their support has been valuable, but it is essential that the

European parties, as well as China and Russia (known as E3+2), present and implement their final proposed package of measures to compensate for and mitigate the effects of America's newest unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions before they are imposed.

This historic agreement can only survive if the Iranian people can witness and enjoy the benefits it promised.

The recent decision of the International

U.S. reimposes Iran sanctions lifted under JCPOA

The Trump administration on Friday announced the reimposition of all U.S. sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal.

The sanctions will take effect Monday and cover Iran's shipping, financial and energy sectors, according to the AP. It's the second batch of penalties that the administration has reimposed since President Donald Trump withdrew

from the landmark deal in May.

With limited exceptions, the sanctions will penalize countries that don't stop importing Iranian oil and foreign companies that do business with blacklisted Iranian entities, including Iran's central bank, a number of private financial institutions and state-run port and shipping companies.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the sanctions are

"aimed at fundamentally altering the behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran." He has released a list of 12 demands that Iran must meet if it wants the sanctions lifted.

"Maximum pressure means maximum pressure," he said.

Treasury Secretary Stephen Mnuchin said 700 more Iranian companies and people would be added to the sanctions lists under the reimposed sanctions.

Chronology of Mossad program to kill JCPOA

1 → 10/29: Planned EU announcement on Special Purpose Vehicle;

10/29: MOSSAD assists in "foiling Iranian assassination plot" in Denmark, the Iranian foreign minister posted his chronology on Twitter on Thursday.

Earlier on Wednesday, Zarif referred in another tweet to Mossad's role in a diplomatic standoff between Tehran and Copenhagen over claims that Iran had tried to carry out an assassination plot on Danish soil, an allegation Tehran has sharply rejected.

"Mossad's perverse & stubborn planting of false flags (more on this later) only strengthens our resolve to engage constructively with the world. Imp talks in Pakistan today, preceded by tripartite mtng with Turkey & Azerbaijan yesterday. Solid relations w/neighbors our priority," he tweeted.

The tweet comes amid a diplomatic standoff between Tehran and Copenhagen over the latter's claims that Iran had tried to carry out an assassination plot on Danish soil, an allegation Tehran has sharply rejected.

Swedish security police also said a Norwegian citizen of Iranian descent had been arrested on October 21 in connection with the alleged plot and extradited to Denmark.

Denmark recalled its ambassador from



Tehran and said that it was consulting with other European countries about how to respond. Tehran also summoned the Danish ambassador to Tehran to voice its protest.

Israeli media later revealed that Mossad had provided Denmark with "intelligence" concerning the alleged plot by Tehran.

Tehran has dismissed Denmark's claims as "rash, politicized," with Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi saying Wednesday that "invisible hands" were at work to damage Iran's ties with Europe at the time when the two sides are closely cooperating to save the 2015 multilateral nuclear deal following the US's pullout.

Iran's UK ambassador: It is impossible to renegotiate nuclear deal

Speaking at the famous Oxford Union debating society, Iran's ambassador to the UK has revealed the extensive efforts made by European nations to counter anti-Iran U.S. sanctions.

Hamid Baedinejad addressed Oxford students on the topic of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), according to Press TV.

Explaining Iran's current position on the JCPOA, he said: "The aspiration that we have with the European Union, Britain, France and Germany, China and Russia, is that we keep the Iran Nuclear Deal alive and give time to the U.S. to rethink and revise its position."

However, he emphasized that any idea of changing or renegotiating the nuclear deal would be "impossible" because if one word is changed other aspects of the deal will either be changed or compromised.

He admitted that "we have a total loss of confidence" in negotiating with the U.S. after their withdrawal from the JCPOA, but added that "we are trying very hard with European countries, with China and Russia, to find mechanisms that this deal could (still) be effectively implemented."

He said: "There will be pressure against some countries, particularly European



countries, and economic and trade institutions from attempting to enter into working with Iran, there will probably be some risks."

However, he said that he remains sure that there is "total determination" by European countries and other world partners to find "practical solutions" so that the deal will be kept alive.

When asked if the UK has remained independent from the U.S.'s hostile position towards the deal, he said: "Let me confess that we were not really optimistic that (the UK) can keep their position independent but they have remained so."

Commentary: Five reasons why Trump's Iran sanctions will fail

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian

The next round of economic sanctions on Iran, which will start going into effect on Nov. 4, will mainly target the country's oil and gas industries. These sanctions were eased after the 2015 signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, but are being phased back in following President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the accord six months ago.

Trump's goal in reinstituting the sanctions is to kill the nuclear deal, to bring Iran's economy to the point of total collapse, to contain Iran's regional involvement in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, and, in spite of Washington's denials, presumably to celebrate the collapse of Iran's ruling regime. The White House's official position is that, by increasing economic and political pressure, it aims to bring Iran back to the negotiating table in order to replace the JCPOA with a new deal that bears Trump's name.

There are at least five reasons why Trump's strategy will fail.

First, while the United States seeks to cut Iran's oil exports to zero, it has become clear that this is impractical; there is no viable replacement for Iran's 2.5 million barrels per day in oil exports. While Saudi Arabia previously claimed it had made up for any shortages, experts believe that Riyadh and its allies do not have the capacity to fully offset the loss of Iranian oil. Now that Iran's oil exports have dropped to an estimated 1.5 million bpd — down from more than 2.5 million before the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in May — the price of the OPEC reference basket has gone up to around \$76. If forecasts indicating that it could jump to \$100 per barrel are correct, the price hike will make up for Iran's loss of revenue even if Tehran's exports are cut further

to 1 million barrels.

Second, Trump's trade war with China and the U.S. imposition of economic sanctions against Russia make Beijing and Moscow less likely to work with Washington on Iran. Moreover, the White House cannot count on cooperation from the European Union, which initiated nuclear negotiations with Iran in 2003 and which sees the JCPOA as one of its signature foreign policy achievements. Further, the EU increasingly views extraterritorial sanctions as a threat to its own identity and independence. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said recently that the "outcome of that crisis with Iran will be the chance for Europe to have its own independent financial institutions, so we can trade with whoever we want." In the past, cooperation with all major powers was critical to creating an effective Iran policy.

Third, U.S. sanctions have laid the groundwork for a historic change in the global financial system. For many decades, the U.S. dollar has dominated the international financial markets. However, American withdrawal from the JCPOA has encouraged countries such as Russia, China, India and Turkey to use their local currencies to trade with Iran. If Europe succeeds in creating a financial system that is separate from the U.S. dollar, other states can use euros in trade with Iran, diminishing U.S. domination of global markets.

Fourth, the remaining signatories to the JCPOA view the nuclear deal as a means to counter American unilateralism. This is due to the fact that the JCPOA is a multilateral agreement backed by UN Security Council resolution 2231, which the Trump administration exited unilaterally and is now trying to punish other nations for implementing. Any capitulation to Washington on this issue would further buttress the current U.S. approach. To avoid this, both Iran and the international community

will see preserving the JCPOA as a strategic necessity.

Fifth, powerful U.S. allies such as the EU and Japan continue to support the JCPOA. Only a handful of regional allies — namely Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Israel — supported Trump's decision to withdraw from the deal while other major regional players such as Turkey, Oman and Iraq continue to support the accord. At the same time, developments in other regional crises do not favor the United States and its allies: Bashar al-Assad, backed by Russia and Iran, is winning Syria's civil war; the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan has failed; Saudi Arabia has been unable to defeat the Tehran-backed Houthis in Yemen and Qatar has prevailed against the Saudi-led blockade. These developments will make it easier for Tehran to find workarounds to sanctions imposed by Washington.

For the past six decades, the United States has been the region's hegemonic power. However, Trump's unilateralist approach and the future of JCPOA may change the calculation by creating a rift among the transatlantic allies, and bringing the eastern bloc powers, Europe and regional powers such as Iran, Turkey and Iraq, closer together. Moreover, the JCPOA has paved the way for other world powers — specifically Europe, China, Russia and India — to preserve international agreements without the United States. This, coupled with American withdrawal from the international scene, has the potential to transform international power politics, shifting from an American-led system to a multi-polar world, with regional actors playing a more substantial role.

Against this backdrop, the next round of U.S. sanctions against Iran is likely to increase Middle East tensions — and unlikely to bring Washington closer to achieving its goals on Iran.

(Source: Reuters)

Fresh Israeli attacks on Syria deepen crisis with Russia: report

Israel's alleged new attacks against Syria after one that led to the downing of a Russian surveillance jet over the country have plunged ties between Tel Aviv and Moscow to a new low, Israeli sources say.

In September, Israeli fighter jets attacking the Syrian government's positions in Latakia used a Russian IL-76 plane flying over the area as shield and took cover behind it, a maneuver that misled the Syrian air defenses to shoot down the plane and kill all the 15 Russian officers aboard.

The incident prompted Moscow to speed up the delivery of its advanced S-300 air defense systems to Damascus, a game-changing development that forced Israeli commanders to rethink their plans for future airstrikes.

Earlier this week, however, an unnamed senior Israeli military official revealed to the media that while Tel Aviv had to work with Moscow to improve "deconfliction" of its missions, the airstrikes never stopped.

"The IDF have attacked in Syria, including after the downing of the Russian plane. Military coordination with the Russians continues as before," said the source.

On Thursday, Israeli media reported that Russian officials were outraged by the new Israeli attacks and personal ties between Israeli minister of military affairs Avigdor Lieberman and his Russian counterpart Sergey Shoigu had been severed as a result.

The reports, citing more unnamed sources within the Israeli military, further noted that the Kremlin was also rejecting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts to schedule a meeting with Russian Pres-



ident Vladimir Putin to discuss the S-300 deployment.

Social media observers monitoring Israeli raids against Syria allege that the latest attack took place more than a month ago.

According to some experts, the Israeli attacks were aimed at testing the Russian response. The reports stated that the recent attack was carried out in daylight, and the

Russians were warned beforehand.

Apparently, Russia blasted the move through the Russian-Israeli military liaison system but stopped short of making the attack public.

Warning to hotheads

On Wednesday, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Moscow was preparing the S-300s for use in Syria.

"This system is a warning to all the hot-heads in the region," he warned, without explicitly naming Israel.

Upon returning from a trip to the United States last month, Netanyahu said he would meet Putin soon to discuss the issue. Five weeks later, the meeting has yet to be scheduled.

(Source: agencies)

Russia and Cuba urge U.S. to rethink exit from nuclear arms pact

Russia and Cuba on Friday called on the United States to reconsider its intention to withdraw from a Cold War-era nuclear arms treaty, saying the move would have extremely negative consequences for international security. Washington has said it wants to quit the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces arms treaty and has accused Russia of violating it, something Moscow denies. Russia and Cuba made their call for the United States to think again in a joint statement issued after talks in Moscow between President Vladimir Putin and Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia reaches out to Afghan leaders for Taliban talks, angering Kabul

Russia has quietly invited a group of senior Afghan politicians to talks with the Taliban in Moscow, bypassing President Ashraf Ghani's government in a move that has angered officials in Kabul who say it could muddle the United States-backed peace process.

The invitations, extended over the past two months by Russian diplomats in Kabul, were confirmed to Reuters by six of the eight leaders, who include former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, or their aides, and by other leading politicians with ties to the Afghan government. The Russian Embassy in Kabul declined to comment.

Russia in August proposed holding multilateral peace talks in Moscow and invited 12 countries and the Taliban to attend a summit the following month. But the meeting was postponed after Ghani rejected the invitation on the grounds that talks with the Taliban should be led by the Afghan government.

The United States had also declined to attend. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul declined to comment further. Three senior Afghan officials said the government was unhappy that Moscow was pressing ahead with plans for talks. "We requested Russia to cancel the summit because talking to the Taliban at multiple forums will further complicate the peace process backed by the U.S., but they rejected the request," said a senior Afghan official who has been holding discussions with Russia. Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Thursday that she hoped to be able to announce details of the conference "in the coming days".

Zakharova told reporters at a briefing that the date and participant list were being finalized, but that Russia wanted to be absolutely sure before announcing anything publicly.

Diplomatic engagement between the Taliban and the United States gained momentum in October, after the U.S. special envoy for peace in Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad met Taliban leaders in the Persian Gulf tiny state of Qatar. But many Afghan politicians say they have been left out of the process. Karzai, who ran the country for 13 years following the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001 but has become a vocal critic of the U.S. policy, is among those planning to travel to Moscow. "Karzai will travel to Moscow because any opportunity for peace talks with the Taliban must not be ignored," said Mohammad Yusof Saha, a spokesman for the former president.

Atta Mohammad Noor, a leader in the Jamiat-i Islami party and former governor of the strategic Balkh province, said he too would attend. Noor, a powerful figure among Afghanistan's ethnic Tajiks who was once a commander in the anti-Soviet Mujahiddin, said he had no problem with the United States and Ghani holding private talks with the Taliban, "but they cannot decide whether we should talk to the Taliban or not".

He said many Afghans were realizing that "a single fixed formula prescribed by one foreign power will not help Afghans attain peace".

Senior Taliban members in Afghanistan said they would send a delegation to Moscow, as it would give them an opportunity to engage with neighboring countries including China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, who have previously said they would send representatives. "Most countries have acknowledged our status and invited us as a separate political force. This is, in fact, our victory," said a senior member of the Afghan Taliban.

Greater leverage

Moscow's strategy of going around Ghani directly to opposition politicians is a concern for the Afghan government and it's the U.S. sponsors, who see it as unwelcome meddling, according to government officials and diplomats in Kabul.

"Russia is trying to create its own regional table to hold peace talks, they are clearly attempting to limit the U.S. role in Afghanistan," said a western diplomat in the Afghan capital.

The Moscow talks underline the increasingly active role Russia is playing in Afghanistan, decades after Soviet forces withdrew from the country, with business investment plans, diplomatic and cultural outreach, and small military support for the central government. In 2014, it reopened a cultural center in Kabul. Since 2016, it has provided thousands of Kalashnikov rifles to the Afghan government, said a senior foreign ministry official in Kabul.

The talks come also at a time when the Afghan government is struggling to recover control of districts lost to Taliban insurgents while casualties among security forces have reached record levels, a U.S. watchdog agency said.

(Source: Reuters)

Germany's Merkel to press for extension of anti-Russia sanctions over Ukraine

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has announced Berlin's plans to press for an extension of anti-Russia sanctions by Western nations next month, claiming that Moscow has not implemented the 2015 Minsk truce deal with Ukraine. "The Minsk agreement is not being fulfilled and we're only making inching progress if at all and sometimes we're going backwards," Merkel asserted on Thursday during a visit to the Ukrainian capital Kiev for talks with President Petro Poroshenko. "So based on the situation we have today, Germany will push for an extension of the sanctions in December too," she further added, noting that among the alleged violations of the Minsk peace treaty -- brokered by Germany and France -- were elections planned in areas controlled by pro-Russia forces for November 11.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine began in April 2014 after Russian and Western nations, led by the United States, faced off in a political crisis after Crimea's separation from Ukraine and reunion with Russia, which took place after a referendum.

(Source: Press TV)

EU considers sanctions on Myanmar over Rohingya crackdown

The European Union has threatened to impose trade sanctions on Myanmar that could put thousands of jobs in its lucrative clothing industry at risk, if the country does not address 'severe shortcomings' in human rights.

Officials wrapped up a four-day fact-finding mission to Myanmar on Wednesday as the EU considers stepping up its response to the brutal crackdown on the Rohingya, and ongoing conflicts elsewhere in the country.

"Trade, done right, is a powerful force for good," the EU commissioner for trade, Cecilia Malmström, said in a statement at the end of the visit.

The EU, the world's biggest trading bloc, is considering whether to add to existing travel bans and asset freezes on certain military officers, by removing the tariff-free access to European markets that Myanmar currently receives via the Everything But Arms (EBA) program.

"We have worked to ensure that trade preferences and access to the EU market are an incentive to promote fundamental human and labor rights," Malmström added. "We now expect Myanmar to address the severe shortcomings that have been highlighted during this monitoring mission. If they do not act, Myanmar authorities are putting their country's tariff-free access to the EU market in danger."

The EU officials' trip to Myanmar comes after the United Nations investigators said that genocide against the Rohingya was "ongoing" and that as many as 400,000 Rohingya still remaining in Myanmar live under severe restrictions and repression.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fled across the border to neighboring Bangladesh last year amid a crackdown that a UN report said warranted the prosecution of Myanmar's top military leaders for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Myanmar has dismissed the UN investigation as biased



and politically-motivated. Earlier this week, it reached an agreement with Bangladesh for the Rohingya to start returning home this month.

True story

Meantime, EU officials met ministers, trade unions, businesses, civil society groups, and international rights organizations to discuss issues including cooperation to investigate and prosecute individuals suspected of having committed crimes against humanity, humanitarian access to conflict-hit Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States as well as the conditions for the "voluntary, safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to their places of origin."

Aung Ko Ko, an independent economist who also sits on the ruling National League for Democracy's economic committee said he was confident that the EU would not restrict access to its markets.

"Myanmar isn't doing any harmful actions to EU members," he said. "It's not doing any anti-EU activities. Myanmar has

welcomed them to see the true story."

Government spokesman Zaw Htay could not be reached for comment.

Some business associations say the EU's withdrawal of Myanmar's trade privileges could force half the country's 450,000 garment workers to find new work, and leave factories facing the prospect of losing 47 percent of their entire export market.

The European Chambers of Commerce -- an umbrella group of six business associations -- said it was "deeply concerned" at the prospect of trade sanctions. The withdrawal of EBA (Everything But Arms) would harm the livelihoods of approximately half a million households affecting an estimated 2 million people, it said.

\$5bn industry

Under the EBA initiative, the world's poorest nations can sell anything but arms to the EU tariff-free. Myanmar, Europe's sixth-largest trading partner, has been part of the program since 2012.

Earlier this month, the EU told Cambodia, whose garment industry is worth about \$5bn, it had started the process of withdrawing the country's access to the same program.

Myanmar's preferential exports to the EU were valued at \$1.48bn in 2017, from \$610m in 2015, with garments accounting for nearly three quarters of exports, according to EU data. European retailers including H&M and Inditex buy clothing from Myanmar.

The United States has imposed targeted sanctions against military commanders and army units as a result of the Rakhine crackdown and is said to be considering more. Last week, Australia slapped sanctions on five generals it said were responsible for human rights violations.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

UN votes overwhelmingly to condemn U.S. embargo on Cuba

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has overwhelmingly backed a resolution condemning the United States economic embargo on Cuba after rejecting proposed U.S. amendments criticizing the communist nation on its human rights record.

Out of the 193-member body, 189 countries voted in favor of the resolution at the 27th annual General Assembly meeting, with only the U.S. and Israel voting against. Moldova and Ukraine did not vote.

The resolutions are unenforceable, but they reflect world opinion and the vote has given Cuba an annual stage for the last 27 years to demonstrate the isolation of the U.S. on the embargo imposed in 1960.

The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley slammed the UN, saying the body "has lost, it has rejected the opportunity to speak on behalf of human rights."

"You're not hurting the United States when you do this," she told those supporting the resolution. "You're literally hurting the Cuban people by telling the regime that their treatment of their people is acceptable."

U.S. has 'no moral authority to criticize Cuba'

In earlier separate votes on the proposed U.S. amendments, Ukraine and Israel were the only countries to join the U.S. in voting "yes" on all eight measures while 114 countries voted against and 65 abstained.

The proposed amendments expressed serious concern at the lack of freedom of expression and access to information in Cuba and the prohibition on workers' right to strike. The U.S. sanctions were imposed in 1960



following the revolution led by Fidel Castro and the nationalization of properties belonging to the U.S. citizens and corporations.

Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez called the U.S. embargo "a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of Cuban men and women" and denounced what he called the politicized U.S. amendments.

"The embargo is a violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law," he said before the vote.

"The government of the United States doesn't have the least moral authority to criticize Cuba or anyone when it comes to

human rights," he added.

The decision by the administration of the U.S. President Donald Trump to call for a vote on each of the eight amendments represents an escalation of its action last year and reflects worsening the U.S.-Cuban relations.

Former Cuban President Raul Castro and then President Barack Obama officially restored relations in July 2016 after 54 years.

But Ambassador Haley and others have sharply criticized Cuba's human rights record. In 2017, the U.S. returned to voting against the resolution condemning the American economic embargo after the Obama administration abstained in 2016, a first for the

U.S. in 25 years.

Troika of tyranny

Thursday's vote came shortly before Trump's national security adviser John Bolton announced in Florida that the administration is imposing new sanctions on Cuba and Venezuela and soon on Nicaragua, calling the three countries a "troika of tyranny".

Speaking at the Freedom Tower in Miami, a building where Cubans fleeing the revolution led by Castro received the U.S. government documents in the 1960s and early 1970s, Bolton condemned what he called the "destructive forces of oppression, socialism and totalitarianism" that he said the three countries represent.

Bolton blamed Cuba for enabling Nicolas Maduro's government and he urged the nations of the region to "let the Cuban regime know that it will be held responsible for continued oppression in Venezuela".

"The United States now looks forward to watching each corner of the triangle fall in Havana, in Caracas, in Managua," he said. "The troika will crumble, the people will triumph and the righteous flame of freedom will burn brightly again in this hemisphere."

According to Bolton, the Department of State has added more than two dozen entities owned or controlled by the Cuban military and intelligence services to a restricted list of entities with which financial transactions by the U.S. persons are prohibited.

