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Iran will flourish despite sanctions, Zarif to Pompeo

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has told U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that Iran "will not just survive but advance" in spite of the harsh U.S. sanctions. Zarif said Iran will achieve this goal without compromising its sovereignty.

"#WeWontForget @SecPompeo openly threatening to starve Iranians—a crime against humanity—in a desperate attempt to impose U.S. whims on Iran. Like his predecessors, he'll also learn that—in spite of U.S. efforts—Iran will not just survive but advance w/out sacrificing its sovereignty," Zarif tweeted on Saturday. →2

700,000 barrels of oil sold at IRENEX

ECONOMY TEHRAN — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) sold 700,000 barrels of light crude oil at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) at the price of \$64.97 per barrel on Sunday, the second offering day of oil at the capital market, Tasnim news agency reported. The set price for this round of oil sales was \$71.59 per barrel, the report added.

On October 28, just few days before new U.S. sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector took effect (November 4), 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 amount of one million barrels per day, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel-cargos of oil on the day. →4

Iraqi MPs plan motion to seek expulsion of U.S. troops

A senior Iraqi politician says the Iraqi parliament will discuss the withdrawal of the United States forces from the country amid rising unease at Washington's meddling in Baghdad's internal affairs. MP Ahmad al-Assadi, the leader of the Iraqi Construction Alliance, said the

lawmakers will step up their demand that the Iraqi government force U.S. troops to leave the country, Arabic-language Arabi21 online newspaper reported. Calls for the withdrawal of the U.S. troops began during the last legislature, but lawmakers are now seeking a "clear timetable" for a pullout, he said. →13

ARTICLE
Hanif Ghaffari
 Political analyst

A contemplation on the U.S. midterm elections

Referring to the Republican's partial victory in the Senate (which was quite predictable from the beginning), Donald Trump, president of the United States, has cheered over his great victory in the U.S. midterm elections! Democrats, on the other hand, claim victory for midterm elections based on their win in the House of Representatives, which has temporarily put an end to the Republican's dominance on this collection.

Apart from the fact that which Party had really won the recent election, there are some points about the Congress elections and its consequences on the U.S. domestic and foreign policy that should be taken into consideration:

Firstly, we should note that even if Democrats could win both the Senate and the House of Representatives, no specific difference was supposed to take place in the U.S. foreign policy! Everyone remembers that in 2008, Barack Obama, through his false emphasis on the slogan of "change", managed to win the Republican Party and John McCain and find way to the White House.

At that time, Obama's senior advisers, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, a prominent American strategist, stressed that it's really difficult, and in some cases impossible, to bring changes to the US foreign policy. This rule was true for Iran as well.

During Obama's presidency, we saw the most outrageous, multilateral and unilateral sanctions against our country. This was while organizing and implementation of these sanctions were all done by the American Democrats; and those same Democrats are now standing against Trump and his foreign policy.

Secondly, the U.S. constitution easily let the country's president make use of his veto power over the congress. Even in some cases, the president can impose his own views on other organs. However, losing the seats in the House of Representatives to the Democrats, has a clear message for the American Republicans: that a significant part of the American society has been turned away from the "Trumpism". Now Democrats have more incentives to prepare themselves to compete with Trump in the 2020 presidential election, based on victory in the House of Representatives. →7

Religion is not major determinant of international actors' behavior: Hunter

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
 By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that Analysis of international relations has shown that very seldom religion per se determines behavior, whenever it does, it is by being part of the states' and non-state actors' ideational, ideological and value systems.

"All IR theories, including the realist theory that emphasizes the role of power and search for security, account for the impact of ideational and value related factors and thus they can address the role of religion as well. The problem is that religion as such is not a major determinant of international actors' behavior," Hunter tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text the interview:

■ When did the religious issues has been a matter of great in Theorizing of International Relations?

A: Focus on religion and its role in international affairs occurred after the fall the USSR and the end of ideological era in international relations best exemplified in the Cold War. The end of ideology left a paradigmatic vacuum which was filled by theories such as the Clash of Civilizations. Prior to that the ideologization of religion especially in Muslim societies increased its impact on the domestic politics of some countries and on their foreign policy. However, this ideologized religion is different from the traditional religion and is similar to secular ideologies and plays the same role.

■ Some argue that if the theory of International Relations means a constitutive and critical theory, then bringing religion into International Relations is possible, but if the theory of International Relations is an explanatory-empirical theory, the theorizing religion in International Relations is not possible and, in fact, there is not theological positivism theory in International Relations. What is your opinion?

A: Most theories, certainly those related to social sciences, which includes international relations, are explanatory. They try to make sense of what is happening and identify consistent patterns and factors that help shape these patterns. If the observations show that religion is impacting the behavior of international actors, then they will factor that in. →7

With Trump sitting nearby, Macron calls nationalism a betrayal

French President Emmanuel Macron used an address to world leaders gathered in Paris for Armistice commemorations on Sunday to send a stern message about the dangers of nationalism, calling it a betrayal of moral values.

With U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin sitting just a few feet away listening to the speech via translation earpieces, Macron denounced those who evoke nationalist sentiment to disadvantage others.

"Patriotism is the exact opposite of nationalism: nationalism is a betrayal of patriotism," Macron said in a 20-minute address delivered under the Arc de Triomphe to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One. "By pursuing our own interests first, with no

regard to others', we erase the very thing that a nation holds most precious, that which gives it life and makes it great: its moral values."

Trump, who has pursued "America First" policies since entering the White House and in the run-up to the congressional elections this month declared himself a "nationalist", sat still and stony-faced in the front row as Macron spoke.

There was no immediate response from either the White House or the Kremlin to Macron's comments.

■ "Old demons"
 In the week ahead of Sunday's commemoration, Macron spent time touring World War One battlefields in northern and eastern France, repeatedly warning in speeches of the resurgence

of nationalism, saying it threatened the unity so carefully rebuilt in Europe over the past 70 years.

In one interview, he compared the political tone now to the 1930s, saying complacency towards unbridled nationalism then had opened the way for the rise of Hitler.

In part, his warnings seemed aimed at far-right parties that have gained ground across Europe in recent elections, including in France, where the National Front, now renamed the National Rally, has nudged ahead of Macron's En Marche movement in the polls ahead of European Parliament elections next May.

Besides France, right-wing nationalist or populist parties are on the rise or now have a stake in power in Italy, Hungary, Poland, Austria and Slovenia, among others. →13

REPORT
Ramin Hossein Abadian
 Mehr News Agency
 Journalist

U.S. and the end of Yemen War, Washington's attempt to save Riyadh's ruling family

Recently, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued his strongest statement yet on the war in Yemen, calling for a cessation of hostilities in Yemen under UN-led negotiations.

James Mattis, U.S. Secretary of Defense in a meeting in Washington also urged all sides involved in the Yemen War to take steps towards peace talks within the next 30 days.

After almost four years of Saudi Arabia led invasion of Yemen, that claimed 30,000 lives of Yemenis, wounded hundreds of thousands, displaced millions, and gave rise to famine and disease, the U.S. has suddenly become concerned and called for peace talks in November in a third country.

■ Exposure of Khashoggi's murder and intentional pressure on Saudi Arabia

The tragic fate of Jamal Khashoggi, a veteran Saudi journalist critical of Al-Saud, broke out a massive wave of international pressure against the Saudi regime, which severely disrupted the image of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia during the past month. Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) and his supporters in the U.S. foreign policy have been in a tough condition ever since.

There is no doubt that, after the murder of Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate Istanbul, and the clear role of MBS in the order of his murder, the cost of support for the Saudi regime and his young prince had gone up for the most beloved American authorities, and the head of them Donald Trump and his son-in-law. The continuous efforts of the Saudi-Zionist lobby in the past year or so to create a modernist, reformist, and moderate figure from MBS have been largely lost with the murder of Khashoggi.

Today, Al-Saud has become a hated regime by public more than ever before. Despite the unwillingness of great powers to call for punishment of the Saudi leaders, the support for the crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen has is getting harder by day. →7



Tehran Times/Mossein Motlagh

2,000 newly built houses inaugurated in quake-hit Kermanshah

2,000 houses built by Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation were inaugurated on Sunday in earthquake-stricken areas of the western province of Kermanshah with the Foundation's head, Parviz Fattah, in attendance.

A powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.3 quake rattled parts of the western province of Kermanshah last November, killing at least 620 people and injuring thousands and leaving many displaced.

According to Ebrahim Bazian, deputy director for housing department of the Foundation, the earthquake caused minor to severe damages to 10,000 housing units of the families under the Foundation's coverage.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



'World dumbfounded over Iran's accomplishments'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said on Sunday that Iran's achievements in defense, missile and nuclear industries have left the world "dumbfounded".

During a visit to Qazvin, Salehi said U.S. sanctions will not stop Iran's progress. "The Iranian nation, since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, has become accustomed to the sanctions, and U.S. policy is not a new issue for the country," IRNA quoted him as saying.

"Iran has reached many achievements over the past 40 years after the Islamic Revolution despite all the pressure, constraints, eight years of the imposed war (Iran-Iraq war), and crippling sanctions," he remarked.



'U.S. will be forced to leave Middle East'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Thanks to the Islamic Ummah's resistance, the U.S. will be defeated and will have to leave the Persian Gulf, Syria and other countries in the Middle East, a senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said on Sunday.

"Shame on some Arab countries that let the hegemonic powers find the way to the Middle East and it was a big treason against regional countries, especially the Palestinian movement," Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi said, IRNA reported.

Rahim Safavi, the former IRGC chief, further said today the Lebanese Hezbollah has formed a powerful army and has good capacities.



Two sentenced to death for financial corruption

POLITICS TEHRAN — Judiciary spokesman Gholam Hossein Mohseni Eje'i announced on Sunday that two more individuals charged with financial corruption have been sentenced to death.

Darius Ebrahimi and Younes Bahaoddini are facing death penalty, while the latter's verdict is not final yet, Mohseni Eje'i said, IRNA reported.

He further said a few others have also been found guilty of financial corruption, and two of them were handed their final sentences.



Tehran condemns terrorist attack in Mosul

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Sunday denounced as "shameful and inhumane" the recent deadly car bombing in the Iraqi city of Mosul.

"By conducting blind and indiscriminate terrorist acts targeting innocent and defenseless citizens, the remnants of terrorist groups intend to take revenge for the defeat they have suffered at the hands of the Iraqi nation and government," he said.

"However, they will never succeed and will soon be wiped off the region forever," the spokesman added.

Ayatollah Khamenei: Martyrs promote spirituality

Tendency toward East and West will perish if messages of martyrs heard, the Leader says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has said that martyrs serve the Islamic society before and after their martyrdom and that their message should be perceived by everyone.

The Leader made the remarks during a meeting with members of Congress of Commemoration of the Martyrs of Qazvin Province on November 5.

Ayatollah Khamenei said martyrs promote spirituality among the nation.

"Martyrs promote spiritual life in the country. Spiritual life means being spirited, having a sense of identity, it is being purposeful and pursuing goals in life; it means moving towards ideals, never stopping; this is what the martyrs do; this is what the Quran teaches us," he said, according to khamenei.ir.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the role of the commemorators and the martyrs'



families in conveying the message of the martyrs to the nation.

"What you do, or the families of the martyrs do, or all those who commemorate the martyrs in different cities - like Qazvin, Birjand, and other regions - is to convey this voice to us; it is important for us to hear this voice," the Leader insisted.

Calling for comprehending the message of the martyrs, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "If we hear the message of the martyrs, inclinations towards East and West, disbelief and incredulity will perish. Spirits will thrive and the movement will be a strong movement."

Over 200,000 Iranians - soldiers and civilians as well - were martyred during Saddam Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s. Even after the war, hundreds of Iranian security forces have been martyred in the fight against drug traffickers and terrorist groups, especially ISIS, also called Daesh.

Zarif discusses nuclear deal with Germany's Gabriel

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met on Sunday with Sigmar Gabriel, former German foreign minister, discussing Europeans' mechanisms to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Zarif and Gabriel also discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations.

Gabriel was accompanied by an economic delegation. Zarif held a separate meeting with Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization Zurab Pololikashvili.

According to Bloomberg, the European Union announced on November 7 that work "has accelerated" on a so-called special purpose vehicle (SPV) to help avoid the U.S. administration's reimposed



sanctions on Iran. The bloc is seeking to use the SPV to help maintain the economic benefits promised in the nuclear deal flowing to Iran.

The mechanism is designed to circumvent the sanctions, under which Washington can cut off any bank that facilitates oil transactions with Iran.

France, Germany, Britain and the European Union issued a joint statement on November 2 condemning the U.S. move in reimposing sanctions on Iran and vowed to protect European companies doing "legitimate" business with Tehran.

The statement read that Europe will also seek to "maintain financial channels operational with Iran and to ensure the continuation of Iranian oil and gas exports".

Parliament to revise CFT: MP

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee will restudy the CFT - a legislation to combat financing of terrorism - on November 18, the committee chairman Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said on Sunday.

"The bill to join the convention of financing terrorism will be studied by the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Sunday, Aban 27, [November 18] with the presence of a representative from the Guardian Council and related bodies," he said, according to IRNA.

Abbasali Kadkhodaei, spokesman for the Guardian Council, announced on November 4 that the council had found 20

faults with the CFT and rejected it.

"The faults includes items which were against the constitution and the Islamic law, and there were also items which were ambiguous for the council and we sent them back to the Majlis (parliament)," he told the Mehr news agency.

The parliament voted in favor of the CFT on October 7. A total of 143 lawmakers, out of 268 ones present in the 290-seat parliament, voted in favor of the bill, 120 voted against and five abstained.

To become a law, however, the oversight Guardian Council should vet the bill for compliance with the Constitution.

■ **'U.S. behavior to make Iranians more united'**

In an interview with ISNA, Falahatpisheh also said that the renewed U.S. sanctions are an "insult" to the Iranians, however, he said the U.S. behavior will make the Iranians "more united".

He also described remarks by the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as an "insult".

Pompeo said in an interview with BBC Persian on Wednesday that Iranian officials must listen to Washington "if they want their people to eat."

In May, U.S. President Donald Trump officially withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and ordered sanctions on Iran. The first

round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were announced on November 4.

Iran's Ambassador to London, Hamid Baeidinejad, on Saturday slammed new U.S. sanctions against Iran as "crimes against humanity", calling for those enforcing the sanctions to be brought to justice.

"US sanctions on Iran have no legal basis and thus are illegal. They affect the essential needs of all strata of Iranian society. Those involved in implementing them should be held accountable as persons perpetuating crimes against humanity, and brought to justice," Baeidinejad said in a tweet.

Iran will flourish despite sanctions, Zarif to Pompeo

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Second Announcement



Tender Holder		Security Paper Mill of the Central Bank of I.R. of Iran			
TENDERS NO.	97/K-192	97/k-166	97/k-168	97/k-185	
Tender subject	Purchasing of 5,000 kg Security Fibers	Purchasing of 42 items (230 pieces) Spare Parts for Counter Machines	Purchasing of one set Swimming Roll for Calender paper machine	Purchasing of Installation and Setting up one set of Quality Control System for Paper/Board Machines (QCS)	
Tender deposit	An unconditional and extendable bank guarantees from Iranian bank for the amount of 21,600 Euro or 2,215,404,000 Iranian Rial.	An unconditional and extendable bank guarantees from Iranian bank for the amount of 10,930 Euro or 1,020,000,000 Iranian Rial.	An unconditional and extendable bank guarantees from Iranian bank for the amount of 8,810 Euro or 822,000,000 Iranian Rial.	An unconditional and extendable bank guarantees from Iranian bank for the amount of 20,000 Euro or 3,000,000,000 Iranian Rial.	
Deadline for receiving tender documents	Maximum Ten days after second advertisement				
How to get document	Bidder can receive the tender documents by sending their written inquiry to Fax: +98 11 4313 2566 or sending letter to email address Info@takab-cbi.ir or refer to national basic of tenders of Iran with address http://lets.mporg.ir				
Deadline for submitting offers	Maximum until dated 22. December.2018 (97/10/01)				
Time of opening of technical offers	Maximum Three week after deadline submitting offer				
Validity period of financial offers	The offers must be valid for 240 days after 22. December.2018 (97/10/01)	The offers must be valid for 90 days after 22. December.2018 (97/10/01)	The offers must be valid for 90 days after 22. December.2018 (97/10/01)	The offers must be valid for 180 days after 22. December.2018 (97/10/01)	
Place for receiving and submitting tender documents	7 th km Chamestan Road, Amol, Mazandaran, Iran, Security paper Mill -department of the commercial department building				
Delivery time	6 month after signing the contract				
For further information, prospective bidder may contact us via the info@takab-cbi.ir					

Trump after causing turmoil in Iran by JCPOA exit: Larijani

Collor de Mello says Brazil to remain on Iran's side along with other BRICS members



POLITICS TEHRAN — By pulling out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and re-imposing sanctions against Tehran, U.S. President Trump was after causing turmoil, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani has said.

Larijani made the remarks in Tehran on Saturday during a meeting with Fernando Affonso Collor de Mello, a senior Brazilian senator who served as the 32nd president of Brazil from 1990 to 1992.

The world is facing growing uncertainty because of Trump's behavior, he said, adding, "Trump's measures have concerned Europeans by his economic war, Russians by threatening to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), and the world by pulling out of the Paris climate agreement and the [2015 Iran] nuclear deal," Tasnim reported.

The U.S. president is not familiar with history and needs to be given advice, the top Iranian lawmaker suggested.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Larijani lauded Brazil for its supportive stances towards Iran on the nuclear deal, saying Tehran and Brasilia could expand trade, industrial, agricultural and banking relations.

For his part, the visiting Brazilian senator voiced his country's willingness to boost ties with Iran.

Collor de Mello underlined that Brazil, together with other BRICS nations - including Russia, India, China and South Africa - stands with Iran against Trump, who has no respect for international regulations.

The world should not remain silent to bullies like Trump, he added, calling on the United Nations to take more serious measures against U.S. policies.

Saudi regime-led invaders face stiff resistance in push to seize Hudaydah

Yemeni officials say a massive Saudi regime push against Hudaydah on the west coast of Yemen has been defeated, with a number of Sudanese mercenaries killed or captured.

Based on reports, fighting reached residential streets on Sunday, with locals and Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters mounting fierce resistance to the invaders.

Medics and military sources say more than 60 combatants have been killed on both sides over the past 24 hours.

A source with the Saudi regime-led militants was quoted by Agence France-Presse as saying that the toll included more than 40 Ansarullah fighters and about 20 loyalists to the former Yemeni regime.

The invaders have been pushing to enter the strategic port city since 10 days ago, trying to advance on Hudaydah's docks which are the lifeline for vital humanitarian aid to the impoverished country.

The House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have deployed thousands of additional troops after seeing their campaign launched in June to seize Hudaydah thwarted by Ansarullah fighters and their allies in the Yemeni army.

On Saturday, reports suggested the invaders had seized the main hospital in the city. The invading forces also saw the Jabaliyah and Matineh areas in Hudaydah retaken by the city's protectors.

According to AFP, Hudaydah fighters have put up fierce resistance to the Saudi regime push towards the city's vital docks, which are the point of entry for 80 percent of Yemen's commercial imports and nearly all United Nations-supervised humanitarian aid.

The recapture of Jabaliyah cut supply lines to the invaders, drawing praise from Sana'a-based Yemeni Defense Minister Major General Mohamed Nasser al-Atefi.

"The aggressors were defeated with all their power and equipment," he said in remarks aired on al-Masirah TV as he praised "the children of Tihamah," referring to the general area in Yemen's west coast.

"The children of Tihamah proved to the Yemeni nation that they are ready to sacrifice their lives in defending the west coast. Their cooperation and solidarity with the



army and the Popular Committees defeated the aggressors' advance," he said.

The Popular Committees is referred to a coalition of Ansarullah fighters and their allies in the Yemeni army who have been resisting the Saudi invasion since 2015.

■ Sudanese mercenaries

Meantime, Ansarullah spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam referred to the deaths of several Sudanese mercenaries in Hudaydah, saying they were the "victims of their government being on the payroll in a cruel and senseless war."

"With all respect for the Sudanese nation, we hope the Sudanese regime will change its position regarding its participation in the aggression against Yemen. The Sudanese government will achieve nothing but defeat and destruction from this futile war," he added.

Abdul-Salam warned on Friday that Yemen would turn into a "graveyard" for the invaders.

On Saturday, fighting raged in Hudaydah's east as the Saudi regime militants and mercenaries backed by airstrikes and helicopters sought to push deeper into the city. Militants said the battles were turning into street fighting.

A Hudaydah resident, identified as Lubna, told AFP that "the noise of Apache helicopters, artillery and gunfire" was incessant. The protectors of the city, she said, were using artillery to pound the invaders.

The intensified battle for Hudaydah comes despite Pentagon chief James Mattis calling last month for a ceasefire and negotiations between Yemen's warring parties within 30 days.

Head of Yemen's Supreme Revolutionary Committee Mohammed Ali al-Houthi said in an op-ed published by The Washington Post on Friday that the escalating offensive in Hudaydah showed Mattis's ceasefire call was "nothing but empty talk."

Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah also said on Saturday that calls from the United States, Europe and the UN for a ceasefire in Yemen "were good to hear" but could also be a trick aimed at wasting time.

"I say to our brothers there: Be patient, be steadfast... You are closer to victory than at any previous time," he said in a televised speech in southern Beirut.

The U.S. and the House of Saud regime said they had agreed to end the U.S. refueling of the Saudi regime aircraft bombing Yemen but several officials underlined that American training and military assistance will continue.

Save the Children's field coordinator Mariam Aldogani, however, spoke of intense Saudi regime airstrikes in Hudaydah, with over 15 raids in the space of just 30 minutes. "This is the worst time for Hudaydah children," she said.

(Source: Press TV)

Palestinians angry as U.S. plans to unveil 'deal of century'

Leading Palestinian groups have pledged to reject the United States President Donald Trump administration's "deal of the century" after reports emerged that the United States is soon to publish the plan purporting to end the Middle East conflict.

While little is known about the plan, leaks have suggested that it regards al-Quds (Jerusalem) entirely as Israeli territory, whereas Palestinians view the eastern sector of the occupied city as the capital of their future state.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday rejected the plan and decried what he called efforts to separate the West Bank from the Gaza Strip.

"The 'deal of the century' will not pass and the fate of the land of Palestine will be decided by the Palestinian people," Abbas said in a recorded speech aired on Palestine TV.

Abbas said he would only accept a deal that secures "the independence and the sovereignty of the Palestinian people on their land in the 1967 territories with East al-Quds as its capital."

His speech came as Israel's Channel 10 television reported that Trump's envoy Jason Greenblatt had said the U.S. would soon release the "peace" plan.

In Gaza, Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said the resistance movement would never allow the "deal" to be implemented.

He said weekly protests held near an Israeli fence separating the occupied territories from Gaza would be held with the aim of thwarting the "deal of the century."

"We ask the Palestinian Authority to allow the 'Great March of Return' protests reach the West Bank and be held there," Abu Zuhri added. The Hamas official also called on Palestinian Authority leaders to cut their contacts with the US and the occupiers. Abbas has described Trump's plan as "the slap of the century" and boycotted the U.S. administration since December 2017 when Trump recognized al-Quds

as Israel's capital.

On Saturday, Abbas said Palestinians were in "one of the most dangerous stages" in their history since the "conspiracy" of the Balfour Declaration, a 1917 statement pledging British backing for a Jewish state in historic Palestine.

Palestinians will only accept a deal that establishes a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with a capital in East al-Quds, Abbas said, adding that "the occupation will end."

"We will remain on our land and continue to act. We adhere to our principles. Our flag will continue to be raised on the walls of al-Quds," Abbas added.

The Palestinian president further underlined the need for preserving national unity and stressed that any attempt to separate the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip from the West Bank was doomed to failure.

"Our national unity is the most precious thing we have, and it is our strongest weapon to face the liquidation projects and conspiracies that are being waged against our national cause," he said.



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Abbas also touched on the recent U.S. halt to funding for the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), saying, "No one can take measures against the UNRWA or try to question the numbers of refugees, as a prelude to the liquidation of the Palestinian cause."

■ Another Palestinian dies of Israel-inflicted wounds in West Bank

A Palestinian man has died of wounds he received from Israeli live fire during an anti-occupation protest in the occupied West Bank. In a statement, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Mohammed Shreyteh, 28, died in hospital in the city of Ramallah on Saturday.

Shreyteh had been shot in the head during clashes on October 26. Another Palestinian man, identified as Othman Ahmad Ladadweh, was also killed during protests in the village of al-Mazraa al-Gharbiya. The health ministry in the West Bank said at the time that he was hit with live ammunition, with the bullet piercing organs in his lower abdomen.

Palestinians across the West Bank often stage demonstrations against Israel's decades-long occupation that frequently lead to clashes with Israeli troops.

Since 2015, the occupied territories have been the scene of heightened tensions due to Israeli measures which Palestinians view as a bid to change the status of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Israeli forces have shot dead a Palestinian during clashes with protesters near the fence between the besieged Gaza Strip and Israeli-occupied territories.

Over 220 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces ever since the "Great March of Return" rallies began in the besieged Gaza Strip on March 30. The protests are centered on the Palestinian right of return for those driven out of their homeland after the creation of Israel.

(Source: Press TV)

'I'm choking' were last heard from Khashoggi: Daily Sabah editor

The head of investigations at the Turkish Daily Sabah newspaper has told Al Jazeera that Jamal Khashoggi's last words were "I'm suffocating... Take this bag off my head, I'm claustrophobic," according to an audio recording from inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist, suffocated to death while a plastic bag covered his head, Nazif Karaman told Al Jazeera.

Karaman said the murder lasted for about seven minutes, according to the recordings.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday that audio related to Khashoggi's murder was shared with the House of Saud regime, the United States, Germany, France and Britain.

He said Saudi Arabia knows Khashoggi's killer is among a group of 15 people who flew into Istanbul hours before the October 2 incident.

According to Karaman, the Saudi entourage covered the floor with plastic bags before dismembering Khashoggi's body - a 15-minute process that was led by Salah al-Tubaigi, head of the Saudi Scientific Council of Forensics.



Karaman's remarks come as Turkish police are ending the search for the body, but the criminal investigation into Khashoggi's murder will continue, sources told Al Jazeera on Saturday.

Traces of acid were found at the Saudi consul general's residence in Istanbul, where

the body was believed to be disposed of with the use of chemicals.

Karaman said that Daily Sabah would soon publish images of the tools that were brought into the country and used by the Saudi regime group.

He added the Turkish newspaper would

also publish some of the recordings that document the last moments of Khashoggi's life.

Last month, Istanbul's chief prosecutor said that Khashoggi was strangled as soon as he entered the consulate and that his body was dismembered, in the first official comments on the case.

Saudi Arabia has said it arrested 18 people and dismissed five senior government officials as part of an investigation into Khashoggi's killing. Ankara, meanwhile, seeks extradition of the suspects.

Karaman said the slain man begged for his life before he died at the hand of killers.

The killers, he said, stretched plastic bags in the room where Khashoggi was murdered to prevent his blood from spreading on the floor. Salah al-Tabiki, a member of the team that had been introduced in media reports as a forensic expert, then chopped Khashoggi's body into five parts to allow other people to stuff them in five large bags. The bags were then transferred to a car belonging to the Consulate to transport them to the outside of the diplomatic mission.

(Source: agencies)

California wildfires: Death toll rises to 25 as blazes continue



The death toll from destructive wildfires hitting California rose to 25 as rescue workers recovered 14 more bodies of people killed by the late-season infernos.

The bodies were discovered in or near the decimated town of Paradise in the state's north, bringing the number of confirmed dead from the blaze there to 23, according to officials.

Dubbed Camp Fire, the blaze ravaging the northern part of the state has become the most destructive in its history.

In the south of the state, near Malibu, another blaze that started on Friday claimed two more lives, bringing the total toll to 25. Thousands have fled the area and firefighters continue to battle all fronts.

The wildfire near Malibu, referred to as Woolsey Fire, has now doubled in area, covering 28,000 hectares.

More than 250,000 have moved out of Malibu and Calabasas, including many actors and celebrities that reside in the upscale area.

In Paradise, more than 6,700 houses and businesses have been destroyed, more structures than in any previous Californian wildfire on record. While Camp Fire is already the third deadliest in the state's history, 110 people are still missing and the death toll is expected to rise, according to officials.

By Saturday, the Camp Fire had burned through 40,500 hectares and was only 20 percent contained while fire chiefs estimated it would take about three weeks to bring it fully under control.

Firefighters hope to take advantage of a temporary drop of winds on Sunday to bring the fires under control, while meteorologists expect southern winds to pick up on Monday and through next week, spreading the flames.

California's governor-elect Gavin Newsom had declared a state of emergency in Los Angeles, Butte and Ventura counties that continued on Saturday.

Sheriff's investigators have been searching through the wreckage of Paradise in California's Butte County as they look for bodies.

Over 3,000 emergency personnel are fighting the blazes using 23 helicopters and firefighting air tankers, according to officials, but the raging winds and speed of the fires were staggering.

The Camp Fire began spreading in the north through Butte County on Thursday with such force that firefighters were unable to stop it for the first 24 hours and had to focus solely on rescues while it flattened Paradise, according to statements.

Speaking about the initial fire run on Thursday, Butte County Fire Department chief Darren Read choked from his emotions as he told firefighters, "It's not an understatement to say that you got your butts kicked."

California fire safety officer Jack Piccinini warned firefighters on Saturday to watch out for "emotional fatigue".

The fire was burning hot enough to peel the fire truck's paint and melt its hoses, blowing relief valves designed to withstand 900 degrees and charring nearby vehicles.

■ Mismanagement of forests

President Donald Trump said "gross mismanagement of forests" is to blame for the wildfires.

"There is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor," he wrote in a Twitter post early on Saturday.

"Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests. Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!" he added.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Central American migrants resume their march toward U.S. border

Hundreds of Central American migrants resumed their march north through Mexico on Saturday, en route to the U.S. border where President Donald Trump has effectively suspended the granting of asylum to migrants who cross illegally.

Trump's Friday order, which went into effect on Saturday, means that migrants will have to present themselves at U.S. ports of entry to qualify for asylum and follow other rules unveiled on Thursday that seek to limit asylum claims.

"It doesn't matter what rules (Trump's) government imposes we cannot go back to our countries. I have a bullet in my arm and another in my shoulder. If I go back home, it'd be better for me to go with a casket," said 30-year-old Julio Caesar from Honduras, who declined to give his last name.

The caravan, made up mostly of Hondurans, started north again on Saturday morning following a rest of four days in Mexico City.

They carried backpacks, blankets, food, many with children in tow, and took the metro and then walked to the town of Tepotzotlan. There they were helped onto buses and trucks by authorities, who stopped traffic to ask motorists if they would take the migrants to the city of Queretaro, where a shelter was set up at a stadium.

Some of the migrants are set to arrive to the border city of Tijuana on Monday, while others later in the week to Reynosa and other border towns, according to migrant shelters.

"These (U.S.) policies leave migrants even more vulnerable, because they will be stranded in northern Mexico, with human traffickers lurking, because the Mexican government does not have the capacity to help them," said Oscar Misael Hernandez, researcher at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

Trump made his hard-line policies toward immigration a key issue ahead of Tuesday's midterm elections. He has vowed to deploy troops at the border to stop a caravan of migrants, who say they want to seek asylum in the United States, citing violence in their own countries.

(Source: Daily star)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	180668.3
IFX	1960.84

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	\$60.19/b
Brent	\$70.18/b
OPEC Basket	\$70.68/b
Gold	\$1,210.50/oz
Silver	\$14.20/oz
Platinum	\$857.80/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iraq receives sanction waiver for importing gas, electricity from Iran

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Iraq has received a 45-day waiver over U.S. sanctions against Iran which allows the country to continue to import natural gas and electricity from Iran, Reuters reported citing the U.S. embassy in Iraq.

"The United States has given Iraq a temporary relief from the sanctions for 45 days to continue purchasing natural gas and electricity from Iran," the U.S. Embassy in Iraq said in a video published on its official Facebook page on Thursday.

"This relief gives Iraq time to start taking steps towards energy independence," the video said.

Iraq central bank officials said in August that the country's economy is so closely linked to Iran that Baghdad would ask Washington for exemptions from some of the sanctions.

The current temporary waiver is conditional on Iraq not paying Iran for imports in U.S. dollars.

Sanctions, which had been lifted under a 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by President Barack Obama's administration and five other world powers, were reimposed on November 5.



TEDPIX down 3,562 points in a day

E C O N O M Y TEHRAN — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) lost 3,562 points to stand at 180,668 points on Sunday, IRNA reported.

As reported, the uncertainty in the export procedures defined for domestic companies and also drop in the global oil prices were the main reasons behind the falling shares of petrochemical, refining, mining and metal companies.

Some 2.387 billion shares worth 8.4 trillion rials (about \$200 million) were traded through 177,304 deals at TSE on Sunday. The first market's index fell 2,822 points while the second market's index dropped 6,181 points in the same day.

Also, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), fell 33 points to 1,960 on Sunday when 635 million shares worth 4.224 trillion rials (about \$100.5 million) were traded at IFB.

China's central bank ready to tackle 'profound' economic changes

China's central bank said the global outlook is worsening and that it'll tweak its policy in a sign that trade tensions with the U.S. are hurting the world's second-largest economy.

"External conditions are undergoing profound changes, downward pressures are increasing, some companies are seeing more difficulties in their operations, risks accumulated over the long term are being exposed," the People's Bank of China said in its quarterly monetary-policy report published late Friday. The bank will "preemptively adjust and fine-tune policies according to the changing conditions."

Key insights

- The PBOC vowed to make its policies more "targeted" as well as forward-looking and flexible
- While sticking to what it calls "prudent and neutral" policy, the PBOC omitted a previous phrase in its policy outlook that had said it was "firmly against flood-like strong stimulus"
- The central bank will boost financial institutions' support to small and micro enterprises, private enterprises
- The PBOC sees trade frictions leading to relatively big uncertainties for China's future exports
- The central bank reiterates that it will firmly curb any increase in "hidden debts"

Get more

- China's exports have grown robustly all year, propped up by strong global demand and the difficulty of quickly shifting supply chains even as trade tensions with Washington deepen
- But the sugar hit may not last. A record 18.3 percent decline in Japan's core machine orders in September provided evidence Thursday that trade tensions and cooling global demand are already taking a toll on some activity in the region. A continuing drop in car sales in China indicates the domestic economy is weakening too.

(Source: Bloomberg)

700,000 barrels of oil sold at IRENEX

E N E R G Y Establishment of IRENEX, which is considered as a turning point in Iran's strategic oil industry and capital market and also a platform for producers and consumers to be in touch and pay lower trade costs in a transparent business environment, can be translated into creation of a new energy stock market that results in economic development. Absorbing a part of available liquidity and injecting it to production sectors and

financing various industries, especially those active in energy sector, it can bring financial discipline and spur domestic production and economic growth.

The energy market is basically exports-oriented and has the capacity to increase Iranian oil customers both domestically and internationally. Price setting relies on the base price determined by NIOC according to global prices. Receiving a trading code, foreign companies can



purchase oil cargos from IRENEX. By now, over 100 trading codes have been received by foreign customers at IRENEX which could be used to purchase oil car-

goes and oil products. The Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) preserves the customers' data from all across the world confidential.

U.S. granted Turkey 25% exemption from Iran sanctions: Turkish min.

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources said his country has been granted a 25-percent exemption from the U.S. sanctions on Iran, Mehr news agency reported citing a NDTV report.

"Of course 25 percent is still just an estimation and we haven't received an exact number yet." Fatih Dönmez said in an interview with Turkey's NDTV.

The official further announced that Turkey will be able to continue purchasing Iranian gas for the next five or six years.

As Iran's biggest natural gas customer, Turkey signed an agreement with the country in 1995 for importing natural gas from the Islamic Republic, the 20-year



agreement was implemented in 2002 and Turkey will continue importing Iranian gas up to 2022.

The U.S. government reimposed the sanctions which had been lifted under a 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by President Barack Obama's administration and five other world powers, on November 4.

40 Iranian companies to sell construction materials to Oman

E C O N O M Y TEHRAN — The contract on cooperation of 40 Iranian construction companies on selling products for building the industrial estate of Sandan in Oman was signed on Sunday at Iran's Embassy in Muscat, IRNA reported.

The contract which allows Iranian companies sell their construction materials to Oman, was signed in the presence of Iranian Ambassador to Muscat Mohammadreza Nouri Shahroudi, the report added.

"Regarding the warm relation between Iran and Oman, the contract can be a good opportunity for collaboration of Iranian companies in the Omani construction sector," the Iranian ambassador said on the



sidelines of the signing ceremony.

Designed with international standards in mind, Sandan is the first integrated estate for light industries in Oman.

It is located in Halban, a vital location between Muscat Governorate and Al Batinah Governorate, the most heavily populated areas in Oman.

S. Korea's fin. min. nominee says economy below potential growth level

South Korea's finance minister nominee said the country's months-long property boom is cooling down and economy is below its full potential, signalling to markets that monetary tightening is not urgent for now.

"(The economy) is below full its potential growth rate but it's premature to say it's in crisis or recession," Hong Nam-ki said in remarks to reporters on Friday that were embargoed until Sunday.

Hong, who was appointed by the presidential office

earlier on Friday, should get approval of the parliament before taking office though the approval is not mandatory.

Hong's remarks contrast slightly with the Bank of Korea's view, which holds that the economy is "roughly around" the its full potential growth level, and has left the door open for a policy rate hike at its Nov. 30 monetary meeting.

The economy expanded an annual 2.0 percent in July-September, far slower than the second quarter's 2.8 percent and missing the poll estimate of 2.2 percent mainly due to

the above-trend expansion seen in the comparable period last year.

Hong noted that overheated housing prices, a long-standing headache for the administration, had "stabilised somewhat".

The central bank BOK said in a report submitted to the parliament on Thursday that it saw a case for monetary policy tightening to curb rapid growth in consumer and corporate borrowing.

(Source: euronews)

Alibaba Singles' Day smashes \$25b sales record

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd smashed the 2017 record for its Singles' Day sales event on Sunday, surpassing 168 billion yuan (\$24.15 billion) sales in under sixteen hours.

Singles' Day, also called "Double 11" is the world's biggest online sales event, outstripping U.S. shopping holiday Black Friday.

The Chinese event was originally a novelty student holiday to celebrate being single, countering Valentines Day, but has since grown into a month-long online shopping festival that peaks with a 24-hour sales frenzy on November 11.

A disproportionately large number of sales are recorded in the first minutes of the 24-hour spending spree, when transactions are recorded for items that have been put on hold.

The company settled roughly 69 billion yuan (\$9.92 billion) in the first hour of Singles' Day on Sunday, up roughly 21 percent from last year's early haul of 57 billion yuan. Items selling well included smartphones and other electronics, but also staples such as milk powder and diapers.

While the company surpassed last year's sales just before 4pm, the rate is slower than last year when it broke the 2016 record around four hours earlier at midday.

Analysts say that despite continued strong growth, sales are likely to be hit by economic headwinds and new competition from competing sales events.

"With an increasing number of promotion events a year, consumers no longer feel that Double 11 is the only opportunity to get good bargains," said Pedro Yip, partner at consulting firm Oliver Wyman.

"Having said that, there are more consumers who still enjoy shopping at double 11 than those that don't," he said.

Alibaba kicked off this year's sales with a gala event that featured U.S. singer Mariah Carey, a Japanese Beyonce impersonator and a shoe-shopping-themed Cirque du Soleil performance.

It's expected to be the company's final November sale event with founder and chairman Jack Ma at the helm. Current chief executive Daniel Zhang will take over as chairman next year, the company said in September.

While sales growth remains steady, Alibaba's stock has dropped 16 percent this year amid economic uncertainties linked to brewing trade tensions between China and the United States.

Earlier this month, Alibaba revised down its full-year revenue forecast, sending a chill through investors, as it said sales of big-ticket items would be impacted. To compensate, the company will take in less income from its platforms in the near term in order to retain brands and new buyers, it said.

This year, Alibaba said there were around 180,000 brands participating in Singles' Day, and as of 8:00 pm on Sunday sales were nearing \$27 billion.

(Source: Reuters)

IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

Extension of INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97-04/141

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
Supply of System Equipment HEVC HEAD END (Ground Communications Department General) according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Sunday Nov. 18, 2018.**

Place of Receiving Documents:
Secretariat of Tenders' Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 55,995** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Tuesday Dec. 18, 2018** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Saturday Dec. 22, 2018** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

For more information, please contact the following phone numbers: **0098-21-22166313**
It is obvious that cost of publishing two advertisements shall be borne by the winner of tender.

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB

If OPEC thought its job was done, 2019 will be a nasty shock

It was meant to be a short, sharp shock. Instead, OPEC members are facing a long, slow grind with no end in sight.

The deal reached with several non-OPEC countries in 2016 to cut oil supply and drain excess inventories was meant to last just six months. But after last week's ugly slide into a bear market for prices, the agreement looks likely to drag into a third year as the group faces having to make further cuts in 2019.

Taking 1.8 million barrels a day of oil off the market from January 2017 was meant to drain excess inventories by the middle of that year, restore prices to an undefined "acceptable" level and balance supply and demand. Instead, the glut persisted. Although better than expected, compliance with the agreement was not complete and it was not until the deal was extended and Saudi Arabia started cutting shipments to the U.S. in the middle of 2017 that prices really began to pick up.

Crude levers

A further extension to the deal helped to push prices up to \$80 a barrel by mid-2018, earning tweeted rebukes from President Donald Trump that prompted a relaxation of the cuts and a surge in supply from those with the capacity to do so — principally Saudi Arabia and Russia. Total OPEC output is now the highest since before the cuts were introduced, even after allowing for changes in membership, while Russia's hit a post-Soviet high of 11.4 million barrels a day last month.

But the recovery in oil prices has been a



double-edged sword for OPEC and friends. Sure, it has boosted revenues for most — Venezuela and soon Iran being the exceptions — but it has also lit a fire under U.S. shale oil production.

Boom time

The latest weekly and monthly data both show American oil output up by 2 million barrels a day year on year. That's equivalent to adding the combined production of OPEC members Nigeria and Gabon in the space of 12 months. And it comes at a time when shale growth is being hampered by a lack of pipeline capacity to move crude from the Permian Basin in Texas to the refining

and export facilities on the Gulf of Mexico. Those bottlenecks should ease next year, allowing supply to rise by another million barrels a day by the end of 2019, according to the Energy Information Administration. On past performance, that forecast could increase significantly.

Shale wave

Perversely, renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran, which came into effect on Nov. 5, have added to the perception of a growing supply glut. The country's exports have fallen by almost 40 percent since April, the last month before President Trump announced that he was pulling the U.S. out of the nuclear deal.

But unexpectedly generous waivers from sanctions, which were extended to several countries that had already halted purchases, have raised the possibility that Iran's overseas oil sales could actually increase in November.

Oil ministers from the OPEC+ group that cut output are meeting today in Abu Dhabi to assess their ongoing collaboration. The get-together won't set policy, that will have to wait until the full meetings in Vienna in early December, but it will set the tone for those gatherings. There is already talk between Saudi Arabia and Russia of a need to extend restraint into 2019 and both may consider reducing their own output back to their individual target levels, having boosted it in recent months to make up some of the shortfalls from Venezuela and Iran.

Glut returns

OPEC's own analysis shows the need to prolong, or even deepen, the cuts. If the group doesn't alter its current track, global oil stockpiles are set to rise by around 1.8 million barrels a day in the first quarter of 2019 and to continue building throughout the year.

Producers may get a short respite from falling prices in the next few weeks. Demand from U.S. refineries could rise by as much as 1.5 million barrels a day by the end of the year, as plants return from their normal fall maintenance. But that boost will be short-lived. 2019 is looking like another difficult year for OPEC and friends.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Iraq and Saudi Arabia agree to work together to stabilize oil markets

Iraq and Saudi Arabia agreed on Saturday to work together to stabilize oil markets, Iraq's Oil Ministry spokesman Asim Jihad said, without giving further details.

During a meeting in Baghdad, Iraq and Saudi Arabia's oil ministers also discussed an electricity grid connection between the two countries to meet Iraq's power needs, he said.

The Saudi oil minister Khalid al-Falih also met Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi.

Iraq currently pumps around 4.6 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil, second only to Saudi Arabia in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. The bulk of Iraq's oil is exported via its southern terminals, which account for more than 95 percent of state revenue.

Earlier this week, Iraq's Oil Minister Thamer Ghadhban said the country plans to increase its oil output and export capacity in 2019, with a focus on the southern oilfields, and is close to reaching a deal with international companies.

The country is targeting production capacity of 5 million bpd in 2019, with average exports expected to reach around 3.8 million bpd.

On Thursday, the United States granted Iraq a 45-day exemption from sanctions which it reimposed on Iran. The exemption will allow Iraq to continue purchasing natural gas electricity from Iran.

"This relief gives Iraq time to start taking steps towards energy independence," a video published on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq's official Facebook page said.

(Source: Reuters)

China passes Japan to become world's largest natural gas importer

China has passed Japan to become the world's largest importer of natural gas in recent months, and is expected to maintain that position as it continues to build out both LNG and pipeline capacity to meet rising demand levels.

In recent months, the growth of China's natural gas imports has been driven mainly by the pace of LNG imports, which has grown faster than pipeline gas imports, even as domestic gas production levels have struggled to keep up.

In Japan's case, which only has access to seaborne LNG but doesn't have any pipeline flows, imports are slowing from the previous year due to nuclear power station restarts.

China's total natural gas imports first exceeded Japan's in April 2018, when it posted 6.818 million mt of imported gas volumes compared with Japan's 6.079 million mt of LNG imports, according to official data from the two countries.

Cumulatively, China imported 72.06 million mt of natural gas over the January-October period, up 33.1 percent year on year, even higher than the full-year imports of 68.57 million mt in 2017, customs data showed. Meanwhile, Japan imported 67.36 million mt of LNG in the same period.

China's total natural gas imports are expected to continue rising as new LNG terminals will be supplemented by the startup of the Power of Siberia pipeline from Russia scheduled for December 2019 that will add a significant chunk to its gas supply.

"As you can see, 2018 is the year that China is expected to overtake Japan as the world's largest natural gas importer," Jeff Moore, manager for Asian LNG Analytics at S&P Global Platts, said.