Bolton said the goal is to prevent money from reaching the Cuban military, security and intelligence services.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	183367.3
IFX	2018.16

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	\$63.20/b
Brent	\$72.58b
OPEC Basket	\$75.51/b
Gold	\$1,233.40/oz
Silver	\$14.84/oz
Platinum	\$866.40/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Separate customs territory for Northern Ireland ‘unacceptable’: PM May’s spokeswoman

It would be unacceptable for Northern Ireland to be in a separate customs territory from the rest of the United Kingdom after Brexit, British Prime Minister Theresa May’s spokeswoman said on Friday.

The Financial Times reported on Thursday that the European Union had floated a tentative plan which would see Northern Ireland remain in a deep customs union with the bloc while the UK would be in a more “bare bones” customs arrangement.

“We have put forward our proposals and the EU is engaged with us but negotiations continue,” the spokeswoman said when asked about the report.

“It would be unacceptable for Northern Ireland to be in a separate customs territory to the rest of the UK.”

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. trade gap widens; deficit with China rises to record high

The U.S. trade deficit rose to a seven-month high in September as imports surged to a record high amid strong domestic demand, offsetting a rebound in exports.

The Commerce Department said on Friday the trade gap increased 1.3 percent to \$54.0 billion, widening for a fourth straight month. Data for August was revised to show the trade deficit rising to \$53.3 billion instead of the previously reported \$53.2 billion.

The trade deficit continues to deteriorate despite the Trump administration’s protectionist trade policy, which has left the United States locked in a bitter trade war with China as well as tit-for-tat tariffs with other trade partners, including the European Union, Canada and Mexico.

The politically sensitive goods trade deficit with China jumped 4.3 percent to a record high of \$40.2 billion in September. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the overall trade deficit rising to \$53.6 billion in September.

When adjusted for inflation, the goods trade gap increased to an all-time high of \$87.0 billion in September from \$86.3 billion in August.

The government reported last week that the trade deficit subtracted 1.78 percentage points from gross domestic product in the third quarter. That was the most since the second quarter of 1985 and reversed the 1.22 percentage points contribution in the April-June period.

In September, imports of goods and services increased 1.5 percent to \$266.6 billion, an all-time high. Imports of capital goods such as telecommunications equipment, civilian aircraft engines and computers were the highest on record.

There were also increases in imports of toys, cell phones, apparel and household goods.

Exports of goods and services rose 1.5 percent to \$212.6 billion in September. Exports were lifted by shipments of industrial supplies and materials, which were the highest on record. Soybean exports decreased by \$0.7 billion in September.

(Source: Reuters)

Euro zone factory growth slowed again in Oct.

Euro zone factory activity grew at its weakest pace in more than two years last month as export orders fell for the first time since late 2014, a survey showed, adding to evidence the bloc’s economy is well past its peak.

Polymakers at the European Central Bank are expected to shutter their 2.6 trillion euro bond-buying programme by the end of the year and the latest survey of purchasing managers will likely make uncomfortable reading.

IHS Markit’s October final manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index sank to 52.0 from September’s 53.2, a touch below a flash reading of 52.1 but above the 50 level separating growth from contraction.

That was its lowest reading since August 2016 and an index measuring output, which feeds into a composite PMI due on Tuesday, endured a similar decline. It fell to a near four-year low of 51.3 from 52.7, albeit just above a flash estimate.

“Concerns about the euro zone manufacturing sector intensified at the start of the fourth quarter,” said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit.

“The combination of destocking, deteriorating order books and drop in business optimism will add to concerns that growth risks are shifting to the downside rather than being ‘broadly balanced’, as indicated by the ECB.”

(Source: Reuters)

As new sanctions coming

Trump’s Iran zero oil plan hits snag

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** OPEC and non-OPEC producers’ disability to make up the shortfall in oil supplies resulting from the loss of Iranian production under the U.S. sanctions, which has led to an increase in oil prices, is a sign of Trump administration’s failure in Iran’s zero oil exports plan.

The other prove to this failure is a report by Bloomberg on Friday that quoted a U.S. official as announcing that eight countries, including South Korea, Japan

and India have received waivers from the U.S. government to keep buying Iranian oil after the reimposition of sanctions on Tehran from November 4.

According to Bloomberg, a list of all countries getting waivers is expected to be released officially on Monday.

China and Turkey are two other countries which are expected to be on the list of the Iranian oil buyers.

A Chinese official told Reuters that discussions with the U.S. government were



ongoing and that a result was expected over the next couple of days.

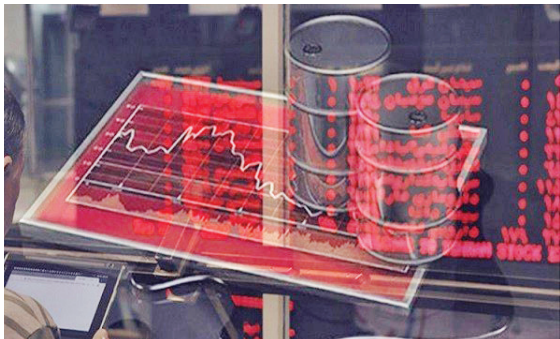
“We think Trump will agree to China importing some volumes, similar to the treatment that India and South Korea receive,” Clayton Allen of Height Securities said in a note on Friday.

South Korea’s Foreign Ministry declined to comment, and Japanese officials were not immediately available for comment.

Another country that has been seeking a sanctions waiver is Turkey, which takes significant volumes via pipeline from neighboring Iran.

Turkey’s Energy Ministry said on Friday it had heard rumors of waivers but added it had not received written notification of any exemption on buying Iran oil after the United States reimposes sanctions on Tehran.

Crude oil sale at IRNEX to go on



Last Sunday on October 28, just few days before new U.S. sanctions on petroleum sector take effect (November 4, 2018), NIOC could sell some 280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel on the first day of offering crude oil for export at the international ring of IRENEX. With the daily supply value of one million barrel per day, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel-cargos

Tehran fairgrounds hosting 2 intl. exhibitions

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 14th **d e s k** International Exhibition for Mines, Construction Machinery and Related Industry and Equipment (Iran ConMin 2018) and the 18th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2018) kicked off on Friday at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRIB reported.

As reported, some 442 domestic exhibitors along with 70 foreign companies from 20 countries including Austria, Germany, Russia, Japan, the United Kingdom, China and the United States are attending IEE 2018 to showcase their latest achievements and products in the electricity industry.

As the region’s leading trade fair for the construction machinery, mining equipment, building and natural stone sectors,



the Iran ConMin 2018, on the other hand, is hosting 80 domestic exhibitors along with 35 foreign participants from 35 different countries; most of which are small and medium enterprises.

Both of the events will be wrapped up on Monday.

WB puts Iran’s ease of doing business ranking at 128

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — World **d e s k** Bank (WB), in a recent report titled Doing Business 2019 (Training for Reform), put Iran’s ease of doing business (EODB) ranking at 128 among 190 countries.

Improving 2.34 points Iran’s EODB score stands at 56.98, according to the WB data.

Iran made paying taxes easier by introducing an online system for filing social security contributions, allowing the possibility of filing value added tax refund claims online, amending corporate income tax returns online and making payment of additional tax liability at the bank, the report said.

The country made exporting and



importing easier by enhancing the national trade single window, the same report confirmed.

New Zealand with 86.59 EODB score tops the WB list. Singapore (85.24), Denmark (84.64), and Hong Kong (84.22) occupy respectively the following ranks.

Hindustan Petroleum may buy Iranian oil if India secures sanctions waiver

State-run Indian refiner Hindustan Petroleum said it may resume buying Iranian oil if New Delhi secures a waiver from U.S. sanctions, its chairman M K Surana said on Thursday.

India is Iran’s top oil client after China and hopes to get a waiver on U.S. sanctions before they take effect on Sunday.

“Why not?” Surana told a press conference, when asked if his firm would look at resuming oil imports from Iran if India gets a waiver.

An Indian government source told Reuters that the United States could announce a waiver for New Delhi on Sunday. The source said India would soon sign an initial agreement with Iran to start paying for oil in Indian rupees through UCO bank.

India would continue to buy Iranian oil in the current

fiscal year to March but to secure the waiver may agree to further cut purchases, the source said.

The United States is imposing new sanctions on Iran’s oil industry after Washington withdrew from a nuclear deal between Tehran and other global powers.

After the latest round of U.S. sanctions was announced, HPCL was the first Indian refiner to halt purchases from Iran after its insurer backed out.

HPCL’s head of finance J. Ramaswamy told the same press conference that the company had already settled all payments for Iran oil purchases.

In the previous round of sanctions India made payments in rupees to Iran’s account with UCO bank. Iran used the funds to buy goods from India.

(Source: Reuters)



Trump administration poised to cave on Iran sanctions



U.S. President Trump signed an executive order on August 5.

allies seeking to keep doing business with Iran as the United States readies new sanctions on Nov. 4, have sparked outrage among Iran hawks on Capitol Hill and among some within the administration who have been pushing for a hardline on Iran.

The sanctions rollout is expected to take place early Friday, though the White House National Security Council leader John Bolton has declined to participate, as previously scheduled, sources confirmed. The cancellation is driving further speculation about unhap-

piness over the concessions to Iran.

The Free Beacon first reported last week that the administration was considering allowing Iran to remain connected to SWIFT. Since that time, senior State Department officials are said to have convinced Pompeo—a vocal and longtime Iran hawk—to go along with this plan, sparking further frustration among those advocating sanctions go fully into effect.

“They’re gutting President Trump’s maximum pressure campaign,” according to one senior congressional staffer briefed by administration officials on Iran and SWIFT.

“Administration officials used to tell us it’s OK to give Iran concessions on SWIFT because they would force oil exports down to zero,” the source said. “Now they’re saying it’s OK to give concessions on both SWIFT and energy, because this is just the beginning of a long campaign. It’s a surrender dressed up in Obama-era talking points, except Obama officials used to do it better. Congress isn’t fooled.”

Sources further confirmed that a series of briefings will be held in the next days disclosing these new concessions.

(Source: The Washington Free Beacon)

Oil falls again as U.S. allows Iran sanctions waivers

Oil prices slipped further on Friday, heading for a weekly loss of more than 6 percent, after a report that Washington has granted several countries waivers on sanctions on Tehran, allowing them to continue to import Iranian crude.

Benchmark crude oil was down 20 cents a barrel at \$72.69 by 0900 GMT. The contract has fallen 12 percent since the beginning of October.

U.S. light crude was 25 cents lower at \$63.44, down more than 13 percent since hitting four-year highs a month ago.

Global markets, including oil, were lifted earlier on Friday by hopes that the trade dispute between the world's two biggest economies could be resolved soon.

But sentiment turned negative after a report that several governments received waivers that would allow them to import some Iranian crude once U.S. sanctions are imposed next week.

The U.S. government has agreed to let eight countries, including close allies South Korea and Japan, as well as India, keep buying Iranian oil after it reimposes the sanctions, Bloomberg reported on Friday,



citing a U.S. official.

"Oil prices sold off sharply ... on news that the U.S. administration would grant waivers for oil imports from Iran," Goldman

Sachs analysts said in a note to clients.

A list of all countries getting waivers is expected to be released officially on Monday, several industry sources said.

Despite these efforts, analysts said any potential Iranian oil sanction waivers would likely only be temporary.

Goldman Sachs said it expects Iran's crude oil exports to fall to 1.15 million bpd by the end of the year, down from around 2.5 million bpd in mid-2018.

Beyond Iran sanctions, oil output has been rising significantly in the past two months.

Russian Energy Ministry data showed on Friday the country pumped 11.41 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil in October, a 30-year high.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries boosted oil production in October to 33.31 million bpd, up 390,000 bpd and the highest by OPEC since 2016.

And in the United States, crude production is now well over 11 million bpd, putting the U.S. in a neck and neck race with Russia for the title of top producer.

By the end of next year, however, Goldman expects Brent to fall to \$65 a barrel, largely due to "the unleashing of Permian (U.S. shale) supply growth once new pipelines come online".

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. envoy to EU voices 'blatant threat' to Nord Stream 2: report



U.S. ambassador to Brussels Gordon Sondland voiced a "blatant threat" to the Russian-European venture Nord Stream 2, which is expected to deliver gas directly to Germany across the Baltic Sea. Der Spiegel reports that the diplomat promised a "pushback against any energy projects that conflict with U.S. interests" by diplomatic means or "stronger measures."

The newly-appointed U.S. envoy has confronted the Germans on a number of issues during his first informal meeting with officials from the EU countries. The outlet cites a document released by the German mission in Brussels, which summed up this encounter. Despite his friendly tone, Sondland is said to remain "tough on the matter and true to the Trump administration's confrontational approach towards points of friction."

The United States has made a number of attempts to impede the implementation of the Nord Stream 2 project, slamming Germany's dependence on Russian fuel. Washington has even incorporated a provision for countering the construction of the pipeline with possible sanctions. Meanwhile, some experts point out that the U.S. aspires to boost its liquefied natural gas exports to the European Union and Ukraine, which may suffer transit revenue

drops if Nord Stream 2 becomes operational, as well as a 2-3 percent GDP loss.

However, Gordon reportedly denied that his position could have anything to do with Washington's wish to sell more liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe. Nevertheless, he was "pleased" about the newly-announced plans of the German government to fund the construction of an LNG terminal in Germany.

Der Spiegel's report has prompted irritation among German politicians, according to Der Spiegel. The head of the CDU/CSU group in the European Parliament Daniel Caspary told the outlet that the U.S. President would like to "sell more gas, and secondly, that Russians sell less."

A German lawmaker representing Die Linke, Andrej Hunko, has said it constitutes an "outrageous act" if the report proves to be correct. He insists that Germany mustn't spend millions funding the terminal for the U.S. fracking gas, which is extremely damaging for the environment.

Nord Stream 2 is a joint venture between Russia's gas giant Gazprom and five European companies. The goal of the project is to deliver 55 billion cubic meters of Russian natural gas annually directly to the European Union across the Baltic Sea. (Source: Sputnik)

Pakistan refuses to allow LNG import from Turkey



Pakistan's cabinet has refused to give the go-ahead for signing an amended agreement for the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Turkey, saying Ankara is not an exporter of gas.

Sources told The Express Tribune that an agreement was inked by the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) with Turkey for LNG import in a government-to-government arrangement without going into the bidding process.

However, the new Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government came to know that Turkey was not an LNG exporter and was of the view that there was no rationale for gas import from there.

Cabinet members, in a recent meeting, argued that the rationale for signing the deal with Turkey should be reviewed and agreed to refer the matter to the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) for its consideration.

An inter-governmental agreement between Pakistan and Turkey was signed on February 23, 2018 after obtaining approval from the cabinet. Pakistan State Oil, Pakistan LNG Terminals Limited (PLTL) and Turkish Petroleum International Company were nominated in the agreement for LNG trade.

The cabinet was told that Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL), which had been established

for LNG imports, was not mentioned among the nominated companies in the agreement.

Earlier, the Law and Justice Division, while responding to a request for its views, suggested that proposed amendments could be made by the two sides by signing an amended protocol. It also said approval of the cabinet would be required for signing the protocol.

The Law Division cleared the draft of amended protocol from the legal point of view. The Turkish side also agreed to the draft amendment.

Then the cabinet's approval was solicited for signing the protocol in order to amend the agreement for cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons.

At present, Pakistan has two LNG terminals having handling capacity of 1.2 billion cubic feet per day.

However, the board of directors of PLL has barred the company from importing additional cargoes, leading to under-utilisation of the second LNG terminal for the past few months, putting an extra burden on consumers and depriving them of cheap electricity.

PLL is importing three cargoes per month – half the handling capacity of the LNG terminal.

(Source: The Tribune)

OPEC oil output rises to highest since 2016: Reuters survey

OPEC has boosted oil production in October to the highest since 2016, a Reuters survey found, as higher output led by the United Arab Emirates and Libya more than offset a cut in Iranian shipments due to U.S. sanctions.

The 15-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has pumped 33.31 million barrels per day this month, the survey on Wednesday found, up 390,000 bpd from September and the highest by OPEC as a group since December 2016.

OPEC agreed in June to pump more oil after pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to curb rising prices and make up for an expected shortfall in Iranian exports. Oil hit a four-year high of \$86.74 a barrel on Oct. 3 but has since eased to \$76 as concerns over tight supplies faded.

"Oil producers appear to be successfully offsetting the supply outages from Iran and Venezuela," said Carsten Fritsch, analyst at Commerzbank in Frankfurt.

The June pact involved OPEC, Russia and other non-members returning to 100 percent compliance with output cuts that began in January 2017, after months of underproduction in Venezuela, Angola and elsewhere had pushed adherence above 160 percent.

In October, the 12 OPEC members bound by the supply-limiting agreement lowered compliance to 107 percent as production rose, from a revised 122 percent in September, the survey found.

This is the closest OPEC has moved to 100 percent compliance since the June agreement. ■ **UAE, Libya**

The biggest increase has come this month from the UAE.



Output in October rose by 200,000 bpd to 3.25 million bpd, the survey found, and oil in theory rise further as the UAE says its oil-production capacity will reach 3.5 million bpd by the year-end.

The second-largest came from Libya where production averaged 1.22 million bpd, the survey found, a rise of 170,000 bpd. Libyan output remains volatile due to unrest, raising questions about the stability of current OPEC production.

Saudi Arabia, after opening the taps in June and then scaling back its plans to pump more, supplied 10.65 million bpd in October, more than in June and close to a record high, the survey found.

The kingdom, OPEC's top producer, has indicated it is concerned about potential oversupply, raising the prospect that its next production adjustment could be to rein in output.

OPEC's second-largest producer, Iraq, also raised output in October.

Iraqi supply could rise further if Iraq's new government goes ahead with a deal reached by the outgoing administration and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to resume exporting Kirkuk crude to Turkey via the KRG.

Angola, where natural declines at oilfields curbed production in recent years, boosted supply in October due to supply from a new field, Gindungo. Output is still far below its OPEC target.

Manufacturing PMI: Japan rebounds, but trade hits China while UK slumps

Supply in Nigeria rose by 30,000 bpd. Like Libya, Nigeria is not part of the OPEC supply-cutting pact because it often faces unplanned outages stemming from unrest.

Output in Kuwait edged lower, the survey found. The country had raised production

in July following the OPEC deal, and kept it steady in August and September.

Among countries with lower output, the biggest drop - 100,000 bpd - occurred in Iran. Exports fell as returning U.S. sanctions discouraged companies from buying the country's oil, although the decline was lower than some analysts expected.

"Iran is going to come in above expectations," said an industry source who tracks OPEC output, referring to Iranian supply in October.

Production also slipped further in Venezuela, where a lack of funds for the oil industry because of the country's economic crisis is cutting refinery operations and crude exports.

Despite these decreases, OPEC output in October has risen to the highest since December 2016, the month before the supply-cutting pact took effect, according to Reuters surveys.

Some of the extra oil has come from Congo Republic and Equatorial Guinea, which joined OPEC in 2018 and 2017 respectively.

Before Congo joined, OPEC had an implied production target for 2018 of 32.78 million bpd, based on cutbacks detailed in late 2016 and Nigeria and Libya's expectations of 2018 output.

According to the survey, OPEC excluding Congo pumped about 530,000 bpd above this implied target in October.

The survey aims to track supply to the market and is based on shipping data provided by external sources, Thomson Reuters flows data and information provided by sources at oil companies, OPEC and consulting firms.

(Source: Reuters)

Southeast Asia's renewables held back by policy inaction: IRENA

Southeast Asia is a potential hotspot for renewable energy, yet the region has not met expectations because it lacks policy frameworks that would encourage investment, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) told Reuters.

Renewables across the world have typically been boosted by policies like price subsidies and guaranteed grid takeoff.

In Southeast Asia, though, barring some exceptions such as in Thailand, support for renewables has been smaller, and the region lags far behind others in renewable output despite its potential, especially for solar, geothermal and wind power.

One of the factors holding back renewables is the region's abundance of thermal coal, of which Indonesia is the world's biggest exporter.

"Some of the ministers here believe coal is one of their cheaper alternatives," IRENA's director general Adnan Amin told the Reuters Commodity Summit interview series this week.

Glencore, the world's biggest thermal coal exporting company, said on Thursday that "Southeast Asia will drive future economic growth and demand for coal."

The miner said "coal will account for 40 percent of energy growth" in Southeast Asia by 2040 despite the emergence of renewables in the region.

■ Catching up

Global renewable capacity, excluding hydro, has soared from under 100,000 megawatts (MW) in 2000 to more than 1 million MW in 2017, according to IRENA data.

Only a tiny portion of that has come in Southeast Asia.

Europe and North America were the first regions to seriously boost renewable energy, and today, China is the leader in the sector, with India catching up.

Now, there are also efforts underway in Southeast Asia: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plans to generate 23 percent of its primary energy needs from renewables by 2025, up from just over 10 percent now.

To help achieve that, ASEAN and IRENA signed an agreement this week to boost renewable investment and deployment.

"I think the adoption of the 23 percent target is a very good step, but that needs to be translated now into policy actions," said Amin.

"Over the next decade, a total of \$290 billion will have to be invested for Southeast Asia to reach its targets, a ten-fold increase on the annual investments we're seeing today," Amin said, speaking to Reuters while attending Singapore's International Energy Week (SIEW).

Amin said renewable investment, including in Southeast Asia, would receive a boost from "dramatic reductions in the cost of renewables."

Solar panel prices have crashed to under 50 cents per watt of electricity, from around \$70 per watt in 1980 as technology and manufacturing efficiency have improved.

"Solar is very dynamic right now, and is going to take the largest share of investments ... We're seeing over the next decade another 50-60 percent decrease in costs, which will bring electricity cost very close to zero," Amin said.

At the same time, Amin said capital markets were starting to price carbon risks, raising the cost of fossil fuels.

"Financial institutions have started to bail out from financing coal, so, cost of investments in coal will rise while cost of investments in renewables are decreasing," Amin said.

The latest major bank to pull out of coal financing was Britain's Standard Chartered (STAN.L) in September.

Renewable investments have soared over the past decade, though, reaching almost \$1 trillion since 2015, IRENA said.

Amin said solar would also start to compete with natural gas, an industry that has so far seen itself as complementary to intermittent renewables.

"We see the momentum on renewables going so fast that they've become competitive with gas power generation. Increasingly as people do the math about investments ... the renewables will start to play a bigger and bigger role."

(Source: Reuters)

Russian oil output nears all-time high with October ramp-up

Russian oil production moved closer to an all-time high before the nation meets with OPEC partners to discuss future supply.

The country's crude and condensate output averaged 11.4 million barrels a day last month, according to data from the Energy Ministry's CDU-TEK unit released Friday. That's about 160,000 barrels a day more than two years ago, before Russia agreed to cut supply with OPEC. It's a post-Soviet record, and not far off its highest-ever output.



The production boom comes amid mixed signals from global oil producers. Russia suggested last Saturday it could push output to a fresh record, just days after a committee representing the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies signaled the group could reduce supply in 2019.

Russia, which relies on energy for almost half its budget revenue, has repeatedly said its plans will depend on cooperation with OPEC. Russian oil output peaked during the Soviet era, averaging 11.416 million barrels a day in 1987, according to BP Plc data. Maintaining current production levels is not a given, especially since volumes can dip in the freezing winter months, and during summer-season maintenance.

Ministers from the so-called OPEC+ group, which brings together Russia, Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing nations, will meet in Abu Dhabi next week, ahead of a key summit scheduled for early December in Vienna.

(Source: themoscowtimes.com)

Peace waves in East Africa



South Sudan President Salva Kiir (R) meets rebel leader Riek Machar (C) in Juba, South Sudan, Oct. 31, 2018.

The 'love can win' diplomacy of Ethiopia's new leader has brought startling results in the region, notably in the reunion of South Sudan's top two rivals. Can peace have a ripple effect?

Abiy Ahmed, the new prime minister of Ethiopia with a PhD in conflict resolution, certainly believes so.

In the six months since he took office as Africa's youngest leader, Abiy has not only transformed the often-violent ethnic tensions of his own country with an approach he calls "love can win hearts," he has also become a whirlwind diplomat in East Africa with an olive-branch touch. He has settled a dispute with Egypt over sharing the Nile waters. He ended Ethiopia's two-decade-old conflict with Eritrea, which in turn helped Eritrea to restore ties with Somalia and sign an accord with Djibouti over a border dispute. The region is now ripe for economic integration.

"There is a wind of hope blowing in the Horn of Africa," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in September.

Now Abiy can claim a large part of the credit for a breakthrough in South Sudan, home to one of Africa's worst civil wars.

On Oct. 31, after months of Abiy-orchestrated talks among South Sudanese groups, the country's main opposition figure and former vice president, Riek Machar, landed in the capital of Juba for a celebration of reconciliation with his rival, President Salva Kiir. Their reunion, more than two years after Machar had to flee the country in a violent political dispute, was the public manifestation of a power-sharing deal the two signed in Ethiopia on Sept. 13.

For his part in the dramatic ceremony, President Kiir apologized to South Sudanese citizens for the five years of war, saying the responsibility fell on him. And Machar said "the past is gone" and promised a new chapter for peace and unity. Both men have given credit to the Ethiopian leader for his peacemaking role.

The peace deal could still fall apart. Two precious pacts since 2013 failed. But what makes this one different was the rigor of negotiations led by Ethiopia and other neighbors of South Sudan. Estranged stakeholders from refugees to armed ethnic groups were included, not just the two top rivals.

The peace process befits the words on a T-shirt that Abiy often wears. It shows a picture of Nelson Mandela with the slogan "No one is free until the last one is free."

South Sudan has far to go to regroup itself as a unified country. It was only formed in 2011, spun off after a civil war in Sudan. Yet the ripples of peacemaking, coming out of Ethiopia, have started the country down that path.

(Source: The CSM)

A Balkans plan that merits cautious backing

History has shown that tampering with borders in the Balkans is more perilous than in any other part of Europe. Yet Serbia's president Aleksandar Vucic and his Kosovan counterpart Hashim Thaci are moving towards a landmark agreement to normalize relations between the former Yugoslav republic and its former province, involving border adjustments and a land swap. Such a breakthrough could help clear the way for Serbia to join the EU and Kosovo to become a formal candidate for membership. It is also fraught with risk. Details have not been released but the two men are understood to have discussed swapping mostly Serb-populated northern Kosovo for part of Serbia's Presevo Valley, largely populated by Albanians. A deal could end Kosovo's international limbo since its 1998-1999 war. Its 2008 declaration of independence has been recognized by more than 110 countries but crucially not Serbia, Russia, China and five EU member states. A deal, if it provided for Serbia's recognition of its former province — and Kosovo is unlikely to accept anything less — would help transform the ex-Serbian province into a viable standalone state. It should prompt the five holdout EU members to recognize its independence and encourage other countries globally to do the same — enabling Kosovo to join key international institutions such as the UN and Interpol. Moving both countries towards EU membership would strengthen democratic and economic reforms, and send a broader signal that the integration of the Balkans into Euro-Atlantic institutions, however slow, continues.

There are, at the same time, multiple potential pitfalls. While western policy has been to encourage different ethnic groups to live peacefully side by side, the mooted Kosovo solution would involve an essentially ethnic-based land swap. More Serbs live in Albanian-dominated southern Kosovo than in the north; many fear being separated from their kin and important Serbian Orthodox monasteries. A land-swap deal could prompt Serbs to leave the rest of Kosovo, turning it into a mono-ethnic Albanian state. Many Kosovo Albanians are suspicious, too. Vucic and Thaci seem to have an eye as much on their own political interests as on the will of the people. The most dangerous potential consequence could be to embolden leaders and peoples elsewhere in ex-Yugoslavia — above all, Serbs in Bosnia — to try to redraw borders they dislike. Conflict resolution, however, often requires leaders to take bold and even previously taboo steps. In this case, if the presidents can reach a deal, the potential benefits — to Kosovo, Serbia and the wider region — are sufficient to merit cautious international support. U.S. and EU officials are warming to the plan. Although Angela Merkel, German chancellor, has criticized the idea, Berlin's position seems to be softening. A Kosovo deal could reinforce a sense of renewed momentum in tackling tricky issues in the Balkans. Macedonia's parliament is pressing ahead with ratifying an agreement resolving a 20-year dispute with Greece over the country's name, despite disappointing turnout in a referendum on the issue last month.

Mr Vucic and Mr Thaci, however, need to lessen impressions of a backroom carve-up and work harder to win over their populations and political establishments. It is vital, too, that the EU and other countries follow through with appropriate recognition and incentives if there is a breakthrough. This would ensure a deal promoted peace and stability — not renewed fragmentation — in a troubled region.

(Source: FT)

The new U.S. hard line toward China is worrying Southeast Asia

By Mark J. Valencia

Analysts are feverishly debating whether the United States and China are on the brink of a modern version of their own "Cold War." It is of course too early to tell and there are many reasons why that may not happen. But the "soft war" for the hearts and minds of Southeast Asian countries is clearly intensifying and the United States has suffered some recent setbacks.

"Soft power" is the capability to use economic or cultural influence to shape the preferences of others. The soft power struggle between China and the United States for influence in the region has become much more equal in capacity and effect than Washington would like. Indeed, some argue that the United States is losing — or will eventually lose.

China has strong soft power influence in the region, the most grandiose element of which is its Belt and Road vision. Its implementation would make China the manager, financier, driver, and core of a vast trade and economic system connecting Asia with Eurasia and Europe. As part of this grand plan, Chinese economic investment in the infrastructure of Southeast Asian countries is already benefiting some countries — and positively influencing their views of China.

The United States was initially complacent regarding China's growing soft power. Washington was confident that its friends and allies in the region would remain loyal. But that hope began to fade with the clear political loss of Laos and Cambodia and the hedging of allies like the Philippines and Thailand and others that the United States considered solidly in its camp.

So Washington began to strike back in earnest. It named China as a "strategic competitor" and a "revisionist" nation. The 2017 National Security Strategy declared that "a geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region." Then-Pacific Commander Admiral Harry Harris added that "without focused involvement and engagement by the United States and our allies and partners, China will realize its dream of hegemony in Asia."

As a counter grand vision, the United States proposed a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." Within this framework, Washington is pushing for a renewal of the so-called "Quad" — a potential (but unlikely) security arrangement among the four large democracies of India, Australia, Japan, and the United States in-



As U.S. policy toward China becomes more confrontational, its soft power in Asia is waning.

tended to counterbalance China.

This push back culminated in the October 4 "it's us or them" speech by U.S. Vice President Mike Pence. He criticized China across the board and in particular for behavior in the South China Sea. However as former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd puts it, "many U.S. allies may decide to hedge their bets, waiting until it becomes clearer whether the U.S. shift will be permanent and whether it will succeed."

On September 30, a U.S. warship on a freedom of navigation operation against China's claims in the South China Sea was confronted by a Chinese warship and the two nearly collided. Meeting as previously scheduled, the ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus Meeting (ADMM-Plus) expressed unusually blunt concern with the incident. The ADMM-Plus participants are the 10 ASEAN members plus Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the United States.

The host, Singapore Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen, seemed to blame both for the incident. Ng said, "We asked pointedly: 'What happened between the two ships, should we be worried? How are your relations?'" He

added that "Some of the incidents are from assertion of principles, but we recognize that the price of any physical incident is one that is too high and unnecessary to either assert or prove your position."

Ng also asserted that the "very act of ASEAN asking" about the incident helped the United States and China "collect their thoughts, formulate strategies and place emphases."

But Washington essentially destroyed this hope by sailing two warships through the Taiwan Strait, clearly stepping up the frequency of such transits and in the process provoking China's nationalists. Indeed, Chinese leaders will clearly see the transit as a weakening of the U.S. "One China" policy. While clearly planned in advance of ASEAN's expression of concern, it probably embarrassed Ng, who had declared that ASEAN has a clear role to play in stabilizing tensions: "Big powers... trust us to be in the driver's seat."

Meanwhile China has made political advances with Southeast Asian countries, particularly in military-to-military relations. On October 27-28, China, Malaysia and Thailand implemented their first ever trilateral military exercise in the strategic Ma-

lacca Strait. From October 22-28, China and ASEAN implemented the first China -ASEAN maritime exercises. The United States and Australia were not invited.

To some, the participation of some South-east Asian nations implies "passive support" for China's position in the soft power struggle. Chinese State Councilor and National Defense Minister Wei Fenghe hailed the exercise "as a milestone event that will showcase the resolve and determination of China and ASEAN to safeguard regional peace and stability." The host commander, Chinese Vice Admiral Yuan Yubai, spoke of the exercise as an ongoing means to build confidence and understanding between ASEAN and China.

Ng announced that ASEAN also said that it is planning a similar maritime exercise with the U.S. Navy next year, in keeping with ASEAN's preferred position of balancing between the two big powers. Indeed, Ng said, "ASEAN's centrality will be further emphasized if we agree on today's proposal for the ASEAN-U.S. maritime exercise next year."

Meanwhile, a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea between China and ASEAN is making some progress. China has proposed a clause stating that "the Parties shall not hold joint military exercises with countries from outside the region, unless the parties concerned are notified beforehand and express no objection." This appears to be a bold affront to the United States and its extra regional supporters like Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and France.

China's President Xi Jinping is about to make a state visit to the Philippines and in deference Manila has promised that it will not participate in reportedly planned U.S.-led military exercises in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait in November.

China is also making progress on an agreement for joint development of natural gas with the Philippines in disputed waters. If this is politically and economically successful, it will create a precedent for other rival claimants to follow — perhaps to the exclusion of companies from countries outside the region, as China has proposed in the draft COC.

Perhaps it does not matter so much whether these efforts are eventually successful. Just the possibility of "progress" itself, with no major backsliding, may be enough to keep ASEAN- China relations in the comfort zone — and put pressure on the United States to moderate its confrontational and provocative policies and actions.

(Source: The Diplomat)

Trudeau won't stop \$12bn of arms sales to Saudi after Khashoggi's death because money always wins over murder

By Robert Fisk

Almost 5,000 miles from the city in which his corpse was secretly buried — in one piece or in bits — by his Saudi killers, Jamal Khashoggi's murder now rattles the scruples and the purse-strings of yet another country. For Canada, land of the free and liberal conscience — especially under Justin Trudeau — is suddenly confronted by the fruits of the bright young prime minister's Conservative predecessors and a simple question of conscience for cash: should Trudeau tear up a 2014 military deal with Saudi Arabia worth \$12bn?

When Ottawa decided to sell its spanking new light armored vehicles (LAVs) to the Saudi kingdom, the Saudis already had a well-earned reputation for chopping off heads and supporting raving and well-armed extremists. But Mohammed bin Salman had not yet ascended the crown principedom of this pious state. The Saudis had not yet invaded Yemen, chopped off the heads of its Shia leaders, imprisoned its own princes, kidnapped the Lebanese prime minister and dismembered Khashoggi.

So the Conservative Canadian government of Stephen Harper had no scruples about flogging off its LAVs — as these little armored monsters are called — to Riyadh, specifically for the "transport and protection" of government officials.

Now you can hardly accuse Trudeau of being a supporter of the Saudi regime. Back in August, Mohammed bin Salman's lads ordered the expulsion of the Canadian ambassador to Riyadh and closed down trade agreements with Canada after Trudeau's foreign minister had complained about the arrest of women's rights campaigners in the kingdom. The Canadians had made "false statements", claimed the Saudis — whose own reputation for false statements would soon achieve proportions worthy of a Hollywood horror epic. Trudeau was in the Saudi doghouse as well as Washington's because, only two months earlier, Trump had called him "dishonest and weak".

So, of course, no sooner had Khashoggi been dispatched in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul than Canada's liberal conscience bestirred itself. Surely now Trudeau must tear up the 2014 agreement for all those shiny light armored vehicles which Harper flogged to the Saudis in 2014. Alas, it turned out a few days ago, the deal included what Trudeau's government has described as a prohibitive cancellation agreement which would — if the armored vehicle transaction was completed — cost the Canadians billions of dollars. It made economic sense, up to a point, but as with all things involving the Saudis these days, there was a "whoops!" factor.

For it turned out — alas, oh alas — that those harmless Canadian LAVs had been videotaped in the Saudi eastern province in 2017, putting down a Shia civilian rebellion. The Canadian foreign ministry — now, in a masterpiece of satire, renamed "Global Affairs Canada" — suspended arms exports and opened a "full and thorough investigation". Nowadays,



The Canadian prime minister may have condemned the actions of the Saudi regime, but his position over light-armored vehicle sales to the kingdom tells us everything we need to know.

we are all familiar with "full and thorough investigations" — like the one the Saudis are enthusiastically conducting into the demise of the secretly buried Khashoggi — and the Canadian version of an enquiry subsequently concluded that the vehicles from Canada had undergone post-export "modifications".

Mohammed bin Salman was by this time running the show in Riyadh, and Trudeau was running the show in Ottawa. But now arrived, yet again, the Saudi "whoops!" factor.

The LAVs, it transpired, had been secretly kitted up with turrets and machine guns, and these vehicles were used in the 2017 operation in which 20 civilians had been killed. But — and here was a deus ex machina to beat them all — the Global Affairs report added (with even further unconscious satire) that no human rights violations had occurred; that Saudi forces had made "efforts to minimize civilian casualties"; and that the use of force — readers, you guessed it — was "proportionate and appropriate".

Thank heavens the Saudis were firing machine guns from those Canadian vehicles and not attacking their enemies with knives and bonesaws.

But now — and here the tired metaphor is oddly appropri-

ate — the knife was twisted in Trudeau's back. Step forth one Ed Fast, an opposition Canadian Conservative MP who, as the former international trade minister in Ottawa, helped to shepherd through the original lucrative arms deal with the Saudis. The contractual arrangements had nothing to do with him. The penalties were inserted by General Dynamics Land Systems, which assembled these wretched machines in Ontario.

Besides, Fast added last weekend, the deal should be upheld; Canada should instead censure the Saudis by targeting the property of Saudi human rights offenders and end imports of Saudi oil. And increase the transshipment of Canadian oil from Alberta, which neighbours British Columbia where — whoops! — Fast happens to be an MP.

No one could have been enjoying this as much as the Saudis. For Ed Fast also relapsed into the mind-boggling diminution of Khashoggi's murder. He described the chopping-up of the Saudi journalist in Istanbul and his secret burial by the Saudis as an "issue" and a "situation", "Issue" as in "problem", I suppose. As for the Fast view of arms cancellation, it wouldn't really "punish" the Saudis, and anyway — here we go again — Riyadh would only buy its armored vehicles from other countries.

Dennis Horak, a former Canadian ambassador to Saudi Arabia — it's odd how former western ambassadors to Riyadh have a habit of beating the drum for the Saudis — announced that cancellation would now "only serve to punish the 3,000-plus Canadian workers... who will see their high-skilled, middle class jobs disappear for a gesture with no consequences in Saudi Arabia". Such a message would be "lost on the Saudi leadership". Selling armored vehicles was not a favor but "a commercial transaction". What we should do, announced Horak in the Toronto Star, is to "speak directly" to them: "Engage, rather than disengage".

Who would believe that this was the same ambassador Horak whom the Saudis booted out of Riyadh only last August after the Canadian foreign affairs minister complained about the arrest of women activists in the kingdom? Does he want to go back, for heaven's sakes?

It's not difficult to spot the moral — or the immorality — of this tale. Arms will almost always win over murder. Our "middle class" chaps and their families — for I mercifully haven't noticed a lot of women among the CEOs of arms companies — must have their jobs secured, whatever the cost in dead Yemeni wedding parties, blitzed hospitals or chopped-up journalists. And already, scarcely two weeks since we all learned for certain that Saudi consulates could perform more ambitious deeds than issue divorce papers, the cloth is being cut to fit the scruples of even the most liberal of western states. So that "issues" and "situations" don't interfere in the "commercial transactions" of the global economy.

(Source: Independent)

Probing Erdogan's threat against Kurds amid Khashoggi's case

➔ Meanwhile, the Russians have a particular interest in the eastern part of the Euphrates. The Russian officials recently blamed the U.S. for undermining Syria's territory and control over Kurds. Moscow has also revealed the suspicion acts in the international-controlled coalition in Syria.

Some analysts believe that the Russia seeks to exploit Turkey's rising concern over the Kurdish ambitions in Syria, and therefore considers any escalation of Turkey's move in eastern Syria to its advantage and its ally, the Syrian government.

"Turkey is being threatened by terror group on the east of the Euphrates," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, referring to the YPG. "We don't threaten anyone and we won't let anyone do things that threaten us right beside our borders," he said on Oct. 26.

Earlier before the planning and preparations for an offensive against the PKK's Syrian affiliate in northern Syria on the east of the Euphrates River were completed, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: "We will destroy the terrorist establishment on the east of the Euphrates. Soon we will bring down the terrorist group with even more extensive and more effective operations"

Is Erdogan going to an adventure in eastern Euphrates?

Turkey is unlikely to make an adventure



in eastern Euphrates, similar to the "Operation Euphrates Shield" in 2016, in which it succeeded in removing the Kurds from the city of al-Bab in Aleppo Province and end up by dominating Afrin city.

Experts believe that the military operations carried out by Turkey on the outskirts of Aleppo cannot be done in eastern Euphrates, for reasons like the democratic Syrian force, whose number exceeds 100,000 people. Mean-

while, Americans have a military presence in eastern Euphrates, which is an obstacle to turning Ankara into an adventure. Erdogan is threatening to expel Syria's Kurds from eastern Euphrates, but analysts believe that the situation is not as easy as the Turkish president speaks about.

Turkey has other cards to play but first and for most, it has to reach an agreement with Damascus. The Syrian government has insisted on repossessing all Syria's lands, including the Kurdish-controlled areas, and has recently warned the Kurds about continuing to contact the U.S.

This issue becomes important as it has political and military dimension to it. Washington insists on the involvement of the Kurds in the Syrian constitutional committee, and Ankara and Damascus are against it.

Erdogan, in the east of Euphrates, can't move without coordination with Iraq, Iran and Syria, as well as Russia. But will Turkey be in direct coordination with these countries if it decides to move its troops on this front? A question that has no clear answer just like Erdogan's threats.

Can we conclude that the honeymoon between Trump and Erdogan has come to a halt after the release of the American priest as Ankara is facing the U.S. forces and bases in the east of Euphrates?

Iran's joint oil fields could resolve regional tensions

➔ Qatar has also become a major exporter of liquefied natural gas, with a lot of investment in foreign technology and gas production focused on the South Pars. Given that the South Pars field has been Iran's top priority, over the past five years Iran has at least succeeded in increasing procurement through investment here. In March 2017, Iran drew a competitive 250,000 bpd from the South Pars, with Qatar drawing 300,000 bpd over the same period.