He said during November and December both countries tend to import more because of their seasonal demand profiles so there is a likelihood that things could change, although they are not expected to deviate under current projections.

Chinese gas demand surge

Higher-than-expected Chinese LNG imports last winter was one of the pillars of support for LNG price levels, helping soak up much of the additional supply from new projects and the bulk of spot market cargoes.

Platts LNG Navigator brings together LNG news, insights, data and analytics, providing you with the most comprehensive LNG resource in the market. Click the link below for a free demo of LNG Navigator to learn more.

This demand was largely backed by unprecedented coal-to-gas switching in northern China, particularly around Beijing to cut down pollution levels, which led to a significant change in projected LNG market fundamentals for this year's winter gas demand as well.

Since last winter, China has added new LNG import terminals and national oil companies have invested in debottlenecking gas infrastructure like pipelines to facilitate gas distribution, which hit a wall last winter.

New regasification terminals in China include the Sinopec Tianjin terminal with a capacity of 3 million mt/year, the 3 million mt/year Zhoushan terminal near Shanghai and the 4 million mt/year Shenzhen Diefu terminal in the south. The 3 million mt/year Wenzhou LNG facility in the south is expected to start up in 2019-2020.

The Zhoushan terminal, which will distribute LNG through trucks and small tankers, is China's first fully independent LNG terminal, marking a key development in breaking up the monopoly of the large state-run oil companies, according to S&P Global Platts Analytics.

"Current balances indicate that all of China will consume roughly 5.9 billion cu m additional LNG supply this winter compared to last winter, implying total regasification utilization will fall roughly in line with last year's utilization rates of around 80 percent during the winter, but peaking above 90 percent during the heart of the winter," Platts Analytics said.

Energy security concerns

Chinese gas demand is forecast to grow by 60 percent between 2017-2023, and the country alone accounts for 37 percent of the growth in global demand, according to the International Energy Agency.

The flip side is that China's dependence on imports goes through the roof, along with energy security concerns. In 2016, China imported around 34 percent of its natural gas demand, and this is expected to touch 50 percent in the next few years.

China's pipeline imports are lower than its LNG imports, but this changes once Power of Siberia comes online. Existing pipeline supply comes from Central Asia and Myanmar with a total volume of around 52.2 Bcm in 2018, out of total imports of 121.34 Bcm, according to Platts Analytics estimates.

The Power of Siberia pipeline alone will add 38 Bcm of gas supply, ramping up slowly by the middle of next decade.

But eventually, even this may not be enough. "Despite Russian gas, we see a growing gas deficit in the China market from 2020 onwards, with a 90 Bcm gap by 2030," Neil Beveridge, senior analyst at Sanford C Bernstein research, said.

(Source: Platts)

Albania picks group led by India Power for solar plant



Albania's government picked a group led by India Power Corporation Ltd. to build the Adriatic country's first solar power station worth 70 million euros (\$79.34 million) with a capacity of 100 MW, the Energy Ministry said on Saturday.

The offer by India Power, Mining Resources FZE based in the United Arab Emirates and the Hong Kong-based Midami Ltd. was the one out of three with the best combination of "technical and financial credibility, price and additional capacity", it added.

"This project will be an important step in diversifying energy resources in Albania and lead the way in turning Albania into a center of solar power in the Balkans," said the ministry.

The Socialist government of Prime Minister Edi Rama wants to install 120 megawatts of solar and 70 MW of wind power capacity by 2020, since more than 90 percent of Albania's power is produced from rivers and a newly built power plant, beset by a cooling problem, does not work.

Once the solar plant has been built in 18 months, it will sell power to the local distrib-

utor at 59.9 Euro per MW for 15 years out of its 50 first MW. Energy from the other 50 MW will be sold at market prices.

The ministry hailed the auction as a success because it secures "one of the lowest energy prices in the region". The price "is lower than the 63 Euro/MW in Greece and Turkey and also below the average import price", it said.

Albania believes the record of India Power, "a 100-year-old company with a 1,500 MW capacity of thermal, wind and solar power owned by the Kanoria Foundation Group" provided enough assurance for the project.

Now Albania and the group led by India Power will negotiate the contract. If finalized, this would be the first major investment by an Asian company to Albania since two Chinese companies bought its crude extraction firm and an airport concession from their respective Canadian and German owners around two years ago.

The ministry said the outcome of solar plant contract will encourage them to hold similar auctions in other parts of the sun-kissed country on the shores of the Adriatic Sea.

(Source: Reuters)

China launches aviation fuel index amid slowest demand growth in 4 years



China National Aviation Fuel Group on Saturday launched the country's first aviation fuel consumption index aimed at providing a fresh gauge for the regional and national economic health of the world's second-largest economy.

After stellar growth for decades, China, the world's second largest consumer after the United States, is seeing its aviation fuel demand growth slipping in the last few years as the economy expands less rapidly and more people travel by high speed rail.

"The aviation fuel index will become a good reflection of the consumption trend and a precursor of major events like an economic crisis," CNAF, the country's near monopoly distributor of jet fuel, said in a release.

China is estimated to consume a total of 35 million tons of jet fuel this year, Gong Feng, vice president of CNAF, told a seminar.

That's about 7 percent higher than last year, but down from 9 percent growth the previous year, said a second company

executive who declined to be named as not authorized to speak to media.

Wu Xiaohua, deputy director at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, told the same seminar that China's jet fuel expanded 5.8 percent in September from a year earlier, recording a year-on-year decline in growth for seven months in a row.

At 5.8 percent, it represents the slowest growth since January 2015, Wu said.

Passenger travel makes up 97 percent of China's total jet fuel consumption, which makes up some 13 percent of the global market, CNAF executives said.

The new index, based on data CNAF accumulated over the years, covers 30 Chinese provinces and regions and more than 200 civil airports. It will be regularly published via the CNAF's website.

Over the next decade, China's aviation fuel demand is forecast to expand 5-7 percent per annum with consumption reaching 57 million to 68.8 million tons by 2028, CNAF's vice president Gong said.

(Source: CNBC)

U.S. judge halts Keystone XL oil pipeline in blow to Trump, Trudeau

A U.S. judge in Montana has blocked construction of the Keystone XL pipeline designed to carry heavy crude oil from Canada to the United States, drawing praise from environmental groups and a rebuke from President Donald Trump.

The ruling of a U.S. Court in Montana late on Thursday dealt a setback to TransCanada Corp, whose stock fell 1.7 percent in Toronto. Shares of companies that would ship oil on the pipeline also slid.

TransCanada said in a statement it remains committed to building the \$8 billion, 1,180 mile (1,900 km) pipeline, but it has also said it is seeking partners and has not taken a final investment decision.

The ruling drew an angry response from Trump, who approved the pipeline shortly after taking office.

It also piles pressure on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to assist the country's ailing oil sector by accelerating crude shipments by rail until pipelines are built. Clogged pipelines have made discounts on Canadian oil even steeper than they were earlier this year when Scotiabank warned that they may cost the country's economy C\$16 billion.

U.S. District Court Judge Brian Morris wrote that a U.S. State Department environmental analysis of Keystone XL "fell short of a 'hard look'" at the cumulative effects of greenhouse gas emissions and the impact on Native American land resources.

"It was a political decision made by a judge. I think it's a disgrace," Trump told reporters at the White House.

The ruling was a win for environmental groups who sued the U.S. government in 2017 after Trump announced a presidential permit for the project. Tribal groups and ranchers also have spent more than a decade fighting the planned pipeline.

"The Trump administration tried to force this dirty pipeline project on the American people, but they can't ignore the threats it would pose to our clean water, our climate,



and our communities," said the Sierra Club.

The State Department is reviewing the judge's order and had no comment due to ongoing litigation, a spokesman said.

The pipeline would carry heavy crude from Alberta to Steele City, Nebraska, where it would connect to refineries in the U.S. Midwest and Gulf Coast, as well as Gulf export terminals.

Shares of Canadian oil producers Canadian Natural Resources Ltd and Cenovus Energy lost 2.7 percent and 2.2 percent respectively.

Canada is the primary source of imported U.S. oil, but congested pipelines in Alberta, where tar-like bitumen is extracted, have forced oil shippers to use costlier rail and trucks.

Two pipeline projects have been scrapped due to opposition, and the Trans Mountain line project still faces delays even after the Canadian government purchased it this year to move it forward.

"You have to wonder how long investors will tolerate the delays and whether the Canadian government will intervene

again to protect the industry," said Morningstar analyst Sandy Fielden.

Ensuring at least one pipeline is built is critical to Trudeau's plans, with a Canadian election expected next autumn.

"I am disappointed in the court's decision and I will be reaching out to TransCanada later on today to show our support to them and understand what the path forward is for them," Natural Resources Minister Amarjeet Sohi told reporters in Edmonton, Alberta.

Alberta has felt the financial pressure, and an industry source said the provincial government last month solicited proposals from companies on ways to move crude faster by rail. The source said proposals included ideas such as buying rail cars and investing in loading terminals.

"I've never seen (the Alberta government) so active on this front," said the source, who asked not to be identified because the matter is politically sensitive. "That is a shift." Alberta Energy Minister Margaret McCuag-Boyd said the province has sent a proposal to Ottawa to move crude faster by rail that includes making more tank cars available. "We're giving away our resources cheap," she told reporters. "We need market access."

Neighboring Saskatchewan stands to lose C\$500 million in annual royalties if the discount for Canadian crude remains steep, Saskatchewan Energy Minister Bronwyn Eyre said.

"People have placed quite a lot of hope in that (Keystone) project, so it's a major setback," she said in an interview.

Morris, in his ruling, ordered the government to issue a more thorough environmental analysis before the project proceeds. He said the analysis failed to fully review the effects of the current oil price on the pipeline's viability and did not fully model potential spills and offer mitigation measures.

The ruling likely sets Keystone back by up to one year, said Dan Ripp, president of Bradley Woods Research.

(Source: Reuters)

Accountability alone will not solve Myanmar's Rohingya crisis

By Bill Richardson

former Congressman, Governor
At long last, momentum is building to hold the perpetrators of the gruesome atrocities against the Rohingya in Myanmar to account.

Accountability will be critical to overcoming decades of impunity in Myanmar, where a UN-mandated fact-finding mission concluded that senior military officials should be investigated and prosecuted for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. An investigative mechanism is being established to collect, analyze and preserve evidence, while the International Criminal Court has opened a preliminary examination into the forced deportation of the Rohingya to Bangladesh. These developments should be welcomed, even if significant barriers to accountability remain.

But a singular focus on accountability risks overshadowing the need to bring about tangible improvements in Rohingyas' lives now. The international community must focus on compelling Myanmar to respect and protect Rohingyas' fundamental rights and on working with Bangladesh to develop interim solutions that bolster the Rohingya and affected Bangladeshi communities. This will require a holistic and coordinated strategy that places the rights and wellbeing of the Rohingya at its core.

More than 700,000 Rohingya, a mostly stateless Muslim minority from Myanmar's Rakhine state, have fled across the border to Bangladesh since August last year, when the Myanmar military launched a brutal campaign of arson, rape and murder in response to coordinated attacks on security outposts. They are now safer in Bangladesh, but confined to camps without adequate access to education or livelihood opportunities.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Myanmar's civilian government, led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, continues to deny that grave abuses were committed and to defend the military's use of force as a legitimate response to terrorist attacks. Moreover, since last August Myanmar has demonstrated no political will to rectify what UN investigators last week called an "ongoing genocide" against the estimated 600,000 Rohingya still languishing in Rakhine in apartheid-like conditions. Rather than taking steps to provide Rohingya with freedom of movement, access to livelihoods or services and a legal identity or granting unfettered access to Rakhine to independent observers, humanitarian workers and the media, Myanmar has sought to alleviate international pressure through purely tokenistic measures.

And yet, even though conditions are not conducive, officials from Myanmar and Bangladesh on Tuesday agreed to begin repatriating Rohingya to Myanmar as early as mid-November. Bangladesh is understandably eager to move forward with the repatriation agreement it struck with Myanmar last November, both to keep pressure on Myanmar and to allay domestic concerns in advance of elections expected in December. But any process that is safe, voluntary and dignified will take years, even in the unlikely event that Myanmar takes steps to improve the situation for Rohingya in Rakhine.

To complement the recent movement towards accountability, more concerted efforts are needed to improve Rohingyas' lives now and to provide them with hope for the future.

In Myanmar, targeted sanctions imposed by the West are largely symbolic (and exclude Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief), while trade sanctions, recently mooted by the European Commission, are likely to be counterproductive. Given that Myanmar has the support of regional actors willing to overlook grave human rights abuses for economic or geopolitical gain, the West must be more creative in manufacturing leverage over Myanmar. There are several ways to do so.

First, the international community must ensure that Myanmar keeps its stated commitment to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by the late Kofi Annan by creating clear, public benchmarks that establish a measure for progress and a platform for advocacy.

Second, the international community must recognize opportunities to increase leverage by sticking to its principles. Though flawed, a controversial Memorandum of Understanding offered an opportunity for UNDP and UNHCR to expand "effective access" to Rakhine had they not quickly capitulated to Myanmar's demand they focus an initial assessment on 23 hand-picked villages. While access should not be the ultimate objective, it can be leveraged to enhance rights monitoring and protection, to hold Myanmar to account for implementing the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations and to strengthen advocacy efforts.

Finally, the international community should consider withholding assistance from detention camps and Myanmar's deeply flawed "village-ification" plans while conditioning future humanitarian and development support to human rights improvements. Cutting aid would have significant effects on the Rohingya that rely on humanitarian assistance, but it would be a strong statement on the failure of status quo approaches to influence Myanmar.

If pressure should be the primary modus operandi for the international community in Myanmar, the focus in Bangladesh should be on engagement.

As host to some 900,000 Rohingya refugees in overcrowded camps, Bangladesh is in need of tremendous humanitarian support. While funding for the \$951 million Joint Response Plan has increased substantially in the past two months, it is still only 45% funded, with key sectors, such as education and health, funded at less than 30%. Further shortfalls risk reducing the scope of life-saving services, increasing tension between refugees and adversely affected Bangladeshi communities, and signaling to Bangladesh that the international community is not committed to the degree required.

As it becomes clearer that this crisis will not soon be resolved, the international community must continue to engage the Bangladesh government in quiet yet honest discussions on the path ahead, while undertaking more serious efforts to ensure Rohingyas are included in decision-making processes. These conversations will be much more constructive if Bangladesh is confident in sustained political and financial efforts to address both the causes and effects of the Rohingyas' mass displacement.

The status quo is not sustainable — politically, economically, socially and environmentally — for the Bangladesh government, affected Bangladeshi communities, or for the Rohingya. Discreet conversations between international actors, the Bangladesh government and affected communities will help to ensure all stakeholders' needs are met, voices heard and rights respected.

Accompanied by the pursuit of accountability, a mix of pressure on Myanmar and engagement with Bangladesh offers the best opportunity to improve Rohingyas' lives now and into the future.

(Source: Time)

It is time for a new leadership in Saudi Arabia

By Abdulaziz Kilani

Saudi Arabia's reputation has never been this bad. Ever since Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman became the de facto ruler of the Kingdom and consolidated his power, things have gone from bad to worse.

Bin Salman started an unnecessary war in Yemen, which has become the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. He created a blockade on Qatar, which was totally unjust. He detained the prime minister of another country and, although Saudi Arabia denied this, in an interview with BFM TV French President Emmanuel Macron said, "I remind you that a prime minister was held in Saudi Arabia for several weeks." The Crown Prince also detained businessmen and other members of the royal family in the Ritz-Carlton in Riyadh, thereby creating the image of a Kingdom ruled by a sadist. He has arrested rights activists, demonstrating his government's repression. Latterly, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, highlighting a new episode of Bin Salman's viciousness.

Saudi Arabia has produced a number of explanations for Khashoggi's disappearance and killing; all have avoided any hint that the Prince might have had something to do with it. None of the Saudi statements has been acceptable, not least because it is hard to believe that fifteen senior officials could fly to Istanbul in two private jets, go to the Consulate, commit the crime and fly back to Saudi Arabia without the knowledge of the head of the government in Riyadh. It was revealed from Turkish sources that the alleged leader of the hit squad called Bin Salman's office while Khashoggi was in the Consulate. Why would he do that if the Prince was not aware of what was going on?



"Impunity, without accountability, is a terrible sign that we are on our way to living under the law of the jungle," Rami Khouri, the commentator and professor of journalism at the American University of Beirut, points out.

The murder of Khashoggi "amounts to an act of state terrorism," former U.S. State Department official Charles W Dunne told me. "It's a sign that the Saudi decision-makers' repression of political opponents and independent voices has reached a dangerous new level."

Despite after all of this, Washington seems reluctant to condemn the heinous crime. Nev-

ertheless, "The Trump administration has to demand answers," added Dunne, who is now a non-resident fellow at the Arab Centre in Washington DC. "It can no longer be 'business as usual' with an increasingly erratic ally."

According to Yahya Assiri, the founder of AlQST, a UK-based Saudi rights group, the hope in Saudi Arabia is based on projects. "These projects must be freedoms, human

rights and ensuring people's participation both politically and in monitoring the performance of the authorities."

Assiri explained to me that the first step for anyone who wants to save the country is to punish the person behind the killing of Khashoggi. "Then we must see the unconditional release of prisoners of conscience with their freedom guaranteed. Finally, the war in Yemen must be stopped. It has become one of the major tragedies in the world."

Although Bin Salman has made some concessions recently, such as the release of Prince Khaled Bin Talal a few days ago — and we may see more to come — these seem to be designed solely to absorb the increasingly amount of pressure on him. It is now very obvious that the world can no longer turn a blind eye to what he is doing. His actions have damaged Saudi Arabia's global image. If the Kingdom is to be saved, someone else must take over; it is time for a new leadership.

It would be disastrous if the perpetrators of Khashoggi's murder are not punished. "Impunity, without accountability, is a terrible sign that we are on our way to living under the law of the jungle," Rami Khouri pointed out. The commentator and professor of journalism at the American University of Beirut added that the Middle East autocracy has to be held to account for what has been done.

There is no doubt that the murder of Jamal Khashoggi has sent a chilling warning to all dissidents, both inside and outside the Kingdom, about what the current regime can do. However, that shouldn't stop us from urging other governments, including our own here in Britain, to put values and the rule of law above commercial considerations in how we react to Mohammad Bin Salman's excesses.

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

What now for America?

By Ian Buruma

Now that the Democratic Party has won control of the U.S. House of Representatives, it must resist pressure to launch impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump. If the party is to win back the White House in 2020, it should adopt a simple core message for the next two years.

At least it wasn't a disaster. If the Democrats had failed to secure a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, President Donald Trump would have felt almighty, with all the dire consequences that would entail. But the Republicans still control the Senate, and that means that the judiciary, including the Supreme Court, will be pushed further to the right. And the election of Republican governors in major states like Ohio and Florida means that electoral districts can be finessed to boost Trump's reelection chances in 2020.

One of the most common political clichés ahead of these midterm elections was that they were a "battle for America's soul." It is easy to imagine Republicans and Democrats standing for two different versions of the country: one is overwhelmingly white, modestly educated, not very young, strong in rural areas, often male, and proud to own guns; the other is better educated, younger, urban, racially diverse, more female, and keen to control guns. These are caricatures, but they express a very recognizable reality.

Though both sides believe they are patriotic Americans, their idea of patriotism could not be more different. The writer James Baldwin put the case for "progressive" patriotism well: he loved America more than any country in the world, and for that reason insisted on the right to criticize her perpetually. Trumpian patriots would have denounced Baldwin as a traitor.

The big temptation for the Democrats, now that they have won control of the House, is to make the most of what they see as their greatest strengths: racial and gender diversity, and a shared loathing of Trump. This would be a logical position. Trump is indeed dreadful, and the Democrats could legitimately claim that older, rural white men are less representative of America today than the young, the urban, the nonwhite, and newly empowered women.

And yet, to focus the Democratic agenda on Trump and diversity would be a mistake. There will be pressure, especially from younger Democrats, fired up by their success, to impeach the president. But as long as the Senate, which would have to convict him, is in Republican hands, an indict-



There will be pressure, especially from younger Democrats, fired up by their success, to impeach the president.

ment by the House would be practically meaningless. Even if impeached, he would still be president, and Republicans would be inclined to defend him even more fiercely.

It is certainly a good thing to have more women and non-white, non-Christian representatives in the legislature. This provides a refreshing and necessary contrast to the Republican Party, which has remade itself in the image of its leader: angry, white, and often openly racist. But to fight Trump's identity politics with an equally aggressive form of identity politics would make political tribalism worse, and could make it harder for the Democrats to win national elections.

There is always a danger that the Democrats will be divided, with younger radicals pitting themselves against the mostly white establishment. But the Republicans, who seem utterly united behind their leader, have a problem, too. The socially liberal, highly educated Republicans who used to be the backbone of the party have been pushed so far to the margins that they are almost invisible. John McCain was perhaps the last of those Mohicans.

The Democrats should capitalize on that. And the way to do it would be to put less stress on sexual, racial, or gender identity, and more on the economy. This might seem a naive

strategy during an economic boom, when Republicans can boast of record-low unemployment. But even many traditional laissez-faire conservatives should recognize that a yawning divide between rich and poor is not good for business. Henry Ford, who was not a fount of wisdom on many matters, recognized that if you want to sell cars, you have to put enough money into people's pockets so that they can buy them.

This, too, is an issue close to America's conflicted soul. For some, American identity is based on red-blooded capitalist enterprise and rugged individualism, unhindered by excessive government regulation in the pursuit of material happiness. But for others, America stands on an ideal of greater social justice and economic equality — which nowadays should include a commitment to address climate change (a barely-discussed issue in the midterms), given that global warming will harm the poor more than the rich.

There have been boom times for the very wealthy, such as the Gilded Age in the late nineteenth century, when 2% of American households owned more than a third of the country's wealth, or indeed our own time, when the top 1% owns almost half the wealth. And there have been periods of reform, when governments tried to redress the balance. The most famous example is Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s.

It is clearly time for New Deal II. Instead of promising more tax breaks for the richest citizens, a more equitable fiscal policy could pay for necessary bridges and other public goods and services that would improve everyone's life. Affordable health care for all citizens is a mark of a civilized society. The U.S. is still a long way from that goal. The same is true of high-quality public education. It is grotesque that so many people who stand to benefit from such "socialist" policies are still persuaded to vote against them because they are supposedly "un-American."

Concentrating on egalitarianism would appeal to liberals, of course, but it should not alienate moderate voters either, because more equality would be good for the economy. And it might even persuade some angry, poor Trump supporters to recognize that his pseudo-populism is not about helping the left-behind folks in Rust Belt cities and rural hinterlands. It is about giving even more money to the very few. The Democrats' core message for the next two years should be that in a plutocracy, everyone else loses.

(Source: Project Syndicate)

Macron shoulders a heavy burden as Merkel bows out

Emmanuel Macron has returned to work after a few days of rest at the Normandy coast. The French president, it was said, felt exhausted nearly 18 months after taking office. If so, that is a worry — because Europe needs him to carry more weight than before. Germany, France's indispensable partner in the EU, has been absorbed in its own affairs since its two mainstream parties hemorrhaged support in last year's federal elections. They struggled to form a government only to fight among themselves once they did.