Iran and Saudi Arabia share four oil and gas fields. By 2017, Iran's oil production from the Forouzan oil field – also in the Persian Gulf – numbered between 38,000 to 40,000 bpd, while the Saudi side has far outstripped its rival with a production capacity of 400,000 bpd from this field. Similar imbalances are apparent in all shared fields in this area.

Joint oil and gas fields are important for all countries in the region, with all countries which share oil and gas fields with Iran gaining billions from their procurement. The US withdrawal from the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal) has motivated many regional rivals to accelerate their activities further. Since major foreign oil firms have abandoned Iran in response to the now-ineffective agreement, these firms have similarly sought activities elsewhere in the region. Unconfirmed reports so far state that around \$6 billion worth of gas has thus been lost to competitors. Any delay in the development of joint fields will thus cause irreparable losses for the country. Experts warn that any delay in signing contracts for foreign investment will hinder the development of joint fields and will help the neighbouring states to plunder Iranian oil reserves.

Cooperation between Iran and neighbouring Arab countries in the development of plans for joint fields could provide the basis for increasing security and stability in the region. Moreover, foreign investments are important for Iran in recovering its oil and gas production capacities. Iran's huge oil and gas reserves can play a key role in the world energy market yet, as expected, with the withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear agreement the Iranian energy industry faces yet more challenges in attracting foreign investment and technology. After the removal of sanctions, Iran plans to create conditions for attracting foreign investors by drafting new oil contracts. Iran has repeatedly stated that it needs \$2 billion of foreign investment to revive its oil and gas production capacity.

Considering developments in the energy market and US sanctions, attracting foreign investment and technology to the Iranian energy industry will be tougher than ever. Achieving the goals of the country's Sixth Development Plan and Twenty-Year Development Plan is possible only with foreign investment, which requires a reduction of political risk in the country. In the event of a reversal of fortunes in terms of foreign policy and the provision of other requirements for foreign companies, capital can be expected to pour in – particularly from Russian and Chinese companies.

A change of attitude in foreign policy and an attempt to eliminate tensions with neighbouring countries will be an important step towards attracting foreign investors. An increase in the oil and gas production capacities of the country is a short and mid-term priority for Iran's Oil Ministry. Yet Iran must resolve political tension with its neighbours and also negotiate with the West to if these goals are to become workable.

(Source: middleeastmonitor)

West and Saudi's Petro Dollars

➔ Although the German Chancellor may think that such a move is considered as a kind of humanitarian and anti-dictatorial gesture, but we're not to forget that Saudi Arabia has bought 416 million euros of military equipment from Germany since the beginning of 2018. According to existing evidences, after Algeria, Saudi Arabia is the second largest importer of weapons from Germany.

The next point is about the way West reacts to the Khashoggi case. Western authorities, such as Trump, have apparently condemned the kidnapping and murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi by bin Salman and his men, while on the other hand, they has been repeatedly emphasizing their strong financial ties with Saudi Arabia! In other words, the European troika and even some other members of the European Union have shown that they lack the will to deal with the case of khashoggi's murder.

The soft reaction of Western officials to the case of Jamal Khoshoggi once again challenged the selective and instrumental approach of human rights claimants to this issue. Meanwhile, governments and security officials in the West are using all their capabilities to prevent their citizens from "knowing more" about this case.

The fact is that the governments of the United States and France have used both their public and secret diplomacy capabilities to prevent the murder of Khashoggi by Saudi Crown Prince from turning into a hot topic among their citizens.

Given that the "Saudi exoneration" project is no longer possible regarding his brutal murder and dismembering, the European troika has moved towards the project of "Managing Western Public Opinion" through adopting democratic gestures. However, this won't change the West's fundamental policy in support of Al Saud's crimes.



European players, especially the three countries of Germany, Britain and France, have spent a lot on organizing their "operational", "political" and "media" approach in the international system. But the power of the independent media, and the disclosures made by independent journalists on such cases, prevent the realization of this "hideous game." At the moment, those like Macron, Merkel and Theresa May

should be held accountable for their coordination with Saudi Arabia in the killing of innocent people in Yemen, especially Yemeni children. Today, people around the world are carefully following the case of Jamal Khashoggi, and such public awareness is certainly not a good news for Western partners of Riyadh and supporters of Saudi Arabia's crimes in the West Asia region.

Yemen talks impossible without accountability

TEHRAN (FNA) — The U.S. and a number of other western states are renewing calls for a ceasefire in Yemen and a return to UN-backed peace talks aimed at ending the three-and-half-year war, but such efforts are destined to failure when they are disingenuous right from the start.

The administration of Donald Trump said on Wednesday the climate was right to resume peace talks, following similar comments from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Jim Mattis this week.

Some might believe the U.S. call is an encouraging step towards a political solution and an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people, but is this enough? How could we make sure this is genuine effort to end the suffering of millions of poor and incarcerated Yemenis, and not an effort to rescue the Saudis who are struggling to get out of the Yemen quagmire. The answer is obvious. The question is what about accountability and justice for all those families that were destroyed by the indiscriminate air strikes? And what about accountability for the U.S.-backed, Saudi-led war crimes as well as the destruction of a nation?

Let's not forget, the U.S. and British governments have already admitted that they are training the Saudi Air Force despite global accusations and condemnations that they are carrying out atrocities in Yemen. Besides providing intelligence and targeting assistance, the United Kingdom and the United States have also sold tens of billions of dollars in arms to the country, an autocratic regime with one of the worst human rights records in the world.

Despite the accusations of war crimes, the U.S., the UK and several other Western governments continue to defend selling arms to Riyadh and training its pilots, insisting close ties keep the West safe.

Worse still, British and American forces are helping the Saudi Air Force in order to 'improve their targeting processes' – and, therefore, their compliance with international law. This is while the targeting courses have failed to improve the



Saudis' targeting processes, much less support International Humanitarian Law compliance.

Any doubters should go through numerous reports published by Amnesty International, UN Human Rights Council and many other international aid groups which have documented the humanitarian costs of the Saudi-led, Western-backed airstrikes. They say these targeting skills and weapons, including cluster munitions banned in most countries, have been used indiscriminately against civilian targets, including markets, weddings, hospitals, and UN schools.

It is indeed shameful that the U.S. government is trying to hide the truth by calling for a ceasefire now after more than three years of failed regime change campaign. The U.S. is not only arming Saudi pilots, it is training them as well – at a growing humanitarian cost. The indiscriminate bombing of innocent civilians, in clear breach of International Humanitarian Law, is now well documented by human rights groups, which have urged the Western governments to end their complicity in this murderous campaign.

Tragic enough, this is yet to be the case. As is customary, the United Nations is yet to find political will to take a stand on this carnage, while the same double standard continues to be

the foreign policy practice in Western capitals. This should come as no surprise. The United States and NATO are both allied to Saudi Arabia. When an "ally" commits war crimes excuses are made and lies are spread in Western media as flat-out fact, allowing governments to turn a blind eye to the tragedy that is Yemen.

The United Nations has a moral responsibility to demand Western governments to end their support of this illegal war on the poorest country in the Middle East. The UN should also seek justice for those who lost their lives and livelihoods in this unnecessary conflict. The Saudis and their partners in crime shouldn't be allowed to escape justice.

Since March 2015, the U.S. and NATO countries have deployed troops, assisted the Saudi coalition in identifying bomb targets and conducting intelligence. They have sent warships to enforce the illegal naval blockade that has choked off critical imports, contributing to a crisis that has left at least 12 million people in desperate need of food.

Many Western governments have been directly involved in this humanitarian catastrophe from day one, and they should all be held to account when this grisly episode is over.

First Announcement							
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> Call for public tender (First/Second publish) - Retender Two-Stage (Semi-compressed) tender N.I.O.C Subject of Tender: HIGH PRESSURE FLEXIBLE HOSE 3" I.D., 2" National Iranian 1397.3681 I.D 10000 PSI Drilling Company </div> </div>							
Tender descriptions:							
The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)				
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,178,838	Tender No.: FP/17-97/029 Indent No.: 48-22-9622003	RIAL 4,500,000,000				
<div> • Qualitative evaluation of tenderers </div>							
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Method	R Based on minimum scoring (60 Points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.						
<div> • Purchasing & Submitting </div>							
Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.						
	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN					
	Submitting Method	Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Income Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents					
Documents Receiving Method	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					
<div> • Tender Guarantee </div>							
Value of guarantee	225,000,000 Rial/ 4,441 Euro						
Type of guarantee	✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.						
Duration of credit & quotation	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 ۹۷/۰۸/۱۲ نوبت دوم ۹۷/۰۸/۱۳							

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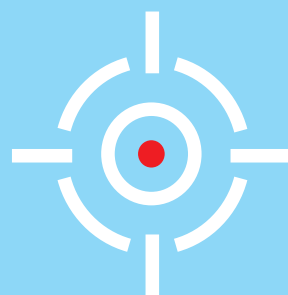
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Researchers may stop Parkinson's by 'cooling off' brain

Parkinson's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative condition, has no cure. However, specialists are hard at work to remedy that situation. A new study conducted in mice suggests that one way to treat this condition may be by "cooling off" inflammation in the brain.

By fighting brain inflammation, researchers stop Parkinson's disease in mice.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Parkinson's disease "is the second most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's disease."

In the United States alone, doctors diagnose approximately 50,000 cases of Parkinson's disease each year.

Although it is not clear exactly what causes this disease, scientists agree that an important characteristic of Parkinson's is chronic inflammation.

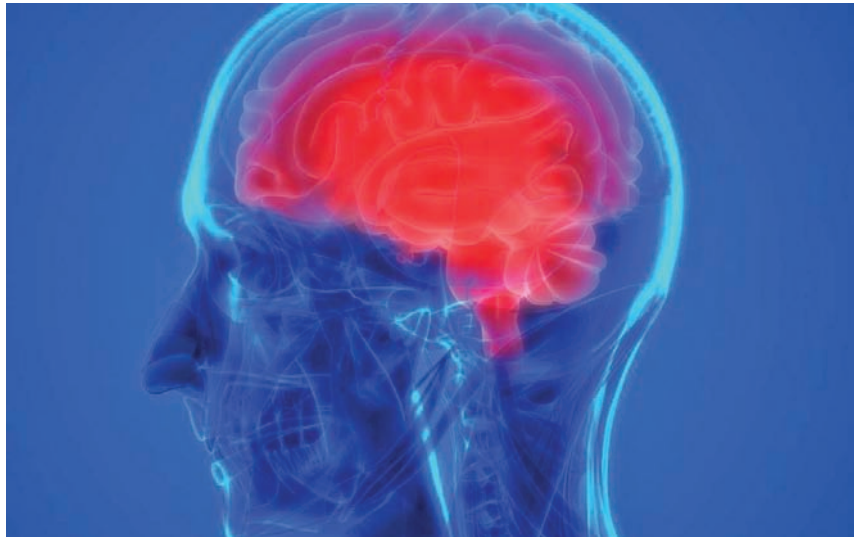
For this reason, researchers from the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia have been thinking about ways in which to counteract inflammation in the brain as a means of stopping Parkinson's from progressing.

In a recent study that they conducted in mice, the scientists identified the molecule MCC950 — which, they say, was effective in blocking the disease from advancing further.

"We have used this discovery to develop improved drug candidates and hope to carry out human clinical trials in 2020," notes study author Trent Woodruff, an associate professor at the University of Queensland Faculty of Medicine.

"Parkinson's disease," explains Woodruff, "is the second most common neurodegenerative disease worldwide, with 10 million sufferers, whose control of body movements is affected."

"The disease," he says, "is characterized by the loss of brain cells that produce dopa-



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Parkinson's disease "is the second most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's disease."

mine, which is a chemical that coordinates motor control, and is accompanied by chronic inflammation in the brain."

This is the mechanism that the scientists sought to attack. They report the results of their study in a paper that appears in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

■ **A small molecule set to tackle inflammation**

Woodruff and his team were able to identify a small molecule called MCC950 that targets a key inflammasome, which is a specialized sensor that helps regulate the immune response.

The inflammasome, known as NLRP3, appears to be particularly active in the brain inflammation that occurs in Parkinson's disease.

"We found," reports Woodruff, "[that] a key immune system target, called the NLRP3 inflammasome, lights up in Parkinson's patients, with signals found in the brain and even in the blood."

When they tested MCC950 in mouse models of Parkinson disease, the researchers found that it was effective in preventing further degeneration.

"MCC950, given orally once a day, blocked NLRP3 activation in the brain and prevented

the loss of brain cells, resulting in markedly improved motor function," explains Woodruff.

This finding offers new hope for people with Parkinson's disease, as none of the currently available treatments are able to prevent the progressive loss of brain cells.

■ **'Cooling the brains on fire'**

Prof. Matt Cooper, at the University of Queensland Institute for Molecular Bioscience, explains that most other studies that have sought a treatment to tackle underlying mechanisms in Parkinson's have focused on a completely different element.

So far, he says, researchers have been targeting the accumulation of toxic proteins in the brains of people with Parkinson's disease. The current project, however, has taken a fresh approach by focusing on the harms of excessive inflammation.

"We have taken an alternative approach by focusing on immune cells in the brain called microglia that can clear these toxic proteins," says Prof. Cooper.

"With diseases of aging such as Parkinson's," he adds, "[the] immune system can become over-activated, with microglia causing inflammation and damage to the brain."

"MCC950 effectively 'cooled the brains on fire,' turning down microglial inflammatory activity, and allowing neurons to function normally."

In the future, the researchers aim to continue to investigate possible ways of attacking the harmful immune response in Parkinson's disease and effectively stop it from progressing.

"With continued funding support, we are exploring new treatment strategies including repurposing drugs to target mechanisms by which the immune system and the inflammasome contribute to disease progression," says Richard Gordon, one of the specialists involved in this study.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Can fermented dairy shield you against heart disease?



Many experts have debated the effect of dairy on cardiovascular health. A recent study in Finland has shown that consuming a particular type of dairy, namely fermented dairy, may actually have a protective effect against heart disease.

■ **How does fermented dairy, in particular, affect heart health?**

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is a condition in which the blood supply to the heart becomes restricted, usually because of a buildup of fat in the arteries that carry blood to the heart muscle.

This condition can lead to serious health events, such as chest pain, heart failure, and heart attack. Some of the main risk factors for CHD are smoking, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure.

There is still a lack of consensus on whether consuming dairy is good or bad for a person's health. However, it is important to distinguish between different types of dairy, which may vary in their effects on long-term physical health.

The results of a new study by researchers from the University of Eastern Finland, which has campuses in Joensuu, Kuopio, and Savonlinna, suggest that consuming fermented dairy products may actually protect the heart. Such products include cheese, kefir, yogurt, quark, and sour milk.

The team's findings, which appear in the British Journal of Nutrition, indicate that men who consume fermented dairy have a lower risk of incident CHD than men who prefer non-fermented dairy products.

■ **Fermented dairy linked to lower risk**

This research was part of the ongoing Kuopio Ischaemic Heart Disease Risk Factor (KIHD) Study. In their current project, the scientists studied associations between incident CHD and the consumption of different types of dairy product.

The team analyzed the data of 1,981 men aged 42–60 years who joined the KIHD study in the years 1984–1989. None of the participants had CHD at baseline, and they all provided details on their dietary habits when they joined the project.

Over an average follow-up period of 20

years, the participants reported 472 cardiovascular events relating to incident CHD.

To determine how the consumption of dairy products might influence the participants' risk of CHD, the researchers divided them into different groups depending on their dietary intake of various fermented and non-fermented dairy foods.

Among the men who consumed fermented dairy products with less than 3.5 percent fat content, those in the highest consumption group had a 27 percent lower risk of CHD compared with those in the lowest consumption category.

The researchers also observed that the most widely consumed low-fat fermented dairy product was sour milk, and that eating high-fat fermented dairy foods, such as cheese, did not appear to sway CHD risk one way or the other.

■ **Milk tied to higher risk of CHD**

At the same time, the team found that people who consumed a lot of non-fermented dairy products, of which regular milk had the greatest use, had a higher risk of incident CHD.

More specifically, those who had a very high intake — referring to an average of 0.9 liters of milk per day — were the most vulnerable to heart disease.

However, there was no association between low consumption of non-fermented dairy products and a heightened risk of CHD.

"Here in Finland, people's habits of consuming different dairy products have changed over the past decades," notes study co-author Jyrki Virtanen, adding:

"For instance, the consumption of milk and sour milk have declined, while many fermented dairy products, such as yogurt, quark, and cheeses, have gained in popularity."

Although the researchers cannot yet confirm the underlying mechanisms that are possibly at play in these associations, they speculate that certain compounds that form during the fermentation of milk-derived products may have a protective cardiovascular effect.

(Source: techsidestuff.com)

MS: How too much salt can cause inflammation



New research, published in the journal Nature Immunology, now shows how a high intake of salt may cause inflammation in multiple sclerosis.

One recent study reveals how excessive salt consumption may trigger inflammation in people with MS.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disorder in which the body's immune system destroys the protective coating around neurons called myelin.

This neurological disease affects around 400,000 people in the United States and approximately 2.5 million adults worldwide. Generally, women are at a higher risk of developing the condition than men.

While researchers do not yet know what causes MS, an interplay between genetic predisposition and environmental factors is likely to be key.

For instance, researchers have so far identified 233 haplotypes that underpin MS. A haplotype is a set of genetic variants that can be found on the same chromosome and that is inherited from one parent.

As for environmental factors, studies have found that vitamin D insufficiency, smoking, obesity, and a high dietary intake of salt all correlate with a higher risk of MS. Some studies have zoomed in on the effect of a high salt intake on a model of MS and found that it exacerbates brain inflammation, while others have found that it boosts the number of pro-inflammatory cells.

However, until now, the precise molecular mechanism behind this effect that salt has on MS was not known. New research finds a molecular pathway that explains how a high-salt environment might potentially trigger the autoimmune disorder.

Tomokazu Sumida, an associate research scientist in the Haffner laboratory at the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, CT, is the first author of the new paper.

■ **How too much salt affects immune cells**

In their study, Sumida and colleagues analyzed regulatory T cells (Tregs) taken from people with MS. The main role of these cells is to control the immune response by regulating or suppressing other immune cells. Tregs also "control the immune response

to self and foreign particles (antigens) and help prevent autoimmune disease."

In these cells, Sumida and team found an imbalance between a type of proinflammatory cytokine called IFN-gamma and a type of anti-inflammatory cytokine called interleukin 10 (IL-10).

As the researchers explain, the scientists identified this imbalance in people with MS and "in a high-salt environment."

The researchers used RNA sequencing to analyze Tregs further, and they found that a protein called beta-catenin plays a key role in both keeping Tregs functional and regulating the two pro- and anti-inflammatory cytokines mentioned above.

The study also revealed that beta-catenin works together with a protein receptor called PTGER2 to trigger inflammation induced by a high salt intake. The authors conclude:

"Our findings suggest that the beta-catenin-PTGER2 axis serves as a bridge between environmental factors and autoimmune disease by modulating Treg function, and this axis may be involved in the pathogenesis of autoimmune disease."

Asked about the clinical implications of his findings, Sumida told Medical News Today, "Not only upregulation of [the] pro-inflammatory cytokine IFN-gamma but also downregulation of [the] anti-inflammatory cytokine IL-10 might mark dysfunctional [Tregs] in MS patients."

"Therefore," he continues, "it would be ideal to work on [both directions]: prevent IFN-gamma and enhance IL-10, it's always important to balance pro- and anti-inflammatory arms together."

"Since this imbalance is enhanced under high salt environment, the people at risk of developing MS should consider lowering high salt intake."

He added that the PTGER2-beta-catenin axis may be of interest to cancer researchers "because these two molecules are well-studied carcinogenic factors," and it would be interesting to see if a high salt intake affects this axis in cancer, too.

"I would suggest to have [a] healthy diet with low salt content as an immunologist and also as a cardiologist," he concluded.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Scientists find brain area that inhibits fear

A recent study, published in the journal Nature Communications, has identified a new brain area that controls the expression and inhibition of fear. The study findings have important implications for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder.

A new study takes a close look at the brain region that suppresses our fear.

According to recent estimates, 3.6 percent of the adult population in the United States have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the past year, while almost 7 percent have had the condition at some point in their lives.

Although almost half of all U.S. adults experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime, not all of them develop PTSD symptoms, which include frightening flashbacks of the traumatic event, sleep problems, and difficulty fighting off fear.

Current treatments for PTSD include medications and various forms of therapy, including exposure therapy and talking therapy. However, most PTSD drugs target all of the neurons in the brain indiscriminately, while behavioral therapy does not entirely prevent relapse.

New research, however, may bring scientists closer to developing PTSD therapies that are more targeted, effective, and long-lasting.

Stephen Maren, the University Distinguished Professor of psychological and brain sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station, led a team of researchers who found a new area in the brain's thalamus that controls our response to fear.

Although the study was in rodents, the findings help illuminate the human brain's response to fear, as well as potential new clinical strategies for treating PTSD.

■ **Nucleus reuniens 'critical' for fear extinction**

Prof. Maren and his colleagues used c-Fos expression imaging to track the neuronal activity of rats that they exposed to fear-inducing scenarios. They began by pairing five audible tones with mild electric shocks that they delivered to the rodents' feet. This triggered the rodents' fear and created a Pavlovian response in them.

Then, Prof. Maren's team used the equivalent of exposure therapy on the rodents, gradually exposing them to the five tones for extended periods.

In this fear extinction context, the neurons in the rodents' nucleus reuniens were more active and fired more in anticipation of the painful stimulus, indicating the suppression of fear.

The researchers also used pharmacogenetic tools called designer receptors exclusively activated by designer drugs to inhibit projection neurons in the rodents' prefrontal cortex.

These neurons projected to the nucleus reuniens, and the experiments revealed that inhibiting them made the rodents unable to suppress fear.

As the authors explain in their paper, scientists already knew that the "thalamus nucleus reuniens [...] receives dense projections from the medial prefrontal cortex [...] and may serve a pivotal role in regulating emotional learning and memory."

However, the new results show that the neurons in this area "are critical for the extinction of Pavlovian fear memories in rats."

The study's lead investigator comments on the findings, saying, "It's interesting because we know that the prefrontal cortex plays an emotion regulation role, and so there has been a lot of interest in how it accomplishes that."

"So [our] research, identifying this particular projection from the prefrontal cortex to the nucleus reuniens in the thalamus, points us to parts of the brain that are important for the inhibitory function of fear, which could be an avenue to new drugs, therapies, and interventions for psychiatric disorders."

(Source: sgtalk.org)

Heartbeats could be key to treating fear of spiders

Living in fear of spiders can be pretty tough, particularly in autumn, when the nimble eight-legged creatures are most visible as males scurry around to find a mate.

Now, arachnophobes might finally get some respite, as new research claims that exposing people to spiders at the exact moment their heart beats may help relieve them of their phobias.

Published in the journal Psychosomatic Medicine, the study claims that the key is to track a person's heart rhythms while exposing them to whatever they're afraid of, which, in this case, was spiders.

"Many of us have phobias of one kind or another - it could be spiders, or clowns or even types of food," writes lead author Hugo Critchley, Chair of Psychiatry at Brighton and Sussex Medical School. "Treatment usually involves exposing the person to their fear, but this can take a long time."

"Our work shows that how we respond to our fears can depend on whether we see them at the time our heart beats, or between heartbeats. You could say we're within a heartbeat of helping people beat their phobias."

Critchley and his team of scientists at the University of Sussex conducted a series of clinical trials involving a total of 54 volunteers with severe fears of spiders, who were selected from 270 people who had completed questionnaires regarding their spider phobia.

Each person underwent one of three modified computerised exposure exercises.

One group of participants were presented with pictures of spiders in-time with their heartbeats.

A second group were presented with the same images in-between heartbeats and a third control group saw the images at random times in therapy sessions.

It's well known that exposing people to their phobias can help reduce them - this is called exposure therapy - but this is the first time this technique has been linked to a patient's own heart rhythms.

The researchers found that out of all of the groups, the patients who had been exposed to the spiders in-time with their own heartbeats reported lower fears of spiders afterwards in addition to reduced levels of anxiety overall.

"We think that showing spiders exactly on the heartbeat automatically increases attention on the spider, which is followed by period of low arousal," Critchley tells The Independent.

"This increased attention enables people to learn that spiders are safe." According to the American Psychiatric Association, phobias affect more than 10 per cent of people in the US - 40 per cent of these are related to bugs, including spiders.

As for why so many people are afraid of the tiny creatures, Chris Buddle of McGill University explains in an article for The Conversation how it derives from a fear of their erratic movements, or their "legginess".

(Source: The Independent)

Rinotex offers technological products by Iranian entrepreneurs

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The 6th Rab'e Rashidi Innovation and Technology Exhibition (Rinotex 2018) offers 136 technological needs met by startups and knowledge-based companies, the executive director of the event Ali Jahangiri announced, jamaran.ir reported.

The Rinotex 2018 opened during a ceremony on Thursday and runs until November 5 at the Tabriz Permanent Fairground.



Participants offer their products and innovative ideas at the Rinotex 2018, which is currently underway in Tabriz

Ali Jahangiri said that Tabriz boasts of innovation ecosystem and the officials at the city try their best to boost and support innovation and entrepreneurship.

"Now it is the time to pay attention to knowledge-based activities, which leads into knowledge-based economy in near future," he said.

The Rinotex 2018 aims to introduce technological products and entrepreneurs in academic centers and knowledge-based companies, he said.

The exhibition hosts 27 side events held by the innovators and entrepreneurs from 27 provinces attended the event, he said.

Technological ideas, technology development and commercialization, selling knowledge-based products and services and meeting the technological needs are the main themes of the event.

The Rinotex 2018 aims to facilitate technology commercialization, exchange of science and technology, introduce innovation ideas and projects to investors and establish links between academics and private sector.

Technology is shaking up the financial industry

Pedigrees, some stretching back centuries, are of little use to global banks unless they aggressively adapt to new financial technologies.

That's long been true, but the pace of innovation means financial juggernauts now face what one top executive likened to a mass extinction event.

A revolution in financial technology — often shortened to fintech — has propelled an explosion of new entrants who are shaking up the sector. Established giants, for their part, are fighting to adapt, emphasizing that technology may be changing fast but banking fundamentals are not.

Stephen Bird, CEO for global consumer banking at Citi, said the current changes may be happening on an unprecedented scale, but his bank — established in 1812 — is set to make the transition. "The benefit of being 200 years old is that we have a survival reinvention DNA and that is core to who we are," Bird said during a panel discussion Wednesday at the annual Hong Kong FinTech Week conference.

"We think of it as we are living through an extinction phase," Bird said. "It is not an incremental thing, it's an epochal shift."

Given the explosion in new financial players, he said, established banks will need a "tense and deep re-engineering" of processes to enhance speed, convenience and trust and get at what is most important: the customer.

Bird said Citi in the United States, for example, has gained an edge by developing new ways of doing things by actively listening to its customers through "co-creation." Citi had 20,000 such sessions, which Bird credited with helping Citi achieve what he described as the most rapidly growing mobile base in North America.

Hard figures on how much the new wave of technology has disrupted retail banking are hard to come by, but analysts have stressed that the challenge is real.

"The rise of digital innovators in financial services presents a significant threat to the traditional business models of retail banks," consultancy McKinsey & Company said in a 2016 report.

So far, at least, global banks are holding up, based on their most recent reporting periods. Citi, Standard Chartered, Bank of America, HSBC and Credit Suisse, for example, all reported third-quarter profit increases from the same period last year. Deutsche Bank's earnings, however, slumped.

■ 'Very, very daunting'

Ben Hung, regional CEO for Greater China and North Asia at Standard Chartered Bank, which has roots going back more than 150 years, said that one constant in the sector has been what customers seek at a basic level.

"It's all about how they want to manage their money, tend their money and grow their money and that fundamental need I don't think has changed," Hung said during the same Wednesday panel in Hong Kong.

What has, he stressed, is the pace of technological development now necessary to meet those requirements, which he acknowledged can be intimidating.

"It's about how to address some of these needs through technology in different ways, but equally it can be quite daunting given the uncertainty and speed by which technology happens," he said.

"It's all very exciting, very, very daunting," said Hung, who also serves as his bank's CEO for retail banking and wealth management.

Bird, meanwhile, said that the pace of investment flows into financial technology suggests an attention-grabbing shift away from incumbents toward new players.

"We take that provocation as very, very real because it's the economics of what's happening," he said.

He said that Citi has hired people from companies such as PayPal and Amazon who possess the "mindset" needed to aid the bank's transformation.

Also crucial, he said, is for the bank to be where its customers are. That increasingly means social media platforms such as WeChat as well as Instagram and Facebook.

"So we must integrate," he said.

(Source: cnbc.com)

Iran set to expand intl. telecom co-op at PP-18

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Information and Communication Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi discussed on Thursday expansion of cooperation in the field of telecommunication with his counterparts during the Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 (PP-18), which was held from October 29 to November 1 in Dubai, UAE.

Azari Jahromi held talks with his Indonesian, Azerbaijani and Turkish counterparts on the sidelines of the PP-18, IRNA reported.

Iran will offer its potentialities and capabilities in different fields of cyberspace, startups and cyber security at the at the Bakutel 2018 exhibit, which will be held from December 4 to 7 at the Baku Expo Center, Azerbaijan, he said.

In a caption on his Instagram account, Azari Jahromi wrote an excerpt of his Thursday speech during PP-18, highlighting the ICT as a peaceful method for wealth creating.

International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference is the highest policy-making body of the ITU. Held every four years, it is the key event at which ITU Member States decide on the future role of the organization, thereby determining the organization's ability to influence and affect the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) worldwide.

During the conference, the officials set the Union's general policies, adopt four-year strategic and financial plans and elect the senior management team of the organization, the Member States of the Council, and the members of the Radio Regulations Board.



The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference was held at the Dubai World Trade Centre from October 29 to November 16

National genome editing symposium to highlight CRISPR

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The second national genome editing symposium will be held on November 28 at the Iran's National Institute of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology with the focus on CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats), Mehr reported.

Genome editing (also called gene editing) is a group of technologies that give scientists the ability to change an organism's DNA. These technologies allow genetic material to be added, removed, or altered at particular locations in the genome. Several approaches to genome

editing have been developed.

The event highlights the technique of CRISPR, which is a family of DNA sequences found within the genomes of prokaryotic organisms such as bacteria and archaea.

The symposium also shed light on the CRISPR/Cas9 software tools and their role in genome editing.

CRISPR-Cas9 was adapted from a naturally occurring genome editing system in bacteria. The bacteria capture snippets of DNA from invading viruses and use them to create DNA segments known as CRISPR arrays.

Which social media platform is right for your business?



Most startups have two important challenges: limited cash and manpower. According to this point that the internet has created a barrier to entry for e-commerce businesses, allowing people to start a business with just an idea and a laptop, it's also created a world where new social media platforms are popping up all the time. How does a company devote their limited resources to the social media outlets that will be most useful?

If you know the answers to below three questions, it's easy to pare it down to two or three platforms to dedicate your time to.

- What are you B2C, B2B?
- What's your target audience?
- What's your goal?

If you want to save your time, I've broken down the five best social media networks for marketing, including their major audiences and best industries for the channel: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest. When you've answered the above questions and matched your answers with the five platforms, you're well on your way to a successful social media marketing strategy.

■ What are you B2C, B2B?

B2B stands for "business to business" that refers to sales you make to other businesses rather than to individual consumers. "business-to-consumer" or B2C referred to Sales to consumers.

Unfortunately, we don't know where people go on social media platforms when they want to buy things. but a general rule is that people on social media are at the top of the sales funnel. What this means for you is that you might be targeting your promotions and social media marketing strategy for the wrong buyer's stage.

The best B2B social media strategies aim to generate interest in your product. Do this by regularly blogging, creating lead magnets like case studies, and promoting your business on the best B2B platforms like LinkedIn.

■ What's your target audience?

You are wasting your money when you target the wrong audience so you can determine them by the answer to

this question.

- Location of your Audience?
- The average age and gender of your buyer?
- Their average income?
- What are their hobbies?
- What industry does your audience work in?
- Do your audience have kids?
- What problems or challenges do they want to be solved?

■ How does your audience get their information?

■ What's your goal?

Define business goals for social media marketing strategy is a critically important task when it comes time to set progress for your efforts.

Setting and monitoring goals and your progress is an important step to help you get from where you are now to where you want to be on all your social media channels like Facebook, Twitter and so on.

Social media network is an effective tool that can support your business objectives but just like with any other business tool, it's important to focus your efforts.

■ FACEBOOK

It is a social networking tool where people can post comments, share photos and post links to news or other attractive content on the web, chat live, and watch a short video.

- Best for: B2C, in some cases B2B
- Businesses: fashion, auto, e-commerce, retail, entertainment, real estate, marketing, sports, health and wellness, news and information
- Target Audience age and gender: men and women from 25 – 55+

■ Twitter

It began as an idea that Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey had in 2006. It is known as a micro-blogging platform. Posting a message on Twitter is known as a tweet. People make connections by following others. When you click follow, anything that user or Brand says will appear on your timeline.

It is becoming a central hub for consumers, so it's a good place to show off your products, and creativity.

- Best for: B2C, some B2B
- Businesses: news and information, retail, e-commerce, health and wellness, travel and hospitality, telecom, finance, fashion, retail, sports
- Target audience age and gender: men and women from 18 – 29

■ Instagram

It is a social media networking platform made for sharing photos and videos from smartphones. Similar to other social media like Facebook or Twitter, people who create an account has a profile and a news feed.

It is owned by Facebook, so Instagram has a lot of the same features and ad targeting options, which makes it a good option for brand awareness and engagement. If you don't have a visual product try a different platform.

- Best for: B2C
- Businesses: Travel and hospitality, fashion, health and wellness, arts and crafts, food and beverage, e-commerce, beauty, photography, auto, event planning
- Target audience age and gender: mostly women from 18 – 35, but that's shifting

■ Pinterest

Pinterest is like a web-based pinboard but with greater organizational functionality. You can also think of Pinterest as a bookmarking tool.

People pin or save images they found on the web to different boards to categorize their image collections.

It is also a Social Media. people interact with each other through liking, commenting, re-saving each other's images and private messaging each other.

It has reached 250 million monthly active users as of October 2018.

- Best for: B2C
- Businesses: retail, health and wellness, travel and hospitality, fashion, e-commerce, arts and crafts, food and beverage, beauty, home, and garden, event planning
- Target audience age and gender: mostly women from 18 – 45.

■ LinkedIn

Introduction

Whether you're a marketing executive at a major company, a business owner who runs a local shop or even a first-year college student looking to future career options, it is for everybody who's interested in taking their professional life more seriously by looking for new opportunities to improve their careers and to connect with other professionals.

■ Best for: B2B, B2C employment

- Businesses: Financial, employment, science and technology, legal, manufacturing, marketing, education, professional services, health and wellness, IT
- Target audience age and gender: both men and women from 25 – 45

■ Conclusion

If you understand which social media network to use for what will not only save you time, it will provide you get further down the path to your goals. However, it doesn't mean you don't have to spend a lot of time on it.

Experts always recommend you spend at least six hours per week on monitoring, posting and so on. If you don't have time to strategize, engage in real-time, and schedule posts, so you need to find a partner who can do it for you.

(Source: startupik.com)

Earth's oceans have absorbed 60 percent more heat than previously thought, says new study

Since 1991, the world's oceans have absorbed an amount of heat energy each year that is 150 times the energy humans produce as electricity annually, according to a new study. The strong ocean warming the researchers found suggests that Earth is more sensitive to fossil-fuel emissions than previously thought.

Princeton and Scripps researchers report that the world's oceans absorbed more than 13 zettajoules -- which is a joule, the standard unit of energy, followed by 21 zeroes -- of heat energy each year between 1991 and 2016. That's 150 times more heat energy each year than the energy humans produce as electricity annually. The estimate is 60 percent higher than that used in the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report.

For each year during the past quarter century, the world's oceans have absorbed an amount of heat energy that is 150 times the energy humans produce as electricity annually, according to a study led by researchers at Princeton and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California-San Diego. The strong ocean warming the researchers found suggests that Earth is more sensitive to fossil-fuel emissions than previously thought.

Standard unit of energy

The researchers reported in the journal Nature Nov. 1 that the world's oceans took up more than 13 zettajoules -- which is a joule, the standard unit of energy, followed



by 21 zeroes -- of heat energy each year between 1991 and 2016. The study was funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Princeton Environmental Institute.

First author Laure Resplandy, an assistant professor of geosciences and the Princeton Environmental Institute, said that her and her co-authors' estimate is more than 60 percent higher than the figure in the 2014

Fifth Assessment Report on climate change from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

"Imagine if the ocean was only 30 feet deep," said Resplandy, who was a postdoctoral researcher at Scripps. "Our data show that it would have warmed by 6.5 degrees Celsius (11.7 degrees Fahrenheit) every decade since 1991.

Scientists know that the ocean takes up

roughly 90 percent of all the excess energy produced as Earth warms, so knowing the actual amount of energy makes it possible to estimate the surface warming we can expect, said co-author Ralph Keeling, a Scripps Oceanography geophysicist and Resplandy's former postdoctoral adviser.

The climate sensitivity

The "result significantly increases the confidence we can place in estimates of ocean warming and therefore helps reduce uncertainty in the climate sensitivity, particularly closing off the possibility of very low climate sensitivity," Keeling said.

Climate sensitivity is used to evaluate allowable emissions for mitigation strategies. Most climate scientists have agreed in the past decade that if global average temperatures exceed pre-industrial levels by 2 (3.6), it is all but certain that society will face widespread and dangerous consequences of climate change.

The researchers' findings suggest that if society is to prevent temperatures from rising above that mark, emissions of carbon dioxide, the chief greenhouse gas produced by human activities, must be reduced by 25 percent compared to what was previously estimated, Resplandy said.

The researchers' results are the first to come from a measuring technique independent from the dominant method behind existing research, she said.

(Source: Science Daily)

Researchers have found the deepest known volcanic eruption - a field of glass under the sea



Almost on the cusp of the Mariana Trench, before it plunges down into the very bowels of the ocean, scientists have found something rare and wonderful. Sometime in 2015, an underwater volcano experienced a massive eruption, spewing molten magma into the surrounding ocean.

As the incredibly hot magma meets the water, it begins to rapidly cool. The result? A vast field of volcanic glass. And, even more spectacularly, at a depth of 4,050-4,450 meters (2.51 to 2.76 miles) it's the deepest known volcanic eruption ever found on Earth.

This large field of volcanic glass stretches 7.3 kilometers (4.5 miles) along a region known as the Mariana Trough, a back-arc basin associated with the active volcanic arc that runs along the lip of the Mariana Trench.

Since this region sits right on the edge of a subduction zone, where the edge of one tectonic plate slips under another, volcanic activity is not unexpected, nor even uncommon. But studying this activity isn't easy.

Volcanic eruption

"We know that most of the world's volcanic activity actually takes place in the ocean, but most of it goes undetected and unseen," said marine geologist Bill Chadwick of Oregon State University and NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory.

"Undersea quakes associated with volcanism are usually small, and most of the instrumentation is far away on land. Many of these areas are deep and don't leave any clues on the surface. That makes submarine eruptions very elusive."

The deepest known eruption, which is now the subject of a new research paper, was first noted in December 2015, by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute's

autonomous underwater vehicle Sentry.

At that time, the volcanic glass flows looked pristine. Nothing was growing on them, and no sediment had started to cover them. A nearby hydrothermal vent was also seeping milky fluid, an indication that the lava flow was still warm.

Returns to the site were made in April and December of 2016, this time with remotely-operated underwater vehicles - the NOAA's Deep Discoverer and Schmidt Ocean Institute's SuBastian - so the scientists could exert more control over what they were seeing.

Those trips showed a rapidly declining hydrothermal system, indicating that the eruption had happened on a scale of just months before the discovery in December 2015.

"Typically after an eruption, there is heat released and venting for a few years and organisms will colonize the vents, creating a new ecosystem," Chadwick explained.

"But after a while, the system cools down and the mobile organisms will leave. There was still some venting, but it had obviously greatly declined."

Submarine flowing lava

This provides a rare opportunity, since most underwater volcanic eruptions are only discovered long after they have occurred. So far, only about 40 submarine lava flows have been detected.

By returning to the site of the eruption, the researchers were able to observe the rapidity at which life moves on. By April 2016, species commonly seen living around hydrothermal vents, such as shrimp and lobsters, had started moving in; but less mobile species, such as anemones and sponges, which generally take longer to colonize, were nowhere in sight.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Where water goes after fracking is tied to earthquake risk: new research



In addition to producing oil and gas, the energy industry produces a lot of water, about 10 barrels of water per barrel of oil on average. New research led by The University of Texas at Austin has found that where the produced water is stored underground influences the risk of induced earthquakes.

Beyond supporting the link between water disposal and induced seismicity, the research also describes factors that can help reduce earthquake risk.

The research was published Oct. 31 in the journal Seismological Research Letters. Co-authors include Matthew Weingarten, assistant professor at San Diego State University; Kyle Murray, adjunct professor at the University of Oklahoma; and Robert Reedy, research scientist associate at the Bureau of Economic Geology. The bureau is a research unit at the UT Jackson School of Geosciences.

The researchers found that the increased pressure that is caused by storing produced water inside geologic formations raises the risk of induced seismicity. The risk increases with the volume of water injected, both at the well and regional scale, as well as the rate of injection.

Researchers specifically looked at water stored near tight oil plays, including the Bakken, Eagle Ford and Permian shale plays, and Oklahoma overall, which has high levels of induced seismicity in concentrated areas. Researchers found marked differences in the degree of seismic activity associated with underground water storage.

For example, the study found that in Oklahoma 56 percent of wells used to dispose of produced water are potentially associated with earthquakes. The next highest is the Eagle Ford Shale of South

Texas, where 20 percent are potentially associated with earthquakes.

Levels of seismic activities

The study reported that the different levels of induced seismic activity relate to, among other reasons, how the water is managed and where it is stored underground. In Oklahoma, the tendency to store water in deep geologic formations -- which are often connected to faults that can trigger earthquakes when stressed -- has increased the risk of induced seismicity. In the other areas, water is stored at shallower depths, which limits exposure to potentially risky faults.