Now, with Angela Merkel's decision to stand down as CDU chairman next month and as chancellor at the end of her term in 2021, the country could be stuck in introspection for years to come. There could be a slow but smooth transition of power to a new center-right chancellor in Germany. Or the CDU could make a sharp change of direction, capsizing a heavily listing coalition with the Social Democrats and possibly triggering early elections. Neither scenario suggests a German government willing to expend political

capital on shoring up the EU. That is bad news for Europe given the potential storms brewing: a no-deal Brexit; a debt crisis in Italy; a Eurosceptic onslaught in European parliamentary elections in May; and a global

that Merkel's successor, even a conservative one, is more willing to bind her party and country to reforms that the EU badly needs. It will have pleased the Elysée Palace to hear Friedrich Merz, a conservative contender

All is not lost for the French president's ambitious EU reform plans.

rules-based system being unpicked by the U.S. But all is not lost for the most pro-European French leader in a generation who has an ambitious agenda for revitalizing the EU. First, he can dream that in a final unlikely act to seal her legacy at the December eurozone summit, Merkel commits her government to strengthening monetary union, with a common bank deposit insurance scheme, a eurozone budget and a rescue fund ready to help prevent countries before they get into real trouble.

The flaws in the euro's design need to be fixed before the next crisis hits. Second, he can hope

for the CDU job, complain last week about Berlin's failure to respond to Macron's proposals on eurozone reform. Maybe a more conservative CDU leader on domestic issues will have more room to make compromises on Europe. Third, Macron can persuade. The best way to do this is deepen his domestic reforms. He has made an impressive start on many fronts. But France needs to do more to free up the labour market, scale back the state and ease the tax burden on businesses and households.

Some changes to his governing style — more collegial decision-making, less shooting from

the lip — would help to lighten the burden of office and win back support at home. In Europe, he needs to build a political alliance with other like-minded parties to amplify his message. So far he has been reluctant to pin his colors to the mast.

He can do a better job of convincing fiscal hawks in northern Europe that risk-sharing does not mean letting southern member states off the reform hook. Germany, meanwhile, should recognize that a strong Europe vital to its national interests is impossible without a strong France. Macron needs help to succeed if the alternative is an anti-EU far-left and far-right.

A weekend poll suggested the far-right would push Macron's party into second place in May's European elections. Merkel has spent most of her 13 years as chancellor dealing with weak or unreliable French presidents. Now that France has found an ambitious and modernizing leader, let us hope Germany's paralysis is short-lived.

(Source: FT)

Religion is not major determinant of international actors' behavior: Hunter

1 -> ■ Some scholars such as "Michael Allen Gillespie" in the book "The Theological Origins of Modernity" believe that modernity was not initially against religion, and in later years, as a result of social, cultural and political conditions, it has led to secularism. So Based on this conception, religion is not conflict with modernity, so can it be said that religion is not conflict with the International Relations theory stemming from modernity?

A: The foundation of modernity is based on rational thinking. According to this way of thinking, reason is the source of knowledge and there is no magical explanation for natural phenomena. Religion, by contrast, believes that revelation is the source of knowledge. As such, all religions are at odds with rational thinking. The other foundation of modernity is secularism.

Secularism is not against religion. However, it believes that it should be relegated to the private sphere of life. In public life religious people can express their views, but they cannot demand special privileges as representatives of a higher truth or value.

The foundation of legitimacy in modern societies is the will of the people and not some divine source and those who claim they represent this divine source. Thus a modern society is one that as Max Weber puts it is disenchanted and does not rely on metaphysical explanations for natural phenomenon.

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

A: I do not agree with this view. Exiting theories of international relations do explain the current phenomenon. In particular, the realist theory based on the centrality of power and security is still valid. Most of the post-Soviet era developments have their roots in



I do not agree with this view. Exiting theories of international relations do explain the current phenomenon. In particular, the realist theory based on the centrality of power and security is still valid.

states' quest for regional and international hegemony and other states' efforts to prevent and defeat their ambitions. I don't see how religion can explain these realities unless we accept Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilization and his contention that all civilizations are based on religion.

■ If theorizing Religion in International Relations is possible, can this religious theory in International Relations explain all the

unresolved issues and problems?

A: Religion cannot solve today's problems any more than it was able to solve problems of bygone eras. Some of the most terrible wars in history were caused by religious differences and zealotry. Remember the Crusades, the thirty years wars, the Sunni-Shia conflicts etc. Religion tends to make compromise more difficult because adherents of every religion believe that they alone are the representative

of God's word. If religion was a source of unity, the Christian world would not have been divided into states nor Muslims would have been fighting one another. To some extent conflict is inevitable. The important thing is how to create a condition that actors' would be inhibited from acting in violent ways. This is best achieved through adequate balance of power and the cultivation of a culture of compromise.

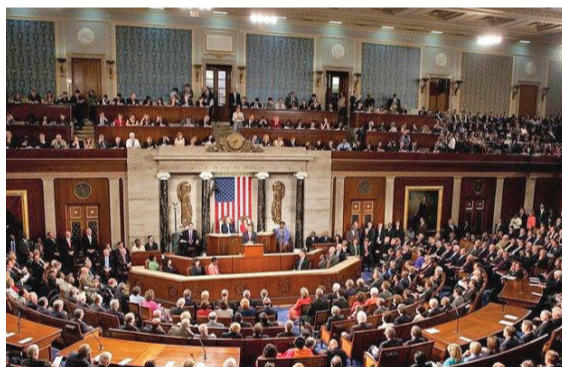
A contemplation on the U.S. midterm elections

1 -> The third point is that the Islamic Republic of Iran hasn't basically counted on the U.S. midterm elections results. Neither the victory nor the failure of one of the two traditional American parties could change the American authorities' policies towards our country. The hostility of the U.S. Democrats and Republicans to our nation, and the vicious and extensive efforts of the two to confront the foundations of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, have been proven to all.

In this equation, there's no difference between Jimmy Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, George W.

Bush, Obama, and Trump. The United States midterm elections were merely a reflection of the anarchy which rules over the American political system.

The deprivation of millions of Americans from voting



in the Congress elections, and the deliberate destruction of voting systems in 12 U.S. states, had well depicted the concept of American democracy!

These events should be analyzed in the context of the unfair American electoral structure.

It's not to be forgotten that in the 2016 presidential election, Trump could enter the White House, although he had three million votes less than his rival, and this happened based on the unfair Electoral College!

In other words, in the United States, the rule of "every citizen has one vote" is replaced by "hidden games" which are played and directed by the American politicians.

This is the fact that challenges the decorated but absurd concept of American democracy.

2018 mid-term elections were referendum on Trumpism: Entessar

By Fateme Mohammadipour

TEHRAN — Nader Entessar, Professor Emeritus of Political Science from university of South Alabama says that "in many ways the 2018 mid-term elections were a referendum on Trumpism."

He adds that "I do not think American foreign policy towards Iran will be impacted by the Democratic victory in the 2018 mid-term elections."

Following is the full text of the interview: ■ Some argued that the congressional election was a referendum for President Trump. What is your opinion?

A: Although President Trump was not on the ballot, he campaigned for many Republican candidates who for both the House and Senate seats. Also, several of the Republican candidates invoked Trump's name and campaigned on supporting Trump's agenda. So, we can say that in many ways the 2018 mid-term elections were a referendum on Trumpism.

■ Republicans can save their chairs in the Senate and Democrats won the House after 7 years. Why Democrats won the House?

A: Elections for the House of Representatives are based on electoral districts in each state. So, unlike the Senate candidates who must gain state-wide support in order to win, the House candidates need only appeal to their own district constituency and not the entire state. In 2010, the Republicans managed to redistrict, or gerrymander, many districts to make it more difficult for a Democrat to win. For a number of years, the Republican strategy succeeded to achieve its goal. However, over time with changing demographics and diversification of population base in many major American cities, the Democrats were able to overcome the Republican gerrymandering in many large cities and win seats in the 2018



mid-term elections. Also, a large number of women, especially women of color, who became House candidates this year, allowed the Democrats to capture the House. There are many divides in American society, and one of the most important ones is the urban-rural divide. The Democrats were able to win the major urban centers.

■ Now Democrats are the majority in the House. Can this issue impact on President Trump's foreign policy especially on Iran?

A: Yes, the Democrats can make it more difficult for President Trump to have a smooth ride. For example, they can challenge Trump's support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen as there are many opponents of U.S. policy among the Democrats. Although there are some House members who oppose Trump's Iran policy, especially Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA, I do not think American foreign policy towards Iran will be impacted by the Democratic victory in the 2018 mid-term elections. The Senate, which is really more important than the House

when it comes to foreign policy, is still controlled by anti-Iran hawks who will work with their House ideological kindred souls to keep Washington's current Iran policy pretty much intact. Unfortunately, anti-Iranianism runs deep among hawks in both the Republican and Democratic parties.

■ According to the result of the recent congressional election, do you think President Trump can win the next presidential election?

A: The results of the 2018 mid-term congressional elections demonstrated that the U.S. society is as divided and as polarized as when Trump came to power. The forces loyal to Trump and the ideology of Trumpism are still united in opposition to their adversaries, and support for Trump among this group, or his base, remains rather strong. Absent a major catastrophe, I believe, Trump has a good chance of getting re-elected in the next presidential election with the current level of support he has among certain sectors of the American electorate.

U.S. and the end of Yemen War, Washington's attempt to save Riyadh's ruling family



1 -> It is quite clear to everyone that MBS initiated the ongoing Yemeni war. Now that all the eyes are on the brutality of the Saudi regime, it is not easy to send weapons to Riyadh, and give them intelligence and logistic support, as well as comprehensive media and political backing, a plan that is to prevent the deterioration of the situation for Riyadh's rulers.

■ Coalition failure in the battle field

Since day one of the Yemeni war, plans and predictions of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have failed. After spending tens of billions of dollars of ammunition and killing casualties and losing their own forces and mercenaries, until now, Saudi-led coalition has only been able to gain access to Aden and other small parts of Yemen and failed to reach important Yemeni cities such as Sana'a, Sa'dah, and especially the strategic port of Hudaydah.

A few months of the coalition's heavy battle to take control of Hudaydah port turned into a long-haul fruitless fight. The port, which accounts for 70% of Yemen's imports, is very strategic, and the coalition's operation to siege the city and cut off its connection with the rest of the Yemeni soil has gone nowhere.

Obviously, the continuation of this war, apart from the overwhelming costs for Riyadh and its regional allies, is not possible, and while there is no progress on the ground for the Saudis, Americans have the option to end the war to free their Saudi friends and relieve them from the financial burden and global pressure of the Yemen crisis.

■ Take away

It seems that Saudi Arabia has not been able to reach the goals that Washington has drawn for it in the Yemeni war. The Saudis mistakenly believe that the Yemeni crisis has a military solution, while such an idea will not only solve the problem, but adds to it each day and, of course, to the suffering of the oppressed people of Yemen.

The White House decision to put an end to the war, if true, is not about human rights issues in Yemen, but to save al-Saud from the marsh that has been created with the resistance of the Yemenis. Americans now think of peace and reconciliation in Yemen, now that they have failed to bring the Yemeni people to their knees.

Now that Ansarullah still has the upper hand in the Yemen war, they must prepare themselves with the same stance to end the war and resolve the rights of the Yemeni people.

Second Announcement

Call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One- Stages tender

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National Iranian Drilling Company

Subject of Tender: PARTS FOR "THCT" SILICON CONTROL RECTIFIER SYSTEM (S.C.R.&MCC)

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,180,075	INDENT NO: 91-22-9746004 Tender No.: FP/11-97/036	6,664,916.237

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	R The evaluation will be made subject to submission of needed certificates in meeting for opening the received tenderer's proposals.
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Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	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 Incomes 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: (97/10/16) 9100 35
	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

Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	333,250,000 RLS , 6,886 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.
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Detecting schizophrenia before symptoms arise

Early diagnosis is key to the effective treatment of schizophrenia. In a recent study, scientists probed neural activity in the hunt for rogue connectivity. Their findings may help clinicians catch schizophrenia before the first psychotic episode.

Catching schizophrenia before symptoms appear is challenging. A new brain scan study may have an answer.

Schizophrenia is a mental health disorder characterized by disrupted perceptions and thoughts. Symptoms can include delusions, hallucinations, and impaired cognitive abilities.

In the United States, schizophrenia affects an estimated 0.25–0.64 percent of the population. Often appearing in an individual's late teens or early 20s, schizophrenia is highly disruptive, challenging to treat, and long-lasting.

Treatment is much more effective if doctors can diagnose the condition early. Currently, however, specialists cannot diagnose schizophrenia until an individual has had their first psychotic episode. At this point, an individual's behavior can change dramatically, and they "may lose touch with some aspects of reality."

Recently, a team of researchers decided to look in detail at patterns in neural activity. They hoped to identify a signature in how parts of the brain communicate that might predict onset.

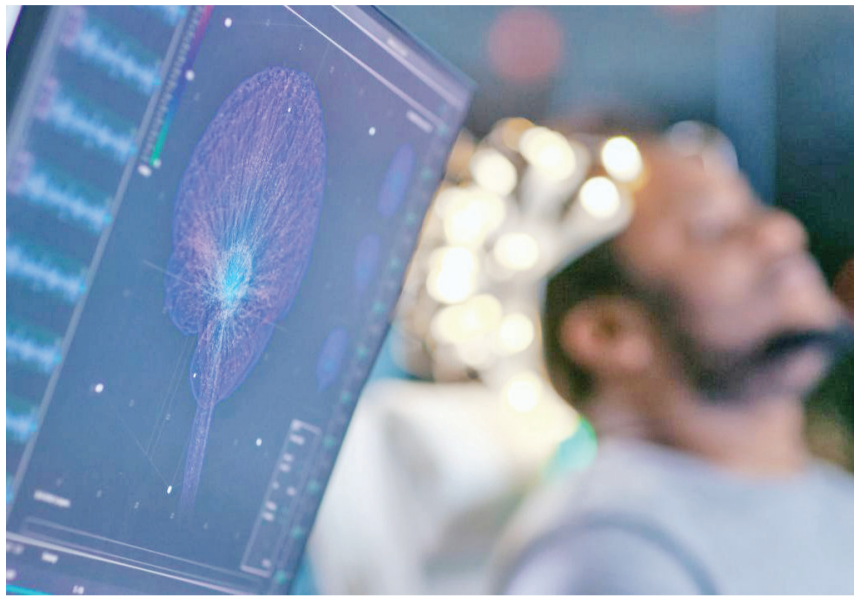
Identifying subtle and unexpected patterns is challenging, and the task took the combined skills of researchers from a number of institutions.

The results of the study was published this week in the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*.

■ The first signs

Before someone experiences their first psychotic episode, there can be subtle changes in the way they think. For instance, they might switch topics abruptly when talking, or answer questions with seemingly irrelevant answers.

However, only about 1 in 4 people who display these symptoms go on to develop schizophrenia. The researchers wanted to



Schizophrenia is a mental health disorder characterized by disrupted perceptions and thoughts. Symptoms can include delusions, hallucinations, and impaired cognitive abilities. Often appearing in an individual's late teens or early 20s, schizophrenia is highly disruptive, challenging to treat, and long-lasting.

find a way to predict who will go on to develop the condition with more accuracy.

Because the Shanghai Mental Health Center receives such a high volume of patients, it made the perfect base for the study. In total, the researchers identified 158 people aged 13–34 years old who displayed the early symptoms that often predict schizophrenia. They also analyzed 93 control participants who did not display this telltale behavior.

Using MRI scans, the study focused on resting state networks; these are interactions between regions of the brain that occur while

a person is at rest and not engaged in any cognitive tasks.

One of the principal investigators, Susan Whitfield-Gabrieli, explains, "We were interested in looking at the intrinsic functional architecture of the brain to see if we could detect early aberrant brain connectivity or networks in individuals who are in the clinically high-risk phase of the disorder."

Each participant had an MRI scan and then received a follow-up scan 1 year later. At the 1-year point, 23 of the 158 high-risk individuals had received a schizophrenia diagnosis.

By examining the 23 and comparing them with the other participants, the research team was able to identify patterns that only occurred in these individuals.

■ The superior temporal gyrus

One brain region that caught the investigators' eye was the superior temporal gyrus. This region of the brain contains the primary auditory cortex and is important for processing sounds. Usually, it connects to areas involved in motor control and sensory perception.

In the participants who had psychotic episodes, the superior temporal gyrus connected differently, having more intimate relationships with limbic regions, which are important for emotion processing.

The study's authors believe this might help explain why auditory hallucinations — hearing voices, for instance — are common in people with schizophrenia.

Lead author Guusje Collin says, "You can consider this pattern to be a risk factor. If we use these types of brain measurements, then maybe we can predict a little bit better who will end up developing psychosis, and that may also help tailor interventions."

The scientists hope that, if we can detect these subtle changes in communication between brain regions at an earlier age, it might help us predict who is most at risk. And, the more we understand the nature of these changes, the more hope we have of reversing them.

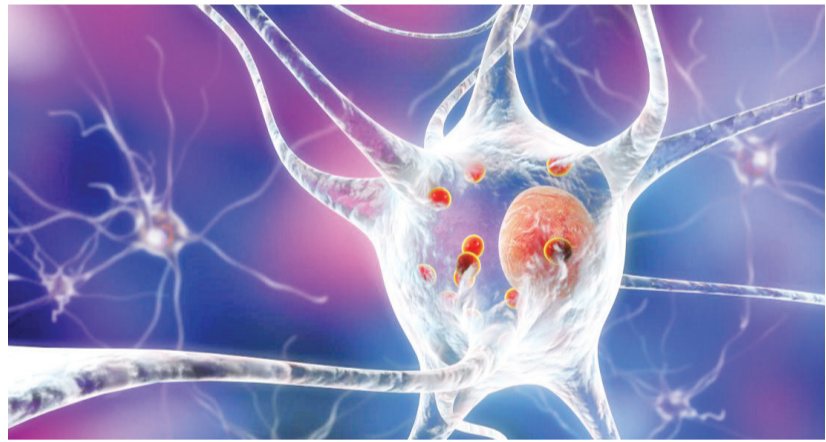
"That really gets at the heart of how we can translate this clinically, because we can get in earlier and earlier to identify aberrant networks in the hopes that we can do earlier interventions, and possibly even prevent psychiatric disorders."

The researchers are already carrying out similar studies, looking at a younger set of individuals. They are also carrying out further analyses on the brain scans they used in the current experiment, searching for additional differences in white matter connections.

Although this work is in its infancy, the benefits could be significant for those at high risk of developing schizophrenia.

(Source: *Medical News Today*)

Scientists confirm the role of 'molecular switch' in Parkinson's disease



Scientists have confirmed that a protective cell mechanism can be disrupted in the brains of people with Parkinson's disease. The mechanism protects cells against damage caused by faulty mitochondria, the small power units that produce cells' energy.

Researchers confirm that in Parkinson's, a faulty molecular switch triggers the degeneration of neurons.

In the past week, the journal *Open Biology* published a report on the recent findings.

Parkinson's is a brain disease that worsens over time. As it progresses, it makes talking and walking more difficult, and it can also affect behavior, sleep, thinking, and memory. Other symptoms include fatigue and depression.

The disease arises from the loss of dopamine-producing cells in the brain.

Dopamine is a brain chemical that, among other things, helps control motor function. This is why movement becomes increasingly disrupted as more dopamine cells stop working or die.

Symptoms rarely appear in people younger than 60. However, in 5–10 percent of individuals with Parkinson's, symptoms occur before the age of 50.

Most forms of early-onset Parkinson's disease tend to be inherited, and some are associated with gene mutations.

In the United States, about 60,000 people learn that they have Parkinson's every year, and almost 1 million people in the country will be living with the disease by 2020.

■ PINK1-Parkin switch operates in the brain

There is no cure for Parkinson's disease, and scientists do not know exactly what causes the loss or impairment of dopamine cells.

The disease likely results from a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

Research has already shown that when an enzyme called PINK1 detects defective mitochondria in cells, it switches on an-

other enzyme, called Parkin. This results in the disposal of faulty mitochondria, and it protects the cells.

Some people with early-onset Parkinson's disease have mutations in the genes that code for PINK1 and Parkin.

Before the recent study, it was unclear whether the PINK1-Parkin switch occurred in the brain. Also, scientists were unsure whether the switch was disrupted in people with Parkinson's disease.

Using genetically modified mice, researchers at the University of Dundee in the United Kingdom, together with colleagues at other European centers, confirmed that the PINK1-Parkin switch operates in the brain.

The researchers then identified two people who had developed an early-onset form of Parkinson's disease. By testing their cells, the team confirmed that these individuals had a defective version of the PINK1-Parkin switch.

The two participants also had the same rare genetic mutation that produces the faulty molecular switch.

■ Findings support drug-targeting of enzymes

Study co-author Miratul Muqit, a professor in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Dundee, is grateful to the collaborators who "helped identify these rare patients who have helped us finally answer this question."

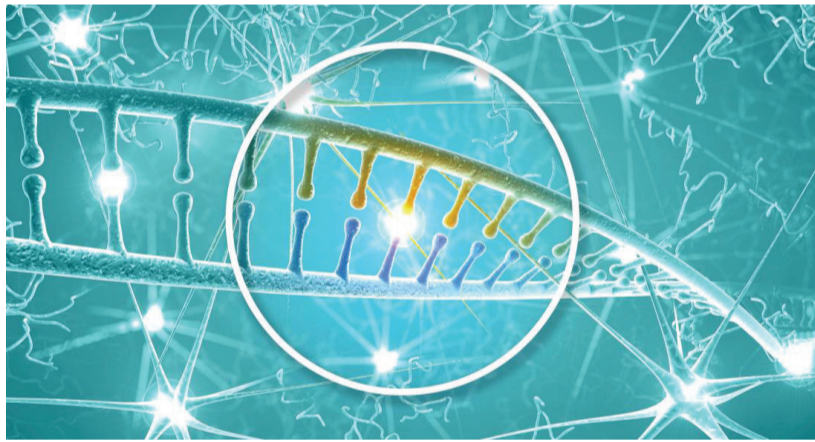
Researchers at the University of Helsinki in Finland tracked down one individual, and the other was identified in a study organized by the Michael J. Fox Foundation in the U.S.

"The probability of finding rare patients with the critical mutation to test in the lab was as low as 1 in 3 billion," Prof. Muqit explains.

The mutation occurs in a precise location of the gene that codes for Parkin, and it prevents PINK1 from being able to switch Parkin on.

(Source: *newstrolley.com*)

New genetic culprit found for early progressive hair loss



Many people face hair loss, but only a few experience it from as early as childhood. This occurs in a rare hereditary condition called hypotrichosis simplex. Now, finally, researchers have been able to identify the gene responsible for this form of hair loss.

One gene may drive the mechanisms behind a rare form of hair loss.

Individuals with hypotrichosis simplex have a normal amount of hair after birth, but they start losing it in early childhood. This loss continues to progress with age.

Although researchers know that this is a hereditary condition, so far, they have only identified few of the potential genetic culprits.

One of these is a mutation in the AP-CDD1 gene, which interferes with a signaling pathway that influences cell function and regeneration.

Now, researchers from the University Hospital of Bonn in Germany, in collaboration with colleagues from other institutions in Germany and Switzerland, have closed in on another gene that plays a crucial role in this rare type of hair loss.