In conventional energy production, water is usually injected back into the reservoir that produced the oil and gas, which stabilizes pressure within the reservoir. However, water produced during hydraulic fracturing -- the method used to access energy in tight oil plays -- cannot be returned because the rock pores are too small for the water to be injected back into the rock.

The findings are consistent with directives issued by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) in 2015 to mitigate seismicity, which included reducing injection rates and regional injection volumes by 40 percent in deep wells. This study confirmed the changes resulted in a 70 percent reduction in the number of earthquakes over a 3.0 magnitude in 2017 compared with the peak year of 2015.

"Everything they (the OCC) did is supported by what we have in this article," said Murray. The "decisions they made, the directives that they put out, are supported by statistical associations we found."

(Source: eurekalert.com)

Parker Solar Probe became the closest thing ever sent to the Sun

NASA's Parker Solar Probe is now the closest object to the Sun that we've ever sent into space. On Oct. 29, 2018, at about 01:04 P.M. EDT, NASA's probe broke the old record for the close-to-Sun distance of 42.73 million km (26.55 million miles). That record was held by the German-American Helios 2 spacecraft in 1976. And the probe will keep getting closer to the Sun.

The Parker Solar Probe was launched on August 12th, 2018, on a projected 6+ year mission. The mission is designed to answer 60 year old questions regarding our Sun.

In order to answer these questions, the probe has to get closer to the Sun than any object before it. It will move directly through the Sun's outer corona, and come as close as 6.9 million kilometers (4.3 million miles).

"It's been just 78 days since Parker Solar Probe launched, and we've now come closer to our star than any other spacecraft in history," said Project Manager Andy Driesman, from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland. "It's a proud moment for the team, though we



remain focused on our first solar encounter, which begins on Oct. 31."

Closer to the Sun

Jonathan McDowell, of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, recognized that the moment was tweet-worthy. By my calculations, at 1635 UTC on October 29 @Parker-

SunProbe became closer to the Sun than any other artificial object has ever been.

This is a perilous journey for the spacecraft. It will be exposed to the blistering heat of the Sun at that distance, a spacecraft-melting temperature of 1,377 degrees Celsius (2,500 degrees F.) To withstand that intense energy, the Parker Solar Probe is protected by a carbon-composite shield 11.43 cm (4.5 inch) thick.

The probe is not only the closest object to the Sun that we've ever sent into space. It's also really fast. In fact it's the fastest object ever sent into space, reaching a speed of 246,961 kph (153,454 mph) relative to the Sun. This dwarfs the speed of the plodding Voyager 1 spacecraft, for example, which is travelling at only 62,856 kph.

Of course, the conditions so close to the Sun are so intense, that the Parker won't hang out there for long. The radiation environment that close to a star is deadly, and Parker has to limit its exposure to protect itself and its instruments.

(Source: universetoday.com)

Giant elephant birds were blind and likely active at night, scientists reveal

Scientists have unlocked new information about giant elephant birds: the largest birds known to science but, unfortunately, have gone extinct.

Upon analysis of the creature's reconstructed brain, scientists from the University of Texas at Austin revealed that these incredible avians were nocturnal and likely blind.

From their reconstruction of the creature's brain, scientists found that the optic lobe or part that processed vision of the elephant bird was tiny. This discovery made them believe that the creatures were nocturnal and blind.

This comes as a surprise because previous assumptions grouped elephant birds with other big, flightless birds such as emus and ostriches. However, emus and ostriches are most active during the day. They also have better eyesights than kiwis and, likely, elephant birds.

"Studying brain shape is a really useful way of connecting ecology -- the relationship between the bird and the environment -- and anatomy," stated Christopher Torres, a Ph.D. candidate who led the study. "Discoveries like these give us tremendous insights into the lives of these bizarre and poorly understood birds."

For the study, the scientists looked at the skulls from two species of elephant birds. They used CT-imaging to create digital reconstructions called endocasts of the brains of the giant avians. The scientists also created endocasts of brains of the close living and extinct relatives of the elephant birds.

The endocasts of the brains of the elephant birds also allowed the scientists to peek into the past, particularly the kind of habitat the creatures had before they disappeared on the surface of the Earth. From the endocasts, they were able to study the part of the brain responsible for processing the creatures' sense of smell.

One of the skulls had a bigger olfactory bulb, for example, suggesting that the creature might have lived in a forest. Meanwhile, a smaller olfactory bulb is associated with grasslands.

(Source: techtimes.com)

Dogs can detect malaria by sniffing people's socks

Dogs' noses could become a powerful weapon in the battle against malaria, according to research suggesting the animals can tell from a sniff of a sock whether someone has the disease.

Dogs have previously proved highly accurate at detecting a range of human diseases, including prostate cancer and thyroid cancer, as well as at alerting people with diabetes that they have low blood sugar.

Now experts say dogs also appear able to identify individuals infected with malaria, even if they are not showing symptoms.

"Many countries are getting near elimination or have achieved elimination [of malaria] -- for example, recently Sri Lanka became malaria-free, which is an extraordinary achievement," said Steven Lindsay, a public health entomologist at Durham University who led the research. The "question then is how do you keep the place malaria-free, because the mosquitoes aren't going away."

The problem, he says, is that while some people fall sick very quickly from malaria, others can carry the parasites without any obvious symptoms. "If you have one in 1,000 people with a malaria parasite, you can't finger-prick and take blood from 1,000 people to identify that one -- you need a non-invasive [approach]," he said.

The research, presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in New Orleans and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, involved asking schoolchildren in the Gambia to wear nylon socks overnight and give a blood sample that was screened for signs of malaria.

The socks were then frozen and packed off to the UK where two dogs -- a Labrador and a Labrador-retriever cross -- were taught over several months whether the socks had been worn by children with malaria or not.

(Source: The Guardian)

Team suggests wormholes could be portals to other universes

Wormholes are theoretical objects that could serve as portals between two points in space and time. Some believe they could even act as passageways to other universes. But if one did exist, what would it look like?



Roman Konoplya, a theoretical physicist with the Peoples Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), has attempted to answer this question in a study published in the journal Physics Letters B.

The "junction of both funnels occurs at the narrowest part of such a system. It corresponds to what we call 'throat' of a wormhole. In a stricter way, if one takes rope and winds it round such a funnel at some distance from the throat, he can measure the length of the rope, then he can repeat measurements at some other distance from the throat and so on and so on.

"Knowledge of such measurable lengths at any distance from the throat gives us the full shape of the wormhole. Far from the throat the funnel is flat and the effect of gravitational attraction of the wormhole is tiny. Therefore it is important to know the shape of a wormhole near the throat, where interaction of the wormhole with its astrophysical environment should occur."

Scientists can only make observations of hypothetical wormholes by looking at their indirect properties. This includes redshift, where there is a shift towards longer wavelengths of the spectral lines by an object moving away from Earth.

He used a mathematical model of a wormhole to describe how the shape and symmetry can be determined based on its wave range. From this he developed an equation to calculate its geometrical shape. Explaining how we might one day use this work find wormholes, he said: "In order to discard--or prove, who knows -- the existence of wormholes it is important to constrain allowed geometries of wormholes by comparing theory with experiment."

(Source: Newsweek)

Adult vaccination coverage in Iran is low: academic

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Adult vaccination in Iran is overlooked and that’s while many severe infections which put the health system to considerable expenses annually can be easily avoided by vaccination, a faculty member at Tehran University of Medical Science’s board of trustees has said.

Mohammadreza Salehi made the remarks on the side-lines of the unveiling ceremony of a book titled “guidelines for adults’ vaccination” on Thursday.



Every year many adults all over the world catch infections which can be mostly prevented by vaccination, Salehi said, adding that many pneumococcal and meningococcal infections driving up high costs can be avoided by vaccination.

Advanced centers in the world have drawn up guidelines for adult vaccination and now University of Tehran has done the same thing, he highlighted, stating that “we hope that adult vaccination coverage increase in the near future.”

Minoo Mohraz, head of Iranian Research Centre for HIV/ AIDS affiliated to Tehran University of Medical Sciences, for her part, said that vaccination is being carried out for years for children free of charge nationwide.

However, up to this point there has never been any comprehensive plans for adult vaccination and booster injection, Mohraz regretted.

People suffering immune system problems due to cancer or organ transplant, as well as older persons aging over 65 and also people with diabetes have to receive vaccines such as influenza every year, she added.

She went on to explain that vaccines for pneumococcal disease, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, meningococcal disease, shingles, hepatitis B, and vaccines against diarrheal diseases are recommend for adults but unfortunately there are no comprehensive programs for adult vaccinations.

Thanks to the colleagues at University of Tehran the book providing guidelines for adult vaccination was prepared and all doctors can have the book free of charge and receive necessary helps and information for adult vaccination.

Necessary vaccines for adults are available in the country, she said, adding, so vaccination programs for adults should be carried out in order to decrease the costs of such infectious disease as well as preventing immature deaths resulted from the aforesaid diseases.

According to the U.S Centre for Disease Control and Prevention very year thousands of adults in become seriously ill and are hospitalized because of diseases that vaccines can help prevent. Many adults even die from these diseases. By getting vaccinated, one can help protect themselves from much of this unnecessary suffering.

Even if one has received the vaccines they needed as a child, the protection from some vaccines can wear off. One may also be at risk for other diseases due to their job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions.

Hepatitis B vaccine lowers your risk of liver cancer. Flu vaccine lowers your risk of flu-related heart attacks or other flu-related complications from existing health conditions like diabetes and chronic lung disease.

Vaccines lower the chance of spreading disease to older adults, infants and people with weakened immune systems (like those undergoing cancer treatment) are especially vulnerable to infectious disease.

LEARN ENGLISH

Canceling an Appointment

A: Hello, Samantha speaking.
B: Hi Samantha. This is Angela calling.
A: Oh, hi Angela, **what's up**?
B: I'm just calling about our meeting today. I wonder, is it possible to **reschedule** our appointment in the afternoon? I have a bit of an emergency that I need to take care of.
A: Let me see, it shouldn't be too much of a problem...
B: I'm really sorry, I hope it doesn't **inconvenience** you too much, it's just this thing **came up**, and...
A: Angela, you know what, I can't **make it** to our meeting, either. Why don't we **postpone** it to tomorrow afternoon at the same time?
B: Sounds great. See you tomorrow.
C: Angela... Angela, look up! See that lady over there who is trying on a red leather jacket? Isn't that Samantha?
B: What? **No wonder** she told me she couldn't make it to the meeting, oh, no, I think she saw me...

■ **Key vocabulary**
what's up: what is the matter
reschedule: schedule something for a different time
inconvenience: cause problem or trouble
come up: occur in an unexpected way
make it: come
postpone: decide to do something at a later time
no wonder: not surprisingly
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
scheduling conflict: two or more appointments scheduled at the same time
call off: cancel
double-book: have two appointments or meetings at the same time
push back: move a meeting or appointment to a later time
rain check: a promise or offer to do something in the future that is not possible to do now

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Will the lonely Siberian crane ‘Omid’ come back to Iran this year?

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — With the onset of the cold season the environment lovers are looking up at the sky anxiously waiting for the last remaining western Siberian crane called ‘Omid’ to come back to his winter home, in Fereydunkenar, northern province of Mazandaran, once again.

Omid (literally meaning hope in Persian), has been winging his way to Iran for years in the first week of the Iranian calendar month of Aban falling on the last week of October, but this year he has not shown up yet.

For the past 7 years the Siberian Crane has been taking a two-month fly of great distance of 5000km from Uvat in western Siberia to Fereydunkenar Damgah [structures built in rice paddies for harvesting wild ducks in autumn and winter by farmers].

Last year Omid flew to Iran 45 days late and left Fereydunkenar earlier than normal ad this made environmentalist worried and now many are still worried whether the eye-catching snow-white bird will come back to Iran or not.

■ **Mazandaran Crane Conservation Association**
According to Lisa Pourlak, a PhD student at University of Tehran and member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Crane Specialist Group, in 1998 a small crane conservation group, the Mazandaran Crane Conservation Association (MCCA), was formed in Iran with the support of Ellen Vuosalo Tavakoli (originally from Finland) who lives in Fereydunkenar and a few Iranian environmental conservationists.

In 2000 this small group grew to include around 200 duck trappers, who joined MCCA by investing in local Trust Funds, which were intended to evolve into a loan program, Pourlak writes.

“This was an important initiative for the conservation of Siberian Crane habitat in Iran, a project that was supported and co-funded by the Small Grants Program of the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Program (2001-2004).

“As a result of this project and through MCCA’s efforts, local trappers became aware of the international importance of Siberian Cranes, and, most importantly, were recognized as “guardians of the cranes” by both Iran’s Department of the Environment and international organizations. Later, this area was listed as an “Indigenous Community Conserved Area” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

“After nearly 15 years local trappers still practice their



traditional knowledge in preparing the wetlands and are still playing the role of Omid’s guardians – and that is why the lonely crane has returned for the past seven winters.

“The local trapper associations (now officially registered as local cooperatives) create a safe environment for the crane within their traditional damgahs, or duck-trapping blinds, which are designated No Shooting Areas and a Ramsar Site by the Department of Environment. These magnificent wetlands are in fact becoming one of the few remaining freshwater wetlands in Iran, and are one of the few options remaining in the area for wintering migratory birds in the face of rapid development and climate change.

“The presence of the Siberian Crane each winter has helped protect habitat for millions of other migratory birds, while benefiting local rice farmers, who supplement their winter income with traditional duck trapping.”

■ **Siberian crane**
According to the International Crane Foundation website this critically endangered species is now only found in one main population in East Asia, with a few birds remaining in the historic Western/Central population.

The Eastern population breeds in northeastern Siberia and winters at Poyang Lake in the Lower Yangtze River

UK heatwaves lasting twice as long as 50 years ago



Heatwaves in the UK are lasting twice as long as they did 50 years ago, ice days are disappearing and tropical nights are starting to occur as far north as Middlesbrough, according to a Met Office report.

The first study of climate extremes in the UK by the government agency shows the longer-term trend behind this summer's prolonged spell of high temperatures and the weakening of winter frosts.

In line with numerous other research papers on the rise in global temperatures, it also highlights how weather patterns are being pushed off a normal path as a result of human emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Until now the annual UK Climate Report has focused on monthly and yearly statistics, but a new supplement adds a series of indices on extreme weather.

Mark McCarthy, the manager of the National Climate Information Centre, said: “Monthly, seasonal and annual climate data provide a valuable record of the changing climate in the UK. However, these average figures have a tendency to mask extreme weather and climate events. So in our latest report we have focused on those measures which record weather extremes.”

The new report shows that warm spells – when the maximum temperature is above the 90th percentile for the time of year – are becoming much more prolonged. From 1961 to 1990, the average longest warm spell each year was 5.3 days. From 2008 to 2017 this more than doubled to 13.2 days. This year,

which is not included in these statistics, was even longer at 17 days.

The south-east has seen an especially striking increase over the same period, up from an average of 6.1 days to 18.3 days.

Tropical nights – when minimum night-time temperatures remain above 20C – are being measured for the first time. They were almost unheard of until a couple of decades ago. Even the famous hot summer of 1976 never saw any of these nights, which are particularly gruelling for the elderly and infirm because they provide no respite from the heat. Since 1995 they have started to be recorded in London, Kent, the Isle of Wight and even occasionally in Wales and the north-east.

70% of world’s last remaining wilderness in just five countries

More than 70 per cent of our planet’s remaining areas of wilderness are contained in just five countries and are at the mercy of political decisions regarding their future, new research has warned.

Urgent international action is required to ensure the preservation of these last pockets of intact ecosystems, the study says, which calls for mandated conservation targets.

The places where the greatest remaining tracts of wilderness containing mixes of species at near-natural levels of abundance were identified as being in Russia, Canada, Australia, the US and Brazil.

Produced by the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the study published in the journal Nature, says these areas are “increasingly important buffers against changing conditions... Yet they aren’t an explicit target in international policy frameworks.”

The study also examines the huge future value these areas are likely to have for our planet.

“They are also the only areas supporting the ecological processes that sustain biodiversity over evolutionary timescales,” it says. “As such, they are important reservoirs of genetic information, and act as reference areas for efforts to re-wild degraded land and seascapes.”

(Source: The independent)

in the depths of winter may also have noticed there is less ice on the path than during their own childhoods. This is confirmed by the metric of “icing days”, which shows that the average number of days each year with freezing temperatures has fallen from 4.8 to 3.2. In the south-east last year there was not a single day averaging below 0C.

The weather is becoming a little wetter and more dreary. The maximum daily deluge each year has risen by 17% from 64mm to 75mm, while the longest wet spell has increased from an average of 12.4 days to 12.9 days.

The longest dry spell has become shorter, falling from 20.5 days with less than 1mm of rain to 18 days, though this year has brought such severe droughts that many farmers have had poor harvests. Many have already had to feed their winter food stocks to their animals and face increased costs as a result. In August the government was forced to relax rules on how much groundwater farmers were allowed to use after agriculture bodies warned continued dry weather could lead to food shortages and increased prices.

Last month the UN’s top climate body warned that unless global temperature rises are held to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, the world is likely to face catastrophic impacts from climate change, with flooding, droughts and extreme heat all more prevalent. Governments will meet in Poland in December for the latest round of negotiations over how to implement and strengthen the recommendations of the 2015 Paris agreement.

(Source: The Guardian)

Second Announcement



Invitation For Prequalification

TENDER NO. : **08-38-9640015**

National Iranian South Oilfields Company intends to purchase the following goods

Description	UNIT	Quantity.
WIRE LINE, SPOOLED ON IRON REEL H2S, CO2 AND CHLORIDE TRIM MATERIAL: SUPA-75 OR SANICRO-26 DIAMETER&LENGTH ASSPECIFIED: REF”SANDVICK”OR OTHERSTANDARD APPROVED EQUIVALENT SIZE 0.108 INCH X 20000 FEET.	RL	10

Vendors who intend to participate in the A/M tender are requested to send their resume & tendency letter via fax/ mail to the following address not later than 14 days after the second announcement. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide a bid bond of Euro 4,563 / Rls 225,000,000 in favor of NISOC. Iranian vendors shall submit their resume Acc. to forms Nos. 01, 02 and 03 which are available at www.shana.ir and www.nisoc.ir

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPT
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site)Bldg NO 104, Ahvaz, Iran
Tel/FAX No.: +98-61-34457437

Public Relations
www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>

تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۷/۰۸/۹ نویت دوم ۹۷/۰۸/۱۲

Saudi regime response to peace calls: Heavy bombing of Sana'a

➔ Airstrikes were intensified on Thursday night on the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement forces' bases near the eastern entrance to the port city, they said.

Yemeni armed forces and allied Ansarullah fighters responded to the attacks with a newly-unveiled Badr P-1 missile launched at an enemy assembly in the Saudi Najran province.

The stepped-up attacks by the Saudi regime came after calls for a ceasefire and the renewal of peace talks by the United States and Britain which are key supporters of the kingdom in the war which has been going on since March 2015.

On Thursday, the U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on all sides in the war to agree to a truce within the next 30 days.

The Ansarullah have expressed readiness for peace talks but strongly opposed the U.S. proposal for mediation in the conflict, holding Washington responsible for the aggression against Yemen.

The Ansarullah believe that the only solution to the crisis lies in intra-Yemeni talks and non-interference by foreign parties, Ansarullah movement Political Council member Mohammed al-Bakhiiti said on Thursday.

The House of Saud regime has been waging the war against Yemen with the aim of



reinstating former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

The war, coupled with a Saudi regime naval blockade, has destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and led to famine as well as a cholera outbreak in the import-dependent state.

Last month, the Legal Center for Rights and Developments in Yemen said more than

15,000 civilians have died as a result of the conflict so far.

Patrick Cockburn, an award-winning columnist for the British daily The Independent, said this week the number of casualties remains unreported due to a media blackout, putting the death toll at around 56,000.

■ Over 7 million Yemeni children subject to 'serious' famine threat, warns UN

Meantime, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has warned that more than seven million children are facing a serious threat of famine in Yemen as Riyadh presses ahead with its atrocious aerial bombardment campaign against its crisis-hit southern neighbor.

"Today, 1.8 million children under the age of five are facing acute malnutrition, and 400,000 are affected by severe acute malnutrition," Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF's regional director in the Middle East and North Africa, said late on Wednesday.

Cappelaere noted that "more than half" of the 14 million people at serious risk of famine in Yemen are children.

"Ending the war is not enough. What we need is to stop the war and [to create] a government mechanism that puts at the center the people and children. Cappelaere also welcomed a call by the United Nations to rekindle peace talks within a month.

He said efforts to come up with a solution to the ongoing Yemeni conflict within the next 30 days were "critical" to improving aid distribution and saving lives.

The high-ranking UN official said that over 6,000 children had either been killed or sustained serious injuries since 2015.

(Source: Press TV)

Assad scolds Europe as Polish delegation visits Syria

➔ Syria's United Nations Ambassador Bashar al-Ja'afari told a Security Council session on Monday that foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists and the sanctions imposed by the United States and the EU were inflicting suffering on the Syrian people.



On May 28, the EU extended its restrictive measures against Damascus until June 1, 2019.

The sanctions currently in place against Syria include an oil embargo, restrictions on certain investments and a freeze of the assets of the Syrian central bank held in the EU.

The EU bans are also in place on dozens of companies linked to the government of President Assad.

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)

Kremlin: Putin, Trump to hold substantive meeting at G20 in Argentina

Russian President Vladimir Putin and the United States President Donald Trump will hold a long and substantive meeting on the sidelines of the G20 in Argentina which runs from Nov. 30 to Dec. 1, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said on Friday.

He said a separate meeting between the leaders on Nov. 11 on the sidelines of events in Paris to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War One would be short.

(Source: TASS)

Israeli delegation in Riyadh as Netanyahu asks U.S. to back MBS

The House of Saud regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, or MBS as he is also known, has met with a delegation of pro-Israeli advocates in Riyadh amid reports that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has asked the United States to keep supporting the young prince against international criticism.



In a new sign of growing ties between Riyadh and Tel Aviv, bin Salman hosted a group of Evangelical Christians in Riyadh on Thursday, Israeli media reported.

Leading the group was Joel C. Rosenberg, a dual U.S.-Israeli author and activist who runs the Jashua Fund pro-Israeli charity. Mike Evans, founder of the Friends of Zion Museum in al-Quds (Jerusalem), was also among the participants of the meeting.

The two sides discussed a wide range of topics including Israel, Palestine and Saudi Arabia's relations with the U.S.

"We were pleased by the invitation extended to us more than two months ago by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the delegation said in a statement. "Without question, this is a season of tremendous change in the Middle East, and therefore we have been grateful for the opportunity to meet in-person with key Arab leaders to understand their goals and to ask direct questions."

The delegation held separate meetings with the House of Saud regime Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir as well as the kingdom's ministers of education and Islamic affairs.

Interestingly, they also met the heads of Saudi Arabia's so-called Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal) and the Muslim World League.

The meetings came shortly after The Washington Post revealed in a report earlier in the day that Netanyahu has asked the U.S. President Donald Trump to continue supporting MBS despite accusations that he ordered a hit job on anti-Riyadh journalist Jamal Khashoggi last month.

The Israeli PM had asked top U.S. officials recently not to abandon their support for bin Salman over the killing of Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Turkey's Istanbul, according to multiple reports.

According to The Washington Post, Netanyahu has specifically told the White House that the crown prince is a key strategic partner and a linchpin of the U.S.-Israeli front against the regional power house Iran's regional influence.

The House of Saud regime does not officially recognize Israel and has no formal ties with the regime. However, the two sides have been widely reported to have cooperated secretly for years.

The warning of Riyadh-Tel Aviv relations has gathered pace since June 2017, when bin Salman became the crown prince and the kingdom's de facto leader.

(Source: agencies)

New twists in Sri Lanka's political crisis fuel uncertainty

For a brief moment on Thursday, it appeared as though Sri Lankan politicians might be able to return soon to the country's suspended parliament to thrash out their differences over who should be prime minister - and thus end an acrimonious power struggle that has shaken the South Asian nation.

The idea took shape in the morning when newly appointed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa told academics at his office that President Maithripala Sirisena had decided to lift the suspension and resume sessions on Monday.

The declaration was nearly as shocking as Sirisena's decision on October 26 to fire Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and replace him with Rajapaksa, a popular and controversial former leader that the president had defeated in a 2015 election.

Critics said Wickremesinghe's removal was the first illegal transfer of power since Sri Lanka established an electoral democracy in 1931. Citing constitutional amendments passed in 2015, they argued the president does not have the authority to sack a prime minister.

Still, many expected Sirisena to withstand mounting local and international pressure and stick to his apparent plan to give Rajapaksa time to muster support in the 225-member legislature.

That's why Wickremesinghe, who maintains that he commands a majority in the House and has been calling for a parliamentary vote, was quick to celebrate when the news of Rajapaksa's statement broke.

"The people's voices have been heard," he said in a triumphant post on

The mood at Temple Trees, the prime minister's official residence, where Wickremesinghe has remained holed up over the past week, was jubilant.

But the day dragged on without an official statement from the president's office. Then, in the late afternoon, two associates of Rajapaksa made an abrupt U-turn in a news conference, saying Sirisena will keep parliament shut until November 16 in line with his initial suspension order.

Legislators Mahindananda Aluthgamage and Susil Pre-

majayantha did not stop there. They said that even when parliament reconvenes, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) - a coalition between Sirisena and Rajapaksa's parties - does not plan to hold a confidence vote and allow legislators to choose between the two leaders claiming the prime minister's role.

"We have decided to convene parliament on November 16," Aluthgamage told reporters. "That's because we need time to present a people-friendly budget."

He added: "There is no vote scheduled for November 16."

■ Tug of war

Then, as morning broke on Friday, more than 100 legislators from all major political parties except the UPFA showed up at the parliament house, and submitted a motion with 118 signatures, demanding Speaker Karu Jayasuriya defy the president's suspension and convene the House immediately.

The figure is five more than the majority of 113 a prime minister requires to stay in power.

Jayasuriya told legislators Sirisena made a verbal commitment the previous day to summon parliament on November 7.

"I am trying my best to resolve this non-violently, but if that fails I have to think of alternatives," he told the politicians in an apparent sign he was not willing to back down on resuming parliament.

There was still no comment from Sirisena's office.

But the huge show of strength once again reignited hopes Wickremesinghe may survive as prime minister.

Prior to the crisis, the deposed prime minister, whose popularity has declined amid widespread anger over the rising cost of living, had a slight edge over the Sirisena-led UPFA, commanding the support of 106 legislators compared with his rivals' 96.

Already, at least five legislators from the UNP have switched sides, taking up positions in the cabinet headed by Rajapaksa, who insists his appointment was legitimate. The former president has his sight set on the UNP because key minority parties have either pledged not to support him or



abstain in any vote of confidence.

The Tamil National Alliance, which commands the support of 16 legislators, said they will not back Rajapaksa, who ruled the country from 2005 to 2015 and has been accused of grave human rights and abuses, because of his treatment of the ethnic minority at the close of the country's 26-year civil war in 2009, analysts said.

The remaining six legislators of the People's Liberation Front are expected not to take any sides because of anger at both leaders.

Observers say Rajapaksa's party has a high chance of winning early elections because of public anger over the failure of Wickremesinghe's government to deliver on promises of economic reform, crackdown on corruption and accountability for war atrocities.

The Sri Lankan rupee lost 12 percent of its value against the United States dollar this year, while growth slowed to 3.3 percent in 2017 - its lowest level in 16 years.

A vote on the budget would put the UNP in a tough spot. If its legislators reject it, the parliament could be dissolved, and if they approve it, it would only legitimize Rajapaksa's government.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Erdogan adviser said Khashoggi's body was dismembered and dissolved: newspaper

An adviser to Turkey's president has said the team that killed prominent Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul cut up his body in order to dissolve for easier disposal, the newspaper Hurriyet reported on Friday.

Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist critical of the House of Saud regime and its de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, or MBS as he is also known, disappeared after he entered the Saudi

regime consulate in Istanbul exactly one month go on Oct. 2.

The Saudi regime initially insisted Khashoggi had left the consulate, later saying he died in an unplanned "rogue op-

eration". Last week, the kingdom's public prosecutor Saud Al Mojab said the attack was premeditated.

Istanbul chief prosecutor Irfan Fidan said this week that Khashoggi was suffocated as soon as he entered the consulate, and his body was then cut up and disposed of.

Turkey has demanded that the Saudi regime authorities tell them where the body is.

But Yasin Aktay, who advises President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and was a friend of Khashoggi, told Hurriyet newspaper that the corpse was disposed of by dismembering and dissolving it.

"According to the latest information we have, the reason they dismembered his body is to dissolve it easier."

This was the first time this detail has been mentioned. There was no immediate comment on the report from Turkish officials.

The kingdom has faced a torrent of international condemnation over the murder of Khashoggi, upending the young, inexperienced and ambitious crown prince's image as a reformer on the international stage.

The United States President Donald Trump has said the Saudi regime authorities staged the "worst cover-up ever" but has also made more conciliatory remarks that highlight Riyadh's role as a U.S. ally against the regional power house Iran, as well as a purchaser of U.S. arms.

On Thursday, the U.S. State Department deputy spokesman Robert Palladino told reporters Khashoggi's remains should be located and returned to his family for a burial as soon as possible.

(Source: Reuters)

First Announcement



Permit No.1397/3845

Invitation For Prequalification

TENDER NO. : 08-21-9640001

National Iranian South Oilfields Company intends to purchase the following goods

Description	Quantity.
TUBING API GRADE L-80 SEAMLESS VAM.N.VAM OR SEC 4-1/2 IN 19.2PPF	01 Items including 5000 LE.

Vendors who intend to participate in the A/M tender are requested to send their resume & tendency letter via fax/ mail to the following address not later than 14 days after the second announcement. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide a bid bond of Euro 117,054 / Rls 5,618,519,424 in favor of NISOC. Iranian vendors shall submit their resume Acc. to forms Nos. 01, 02 and 03 which are available

at www.shana.ir and www.nisoc.ir and <http://iets.mporg.ir>

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPT
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site) Bldg NO 104, Ahvaz, Iran
FAX No.: +98-61-34457437 Tel No.: +98-61-34124644

Public Relations
www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>

تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۷/۰۸/۱۲ نویت دوم ۹۷/۰۸/۱۵

Four Balkan countries to explore 2030 World Cup bid

Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Romania will explore a potential joint Balkan bid to host the 2030 World Cup, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said on Friday.

A Balkan country has never hosted the World Cup. Yugoslavia, which collapsed in 1991, hosted the four-country European Championships in 1976.

"I think it is worth discussing the proposal of (Greek Prime Minister Alexis) Tsipras," Borissov told a joint news conference during a four-party summit between Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Serbia in the Black Sea city of Varna.

Tsipras said the four countries would discuss the possibility of becoming candidates for a major sporting event within 10 years.

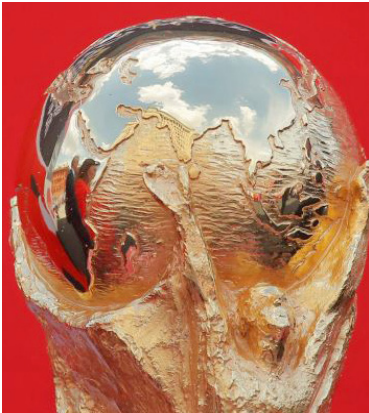
"Just as Bulgaria and Italy hosted the world volleyball championship (in September), the four countries — Serbia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria — (can) bid to host the world's (soccer) championship in 2030," Borissov said.

The English Football Association has already announced plans to conduct a feasibility study into a joint bid for the 2030 tournament along with Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The Football Association of Ireland said it will join them in exploring the potential bid. A South American tri-nation bid involving Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay has already been announced for 2030. The bid is designed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the first World Cup, which took place in Uruguay in 1930. Morocco, which has made five unsuccessful bids to host the tournament including 2026, has also said it would try again for 2030. Algeria and Tunisia are considering joining Morocco in a joint North African bid.

The 2026 World Cup will be hosted jointly by the United States, Mexico and Canada.

(Source: Eurosport)



West Ham ban pitch invaders for life

West Ham United have issued lifetime bans on two supporters for invading the pitch at the London Stadium during their 3-1 League Cup defeat by Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday.

"West Ham can confirm that following two incidents of pitch encroachment during our game against Tottenham, two individuals have been arrested and charged by the police," the Premier League club said in a statement on their website.

"Encroaching the pitch is a criminal offence that will not be tolerated by the club. In keeping with the club's zero tolerance policy, the two individuals will be banned for life from London Stadium with immediate effect."

In March, the club banned five people for invading the London Stadium pitch during a 3-0 league defeat by Burnley.

An unspecified number of fans also suffered the same fate for directing verbal abuse and hurling coins at owners David Sullivan and David Gold during that game.

West Ham supporters have long been dissatisfied over the club's move from Upton Park which was their home from 1904-2016.

The club have endured relegation battles in their last two league campaigns and sit 13th in the table this season after a difficult start under new manager Manuel Pellegrini.

West Ham host 15th-placed Burnley in the league on Saturday.

(Source: Mirror)

Man Utd review security after toy guns found in backpack

Manchester United will review security measures at Old Trafford after a pitch invader during last month's Champions League match with Juventus was found to have carried two toy guns into the stadium in his backpack.

"Carrying a children's miniature plastic toy gun into a stadium is clearly an irresponsible act. Fortunately, the actions of the pitch intruder at the Juventus game did not harm anyone," the BBC quoted a United spokesperson as saying.

"However, as the security and safety of all fans and staff is the absolute priority at United, the club launched an investigation. This includes a full review of our already rigorous security protocols."

European soccer's governing body UEFA have charged United for field invasions by two spectators during the 1-0 home defeat by Juventus. They have until Nov. 22 to respond.

In 2016, United evacuated the stadium minutes before a Premier League game after a suspicious package was found. The device was later determined to be fake and had been accidentally left behind after a training exercise.

(Source: Reuters)

Man City's De Bruyne ruled out for a month with knee injury

Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne has been ruled out for at least a month after suffering a knee injury against Fulham in the League Cup. British media reported on Friday.

The Belgian playmaker was substituted in the 85th minute of City's 2-0 win over Fulham at the Etihad Stadium on Thursday after opposing defender Timothy Fosu-Mensah landed heavily on his left knee. De Bruyne, who played a pivotal role in City's record-breaking Premier League title triumph last term, has already spent six weeks on the sidelines this season.

The 27-year-old is now likely to miss City's next six matches, including a league clash against local rivals Manchester United on Nov. 11. Pep Guardiola's City, currently top of the table with 26 points from 10 matches, host Southampton on Sunday.

(Source: Goal)

Bayern Munich accused of racism over Halloween party photo

Germany's most successful football club Bayern Munich is facing a barrage of criticism after it posted a photo on its Twitter account of a player's Halloween party.

In the photo, one player appears to be wearing traditional Arab attire and is holding a box that looks like a package bomb, with caution stickers and wires coming out of it.

Since then, Brazilian national Márcio Rafael Ferreira de Souza -- known as "Rafinha" -- posted an apology on his official Twitter account. "Halloween is a scary celebration with exaggerated costumes, it was not my intention to anger anyone through my disguise or hurt someone's feelings," tweeted Rafinha.

The Bundesliga club quickly deleted the photo, but not before a number of Twitter users had accused Bayern of racism, with one saying: "Seriously?... someone dressed up as BOMBER(?)"

Another wrote: "This is sick ... not all Arabs bombers, it looks funny for you but you don't know how you are effecting others."

One Twitter user referenced a 2017 attack



on another Bundesliga club, saying: "Just imagine if somebody dressed up as a German soccer players. Which is a thing that actually happened like 18 months ago."

Man United must aim for top four, not title challenge - Mourinho



Manchester United can only start to think about challenging for the Premier League title once they have fought their way back into the top four, manager Jose Mourinho said on Friday.

United travel to Bournemouth on Saturday, nine points behind table-toppers Manchester City and Liverpool and five points off the final Champions League qualifying spot occupied by Arsenal.

Mourinho believes eighth-placed United, who are unbeaten in their last three league games, will improve and close the gap on their rivals over the next couple of months.

"When you are outside the top four I don't think you should speak about the title," Mourinho told a news conference on Friday.

"When you are top four you can look up, see the distance, look to the fixtures, to the calendar, you can look to the situation at the moment, injuries, suspension, form and then you can feel it.

"But in this moment we are outside the top four so the point is now to get the points we need to try and be at the end of December in a better position than we are in now at this moment."

Forwards Jesse Lingard and Alexis

Sanchez were among the substitutes against Everton last weekend, and Mourinho said the pair are in a much better condition to play a role at Bournemouth.

"Jesse and Alexis are in a much better position than last week," the Portuguese coach added. "Last week was an effort from them to be available to help the team.

"But now it is a different story. Now, Alexis and Lingard are after one good week of work with the team. They are ready to play really."

In-form Bournemouth, currently sixth in the league, will look to secure a fourth victory in five league matches when they host United.

Mourinho said he was not surprised by Bournemouth's steady progress under Eddie Howe and expects them to compete for the Europa League qualification spots this season.

"Same manager, clinical scouting work," Mourinho said. "I wouldn't say it's a big surprise.

"After promotion was the season of being a Premier League team and staying. Now they want more than stability and are fighting for Europa League position."

(Source: Reuters)

Gianni Infantino concerned about FIFA hack

According to FIFA, the organization has been confronted by questions referring to and containing internal information, hence Infantino's concern.

"My job involves discussions and the exchange of documents, drafts and ideas on many, many, many, many different topics," the 48-year-old told AP. "We have responded to the questions we have received, but if I just remain in my room and don't speak to anybody, how can I do my job properly?"

The hack, which, according to the New York Times, is not connected to the cyber attacks by Russian secret service agents on global sports organizations including FIFA and the International Olympic Committee last year, has resulted in confidential documents being passed on to German magazine Der Spiegel and the European Investigative Collaboration (EIC) research network -- the team behind the so-called "Football Leaks" revelations. Der Spiegel confirmed to DPA that the EIC had sent questions to FIFA but would not be drawn on when or whether further publications would be made. The New York Times, on the other hand, says documents



could enter the public domain as early as Friday, leading FIFA to release a statement condemning "all attempts to

North and South Korea set to combine for Tokyo 2020 and co-host 2032 Olympics

North and South Korea are planning to compete as a unified team at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 and are bidding to co-host the 2032 Summer Games.

Following inter-Korean sports talks Friday the rival nations issued a statement saying they wanted to participate jointly in international competition, starting with a combined team at next year's men's handball world championships in Germany.

They will send a letter to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), informing the organization of the two Koreas' intent to host the Olympics in 14 years' time. In a state-

ment to CNN Sport, IOC president Thomas Bach said the organization welcomes plans for a joint bid.

Athletes from North and South Korea marched under a unified flag at the opening ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, and in ice hockey the women competed as a unified team, helping ease tensions on the peninsula.

"After we opened the door for political talks with the joint march of the two Korean teams at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018, sport could once more make a contribution to peace on the Korean

Peninsula and the world," Bach said.

"We sincerely wish that these political talks produce the necessary progress for a successful candidature."

North and South Korea will also "actively participate" in international competitions held in each other's territories and resolve issues that arise from sports exchanges.

Sport has provided many symbolic moments over the last year in the continued rapprochement between two countries still technically at war.

In May, North and South Korea were due

(DFB) Reinhard Grindel.

"[I] will no longer be playing for Germany ... whilst I have this feeling of racism and disrespect," he said.

While rejecting Ozil's accusations of racism, Grindel said the organization could have done better in the way it dealt with the Arsenal player.

"Of course I have been asking myself what I could have done differently," said Grindel in statement.

"Looking back, I should have clearly stated what is unquestionable both for me and the association: that racist hostility in any form is unacceptable, intolerable and insufferable.

In August, Germany coach Joachim Loew said: "Nowhere within my team during my time here, there has been not even as hint of racism."

The dominant force in German football, Bayern has won six consecutive Bundesliga titles, though this season after an uncertain start lies second, two points behind Dortmund.

(Source: CNN)

Usain Bolt's trial done at Central Coast Mariners, will leave club



Usain Bolt has quit his A-League trial, rejecting a contract offer from the Central Coast Mariners.

The Olympic sprint great has been unable to strike a deal with the Mariners, which largely hinged on finding a commercial partner to boost his salary.

Bolt had been on trial at the Mariners for the past two months.

Central Coast were understood to have offered Bolt a contract in the vicinity of \$150,000, without any guarantee that the Jamaican would get an A-League game.

Bolt's camp, the Mariners and Football Federation Australia had been seeking a commercial partner to increase the amount of the offer. Mariners' owner Mike Charlesworth said the club and Bolt had concluded they wouldn't be able to settle any suitable deal in a timely manner.

"I would like to thank the Central Coast Mariners' owners, management, staff, players and fans for making me feel so welcome during my time there," Bolt said in a statement released by the club on Friday. "I wish the club success for the season ahead."

Charlesworth deemed Bolt's trial "mutually beneficial" for the club and the eight-

time Olympic gold medalist.

"We have been thrilled to have ... [him] as part of our club for these past eight weeks," Charlesworth said. "For the Mariners, it has been a pleasure to work with Usain as he pursued his desire to become a professional football player."

"This has been a mutually beneficial partnership that brought an increased level of excitement and attention to both the Mariners and the A-League."

Charlesworth said Bolt had made "great strides as a footballer" during his trial but the 32-year-old was widely thought to be well short of A-League standard. Bolt made his professional football debut for the Mariners when coming on as a substitute in a friendly game against a local Central Coast select team on August 31.

On October 12, he scored twice in another friendly, against amateur club Macarthur South West United. Six days later, Bolt was offered a two-year contract from Maltese club Valletta, which he rejected.

The Mariners then offered Bolt a contract in a move coinciding with the start of the A-League season. Bolt had been considering the deal in the past fortnight.

(Source: ESPN)

compromise the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data in any organization by unlawful means."

FIFA, whose computers at its Zurich headquarters were the subject of the attack, has not commented on the scale of the breach, but said it was "concerned that some information was obtained illegally."

Infantino and other FIFA bosses are currently attending the congress of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in Kuala Lumpur where Infantino has spoken out in favor of increasing the number of participating teams in the 2022 World Cup in Qatar from 32 to 48. "If it's possible, why not?" he told the congress.

Since September 2015, Football Leaks have been publishing confidential information regarding the tax affairs of several top footballers, including Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. The source, allegedly based in Portugal, has since passed on huge volumes of information to Der Spiegel and other media organizations.