Their study, the findings of which appear in *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, indicate that mutations in the LSS gene drive the mechanisms that characterize hypotrichosis simplex.

■ A mutated gene plays a key role

The scientists analyzed the genetic information of people from three families that were not related in any way. In total, eight relatives experienced hair loss symptoms.

Looking at their genetic makeup, the investigators found that they all had mutations in the LSS gene, which normally encodes a specialized enzyme.

"This gene encodes lanosterol synthase — LSS for short," notes study author Prof. Regina C. Betz. "The enzyme," she adds "plays a key role in cholesterol metabolism."

However, this has nothing to do with blood cholesterol levels. Instead, LSS influences a metabolic pathway that impacts the health of hair follicles.

(Source: *sgtalk.org*)

Could blue light reduce blood pressure?

Exposure to blue light may help combat hypertension, according to a recent study. If the findings are replicated in a larger sample, blue light could provide a cost-effective and side effect-free intervention.

Blue light may be the future of blood pressure treatment.

The results of an investigation into the effects of blue light on high blood pressure were recently published in the *European Journal of Preventative Cardiology*.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is widespread in the United States and many other Western countries.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high blood pressure is a primary or contributing cause of almost 1,000 deaths every day in the U.S.

Hypertension is also a risk factor for more serious conditions, such as heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease. For these reasons, managing blood pressure effectively is a high priority.

Currently, doctors usually prescribe medications such as angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors and calcium channel blockers to help manage hypertension. Although these can be effective, side effects are common and include a persistent dry cough and dizziness.

Because high blood pressure is so prevalent, a great deal of research has investigated its causes. The importance of lifestyle, including diet and exercise, cannot be overstated, while other risk factors play smaller roles.

For instance, studies have demonstrated that exposure to sunlight influences hypertension. Blood pressure is, on average, lower during the summer months, and some research has linked high levels of long-term sunlight exposure to a reduced risk of dying from cardiovascular disease.

■ The bittersweet symphony of sunlight

Exposure to excessive levels of sunlight damages the skin, causing premature aging. Research has also established that ultraviolet (UV) light is a carcinogen — excessive exposure increases the risk of developing skin cancer.

On the other hand, as sunlight hits our skin, it drives a chemical reaction that produces vitamin D, which plays a range of essential roles in the body.

UV light also affects nitric oxide (NO) levels, and NO is an important signaling molecule in humans and virtually all other organisms. The inner lining of blood vessels — called the endothelium — releases NO. This causes the smooth muscles around the blood vessels to relax, thereby lowering blood pressure.

When sunlight hits the skin, compounds such as nitrites break down to produce NO, which then diffuses into the deeper tissues and, finally, enters the blood vessels.

The interaction between sunlight, NO, and the smooth muscles of the blood vessels may explain why sunlight has a hypertension-minimizing effect.

■ A bolt from the blue

Finding a way to harness the benefits of UV light while removing the negative effects would be a significant discovery. Enter: blue light.

Recently, researchers from the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom and Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany joined forces to investigate whether blue light without UV wavelengths has the potential to ease hypertension.

Earlier studies demonstrated that visible blue light, in a range of 420–453 nanometers in wavelength, can induce the production of NO without damaging DNA.

The latest study goes one step further. For the first time, researchers assessed whether blue light exposure could produce enough NO to significantly reduce high blood pressure.

Their proof-of-concept study involved 14 male participants aged 30–60, none of whom had preexisting cardiovascular issues, hypertension, or diabetes.

■ Blue light benefits

Each participant visited the testing facility twice, with 1 week between sessions. During one visit, they were exposed to 30 minutes of whole-body blue light. At the other, they received 30 minutes of "control light."

Most importantly, the scientists looked for changes in blood pressure. They also assessed other parameters, including heart rate, blood flow in the forearm, circulating levels of NO, and pulse wave velocity, a measure of how stiff the arteries are.

Members of the team took measurements before, during, and after the light exposure. They found that 30 minutes of whole-body blue light significantly lowered systolic blood pressure — the pressure in blood vessels as the heart contracts — by 8 millimeters of mercury.

According to the authors, this reduction was equivalent to, or more significant than, "the blood pressure-lowering effect sizes observed by typical blood pressure-lowering medications."

The other parameters also improved significantly under blue light, including pulse wave velocity. As expected, serum NO levels also increased. The authors conclude:

"Our present study demonstrates for the first time that whole-body blue light exposure at doses that are comparable to daily sunlight exposure decreases systolic blood pressure [...] in young, healthy male volunteers."

Of course, this pilot study included a very small number of participants, and it will need to be replicated on a much larger scale.

If the findings are duplicated, however, this could be a game-changer for the management of hypertension in some populations. As one of the study's authors, Christian Heiss, a doctor and a professor at the University of Surrey, explains, "Exposure to blue light provides an innovative method to precisely control blood pressure without drugs. Wearable blue light sources could make continued exposure to light possible and practical."

Although blue light therapy could never replace changes in diet and lifestyle, it may provide additional benefits for certain people. As Dr. Heiss notes, "This would be particularly helpful to those whose blood pressure is not easily controlled by medication, such as older people."

(Source: *Medical News Today*)

Iranian students to compete at Brain Bee 2019

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — Iranian students will compete at the Brain Bee 2019, a national competition focusing on the neuroscience knowledge of the participants, on December 13.

Organized by the Iran's National Brain Mapping Laboratory and Iranian Neuroscience Society, the event is supported by the Cognitive Sciences & Technologies Council for student between 13 and 18.

Every year, regional Brain Bees send one representative to compete at the International Brain Bee world championship.

Winners at the international level compete against representatives from other nations. The 2018 winner of the competition at the international level was Piotr Oleksy from Poland.

The international competition has different sections, which are brain anatomy, diagnosis test, live Q&A, multiple-choice and short-answer quiz, histology and MRI scan of brain or spinal cord identification.

The 2019 Brain Bee World Championship will be held in Daegu, South Korea in conjunction with the 10th International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) World Congress of Neuroscience in September 2019.

The International Brain Bee was founded in 1998 by Norbert Myslinski with a mission to build better brains to fight brain disorders. Since its inception, the International Brain Bee has inspired thousands of students to study and pursue careers in neuroscience.

France to hunt for tax cheats on social media

France's tax administrators will start searching through social media accounts in early 2019, a pilot project in the fight against tax avoidance, Budget Minister Gerald Darmanin told weekly business TV show Capital.

The idea is to identify potential frauds by analyzing publicly-available data on individuals' social media accounts, Darmanin said, according to excerpts of the show to be broadcast on Sunday. "The fiscal administration) will be able to see that if you have numerous pictures of yourself with a luxury car while you don't have the means to own one, then maybe your cousin or your girlfriend has lent it to you... or maybe not," Darmanin said.

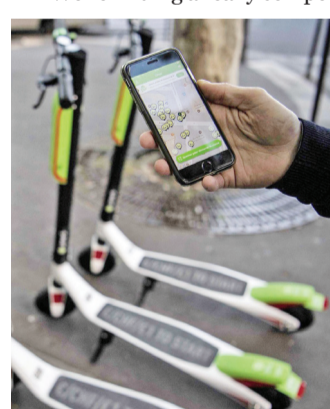
The measure is part of a law France enacted last month designed to strengthen the authorities' capacities to fight tax fraud and permit a wider use of online data to bolster fiscal controls. (Source: Reuters)

Car companies rush to embrace scooters and bikes

Car companies are betting on bikes and scooters to protect themselves from disruption.

Ford announced Thursday it's acquiring the scooter-sharing startup Spin, becoming the latest automaker to invest in electric scooters and bikes.

Ford plans an aggressive expansion into over 100 cities in the next 18 months, according to Sunny Madra, vice president of Ford X, its group that develops new mobility services. Ford sees scooters as an affordable, accessible way to move around cities without polluting, congesting traffic or struggling to park. "We're finding a really compelling need. The struggle is real as urban populations grow," Marci Kleborn, president of mobility at Ford, told CNN Business.



San Francisco-based Spin launched a dockless bike-sharing service just over a year ago, and pivoted to a scooter sharing business, which proved more profitable. It now operates in 13 cities and college campuses, and launches in Detroit Thursday. But it hasn't kept pace with rivals Bird and Lime, which have rapidly expanded, raised hundreds of millions of dollars and sometimes rankled cities with aggressive tactics.

Spin CEO Derrick Ko said joining Ford will allow it to play the long game, rather than rushing to expand to secure another funding round.

For Ford, the acquisition may protect it from a wave of new mobility options that threaten its core business of cars and trucks. It's not the only automaker taking notice.

Earlier this week, GM said it will sell electric bikes next year. Daimler will launch a scooter-sharing pilot in a Southern European city this year, and expand into Germany next year, according to a spokesman. And last week Tesla CEO Elon Musk said his company might make an electric bike.

"Automakers are seeing that rideshare, bikeshare and scooters are taking the short trips, from zero to five miles," Horace Dediu, a tech analyst who hosts a popular mobility conference, told CNN Business. "It's important for them to get ahead of this game."

Bird and Lime have said they've completed 10 million rides each in the first year of operation, growing far faster than Uber and Lyft did.

Now car companies, scooter startups and analysts are trying to figure out how big the market is for micromobility, a catch-all term for lightweight, electric transportation options like bikes and scooters. Nearly half of all vehicle trips in the United States are under three miles, according to the US government's National Household Travel survey. Short trips are ideal for micromobility, according to experts, whether it's an electric bike, scooter, or a new option that hasn't arrived yet.

(Source: cnm.com)

First Iranian accelerator for traditional medicine to be launched

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — The first Iranian accelerator in the field of traditional medicine will be introduced in the 4th festival of medicinal herbs, natural products and traditional medicine, which runs from November 12 to 15 at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

"A total of 110 startups will be participating in the exhibition," said Esmaeil Qaderifar, an official with the vice presidency for science and technology, during a press conference on Saturday, Mehr reported.

The vice presidency plans to initiate accelerators in all fields of technology in the near future, he added.

The festival's secretary Mohammad Hassan Asareh explained about different sections of the event and the participants.

About 170 knowledge-based companies and 550 innovative firms will be attending the event, he explained.

A total of 551 companies from the private sector are active in the field of herbal medicine, he announced.

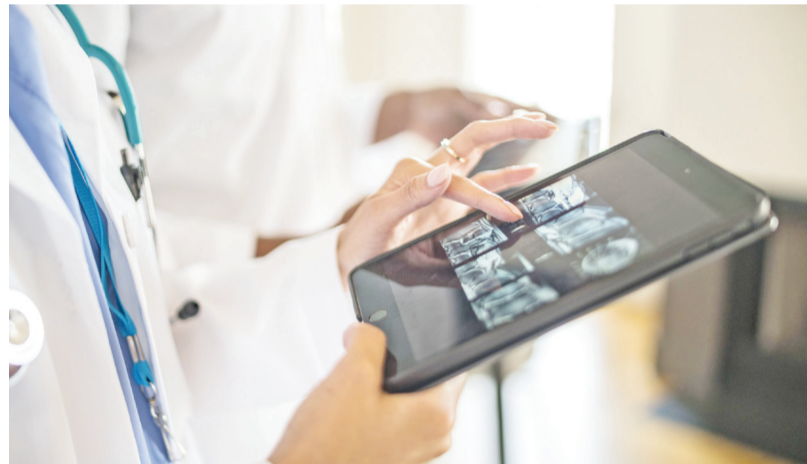
Asareh said that over five thousand products are on the show during the event.

The 170 innovative plans and idea proposed by student compete during the festival, he said.

The festival aims at introducing the latest scientific and industrial achievements in the technological products of medicinal plants in order to shift from an oil-based economy, and remove the barriers and challenges the development of the medicinal plant industry is facing.



National health tech market introducing new products



TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — Iranian health incubator centers are introducing 100 new products at the 4th health national tech market, which is being held on November 11 and 12 at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, the event's secretary announced, IRNA reported.

Mohammad Reza Monazem said that the event hosts 16 incubator centers from 16 provinces.

Three different research panels are also held on the sidelines of the tech market, he said.

The third-generation university, which connects academic centers with industry and entrepreneurship, is on the limelight in this edition, he explained.

The event aims to boost the knowledge-based economy in the field of health and to pave the way for formation of permanent health tech market in near future.

It also lays the ground for synergy in the field of health and medical sciences and encourages the health activists to provide their needs from national market.

Iran to attend Science Forum South Africa



A view from the Science Forum South Africa 2017

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — A delegation of Iranian entrepreneurs and businessmen will attend the Science Forum South Africa (SFSA), which will be held from December 12 to 14 in Pretoria.

Headed by the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari, a group of knowledge-based company owners will hold B2B meetings with their counterparts during the event.

SFSA2018 positions itself between an academic and research conference, where research papers are presented, and a sci-

ence engagement meeting, where science is made popular, often with a focus on the youth.

The event is a celebration of science, technology, and innovation where we ignite conversations about science on the middle ground between academics, policy, and popular science engagement.

In early October, Sattari headed a delegation of officials and knowledge-based companies' directors to Kenya and Uganda in order to boost the market of Iranian knowledge-based companies in eastern Africa.

Making technology easier for older people to use

Intimidated by digital technology? So was Marian Goldberg, 70, until she went to a Senior Planet Exploration Center in Manhattan, which teaches older adults how to become more comfortable being online.

Now, she has learned to use Pinterest, send messages on Facebook and embed emoji in her emails. Goldberg, who has a part-time beaded jewelry business, said she had mastered enough tools to reframe herself as a digital entrepreneur.

"Senior Planet gave me courage," said Ms. Goldberg, a retired social worker.

Across the country, older adults who grew up in a pre-digital age are finding more help to navigate the wired world. Senior centers, retirement communities and advocacy groups like AARP are offering more free courses for older adults. And simpler devices and apps, which are better designed for aging hands and eyes, are trickling into the marketplace.

Many older people already use laptops and tablet computers, studies show, but use of newer mobile gadgets like smartphones is lagging among the 60 and older cohort. In part that is because mobile devices typically have smaller screens and complex menus that may be harder to navigate.

"The digital divide is closing but still relevant," said Terry Bradwell, chief enterprise strategy and information officer at AARP. "As long as tech changes, there will always be a divide of some sort."

But even for those who only partly close the gap, rewards await. Learning new technology skills helps lessen isolation, gerontologists say, keeps the brain active with games like Lumosity and allows older people to monitor their own health more closely. A robust digital toolbox can even jump-start new careers, as in Ms. Goldberg's case.

Big cities like San Francisco and New York offer free classes. The Brooklyn nonprofit group Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), which runs Senior Planet, has defined its mission as helping older adults harness technology. The Bay Area initiative SF Connected also provides free computer training.

Digital groups provide safety, too. "When people learn alone, they're more apt to be victimized," said Tom Kamber, executive director of OATS. "And they're often targeted for financial fraud. So they need intensive support."

AARP offers workshops, videos and even online safety tips through its TEK Academy, which stands for Technology, Education and Knowledge. But now the advocacy group wants to go further. It has teamed up with J.P. Morgan Asset Management to start a \$40 million Innovation Fund to spur the invention of new, senior-friendly digital tools



Marian Goldberg at the Senior Planet Exploration Center in Manhattan, where she learned to overcome her fear of digital technology. (Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times)

for aging in place, with other health care aids.

"The tide is starting to turn," Mr. Bradwell said.

Tablet computers, which have bigger screens and are often easier to use than smartphones or laptops, are becoming popular devices for people over 75.

That has prompted the creation of the grandPad, a digital tablet with its own private, curated system. With this device, older people tap a photo to make a video call or tap a button to send a voice email. Their relatives download the app to communicate with them.

Scott Lien, grandPad's chief executive, created the tablet after hearing loss made it difficult for his mother to talk on a standard phone. Navigating Skype was equally frustrating for her, he said.

"This problem was nagging me," Mr. Lien said. "It needed to be solved." Remembering passwords and installing updates can be equally daunting for older people, so grandPad was designed without them, he said.

Bernadine Winter's daughter introduced her to a grandPad. Now Ms. Winter, 85, has weekly video calls with her children and grandchildren, posts photos and listens to country music. She also plays her favorite games, solitaire and blackjack, on the grandPad.

Ms. Winter, who lives in Greenwald, Minn., has an iPhone. But after forgetting her passwords, she could not use most of its features. "Now I just use it for texting and making calls," she said.

Many apps were not designed with older adults in mind, either. So they can be hard to read or even download.

By contrast, Pillboxie uses color coding and simple menus to help older people remember to take their medications. EyeReader turns a smartphone into a magnifying glass. And the Silver Surf app was designed for people over 50 to read small print with zoom control.

Bradwell likes the Tile app, which is a tracking device for finding lost keys, wallets and other easily misplaced items. "There are more apps for geo-location," he said.

Tomas Posker, the chief executive of Oscar Senior, is also on a mission to offer an age-friendly app. Mr. Posker watched his grandmother struggle to use Skype for video conversations.

"She had difficulty learning it, and so she kept calling me," he said. "Understanding a computer environment is especially hard for the elderly."

The Oscar Senior app turns a tablet into a remote-controlled device. Features are more limited, but users can get medication reminders and have video chats with family members who download their own version of the app.

The key for any device is keeping older adults connected.

The Jitterbug Touch, by GreatCall, is a simple smartphone with a brightly colored screen that makes it easy to make calls, send text messages or email, or get emergency help.

"Being disconnected leads to isolation and depression," said Colin Milner, the chief executive of the International Council on Active Aging. "So there's a significant incentive to getting people connected." He cited a World Health Organization study that argued that by 2020, the second-leading cause of death globally would be depression, behind heart disease.

Better digital skills can even improve dating choices. Once older adults are connected to children and grandchildren, the next step is reconnecting to old friends, said Hal Spielman, 88, co-author with Marc Silbert of "Suddenly Solo," a lifestyle guide for widowed or divorced men.

"The electronic media is a wonderful way to connect," said Mr. Spielman, a widower who interviewed more than 1,600 people to find out how they coped with being single. "You can try out senior dating sites, reconnect with people you knew in the past or join a meetup. It opens up a whole new social world."

Ms. Goldberg is busy using her new digital skills to campaign for Senator Bernie Sanders using an electronic call system.

"I was terrified of my smartphone," Ms. Goldberg said. "Now I have an intimate relationship with it."

(Source: nytimes.com)

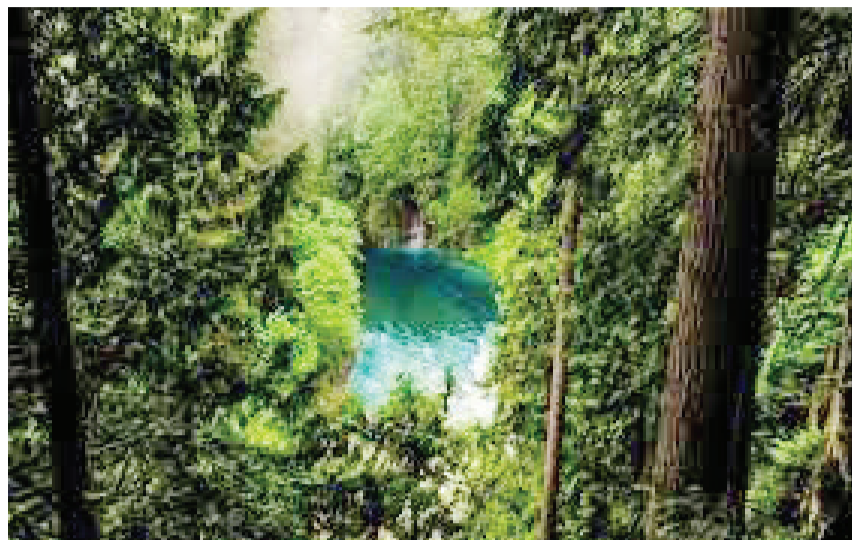
New research suggests Amazon forests failing to keep up with climate change

New research has assessed the impact of global warming on thousands of tree species across the Amazon to discover the winners and losers from 30 years of climate change. The analysis found the effects of climate change are altering the rainforest's composition of tree species but not quickly enough to keep up with the changing environment.

A team of more than 100 scientists has assessed the impact of global warming on thousands of tree species across the Amazon to discover the winners and losers from 30 years of climate change. Their analysis found the effects of climate change are altering the rainforest's composition of tree species but not quickly enough to keep up with the changing environment.

The team, led by University of Leeds in collaboration with more than 30 institutions around the world, used long-term records from more than a hundred plots as part of the Amazon Forest Inventory Network (RAINFOR) to track the lives of individual trees across the Amazon region. Their results found that since the 1980s, the effects of global environmental change -- stronger droughts, increased temperatures and higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere -- has slowly impacted specific tree species' growth and mortality.

Moisture-loving tree
In particular, the study found the most moisture-loving tree species are dying more frequently than other species and those suited to drier climates were unable to replace them.



Lead author Dr. Adriane Esquivel Muelbert, from the School of Geography at Leeds, said: "The 'ecosystem's response is lagging behind the rate of climate change. The data showed us that the droughts that hit the Amazon basin in the last decades had serious

consequences for the make-up of the forest, with higher mortality in tree species most vulnerable to droughts and not enough compensatory growth in species better equipped to survive drier conditions."

The team also found that bigger trees

The research says the effects of global environmental change -- stronger droughts, have increased temperatures and higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

-- predominantly canopy species in the upper levels of the forests -- are outcompeting smaller plants. The team's observations confirm the belief that canopy species would be climate change "winners" as they benefit from increased carbon dioxide, which can allow them to grow more quickly. This further suggests that higher carbon dioxide concentrations also have a direct impact on rainforest composition and forest dynamics -- the way forests grow, die and change.

Pioneer trees

In addition, the study shows that pioneer trees -- trees that quickly spring up and grow in gaps left behind when trees die -- are benefiting from the acceleration of forest dynamics.

Study co-author Oliver Phillips, Professor of Tropical Ecology at Leeds and founder of the RAINFOR network said: "The increase in some pioneer trees, such as the extremely fast growing Cecropia, is consistent with the observed changes in forest dynamics, which may also ultimately be driven by increased carbon dioxide levels."

Co-author Dr. Kyle Dexter, from the University of Edinburgh, said: "The 'impact of climate change on forest communities has important consequences for rain forest biodiversity. The species most vulnerable to droughts are doubly at risk, as they are typically the ones restricted to fewer locations in the heart of the Amazon, which make them more likely to be extinct if this process continues." (Source: sciencedaily.com)

Chimps have different cultural norms about friendliness, too, team finds

Human cultures have widely varying norms when it comes to friendliness and politeness. Make accidental eye contact with a Londoner on public transport and suffer mutual horror, but go to South Africa and find yourself routinely embraced by complete strangers.

For researchers studying human behavior, there's a strong push to study a wider variety of different populations around the world in an effort to expand focus beyond rich westerners. But when it comes to animal behavior, differences between populations have come under less scrutiny.

A research has explored differences in social behavior between four different populations of chimpanzees, finding that the groups had very

different norms when it came to hanging out together and grooming one another. They point out that this means studying one population of chimps might not always be enough for accurate claims about the species as a whole.

The Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage Trust in Zambia is an ideal place to investigate differences between chimpanzee groups. It's home to 120 chimpanzees, some of whom were wild-born but needed to be rescued and some of whom were born in the orphanage. The sanctuary has distinct populations separated from each other but all living in the same ecological environment.