(Source: DW)

to play each other in the quarterfinals of table tennis' world team championships in Sweden, but instead of going head-to-head they came together as a team, going on to lose to Japan in the semifinal.

Bach added: "In my talks with the leaders of the two countries, the IOC committed itself to continue to support the rapprochement between the two Koreas through sport by supporting athletes and enabling their participation in international competitions and promoting sports exchanges between the two countries."

(Source: CNN)

Persepolis set to make history against Kashima



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis are aiming to become the first Iranian football team to win the AFC Champions League but they will have two difficult matches ahead.

Iranian teams Sepahan in 2007 and Zob Ahan in 2010 reached the final but both ended up losing to East Asian oppositions and now, well-prepared Persepolis, are going to make history in the prestigious competition under guidance of Branko Ivankovic.

Persepolis will meet Kashima Antlers on Saturday in an unfamiliar territory because it's the first time they play in Japan.

Persepolis qualified for the final with a 2-1 aggregate victory against Qatar club Al Sadd SC in the semi-finals. An important 1-0 win away from home was secured with a late Ali Alipour penalty, the Iran club holding on with a 1-1 draw at home with Siamak Nemat's equalizer getting it done.

Elsewhere, Kashima advanced to the final with a thrilling 6-5 aggregate win against Suwon Bluewings. A 3-2 home win was followed by a 3-3 draw in South Korea. The Japanese club were 3-1 down in the second leg but goals to Daigo Nishi and Serginho gave them a famous draw to qualify for the final, the-afc.com reported.

"We play very well away too. Our vision is to keep our way (style of play) as much as possible in the first leg. This is the final and two of the best teams are playing this game. We are very proud and satisfied and it is a big pleasure to be in the final," said Ivankovic in the pre-match news conference.

"We hope we will enjoy this game, we hope we make our fans happy with this game. We want to win the title and we have worked hard to be ready for the final. We know Kashima very well. Persepolis may not have played them before but we know them. We know their strengths, that they are very good in set-piece situations with their tall players but we

will have our plans," he added.

Persepolis striker Ali Alipour is his team's top marksman, scoring five goals in the competition so far and his pace on the break will pose a threat to Kashima.

Also, Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand grabbed global headlines after a superb FIFA World Cup and, as the last line of defense, will be looking to again shine on the biggest stage. In front of him is Jalal Hosseini, the veteran Persepolis captain who may view the final as his last chance of continental glory.

Persepolis have won Iran domestic league back-to-back titles and also are favorites to win the trophy for the third successive year. They are also hunting to win Iran's Hazfi Cup.

Persepolis, who have been banned from signing players in the last two transfer windows, are going to win triple in their best days.

They want to make history.

Kashima targeting big win, coach says

Kashima Antlers will be on a mission to maximize home ground advantage in the first leg of the 2018 AFC Champions League final on Saturday, said head coach Go Aiwa. Aware that Persepolis are an awesome force when playing at Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Aiwa said Kashima's target in the first leg at the Kashima Soccer Stadium is to win by several goals and not concede any.

"Firstly, I would like to say that it is an honor to be playing in the AFC Champions League final.

"Having said that, we will be playing at home and we want to make use of our home ground advantage in the first leg to get the result we want," said Aiwa at the pre-match

media conference on Friday.

"The final is a game of 180 minutes and we will be playing the first half on Saturday. Our target is to win the title and my players are highly motivated and in good physical condition."

Kashima, despite their rich history, are seeking their first AFC Champions League title, which would bring their overall tally of honors to 20 and also seal them a place in the FIFA Club World Cup in December, having played in the 2016 final.

"I have full confidence that my players can deliver. We want to play in the FIFA Club World Cup again. In 2016, we played in the tournament as the J League champions but this time, we

have the chance to qualify as the kings of Asia and we must concentrate on the two matches ahead of us," added Aiwa.

Kashima, said the Aiwa, will go into the first leg having done their homework on Persepolis.

"I agree that Persepolis are very disciplined and their defense is very tight. However, they also have their weaknesses and my players have their instructions.

"Our mission is to win by multiple goals and it is mine and my staff's responsibility to give the players the right atmosphere so that they play the football we want to and bring joy to our fans."

(Source: the-afc)



Alipour: We are representing Iran

Ali Alipour insists Persepolis are playing for national pride as the Iranian side prepare to take on Japan's Kashima Antlers in the first leg of the AFC Champions League final at Kashima Soccer Stadium on Saturday.

Persepolis are the first team from the Islamic Republic of Iran to reach the final since Zobahan in 2010, while the only other Iranian side to progress to this stage were Sepahan in 2007. No club from the country has ever won the title.

But the Tehran team have produced some remarkable results in the current campaign, ousting the United Arab Emirates' Al Jazira and Qatar pair Al Duhail and Al Sadd in the knockout rounds, all three match-ups being gripping encounters as Branko Ivankovic's team advanced to a first AFC Champions League final.

"The Iranian people are very happy that we got to the final," said Alipour, who with five goals to his name is Persepolis' top scorer.

"It was a very tense and exciting game for the fans against Al Sadd because they didn't know until the very end if we were going to go through.

"We do believe that we're representing Iran and the people of our country. Regardless of who you support, whether it's Persepolis or even Esteghlal, we hope people are supporting us and we want to make our country happy."

After the departure of Iranian international striker Mehdi Taremi prior to the 2018 AFC Champions League, Alipour assumed the role of his side's main striker, and he scored a brace in Persepolis' 3-0 opening-day victory over Uzbekistan's Nasaf.

The 23-year-old added another goal in a 2-0 win against the UAE's Al Wasl, before his fourth strike of the campaign came away at Al Jazira in the first leg of the last 16.

But Alipour's most important contribution arrived when he struck a late penalty away at Al Sadd in the first leg of the semi-final in a 1-0 victory that was achieved after the forward raced clear in the dying moments, was brought down in the box and converted from the spot.

"Our game plan will not be too different from when we played Al Sadd and we expect Kashima to have more of the ball during the game, but like in the last away game we'll be looking for opportunities to catch them on the break," admitted Alipour.

"It's not really important who scores the goals. Obviously I have scored a lot of them but ultimately we're all working as a team to win and that's more important than me scoring goals.

"The key is unity. We've played together for a long time now and it's our responsibility to put everything the coach has trained us on into practice on the pitch and get the result we need."

Alipour's teammate Mohammad Ansari, meanwhile, supported the view that Persepolis were playing for their country, while the left-back also believes that the right teams are meeting in the final.

"Iran and Japan are the strongest sides in Asia just now," said Ansari. "Our aim from the start was to become champions, so we will do our best for Persepolis and for our country."

(Source: Fos Sports Asia)

Octavio announces Iran team for Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran coach Marco Octavio has named his 12-man team for the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup 2018.

Team Melli have been drawn in Group B along with three-time champions Russia, 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup runner-ups Tahiti and the U.S.

Group A consists of the UAE (host), Brazil, Egypt and Spain. The tournament will be held in Dubai, the UAE from Nov. 6 to 10 in two groups of four teams.

Mohammad Ahmadzadeh, Moslem Mesigar, Amirhossein Akbari, Mostafa Kiani, Hamid Behzadpour, Mohammad Moradi, Mohammad Masoumizadeh, Ali Mirshekari, Peyman Hosseini, Saeid Piramoon, Mehdi Shirmohammadi and Ehsan Dara have been invited to the national team.

Iran will start the campaign with a match against the U.S. on Nov. 6.

"We respect all the participating teams in the competition and know that they will play in the highest level. But, we also are fully ready and well prepared for the competition," Octavio told Tehran Times ahead of the competition.

Iran come fifth at FIBA U18 Asia Women

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran basketball team defeated Singapore 63-51 to finish in fifth place at the FIBA U18 Women's Asian Championship on Friday.

Fatemeh Ghazvini led the Iranian team with 29 points, while Briana Bao Yu Lee scored eight points for Singapore.

The top placed team from division B gets promoted to Division A for the 2020 FIBA Asia Under-18 Championship for Women. The bottom-placed team from division A gets relegated to division B for the 2020 championships.

Syria will face Kazakhstan in the semi-final while India meet Hong Kong to book a place into the final match.

The FIBA U-18 Asian Championship comprises of eight teams each, in Division A and Division B. Teams from Division A compete for the title and to secure their qualification for the 2019 FIBA U-19 World Cup.

Padideh emerge victorious, two teams earn first win

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Padideh continued their winning way in Iran Professional League (IPL) as they defeated Nassaji Mazandaran 3-0 on Friday.

Amin Ghaseminezhad was on target in the 30th and 90th minutes while Hossein Mehraban found the back of the net in the 79th minute.

In Tehran's Shahre-Qods Stadium, Tractor Sazi beat Paykan 2-1 thanks to goals from Anthony Stokes and Danial Esmailifar.

Sepidrood earned the first win after 11 weeks, beating Pars Jonoubi 1-0 in Rasht.

Naft Masjed Soleyman also seized their first win in the current league, emerging victorious over Esteghlal Khuzestan 2-1 in Ahvaz.

Padideh lead the IPL table with 26 points, four points ahead of Sepahan.

Ansarifard on the verge of Joining Nottingham Forest

Iran international striker Karim Ansarifard is reportedly close to signing a contract with Nottingham Forest.

The work permit issues were the only thing standing in Forest's way of signing Ansarifard at the start of September.

It is stated that Aitor Karanka's side is hoping to finally gain clearance on a work permit in the coming days, potentially bringing an end to a transfer saga that has rumbled on now for almost two months.

The Iranian striker has been heavily linked with a move to the City Ground since being released by Olympiakos at the end of the summer transfer window. But a move that seemed all-but inevitable is yet to happen with the trail growing cold in recent weeks.

The 28-year-old striker is a proven goal-scorer who netted 18 times for Olympiakos during a spell in the Greek Superleague last season.

(Source: HITC)

First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

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AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : **01-31-9580012**

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC)intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity.
38	P/F”BROWN BOVERI-SULZER”GAS TURBINE TYPE NS70 REF.BROWN BOVERI- SULZER TURBOMACHINERY LTD	324

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their “Intention To Participate” Letter via fax to the following number not later than 14 days after the second announcement. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 6,630 Euro or 320,648,216 RIAL in favor of NISOC

Iranian vendors shall submit their resume according to Quality Assessment

Forms available at www.nisoc.ir

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Iranian association to commemorate Tahereh Saffarzadeh

CULTURE TEHRAN — The Translators and Interpreters Association of Tehran has arranged a program to commemorate Iranian poet and translator Tahereh Saffarzadeh (1936-2008) during Iran Book Week.



Tahereh Saffarzadeh in an undated photo

A number of experts and translators are scheduled to attend the program set for November 18, the director of the association, Mohamamdreza Arbabi, has said. Saffarzadeh, the female scholar, poet and translator who died of cancer in 2008, is famous for her bilingual translation of the Holy Quran in Persian and English. She has also translated a selection of the Nahj-ul-Balagha of Imam Ali (AS) into Persian and English. Arbabi also said that the association has organized a series of programs during the week. A number of translators are due to visit bookstores to promote book reading culture and meet book readers. The 26th edition of Iran Book Week will begin on November 15 promoting the motto “Good Feeling of Book Reading”.

“Mummy” film poster, expected to fetch record, fails to sell at auction

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A rare, original poster from the Boris Karloff horror classic “The Mummy” that was predicted to set a record price for a film poster at auction went unsold on Wednesday when no one bid the \$950,000 minimum in the online sale.



An original 1932 lithographic film poster designed by Karoly Grosz, for the movie “The Mummy” is seen in this handout photo provided by Sotheby’s, October 11, 2018. (Courtesy Sotheby’s/ Handout via Reuters)

Sotheby’s had predicted that the work, one of only three known surviving examples of the original lithographic poster from the 1932 film, would fetch up to \$1.5 million. “Unfortunately, the work did not find a buyer in our online auction that concluded today, but that does not in any way detract from its importance,” Sotheby’s said in a statement. The auction house described the piece as “one of the rarest and most celebrated film posters in existence, and a seminal example of the graphic design pioneered by Hollywood studios during their ‘Golden Age of Horror.’” The poster set a record more than 20 years ago when it fetched \$453,500, a price exceeded last year when a poster from “Dracula,” the 1931 horror film starring Karloff rival Bela Lugosi, sold for \$525,800 at auction.

Chris Pine puts on Scottish accent for historical drama “Outlaw King”

LONDON (Reuters) — “Star Trek” actor Chris Pine swaps space for medieval Scotland in Netflix action drama “Outlaw King” in which he plays 14th century rebel warrior Robert the Bruce who fought the English to regain control of his homeland. The American actor, best known for playing Captain Kirk in the sci-fi saga, dons armor and puts on a Scottish accent for the role, which follows the man deemed an outlaw by the English king as he pursues the bloody quest for independence. Deemed a national hero in Scotland, Robert the Bruce was King of Scots from 1306 until he died in 1329. “It’s certainly about Scottish independence,” Pine told Reuters about the film. “But I think ... it’s about love, it’s about relationships, it’s about violence, it’s about the cost of the violence, it’s about man’s will to power and be in power and what one is willing to do to get it.”

“The Dark Room” named best at HANIFF

A R T TEHRAN — “The Dark Room” by Ruhollah Hejazi from Iran has won the award for best feature length movie at the Hanoi Film Festival (HANIFF) in Vietnam, the organizers have announced. “The Dark Room” tells the story of a married couple named Farhad and Halleh. The award for best director went to Piotr Domalewski for “Silent Night” from Poland. Christian Bables received the best actor award for his role in “Signal Rock” from the Philippines, and the award for best actress went to Phuong Anh Dao for her role in “Summer in Closed Eyes” from Vietnam. Iranian director Shahram Mokri was a member of the jury for the official competition of the festival, which was held in the

capital of Vietnam from October 27 to 31. Japanese filmmaker Oguri Kohei was president of the jury. The organizers also arranged a seminar on Iranian cinema and its international achievements on October 29 attended by a number of Iranian cineastes including film expert Mohammad Atebbai, filmmaker Kazem Molai, as well as Hejazi and Mokri. General Director of the 5th Hanoi International Film Festival Ngo Phuong Lan, former Director of the Singapore International Film Festival Philip Cheah and Managing Director of the ASEAN Film Fund Miguel Dela Rosa were also among the attendees. The cineastes discussed Iranian cinema and its great success at numerous international film festivals.



Ruhollah Hejazi (R) receives the best feature length award he won for “The Dark Room” from the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Nguyen Ngoc Thien at the closing ceremony of HANIFF on October 31, 2018.

Fatemeh Motamed-Arya on panel of Thessaloniki film festival

A R T TEHRAN — Fatemeh Motamed-Arya, the star of the acclaimed Iranian movies “The Blue-Veiled” and “Gilaneh”, has been selected for a jury of the 59th Thessaloniki International Film Festival underway in the Greek city, the organizers have announced. She will be judging the films competing in the International Competition section along with Sandra den Hamer, the director of Eye Film Museum in the Netherlands, Romanian filmmaker Radu Jude, Spanish composer Alfonso de Villalonga and Syrago Tsiara, director of the Thessaloniki Centre of Contemporary Art. The juries will be awarding the Golden and Silver Alexanders plus a number of additional awards at the festival running until November 11. Motamed-Arya was a jury member of the 75th Venice International Film Festival in summer. In addition, Villalonga, who is also a member of the international jury this year, will present a special concert with songs he wrote for films such as Isabel Coixet’s “The Bookshop”. He will be accompanied by Spanish guitarist Pau Figueras, singer



Fatemeh Motamed-Arya in an undated photo

and trombonist Rita Payés and a string quartet of Greek musicians led by Andonis Sousamoglou of the Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra. The concert named “Music for Films & Cabaret” will take place at the Duende jazz bar on November 8.

Jane Fonda, Amy Schumer among stars to appear on U.S. voter telethon

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Hollywood celebrities including Jane Fonda, Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Amy Schumer will take part in an online telethon on Monday to urge young people to pledge to vote in Tuesday’s congressional midterm elections. The two-hour “Telethon for America,” created by comedian Ben Gleib, will be streamed live starting at 9 p.m. ET on Monday on YouTube, Facebook Live and Comedy Central’s website, organizers said in a statement. This telethon, unlike traditional ones, will not ask for money. Instead, viewers will be urged to call in to a celebrity phone bank and pledge to vote in the next day’s election. More than 50 actors, comedians and YouTube stars will take part, including Judd Apatow, Chelsea Handler and Olga Kay. The celebrities will be encouraged to simulcast



Jane Fonda arrives for screening of the film “BlackKkKlansman” at the 71st Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France May 14, 2018. (Reuters/Stephane Mahe)

Oprah backs Stacey Abrams in historic Georgia governor’s race

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Media mogul Oprah Winfrey lent her star power on Thursday for Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, who is vying to become the first female black governor in the United States, while saying she has no political aspirations of her own. “I am here today because Stacey Abrams cares about the things that matter,” Winfrey told a cheering crowd at a Cobb County town hall, citing Abrams’ stance on environmental protection, healthcare and gun control. Winfrey, who said she is a registered independent, has long championed Democratic Party causes and some fans earlier this year tried to encourage her to run against Republican President Donald Trump in 2020. “I don’t want to run, OK?” Winfrey told the crowd. “I’m not trying to test any waters, don’t want to go in those waters.” Winfrey also is to appear alongside Abrams at a second town hall later on Thursday in DeKalb County. Winfrey, 64, endorsed Democrat Barack Obama before his 2008 White House run, and campaigned for the two-term president. The contentious gubernatorial race between Abrams, a former leader in the state House of Representatives, and her



Oprah Winfrey takes part in a town hall meeting with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams ahead of the mid-term election in Marietta, Georgia. Republican opponent, Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp, has been marred by accusations of voter suppression. Last month, former voting rights advocacy groups sued Kemp, whose role makes him Georgia’s top election official, accusing the Republican of placing voter registrations on hold to boost his campaign. Former U.S. President and Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter asked Kemp to resign his position as Georgia’s secretary of state, saying his role in state government imperiled popular confidence in the election. Trump is due in the state on Sunday for a rally supporting Republican candidates including Kemp.

Tehran exhibit honors martyred Iranian divers

A R T TEHRAN — A joint exhibition of paintings and sculptures commemorating the names and memoirs of martyred Iranian divers has opened in Tehran’s Shalman Gallery. A selection of seven sculptures by Peyman Tahmasbi Arashlu and 20 paintings by Bujan Rahimi has been put on view in the exhibit named “The Fish Never Die”. 175 Iranian divers were buried alive in scattered mass graves in Iraq during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The skeletons of the divers were unearthed by an excavation team in early June, 2015 by an excavation team led by Brigadier General Mir Feisal Baqerzadeh. Most of the skeletons were discovered handcuffed with wire with no sign of execution on their bodies. The divers were members of a shock troop squad, which crossed the Arvand River to overrun Umm al Rassas, a nearby island on the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, during the Operation Karbala-4 on December 25, 1986. However, they were captured by Iraqi forces. Tahmasbi says that his sculptures are shaped in the form of fish to depict the love towards the martyrs and show the hate of the violence that has caused the death of the fish.



A poster for “The Fish Never Die” exhibit in Tehran’s Shalman Gallery.

The works are designed in a way to remind visitors that the martyrs are like the fish that will never die and are alive all throughout time, Tahmasbi has said. The joint exhibit that opened on Friday will be running until Wednesday at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

the program live on their own social media channels. The telecast will include live performances, comedy, music and taped segments plus information on how to cast a ballot. Many Hollywood celebrities have urged their fans to support Democrats in federal and state races to fight President Donald Trump’s agenda and increase oversight of his administration. The voter telethon is described as nonpartisan. It is backed by When We All Vote, a nonpartisan, nonprofit campaign launched by former first lady Michelle Obama to encourage voting. Tiffany Haddish had been scheduled to participate on the telecast but had to drop out because of a scheduling conflict, organizers said.

Netflix to release three films in theaters ahead of online debut

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Netflix Inc will debut three of its upcoming original films in a limited number of theaters before the movies appear on the streaming service, the company said on Wednesday. The move for “Roma”, “Bird Box” and “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs” is a change from the company’s traditional practice of releasing movies in theaters and on Netflix on the same day. “Roma”, a black-and-white, Spanish-language film about a housekeeper in Mexico, will start playing in cinemas in Los Angeles, New York and Mexico on Nov. 21 and later expand to other cities and countries. Directed by Oscar winner Alfonso Cuaron, “Roma” will debut on Netflix and in additional theaters on Dec. 14. At the end of September, Netflix had 137 million subscribers to its movie and TV streaming service. It began stocking its library with original films just three years ago. Netflix had been insisting that any movies it sent to theaters be available to its streaming membership on the same day. Most large theater chains remain opposed to Netflix films, and some prominent directors have objected to the idea that their movies would be seen mostly on the



The Netflix logo is seen on their office in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, July 16, 2018. (Reuters/Lucy Nicholson) small screen. Now, Netflix’s strategy is evolving. “Netflix’s priority is our members and our filmmakers, and we are constantly innovating to serve them,” Scott Stuber, head of Netflix’s film group, said in a statement. “Roma” is a likely contender for best picture, according to Hollywood awards experts, and Netflix’s release plan for the film is similar to ones used by traditional studios to promote their arthouse movies ahead of awards voting. “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs”, a new movie from “Fargo” filmmakers Ethan and Joel Coen, will start a limited theatrical run on Nov. 8, eight days before its debut on Netflix.