That's important, because when it comes to studying population differences between chimps, the environment could play an important role. If

two groups of chimps have different methods for cracking nuts, is that the result of them passing down different traditions to their children or just a result of the nuts and tools available in their kind of forest?

Different chimp individuals

While some cultural traditions -- like nut-cracking -- have been established in chimps, primatologist Edwin J. C. van Leeuwen and his colleagues wanted to see if there were broader cultural differences in social behavior. So they tracked 89 different chimp individuals across four populations, gathering data over a period of two years.

There could be other explanations, too, of course. One of the big ones is demographics, and

they found that this did explain some of the differences they found: in the bigger populations, individuals had a lower likelihood of getting to know each other and groom each other -- much like people knowing more of their neighbors in a small town than in a big city.

But they also found differences that couldn't be explained by population size. "Some populations proved more gregarious than others," write van Leeuwen and his colleagues, both "in terms of the size of their typical congregations throughout the day and their proclivities to associate and positively interact with others." In the friendlier chimp cultures, social network analyses showed higher levels of social cohesion between individuals.

(Source: arstechnica.com)

Environmentally-inspired 'niche' features impact species evolution



Researchers from Tokyo Metropolitan University have shown that the environment-driven evolution of a unique ovipositor in the female fruit fly *Drosophila suzukii* may have caused coevolution of the male genitalia; new features were found to cause mechanical incompatibility during reproduction with similar species, impeding crossbreeding and isolating the species. The dual role of the female genitalia was found to trigger coevolution and speciation, a generic pathway which may apply to many other organisms.

The *Drosophila suzukii* fruit fly is a fruit-damaging pest. The thin, saw-like serrated ovipositor, the egg-laying organ of the female, allows it to penetrate the hard skin of ripening fruit, unlike most other species of fruit fly which prefer softer, rotting fruit. They are thus a serious problem in invaded areas, now including Europe and America where they have recently been introduced. But a team of researchers from Tokyo Metropolitan University led by Assoc.

Professor Aya Takahashi saw a unique opportunity to study how such ecologically-driven evolutionary traits might affect the coevolution of male and female genitalia. Such a study would help us understand how the specific functions of reproductive organs might influence how different species of organisms develop.

The team found that the unique ovipositor of *D. suzukii* had benefits for offspring, but required significant changes in the male genitalia to accommodate the obstacle during copulation. By making the cuticle transparent, the team were able to directly confirm that changes to the ovipositor had caused drastic changes in the position in which the flies copulated. This included structural changes in the male genitalia to firmly latch onto the end of the ovipositor without relying on parameres, spikes which help the male fly to latch on during sex. They confirmed that surgical changes to prevent the proper contact of the parameres to female genitalia in sibling species led to a significant decline in reproductive success, whereas *D. suzukii* were less affected.

More prone to reproduce

However, this did not somehow make them more prone to reproduce. In fact, the new morphology adopted by the male genitalia of *D. suzukii* made them incompatible with the shorter ovipositors of other fruit flies. This made it more difficult for crossbreeding to occur, effectively isolating *D. suzukii* and setting them on a different evolutionary track.

It is clear that evolution of the ovipositor was driven by a need to give offspring a better chance of survival in an open niche.

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

DNA tests reveal discovery of rare triple-hybrid bird: study



Scientists found that a rare type of bird is actually a hybrid of not two but three species. It was first discovered by a dedicated bird watcher.

It was in May 2018 that dedicated bird-watcher Lowell Burket noticed the one-of-a-kind bird in his family's property in Pennsylvania. He took photos and videos of the birds he saw, but then he noticed something rather odd about a male bird he took a video of: the bird was singing like a Chestnut-sided warbler but had the physical characteristics of both the Golden-winged warbler and the Blue-winged warbler.

He saw the bird several times and got in touch with Cornell Lab's Fuller Evolutionary Biology Lab. Someone came down within a week, and they collected blood samples and measurements of the bird for testing. In just a few days, Burket's hypothesis was confirmed.

In a study published in the journal *Biology Letters*, researchers describe the unique bird that Burket saw in his property. DNA testing revealed that the bird really is a hybrid of not just two but three bird species: the Golden-winged warbler, the Blue-winged warbler, and the Chestnut-sided warbler.

Combination of species

Genetic analyses revealed that the bird's

mother was a Golden-winged/Blue-winged warbler hybrid also called a Brewster's warbler, while its father was a Chestnut-sided warbler. While hybridization is said to be common between the Golden-winged and the Blue-winged warblers, the combination of these species resulted in a three-species hybrid that has never been recorded before.

As mentioned, hybridization is quite common for Golden-winged and Blue-winged warblers, but this doesn't mean that it no longer poses problems for the species involved. In fact, this has caused a dramatic decline in some Golden-winged warbler populations. Furthermore, it's possible that the hybridization that resulted in the triple hybrid may have been a result of declining warbler populations.

"That this hybridization occurred within a population of Golden-winged Warblers in significant decline suggests that females may be making the best of a bad situation," said study lead author David Toews, also noting how it shows that warblers may still be genetically compatible despite evolutionary differences.

The question now is whether the new triple-hybrid will thrive or if it will be a pariah among warblers.

(Source: Tech Times)

Scientists just engineered human heart tissue that beats like the real thing

If you have doubts about the progress scientists are making in growing tissue in the lab, check out this incredible artificial heart tissue that beats just like the real thing - it's both haunting and fascinating to watch.

The researchers grew the heart's atria -- the upper chambers of the heart, which either pump blood into the ventricles or out to the rest of the body.

This artificial tissue can beat, express genes, and respond to drugs in a way that mimics a real human atrium, which means it could prove invaluable in developing treatments for related heart conditions such as atrial fibrillation.

This remarkable bit of lab engineering was based on human induced pluripotent stem cells or hiPSCs, which are stem cells generated directly from adult cells that can then be coached to develop into any other type of cell required.

"This is the first time that human atrial heart tissue has been generated in vitro from a principally unlimited source of hiPSCs," says one of the researchers, Marta Lemme from the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf in Germany.

"This could be useful both for academic laboratories and the pharmaceutical industry, because to test potential new drugs, we need to generate an in vitro model of atrial fibrillation.

Cardiomyocytes are the cells that make up the muscle of the heart or the cardiac muscle. What's special about these cardiomyocytes were they were developed to create 3D, beating heart tissue: that means properties allowing them to contract and relax, and to respond to drugs and electrical impulses.

The key was a vitamin A metabolite called all-trans retinoic acid, used to reprogram donor cells into a suitable, atrial-like form. Because the tissue matches the real heart so closely, it should be useful for everything from drug screening to disease analysis.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

SpaceX is going to build a mini-BFR to launch on a Falcon 9

In September of 2016, Elon Musk unveiled his vision for a super-heavy launch vehicle, which would be SpaceX's most ambitious project to date. Known as the Big Falcon Rocket (BFR), this massive launch vehicle is central to Musk's plan of conducting space tourism with flights into orbit and to the Moon. It is also intrinsic to his vision of sending astronauts and colonists to Mars.

Ever since, the astronomical and aerospace community has been paying close attention to any updates provided by Musk on the BFR's development. In his latest update, which was made via Twitter, Musk indicated that his company will be building a small, winged version of the massive spaceship component -- the Big Falcon Spaceship (BFS) -- which will be launch-tested using a Falcon 9 or Falcon Heavy rocket.

According to Eric Ralph of Teslarati, its intended purpose is also to act as developmental stepping stone between the Falcon 9 and the BFR, which are two very different launch vehicles that rely on different technologies.

In addition to being much more massive than the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy, the BFR will be a single system, consisting instead of a massive first stage booster and an equally massive second stage spaceship (the BFS). The design also calls for actuators on the front and two on the three rear fins to help control the rocket through a variety of atmospheric densities and velocities.

The former scenario appears more likely, he claims, as it would take additional time to miniaturize all of the new technologies that will be going into the BFR. These include the carbon-fiber deep cryogenic liquid oxygen propellant tank and new propulsive landing techniques that will function in vacuum or in a thin atmosphere (i.e. on the Moon or Mars).

However, this test will still be an opportunity to validate key technologies of the BFR, such as its actuated tripod fins, heat shield and other hardware components.

(Source: universetoday.com)

Two more mysterious rogue planets found, space team says

Rogue planets wander through space without orbiting a star, and now scientists have found two more of these free-floating worlds.

For centuries, the very existence of rogue planets was hypothetical. Because they're not close to a star that lights them up, they're tremendously difficult to spot. Then a technique known as gravitational microlensing came around.

Using gravitational microlensing, scientists find planets by noting when a rogue planet interrupts a star's light from our point of view. The planet suddenly acts as a lens for the star's light, curving it as it would be seen from Earth. The bigger the planet, the bigger the interruption.



It's not the most efficient system. Some astronomers (like Neil DeGrasse Tyson) estimate there are billions of rogue planets within the Milky Way. But while humanity has proven great at finding exoplanets attached to stars, scientists have only identified a dozen or so rogues. That's what makes adding two more to the pile such a big deal.

The planets are officially called OGLE-2017-BLG-0560 and OGLE-2012-BLG-1323, respectively, and there's a lot we don't know about them. Their names stem from how they were discovered, at the Optical Gravitational Lensing Experiment at the Las Campanas Observatory in Chile. The first one could be anywhere from the size of Jupiter to the size of 20 Jupiters, while the latter is between the size of Earth and Neptune. Nothing is known about how far they are from the solar system.

Scientists are hoping that the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, launched April 16, will give exoplanet and rogue planet hunters a new advantage in learning more about the mysterious bodies that apparently surround the Solar System.

(Source: popularmechanics.com)

380,000 Tons of Various Types of Goods Traded in IME

In the week ending 15th of Iranian month of Aban (Nov. 6), 380,303 tons of various types of goods, valued at more than 20,000 billion rials, was traded in Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), showing a considerable 26 and 34 percent growth in terms of weight and value respectively, the Public Relations Dept. of IME reported.

In the same period, 192,209 tons of various types of

mineral and industrial products, valued at 10,721 billion rials, was traded in the Exchange, the report added.

In the same direction, 185,700 tons of steel products, 5,330 tons of copper, 170 tons of molybdenum concentrate, nine tons of concentrate of precious metals and also 5 kg of gold bullion as well as 1,000 tons of cements were purchased by purchasers at the Exchange.

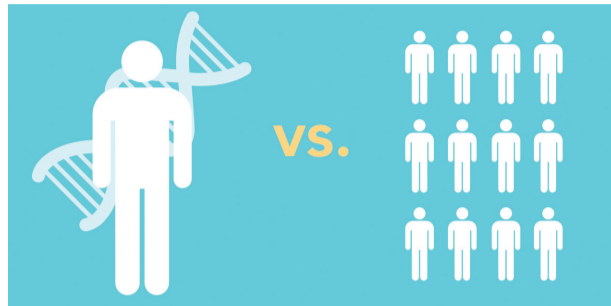
Moreover, 154,093 tons of various types of oil and petrochemical products, valued at more than 9,000 billion rials, were sold at the Exchange.

In the said period, Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed the trading of 34,000 and 320 kg of edibles and saffron respectively, the Public Relations Dept. of Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) concluded.

Intl. Congress on Endocrine Disorders and Metabolism to highlight precision medicine

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Precision medicine will come under the spotlight in the 12th International Congress on Endocrine Disorders and Metabolism, which will be held in Tehran on November 14-16, Fars news agency reported on Sunday.

Precision medicine is an emerging approach for disease treatment and prevention that takes into account individual variability in genes, environment, and lifestyle for each person, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine.



It will allow doctors and researchers to predict more accurately which treatment and prevention strategies for a particular disease will work in which groups of people. It is in contrast to a one-size-fits-all approach, in which disease treatment and prevention strategies are developed for the average person, with less consideration for the differences between individuals.

In line with that, Iran has completed a human genome project, Shahram Alamdari, the secretary of the event, said.

Human genome project refers to the scientific research program mainly designated to discover all the human genes, analyzing the structure of human DNA and determining the location of all human genes and also making them accessible for further biological and medical investigations.

Alamdari further explained that thyroid disorders, diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, pituitary disorders, adrenal disorders, reproductive endocrinology, osteoporosis and metabolic bone disorder, and obesity are also among the main topics of the congress.

Flash floods hit 10 provinces in Iran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Ten provinces across Iran have been affected by flash flood since last week, Rescue and Relief Organization head Morteza Salimi has said.



Provinces of West Azarbaijan, Ilam, Bushehr, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Fars, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Golestan, Gilan and Mazandaran have been inundated by flood for the past week, Fars news agency quoted Salimi as saying on Sunday.

More than 3,000 flood victims were rescued and many were accommodated, he added.

Water was pumped out of 30 houses and victims received food and blankets as well, he concluded.

LEARN ENGLISH

Christmas Day

A: Dad, dad, dad! Wake up! It's Christmas!
 B: Timmy. It's too early for this. Look, it's six in the morning! Go back to bed!
 A: No way! Santa already came and left all our presents! Can we go open them? Please! Please!
 C: Of course we can honey. Bill, come on, get dressed.
 B: Fine! Not like Santa brought me any gifts!
 C: Bill! Honestly. You can be such a **grouch** sometimes.
 A: Look at all these presents under the Christmas tree! Awesome!
 B: Alright Timmy, **knock yourself out**. We should get ready and **head to** the market to buy everything for the Christmas dinner tonight.
 C: Yeah you're right. It's the first time we are **hosting** Christmas dinner at our house so everything has to be perfect.
 B: I got the list right here. Ham, turkey, mashed potatoes, ingredients for the gravy and of course, yams!
 C: My dad offered to bring the eggnog so we should be **set**!

Key vocabulary

grouch: a bad-tempered person
knock oneself out: go ahead; do as you please
head to: go directly to
host: hold an activity
set: ready for something (informal)
Supplementary vocabulary
cannot sit still: cannot sit patiently while waiting due to excitement, anxiety, etc.
bursting with excitement: being so excited that one feels as though it is bursting out from within themselves
wrapping paper: heavy decorated paper used to wrap gifts
candy cane: a striped stick of peppermint candy with the top curved to resemble a walking cane
hot cocoa/chocolate: a beverage made from cocoa powder and milk and sugar; usually drunk hot

(Source: irlanguage.com)



Iran's support for refugee students unnoticed, says minister

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iranian Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei regretted that Iran is receiving limited coverage for its support for refugee students from international entities.

Bat'haei made the remarks in his opening speech at the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) meeting of the Secretaries General of Member States' National Commissions kicked off in the city of Shiraz on Sunday, November 11.

"International agencies' financial support for Iran to provide these students with proper education is inadequate and this is while annually more than 400,000 foreign national students are studying at schools in Iran."

It's been more than 4 decades that Iran is playing host to refugees, Bat'haei said, adding that, due to persistent conflicts in the region many refugee children are suffering from mental and physical disorders and ministries of health and education are jointly collaborating to offer these children good medical care.

"We are treating these children just like our own citizens and we are proud to see Afghan national experts who have finished schools or university in Iran."

Following a decree issued by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in May 2015, all foreign nationals,



Mohammad Bat'haei

even those who have no identification and are living in Iran illegally, are allowed to attend schools now.

Minister also commented on enrollment rate in primary education in Iran saying that it exceeds 99 percent in the country and that enrollment of boys and girls in primary education is almost equal in the country.

ISESCO's meeting of secretaries general

The event takes place in partnership with the Iranian National Commission for ISESCO and in cooperation with the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC). It will run through November 12.

According to ISESCO official website, the meeting aims to promote cooperation relations and partnership among National Commissions so as to share benefits, capitalize on successful experiences, support

innovative scientific research, and suggest executive procedures and measures likely to enhance the quality of scientific publications in Member States.

It also focuses on exploring the best ways to enhance the performance of scientific research and better meeting the current needs of knowledge-based economies, and formulating practical steps to encourage scientific research, technology and innovation including the enhancement of research performance in Member States and promotion of the Islamic Scientific Network.

This meeting has brought together the Secretaries of National Commissions of Jordan, Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Tajikistan, Uganda, Pakistan, Brunei Dar Salam, Bangladesh, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Djibouti, Senegal, Sudan, Suriname, Iraq, Sultanate of Oman, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Palestine, Republic of Comoros, Qatar, Cote d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Libya, Mali, Maldives, Malaysia, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria.

ISESCO is represented in this meeting by Mohamed Ghemari, Director of the Secretariat of the Executive Council, General Conference and Specialized Ministerial Conferences, Dr Aicha Bammoun, Programme Specialist at the Directorate of Science and Technology, and Ali Akdim, from Service of Cooperation with National Commissions.

Tehran mayor candidates brief city council on urban management plans



Abbas Akhundi



Gholamreza Ansari



Seyyed Kamel Taqavinejad



Pirouz Hanachi

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Four candidates who are running for Tehran mayoral election briefed the city council on their urban management plans on Sunday, ISNA news agency reported.

On November 4 members of the Majlis [Iranian parliament] social committee voted on Sunday against a reinterpretation of Article 1 of the law banning employment of the retired officials, and as a result Tehran mayor Mohammad Ali Afshani, who is retired, should give up office.

The law to ban employment of the retired was passed in mid-September by the Majlis and it will be implemented by November 15.

Seyyed Kamel Taqavinejad, head of Iranian National Tax Administration, Pirouz Hanachi, deputy mayor for urban development and architecture, Abbas Akhundi, former Minister of Transport and Urban Management, and Gholamreza Ansari, a former ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Russia are the four candidates.

The city council will elect two of the candidates to run for the post and will finally choose the next mayor by Tuesday.

The fifth city council election was held simultaneously

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

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

After Najafi, Samiollah Hosseini Makarem became the caretaker and finally a month later in mid-May Afshani secured the seat as the mayor.

Taxing red meat would save many lives, research shows

Taxing red meat would save many lives and raise billions to pay for healthcare, according to new research. It found the cost of processed meat such as bacon and sausages would double if the harm they cause to people's health was taken into account.

Governments already tax harmful products to reduce their consumption, such as sugar, alcohol and tobacco. With growing evidence of the health and environmental damage resulting from red meat, some experts now believe a "sin tax" on beef, lamb and pork is inevitable in the longer term.

The World Health Organization declared processed red meat to be a carcinogen in 2015, and unprocessed red meat such as steaks and chops to be a probable carcinogen. However, people in rich nations eat more than the recommended amount of red meat, which is also linked to heart disease, strokes and diabetes.

The new research looked at the level of tax needed to reflect the healthcare costs incurred when people eat red meat. It found that a 20% tax on unprocessed red meat and a 110% tax on the more harmful processed products across rich nations, with lower taxes in less wealthy nations, would cut annual deaths by 220,000 and raise \$170bn (£130bn).

The resulting higher prices would also cut meat consumption by two portions a

week – currently people in rich nations each eat one portion a day. This would lead to a \$41bn saving in annual healthcare costs, the research shows.

"The results are dramatic for processed meat," said Marco Springmann, at the University of Oxford and who led the new study. "Bacon is really one of the unhealthiest food products that is out there."

"Nobody wants governments to tell people what they can and can't eat," Springmann said. But the healthcare costs incurred by eating red meat are often paid by all taxpayers, he said: "It is totally fine if you want to have [red meat], but this personal consumption decision really puts a strain on public funds. It is not about taking something away from people, it is about being fair."

Rob Bailey, a researcher at the Chatham House thinktank and not part of the research team, said: "The recent sugar tax has shown the UK government's willingness to tax foods when there is a sound rationale for doing so. I would argue that there are strong grounds for taxing meat. I find it hard to imagine a meat tax will not be implemented within the next decade."

Meat eating is also damaging the planet. In May, a major analysis of the damage livestock does found that avoiding meat and dairy products is the single biggest

way to reduce your environmental impact. In October, scientists reported that huge reductions in meat eating are essential to avoid dangerous climate change, including a 90% drop in beef consumption in western nations. Diets are changing, with a third of British people now having stopped or reduced meat eating.

The new research is published in the journal Plos One and uses a standard economic approach called "optimal taxation" to calculate the tax rates. This uses the healthcare costs incurred by eating one additional portion of red meat to set the tax rate, rather than the total healthcare costs incurred by all the red meat people eat.

As a result the taxes would recoup about 70% of the \$285bn spent every year around the world treating illness caused by eating red meat. To cover the total healthcare costs, the tax rates would need to be hiked up again to about double the optimal taxation rates.

The researchers calculated red meat taxes for 149 different nations, with the rate depending on how much red meat those citizens eat and the costliness of their healthcare system. The US would have among the highest tax rates, with a 163% levy on ham and sausages and a 34% levy on steaks.

Australians would face a 109% tax on processed meats and 18% on unprocessed

meats, while the rates in the UK would be 79% and 14% respectively. However, in poor nations where people eat little meat, the tax rate would be close to zero.

The proposed taxes would result in a 16% reduction in the processed meat eaten around the world, the scientists estimated, which would cut the greenhouse gas emissions from livestock by 110m tonnes per year. Also, fewer people would become obese as they switched to healthier foods.

Catherine Happer, at the University of Glasgow and not part of the research team, said: "My view is increasingly that a tax on red and processed meat is inevitable as the science on the harms has consolidated."

She said other measures would be needed too, including looking at menus in workplaces and schools, as well as raising public awareness: "If we look at the significant cultural shift on smoking over the last decade or so, communication of the science was central to those changes."

Research in 2015 found that people's opposition to meat taxes significantly softened when the harms were explained. "People then feel the onus is on governments to act," said Happer. Using meat tax revenues to subsidise healthy foods is another idea touted to reduce opposition.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Over 1.1m Iranians applied for visa for Arbaeen pilgrimage

More than 1.1 million Iranians have applied for visa to attend Arbaeen pilgrimage 2018, head of Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization has said. All those interested in joining the spiritual journey to Iraq can apply for visa online twenty four-seven, YJC quoted Hamid Mohammadi as saying on Thursday.

ثبت نام بیش از یک میلیون نفر برای پیاده روی اربعین

رئیس سازمان حج و زیارت گفت: تعداد متقاضیان ثبت نام اربعین در سامانه سماح به بیش از یک میلیون و ۱۰۰ هزار نفر رسید. به گزارش روز پنجشنبه باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان؛ حمید محمدی اظهار کرد: زائران اربعین حسینی ضمن آن که می‌توانند در هر ساعتی از شبانه روز در سامانه سماح ثبت نام کنند، در ایام تعطیل و جمعه‌ها نیز برای ثبت نام و ارائه مدارک خود به دفاتر زیارتی در سراسر کشور مراجعه کنند.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ac”

Meaning: pertaining to
For example: Patients with **cardiac** problems should avoid foods that are high in salt.

PHRASAL VERB

Beef something up

Meaning: to improve something or make it more interesting, more important etc.
For example: We need to beef the campaign up.

IDIOM

Bury (one's) head in the sand

Explanation: to avoid, or try to avoid, a particular situation by pretending that it does not exist.
For example: Lou, you can't bury your head in the sand about your health—please, make an appointment with your doctor.

Iraqi MPs plan motion to seek expulsion of U.S. troops

1→ The U.S., enlisting some of its Western allies, began deploying troops to the country in 2014 under the pretext of fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists who were defeated in Iraq last year.

Al-Assadi said, "After the big victory against these gangs [Daesh], the Iraqi government has the right to review the need for American forces on Iraqi soil."

He said the push for the withdrawal of the U.S. forces will double once the new parliament is sworn in, where lawmakers will allow the presence of foreign military advisers and trainers based on the requirements specified by state authorities.

The U.S. has maintained a military presence in Iraq since 2003 when Washington invaded the country under the pretext of destroying weapons of mass destruction which were never found. The invasion plunged Iraq into chaos and led to the rise



of terrorist groups. More than one million Iraqis have been killed because of the U.S. invasion and the subsequent occupation of the country, ac-

ording to the California-based investigative organization Project Censored.

In August, thousands of Iraqis took to the streets in Baghdad to condemn the U.S. meddling in the country's domestic affairs amid debates over the make-up of a new government.

Earlier this month, Iraq's Foreign Ministry hit out at the U.S. for dictating how the country should deal with neighboring Iran.

Iraq's former prime minister and leader of the al-Wataniya faction in parliament Ayad Allawi warned earlier this month that the new U.S. sanctions on Iran would deeply impact the Iraqi economy.

Allawi said like the Iraqi government and other political leaders, he was opposed to unilateral U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic, Iraq's al-Maluma news agency reported.

(Source: Press TV)

Mueller's next steps worry White House

The White House is bracing for the probe of Donald Trump's presidential campaign to fire up again. Trump's advisers are privately expressing worries that the special counsel, who's been out of the news for the past month, has been stealthily compiling information and could soon issue new indictments or a damning final report.

Trump abruptly altered the chain of command above Mueller Wednesday, putting his work under the supervision of a Republican loyalist who has been openly skeptical of the special counsel's authority and has mused about ways to curtail his power. But Trump and his aides are concerned about Mueller's next move with the work that is complete, according to a White House official and a Republican with close ties to the administration.

They insisted on anonymity to comment on conversations they were not authorized to describe.

Mueller kept a low profile for the past month as voters were mulling their choices for this week's elections.

But a flurry of activity during his quiet period, including weeks of grand jury testimony about Trump confidant Roger Stone and negotiations over an interview with the president, hinted at public developments ahead as investigators move closer to addressing key questions underpinning the special counsel inquiry: Did Trump illegally obstruct the investigation? And did his campaign have advance knowledge of illegally hacked Democratic emails?

Trump has told confidants he remains deeply annoyed by the 18-month-old Mueller probe. The latest indication of the fury came Wednesday when he forced out his attorney general, Jeff Sessions, whose recusal opened the door to Mueller's appointment.

To this point, Trump has heeded advice not to directly interfere, though a new chapter in the relationship with the probe may have begun with the appointment of Matthew Whitaker as new acting attorney general. Even if Whitaker, Sessions' former chief of staff, does not curtail the investigation, Trump could direct him to take a more aggressive stance in declassifying documents that could further undermine or muddle the probe, the White House aide and Republican official said.

The investigation until now has been overseen by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller last year and granted him fairly broad authority.

"It's very significant because Whitaker's position on indictments or future indictments may be different than Rosenstein's, and Rosenstein had given Mueller a broad

mandate to pursue various crimes," Washington criminal defense lawyer Jeffrey Jacobovitz said. Trump Friday moved to distance himself from Whitaker, saying, "I don't know Matt Whitaker." But he also called him "smart" and "respected."

The Mueller investigation has so far produced 32 criminal charges and four guilty pleas from Trump associates. But the work is not done.

A clear focus concerns Stone, a longtime political dirty trickster. The special counsel's team has been investigating Stone's connection to WikiLeaks during the 2016 campaign and whether he had advance knowledge of the group's plans to release hacked material damaging to Democrat Hillary Clinton. Stone has said he did not, but emails, Twitter messages and his own public statements show he portrayed himself as plugged into the WikiLeaks orbit. That includes implying he had inside knowledge in separate email exchanges with a Breitbart editor and Steve Bannon, the former Trump campaign chief executive, just days before WikiLeaks began releasing thousands of emails stolen from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

Bannon and other Stone associates have been questioned, and multiple witnesses have appeared before the grand jury. A federal appeals Thursday court heard a challenge to Mueller's authority brought by Stone aide Andrew Miller, who defied a grand jury subpoena last summer and was held in contempt by a judge.

In the president's orbit, there remains some concern about his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., though there are no outward indications that charges are imminent, according to a Republican close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Beyond Mueller, but also within the Justice Department's oversight, is a federal investigation into Trump's longtime legal fixer, Michael Cohen, who admitted as part of a guilty plea in August to coordinating with Trump on a hush-money scheme to silence a porn actress and an ex-Playboy model who say they had affairs with Trump.

The president hasn't been charged with any wrongdoing, but federal prosecutors have said that a grand jury investigation is ongoing and it targets unspecified "others." Court papers show Trump's conduct and that of top executives at the Trump Organization, some of whom have received immunity, have been scrutinized.

It's unclear what additional charges prosecutors are pursuing and how much of it pertains to the presi-



dent personally. Federal prosecutors have said in court papers that the case involves numerous "uncharged" third parties and have argued against disclosing search warrants and other documents that would "certainly result in a very public guessing game" about their identities.

Overseeing it all is Whitaker, a U.S. attorney from Iowa who was brought into the Justice Department last year to serve as Sessions' chief of staff. In the months before, Whitaker was a familiar presence on CNN, where he questioned Mueller's scope and reach.

In one appearance, he defended a June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between Trump Jr. and a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer, saying: "You would always take that meeting."

He also once tweeted an ex-prosecutor's opinion piece that described the Mueller team as a "lynch mob," and wrote his own op-ed saying Mueller would be outside his authority if he investigated Trump's family finances.

Trump had enjoyed Whitaker's cable TV appearances and the two men soon struck a bond. Trump told associates that he felt that Whitaker would be "loyal" and would not have recused himself from the Russia probe as Sessions had done, according to two Republicans close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Despite demands from Democrats that he recuse because of his past comments, Whitaker showed no signs Thursday that he intended to do so.

(Source: AP)

At least 16 killed in Taliban attack on army base in Baghlan

At least 12 army soldiers were killed in a Taliban attack on Saturday on a small military base in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province, officials said.

The Taliban left behind explosives that then killed four tribal elders who had come to help collect the soldiers' bodies, according to Afghan officials.

Safder Mohsini, head of the provincial council in Baghlan, said the group also abducted two soldiers and wounded three others in the attack.

He said Taliban fighters burned down the base before planting bombs around it. The Taliban claimed responsibility for

the assault and said they seized ammunition from the base.

The group carry out near-daily attacks, mainly targeting Afghan security forces stationed in rural outposts.

Taliban fighters have ramped up attacks on Afghan security forces and government facilities in recent months, leaving troops thinly stretched throughout the country.

The latest phase of Afghanistan's decades-old war began in 2001, when the United States-led troops overthrew the Taliban government in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the United States.

A U.S. watchdog agency said last week

that the Afghan government was struggling to recover control of districts lost to the Taliban while casualties among security forces had reached record levels.

The government had control or influence over 65 percent of the population but only 55.5 percent of Afghanistan's 407 districts, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (Sigar) said in a report.

■ Moscow peace talks
Amid rising violence, Russia on Friday facilitated a conference aimed at seeking peace attended by officials from the High Peace Council (HPC) and members of the Taliban based in Doha, Qatar.

Russia invited 12 countries and the Taliban in an attempt to "open a new page" in Afghanistan's history.

Kabul did not send a delegation. Instead, members of the HPC, a government-appointed body responsible for reconciliation efforts with the Taliban, attended the event, where they repeated Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's offer of peace talks without pre-conditions.

The meetings ended without the sides agreeing on a path to direct dialogue, the delegations from the Taliban and HPC said.

(Source: agencies)

Thousands of Italians march against immigration policies in Rome

Thousands of people have staged a rally in the Italian capital, Rome, to protest against racism and a proposed law on immigration.

The protest, with an estimated turnout of 100,000 people by organizers and 20,000 by local media, was held in the center of Rome on Saturday.

The demonstrators chanted slogans against far-right Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini and against his proposed law on security and immigration, which would facilitate the expulsion of refugees and asylum seekers from the European country.

The legislation — which tightens immigration regulations and limits the right to asylum — was forced through the upper house of parliament by the government on Wednesday.

The lower chamber now has until the end of November to vote on the bill.

Among the demonstrators in the Saturday rally was

Domenico Lucano, the former mayor of Riace in the Italian region of Calabria, who was recently removed from office, put under house arrest, and later banished from the southern town on charges of facilitating undocumented migration.

"I am here because I am part of this people that follows a dream of humanity and to protest against the hatred, the fascist and racist drift that is emerging not only in Italy but also in Europe," he said.

The anti-racism protesters in Rome argued that Italy's populist government had been spreading a "growing climate of hatred" since it came to power in June.

Salvini, whose far-right party has formed a ruling coalition with the Five Star Movement, has accused other European Union (EU) members of putting an unfair share of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe on Italy's shoulders.

scenes as to what support our armed forces will do," Ellwood said on the 'Ridge on Sunday' television program. "With the transition from Brexit, if there is a requirement to provide assistance we're looking right across the full spectrum of requirements to make sure that

we are prepared."

Earlier, the chief of Britain's defense staff Gen. Sir Nicholas Carter said the armed forces were making "sensible" contingency plans on Brexit and other issues.

(Source: Reuters)

With Trump sitting nearby, Macron calls nationalism a betrayal

1→ There has been a similar resurgence in nationalist-populist sentiment from Brazil to Turkey and the Philippines, echoing trends in Russia and the United States and challenging the multilateralism that leaders like Macron are keen to preserve.



In his address on Sunday, Macron said that "old demons are reawakening" and warned against ignoring the past.

"History sometimes threatens to repeat its tragic patterns, and undermine the legacy of peace we thought we had sealed with the blood of our ancestors," he said.

Asked in late October what he meant when he described himself as a nationalist, Trump cited his love of the country and said it was about putting it first economically.

"We're giving all of our wealth, all of our money, to other countries and then they don't treat us properly," he said.

"For many years other countries that are allies of ours... they have not treated our country fairly. So in that sense, I am absolutely a nationalist and I'm proud of it."

(Source: Reuters)

Putin says Russia wants dialogue with U.S. on missile treaty

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Sunday Moscow wanted to restore a full-scale dialogue with the United States about the landmark Cold War-era missile treaty, Russian news agencies reported.

President Donald Trump said last month Washington would withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty because Russia was violating the pact, bringing a warning of retaliatory measures from Moscow.

Putin, speaking to Kremlin-backed RT France television, said he could meet Trump on the sidelines of a G-20 summit in Argentina, according to the agencies.

(Source: Reuters)

DR Congo's worst Ebola outbreak kills over 200

The death toll from an Ebola outbreak in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has risen to more than 200, the health ministry said on Saturday.

The ministry said it had recorded 201 deaths from the virus and that 291 cases has been confirmed since the outbreak began in August.

About half of the cases were in Beni, a city of 800,000 people, in the North Kivu region.

The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping on Friday called on armed groups active in the region not to hinder efforts to fight the disease.

Teams responsible for responding to the outbreak "have faced threats, physical assaults, repeated destruction of their equipment and kidnapping," Health Minister Oly Ilunga said on Friday. "Two of our colleagues in the Rapid Response Medical Unit have even lost their lives in an attack."

The outbreak is the 10th in the DR Congo since Ebola was first detected there in 1976.

Ebola is a serious infectious disease that can spread rapidly through small amounts of bodily fluid, causing internal bleeding and potentially death.

Since a vaccination program began on August 8, more than 25,000 people have been inoculated, the health ministry said earlier this month.

The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the most severe in the country's history, the health ministry said late on Friday.

"The current epidemic is the worst in the history of DRC," Jessica Ilunga, a spokeswoman for the ministry told Reuters.

With nearly 300 cases, the epidemic also ranks as the third worst in the history of the continent, following the 2013-2016 outbreak in West Africa, where over 28,000 cases were confirmed and an outbreak in Uganda in 2000 involving 425 cases.

World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Thursday that security represented the primary challenge in the current epidemic, followed by community mistrust.

"When there is an attack, the operation actually freezes. So we hold the operation. And when the operation stops, the virus gets advantage and it affects us in two ways," he told reporters in Kinshasa.

"And one is catching up on the backlog. Because when operations are stopped, there is always a backlog of vaccinations, or contact tracing. And the other, the second problem, is that more cases are generated because we can't vaccinate them," he said.

The confirmation of new cases has accelerated in the last month and an emergency committee of WHO experts said in October that the outbreak was likely to worsen significantly unless the response was stepped up.

(Source: agencies)

Britain's armed forces making contingency plans for 'no deal' Brexit

Britain's armed forces are making contingency plans for how they could support the country if Britain leaves the European Union without a deal, senior British defense officials said Sunday.

Asked what role the armed forces could

play if there was a 'no deal' Brexit, British defense minister Tobias Ellwood said: "The armed forces stand ready to support Britain on a practical basis."

"There are contingency plans being made, there are discussions being held behind the

Hummels blames illness for poor show in Bayern defeat

Mats Hummels has blamed illness for his poor performance in Bayern Munich's defeat at Borussia Dortmund in Saturday's Bundesliga showdown that left the defending champions seven points behind in the table.

"I became ill today," Hummels told reporters after Bayern lost 3-2 at Bundesliga leaders Dortmund despite having twice led at Signal Iduna Park.

Hummels said he started to feel unwell on Friday, then felt "really bad" before kick-off, but the Germany international desperately wanted to play in Der Klassiker.

Spain striker Paco Alcacer came off the bench to score Dortmund's winning goal 17 minutes from time as the hosts staged a rousing fightback, twice levelling through Marco Reus goals to cancel out Robert Lewandowski's double for Bayern.

Hummels was replaced by Niklas Sule after 63 minutes, but not before he made two mistakes, both of which led to chances for Dortmund.

Hummels gave away the ball to allow Dortmund captain Reus a shot that was saved after 10 minutes. He was then beaten for pace to present substitute Alcacer another opening before the Spaniard was tackled.

"You could see in both situations that my head wasn't where it needed to be," Hummels admitted.

"This has not happened to me since 2010.

"That's why after the second mistake, I said it makes no sense to continue playing.

"On both occasions I was lucky that it didn't result in goals. The coaches knew, of course. I'm angry with myself that I did not say at half-time 'I'm not going out' - (my vision) it was all dull and blurry," added Hummels.

Bayern coach Niko Kovac said he asked Hummels how he felt during the half-time break with his side leading 1-0 after a strong first-half performance by the visitors.

"He (Hummels) told us at half-time, our doctors gave him some medicine, things seemed to be okay, so I sent him back out," said Kovac, under pressure after three defeats in the last six games. (Source: AFP)

Tottenham get permission to keep playing at Wembley



Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur said on Sunday that they had been granted permission to continue playing home matches at Wembley until their new stadium is ready.

Spurs were supposed to move to their new home in September but reached an initial agreement to play at Wembley until the end of the year instead because of construction delays at the new, 62,000-seater venue.

That agreement has now been extended indefinitely but all Tottenham's remaining Premier League games at Wembley after their match with London rivals Chelsea on Nov. 24 will have a reduced capacity of 51,000.

Spurs said in a statement that they would issue an update on their new stadium next month. (Source: Mirror)

Neymar: Football Leaks claims 'misinformed idiots'

Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar has responded to the latest Football Leaks revelations concerning the "ethical bonuses" the French champions receive as part of their contracts and blasted the journalists as a "bunch of misinformed idiots."

Earlier this week, France 2's "Envoye Special" looked at those bonuses and claimed that one of the terms involved was applauding the supporters after each match.

Reports have surfaced claiming that Neymar earns €375,000 simply by clapping the fans.

"I do not know what is worse ..." the Brazil international wrote. "The source or those who respond. A bunch of misinformed idiots. I am tired of the ill-intentioned press. Thank you, God, for every litre of patience that you give me."

PSG and Brazil teammate Thiago Silva, who reportedly earns €33,000 for the same gesture, joined Neymar in ridiculing the claims.

"It is becoming routine," the captain wrote before adding that the stories are "a shame" and "fake news."

Right-back Thomas Meunier shed light on the situation on Saturday when replying to a tweet about the ethical bonuses and rejected the idea the bonus is simply for applauding the supporters.

"This amount is known as an 'ethical bonus' and includes numerous obligations for the player towards the club and the supporters, as well as the player themselves [professionalism and respect towards others]. It is far from being a bonus for simply applauding the fans," he wrote.

Speaking at a news conference at Camp des Loges ahead of Sunday's Ligue 1 trip to struggling Monaco, PSG coach Thomas Tuchel quickly lost his patience with questions about Football Leaks and the ethical bonuses.

"I did not see the report," the German said. "I hear many things. For me, it is not a topic with either the team or my staff."

"Honestly, I am here to coach and manage the squad and my staff. We have our match against Monaco to prepare for and this has not affected us." (Source: Soccernet)

LeBron James: Smoke in Kings' arena 'affected me a lot'

Smoke from a wildfire raging in Butte County -- known as the Camp Fire -- billowed into downtown Sacramento and was visible above the court at the Golden 1 Center before and during the Kings' game against the Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday.

"We are aware that there is a smoke problem," a Kings spokesman told ESPN shortly before tipoff.

To combat the conditions, arena workers manning the entrances where ticket holders arrived were instructed to keep the doors closed as much as possible during the pre-game window, the spokesman said.

"Not to sound dumb, but this kind of snuck up on everybody," Kings coach Dave Joergel said. "From wherever you're coming in from [you notice the smoke]. Today, I immediately started calling our staff: 'How bad is it downtown? What's going on here?' It's just a really sad deal."

The fire began Thursday and has already destroyed the town of Paradise, resulting in the deaths of 23 people, according to Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea. Two people were found dead in a wildfire in Southern California, bringing the total number of fatalities in the state to 25.

Several members of the Lakers said they could see the fire burning from the plane on their flight from Los Angeles to Sacramento on Friday.

A faint, hazy smoke was visible in the arena at shootaround Saturday morning.

"You can smell it," LeBron James said before the game. "We haven't really gotten up and down [running] like that to the point where you can tell it affects you or not, but anytime smoke is around, you know it can affect all of us. Not only us as athletes but everyone. Everyone gets affected by pollution." James finished with a game-high 25 points



in 31 minutes in the Lakers' 101-86 win but said the air in the arena "affected me a lot."

"I had a slight headache before the game," James said. "And I can't pinpoint any other reason why it was going on besides the smoke. But it went away after the game started. Hopefully I'll be able to get some good rest tonight."

Lakers center JaVale McGee, who suffers from asthma, also reported symptoms.

"My stomach was hurtin' like I was hungry or something, but it was from the smoke for

sure, so ... but we still won, though, so it's all good," he said.

Joergel said the Kings were monitoring the situation from noon until tipoff at 7 p.m. PT.

"I'm no scientist, but smoke goes to the lowest places, doesn't it? Like it's heavy?" Joergel said. "And it's coming in through the parking ramp, and I'm interested to see [its presence during the game]."

One arena staffer told ESPN that the haze in the arena's upper bowl was atypical and not something that occurred when wildfires blazed through Northern California last sea-

son. Before tipoff, several blocks from the arena, a civilian could be seen walking the streets wearing a surgical mask.

"Breathing, it's a little bit muggier," Lakers forward Kyle Kuzma told ESPN before the game. "You can kind of feel that from the jump."

Kuzma also mentioned the Woolsey Fire currently consuming nearly 70,000 acres of land in Ventura and Los Angeles counties.

"Climate change, or I don't know what it is, but there's a lot of them coming," Kuzma said. (Source: ESPN)

Shaqiri and Salah fire Liverpool past Fulham



Goals from Mohamed Salah and Xherdan Shaqiri send Liverpool top of the league, temporarily at least, following a 2-0 win over Fulham. Fulham afforded Shaqiri and Trent Alexander-Arnold plenty of space to operate in advanced positions, with both enjoying early chances. However, Fulham's defensive set-up frustrated the hosts for much of the first half, and Ryan Sessegnon was presented with a brace of chances to give the visitors a shock lead.

Fulham appeared to defy expectation when Aleksandar Mitrovic headed in an Andre Schurrle cross shortly before the break. However, the goal was ruled offside, and while Fulham were celebrating, Alisson took a quick free kick. Mo Salah then latched onto Alexander-Arnold's incisive pass and slotted low past Sergio Rico.

Liverpool's goal came just 14 seconds after Fulham's controversially disallowed effort. The Reds' frustration subsided in the second half and they doubled their advantage through a superb Xherdan Shaqiri cushioned volley. Andrew Robertson's brilliant deep cross found the Swiss in plenty of space in the area for his second goal in three appearances.

The goal was the 31st Fulham have conceded this season--no other side in Europe's Top 5 leagues has shipped so many.

The result was enough for Liverpool to top the Premier League before Chelsea and Manchester City's games later in the day. Klopp's side will travel to Watford after the international break, while rock-bottom Fulham will host Southampton.

■ **TALKING POINT: Can Fulham stay up?**

Despite generous summer spending, Fulham are rock bottom after suffering seven straight defeats, having conceded an astonishing 31 goals in 12 league games. Jokanovic's side did well to frustrate Liverpool in the first half, but quickly ran out of ideas as the game progressed.

There are plenty of candidates for the drop, and staying up won't be impossible—but something will need to drastically change for the Cottagers for that to happen.

■ **MAN OF THE MATCH: Xherdan Shaqiri**

The Swiss is having plenty of impact for the Reds lately, with three assists and two goals in his last six appearances. Shaqiri was a constant threat going forward and showed his class with the finish for the second goal.

Credit must also be given to Liverpool's fullbacks, although they were given plenty of free reign by Fulham to push forward.

(Source: Eurosport)

'Heartbroken' British boxer retires after defeat



Tony Bellew said his boxing career was "over" but insisted he had surpassed his dreams and "won in life" during an emotional news conference following defeat by Oleksandr Usyk.

Bellew, 35, briefly said he felt a "failure" because of his eighth-round stoppage defeat against the undisputed cruiserweight world champion.

Wife Rachael instantly shouted from the back of the news conference that he "hadn't failed at all", while Bellew's father also yelled words of praise.

"It's definitely over, you'll not see me in a ring again," said a sobbing Bellew.

"Now I just want to be normal, so please leave me alone."

"No one who knows me calls me Tony, I've always been Anthony to them. Tony Bellew exists for these cameras really. Tony Bellew died tonight, it's Anthony that's left."

"I have won. I sit here as a loser, heartbroken, but I have won in life. When I was expelled in school, I had nothing, with nowhere to go. Now my family are millionaires. I never dreamed this would be possible."

A win over Usyk would have made Bellew the first Briton to hold four world titles in a weight division.

During a 40-minute news conference, he began to cry when thanking his mother and father, who he cites as his motivation during years as a young boxer. His dad shouted he was the "best son", adding: "I'm proud of you lad."

Trainer Dave Coldwell fought back tears when stating his fighter was part of "the best five years" of his life, while promoter Eddie Hearn pointed to moments where Bellew's career was on a knife-edge long before he realised his dream of becoming a world champion in 2016.

"Tonight, I watched a great fighter," said Hearn. "Someone who has improved so much. He has gone from being not at world level as we saw when he fought Nathan Cleverly in 2014, to elite level."

We are so proud of this man and what he has achieved."

In his last three outings, Usyk has now beaten Latvia's Mairis Bredis in Riga, Russia's Murat Gassiev in Moscow and Britain's Bellew in Manchester, earning and defending the IBF, WBA, WBO and WBC titles in the process.

He was priced as short as 1-7 with some bookmakers.

He insisted moments (Source: BBC)

NBA roundup: Aldridge double-double leads Spurs over Rockets

LaMarcus Aldridge posted a double-double and paced the host San Antonio Spurs to a 96-89 victory over the Houston Rockets on Saturday in the first meeting this season between the Southwest Division rivals.

Aldridge finished with 27 points and 10 rebounds, while Derrick White added 14 points and eight assists.

DeMar DeRozan and Bryn Forbes scored 13 points apiece for the Spurs, who snapped a two-game skid.

Harden led the Rockets with 25 points, but shot just 7 of 27 from the field. Eric Gordon added 23 and Clint Capela recorded a double-double (12 points, 17 boards) for the Rockets, who dropped the final two games of their five-game road trip while shooting just 33.3 percent (30 for 90).

■ **Raptors 128, Knicks 112**

Pascal Siakam scored 14 of his career-best 23 points in the third quarter, and Toronto remained undefeated at home in blowing out New York.

The Raptors have won six in a row and are off to a franchise best 12-1 start to the season that includes a 7-0 home record. Jonas Valanciunas added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Raptors, who shot 53.2 percent from the field.



The Knicks lost for the third time in four games despite 27 points from Tim Hardaway Jr. Enes Kanter added 15 points and 15 rebounds.

■ **Grizzlies 112, 76ers 106 (OT)**

Mike Conley scored a season-high 32 points and Marc Gasol recorded 18 points, 12 rebounds and six assists to lead host Memphis to a comeback win against shorthanded

Philadelphia.

The Grizzlies rallied from their largest deficit of the season — 16 points — and forced overtime when Garrett Temple's 3-pointer tied the score at 102-all with just under 40 seconds left.

Joel Embiid recorded his league-leading 13th double-double with 14 points and 16 rebounds. JJ Redick scored 20, but only four in the second half. Ben Simmons also totaled 18 points and 14 rebounds.

■ **Warriors 116, Nets 100**

Quinn Cook scored 19 of his 27 points in the first half in his first start in place of the injured Stephen Curry, helping host Golden State roll to victory over Brooklyn.

Kevin Durant had game-highs with 28 points with 11 assists, and Klay Thompson added 24 as the Warriors bounced back from a home loss to Milwaukee to win convincingly despite the absence of Curry and Draymond Green.

Joe Harris fired in a team-high 24 points for Brooklyn, which was playing the second half of a back-to-back that began with a dramatic 112-110 win at Denver on Friday night. (Source: Reuters)

Carlos Queiroz names 24-man squad for Venezuela friendly

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Carlos Queiroz has named his 24-man squad for Venezuela friendly match scheduled for Nov. 20 in Doha, Qatar.

Team Melli will face the South American football team as part of preparation for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Brighton & Hove Albion winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Reading defensive midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi and KAS Eupen defender Morteza Pouraliganji have not been invited to Team Melli due to injury.

Padideh, Iran Professional League leaders, have no player in the new list.

Persepolis, the 2018 AFC Champions League runners-up, have also two players in the list.

Squad:

Goalkeepers:

Alireza Beiranvand, Amir Abedzadeh, Hossein Hosseini

Defenders:

Ramin Rezaeian, Mohammadreza Khanzadeh, Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Majid Hosseini, Milad Mohammadi, Sadeq Moharrami, Vouria Ghafouri, Mohammadhossein Kananizadegan

Midfielders:

Omid Ebrahimi, Ashkan Dejagah, Saman Ghoddos, Masoud Shojaei, Vahid Amiri, Ahmad Nouroollahi

Strikers:

Ali Gholizadeh, Mehdi Taremi, Sardar Azmoun, Karim Ansarifard, Kaveh Rezaei, Mehdi Torabi

Team Melli will travel to Doha on Dec. 10 and will hold a 23-day training camp until Jan. 2.

Iran national football team have been drawn along with Iraq, Yemen and Vietnam in Group D.

Carlos Queiroz's team will reportedly play Qatar, Syria and China in the training camp.

The 2019 AFC Asian Cup will be held in the United Arab Emirates from January 5 to February 1.



Zico visits Esteghlal Brazilian defender Leandro Padovani

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Esteghlal Brazilian defender Leandro Padovani has gained support from his countrymen on Sunday.

Zico, technical director of Kashima Antlers, along with Léo Silva and Serginho, Brazilian players of the Japanese team, visited Padovani in a hotel in Tehran, capital of Iran.

Zico presented a shirt of Kashima Antlers to his compatriot. Kashima Antlers won the AFC Champions League for the first time ever after beating Persepolis of Iran 2-0 on aggregate thanks to goals from Brazilians Silva and Serginho.

The 34-year-old player broke his neck after a horrific-looking collision with his teammate in February.

He is trying to regain his movement ability after undergoing surgery.

Padovani has spent the majority of his career in Brazil. In 2012, he was transferred to Foolad, where he won the title in 2013-14 season. In September 2016 Padovani signed with Esteghlal.

Padovani has also played in Iranian clubs Sepahan and Naft Tehran.



Resan: Reaching the final is itself an achievement



Persepolis midfielder Bashar Resan believes that their 2018 AFC Champions League campaign can still be considered a success, despite falling at the final hurdle on Saturday night.

A tough night in Tehran saw Islamic Republic of Iran's Persepolis fail to breach the backline of Japanese side Kashima Antlers, as a goalless draw was enough to see the AFC Champions League title lifted by a J.League side for a second year running.

Nevertheless, Iraq international Resan was in philosophical mood after the second leg of the final concluded at Azadi Stadium.

"In football, things go in your favor at times and sometimes they don't," said the 21-year-old, who last year won the AFC Cup with Iraqi side Air Force Club.

"In the second half in Japan, we committed some slight mistakes which led to their goals. Today, we had many chances but we didn't use them.

"Reaching the final itself is an achievement for us."

West Asia's AFC Champions League title drought now goes back to 2011 when Qatar's Al Sadd defeated Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors of Korea Republic, but Resan insisted there was no great difference in ability between the two sides, just a matter of clinical finishing in the first leg in Japan a week ago.

"While I'd like to congratulate Kashima but I don't think they were as good as Al Sadd or Al Duhail," he added.

"They just exploited our mistakes in the first leg and scored twice, making it difficult for us to come back into the game in front of our fans."

"Once again, congratulations to Kashima, and commiserations to our fans; I am sad we weren't able to make them happy. "But, sometimes, this is how football is."

(Source: the-afc)

Misao hails career-defining title



Tehran: Kashima Antlers' Kento Misao believes the 2018 AFC Champions League crown is a title that will one day help define his career.

The 22-year-old played a key role as Japan's Kashima Antlers sealed their maiden continental crown with a 0-0 second leg draw away to Persepolis of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Saturday, after winning the first leg of the final 2-0.

The young Japan star was in no doubt as to the magnitude of the team's success, and is sure it is a triumph he will look back on with great pride in years to come.

"After players retire you can see how they spent their careers by the number of titles they won. That is how we are assessed, and so with regards to my career I'm very happy to have won such a big title as the ACL."

The Asian title was the only piece of silverware missing from Kashima's imposing trophy cabinet, and Misao was

delighted to have played a central role in finally delivering continental glory for the J.League's most successful club.

"This was the only title Kashima hadn't won, so the fact we were able to achieve this success, and, for me personally, the fact I was able to play regularly makes me very happy."

Misao felt a lack of egos in Kashima's squad was vital to them claiming the title. "The team's sense of unity (was key). Nobody plays for themselves and instead does so for the benefit of the team."

The Tokyo-native is part of an exciting crop of young talent involved in Hajime Moriyasu's new-look Japan squad, and he feels achieving ACL glory in such an intimidating environment — the Azadi Stadium was packed to the rafters and a cacophony of noise — will only help him develop as a player.

(Source: the-afc)

Victory in defeat for Persepolis

The 2018 AFC Champions League final didn't go according to plan but Persepolis head coach Branko Ivankovic said there was victory in defeat for the Islamic Republic of Iran side.

The fact that his players and the team's fans gave it their all meant Persepolis had won despite Kashima Antlers holding them to a 0-0 draw to seal their first AFC Champions League title with a 2-0 win on aggregate.

"I am so proud of my players, they tried so hard and put all their energy into the match. They are winners," said Ivankovic.

"I am also so proud of the great atmosphere, the Persepolis fans showed they are the best and we appreciate them."

An AFC Champions League record of 100,000 fans, including 250 Kashima Antlers supporters who made the long trip from Japan, witnessed the two sides battle in a tight second leg.

The Azadi Stadium was filled to the brim two hours before the match kicked off and it was, Ivankovic said, a true spectacle.

"I am sorry we couldn't be Asian champions but this was our first major Asian final and we came very close."

"The players and fans showed how beautiful and fair football is in Iran and I applaud them. I would also like to thank the staff and club for helping raise us to this level."

"We may have lost but this is an incentive to do better in the future. We now have the experience of having played at this level and we will improve."

(Source: Fox Sports)

Winning ACL title more satisfying than playing Real Madrid: Go Oiwa

Kashima Antlers coach Go Oiwa says that to win the 2018 AFC Champions League for the first time is more satisfying for him than playing Real Madrid in 2016.

Kashima Antlers played a goalless draw against Persepolis of Iran on Saturday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and won the AFC Champions League title thanks to a 2-0 win in the first leg last week.

"It was a very tough game but my players were very mobile, battled well and I am delighted with the result. I lost my voice but it is worth it," Oiwa told the-afc.com.

"I am so proud that we have won the AFC Champions League title for the first time. We played Real Madrid in the final of the FIFA Club World Cup two years ago but for me, the Persepolis match is more satisfying as we won the title."

"The name of Kashima Antlers will now echo throughout Asia," he added.

Oiwa also paid tribute to Persepolis.

"Persepolis was the strongest team we played in the AFC Champions League this year. It is not just the team and tactics, but their fans too who were magnificent."

"I said on Friday that our aim was to win in the Azadi Stadium but we all saw how difficult it is to play Persepolis in their home ground. I wish them all the best," Oiwa concluded.

(Source: Goal)

AFC hails Persepolis performance in ACL finals

IRNA — The Asian Football Confederation in a Twitter message praised Iranian team Persepolis for its performance in the second leg of the Asian Champions League final match against Japanese rival 'Kashima Antlers'.

"You played with honor. Fair play, it's what it's all about. Plan, train and you go again @PerspolisFCIran!," ACLFinal tweeted on Saturday night.

Heavyweight Iran's Red club Persepolis in a scoreless draw paved the path for championship of Japanese football club Kashima Antlers.

Kashima Antlers had managed to defeat Persepolis 2-0 in the first leg of the final game in Japan last week.

The result brought the Japanese team Asia championship while the Iranian squad stood on the second place crowned champion of west Asia.

Iran's team kata shining in Spain

IRNA — Iranian men's team kata defeated Turkey's strong team and for the first time won a medal in World Championships in Spain.

Iranian karate players thrashed Russia 4-1, then lost to Spain, a title-holder, 5-0 and entered the repechage tournament with Kuwaiti.



They defeated Kuwait 3-2 and headed to the qualifying match where they beat Turkey 3-2 and won a medal for the first time.

Iran's national team has bagged one gold, one silver and four bronze medals at the games.

The 24th Karate World Championships being held in Madrid, Spain since last Tuesday will come to an end tomorrow.

A total of 1,170 karatekas from 140 countries have taken part in the competitions.

Iran has participated in both men and women kata and kumite competitions.

AFC, FIFA Presidents praise attendance of female fans at final

AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa joined FIFA President Gianni Infantino in welcoming the presence of more than 1,000 female fans in the Azadi Stadium for the 2018 AFC Champions League final on Saturday.

After the final won 2-0 on aggregate by Japan's Kashima Antlers against Persepolis of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Shaikh Salman said: "Football in Asia has always been inclusive and the AFC welcomes supporters no matter their creed, beliefs, gender or race."

"I thank the authorities in IR Iran for making it possible for a diverse and socially representative crowd to witness an extraordinary occasion. Tonight was historic in so many ways and showed that the AFC continues to develop their competitions."

"So much credit must go to the Government of the Islamic



Republic of Iran and the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran for their co-operation and support in staging this memorable final."

The FIFA President added: "I was delighted to personally witness that, for the first time in 40 years, Iranian female football fans were allowed to attend an official match again."

"The fact that over 1,000 women could cheer their favourite team and that this took place during Asian football's most important game of the season, the AFC Champions League finale, makes this occasion even more special."

He also praised the AFC and FFIRI for the key role on such a historic occasion. He added his thanks to the Iranian authorities and in particular the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani.

The AFC also accredited female reporters and photographers to cover the match for various news outlets.

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Renewed U.S. sanctions damage Iranian intl. film distributors

A R T TEHRAN – Mohammad Atebbai, the director of Iranian Independents, a company marketing Iranian independent feature and documentary films, has said that the sanctions reimposed by the United States on Iran have had serious effects on Iranian companies active in overseas film distribution.



Iranian Independents director Mohammad Atebbai in an undated photo.

The U.S. Treasury has reissued sanctions targeting Iranian banks. Speaking to the Persian service of ISNA on Sunday, Atebbai noted, "The inability to transfer money is the fundamental problem facing the companies. It has paralyzed a number of our friends and even many state-run companies."

He also said that the DHL Express suspended its services in Iran last week due to the sanctions. "The company had given Iranian film distributors the most reliable mail service by which they sent copies of their films to overseas distributors and festivals," he added.

"Under these conditions, I don't know how Iranian distributors can continue working in the international arena," Atebbai lamented.

He also said that those Iranian filmmakers who plan to attend foreign film events have a few problems with the travel agencies assigned by European embassies in Tehran to receive visa applications.

He accused the agencies of taking bribes to expedite visa processing time.

Previously, the embassies directly accepted visa applications.

Female Iranian filmmakers under spotlight at Spanish festival

A R T TEHRAN – The Zinebi International Festival of Documentary and Short Films underway in the Spanish city of Bilbao is reviewing films by Iranian women directors in a special program.

A selection of 20 documentaries and shorts have been chosen to go on screen in the program "The Present Female", the organizers have announced.

"Gaze" by Farnush Samadi, "Icky" by Parastu Kardgar, "Ascribed Achievements" by Samaneh Shojaei, "Butterfly" by Maryam Khalilzadeh and "Double" by Ronak Jafari are among the films.

In addition, Iranian filmmaker Qasideh Golmakani, daughter of journalist and film critic Hushang Golmakani, is among the jury members of the international competition at the festival, which will come to an end on November 16.



A scene from "Gaze" by Farnush Samadi.

China cracks down on celebrity hype and fake click-through rates

SHANGHAI (Reuters) — Chinese broadcasters and online entertainment sites should avoid celebrity hype and crack down on fake audience and click-through rates, state media quoted the National Radio and Television Administration as saying.

The edict comes after Beijing ordered A-list movie star Fan Bingbing to pay about 884 million yuan (\$129 million) in taxes and fines, spurring widespread discussion on the moral health of China's film industry.

Some programs overpaid celebrities, destroying industry order and leading teenagers into worshipping stars and money, Xinhua news agency said, citing the administration.

Radio and television stations, along with online audio-visual service providers, should scrap rude content, promote core socialist values and keep children away from entertainment and reality shows, it said.

The providers should also cut down on game shows, reality shows and singing contests that feature celebrities.

Sculptor Aqeli says Tehran visual pollution worsened by more statues

A R T TEHRAN – Veteran sculptor Qodratollah Aqeli has said that an increase in the number of statues across Tehran adds to the visual pollution in the city.

"Visual pollution observed in urban areas makes human beings suffer, and the problem is a major issue that the Tehran Municipality must take into consideration," Aqeli told the Persian service of ISNA on Sunday.

"All across the city, large and small shops with huge, nonstandard signs have caused the visual pollution, making the city look ugly while in a modern, developed country you cannot see such big signs even for popular brands," he added.

"A heterogeneous collection of buildings and varied billboards across the city are other factors causing visual pollution. In some cases, even some of the billboards have led to several nasty accidents," he added.

Aqeli said that part of the solution to the problem of visual pollution in every society depends on the level of people's understanding of graphic designs and visual art. He lamented that Iranian society suffers from a low level of understanding these subjects.

He also suggested establishing gardens across the city to display the sculptures, while green areas can be decorated with sculptures adding more to the beauty of the city.

"The passageways and squares across the capital are very crowded, so the increase in the number of the sculptures will not add to the beauty, but will only make the city look busier," he added.

He elsewhere remarked that the visual pollution and the noise in Tehran is really annoying, and that over 30 percent of people's feeling of anger is because of these forms of pollution.

"The officials in the municipality should not think only about making highways and streets, they must also think about pedestrians. The streets are so crowded that there is no place for pedestrians and they can't walk in the city



Sculptor Qodratollah Aqeli poses at an exhibition of his works at Tehran's Sareban Gallery on December 30, 2016. (Honaronline/Sharareh Samei)

to entertain themselves. We should not think only about modernizing the city, because people are the main part of the city and their peace and well being need to be taken into consideration," he concluded.

"Common Borders" to gather Iranian, Turkish artists in Tehran



A poster for "Common Borders".

A R T TEHRAN – A group of Iranian and Turkish artists will showcase their latest works in an exhibition titled "Common Borders", which will open at the gallery of Mellat Cineplex in Tehran on Friday.

Majid Abbasi Farahani from Iran and Denizhan Özer from Turkey are the curators of the exhibition.

Over 40 artworks in various media, including photography and painting, by 11 Iranian and 10 Turkish artists have been selected for the showcase, Abbasi Farahani said during a press conference in Tehran on Sunday.

"The exhibit aims to put the spotlight on

cultural affinities between the two countries that would help the participating artists become more familiar with the styles of each other's works," he said.

Mustafa Albayrak, Demet Taspinar, Tansel Türkdogan, Gül Yildiz and Vicdan Nalburlu are among the Turkish participating artists.

The exhibit will also put on display works by Hamed Jaberha, Vahid Danaifar, Navid Azimi, Leila Emadi, Katayun Karami and several other Iranian artists.

The exhibit will later travel to Istanbul.

Abbasi Farahani also plans to organize exhibitions with a number of Pakistani and Azerbaijani artists in the near future.

Tate Britain to hold major Van Gogh exhibition in 2019

LONDON (Guardian) — Tate Britain is to hold its first Vincent van Gogh exhibition since a 1947 show that was so wildly popular that the gallery's floors were damaged.

"I think our floors are more robust these days," said Alex Farquharson, Tate Britain's director, as details were announced of the major 2019 show, which will explore Van Gogh's relationship with Britain and his impact on British painters in new ways.

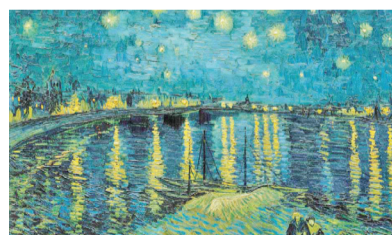
Last time, people queued in the cold and rain to see a five-week long exhibition organized by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Over 157,000 people came to the show, including the Queen. Newspapers compared the scenes with the queues outside food stores during rationing – "And now they queue to see paintings" – putting the exhibition's success down to people being "color-starved" by the austerity of postwar Britain.

Tate has discovered in its archive a letter to the Arts Council requesting reimbursement for three years' worth of damage to its floors over the five weeks. A reply has not been found.

Many of the visitors had never visited an art gallery before and they came even though it cost a shilling to get in on weekdays. That raised £3,000, one newspaper reported. Around half the total visitors came at weekends, when it was free.

Tate said it was bringing more than 45 Van Gogh works to the new exhibition, the



Vincent van Gogh's painting "Starry Night Over the Rhône". Photograph: Hervé? Lewandowski/RMN-Grand Palais (Muse?e d'Orsay)

largest group of works by the artist to be seen in the UK for nearly a decade.

The exhibition will tell the story of the young Vincent, an economic migrant who lived in London between 1873-76 as a trainee art dealer. He lodged in Brixton and fell in love with the city, walking everywhere. Important loans will include Self-Portrait 1889 from the National Gallery of Art in Washington; Starry Night over the Rhône 1888 from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris; and Prisoners Exercising 1890 from the Pushkin in Moscow.

Closer to home will be the loan by the National Gallery of one of its superstars, Sunflowers 1888, one of only four paintings by Van Gogh of the subject which still exist.

It will be a homecoming of sorts: Sunflowers hung at the Tate for four decades before a change in its remit saw the painting sent to the National Gallery in 1961.

"Yeva" named best at Arpa film festival



"Yeva" by Anahid Abad.

A R T TEHRAN – Iranian director Anahid Abad's acclaimed drama "Yeva" has won the award for best feature-film at the Arpa International Film Festival in Los Angeles.

A co-production between Iran and Armenia, the film is about Yeva, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband's tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages of Karabakh. Yeva is a complete stranger in this ballgame and is obliged to live her daily life in disguise.

Earlier in July, "Yeva" received the Armenian National Film Academy Award

for Best Film at the 15th Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival.

Ari Gold was selected as best director for his "The Song of Sway Lake" at the Arpa festival, the organizers announced last week.

The award for best screenplay went to "In Vino" by director/writer Leonardo Foti from the U.S., while the award for best short animation film was presented to "Echo" by Serbian director Boriša Simovic.

"Taniel" by Garo Berberian from the UK won the award for best short film and "River of Gold" by Reuben Aaronson from America received the best documentary award.

Netflix CEO Hastings says no plans for cheaper India offerings

SINGAPORE (Reuters) — Netflix (NFLX.O) chief executive Reed Hastings said that the streaming video company had no plans for cheaper prices in the hotly competitive India market and that an executive's comments suggesting otherwise had been "misunderstood."

In an interview with Reuters on Friday, Hastings noted that Netflix had three price tiers in India: 500 rupees (\$6.90) for a basic plan, 650 (\$9.00) for a standard plan and 800 rupees (\$11) for premium. Those prices are only modestly lower than what the company charges in the United States.

But in India, Hastings said, "we see the typical mix across these three plans that we see in many other countries like the U.S., which would indicate that we don't have a pricing issue. Because if it was, everyone would be on the lower price plan."

When asked directly if that meant the company had no plans for lower prices in India, he said: "Correct."

Hastings' comments followed a Singapore event where the company introduced 17 new original productions for Asia, including nine for India. He said local production was a key driver of new subscribers in India and elsewhere, but he declined to provide specific figures on Asia subscriber numbers and growth.

Netflix launched in India two years ago and has won fans among a young, tech-savvy middle class in a country where video consumption of all kinds is soaring.



Netflix's Chief Executive Officer Reed Hastings delivers his keynote speech during Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain, February 27, 2017. (Reuters/Paul Hanna)

It scored a big hit in July with the release of "Sacred Games", a hard-boiled thriller built around Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan.

Local industry players, however, say Netflix's prices will make it hard to compete against domestic competitors like 21st Century Fox-backed Hotstar (DIS.N), Amazon's (AMZN.O) Prime Video and satellite TV provider Tata Sky.

But Hastings said Netflix could still thrive amid cheaper options.

"Now it is true that Youtube is free, and Amazon is basically free, and cable is extremely inexpensive because it's ad-supported. To some degree that creates a consumer expectation," he said. But he added that the cost of Netflix in India was "like going to the movie theater 2-3 tickets a month, but you get to watch a lot more."